In todays B-List, Buff breaks down yesterday's throttling of the Tigers. Among the highlights were a Casey Blake inside the park homer, the new look Tribe bullpen, and hopefully the beginning of the end for Kenny Rogers.

In two games, the finest starting pitching performance was by Jeremy Bonderman, the only pitcher to manage to give up fewer runs than innings pitched. With 4 runs in 5 IP, Bonderman's series ERA of 7.20 gives you an idea of just how tremendous the starting pitching has been. Fortunately, the relief pitching for both teams has been ... well, really shitty, actually, with one exception.

As Warner Wolf would bellow, let's go to the videotape!

1) Refining the Paul Byrd Theory

Here, by "refine," I mean "completely defenestrate." My theory is nonsense. I got nothin'.

Seriously, what can you say here? In the first inning, Byrd started three of the four batters off with a pitch out of the strike zone, and Ivan Rodriguez actually took a pitch. After the confetti stopped dropping and the trumpet blare was cut to a bar minimum, Pudge grounded out harmlessly and Byrd's first inning was scoreless, something novel for Detroit of late.

In the second inning, Byrd's first 18 pitches featured ONE ball. Seventeen strikes in eighteen pitches! The very formula for success! Unless the balls end up over the fence! That is not as successful as one might hope for! (What is this with the Brandon Inge Show?)

In the third inning, Byrd threw 8 strikes and 1 ball in a perfect inning. Back on track!

Yes, on the track to Showersville: 10 strikes, 1 ball, 4 runs, one hook. Apparently there is a difference between "throwing strikes" and, to borrow from Walt "Haiku Master" Svirsky, "tossing gravy-dripping slop."

I ... I have to think that there's something more to Paul Byrd than just throwing strikes. Like "don't suck" or something.

2) A veritable conga line

Was that a sweet first inning or what? The first seven guys score, Sizemore and Michaels both reach base twice in the inning, and it's Jhonny Peralta who got the big hit that cleared the

(loaded) bases. As Jim Leyland said after the game, Kenny Rogers' problem was that he threw too well or too poorly: that is, the strikes were hittable in the middle of the plate, and the balls were, well, out of the strike zone and thus harmless. In a sense, Rogers' problem was that he threw strikes and balls: since there's no third option, that bodes ill for Mister Rogers.

My favorite stat of the inning: Sizemore, Hafner, and Blake all walked ... with 2 strikes on them. Hafner had to foul a couple off to work the walk. Rogers threw 48 pitches in one inning.

3) The tippy-top of the order

Jason Michaels and Grady Sizemore did their part to "set the table" by going 6-for-7 with 3 walks. Sizemore made the only out, although he was double off on the basepaths. However, he did hit a triple and remains Grady Sizemore, so it's hard to get too upset.

For those of you counting at home, this means the pair reached base 9 times. They scored 4 runs. Sigh.

4) The soggy middle of the order

Travis Hafner continues to show why he is no All-Star, going hitless in 5 plate appearances. Sure, he walked twice and scored a run, but he's no Paul Konerko, that's all I'm saying. (Yes, that's sarcasm.)

Otherwise, it's hard to argue with Vic's 2-for-5 (2 R, 2 RBI) and Casey's 2-for-4 with a walk (2 R, 3 RBI). It's just that leaving things for Aaron Boone and Joltin' Joe Inglett to clean up is prolly not the very best strategy.

5) The Fairness Doctrine in Action

Given that I wouldn't credit Ramon Vazquez for his home run, perhaps this should be the Fairness Doctrine Inaction. Mea pulpo (*), or something like that.

I have certainly given Chinless Davis enough grief over the years, but his performance last night was tremendous and timely. Detroit had closed to within 1 run (8-7), and to lose a game in which you have a 7-run FIRST-inning lead has to be pretty demoralizing. Instead, Davis came in, tossed three scoreless innings, including inducing a double play to erase Byrd's last baserunner, and allowed the Indians to pull away. He was efficient (34 pitches), effective (2 hits, zero walks and runs), and statistically aesthetic (5:2 GB:FB ratio, 2 K). Nice outing by Davis.

6) I like this guy!

Did I know Brian Sikorski before he arrived? Of course not. Let's be serious. We got the man from San Diego, which only theoretically exists, and his stock photo is of him in a Texas Rangers hat ... three years ago. Where is my picture of him as a Ham Fighter or Carp or

whatever he was in Japan? (Does any league have better mascots than the Japanese Baseball League? MLS could learn something here.)

Since arriving, Brian Sikorski has thrown 5 1/3 innings, given up two hits, struck out NINE, and has never thrown an inning without a strikeout in it. Sure, his K/9 went down from 18.9 to 15.2. What does this guy throw? A gyroball? His repetoire is listed as fastball, slider, change-up, "other." He has no curveball.

Who the hell cares? This is the guy I thought Raffy Betancourt was. Come to think of it, so was Raffy Betancourt. Anyway, I like this guy! As of July 26!

7) Casey Blake, Speed Demon

In a game in which two Cleveland players hit triples (Sizemore, Inglett (his second: maybe he is legitimately fast?)), the hit-and-run award ends up going to Casey Blake, who managed to round the bases on a deep drive to center after Curtis Granderson hit the wall awkwardly. I like how Travis Hafner told him after the game that a self-respecting power-hitter would have stopped at third. Somehow, I believe Hafner would have (been) stopped at third.

Sure, he made an error and left two guys in scoring position, but the man hit an inside-the-park home run! Give it up, people!

8) Yes, I played too, and I didn't even get a hat

Kelly Shoppach was the only Cleveland player not to reach base. Not only did he not reach base, but he whiffed three of his five times at the plate. Magglio Ordonez doesn't have to fork over the Sombrero, but that's still a forgettable day at the plate, made all the more forgettable because it made no difference whatsoever. We forget you, good ol' Whats-yer-name!

9) Obligatory Mention

Fausto Carmona looked good in a perfect ninth. With a five-run lead, it's hard to draw much of a conclusion about his closing ability, but it was a nice inning anyway.

(*) technically, "my octopus." I'm not apologizing for Ramon Vazquez needling.