It's all good in the wigwam right about now. The Tribe beat the Jays 7-6 in extras last night for their 9th win in their last 10 games ... and sit atop the division at 16-8. In today's *B-List*, Buff is all over the board. He talks about Jake's injury, Jason Davis and Ferd Cabrera's appearances, Honny Peralta staying hot, and The Hafner Shift. And he even dusts off The Ballad of Oldberto (tm). Enjoy.

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	**R**	**H**	**E**
Blue Jays (13-14)				1							0			0
Indians (16-8)				0							0			1

W: Mastny (2-0) L: Marcum (1-2)

There were a few unexpected things about last night's game, but in general it was a giant exercise in Not Surprise. Jason Davis walked guys? Joe Borowski put two on base but didn't let them score? Jhonny Peralta hit a bad curveball? Casey Blake struck out? Surely you jest! Pinch me!

1) Bring me the head of the oblique stretching coach!

You could tell that Jake Westbrook didn't have his very best stuff right from the beginning. How? Well, consider that Westbrook faced 8 batters, and exactly 3 hit the ball on the ground, one of which was a sharp single. Westbrook's entire schtick is ground balls: either he couldn't put the right spin on the ball or couldn't get "up on top" of it.

How else could you tell? Well, because I thought we'd traded back for Scott Elarton, that's how. Westbrook was short-arming the ball something awful, which is a pretty good tipoff that something's wrong: either you've pulled a muscle (acute, treatable), or you are Scott Elarton (chronic, untreatable). Either way, you need to be pulled from the game.

As of this writing, there is no official diagnosis of Westbrook's injury, although Eric Wedge said last night he expects a trip to the DL. Given the description and location (left abdominal strain), that pretty much means an oblique (cf Lee, C. or Sabathia, C.), unless his *spleen* is barking or he has something better diagnosed by Dr. Greg House.

2) Fabulous Ferd and limit-testing

The first pitcher called out of the bullpen was Ferd Cabrera, who finished off Sal Fasano on one pitch (it was 2-2 when Westbrook had to leave) and got Alex Rios to ground out on the second pitch he saw. Cabrera then had an eventful third inning, featuring a bad decision to throw to the wrong base by Casey Blake, a pickoff of Vern Wells at second, a semi-intentional walk, and finally a ground ball to end the inning. He loaded the bases in the fourth, but he ended with 52 pitches, which is pretty unusual territory for Ferd. He had struck out the first two guys before appearing to lose his sharpness.

In all Cabrera gave up 3 hits and 2 walks (both to left-handers in front of right-handers, nine pitches total, suggesting a certain degree of intent) while striking out 4 in 2 2/3 scoreless innings. Of course, I was surprised to see Cabrera as the first guy out of the 'pen. I was kind of expecting, you know, like the "long man" or something. What you're missing is that there was a runner on second at the time: Cabrera appears to have no real qualms about entering a game in this situation, while the said "long man…"

3) Fool me once, shame on me, fool me sixteen times, call me Zydrunas Ilgauskas' feet

Jason Davis used to drive me crazy, but I no longer let him. He is what he is: a guy who can throw a baseball better than 99.99% of the planet, but is not actually a very good pitcher. He's not a worthless schmoe. He's not a too-mah. But he isn't a valuable asset, either.

Davis was called into the game in the fifth to preserve the slight 2-1 lead. Frank Thomas singled, hey, he's Frank Thomas, he's hit a lot of singles. Lyle Overbay struck out, hey, he's Lyle Overbay, he's struck out a lot. And then the deluge:

Glaus: double

Hill: IBB

Stairs (PH): BB, RBI

Fasano: BB, RBI

Okay, now this is just teeth-grinding. It's SAL @#%*ING FASANO! This is worse than Gerald Laird, who might, might, might, might, *might* SOMEDAY be able to hit. No! This is Sal Fasano, who was a hotshot prospect at the same time Chad Ogea was! It's Sal Fasano! The man got a hit to raise his average to ONE FORTY THREE! The bases are loaded! You throw a sinker! Sal Fasano can't hit! And he's a 35-year-old catcher, meaning his speed is somewhere between "negligible" and "theoretical!" Fasano saw six pitches. He swung at nary a one of them. He drove in a run, **raising** his RBI total on the year to **one**. He's **Sal Fasano**! Come on!

Okay, here's the real problem, other than not being able to throw a strike with the bases loaded … TWICE … we don't really need a setup guy. That's Cabrera, possibly Betancourt, maybe even Mastny. We don't need a left-hander (well, we kinda do, but Jason Davis isn't going to develop this skill). We don't really need a first guy out of the pen, the sort of Julian Tavarez role, that's more Mastny or Hernandez or Betancourt. And Borowski is the closer, you aren't going to trump him there. No, really, the only thing left is "long guy" or "innings eater," a guy who can come in, say, when the starter is knocked out way early, or when it's the 13th inning, or when the rest of the pen is tired and we need innings. This is the role we've got left. You, Jason Davis, have been selected to fill this role. And this role kind of calls for a guy who can go MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF AN INNING WITHOUT TURNING INTO A QUIVERING MASS OF GOO. So, as it turns out, we don't have a good role for you.

I am reminded of the story of Marvin K. Mooney.

4) The continuing Ballad of Oldberto

I came in the game

A man stood on third

And then I did pitch

Very much like a turd

I kind of wondered why Fultz was left in to start the sixth when two righties (Wells and Thomas) were due up, but Fultz got one (Thomas) and not the other (double by Wells) before getting to face left-hander Overbay (ground out). Then there was another pair of righties, a lesser pair, really, in Glaus and Hill. Okay, bring in the large old man!

