

Morning Rundown: Should the Tribe Consider a Santana Switch?

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, October 02 2012 6:27 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, October 02 2012 8:22 AM



You know, after smashing the ever-loving daylights out of the Royals on Sunday, there was a little sense of hope. A sense of hope that made you think things are a little better around these parts than you would have thought.

October 1st, 2012

Chicago White Sox - **11**

Cleveland Indians - **0**

W: Hector Santiago (4-1) L: Corey Kluber (2-5)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

So how do you feel after an 11-0 drubbing at the hands of the White Sox in which the offense could muster just two hits?

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Okay, that was a little mean, but what can I say? How much can I really talk about a game like this? How much can I really muster at this point in the season about games like this one.

Hey, Hector Santiago went out there a week after, looking rather ordinary, and was little bit more than that. In fact, he was lights out. I mean, you have to be on your game to allow three base runners and strike out 10.

There's your game. Santiago good, it doesn't matter what the Indians pitching did.

You have to tip your hat to **Corey Kluber**, who actually went the first five innings not giving up any of those four runs he ended up surrendering. He gets into the sixth and [things start to unravel a bit](#) and things would spiral out for the bullpen from there.

Kluber's effort I'd say was along the lines of keeping his team in the game, at least for a good portion of it. So you can't blame him, especially when the offense scores a big fat zero.

But can you really even blame the offense for running into a guy who seemingly summoned some of his superior stuff on this particular night.

"This guy was nasty tonight," Alomar said. "Give him credit. He kept the ball down. He used more breaking balls tonight. He had a great screwball, which not many lefties have. We couldn't put any good at-bats together against him. We couldn't eliminate any pitches, because he was throwing them all for strikes."

Sometimes that's just how you lose, because you got beat. And Santiago beat the Indians, regardless of how many runs the White Sox scored. They could have scored two runs and it would have been just the same, it just wouldn't have looked as bad.

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It was the Indians trying to stay in the game, but it was also the White Sox trying to stay in the postseason chase. Of course their win was one part of the equation. They needed the Tigers to lose, which they did not as they beat Kansas City. So now the next two games are two teams that are headed for the winter after they finish playing. Should be fun.

"I'm not ready for the end of the year," Indians third baseman Lonnie Chisenhall said.

There are some people that are, but Lonnie certainly isn't ready. Probably Corey Kluber too as he said he's learned that he can pitch at the major league level. There's some confidence brimming from young guys like Kluber, McAllister, Chisenhall, and Kipnis. That's huge heading into next season.

Random Details...

Striking out 10 times to Santiago as well as two more, the Indians entire starting lineup all ended up striking out save for Michael Brantley.

Speaking of, Brantley returned to that starting lineup for the first time in some time last night. He did play last Saturday in relief, but this was his first start. He walked, the only walk in the entire game.

Anyone else like Scott Maine? No? Okay, great... Let's forget it then and cut bait. Maine is actually the first Indian to have given up a grand slam. That's crazy considering it wasn't long ago Edgar Renteria hit like a million off the Tribe.

Asdrubal Cabrera was hit in the hand by a pitch and it looked very frightening the way he was jumping around and shaking it. He was lifted for a pinch hitter in Brent Lillibridge later in the game and there is no word on what is up with him though or if it's serious.

Anyone else see the graphic flashed up showing how long each team in the Central was in first

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place? The White Sox had the most and the Tigers actually had the least. They'll finish with like 33 days in first place, while the Indians will have 40. To have gone from being in first place for 40 days, to one of the two occupants of the basement is incredible.

[MANAGER SEARCH]

The Cleveland Indians will interview both **Sandy Alomar Jr.** and **Terry Francona** this week when the season ends. It will be

[Francona's time on Friday](#)

as he will come in to talk with his "buddy" Chris Antonetti.

And it still very much looks like a two-horse race from the start and likely to the finish. Who else could the Indians really bring in that would be better candidates? I know this is repeating yesterday's question, but after thinking about it more, I'm not sure if even bringing another person in is even worth it in the long run.

Antonetti would like this to go rather quickly and if the Indians do not name someone their manager before the League Championship Series gets underway, then they'll have to wait til the World Series ends. I can't see them waiting to make that decision until November.

I could see a manager being named by the end of next week.

And Terry Pluto suggested that you throw everything at trying to get Francona and then bringing back Alomar as the bench coach to continue to groom him. The thing is he'll probably get a job sooner than later, so if he doesn't get Cleveland's job, he will probably be gone. Nonetheless, Alomar is taking the company line.

"Whatever is best for the team. I'm humble about that," Alomar said. "I don't say, 'I'm supposed to be the guy. I've got to be the guy.' I'm not that kind of guy. I never have been in my career. I've never been selfish about that. Whatever is best for the organization."

