

Morning Rundown: Tribe Storm Through Baltimore; Rage and Cabs Return to Midsummer Classic

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Sunday, July 01 2012 11:00 PM - Last Updated Monday, July 02 2012 10:17 AM



I can't remember the last time the Indians won a Saturday game. I mean, I could go and look to prove my point, but the point is that. I can't remember the last time they won a Saturday game. They've been winning the Friday games and sometimes the Sundays, but those Saturday games I always feel like they've been losing them. Well they won one this weekend and then went ahead and won on Sunday too. We call that a weekend winning streak.

July 1st, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **6**

Baltimore Orioles - **2**

W: Justin Masterson (5-7) L: Brian Matusz (5-10)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

For the record, they were in danger of going winless on Saturday in June before their 11-5 win over the Orioles on Saturday. Just to prove my point after actually looking. Their last win on a Saturday was May 19th against Miami. They've won just four Saturday games this year.

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Anyway, before I roll off these statistics in regards to left-handed pitching, I just want to say this...

After scoring 7, 8, and 11 runs in the previous three games, if the Indians would have left **Justin Masterson**

high and dry in the series finale, I may have gone off for him. Still, it does make sense that of all the offensive performances, they gave Mastey the least amount of runs.

Yet, he [still referred to it as "a bunch of runs"](#) which for him, is a bunch.

He really didn't even need a bunch the way he was throwing the ball. Masterson carried a perfect game into the fifth and was an out away from getting through it without a hit. It was a most excellent start in that he did not walk a hitter and even though he gave up two runs (one unearned) he never looked to be in any sort of danger. Masterson was fantastic.

Anyway, remember how last week we were talking about taking tests? I made a bunch of silly metaphors to failing tests and what not and probably utterly confused you.

Well each of these series' that the Indians have, starting from the Yankees are proving some sort of particular challenge the Tribe is going to have to overcome. With the Yankees it was just facing a legit team. With the Angels, it will be testing themselves against a team they had success against early in the season, but have now completely changed in terms of what they do and how they are performing. Against the Rays, it will very much be a test for the offense.

Baltimore's challenge was unique in that they threw something at the Indians that normally would have everyone quivering in their boots. Three left-handed starters in each game. The one thing that has really caused a lot of problems for the offense this year in all four games to start it out. How would the Indians respond? Last weekend the Astros threw two relatively unknown pitchers and J.A. Happ, two lefties and were completely shut down. This couldn't be any good... Could it?

Not like you would have thought.

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On the season going into Sunday the Indians left-handed hitters were hitting .216 with a .302 OBP against left-handed hitters. Before you say start more righties, their right-handed hitters have a .225 average with a .307 OBP, it isn't any better.

Overall they're hitting .220 against left-handed pitching, compared to .271 against right-handed pitching. Their lefties crush right-handers to the tune of a .277 average with 46 of their home runs. With a lefty starter on the mound, they hit .230 compared to .264 with a right-hander. So the different isn't that different, but that is with three of these games included into the numbers.

Here are your records when the Indians face a left-handed starter...

Aprl: 2-4 (2-0 against Jonathan Sanchez)

May: 1-7

June: 1-5

So, before the Baltimore series, if the Indians didn't face Jonathan Sanchez, there was little chance of them winning a game against a left-handed starter.

And then the Orioles threw three guys out there that completely blew this particular statistic up. 3-0 on the weekend when the lefty started, the one game the Indians lost was started by a right-hander, Jake Arrieta. Go figure.

So... Sanchez or the Orioles, that right now is what the Indians have to hope for. The three starters that were on the bump for Baltimore were not anything special though. However neither are some of the characters that other teams threw out there. Matusz is a 10-game loser now with a .5.24 ERA, but has been rather effective against lefties (9 ER to lefties compared to

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42 against righties). He was also demoted after the game.

Dana Eveland? He's beat the Indians in the past, but it's Dana Eveland. Hate to stomp on the parade, but it is Dana Eveland.

Wei-Yin Chen is someone the Indians have never seen before, but he's having a decent season for the Orioles. Throw the splits out the window though when it concerns him because he's been bad against lefties. He's faced way more right-handed hitters, but the lefties he's faced have made him look bad (19 earned runs to both sides of the plate, 25 innings against the lefts, 66 against the rights).

So what can we take from this? A combination of Baltimore has bad pitching regardless of what hand they throw with, and that the Indians are just finding a groove.

