The Indians were blanked by a superior performance by Tigers' starter Justin Verlander, and today's B-List has hardly anything to say about it. I mean, what is there to say? Justin Verlander was really, really good.

The Indians offense is really, really bad.

The confluence of the two produced the expected result.

Sure, there was some no-hit drama, but otherwise, is anyone really surprised that the really good pitcher shut down the really bad offense?

Buff sure wasn't.

Wasn't real happy, either.

FINAL

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Tigers (37-30)

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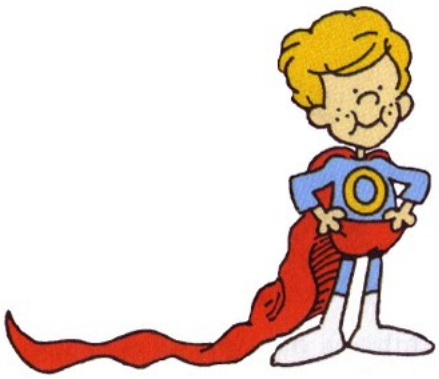
W: Verlander (8-3) L: Masterson (5-5)

Shouldn't a near no-hitter take less than 2:24 to play?



0) Administrative Note

This is a short column because of time pressure and also content pressure. I apologize in advance, or, since you're reading it now, in real time.

1) An Inning of Crap™ with an assist

It's hard to argue that Justin Masterson pitched really well, especially when juxtaposed against a performance that really WAS very good. He walked two guys in the first inning. He contributed to giving up two steals in the first two innings.

His third inning was borderline atrocious.

He walked 5 guys in 6 1/3 innings and threw 58 strikes against 51 balls, a really lousy ratio.

He started a pitiful 12 of 32 batters with a first-pitch strike.

He only induced 5 swings-and-misses in nearly 110 pitches.

His GO:FO ratio was a "backwards" 6:9, extremely unusual for Masterson.

Still, it's worth noting that in the 4th through 6th innings, Masterson allowed only 2 baserunners, and one was a walk to Miggy Cabrera, which is one of the more-warranted pitching approaches available to a major-league pitcher. He left the game in the 7th after consecutive singles, but those singles came off the bats of Cabrera and Victor Martinez, two of the better (in Miggy's case, one of the BEST) hitters in the American League.

And it's plausible to say that he should have escaped the third inning (his **Inning of Crap™**) while yielding only one run.

After a leadoff single to Austin Jackson, Masterson got Don Kelly to hit a popup to second: this may or may not have been something that could have caught the speedy Jackson leaning, but what it ended UP being was a *de facto* single as Orly Cabrera butchered the play. After that, a bloop single, a sac fly, a walk to Martinez, a single by Andy Dirks, and another sac fly gave Detroit an insurmountable 3-0 lead.

I guess what I take some encouragement from is that even when Masterson doesn't have his best command (*not his best? How about "borderline atrocious?"*) and isn't able to put guys away, opponents still rarely simply "tee off" on him.

The Tigers didn't produce a single extra-base hit, and if not for a career day by Dirks, Masterson would have had a more-aesthetic Quality Start: as it is, because two of the runs were unearned, Masterson ends up with a Quality Start anyway.

Again, this is not to say that Masterson pitched exceedingly well or "deserved to win." Boy, howdy, did he not "deserve to win" against Verlander's performance.

But this is hardly the type of disastrous outing I expect, say, tonight from Fausto Carmona, or anything we've gotten from Josh Tomlin in recent weeks.

2) Milestone Alert

Cleveland's first hit of the game was notable for being the first hit off Verlander, but was even more notable in that it was Orlando Cabrera's 2000th hit of his career. For as much play as Derek Jeter's 3000th hit is getting, and deservedly so, 2000 hits is still a heckuva lot of hits.

I mean, we're not talking Hall of Fame or some gold plaque or anything, but really, 2000 hits is a real, notable accomplishment.

Consider it this way: 200 hits is a spectacular season. Yes, yes, I get that 200 singles is not as valuable as plonkity plonk plonk, but 200 hits is a lot of hits.

If Jeter did this FIFTEEN TIMES IN A ROW, he'd have 3000 hits.

Well, 150 hits is a good season. And if you get 150 hits for THIRTEEN STRAIGHT SEASONS, you STILL don't have 2000 hits. So if you climb down from the stratosphere of the Very Best Players Ever and consider only what is Pretty Darn Amazing, Orlando Cabrera's 2000 hits is pretty darn amazing.

Well done, Orly.

3) Contractual Obligation

Raffy Perez was not able to deflect the juggernaut that is Andy Dirks, and thus gave up the last of Justin Masterson's runs, but he did get the next hitter to ground into a double play, so I consider it a relatively successful outing.

Joe Smiff's outing smacked of ineptitude and farce, but it was scoreless, so he has that going for him, which is nice. (Giving up three hits in an inning is not good relief pitching.)

4) Terror on the basepaths!

What Casper Wells was thinking on that play, trying to get from first to third on an infield single to short, is anyone's guess. That was no more comprehensible than "Liquid Sky" or "Cthulhu f'thagn."

5) Offensive star

Carlos Santana reached base twice, once by being hit by a pitch, and a second time by lining

an opposite-field single.

The rest of the team also reached base twice.

6) Credit Where Credit is Due Dept.

Justin Verlander was awesome.

If you’re wondering what has happened to Verlander in recent years:

2007: Steve announces Verlander is His Favorite Player

2007 ERA: 3.66
2008 ERA: 4.84

2008: Steve shifts Favorite Player designation to Jonathon Penisbon
2009 ERA: 3.45
2010 ERA: 3.37
2011 ERA: 2.66

In this vein, I am now announcing that My Favorite Player is Max Scherzer. Huzzah!