

## Morning Rundown: Step Away From the Ledge; Indians Drop 4th Straight

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, May 23 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, May 29 2013 9:10 AM

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You know it is kind of funny. Well, not really funny, but you'll get what I'm about to say.

We sat here not more than a week ago talking about how the Cleveland Indians, ahem, YOUR Cleveland Indians were the hottest team in baseball.

Now there seems to be some panicking setting in.

Lemme just say, no panicking, please. Just like you shouldn't have ran out and bought playoff tickets last week, you shouldn't go burning down houses this week. Baseball is a marathon. I shouldn't have to repeat that cheesy cliché, but sometimes it needs to be said for you to remember it. Especially during a stretch like this one.

**INDIANS - 2 | REDS - 4**

**W: Jonathan Broxton (2-1)**

**L: Nick Hagadone (0-1)**

**S: Aroldis Chapman (13)**

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### [BOXSCORE](#)

I was trying to avoid it. I was going to just blow-past it, especially with a win, it would have been easy. But this bullpen keeps making it hard to not talk about it endlessly. It is the central story with this team right now, especially with another loss on Monday, their third straight.

I really don't know what to say at this juncture. You have a freshly tied game thanks to a huge home run by Jason Giambi, momentum on your side, your dugout is fired up. All you need to do is get it to the ninth inning and you have a good feeling about something happening in the ninth.

So in this situation, who does Terry Francona choose to go to in his newly lined up bullpen?

I'm not going to say the decision to use **Nick Hagadone** is wrong, but it was mildly surprising. He needed to go with a left-hander in that situation with Choo leading off, that was a given. Cozart isn't exactly Babe Ruth, so you pitch to him as well if you wanna match up Hags against Votto. Fine, I'll go with that idea.

I mean it doesn't seem like the best idea, but it certainly has some logic. You wanna play the matchups in a tied situation, especially if you believe something is happening in the ninth inning.

I can understand not really trusting Rich Hill lately and perhaps getting something from a guy who's been shaken confidence wise could really boost this bullpen. But man, it seems really ill-advised at this juncture, doesn't it?

And if anything, letting him pitch to Choo and Cozart would have been fine, but to let him pitch to Joey Votto? I tend to side with TD over at WFNY on this one. Bryan Shaw [should have been utilized in that situation](#)

, even if it means walking Joey Votto. I know you are putting another runner on base, but you are putting the double play back into order and facing a guy who is not the best hitter in the National League.

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Brandon Phillips is no slouch and he'd have loved to kill the Indians there, but you rather him do it than their best hitter. [Why let the guy who has better odds of beating you, beat you?](#)

*"We want to try to pound Votto in and we didn't," Francona said. "We don't want to let him get his arms extended there. But that's the learning of a young pitcher."*

Uh, but he did. That's all this game came down to. All of the rest, it might as well be a moot point with one ill-advised pitch to an NL MVP in Joey Votto.

And the beat goes on, getting louder, and more irritating.

*"This is a little bit of a tough stretch," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "We're getting tested, and we're going to figure it out. We're going to battle through it."*

What's tough about this stretch other than the losses? These are games the Indians could and should be winning. They didn't so much hand this one to the Reds like they did the past two against Boston, but this was one of those first to make a mistake type of games. The Indians have to not be the team to make a mistake. Especially when you have the opportunity to avoid their best guy.

Especially when your team battled all game against a guy who had a really well-pitched contest and finally broke through towards the end with the Giambi home run. With very little opportunities to score runs, the Indians made the most of it and managed to stay in this one. They scrounged across one run early and got the Giambi blast in the eighth inning to send Mike Leake packing.

And above all, it got **Ubaldo Jimenez** off the hook in a game that was really well-pitched on his part. Aside from a scary leadoff home run surrendered to Shin-Soo Choo, Jimenez was incredible. He walked four, which is a little unsettling as it always is with him, but he was pretty

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flawless after the second inning. He held the Reds big guys in check and if not for a close by centimeters double in the sixth, he may have left that game in a tie and the Giambi home run may have been for the lead.

But it seems like none of any of this matters. Jimenez's outing is secondary, what Giambi did was eh. This team is just talking about how this is not last year and that this is simply a rough patch that will be overcome.

I really hope this isn't a matter of "convincing ourselves" with all this talk.

### Random Notes...

Giambi unloaded on that thing in the eighth. 467-foot worth of home run in that blast that snapped a 0-for-24 skid he had been on.

The Cozart double that ultimately led to the go-ahead run in the sixth being scored was ohhhh so close from being a foul ball, but don't let Matt Underwood fool you, it was a fair ball. As cruddy as it may be, any ball on the line, no matter how much of that line the ball hits, is a fair ball. It can be dead center, to the fair side, or just a smidge on the foul side, if it touches that line, it is fair. Again, it sucks, but it was a fair ball.

