

Morning Rundown: Indians Turn White Sox Black and Blue with Opening Game Mashing

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Friday, September 13 2013 7:03 AM - Last Updated Friday, September 13 2013 7:12 AM



Now that's how it goes.

That's how it goes, that's how your supposed to do it, and that is how you want to handle your business throughout the rest of the season.

You may not win every single game against the White Sox throughout the rest of the season, because there's seven of them and the Indians have already beat up on the hapless Sox all year. But this sets the tone and gets them out ahead where they need to be. You need to handle your business against this portion of the schedule, and that means winning, sweeping if you can, the series.

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W: Corey Kluber (9-5)

L: John Danks (4-13)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

And there was no more definitive win than this one Heck, it was probably over after the fourth when the Indians just kept scoring and the Sox finally couldn't answer back. Aside from a Konerko homer and a pair of hits in the third, the Sox had nowhere near the firepower the [Indians were unleashing on this one from the get-go](#)

It was already 7-2 when the fifth inning occurred, and then it was all over. Which was nice in support **Corey Kluber**, who had struggled early with his command.

"I thought early [Kluber] was fighting [his command]," Francona said. "[He was] kind of in and out of the zone. I thought when we scored and we spread it out a little bit, I thought he kind of got back in sync, [and] even with the rain, I thought he held his stuff pretty well."

As mentioned, Kluber got touched up by Konerko and let up a run in the third, but by the time he settled in, the Indians not only had that big first, they were matching the Sox every inning with a run. Then they put up the seven spot in the fifth and that all but assured Kluber of a win if he could just get through one more frame.

That fifth inning was an absolute clinic. Charlie Leesman replaced Danks and was immediately greeted with the Asdrubal home run and that was it. Three walks followed and then came the hits. By the time Leesman exited the game, he had faced seven hitters, gave up four walks, three hits, recorded no outs and when Axelrod was done cleaning up his mess, he was charged with seven runs.

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That's a little embarrassing, but that's exactly what the Indians needed to do. They needed to go out and embarrass someone. They needed to flex their muscle and give themselves the confidence that they can roll up the runs and that their offense is powerful. Mission accomplished.

Ryan Raburn had himself a game. The three-run shot early, the two-run single. Tito says this is a big series in terms of having Raburn available because of all the lefties.

"We said coming into this series that Raburn would hopefully play a big part, because we were going to face three lefties," manager Terry Francona said. "But he did what he's done so often this year. He not only gets hits, but he gives us a lot of production for a guy that plays maybe half the year or not even [half]. He's given us a lot of production out of that bat."

For a guy who's struggled with his swing and keeping it going last year, he's sure done a good job this year despite having the injury and being a backup player. Raburn is killing left-handed pitching to the tune of .333/.434/.726 in 84 at-bats. He has seven of his 16 home runs against lefties and 21 of his 51 RBI against them. He's decent against righties too, so that's the thing, he's just extra good against the lefty.

Man, you wish Raburn was healthy enough to be in there everyday. The guy just has big hits. He's not able to play a whole lot, but when he does, he's coming up with a hit. Raburn had not played since last Saturday as he continues to deal with his strained Achilles and the ups and downs. Tito said he has good and bad days so they're closely monitoring him, but that he should play this weekend a good deal.

Oh, you think that is a joke about Raburn? Look at his past five games. He's homered or doubled in all of them. Sometimes both. The guy is an absolute beast. Just 73 games, 16 home runs? That's a home run every four and a half games. He's hitting one every 12 at-bats. He's knocking in a run every four at-bats. They don't call him "Rakin'" for nothing.

Random Notes...

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The last time the Indians scored more than 14 runs? You bet, against Chicago. They put up 19 against the White Sox on June 28th in the first game of a double header.

Really, the last time the Indians scored double digit runs was back on July 26th against the Rangers.

Jason Kipnis continues to destroy the hometown Chicago team. He was 2-for-2 with two runs, two RBI, a steal and a walk. This brings his yearly totals against the White Sox to: .344/.467/.583 with a home run, 11 RBI and six steals. you think that is good? Wait til the Indians reunite with the Twins. That'll be a feast.

You have to love a game in which Carlos Santana goes 1-for-4 with a run scored and batted in and collects two walks, and you're kinda like, "Eh, good job."

Both Yan Gomes and Drew Stubbs had multiple hits but only scored a run apiece. They also walked each, so they were busy, but not always coring or getting their chances with runners on.

Oh, Nick Swisher hit a home run, knocked in a few more runs too. So uh, he actually had a really good game to. Not many people actually had a bad game. I mean, Asdrubal hit a solo home run even.....Swish had the high socks going, probably good karma.

Kelly Shoppach made an appearance, coming in for Yan Gomes after the damage had all been done to get Yan a breather. He was 0-for-2 with a strikeout, the strikeout coming in the ninth when the Indians loaded the bases to threaten the Sox one more time. He was a little rusty defensively with that passed ball.

