



The Tribe is in engaged in interleague play after taking two of three from Detroit earlier in the week and Cleveland's favorite son, LeBron James, dominated games six and seven of the NBA Eastern Conference Finals to propel the Heat back into the Finals for the second season in a row. Other than that? There was white collar robbery in a boxing ring and Kent State was on the precipice of advancing to the College Freaking World Series. It's the Weekend Wrap.

Come What May (in June, July, August)

Newsflash!!! This Tribe team is flawed!!

Also- The AL Central can still be theirs!!

I'm going to take a new approach and stop complaining about the Indians uneven play during the start to 2012. Not because it's not annoying to me but more so because it's who they are. The pitching staff is as Jekyll and Hyde as the hitters and that's just the way it's going to be. There's not talent seeping from every position on the club. There's not shut down aces at any spot in the rotation.

That's not this team.

This team has a few solid hitters, some kids with some potential and some veteran role players who will give you what you need one day and fail the next. That's why role players aren't every

day players to begin with. This isn't the Yankees lineup that can ride Jeter and A-Rod when Cano and Teixeira are struggling. This isn't the Phillies who can absorb the loss of Roy Halladay with the presence of Cliff Lee and Cole Hamels.

It's a team that's going to have its ups and down because the talent is limited and there are guys figuring the game and themselves out while facing major league hitters and pitching. I think if we come to grips with what this team is we can stop beating them and ourselves up for what they aren't. They're not going to run away and hide in the division. They're not going to rattle off 14 straight wins. They're going to play hard and get enough contribution from guys like Asdrubal Cabrera and Shin Soo Choo, while watching Jason Kipnis and Lonnie Chisenhall develop, to scare the crap out of the rest of the AL Central and potentially win the division.

They'll lose 4 of 6 to the Twins and Royals because they're closer to being the Twins and Royals than they are to being the Rangers or the Dodgers. They'll sweep the Tigers or take two of three from the Rangers as they did earlier because they have some potential and some talent and there will be days when it plays bigger than others.

Just ride the wave. Get into this team and give them some credit for the way they approach every game. They are a good group to root for and they come to the park every day as prepared as they can be. You can't ask anything more of a team once it's actually set and rosters are established. If you want to complain that they ignore big dollar talent you have every right. But that's an argument for the offseason or maybe the trade deadline if they're still contending. Consider even then, *though, that they may be contending.*

Kind of hard to crack on the front office for building a team contending at the All Star break or trade deadline, no?

If nothing else go down and watch guys like Kipnis and Vinnie Pestano perform. You're watching two younger guys who are establishing themselves among the very best at their positions. Asdrubal is probably already in that boat and Carlos Santana can get there too. Chris Perez is having a huge year and Choo is also having resurgence after a rotten 2011. Take some solace that there is a solid nucleus that's in the lineup every night. Then let the chips fall where they may.

New Narrative Necessary

I hate the word 'narrative' as I've mentioned more than once here. It sounds pompous, arrogant, hipster and completely and fully 'Tool'. It's surpassed only by the word 'meme' at the top of my personal hate list. It's the story or the description. If you're replacing one word with another word you're trying too hard. A meme is an idea, a behavior, a style. You can say those words without sounding pompous.

But as it concerns LeBron James we probably need to change how we perceive him, what we think of him and how we write about the guy. In other words, we need a new narrative.

James just came off perhaps two of the more dominating back-to-back Game 6 and Game 7 performances of recent memory and he did it in the Conference Finals with the Heat's season and, probably, their future in the balance.

It's more than fair to criticize James. He asks for it with the way he presents himself to the world. When you accept and adopt "The Chosen One" and "The King" as monikers and tattoo them across your body you're asking for people to look at you. When you constantly refer to yourself in the third person you ask people to look at you. When you talk about just always going out there and performing 'at a high level' you invite people to remind you when you don't. When you have a personal biographer in Brian Windhorst (which is what Windhorst is right now for all intents and purposes) and you have a team of pilot fish and hangers-on making excuses for you and running PR interference for you, you're going to get blasted when you come up short.

James has come up short in the past. With the Cavaliers and with the Heat.

But he didn't come up short in the Conference Finals. Not even close. James took the heat on his wide shoulders and drove them to two must-have wins against the Celtics in the final two games of that series.

He was brilliant. He was dominant. He did what he's capable of doing every single night on the

basketball court. To say anything less is being less than honest and less than credible.

Now, for an encore, all he has to do is exactly that again for four more Heat wins.

Personally I'd have been more than fine with a tired, overmatched, old Celtics team going against OKC in the Finals because it would have meant turmoil for James and the Heat. I am not ashamed to say I rooted (and will root) against LeBron again starting Tuesday night. But there is also the basketball fan in me that is completely thrilled to have the opportunity to watch James, Dwyane Wade and Chris Bosh face off against Kevin Durant, Russell Westbrook and James Harden, et al.