And then to almost get out of that without any damage when Brandon Phillips hit one to shallow right field. Drew Stubbs made what was a decent, but not perfect one-hop throw to Carlos at the dish. Because Carlos was up the line a bit, he had to be able to catch and reach back. The thing is, he would have had plenty of time to do just that had he actually caught the ball.

You can call it a bad hop that took the ball away from Carlos's glove if you want. But the fact of the matter is, he didn't come up with it. I like to look at it this way. If Carlos makes the catch, Cozart is out. If Stubbs makes a more accurate throw where Santana can be more in front of the dish, Cozart is also out. Either way, it was a play the Indians could not make and it let the Reds get that run.

### [THERE'S A SPECIAL PLACE FOR YOU]

I don't even know what to make of [Aroldis Chapman's little display in the ninth inning](#) .  
Throwing a 100-mph fastball way above

#### **Nick Swisher**

's head, almost as if he completely lost control of the ball.

Okay, I can buy that. That's fine, he lost the grip or whatever, it got really away from him. A guy throws that hard, perhaps he made a mistake.

Swisher didn't seem to really say much, if he did, it was just a cold glance. He was unhappy, like anyone who just saw a pitch sail above his head would be.

And then that second one came in.

*"I know you guys are trying to stir some stuff up here," Swisher said. "The first one I saw go by, and I thought, 'Wow, that's pretty quick.' And then that second one was a little too close for comfort. Let's be honest, 100 mph at somebody's head? That's not exactly the best thing."*

Nick doesn't remember what he said after that, but you could see it plain as day on the replay, he was telling Chapman "Don't do that."

Chapman looked just as pissed as Swisher. What for? I don't know. Why do people do what they do? What is this guy's problem? There's no history here that anyone knows of. Maybe the first was a mistake and Chapman didn't like the way Swisher glared at him. If so, Chapman needs thicker skin, or he needs his ass kicked. Either way, he's started some trouble that is far from over. You will see something come of it today.

Dusty Baker said that everyone except for the umpire overreacted. Wait, what?

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I think the umpire was incredibly stupid in that situation. How do you not take control of that situation and issue a warning? You can not do anything after the first one, I'm giving Chapman the benefit of the doubt. But when you come right back and send someone back off the plate with a pitch that almost hits them in the jaw?

You can't sit there and tell me that wasn't at least a little purposeful. If he wanted to back Swisher up, he can do it without throwing one that high. Chapman was playing games and it was up the umpire to stop those games. He failed to do so and now his crew will have a problem on their hands the rest of this series.

And furthermore, if Carlos Carrasco did that, he would have been banned from the game with less of a chance to return than Pete Rose. Mark my words.

### [YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND]

It did not take long for the Indians to announce the move on Monday. Despite having just an MRI scheduled for late Monday, the Indians decided they had all the information they needed to know **Chris Perez** would be out for at least two weeks.

[Perez was placed on the disabled list Monday](#) with the results of an MRI still yet to be known. We will know soon enough the diagnosis and at least a rough time table as to how long an ailing right shoulder will keep CP out.

It answers one question, of many, that came into play before, during, and after the meltdown the Indians had this past weekend in Boston in regards to their bullpen. We now know CP will miss time, but who will replace him, and more importantly, was he hurt prior to that 1-1 pitch he threw to Jacoby Ellsbury?

*"We'd never pitch somebody that we didn't think could pitch," Francona said. "His velocity was very good [on Sunday]. He was up to 94 mph. He felt it on that last pitch. We communicate a lot*

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*with these pitchers consistently. We would never pitch somebody that we didn't think we should -- ever."*

Of course that just tells us the Indians perspective, if Perez was hurt, he wasn't saying anything and a lot of people wouldn't put it past him to clam up in that situation. The thing is, Francona is right, the velocity was still there. If he was really hurt, do you think he'd be able to have full effectiveness on his fastball?

To argue about this though at this juncture is silliness. He's hurt, the game is over and done with, there is nothing you can do to alter the past. What we now focus on is what the Indians do in the meantime. The Indians are putting their faith in the health of Vinnie Pestano, despite the shaky outing over the weekend that says otherwise.

*"We talked to Vinnie this morning," Indians manager Terry Francona said on Monday. "He's comfortable slotting into that inning, and part of the reason we're doing that is it makes it so much easier for us if you have an end point to get to. And we have plenty of depth. I still think having guys know [their role] really helps."*

Francona made sure to mention that Pestano will only pitch when the game is close or on the line late in the game. Essentially, he's the next guy up when you slot that back-end, so regardless of where he is with his return, as he's returning he's pitching there anyway.

