The Indians completed their anti-sweep of the Tigers yesterday as a three-run seventh couldn't make up for an execrable tenth. In today's B-List, Buff tells us that Fausto Carmona pitched better than his final numbers, that Eric Wedge managed his bullpen like a tasered monkey, that Shin-Soo Choo is having an excellent season, and that Kelly Shoppach was more productive than a full third of the Cleveland lineup.

FINAL	1	2	
Indians (58-75)	0	0	0	0
Tigers (72-61)	1	0	0	0

W: Miner (6-4) L: R. Perez (4-3)

Not a good day for left-handed relief pitching.

1) Deceptive appearances

You can look at the beginning of Fausto Carmona's outing and convince yourself that he had another lousy outing marred by poor command: he gave up a leadoff homer to Curtis Granderson, started 4 of 5 hitters with a first-pitch ball, threw two balls to three of the hitters, gave up two hits, and one run.

And you can look at the end of Carmona's outing and conclude largely the same thing: after walking two hitters with one out on five pitches each, including Adam Everett, he of the .295 OBP, he grooved a pitch to Clete Thomas that Thomas punished into a two-run triple to end Carmona's day with only 55 strikes in 100

pitches, with 5 walks and 3 runs in 6 1/3 innings. Two of his four hits allowed were for extra-bases, and those two hits resulted in all three runs he allowed.

The problem with this simplistic analysis is that it overlooked the fact that in between, Carmona was nearly brilliant. And realistically, except for the one terrible pitch to Thomas, which will be addressed in more detail later, Carmona should have won the game, even with a paltry three runs of support.

Consider this: after a four-pitch walk to Everett in the 2nd, Carmona retired the next 8 hitters in a row before walking Everett as second time. From the time he gave up a two-out single in the second until Thomas' triple in the SEVENTH, Carmona did not allow a single hit, and only allowed five baserunners on four walks and a hit batsman. Three of the walks were issued to Everett for some unknown reason.

Yes, Carmona seriously lacked command, but mostly just to Adam Everett. Otherwise, he thoroughly throttled the Tigers' lineup except for one bad pitch to Thomas (Granderson seemed to hit a pretty good pitch, more a good piece of hitting than bad pitching; I mean, Curtis Granderson is pretty good).

I can take some measure of encouragement from this outing: it wasn't a great performance, because no outing with 5 walks can be considered "great." But Carmona flashed very good stuff yesterday, and took it into the 7th with only 1 run on 3 hits (and 3 walks, for a WHIP of 1.00 through 6 IP).

2) Managerial Head-Scratchers

One of the striking things about the Detroit lineup is the high percentage of right-handed hitters: Detroit's four most-productive regulars are all right-handed (Miguel Cabrera, Magglio Ordonez, Placido Polanco, Ryan Raburn), and at the end of yesterday's game, these four gentlemen (followed by less-productive but still-right-handed Brandon Inge) were hitting consecutively in the 10th inning (Raburn, Cabrera, Ordonez, Polanco).

So, in a day game after a night game in which Raffy Perez pitched, Perez was called out for the 10th.

Here is a partial list of pitchers who did NOT pitch in the previous game:

Joe Smiff
Jen Lewis
Jess Todd
Kerry Wood

Now, Wood, may be nursing a sore shoulder. This may explain my lack of impetus to concoct more Completely False Statements. But Raffy Perez not only pitched the previous game, **he pitched the game before THAT**
. This was using Raffy in three straight games, while Smiff ... Smiff last pitched on August 29th

... and is right-handed ... and has an ERA that is nearly FOUR RUNS BETTER than Raffy Perez.

Now, I wouldn't have been very sanguine about seeing Lewis or Todd out there against the Tigers' best hitters. But I would have had more confidence in them that the left-handed Perez pitching for a third consecutive day.

