

The B-List: 8/2

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, August 02 2006 7:00 PM -

Ouch! The losses just keep getting more painful. And based on what we've already been through this season, last night's loss was downright sinister. In today's B-List, Buff hits on the Tribe getting Carmona once again last night, as well as another solid effort from Jeremy Sowers. And a couple good Animal House resets. Enjoy.



You have to understand something about how I follow the Indians: after a loss like last night's, I can't open the sports page to the baseball section, I can't read ESPN's website, I can't discuss baseball with anyone ... the whole thing becomes an ordeal. I'm not sure why this team holds my emotional involvement, and objectively, the difference between a win and a loss at this point in the season is mostly valueless ... but *damn*. I guess it's because I view Carmona as a valuable part of next season. Or because I'm an idiot. Still sucks.

1) Gargling with nitric acid

Wile E. Mo Pena is a dangerous hitter: batting around .330 with scary one-swing power. Fausto Carmona ate him on toast: three swinging strikes, have a seat.

Covelli Crisp is a pesky hitter you don't want on the basepaths. He's not a good baserunner, but he does have a jaunty cap. Fausto Carmona happily grilled him over an open flame and ate him with some nice fava beans (swinging strikeout, although Crisp did manage a foul and Carmona missed once).

At this point, there was now no chance for David Ortiz to make a plate appearance. Thank God. It sure looked like Carmona had gotten back on the horse in a BIG way. Two swinging strikeouts? Where do I sign?

Doug Mirabelli is a complete fraud with a bat in his hands who could not hurt you with a swing of a bat if it were on fire and you were with him in a phone booth made entirely of magnesium. Doug Mirabelli has no business being in the major leagues except that he can catch knuckleballs. The Red Sox are expected to trade for Javy Lopez because Doug Mirabelli is Chris Bando with a bigger glove, and I am not talking about Bando during his playing career, I am talking about Chris Bando right *&#^\$@# now. There is no compelling reason to throw

Doug Mirabelli anything but cheese, cheese, and more cheese. Hitting Doug Mirabelli with a pitch is tantamount to punting from the opponent's 15 yard line on second down. Oh, by the way, the count was 3-2.

Hitting Alex Gonzalez with the next pitch is almost comical.

After this, the only thing you **MUST NOT DO** is walk Kevin Youkilis, whose skill set consists of drawing walks. (All right, he was 2-for-4 with a double and is hitting .294. This is clearly hyperbole. But damn, did anyone else find themselves yelling, "Just don't walk him! Anything but a walk! For the love of God, let him hit the ball, but do not throw four balls to this man!"?) Oh, by the way, the count was 3-2.

And that's enough of that.

I have nothing compelling to say here. Sure, give him the ball. Sure, you let him work out of that. You're learning something here. You're learning how thick my stomach lining is, that's what.

2) Hey, the kid is human after all!

Jeremy Sowers did not pitch a third consecutive shutout. On the other hand, you take a 5-hit 5-K 5-inning 2-run outing from your rookie left-handed fifth starter on the road in Fenway.

I'm encouraged by the adjustments Sowers has made this season. The thing is, until there were two outs in the bottom of the fifth, this was a 2-hit 4-K, 4 2/3-inning 0-run outing. Baseball is all about adjustments, and you have to keep in the back of your mind the potential that hitters will re-adjust to Sowers' initial adjustments.

He struck out Ortiz three times, though, so he is my new hero.

3) Hey, this guy is a mediocre journeyman after all!

Brian Sikorski, it turns out, is actually Brian Sikorski. Who knew?

A 1-to-2 strikeout-to-home-run ratio is no way to go through life, son.

4) A much more impressive journeyman

I'm not sure what to think of Rafael Betancourt: every time I get attached to him, he gacks one up and I have to back off. And he was kind of the Popup King last night, with 5 flyouts and a K. But it's two scoreless innings, with 15 strikes in 19 pitches, the second of which preserved a one-run lead ... I mean, isn't that quintessential Setup Man work?

I'm not sure Betancourt is a major piece of any future planning or anything, but effective relief pitching has been such an undependable commodity in Cleveland, I just have to think you have to hold on to a guy who can throw strikes and get people out. And anything that lessens the amount of Brian Sikorski is looking like quite the positive.

5) Welcome back!

Travis Hafner hit what should have been the game-winning two-run blast in the 8th inning. Hafner has been struggling mightily (Hafner does EVERYTHING mightily: I believe he *defecate*s mightily.), so it's good to see our best offensive force come through with a clutch run-producing hit.

Please, sir, may I have another?

6) Return of the Bad Baserunning

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Good Lord. I know Lester has a good move, and Marte really smoked the ball, but great googly moogly. I guess it's just one of those pet peeves that has happened enough in the past that I'm hypersensitive to it. Or, we are, in fact, lousy baserunners.

7) Nice wheels!

Grady Sizemore led off the game with a triple. Led off! That's so cool.

Casey Blake stole his sixth base.

8) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

Kelly Shoppach had a pretty nice night, going 2-for-4 with a double and gunning down Speed Ball Youkilis trying to steal. Too bad he runs the bases like a Cleveland Indian.