



It felt like déjà vu for the Indians today, as they jumped out to a 1-0 lead on a first inning home run and still got beaten handily by the Pirates 9-5. The Pirates, who had scored nine runs or more just twice in their first 63 games, hung a nine-spot for a second consecutive day in front of 28,000-plus on a humid Father's Day afternoon at Progressive Field.

With rain clouds hanging off in the distance, the series finale matinee started on time and so did Jason Kipnis. Kipnis got the Tribe on the board with his 11<sup>th</sup> homer of the season, a shot high up into the jet stream with the wind blowing out to right center field. After Jeanmar Gomez got the Indians offense back to the plate quickly working around a second inning infield single, the Indians extended their lead to 2-0 in the second inning on a double by Johnny Damon and "hit" by Casey Kotchman. Kotchman hit a ground deep into a deep shift by second baseman Neil Walker, who failed to come up with the ball cleanly and Damon scampered around third.

Countless times in this series, the Indians blew a prime scoring opportunity and paid for it the next inning. In the third, Asdrubal Cabrera and Kipnis started the inning with back-to-back singles. Jose Lopez popped up the first pitch he saw from Pirates starter Brad Lincoln for the first out. Michael Brantley flew out to center field, sending a tagging Cabrera to third. With Jack Hannahan up, Kipnis stole second without a throw, pushing his league-leading total to 17. Hannahan promptly grounded out on the next pitch.

One of the most important things for a starting pitcher to do is pick up his defense. Gomez failed to do that in the fourth. With one out, Andrew McCutchen sprayed a single to right. After Garrett Jones hit into a fielder's choice, Casey McGehee hit a slow chopper up the middle. Cabrera ranged to his left and fielded the ball near second base. He fired to first, low-bridging Jones on his way to second, but the throw was off-line and bounced into the camera bay. It wasn't an easy play for Cabrera, but one that needed to be made. The following hitter, Pedro Alvarez, got

a 1-0 sinker right down the middle and deposited it into the seats for his third home run in two games.

Unlike the day before, where the Indians got down and stayed down, they battled back in the bottom of the fourth. Johnny Damon led off the inning with a double and Casey Kotchman had a solid at bat, advancing Damon to third with a ground ball. Lou Marson walked. Shin-Soo Choo drove a two-run double over the head of Pirates left fielder Alex Presley to put the Tribe back on top 4-3. Brad Lincoln left the game and the Pirates went to the Indians kryptonite, a left handed pitcher. Choo was stranded at second.

It took all of two batters for Jeanmar Gomez to surrender the lead. After catcher Mike McKendry grounded out to third, Alex Presley hit his second home run in as many days to tie the game at four. Gomez was clearly rattled. He issued a five-pitch walk to Walker and then McCutchen doubled down the left field line on a ball that looked foul, but may have drawn chalk. With runners on second and third, manager Manny Acta opted to walk .255 hitter Garrett Jones, giving him just his fifth free pass of the season.

Gomez made his pitch. Casey McGehee hit a tailor-made double play ball to short. Cabrera shifted to his left and had the ball bounce right off his glove. In his haste to try and get one out, he batted the ball toward Kipnis and it rolled under his glove. Two runs scored on Cabrera's double error. Jeanmar Gomez's day was done.

Enter Esmil Rogers, the recently-acquired right hander from Colorado. The Indians bullpen has been allowing home runs at an alarming rate over the last week, most of them coming from Tony Sipp, Nick Hagadone, and Scott Barnes, the three lefties. Acta opted to use the right handed Rogers against the left handed Alvarez. It blew up in his face. Alvarez got a fastball down and in, right in a left handed hitter's nitro zone, and hit another home run that hasn't landed yet. Alvarez had six RBI to go along with his two home runs and raised his average 18 points over the weekend off Indians pitching.

The Indians scratched out a run in the seventh on a Jason Kipnis single and Michael Brantley RBI double, but that was all the offense the Indians could muster. The Pirates won the series finale 9-5 and took the series from the Indians, scoring 18 runs with a lot of help from seven home runs in the final two games.

As if Asdrubal Cabrera's three-error effort wasn't bad enough, it couldn't hold a candle to what happened in the ninth. Errors will happen, balls will take bad hops or a player's footwork will get out of whack. Hustle never commits errors. With one out in the ninth, Cabrera hit a ball deep into the right field corner that one-hopped the wall. Cabrera didn't hustle out of the box and didn't kick it into gear until defensive replacement Jose Tabata fired a seed to second base. Cabrera was out and any potential rally was immediately snuffed out.

The Indians have now lost five of six and are just one game above .500 for the first time since May 1. The Indians have been above .500 since April 18 and are now in danger of ending that streak.

**Stat of the Night:** The league seems to have figured out Jeanmar Gomez. Without swing-and-miss stuff, every start is an exercise in dodging bullets. Gomez allowed just four earned runs over his 4.1 innings today, but was tagged for eight runs on seven hits and only struck out one. In Gomez's last five starts, he's 1-4 with a 7.92 ERA and six home runs allowed.

**Player of the Game:** Since I jinxed the starting rotation by selecting Justin Masterson on Friday and jinxed Asdrubal Cabrera by picking him on Saturday, for Sunday's game, I'll go with Jeremy Accardo. Accardo worked two more scoreless innings, striking out three. At least little harm can be done if I jinxed Accardo since he only pitches in low-leverage situations.

**Tomorrow's Game:** The Indians will look for some redemption against the Cincinnati Reds as the in-state rival (or so they say, I personally think Cincinnati is part of Kentucky) comes to town. First pitch on Asdrubal Cabrera bobblehead night is at 7:05 with a rematch of the June 13 start between Derek Lowe and Mat Latos.

Despite the awful game today, I hope all the dads out there had a great Father's Day.