The Tribe scored five runs in each of their three games against the Royals this weekend, and it was good enough to win two of them, leaving the Indians still half a game behind the Tigers, and 5.5 games ahead of the surging Twins. In the Monday edition of The B-List, Buff recaps the weekend set, and hits on the breaking news that the Indians signed Eric Wedge to a three year contract extension. More details on that in our Indians message forum.

FINAL SCORE				
Royals (38-51)	0	1	2	0
Indians (53-36)	0	1	1	1

W: Borowski (2-3) L: Greinke (4-5)

FINAL SCORE				
Royals (39-51)	2	0	3	0
Indians (53-37)	0	0	0	1

W: Meche (6-6) L: Sabathia (12-4) S: Dotel (9)

FINAL SCORE				
Royals (39-52)	0	0	0	0
Indians (54-37)	2	0	0	1

W: Carmona (11-4) L: De La Rosa (7-10) S: Borowski (26)

My favorite game was the one in which we scored five runs.

1) Next year, you stay home

C.C. Sabathia spent part of the All-Star Break at the actual All-Star Game, being an All-Star and all that. And deservedly so: although wins are not the most accurate measure of a starting pitcher's effectiveness, Sabathia still ranks third in the AL in strikeouts and complete games, second in innings, and has a respectable ERA and WHIP. His K:BB ratio was an impeccable 119:18 coming into the game, and he'd only had one poor start in his past eight. Of course, that one poor start was his last start, getting clubbed for three home runs against the streaking Tigers in Detroit and lasting only 4 innings. Still, an argument that Sabathia didn't deserve an All-Star nod would be pretty convoluted.

An argument that he might've been better off sleeping might have merit.

Sabathia's day got off to an inauspicious start as, after a swinging K to David DeJesus, he gave up consecutive singles to Mark Grudzielanek and Mark Teahen, Teahen's coming on a 1-2 pitch. Recent callup Billy Butler then whacked a two-run double to right center to put the Indians in a quick 2-0 hole.

Before the Tribe could fight back with a single run, Sabathia gave up another pair of hits to Teahen and Butler, each on the first pitch, before allowing a first-pitch home run to .231-hitting Emil Brown. Brown was something of a Feel Good Success Story for KC the past two seasons, putting up nearly-identical .286/.349/.455 and .287/.358/.457 lines for talent-challenged squads after spending four years out of major-league baseball (hitting very, very poorly in limited trials in Pittsburgh and San Diego in 2001). However, this season, some mean-spirited soul gave Brown a mirror in the off-season, and he has realized that he is, in fact, Emil Brown, and he has returned to hitting in the manner of overripe fruit as one is accustomed to getting from Emil Brown. Brown's .231/.297/.330 line is poor enough, but the man has 12 extra-base hits in 212 at-bats, including a

massive *four* home runs. This is not a high-quality ballplayer here. And the REASON he has 12 extra-base hits with four home runs in 212 at-bats is that Sabathia threw him a Cliff Lee Commemorative Nonfast Ball, allowing Brown to be the hero with a three-run homer to the opposite field.

With his customary **Inning of Crap** out of the way, Sabathia settled down, giving up three hits over the next three innings before being victimized by Casey Blake's audition for "Dancing With the Stars" in the seventh. But it's hard to argue that this was anything but a lousy start by Sabathia, whose 11 hits in 7 innings included *five* extra-base hits, including a pair of doubles by Teahen (slugging .411 on the season) and the homer to Brown (slugging .330 on the season). He also walked two, quite the aberration for Sabathia, while striking out 6: Sabathia was in the strike zone with 72 strikes in 113 pitches. It's just that some of his pitches were not so good. In fact, I would need scientific notation to express just how bad a pitch that Emil Brown can drive out of the park the other way must be.

2) Have you considered pregame aerobics?

Back when Orel Hershiser was jerking and twitching on the mound for the Indians, I remember him saying once (he may have said it more than once: I remember it once, because, frankly, who needs more?) that he actually liked starting on short rest. As a sinkerball pitcher, Hershiser believed that being a little fatigued helped him, because he couldn't overthrow his sinker, and he got better (downward, ostensibly) movement on the pitch and was more effective. Although there's a certain amount of intuitive sense here (and I'm certainly not going to contradict Hershiser about **his pitching**), there's a careful balance to be struck, as a pitcher can still only go 100-odd pitches before losing effectiveness and risking injury. Fatigue may be helpful, but it's still ... well ... fatiguing.

Jake Westbrook's effective pitch is his sinker, and after a fairly harmless first inning featuring an inning-ending double play, Westbrook labored mightily through the next two, giving up a run on two walks, a single, and a fielder's choice

groundout in the 2nd, and two more runs in the 3rd on 3 more singles, a walk, and another fielder's choice. Westbrook threw 64 pitches in the first three innings, walking four batters, and generally looking like a man trying to teach himself how to pitch after being roused from suspended animation for 200 years.

