

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

The Indians beat the weather but not the Rockies, as a furious comeback fell just short and the Tribe dropped their second straight to Colorado. In today's B-List, Buff takes a break from raw analysis and asks the open question, "What makes one loss more painful than another?"

His answer might surprise you.

He also touches on Mitch Talbot's hard-to-shake label, the Perez lads, The Most Unlikely Hit in the World, and finally acquiesces to calling the second baseman by his preferred name.

FINAL

[1

[2

[3

[4

[5

[6

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

[7

[8

[9

[R

[H

[E

Rock(63-36)

[0

[0

[0

[0

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

1

2

0

0

1

4

11

0

Indians (39-33)

0

0

0

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

[0]

[0]

[1]

[0]

[2]

[0]

[3]

[7]

[p]

W: Belisle (5-2)

L: C. Perez (2-3)

S: Street (22)

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

In retrospect, I find myself wishing the rain had come down much harder after the 8th inning.



1) A Philosophical Digression

I read a lot of Tweets and emails last night suggesting that last night's loss was extra-painful, an extra kick in the stomach, a new, fresh kind of heartbreak, a dispiriting death knell. I have to admit, fighting your way all the way back into a tie game just to blow it in the 9th

is pretty bad.

But let's be more introspective than that. You know what's a dispiriting loss? Falling behind early, then watching helplessly as the team continues to squander at-bats and the relievers continue to ineptly give up runs and you lose like 9-2.

THAT'S a dispiriting loss, one in which you never feel like your team even belongs on the same

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

field, one in which you wonder if your team is ever going to beat anyone again.

I've certainly seen some of THOSE losses in my time.

THAT'S what THIS loss felt like for 6 or 7 innings. The Indians got no-hit through five-plus innings and looked rather inept doing so. Th
They drew six walks and once even loaded the bases and STILL couldn't get anything done.

The opposing pitcher was a Complete Blunderbuss and we couldn't figure out how to turn that into a run.

Meanwhile, the revenant of Jason Giambi continued to haunt the team and Mitch Talbot couldn't weasel out of One More Jam and the whole thing looked like a decent team playing a bad one.

Once you got past the six slot in the Cleveland order, was there someone you thought was going to get a hit?

If you had a Marson-Brantley-Phelps inning lined up, were your expectations for a Big Inning?

Here, consider this: let's say you were reading the Colorado version of the B-List for this game.

Can you imagine what the perspective of this game would be if the Indians had pulled this one out?

We no-hit a team for nearly six innings and then lost because Raffy Betancourt gave up a hit to a guy whose last hit came when Milwaukee was in the American League! Where is the relief pitching on this team?

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

How could we squander all those early opportunities against a nobody like Mitch Talbot, a guy with one pitch?

It's great that Jason Giambi gets a chance to play DH again, but really, where are the runs coming from on this team?

Last time we needed Troy to hit the friggin' third base bag to score enough runs to win.

*Do we have to **DEPEND** on that kind of raw fortune to score?*

*And Huston, I love you man, but can we **PLEASE** cut down on the Really Long Fly Balls?*

*You were lucky the night before that one of those was caught: tonight, you gave up a **TRIPLE** to a guy who started his career **TWO FOR TWENTY**.*

What the hell are these guys doing?

It's great to win and all, but can't we look more professional doing so?

See, I think what gets lost in all the positive drama of tying the score late is that *we had no business winning that baseball game*

.

I mean, yes, of **COURSE** we could have won that game: it was tied going into the 9th

.

We'd fought all the way back.

But I think that point gets lost in the loss, if you will: we *fought all the way back*

.

The Rockies probably should have scored six or seven runs last night.

We scored the tying run when a guy in an 0-for-24 slump who would be in the minor leagues right now if not for a baserunning gaffe got a base hit.

We got triples from **BOTH** Lou Marson **AND** Cord Phelps.

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

Chris Perez got beat and we lost.

HE seems to understand the significance of that, at least: it happens.

But the TEAM wasn't just going through the motions of a dissolute loss: they
fought all the way back

Consider this: the motto of the team is "Never give up." The motto is not "Never fail." You know who never fails?

People who are doing things below their capacity.

I never fail at arithmetic.

My son never fails at tic-tac-toe.

Nickelback never fails to make me change the radio station.

Wait, that's a bad example, I think Nickelback is pushing the very envelope of their capacity.

But the point is, the team is going to lose ballgames: EVERY team is going to lose ballgames.

What you draw from a loss like this is that you get convinced that this team is not simply going to ACCEPT losing a ballgame as if it's beyond their collective control.

I can root for that team.

2) The Unshakable Label

From the AP write-up:

*Talbot worked out of a second-inning jam by getting the Rockies to pound the ball into the ground. Giambi doubled and went to third on a single by Smith. **The crafty right-hander** then got Ty Wigginton to hit a one-hopper back to him. The pitcher checked Giambi at third and threw to second for the out, then got Charlie Blackmon to ground into an inning-ending double play.*

This is what Mitch Talbot has been reduced to: “crafty right-hander.”