Oddly enough, I had just the opposite complaint in the 7th. Fausto had certainly done a great job getting TO the 7th, but IN the 7th, he

walked two straight guys on 10 pitches total and the left-handed Thomas at the plate.
Left-hander Tony Sipp was obviously warming up: Thomas was Carmona's last hitter, and Sipp relieved him. At that point, you have to send the trainer out or talk about the weather or walk reeeeeeeally slowly to the mound and call Sipp in to face Thomas (the 100-point difference in his platoon split is entirely SLG, which would still have come in handy with runners on base). Carmona has clearly lost what little command he had and you've got a lefty in the pen:
bring him in
! Golly.

3) By the way

Sipp faced three hitters.

He struck out Raburn swinging.

He intentionally walked Miguel Cabrera (which is still prudent).

Then he struck out Ordonez swinging.

I like Tony Sipp.

4) Not to be outdone by much

Chris Perez struck out 3 of the six hitters he

faced, two of them swinging.

5) Box Score Follies

One of the hitters Chris Perez struck out was Adam Everett, meaning that in four trips to the plate, Everett did not produce a fair ball. Carmona walked him thrice and Perez struck him out. He did have three foul balls, but realistically, Adam Everett's bat was completely superfluous. (It always has been.)

6) Squander Ball

The first batter of the game, Grady Sizemore, reached base on a walk. He was immediately erased on a double-play grounder off the bat of Jamey Carroll.

Carroll again gunked up a rally in the third, bouncing into a force play with runners on first and second, but at least it wasn't a double play.

The Tribe saved that for the fifth, when with runners on the corners and one out, the next hitter grounded into a 4-6-3 double play to end the inning. The hitter? Grady Sizemore.

A full circle of squander!

7) Wheels in Theory and Practice

Michael Brantley is fast. He reached in the third inning on a bunt single, promptly stole second base, and reached third on a passed ball. Speed is a useful weapon, and Brantley appears to use it well.

Except when everyone knows it's coming: Brantley walked with one out in the 9th, but failed to notice that Gerald Laird had replaced Alex Avila behind the plate and that everyone within sixty miles of Comerica Park knew he was going to try to steal, and

was thus gunned down at second to largely end the threat.

I like Brantley. He has exceptional bat control in the strike zone and excellent strike zone judgement as well. His single was a good piece of opposite-field hitting, and his bunt single was very clean. Tim Raines, he is not.

8) An oasis of clutch in a sea of squander

I was thoroughly convinced that Jamey

Carroll had capped off an astoundingly-bad day at the plate with a two-out groundout to reliver Fu-Te Ni (Ni!), but Ni couldn't handle it and Carroll beat it out for an "infield single." After this, Asdrubal Cabrera lined a 1-2 pitch to center for an RBI single, bringing lefty Shin-Soo Choo to the plate.

I'm not sure if this can truly be termed a "breakout" season for Choo: I think that might have been last season. But the fact is, Choo has gotten to play every day and has a fine .302/.396/.476 line on the season. Among qualifying right fielders, Choo sports the 4th-best AVG in the majors and the 7

th

-best OPS, ahead of such players as Ichiro Suzuki, Nick Swisher, and Nick Markakis. And a great deal of his success is attributable to his newfound ability to hit left-handed pitching: unsurprisingly, he's still better against righties, but in 180-odd plate appearances against lefties, Choo hits a respectable .275/.376/.458, which alone would make him the best Cleveland corner outfielder since ... um ... well, Casey Blake 2006?

(Remarkably, according to Baseball Prospectus, projected to a 162-game season, Choo's 8.3 WARP3 ranks 6th

in the A.L., and 4th amongst position players.)

Anyway, against the left-handed Ni (Ni!), Choo fouled off an 0-2 pitch, took two pitches out of the strike zone, then laced a two-run game-tying double to the wall in right. He makes $420,300.

9) Box Score Follies II

Kelly Shoppach had more hits than Jhonny Peralta, Matt LaPorta, and Andy Marte combined. He also had more extra-base hits than Jhonny Peralta, Matt LaPorta, and Andy Marte combined.

Kelly Shoppach ALSO had more WALKS than Jhonny Peralta, Matt LaPorta, and Andy Marte combined.

Kelly Shoppach scored more runs

than Jhonny Peralta, Matt LaPorta, and Andy Marte combined.

Yay, Kelly Shoppach!

(Thumper Rule invoked.)