Talk about a strange doubleheader. Asdrubal Cabrera records only the 14th unassisted triple play in baseball history. And Fausto Carmona and Cliff Lee both shut the Blue Jays out through nine innings, yet the good guys can only come away with a split. In today's B-List, Buff looks back at the twinbill, breaks down the performances of Fausto and Cliffie, hits on the triple play, and talks about the display of offensive ineptitude displayed last night at The Prog.

FINAL SCORE				
Blue Jays (17-22)	0	0	0	0
Indians (19-18)	0	0	0	0

W: Carmona (4-1) L: Burnett (3-4)

FINAL SCORE				
Blue Jays (18-22)	0	0	0	0
Indians (19-19)	(2nd		1.5 GB MIN)	0

W: B. Ryan (1-0) L: Betancourt (1-2) S: Downs (4)

Now THAT was more what I expected from a rousing Cleveland-Toronto series, except with more runs.

1) Fausto!™

I have actually seen Fausto Carmona pitch better games than the one yesterday. Carmona is still struggling to locate his best pitches, and ended up walking another 4 batters yesterday. Now, walks in and of themselves are not going to make or break a pitcher, but they are useful tools to help predict future success. A pitcher who is missing the strike zone entirely is likely to be a pitcher who misses IN the strike zone, and those missed pitches are more likely to be powerful hits. Any baserunner is bad, obviously, but it's when a pitcher gives up baserunners and THEN gives up a big (here, "extra-base") hit that he really flounders.

Also, a quick glance at K-rate and K:BB ratio give you some raw idea of the sustainability of a pitcher's stuff: the K-rate tells you how well he is overmatching hitters, getting them to swing poorly at a pitch that moves, darts, or is otherwise well-located, and K:BB tells you how well he is commanding his arsenal. By either measure, Carmona does not do much in the way of Warm Fuzzies: he has 18 Ks in 48 2/3 innings, which is terrible (never a real strikeout pitcher, he did post a 5.74 K/9 last season: this is 3.33), and his K:BB ratio is a preposterous 18:35, or 0.51. (Last season, it was 2.25: you really want this to be closer to 2 than ONE-HALF.)

You want to know why Carmona is 4-1 with an ERA of 2.40? Of the 35 hitters he has walked this season, three ... THREE ... have scored.

Now, that's simply unsustainable. I'm not going to get all jiggy with Actual Research or anything, but that simply defies belief. Part of this is certainly Carmona's ability to induce ground balls: his GO:FO ratio of 3.66 this year is actually even higher than last year's 3.28, which placed him comfortably in the top echelon of groundball pitchers with guys like Brandon Webb, Chien-Ming Wang, and Jake Westbrook. And to this end, Carmona induced 32 double plays last season, and already has 15. Think about this for a moment: in 215 innings last season, Fausto Carmona induced 32 double plays, which is a lot. He has already induced nearly half as many ... in FORTY-NINE INNINGS. At this pace, if he were to throw 200 innings, he would induce a sickening SIXTY-TWO DOUBLE PLAYS. That's madness.

Anyway, he gave up five hits, but they were all singles. He gave up 4 walks, but induced two double plays. And he was helped by some fine defense, including an outfield assist. His GO:FO ratio of 17:6 actually *lowered* his overall ratio.

What might escape attention here is that Carmona's innings were actually kind of high-stress: until the sixth inning, he was actually being out-pitched by counterpart A.J. Burnett. Given little margin for error, Carmona was able to make the pitches he needed when he needed them. And of course, how did he record the final outs, after giving up a third single to Matt Stairs?

He got Lyle Overbay to ground into a 4-6-3 double play.

2) We interrupt this discussion of pitching to bring you an outstanding play by Asdrubal Cabrera

Eric Wedge likes to give as many players as possible a chance to rest during a double-header. This is prudent in some cases (Victor Martinez should not catch both games) and excessive in others (Jason Tyner should not play a role at a baseball stadium that does not involve the sale of hot dogs), but it's been established, so there you are. To this end, Jhonny Peralta would play shortstop for only one of the contests, so it was entirely sensible to let him play behind the more flyball-tending Cliff Lee and let the superior defender Cabrera play short behind Fausto's ground ball machine.

The decision paid dividends almost immediately, as Cabrera ranged far to his left to field a sharp grounder from Matt Stairs and shoveled it to second baseman Jamey Carroll with his glove to start the 6-4-3 double play that ended the inning. The play showed excellent range, but also superior hand control to be able to direct the ball with his glove like that.

3) Cliff ex machina

The wag in me could point out that Cliff Lee was only the third-best starting pitcher of the four: Carmona gave up fewer hits, none for extra bases, and allowed fewer runners to get into scoring position, while nightcap starter Shawn Marcum was simply brilliant for Toronto, firing 8 2-hit innings with no walks and 5 Ks. In contrast, Lee allowed 7 hits and a pair of walks, although he did squeeze a ninth inning out of his scoreless outing.

