

Morning Rundown: Tribe Continues Road Success, Improve to 4-0 over Detroit

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, June 06 2012 5:00 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, June 06 2012 6:51 AM



If he does things like this, The Big Eww and U-Bad-O are going away.. It will be more like The Big Ooh Ooh Ooooooh! And that's the only thing we really want. A Good Ubaldo and some good tasting cheese. Oh and continuing to pound the Tigs into submission!

June 5th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **4**

Detroit Tigers - **2**

W: Ubaldo Jimenez (6-4) L: Drew Smyly (2-2) S: Chris Perez (18)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

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This one had nothing to do with offense and while it was spectacular, it had nothing to do with defense either.

This was about **Ubaldo Jimenez** finally starting looking like the pitcher he can be. I say this for one simple reason. He walked one hitter, he did hit another one, but he's starting to show small signs of gaining control of what he's throwing. We need to see two things though.

The first is consistency in this. He can walk one hitter against the Tigers, but if he goes out and walks five more the next time out, it does nothing.

The second is his first pitch strikes and swinging strikes. While better, those two numbers still were not there. Jimenez got just four swinging strikes. 34 contact strikes compared to 21 non-contact strikes is not what someone like Jimenez should be getting. You take it, because he pitched just short of seven great innings, but you need to see more in this department if you want to actually feel good about Jimenez.

He was also 11-for-27 on first pitch strikes, which is not even half. He had just over half of his pitches as strikes, but again, it boils down to baby steps. It's close to what we want, it was more than enough to beat the Tigers, but it needs to continually steadily trend upwards and it needs to be consistent.

Whatever you want to say though, the guy has won six games. He's pitched well enough to win six games this season and you can't give up on that right now. I know I had said just a few days ago that Zach McAllister may be able to give the Indians some better efforts and chances to win more times out than Ubaldo, but perhaps I just need to shut my mouth.

Six games is six games through a little over two months. He didn't even win one of his best starts of the season (his first game), so you have to respect that and continue to roll with him. It would be nice to have the ability to work out his issues, but as I did say when I brought up the McAllister idea, they don't really have that option. Instead they chose to rest Ubaldo for eight days, giving him somewhat of a mental break and it couldn't have [worked out any better](#) .

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"It gave me a break mentally and physically," Jimenez said. "It gave me a couple more days to rest not only my body, but my mind. I was able to come to the stadium today and just have fun out there. I was not thinking too much or overdoing this or that. I wasn't stressed."□

Acta went on to say that Jimenez's fastball was working well and that the biggest thing was limiting his base runners. Of course things are a lot easier when you don't have base runners to deal with, but he deserves the credit for not putting them on there.

He even had a stretch of 16 out of 17 hitters retired and the walk and most of his hits came late in his outing before he departed. Hopefully it gives Ubaldo some confidence because I think we're all tired of having these types of outings, getting our hopes up that he's getting back to a good level, and then going out and walking five hitters.

If anything, winning for the first time in Comerica Park may exercise some of the bad karma. Offensively if you don't tip your cap to

Lou Marson

, you might as well be a big jerk. Lou has played real sparingly this year, in fact that was just his 10th game played in. His biggest chance to play was with Santana injured and on the DL but then he went and got hit in the face and gave Luke Carlin a small opportunity to play instead.

But Marson came up big this one and surprise surprise, it was against a left handed pitcher. He's now 6-for-20 against the lefties compared to 4-for-27 against right-handers. He has no extra base hits against right handers and eight strikeouts compared to three against the lefts. One of those extra base hits was a huge triple that was smack dab in the middle of the scoring for the Indians.

This isn't anything new. This is Lou Marson. He hits left handers really well and quite frankly with Travis Hafner out, he needs to perhaps play every single game against the left hander. Be it getting Santana a breather as the DH or even Marson in there at the spot. I know that's dangerous putting both your catchers in the game, but maybe they just carry Luke Carlin then.

I'd much rather see Marson in there against left handers every day than Matt LaPorta in there period. At least I know he presents a good opportunity to get the job done, where as with LaPorta, we're still wondering. LaPorta was 1-for-3, but the single was weak and he left two men on base when it counted. It's only been a few games, but I already decided I've seen enough.

