



Who would have thought it is Ubaldo Jimenez that was claiming a spot in the rotation and showing he is worth keeping in that spot and Kazmir showing some vulnerability?

The Indians are now in an interesting position. They're 4.5 back and coming off a series with a team that is leading the spot they're chasing. It wasn't a total failure and if the Indians can find a way to pull off a sweep, you'll take a 6-3 road trip. And even if they win two, 5-4 isn't so bad either if you can go home and finish out the week strong against the Twins.

A lot of people want to lament the fact that the team just lost this series. A lot of people are calling them dead, but I guess I just don't get it. This team is above .500 and with two wins will match last year's win total. This team isn't dead. This team is so much further ahead than last year's team. This is a new era. There's faces that weren't around last year, a manager who is new and bringing a fresh attitude and new set of accountability due to the respect he commands.

I feel like a broken record. But if you think this is the same old story, and you aren't enjoying this summer, then man, why are you watching this team with a miserable outlook?

INDIANS - 3 | ATHLETICS - 7

W: Dan Otero (2-0)

L: Scott Kazmir (7-6)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

Scott Kazmir is a perfect example and a great representative of this team. Do not sour on him after the season he's just had because of some of the starts he's had recently.

He's still got it. He's out there throwing the ball at the same velocity and with the same stuff he was throughout the season. But he's not sharp and looks a little bit like he's suffering from not having been at this point in a season in a long long time. The last time he pitched this deep into a season was 2010 and last year, he pitched 60 innings in independent ball, which isn't anything.

And this was not a bad outing either. It wasn't great. It wasn't a winnable outing. But he didn't get creamed, he just left some key pitches over the plate that got hit. He made some pitches, but not all.

He simply looks like a pitcher who is trying to adjust to the fact that he hasn't seen this much work on his arm, his routine, everything, in a few years. And then he got a lot of days off to rest that arm, and looked like [a guy who hadn't pitched on his normal routine](#) .

"He's fine. He just didn't command real well today," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "I think the layoff was good for his arm strength, but it looked like he didn't have his best changeup and he didn't command his fastball. He had a lot of deep counts, especially early in the game."

So don't go thinking he's a lost cause. He's a guy who very much should be in this team's plans moving forward. I don't know what the plan of attack should be for the rest of the season. Certainly if they can come up with other options, maybe giving him the rest of the season off could be an option. Or even putting him in the bullpen so he isn't as worked. But I'd hesitate doing that with a guy who's come back like he has. I'm interesting to see what he looks like after this start, having his rest under him and now getting back into a normal routine.

Either way, Kazmir is not a problem, he hasn't gone south, don't think he's done for.

As for the story on this game, there isn't much more you can do. A team like Oakland is just like Cleveland. They don't really have that big threat or that explosive offense that you can always count on. They have a lot of nice pieces and can sometimes produce in a big way. But if you neutralize one or two guys, you can beat them with a good pitching performance.

The Indians needed a good pitching performance, but they also needed a good deal of offense. It was very much a "strike first" type of a game once Milone and Kazmir were done, because Tommy Milone gave the Indians plenty of chances. The Indians couldn't get anything out of him though, at least til the end. And by then, it was only a tie game.

And yeah, in case you missed it, the A's struck first.

And with that strike, they won the game. Now they need to turn it up and start winning games ahead. Seems like Jason Kipnis has that mentality at least.

"You don't have time to be deflated by any of these games any more," Kipnis said. "It's go time. We need to win. There's no time to sit around and feel sorry about losing two of three. We've got three against the Angels that are going to be big games."

This season isn't over. It won't be until the Indians aren't playing anymore.

Random Notes...

Ryan Raburn had been out of the lineup for quite some time and it had nothing to do with "not finding a spot" or matchups, it was simply a sore calf. Of course we saw what he did in his return to the lineup yesterday evening with a solo shot. The Indians and Raburn are both saying that he is fine though and nothing serious, rather just something the team is keeping an eye on and being cautious about.

And the guy now shares the team lead in home runs with Kipnis at 15. Can a part time bench player end up the team leader? You bet.

Some great bullpen work from Cody Allen, who breezed through an inning and two thirds with 26 pitches, 15 of which were strikes. He struck out one and walked one. Unfortunately Letters and Shaw who followed were let down defensively on a Nick Swisher error that scored a run and let the inning continue for another in the eighth.

Kipnis and Santana did their jobs, knocking in runs and Kipnis scored one. Both had two hits and the guy in the five hole, Raburn, did his job as well. When your middle of the order does their job, and the team losses because it scored three runs, you gotta look around. Someone else, just one person, needed to come up with a hit. 2-for-10 with RISP falls on the shoulders of 6-through-9.

