

## The B-List: 6/24

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Friday, June 25 2010 2:29 PM - Last Updated Friday, June 25 2010 2:48 PM

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*The Tribe left Philadelphia with their tails between their legs: after dropping a pair of winnable one-run games, they got shellacked by 9 runs in a game that featured a player's first career home run, the worst double play effort in recent memory, and a rain delay that lasted almost as long as the played portion of the game. In today's B-List, Buff assigns responsibility for Fausto's poor outing, wonders about roster decisions, and compares Hector Ambriz to the pilot of the Exxon Valdez. All of which is more enjoyable than yesterday's game.*

<b>FINAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Indians (26-45)</b>	0	0	0
<b>Phillies (38-32)</b>	0	5	0

W: Blanton (3-5) L: Carmona (6-6)



*We'd all like to see some change  
But the shit it falls like rain  
Watching while the world turns grey  
What's the point here, anyway?  
-- "New Day," Bouncing Souls*

### **1) Assigning responsibility responsibly**

*"I had trouble throwing my sinker and changeup," said Carmona.*

So ... I think what we can infer from this quote is that Carmona's two best pitches are his sinker and his changeup.

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You know what's great about sports site headline writers? The one-liner from this game on ESPN's scoreboard begins, "Blanton outduels Carmona..." Outduels? Outduels? I mean, I suppose in a very literal interpretation of "outduels," in which one participant is missed entirely and the other one is completely dead, well then, this was quite the duel. Carmona pulled out a Nerf™ ball, and Blanton revealed a shovel, and after Carmona pelted Blanton in the chest, Blanton took a full swing and smacked Carmona in the face, teeth flying in all directions as the head rolled silently off to watch a replay of the Isner-Mahut Wimbledon match.

Yes, you can rightly point out that Carlos Santana's absurd misplay in an effort to turn a base-loaded double play on a grounder to Andy Marte at third was comically bad and would potentially have turned the ill-fated second inning into a scoreless frame. Had they turned two, the next player was hit by a pitch, and the one that followed grounded out. Three outs, no runs.

But what is the *important* part of the first sentence? "Bases-loaded." The bases were loaded with no outs. And why were they loaded?

Because Fausto Carmona gave up a single ... and a single ... and a single.

And then the batter that he hit to re-load the bases after the two-run error was ... pitcher Joe Blanton.

Now, admittedly, Joe Blanton hits pretty well for a pitcher. In fact, he sports at least as good a batting average as Grady Sizemore, Mike Redmond, Andy Marte, Lou Marson, Luis Valbuena, and Michael Brantley.

*(Man, it is really hard to understand why this team doesn't win more games, isn't it?)*

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But .211 is still lousy.

And then he let the runners advance on a comebacker.

And then he gave up an RBI single.

And then he gave up a sacrifice fly.

Now look: Carmona then faced the minimum in each of the next two innings thanks to a double play and 5 groundball outs in 6. But in the fifth, Carmona was chased after three more singles and had to be bailed out by Hector Ambriz, which is kind of like hiring Joe Hazelwood to steer your boat because you're intoxicated.

In all, Carmona gave up 7 runs (5 "earned"; I have no idea how these are calculated any more) on 9 singles in 4+ innings (the "plus" means Extra Fail!). The good news is that he didn't walk anyone and threw 55 strikes in 80 pitches. The bad news is that he didn't strike anyone out, either, and who the hell cares, anyway? You gave up nine singles! Who are you, Jensen Lewis?

### 2) No, \*I\* am Jensen Lewis!

Well, not any more, you're not. Now you are Clumbus Carl, the Yo-Yo Boy, but in the meantime, called in to bail Joe Hazelwood out of a bases-loaded jam of his own, Lewis promptly gave up a two-run single and everyone wept.

Lewis ended up recording four outs and only 2 singles, meaning his WHIP for the game was a mere 1.50, and he did throw 17 strikes in 20 pitches, which is outstanding. Unless you're givin' up a two-run single to Wilson Valdez, a 32-year old journeyman with jutting ears and a career .232/.272/.316 batting line. Otherwise known as "Anderson Hernandez' Role Model."

Anyway, Lewis got the wazoo to bring up Aaron Laffey to start, because Joe Smiff is SOOOOOO valuable, and Tony Sipp will recover his form Any Minute Now You Betcha. I'm not necessarily lamenting the loss of Lewis (I'm not), but I am saying that he's at least recorded some outs here and there, while Smiff and Sipp specialize in walking the only batter they face. So I'm not really *bitter* about the move per se, although the faint aroma of hydrogen sulfide can be detected.

