

Morning Rundown: Ughhhh Masterson!

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Friday, May 31 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 05 2013 9:44 AM



Write your own introduction from this one. I got no words left.

INDIANS - 4 | YANKEES - 7

W: Shawn Kelley (3-0)

L: Justin Masterson (8-4)

S: Mariano Rivera (20)

[**BOXSCORE**](#)

Perhaps because I've become exhausted trying to figure **Justin Masterson** out.

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Look, I love the guy, I want him on my staff, but it has become incredibly clear that the Indians need a guy ahead of him. He has been ace-like this year, but he has also been, crud-like. In the instance of last night against the Yankees.

Which tells me that if he were the number two in this rotation. Man, he'd be one of the best number two-pitchers in the entire game. To have eight wins? To be ranked where he is ranked in all the major categories among major league starters.

To get through almost seven innings of this game when he didn't have it? That would have been admirable. But because he's our best pitcher, you almost get frustrated. Masterson went out and his third inning was really a overall good way to look at this entire game and the ups-and-downs you have with Mastey.

He loads the bases for one thing. And how does he do it? By walking Brett Gardner, a guy TRYING to bunt the runners over with nobody out, on four pitches. FOUR pitches! Are you kidding me? You need to throw a strike right down the middle of the plate before you walk a guy on four pitches who is trying to bunt.

I know pitching is not an easy thing. I'm criticizing a guy who couldn't throw a strike in four attempts, where as it may take me 14 attempts just to throw one. But man that is frustrating to watch. Then to get the groundout from Cano that erased a runner and didn't allow a run to score. Masterson was just a pitch away from getting out of the inning.

Or completely bombing it. Which is what happened with the pitch he threw to Mark Teixeira.

A hanger right down the middle. How come he couldn't hang one to Gardner a hitter before? How come when he shouldn't have been throwing a strike, he threw one?

I know it was a mistake pitch, it wasn't intentional, but it is frustrating. You get a guy like Cano out rather easily with a good pitch. But then you come back and hang one to a guy who's fresh

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off the disabled list and probably doesn't have his timing back quite yet.

Should have been easy pickin', but I guess not. And that right there is the inconsistency of Masty shown to you in one inning of work of one game. The crazy thing about it all is that he didn't even come close to hitting 100 pitches when he exited in the seventh, which is a shocker considering he gave up nine hits and walked three. But that's what happens when you don't make adjustments. He befuddled this team last month, to the tune of a complete game shutout.

They knew his strategy, so they came out and swung early. And it showed. It wasn't just that inning, it was every inning, even ones they didn't score on. He would give up two more in the sixth and then be chased by Pronk's ninth homer of the year. The sixth was even more frustrating as the Indians had just come off a frame in which they had tied things up. A new game, and with the third being Masty's only hiccup, it seemed as if it was a second chance to seize this game and get him locked in.

But no... He walks Ichiro the leadoff guy to the inning and then can't get Austin Romine, of all people, out. Then after Romine steals second, and Gardner gets a hit, Masterson makes a foolish throw that lets Romine score.

"I was frustrated about a hanging slider [to Gardner]," Masterson said. "And then I made an idiotic play to boot after that, which is not typically what I do. That's just the good Lord keeping you nice and humble once you get too excited about yourself. By no means were we very excited about ourselves tonight."

By no means was anyone excited about what happened last night, don't worry...

Random Notes...

Good to see Drew Stubbs get a hit, he was mired in a 5-for-44 slump coming into Monday and a 0-for-17 skid. His leadoff double in the fifth got things going in a run-producing inning. Need to see him make a turn on the corner.

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Yan Gomes actually didn't have a hit, what's up with that man!?

Two more hits for Carlos Santana, and he had the big two-run, two-out hit in the fifth inning that tied things up. He got an assist from whatever made that ball pop up of course, but he got the big hit. He'll need more of those if Cabrera is out for an extended period of time. Good to see him sort of heating up again.

