The Indians did their part to contribute to one of the better Cleveland sports weekends in recent history bt taking two of three from the O's at The Jake. In the Monday edition of *The B-List*, Buff breaks down the weekend series ... focusing on an impressive Fausto Carmona, unimpressive returns to Cleveland from Jaret Wright and Jeremy Guthrie, and steps in the right direction from Barfield and Peralta.

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**R**	**H**	**E**
Orioles (11-12)				1							0			0
Indians (13-7)				0							0			0

W: Westbrook (1-2) L: Trachsel (1-2) S: Borowski (9)

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**R**	**H**	**E**
Orioles (12-12)				1							0	2
Indians (13-8)				1							0	0

W: J. Walker (1-0) L: F. Cabrera (1-1) S: C. Ray (7)

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**R**	**H**	**E**
Orioles (12-13)				0							0	0
Indians (14-8)				2							1	0

W: Carmona (2-1) L: J. Wright (0-3)

Thus ends one of the biggest weekends in recent Cleveland sports history, where the Indians have finally ended an April with a winning record. After falling long distances behind Chicago and Detroit in the past two seasons (and simply being crummy the two before that), this was an important achievement for the team. Coupled with the easy win by the Cavs to go up 3-0, Cleveland sports fans were happy people. I think that about covers it for events anyone would notice …

1) The Buffalo Express

Fausto Carmona pitched a good game in his previous outing, but I'm not sure even Fausto's Fans were anticipating the gem he threw Sunday: 8 1/3 innings of 6-hit 2-walk ball that held the Orioles scoreless until a solo homer ended his day in the top of the ninth. Although he only struck out 1 batter, Carmona induced an unearthly 18 ground ball outs, including a 1-6-3 double play (although he did make an error). As I said earlier, others have compared Carmona's sinker to some of the very best, so perhaps he will be able to survive in Westbrook/Wang fashion with such low K-rates, but it's hard to argue that 8 shutout inings are negative. By the way, Carmona also controlled the strike zone, throwing 73 of his 104 pitches for strikes: the only extra-base hit was Huff's solo shot.

This brings up an interesting dilemma for the Indians as Cliff Lee stands poised to come off the

DL. There are four basic choices for what to do: send Carmona to Beefalo to continue starting every day, send Carmona to the Cleveland bullpen, replace a different member of the rotation by sending Sowers down or trading Byrd, or move another starter to the pen. Of these, both options that move a starter to the bullpen are egregious: Carmona's only bad outing came on long rest, and Jason Davis doesn't get the work he needs as it is. Frankly, I am loathe to trade a starter before we MUST trade a starter, so since we have guys with options, it seems obvious that that's the path to travel. I guess the question is, which of Carmona or Sowers do you see as being a guy more apt to contribute to wins for the next two months (as far ahead as I care to look) right now: I happen to prefer Carmona, but it's my impression that he was told up front that he was the "sixth starter," and as long as he understands that he's not being sent down because he wasn't "good enough," but rather so he can get regular work to jump back in when needed, I gotta figure it's Carmona making the trip east.

2) Please watch Fausto pitch

Jake Westbrook won his first game of the season with a pretty good outing: six one-run innings of four-hit ball with 5 Ks and a walk. None of the four hits were for extra bases. Of course, he also strode to the mound in the seventh and gave up two more singles sandwiched around a flyout before ceding the mound to Aaron Fultz and ending up with two more earned runs in the process.

No, I'm not saying that Westbrook pitched poorly, rather that Westbrook pitched non-Westbrookly, giving up 7 GB outs and 7 FB outs. Isn't the point of Jake Westbrook that he makes you pound it into the ground? Or was that Carmona? Maybe I've got my guys mixed up. Perhaps they should switch salaries as well.

3) I started and no one cared

Jeremy Sowers pitched.

4) Methinks thou dost protest not enough

In the top of the third ining, Sowers got into trouble when Brian Roberts singled and stole second, then Melvin Mora walked. After a fielder's choice, Roberts scored on a single by Miguel Tejada. Ramon Hernandez, stale off the disabled list, then hit a line drive to center field, leading Nick Markakis to tag up and score Baltimore's third run.

Except that Miggy was wandering around in a Cleveland-like baserunning haze and was doubled off first base by Grady Sizemore. The umpires ruled that Markakis had not scored the run before Tejada was thrown out, so the run was waved off and it remained 2-1.

That is, it remained 2-1 (then 2-2 as Cleveland scored in the 5th) until the 6th inning, when the umpires decided that, well, they'd botched the call and Markakis actually scored. So now it was 3-2, Baltimore.

I'm not going to get into the nuts and bolts of protesting a game: whether the game should be replayed from the third or the sixth or replayed entirely or left alone. The Indians *have* filed a protest, and they've actually got a case. But I'll say this: I haven't seen a lot of games when the scoreboard changes three innings after the fact. That's just bad. (I have seen plenty of guys get doubled off first: I am a Cleveland fan.)

5) We are not specialists, but we certainly are "special"

I was crushed … crushed … when I saw that Ferd Cabrera had lost Saturday's quasi-game. Ferd Cabrera? Lost? It did not compute. The blind-faithed little boy in me died once again. If you cannot believe in St. Ferd, what hope is there? And then the truth was revealed: it was the

evil Aaron Fultz who allowed Ferd's inherited runners to score after Cabrera had already blazed through one perfect inning (with 2 Ks). So perhaps the little boy is on life support. (As a Cleveland fan, he spends a lot of time on life support.)

