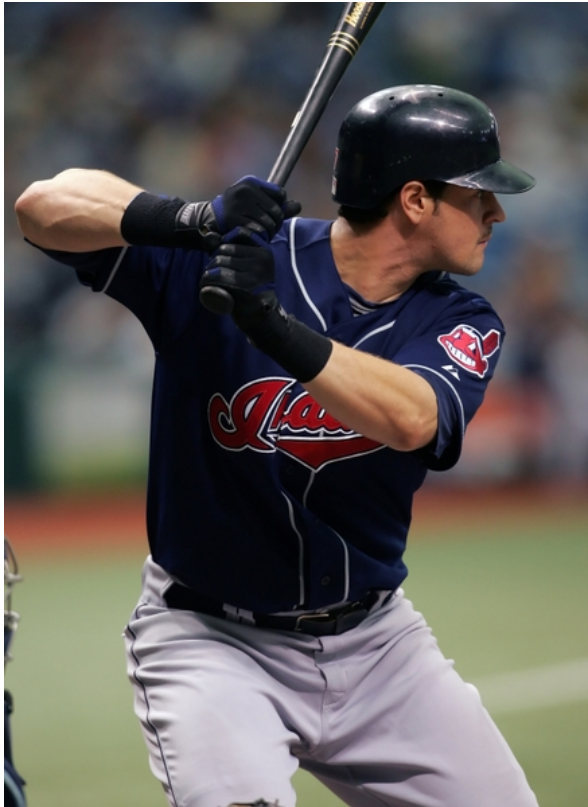


2010 Indians Lasting Moments: Second Half

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, October 17 2010 6:00 PM - Last Updated Tuesday, October 19 2010 12:52 PM



This is part two of a two part series on the Indians 2010 season.

Coming out of the All-Star break the Tribe sat at 35-54, almost certainly out of the playoff picture. All that would remain in terms of unknown is where the likes of Jhonny Peralta, Jake Westbrook, Kerry Wood, and Austin Kearns would be traded to. Or if they would be traded at all.

July 18th - Six straight out of the break

As if they came back refreshed and ready to go after a four day break, the Indians came out of the gates swinging. They swept a four game set over the weekend against Detroit and then traveled to Minnesota to take the first two.

Perhaps the highlight of the streak was the major league debut of rookie Jeanmar Gomez, who was called up to start Sunday's game after a double header on Saturday to keep the rotation in check with a slight injury to Justin Masterson.

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The start was originally intended to go to David Huff, who had been exiled to Columbus after a rough start. Perhaps with a foggy memory thanks to the line drive he took off the head earlier in the season, Huff forgot what the Indians told him ten minutes after the fact to “not tell anyone” that he was starting on Sunday.

Not only did Huff not tell anyone, he told everyone, via twitter. The social media concept is a growing one for this club and most of its players. Only Jensen Lewis, Matt LaPorta, and up until this date David Huff, had a twitter handle, but the club was embracing bloggers and tweeters with the addition of the Tribe Social Deck in left field.

There is still a lot of different accounts as to how the tweet got out there and who got it out there, but the Indians were less than pleased with the fact that it did get out there, so untested rookie Jeanmar Gomez got the start instead of Huff.

Gomez was masterful, going seven innings and giving up just two unearned runs on just 93 pitches. It was just one start, but Gomez left enough of an impression to get a real audition later in the season when the long term need came around.

Like every big story with this club, it seemed to overshadow something far more intriguing on the same day. This time it was the fact that Jhonny Peralta, of all people, hit an inside-the-park home run. This was of course after the Indians bullpen door came flying open after Ryan Raburn crashed into it, but let's not get into specifics, it happened. There is documented video of it for historical proof.

July 27th - From one rookie to another

With Aaron Laffey dealing with a dead arm, the Indians were ready to make a move to the reinforcements they've had waiting around in Columbus. However with Carlos Carrasco dealing with injuries of his own and Hector Rondon out for the year, it wasn't the rookie we thought.

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Josh Tomlin had been putting together a stellar campaign for the Clippers and while Gomez's shot was a one-time deal at the time, Tomlin was coming up for more of an extended look.

Not only did Tomlin go toe-to-toe with former ace CC Sabathia, he held the Yankees to three hits in seven innings and prevented Alex Rodriguez from hitting his 600th home run for yet another night.

Tomlin got support offensively from LaPorta and returning Shin-Soo Choo, who was activated off the disabled list earlier than expected just four days earlier.

August 1st - There's the fire sale

They didn't have a Cliff Lee or a Victor Martinez this season, but that didn't stop the Indians from trying to get returns on some of their players that didn't have a place in their future.

