

The B-List: 6/9

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, June 09 2009 7:00 PM -

Outta the cellar, and hopefully headed for greener pastures. The Tribe overcame a 4-0 deficit last night against the Royals, rallying for four runs in the sixth, and another four in the seventh on a Mark DeRosa grand slam home run. You know the DeRosa grannie pleases Buff, who has been campaigning for a trade of DeRosa for several weeks now. He hits on that, as well as all other aspects of last night's exciting win in today's edition of The B-List.

FINAL

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Royals (24-33)

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Indians (26-34)

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4

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W: R. Perez (1-1)

L: J. Cruz (3-2)



1) The fine line between glee and apoplexy

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Well, really, it's a big, fat, thick black line, but really now: what would be your reaction to the bottom of the 6th had the Indians managed to cough that hairball out of their collective throats? We've seen that inning before, right?

That inning is the hallmark of a bad baseball team, and with all due respect to Rob Neyer, Rany Jazayerli, and Joe Posnanski, the Kansas City Royals are a bad baseball team.

The inning got off to a mundane-enough start: Adorable Jamey Carroll (I am going to lobby for him to officially change his name, like Marvelous Marvin Hagler or Flavor Flav) drew a five-pitch walk off Brian Bannister and Victor Martinez lined a single to center to put runners on the corners. Bannister had largely throttled the Indians to that point, giving up 2 hits and 2 walks but striking out 5 in 5 shutout innings. The wheels began to come off when Bannister got Shin-Soo Choo to ground a 3-2 pitch to Billy Butler at first, which looked like a good bet to become a double play.

Well, a good bet if the first baseman is not Billy Butler. (Or Mike Jacobs, for that matter.)

For all the grief I give Ryan Garko, one thing I have to give him credit for is that he truly has worked hard on his defense. He is never going to be Albert Pujols at first, but he has taken a lot of repetitions there and it shows. So imagine Ryan Garko in his first week of learning to play first base, suffering from allergies, having taken a triple dose of the prescription-strength Benedroctylon (an made-up antihistimine much stronger than Benedryl), after having done nothing but eat meat and drink protein shakes between weightlifting sessions for the previous three weeks.

This is Billy Butler at first base.

He may be unathletic, but at least he is stiff.

Butler took the ground ball and promptly threw it to Not Second Base to not get Martinez: Carroll scored and with no outs and runners at first and second, Mark DeRosa singled to load the bases. This was enough for Bannister, as the left-handed Travis Hafner came to the plate to face John Bale. Hafner imitated Choo, grounding the ball to Butler, who threw home, and in his excitement to see the ball delivered to the approximate right location and salivating at the thought of a 3-2-3 double play, Miguel Olivo neglected to actually be standing on home plate when he caught the ball.

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Now, this is simply an awful, awful play. Had Shoppach or Martinez made this play, I would be calling for a healthy round of enemas and shaved heads.

And with the bases STILL loaded, the Indians did nothing more interesting than hit the ball into routine outs, the first two of which scored runs to tie the game at 4.

In the next inning, the massive four-run rally consisted of an infield single, and walk (on a full count), and a hit batsman (ALSO with a full count). Again, had this been Vizcaino or Aquino, the prescription would have been *bromine* enemas and *weed-whacker* head-shavings.

And then Mark DeRosa hit an *opposite field* grand slam, and the game was functionally over.

Cliff Lee gave up 11 hits in 6 innings, including a triple to David DeJesus and a home run by the #8 hitter. He gave up 4 runs and was lucky not to give up more. Brian Bannister gave up FOUR hits in 5 innings and gave up 1 earned run.

Neither man won ... but of the two, I would imagine that Brian Bannister is the more-frustrated pitcher.

2) A chink in the armor

Lee had his string of 10 Quality Starts dashed when he gave up a fourth run, but in some respects, he didn't even pitch THAT well. Actually, his first two innings were terrific, with a leadoff walk erased on a double play and a leadoff single in the next inning thwarted by two swinging strikeouts.

Things fell apart a bit in the third as Olivo homered and Willie the Q singled, stole second, and went to third on a sacrifice bunt.

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(By the way: I know you're not expecting a lot of runs against Cliff Lee, but if that truly was a sacrifice, I have to call that a bad play. The top of the order is coming up and Bloomquist is fast enough to score from second on any single that makes it out of the infield.

I think Crisp was more likely trying to bunt for a hit and was willing to take the sacrifice ... which is still kind of a bad play, IMO, but I have never been as fast as Covelli Crisp.)

The triple scored Bloomquist, but Lee escaped without further damage. His 4th inning was pretty bland with a single and a passed ball but nothing else.

