There it is... Last place. Indians, meet bottom. It feels like a rock.

September 10, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **2**

Minnesota Twins - **7**

W: Samuel Deduno (6-3) L: Justin Masterson (11-13)

[BOXSCORE]

I really don't know...

Uh well, here's the thing. This game is 100-percent on the offense. You only score two runs,

yeah. I think it's reasonable to say the offense didn't do their job.

However that isn't what is bothering me.

What's bothering me is what we kind of talked about yesterday with Ubaldo Jimenez and what was eluded to by Paul Cousineau on Sunday, the reason we talked about it yesterday with Jimenez.

And it extends to last night's starter, **Justin Masterson**. The guy was just about perfect through the first five innings, so much so I remarked at that point that he looked as good as you could expect him and wondered why he can't just do this most of the time.

Aside from a cheap run that scored because Casilla led off the fourth with a bogus single, Masterson was on-point. He had barely over 50 pitches, he had walked no one, he had thrown very few balls if that. Then something happened in the sixth. Masterson gave up a triple to Pedro Florimon and the wheels fell completely off the wagon.

He'd give up a few more singles and walk a guy and even though it was only two runs that scored in the inning, it set the stage for that disaster of a seventh. I just. I just don't get it.

What is going on here?

"I made some good pitches and they got some swings on them," he said. "There were a couple balls that we just missed. We were making some pretty good pitches throughout the game, pounding the zone for the most part. They just happened to catch the breaks, have the ball go in the right spot."

Oh no, I don't think so. Justin, I love you and everything but that isn't going to fly. You walked a guy and threw a wild pitch. That tells me you lost focus at some point, or you lost whatever it is you had in the first five innings. Sure as he was seemingly preaching, the Twins seemed to

have some good luck and in particular against the Indians this year and in this game, but don't you dare for a second think that has everything to do with it.

There's a problem here and it is getting more and more disturbing the more I think about it, the more I look for it, and the more I find it.

This whole inconsistency thing is frustrating. It is by far the most frustrating aspect a player can have about them. Because you know. You know they can be good. You know Justin Masterson can go out there and give you eight solid innings on a night like last night. He can be so economical with his pitches, not walk anyone, get the grounders working to keep the fielders happy, and walk into the clubhouse with a 2-1 lead and a beautifully pitched game.

Instead, he's out before the seventh is completed, shortened by his own doom, his own walks, his own lack of focus and control.

"I thought that Masterson had good stuff," Acta said. "Gave us six innings to score runs, to do something. But we weren't able to do it."

Of course when your offense only puts up a few runs like that and the pitcher LOOKS good early on, that will be the focus, but just listen to the first part of Acta's quote. He thought his stuff was good, not necessarily that he pitched a good game. For the first five innings, he was brilliant. But when you look at the numbers as a whole, 6.2 IP, 7 hits, 6 earned, 2 walks, wild pitch, hit by pitch... It's kind of blah. It's kind of blah because it is blah. And someone can have good stuff, which he did last night, and completely lose it, which Masterson did last night.

This is not what a number one or even a number two in the rotation does. We can talk all about Masterson being a number two if the Indians were to get a number one, which I think he could be and fit into real well. But not even a solid number two pitchers does this. His ERA is closing in on 5.00, just mere points away from it. He's lost 13 games, not all by his own doing, but someone who is a number two doesn't lose that many games in one season or put himself in position to do so.

He doesn't give up a double and a triple to some shortstop the Twins have only had up in the majors for 23 games, who hit .251 in Triple-A this season.

It's time for a gut-check on Justin Masterson. It's time to figure out what it is we actually have here with him because if the Indians think and want him to be a two or even a three, they need to make sure he can do it. If not, it's time to ship him off while he at least has his value and the Indians could at least get more than they are supposed to for him.

Because starts like this, just are not going to cut it.

Random Details...

