

Morning Rundown: He's Back! Ewwwaldo and Rain Curtail Offensive Momentum

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, May 23 2013 4:54 AM - Last Updated Thursday, May 23 2013 8:17 AM



I don't think I've ever flip-flopped between wanting a game to restart and not wanting a game to restart as much as I did with this rainy-mess of a game. Of course you would love to erase a 9-2 deficit and forget about the whole thing, because you might as chalk that one up to a loss.

But when you suddenly score three runs to make it some sort of a ball-game, then things get interesting.

Tack on a few more to make it a two-run game, and all of a sudden you feel like you have a chance.

Of course when it was all said and done, rain couldn't prevail and neither did the Indians.

TIGERS - 11 | INDIANS - 7

W: Justin Verlander (5-4)

L: Ubaldo Jimenez (3-3)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

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If anything, Mark Reynolds contended [that the rain killed any sort of momentum](#) that the Indians were building. Heck, can you argue with him? It seemed like Justin Verlander was on the ropes when the Indians got a two-run shot in the arm from Carlos Santana. Then the skies opened for a few minutes and the water flowed.

"You can't complain too much about our effort," Reynolds said. "It was a tough night staying in the flow of things -- a couple rain delays. But, it is what it is. We'll move on."

You would think a guy is done after that, but a few outs short of qualifying for the win, the Tigers sent Verlander out to get two more outs despite the lengthy delay. Terry Francona said it was just a night where they scored more runs and his team handled the circumstances well in playing to the end.

"You play when they tell you to," Francona said. "They just ended up scoring more runs than us. I thought we had plenty of steam, actually. We had guys grinding 'til the end. They just scored more than us tonight."

Momentum and Verlander's continued struggles aside (5 IP, 10 H, 5 R) there was nothing stopping the Tigers offense from pounding **Ubaldo Jimenez** into the dust the field crew lays down after the rain comes down on Progressive Field.

To put it as concisely as possible... Ewwbaldo was back.

"I didn't have any command of my fastball or breaking ball," Jimenez said. "I couldn't throw any of my breaking balls for a strike. I didn't have the same release point. I couldn't get out there with every pitch. That's why it was getting really hard to get ahead. I was falling behind in the count every single time."

You think? Jimenez reverted to old form in this one. An unwatchable drab of a pitcher who is dealing with too much traffic and throws too many pitches to even get through four innings. At least with the offense the Indians had tonight they were able to stay in it, but sometimes the holes you dig are too deep to do anything with, and this was one of those deep holes.

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It isn't just the runs, but it's the walks (3), the wild pitches (1), the hit batters (1). It all makes for an ugly looking game. His wildness can't be controlled and the frustrating part is that the Indians know it, we all know it watching, and even Ubaldo knows it. Yet he still has to go out there and throw the ball.

Even though we don't know where the ball is going, we actually do know where the ball is going.

I think Ubaldo has earned the opportunity to get another start before I personally start flying off the handle about him. I think he's still trying to get his release point down consistently, and until that happens, he may have these outings. Everyone has bad outings, its how you minimize the damage with them. Other pitchers can minimize it to the point where it isn't so bad.

But when Ewwbaldo is here, he's screaming really loud and he's incredibly difficult to deal with.

So it's just something we're going to have to live with in regards to Ubaldo if he's going to be a member of this rotation.

Random Notes...

Verlander's lack of total success continues the Indians ability to hit Cy Young pitchers. Of course he got a win so the record goes to 2-7, but those numbers keep looking better by scoring five runs in five innings off of him. Jimmy Leyland contends that he looked rough early, settled in, and then tried to rush things in the fifth because he senses the rain was coming. Whatever dude.

Might as well not credit Rich Hill for that two-run homer he surrendered to Miguel Cabrera in the eighth inning. Bourn said he's never done anything like what he did on Wednesday when he went back to make a rather routine (for Bourn) fly ball an out [and the ball bounced out of his glove](#) and over the fence. It's one

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of those classic outfielder low-points when they turn an out into a home run.

"Never had it happen, man. I guess they say first time for everything, huh?" a bemused Bourn said after the game. "I just missed it. There wasn't no excuses. I had my balance, I was good and it just came out of my glove."

As if a guy like that needed any help hitting home runs, but yeah, that happens.

Remember how Victor Martinez looked just a few weeks ago? It was like he was the weak link in the lineup behind the behemoths of Fielder and Cabrera. Well looks like the guy figured it out in the span from the last series to this one because he was looking much better this time around. He was 3-for-5 in the first game and while he was 0-for-3 in the second game, he knocked in two runs via sac-flies. The swing is coming back to him. I wouldn't want to face that lineup with those three in the middle all hitting well.

