

Morning Rundown: Wake Me Up When September Starts

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, August 29 2012 9:02 AM - Last Updated Thursday, August 30 2012 6:53 AM



I know some people are wondering how I can continually do this to myself. Come up every morning and talk about a team that essentially does not need talked about. Talk about games that are perceived to be meaningless and talk about a team that has fallen far far out of any sort of contention and into an abyss of horrific baseball.

August 29th, 2012

Oakland Athletics - **8**

Cleveland Indians - **4**

W: Travis Blackley (5-3) L: Corey Kluber (0-3) S: Ryan Cook (13)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

Two things. If you want to put it into a nutshell, I have a job to do. For one I'm a fan of this team, but I'm supposed to be here from day one to the final pitch to do this. Would it be fun if I got to

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do it for a team in the playoff race or for playoff games?

Of course. Would I like to be talking about more than games that are really not of any use to us? Well, I'd like to be talking about games that are moving forward towards a championship, but I'm not considering what we're watching as meaningless games. They have a value in what they bring to the inexperienced people that are playing.

We need to see about guys like **Corey Kluber** and **Zeke Carrera**. Little pip-Zeke went 2-for-4 with a triple and a run scored. He's hitting over .300. The Indians have a guy like Tim Fedroff in the minors that could get called up and if they wanna see what they have in both of them, they need to get these guys time and right now, we're trying to find out about Carrera and if he can play.

I'm intrigued myself to see it. Yeah these games might not matter, but there are things riding on it. It's important to see how things progress and what these players are doing.

Matt LaPorta needs at-bats so we can finally decide what to do with him. So far, so bad.

In it all though, the pitching is what we really need to work out. Kluber has to make these starts because he very well may be one of the guys that starts 2013 in the rotation, or at least competing for one of those rotation spots. We have to find out if he can at least be viable, or at least try and help him get his work in so he can experience major league hitters and adjust.

I was impressed with his effort last night, three earned runs and six innings is a quality start. The error hurt and the one run scored on a groundout. He got hurt big time when he gave up the Josh Donaldson three-run shot, but that was it. He looked really sharp otherwise. He struck out seven hitters, career high, and didn't walk anyone.

He showed some flashes and he showed how he was able to strike out a ton of hitters in Double-A San Antonio a few years ago. He has the potential in there and that is why we need to see him, we have to see those flashes and see if they can turn into something more.

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The other thing going here is the simple fact that the Indians may be finally reaching that "boiling point" they need to reach for them to get through all of this. We'll talk about Cabrera in a second, but Vinnie Pestano said [something mighty interesting](#) .

"A month ago, we were in the thick of it," Pestano said. "And now 30 games later, we can't even sniff the second Wild Card. That's just brutal. There's no real words that I know to convey just how upset [we are]. You can say, 'We're a better baseball team than this,' but we're not. We're not showing it."

Before then, when the Indians were in contention and not playing well or going through a small rough patch, looking to turn it around. Or even when they were going good and leading the division. Several players would say things like "our best is yet to come" or "once we get going", all the cliché stuff like that.

Finally. Finally someone said it. "We're not better than this" and "We're not that good" are not words that often come out of players mouths. But maybe they needed to in this instance. Maybe they need to realize that this team is not good enough to contend. They aren't this bad, that is for sure, there is too much talent to be a last place team, this whole streak business is a product of bad baseball being played by good and mediocre talent.

But the team is good enough to win games, just not good enough to win a lot of them.

I don't know if it was **Asdrubal Cabrera** simply reaching a boiling point for the bad baseball that has been being played, or simply him getting upset over a blown call. Either way, he took his frustrations out of home umpire Gary Darling and included many finger gesturing and if you can read lips, some choice words. For his gift of yelling and screaming, and finger pointing, [Cabrera got booted from the game](#) and took an early shower, another "day off" for him.

Whatever it was, I liked it. I liked it very much because now, there it is. There is someone finally showing some sort of emotion towards what is going on. Gary Darling probably didn't deserve it, and Cabrera's finger pointing was him just looking to get tossed, but wrong place, wrong time.

