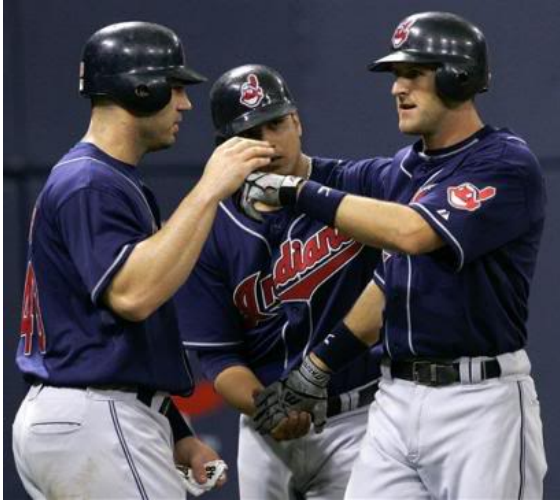


That one felt good. Buff's back to analyze yesterdays thorough ass-whoopin' of the Twins. As usual, he hits on several topics, including CC's dominance, Victor's awakening, and Ron Gardenhire's ejection. If there is a better daily Indians column anywhere on the world wide web, I haven't seen it.



You *need* an off day after a shellacking like that. Who makes these schedules, anyway? Two days off because of a two-game series, so we can play every day next week including a four-game set with Chicago? Is three and three that hard?

1) Insert superlative here

Last time out, C.C. Sabathia spun a 3-hitter but gave up a run on a homer and walked a guy. Yesterday, Sabathia doubled the hit output, but cut out the homer, the run, the walk, and much of the suspense. In 102 pitches, he threw 76 strikes, to walk 0, strike out 8, and generally make the Twins look like toads.

In his last four starts, all Sabathia has been able to do is:

Go 8 innings twice and 9 twice.

He has yet to give up as many hits as IP.

Has not walked a second batter, and not a first batter in two of them

Thrown between 102 and 112 pitches

Struck out 4, 10, 9, and 8 hitters

In fact, for the season, Sabathia's ERA is 1.52

and his WHIP is 0.90. Eliminating the aborted Opening Day start, he has thrown 39 innings, given up 4 earned runs, 27 hits, and six walks. He has failed thus far to cure cancer, develop perpetual motion, or kick Jack Bauer's butt, but that's about all. Consider this: in Sabathia's last ten starts last season, he had one bad outing, one decent one, and 8 very good ones, including 7 in which he gave up 1 or 0 runs:

IP	H	R	BB	K	6	7	1	1	6	7	8	2	2	5	8
3	1	2	5												
6	6	3	3	7											
7.1	3	0	1	7											
9	4	1	0	10											
6	4	1	5	7											
8	5	0	0	8											
5	7	5	3	5											
8	5	0	2	9											

I remember people talking about how

Sabathia had a good second half, but I didn't realize just how good. Without the 5-in-5 clunker against the Royals last year and the pulled-muscle-marred opening start, Sabathia has been ... well, an Ace.

I wrote this article (<http://story.scout.com/a.z?s=149&p=2&c=230885>) a couple years ago. Although its conclusions were true when written (check Sabathia's 2004 year-end stats), they sure seem to lack application now.

2) It helps to adjust the contrast

Not one Minnesota pitcher gave

up fewer than a hit an inning, or fewer than a RUN an inning, or had a K/BB ratio over 1.5 Only Dennis Reyes managed not to walk anyone, and it's hard to argue that his pitch to Casey Blake in the seventh with two out qualifies this as anything really positive.

3) Everybody hits!

And I mean it this time: every Indian got at least one hit. Six Indians reached base at least twice, although

one of them was Casey Blake, who only got to actually stand still on a base once, seeing as though his two hits were home runs. (Not very cheap ones, either). Even Aaron Boone got two hits ... and stole a base! CNN's website said nothing of burning skies or raining frogs, so I think it might be a typo.