Actually, there's not much evil or even atrociousness going on here: Ferd gave up a couple singles, and Fultz got pinch-hitter Aubrey Huff for the second out of the inning. Corey Patterson followed with the two-run double that for all intents and purposes ended the game. Hey, Patterson's left-handed, so you leave Fultz in: giving up an 0-2 double to Patterson is simply bad, but hey, that's baseball.

Friday's bullpen, though, was more a performance by firemen from the Lemony Snicket novels, where the fire department sets the fires rather than putting them out. Staked to a 5-0 lead, Westbrook began the newtification process, then Fultz gave up a run-scoring double to Patterson on his only pitch, then Oldberto Hernandez gave up a two-run double to Brian Roberts, then wild pitched him to third. Finally Raffy Betancourt restored order with a ten-pitch four-foul groundout to Nick Markakis and threw a stressless perfect 8 th to help preserve the win. If you're scoring at home, Aaron Fultz basically tried to botch one game by pitching badly to Corey Patterson, then succeeded the following night. Oddly enough, he was not used Sunday.

This having been said, let us look at Lord Joedemort's performance Friday:

Gibbons struck out swinging

Ramon Hernandez struck out looking

Patterson struck out swinging

In a one-run game. Okay, that's REALLY GOOD. Thanks, Joe.

6) Hey, we had one of those!

Jaret Wright's return to Cleveland was marred by his giving up three runs in two innings and continuing to hurt his shoulder (it came in hurting, he had to leave because of it) in the process. In other words, it was marred by his continuing to be Jaret Wright.

Jeremy Guthrie proudly returned to Jacobs Field on the heels of a very fine start that had hand-wringing Indians fans wondering if they'd made a terrible blunder letting Guthrie drop off the roster. Hm, I wonder:

Friday: 1 K, 2 H (1 HR), 3 ER, 1/3 IP

Sunday: 1 K, 4 H, 3 ER, 1 IP

Nope.

7) You WISH I was draft-elligible

I suppose that, technically, an NFL franchise could draft Grady Sizemore. I just think he'd be a "tough sign."

Sizemore hit the home run off Guthrie that proved to be the game-clinching hit, except that the ball never actaully left the park. Instead, it went over Patterson's head in center, and after he fell down, left fielder Jay Payton wasn't even able to make the play at the plate *close*. On the weekend, Sizemore also stole second Friday, stole third (on a double-steal) Sunday, and made a serious diving catch in center. He also walked in each game, which led to him scoring in each game. Despite having a .253 BA, his OBP is .433, which is considered adequate for leadoff hitters. (Actually, it's considered @#%*ing fabulous.)

8) Streaking!

Josh Barfield had a hit in each of the three games to stretch his hitting streak to three. In all seriousness, the hit Friday was a two-run single to right that not only gave Barfield a share of the lead in the category "RBI with the bases loaded," but suggests a good approach at the plate. With two hits Saturday and another one Sunday, I almost feel bad mentioning that Barfield whiffed three more times and results in a player with 15 Ks but only 3 BBs. I'm not really insisting on a lot of offense from Barfield in 2007, since he's the nominal #9 hitter for now: as long as he improves his approach and learns AL pitchers, that's fine with me.

Casey Blake had a hit in each of the three games to stretch *his* hitting streak to three. To be fair, he'd had a four-game streak snapped Thursday in a game in which he walked three times. He hadn't been completely kept off base since April 20th and has been an asset in the two-hole, something most thought improbable. (He batted 8th Sunday, from which he hit a homer and walked twice more.) With the recent hot streak, Blake has quietly become "merely inadequate" instead of "a sucking wound." It *has* been a good stretch, though.

Jhonny Peralta had a hit in each of the three games to stetch *his* hitting streak to *five*. Peralta, who has also drawn three walks in the streakling, is now hitting .227/.330/.440: the batting average is obviously crummy, and his 24 strikeouts are mind-bogglingly bad, but he

hasn't had a real "bad night" at the plate since April 19 (0-for-5, 3K: yep, that's bad). Well, okay, April 23 he was 0-for-5, too, but he drew a walk. I'm not askin' for a *lot* here.

9) Department of Efficiency Department

Cleveland scored 5 runs on 7 hits, 4 runs on 6 hits, and 6 runs on 8 hits in the weekend series. Really, 24 hits in three games is not a whole lot of hits. However, the hits were sandwiched around 16 (!!) walks, and the Tribe only left a bunch of guys on Friday. I'm concerned about the sustainability of an offense that depends on scoring nearly a run per hit, but the team is 2nd in the AL in scoring and is doing it without any really tremendous performances (besides Hafner's, but he is actually tremendous) and several truly execrable ones. The team's approach at the plate seems excellent, making pitchers work and getting on base. We'll see if it stays this way: it could improve significantly even if some of the good fortune is removed.

10) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro registered to vote electronically five hundred thousand times in Chicago. Mayor Ozzie Guillen said he did not notice any irregularities in the voting: after all, it *is* Chicago.

Since it is verifiable that Guillen is not the mayor of Chicago, the above statement is clearly untrue. Fire Eric Wedge.