

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM



Well, that was short-lived. The Indians seem to be homer or bust lately and with no other hits, they of course end up being solo shots.

June 8th 2011

Minnesota Twins - **3**

Cleveland Indians - **2**

W: Matt Capps (2-3) L: Chris Perez (2-2) S: Phil Dumatrait (1)

[**BOXSCORE**](#)

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

Or... they just so happen to come with no one on base in a game in which your team has 10 hits. Really? For once the offense sort of wakes up for a day game and both home runs happen to come with no one on base?

Another disappointing outcome and while winning at least one is nice, a series loss to the Twins is not the greatest thing in the world to occur right before a trip to New York.

Obviously, because this one was shielded from our eyes unless you had MLB Network, other than a few video highlights, I can't complete context of this game. So let's just judge this thing off the statistics. Of course Michael Brantley collects three hits. It's either him or Cabrera having big games. Unfortunately those three singles amounted to nothing and he got caught stealing.

Grady Sizemore hits the solo shot and then Jack Hannahan wakes up and ties it up with the solo shot in the ninth. If only there was someone on base. [Pretty crazy that your entire offense scores two runs](#) off two home runs, yet you have eight hits.

"It was a poor homestand," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "I'm very disappointed today that we couldn't get a win for Justin. I thought that he threw the ball very well. We continue to struggle at the plate. Right now, it seems like if we don't hit a home run, we can't score runs. We're just having poor at-bats."

That is not an offense you want to have. That is a bad offense. It is spotty and it creates these types of inconsistencies and losing streaks. Another goose-egg effort in the RISP department. That ups the number to just one hit in the last 40 at-bats with runners in scoring position.

I suppose the good news-bad news is the pitching as of late and specifically yesterday the start of **Justin Masterson**. Masterson is back on track, and while he didn't notch a win, he put in a winning effort. No walks, went deep into the game, gave up just the two runs.

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

"Not really, personally," he said. "As a team, yeah, you get frustrated, just because you want the team to win. I'd be happier than happy if we got a win today, and it doesn't necessarily go on my record. That's probably the more frustrating part."

Masterson looked to be good though. He had a rough May, most specifically with Tampa Bay. He seems to be re-setting himself though. Just one walk in the past two games and in this one against the Twins he got nine groundouts.

So, back to back now with Carrasco and Masterson looking good. Talbot putting in a good effort recently.. The bad-news about the pitching is the fact that it is being wasted because of lack of offense. You hate to waste these amazing winning efforts, but it is reassuring that there is one part of this team working right now.

Random Details...

Interesting stat from Bastian back on the RISP numbers. Entering the homestand the Indians were first in the AL in average with RISP at .303. Now they are .282. Horrific. You expect that number to drop, but not drop as much as it did as fast as it did.

Lou Marson snapped that skid he was on and collected two hits, against right-handers no less.

Speaking of Marson. Acta said that he would have made a nearly-impossible play if he picked the ball at home plate on the Brantley throw when Revere knocked in that go-ahead run. The throw definitely beat the runner, but it was really hard to handle. It wasn't exactly in a great position for Marson to corral. It's unfortunate, but I wouldn't necessarily blame Marson either.

Carlos Santana [was not behind the plate](#) for the second straight game, which means he was at first base for two straight games. It was by design, or at least Acta's choice. LaPorta received Tuesday off and DHed yesterday, while Santana played first both games. There's no extra business to it in terms of injuries or anything like that.

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

Shin-Soo Choo hit his eighth double. Really? Eight? That's it? Choo really is struggling.

[PULL THE CORD]

Much ado about the **Cord Phelps** debut. He didn't get a hit and struck-out once, but did ya see some of the plays he made? If not check out the videos in the boxscore link. He made a nice snag on a ball up the middle, then made a nice charging throw on another one up the middle. Two plays I'm not sure Orlando Cabrera would have made.

The Phelps move set off a chain of other moves that ultimately shook up the roster significantly. Two guys lost their jobs, sort of.

Shelley Duncan is the main roster move that was made. I feel bad for the Hawkman. He was put into a position he wasn't supposed to be in as the regular DH. He's a bench player and his most effectiveness is as backup. Plus, Austin Kearns is playing like utter crap and has no business being on the roster.

But then the breaks and [Duncan does have an option](#) . So he's still with the club, just in Columbus. Hopefully it doesn't have a negative effect on the clubhouse because the club clearly loves the guy. The move though for Acta was purely on matchups.

"We're only facing two left-handers over the next almost two weeks," Acta explained. "It made a lot more sense for us to keep a left-handed bat or two and send Shelley down. That's where his playing time comes in -- against lefties."

The good news is, that means Duncan will probably be back rather soon. Acta even said he anticipates having Duncan back because he's been a part of what they've done in Cleveland. The option is certainly nice.