Look, it's hard to argue that 9 innings of scoreless baseball is anything but terrific. Lee lowers his ERA on the season to an unreal 0.67 and continues to string excellent efforts together. He threw 78 strikes in 117 pitches: it didn't look like he had the kind of "catch with your eyes closed" command he's had in a couple other starts, but he induced a pair of double plays of his own, posted an unusually-high 13:7 GO:FO ratio, and only one of the seven hits he allowed was as much as a double. In fact, THREE of the six singles he allowed were of the "infield" variety, which hurts my spleen.

But he, like Carmona, required several excellent defensive plays to get through the game unscathed. In one sense, this might seem like cracks in the façade, but on the other hand, this is a regular game in which he didn't get exceptionally lucky (in terms of batted balls not being hits), didn't have exceptional stuff (in terms of posting a 5:2 K:BB ratio instead of 8:0 as he has earlier), and still threw nine shutout innings.

4) We interrupt this discussion of pitching to bring you an outstanding play by Asdrubal Cabrera

One of these "excellent defensive plays" was actually historic: it wasn't a unique play, but it was something that was accomplished for only the 14th time in major-league history and 7th in the American League. After allowing a pair of singles in the fifth, the Jays tried to manufacture some offense by sending the runners for Lyle Overbay. Overbay lined a ball up the middle, but too far toward second baseman Cabrera, who snared the liner, touched second base, and tagged out the dejected Marcos Scutaro for the unassisted triple play.

5) More surprising leather

Here, "more" refers both to "leather" and "surprising:" two of the better plays last night were made by first basemen Ryan Garko (game 1) and Victor Martinez (game 2) to snare line drives with runners on base that might have resulted in runs.

Much is written about third base being the "hot corner" where reflexes are more valued than range or speed. In a sense, the most important skill for a third baseman to have is the skill to avoid being struck in the face. (If you have the ability to get your glove up to catch that one, you can catch others not aimed directly through your sinuses, although the incentive is not as compelling.) In watching those plays, I'm not sure first basemen, at least with lefties at the plate, don't require some of the same skill set, and why it isn't entirely "trivial" for a player used to another position (say, outfield) to simply show up and play credible first base.

I would make an insightful comment about footwork here, but I am not entirely convinced Ryan Garko has feet.

6) Richard Scarry's Worst Offense Ever!

Am I talking about Cleveland, or am I talking about Toronto?

Yes.

The Blue Jays' explosion for three runs in the 10th inning of the second game ended a nine-year span in which they scored fourteen runs. Actually, it was only 22 scoreless innings, but prolonged exposure to the Jays' offense causes genetic damage in frogs. It's really bad.

Sort of like Cleveland's.

7) We interrupt this tale of offensive ineptitude to bring you an outstanding play by Asdrubal Cabrera

Although the only necessary run of the game had already scored in the 6th inning of the first game, the Indians were poised to squander another baserunner in the 7th as Travis Hafner walked and Ryan Garko fought off a

couple two-strike pitches before flying out. And then Asdrubal Cabrera ... .190-hitting Asdrubal Cabrera ... he of the sub-.250 slugging percentage ... hit a home run to CENTER FIELD on the third pitch he saw.

A home run. To center. By Cabrera.

I did not have that in my "Things Likely To Happen" Pool.

8) We now return you to offensive ineptitude already in progress

Eric Wedge was very angry after the 3-0 loss, saying the Indians had shown the worst

offensive approach all year and that they simply "gave away" a number of at-bats.

Um ... Eric ... I've seen that EXACT SAME APPROACH at least *eight times* this season. This is not "new." This was not even "worst." (Hey, we hit three doubles.) It was bad, it was awful, it was completely the same. What team have you been watching, man? Come on.

Anyway, the Indians got eight hits ... in the two games combined. They didn't walk against Marcum. They didn't hit against Marcum. They barely buttoned their *pants* against Marcum. They were terrible ... and this annoyed you? Now? It annoys you NOW?

Dude. Welcome to my world.

9) Nice hose!

Ben Francisco gunned down Scott Rolen trying to go from first to third on a single to right. I knew Franklin Gutierrez had a good arm, but if Francisco does, too, this portends well for outfield flexibility in the future.

10) For completeness' sake

Raffy Betancourt was awful. I'm not clamoring for a change or getting self-righteous or anything, just noting that he lost because he pitched poorly. Not much more to it than that.

11) Jason Tyner sighting

Still a fungus.

12) Completely False Statement for the Google Search Engine

Mark Shapiro hates Stadium Mustard. I don't think this describes anyone and is clearly preposterous. Fire Derek Shelton, then re-hire him, so he may be fired a second time.