4) A fast start raises all

boats, or something like that

Victor Martinez has not been hot. In fact, he has been not hot in the same way that liquid argon is not hot. Coming into the game, he had three hits since May 10, one in each of the games against Pittsburgh. So it was nice to see him come

to the plate in the first with two outs and two on ... and drive both guys home with a double. He tacked on two more hits to go 3-for-5 and double his post-May 9 hit total. Seriously, if this helps him get out of his slump, I'm all for it. The fact that Brad Radke's fastball is mostly theoretical at this

stage in his career has no bearing on the discussion. Anyway, after that hit, the Indians seemed to take a relaxed approach at the plate as they proceeded to pound Radke like end-stage Dave Burba.

5)

"Clutch"

**with a lower-case
"c"**

It's hard to call a hit in
an 11-0 laugher a
"clutch hit."

However, it bears
mentioning that 7 of
the Tribe's 11 runs
came with two outs,
including the
aforementioned

Martinez double and
Blake's bomb off
Reyes. Sizemore and
Boone chipped in
2-out RBI as well.

There's no
earth-shattering
conclusion to draw
from this, but since
leaving runners on
base (we left 6 today:

any time you score twice as many runs as you leave runners on base, it's hard to complain about the ducks) has been an issue, it's nice to see some two-out hits.

6) You, you get nothing and like it

The bottom half (five through nine) of the Minnesota batting order: 1-for-17, 4 K, 0 BB, 0 R, 0 SB, 0 help. Sabathia had more to do with that than they did (they did the majority of the damage

Tuesday), but
checking the lineup:

Cuddyer: .301 Morn
eau: .237

White: .195

Batista: .241

Castro: .231

You can argue slow
starts. You can

argue defensive
wizardry. You can
argue the Flat
Earth Theory for all
I care: that's a bad
offense, ladies and
germs. By the way,
of all the players to
choose from to lead

off, Ron Gardenhire
chose Lew Ford
and his sparkling
.224 AVG (OBP
.308, but that's still
bad ... he slugs
.290, BTW). The
two men who hit
behind him? Punto

hits .290, while
Redmond hits .422.
Tuesday, it was
Castillo's .314 and
Mauer's .336.
That's like cooking
a nice pork loin,
with some
rosemary potatoes,

perhaps a little
green beans
almondine, and
then tossing it into
the cat's dish for
your guest because
you don't even
have a bloody table
to *set*. I can't

believe I advocated
pursuing Lew Ford.

Of course, I've
seen people berate
Mark Shapiro for
not signing Rondell
White, too. I feel
better than *th*
em

at least.

**7) I feel so broke
up, I wanna go
home**

At least, that's the
attitude I'm
attributing to Ron
Gardenhire, who
got tossed for

arguing multiple
times. I don't
think he was
really that upset
with the umpiring
(which did make
mistakes, notably
Sabathia's dive at

Punto), I think he was just tired of seeing his ass get kicked and preferred drinking beer in his office to watching Carlos Silva's

Magic Eight-Plus
ERA once again.

**8) Naked
aggression**

The Tribe sent
three runners,
two of whom
stole second off

Radke and
Redmond.

Jason Michaels
got caught,
prompting the
ESPN guy to call
it "a big
caught

stealing"
when I watched
the third inning.
It was big, all
right: it
prevented us
from having a
legitimate shot at

winning by
twelve. (In his
defense, it
seemed bigger
at the time, but it
was pretty
obvious pretty
early that Brad

Radke did not
have his best
stuff and
Sabathia did.)
I'm ambivalent
about stolen
bases: I lean
toward the

stathead
contention that
the break-even
point is as high
as 75% success
rate instead of
the old 67%. On
the other hand,

they suggest a
certain
willingness to *do*
something that
is out of
character for this
coaching staff,
so I'd hate to nip

creativity like
that in the bud.
Plus it gives
Grady more
Face Time, and
how can that be
bad?