

Morning Rundown: Cabrera and Baserunning Help Masterson Win Number 4

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, April 23 2013 7:11 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, April 23 2013 8:20 AM



This is bizarro world right now in Major League Baseball. You have the Twins and Royals at the top of the division early on, the Rockies playing like no one thought they would and aside from all that, team's are going on some really weird streaks.

So as quickly as the Indians went on a streak that was bad, they've pulled off three straight and are now 3-1 against their division foe Chicago. Must be a good sign of things to come when they get the rest of their division.

At least, I would hope it is. Despite losing two games to rain, the Indians have played just as many, if not more games than everyone in their division, which is kind of weird. But nevertheless, we are now entering a point in the month where an AL East team is not lurking in every series, which should help considerably.

INDIANS - 3 | WHITE SOX - 2

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W: Justin Masterson (4-1)

L: Matt Thornton (0-1)

S: Chris Perez (3)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

The stat was given at some point in the game by the boys in the booth, or maybe in pre-game how the Indians are 4-0 when leading after sixth, and without a win when behind. Well they tested that theory in this one as the comeback came in the eighth. Had to happen sometime.

It just shows you how this team has really been starting pitching dependent. They needed a good start or an offensive outburst early in order to win a game. And it also shows you that their bullpen is so good, when they have that lead, it is time to shut the door.

So the game plan is simple. Get the lead, hold it until the sixth, and most of the time, you've got a win. If half of these starters can at least do that consistently, we may have something here.

How about the play in the seventh inning? Not only was it the turning point, it was reason the Indians really won. This game came down to one thing: baserunning. It was the reason the White Sox lost and the reason the Indians won.

The seventh inning is where it happened. White Sox two guys on to start the frame against Masterson. After a visit, this is basically Mastey's situation to get out of, the trust you give your ace. So right after the visit, the pinch runner gets picked off second. Not just a Masterson from the mound pickoff, a Santana catches Blake Tekotte too far off second and guns him down pickoff.

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Double play, inning over, [Masterson through seven in brilliant fashion](#) .

"We really needed a play," Masterson said. "[Santana's pick-off] was like a momentum swing for us, because then it was the next inning where we scored the couple runs. Cabby had a real clutch hit for us. I was just happy. That was nice to see."

You could almost sense that momentum turned. Not long after, the Indians get some traffic and it's their speedsters. Stubbs steals second, making Matt Thornton all sorts of flustered to the point he ends up losing Brantley, who walks. Then his pickoff attempt at second goes awry and puts not just the tying run on third with less than two outs, but the winning run in scoring position.

Of course, Kipnis comes up empty, but it was almost if that momentum was gained for a reason. And the reason was for Asdrubal Cabrera's clutch hit that knocked in both Stubbs and Brantley.

And all was right in the world. Because Asdrubal has not been hitting the ball well. Perhaps this is the thing that gets him going.

"That was perfect," Cabrera said of Thornton's mistake. "That's what I was thinking when I was waiting. That was the perfect time for winning the game."

The other aspect to this was the brilliance of Justin Masterson. He had his second game against the White Sox and while it wasn't as dominant, he battled to the point of keeping his squad in the game. He walked four, but kept his pitch count low enough to get through seven and kept the traffic to a minimum. He gave up the solo shot, otherwise almost got out of that fourth inning without a blemish. Unfortunately Brantley couldn't come up with the fly ball that was hit deep to left, had he did though, that game was still tied.

That wasn't the case though, so it was good for the club to come back and get the lead right before Masterson would exit. It's textbook and it really is the exact science to winning a baseball

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game. Your starter goes seven, keeps you in it, the bullpen gets the final two, the offense manufacturers runs with fundamental baseball and takes advantage of the other team's mistakes.

And Tito feels really good about this ace.

"I was convinced in Spring Training," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He's good, and he's backing it up. That's the biggest thing in our game, is being consistent and he's backing it up at a pretty high rate."

I think we all feel good about our ace. Or at least with the fact that we have one.

Random Notes...