Apparently 64 pitches caused the requisite amount of fatigue necessary. Westbrook's next three innings went by in 9, 9, and 12 pitches. The nine-pitch innings were perfect, while the 12-pitch sixth was marred by a double and a walk, but punctuated by another inning-ending double play. Westbrook ended with a typical 12:4 GB:FB ratio: other than the Wittian 5 walks in six innings, he was actually quite effective, giving up 5 hits (one double) and inducing three double plays. Hopefully Jake can shake off the effects of the layoff and start pitching in the first inning next time out, but credit to him for turning what looked like a disastrous start into a pretty good one.

3) I don't understand the problem with this "layoff thing"

Fausto Carmona did not have a problem getting his sinker to work, inducing 14 ground ball outs to 3 fly outs (and 4 Ks). He induced a double play, gave up one extra-base hit out of eight total, and gave up two runs in seven strong innings to win Sunday's tilt.

Interestingly, like Westbrook, Carmona's best innings were at the end of his start: after giving up a pair of runs in the fifth, Carmona had his only two 1-2-3 innings in to the fifth and sixth. Still, after 102 pitches and a 5-2 lead, it was the right time to call it a day.

People ask, "Where would we be without Fausto?!" The answer will be available tonight at 7:05 Eastern.

4) Dept. of Lumbering First Basemen

After Super Joe Borowski hairballed the save of Westbrook's outing Friday, the heart of the order came to the plate in the bottom of the ninth against adorable nine-year-old Zach Greinke. Victor Martinez fouled out, but Travis Hafner celebrated the signing of his enormous new contract with a double off the wall. Eric Wedge prudently sent Mossy Mike Rouse to run for Hafner since he represented the winning run. Sure enough, after Jhonny Perlta was intentionally walked, Ryan Garko lined the first pitch he saw into center field, and one it wasn't fielded cleanly, Rouse scored and Garko was beaten to death with pitchforks and bazookas.

In all, Hafner went 4-for-11 with a walk and 3 RBI, but his performance paled in comparison to his right-handed counterpart's, as Garko followed a 2-for-3 2-walk Friday with a 2-for-4 Saturday (including a solo shot and a second RBI) and a 2-for-3 1-walk Sunday with an RBI and 2 runs scored. Garko has lifted his average back over the .300 mark: while Hafner's remains in the mid-.260's, he has just purchased North Dakota, so he has that going for him, which is nice.

5) Bullpen By Numbers

Westbrook is tired ... beep ... bzzz ... seventh inning with lead means

Perez ... bzz ... perfect seventh, time for Betancourt ... whirr, click ... one hit, one K, 11 strikes in 13 pitches, scoreless eight ... bump whirr neep ... bring in Borowski ... danger, Will Robinson! Garko singles, game over, return to solid state.

Carmona goes seven ... whirr ... eighth inning, must be Betancourt ... solo shot to Jason Smith, must be data entry error ... whirr, click ... Borowski with perfect ninth for 26th save.

Sabathia is finished ... zip, boom, bzzz ... we trail in game, bring in Mastny ... buzz, bip ... two quality scoreless innings, 3 strikeouts, 2 hits ... game over ... beep.

And you know what?

It was perfect. You could argue with needing to use Betancourt up 5-2 in the 8th (and, of course, the whole Lord Joe thing), but that's about it. There's a time where a routine exists because it's been established as the reasonable, prudent, and effective course of action.

6) From the Rumor Mill

My newspaper says we called up a thing called a Jensen Lewis.

I say there is no such thing.

7) Leaning left

The outfield platoon has been re-established: after trying to figure out how to shuffle the cards dealt after David Dellucci's injury, it appears that a right-handed starter will face Ben Francisco's negative platoon split and Trot Nixon's negative value split. Left-handers will face Jason Michaels, now hitting a robust .333 (.932 OPS) against lefties, and Franklin Gutierrez, hitting .351 (.898 OPS) against lefties. These samples are pretty small (especially in Gutierrez' case), but both started Friday against Odalis Perez and each got a hit (plus a walk from F-Goot), and each started again against Jorge De La Blunderbuss and went a combined 3-for-6 with a walk, a sacrifice, an RBI, and a run.

The right-handed pair faced Gil Meche and ... hey, look over there!

8) Look Over Here!

I have distracted you!

9) Terror on the Basepaths!

Grady Sizemore (25), Franklin Gutierrez (3), and Josh Barfield (10) each stole bases. Barfield's came off John Buck, who is good, while the others came of Jason LaRue, who is not. In contrast, Victor Martinez caught Joey Gathright, whose skill set consists of Being Fast, although he did allow Esteban German and David DeJesus to steal successfully.

10) Terror at the Hot Corner!

What the HECK was THAT?!

Personally, I think that Alex Rodriguez threw his voice and called for Blake to throw the ball to Not Peralta. (It's as good an explanation as Blake actually had.)

11) A sad, sad, sad, sad day

It has been announced that Eric Wedge has been signed to a 3-year extension. This shows that the **B-List** has an unprecedented complete lack of influence, and I will celebrate by whining. And drinking coffee. (I drink a lot of coffee.)