Lonnie Chisenhall had a great night in his return to action. In his first at-bat he battled and battled and battled, fighting off pitches as he see fit. It ended up earning him a walk. He followed that up a few at-bats later with a solo shot, one of the two runs the Indians scored on the night.

Excellent to see Chisenhall back and it was nice to see that first at-bat more than it was to see the home run. He fought the pitches off and when challenged, was able to lay off and work the walk. Great work. He will be worked into this rotation slowly though, so don't expect him to go two-straight right away.

"He feels pretty good," Acta said. "When he was down there [with Akron] he felt he was ready to go, like he wasn't limited or anything right now. But I think we saw last year when [Asdrubal] Cabrera bounced back from the broken wrist, a lot of times it takes those guys some time to get the strength back. So that's something to consider."

Chiz said it was good to be out there.

"I felt good coming in," Chisenhall said. "I was swinging the bat well in BP. I felt I was getting

close to normal just being out there in the field, kind of getting back in the rhythm, it felt better to me."

Offensively there wasn't much else other than what Chisenhall did. Choo walked and scored on a Santana RBI sac-fly and uh, I think Brantley had a hit somewhere in there. Yeah you have to credit the starter Sam Deduno though, he actually looked really good and had things working. I don't think you could have expected the Indians to score much on this one.

And that's exactly what I'm saying. Masterson was pitching to the point where you shouldn't have expected the Twins to score much, yet they did. Sure that first run happened and in the sixth he gave up a few more, but it could have stopped after that. Deduno gave up a few runs but did he make an excuse for that as well as he pitched?

No. So my point stops there.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

There was no **Asdrubal Cabrera** in the game on Monday because the Indians shortstop is dealing with a sore wrist. Despite the X-rays showing that everything is fine with his wrist, Cabrera sat out after exiting the game on Sunday in the seventh inning.

Acta says that the Indians will not play him until he's ready and that Cabrera has had this issue that came up last week and bothered when he was swinging on Sunday.

Honestly there's no need to be putting him out there. You'd hate to have him do something to the wrist that furthers whatever he has going on right now. We're talking about someone who's valuable to this team in 2013 and if something happens to him in the remainder of 2012, then, well that's an issue if it could have been prevented.

There was just no catching up for the **Lake County Captains** last night as they fell to the Fort Wayne Tincaps 13-6
. Fort Wayne kept on the pedal as they will cruise into the Midwest League finals after their 2-1 series win over the Captains.

It ends a great campaign for Lake County, a wonderful season put on by the boys up in Eastlake. Jake Lowery homered and knocked in three runs but the pitching just couldn't put it all together as Fort Wayne came out swinging.

Great season Caps..

To follow up yesterday's hot topic on **Chris Perez** and his mobilization for change, it appears he'll get it, although I'm not sure it is what we're looking for.
Ken Rosenthal says the club is "livid"
with his comments and that he is only decreasing his trade value (I said that I believe) for other teams. So if he is trying to get himself traded, it isn't helping the Indians side.

On the other side of the coin is **Manny Acta**, who 'scouts' are saying is "displaying poor body language" and is "resigned to the team's fate."

He even titled the section THE INDIANS: A HOT MESS. Rosenthal believes the Indians will entertain offers for Masterson, Choo, Perez, and potentially Asdrubal Cabrera.

Um, yikes. As he correctly points out in all of this though, if the Indians do fire Acta, it doesn't solve anything. It doesn't make the team better. In fact it may make them worse. This isn't Acta's fault as we've gone over numerous times. If he's trying to send a message to the front office by exhibiting this behavior, I can't say I agree, which makes me think that isn't why.

Maybe he knows something we don't. Maybe he knows HIS fate.

If that's the case, I may lead the riot charge into the front office on this one.

This is going to be an interesting month, that's for sure.

And if things continue to completely fall apart like they are and have been, an even more intriguing offseason.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a visit at The Tribe Daily , because his fridge is covered in plenty of quotes about the Cleveland Indians.

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