

Morning Rundown: Tribe Foiled Again in Texas

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, September 13 2012 6:21 AM - Last Updated Thursday, September 13 2012 3:07 PM



There are a 162 games in a season. The Indians are at 59 wins. If they were to end up losing 100, they'd only end up winning no more than three more games. The thought is crazy considering they have 19 games left, six of which are against the Royals and Twins. They can win more than three in there, right? RIGHT?

September 12, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **2**

Texas Rangers - **5**

W: Ryan Dempster (11-6) L: Jeanmar Gomez (5-8) S: Joe Nathan (33)

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[BOXSCORE]

I mean, they're already on pace to snap August's win total, which is sad but true. However they need to pick up wins here and there, and right now they're on a healthy five game losing streak if you didn't notice.

Granted, it won't be easy against the best team in the American League, a legitimate World Series contender with a lineup that never ends and fan support for days.

In fact, they're probably on a quest to nail down 100 wins and losses against the Indians are just out of the question right now. Perhaps that's how they pulled this one out, or perhaps it was the ineptness of the Tribe. Last night, was, baffling.

The Indians had not just opportunities, but good opportunities that even bad teams come through in more times than not. Just not the Indians last night I guess.

Not even talking about two on and two out like they had in the second. But loading up the bases in the fourth inning with nobody out thanks to a errant glove flip up the middle by Elvis Andrus on a Michael Brantley single. He went for the spectacular play instead of trying to get one out and ended up with none. Russ Canzler followed up with a walk to set up Lonnie Chisenhall and the following hitters with a golden situation.

Chisenhall struck out, Kotchman grounded out into a force out that scored a run, and then Lillibridge struck out to end the frame. Yeah, one run is nice, but in that situation, you'd at least like to get two.

The Indians would do it again in the fifth, putting two on, with a runner on third, and nobody out. Jason Kipnis would line out to right and Santana would bring in another one off a sac-fly. Brantley's shot to right seemed to have some promise but Cruz was able to get to it to end the inning. It wasn't necessarily bad at-bats or disappointing results like the previous inning, but it was certainly frustrating to not come through with more than one run.

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So those might have been the only golden opportunities and if you put up a few more runs there, we may have a different game, but by far the most frustrating part about not just the opportunities, but scoring a run here and a run there is what the Indians would let the Rangers do in response.

It seems like every time the Indians score in this series, the Rangers came right back and scored another run, essentially erasing what happened in the previous inning. They put in one off a Geovany Soto sac fly that was nearly a homer in the fourth in this one. [If not for the hole they're already in](#), it'd be giving up more ground. You just can't keep doing that and **Jeanmar Gomez** did it again last night.

"It's been a tough year," he said. "I started good in Spring Training and the first two months after that I had trouble a little bit. But, it's part of it. You have to learn as much as you can for the next year -- don't make the same mistakes. I'm trying to learn all I can."

I really don't care for a "next year" Jeanmar. I think I've seen enough. I think Manny Acta pretty much makes that clear.

"It's unfortunate," Acta said, "because we really felt that this year was a year that he was going to take a step forward. He started the season well, but he hasn't pitched well ever since. We felt it was a very important year for his development."

If this is an important year in his development, and he hasn't moved forward, where does that leave the Indians with Gomez? Sounds to me like it leaves them with him not being a part of the equation. And I'm okay with that. I'm also okay with **David Huff** not being a part of it, as good as he's pitched in relief of Gomez the past few times out. He threw more scoreless inning in a relief spot and could potentially flip with Jeanmar next time out, with Huff getting the chance to start and Gomez going to the bullpen.

Hey, six shutout innings, just one walk, eight strikeouts. That's good stuff. I'm not ready to gie

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Huff another chance next year or beyond based off that, but this year, why not? He's putting zeros up while no one else is. Gomez was pretty much brutal again, giving up five earned off six hits in just four innings. It seemed like the game was much further along than it was, but no, he really did just give up five runs in four innings. His problem isn't strike throwing or walking, or control, or any of that stuff. He's simply flat.

He's just a run of the mill pitcher with okay stuff and since he doesn't have pinpoint control, he's going to struggle when the pitches he's trying to throw that need to hit their spots, tail in or get left a little over the plate. A good lineup like Texas will kill you.

It's really as simple as that. So it's time to move on to someone who could do the job, because the Indians are not looking for a fifth starter, they're looking for consistent pitchers that can stay in the rotation all year and be viable options.

