

On the heels of a lengthy two game winning streak, Buff starts to see some positives in the World of Wahoo. He hits on CC Sabathia's superb start, Ronnie Belliard in the two hole, Grady Sizemore doing just about everything right these days, and Eric Wedge's flaws as a tactical manager.



How would you like to be Anthony Reyes? Your run support the last two games: one. He'll have to cut his mistakes back from one to zero if he wants to win for these mooks.

1) Getting back on the horse

It's hard to pitch worse than C.C. Sabathia did last time: 9 ER in 2 1/3 IP. Conversely, it's hard to pitch a lot better than he did last night. Even with his rhythm derailed by a rain delay, Sabathia tossed 8 excellent innings and was in command pretty much the whole game. He only struck out 4, but didn't

walk anyone and scattered 5 hits to leave Really Big Bob with a 2-run lead to protect.

Here's the neat thing about his outing last night: after a scattershot first inning, Sabathia faced 26 hitters, and 22 were treated with a first-pitch strike. Now, there's something to be said for wanting to be a little unpredictable, but starting batters out 0-1 consistently (or recording a first-pitch out: only 1 hit, a single, was a first pitch) is a Very Good Thing. Replace David Eckstein with Ramon Vazquez, and this is a 3-hit shutout.

2) A lot like patience

Grady Sizemore took the first pitch of the game for a strike. After missing the next one, he watched four balls go by to get on base. Going from 0-2 to a walk is a pretty neat trick, even if the guy (Reyes) is a bit off target.

Ron Belliard, who averages seeing 0.6 pitches per plate appearance, watched three balls and a strike go by. Hey, he couldn't find the plate for

Grady, why not wait him out? Wait for him to throw a "get me over" fastball, and ... boom. With the benefit of the hindsight of Sabathia's performance, the game was over after the game's 11th pitch. Which was its fourth strike. That pretty much sums up Mr. Reyes' command (4 walks and 94 pitches in 5 innings).

3) A transfer of momentum

Inertia Man moves!
Billiard looks pretty nice
in the 2 hole. I like
having the guy hitting
.288 in the 2 slot instead
of the guy hitting .196
(Hollandsworth).

That's just me, though.

(By the way, I was obviously exaggerating about Belliard's plate discipline: he walked last night and has an

OBP-AVG of .049:
not terrific, but not
hacktastic, either.)

**4) There goes the
neighborhood**

Sabathia struck out three times in four plate appearances last night, making him look more like Cliff Lee than Travis Hafner, but he

does have a
2-game hitting
streak after a
single. After a
quick start in
which Cleveland
pitchers sported a
.333 AVG, Lee's

"performanc
e" and
Sabathia's 1-for-4
outing have
dropped pitcher
down to below
.300 and no
longer the most

productive
position in the
batting order.

They do still kick
butt on our

current corner
outfielders,
though. I'm not
sure if Sabathia
is mobile enough
to play right, but
he certainly has
the arm for it. He

does have an
advantage over
Todd
Hollandsworth
and Franklin
Gutierrez, in that
he is neither
Todd

Hollandsworth
nor Franklin
Gutierrez.

**5) Ducks on
the pond!**

Sure, we won
3-1, but it's
discouraging to
watch 5 guys
get stranded in
scoring
position and 9

overall. It's
very nice to
draw 5 walks in
a game, but
unless you
make the other
team pay for

'em, they're
just pitch count
elevators.
Since three of
the five were
stranded by
Hafner and

Victor
Martinez, it's
hard to
complain too
much.
However,
through effort

and willpower,
I am able to
manage it. (A
daily columnist
must
sometimes
draw from

reserves he
didn't know he
had.)

6) Definition

check

Shouldn't a
sinker ... *sink*

? I appreciate
that Wickman
threw strikes
and efficiently
(for Wickman:
only one

baserunner)
saved the
win, but two
fly ball outs?
Yeah, one
was a popup

into foul
territory, but
... throw the
sinker,
homes.

7)

**Department
of
Corrections
Department**

Yesterday I
wrote that
Eric Wedge
did not have
Cliff Lee
bunt. This

was not
technically
accurate, in
that it was
completely
false. Alert

reader Jon
Cohodas
points out
that Cliff Lee
took two of
the very

worst stabs
in
major-league
history at
trying to
bunt pitches

out of the
strike zone
(thereby
making
them
strikes,

which is
fiendishly
clever
indeed)
before
striking out.

This,
apparently,
WAS
enough for
Wedge to
tell him in no

uncertain
terms not to
bunt a
second
time. One
could argue

that, in fact,
there was
no *first* time.

This seems
like a good
opportunity
to hire
someone to

**coach the
players.**

**You know,
a co
aching**

**guy,
someone
who could
coach
them on**

how to bunt
or run
bases or hit
the cutoff
man or hold

baserunner
s or count
outs or do
all the little
things one

is
coached
to do. We
could even
come up

with a
special title
for such a
coaching
guy: we

could call
him a
COACH

■

Anyway,
we should
get some.
They
sound

really
useful.

8) Credit

Where

Credit Is

Due Dept.

Grady
Sizemore
banged
out his
21st

double of

the

season.

This gives

him 41

extra-base
hits on the
season.
He bats
leadoff.

Travis

Hafner did

not get a

hit but

drew two

walks.

Hafner

has a

1.071

OPS and

has
walked 65
times on
the
season.

This puts
him on
pace to
finish
ninety-thir

d in the
All-Star
voting and
be the
fifth

alternate.

Franklin

Gutierrez

got a hit!

He now

has a

two-game
hitting
streak,
doubling

his

previous

streak

length of

one.

We didn't
make

any
errors. I
could get
used to

that. (I
prolly
won't
have to.)

9)
Moment
of
seriousn

ess

Best wishes to Peter Gammo

ns.