The rubber match in Anaheim wasn't pretty yesterday afternoon, and the Tribe will attempt to regroup out in Oakland tonight. Should the Tribe possibly send down struggling youngster Jeremy Sowers? Maybe give pehnom prospect Adam Miller a couple starts? In today's B-List, Buff analyzes Sowers ... giving his thoughts on his struggles to date. Buff also hits on new call ups Eddie Mujica and Franklin Gutierrez and breaks down the rest of yesterday's 8-0 loss to the Halos.

FINAL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**R**	**H**	**E**
Indians (20-12)	0				0					0		
Angels (19-16)	0				0					5		

W: Escobar (4-1) L: Sowers (0-3)

Well, that sucked.

1) A terrible feeling of deja vu

I went to look at Jeremy Sowers' statistics to see if I could discern anything about why he was struggling so much. Is he having special trouble pitching with runners on base? Does he have more trouble the second time through a lineup? It should be noted that by "struggle," I'm obviously talking about a very limited sample: Sowers has basically had four good starts (all Quality) and three wretched ones (all Shitty). At least he went five innings this time instead of getting knocked out in the Westbrook.

The only interesting split I can find is that he has a 2.08 ERA at home and an 8.66 ERA away. This smacks of Jake Westbrook in the first half last season. Of course, it should be noted that one of the two "home" starts was actually in Milwaukee. (He does have a pronounced left-right split, but that's not terribly interesting to me, except insofar as it points out he does not get right-handed hitters out, which turns out to be kind of an important skill.)

Now, a long time ago in a galaxy about ten miles down the road, I used to talk baseball with a bunch of guys at the University of Washington.

Since U-Dub is in Seattle, they all followed the Mariners (although, being grad students, the weren't all fans since they came from all over). There was a fresh young rookie left-hander I remember getting excited about: he put up wonderful stats and seemed to be able to keep guys off balance. I asked if they thought he'd develop into a good, dependable starter, and the consensus was:

No. Finesse lefties with nothing else eventually get hammered.

I went to Baseball Prospectus to find out if Sowers is similar to this guy, and it turns out he is tenth on the list. Now, in Sowers' defense, his #1 comp(arable) is Tom Glavine, and Mark Buehrle, Bob Ojeda, and Dave McNally also make appearances. Of course, so do Jason Jacome and Horacio Ramirez. (By the way, Ramirez has a brisk 7.62 ERA and a WHIP of 2.19 this season. He has had two great starts and three wretched ones.)

Anyway, the guy I'm thinking of is Dave Fleming. In 1992, Fleming went 17-10 with a 3.39 ERA at age 22. At age 23, he went 12-5 with a 4.36. His ERA the next season was 6.46. His ERA the season after that was 7.50. His ERA the season after that does not exist, because Dave Fleming never pitched another inning in the major leagues. He was twenty-five years old.

I am not saying that Jeremy Sowers is a putz who will be out of baseball in three years. What I AM saying is that what Jeremy Sowers has RIGHT NOW is not enough to be a successful major-league

pitcher. He has plenty of time to develop whatever ingredient is missing, but make no mistake: the gumbo is bland, bland, bland.

Anyway, Sowers gave up a bunch of hits which turned into runs and he lost. Delving much deeper than that seems like time poorly spent.

2) Eddie Moo Sighting

Eddie Mujica got to make his first appearance of 2007 after having been on the team for a week or so. He gave up 2 runs on 4 hits, including a two-run double to Vladimir Guerrero, in two innings of work. He threw 27 strikes in 36 pitches, which is good. He has an ERA of 9.00, which is bad.

I have no problem giving up a two-run double to Vladimir Guerrero. Vlad's a very fine hitter, a perennial All-Star, and is hitting .354 this season (so he's hot). And before anyone gets real uppity about walking Guerrero instead of pitching to him, it was 6-0 in the bottom of the sixth, we were being dominated by Kelvim Escobar, and I'd rather find out if Eddie Mujica can get Vlad Guerrero out with runners on base than do any extensive tactical management there. (Hey, if it was a close game, it wouldn't have been Eddie Moo.) Vlad's good. He got a hit. Hooray for him.

Here's my problem with Eddie Moo's outing: he gave up a single to Chone Figgins on a 1-2 count. He had Orlando Cabrera at 0-2 (the

second strike swinging) before giving up a single. And Guerrero had a miss and a foul to make the count 1-2 when he hit his double. Even the next hitter, Robbbbb Quinlan, swung and missed at the first two pitches before going foul, ball, ball, foul, ball, fly out. In his second inning, he settled down, but only a little: 2-2 to Matthews before a fly out, 1-2 to Murphy, then 2 fouls before finally a K looking. (Jose Molina flied out on the first pitch each time he faced Mujica, suggesting that he is a Compleat Nitwit.)

It is very good to throw strikes as a relief pitcher. It is the one skill I insist on, and Mujica appears to have it. But you have to do a better job finishing off hitters with two strikes: I'm not demanding that all those guys *strike* out, but I'd like more of them to *BE* out.

3) F-Goot Sighting

Franklin Gutierrez made his first appearance since being called up. He played center field and made no plays. He batted once and hit no pitches (K). He was superfluous, unnecessary, and right-handed.

I am not a big Franklin Gutierrez fan.

4) Offense in Theory and Practice

Actually, this heading is a lie. The offense last night was simply theoretical. Escobar throttled the Indians offense with 9 Ks and 0 BBs in a complete-game shutout, which is redundant, but so was Escobar. The Indians collected seven singles, the most notable by Mike Rouse, who is trying to develop chloroplasts in order to evolve from “fungus” to “houseplant.” He is also one of two Indians not to strike out, the other being Jhonny Peralta. When “not striking out” is worthy of being singled out as a notable offensive performer, your team has not had a productive day at the plate.

Travis Hafner had two singles, which is kind of demi-notable. Way to go, Trav.

5) Adventures in bad run control

The Angels stole three bases last night: although not unprecedented, one was notable in that it was Jose Molina (a catcher) stealing home (a plate). Yes, it was on the back half of a delayed double-steal, but that will probably not be mentioned to Mr. Molina’s grandchildren in the retelling of the story.

I’m not going to get all worked up about Victor Martinez giving up stolen bases: the double-steal seemed to surprise everyone, since the Angels were up 5-0 at the time. Thanks, Mr. Scioscia. The third stolen base was off Eddie Moo, who was probably not concentrating real hard on the baserunner.

6) Box Score Follies

The Angels extended their league lead, turning two more double plays last night. One was a classic 6-4-3. The other … well, let me simply copy the game report from ESPN:

G Sizemore grounded into double play, first to pitcher to catcher to third to first to pitcher to catcher to third, R Garko out at home, R Garko out at third

Now, this seems extraordinarily hard to do. Not only is it the classic 3-1-2-5-3-1-2-5 double play, but Ryan Garko managed to be so very, very out as to be called out twice. This is what you get for trying to score from second on a ground ball to first.

Let's not do that again.

7) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro wrote the screenplay for "Gigli" under a pseudonym. I don't believe *anyone* actually wrote the screenplay, but rather it was a found collection of random words, so this statement is clearly untrue.

Fire Eric Wedge.