Jhonny Peralta went to Detroit on the 28th, Austin Kearns went to the Yankees a day after they left town, and then when you didn't think they'd find a taker, the Yankees also came calling for Kerry wood in a separate deal.

However the biggest piece the Indians found a new home for was Jake Westbrook. The trade to St. Louis ended an often overlooked, but productive career with the Indians. 2010 was a comeback year for Westbrook who spent all of last season and most of 2008 on the disabled list recovering from Tommy John surgery.

Westbrook went 4-4 down the stretch for the Cardinals and pitched well enough for them to consider bringing the veteran groundball pitcher back next year. Westbrook will certainly get a decent contract from the Cardinals or another team, making his return to Cleveland unlikely.

The Indians continued to add pitching with all of the trades they made, acquiring right-hander Corey Kluber for Westbrook, right-hander Zach McAllister for Kearns, and left-hander Giovanni

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Soto for Peralta.

Meanwhile, Chris Perez converted his second of what would be three straight saves after officially being handed the closers role and Jeanmar Gomez won his second game, getting called up and pitching on just three days rest.

Because of the Westbrook trade, the Indians were short handed and called upon not only Gomez, but Tomlin to make a start on three days rest. Tomlin went a day before Gomez, gave five-plus solid innings of work and the Indians won both games.

August 2nd - And down goes hope

A day after the Indians second season began with a batch of fresh new faces; their freshest and most hopeful face went down for the season.

Carlos Santana, collision at the plate, knee twisted, done for the year.

Go figure.

August 6th - Yeah, that fat Matola kid

I laughed when I read White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen refer to Matt LaPorta as both "Matola" and "that fat kid at first base" earlier in the season.

LaPorta had a season fit for an Indian, filled with plenty of ups and downs. After getting called down to Columbus, the first baseman absolutely went off, hitting home runs like nobody's business off Triple-A pitching. When Branyan was traded, not only did LaPorta return, he returned in a big way.

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Perhaps no game of LaPorta's was more reassuring the night he hit a walk-off home run to beat the Twins. Yes, he put together some hot streaks that made his cold streaks look abysmal, but the point of it all is that we saw him flash that power and hopefully fix his swing.

More than anything, LaPorta is still coming off offseason surgery to two parts of his body. We've heard he's going into the offseason with the idea of improving on his conditioning for a full season.

August 15th - Down goes the king

I think after 162 games, 118 of which saw Travis Hafner play in, the consensus about Pronk is that he can be a productive player, but not for the money he's getting or with the numbers we're used to.

Hafner spent some time on the disabled list this season once again, but it was minimal and instead of a rehab assignment he was activated when eligible to return and placed right into the lineup.

Good thing too. The day Hafner was activated he was thrown into the fire against Cy Young contender Felix Hernandez and he responded with a seventh inning grand slam.

Hafner finished up with 13 home runs, down last year from the 16 he had despite playing in less games. The difference in Hafner this year though was his batting eye. He significantly improved on his plate discipline and started showing that patience that made him such a dangerous hitter from 2004 to 2007.

If Hafner is able to provide a healthy .374 on-base percentage for 120 or so games next year, I think the club will take it.

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August 17th - A glimpse of the future

Hopefully some of the home runs that LaPorta hit are a glimpse of the future, but on this day the Indians signed players that they hope will join him.

Draft pick signing day is an exhausting one, mostly because all the big names are inking deals due to the rules set in place by the MLB and the messed up value slotting system.

The Indians officially agreed to terms with their first three picks, Drew Pomeranz, LeVon Washington, and Tony Wolters. They also handed out a million dollar bonus to local Cleveland product Alex Lavisky.

On the field, Jeanmar Gomez was tagged with his first loss after he came out on the short end of a duel with Cy Young Award winner Zack Greinke. A few weeks later, Greinke did it again; going eight solid frames against Gomez, but Asdrubal Cabrera hit a walk-off home run in the tenth inning to save the Tribe.

August 26th - This one's for the dogs

Face it; of all the horrible dog puns that I could have used, I used one that was low on the corny meter.

Still it was on Puppypalooza night that the Indians topped the Athletics for their 51st win and it was one of those nights where you gained a little hope for the younger core.

Justin Masterson picked up his fifth win, Chris Perez notched a five out save with four of them coming off strikeouts, and LaPorta hit a two-run home run in the sixth inning to give the Indians the lead for the rest of the night.

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September 6th - Carlos Carrasco makes 2010 debut

Six innings, six hits, two walks, six strikeouts and just two runs.