Is this fair? Well, yes and no. By this, I mean, “Hell yes.” But I also mean “no” in that Talbot does have a couple pitches that he can throw to anyone at any time in the count.

The thing about Talbot is that it always seems like his two-strike offerings are “spoilable,” and then he has to come back with another pitch, which is also spoilable, until he eventually lets the ball waft out of the zone or into a Happy Place for a hit.

24 fouls to 4 swings-and-misses seems like a pretty rotten ratio, although I’ve not done much research on the topic.

Anyway, Talbot deserves credit for Advanced Weasel Theory, but eventually Sean Smith homered off him and his night was done. Still, it was a Quality Start, and he matched Jhoulys Chacin's zeroes for four innings before losing his magic touch.

3) Welcome to the club for real this time

Listen, I Tweeted in the first inning that I was flabbered by the idea of Cord Phelps batting second. Yes, Cord Phelps. His first name is Bob, but he prefers Cord, and by golly, he's earned that moniker as far as I'm concerned.

Phelps certainly had his tough moments since his debut: the aforementioned start, the bad-looking strikeouts, the nervous defense at the keystone. I guess it's worth being reminded sometimes how difficult it must be to get tossed into the deep end of the major leagues.

His small-sample numbers still represent a small sample, so while it probably doesn't mean very much to talk about his OBP climbing over .300 or his SLG climbing over .400, both legitimate

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

numbers for a middle infielder (not GOOD, but no longer thoroughly inadequate), just LOOK at him PLAY. Over his last three games he's 5-for-13 with the Career Cycle (he hit a double and a homer Sunday and tripled last night: his other two hits are singles). But more than that, he's LOOKED like a guy who could hit for the Career Cycle.

He's no longer getting bullied by fastballs in or waving at sliders low and away.

Well, I mean, sure, one here or there, but there were moments over the last couple of weeks where I literally thought Phelps was simply incapable of hitting a major-league pitch.

Anyway, he now looks like a major-leaguer. Which is pretty neat.

4) Rubber Raffy

How's this for a rebound after a lousy outing in which he gave up a pair of hits AND a pair of walks and generally looked like Rick Ankiel's Hispanic cousin? Raffy Perez threw 17 strikes and TWO balls in 19 pitches, struck out the resurgent Carlos Gonzalez and retired another batter with a runner on first, then got Troy Tulowitzki to bounce into a double play and whiffed Jason Giambi, who was 3-for-3 with a pair of doubles to that point.

Quality pitches to quality hitters, and a great bounceback performance.

5) Chain of Command

Everyone gets all bent out of shape because Austin Kearns pinch-hit for Adam Everett with two outs in the 9th and ended up striking out. There's a worthy argument to be made that pinch-running Everett for Travis Hafner in the 8th was premature and a bad risk, but I certainly understand the thinking there.

After all Everett was on third base when the last out was made, and Hafner had already been thrown out once trying to get there.

Just because I can argue against it doesn't mean I feel all up in arms about it.

But here is your bench, even noting that Lou Marson is catching, Cord Phelps is playing second, and Travis Buck is playing in left:

Adam Everett
Grady Sizemore
Austin Kearns
Orly Cabrera

Sizemore pinch-hit for Marson. Against the slider-happy Huston Street, this seems reasonable.

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

I would have taken my chances with Tofu Lou's inside-out approach, but surely this again is at least defensible.

Everett was in the game.

This means that you can either let Everett hit or try Kearns or Cabrera.

These are your three options.

These are not good options.

Okay, well, clearly this is the GM's fault, then! Go get better players! Except ... well .. he kinda did already. Consider what is in AAA: guys who are not as good as Austin Kearns, Adam Everett, or Orly Cabrera.

Well, Jason Kipnis is probably better than Everett or Cabrera, but ... did anyone see Cord Phelps' first couple of weeks?

I am firmly of the school that says that once you call Kipnis (or Lonnie Chisenhall, who I view as even less "ready" than Kipnis, or Nick Weglarz, even less ready than that, or ...) up, it's because he is going to be up for good.

This might be true now.

This might not be true now.

And Kipnis and Chisenhall are exciting young players I'm looking forward to, both having been drafted in the last couple of years.

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}

Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

Before that? Garbage on a stick. Guys like Kearns and Everett and Cabrera and Travis Buck and Shelley Duncan were signed to make up for the fact that the farm system HAD NO PLAYERS IN IT until very recently.

Anyway, I am no fan of Austin Kearns, but this makes me a lot more infuriated at the drafting of the 2000s than it does with Austin Kearns.

6) This having been said

Austin Kearns serves no purpose for this team

7) The Least Likely Plate Appearance in the World

Travis Buck? Seriously? Travis Buck?

The B-List: 6/21

Written by {ga=stevebuffum}
Wednesday, June 22 2011 3:42 PM -

Way to go and all that, but ... Travis Buck came through with the game-tying single, and you're upset we "blew" the game? Do you realize how unlikely that was?

8) Rhetorical Question Dept.

Derek Jeter over Asdrubal Cabrera? C'mon.