

Morning Rundown: Z-Mac Back on the Attack for Tribe

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Saturday, August 10 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Thursday, August 15 2013 7:54 AM



Just more proof that Andrew Albers deserved a lot of credit for what happened on Monday. The Indians came back out on Tuesday and were able to get some things going.

Those games happen, those performances are sometimes ones you just can't anticipate nor stop. There was a little uneasiness with the loss because it knocked the Indians down to third thanks to a Royals win.

But fear not, for the Indians get back in the win column, Kansas City finds out what it is like to face Jose Fernandez, and the Indians are back into second and even gaining a little bit on the Tigers after their loss. Not to mention, they're not too far out of the wild card race, with a big series coming up against one of the leaders.

Gear up for an early start today and then what will be a little bit lengthy period of no Tribe baseball.

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W: Zach McAllister (5-7)

L: Samuel Deduno (7-6)

S: Chris Perez (19)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

You kind of needed to see **Zach McAllister** turn it around. Not just for his sake, but for the good of the rotation as well. They've been scuffling a bit and a nice outing from someone like McAllister was going to be key, especially if the Indians wanted to be in this one and not kill their bullpen with certain guys not being available.

Luckily with a lead, the right guys were available and got to pitch, but before that, Z-Mac looked like he was back to old form.

Just as Albers did the previous night, McAllister [was a strike-throwing machine](#) . He was 76-for-105 on the strikes, which is just at 72 percent strike percentage. He walked just one hitter the entire game and had the strikeout pitches even working for seven.

"He got to two strikes on, I think, 18 of the [23] hitters he faced," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "So he's pitching ahead in the count. As he got into the game, he started getting more comfortable with his offspeed. His cutter was a little bit bigger tonight. Not sure if that was by design, but it was a pretty effective pitch. He flipped enough breaking balls in there to make them respect that. He pitched really well."

The thing that impressed me most was how he never really looked in danger. Willingham took him deep early and if not for Michael Bourn not playing the Morneau single incorrectly in the

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sixth, he wouldn't have even given up that second run. He was very efficient and worked with low amounts of traffic.

It looked a lot more like the Z-Mac we grew to become accustomed to prior to his injury.

He was also growing stronger throughout the game. The first three innings he had just two strikeouts. He gathered up the other five in the last two innings he pitched, two in the fifth and striking out the side around the two singles and error in the sixth inning.

"I felt like maybe I was a little bit more relaxed," McAllister said. "But the big thing was command. I think, for me, it's being able to keep my front shoulder closed with all my pitches. Today, I was able to have a better mix rather than just going with my fastball."

He then gave way to the bullpen, which was incredibly efficient. Cody Allen and Joe Smith each threw 12 pitches and Perez 14 with just a double surrendered by Perez as the one baserunner throughout the last three innings. Just continuing a great streak of bullpen work.

And that is where this team is going to win games. Getting performances like that starting and being backed up by that bullpen and specifically those guys that had a part in the win. If you can get a guy like Z-Mac to give you six, the trio can come in and take care of business. That's how it needs to be set up and hopefully that's a winning combination from now on.

Random Notes...

Yan Gomes just keeps hitting. He was one of two Indians to get a hit on Monday against Albers and he had two of the five hits on Tuesday. He didn't knock in any runs but he did score one. His second start in a row, and the second time this month that he's started back to back games. He will continue to play often though because he presents this team's best defensive catching option and right now, is hitting just as good as anyone on the team.

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Ryan Raburn back in the lineup and making an impact, especially when he hits a big two-run home run to extend a lead.

Other hits belonged to Michael Brantley and Jason Kipnis, both who knocked in runs at different points in the game. Kipnis' came via a groundout and the team as a whole actually did not hit well when they had opportunities to score. That groundout being one of them. Another Michael Bourn groundout for a run being another. Anyone else and that is actually a double play, but Bourn's speed and a poor feed helped them out.

Swisher of course would then hit into an unassisted double play and catch Bourn too far off the bag, so, whatever right? It ruined a good opportunity though. Raburn walked to lead off the inning, Chisenhall reached on a fielding error, Gomes singled, and the Indians had three on and nobody out. That contributed heavily to that 2-for-8 with RISP, but you'd like to see better at-bats there because you could have and should have found more than one run out of that situation.

The other situations came and went in the next few innings. In the fourth they had two on and two out thanks to a fielding error. In the fourth Gomes lead off with a double, Bourn sacrificed him over and Swisher walked. It led to Kipnis' groundout run, but Asdrubal's pop out to short was a little disappointing.

Not really sure what Bourn was doing on fielding that ball that lead to McAllister giving up that second and unearned run. Bad hop? I don't know, but why wasn't he able to get behind it a little more with his body. I understand he is trying to cut it off, but it seemed like he got out there just fine and decided the only way to stop that ball was to just stick his glove down. Get a little behind it more, not just put a glove down there. It might have been too quick to do though, so I won't criticize one of the fastest men in baseball.

Especially since it is one of the two errors he'll make all season and the Twins actually made two themselves in this one.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

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The Indians made an intriguing pick up on Tuesday. [They signed a first baseman to a minor league contract](#), former first round pick in 2008, **David Cooper**. He was the 17th overall pick by the Blue Jays and is currently still 26-years-old. He has six career home runs after getting some time in the big leagues with Toronto, as recently as last year.

His career was derailed by back surgeries however though. He's got screws in his back, was released in spring training this season, and is now looking to get back into the game. He'll report to Columbus and the Indians are hopeful to call him up in September. Seems like one of those "for the future" type pick-ups though. Maybe someone they can keep around longer than this year.

"It's a kid who got called up to the big leagues, I think, at age 21," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He was kind of a phenom with the Blue Jays. He had some back issues, and he's tried to rehab through that. We're going to see what he's got and see where it leads."

Tito said that Cooper coming up would depend on the Indians situation as well as Cooper.

"I think some of that may depend on where we are in the standings," Francona said. "There are always some guys who seems worthy of being rewarded. At the same time, if you're in the hunt, you don't want too many guys wandering through that clubhouse. We'll work our way through it."

Corey Kluber is [back to throwing](#), playing catch yesterday with some tape covering his finger. He will progress throughout the next week to throwing from longer distances and hopefully soon he can take the mound.

"He's progressing really well," said Francona. "He's at the mercy of the way the finger heals, but he seems to be healing quickly. In the meantime, he's been in the weight room killing it."

A bullpen session was thrown by **Justin Masterson** and he says that his "whip" is back. He was encouraged by his pen session and said that he had a feel that wasn't present in his start on Sunday. I'm sure we will see a reformed and improved Masty on Friday after the off day.

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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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