No win for Carlos Carrasco but a Shin-Soo Choo single in the ninth inning put the Indians up and Chris Perez shut it down in the ninth for his 19th. It was Carrasco's first start of the season after getting called up from Columbus and it provided a glimpse of what he was about to do for the rest of the month.

September 11th - Thome!!!!

There's that man again. 587 for the man who used to belt them out of Progressive Field regularly came late Saturday night and it was of much importance.

Not only did Jim Thome pass Frank Robinson for eighth place, his home run was the lone run in a 12-inning win for the Twins. Manny Acta's response?

They simply got beat by one of the best home run hitters ever.

I guess it's better than getting beat by Luis Valbuena.

September 17th - Choouooooo!!!!

The Indians were in danger of not having a 20-home run hitter on their squad for the first time since 1983.

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That was until Shin-Soo Choo went absolutely bananas against the Royals one Friday night. Choo homered three times, once with the bases juiced, to knock in seven runs and help Carlos Carrasco to his first major league win.

The herculean achievement put Choo at 19 on the season and before seasons end; Choo would have 22 home runs, 22 stolen bases, a .300 average and a .400 on-base percentage. It is the first time that an Indians player had ever done such a thing.



September 19th - Brantley's streak reaches 19

Last September, Michael Brantley was called up and he proceeded to light the base paths on fire. This season he started in left field, almost begrudgingly by the Indians due to the injury to Brayan.

The Indians didn't feel Brantley was totally ready and given his horrible production early on, they were probably right. But after the Kearns trade and some well-needed seasoning in Columbus, Brantley found his footing in the second half.

It was against the Royals on this night that the Indians season-high hitting streak reached 19 when Brantley got a hit in the 6-4 loss. The streak would end the following night, but Brantley ended up with a hit in 27 of his last 29 games from when the streak started to the end of the season.

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Brantley hit a dismal .157 in his first few stints with Cleveland. From August 6th on when he got regular playing time and Kearns was traded he hit .292 with eight stolen bases out of nine attempts.

September 21st - @ Minnesota, Twins clinch AL Central

It was almost as if the Twins could smell the blood seeping from the White Sox collective body that was just trying to barely keep their head above water.

Down 4-2 heading into the eighth, the Twins rallied to beat the Indians, as they did often in 2010, to put themselves in position to clinch the AL Central division crown.

The Indians storyline had to do with Justin Masterson, who was getting moved around between bullpen and rotation in order to help him finish the season right at his innings limit.

Thanks to an injury to Mitch Talbot in the first inning less than two weeks ago, Masterson was forced back into the rotation a day after he was moved to the bullpen. Masterson would make one more start, a game that ended up getting delayed and shortening his outing, against Kansas City before being put back in the pen.

This was Masterson's first true effort in relief work and it ended with him getting tagged with the loss and for three runs. Masterson did finish the season on a strong note, tossing three scoreless innings over the last few weeks and despite his inconsistencies, led the team in strikeouts and had a 3.84 ERA post All-Star break.

September 25th - Tribe pulls out of basement in Greinke V Gomez III

It was a popular pitching matchup in the second half and in all three contests and Gomez went

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head to head and hung with the Royals ace.

Picking up his fourth win, Jeanmar Gomez went five innings and gave up a run to help the Indians pull out of the cellar with a win over Kansas City. Greinke got battered, giving up seven runs and Shin-Soo Choo collected four hits.

September 29th - Double the games, double the fun

Thanks to a rainout on Tuesday, the final day at Progressive Field would be a good old fashioned double header.

It started with a combined shutout led by Mitch Talbot, who won his tenth game to cap off a good rookie campaign. He was supported by two-run shots from Shin-Soo Choo and Travis Hafner.

And it ended with a 4-3 nail biter in which the Indians foiled Justin Verlander in the fifth inning with a perfectly executed suicide squeeze by Trevor Crowe. The Indians celebrated by giving away the left over promotional items stashed away in the closet and shooting off dusty fireworks.

The day capped off a three game sweep and would continue what would be a seven game season-high win-streak.

October 3rd - All bad things should come to an end

After winning the first in Chicago, the Tribe would drop the final two to the White Sox and end their season with a 69-93 record, good enough to keep them out of the AL Central basement.

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As fans we probably saw more crazy scenarios, ways to lose a baseball game, and injuries combined than we saw wins, but we certainly learned a lot.

And really when it comes down to it, that was what this season was about. It was about learning what we had on this team and gaining knowledge on what we had to look forward to. It wasn't about the wins and losses.

I think it is safe to say that not only did we learn a lot of things; this team didn't stop short of providing us with some vivid memories of a losing season.

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ [TheTribeDaily](#) where he often tweets about his parties with Andy Marte and sometimes about the Indians.