One situation, where Gomes had two out and the bases loaded, he had a nice swing on a ball that went foul. It was a great at-bat, Gomes didn't swing at anything that was bad, and put a good swing on the pitch he was looking for. Them's the breaks. Yeah it was his responsibility when you look at that situation and the end result, but you can't fault him for a bad at-bat.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Terry Francona says that **Josh Tomlin** is [well on his way to being an option](#) for the Indians once roster's expand in September.

"That'd be more realistic," Francona said prior to Saturday's game against the A's. "He's at four innings and we've got two weeks. That wouldn't be fair to him."

Tomlin says he has made some great progress, and that in addition to how he feels with his arm, he has felt good about his results and numbers, not walking people, and being around the strikezone like he is accustomed to.

Tim Belcher has been around Tomlin in Akron to monitor and work with Tomlin in his latest start and has reported good things. It really looks like the Indians are going to be bringing Tomlin back as a starter. Having already pitched as many as four innings, it is pretty incredible that they've been able to see him make this kind of progress in less than a year.

Thursday will mark a year and he'll be making another appearance rather soon for the Aeros after pitching last Friday. If they can get him back as rotation or option, or even a flex player who can do whatever you need, that could be a huge boost for this pitching staff as a whole.

Also on the comeback trail, but at a much lower pace as we've continued to note is Brett Myers, who was supposed to throw a simulated game today with the Aeros. Snore. **Corey Kluber** how ever has made some significant progress and will be now [advancing to throwing without the protective tape](#) that he has been using on his finger. He had thrown up to 120 feet as of Saturday and will now start to put the real rehab steps into motion.

Kluber, Tomlin, the Indians will need both if they can get them back soon. Chris Antonetti is now with the team on the road and meeting with Tito about possible call-ups. When asked if the team needed another move via the waiver wire trade option, Francona said he has no problem with where his team is. The additions in September can certainly help this team with their depth, especially in regards to the bullpen. There isn't much you are going to find on the waiver wire at this point that is going to dramatically impact the team honestly, unless you can get a middle of

the order bat. But call me when you find one of those just sitting on waivers, even if it's through trade, because there's always a catch and it would likely be a contract the Indians don't need.

What they really need is the [middle of the order bats that they currently have](#) to provide a little more. They've been seeing a nice surge from Nick Swisher now that he's in the two-spot, but the guy falling under pressure now is

Asdrubal Cabrera

You saw it on Saturday. Cabrera came up with a big hit, Swisher hit a solo shot. The pair had good games offensively and the team won with no problem in the end. Even though he had a few hits on Sunday, he came up empty in a big spot where the game could have swung towards the Tribes. You can't blame the guy when he comes up for you twice on the day, but watching him strikeout in that situation, and then watching Brantley go up and take a walk on a guy who wasn't really consistently in the zone, is a little frustrating.

"Everyone knows he's going through a rough patch," Swisher said of Cabrera. "His numbers don't speak for how good a player he is. For him to just kind of get on the board and get those knocks, it has to be a major confidence booster. We're going to need him down the stretch for sure."

And they'll still need him, but he'll be needing to fix things lower in the order. Because **Carlos Santana**

has been

[reinserted into the cleanup spot](#)

and Cabrera has finally been pushed down. It is kinda where the Indians want him offensively, but for defensive purposes, have avoided.

"The reason we really didn't [hit Santana fourth] early," Francona said, "and I was pretty open about it, was the fact that he was catching. ... But we've been catching Gomes more now, and with Santana either playing first or DHing, I don't feel like maybe we're sending the wrong message. Hopefully, we can use his offensive skills and not take away from the defense."

Makes sense logically, as does starting Gomes more behind the dish, which is exactly what has

happened. And should happen.

What also should happen for the remainder of the season unless he proves otherwise is that **Carlos Carrasco** [should be a bullpen arm](#)

"We'll put him in the bullpen," Francona said. "For the time being, that's kind of where we are. I think we like the idea of always trying to have the eight-man bullpen, because we seem to be situated better to win that way. But, again, things happen. Things can change, as we've seen a lot."

Don't take it as a permanent move though. And it shouldn't be. Because Tito brings up a good point. Arms like Carrasco are legit. He has the arm of an ace. He has the stuff that could make him a top-flight starter. There is a reason he was one of, if not the top prospect in the Phillies organization as he was making his way up. His stuff was that good and that much better than anyone he faced.

But then we started to see the between the ears aspect of baseball come into play. And that is what makes him just another option. Until he proves he is more than just an option and a player, I think the best place for him is the bullpen.

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