

Morning Rundown: Hold the Shovel Tribe Won't Be Buried Yet

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Friday, August 09 2013 10:37 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, August 13 2013 7:46 AM



Closer's blow saves. Mariano Rivera has done the Indians no favors this weekend blowing two saves against the Tigers. On Sunday he let up a two-run lead after Miguel Cabrera homered and then Victor came back few hitters later to tie it. It marked his THIRD consecutive blown save in the week.

Chris Perez blew one save and the world was ending. He came back on Sunday to nail the comeback win down. Mariano Rivera will come back next time and figure it out and he'll go on to save a bunch more games before his career ends.

Both guys close out games for a living. Both are prone to mistakes and bad outings. Both will blow saves. Rivera has blown five saves this year. I'm in no way saying that Perez is a better closer, all I'm trying to prove right here is that closer's blow saves. It happens. Before we melt the world down, let's let things play out.

Because the Indians proved they have a lot of fight left in them after Sunday's huge comeback

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and there is a whole lot more of enjoyable baseball left to witness.

ANGELS - 5 | INDIANS - 6

W: Matt Albers (3-1)

L: J.C Gutierrez (0-3)

S: Chris Perez (18)

[BOXSCORE](#)

This could have been horrible. It really was setting up to be a doom and gloom situation. Masterson comes out, lays an egg, probably the first time all year he had an outing that was this helpless. You knew he didn't have his sharp command, it was just a hope you could see him get through as many innings as possible without digging the team into a bad hole.

Seven straight, a horrible 0-for-7 homestand. Hitting the road. The offense isn't hitting. A guy with a pink glove is going to shut them out.

Then something just happened. **Nick Swisher** [said that this team isn't dead and he meant it](#) . He said it wasn't over.

"I hate it, dude. I hate it," first baseman Nick Swisher said Sunday. "It's the worst, because you feel like you're right on the doorstep in some games, and it just doesn't turn out in your favor. We've just got to find a way to win, man. That's it. That's what it boils down to. Regardless of where we are -- home, road whatever, man -- we got a good team in here. We've got to find a way to win."

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And who better to do it? Swisher, with one swing of the bat, put a charge into this team. Make no mistake it was Mike Aviles' big home run that made you think the Indians actually had a chance, but it was Swisher's which [showed you that this team was far from dead](#) .

"We just didn't give up," Bourn said. "We were down five -- it'd be easy to fold. We didn't fold. We kept our heads up and kept grinding it out."

Swisher has not been what the Indians have hoped for, but since a move to the two spot, he's been much better. And perhaps this is the sign to show you that he's turning things around and being the leader in the lineup that the Indians hoped he would be. In the two spot he has hit .263 with three home runs and six RBI in 19 games. He had nine home runs in 72 games hitting in the fourth spot. Slowly but surely Swish may be getting it going at the right time for the Indians.

And who knows, the win as a whole may get the team started off on a streak the other way.

"I wouldn't count it out," Bourn said. "Certain games are key games in a season. This could've been one of them. We'll see in the future. We'll go back and look at it when everything is said and done, and see where we're at."

From there, as we noted, Aviles hits a huge home run later in the inning and he wasn't even supposed to be playing, but was called upon after Cabrera's ejection. Then the next inning Santana leads off with a home run and the Indians weren't being denied from there. They scratch a run across, Joe Smith looks incredible in the eighth, and Chris Perez needed just 11 pitches to get rid of the Angels in the ninth.

Let's quickly note, despite the horrific RISP hitting the club has had in the past week on the homestand, that both home runs came with two outs. In fact, Williams tarded the inning with two strikeouts. Then Bourn singled and it imploded for him.

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This team couldn't get anything off of Jerome Williams for the first five innings and of course those two outs he got in the sixth. The guy has dominated the AL Central this season. He's 3-0 against Central with wins against the Tigers in relief, starting wins over the Sox and Royals, and was looking for one more against the Indians. Then the tides turned, Williams lost it, and the bullpen couldn't even stop the Angels bleeding.

