

## Morning Rundown: Indians Split Doubleheader with Royals, But KC Gets Klubbbered

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Saturday, April 27 2013 1:00 AM - Last Updated Monday, April 29 2013 8:27 AM

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Friends, the Kansas City Royals actually have some pitching. Cleveland will leave Kauffman Stadium without having James Shields, pretty odd for a four game series, but if that statement doesn't tell you anything, you must not be paying attention to what is going on in KC.

The Royals have pitching, and we didn't even see James Shields.

The ROYALS HAVE PITCHING!



It was a stark contrast this weekend. Sure there's one more game and while the Indians can still split, you tell me which team deserves to be leading the division right now and which one has the potential staying power.

Hint: my answer is not Cleveland.

The difference? The Royals pitching is near the top in the American League. The Indians? Well,

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---

the rotation is at the bottom.

**INDIANS - 0 | ROYALS - 9**

**W: Jeremy Guthrie (3-0)**

**L: Justin Masterson (4-2)**

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

**INDIANS - 10 | ROYALS - 3**

**W: Corey Kluber (2-0)**

**L: Will Smith (0-1)**

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

So according to some stats that the great Tom Hamilton was rattling off during the first game on Sunday, only nine pitchers have ever won five games in April twice or more in their career.

**Justin Masterson** had an opportunity to join the likes of Randy Johnson and Pedro Martinez in that club and become the 10th pitcher ever. He was stopped short of that and will finish April with a 4-2 record.

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That's it. That's all the Indians have. And on Sunday afternoon, he got battered around by the Royals lineup. The Indians best pitcher struck out nine hitters, but he gave up nine hits to match that total and tacked on four walks for good measure.

And before I even get into it, I need to continue to point out Masterson's continued struggle against the left-handed parts of these lineups.

Alex Gordon - 1-3, BB, 2 K

Eric Hosmer - 1-3, 2 K

Mike Moustakas - 1-1, 2 BB

Jarrod Dyson - 2-3, 2B

Chris Getz - 1-3 (bunt out)

Those lefties went a combined 6-for-13 with three walks. They struck out four times between the five hitters. The righties?

Alcides Escobar - 1-3, K

Billy Butler - 0-3, GDP, K, BB

Salvador Perez - 0-3, 2 K

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Jeff Francoeur - 2-3, 2B, RBI, K

Those four hitters combined for just one walk, struck out five times (among four people), and were 3-for-12, half the hits the lefties had. The split is scary, especially if teams continue to load up on the left-handers against Masterson. He issued two walks to Moustakas with two outs and [both times it led to back-to-back hits from Francoeur and Dyson](#)

*"I think there was a force field around the strike zone for [Moustakas'] first two at-bats," Masterson said. "I couldn't put it there. I have no clue why. It was unbelievable."*

Perhaps it was because you can't effectively pitch to left-handed hitters and those guys know it. Moustakas laid off the sinker EIGHT TIMES in a row. They aren't fooled by it when you can't throw it for a strike, so perhaps you need to figure something else out. Seriously, go look at what he threw Moustakas in those two at-bats. All sinkers anywhere from 90-to-93 mph. Why throw that? He's clearly going to continue to lay off of it considering he knows it won't be called a strike.

Masterson needs to figure it out. He needs a pitch to effectively show these left-handers. It's getting the righties all right when it works. He does nothing but throw the sinker and his slider to the right-handers and it works. He made Perez look like a fool with his sinker. But if a lefty steps up there and he throws them that same pitch, they're spitting on it.

As Francona said on the pitch to Alcides Escobar that was hit for a home run. First pitch fastball that got the plate, Escobar did what a major league hitter does, and it happens, you make mistakes. You take that away and Masterson was barely touched by right-handers.

So yeah, regardless of the offensive struggles, this is going to continue to be an up-and-down year for Masterson as long as he struggles like this against left-handed dominant lineups, which is exactly what teams will continue to do. Is Jarrod Dyson a regular? No, but he's a lefty and he played and had a great game against Masterson. Normally it'd be Lorenzo Cain, someone who hits in the middle of their order, but Ned Yost made a brilliant play to put Dyson in there in the

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first game and it paid off.

But about those offensive struggles. I mean, there's nothing struggling about eight hits, three walks, plenty of traffic. The problem is not sending anyone home, which the Indians managed to do in every single inning against Guthrie.

Granted three times the traffic came with two outs and one of those times Kipnis ran out of the inning, but how do you not come through at some point? Especially with four other innings with legitimate opportunities to put something on the board? Especially in the seventh with runners on first and second in the 7th, with Guthrie at the end of his rope and one out.