You have to at least give it up for the Indians offense. Other than the Santana home run, Michael Brantley was taking his clean-up role duties really seriously with a 3-for-5 night and three runs batted in. Yan Gomes continues to hit like a wild man with his fifth home run (he's a backup!) and a 2-for-4 night. Michael Bourn knocked in a run and stole a base. The team played really good offensively and really had Verlander on the ropes for awhile. Even before they hit the home run in the fifth they were steadily chomping into his pitch count to get him out of the game as early as possible and get into the creaky Tigers bullpen.

Curious to have seen Francona pinch-run Aviles for Cabrera in the fifth inning. Not sure if he did that thinking the game was that out of reach (in the fifth?) or because of the impending rain. But Aviles would go on to score there and latest score again with a hit of his own.

David Huff is garbage. Sorry, but it's true. If he had come in and didn't make things worse, the Indians might have actually won that one. He did not do his job at all in giving the Indians some length after Jimenez's short start. I think the consensus needs to have this one, Huff needs to go and his time with the Indians may be over for good after that implosion.

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[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I think we got a little too excited with the progress of **Scott Kazmir**. We were kind of ready to throw him to the top of the rotation as a trusted starter who is going to go out every day and be solid. But I think we have to realize that Kazmir [is still trying to get readjusted to the major leagues](#)

"I'm kind of working in between my starts to try to stay fresh and kind of develop a routine for this year," Kazmir said. "Stuff that's worked for me in the past is not going to work for me right now, just because of being out of the game for so long and then just coming right back into it."

Kazmir went on to say that he's battled his last two times out and things simply did not go his way. A lot of us saw that brilliant strikeout performance a few weeks ago and got excited. Perhaps that excitement needs to be tempered a little bit. I'm guilty of it myself.

There's only a handful of parks (former home park of Tampa Bay included) that Scott Kazmir has pitched better in than Fenway Park. In parks he has pitched at least four games in, Kazmir's 3.90 ERA and 6-5 record is third behind Seattle, Texas, Detroit, and Tampa Bay. So this weekend visit to Fenway should be a good one for Kazmir.

Just as one final aside and twist of intrigue for you on this Thursday morning. Did you know Scott Kazmir was once caught by current bullpen coach Kevin Cash? How about that for some random fact?

Speaking of Fenway visits...Ahem... [This one is one a lot of people are going to be waiting for](#) and talking about. This weekend is the time that Terry Francona makes his long-awaited return to Fenway Park. Boston, the place he won two championships with and put himself on the map. Boston, the place that pretty much ushered him out only to regret the decision after the man they replaced him with was a total disaster.

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"I'm sure I'll have a lot of emotions," he said, "This game is tough enough to play and I don't want our guys having extra baggage during that series. I need to be very cognizant of that, that whatever feelings I'm having, I'll deal with them. Like I said, it's hard enough to play this game."

Above all, Francona said that he's proud he is going back as an Indian and that really is the only thing that's going to matter right now. Yes he is their former manager, but that isn't how he is going in. He's going in current manager of the Cleveland Indians.

I remember hearing that mentioned a few times before the season got underway. He was referred to by many outlets as the former manager of the Boston Red Sox, not the current manager of the Cleveland Indians. That's why this series is rather important. Hopefully the Indians can get a few wins and establish just that, that Tito is an Indian.

Still no word on the name for Baby Swisher, but we do know that **Nick Swisher** will be back with the team on Friday

[after missing the first game of the Boston series](#)

to be with his wife.

The second start for **Brett Myers** in his rehab assignment [was made last night](#) and Myers made 74 pitches in the 4.1 innings he pitched. He gave up three runs off two hits and four walks. He only struck out a pair and also had a wild pitch. Not the sharpest outing for him, but it is all about his health when you are in this position.

Not long before he said that the Indians would not be able to "sustain their success" throughout this season, ESPN's Jim Bowden interviewed Chris Antonetti about the offseason. [You can see that video here](#)

. It was mostly Antonetti talking with Bowden recapping the offseason moves the Indians made. It isn't anything you haven't heard before, only with the "in progress" spin put upon it.

What is most interesting is the ESPN Insider article Bowden would pen about an hour and a half later in which he stated that the Indians simply [did not have enough pitching](#) to be even a legitimate wild card contender. Bowden alluded to this issue in his questioning to Antonetti, asking him if he thought he had enough starting pitching. But here's where I take issue with the guy. Really, not even a wild card spot? I can understand not having the starting pitching to

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match the Tigers, that is reality. But the way the team is playing and the way the Central is shaking out, how could they at least not be that kind of contender?

Give 'em a little break guy. I think they have a little more staying power in that race than you seem to be giving them credit for. It isn't bias talking, but if you look at the standings, the Central appears to be the Tigers and Indians and then everyone else. The East is mashed together at the top and the West is scattered about. I think the Indians have shown plenty of firepower to be in some sort of race just given the teams around the and how the talent stacks up.

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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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