And after this week, it felt good to make the opposing team bleed like that.

Starter **Justin Masterson** was bleeding in the first two innings. He could not find the zone consistently which led to some close calls not going his way (he also faced Mike Trout in one of those at-bats, so, guess who's gonna get that call?) and the Angels just taking the walks Masterson was giving them.

"It wasn't going the way we'd like it to," Masterson said. "But the boys came back and you saw some offensive power, and I think that's a great thing to see by this team."

It was really painful to watch, especially since the offense was being quiet against a guy that you thought they'd have success against. That was not the case. Masterson's case was just that though. Uncharacteristically he was up on the ball count early on, throwing few strikes. It took him 60 pitches just to get through the first two innings, and while things got better, you got the sense he was mostly doing it on some luck.

He gave up another run in the fourth, and then things went bad again in the fifth when he walked a hitter and then hit Chris Nelson with a pitch. That would be the end of it for Masterson, and thankfully for the rest of the game's sake, Rich Hill came in and got the final two outs of the inning.

Masterson will be okay. He was 57 out of 101 for strikes, and it was said he only stuck to his slider and two seamer. You take away his fastball and of course that's going to cause problems, especially in throwing strikes. That's what you throw the majority of your strikes with, fastballs.

Two rougher starts in a row for Mastey, so you know he'll come out next time and turn it around.

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He's having too good of a year and has bounced back just about every time he's struggled. No worries here on him.

Random Notes...

Obviously, a story of this one was Asdrubal Cabrera, who was ejected in his first at-bat after he argued some balls and strikes with the umpire. Yeah the ball that was called a strike wasn't, but a pitch later, Cabrera swung at a ball and struck out. Instead of taking ownership, Cabrera took it out on the ump and was sent to the showers, as he should have been. If the umpire didn't do it, Tito probably should have considered it because Cabrera's defense in this one wasn't sloppy, but just a product of what looked to be some indifference and lack of caring. Tito defended his guy though, saying that Cabrera didn't say anything and perhaps it was just a young umpire getting aggressive. I think he deserved to be booted.

Maybe he's hurt. Who knows, he did miss time with an injury this year. He could be hurt a little more than we know and that has caused some range issues. But he could have made more of an effort to get to that Hamilton ball in the first that went up the middle and scored a run.

Let's not forget the most important point in all of this. His replacement actually hit the huge two-run shot that put the team within one. Could you make an argument that it may be time for Tito to consider benching Cabrera as a way to show him he needs to pick it up in all facets?

Carlos Santana's defensive behind the plate is becoming just as bad as Asdrubal's play at short. Only, he at least isn't as lazy. Don't get me wrong, he's been getting a little lazy back there, but those are not his main issues. Santana is simply just not any good throwing people out anymore.

Maybe it is solely because of his footwork, I don't know, but it isn't very good, especially this year. He let three bases get swiped in this one, two of which came on a double steal and one came thanks to Mark Trumbo. Wait, what? All Carlos needed to do was have a good throw and Trumbo was done. But not only did he take forever to get his transfer out to his throwing hand, the throw he made was way high for Cabrera to bring in and get the tag in on time.

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Something is wrong back there. I don't know what, maybe he just doesn't care and has committed himself to the sloppiness. Whatever it is, it has become frustrating to watch. He's caught just six baserunners this season out of 53 attempts. That's 11 percent. That's half of the MLB average and more than 40 percent less than what Gomes is doing. Awful.

His hitting, another story, of course. He needs to be in there every day as a hitter. But I'd prefer it be switching with Swisher at first and DH.

Can we credit the bullpen that has been bashed this season? They were the ones who picked Mastly up, put zeros on the board and got the ball to the end to slam the door after the comeback. This bullpen, namely Matt Albers, has been picking it up despite the rough outings. Albers pitched 5.2 innings this week surrendering just two hits and a walk in the four games. He's really been giving some much needed scoreless innings.

