That one felt good. Buff's back to analyze yesterdays thorough ass-whoopin' of the Twins. As usual, he hits on several topics, including CC's dominance, Victor's awakening, and Ron Gardenhire's ejection. If there is a better daily Indians column anywhere on the world wide web, I haven't seen it.

You *need* an off day after a shellacking like that. Who makes these schedules, anyway? Two days off because of a two-game series, so we can play every day next week including a four-game set with Chicago? Is three and three that hard?

1) Insert superlative here

Last time out, C.C. Sabathia spun a 3-hitter but gave up a run on a homer and walked a guy. Yesterday, Sabathia doubled the hit output, but cut out the homer, the run, the walk, and much of the suspense. In 102 pitches, he threw 76 strikes, to walk 0, strike out 8, and generally make the Twins look like toads.

In his last four starts, all Sabathia has been able to do is:

Go 8 innings twice and 9 twice.

He has yet to give up as many hits as IP.

Has not walked a second batter, and not a first batter in two of them

Thrown between 102 and 112 pitches

Struck out 4, 10, 9, and 8 hitters

In fact, for the season, Sabathia's ERA is 1.52

and his WHIP is 0.90. Eliminating the aborted Opening Day start, he has thrown 39 innings, given up 4 earned runs, 27 hits, and six walks. He has failed thus far to cure cancer, develop perpetual motion, or kick Jack Bauer's butt, but that's about all. Consider this: in Sabathia's last ten starts last season, he had one bad outing, one decent one, and 8 very good ones, including 7 in which he gave up 1 or 0 runs:

IP H R BB K6 7 1 1 67 8 2 2 58
3 1 2 5
6 6 3 3 7
7.1 3 0 1 7
9 4 1 0 10
6 4 1 5 7
8 5 0 0 8
5 7 5 3 5
8 5 0 2 9

I remember people talking about how

Sabathia had a good second half, but I didn't realize just how good. Without the 5-in-5 clunker against the Royals last year and the pulled-muscle-marred opening start, Sabathia has been ... well, an Ace.

I wrote this article (http://story.scout.com/a.z?s=149&p=2&c=230885) a couple years ago. Although its conclusions were true when written (check Sabathia's 2004 year-end stats), they sure seem to lack application now.

2) It helps to adjust the contrast

Not one Minnesota pitcher gave

up fewer than a hit an inning, or fewer than a RUN an inning, or had a K/BB ratio over 1.5 Only Dennis Reyes managed not to walk anyone, and it's hard to argue that his pitch to Casey Blake in the seventh with two out qualifies this as anything really positive.

3) Everybody hits!

And I mean it this time: every Indian got at least one hit. Six Indians reached base at least twice, although

one of them was Casey Blake, who only got to actually stand still on a base once, seeing as though his two hits were home runs. (Not very cheap ones, either). Even Aaron Boone got two hits ... and stole a base! CNN's website said nothing of burning skies or raining frogs, so I think it might be a typo.

4) A fast start raises all

boats, or something like that

Victor Martinez has not been hot. In fact, he has been not hot in the same way that liquid argon is not hot. Coming into the game, he had three hits since May 10, one in each of the games against Pittsburgh. So it was nice to see him come

to the plate in the first with two outs and two on ... and drive both guys home with a double. He tacked on two more hits to go 3-for-5 and double his post-May 9 hit total. Seriously, if this helps him get out of his slump, I'm all for it. The fact that Brad Radke's fastball is mostly theoretical at this

stage in his career has no bearing on the discussion. Anyway, after that hit, the Indians seemed to take a relaxed approach at the plate as they proceeded to pound Radke like end-stage Dave Burba.

5) "Clutch"

with a lower-case "c"

It's hard to call a hit in an 11-0 laugher a "clutch hit." However, it bears mentioning that 7 of the Tribe's 11 runs came with two outs, including the aforementioned

Martinez double and Blake's bomb off Reyes. Sizemore and Boone chipped in 2-out RBI as well. There's no earth-shattering conclusion to draw from this, but since leaving runners on base (we left 6 today:

any time you score twice as many runs as you leave runners on base, it's hard to complain about the ducks) has been an issue, it's nice to see some two-out hits.

6) You, you get nothing and like it

The bottom half (five through nine) of the Minnesota batting order: 1-for-17, 4 K, 0 BB, 0 R, 0 SB, 0 help. Sabathia had more to do with that than they did (they did the majority of the damage

Tuesday), but checking the lineup:

Cuddyer: .301

Morneau: .237

White: .195

Batista: .241

Castro: .231

You can argue slow starts. You can

argue defensive wizardry. You can argue the Flat Earth Theory for all I care: that's a bad offense, ladies and germs. By the way, of all the players to choose from to lead

off, Ron Gardenhire chose Lew Ford and his sparkling .224 AVG (OBP .308, but that's still bad ... he slugs .290, BTW). The two men who hit behind him? Punto

hits .290, while Redmond hits .422. Tuesday, it was Castillo's .314 and Mauer's .336. That's like cooking a nice pork loin, with some rosemary potatoes,

perhaps a little green beans almondine, and then tossing it into the cat's dish for your guest because you don't even have a bloody table to *set*. I can't

believe I advocated pursuing Lew Ford. Of course, I've seen people berate Mark Shapiro for not signing Rondell White, too. I feel better than *th*

em

at least.

7) I feel so broke up, I wanna go home

At least, that's the attitude I'm attributing to Ron Gardenhire, who

got tossed for arguing multiple times. I don't think he was really that upset with the umpiring (which did make mistakes, notably

Sabathia's dive at Punto), I think he was just tired of seeing his ass get kicked and preferred drinking beer in his office to watching

Carlos Silva's Magic Eight-Plus ERA once again.

8) Naked aggression

The Tribe sent three runners, two of whom

stole second off Radke and Redmond. Jason Michaels got caught, prompting the ESPN guy to call it "a big

caught stealing" when I watched the third inning. It was big, all right: it prevented us from having a

legitimate shot at winning by twelve. (In his defense, it seemed bigger at the time, but it was pretty obvious pretty

early that Brad Radke did not have his best stuff and Sabathia did.) I'm ambivalent about stolen bases: I lean

toward the stathead contention that the break-even point is as high as 75% success rate instead of the old 67%. On

the other hand, they suggest a certain willingness to *do* something that is out of character for this coaching staff,

so I'd hate to nip creativity like that in the bud. Plus it gives Grady more Face Time, and how can that be

bad?