

Morning Rundown: Kipnis Flashes Hometown Strength in Series Win

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, May 02 2012 11:00 PM - Last Updated Friday, May 04 2012 5:28 PM



Part of me can't believe the Indians went into Chicago and actually won two games in a three game series. Part of me was expecting to wake up on Friday morning having dreamed the seventh inning on. Nope? Still a 7-5 win? Kipnis a hometown hero? Perez with his AL-leading nine saves? Mastey gets a win!?

May 3rd, 2012

Cleveland Indians - 7

Chicago White Sox - 5

W: Justin Masterson (1-2) L: John Danks (2-4) S: Chris Perez (9)

[BOXSCORE]

Originally, when I had been writing the Random Rundown part of this little morning update, I had Jason Kipnis as a side story.

Jason Kipnis added some more hometown juice last night as he continues to bat around the White Sox in his hometown of Chicago. It's their home field, but it's his home period. However the three games is just a snippet of [how he's rebounded](#) from that real early season rut, if you can even call it that. Acta talked about Kipnis prior to the game. Then he hit a home run and became the story in my eyes.

"He has matured pretty quick," Acta said. "He understands that this is a very humbling game and that nothing is going to come easy to him. And he has fit in pretty good since last year here. This guy is going to be a very good player, man. It's a process. He's going to have his ups and downs."

Kipnis came into Thursday's game on a 16-for-38 tear and he's leading the team in steals, triples, hits, and runs. Got a little stud on our hands, don't we? After the game on Thursday, he now also leads the team in RBI and tied for the lead in home runs. And just to show you how big his game on Thursday was, look no further than starter Justin Masterson, who's a believer after Kipnis [helped him get his first win of the season](#).

"We are all Kipnisses," Tribe starter Justin Masterson said with a smile.

We are indeed.

Kipnis put the nail in John Danks' coffin in the seventh inning when he hit a three-run bomb that put an end to a rocky night for Danks. The White Sox starter had been teetering on the edge in giving up a lot of hits, and just pitching very un-Danks-like than what we are used to, especially with him being a lefty against a left-handed heavy lineup. But Kipnis took him deep to put a cherry on top of the evening and he says it was only a matter of time before he got his footing under him.

"I had confidence still in myself," Kipnis said. "I knew my average wasn't that high, and I knew I didn't come out of the gates like I wanted to, but I was still having good at-bats. I still had the right approach and I was swinging at the right pitches, so it was only a matter of time." Kipnis did the majority of the bashing in this one, providing four of the Indians seven runs, scoring an additional run as well and helping stake the Indians to their 7-3 lead going into the final three

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frames.

You would have thought

Justin Masterson

could get through the seventh and turn it over to the bullpen for the final two, but he had some issues that didn't let him get out of the seventh, which prompted Manny Acta to call for Sipp and Smith to finish off that frame and pitch the eighth.

Masterson though walking three, pitched a good game and probably better than his numbers indicated after a Alejandro De Aza chopper scored two runs.

"I just missed it," said Masterson, who struck out six and walked three. "It was off me. I thought it was going to stay down, and then it just kind of hopped up last second and I couldn't get my glove up quick enough. It went off my arm. And then it goes just far enough so that Kip can't get it."

And two runs score off of that. So really, Overall, I was pleased with how Masterson looked out there. Of course it was a White Sox staggered lineup in terms of left/right mix, but Masterson handled it well, but you'd still like to see the walks go down a bit but one was to Konerko in the fourth after Dunn struck out. The other two came to left-handed Kosuke Fukudome, both on four pitches, both on four sinkers. That's a little strange, but it just shows you the need for him to be able to have that pitch he can throw to left-handers.

Overall though, a good outing to get Masterson his first win, a good offensive performance, and a game and a half lead over the Tigers and a two game lead over the White Sox with the Rangers coming to town.

Random Details...

The series win in Chicago marked the fourth straight road series win of the season and that is the first time that has happened since 1961.

Johnny Damon doubled, collecting his first hit as an Indian and scoring a run. It was a smooth double to right and now, relax. I like that pair of Damon/Kipnis at the top though, really works,

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and it lets Manny hit Cabrera right in the middle.

Big Casey! Kotchman had two hits and knocked in a run. Every once and awhile, every once and awhile.

Overall that was it, that was Kotchman and Kipnis. **Asdrubal Cabrera** hit his third, a big solo shot in the sixth off Danks that really started to break him down. The middle of the order didn't do much other than Cabrera with his two hits and two RBI. Santana, Duncan, and Choo were 0-11 with a walk (Choo) and two strikeouts. Looked like that Tuesday game, only with a different outcome because of good pitching on the Indians end and production from other spots.

A key moment was in the eighth inning when the Indians really got helped out by the White Sox making a real fundamental error. Joe Smith had gotten himself into a jam, putting the first two on, then getting a fielder's choice to set up first and third with one out. Eduardo Escobar flied out to shallow center, close enough to where even Michael Brantely's noodle arm could have gotten a throw in quick enough for the runner to not score.

