

Morning Rundown: Are We Having Fun Yet?

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, August 26 2012 5:00 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, August 28 2012 3:22 PM



Today's question: Do the Indians make it to 60 wins before they make it to 80 losses? They have seven losses to go before 80, but five wins to go before 60. It's only a two game difference but you have to figure the law of averages has to work itself out at some point with this team's record.

August 27th, 2012

Oakland Athletics - **3**

Cleveland Indians - **0**

W: Brett Anderson (2-0) L: Roberto Hernandez (0-3) S: Grant Balfour (15)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

What more can you say? Brett Anderson is back for the Athletics and he's good. Good enough (and sharp after a very long layoff with just one other start) to throw seven shutout innings with

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just two hits given up? Eh, I'm not sure, but he was good enough to beat the Indians last night.

Whether he was 2-hit, seven shutout inning good is up for debate given how the Indians have been playing.

But regardless, the offense did not do a darn thing. Michael Brantley got a hit, Brent Lillibridge doubled and Carlos Santana walked twice.

Other than that, there were opportunities. Of course Lillibridge's double led off the sixth but the following three hitters? LaPorta, Laser Lou, and Kipnis. Anderson walks Kipnis after getting two outs to bring up Jason Donald.

If Lillbridge is doubling, odds are those three are not getting a hit in the same inning, so is it really an opportunity?

The game's final score looks close. I mean in that situation and the one in the seventh with a Santana walk and Brantley reaching on the error the Indians brought the tying run to the plate. So a close game yes.

But in score-alone. It could have been close, it could have been possible. But really, it wasn't. Because when you can only muster two hits (regardless of how many opportunities you HAD on the board), [you really are not in a game](#) .

"This is frustrating," Indians third baseman Jason Donald said. "It's not enjoyable losing ballgames like this, especially when you feel like you have chances to win it. It just seems like it keeps piling on right now."

Oooh, openly visible frustration. Has it reached a boiling point with some of these people? Chris Seddon, who arrived in, as he termed it, "the middle of the bad stuff" said that he thinks the team has the players to come up with the hits and the pitching to keep them in games and it's

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only a matter of time.

"I think it's just a matter of a couple knocks going our way, a couple of quick innings, and we'll get back to winning."

That may be the case. Who knows, one win and suddenly things may not look so bad. But right now, they look so bad.

"Hopefully," Donald said, "we can break out really quick and finish this last month on a high note."

Hopefully? What if they don't? Then what? What if there is no high note and it's just one big fat two-and-a-half month low note of frustration, futility, and utter chaos and destruction.

I know that sounds bad, but it could get worse before it gets any better. I know it may seem like I can't get worse given how many games this team has lost, but it really can because as long as the Indians have games, they have more of a chance at losing than they do winning given how they've performed up to this point.

And it doesn't matter how, it continues to be in different ways. It's funny because we've been talking about the offense in this one, but have not brought up what was probably the most key story. Probably because it didn't really impact how this game turned out. It wasn't like **Roberto Hernandez** exiting changed the outlook of anything.

Fausto left the game midway through the third inning due to what is being [currently called a sprained right ankle](#)

After a quick conference with Lou Marson, Manny Acta trotted out, and then the trainer did so as well and his night was over.

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And his Cleveland homecoming was over right then and there. Just like that, no chance to really go any further, no chance to do much more.

He'd have to give way to Chris Seddon and the bullpen and you have to credit them. The reason that the game was "technically" close in many instances was because of all the 0's that Seddon put up. The crafty lefty put up 4.2 scoreless giving up two hits himself and was followed up by two scoreless from Cody Allen, giving the Indians more than six innings of clean relief work, something they probably could have used at several points lately.

Bullpen work was great, Mr. Fausto Hernandez had some issues before leaving with issues. Either way... I'm not sure what to make of the injury. You could tell he might have tweaked an ankle just in the way that he landed and he knew it almost immediately as he signaled for Marson to come out just as he caught the ball.

"Lonnie doesn't think it's too bad," Acta said. "He was looking at him after he came out of the game. He feels that it's nothing major, but at that point, [Hernandez] felt that it was bothering him to push off the rubber."

We'll find out more about Fausto moving forward, but he obviously was not good enough to continue in this one, so that is usually telling of a pitcher missing more time, if not a few starts, at least a start. The Indians said they'll take the time they have between now and his next start to decided if he can go, and given that mentality, I'd say he shouldn't be out long if at all. And since the Indians have the September roster as soon as Saturday, if they do need another starter to replace him, it shouldn't be hard to do if they need to make that move.

Random Details...

So after that discussion yesterday about Asdrubal Cabrera's sore legs, the Indians gave their All-Star shortstop the day off. And of course Brent Lillibridge is quite the replacement.

