

Texas Sized Big Inning Dooms Tribe

Written by {ga=riverburns}

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It was a little closer for the Indians on Sunday at Goodyear than it was in their 10-0 loss to the Texas Rangers in Surprise on February 28th, but still no cigar for the Tribe in the win column. Going for their seventh consecutive win of the spring, the Indians put the ball in the capable hands of Brett Myers against the Rangers, who started Robbie Ross on the bump. Myers was 1-1 with a 3.60 ERA headed into Sunday's action, and was a well-oiled machine early, but things got unsatisfactory very quickly when the veteran right-hander ran out of gas.

The former Houston Astro likes to pitch to contact, and the Rangers gave him plenty of it in the top of the fourth inning. Adrian Beltre put his first pitch of the inning in play for a lead-off single.

David Murphy hit a ground ball to second, but it was too close to first base for Cord Phelps to start the 4-6-3 double play, which may have bailed Myers out in his 3rd start of the spring and Phelps wisely chose to get the sure out at first.

AJ Pierzynski grounded out to short, and Myers was one out away from calling it a day when all hell broke loose. Jeff Baker's double, over Ezequiel Carrera's head in center field, got Texas into the run column, but that broke the seal and the Brett Myers boat started taking on some serious water after that.

Leonys Martin's double landed just inside the left field line, about 20 feet beyond the threshold of the infield dirt at Goodyear Ballpark, which tied the game at 2. Craig Gentry gave the Rangers a 4-2 lead, and then Ian Kinsler and Jurickson Profar each fouled off a few pitches before getting a base hit. Tha
t was all Terry Francona needed to see from his project #3 starter, and Myers got the hook.

Fernando Nieve walked Lance Berkman before getting Beltre, who led off the inning, to fly out to center field.

When it was over, the Rangers had five runs on six hits, which ruined what was looking like a sensational outing from Myers.

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Down 5-2, the Tribe battled back, getting a run from Michael Brantley, who was back in the lineup after being spiked by Oakland's Josh Donaldson on February 25th, on a Drew Stubbs triple, his second hit of the day. The Indians would get back on the board in the fifth when Cord Phelps led off the inning with a single, then scored from third on a Ryan Raburn sacrifice fly. Two batters later, Luis Hernandez, the man of the day for the Indians, would knock in Tim Fedroff, running for Ben Francisco after Francisco walked, to even things up at 5.

The Indians got on the board in the second inning after back-to-back walks to Raburn and Ezequiel Carrera. Luis Hernandez came to the plate with 2 on, 2 out; he gave the Indians a 2-0 lead with his 2nd and 3rd RBI of the spring. Ross got Brantley to ground out to second base to end the inning.

Brett Myers came out of the gate, firing on all cylinders. Doing well to mix the change-up in with the fastball, the former Astro struck out Ian Kinsler and Jurckson Profar, both swinging on six pitches. He threw a first pitch strike to Lance Berkman as well, and put Berkman in an 1-2 hole, but the Rangers DH fouled off a few pitches and walked with the count full.

Myers started Adrian Beltre with a first pitch strike, before ending the inning on a fielder's choice.

In Myers 2nd inning of work, it was, again, all first pitch strikes. David Murphy put a charge into the first offering, but Murphy was ready to swing and did so on the next pitch, which resulted in a harmless fly ball to Ezequiel Carrera in center field.

He struck out AJ Pierzynski on 3 pitches, before Jeff Baker, who Myers couldn't figure out today, singled.

Leonys Martin got caught looking for Myers 4th strikeout of the day, which ended the second inning.

Myers was looking good when he came out for the third inning, getting Craig Gentry to ground out to the right side on the second pitch of the at-bat, and then striking out Profar after a full count walk to Kinsler. Lance Berkman flew out to Ben Francisco in left field to end the inning. Then, his pitch count got out there in the fourth and couldn't get that final out, spoiling a fantastic three and two thirds inning masterpiece.

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Yan Gomes continued his hot Cactus League campaign with a double to the alley in left center field, just beating the tag of Ian Kinsler on the relay from Jurickson Profar in the first inning. Carlos Carrasco pitched 4 innings in relief, giving up 2 runs on 4 hits, striking out 2, and walking 2. He took the loss, to drop to 1-1 on the spring. Rich Hill pitched a 1-2-3 ninth, striking out a batter, but the Indians couldn't get a 7th run across the plate and the final was 7-6, after Jeremy Hermida's broken bat foul out to Brandon Snyder.

The Indians will be back in action at the Goodyear Ballpark on Monday, where they'll take on the Los Angeles Angels at 4:05 ET/1:05 AZ. Scott Kazmir will get the start for the Indians; Mike Scioscia will go with Jered Weaver for the visiting team. After Sunday's loss, the Indians are 11-6 in Cactus League play.