

Indians Concede Spring Perfection to Royals

Written by {ga=riverburns}

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Some things just weren't meant to last forever, but when it comes to things ending with a thud, the Cleveland Indians could do a lot worse than dropping to 5-1 in Cactus League play on February 26th. But, the 1972 Dolphins will need to hold off on the champagne celebration for right now, as it's the other potential American League Central Division sleeper team that upped their record to 4-0 on the spring.

For Terry Francona's squad, it was a bullpen day, but his Opening Day starter was the news of the day from Goodyear. It will be Justin Masterson on April 2nd at the Rogers Centre in Toronto. Francona confirmed after the game that Ubaldo Jimenez will be the #2, so barring an unlikely postponement of any of the Tribe's first six games, which are all indoors, it will Jimenez on April 8th to open up the home slate at Progressive Field.

On the field today, there were a few less smiles for Matt Albers, one of the eight names in the Choo-Bauer-Gregorious trade between the Indians, Diamondbacks, and Reds in the off-season.

Though Albers was confident about getting the ball in the first inning today, it was a shaky outing for the 30 year-old reliever, who hasn't started a game since 2008 with the Orioles.

Albers, making his second appearance of the spring, had his second frustrating outing. On Saturday, the Reds tagged him for four earned runs in an inning of work.

It was a little more of the same for the former Arizona Diamondback on Tuesday in Goodyear.

Kansas City got going, right out of the gate with Jarrod Dyson's single to left field.

Though Albers managed to strike out Alcides Escobar, he got into a jam when he walked Eric Hosmer, but Dyson did the Indians a favor.

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After stealing second base with Escobar at the plate, Albers caught him leaning with Billy Butler at the plate and threw him out at third for the second out of the inning. Butler went on to single Hosmer home from second on a ball just beyond the reach of Jason Kipnis at second base, before Salvador Perez grounded out to end the inning with minimal damage.

Albers gave up a run on two hits to drop his ERA to 22.50 on the spring.

Chris Perez came on to pitch the second inning, and left with his second scoreless outing of the young Cactus League season. After retiring Mike Moustakas and David Lough, by way of the fly ball, Johnny Giavotella tagged him for a base hit to left, which was ruled a double, though Giavotella took second when Tim Fedroff misplayed the ball in left field.

Perez bounced back to strike out Willy Tavares to end the inning.

Bryan Shaw, another name in the now-infamous Trevor Bauer trade, worked the third, and got off in the wrong foot with a lead-off walk to Dyson, who then stole second. He took third on a ground out, but it mattered little since Eric Hosmer blasted one over Cedric Hunter's head in center field and off the wall for a triple, good for the Royals second run of the game.

Scott Barnes came on for the Tribe in the fourth, and escaped an eventful inning without giving up a run.

Giovanni Soto, scheduled to pitch for Puerto Rico in the World Baseball Classic was given an opportunity to get more work in, but was unable to finish the inning he started. The theme of the day for the Indians bullpen, the lead-off walk, came back to bite them again when Billy Butler put a Soto pitch into the Royals bullpen in left-center

For the Royals, it was Wade Davis, a key component in the Royals blockbuster trade of the off-season, stymied the Indians for a dinosaur egg in the run column on one hit in two innings of work. In December, Davis and Scott Shields were moved from Tampa Bay in a trade that featured Wil Myers going to the Gulf Coast to play for Joe Maddon. Though he hit Jason Kipnis with a pitch and allowed a second inning single to Carlos Santana, Davis was dominant in his 2013 spring debut.

The offensive surge we've seen from the Indians so far this winter was tragically absent today, as Davis, Yordano Ventura, Donnie Joseph, and Justin Marks kept them off the scoreboard for

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seven innings. A Matt Carson solo shot, his second, on to the left field berm broke the monotony and put the home team on the board in the eighth, but it was still an uphill climb at 4-1.

Dan Wheeler came on to pitch the ninth, and if you've been watching the Indians for more than a year, you know that can be an adventure. Actually, today was no different. After Chris McGuinness pinch-hit for Nick Swisher, and struck out to start the bottom of the ninth, Cord Phelps hit a nice bases-empty double to make interesting, but Jesus Aguilar struck out looking, then third basemen Nate Spears flew out to end the game.

You can't win them all, I suppose.

The Indians will be back in Goodyear tomorrow to take on Seattle. The first pitch is at 3:05 ET; it will be thrown by Brett Myers.

Myers gave up an earned run on 3 hits and notched the win in his Indians Spring Training debut against the Reds on Saturday in Goodyear.