The reason they optioned Duncan and no simply cut someone to make room on the 40-man

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

was the placing of **Alex White** on the 60-day disabled list. That likely means Alex White is going to miss most of, if not all of the season. Not encouraging news in the least bit.

And finally, the Phelps move most directly impacts **Orlando Cabrera**, who has now been [reduced to platoon player/bench veteran](#)

. That may be for the best though. Cabrera will play against left-handers, who he can hit significantly better against than righties, but at least he will still play. The biggest thing is just having him around. He'll likely be the main backup infielder by the time the season ends, and this is just the first step in that transition.

"He was very professional," Acta said of Cabrera. "He understands what's going on. Obviously, he was disappointed in a way, because that's human nature. Every one of us, that's what we want to do, and he's a competitor. He knows how important he is to our ballclub, and he's always been an everyday player. Nobody is saying he's not going to be an everyday player again. He's very professional. He took it as [well] as he could."

Acta does mention though that this isn't the end. Phelps is going to get his opportunity, and Cabrera will still play.

[But Cord is here](#) and he had himself a nice first game defensively. He's here to provide some sort of spark offensively though. He's not a cure-all, that's for sure, he's not going to completely turn this lineup around, especially hitting from the seventh hole. But he can maybe push things in the right direction.

"He was playing well in Triple-A," Acta said. "He earned his shot. We're going to give him an opportunity to play the majority of times against right-handed pitchers. We hope that he can give us some spark and take advantage of his opportunity."

Phelps has a lot on his plate right now. He's going to be the primary second baseman against right-handed pitchers and could probably even play other spots against left-handers. But he's responded in the past when pushed to new levels. He spent little time in Akron last year before being shifted right up to Columbus where he played that much better.

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

[CLEVELAND FAN EXTRA INNINGS]

The Cleveland Fan-exclusive section of Morning Rundown.

So the lead is down to 1.5 in the Central and the White Sox are climbing towards the .500 mark and are just six games back. The Indians hit the road for a four game set in New York. The question is, do they enter their three game road set in Detroit with the lead?

That series against Detroit is going to be huge. It's the last series before Interleague play starts and the Indians definitely need to take advantage of Interleague.

But that series against the Tigers is going to be huge. The two teams won't meet again until August and the Indians won't play a team in the Central again until July 18th when they travel to Minnesota for four games. So consider this next weeks worth of games crucial. Hopefully they use Thursday's off day to recharge and head into New York with a different approach, because they will not beat the Yankees playing the way they are offensively.

Good news, they'll miss Sabathia by a game, Chamberlain is on the DL and A.J. Burnett will pitch in the series.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

The MLB Draft has been completed and if you need to catch up with Day Three and picks 31-50, you can check out yesterday's quick recap. Some additional notes from yesterday's batch of picks.

Brian Ruiz was pretty much the only Ohio player the Indians went with in this one, or at least the one with the closest ties to Cleveland or the area. Ruiz [actually has ties with Manny Acta](#) and according to Manny, the scouting department may have not even known that.

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

Acta said he met the Tribe's 41st round pick at a Hispanic Heritage Month event and have kept in touch ever since. They even met up in Toronto where Acta left tickets for he and his dad. Ruiz was involved in the Cleveland RBI program and is from the Dominican, like Acta.

Castrovince has a little wrap-up of [the approach the Indians took in 2011 to the Draft](#) . It was a very young and aggressive one. They took a lot of high schoolers and a lot of junior college picks. Players that ultimately have leverage and don't have to sign. It will be interesting to see A) How many players they actually sign and B) How much money they can spend. It may be a low amount, but there was so much influx the past few season, that may have been by design.

Brad Grant, the director of scouting, says that it is a byproduct of the pool. There was a lot of high school pitchers. Or at least that's what was good.

"We knew it was going to be a deep pitching Draft," Grant said. "There were just not as many position players as in the past. We leaned toward pitching and came out with a lot of it. What we looked to do toward the end was add high school pitchers with power arms and continue to add upside position players at the same time."

And so the August 15th deadline is now in sights. It will probably be awhile. Although with Mahoning Valley's season starting up, the Indians are going to want to get some guys in to fill the roster so they avoid fielding a team like they did last year.

Don't expect much activity until that deadline though. Remember they ended up signing their first three picks at the last moment in 2010. It was unexpected that they did because of the money involved, but it took so long because that is the system that is installed right now.

I can only gather [Michael Roth](#) , the Indians 31st round pick as a member of Twitter.

The Marlins fired their hitting coach on Wednesday [and hired Eduardo Perez](#) , who had helped out instructing for the Indians during Spring Training. He helped out coaching first base and

Morning Rundown: Another Masterson Effort Wasted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, June 09 2011 9:44 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 14 2011 7:39 AM

probably did some hitting instructing when he was there. Congrats to the former Indian.

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

I have very little to say about Rafael Perez having very little to say.

Days Without a Tweet: 22

-

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

.