Buff takes a look back at the weekend series with the Rangers that saw the Tribe drop two of three. CAUTION: This column contains Chinese water torture analogies and harsh truths about exactly how badly Jason Michaels sucks.

Don't these guys watch television? You can't lose two of three to Texas at home: the Under Armour commercials drive this point home time and again. You must protect this howse! Even children know this now. I have no clue what value Under Armour has as a product (it appears to either enlarge your pectoral muscles or act as a sort of male girdle), but it does inspire one to protect one's "howse." We could use some of that. I mean, I haven't seen any commecials for products that punch A.J. Pierzynski in the face or whack Jim Thome in the kneecaps, so we'll just have to settle for howse-protection.

1) Richard Scarry's Worst Pitching Strategy ... Ever!

You have two outs and two men on. You have a two-run lead. You have an 0-2 count to the leadoff hitter who is currentlyhitting .267 and is 0-for-3 with 2 Ks. The next five batters in the lineup are hitting .352, .293 with crazy power, .278 with power, .344, and .342 with absurd power.

Naturally, you are filled with the spirit of Charles Nagy and begin to nibble like there's no tomorrow.

Look, Jason Davis has shown me some good things this year, and you can't be "on" every

night. But losing a relatively weak hitter (certainly for Texas) after 0-2 is simply ludicrous. Getting guys out would have helped, but you have to go after Matthews there. The worst he can do is blast a three-run homer to put you down one, but Davis has been a groundball pitcher this season and Matthews was cold. (Forget the homer in the ninth, Cabrera is a flyball pitcher)

2) Drip, drip, drip: the Chinese Water Torture in action

In my youth, had Jason Johnson been able to pull out the win, they would have said he "scattered 12 hits." In lay terms, this means, "The guy gave up twelve hits and we can't figure out how the hell he won with such a lack of stuff." However, he really *did* scatter the hits, inducing 12 ground outs and two double plays. He only walked two, which is pretty key for a guy giving up two hits an inning. Pretty straightforward fifth-starter material, and going 6 innings worked out okay.

3) In retrospect, perhaps he isn't ready after all

I'm not arguing that Fausto Carmona doesn't deserve a major-league spot or that he'll never be a good starter, but it's hard to argue with the facts: an ERA of 7.94, a WHIP of 1.59, and two crummy starts out of three. I love his groundball stuff, and he misses more bats than I've seen people give him credit for, but ... hey, he's not ready.

4) Ducks on the pond!

This was the first series where the Indians consistently showed a real inability to take advantage of having guys on base. Drawing seven walks Friday was the real

key to winning the game (especially given 8 hits: one RBI was on a walk), but we still left 8 on base. Twelve hits only produced 5 runs Saturday (6 LOB), and 8 more sat on the basepaths last night. (This doesn't even include the preposterous two baserunners eliminated in Outfest Sunday, see below) It's hard to get really worked up when the team is averaging over 6 runs a game, but each game was winnable with a few better plays, and leaving guys hung out to dry (yes, Aaron,

I mean you) doesn't help.

5) Perhaps the Phillies weren't so dumb after all

Well, okay, the Phillies are certainly dumb, but in the case of Jason Michaels, spotting him up against left-handers (like Koronka Friday) seems defensible. The man is slugging .228 against right-handed pitching. Two twenty eight! That's zero extra-base hits for those of you counting at home. I like

his ability to work a walk (although I am not crazy about his ability to work a strikeout). I like his ... um ... his ...

No! I hate everything about him! Why is this man in the two hole?! Why is this man making Manny Ramirez look fluid in left field?! Why does this man's hair aspire to mulletude?! I actually don't mind playing him, but not in the damned two hole. How

about the nine hole? He's that bad. Congratulations, Jason, you have made me ask for more playing time for Todd Hollandsworth. I will now gargle with toner fluid.

6) The proverbial win-win situation

If you try to send down Ramon Vazquez (for Lou Merloni, for

example), he might get claimed on waivers.Where is the downside here?

7) It is more important to look good than to feel good

But it is more important to *pitch* good than to

look
good. This is the lesson I am gleaning from Jeremy Guthrie: I really like that he can throw hard, and that his fastball seems to bore in on right-handers, and that he no longer

looks paralyzed on the mound. Wouldn't it be nice to have an outing in which he didn't give up a run, though? Seriously, three outings, zero scoreless. Slocum had two, for Pete's sake. (That makes

him pretty unusual on this staff.)

8) Bring me the head of the baserunning coach!

First and third, nobody out. Ground ball to third. Runner on third

caught in a rundown, tagged out, runner from first caught between second and third (between second and third! I will now move on to spraying whiteboard cleaner

into my eyes.), tagged out by CATCHER. Does this bear any resemblance to major-league baserunning? I never saw this in Little League,

although, admittedly, it was because our catcher was incapable of running past the pitcher's mound with his gear on.

It is also suboptimal to get doubled off

on a line drive ... in the bottom of the ninth ... down two runs ... with one out. I couldn't tell if there was a play on that got Sizemore doubled off, but either the coach

has to reconsider calling that play or tell Sizemore to activate more brain cells. Terrible way to end the game. These are hardly isolated incidents, though: there have

been a BUNCH of times when I literally had to watch the replay before I could believe what I read or saw.

9) Credit Where Credit Is Due

Dept.

Ramon Vazquez got two hits to raise his OPS to to .408.

For as much crap as I give Danny Graves, he has

had four scoreless outings in a row. Still hate the mullet.

10) Box Score Follies

8.89, 6.10, 4.82, 6.944.50, 0.00,

1.42, 3.12, 0.69, 1.80, 3.86

One of these lines is the ERAs of Colorado pitchers in a

game. The other string is the ERAs of Minnesota pitchers in a game.

Yes, the first is

Minnesota. (I'm not sure which string is more surprising. I know which I *like*

better.) BTW, kudos to Minnesota for their spectacular showing this weekend,

losing three to Detroit by a combined score of 33-1. Stellar!