Well, if there's a silver lining in a loss like this, it's that ... um ... it's ... er ... well ... who am I kidding, that one hurt. In today's B-List, Buff sings The Ballads of Jeremy Soboring and Jensen Boringis. He makes a suggestion on how the Indians should restructure their starting rotation. He talks about the abomination that was the Indians peformance at the plate with runners in scoring position. And talks about the Indians bench, which just isn't very good right now.

FINAL

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

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E

Brewers (36-29)

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1

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1

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3

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7

12

0

Indians (29-38)

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1

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2

5

10

0

W: Gallardo (7-3) L: Sowers (1-4)

Well, if there's a silver lining in a loss like this, it's that ... um ... it's ... er ... well ...

1) The Ballad of Jeremy Soboring

I'm tired of writing it, so it's hard to believe you aren't tired of reading it.

Jeremy Sowers was perfect through two innings!

Jeremy Sowers was excellent through three innings!

Jeremy Sowers was pretty good through four innings.

Jeremy Sowers was almost adequate through five innings and had to leave.

He even started nibbling early: each of the five hitters he faced in the 4th inning were started with a ball (2 started 2-0).

In the 5th, he gave up a hit to J.J. Hardy, which is difficult.

He walked Jason Kendall, which is ill-advised.

He threw 99 pitches in 5 innings, which is crappy.

I can hardly be bothered to work up a feeling stronger than "dispeptic," if that is, in fact, a feeling.

Here's what I want: Aaron Laffey has trouble getting through an order a third time, limiting his effectiveness as a starter and producing at least part of the rationalization for slotting him in the pen in the first place. He is pitching another rehab outing on Thursday. Jeremy Sowers has trouble getting through an order a third time, and isn't really all that great at getting through it a SECOND time. However, both men are actually quite good at getting through an order a first time, and often pretty

good at doing it a second.

So I want the rotation to be:

Lee
Pavano (for now)
Sowers/Laffey tandem start, 4 innings each
Huff
Ohka (eventually Westbrook)

Sowers takes a long time to warm up, whereas Laffey basically needs to stretch, so let Sowers start and pull him for Laffey as soon as he gives up a second baserunner in the 5th. (It will happen. T
rust me on this one.)

Or just let Laffey start the 5th.

Whatever.

This would save the bullpen an entire game on average, nearly two if you count Lee's normal 7-8 inning start.

Is this the best use of the pitchers? Is it better to have Tomo Ohka start than both Sowers and Laffey? Well ... I mean, I am not really a fan of having to DEPEND on Tomo Ohka ... but ... yeah. It *is* better.

Also, I want Sowers to watch more video and consult with a kinesthesiologist so that he can do a better Charles Nagy Face. It's really not very good yet.

2) The Ballad of Jensen Boringis

Blah blah blah Jensen Lewis.

Listen, I appreciate that in small doses, Jensen Lewis can be a valuable pitcher. And I acknowledge that one of the things that makes him valuable is his ability to absorb multiple innings.

But sending him out for a third inning brings to mind the bromide about the frequency with which one attends one's well.

Lewis gave up a run in the 6th on a double (Jensen Lewis Boring Fact #3: extra-base hits; see also "taterosity") and a single. He also struck out two hitters swinging (Jensen Lewis Boring Fact #4: but at least he has a good K rate).

He threw a very efficient 7th, with all three outs in the air (Jensen Lewis Boring Fact #2: works high in the zone).

But the first hitter of the 8th inning was the left-handed power hitter Prince Fielder, who runs smack into Boring Facts #1 and #3: Lewis fares very poorly against lefties.

And after that, you're making a second trip through the order: if Lewis were good at this, he'd be a starter.

Anyway, his 8th was terrible, and had he not done it, we could have won the game by doing no more than we did. And the only people surprised that he DID do it were Milwaukee Brewers, who could not believe he was out there.

3) Back on the Boring Horse

Blah blah blah Eric Wedge puts people into situations they failed in as quickly as possible. Gre at.
And to his credit, this works way more often than it doesn't.

So this is generally a good thing.

Raffy Perez was called in to face a left-handed hitter with a runner on base after receiving a chelating agent and a paper bag to breathe in. He promptly gave up a single ... but struck out Bill Hall (which, admittedly, is not unusual). Not bad.

And he was left in to face Fielder, who had victimized him the night before. He gave up another single, but he did get two more swinging strikeouts.

At least he threw strikes. Actually, at *most* he threw strikes. But he threw them nonetheless, and it was only somewhat exactly the same.