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Michael Brantley also deserves a hat tip as he was on base all three times he stepped up to the plate. It's time to start recognizing what he's doing right now as his average creeps ever closer to .300 and he establishes himself as a reliable hitter in this lineup. It's far more than you can say about his CC Sabathia Trade partner, and if not for Brantley, this deal would really start looking like a complete and utter bust. You can't help but root for Brantley in that regard.

Overall it was a big win for the Indians to start this road trip out. Not only is it against a team that was struggling just as much coming into this one, it's against one that people still think can turn it around and become that threat they have the potential to be. I think we'd all much rather that not happen and in a bit of twisted irony, it was the man that the Indians think has the threat to have the much potential and turn things around that set them down to open this road trip up.

It's not only a long road trip, game two has the Indians sending Jeanmar Gomez to the mound, so momentum should be easy to keep up and if they can quickly win this series in the first two games, the tone will have been set.

Random Details...

Chris Perez got his 18th straight save and he leads the entire major leagues. He gave up a run in doing so which was his first run given up on the road this season.

You can't get better than the one-pitch Nick Hagadone threw in the seventh inning to get out of things. With Ubaldo having reached his limit according to Manny Acta, he opted for the lefty get the final out of the inning, and he did it on one pitch.

A combined 0-11 with a walk/run scored between hitters 3-5, Kipnis, Santana, and Duncan. Those are the games in which you score little runs, but thankfully, the pitching stopped the other team from scoring even a little. It more than masks the 1-for-5 with runners in scoring position, especially since Kipnis was a big culprit in that area, not coming through in the 2-out/RISP situation.

Lou Marson was not the only one that tripled, it was a theme of the night. Asdrubal Cabrera and Michael Brantley also tripled and Asdrubal may have had two if Quintin Berry hadn't made a great play in center to take the ball away. The three triples marks the first time in 10 years that the Indians did such a thing and it was in Detroit that they did it.

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"It's awesome," Brantley said. "With this park, it's a big outfield. There's a lot of room out there. With the speed that we have on the basepaths and in our lineup, hopefully we get a couple more before we get out of here." □ Brantley's was perhaps the only one that wasn't because of the park directly, but more so because the right fielder dove for the ball and came up short. At that point, it's a matter of Brantley going into third standing or rounding third and attempting an inside the parker. Uh.. How [about that play for the second out](#) in the ninth inning by Asdrubal Cabrera? You can keep giving me those "oh he's a below average fielder" arguments and point to some cockamamie stats that say Jhonny Peralta is a better shortstop. I'll continue to point to plays like that and laugh in your face at the notion Peralta is half the infielder Cabrera is. They may have been booing the call, but I like to think the Tigers fans were so upset they were booing Cabrera's awesome defense.

It wasn't the only great defensive play on the night either. Choo made a nice one to end the game and even to cut the ball off that was hit earlier in the inning to hold the runners back a base. There's nothing better than a game played that well defensively.

[DRAFT RUNDOWN]

Days 1 & 2 of the MLB Draft has come and gone and the Indians [made their first selection Monday night](#). The 15th overall pick was an outfielder, Texas A&M's

Tyler Naquin

. It went away from the idea of them taking some pitching with the first pick, but as we would soon see in the following rounds, it didn't stop them from getting some young arms.

So far, reports on Naquin are that he's a good outfielder, with the ability to play any spot and a good throwing arm. You can go around and look at all the reports. He was previously drafted in 2009 by the Orioles and after a successful career as an Aggie, he's in the Tribe. He's signable with a price tag that won't eliminate the Tribe's \$4.5 million allotment for the first 10 picks and give them some room to sign some of their pitchers.

Scouting director Brad Grant said that Naquin was the top guy left on their board. Showing again and again that we can predict and prognosticate and the Indians will always just end up taking [their top guy on the board](#), regardless of position.

"We had our board up in order of how we would select them," said Brad Grant, the Indians'

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director of amateur scouting. "Tyler was the next guy up. He was the guy that we liked best and who was available on our board at the time."

He's in his early twenties and could be a quick-rise through the system. Honestly, I see some similarity as far as situation goes with Jason Kipnis. Just in terms of what he does in that we know he can hit, think he can hit for power, plays solid defense and is one of those polished college players. He could make quick work of some levels and be contributing sooner rather than later.

Or he could end up being more of a Brad Snyder, whatever. You just never know.