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So there's that. Is Francona a series candidate for the Indians? I know there's the stance that, hey why would Francona want this job? But there's also the factor of money and the possibility that the Indians may not be able to afford Francona is also something that has to be highly considered.

When Alomar Jr. interviews remains to be seen. I can't imagine they'd interview him a day after the season ends, but with this team, who knows. One thing that works in Sandy's favor is that he's interviewed for jobs the past few years, so he'll be prepped for that aspect of going for a managerial post. And now he'll have some sort of experience as a manager to draw upon, even though it is very brief experience. It's six more games than a lot of people have.

Just as a side note, Carlos Baerga reportedly said he's [ready to coach full time](#) and he told the Indians that. It may have something to do with the guy he arrived to Cleveland with a long time ago being in line for the managerial job, could it not?

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

One thing that this team needs to ask themselves this offseason, in my opinion, is if **Carlos Santana** should remain behind the plate full-time.

I know that sounds odd, but let's get one thing straight. He will not be going anywhere this offseason. He's signed to a contract extension and while he's had his ups and downs, he has the potential to be an All-Star catcher for years.

But the problem isn't so much that, or is it? He gets beat up back there and given the Indians dire need at first base, a move to first full-time next season could be beneficial in several ways. Yeah it would behoove the Indians to have a first baseman and Carlos Santana at catcher for the sake of offensive production. But with someone like **Lou Marson** on the roster, who is really excellent behind the plate, the Indians may actually get better production from their pitching staff and plate defense and even get a capable hitting Marson into the lineup.

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Not to mention with the DH spot likely open next year, there's plenty of ways to work Santana into the lineup while keep him fresh. Maybe not a full-time move, but one that facilitates Marson playing against every left-hander and Santana getting a lot of time off from behind the dish.

One thing that is for sure is that he's improved behind the plate. Sandy Alomar Jr. did give a synopsis of how Santana's progressed.

"The thing that improved the most this year was his throwing," Alomar said. "That's something that we worked hard on in Spring Training. Last year, he had a long release and long footwork. This year, he's much better with that. He just needs to stay more focused on his catching area. Other than that, he's making progress. Not super progress, but he's progressing. He has years of experience now -- four years of experience behind the plate."

What I like about what Alomar said is that he's progressing, not in huge strides, but that he is progressing. Why? Because it's the truth. There's still things he could work on and he's far from the defensive catcher or the game-caller that Marson is, but he has improved greatly in throwing to second.

This to me will be an interesting thing that plays out over the offseason, even if nothing really plays out. Of course what the Indians do with Hafner and decide for first base has a big impact on all of that, but to me, a Marson against all-lefties game plan makes a lot of sense all around.

It was noted that **Shin-Soo Choo** became [the first player since 1918 in the Indians organization](#) to have 15 home runs, 40 doubles, 60 RBI, and 20 stolen bases. The other two happened rather recently, Grady Sizemore and Roberto Alomar (who did it twice).

Choo won't get to 20-20 status again, but the 43 doubles are rather impressive. That's 58 of those power hits, which is really good as a whole.

Not really Indians related, at least as I initially bring it up, but it just goes to show you how quickly a team can fall. How about the Pittsburgh Pirates securing their 20th consecutive losing

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season the other day? It will be barely and it comes after a summer in which things were hoppin' in Pittsburgh. They we're contending, in the race for a playoff spot and if anything, were poised to have a winning season, the first in 19 years in that city.

But things fell down quickly and now despite the success that no one really thought was possible for that Pirates squad, it seems as if some of the higher ups in that organization are ready to shoot first and ask questions later.

Remember how I talked about that, what I guess I can term now as a culture of losing? Where a team just continues to cycle through things that are ultimately not the reason they are failing?

Bob Nutting is Pittsburgh's owner and he promised [an "investigation" into all aspects of the Pirates baseball operations](#). That means from the top on down are under fire, even our old buddy Neil Huntington.

Progress is progress, but it hasn't been enough and after another "collapse" in Pittsburgh has the owner upset and it sounds like there is some dissension between the groups in Pittsburgh.

Unlike in Cleveland, where Dolan supports Shapiro, Shapiro supports Antonetti, and Antonetti. Well we all know what Antonetti did. Their owner is actually finally seemingly waking up. Although a guy like Clint Hurdle, who's actually done something decent with that squad the past two years may be on his way out because of the "collapses" the Pirates have had.

So just something to think about in relation to the Manny Acta situation and how it played out and how it seems to be progressing. If the Pirates "have had enough" how long will it be before the Indians feel the same?

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Nino has a blog! Give it a visit at [The Tribe Daily](#) , because Shin-Soo Choo will certainly be

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dancing 'Gangnam Style' somewhere there.

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