



There's an old adage in baseball, one that Manny Acta loves to use, that states "Momentum is only as good as tomorrow's starting pitcher." Seeing how Indians starters have posted an 11.89 ERA over the last six games, that doesn't provide much momentum. There's also a term called "regression to the mean". That might be what we're seeing from some of the starting pitchers.

May 30, 2012

Kansas City Royals 6

Cleveland Indians 3

W: Bruce Chen (4-5); **L:** Jeanmar Gomez (3-4); **SV:** Broxton (11)

"Regression to the mean" is an expression that a lot of baseball statheads like to use. It's a principle that operates under the assumption that players are going to perform pretty consistently and big deviations, good or bad, from their career/projected numbers are bound to inch closer to the mean throughout the season. It basically serves as a mission statement for sabermetricians, the hardcore baseball stat geeks, because the numbers will almost always point out the red flags.

Jeanmar Gomez entered Wednesday's start with a lot of them. In Gomez's two previous years in the big leagues, he allowed 146 hits in 116 innings, 73 each season. In 2012, Gomez had

allowed just 39 hits in 48 innings. After watching opposing batters hit over .300 against Gomez in his first 22 Major League games, it's hard to imagine that the proverbial light would have come on for Gomez and he would suddenly become a very strong starting pitcher in 2012. Gomez ends the month of May with a 5.25 ERA after posting a 2.35 ERA in April.

After striking out two of the first three Royals to start the ballgame, Gomez tight-roped his way through second inning trouble, loading the bases on a hit by pitch, a single, a fielder's choice with an out recorded at home, and then a bunt single, Alcides Escobar struck out to end the inning.

The Indians staked Gomez to a three-run lead by singling four times in the bottom of the second to score three runs, with hits from Shelley Duncan, Michael Brantley, Casey Kotchman, and Shin-Soo Choo. Gomez immediately gave the runs back in the top half of the third with a couple of doubles from Johnny Giavotella and Mike Moustakas and an RBI single from Jeff Francoeur. One has to wonder why, with first base open, a right handed hitter on deck and two outs, Gomez even pitched to Moustakas after starting the at bat down 3-0. Francoeur singled anyway, but it was still a head scratcher.

The turning point in the game came in the bottom half of the third. The Indians had the opportunity to answer Kansas City's two-run top half, but Casey Kotchman struck out on a 3-2 slow curve from Bruce Chen, who has dominated the Indians since 2010, going 6-1 against the Indians. Yes, Chen throws with his left hand.

In the fourth, the Royals plated two more runs and the Indians never scored again. The Tribe had chances, as they ran themselves out of the fifth inning when Michael Brantley got picked off of first with Shelley Duncan on third. Duncan was eventually thrown out at home after a brief rundown. In the sixth, Johnny Damon accidentally singled to CF and then a Casey Kotchman pop up fell in between three Royals in shallow LF. Damon was thrown out at second and the inning fell apart. In the ninth, with a 6-3 lead, Royals closer Jonathan Broxton had command issues, walking Shin-Soo Choo, giving up a solid 3-1 single to Jason Kipnis, and walking Asdrubal Cabrera. Jose Lopez inexplicably swung at the first pitch and hit into a 4-6-3 double play. Broxton threw 21 pitches in his inning of work. Nine were strikes.

