

## Morning Rundown: Kid K Grows Up for Tribe, Saves Series

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Saturday, July 20 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Friday, July 26 2013 7:59 AM

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If you are a long time reader of what I do, or at least around last year at this time, right around when the Indians started to nose dive, you may remember this. If you do, you are quite the Indians fan.

But remember the comparison of last year's losing streak to a festering wound? As gross as that might sound, when you think about it, what happened really was just that.

As frustrating as this team has been this year in situations like this past week of games, never once have I thought they had the capability of becoming the festering wound that they were last year though. Despite it all, this team won't let it fester. Just look at what happened yesterday afternoon against Seattle and in the finale against Minnesota.

Last year's team might be starting at a six-game losing streak. This year's team found a way to make something out of this situation and are now going home off a game in which they look like they cannot be stopped offensively. Just when you may think that this team is not what you

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were hoping for, they do what you were hoping for but didn't think they could do.

**INDIANS - 10 | MARINERS - 1**

**W: Scott Kazmir (6-4)**

**L: Joe Saunders (9-9)**

### [\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

If you can remember back to the mid-season review I did, if you got through to this part, I listed off some Derek Lowe statistics from last year. I think he pitched in 11 innings or so after the break. And that was over like, four games. He had a better ERA than Scott Kazmir up through the break.

In his two starts since the break, **Scott Kazmir** has pitched in 14 innings and has given up two earned runs and struck out 10. Time to fall in love all over again with the guy who has reclaimed his career. Kevin Millwood, Carl Pavano, the Indians have been down this road before. But I don't think they've ever helped a pitcher reclaim his career that [has the talent quite like Kazmir does](#)

*"I'm even better than that. Way better than that," Kazmir said. "I just feel like more of a complete pitcher now. I'm not just throwing it as hard as I can every single time out there. I have it still, but I throw it when I need to and I'm able to use all my secondary pitches."*

But the scary thing in all this for opposing teams is that Kazmir's "stuff" is back to a point where it can beat Major Leaguers again. He's unbeatable in the last month, with an incredible 1.60 ERA since June 21st. I think the Indians were hoping for something like this, but never in their wildest dreams thought they would get anything like it. The fact that they are though is a big

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reason they are where they are at. It is a big reason the wounds aren't festering. They have this veteran now who used to be a stud strikeout artist who has rebuilt himself into a better pitcher than he ever was.

And now he's starting to find his groove. Aren't you glad they didn't stick him in the bullpen a few months ago?

Kazmir went eight in this one, the only run surrendered was in the second after a walk, groundout, strikeout, and a throwing error by Asdrubal Cabrera. It was the the first of two walks in the game and the only hit came to lead off the fifth when Justin Smoak singled. He'd be erased on a double play later in the inning and Kazmir would knife his way through the next three innings allowing just a walk and finishing with seven punchouts.

If this has been anything more than a blowout, perhaps Terry Francona would have left Kazmir out there to finish the game off, even at 103 pitches. But even then I don't think Tito would have done that. Sure it would be nice for Kazmir to say he was able to go the distance this season one time, but as Francona said he'd be managing with his heart more than his brain. He knows Kazmir would have finished the job, I think we all did.

But why bother with a nine run lead?

Obviously the other big story in this one is the fact that the offense found themselves and just went off from the very start, blitzing Seattle starter Joe Saunders in the first and chasing him before he could even finish the fifth inning.

This whole **Asdrubal Cabrera** cleanup role thing is working out pretty well, and he seems to be entering a hot streak just as he is taking over. I said it a week ago and I'll say it again, Cabrera is swinging the bat a lot better. They went for outs because of good defense and just luck, but he was close to getting with it.

And now he's with it and smack dab in the middle of the lineup. His two-run double powered the first inning and then his run on Carlos's capped it off. He'd score again on another Santana

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double in the third, and then for good measure would hit a solo home run in the sixth to make it quite the day. When all was said and done, Cabrera was 2-for-4 with three RBI, a walk, and four runs scored. Move him out of the two hole and he scores more runs than he probably has all season. Also knocks a few in.