So, that's fine, two outs, get one more batter... Until Gordon Beckham inexplicably took off and they were able to double him up. I'm not sure what he was thinking, maybe that there were two outs?

This was an inning after he was embroiled in a battle with Paul Konerko that saw him throw SEVERAL borderline pitches, the last one looking an awful lot like a strike, but not to the man that counted. Of course a few pitches later he got Pierzynski to pop out to end the inning.

[RIOS V PEREZ]

And of course, after Dan Wheeler came in to, ugh... **Chris Perez** came in for a two-out save. He celebrated a bit after striking out Pierzynski and one would think that's why [he immediately turned around and said something](#) to Pure Rage.

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But Rios said Perez started it.

"Well, I don't know what was wrong with him," said Rios with a wry smile. "He just started yelling for no reason. I don't know why he started yelling, and that's it." When I hit that ground ball, he was yelling when [Cabrera] was throwing to first. He was yelling the whole way. I couldn't tell what he was saying. He was just staring and saying something."

Maybe he was CELEBRATING? Why would he be yelling at you Rios? I have no clue, but usually a fired up guy, Chris Perez or not, is going to be happy he won.

You didn't know what he was saying, so maybe you should shut up unless you heard something directed at you... Just a thought. Perez said he was just yelling at his teammates, excited for the win.

"As soon as he hit the bag, he turned and looked right at me. I was like, 'What? The game's over.' It's a big win for us. We're in first place. We don't play well here, so to win a series on the road going into a big weekend series for us, yeah, it's a big win for us."

And that's the thing that gets me. Rios pretty much touched the bag and turned around and started walking and looking in Perez's direction. It seems a little more intentional that Rios was letting on. Maybe he realized he was being an idiot and is trying to turn this around to make it look like he wasn't an idiot. That's cool, I guess?

When told he was celebrating, Rios said that was not the right way to do it. I'm not sure if this is any sort of code. Granted, you don't want the opposing team showing you up on your home field, stomping around and being obnoxious after a win, but they just won a baseball game, so what is he supposed to do? Dumb... Dumb... Dumb...

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I would guess it was a more of a routine day-off [than it was a precaution](#) , but that is the reasoning the Indians are using as to why

Travis Hafner

sat in Thursday's finale against the White Sox. Hafner was plunked in the knee by Humber early on in Wednesday's game, but he did continue to play and even went on to hit that home run.

"It's a lot better now," Hafner said. "It hit right where there's no fat or anything. It's all bone -- so

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that wasn't a great spot. But, it felt better as I was icing it between at-bats and stuff. By the end [of the game], it was doing better."

It was a nice opportunity to get Damon into the lineup though as a DH, and Duncan. The Indians should be able to do this a little more often though with Damon now around. Hafner needs the odd day off, at least once every ten days, and a few times during this 21-games in 20 day stretch.

Johnny Damon was a guest on [MLB's Intentional Talk yesterday](#) . Among him talking about "naked push-ups" and him not wanting to do much other than walk around with his shirt off in the locker room now a days (because guys are bigger and longer.... You heard him), Damon gave a few good faces when talking about Chris Sale and how he was glad he avoided facing him.



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So, Johnny Damon is pretty funny...

I think there was a little worry about the bullpen early on, I was a little hazy about what was going on with Dan Wheeler and Jose Asencio, but those pieces have become, eh. Un-important. Hagadone is here now, and seemingly taking over for Perez so those guys, those guys are never in any leverage situations. Of course that was my thinking last night, until Acta put Wheeler in with a four run lead. I would have not put in Perez, because it was not a save situation, but maybe Hagadone? Either way... They've certainly found their groove though, and as Manny Acta says, they're a big part of what's going on here saying they have [never been a worry of his](#)

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"They're going to go through some tough spells here and there just like everybody else," Acta said. "But not even after that first homestand was there ever a doubt in my mind that those guys weren't going to be good for us. They have been a big part of what has happened here. It's been pretty consistent that, once we take the lead after the sixth inning, we have a chance to win the ballgame." And to have a good bullpen, is a complete relief, no pun intended. One of the hardest things to deal with in the major leagues is not having a good pen. Because if you don't have a pen, more times than not, that starting pitcher that just pitched a good game may lose that effort, or that offense that got you the lead, may not be able to get it back after the bullpen ruins it. So to have a reliable bullpen, you are one step closer to doing big things, especially in a playoff setting. **Jose**

Lopez

has cleared waivers,

[has accepted his assignment](#)

and has been out-righted to Triple-A Columbus. So, no harm, no foul. Still there if ya need him.

Mike Rayl threw six innings, gave up two hits and two walks in a Carolina win last night, but it was

Jesus Aguilar

who supplied all the runs needed. A Solo shot and a two-run shot in the seventh and ninth inning in a

[3-0 win for the Mudcats](#)

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Nino has a blog that he creates dumb nicknames, even for players not on the Indians. Give it a vist at [The Tribe Daily](#).

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