



This is it people. This is freaking it. If you don't make it a point to go down to the ballpark for one of the final home games in the next two weeks, you need to stop this charade. You either support this team or you get off the bandwagon. If you don't have the means, I understand, I don't either. I'm lucky enough to have tickets to Sunday's game. But do EVERYTHING you can. Heck, I might start putting pennies away for a possible postseason game. If you can't be there, throw your heart into it on television and show how much you care. Forget about the Browns. They'll be losing games on Sunday in six weeks in the same fashion that they are right now.

This team is primed for a spot in the postseason. This isn't going to line up any better for a team. They've seemingly caught fire at the right time, have the most favorable schedule out of any team left in the wild card race, and they have the most well equipped manager for this situation.

I'm running the Akron half-marathon in less than two weeks. It is tough and everyone tells me that the last mile is tough. But you know what gets someone through that last mile? That last little bit? The people cheering at the finish line. The people encouraging you, telling you that you can get to the finish.

If you aren't all in right now, I don't know what you need. You asked for more support financially, you got it. You asked for a competitive team, you got it. you asked for everything you've been given so far to get out there this season and show your backing. This team isn't going anywhere this year, they're in the race. It's time to go out and support them to the finish line and let them know that they can do it.

Because damnit, this team can do it.

INDIANS - 7 | WHITE SOX - 1

W: Zach McAllister (8-9)

L: Chris Sale (11-13)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

Now I know what the Tigers feel like. Although it isn't utter and complete dominance like the Tigers have had over the Indians this year, the Tribe has completely run rough shod over the Chicago White Sox this season. Chicago has been feeble at the feet of the Tribe for the past 12 games the two teams have played and you can expect the psychology of that to continue in the final two games in a week.

The Indians won this series with pitching. They got excellent starts from all their starters and great work from the bullpen when necessary, although it wasn't all that much needed. Offensively, yes, they were good, but the starters set the tone, and the offense did their job every time out. Their pitching has been better than just about anyone since the All-Star break and this series was a prime example of it, from Ubaldo all the way down. We'll talk about that more later though.

The offense did what they needed to do and finally started to get key hits. Now it is the White Sox, who are not the worst pitching team in the league, but certainly not the best. They've got some players, especially the one that went yesterday.

But [like they have done all season, the Indians beat up](#) on Chris Sale yet again.

"I [threw] a changeup up to Cabrera and you obviously can't do that to a hitter of his caliber,"

Sale said. "I got a 3-2 count to Carson and obviously, more times than not I'm coming in with a fastball there. They just put some good swings on some bad pitches and they put some good swings on good pitches. That's kind of how it shook out."

It wasn't the people you would have expected though. Tito pulled the right strings and put out one curious lineup against Chicago's best pitcher. He has given Stubbs the nod at the leadoff spot against lefties before, so that so isn't much curious. But **Matt Carson** in right? Jose Ramirez at second? Sitting a guy like Jason Kipnis who has killed Chicago this year and one of his better hitters in Michael Brantley?

Carson and Ramirez, combined 4-for-5 with a run, two RBI, a steal, and two walks... Wow.

Of course that wasn't it, but Carson singled home Santana in the second inning to put the first run on the board and then made it 2-0 in the fifth with his first home run as an Indian. Matt Carson?!

MATT CARSON?! He wasn't even supposed to be on the roster. Shoot, I thought he was going to get cut when the Indians added Jason Kubel. But he didn't, and he started yesterday and was a big reason the Indians won that game. Matt Carson.

Oh, but he wasn't done. Carson and Ramirez were the guys that chased Sale in the sixth after Carson singled and Ramirez walked. Matt Carson.

"[Carson] is excited to do whatever he's asked to do," Francona said. "He got a couple of big, big hits for us today."

Matt Carson. Okay, I'm done. Of course he is excited to do whatever, he doesn't play otherwise. I'd be excited too after getting a start during a pennant chase.

Before that though, Nick Swisher led off the inning with a solo shot, and then the flood gates.

Raburn and Santana single, and Asdrubal Cabrera finds his way into yet another home run, his second in as many days. Could he be heating up at the right time? Could Swisher? Swisher went deep again in the ninth for his 20th. Cabrera has had few home runs in the past few weeks.

This offense may be hitting their stride. Which is huge and important at this point. The pitching is going to win you games in the postseason, but the lack of big hits the past few weeks were getting a little worrisome. They've been getting them now, and in bunches.

Random Notes...

Before we get into anything else, I just have to commend the way Terry Francona is managing his bullpen. [It is no doubt tough](#) , but he's been through it enough times to know what to expect. It has helped with Z-Mac and Ubaldo's outings the past two nights, but with having to figure out that Salazar situation, and just overall how he's been able to use his guys, deserves credit. He may have overused Cody Allen for a bit there, but it is kind of hard to not overuse someone when you have to rely on the same guys. He's pushing the right buttons right now though, so, hopefully that continues.

Ubaldo's outing on Saturday night. Wow, just incredible. The guy continues to be unstoppable. The only run he gave up was after he exited and I'm pretty sure if Tito left him in, he would have found a way out of that situation without having let it cross. That was the right move though, because the game is well in hand, you need Ubaldo the rest of the way, so no sense in running him out there anymore. It would have been nice to see him get the complete game shutout, to not only add to the Indians total, but for Ubaldo to have that in this magical second half, but the end is the goal.

