

## Morning Rundown: Gomez Pitches to Win, Choo Heroics Still Needed

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, May 15 2012 5:14 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, May 15 2012 7:45 AM

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I'm going to be straight up honest with you guys. I fell asleep. I didn't have the physical energy to sit up in a chair, so I made the mistake of laying down. I fell asleep. I fell asleep only to wake up to see Ryan Doumit do what he did. And I was so deprived of energy, I rolled over, set my alarm and went back to sleep.

**May 14th, 2012**

Cleveland Indians - 5

Minnesota Twins - 4

W: Joe Smith (3-1) L: Matt Capps (0-2) S: Chris Perez (12)

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### [\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

All I can say is that it's a good thing **Shin-Soo Choo** was leading off in this one. Or else [he wouldn't have been set up in a position](#) to do what he did.

*"I didn't make the lineup thinking Choo was going to come up with two outs in the ninth and a runner on base," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "He's a good hitter and I'm glad that he was the one up there. That was a huge hit. A two-out game-winning hit. He's coming around and he's one of those guys that we need to get going for our offense, and tonight was a big hit."*

Then what was Manny Acta's line of thinking?

Before the game, Acta said Choo was the best option with Damon struggling and that his OBP is well above the league average. Even with the game-winning hit, Acta says Choo would [be there in that spot on Tuesday](#).

Acta doesn't usually make moves if they aren't semi-permanent, or at least something he's going to do more than once.

*"He's never changed. He's always been an on-base percentage guy," Acta said. "And that's something we made clear to him. If he wants to swing at the first pitch of the game, go for it. The quality of at-bats doesn't need to change no matter where you hit it. He's a guy that knows the strike zone and if it's there, he's going to whack at it, and if not, he's going to end up getting his walks."*

Choo only provided the two-out hit in the ninth, which was the biggest hit of the game, but otherwise didn't do much. However what he did was ultimately stop a losing streak and save the team from losing a game they had no business losing. A losing streak? A legit losing streak that this team has not gone through this year. After dropping the final three to Boston, in a row, this team was in danger of going on a streak in the bad way, they haven't lost more than three in a row and Choo saved them from that with his hit.

And I keep using the term save because, he really did save it. This wasn't supposed to be a 5-4 win, nabbed from the jaws of defeat at the last minute. It wasn't supposed to make us sweat. Heck, when I was sitting there, awake, watching **Jeanmar Gomez** pitch, I thought, well this is just nice. We get a nice game here where our starter has a lead, he's cruising, this won't be anything. That'

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s how good Gomez looked. The run he gave up should have never happened, he was blazing through the Twins lineup.

*"For me, one point that was important was attacking the zone," Gomez said. "[I wanted to] throw down in the zone, make quality pitches and be aggressive with the hitter. ... [Getting the win] didn't have to happen for me to do my job today."* Unfortunately and unfairly, Gomez deserved the win after the way he pitched. He looked as good as he has all season and he's looked good in other games. There was just something different about this start. Maybe it was the Twins lineup, maybe it was the location, maybe it was just the realization that Gomez is for real. But he pitched well, more than well and he's becoming someone this rotation can count on.

*"Gomez did a very good job," Acta said. "He went out there and threw strikes with good life on his fastball. He got a lot of ground balls -- actually 11 groundouts. He did a good job, especially against the left-handed hitters that he saw tonight. I feel bad for him. I'm glad we were able to come back, but he should have gotten a win out of that."* Watching Gomez, it was not an issue. The game flew. Despite my battle with the sleep monster, it was 9:00 and 9:30 and the game was flying by in large part because Gomez was going. He was in that type of groove on his way to a three-hit, one run, seven-inning beauty.

The one run he gave up was unearned as it should have been. With Darin Mastroianni on second after a groundout, Carlos Santana fumbled around a Gomez pitch. The ball didn't really get away from him, but it bounced around and with Denard Span in the box, it became difficult for Santana to get a good grip and a good read on Mastroianni advancing to third.

He shouldn't have thrown, but he did and it was a poor throw that went into left field. A run scored and the Twins were leading and you felt sick for Gomez.

But perhaps the offense felt sick and decided to do something about it because a single and a double from Kpinis and Cabrera led off the fourth and even though they manufactured the runs the old fashioned way with a groundout and a sac-fly, you feel a little more sicker that Hafner and Santana didn't do a little more damage.

But I said it when it happened, two runs may have been all the Indians needed for Gomez the way he was pitching and that is the truth. Thankfully they got a few more when Casey Kotchman would hit a two-run shot in the fifth, because it wasn't up to Gomez after the seventh as he had just about reached 100 pitches.

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I guess a side story here is the struggles of Vinnie Pestano, who got his strikeout, but walked the leadoff hitter in Denard Span and gave up a Josh Willingham double to start to let the lead deteriorate. First batter Nick Hagadone faces when he comes in, Ryan Doumit clobbers a home run and the game is tied.

And from there, all I can say is that thank god Lou Marson can at least run a little, or else Casey Kotchman is not scoring from second.

### Random Details...

After the roller-coaster ride of the eighth, Chris Perez only needed 12 pitches to get through a relatively clean and harmless ninth inning for his major league leading 12th save. Maybe he should get one-run games all the time.

I'm sorry but the Twins were just what the doctor ordered. With the Indians having struggled in that Boston series to score some runs and to pitch well, the 10-24 Twins were just what the Indians needed. It's only a quick two-run set, but it will do the trick. The first game was closer than we should have liked, but all that is important is that it's a win.