Michael Bourn had the big RBI hit that put the Indians up in the game, so he also gets some big credit for what he did. He was 2-for-4 with a run scored as well. Brantley hit his 20th double of the season.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Bright spot of the week, if there was one, was the reemergence of **Carlos Carrasco** from the depths of nowhere. Of course, the hope is that he isn't just teasing us again like always. Carrasco will get his chance after relieving

Scott Kazmir

[on Friday with five scoreless innings](#)

"It should [help his confidence]. He was very good," manager Terry Francona said. "It was good for our whole team's confidence. Any time you see somebody go out there and do what he did, that's terrific."

We all know the stuff is there, we've seen it and know he can do it. He's one of those classic

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guys that has the stuff but needs to figure out the makeup of it all. The relief option was interesting and one I think needed to be done. But that stint is short lived as the Indians will give him a shot to start this Wednesday in place of Kazmir, [who's being skipped to be given some extra rest](#) because of a dead arm.

"It's just a little dead, a little fatigued," Kazmir said. "I felt like I could keep it going. We'll see how it goes. I've never had this where it's just been really fatigued. Normally, I'd get stronger as the year goes on. It's just something where we'll get past this and I'll be fine. The good news is I came in today feeling better than I anticipated."

Hopefully dead arm doesn't lead to anything else and he can actually pitch, because Wahoo knows we don't need another starter to go down for an extended period of time. Either way, it is a great opportunity for Carrasco, despite wanting to see him in action in that relief role.

Speaking of relief roles, if you are still waiting for **Brett Myers** to make that appearance as a reliever, keep waiting. In fact, stop waiting, it probably won't even happen. Myers

[has once again been feeling some discomfort in his arm](#)

. Can't fault the guy for continuing to try, but, if this is an issue, perhaps he needs to get it taken care of. He's not helping anyone, including himself.

Corey Kluber has [not had a timetable established](#) for him to start throwing again. But he'll be with the team for their long road trip to Minnesota and the west coast. I'm sure since he's going to be with the team that they'll be having him do something at some point.

The "Goon Squad" is [going to be a lot more active and benefit](#) from the departure of Mark Reynolds. Not that Reynolds was playing a lot to begin with, but not even the two starts he would make during the week are taking away from their time. That means every day there will be one of those guys, be it Raburn, Aviles, Giambi or Yan Gomes, in the lineup.

The guy who benefits the most is Yan Gomes, and deservedly so because he's the best catcher on this team. Whatever he's doing, he's doing it right behind the dish. Tito even said Gomes specifically will see more time.

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"Gomes' development has been incredible," Francona said. "Doing it at the Major League level, it's not an easy thing to do. It's so nice to feel like you don't have to catch Carlos. We can DH him a couple days in a row. Not a lot of teams can do that. You can go a day, but sometimes we've been going two, or sometimes three out of four."

That is the right move anyway. As we went over earlier in the notes from the game, Santana has been downright horrible behind the plate. His footwork has been atrocious, his transfers slow. Gomes NEEDS to be the guy behind the plate more often than not. Sandy Alomar Jr. [&nb sp;has praised Gomes for his rapid improvement](#) from spring to now in his accuracy of throwing.

"His feet are the key. His footwork is unbelievable," said Alomar, who spent 20 seasons as a catcher in the big leagues. "He's been consistent all year. I know he's not playing the amount of games like a starting catcher, but he's been impressive. He works at it. I love when guys ask questions, and he's been a guy that's done that all the time."

It has been apparent for some time now that Gomes is the better option back there. He's throwing guys out at a rate of a coin flip. He has twice as many guys caught stealing as Santana in half the attempts that Santana has. And Sunday's game was indication that Santana just isn't getting the job done back there.

And finally, **Ryan Raburn** told [his agent that he needs to renegotiate](#) his contract extension now that he's a two-way player after his pitching stint earlier in the week. As fun as this all was, I hope Ryan Raburn never pitches another inning, ever. If he does, that isn't a good thing.

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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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