"Why do I do it? Time and time again, I praise a relief pitcher, and the next night he newtifies right before my very eyes. I admit to a certain degree of superstition when it comes to being a baseball fan (which is why I keep calling for Wedge's head even though he appears to have improved considerably: we've been winning since I started, so I'm not stopping now), but this is getting just flat-out eerie. I would hate to have to bad-mouth relief pitchers just to keep them from imploding" That is my favorite section in today's B-List! Open it up and read on for more pearls of wisdom from the King of the Recap!

FINAL SCORE				
Indians (27-16)	2	0	0	0
Royals (18-28)	0	0	0	0

X

4	**11**	**0**

W: Greinke (2-4) L: Mastny (3-2) S: Soria (10)

Never attribute to overconfidence what can just as easily be explained by simple incompetence.

1) I had forgotten he was a regular guy

Although Fausto Carmona was not tagged with the loss (and, in fact, didn't deserve to be), it could also be argued that he wouldn't have deserved a huge share of the credit had we won. C armona managed to give up nine hits and a walk in six rather stressful innings of work, striking out no one in the process.

To put this in perspective, the Cleveland Indians have struck out a lot this season: their 323 whiffs is the second-most in the AL behind Tampa Bay's incredible 355.

Of course, they offset this with 172 walks, but the fact remains that the Indians strike out quite a bit.

They struck out nine times last night, for example, just a couple more than their average of 7.5 a game.

I mean, that's kind of a lot.

Kansas City has 322 strikeouts. It features two players in the top ten (Alex Gordon and Mark Teahen: Teahen because he is a patient hitter, Gordon because he is a terrible overmatched hitter), three players batting below .220, and six players batting below .250.

You could make a credible argument that Kansas City has a poor offense that strikes out a lot, based primarily on the statistics that show it is a poor offense that strikes out a lot.

Fausto Carmona struck out zero of them.

Now, look, we've been through this before: Carmona isn't going to strike out a lot of guys, but since he's such an extreme ground ball pitcher, it doesn't matter. And sure enough, Carmona induced 15 ground ball outs to 3 fly ball outs, including getting the Royals to bounce into **four** double plays (innings 3, 4, 5, and 6).

Four double plays is Way Cool.

Of course, it means you put a guy on base every inning as well.

But even with the ground ball stuff and the Torii Hunter impressing and the 2.76 ERA, how can

a guy not named Jason Davis throw mid-90's stuff that moves and not miss ANYBODY'S bat?

Carmona threw only one real mistake pitch, one that veteran Mike Sweeney was able to golf over the left field wall to tie the score at 3-3, but he gave up nine hits in six innings: that's just not that good. In fact, Carmona was pulled after throwing only 70 pitches, and I'm not sure you'll find many who will argue that was a bad decision. One gust of wind and that tightrope just doesn't seem all that sturdy.

2) From the sublime to the ridiculous

Why do I do it? Time and time again, I praise a relief pitcher, and the next night he newtifies right before my very eyes. I admit to a certain degree of superstition when it comes to being a baseball fan (which is why I keep calling for Wedge's head even though he appears to have improved considerably: we've been winning since I started, so I'm not stopping now), but this is getting just flat-out eerie. I would hate to have to bad-mouth relief pitchers just to keep them from imploding.

(For the record, the related sentiment with respect to Wedge hasn't come to the fore.)

Anyway, on the same day on which I just praised him, Tom Mastny pitched like a goober last night in relief of Carmona: it wasn't that he was completely putrid, but he did give up a single to John Buck and a double to Tony Pena, Jr. Now, I give him credit for striking out Ryan Shealy on four pitches, and without the intentional walk to load the bases, Mastny threw a typical 7 strikes in 9 pitches. It's just that two of the strikes resulted in baserunners.

Now, I should say that the decision to walk DeJesus made perfect sense. Mastny induces more ground balls than flies, and strikes out guys at a fair clip.

With one out, setting up a possible double play made some sense (although Mark Grudzielanek is pretty fast for an old guy).

Also, Grudzielanek is not hitting as well as DeJesus.

Bringing in Aaron Fultz to face Mark Teahen is a bit of knee-jerk orthodoxy: Teahen barely has a platoon split, possibly because of his inside-out swing.

But I can't really complain about that decision, and it's not like Mastny was lights-out to that point.