A real blown opportunity by Nick Hagadone in the eighth there. He just needed one out in that situation and he could have really stepped up and made everyone say, hey, this kid, this kid is here to stay. I still don't think that will cost him anything, he'll still stick around when Perez returns, at least I think he will at this point, but he had a nice opportunity to push his name out there a little further in a big spot. He's still young though, so hopefully, it's more of a learning moment more than anything.

And really, the bullpen has been too good to not have their moments here and there. If they can have a moment, at least it can still be salvaged for a win and at least it's against a team they can come back against like the Twins.

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### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I will leadoff with the leadoff switch. As was featured earlier, Choo was in the leadoff spot with Damon getting the night off. But it was said when Damon was first placed there upon his arrival that when Damon wasn't playing, Michael Brantley would start there.

Well that isn't such with Acta making the move as more of a try-out type of a thing even when Damon is playing (as Choo will start there Tuesday, presumably when Damon will return to the lineup). **Michael Brantley** seems to have found a home though, hitting where he is hitting in the six-seventh spots. Acta's idea in putting Choo up atop and keeping Brantley down also boils down to him, simply liking Brantley "everywhere."

*"I like Brantley everywhere, but I really like him in that spot because he doesn't strike out much, and he's one of those guys I really like to see at the plate when we have runners in scoring position," Acta said. "Some how, some way, he doesn't panic, and he gives us good at-bats in those situations."*

And you can't argue the way he was hitting in Boston from that area. Maybe he's found a home in that space in the lineup. Maybe that's where he should be hitting from now on. It's working right now for him and he's really settled in.

I was not around Monday and over the weekend, the Indians made a bunch of moves to their roster, their first real big roster shakeup of the season. And when it involves just bench players, that is a good thing, I guess. With **Josh Tomlin** hitting the disabled list (likely on there the minimum amount of time, good news), the Indians made a few moves in order to get Zach McAllister on the roster.

In addition to calling him up, they sent down **Jason Donald**, but to send down Donald they also needed another utility player, so they purchased the contract of

#### **Jose Lopez**

from Columbus. The minimum 10 days didn't even pass since they sent him down, but because Tomlin was DLed, the Indians could make that move. To make room for Lopez on the 40-man, they designated Nick Weglarz for assignment and it's looking like they'll be able to sneak him through.

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I didn't really agree with the Lopez move and here's why. I know many people are down on Donald, he hasn't hit well when he has played and looked a little shaky in the field. He's not everyone's favorite player. But he plays hard and he makes up for a lot in his effort. He can play multiple positions and even though he was a little shaky on defense this year, he's still better than the botch-artist that Jose Lopez is.

And another reason shined through on Monday when Kotchman got a hit and was at second late in the game. Ordinarily you call your first bench guy cause he has a lot of speed. By taking away Donald, your first option for a pinch-runner is....Lou Marson? Not that Lou is slow, but he certainly isn't quick and not the ideal choice for that.

And as you can see, that can come into play late in the game and cost you wins. So although he did have a double in the game and may carry a nice stick, to me, the cons outweigh the pros in having Lopez on this roster. If they wanted to give Donald a break, why not call up Cord Phelps and give him a shot? He's virtually the same type of player who can play multiple spots (and prevents Hannahan from being the "backup" shortstop) and you don't have to make a 40-man move.

But that's fine, we'll go with Lopez for now.

Part of the reason Lopez was playing on Monday (and hey look, if Asdrubal went down, they'd have no one to play short) was because **Jack Hannahan** [was battling some back tightness](#) .

Manny Acta said that he is day to day and could return to the lineup on Tuesday, but I wouldn't be shocked to see him sit out a second game. Hannahan felt the tightness in Sunday's game against Boston.

The Indians other roster move this weekend came on Sunday pretty much right before the game ended. The dust hadn't even settled and the Indians had designated Dan Wheeler for assignment after bombing it on Sunday. In his place, the Indians called up **Jeremy Accardo**, [who takes Wheeler's roster spot and 40-man spot](#)

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*"He pitched the best out of all those guys in Spring Training. He barely missed making our club. And he was pitching the best out of the bullpen in Triple-A," said Indians manager Manny Acta, who also noted Accardo's Major-League experience as a factor in the decision to promote him.*

Accardo was also pitching well in Columbus, so he's thrown the ball well all year and he deserved the first shot. What he needs to do is fill a void of being called upon to fill two innings. Wheeler did not deal well with a "long-relief" sort of role that he was in. Because the Indians starters have been so good, the Indians haven't really needed a long-man, but that they've needed is someone they can throw in when they are down 4-5 runs, a close game, but not close enough to use your best relievers.

So Accardo needs to come in and fill that sort of role with what's left of Jairo Asencio. Hopefully he can do that effectively.

[Check out this feature](#) on **Francisco Lindor**, who hit a home run and knocked in five runs just in time for this feature to mean a little more.

*"No matter what pick, what round -- whether it's the first or the 50th, I still have to compete," he said. "I have to show [the Indians] that they made the right choice, and I have to prove to everyone else that I can play, that I can do this for the rest of my life."*

The first round pick from last year's draft is ripping things up in Lake County at the age of 18. He's hitting .312 and is second in the Midwest League in hits. Just 18 and killing Low-A already? When is he supposed to get to Cleveland?

**[TIGER WATCH]** For a short time Tiger Watch can also be Sox watch as the second and third place AL Central foes face off. Detroit got off to a 3-0 lead, only to see that erased almost immediately by Adam Dunn in the bottom of the first. It was a slugfest all game as John Danks and Drew Smyly both struggled against the opposing offenses. The White Sox would get the better of the Tigers bullpen though and create an even closer gap between themselves and the Tigers, while also strengthening the Indians AL Central lead. -

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

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