So through 4 innings, Lee had given up 4 hits and 2 runs: not auspicious, but hardly terrible.

In his next two innings, Lee gave up SEVEN hits and 2 runs.

As a quick aside, imagine if you will the Cleveland Indians inning in which 5 men get hits and only 2 score. More enemas would be in order, no?

Now, three of those seven hits were infield singles, and in fact all seven hits were singles. It's not like the Royals were pounding the crap out of Lee.

On the other hand, the Royals are a bad offensive team and got 11 hits in 6 innings, so it's not like Lee was very sharp, either.

When all is said and done (and note that 1 run scored when Kelly Shoppach made a comically-bad throw trying to catch Miguel Olivo (Miguel Olivo!!) stealing third. In his defense ... well, no, it was just comically bad.

Luis Valbuena didn't do a great job of backing up the play, but the throw was simply execrable), Lee didn't pitch particularly well and his results were mediocre.

It happens to the best of them, even Cliff Lee.

It's awesome that the Indians were able to hold off their game-winning rally for when Lee was out of the game, because Lord knows Cliff Lee certainly doesn't deserve for the offense to bail

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him out with a cheap win.

(That's sarcasm.)

3) Whippet of Death

Raffy Perez is the best illustration of two principles I've seen in a long time:

- a) The difference between Super Awful and Super Effective in baseball is often expressed in tiny amounts
- b) I would be a terrible scout because I can't tell the difference in Perez' motion from April (Super Awful) to June (Super Effective)

Raffy Perez threw 8 pitches. Seven of them were strikes. One was hit for a single. Two were watched.
FOUR were swung at and missed.

Perez struck out two of the three batters he faced before yielding to Matt Herges to face the mammoth right-handed Billy Butler: in his past three outings, he has racked up 6 Ks in 3 1/3 innings, only walking 1 batter. His numbers since being called back on May 29th aren't spectacular: 5 1/3 IP, 4 H, 2 R, 2 BB, 7 K ... but he LOOKS like the guy I fell in love with in 2006.

4) Ho Hum Dept.

Matt Herges threw three pitches. One was a strike. It produced two outs.

5) For completeness' sake

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Luis Vizcaino did a nice job, recording two outs (including one K) on 7 pitches before giving way to Perez.

Kerry Wood pitched a scoreless 9th because he could.

6) The Man of the Match

The Indians came to the plate 6 times with a runner in scoring position. Two times they got hits, and the contrast could not be starker:

Mark DeRosa: 2-for-2

Not Mark DeRosa: 0-for-4

How much clutchiness are you asking for from a versatile veteran who leads his team in both homers and RBI? A man slugging .577 in the past week with a pair of blasts and EIGHT RBI? A man who has played four positions to this point (1B, 3B, LF, RF) after playing the majority of last season in a fifth (2B)?

Are you asking for a guy who can hit a game-winning opposite-field GRAND SLAM?

Because that is what we have.

We have Mark DeRosa.

Consider this article by [Tom Verducci](#) , outlining the biggest problems for contenders.

- a) Minnesota 2B: Verducci mentions Carroll, but DeRosa would be a better choice.
- b) Giants 1B/3B: tailor-made for DeRosa's skill set
- c) Mets RF: DeRosa is mentioned
- d) White Sox CF: I would not urinate on the White Sox if they were on fire. You may not have

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Mark DeRosa.

e) Reds LF/CF/3B: DeRosa would be a solution at two of those spots

This doesn't even mention the Cubs or Cards, although he mentions the Braves in RF.

The groundswell is coming. You can feel it. And its name is Mark DeRosa.

7) Patience is a virtue

Adorable J. Carroll made four plate appearances. He reached base twice on a single and a walk and saw a total of 17 pitches, more than four per plate appearance.

Victor Martinez made four plate appearances. He reached base twice on a single and a walk and saw a total of 21 pitches, more than *five* per plate appearance.

Shin-Soo Choo made four plate appearances. He reached base twice on a walk and a fielder's choice (but scored two runs). He saw a total of 26 pitches, more than **SIX** per plate appearance.

I am pretty sure I would not enjoy pitching to this team.

By the way, if Shin-Soo Choo converted to Judaism, shaved his head, grew a ginormous goatee, and acted like a general jerkwad, would he get more notoriety?

8) On the other hand

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Josh Barfield grabbed his Big Orange Suit, seeing 13 pitches in his 4 plate appearances. Considering that he needed at least 3 in each of his 3 whiffs, this is not all that great.

Luis Valbuena trumped Barfield, striking out in only 50% of his plate appearances instead of 75%.

9) Nice hose!

Okay, well, actually, it wasn't.