Justin Masterson is the first pitcher in MLB with a loss to get to four wins. He's the the third pitcher int he AL to get to four wins and fourth in Major League Baseball. He's an inning behind CC Sabathia for most innings pitched.

Chris Perez and Vinnie Pestano have matching 1.29 ERAs. It's like matching t-shirts or bow-ties. Let's go with bow-ties. Or maybe beards, with Vinnie sporting one lately.

Chris Perez was pretty locked in. He did float one over that almost sent me through a window, but he was able to reel it in and get the job done.

Perez noted in the post game interview that Matt Thornton has presented trouble for the Indians in the past. Probably cause: Travis Hafner (5/24), Grady Sizemore (5-18), and Shin-Soo Choo (7-25) were always making up the middle of the lineup for the Indians. Put a few right-handers in there to break up that middle, and you are either using Thornton to match up against the Indians, or live and day with the results of facing the right-handers that may be tougher than what you are used to.

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Sox manager Robin Ventura obviously picked the latter.

You know who had a great game? Lonnie Chisenhall, who had two hits, but one was that bloop double that opened up the scoring. It wasn't a typical double as it was a falling blooper in center that was overran, but it got the job done and did so with two outs. So, score several for the clutch hitting.

Every Indian struck out except for Brantley and Chisenhall. But yet no one struck out more than once. Talk about weirdness.

This Connor Gillaspie kid for the Sox is turning out to be a pain in the pants for the Tribe thus far. Two more hits against the Indians, one being a home run, and a walk. Go away already.

He didn't do anything big on Monday, but it needs to be pointed out that Mark Reynolds leads the American League in home runs and is fourth in RBI.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

No reason for why the extended absence of reliever **Matt Albers** (and we don't really deserve to know unless Albers wants everyone to know), [but he is back with the team](#) after dealing with the family related issue that has taken him away.

Albers was activated and tried to keep sharp by throwing at a local high school in Houston. Fernando Nieve was designated for assignment to make room for Albers, who was on the restricted list, and therefor didn't require a 40-man roster spot. The Indians will need the extra arm.

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For **Brett Myers'** arm, the Indians are going to go the "rest" route for him to recover from, whatever it is that is wrong with him. It will be more than a few starts before Myers returns though, as [he will take two weeks before he is even looked at again](#) . But that's the thing when you deal with elbow problems.

"I'm not happy about [being injured]," Myers told MLB.com. "There was inflammation in there. They saw something on the UCL ligament they weren't sure what it was, but they diagnosed it as a sprain. The doctor told me it's usually six weeks for a younger guy because they want to be sure. I'm hoping that it's just two weeks and in 10 days I can start throwing again."

What's a little scary is that Myers has been "dealing with the issue" since Spring. Uh what? He had elbow issues from the outset? Why was he pitching like he was? Why didn't they ease him in or hold him out then. Of course Myers is a warrior and unless his arm is falling off, he probably won't say anything or be willing to sit.

If it hurts the team though, he really shouldn't be out there. Again, I'd rather have a Corey Kluber out there, throwing strikes, challenging hitters, where a gimpy Brett Myers may not actually get that job done.

Lou Marson hasn't made much progress with the Clippers, but [he is expected to be activated](#) by Wednesday, which means Yan Gomes will be headed down.

"We've talked to Yan about this," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "We haven't made a move yet, but he understands that he does not need to be sitting here not playing. It's not in [the best] interest for his future."

Hard to do that based off the awesome offensive games he has had in a limited role, however look at it in the way Francona put it. He needs to be playing everyday. He'll do that in Columbus. This is very much someone the Indians can make their regular catcher and they need him to be able to catch. He does that by playing everyday. He also gets better as a hitter.

Gomes has had some good games, hit a few homers, looked impressive swinging the bat. But

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this is the right move at this juncture. It may not be fair, but as Francona noted, it is better for his log term future.

And finally, yesterday was Terry Francona's birthday. So it was only right that they won the game. For birthday reasons, of course.

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Nino is in full baseball mode here and on [The Tribe Daily](#), his own Indians blog. Don't miss all the fun, photoshopped Indians players, and LOLTribe ridiculousness.

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