

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---



Cleveland and Kansas City, Baltimore and New York. You could call it the series of separation on both accounts. The four teams are the four contenders in trying to catch current wild card leader Tampa Bay for the last spot in the MLB Playoffs.

Last night, the Indians and Orioles took huge leaps in that chase, by jumping up within a half a game more and setting both the Yankees and Royals back a little further. There's more work to be done though.

**ROYALS - 3 | INDIANS - 4**

**W: Ubaldo Jimenez (11-9)**

**L: Ervin Santana (8-9)**

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

**S: Chris Perez (23)**

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

PHEW!

PHEW!

Okay, PHEW!

Where do you start?

The solo home runs? The Big U? Chris Perez's Bob Wickman impression? Yanimal?

Let's start with the end, which was as wild of a ride as you will need. THAT was playoff baseball. You want pressure? Look at that. And with the pressure at it's height, with runners on every base and a one run lead, Chris Perez reached [back and found what he needed to get out of that jam](#) against one of the best hitters the Royals have.

*"Everybody knows what's going on here," Francona said. "It's a lot of fun to be a part of. It's nerve-wracking and it's a lot of things, but it's a lot of fun to be a part of."*

A hitter before, he faced a pinch-hitting backup catcher in George Kottaras who is hitting .179 on the season. And that dude put up a battle. Perez overpowered him most of the at-bat, giving him 95 mph heaters to swing at miss at and he fouled most of them off. Perez started 0-2 and

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

seemingly had the final out within arms reach. But Kottaras laid off every breaking pitch Perez threw and fouled off any fastball. The final pitch that worked the walk was just a nasty offspeed pitch that most hitters would probably swing and miss at. Kottaras though somehow just took it and set up the situation that could have made Chris Perez the most wanted man in Northeast Ohio had he failed.

But he didn't. He pulled the rabbit out of his hat, put out Joe Borowski's cigarette, and brought down Bob Wickman's blood pressure. He notched save 23 and got back on the good side of things after having a few rough outings the past few times out.

He even gave Terry Francona a stomach ache and forced Ubaldo to pray. Getting to that position was tough enough, as the Indians had some intentions on throwing away the masterpiece that **Ubaldo Jimenez**...well, threw.

*"I've been feeling pretty good," Jimenez said. "Pretty much, I get ahead, stay ahead and get people out. That's what I've been doing. It's been really nice."*

Jimenez gave up seven hits, but he scattered them through his seven shutout innings and didn't walk a single hitter. He also struck out 10 hitters, making his escapes even that more possible and in the process of it all, he lowered his ERA even further down to 3.62.

Jimenez has now struck out 10 hitters in three of his last four starts. He's absolutely on fire right now. Aside from that three-run home run hiccup to Brian McCann against Atlanta, he's been untouchable the past few outings. He hasn't gone less than 5.2 innings since August 2nd against the Marlins, and even then he only surrendered two runs.

As you can see, I've completely ignored the idea of denying Ubaldo's turnaround and have gone to full-out singing his praises. I mean, I've never really had that opportunity and who knows when we will again? Ubaldo for President!

The Indians got contributions everywhere, which is why they won. Their starter, their offense, their defense, their bullpen. It was a game of all parts, and really, at this point in the year, that's

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

what you need to do.

*"We're going to need it," said Francona, referring to the contributions from a variety of sources. "We're not the team that's going to bash you to death, but you show up and try to be one run better. Tonight, I feel like maybe we were like a tenth of a run better, but it was good enough."*

A tenth of a run better? Yeah, you bet that. Look at this...

Royals 1-5 hitters: 6-for-21, 3 RBI, 2 Runs

Indians 1-5 hitters: 1-for-16, 1 RBI, 1 Run

And which team won the game? Incredible. The solo shots came up huge for the Indians and the excellent pitching with runners on base (holding Royals to 2-for-8 with RISP), won the game for the Indians there.

Also, lack of walks. The game as a whole saw two walks total, both of which came in that ninth inning when Perez was pitching to the Royals.

On the flip-side, 20 strikeouts, with 12 of them thanks to Indians pitching. So the game was very much an odd one from the three solo shots, to the great pitching, to the weird late surge from the Royals. Either way, a win is a win, is a win...is a win!

### Random Notes...

One of those solo shots that helped the Indians came from the Yanimalistic Yan Gomes, who is just on fire right now and is officially the starting catcher of this team, in case you didn't hear. [He's started 22 of the last 36 games at catcher](#)

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

Gomes also threw out a pair of runners, doing what he does best. And oh yeah, the game separating solo home run that was hit last? Came from Carlos Santana, who has been significantly more lethal as a DH/1B and not playing every day behind the dish going through the wear and tear of having to catch.

Since July 30th, Santana has seven homers and 18 RBI in 37 games. He's now got seven home runs as a 1B or a DH with 29 home runs. His batting average is significantly higher in those positions than it is as a catcher, as is his OBP, and that is something that is already high regardless of where he plays.

Castrovince's points are clear in that last link, and we are seeing the results of the switch, and right now, quite frankly... that switch is what is fueling this Indians run right now.

