

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

That Zach Greinke guy ... he's pretty good. 15 strikeouts of Indians hitters last night. In today's B-List, Buff says that Greinke's performance last night may not be the most dominating performance he's seen an opponent throw against the Tribe, but it clearly was *A* dominant performance. Buff talks about Greinke's effort, he talks about the outing for Justin Masterson, hits on the progression of Andy Marte, and makes note of a statistical anomaly developing with Matt LaPorta.

FINAL

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

R

H

E

Indians (55-70)

0

0

0

0

0

1

0

1

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

0

2

5

1

Royals (48-77)

1

0

2

1

0

0

2

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

0

X

6

9

0

W: Greinke (12-8)

L: Masterson (4-5)



Wow.

1) Truth and Beauty Dept.

Here is a bold prediction: in 2027, Zack Greinke will pitch a complete game throwing primarily knuckleballs.

Why would he do this? Because he can.

There are numerous stories about Greinke as a minor-leaguer, largely pitching as if he were bored with the task. In Joe Posnanski's Sports Illustrated profile, there is the story of him

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

turning suddenly to David DeJesus and declaring that he was going to throw a 50-mph curveball in the next inning, then throwing a slow curve and having the stadium radar gun register exactly "50."

There may be pitchers that have individual pitches that are better than any single pitch that Greinke throws, but I am convinced that there is no active pitcher with a better ARSENAL of pitches than Zack Greinke.

(If you haven't seen it, Posnanski [compares](#) Greinke's 2009 performance to that of Tim Lincecum. Zack comes out looking very similar to Tiny Tim, except that he doesn't get to pitch in Petco, Chavez Ravine, and Not Candlestick, pitching to pitchers and other National Leaguers.)

Last night's performance may not have been the most dominant performance I've seen an opponent throw against Cleveland: Greinke did allow 2 runs on 5 hits, including an inconceivable home run, and needed 117 pitches to complete 8 innings. But it certainly was *A* dominant performance, as Greinke struck out 15 Indians en route to his 12th

win of the season.

Consider this: Greinke's winning percentage is a mere .600, but the Royals without Greinke are a .343 team.

This isn't the biggest disparity we've ever seen (heck, Cliff Lee's was bigger last season), but it does help point out that Greinke is pitching in front of a pretty lame team.

Not only that, but it's a team that normally plays crummy defense with noted poor defenders like Jose Guillen (who isn't terrible in a vacuum, but certainly is when injured enough to barely move), Mike Jacobs, and Bubba Butler, not to mention the recently-acquired Yoon Betancourt.

Anyway, Greinke is having a terrific season, but last night was really just a men-vs.-boys sort of setup where the Indians could not have looked more helpless had they come to the plate tied to railroad tracks with Greinke wearing a tall black hat, twirling his thin moustache and cackling in suitably dastardly fashion. Here's one thing: Greinke attributed a lot of his success to the Indians taking strikes early in the count. But consider that Shin-Soo

Choo struck out three times and took ONE strike.

He swung at every other strike he saw.

In the 8th

, the Indians did not take a single strike, but still missed one and fouled off SEVEN.

In the 7th

, two of the four Indians swung at the first strike they saw but either fouled it off or missed it.

Sure, the Tribe takes some pitches, but I think Greinke was selling himself a little short there: he had astounding stuff.

It should be noted that at least three Indians struck out swinging at a slider that dove out of the strike zone. But ... hey, that's a good two-strike pitch. That's why he threw it.

Greinke posted at least a 25-mph difference between his fastball and his slower curves (possibly as much as 30-mph). I think that at some point in his career, he's going to get restless and wonder, "I wonder if I can throw a knuckleball?"

The evidence suggests that Zack Greinke can throw a baseball in any way he sees fit.

Get back to me in 2027.

2) Relegated to "The Other Guy";

To say that Justin Masterson was not as good as Zack Greinke is not a very controversial (or, in fact, meaningful) statement. A few things of note:

Masterson was "aired out" to 110 pitches last week against the Angels: at the time, I thought that to be a highly questionable maneuver. His first start of 46 pitches was a nice uptick from the 36 he'd thrown in his last outing for Boston, and his next start of 61 pitches seemed like a nice, normal increase. After
83 harsh high-stress (always runners on base) pitches in his third start, I expected he'd stay in the 80-90 range for his next start, as that's a big jump.

