At 70-82, the Indians have just ten games left in their season, which means a much needed rest for Buff (and Indians fans alike) is right around the corner. The teams late season swoon continued last night ... and Buff hits on that, CC's outing, Andrew Brown's lack of control, and a rare Kelly Shoppach sighting in todays edition of The B-List.

This is the way the season ends Not with a bang but a whimper. -- B.S. Eliot, "The Wedgy Men"

1) Composure in theory and practice

One of the most memorable scenes this season featured C.C. Sabathia disintegrating when his defense played preposterously and he admitted to "giving up." I always thought that was fine for him to admit, because it was honest and a natural human reaction. I might ask more of a professional athlete, but probably not more than Sabathia asks of himself. It was one game, and didn't become a trend, so I found his candor refreshing and, in a sense, life-affirming: even professionals have lapses, and it reminds us that the game is played by men, not machines.

It's also natural, though, to have a heightened awareness of this episode whenever Sabathia faces adversity. Sabathia has pitched very well since the incident, and this season as a whole, but I don't think there's an attentive Cleveland fan that doesn't wonder whenever Sabathia gets in a jam and his defense plays poorly if it won't be "deja vu all over again."

The answer, of course, is, "Yes and no." Sabathia sailed through the first three innings, giving up 2 hits, a walk, and a pointless stolen base. Staked to a 1-0 lead in the third, he retired the A's in order, striking out Milton Bradley swinging for his 4th K (3rd swinging). To that point, he had more swinging stirkes than foul balls (7 to 6), so he looked like he had The Good Stuff.

In the 4th, he walked Frank Thomas, which is nothing to write home about, as Thomas has drawn nine trillion walks in his career. Then Jay Payton grounded one back to the box, and Sabathia whirled and tossed the ball into center field for an error. The next batter, Nick Swisher, loaded the bases when Sabathia hit him in the foot (on an 0-1 count).

At this point, many fans were wondering if this was Buddhist monk territory. Sabathia gave up a sac fly, gave up a (two-strike, after three two-strike pitchers were fouled off) single to Scutaro,

and induced a foul out, but gave up a two-run single to Jason Kendall to fall behind 4-1. Still, he got Kielty out and threw a perfect 9-pitch 5th, so in that regard, I'd have to say that Sabathia's composure was just fine, and it was more a nice piece of (two-strike, after fouling off four two-strike pitches) hitting by Kendall that was the real culprit.

Now, the single to Scutaro was really a ground ball off Jhonny Peralta's glove, where a combination of bad positioning, slow reaction, and iron handedness contributed to the run-scoring hit. But if this bothered Sabathia, there was no tangible manifestation: as I say, he got the next guy out and Kendall just did a good job. Sabathia did fall apart in the 6th, but that seems a whole lot more like simple ineptness than any significant lack of composure.

2) Speaking of *deja vu*

Rich Harden made what amounted to a "rehab start," going 3 innings and throwing 55 pitches. He was on a strict 60-pitch limit, so everyone knew up front this would be the case.

He looked pretty good.

Harden struck out seven Indians, including five in a row (last out of the first, side in second, leadoff in the third), meaning that it was hard to tell if last night's game was simply continuing. He gave up two hits, although one was a solo shot to Sizemore. With Liriano almost certain to not pitch in the playoffs, the A's might have the scariest rotation if this is the Real Rich Harden.

By the way, except for Jay WitaSUCK, the ERAs of the Oakland pitchers used last night: 3.79, 2.87, 3.33, 2.12., 2.81, 2.83, meaning that ostensibly, Harden was the WORST PITCHER the A's threw last night. The bullpen struck out another 6 Indians over the final 6 frames.

3) Requiem for the Under Bussed

My prescription for Less Brian Sikorski has more to do with my view of his role next year (as a non-Cleveland Indian) than due to any incredible ineptitude on his part: Sikorski's not terrible. His K-rate is really quite good: it's just that he's given up 8 HR in only 30 innings, which is completely ridiculous. His ERA of 5.17 isn't good, and the homers are the root cause.

Still Sikorski has something on the ball, and he showed it yesterday: although he did give up one of Sabathia's runs on a walk and a single, he proceeded to strike out Thomas and Jay Payton swinging with the bases loaded. If he could harness the strikeout power with something that didn't involve yielding a slugging percentage hovering around FIVE EIGHTY, he'd actually be a valuable guy.

He'd look good in a Nationals uni, IMO.

4) I throw gas! I just don't know where!

Andrew Brown bookended a walk and a flyout with two swinging Ks in a hitless, scoreless inning of work. Brown threw 11 of his 19 pitches for strikes, meaning that was was more

accurate than his last outing.

Can we buy this guy some contact lenses? Or teach him which shape a pentagon is? Maybe stop buttering his hands before he gets to the mound? What is it with this guy's control?

5) A tiny data point for next season

Matt Miller has made an impressive return from sproing surgery, pitching a scoreless ninth inning in which the single he yielded was erased on a double play.

More interesting to me, the double play was induced to Milton Bradley, batting left-handed against the side-arming Miller. It's always been taken as conventional wisdom that Miller's delivery would make it hard for him to consistenly retire left-handed hitters, but in the pre-season, I noted that his stats show that he can get lefties out, too. This means that Miller could have an extended role next season rather than being the "matchup righty," a guy who could pitch whole innings regardless of batting order. (Not that he wasn't used that way before, but data are good, y'know?) I actually feel more confident with Miller on the hill than Cabrera or Mastny, especially since Miller has been better at supressing the longball.

6) Return of the doughnut

5 and 6 hitters Casey Blake and Jhonny Peralta combined to strike out 5 times and walk once in 8 hitless plate appearances. Each left a runner in scoring position to end an inning.

Not to be outdone, cleanup hitter Ryan Garko left THREE in scoring position to end innings, although he did go 2-for-5 with an RBI, so he's sort of the inner edge of the doughnut rather than part of the hole.

In all, the Indians left 9 of their 13 baserunners stranded; Oakland stranded 8 of their 15.

7) Kelly Shoppach sighting!

It was a day game after a night game, after all. Shoppach managed a hit in four trips to the plate, but also whiffed twice and allowed Jason Kendall to steal second.

By the way, Victor Martinez, clearly wearing down (*), only went 2-for-4 with a walk and a double. Forget I said anything.

(*) Not