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He simply received the brunt of Cabrera's frustrations, which I'm sure have been mounting.

"I guess what got Cabrera mad," Acta said, "was [Darling] did what a majority of them do: never admit being wrong. That kind of got him to say the wrong words out there. When English is not your first language, I don't think you can argue for too long before dropping inappropriate words to those guys. I guess he went too far right off the bat."

Maybe now that the anger is all out, the Indians can start moving on into whatever next stage is in this process that they're going through. Maybe they went through it last night because on the flip side of Cabrera's blow up, Carlos Santana perhaps responded to this situation by showing a lack of effort. So Manny Acta yanked him.

"Carlos is fine," Acta said. "He looked a little sluggish, kind of tired. We have already talked about that. We can be beat, but we're not going to be looking beaten out there. We need full effort from everybody."

That is one reason right there that I've continued to say that the Indians haven't quit or that they continue to play for Manny Acta. You've never seen the manager question anyone until he had to yank Santana for lack of hustle. Hopefully between Cabrera lashing out and Santana not running hard, all the bad karma is getting flushed out.

And maybe there is some mentality that August has been a cursed month, because Pestano even said that he's ready for August to be over. Things won't magically change when the calendar flips over, but if there's some sort of mental road block for this team concerning August, then I too will be glad to see September roll around.

Random Details...

Holy pitching change Batman, look at all those relievers Bob Melvin used in the nine inning to get through the Indians with leads of two and four runs. Normally it would be no big deal, but it would seem as if the Indians are a threat the way he made all those moves. But hey, he has to win, he needs to win.

You have to tip your cap to the A's though for this series. Sure you can blame the offense, but like Manny Acta said, they have a really good staff from top to bottom. They threw out three left-handed starters against the Indians and the three combined gave up two runs. That's pretty good.

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The Indians got one solid inning from Jeanmar Gomez, who struck out one and retired the side with rather ease in the eight. Not so much for Vinnie Pestano or Cody Allen. Pestano struggled in a non-lead situation and Allen simply fell apart.

I'm impressed by Allen though. Sure he gave up three straight two-out hits that scored runs, but he struck out the side and for someone who started the year in A-Ball to come up to the major leagues and do what he is doing, there is something special there. There's something to be said for someone who can progress this far and start looking this sharp at the majors. He has work to do and things to learn, but that's a good thing that he's here, so that he can learn and work on those things the rest of this season.

Jason Donald hit a home run and the Indians were actually able to grab an early lead. You have to admire the offense for fighting back, unfortunately with the pen struggling, fighting back only resulted to cutting into the lead, rather than erasing it.

The 16-strikeout performance on Tuesday marked the first time since 2000 that the Indians struck out that many hitters in a nine-inning game. The last time it came against Oakland a well. It's also the second time the team has struck out that many hitters and lost, the first time coming when Bob Feller struck out 18 Tigers in a losing effort. That's pretty crazy.

[DUNKED TANKED]

He's gone... No more **Shelley Duncan**.

I'm not going to lie, I'm a little broken up about this. I went on for awhile about it yesterday after it happened, and [you can read that little rant if you want](#) . While I understand [the Indians are moving on](#) , I will miss Shelley and what he brought to the table.

"He wanted to play," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Unfortunately, going forward, the

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at-bats weren't going to be there and we probably don't feel he's going to be in the plans for next year. So, we might as well see some other guys."

Acta did say that it was tough to let a guy who works so hard go. And really that's what it is. Duncan doesn't bring anything extremely special to the table baseball wise. He can hit a moon shot and give you some really good pop from the bench. He's a great pinch-hitter. But that's what he is, a good bench guy.

What he brings to the table that no one else does is intensity and drive. He brings a quality that cannot be learned or practiced. He brings a genuine passion for the game and for winning. That's something that is special and something that is hard to find.