Anyway, he got Grudzielanek to pop out with the bases loaded, bringing on Aaron Fultz to pitch to the lefty Teahen. Now, it wasn't long ago that I praised Fultz for his great effectiveness this season, so naturally, Fultz threw four straight balls to Teahen to "drive in" the winning run. That was just bad.

3) My concern abates

I used to worry about Victor Martinez as a switch-hitter: he hit perfectly passably as a right-handed hitter, but not really in the same league as his left-handed hitting, especially in terms of power. This season, Victor's "platoon splits" look like someone forgot to record the handedness:

LH: .330/.392/.516
RH: .306/.414/.490

I mean, we are not talking about huge samples, and I understand that .330 does not equal .306, but the averages, on-base percentages, AND slugging percentages are all in the same small error band. He has roughly twice as many appearances left-handed, and has twice as many hits, twice as many homers, near twice as many doubles (5:3), the same number of triples (please, be serious), and almost exactly twice as many total bases (47:24).

By the way, does anyone tell Victor what city they're playing in? Because it certainly doesn't seem to matter:

Home: .321/.400/.482
Away: .321/.400/.524

The difference? He hits doubles at home (6, to 2 away) and homers on the road (5, to 1 at home). That's it. By the way, that was a right-handed home run he hit last night, which is why I thought of it.

Anyway, next home stand, I'm lookin' for a windup key in Victor's back.

4) Look out for Don Quixote!

Ryan Garko had a hit last night. That is good.

Ryan Garko struck out three times last night. That is less good.

Combined with his two strikeouts in three appearances last night, Garko is either Dutch, or had the spirit of Richie Sexson inhabit him Tuesday. Anyway, 5 Ks in 7 PAs is some serious Windmill Action. Stop doing that.

5) I am drawing no conclusions, but those appear to be spores

I was on record as saying that I thought signing David Dellucci was acceptible but not particularly exciting. I mean, he has hit right-handed pitching. He has hit acceptibly well. He's not special, but he's not paid a lot either.

Kind of an "eh" all around.

Except that's he's not been an "eh," he's been a "feh." He does not hit (.228 AVG). He does not get on base (.288 OBP).
He does not hit for power (.333 SLG).

These numbers are lousy from Josh Barfield, a young middle infielder.

They are
completely preposterous
from a
starting corner outfielder
.

Jason Michaels had much the same start last season, and the conventional wisdom was that Michaels, who had been used primarily as a platoon player, was not really an everyday player and shouldn't face right-handed pitchers so often. This season, Michaels is hitting .275/.306/.400: it is hard to believe, but this represents a significant improvement on Michaels' start in 2006.

It also represents a Thorough Butt-Kicking on David Dellucci's numbers ... in a role in which he's facing only the kind of pitching he's supposed to be able to hit!

Now look, I'm cutting Barfield a break because he's switched leagues, why not cut Dellucci the same slack? Two reasons:

a) he recently played in the AL with Texas in 2004 and 2005, it's not "new"

b) he's 33 freaking years old

I'm not saying he's exactly a fungus, but he sure is playing poorly. I want the Indians' Brain Trust to look me in the eye and tell me that Shin-Soo Choo or someone else on the farm couldn't put up .228/.288/.333 facing only their more favorable platoon split pitching.

Come on!

Stop sucking!

6) Welcome back

Andy Marte returned to the starting lineup, giving Casey Blake the night mostly off and went 1-for-2. He also turned a 5-3 double play in the fifth.

I don't know what the long-term plan here is: the problem with Blake as an outfielder is that I think he's really only been developed in right, and the same goes for Trot Nixon, the only real productive corner outfielder. Unless switching from right to left is a lot easier than it sounds, it means that either the good hitter (Nixon) or the hot hitter (Blake) will have to sit to allow the non-hitter (Marte) and the Philadelphia Phungus Platoon (Dellucci/Michaels) play.

This may be good for Marte's development, but at this point, I'm a little more concerned about, say, winning the bloody division.

We'll see where we go from here.

7) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

Raffy Betancourt cleaned up Fultz' mess, getting Sweeney to ground out, then pitched a perfect 8th. He threw 10 strikes in 14 pitches to record 4 outs.

Michaels did hit an RBI double off Odalis Perez.

8) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro replaced all the straws in the local elementary school cafeterias with ones made from tissue paper. When the students tried to drink their milk, the straws collapsed, inducing the students to cry. S
hapiro then piped the sound of his cruel laughter over the school intercom to rub it in.

This did not actually happen.

Fire Eric Wedge.