

Morning Rundown: Red Hot Tribe Run Into Superb Scherzer

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, May 22 2013 4:49 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, May 22 2013 7:48 AM



Some nights, you can't do much. There's always things you can do differently. There's always things that could have went your way and there's always things you analyze as to what went wrong.

That happens and that happened against the Tigers on Tuesday. However, there was one thing that the Indians could do absolutely nothing about.

As hard as they tried, even if certain things went their way or they did things a little differently, there was one thing that was not being messed with.

Those nights happen. And those nights make losing easier to stomach. It isn't fun, especially with the team that the Indians figure to be locking horns with all summer, but you can at least rest a little easier knowing that what ultimately happened was out of your control and you got beat by the better guy having an awesome night.

TIGERS - 5 | INDIANS - 1

W: Max Scherzer (6-0)

L: Corey Kluber (3-3)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

Before the game, Terry Francona said that if Miguel Cabrera didn't hit the ball right at someone or wasn't walked, it would be like a video game. The question comes up every year with this guy.

How do you pitch to him?

The answer to that question has to be a simple one. No.

No? How do you answer a question of how with no?

Miguel Cabrera is dangerous to the point where it becomes borderline stupid to ever pitch to him. He makes managers look dumb, pitchers look bad, and everyone else competing with him offensively inferior. The fact that he has Prince Fielder and Victor Martinez behind him doesn't really help matters.

Sometimes though you have to pitch to him. There's nothing you can do about it other than hope he does something that generates an out, like Tito said. He will make outs because the odds are never in a hitters favor with nine guys out playing defense, but more times than not, he'll find a way to burn you.

Like he did on Tuesday. In the same inning that Andy Dirks led off with a home run, the Indians were faced with one of those damned if you do, damned if you don't situations. The sixth inning, **Corey Kluber** has cruised up to this juncture. But now the game is tied and he is faced with having to pitch to

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Miguel Cabrera with nobody out and first base open.

The way Cabrera and the on-deck hitter Fielder run, a double play is almost assured if you get a groundball. The question becomes, can you induce one from Prince?

Or do you take that chance to pitch to a guy who is coming off a game in which he hit three home runs. I mean shoot, he hit three home runs in his last game, surely he's running out of a steam to hit a fourth in two games.

He's 0-for-2 on the night! Kluber has been able to get him out the previous two times, what's one more, right?

Oops on all accounts. Whatever the logic was behind letting Cabrera hit in that situation was faulty. It doesn't make sense, before, during, and after the home run. And even if it turned out roses for the Indians had Cabrera made a rare out, it was still flawed logic.

"If you walk him, and you have first and second and nobody out, you're asking for trouble," Francona explained. "You're putting your pitcher in a tough spot."

Fair enough. I'm not the manager and it is far [from the reason that this game turned out the way it did](#). They did end up walking Cabrera intentionally late in the ninth inning, but it wasn't then that he made the Indians pay.

To Kluber's credit, even though he said he missed his spot, Cabrera hit an okay pitch. It wasn't a huge mistake or a ball right down the middle. It was something that you have to be a really good hitter to hit out of the park. Other players would have been able to get a hit off that, but very few would hit it the way Cabrera actually did.

Max Scherzer... As I covered [in a series preview for this two-game swing](#) against the Tigers, came into this game undefeated and pitching incredibly consistently. When he doesn't walk

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anyone, he's virtually untouchable. He's also an innings eating, having gone at least eight innings in half of his starts.

What did he do on Tuesday?

Eight innings, one walk. Textbook Scherzer.

"That was a dominant performance," Francona said. "His last pitch was 98. When you're up around 115-120 pitches and you have that left in the tank, that's saying a lot. That was impressive."

And to cap it all off, he retired 22 straight hitters. After that first inning, the Indians did not touch the guy. At all. All damage was done in the first and from there, Scherzer became locked in. And he ended locked in striking out the side in the eighth inning.

That's entirely what this game was about, from the first inning on. It was about pitching, because until that Cabrera home run in the third that provided slight separation, this was a tit-for-tat pitcher's duel. This ended up being Scherzer's night, he dominated after the first, and he was the singular reason that the Tigers were able to take this game.

It makes Kluber's outing look a little disappointing, especially since he held a lead for five innings of this game. But guess what? Kluber pitched into the seventh inning. For five innings, he was just as good as Scherzer. He ran into trouble late, but look at the numbers and the game as a whole. He didn't walk anyone, he struck out eight. He looked a million times better this week against the Tigers than he did the last time out.

"I thought Corey was extremely aggressive and crisp," Francona said. "He's learning quickly. I think he's confident. He came out of the chutes tonight throwing pretty good, but he made a couple mistakes to the wrong guy."

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What he did was a quality start. Despite blowing the lead, he kept his team in the game the entire time. The lead he did blow was a one-run lead against a team that is perhaps the best scoring offense in baseball, not just the American League.

Tip your cap to him, he pitched a heck of a game. I almost think that had they forced him to walk Cabrera, he might have exited that game with a tie. But that's just me. He seemed to get a little rattled after the Cabrera home run, not that the wheels fell off from there, but he went on to labor through the next inning and a half.

Just one of those games, the other guy was better, untouchable minus one inning in the whole beginning. It happens and there's nothing that can be done about it, not even pitching around Miguel Cabrera.

Random Notes...

Prince Fielder had a big insurance run knocked in during the ninth inning. Up until that point though, Tribe pitchers struck him out four times. He killed any sort of momentum they tried to gain offensively.

Why does that goof Jose Valverde have half of his goatee colored blonde? If anything, I'm glad he stopped Spazing out after getting the last out of a game, or maybe he toned it down because it wasn't a save situation. Either way, he's still a goof.