Glaus: double to deep left

Hill: double to deep left

Remember that 6-4 lead we had coming into the sixth? Yeah, neither do I.

And then he pitched a scoreless seventh, just to taunt me! I've had enough, I tell you!

5) Pronk bip!

Travis Hafner blasted the game-winning double off reliever Shawn Marcum by … okay, he didn't really so much "blast" it as "dribble" it. On a 3-2 pitch during which Marcum stayed exclusively near the outside corner, Hafner was fooled by a dropping pitch well out of the strike zone and hit it in the manner of a batter protecting a wicket: just make it go away. The ball would have aspired to be a routine ground ball to third (it wasn't hit hard enough) … had there been any Toronto defender within a mile of the third base bag.

See, they had the "Hafner Shift" on, so the ball rolled … and rolled … and finally just died in left way in front of the left fielder, who beat the third baseman to it because the third baseman had been playing near second base. Anyway, David Dellucci had singled and was running with the pitch, and he was improbably able to make it all the way around on the ersatz "double."

Here's my question: if you're going to play the guy to pull … and have no one cover the area into which he would not pull … why are you exclusively throwing him pitches he … could not possibly pull? Am I insane?

Anyway, thanks to Pronk for preventing further bullpen abuse.

6) No, it's like this, Trav

Ryan Garko hit a home run to left center to tie the game at 1 early in the contest. Garko ended up 2-for-3 on the night with a walk, 2 RBI, and 2 R.

Jholtin' Jhonny Peralta arrived at the plate in the 5th with two men on when Josh Towers decided that really, the best tack at this point would be to throw a moderate curveball on the inner half of the plate. I mean, this had been so successful the night before or by the Orioles over the weekend. Peralta blasted a three-run homer and ended his night 3-for-5 with a run and 3 RBI. (He is actually so hot that I *wanted* him to come to the plate with the bases loaded in the 3rd. He actually grounded out that time, but the fact is I legitimately *wanted to see Jhonny Peralta at the plate with the bases loaded*. This is kind of state change here.)

7) A civil discussion on smallball

It was suggested last night that in the 8th inning, after Grady Sizemore drew a leadoff walk, that David Dellucci should have bunted him over. After all, tied 6-6 in the 8th, playing for 1 run is good (even statheads agree with this). There is the slight drawback that Hafner would almost certainly be walked, but now you have 1st and 2nd with 1 out for Victor Martinez (Nixon, Garko), how can that be considered a Bad Thing?

Dellucci did not bunt but instead grounded into a fielder's choice. However, by leaving a runner on first, the Jays were encouraged (induced?) into pitching to both Hafner AND Martinez. The fact that they both made outs speaks more to the nature of baseball than it does to any strategic failure. It's hard to get a hit. They didn't. C'est la vie.

Should Dellucci have bunted? Well, the obvious answer is, "No," because David Dellucci can't actually bunt. He has three sacrifices in his career. Do you remember Jhonny trying to bunt that one time? Doesn't your eye still hurt? That was awful (although, admittedly, not as awful as Cliff Lee bunting last year), and Dellucci probably wouldn't have looked a lot better.

However, the more interesting question becomes, “Should Francisco or Michaels or Choo have pinch-hit and laid down a bunt?” (This assumes one of them can bunt.)

I still say, “No.” Partly because I hate bunting, but I admit this is a knee-jerk response. Bunting can be useful. I don’t deny this. But not bunting directly led to a situation in which our two best hitters each got a shot at driving in a run: bunting would have given only one of them (an admittedly easier) chance. Personally, I would take the same approach.

8) Box score follies

The Indians left 11 runners on base, but only 4 in scoring position. The Blue Jays left **14** on base, a whopping
9
of whom were in scoring position.

Jason Smith, hitting .209, pinch-hit for Sal Fasano, hitting .143. After making the out, Fasano was replaced at catcher by Jason Phillips. Phillips is hitting .289. (There are handedness and sample size issues here, but it sure looks follyish in the box score.)

9) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

Josh Barfield got a pair of hits last night. He was caught stealing in the ninth, but I actually appreciate the effort to end the game there. Hopefully this will continue as with our other middle infielders (Peralta hitting heroically, Rouse sitting on the bench equally heroically).

Raffy Betancourt threw two perfect innings with a pair of Ks in the first of them. (In the second of them, he scared the bejeezus out of me with some long flies, but hey.)

Tom Mastny threw 8 strikes in 11 pitches to pitch a perfect 11th with 1 K.

Casey Blake did not hit his head on the top of the dugout.

10) Dept. of Corrections Dept.

I wrote yesterday that Tom Mastny is the only relief pitcher with an option left: in fact, Matt Miller still has multiple options left, so after the rehab assignment, there's no procedural reason he couldn't be optioned to Beefalo instead of making room for him in Cleveland.

Alert reader Mike Bogucci pointed out that I said that Jhonny Peralta grounded into a double play on the first pitch of an inning: I meant the first pitch Peralta saw, not the first pitch of the inning, which would have been pretty amazing, Mike admits.

11) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro has created a gravity-wave gun and is planning to move the moon closer to the Earth so that he will have bigger waves to surf on. This is almost certainly false: I have never seen Mark Shapiro surf. However, fire Eric Wedge.