Before Tim Collins got the last out, Drew Stubbs' ground out killed all momentum. Collins came in to face the lefty in Brantley, so that was Guthrie's last batter either way. And all Stubbs did was look at a ball before chopping at a garbage changeup.

### [FHQWGHADS!](#)

Now this was contained to just the first game, because in game two, things started to turn around. What Guthrie was doing by the time he got to two outs and how it mystified the Indians is beyond me. But things started getting jiggy against Will Smith [later in the second game](#) .

It didn't take long with a few runs in the first by Santana and Aviles, but it was opened up big time by **Mike Aviles** in the third when he hit a three-run shot that scored Santana and Asdrubal. And that was really it. Aviles had the big hit that charged the offense and really broke the chill that has been over the club the past few games.

*"It was definitely, definitely good," Aviles said. "Things haven't been going the way we wanted them lately, and everybody knows that. But, at the end of the day, it's still early in the season. It's always good when you're able to respond after the first game. We lost 9-0 and [the Royals] have been pitching well."*

I know a few people are ready to send Jason Kipnis to Columbus and let Mike Aviles start

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full-time. To that, I say slow down. It has been one month and that is in no way a logical thing to do. Kipnis has been hurt and if anything, he needs a trip to the DL to get completely healthy. Aviles is a nice guy off the bench who can come in and do that type of stuff, but it is way too early to stick him in their on a regular basis in place of Kipper.

The Indians would go on to collect more runs throughout the game, three of them coming via the sac-fly, but the real story was **Corey Kluber**.

COREY KLUBER PEOPLE! Pitching! Starting pitching in the form of Corey Kluber. Can you even believe it?

*"He was aggressive, especially in," Francona said. "He was kind of moving guys off the plate and opening up the plate. Considering how much he's been bounced around and things like that, for him to do what he did is very impressive."*

Brett Myers will get his rotation spot back when he returns, but if someone like Ubaldo doesn't pick it up, Kluber might take his spot if he can pitch like that. Not only going the seven innings, but he did what you need your starting pitchers to do more often than not. He threw strikes. He didn't walk a hitter, struck out six and yeah he gave up a few runs, but he was aggressive and had the backing of his offense to make up for that. He didn't try to be perfect like some people and the results were stellar. He looked fantastic out there.

And so far, in all his outings he's looked pretty darn good. If it comes down to it and Kluber continues to pitch like this, I would hope the guy who is pitching the worst is the one sent to the bullpen, and not Kluber. Because right now, other than Masterson and McAllister, Kluber has been the only other guy that has given the Indians solid outings that have given them the chance to win games.

### Random Notes...

First multi-hit game for Asdrubal Cabrera came in the first game yesterday. No joke, it took til April 28th.

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For perspective, Carlos Santana had two of them yesterday. Yes, he had multi-hits in both games, including the four hits in the night cap. Of course Cabrera would also get a second multi-hit game going 2-for-5 with a RBI in the second contest, but, yeah.

Lonnie Chisenhall probably should have been 3-for-4, but Hosmer robbed him. Just part of the great defense Guthrie got to help him.

Luke Hochevar seems to be taking to his relief role. Not even the always pesky Indians could help him revert to his old ways. Five strikeouts? As many as Guthrie had in the first seven innings in just two frames? Holy smokes.

The Indians called up Scott Barnes to utilize the new common sense rule in MLB that can be applied to double-header days in which both teams get the opportunity to call up one player to utilize during the day. The Royals used the rule to call up Smith to start as to not ruin their rotation. The Indians have an off-day on Thursday, so they'll be okay long term, but will need to find a starter for Wednesday before that off-day. Looks like Bauer Power.

Anyway, Barnes gave up a pair off that Alex Gordon bomb in the eighth inning. Otherwise, a solid day at the office.....

Mike Aviles is second on the team in RBI with 11 after his Hercules effort last night. He has about less than half the at-bats some of the people he is ahead of. Well, aside from Reynolds, he's ahead of everyone so. Play Aviles more?

Yan Gomes with two triples this season, two more than any of us will ever get and two more than Jason Giambi will have this year. Heyo! Kluber also spoke highly of Gomes and it just seems to mark yet another pitcher who has had a good game with Gomes behind the dish.

Chris Perez and Vinnie Pestano both got some much needed work in the second game and Perez was hit by a comebacker to the mound. He tried to catch the ball with his pitching hand,

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purely reactionary, and was able to stop the ball's momentum, pick it up and toss to first for the out. He made a few warmup tosses and was ready to go, so crisis avoided.

### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Well that lasted long. **Lou Marson** was just activated off the disabled list earlier this week [and is headed right back](#)

. This time it relates the shoulder inflammation that Marson has been apparently dealing with since spring. Tito said that it simply wasn't fair to Marson to be playing him

*"He tried to work through it during the spring," Indians manager Terry Francona said of Marson's arm injury. "I know he had it last year, which a lot of guys do. And then when he got hit [on April 6], that didn't help. He's battling a couple things. First, his neck hurts. And then his routine was thrown off with his throwing. We sat down and talked to him and we're like, 'Hey, man. This isn't fair.'*

So it sounds like Marson may be down for awhile as the Indians let him get back to 100% completely. They can do that because of **Yan Gomes**, who returns because Marson was placed on the DL and you can call up a player despite the 10 day rule when you place a player on the DL. Gomes' bat, and you saw it in the nightcap last night, is really catching a lot of attention and as long as he keeps doing that, the Indians will not be in a rush to get Marson back.

And why not? The only reason to keep Gomes down in Columbus is to get him regular playing time, which is the thing that Francona is trying to juggle. Gomes sees being up with the big league team the best experience though.

*"I feel like you're in a way going to get your best experience by being up here," Gomes said. "But if it's the development stage, it's definitely good to play every day. You just can't [treat] it [like you're] a backup guy. You've still got to work hard every day kind of as if you're a starter, talking to the pitching staff every day and hitting. You've got to do work every day as if you're playing every game."*

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I think you can play Gomes a lot. Jason Giambi is not playing everyday right now, so as long a Bourn is out and that extra spot is open with [Swisher playing a lot more right field](#) , Gomes will get more playing time. And even when Bourn gets back, you can give Chisenhall more regular days off by moving Reynolds to third and playing Santana at first.

Because lord knows Santana playing so much behind the plate may be the end of him the way he gets battered back there.

These things always work themselves out. The Indians want Gomes to play regularly, but they also want to win. Gomes' bat though may be helping them win, so when push comes to shove, they'll find a way.

By the by, **Michael Bourn** is stewing. [He can't play right now](#) and while he's eligible to come off the disabled list on Tuesday, the Indians don't seem to know if he'll even need a rehab assignment, so his return is cloudy. The Indians have the two games against the Phillies on Tuesday and Wednesday and then another day off on Thursday. Bourn said sitting is not a fun thing to do.

So, day to day. His stitches are out but he hasn't resumed catch playing. He's been able to partake in light-hitting, but that tells us no more than him being day-to-day does, so we continue to wait and hope he's back soon.

**Carlos Carrasco** [exited his start last Thursday for Columbus](#) after being struck by a line drive. Things look okay though and even though T.J. House was promoted to start in his place, Carrasco is considered day-to-day but has not been placed on the disabled list, so he should be fine. The Indians could have used Carrasco for that start on Wednesday had they called him up and appealed the suspension immediately, but that is obviously out of the equation now. House may end up staying as

**Daisuke**

**Matsuzaka**

also left a game this weekend being pulled after three innings due to injury.

Aside from a Salvador Perez blast, pretty satisfied with **Scott Kazmir's** last outing on Saturday. He didn't look great, [but he managed to get through five innings](#)

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and kept his team in the game. If they put the run-production they put up the last time he pitched, he wins that game. Not spectacular, but definitely not "loss-worthy" in the way he pitched. Even more appealing is the fact that he walked just two, so he seems to have a good command of what he's trying to do, which is always the first step.

That aside, I don't think I've ever seen a team use four pitchers in one inning and give up just one run. Which is exactly what happened and was the difference in that game, that one run.

It wasn't apparent at the time, because it would not be until the ninth in which the Indians would come back and there was one detail about that inning that sort of irked a lot of people. Two outs, Indians down to their last out but with the tying run in Brantley on third.

**Jason Kipnis** strikes out. Game over. Right? Until Perez couldn't corral the pitch and meant that the ball was live. [Kipnis doesn't run to first though](#) as you're supposed to do when the ball gets away, instead he looks up.

*"He came in and said he was sorry," Francona said on Sunday. "I thought that took a lot of class. It means he cares. When guys don't always run, it doesn't mean they don't care. Sometimes it's frustration. It's human. You live and learn."*

Clearly, if you watch the video, Kipnis has no clue that Perez didn't catch the ball. He's turned around. It isn't until he turns around to walk away that it's too late. Even if he starts running, Perez throws him out at first baring an incredibly bad throw.

I get it, run it out. You never know. But as Francona said, this wasn't a blatant "I don't care, so I'm not running" type of thing. Kipnis not only apologized to fans on Twitter, he admitted that his first reaction should have been to see if the curveball hit the dirt than react in frustration at the fact that he struck out.

I say, this doesn't need to be a thing and he doesn't deserve any heat. He's not off to a great start, so let's not pile on for an unnecessary reason.

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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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