

Corey Kluber, Streak Buster

Written by {ga=tommoore}

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He may not be a Ghostbuster, but Cleveland Indians manager Terry Francona knows who he needs to call to help the Tribe when they are coming off a loss.

Corey Kluber.

Sunday's start against Washington marked the sixth time that Kluber has taken the mound following a Tribe loss this season. In those six starts, Kluber has gone 4-1 with an ERA of 2.38 and 40 strikeouts in 41.2 innings of work. In the other game, (May 26 against Boston), he earned a no-decision despite giving up just one run and striking out 10 as the Tribe bullpen fell apart in the ninth inning.

In his last two starts, Kluber has given up just one run in 16 innings of work, earning him [American League co-Player of the Week honors](#) for the week ending June 16. Kluber is sharing the honor with teammate Jason Kipnis, who batted .524 (11-for-21) with two doubles, a home run and four RBIs in six games.

"Right in front of our eyes, we're seeing a kid mature into a really good pitcher," [Francona said in published reports](#) following Sunday's win.

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Kluber pulled off the win against the Nationals despite repeatedly finding himself in trouble. In both the fourth and sixth innings Washington had runners on first and third with no outs, and they loaded the bases with no outs in the seventh, but Kluber (and the Tribe defense) found a way to shut them down.

On the day, Washington was 0-for-7 with a runner on third base, a number made even more remarkable when you consider that heading into Sunday's start, batters were hitting .556 (10-for-18) Kluber with a runner on third, the second-worst mark in all of Major League baseball out of 233 pitchers with at least 10 batters faces with a runner on third (according to ESPN Stats & Information).

"Once we got into those jams, I was just trying to take it pitch-by-pitch and not get ahead of myself," [Kluber said in published reports](#) . "Not get too far into the inning, just worry about executing each pitch and kind of pitch the situation. I think I'm making adjustments quicker, now. Making adjustments pitch-to-pitch now, where it might have been making adjustments after an inning last year."

So while Kluber is trending in the right direction, two key pieces of the Tribe offense - Nick Swisher and Mark Reynolds - continue to trend the wrong way.

Swisher was held out Sunday's game with a sore shoulder. During Saturday's game, Swisher could be seen having an Al Czervik moment ("oh my arm, I think it's broken!") as he repeatedly was shaking his arm. Swisher is batting just .125 in June and is just 6-for-64 (.094) with 18 strikeouts in his last 15 games.

"I just don't feel like I have that thump in my swing, and that's a frustrating thought for me, because I like to let it rip every now and then," [Swisher said on the team's website](#) . "We're just doing our treatments, man, trying to get better every day. We met with the doctors and this and that. We're just going to see what tomorrow brings."

All kidding aside, the Tribe needs to find out what is going on with the player who they signed to the largest free-agent contract in franchise history.

"It's something that may be there, at least partially, all year," Francona said. "You just don't know. That's why we're getting it looked at again and trying to get some more knowledge about it to see the best way to attack it."

On Monday afternoon, [Swisher reportedly received a cortisone injection in his aching shoulder](#) and he will be out of the lineup until at least Friday. Hopefully a few days off can help, but how likely is that?

As for Reynolds, he is in a major funk - a .128 batting average in June with 23 strikeouts, and just one home run and two RBI. Since hitting a three-run home run against Seattle on May 18, Reynolds has hit just two home runs and had just six RBI in 26 games.

"I've done it so much in my career, I knew it was going to happen at some point," [Reynolds told The Plain](#)

[Dealer](#)
[when asked about his slump](#)

. "I was hoping it wasn't. But sometimes I feel I get a little too jumpy at the plate. I get a little timid. I'm not able to take the quality swings that I want to take.

"Then it starts snowballing on me and the confidence goes down. But that's just the way it is sometimes. But at the end of the day, I know in my career I've done it before, I've bounced back. And all it takes is one good swing and you're right back in there."

Whatever is going on with Swisher and Reynolds, the Tribe better hope they can get it fixed pretty soon. Despite their recent streak of losing 16-of-20, the Indians are still a manageable 4.5 games behind Detroit as they get ready to host Kansas City and then Minnesota this week.

If Francona can find a way to keep things moving in the right direction - the Indians have now won four-of-five - there is still time for them to put some pressure on the Tigers.

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After all, as good as Kluber is at busting streaks, he can't pitch every day.

(Photo by The Plain Dealer)