Really, the table setters did a great job in this one. Michael Bourn and Mike Aviles were both on base for a combined five times. Bourn scored twice and Aviles knocked in a run. Plenty of opportunities for Cabrera, Swisher, and Reynolds, but only one RBI.

Ryan Raburn was lifted for Michael Brantley in left as a pinch hitter. Raburn got two at-bats, but it was after Andy Pettitte left the game, so it was not injury related. Raburn has been dealing with some cramping himself lately.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Of course the big news stemming from this game was the **Asdrubal Cabrera** injury. Running down the first base line in the fifth inning, before the Indians busted out, Cabrera slowed down, limped up and hobbled down the line. He then went down past first base and had to be physically helped off the field by Lonnie Soloff and Tito.

This has been after weeks of Cabrera gingerly running to first base. He hasn't been running full-speed, you can tell. [This has something that has been bothering him](#), not enough to sit down though, apparently.

"He felt better," Francona said. "You could see, he's stealing bases and things like that. I think there were days where he felt better and some days where we kind of kept an eye on it."

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Of course this comes a day after I had pretty much said Cabrera had been benefiting from having Mike Aviles around, and getting a few more starts at DH than usual. And now this happens. You can blame me if you want for jinxing it, I'll understand.

But now **Mike Aviles** is the guy... Because even though it is just a quad strain at this juncture, an MRI can reveal more, and even if it doesn't, he'll probably miss some time.

"He got it pretty good," Francona said. "Most likely, this is headed towards the DL, but we'll let him get scanned just so we know exactly what's going on there. We don't want to rush into anything, but it looked like he got it pretty good."

I'm a little puzzled as to why he was playing if this is something that could have happened. He should have sat for a few days to get it right. It's one of those situations that if you know it can cause greater longer term damage, why not eat the fact that you may have to go it without him for a week or something?

Bah, anyway. Mike Aviles can do it. He'll be a solid replacement as he is pretty much a guy who starts more often than not in a given week. Aviles knows he isn't 'replacing' Cabrera though so to say. He's simply filling in and realizes there is a hole that is now created.

"You know every day he's going to play and every day he's going to give you solid defense at short, as well as potentially hit you the game-winning hit or a game-winning homer. There aren't many good shortstops like that in the league."

And that does hurt. You lose that guy in the middle of your lineup. Tough to replace. I think with that though, Tito has to make **Michael Brantley** the permanent three-hole hitter for now. It was something I was thinking of even talking about this morning, because Brantley just seems to be the best all-around solid hitter this team has. Perhaps he can stabilize that three spot and get this lineup some consistency from the middle and give the RBI guys more chances.

Last year the Indians signed **J.C. Romero** to a minor league deal. He never made it to the big leagues, opting out and going elsewhere after spending some time with the Columbus Clippers.

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[Now he's opted out of his contract with the Nationals and could be in talks](#)

with the Indians about signing a minor league deal. Perhaps he sees the injuries as more of an opportunity to break in with the Indians, rather than with the stocked Nationals bullpen. He is hurt though, spending time on the DL at the time of his decision.

Speaking of, **Chris Perez** did not throw yesterday, which now means it is more than a week. He will resume throwing though soon, as he could get cleared by mid-week to do so. Still, no real time table on when he could be back.

The [first round of voting tallies has been released](#) and all the deserving Indians are ranked third. Mark Reynolds is third in the DH voting to, you guessed it, David Ortiz (and Lance Berkman), and Carlos Santana is third to Joe Mauer (and Matt Wieters). The two leaders are not leaps and bounds ahead of our Tribe players, but an early lead is as good as gold with those two. Oh well...

Finally the Indians [made amends for last Friday's dollar dog rainout debacle](#). They've offered every fan from that game the ability to exchange the ticket from last Friday to two other Dollar Dog Night games on the schedule. That is really big of them, because as we've discussed, they didn't have to do that seeing how the game had been played. So if you stayed, you get to see free baseball. How awesome is that?

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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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