Santana's home run needed replayed and reviewed because it was that close, but the umpires returned and confirmed it. I guess I at least mention the one home run that was a no-doubter from Asdrubal Cabrera, seeing as how it was the first one of the night and gave the Indians the early lead. Cabrera was having yet another awful at-bat until Santana grooved a fastball down the middle for Cabrera to absolutely unload on.

Thank the heavens for that one. Also thank heavens for what ever the hell Ned Yost was doing. With the two on second and third and one out situation, pinch hitting Carlos Pena was probably not the best idea. But guess what? He did it, and the Indians benefited from it. Classic case of over-managing with your deeper roster. Pena is not a contact guy, which is all you needed with less than two outs and a runner on third. Just put the ball in play. Pena didn't even swing, and the Indians benefited from it. Thanks pal!

Cody Allen struggled again for the second straight game. The Indians tried to get away from using Joe Smith for an entire inning, but still had to use him to get an out in the eighth. They turned to Cody Allen who got a strikeout, but let up a hit and then a two-run shot to Alex Gordon. That Chicken seemingly has had an adverse effect on his namesake.

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

Jose Ramirez got [his first major league start last night](#), which seemed to be a big deal based off the importance of the game. Ramirez was hitting eighth and playing third base and notched his first career hit.

*"It'll be fun to watch," Francona said. "This isn't going to define his career, and he's not going to be an everyday third baseman, but I wouldn't be surprised if he does something to help spark us. I've been wanting to get him in a game," Francona said. "If you look at the numbers, it's a nice solid year."*

He did just that. His first major league hit sparked a run for the Indians and he almost did it again in the eighth inning after the Royals put up two runs in the top of the frame and pulled within one. But Drew Stubbs couldn't get the bunt down properly in the first few pitches and then Ramirez got picked off venturing too far off the bag.

If Stubbs was someone who could make a little more contact, the hit and run could have been a little more of an ideal plan of attack with the speed of both Stubbs and Ramirez.

Either way, Ramirez had quite the first start. He isn't much of a third baseman, more of a middle infielder, but he looked good there. He did commit a throwing error, but he made a nice pick at one point on the lip of the grass with a runner on second. And again, it just makes it seem like the Indians are getting an expanded look at someone who could be a big part of 2014. Not bad for having barely played there.

### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Speaking of 2014, do we want **Jason Giambi** around for it?

Lately, I'd really be considering it. I mean, why not right? I'll hold off on that thought for awhile, because this season isn't even over and who knows if that is a need, a possibility, or even a good idea at this juncture. We need to see the rest of the season play out before that decision is made.

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

But it is fun to think about really, because [Giambi is having a whole lot of fun](#) and even considering another go at things next season.

*"For sure, yeah. Hopefully here, too," Giambi said. "I love it here. I love the direction we're going and the things we've got going on. I definitely love it here. I feel great. I feel good."*

For a guy who was told 2009 was the end, he's still going strong. And he could have been a manager last year. I mean the guy has like, twenty playing lives. Times twenty. Giambi could play another year and he is open to playing another year in Cleveland. We'll cross that bridge when we get there though.

We're still in 2013 and **Justin Masterson** isn't [ready to give up on pitching in 2013](#) .

*"Why not?" Masterson said with a grin. "Positive thinking definitely helps the process. It's just the fact of the way I felt when it took place. Sometimes, some other people have much different feelings, much more pain. That's why I feel a little bit more like, 'Hey, we could have this.'"*

There is no actual movement on the rehab process though for Masterson, the timetable is still the same. There is just some hope though that Masty can make this comeback possible as he has progressed fine and is going to try and get more aggressive later this week. His manager has echoed his hope, but doesn't want to get ahead of things.

*"I need to be a little careful saying that," Francona cautioned, "because I don't want to push somebody to do something they're not supposed to. So, I don't say that very often, but I watch him walking around, and I talk to the trainers. It wouldn't shock me [if he returns before season's end]. Again, I don't want to create unrealistic expectations for him, and put him through that, but if it's at all possible, he'll do it."*

If they can get Masterson back for a start or two, that would be such a huge boost. They're definitely without him this week and probably most of, if not all of next week. But if this team is

## Morning Rundown: Big Homers and Big U Pull Tribe Closer to Wild Card

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, September 08 2013 11:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, September 10 2013 6:44 AM

---

playing meaningful games still and all indications are that they will be, having him starting in some of the final few games can make all the difference.

Still a little salt in the wounds of **Mike Aviles** after he was thrown out stealing on Sunday and then thrown out of the game for arguing about said caught stealing. The [media confronted Aviles about it](#), and he simply walked away from the questioning. Kind of odd, don't ya think? Aviles is usually a chipper fellow on camera.

Finally, obviously you saw **Michael Brantley** [back with the club](#), which is a big get-back for the Indians. Brantley is back after missing the Mets series for the birth of his first daughter, Mariah Brantley. Baby was born on Saturday, Brantley back with the team on Monday. Yay babies!

-

*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.*

[Follow @TheTribeDaily](#)