After Naquin, the Indians took [pitchers with six of their next nine picks](#) , all right handers. Mitch Brown and Kieran Lovegrove, second and third round, are both High School products that if signed, can infuse some young arms back into the system.

"It wasn't something we specifically looked for," said Indians scouting director Brad Grant. "I think it was the strength of the Draft this year. There was a lot of high school right-handed pitching. We certainly wanted to add starting pitching to our organization, and at the same time, I think it was the strength of the Draft as well." □

Perhaps the drafting is a strategy of the new system in place for pricing and signing drafted players under the new collective bargaining agreement. If the past few years are any indication though, this is where the Indians will spend their money and in terms of signing their high round picks, the Indians have been very good with it.

There's still another day left with rounds 16-40 left to go. So many names have still left to be called.

[WAKE UP THE MASSES]

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"He's not in the top five?" Indians manager Manny Acta said of Kipnis. "Well, it is a popularity contest."

Such is the thought of every Cleveland Indians fan with a brain on this Wednesday morning. **Jason Kipnis**

is not even

[in the top five in voting for starting second baseman](#)

of the American League in the All Star game?

It is a popularity contest, but Chris Getz is in the top five and I don't care if the game is in Kansas City. That has nothing to do with who represents the people voting for him. Maybe they'll try a little harder in KC to vote and get their guy in, even though it is ultimately futile.

The people that represent Jason Kipnis should be ashamed of themselves. Maybe we should try a little harder in CLE because not only is the team playing well, Kipnis has been this team's best player offensively. If anything, he deserves to be there and we're letting him down. Sure if he keeps it up, he'll get in via player vote or managerial selection (maybe...) but you can't put it up to chance with the names that are there.

Ian Kinsler, Dustin Pedroia, Robinson Cano... They all carry some heavy weight not only with fans but managers and players.

Even such, the representation for the Tribe as a whole thus far? Pretty poor. Only Asdrubal Cabrera is in the top five of his position in voting. Can we not get Carlos Santana, one of the best catchers in the American League enough votes to be in the top five?

Is it really too much to get Jack Hannahan more votes than last year now that his name is actually on the ballot.

I was kidding with that one.

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But we need to get the picture here. He won't catch or beat out any of those guys in the big markets, especially if they are having somewhat decent years. But that isn't the whole point. It's about supporting your guy who deserves the support. We at least have to show the support if anything. If the fans don't believe he should be there, his peers likely won't.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

It was good to see **Carlos Santana** [back in the lineup at DH on Tuesday](#) and he should be back behind the plate on Wednesday. Santana homered in his rehab game with Lake County, showing that he was more than ready in terms of hitting to play. The question of course was he healthy and in the right frame of mind after having dealt with a concussion.

Good move putting him at DH in the first game, but it's time to get back to where he normally plays.

"We have to put him back there," Acta said. "He's cleared [by MLB]. He passed everything. He's normal. He's our catcher and he needs to catch."

He took the spot of Juan Diaz, who was optioned back to Double-A Akron before the game. Luke Carlin remains on the roster, but that is unlikely to last with **Johnny Damon** expected to rejoin the team today. The Indians will not carry three catchers.

It's sad that these notes are all injury related, but Jack Hannahan is close to resuming baseball activities, and his "replacement" was scratched on Tuesday. I contend that **Jose Lopez** should not be scratched from any lineup, because it should be

Lonnie Chisenhall

starting everyday at third base (regardless of how bad he is against lefties, time to grow up kid), not Lopez.

What did Chisenhall do against lefty Drew Smyly? He went 0-for-2 with a run, but he needs those at-bats. Especially against another young guy.

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Jared Goedert [almost set a Columbus record](#) by knocking in nine-RBI against Buffalo in a 21-3 victory. He clubbed two home runs, and doubled, with the two homers each knocking in three. Goedert was one shy of the single-game RBI record, which belongs to teammate Chad Huffman.

The performance hardens back to his days not long ago when we referred to him as "Rare Breed" as he clubbed homers at an astonishing rate and carved a desk chair using just his beard. That last part was a lie, but he had a stretch in both Akron and Columbus that made you turn your head and say, "Whoa, where did this come from."

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Nino has a blog that is protected by a statue of Luke Carlin. Give it a vist at [The Tribe Daily](#), or he might eat your face off.

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