David Huff is not a viable option either, as good as he's pitched the last few times out. You'd need to see a lot more than this. He has earned an opportunity to start though, over Gomez, and should at least get that as this season continues to be played out.

Random Details...

For perspective, Bastian notes that over the past 44 games, the team has averaged 3.2 runs per game. Their starting pitching has an ERA of 6.96. That's like, seven runs? So the yield on that is about four. You don't even need me to explain it, do you?

Here's a thought. That Adrian Beltre guy is pretty good, in fact so good the Rangers probably better find a way to hold onto him. Granted Mike Olt still has some time to go in the minor leagues considering he hasn't reached Triple-A and they can afford to wait around another year before having to make a decision, why not target him?

If you have a guy like Beltre at third, it would seem Olt is blocked. Sure you have a DH spot and even could play him at first base, but what if you could go at Texas with something they could use... Oh like say, an outfielder to fill the void left by someone named Hamilton.

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Olt is a stud power hitter who's blasted 28 bombs this year for Double-A Frisco. Sure he's a third baseman, but he could play first, giving the Indians that right-handed power stick at the corner the so desperately need. I'm not sure what the Rangers plans are for Mitch Mooreland, if he's a stopgap to Olt, or if he's someone they'd like to invest in, but if the later is the case, my first play in the offseason is trying to pry Olt away from the Rangers, and using Shin-Soo Choo to do so.

They could move David Murphy to center full-time, play Cruz in left, and have a year of Choo in right. And heck, if you want, Choo is a much easier sign long-term than Josh Hamilton and you can hold onto a middle of the order bat.

Just a thought.

[I DID VERY WELL TODAY]

I was driving home from class last night and listened into the pregame show on the good old radio dial. Of course Manny Acta's usual chat with Hammy aired and they brought up **Ubaldo Jimenez** and the "positives" he had in the outing on Tuesday night. I guess there [are things to be encouraged about](#) and you can say there has been bright spots, or small flashes of brilliance, because there has.

But his ERA has only improved because he's simply giving up less runs than he did earlier. He's still not pitching well, despite what Acta is saying.

"We have been able to show it to him with stats on paper," Indians manager Manny Acta said on Wednesday, "so he doesn't just think about the whole year. We just try to take the positive out of it. As of late, the results haven't been there with W's and L's, but he has thrown the ball much better. It's good that he can see it in front of him. The numbers are there to prove it."

I'm sorry but are we watching the same games? I'm not looking at the W's and L's but I'm looking at the walks and the erratic pitches. Yeah he can go out an have a great inning where

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he smokes two guys and looks efficient doing it. But he throws a lot of pitches, he has disastrous innings that pile up his pitch counts if they don't put up a lot of runs, and overall he has more frustrating innings than good ones.

"Since mid-August, he has pitched pretty well for us," Acta said. "His numbers stack up with the best pitchers in the American League when it comes to strikeouts per nine innings and walks and all that. Unfortunately, his batting average on balls in play hasn't helped him out. Some people attribute that to luck, which is something that I'm not a big believer in. He has thrown the ball a lot better than those numbers indicate since the second week of August."

The BEST in the American League? Now are we even looking at the same statistics? In the last 30 days (which would be around the second week of August), he's got an ERA of 6.61. He's walked 12 hitters, with the leader, Francisco Liriano, having 19. He's given up six home runs, two less than the most, and only three other people have given up more hits than him, all of them, with 41 to his 40 and one is his teammate, Justin Masterson.

So yeah he's right up there in the statistics with the tops of the American League, all in statistics you don't want to have the most of. Is that what Acta is talking about?

So what can I take from these comments? Let's play into the theme we've seemingly talked about the past three mornings. You've got a guy who's not really putting forth the effort or he's got something going on. You have an organization that has lost it in terms of a program or a philosophy or just an overall lack of idea what the heck is going on with their pitchers. So much to the point where it is now just a mess and they're scrambling to clean it up. So what do you do with this guy who's seemingly now a headcase?

Are the Indians just going to coddle this guy? Is Ubaldo's psyche that fragile that they have to reward him for the littlest things and say he's pitching well? Acta points out things like his velocity and something as silly as strikeouts per nine innings when his ERA is above 6 in the past 30 days. Or he talks about the one good inning he had. What about the five bad ones? Jimenez himself says he's more consistent this half, giving the team more of a chance to win than he did in the first.