And then Z-Mac last night was fantastic. His best outing since he came back. If he's re-configured himself right in time, then the Indians rotation has received a huge boost. **Zach McAllister** went six-plus, an out away from seven, surrendering just a run off six hits and a walk. He struck out five and that outing seems to be more along the lines of what we've come to expect from him from earlier in the year.

"I thought Zach's stuff today was probably as good as we've seen," said Indians manager Terry

Francona. "He had velocity with his fastball. It had some power to it, but he commanded it in and out very well. He wasn't just throwing. He was pitching with good velocity and it opened up the plate for his breaking ball."

Zach talked about getting rid of the one bad inning that seemed to derail his last few starts. How he was able to make sure the sixth didn't get out of hand. That was about where he lost it in his other games, so it was good to see that.

Raburn was in the three-spot with Kipnis out, and he got yet another hit and scored. The way Francona is using him has been perfect. While I think we'd all like to see him a lot more, the matchups that Tito has used him for have been perfect. He isn't completely healthy, so using him primarily against lefties and then getting him out has been big. Keep to the plan on Raburn.

Chris Sale against Cleveland this season: 0-4, 4 GS, 22.2 IP, 22 ER, 6 HR, 26 K, 6 BB for a nice big fat ERA of 8.74.

This is a guy who is 11-13 with a 3.08 ERA on a horrible team. He's struck out 214 hitters and has a WHIP of 1.07. He's given up 23 total home runs. Six have come against the Indians. 22 of his 69 earned runs have been scored by the Tribe. That's 32 percent of his runs given up have come from one team. They've made a lot of Aces look silly this year, but they haven't embarrassed anyone like they have Chris Sale this season. Sale has been nearly [unstoppable against everyone, except the Indians](#)

Nick Swisher's two-homer game marked the 13th time that he has homered from both sides of the plate. Which also ties the major league record currently held by Mark Teixeira. How does that feel? [Uh, cool bro, of course](#) .

[THE RACE FOR THE WILD CARD]

Here's everything you need to know about the final two weeks in regards to this race. With Tampa and Texas both losing last night, the Indians are a half game back of not just one, but

BOTH wild card spots. This just increases their odds with two spots up for grabs. It would also be of a benefit to be the top wild card spot as that is the team that gets to host the matchup between the two.

As you know, the Indians have an all-important series against the Royals, their last matchup with an above .500 team this season, on the road to start the week. They'll return home for a four game set against worst team in all of baseball, Houston. After that, two more at home against the White Sox, and a finale against the Twins.

After Cleveland departs Kansas City, the Royals (78-71, -3.5) close out their home schedule with a three game set against Texas. They'll then head off on the road for three against Seattle and four against Chicago.

The Rangers (81-67, +0.5) meanwhile will start the week off against the Tampa Bay Rays, a four game series between the two teams that currently lead the Wild Card race. So, one team isn't going to leave that series with a wild card spot, as long as the Indians win a few games in the first part of the week. Theoretically. Texas is at home the rest of the way through against the Astros and Angels, the easy part of their schedule, which is needed after the week they had, and the week ahead.

Tampa (81-67, +0.5) will have the rest of the schedule after Texas against AL East teams in Baltimore, New York, and Toronto, while the Orioles (79-70, -2.5) have the same sort of set up with six more games against the Red Sox, ouch. Finally, the Yankees (79-71, -3.0) will have games against San Francisco and Houston oddly thrown into their two series with Tampa and Toronto.

So there you go. Things look good schedule wise for the Indians. But that's only part of the battle. You need to win the games that are on that schedule for it to mean anything. And so far, after this past weekend, the Indians have done just that.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Some guys seem to be getting it together offensively at the right time, Nick Swisher being one, and another being **Lonnie Chisenhall**, who [says he has found his swing](#) .

"The past two or three weeks, I've felt better in the box," said Chisenhall, who is hitting .229. "To do something to help our team win or propel us forward, [the homer Saturday] was a big hit for me. ... It's been frustrating for me this year. I made some small adjustments at the plate that haven't worked, but right now I feel like I have something good going and I'm going to try to continue to do that."

Tito makes a great point. You got a guy down in the order, and generally you don't expect those guys to be the biggest contributors on a nightly basis. But Chiz, he's down there and can give you a big night on more than one occasion because of his ability to hit and if he's going to be heating up here and figuring things out... Shoot, that's a nice bonus to have down there.

It would be nice if **Vinnie Pestano** found himself. Not going to happen this year though, because unless it is garbage time, Pestano isn't getting his opportunities. Tito knows Pestano is frustrated, mainly because he isn't sure of what is going on. He knows that Pestano will get it figured out though, just not this year. He even blamed the WBC for perhaps throwing Vinnie off a bit. It wasn't the reason, but it may have helped.

"I do think when he was down [at Triple-A rehabbing from tendinitis in his elbow], I don't think that helped. I don't know whether he protected the elbow. I don't know if Vinnie quite even knows. And I don't think the WBC helped. Like we worried about, he geared up awfully fast and that game he threw [in the Classic] he was sitting at 93-94 mph. It's just too early."

Either way, the Indians have a lot of options they can go to in the bullpen right now. It would be incredibly awesome if they had Pestano to go to as well, but right now you just worry about him getting it back together for next year, because he's an important part going forward into the future.

-

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](#)