To me it shows that it does not matter what side of the plate the Indians have the majority of their hitters from. If all of them are hitting, then they'll win games because they can score runs.

Shin-Soo Choo

was a barn-burner in this series. He was the gasoline that lit the fire. He'd get on and there was nothing that the Orioles could do because the rest of the lineup was knocking him in.

He walked in every game (and has walked in six straight) and was on base a total of 12 times in four games. He scored seven runs against the Orioles. They scored nine total runs in all three of their losses to the Tribe.

Cabrera was hitting, Kipnis was hitting, heck, Jose Lopez and Shelley Duncan were hitting.

You replace those two with healthy and productive Carlos Santana and Travis Hafner, because you know you can't count on those two every game, then you have something. I'll face right, left, Pat Venditte switch-pitcher or someone who throws with their feet. It doesn't matter if the Indians are hitting because they'll hit either side of the mound. Acta feels the same and hasn't waived from this opinion.

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really come into play at all. Interesting story line is all that it was.

Carlos Santana was curiously absent from the lineup on Sunday, getting another day off to rest his back/ribs/whateveritis despite the Indians expecting to get him back into the lineup on Sunday. Carlos [was surprised](#), Acta said there is no rush and gave a solid 'maybe' for Monday.

"He hasn't hit on the field yet," Acta said. "He's done some soft toss work and all of that, but there's no need to rush anything. We could give him the day off ... and when he hits on the field [Monday], maybe he plays [Monday]."

It's better for him to miss one more game right now than 15 more after it. That's all I will say.

You have to enjoy what Shin-Soo Choo is doing in the leadoff spot. He was 0-4 on Sunday but he has walked in six straight games now after he got one on Sunday. Choo says that [he sees a lot of fastballs](#) up at the spot and he's simply taking advantage of them. He's 19-for-53 in the first inning and Jordan Bastian notes that he is hitting .377 against a starter in his first at-bat.

He's back to mashing the ball around like the Choo we became used to.

How about Lou Marson bidding for the cycle on Saturday? He caught grief for not going for the home run in his last at-bat, but I'm sure everyone will be satisfied with a four-hit game and the additional RBI he knocked in. Marson played in all four games and was 7-for-16 with four runs scored and a pair of RBI. He hit .383 in June getting 25 at-bats. I'd play him more, no? He's doing it against both lefties and righties too.

[PEREZ AND CABRERA HEADED TO KC]

A year after the Indians sent **Asdrubal Cabrera** and **Chris Perez** to the Midsummer Classic in Arizona, they're [sending](#)

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[them to Kansas City](#)

for another go-around.



Perez and Cabrera made the team for the second straight year. Each one was a no-brainer as Perez is a major league leader in saves and Cabrera is still one of, if not the best shortstop in the American League. Derek Jeter be damned Cabrera is out-producing just about every AL shortstop. Both got selected by the players.

For Cabrera, it is simply another chance to showcase himself as one of the unsung players in the game right now. Everyone will talk Jeter and when they talk about young shortstops, Andrus' name always comes up. But Cabrera is the best right now.

For Perez, he's entering dangerous territory ([and he's aware](#)). Not only is it a rival park, it's the home park of the team he last stirred up some controversy with. Between telling Jarrod Dyson that he "can't see him" with a John Cena hand motion and tweeting that it was "Tribe Time not Our Time" and "you hit us, we hit you" to the Royals, he is sure to not have many friends other than Cabrera in Kansas City.

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At least in the stands. The man they call Pure Rage doesn't mind though. He is [preparing to get booed](#) and even implied that it's better than not getting a reaction at all.

"I'm prepared for the boos. I'll just quote Reggie Jackson. They dont boo nobodies."

Perez did credit his bullpen for putting him in the position to save as many games as he has.

Not going is **Jason Kipnis**, at least for now. The young second baseman simply got caught up in a number game among infielders. He deserved it and out of anyone that didn't get put on the team in the AL, aside from Chicago's A.J. Pierzynski, Kipnis is probably the snub with the biggest beef.

Essentially it came down to Ron Washington making selections for his final few spots. It basically came down to selecting his guy, Andrus over Kipnis. And when it comes down to Ian Kinsler and Jason Kipnis, who do you think the players are going to vote in? It's essentially a coin flip between the two, so you can't really say the players made a horrible choice.