I said yesterday and I'll say it again. If I'm building a team, Shelley Duncan is one of my 25 guys. If I have a free reign to pick 25 people that I think will win me a championship, I want Duncan as a part of that. Because I think he does more good than harm.

Acta went on to say that Duncan wanted to play every day and that they never could do that for Duncan, using him the "proper" way that they felt he should be used for the team and that he had his chances.

I don't agree with that completely. Considering that they gave him his shot to start everyday in left field and then they almost immediately took it away from him when he was actually playing well. Maybe Duncan isn't an everyday guy, he probably isn't. But he was putting up good numbers before the Damon signing and then when he got replaced, it killed any sort of momentum Duncan had.

But whatever, it's in the past and there's no changing it now.

I just want to say that Shelley Duncan is a class guy. I used to hate him when he signed an autograph for a little kid and put "Red Sox Suck" on it or when he ran into the infield and hit Jonny Gomes in the head during a Yankees/Rays spring training game.

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But watching him play for Cleveland and getting to know him better as a member of this organization and learn what he is all about by watching him play, I'm definitely a fan for life now. I'll support the guy wherever he goes and hope he finds some place to settle into where he can be a part of something. He's good people and a guy I'd put on my baseball team any day of the week.

Goodbye HawkMan, Goodbye Dunk Tank, Goodbye Shelley. **[RANDOM RUNDOWN]** Of course the move was made because the Indians wanted to recall

Jeanmar Gomez

from Triple-A to add to their bullpen. Manny Acta says that it is because of the volume his bullpen has been throwing as of late.

"The way we've used the bullpen the last couple of nights," Indians manager Manny Acta explained, "we're a little short back there. It's late in the season. We don't want to push anybody and you don't know how things are going to turn out."

Of course Gomez was used last night in the game and the intention is for him to stick there for the time being. Acta said that if they have an opportunity to get him a start, they might do it, but he won't be a part of a six man rotation. It also is not to replace Roberto Hernandez in the rotation, as it looks like since the Indians pitched Gomez last night that he may be well enough to make his next start. We'll see on that issue for sure, but I can't imagine them having to call up another starter.

What I do think is interesting in the whole move is that since Gomez is for the pen, why couldn't they have just waited until Saturday to make this move when the rosters expand? I mean if you wanted pen help, you could have recalled Frank Herrmann and been fine and not had to ship off Duncan.

I guess the team just wanted to move on from Shelley Duncan and this was the way they wanted to do it. Or they wanted to claim a matchup specialist off waivers...

Not only did they add Jeanmar to the pen, the Indians claimed another bullpen arm, left-handed

Scott Maine

off

[waivers from the Chicago Cubs](#)

organization. He was sent right to Columbus though and he could come up in September but that decision hasn't been made yet, or if it has, Acta isn't telling.

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"He's an interesting guy, especially being left-handed," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Some people feel that he could be a good matchup guy down the road."

Maine is 27-years-old, so I'm not sure how far "down the road" is, but he has a 4.87 ERA in 41 career games. He does has a .130 average against lefties in Chicago this year, so he definitely is a matchup guy with a good slider and command issues. Clearly though, the Indians made the move and needed a 40-man spot, which is why they made the move to jettison Duncan and call up Gomez.

Lonnie Chisenhall

could probably begin his rehab assignment with Double-A Akron [after the weekend](#)

. We'll probably see that happen and if he gets in a few games, he could be back for the final three weeks of September, which would be great.

And the Indians have named their Arizona Fall League participants, choosing to send catcher Alex Monsalve, infielder Ronny Rodriguez, outfielder Tyler Holt, and pitchers Matt Packer, T.J. House, Shawn Armstrong, and Trey Haley. Haley and Packer are there to get in more work due to the injuries that shortened their seasons, while the others are there to showcase. Holt, House, Armstrong, Monsalve, and Rodriguez all have some potential and put up some nice seasons that the AFL is almost like a reward. Some good prospects usually go there, so for them, it should be an honor.

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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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