David Huff looked rough. He struck the first guy he faced and then labored through that ninth inning he came on to pitch in. So much so that Matt Albers had to relieve him.

Kluber's eight strikeouts was a career high. The more and more I look at it, it was one of his better starts that I've seen, despite the loss.

Cody Allens' four strikeouts were, fantastic. He collected five out with four of them via the

strikeout and he continues to get better and better.

Hitters 6-through-9 didn't sniff first base and accounted for all but one of the strikeouts. Yet it wasn't like they had any chances to knock in some runs. Those opportunities were squandered by the middle of the order. One of them was too little too late though.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Chris Perez released [a statement on the decision to delete his Twitter account](#) in the wake of the mass idiocy he has received lately.

"The decision to deactivate my Twitter account," Perez wrote, "was a personal choice I made in order to maintain the greater focus on the success of the team this season and our shared goals moving forward. We have an extremely positive and supportive group of players, coaches and staff members in our clubhouse, and I want to participate in activities and routines that contribute positively to the culture we're building here. Out of respect for my teammates, I want to minimize any potential off-the-field distractions, so this is the only time I will comment on this topic. Thank you for your understanding."

This is getting a little ridiculous, no? A man has to delete his account because fans are being that unruly towards him on THE INTERNET?! Please. And to have to write out a statement as to why? To have to explain himself to the media?

I love sports and I once and still kind of do love the idea of covering a baseball team as a job, as a member of the media, but what a killjoy this situation seems to be. At what point do some of these people who spew their crap step back and realize how silly this all has become? I've had several instances where I've talked to people through Twitter about this situation and there are quite a few people who simply do not like Chris Perez. They think he's a bit of a jerk and do not like the way he goes about business.

Not only do I understand that perspective, I respect it. And more-so because those people have chosen not to be asses to the man. Do they like him? No, but they don't hate him to the point

where they have to personally (or virtuapersonaly {i made that word up}) let him know how much they hate him, followed by a derogatory statement.

I guess there has been a loss of civility in the universe. Whatever, man.

Nick Swisher was not with the team on Tuesday as he left and [was placed on the paternity leave list](#) following the birth of his daughter. JoAnna Garcia Swisher (star of the wrongly canceled Better With You) gave birth Tuesday and Swisher could end up missing this mini-series with the Tigers.

To take his place on the roster in the meantime, the Indians called up Cord Phelps. You saw the results of Swisher's absence, which included hitting **Michael Brantley** (Mr. Fill In) in the cleanup spot and starting Mike Aviles at third so that Reynolds can play first and Giambi starts at DH.

Brantley hitting cleanup marks the ninth spot in the order that he's hit in. Which means, yes, [he's literally hit in every spot this season](#) and it's only May. It really is quite ironic considering there was a point in time where it didn't seem to be real obvious as to where Michael Brantley really belonged in a major league lineup. A lot of people felt that he should be a leadoff hitter, while others felt he didn't fit that mold as perfectly as you would think. There were also some people that felt he didn't exactly look like an RBI guy because of his lack of power.

Well now, he's hitting everywhere. Which is awesome. I think that is just the type of hitter he is. He's whatever you need him to be because he's just a consistent hitter. There's a reason he's had those long hitting streaks. He's consistent, he stays with his same approach and he has it working. He's the perfect guy to move around when you give other guys a day off and it lets you settle those that are accustomed to hitting in a certain spot every day. Less shifting, more normalcy, and Brantley is someone who can balance that issue.

While Swisher welcomed a new member to his family, the Indians will soon be welcoming some new faces to their organization. The annual MLB Draft takes place in just a few short weeks and as always each team [sends a representative to partake in the first round festivities](#) on MLB Network. They've sent former pitching coach and current special assistant Tim Belcher and

adviser of player development Johnny Goryl.

Further proof that you always run the ball out at first base. Had **Jason Giambi** [not taken Santana aside to let him know](#)

he could see his offensive frustrations impacting the way he ran to first, the Indians may have not won that game on Monday. Santana's tough running kept the pressure on and the error was committed, but who knows if he lollygagged over to first how that would have turned out.

Giambi went on to say that he told Santana he was incredibly important to the club and that he can be a leader with his play. Giambi could be a coach with his words.

Terry Francona noted that he pulled **Scott Kazmir** on Monday due to the fact that he simply didn't look right. He mentioned that Kazmir is still very much a guy who is getting re-accustomed to the fact that he has to pitch every five days. There is no injury issue and hopes Kaz comes out rejuvenated for his next outing.

The three walk-off wins against Seattle is the first time since 1992 that the Indians had three walk-off victories in a series, when they did the happy home plate dance against the Royals.

Finally, I used to listen to Mike and Mike religiously as a younger gentlemen. Back when ESPN was breathed in as a part of my daily routine and a I acquired sports knowledge through osmosis by leaving it on while I slept. Every morning on the way to school, it was on the radio. Even through college, it was what I had on during the morning if I was home before class.

I can't stand the thought of watching ESPN anymore, and with that Mike and Mike. The show jumped the shark years ago. Part of their shark jumping involves this business where Mike Greenberg "curses" teams via the Greeny curse. Part of that is the fact that [they've been to Progressive Field three years running](#) now and have tossed out the first pitch since 2011. Golic and Greeny are now taking credit for the collapses the Tribe has suffered the past two years.

"It's just brutal what we've done," added Golic, who was born and raised in nearby Willowick,

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Ohio. "We've come here and the Indians have been doing well, and we leave and they basically go in the tank for the rest of the year."

Yeah because you guys are the reason the Indians have taken a nose-dive. Has nothing to do with how bad the Indians have pitched the past two years.

Ugh, sometimes...

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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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