

Sweep! God we needed that. In today's B-List, Buff goes inside the numbers of yesterday's win over the Royals. He's got love for Casey Blake, hates on Aaron Boone, and examines the methods to Wickies madness.



It's hard to take a staff with guys name Rune Elvis and Gobble seriously, but it is nice to go into interleague play with a three-quarter sweep in hand. The question as to whether Pittsburgh is functionally different from Kansas City has yet to be answered.

### **1) Being right is not as satisfying as you might think**

If Cliff Lee had pitched six innings, he would have thrown 93 pitches, 62 strikes, given up 6 hits and 2 runs (1 earned), walked two and struck out seven. It's not a great game (since it's only six innings), but certainly a quality one. I really like the more-than-one K per inning.

Since Cliff Lee pitched six-*plus* innings (the accepted euphemism for "he came out for the seventh, but couldn't get anyone out"), Lee finished with 8 hits, 3 walks, and 5 runs (4 earned). It's not a great game, but certainly a crummy one.

Is it possible for a game to go from "quality" to "crummy" based on a single bad pitch? You can't really say for sure since there were other variables involved, but at 0-2

to Reggie Sanders, Lee simply missed badly and Sanders (nothing if not an experienced hitter) made him pay with a two-run double. Hey, after 100 pitches, making a mistake isn't totally unexpected. I guess Mickey Ferguson put it best on another list I read: given Lee's history this season (please tell me the Indians are at least as good at trend analysis as I am), it would be foolhardy not to have someone (in this case Filthy Ferd) ready to go at the top of the seventh. After the five-pitch walk and the double down the line, there are two scenarios:

a) you think Lee can handle Reggie Sanders, a powerful right-handed hitter, better than Cabrera, because ... well, who knows why?

b) Cabrera wasn't ready, because ... well, who knows why?

In Wedge's defense (and Lee's, peripherally), Lee had just finished two hitless innings, the only baserunner on an HBP. He looked solid, and 93 pitches

is not onerous. I'm just sayin': Cabrera had to have been ready, or that would be a problem, and if he was and wasn't brought in, well, that would be a problem.

By the way, Lee's GB:FB ratio was a preposterous 0.1 in this game. He is trying to give me a heart attack.

## **2) An equitable distribution**

Each Indians batter got a hit. In fact, seven Indians batters got *exactly*

one hit. It's nice to have your top four hitters score, though: it looks like you know what you're doing.

## **3) All or nothing**

Casey Blake extended his

hitting streak to 15 games, including a bunt single and a two-run single. The other two times he was up, eh, not so good: he struck out. Both times he watched two strikes before missing the third, so I think this Plate Discipline thing is more ingrained than fadular. Blake batted fifth yesterday, a much better use of him than the nine hole, especially with Victor getting a day off.

In all, 8 Indians and 12 Royals heard strike three land in the catcher's mitt, meaning that on average, each inning, at one point or another, greatly resembled Little League games of yore.

Except for the nine walks: we could give up nine walks in two-thirds of an inning. I scoff at your lack of lack of control! Feh!

By the way, inspired by

Blake's example, Kelly Shoppach had a double (huzzah!) and two Ks (huzzah!). Two Ks may sound bad, but at this point of this season, you could do worse than emulate Casey Blake.

**4) Okay, I give up: what does he do again?**

Aaron Boone made his seventh error on the

season, putting him on pace to be Corey Smiff. On the other hand, he is hitting right-handed pitching (the more sommon kind) at a .221/.287/.279 clip, with 0 HRs or triples and five doubles, putting him on pace to be Jerry Dybzinski. I am not clamoring for the Andy

Marte Era, since he himself is sucking pretty significantly in Beefalo, something Boone has never done, but I am beginning the clamor for the Someone, Anyone Else Era. If it happens to be Marte, so be it. Lou Merloni might work. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, perhaps. All I'm saying

is that we're closing in  
on a significant sample  
size, and the sample  
politely whispers,  
&quot;Suck.&quot;  
For this, Boone had  
better be one very  
serious clubhouse  
leader, like he buys all  
the pizza and scrapes  
guys' cleats and the

whole bit. (I misspelled  
&quot;impertinently  
screams&quot; in the  
last sentence of the  
previous paragraph.)

## **5) The insidious threat**

Long-time fans know  
what I mean by the  
term &quot;Kenny  
Lofton

Disease, &quot; in  
which the speedy  
leadoff center fielder  
cranks a couple of  
balls over the wall,  
forgets that he is, in  
fact, the speedy  
leadoff center fielder,  
and ends up with  
forty-three

consecutive popups  
before remembering  
that, hey, he's not  
really a power hitter  
after all.

Grady Sizemore is  
not Kenny Lofton,  
and does have some  
legitimate power, but  
I am too much a

Cleveland fan not to have at least thought of the idea. The home run turned out to be the winning run, so huzzahs all around, but ... it's just hard to suppress the reaction, y'know?

**6) I never doubted  
them for a minute!**  
For several weeks,  
yes, but not for a *m  
inute*  
: the bullpen threw  
3 shutout innings to  
preserve the win,  
with Cabrera

striking out two  
Royals, Sauerbeck  
striking out the  
pinch-hitter on four  
pitches, Betancourt  
throwing 22 of 24  
pitches for strikes  
(2 hits and only 1  
K, but one hit was

an infield single  
and it was a  
shutout inning  
nonetheless), and  
Wickman  
Wickmanizing.  
Yes, Ferd gave up  
the inherited run,  
but I am confident

when I see any of  
Cabrera,  
Betancourt, or  
Wickman on the  
hill.

Sauerbeck ...  
come on, be  
honest, how many  
of you were

sanguine about  
Sauerbeck facing  
Matt Stairs?

Anyone? Credit  
where credit is  
due, as he did his  
job (well), Kudos.

Now if only  
Wedge would call

my cell phone  
when he gets  
'beck up so I can  
take my  
acid-reducing  
medicine in time.

**7) A madness to  
the method**

Yes, Wickman

gave up a hit and  
a walk, but I  
contend the walk  
doesn't really  
count. After  
Mientkiewicz was  
sacrificed to  
second, Wickman

saw first base  
open and decided  
he'd rather have  
Matt Stairs there  
than in the  
batter's box. I  
know the box  
score doesn't say

&quot;IBB,&quot;  
but I'm telling  
you, it was an  
intentional base  
on balls.

Of course, he  
went 3-2 to the  
alien abduction

version of John  
Buck (2 more  
hits) before  
punching him  
out, but it makes  
all kind of sense  
to pitch to Buck,  
even the

abducted  
version, instead  
of Roly Poly  
Stairs. I love  
Merely Big Bob.  
**8) Our ducks,  
they are  
dwarfed by**

**your  
preponderance  
thereof**

**Leaving 8 on  
base, including  
4 in scoring  
position, isn't**

very good.  
Grady himself  
saw three of the  
four die. But  
the Royals left *t*  
*hirteen*  
on base,

including a  
mind-boggling  
*eight*  
in scoring  
position. Think  
about that.  
That's basically

one an inning.

In

*scoring position*

. That's so bad  
it ... reminds me  
of the Indians.  
(That's bad.)

**9) Well, it  
wasn't really *t  
hat***

**many**

**Sure, we left 8**

**and 4 out**

**there, but only**

because we  
had TWO  
GUYS  
THROWN  
OUT AT  
HOME. That's  
doubleplus

ungood. You  
know Jason  
Michaels' arm  
is in OUR  
outfield, right?  
**10) I am ready  
for the**

**&quot;infield  
singles&quot;  
to stop  
Really. Any  
time now.**