

Morning Rundown: Talbot and Offense Make Returns

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, June 01 2011 5:22 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 01 2011 8:46 AM



You counted Mitch Talbot out didn't you? Despite my pleading last week after his disaster of a comeback, you doubted him. Don't lie. You doubted him.

May 31st, 2011

Cleveland Indians - **6**

Toronto Blue Jays - **3**

W: Mitch Talbot (2-1) L: Brandon Morrow (2-3)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

Why did you doubt him? Why did you want to kick him out of the rotation? He made his first start after a long layoff from major league hitting. He deserved a chance and some of you were unwilling to give **Mitch Talbot** his fair shot.

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Some of you, probably the same people, were ready to go crazy about the team as a whole. Well, har.

Yes, har!

Talbot looked to be in a groove and much better than a week ago against Boston. Seriously. He was finding the zone (against everyone other than Yunel Escobar?), working his pitches correctly, not making mistakes. He pitched into the seventh, and had Orlando Cabrera not thrown the ball away, [he might have not given up a run, period](#) .

Acta and Talbot both credited the defense. Talbot said he'd had given up more runs if the guys at the corners didn't do such a fantastic job. Acta also credited the offense in chipping away and adding on against Morrow throughout the game.

"Absolutely," Talbot said. "Defensively, we looked alive. Offensively, we looked alive. When a guy got on, we moved him over and got him in. That's what we were doing early in the season. Hopefully we're getting on track and getting ready to go."

Overall, it was great to get back to the type of baseball that had been seen over the past two months. It was good to cap off May on a high note. It was good to see Manny Acta say this.

"Those are the kind of things that got us here," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Playing good defense and pitching."

It would appear as if Manny Acta suddenly became a bad manager because his team faced a few good pitchers and went, gasp .500 over the past few weeks. Even though his team leads the division by as many games as they did back on May 20th.

Now conversely, don't go on that other side of the coin after this win and think everything is all roses. But the mass-panic that ensued over the past few days was quite comical. We really are

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bi-polar in the city of Cleveland when it comes to this team. Everyone was shouting AL Central champs a week ago, and a few days ago it was doom and gloom. Now what is it?

"We hit a few speed bumps there," Indians third baseman Jack Hannahan said. "It's a long season. You're going to have your ups and downs. I think it was big that we kind of bounced back after a game like [Monday's]."

I said it the other day. The Indians as a team continued to say that it was just a stretch they'd get over. They are continuing to say it. And what's more important, they continue to make it true. That's the key.

Random Details...

Carlos Santana now has a five game hit streak, spanning from the time he was moved out of the clean-up spot to now. He's got things going and last night was sort of the "realization" moment of that. 3-3 with a sac fly as well. He knocked in a pair of runs, doubled twice, scored twice. Santana really is turning it on. It was also his first three hit game since Opening Day.

Think Grady Sizemore got his timing back or he just needed to play in center? Sizemore says he hates DHing because he feels removed from the game. It is better than not playing at all, but maybe Sizemore playing in the field is the whole key here. It sounds a little crazy, but until he played center last night, he had not got a hit. A couple of hits, both doubles, one not very double-ish, but also a pair of runs batted in.

I will take full blame for Tony Sipp giving up that home run. I [jinxed him by mentionin](#)g he was going for the perfect May.

Matt LaPorta another 0-4 night. Couple of those lately. Also a couple of strikeouts.

The whole strikeout thing is a little overblown, especially in this one. They scored six runs off

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Morrow, so settle down. The guy averages a ton of strikeouts, always has, always will. But he gives up runs. So what if he struck out nine? He gave up six runs and lost. Those are the more important numbers. Morrow averaged over seven strikeouts per start coming into this one.

Jack Hannahan played defense last night. In case you missed it. John Farrell said he looked like Patrick Roy (hockey goalie for you non-hockey folk). The team has been a little shady lately in the defense department, so it was good to see some leather flashed. However....

[THE O-SHOW]

Orlando Cabrera took the [blame for the error at second base](#) on Monday. He claims he simply lost focus. Great, wash your hands, dust your shoulder off, whatever, move past it. Cabrera explains himself.

"I was trying to get the out at second base, and after I dropped the ball," Cabrera said. "I looked to second base and I saw the guy was safe. I totally lost focus on the guy running from second to third, and going to home. By the time I realized, he was scoring."