Vinnie Pestano got in and pitched an inning, giving up an unearned run off a hit and a walk. But he did strikeout a pair. Shoppach's passed ball let Keppinger advance to third, who would then score on a sac-fly. So, kind of Pestano's fault for the walk and single to lead off the inning, but had Shoppach not had the passed ball, would have wiggled out with no runs instead of a run. I mean, it is progress though?

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How about Josh Tomlin!? He got a chance to pitch and make his return to a major league mound. He went two scoreless giving up just two hits and working some rather clean baseball. He threw 36 pitches, most of them for strikes and shoot, if he can build up from that, I think the Indians will be happy using him when they can.

[WILD CARD UPDATE]

It's only right we update the Wild Card Race.

The Rays managed to finally beat the Red Sox by one, so they make anything anyone else does irrelevant unless they lost. The Indians remain a game and a half back, as do the Yankees, who beat the Orioles again. You wanna talk about a team falling out of it? Right now, Baltimore is and the Yankees are making sure they slide far.

Texas was idle after their bad series with Pittsburgh and the Royals were also idle for a travel day. Tampa holds their one game lead over the Yankees and 1.5 over the Indians. The Orioles are now 2.5 back along with the Royals. Texas remains two games ahead in the first wild card position.

Fridays Games: Baltimore @ Toronto (Hammel v. Redmond), Kansas City @ Detroit (Chen v. Verlander), New York @ Boston (Kuroda v. Lackey), Oakland @ Texas (Straily v. Holland), Tampa Bay @ Minnesota (Archer v. Correia)

So obviously, some of what we were talking about the other day is coming into play with Oakland playing Texas, and hopefully Boston can continue to roll and put the Yankees back a bit. This is where you hope Minnesota shows a little life and can spoil Tampa, which is really possible the way Tampa is rolling right now. Anything can happen.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

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Michael Bourn knows he is slumping, [he's the first to admit it](#) . It was good to see him get a few hits in the big game last night and hopefully that is the start of him turning it around. If your leadoff guy is getting on and doing his job, then hmm, I'm thinking that is going to bode well for you. That could jumpstart this offense moving forward and carry them.

"I'd say I've [been slumping at the plate] the last month and a half," Bourn said. "I always believe that I can come out of it any given day. That's how I look at it. ... I take it one day at a time and I just grind away."

Grind? Wedge would be proud. Bourny went on to say that he knows that when he is rolling, the team is rolling. So let's get Bourn going and get this offense moving in the right direction, sound good?

Carlos Carrasco has returned to the team [and is back with the club](#) . He should now be available out of the pen, giving the Indians another reliable arm to go to, and one who can give them innings, which is important in this run of guys who are starting right now, Salazar especially.

Right now, the point in **Justin Masterson** coming back is for the postseason. It looks like this team can get to the postseason without him, but if they get there, they can't be in it without him. It's looking like he can get back and possibly pitch in one game.

[Masterson played catch at 90 feet](#)

before the game on Thursday. Which is good news in his progress on a return to the mound.

"He came out today and played catch," manager Terry Francona said. "He went out to about 90 feet [and there were] no issues, no problems. And we'll just continue that progression. ... He has to go [through] his progression, but he did well. [When he returns] all depends on how quickly he comes back. If he's back and healthy, we can pitch him. But that has to happen. So, we don't need to put one thing ahead of the other."

If you're able to get to the postseason without Masterson in the stretch run, there's no telling what the team could do with Masterson in the postseason. Fun to think about, eh?

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Jason Giambi compared the Indians to the Athletics team he played on last decade. When you start throwing around "last decade" like that, you're definitely showing the gray hairs. Easy G.

"This team reminds me a lot of the Oakland teams," Giambi said. "Great starting pitching [and] a great bullpen. We definitely hit with more power in Oakland, but we have that team chemistry [and] guys are really tight on this team and really root for each other. The play of some guys on the bench, from Ryan Raburn to the rest of the guys like Mike Aviles and Yan Gomes have been unbelievable. So that's been really exciting. The team chemistry is what I think has really carried us through."

And I think that is the thing right there at the end is what is the hallmark of this team. You look at how they are doing it. Because right now, this rotation is being held together with glue, yet they're still getting it done. The offense, until last night, either wasn't hitting or wasn't getting the big hits they needed to open the flood gates.

What is it that this team has that makes them good? Their chemistry. He hit it. They've got chemistry pulling them through. They are a team that doesn't give up on themselves. It continues to make me laugh when I think back to when people were saying that this is just the same team yet again, ready to collapse like they have the past few years. This is NOT the same team and if they haven't proved it lately and with the fact that they're still in this race, then there is just a major flaw in your outlook.

Chemistry, is this team's strength. And chemistry can take you a long way. You need talent to ultimately get it done and they have it. But they've got chemistry and they'll need that talent to start to pan out and shine through if they want to make something special happen.

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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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