4) I hate boring ducks on the boring pond

The Indians hit a preposterous 0-for-14 with runners in scoring position until Travis Hafner hit a cosmetic homer in the 9th with a runner on second. This includes two innings with the bases loaded. In fact:

1st: bases loaded, 1 out, score 1 run on groundout
2nd: 1st and 2nd, 2 outs, score 0 runs on K
3rd: 1st and 2nd, 2 outs, score 0 runs on groundout
5th: bases loaded, 1 out, score 0 runs on K, FC
6th: 3rd, 1 out, score 1 run on groundout (yay!)
7th: 1st and 2nd, 1 out, score 0 runs on K, foul out on first pitch (great googly moogly)
8th: 2nd, 1 out: score 0 runs on fly out, ground out

Not only did we not get HITS, we didn't even ADVANCE THE GODDAM RUNNERS most of the time. I mean, that's just piss-poor.

Now, in our defense, Chris Gimenez went 0-for-2 with one of those Ks, and Ben Francisco followed him in the lineup with an 0-for-3. Gimenez has the mitigating factor that he is a raw rookie, and Francisco has the mitigating factor that he is a schmoe.

5) The hidden, yet boring, game

With one out and runners on first and second in the 7th, Gimenez was spared the ignominy of Francisco-ing and was pinch-hit for. Okay, I don't mind that.

Gimenez is a rookie and is hitting .200, which means that since he started hot, he's been very bad lately.

By all means, we need a baserunner there.

Our choices:

Jhonny Peralta, punitively benched and riddled with fish parasites
Kelly Shoppach, hitting .207 (but with a .340 OBP, so he has that going for him, which is nice)
Trevor Crowe, hitting .175/.266/.228 and hardly distinguishable from Tony Graffanino
Jamey Carroll, hitting .300/.398/.363

So it's absolutely the right move to send Carroll to the plate: he can hit, and the others either cannot or are being punished and may not actually be awake.

Note two things about this:

a) The only person capable of hitting left-handed is Crowe, who is only "capable" in the sense that he has batted left-handed before, rather than the sense of being actually capable of getting a hit under that circumstance
b) Jamey Carroll is the best hitter by a very, very large margin

That's a bad bench. And it doesn't take into account that the following players were already in the lineup: Luis Valbuena (hitting .191, sub-.300 OBP), Josh Barfield (ostensibly a backup), Chris Gimenez (sub-.300 OBP), and Ben Francisco (sub-.300 OBP).

Actually, that's not boring. That's horrifying.

6) Credit Where Credit Is Due Dept.

I mention Josh Barfield, and I have to say: I did not think much of him as a player, and he has generally been awful in his times in Cleveland, but the man's hitting .412 and has scored 4 runs in 17 plate appearances (the confound being that he sometimes pinch-runs). He never complains and he is doing a fine job in a 24th Guy sort of way.

Nice going, Josh.

(Barfield got a hit a scored a run. He also whiffed twice and has not drawn a major-league walk in 2009, but the man's got 17 plate appearances. I'd prolly be up there swinging, too.)

7) Pronk smash!

After a homer Monday night on a swing that looked about as ugly and poor as a home runs swing has ever looked, Travis Hafner hit another home run last night to raise his season total to 7 and his SLG on the season to .587. He's likely not good for three games in a row, but those are nice numbers.

Here's the thing, though: I'm no scout, but it looks *very* much like Hafner is guessing at the plate. I think he's still strong enough to lift a ball, but his shoulder is NOT strong enough to generate enough bat speed to catch up to a fastball he wasn't looking for. I

could be wrong: so far, I'll take a .283/.383/.587 line from Hafner this season.

(He actually has a higher OPS than Victor Martinez, albeit in a third of the plate appearances.)

8) Post Hoc Hero

Luis Valbuena, hitting .191 and getting on base at a .270 clip, led off last night and promptly rewarded the decision with a pair of doubles, giving him 10 for the season, as many as Shin-Soo Choo. (I had no idea he had 10 doubles.)

I still think the decision to have him lead off was weird, but ... hey, it worked.

9) Dee-fense!

Mike Cameron made a wonderful running catch of Mark DeRosa's blast to the center field wall. Any other part of the ballpark and that ball is gone: even there, it was a nice catch and saved a run (if not more).

Prince Fielder robbed Ryan Garko of a single with a nice diving stop. Since Hafner homered immediately thereafter, this saved a run (if not more).

Ben Francisco cleverly trapped a ball hit by Cameron over his head against the wall, then fumbled it further trying to get the ball to the infield. Cameron was credited with a triple on the play, and Prince Fielder, a graduate of the Matt Stairs Conditioning Program, scored from FIRST BASE. This saved negative one run (if not fewer).

We lost by two runs.