

## The B-List: 6/7

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}  
Tuesday, June 08 2010 2:44 PM -

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*Daisuke Matsuzaka outduels Fausto Carmonderbuss, as the Indians drop a game to the Boston Red Sox in about the least interesting way possible. Buff does his best with what he's been given, but when the runs score on a pair of sac flies, a groundout, a long single, and a meaningless solo shot, pumping excitement into the writeup seems almost disingenuous. He does get in a cheap shot at both Raffy Perez and Hector Ambriz, though, so he has that going for him, which is nice.*

FINAL

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[9]

[R]

[H]

[E]

[Red] Sox (34-25)

[1]

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1

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4

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2

Indians (21-35)

0

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6

1

W: Matsuzaka (5-2)      L: Carmona (4-5)



Of course, the day I get praised is the day I have to play chauffeur and have a limited column.

### 1) Degrees of difficulty

Think about this: let's say you went to see a knife-throwing act, and the people tell you that the knife-thrower is doing a lot better this year. Last year, the poor guy performed an accidental splenectomy on his lovely assistant and was generally booed off the stage in most of his performances, but this season, he was executing most of the best maneuvers without too many hiccups. He could get the knives reasonably close to the lovely assistant, and even performed the "spinning wheel" trick. However, for a wrinkle this time, he tried the next-harder trick: the Blindfolded Knife-Thrower.

They slipped on the blindfold, and the audience held its collective breath, waiting to see which organ the lovely assistant would be donating tonight, but lo, the lovely assistant made it through the act unscathed. Sadly, the knife-thrower was pretty wild with the knives: several of the throws plunked into the solid board a good three feet from the lovely assistant, while others clattered harmlessly to the ground, striking handle-first or missing the entire board and lodging themselves into the roving popcorn cart hidden in the cheap seats. On the one hand, it was impressive that this man who, as recently as last year, was peppering lovely assistants with cutlery, could throw dozens of knives and never once struck the lovely assistant. On the other hand, the man hit a popcorn cart, three foam stanchions, a poorly-trained seal, and the shrivelled remains of Jose Canseco's dignity. We can be thankful that no lovely assistants were harmed during the performance, but are we really, actually *impressed?*

On the one hand, Fausto Carmona has always had the reputation for being a guy who has a harder time pitching with runners on base, largely due the fact that he had a harder time pitching with runners on base. His three-year splits from 2007-2009:

Bases empty: .256/.360/.410  
Runners On: .339/.412/.527

Oddly enough, that isn't the case this season:

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Bases empty: .268/.347/.357  
Runners On: .227/.294/.341  
Scoring Position: .208/.295/.286

I included the “scoring position” because ... hey, that’s impressive stuff. And to be sure, the Red Sox had 9 ABs against Carmona last night and went a brisk 0-for-9. Now, what this doesn’t include is a couple of walks and a couple of sacrifice flies, but really, that’s a good way to limit scoring.

And, to be sure, Carmona’s 6 walks in 6 IP weren’t the reason we lost: none of those runners contributed to scoring in any way (none of them scored, and no walk advanced a runner to the point where he later scored because of the advance). Frankly, if Carmona could have limited his use of the “Marco Scutaro Doubles Pitch,” he would have been better off. Or if he in fact could have fielded his position in a manner unlike a crustacean.

But six walks in six innings is just shitty. I can *appreciate* the runner-stranding performance without actually being *impressed* by it.

Rule of thumb: anything you do in the manner of Justin Masterson that does not involve striking people out is not going to be welcomed.

### 2) Return of The Herrmannator!

Ho, hum, another inning for Frank Herrmann, another scoreless frame. Another strikeout. No baserunners. La de da.

Look: is this the Son of Return of the Legend of Tom Mastny? Of course it is. But let me enjoy it while I can.

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Fun fact: Frank Herrmann's face is, in fact, two-dimensional. It is completely flat.

### **3) Heart attacks from Not Surprise**

Raffy Perez came in, retired the left-handed hitter, then walked the right-handed hitter, preserving a WHIP of 3.00 and an Effectiveness Factor of fungus point fungus.

Hector Ambriz then came in, and ...

### **4) Wait, what was that?**

Yeah, Ambriz came in AFTER Kevin Youkilis had already walked. I don't get it either.

### **5) In any event: Not Surprise continued**

So Ambriz gives up Fausto's run and then one of his own and is saved by the combination of Austin Kearns' arm and Bill Hall's greed and gee, he just isn't very good.

I'd say 18 strikes in 33 pitches was bad, but he didn't walk anyone, and he didn't get an swinging strikes, and he only gave up three hits, and only one was a double, and ... I got nothin'. Hector Ambriz now bores me to tears.

### **6) The shutout roont**

Austin Kearns hit a solo shot off titular future closer Dan Bard. He hit it a LONG way. So we only lost by three runs.

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Paul Hoynes asked, "Where would this team be without Austin Kearns?" And while I admit that Kearns has done a very fine job, a job I did not think him capable of, a .313/.388/.494 line that might make him Cleveland's only All-Star representative, you know what the answer is? Right where we already are: in last [f&@#ing place](#).

Where would this team be if it gave Matt LaPorta every f&#\*ing plate appearance it could? Exactly: right in last place, but in last place with more plate appearances for Matt LaPorta.

Look, is Austin Kearns part of the glorious future of the Cleveland Indians? I submit to you that he is not. I would trade him in July. I would thank him profusely for his contribution, but at the end of the day, Austin Kearns' performance simply serves to avoid Historic Levels of Suck. Let's make history. Why the f\*#& not?

### 7) Wait, are you serious?

Austin Kearns: .313/.388/.494  
Shin-Soo Choo: .282/.380/.454

Choo has more stolen bases and has a better arm, but objectively ... Austin Kearns has had a better season.

I would still lobby for Choo. In fact, I think it WILL be Choo. But it isn't OBVIOUS.

Unless it's Frank Herrmann. Huzzah!

### 8) Surprising result

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How many Cleveland Indians, based on their hitting statistics, would have started for the Boston Red Sox last night?

Would you believe ... the entire outfield?

Kearns: .313/.388/.494  
Hall: .247/.354/.454

Choo: .282/.380/.454  
Drew: .265/.342/.435

Crowe: .253/.320/.330  
Reddick: .231/.231/.462

Note that the super-lame Reddick bats NINTH for Boston. Our super-lame CF bats ... FIRST.

By the way, that's it. Everyone else: edge, Boston. (In some cases, BIIIIIG edge, Boston.)

P.S. – Based on stats, the starting pitcher comes from Cleveland as well.

### 9) Congratulations!

Jason Donald, come on down! You are the only man on Earth who can be thrown out by Victor Martinez trying to steal second! Huzzah!