And through 6 innings, he'd thrown 89 pitches, giving up only 1 unearned run.

Instead of pulling him there, Masterson was sent out for another inning, one in which he looked like he was struggling fairly significantly. He walked Erick Aybar on 4 pitches and went to three-ball counts on the next two hitters, giving up a single and a walk.

I'm not sure that 110-pitch outing was truly necessary.

Anyway, Masterson was held to "only" 98 pitches in this outing, and there was a fair mix of good and bad in it. The 12:2 GO:FO ratio (15:4 GB:FB) ratio was outstanding, and he struck out 4, including two in the 5th and another in the 6th, so he rebounded from giving up early runs to finish strong.

On the other hand, he walked a guy on four pitches, held him poorly (he stole second), and let him score on a sharp single. In fact, both of his walks were four-pitch affairs to left-handed hitters. And he gave up a home run, which isn't a good thing for a groundball pitcher.

Still, if we're talking about building for next season, Masterson at least looks like a credible starter, and his stuff will play. He could be more consistent, but he's 24 and starting for the first extended time in the majors. Hard to get real worked up about that.

3) Tyner Zone Liftoff!

Andy Marte punished a high fastball from Greinke (one of his few real mistakes on the day) over the left field wall for his first homer of the season.

For the first time in 2009, Andy Marte now has a slugging percentage higher than his on-base percentage.

More seriously, given a chance to stop worrying about being in the lineup on consecutive days, Andy Marte has a modest six-game hitting streak, going 9-for-21 over that span with 6 RBI and extra-base hits in consecutive games. And you can talk about it being Seattle and Kansas City, but Seattle can pitch (they just can't hit) and Zack Greinke is as good as any starter in the majors.

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

Is Marte just "finding his stroke"? Does playing every day actually make that much of a difference? Do blind squirrels actually find nuts, or do they tend to get run over by cars before they get a chance to eat?

I'm not sure any of these things can be concluded on the basis of six games, but a six-game hit streak is certainly better than a six-game streak in which there are o-fers.

Note: first base is a preposterous place for Andy Marte to be a major-league regular. Just ludicrous.

He might be able to hit well enough to justify another infield position, but not 1B/DH/LF.

Just no.

I'm happy to slot him in there now so that he gets an extended evaluatory look this season, but you can't go into 2010 with the stated PLAN that Andy Marte is your everyday first baseman.

That's just patently false.

4) This town isn't big enough for two of us ...

*"... so, off you go!"
-- Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 th century*

If I get to pick one Perez, I pick Chris.

Really, Raffy Perez just makes me sad at this point, like "Minnesota Twin Steve Carlton" and "Eric Show Interviewing."

5) Contractual Obligation

Jensen Lewis.

6) I dunno, guys, what was the big deal?

Asdrubal Cabrera was the only player not to strike out against Zack Greinke. Not only this, but he got a pair of hits, including a double that he ill-advisedly tried to stretch into a triple, resulting in more of a "tripe" instead.

Still, the man went 2-for-4 off Greinke with 0 Ks. The rest of the team: 3-for-27 with 15 Ks.

7) Statistics corner

According to ESPN, Matt LaPorta is hitting .318/.304/.500 in August. This is very encouraging, as his debut was pretty lousy (his overall numbers are still laughable), and hitting .318 is a wonderful thing. Slugging
.500 is even better and gives us hope that there's a legitimate power source in left field for the first time in a while.

But to have a OBP lower than your AVG ... well, that's just weird.

(It's a low-sample gork that happens when you have sacrifices but no walks, but it still looks weird.)

8) Dept. of Not Surprise

Kelly Shoppach: 3 whiffs in 3 plate appearances.

9) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

The B-List: 8/25

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Tuesday, August 25 2009 7:00 PM -

Eric Wedge appeared at the Teen Choice Awards in a Miley Cyrus costume and performed a pole dance in order to ruin the young "singer" "actress" 's reputation. I do not believe anyone would mistake Eric Wedge for Miley Cyrus, regardless of makeup, and this statement lacks all merit.

Do not let Kerry Wood finish games to vest his third-year option.