We talked so much about hoping for Swisher and Reynolds to get things together. But really, Asdrubal Cabrera, while not bad, hasn't been Asdrubal Cabrera with the bat this season. If he's about to be, this offense is capable of exactly what they did to Seattle yesterday.

I mean, you can throw in a grand slam by Michael Bourn as well, from one of the last men in the lineup you'd expect it from. Bourn can still hit them though, and he just happened to hit one of them with a lot of people on base.

*"I was able to put the barrel on the ball," said Bourn, who has three home runs this season. "I really wasn't trying to do too much, but I guess that's when it normally happens. That was all I was trying to do -- put the bat on the ball."*

Mr. Leadoff-Cleanup guy scored a pair of runs, was on base three times and of course had the big four RBI. All in all, a good day at the park.

### Random Notes...

With game in-hand and an inning left, Tito trotted Vinnie Pestano out there for what feels like the first time in a long time. Vinnie labored with a hit and two walks, but did get through the inning with no damage and a strikeout. This might take longer than we thought after all. This after his relatively clean inning against Minnesota a few days ago, there seems to be some scary inconsistencies there.

More errors! Mentioned Cabrera's error that led to Seattle's only run, but Mark Reynolds has once again committed another error, for two more to the running total. The defensive play lately is scary, but when you play like that offensively, and you have a pitcher who is out of his mind like Kazmir was, then it can cover up a lot of things.

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Mark Reynolds got a hit! And scored a run! And technically knocked in a run! I say technically because you can't get credit for an RBI when you hit into a double play, which is exactly what he did to help the Indians score another run late in this one. At least we have that one hit though.

Only Jason Kipnis didn't get a hit, shocking, and didn't even walk. He was the lone Indian to not reach base either way, but he did execute a sacrifice bunt in the first inning, which really didn't end up mattering since Cabrera and Santana followed with back-to-back doubles.

Carlos Santana has been on quite the roll himself. No one has really paid much attention but three more hits, two of them RBI doubles and he has provided some nice stability right there in the middle.

All of this too without Michael Brantley in the lineup.

In the four losses the Indians have had since the break, they scored just eight runs. They've topped that plus two in just one win. There ya go.

### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Not to bring up those errors again but. I am going to. **Lonnie Chisenhall** spoke on his defensive struggles lately, [and says he isn't worried](#)

. And I don't think there is cause for concern, unless of course he lets it impact the way he plays offense like he did earlier in the season.

*"I feel fine. Third base is a tough position," Chisenhall said on Wednesday morning. "You're going to get errors that you don't have any control over. Some balls are going to hit off your shoulder. Balls are going to hit off your shins. You can't control a lot of that stuff. "I'll go out there and continue to take my ground balls and get my work in."*

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Errors are mistakes. Chisenhall has made many of them. I know he says you can't control a lot of them, and sometimes you can't. Sometimes there is a weird hop you don't see. It isn't easy. But he's a professional and at some point he has to become routine over there at third and not mishandle the easier plays. He has to find a way to limit his mistakes. They're going to happen, just as long as they are not frequent and start costing games.

Let's not forget that while he has only committed eight errors for the Indians, he also has eight more for the Clippers, meaning he's committed 16 mistakes this year defensively and we are only through 100 games. He needs to start limiting those mistakes.

Overall with the defense as a whole, because it hasn't been just Chisenhall as of late that has been fouling things up, Francona says [there could be some sluggishness](#) coming out of the break.

*"I think as a manager, that's probably your concern," Francona said. "I don't think we're sluggish. I think we're not finishing plays and we're not making plays. ... I think the best thing we can do is try to grind out a win today, we've got an off-day tomorrow, get home, and get back to a schedule where we've got some ground balls."*

I can't imagine what Tito will be having the club do on Friday. Heck, if I were some people, I'd be coming in to the park on Thursday and being doing nothing but taking ground balls and throwing to first. Because the defensive play lately has not been acceptable and it has really already cost the Indians at least one game on that road trip. If it starts costing them any more, that will be a disappointing way to fall out of contention.

Especially for a team talented enough to do what they did on Wednesday.

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Nino is in full baseball mode here and on [The Tribe Daily](#), his own Indians blog. Don't miss all

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*the fun, photoshopped Indians players, and LOLTribe ridiculousness.*

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