### 3) Adventures in GM'ing

And, of course, Lewis will have company on his trip back to Clumbus in the form of Ice Luis Valbuena (form of a sphagnum moss!), as Mark Shapiro cleverly snapped up Jayson Nix off waivers from the Chicago White Sox.

Let us pause here for a moment. The White Sox are playing surprisingly well, in my opinion. They have a few excellent players and some decent-enough pieces, but they just can't hit. The team line of .250/.323/.402 has produced 309 runs on 589 hits. In contrast, the Indians, one of the saddest sack of live worms in the history of history, have scored 297 runs on 594 hits while hitting .247/.323/.376. Chicago is 10<sup>th</sup> in the AL in scoring, ahead of such luminaries as the Seattle Dead Fish and the Baltimore Passenger Pigeons. The Sox play in a bandbox and have some really good pitching, but hit, they do not.

So if Chicago is jettisoning a position player, chances are that this player does not hit very well. And Jayson Nix ... Jayson Nix is an incredibly not-well-hitting player.

Let us put this in perspective:

Player A: .163/.268/.245

Player B: .166/.269/.245

Player A: 12 K in 49 AB (24.49%)

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Player B: 37 K in 151 AB (24.50%)

Player A: 6 errors

Player B: 5 errors

Player A is Jayson Nix. Player B is Luis Valbuena. So the point of this exercise is ... great googly moogly, there is no more point to this than a GWAR reunion tour! What the bloody hell is going on here?

Okay, I'm back now.

Do you want to know what the REAL point of this is?

Jayson Nix has played short and second, just like Luis Valbuena. But the MAJORITY of his games have been played at THIRD. Jayson Nix is not "the second baseman of the future." Jayson Nix is the "bridge between a traded/option-declined Jhonny Peralta and Lonnie Chisenhall" of the future. So I applaud that effort, I suppose, although I do wonder if Rodriguez or Bixler (already in the damn system) couldn't do this just as poorly as Jayson F\*#^ing Nix.

Because effort is great and all, but Jayson Nix is just bad at baseball.

### 4) In the same vein

Hector Ambriz was a fine gamble as a Rule 5 guy, but he isn't actually any good. Offer him back to Arizona, give them a mook to be named later, whatever it takes, but keeping him on the roster just to keep him seems spiteful. To ME. You're spiting ME, not your own face or whatever.

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While I'm here, excellent work giving Dane Sardinha his first EVER major-league homer. A bunch of others have failed to do that, so you have that going for you. (It's not nice.)

### 5) The dumbest decision ever

In the top of the 8<sup>th</sup>, with a runner on second and two outs, Dorothy's house came flying by in a rainstorm that prevented the groundskeepers from even getting the tarp to stay on the field. Two of the smaller members of the crew were carried off, as if holding a hot air balloon. Santa Claus was blown off course, and the fans booed him.

The total delay was one hour and thirty-seven minutes.

Of the next seven hitters after resuming, zero hitters reached base.

Now listen, I understand "Never say die!" and "Sydney or the bush!" and "Fifty-four forty or fight!" I don't understand "Hush Puppies are dumb," but this did not prevent my father from singing the jingle until it permanently lodged in my memory. But to make the teams and the fans and the me's sit through that much nonsense in a NINE-RUN GAME is just preposterous. Call the game. Had I been Manny Acta, I would have snuck my team out of the building and left town under the cover of whirling debris. There is "honor," and there is "futility."

The flying monkeys were a nice touch, though.

### 6) Welcome back!

No, not Aaron Laffey or even Jayson Nix, but Jason Donald, returning to his original home, gathered up three of Cleveland's six hits on the day, including a double, and homer, and a single. He scored two of the three runs and drove in two of them (one of them being him) as well. He did not make an out. Nice game.

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### 7) Ducks on the Lake!

Trevor Crowe got a hit with a runner in scoring position, doubling in Donald after he had doubled to lead off the 8<sup>th</sup>. That was pretty much it. Of course, since we didn't draw any walks, we only left 3 on base, so ... aw, hell, I got nothin'.

Special thanks go to Travis Hafner, who pinch-hit and struck out on four pitches.