I've come to peace with the fact that James and the Heat getting LeBron his ring is simply a matter of time. Despite how we feel about LBJ as a person he's too good a player on too good a team to never win a title. It's going to happen.

Just not this year.

I think that Westbrook is going to be the difference against the Heat in the finals. Mario Chalmers and the Heat bench bunch can't play at the level Westbrook plays, not at the same pace or with the same ability to dominate the game. The Thunder is hungry, young and immensely talented. They can run with James and Wade and they showed the ability to adjust in the series with San Antonio t put themselves in the best possible position. Their Finals inexperience concerns me and the Thunder's young nucleus can implode for brief moments on the court but I think they get it done in the Finals and deprive James of his championship in either 6 or 7 games.

Caveat Emptor

I must say first off that I didn't watch the Manny Pacquiao/Tim Bradley fight on PPV Saturday night. You know why I didn't buy the PPV of Manny Pacquiao/Tim Bradley Saturday night? Because boxing is a scandalous, corrupt sport run by organized criminals who think nothing of stepping on the boxers or boxing fans to make as much money as they can.

Boxing, in other words, is kind of like the Browns for me: I refuse to allow you to make me feel like an idiot for buying your products or watching your events forever. I stopped buying PPVs when a half dozen boxing associations all showed their true side and began offering up eyebrow-bending results at hair-raising prices. It took me far longer to wake up regarding the Browns but I'm okay with not shelling out \$50 for bullshit boxing events that are scored by minions of the men who benefit from decisions going their way just as I'm okay not spending \$100+ for two seats to the shit show down at CBS this season.

There's not a boxing fan out there reading this who would argue that there is corruption and shady dealings that go into setting up fights and officiating them. It happens regularly. If you buy the PPV then shame on you for doing knowing there's a really solid shot that something like this can and may happen.

It's the same with horse racing. It's a novelty sport to many of us but there are billions of dollars wrapped up in it from a wagering and breeding standpoint. Some of these breeders would raffle off their own children to strengthen their stables and their holdings. They'd certainly dope up an animal to enhance its performance and to increase the odds the animal wins, makes tons of money and establishes stud fees that guarantee millions more for two more decades.

You think "I'll Have Another" was fine Thursday and then retired Friday because of tendonitis? Tendonitis developed overnight to the point to the point the horse had to forever retire from horse racing?

Okay. Maybe it happens. Color me skeptical though, that in another sport riddled with drug use and performance enhancement controversies, including an ongoing investigation into I'll Have Another's trainer, Doug O'Neill, that tendonitis, an affliction usually taken care of with rest, ice, compression, etc for a few weeks, would render the Triple Crown candidate useless on the track.

The conspiracy theorist in me wonders whether or not the horse was a product of more than hard work and good genes and whether stud fees and reputations would have been damaged had the horse submitted to the normal testing that accompanies these races.

Either way, the point is these sports (and horse racing and boxing share similar, disjointed systems of governance where there are multiple organizations and commissions involved) reek of corruption, treachery and deceit.

So if you pay to watch them or pay to wager on them you get what you sow. What you probably don't get is a fair chance to win that wager or get value for your entertainment dollar. At least the WWF was up front about being a sham. Boxing and horse racing would have to step up a couple rungs on the ladder to reach wrestling's level.

There is an easy fix though: just clear the decks of all the people making millions, if not billions, of dollars so that someone with some integrity can restore the sports' credibility. Simple, no?

College World Series

The NCAA College World Series has always been an event I deem worthy of my time. Right now, out in Oregon, Kent State is in a battle to earn their first trip to the College World Series in their history.

And if you want to see what college baseball can offer in terms of drama and suspense, Kent's 7-6 win over the Ducks Saturday night was all you needed to see. The Flashes got out to an early 5-1 lead over Oregon despite shaky starting pitching. Oregon chipped away and trailed 5-4 before Kent got a couple more runs in the 8th inning thanks to an Oregon error.

But with a 7-4 lead Kent saw Oregon load the bases with no one out in the bottom of the 9th. Oregon got a couple runs on a couple outs and then loaded the bases again trailing by only a run. That's [when this happened](#) . How's that for drama and an illustration of just how thin the margin is between winning and losing and potentially heading to Omaha to battle for a national championship?

Kent plays Game 2 of their series with Oregon tonight at 10pm on ESPNU. It's a great way to end your sports weekend if you read this before it happens. If not, check the scores and see if Game 3 is necessary Monday or if the local team is going to Nebraska.

** Update **

Kent took a 2-0 lead into the top of the 7th inning against the Ducks last night only to see Oregon get three in the 7th that they made stand up for a 3-2 over the Flashes. The deciding Game 3 is tonight at 7pm EST on ESPNU. The winner heads to the CWS.

[Follow @Peeker643](#)