Did this team get replaced by the '99 team and no one told me?

1) Wonder Twins Power - Activate!

Form of ... a power-hitting shortstop! Shape of ... an ice donkey! Or something like that! As long as there's no space monkey involved! (I hated that thing.) Sure, Travis Hafner hitting a home run is not exactly *new* (since it's his fifth ... in seven games), but Jhonny Peralta goes yard for the first time. This augments a 3-hit performance including a double that lifts his average to .300. Did I mention that both homers came with two outs? Or that neither player had swung at a previous pitch (Peralta 2-1, Hafner 0-2)? Maybe Washburn didn't have five innings of stuff, but give these guys credit for waiting him out.

2) Did I mention the power?

Of the Indians' 13 hits, 6 were for extra bases. The only one that didn't lead directly to a run was because they intentionally walked Hafner after Peralta's double. And by the way, one was by Victor Martinez batting right-handed, which was a concern last season (that all his power was from the left side).

3) My Favorite Player Lacks Stamina!

1st 3 innings: 0 hits, 1 BB, 5 Ks (4 swinging). That's dominant.
4th/5th inning: 1 hit, 3 swinging Ks, 2 lineouts. That's good, but the hit was a double and the outs were hard-hit.
6th inning: 2 extra-base hits to *middle infielders*, including one named "Yuniesky." One other hit, an inning-ending lineout with two on, and 2 runs.

Look, 6 innings with 4 H, 1 BB, 2 R, and 8 K is a very tidy start. Who's complaining? But check out the 4/5 B-List:

Through three innings, I would have

told you that Cliff Lee was our best pitcher. Through five innings, I would have said one ball was really clobbered, but that's a heckuva start.

What goes unsaid is that Lee largely turned into a newt in the sixth inning and did not get better. It's early in the year and the man has stuff, but we're going to need a starter that goes more than six at some point in the season. By the way, when did Cliff Lee become Eric Milton? 9 fly ball outs and 1 grounder? He got 18 outs, and ONE was a ground ball. Huh?

4) The Wisdom of Nibbling with a SIX RUN LEAD

If Scott Sauerbeck throws Raul Ibanez the fattest pitch imaginable, we would have been down 9-4. If Matt Miller throws an R. A. Dickey knuckleball to Richie Sexson, the score balloons to the unsurmountable deficit of ... well ... negative four. Now, I am not advocating this as a long-term strategy, and Sauerbeck did throw three

strikes to Ibanez (he fouled 'em off), but for cryin' out loud, they loaded the bases without getting a goddam hit. That's twice in two Lee starts! (The first time was Lee's fault, as he attempted to play Plunk-A-Mole with the White Sox.) Thank goodness Miller throws such gunk that Everett grounded into a double play.

5) You, you're not good.

It's early, and blah blah blah,

but I'm lookin' at Seattle and I see:

1 guy hitting .300 (Johjima)
2 guys cast off from the White Sox, who were a lousy offensive team (Borchard, Everett)
2 middle infielders I could not identify with access to the FBI's internal website
2 guys whom Seattle oversigned after career

years (Beltre, Ibanez)
5 pitchers were the lowest ERA is 5.40 (granted, we have a guy with a 21.00, so these things change)
I'd take Suzuki, Sexson, and Petagine. What does Roberto Petagine have to do, anyway? Hit Carl Everett with a dinosaur bone?

6) Early All-Star Voting

Ho hum, three more hits for Victor Martinez. Why does anyone throw Travis Hafner a strike? How about the guy hitting .444 behind him? Not the very best baserunner ever to wear a Cleveland uniform, but this seems like picking the very

smallest nit possible.

7) The continued rehabilitation of Casey Blake

1-for-4 doesn't look like much. Heck, he struck out twice. But the second one was a brutal call on 3-2, and he *worked* that

double out of Washburn. I see a different player.

8) There is no Last Minute

6 of the 9 runs were driven home with 2 outs. Runners left in scoring position, 2 out: 1. Something

seems different from last year, I just can't put my finger on it ...
(BTW: Seattle stranded 7, 5 of whom were in scoring position. Doh!)

9) Did I mention I hate the Minnesota bullpen?

Crain actually stunk, but Nathan got the one-run save. Stupid A's.