

Wow, we needed that one. Now, if we could only win when CC isn't on the bump. In today's B-List, Buff breaks down CC's performance, the resurgence of Jason Michaels, and Victor Martinez's putrid defense. He even manages to run some smack at the White Sox intolerable TV announcers. So he's got that going for him ... which is nice.



I can't tell you how nice it is to see a White Sox - Indians game without listening to the "pig-like wails of Hawk Harrelson." (Jay Mariotti's phrase, which makes me envious.) Of course, it helps when the Indians decide to show up as well.

### 1) Can an Ace be ordinary?

The answer is, "Yes," because another term tossed about with respect to starting pitchers is "Stopper." That's the guy who prevents you from having a prolonged losing streak because when he takes the mound, the streak stops.

C.C. Sabathia was more "Stopper" than "Ace" last night, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a complaint about it.

We got an inkling that it would be a longish night for the portly-sider when he started each of the first three hitters off with 2 balls. How often do you see a perfect 1-2-3 inning take 18 pitches? That's a

woofer. On the other hand, it suggests that Sabathia didn't have his best stuff ... and so what? Of the next 15 batters, 14 were started off with a strike (counting first pitches put into play). That's quite a turnaround. Look, it wasn't the smoothest outing (7 hits and 112 pitches to get through 6 innings, 2 walks, but both to Thome so I can't get too worked up), but it was enough to beat Mark Buehrle, raising Sabathia's head-to-head mark to 5-0. (Did you know that? I had no idea. I didn't realize the Indians as a whole had beaten Buehrle five times, since it feels like he's about 42-3 against us.) Anyway, sorely needed in any event.

## **2) I knew he could do it!**

Actually, this time my tongue avoids my cheek altogether: I felt placid when Cabrera came in, knew Raffy would throw strikes, and had zero doubt that Wickman would get the save. The bullpen is shaping up to have a good back end: the long guys are iffy and the lefty has his issues (including being terrible), but these guys are capable. By the way, Cabrera's 7:4 strike-to-ball ratio

doesn't look so hot ... until you see that the four balls were an "unintentional" (yeah, right) walk of Jim Thome. That means every meaningful pitch Ferd threw was a strike: Raffy threw on ball in nine pitches, so he is clearly having control issues.

By the way, I loved how Wickman threw three straight back-door breaking balls to mACKowiACK, only the third of which nipped black. "I'm not giving in to Rob #^%\$\*@# mACKowiACK, for Pete's sake!"

### **3) Time to use a little stragedy**

Buehrle can be an enormously frustrating pitcher because he throws a weird-looking fastball that runs in on right-handers, then Glavines away at the outside half of

the plate. Pulling Buehrle is an exercise in futility. So it's nice to see Jhonny Peralta hit a two-run shot to right-center (which took approximately 0.06 seconds to leave the yard), on a 2-0 count, no less. Peralta's numbers may be significantly below last year's, but I actually like his approach at the plate better.

In the same vein, Victor Martinez took a pitch the other way for the game-winning RBI (Does anyone miss this stat? Did anyone *understand* that stat?). The right-handed

power concerns are officially null and void: yes, Martinez' May has been atrocious, but it's hard to argue that the Indians' main problem is the hitting of Victor Martinez.

#### **4) Tough Man Award**

Aaron Boone not only played last night, he got a hit, hustled when Dye Incavligia'd his single, scored the first run on a sac fly, and started a double play. When I had my first concussion, I spent the day in my bed with the lights off

eating nothing more  
challenging than  
Spaghetti-Os. Yes, I was six,  
but I'm still impressed. (And  
pleased at the minimalization  
of Lou Merloni sightings.)

## **5) Hey, that guy looks familiar**

In April, Jason Michaels  
was perhaps the most  
worthless regular  
left-fielder in ... the 21st  
century? .245/.304/.287 is

what we statheads call, "bad." Actually, we call it "sucky" and "putrid" and "Neifi Perez" as well, but you get the idea. However, in May, Michaels is hitting .326/.375/.463, meaning he not only is getting on base at near the clip we expected when we stuck him in the 2 slot, but

he actually has an extra-base hit. His OPS for the season is still a paltry .715, but it would be nice to rationalize that Michaels is actually an offensive asset. (Thanks to email from Jarad Regano, I will now forever think of him as Fred Flintstone in the field: thanks a lot, Rigs.) By the way, Michaels singled to

each of right, center, and left, which is the only approach that yields valuable results for a guy like Flintstone ... er, Michaels.

## **6) Who are these bastards?!**

Last month the White Sox plagued me with a left-handed relief pitcher they pulled from their

collective bottoms in  
Boone Logan, who  
ended up using up his  
fifteen minutes and got  
send back down to  
Missoula or  
Ouagadougou or Parma  
or wherever the Sox play  
D-ball. Not to worry, the  
Sox said, patting me  
patronizingly on the  
head, we have more

where that came from.  
Matt Thornton threw two scary innings last night, routinely cranking up to 98 MPH and making Eduardo Perez (in particular: he wasn't alone, just most dramatic) look completely ridiculous.  
The Sox got Thornton in the spring by trading Joe

Borchard to Seattle, which would be like trading Ryan Ludwick for B.J. Ryan two years ago. Have I mentioned that I hate the White Sox?

## **7) Blind Squirrel Theory**

Yes, Jermaine Dye hit a home run. Jeez, it

wasn't even a very GOOD home run. Yeah, it went over the wall, but it wasn't a titanic shot or anything. It was a home run, big deal. Ozuna's double was a more important hit. Peralta's home run was more impressive.

But what does  
Baseball Tonight show  
ad nauseum? Dye's  
home run. The man  
made four plate  
appearances and  
struck out three times,  
fer Chrissakes.

Maybe they were  
shocked that Sabathia  
gave up a run. Yeah, I

bet that's it.

(Yeah, right.)

**8) Nice hose!**

Ben Broussard's 1-6

play in the ninth to

get Podsednik

(whom I was

convinced would

have stolen third

had he reached

second) was a thing of beauty.

Sometimes being left-handed is a real asset.

By the way, on the last out, why did the right fielder grab that last

ground ball instead  
of the second  
baseman? Oh, that  
was Belliard?

What kind of shift is  
THAT?

**9) Go buy a hose!**

Although Victor  
Martinez had a

nice hit, and was  
unfortunate at  
least one other  
time when a line  
shot was right at  
someone,  
Martinez'  
defensive night

was not as  
impressive. The  
errant throw on  
the bunt led to an  
unearned run, and  
his attempt to  
throw Cintron out  
in the ninth was

Mackey  
Sasseresque.  
Has someone  
stolen this man's  
triceps? That's  
just not good.