Okay so you make a mistake and you move on... But Cabrera better not be creating a habit of this. He was brought in for defense, and while he isn't the rangiest and may not have the flash he once used to, the one thing you can count on him to be is reliable. He is the steady hand not making mistakes or "bad errors."

However Cabrera made another error on Tuesday that cost the Indians some runs. Basically, the Bautista grounder should have just been eaten. Cabrera had to range a good ways just to field it, which was great. But he made the mistake of throwing to first and it caused the run to score.

That type of stuff can't come from the veteran. He's dealing with the lack of range and just an overall diminishing of skills. He can't be making the bad mistakes or there becomes more of a reason to make a change.

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That change is already gaining more steam with **Cord Phelps**. The # [FreeCordPhelps](#) movement is already underway and [Terry Pluto has now chimed in](#). Why not?

"The Columbus non-pitcher most big league ready is Phelps, who also is a switch-hitter. He has been a DH for 10 games. Why can't he do that in the next few weeks with the Tribe until Hafner's rib cage injury heals? He also can spell Orlando Cabrera at second base, and even give Asdrubal Cabrera (who has played every game) a day off at short?"

I had an interesting point made to me on Twitter. Why not bring Lonnie Chisenhall up as DH with Hafner out? Since Hannahan is such a great fielder at third, you are kind of rotating the DH spot anyway. It's an interesting idea, but the team wants Chiz playing every day at third and you can't do that in Cleveland if you still want to play Hannahan there. You may not even play him every day at DH.

But with Cord Phelps, that idea is really good. Phelps has already been used to the type of playing time he'd get here. He can rotate in at DH, see some time in left field, but also play his majority of the time at second, his natural position. And it works perfectly.. You could platoon Cabrera and Phelps. Orlando is hitting lefties the best with a .333 average in 51 at-bats. Phelps? He is a righty killer. He has a .331 average in 121 at-bats with all seven of his home runs coming from the left side of the plate (switch hitter).

So... Free Cord Phelps? Sure! I'm on board.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Not sure how Torii Hunter did it all those years in Minnesota. Manny Acta is only playing Grady Sizemore once in the field on this six-game road trip on turf. And after playing every other game in center, he gave **Michael Brantley** [a day off from fielding](#).

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The turf can be bad on the knees because it isn't the nice spongy stuff you are used to. It is a little harder on the knees when you run.

"He's got plenty of guys to talk about that," Acta said. "I talked to him yesterday, and he felt good about it. He was joking about it already. He'll figure out what to do. I think his legs are really going to appreciate this DH day."

None of the outfielders played or will play all six games in the outfield. Choo got his day off last week against Tampa.

We discussed Carmona's struggles yesterday, but it does worth a mention that his struggles have all in separate starts and largely in one a few innings. So much so, [Acta doesn't want to call](#) **Fausto Carmona** inconsistent.

"That's why I can't come out and call him inconsistent," Acta said on Tuesday. "He's had more good ones than bad ones. It's just that when he's had the rough ones, the amount of runs have really gotten to him."

[From Bastian](#) More than half (56 percent) of Carmona's runs have come in just 16 percent of his total innings. That's really telling. It really shows that if not for a few innings in which he just has been inexplicably bad, we wouldn't be having this discussion.

Struggling is struggling though. And right now, Carmona is on a bit of a run in terms of his struggling. That being said... Let's not scream like we did about Mitch Talbot. We've got a first place team here and he's really had three out of 12 starts that have been bad. Yes they've been REALLY bad, but he's gone out the other nine times and had the team in the game.

More interesting Bastian stats... Orlando Cabrera [is seeing the highest percentage](#) of strikes in the AL and

Carlos Santana

[has the lowest percentage](#)

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. Now... What does that tell you? Other than Cabrera swings very early and often and Santana is the complete opposite, pitchers simply don't give Santana much to hit.

So is having a guy like Orlando hitting behind Santana really the best idea? The Indians can't continue to have Cabrera in a position he's been in. The magic seems to be wearing off with him. It also shows that the move down for Santana is perhaps working and giving him more select pitches.

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

This will be the last daily occurrence of the Rafael Perez Tweet Watch. It will be back on some occasions, like, if Rafael ever decides to tweet. Ha! That's a good one Nino, tell me another joke.

Days Without a Tweet: 14

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ [TheTribeDaily](#) where he tweets about jinxing Tony Sipp. You can also read more Morning Rundown and other features at his blog, [The Tribe Daily](#)

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