Um, yeah okay, if by that you mean, a four run deficit routinely more than a six run deficit, yeah sure. But in April he gave up 12 earned runs, in June he gave up 10 earned. In July he's given up 23 and in August he gave up 27. I don't really know where these comments or these ideas

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are coming from, but... I don't get it! I really don't see it anywhere. It's just... It makes no sense and if this is the approach their taken with him, to coddle him and hopefully get him to believe he's improving, in an effort to maybe actually get him to improve. Then God speed. Heck, I hope it works, but do I think it will?

Yeah, no, fat chance.

At work last year, we had someone apply for our job that we hire. We do self-evaluations after and they get to write down how they thought they did. It's a group interview process, a whole deal. Anyway this individual did bad. Not good. Yet on it, he simply wrote "I did very well today." That's kind of how I picture Ubaldo Jimenez right now.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

If Ubaldo is on this team in 2013, he'll likely be playing against the New York Yankees early on as the Indians [open up Progressive Field against the Bronx Bombers on April 8th](#) . A week before that, they'll open the MLB season up on April 2nd against the Jays in Toronto.

It'll be a full-AL East swing as they take on Tampa Bay between that and other than the White Sox after they face the Yankees, the first half of the month is filled with AL East foes.

And the Indians will see their host of Interleague matchups against NL East teams like Atlanta, New York, Miami (again), Philadelphia, and Washington. With Houston (who the Indians face for the first time as an AL team in late April after their AL East swing), now in the AL and every team having five divisions, Interleague play will now be a routine thing throughout the year.

There's a unique thing the MLB is doing with having the "rivalry" series have two-game home and homes, with the Indians and Reds playing in Cincinnati on May 27th and the 28th and then quickly shifting to Cleveland for the 29th and 30th, essentially playing a four game set at both parks. Many other rivals like the Yankees and Mets, A's and Giants, and Dodgers and Angels will be doing the same.

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Either way the schedule for 2013 looks rather interesting. We'll see if that is the new norm for the MLB schedule, or the Astros shakeup is only a feeling out process that the MLB will adjust as they see fit. Either way, it should be interesting to see things work in a different way.

Hopefully the Indians will have a rehabbed and ready to go **Carlos Carrasco** to plug into their rotation in 2013. With that, the Indians have some hope that he can slide in at [least be an answer to one of their many questions](#) in that five-man abomination.

"We'll still have to be careful with him next year and still manage things appropriately," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said on Wednesday. "But it would've been great to have him this year and we're certainly looking forward to having him back next year."

Yeah that certainly will be nice, but you know he won't be fully back from things next year, at least not at the outset. If anything, you just have to hope he's ready to go and be back to what we thought he was becoming in 2014, and that's a long ways away.

[Infirmary Report...](#)

Asdrubal Cabrera took batting practice on Wednesday, but it remains to be seen if he'll be returning to the lineup any time soon. The same can be said for **Roberto Hernandez** who did some long-toss and could throw a bullpen session.

Travis Hafner is hitting somewhat and could take some batting practice when the team gets back home on Friday. I'd say the odds are good Hafner plays, if only a few games as his last "hurrah" as an Indian. Maybe for him to get a nice send off and a chance to see him have his last at-bat as a Cleveland Indian. Never say never, but, I think that may be the case.

And **Rafael Perez** will throw a simulated game within a week. I still don't see how he's going to

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pitch this season, but I'd definitely get him ready to go out to Winter Ball, because he'll need it, and so will the Indians given that they'll have a decision to make on whether or not to bring him back.

There is one team angling towards a championship in the Indians system though, and they are the Akron Aeros. With one more win over the Trenton Thunder, the Aeros will capture the 2012 Eastern League Championship after [they won Game Two last night in Akron, 7-5](#) . Danny Salazar was electric, even though he gave up four runs in six innings, he struck out nine hitters and walked just one. That's the type of arm I'm talking about there. The offense was powered by two-run homers from Jesus Aguilar and Ryan Rohlinger.

The series shifts to Trenton now, but the Aeros just have one more win they need to get and if they get it in the next one, not only will they have the title, but they will have pulled off six straight in the playoffs in an amazing run.

And as a side note, Hector Rondon tossed another scoreless inning, striking out a pair in his recovery from Tommy John years ago.

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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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