

The B-List: 8/24

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In a season of long lost playoff aspirations, we're starting to see some encouraging things from the yoots. Andy Marte is starting to come around, Ryan Garko is mashing, and Tom Mastny has yet to self implode as the closer. In today's B-List, Buff hits on all these topics, analyzes CC's outing last night, and makes multiple Napalm McGee references. Don't ask. Just read. It's The B-List.



You know who would look really good in the White Sox dugout? Buddy Bell! Yeah! In fact, let's switch all around: Bell to Chicago, Wedge to Detroit, Leyland to Cleveland, Guillen to Kansas City. How long would Ozzie last, like 25 games? And Wedge would use Neifi Perez! I admit, I'm missing the downside for Cleveland fans here.

1) This job is so much easier without those long wooden things

If it weren't for all those pesky bats swinging through the strike zone, C.C. Sabathia would be a helluva pitcher. He certainly throws lots of strikes (84 in 122). He certainly is durable (8 IP, the fourth time in the last five outings he's gone 8 innings, and the eighth out of nine he's gone at least 7). He certainly is hittable. Hey, wait, that's not good. Let's go back.

In the first 4 2/3 innings, Sabathia gave up 3 runs (2 earned) on 7 hits. He walked a guy, uncorked a wild pitch, had no hitless innings, and was ... eh ... pretty good. In the first 4 innings, he induced 4 swinging strikes and had 10 foul balls.

Now, swinging strikes aren't the new OBP as the Master Stat for Pitchers: in the fifth, he induced a swinging strike to German, and German singled on the next pitch; he induced a swinging strike to Sweeney, who *homered* on the next pitch. And you might argue about whether he really pitched "better" after the home run. Heck, he gave up another run and a pair of doubles to deep left center. However, I still think Sabathia is a more effective pitcher when he pitches *away from contact*, and 4 swinging strikeouts in the back half of the game are a good sign. (He certainly doesn't appear to "run out of gas"; in this, he resembles Bartolo Colon in a *second way*.)

All things said and done, though, 11 hits, 2 walks, 7 Ks, and 4 runs (3 earned) isn't really "Ace" material: that's kind of like a really good start by your #4 guy. I'll take it, but

let's not color this as any sort of dominant effort.

2) The Tom Tom Club

Tom Mastny didn't get the save, since Napalm McGee managed to give up three runs in the top of the ninth, but he was effective again, striking out two guys in his scoreless inning. The single to Sweeney bothers me less than the five-pitch walk to Teahen: I know Teahen has been hot, but Mastny's calling card thus far has been throwing strikes. Those aren't strikes. He even went 2-0 to Emil Brown before looking at his jersey and realizing he was not Ferd Cabrera. Brown got to watch two strikes and miss the third and that was enough of that. But it's better without the walk.

3) Here's your problem with your pond, sir, it's choked with all these ducks

In the second inning, Andy Marte left runners at first and second by making the last out.

In the third inning, Victor Martinez grounded into a double play with runners at first and third to end the inning.

In the fourth inning, Andy Marte doubled to put runners on second and third with **no outs**. Neither runner scored.

In the fifth inning, Jhonny Peralta hit a one-out double to put runners on second and third. Neither runner scored.

In five innings, Mark Redman stranded at least one runner every inning in scoring position, and in three consecutive innings had a runner at third with fewer than two outs and proceeded to worm out with **NOBODY SCORING**.

After that, Gobble was actually terrific and Napalm McGee was inconceivably bad, but that's some real squanderrific baseball being played right there. Of the 12 we left on base, **EIGHT** were in scoring position ... and that doesn't count the third inning because they don't count the guy on third as a LOB with two outs (there was only 1 when Vic hit the batter's box). It's easy enough to laugh it off since it was eventually a comfortable win, but that's really stinky.

4) Andy, Andy, Andy!

Hey, Andy Marte still has dreadful numbers on the season and looks thoroughly not-yet-ready for the bigs, but the man's 22. He's got talent. And he certainly had a good game last night, driving in 3 runs with 3 hits, including a pair of doubles. Marte's overall numbers of .233/.303/.383 are certainly not very good, but consider that Aaron Boone is hitting .246/.313/.372, meaning that Marte has both a better OBP-AVG and ISO than Boone: raising the batting average a bit (which he's certainly got the potential to do) would lead to Marte lapping Boone sometime around ... now.

(I understand that using Aaron Boone as a measuring stick is a very bad idea, but what I'm saying is, as bad as Marte has looked, he's not a *downgrade* from the offense we had earlier in the season. This says more about Boone than Marte. Let's move on.)

5) But I was just getting the hang of this!

Franklin Gutierrez went 2-for-3 with a walk, driving in a run (with two outs, no less). In his last 7 games, he is hitting .368. Of course, he's also slugging .421 with a .400 OBP, meaning that he is basically a very, very, destitute, axe-murdering, syphallitic, insane man's Ichiro who hits a single or makes an out. Anyway, he got sent down to bring Blake off the DL. It's the right move. I've given up on the Gootinator.

6) The incredible inverted batting order

Top four hitters: 3-for-19, 2 walks, 9 (!) Ks, 1 RBI.

Bottom five hitters: 12-for-21, 3 walks, 3 Ks, 7 RBI.

12-for-21, man, that's good. By the way, that includes five of the six extra-base hits Cleveland got (4 doubles, 2 HR). Had Napalm McGee not given up the tater to Victor Martinez (batting 4th), these numbers would really be skewed.

7) Real Men of Genius

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do, I'm just going to keep sending him out there," said (manager Buddy) Bell. "That's what I'm going to do."

In Bell's defense, the pitcher he brought in to replace Napalm McGee, Andy Sisco, has an ERA that is almost a RUN-AND-A-HALF **WORSE** than Napalm McGee's. This is not a man with a lot of good options.

But I have an idea: how about you move Napalm McGee toward the FRONT of the game instead of seeing if he can blow 20 saves this season? Hm?

8) A modest request

I would like to see one error-free game against Detroit. It doesn't have to be tonight. It doesn't have to be all three. Just one. *Please?*

9) Trivia corner

Did you know that Ryan Garko is listed as "Ryan F. Garko" on ESPN's site? That's funny, because that's how I refer to him, too.

He may be our answer to April Chris Shelton, but signs exist that Ryan F. Garko can hit.

10) Department of Corrections Department

Tampa Bay's shortstop is Ben Zobrist, not Brett as I'd written earlier. Absolutely no one cared. Or cares. I even have an ostensible reader in Tampa. In his defense, he would probably not know Bob Zobrist unless he played the ukulele. Tampa Bay has no fans.