But perhaps the ultimate statement was made when Francona said he has no worries about the bullpen's depth and that he feels comfortable using anyone.

*"Our bullpen has been outstanding and will continue to be," Francona said. "I think we're in better shape than a lot of teams, even when we lose our closer. I've been on teams where you manipulate it to get to certain guys. There's not one guy out there we have to run away from. That's a nice feeling. We'll be all right."*

Perhaps the panicking has come from the two games and the fact that the closer is now sitting on the disabled list. Or maybe it is legit. Either way the Indians are going to need Bryan Shaw

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and Cody Allen to step up into that seventh inning role. They'll also need Rich Hill to be a bigger part as the only left-hander that Francona trusts right now (even more after Monday). He can say he likes everyone, but Hill is the guy he trusts in high-leverage situations.

Until Hagadone and Scott Barnes prove otherwise, Hill is the guy.

What may also help? Matt Albers to figure things out. He has been the forgotten man back there in the pen but if he can piece things together, the Indians won't need to resort to moving a guy like Brett Myers back there.

Wherever it comes from, Hagadone, Barnes, Albers, a moved starter, the Indians will need one guy to step up in Perez's absence. With Pestano in the ninth, and Smith in the eighth, having someone to take on the seventh if a starter can't get past that has been a key success for this bullpen the past few years.

### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

The Brett Myers moving to the bullpen topic of discussion hasn't been broached yet, not even by the eager media to the Indians. If it has, there hasn't been anything made note of it. What has been noted is the fact that Myers' rehab outing [scheduled for Monday night was shut down](#). The Indians said his elbow "was still a little tender" from the last outing. He'll be evaluated today and I'm sure we will hear more on the matter today.

Francona [said his elbow is "being cranky."](#) Tender, cranky... I usually am tender when I'm cranky too.

I know this is billed as being two different series because it is a home and road split, but really, this is one series against one team. And it is the only series with the team that we've become accustomed to seeing twice a year in three game sets. Whoever made that Ohio Cup business is getting really upset after last year's 3-3 split and the increased possibility of another split between the two teams. The Indians do hold a 42-39 lead in the all-time series however.

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This will pretty much end the 2-2 business that the Indians have had so far with their interleague opponents. They've got a pretty normal looking schedule from here on out with more three and four game series scheduled, particularly the three game variety with the NL opponents.

Mickey Callaway spoke on **Corey Kluber** after his great performance against Boston. [He praised the adjustments that Kluber has made](#) to this point, not from game to game, but rather inning to inning.

*"In the past, when he was able to make adjustments, it was more start to start," Indians pitching coach Mickey Callaway said. "So you saw some inconsistencies. Now, it seems like he's doing it in-game, which is really helping. He's a guy that likes information and likes feedback. Now, he's really starting to be able to use it in games."*

Callaway mentioned that they want Kluber to stay away from his cutter and use it as a compliment to his fastball. It's working, because he's getting full life on his fastball and his slider is effective. Callaway noted that sometimes a cutter can effect the slider's movement. Kluber said that his comfort level is settling in and also mentioned he's getting on top of his pitches much better than before when he was too quick to the plate, especially against the Tigers.

And it is worth mentioning once again in case you didn't see it yesterday.

**If he were qualified, Corey Kluber's 6.14 strikeout to walk ratio would rank fifth in all of baseball.**

I'll stop eventually.

Finally, what would typically be reserved for the new Sunday Grazing fun is just too good not to mention right now because of what Francona said in response.

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Anyone catch the awkward moment when God Bless America [started up in the middle of an on-the-field argument?](#)

Bourn was tagged out attempting to steal second in the seventh inning. Although he wasn't really tagged out. He was tagged, but it was Bourn's belief that he was safe (because he was). So Bourn argued, which prompted Francona to come out and stop things.

*"I got out there because I thought Bourny was yelling at him," Francona said. "I got in the way of Bourny and Bourny goes, 'Tito, I'm not cursing at him.' I said, 'Oh, I know, because Michael Bourn doesn't curse.' Then Bourny goes, 'Yes, I do. Sometimes.' If there had been a tape recorder out there ... it was so funny. It was unbelievable."*

What looked like a heated argument was actually this.

*"I told Tom Hallion, I said, 'I came out here to yell at you and now I have to honor America with you.' That's exactly what I told him. We ended up all laughing. I said, 'Look at this. Look what you did now,'" said Francona, still laughing. "'I've got 34,000 people here and I have to take my hat off.'"*

What a comical altercation. Bourn is arguing during the singing, and Tito is just worried about his baldness showing.

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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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