Grant Balfour certainly had the strikeout working, to make for a big 10 for the Indians on the evening. Everyone struck out minus Carlos Santana and Lou Marson. The catchers, unite.

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Matt LaPorta was 0-for-3 with two more strikeouts and he is now 1-for-11 with five strikeouts and no walks. Fantastic.

Of course with Josh Reddick not only in town, but hitting his 26th home run, it is a stark reminder that the Indians could have went out and acquired him much like they did in Aaron Cunningham-fashion. It would have cost more, but that is a bonafied answer to your outfield issues.

Reddick also made a slick catch in the fourth inning to preserve that Anderson no-hit bid. So there's that.

Cody Allen back on track with two scoreless innings of his own to follow up Seddon. He gave up a hit and struck out one hitter. Other than the two runs he gave up against the Yankees last week, Allen has been clean in his first few weeks as a big leaguer.

I'd love to say "Hey Jason Donald is hitting really well since returning from Columbus!" But, I can't really say it, not since a few days ago. Fact of the matter is, he hasn't played consistently since Jason Kipnis has returned to the lineup. He started once against Seattle, once against New York and now against Oakland and in all three of those games' he's gone 0-for. Prior to that when he played just about every day he was on a six-game hitting streak.

I'd get him more consistent playing time at this point to see what he has. We've never really seen him get a fair consistent shake at the big league level and I think that time is now. I love Jack Hannahan, but why not? Before Chisenhall comes back at least.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Jason Kipnis is pretty much going to be a core player for this team moving forward and he's the perfect guy for a role that is really needed on this team. They need a vocal leader. And not just some veteran guy who can speak up, but rather a vocal piece from a presence that is

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capable of backing it up on the diamond.

So to see him [speak up in this instance](#) is pretty encouraging.

"We've got to get better," Kipnis said on Monday. "Winning games right now, as far back as we are, as much as it stinks to say, it's not going to change too much. I don't see us making up 16 games in the last month. What is important is I think we need to get better in all aspects. Not just as a team, but all of us players need to get better. I need to get better. We need to take something out of this."

And the part where the "backing it up" comes into play can be the play as of late. As Kip has been struggling, at least he isn't out there flailing around. He's out there giving it a great effort and taking ownership for all his issues. What he can do though is go at this last stretch strong and set a good tone. He's in his first full season, so to expect an entire season of what he did earlier and last year, well, that would be a little much at this juncture. Great if it would happen, but also not realistic.

Part of the reason for the Indians increase in aggressiveness and higher steals numbers is Jason Kipnis and his 26 steals. The team as a whole [is on pace to eclipse 100 steals](#), which would be the first in the past 12 years, a rare occurrence in Cleveland.

Part of that is because of the personnel (what team will run with guys like Hafner, Martinez, and Peralta clogging the bases?) and part of that is because Manny Acta is probably a little more aggressive than most AL guys if he has the talent, and he does.

"Nobody feels it's great if you don't do the right percentage," Acta said. "If you make it 70 percent of the time or higher, I'm good. If you don't? It's not worth running. It's that simple. So there's not that big difference in philosophy."

Right, but you can bet that Acta wants guys that can swipe him a bag on the team. It allows him to get creative and to play that sort of style of baseball. I believe he coined it last year as "Wahoo Baseball"?

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So yeah, stealing may be something teams do if they have the personnel, but you can bet Acta has a play in the more aggressive nature of swiping bags the Indians have come to develop.

Last week the story on **Rafael Perez** was that he sprained his ankle and has yet again suffered another set-back in his rehab process. The latest word? Well that is the latest, but [it isn't looking like he'll be back](#)

. The Indians say they'd like to, but August is almost over and at this point, I can't see it happening as it important as the Indians say it might be.

"I think it's important to see him," Acta said, "just to see how healthy he is and how he bounces back. Whether we make a decision [to offer him a contract] or not, you still have to be able to see him. You don't want to make a decision based on what you saw in [April]."

Of course the contract is the issue and the Indians probably want to know what they have before they start exploring the idea of bringing back a Rafael Perez, but I get a feeling maybe if there was a time to cut ties with him, they could use this year to do just that.

Could the Indians make a late move here for a pitcher that some of us wanted prior to the break? The Seattle Mariners [put Jason Vargas on waivers](#) and considering he's still controlled through 2013, it wouldn't be a bad add. Of course it only adds a year bolstering to the rotation but with all the question marks, it would be nice to at least have a solid option.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a visit at [The Tribe Daily](#), because his caught stealing percentage is higher than 12 percent. He also didn't notice that the word visit was typo-ed for quite some time.

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