You could even say that about the decision to take Andrus over Kipnis. He could have an extra shortstop or an extra second baseman. I'd take my guy too if it's a coin flip because Andrus is deserving.. Kinsler made it through player votes, so Washington took Andrus at short to get both his guys. Kinsler is having just as good of a season as Kipnis is. In fact, I'd venture to say he, Kip and Cano are playing better than any other trio at any other position right now.

Maybe Andrus, Jeter, and Cabrera are second at short, which is unfortunate for Kipnis as he is the odd-man out in the equation. Manny Acta said that regardless, he's [played like one](#) and made sure Jason knows it.

"I'm a little sad that Jason is not going to have an opportunity to make it," Acta said. "We made sure we told him that in our heart he's an All-Star. He has played [like] an All-Star."

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What stings even more is that Washington left the final spot on his roster open to a pitcher, which means Kipnis would not be a part of the balloting for the AL Final Vote. So there's really no chance for the fans to come to his aid. The only thing he can hope for is for someone to bow out.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Not great news for **Lonnie Chisenhall**. He may [very likely be out for the remainder of the season](#) after undergoing surgery to repair a fracture in his forearm. Initially the diagnosis was a month to a month and a half, but after surgery, it's looking more like 10-12 weeks, essentially well into September.

"That's a tough one," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Obviously, the doctors know better. Being closer to the joint, it'll take longer. [Soloff] is optimistic that [Chisenhall] will still play at some point this year. But four to six and 10 to 12, that's a totally different story."

It really is.. At first it was "Oh well, he'll be back soon, still get some time in and who knows, we may be in a position to need him when he is ready." Now that isn't even an option. So what if he does get back in September? He's missing a lot of potential opportunities to hit major league pitching. This will only slow down his progress and that is never a good thing.

Soloff did say that the Indians are optimistic for a full recovery. It isn't a real scary type of an injury even though the initial timetable ended up being pretty much half of what he'll actually be out.

Of course the timing of Chisenhall going down for the sake of the offense is a little more bearable with **Travis Hafner** on his way back.

Hafner went 0-for-3 with an RBI for Columbus on Saturday. He was in the lineup again on Sunday for the Clippers at DH, however there was a bit of rain to deal with and the game was

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rained out. Where that puts us with him actually being re-activated for Monday is questionable. I couldn't see them activating him on Monday after playing two games straight for Columbus, so I would have thought it would be Tuesday. With the rainout, maybe they just go for it on Monday and bring him back.

To replace Chisenhall on the roster, the Indians called up **Jason Donald**, which is interesting. Had they just planned on bringing Hafner back after the weekend, they would have likely went with an extra bullpen arm or someone they wouldn't mind bringing up to just be there in case. But Donald got a start on Sunday (maybe it was intentional to get Cabrera a day off from the field) and it makes some think that he may be here to stay.

We'll see when Hafner comes back what happens to Donald, but if he is here to stay for some time, it may be the last call for Aaron Cunningham, who strangely got two straight starts this weekend. Of course being the only center field option other than Brantley has been the lone reason he's managed to stay on the roster, but if the Indians feel Donald can handle center in a pinch, Cunningham will be gone. If you ask Acta, [this was a move that was going to be made](#) at some point. Perhaps Chisenhall's injury sped it up.

"He's here to back up the infield and the outfield," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "We had him at Triple-A playing some outfield. He played some center field and some left field. Obviously, this is a move that sooner or later we were going to make."

They got Brantley his day off and probably don't expect to give him another one for quite some time. A "cross that bridge when we get there" type of a move if you will. Reading into what Acta said, it seems like Donald is here to stay and Cunningham is on the outs.

As for Donald getting another shot, he spoke about his first one, saying that he worked way too hard in terms of preparation, saying that he essentially was grinding himself to death the way he prepared.

The Indians have half of their 40 draft picks signed to contracts, with 15th round catcher Nelson Rodriguez being the latest.

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[TIGER WATCH]

The Tigs are climbing closer and closer to that .500 mark that the Indians are two games over of. With two wins over the Rays, they are three games back of first place. On Sunday Drew Smyly picked up his third win as Detroit followed the same pattern in their four game set with Tampa as the Indians did against the Orioles.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a vist at [The Tribe Daily](#) , because he's more Italian than Vinny Rottino. Pizza Pie!

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