



It was a night of unlikely heroes doing relatively unlikely things as the Indians beat the Tigers 3-2 in what was, for all intents and purposes, a must-win game. The win pushes the Indians to three games back in the AL Central Division and they are now 6-1 against Detroit this season. Aaron Cunningham executed a suicide squeeze bunt in the seventh inning and Ubaldo Jimenez threw six shutout innings to help the Indians cool off the Tigers, who had won 13 of their last 15 games entering play tonight.

With Doug Fister on the mound, a guy the Indians have had next to no success against, Ubaldo Jimenez needed to pitch a gem. He did. Jimenez scattered seven hits over six innings and walked just two while throwing 65% of his pitches for strikes. The Indians took advantage of their limited run-scoring opportunities and pushed across just enough to win the game.

The Indians scored single runs in the second, fourth, and seventh in different ways. In the second, Carlos Santana stayed hot, ripping a double up the alley in right center. Travis Hafner had a productive at bat, moving Santana to third on a fly ball to deep center. Johnny Damon went to the plate looking for a first pitch two-seam fastball on the outer half, got it, and hit it to left center for a base hit. Santana practically walked home and the Indians took a 1-0 lead. In the fourth, Santana came through again. Jason Kipnis, on a beautiful piece of hitting, slashed a double down the left field line to start the inning. Michael Brantley reached on a "infield single", which will probably be changed to an error after the game, when Miguel Cabrera made a phenomenal diving stop on a ball that Brantley smoked. Cabrera hurried his throw and Prince Fielder was unable to pick it at first. Santana followed with a ground ball single through the hole between first and second that plated Kipnis. Brantley was caught in a rundown between second and third, but stayed in it long enough for Santana to advance to second. The Indians couldn't bring Santana home, however.

The Tigers were happy to see Ubaldo Jimenez exit the game. With his six scoreless innings, Jimenez lowered his season ERA against the Tigers to 1.93 in 18.2 innings of work. Joe Smith

relieved Jimenez and ran into some bad luck from home plate umpire Marvin Hudson. After recording the first two outs, Quentin Berry worked a full count. On the 3-2 pitch, Smith appeared to strike Berry out, but the pitch was apparently ruled high. Three pitches later, Cabrera hit a two-run homer to the bullpen roof in right center field to even the score at 2-2.

In what will probably go down as the most unexpected run-scoring sequence of the season, the Indians took the lead right back in the seventh. Travis Hafner led off the inning with a triple to left center. Hafner drilled a ball off the 19-foot-high wall in left and both Berry and Austin Jackson got too close to the wall. The ball caromed back toward the infield and Hafner kicked it into his eighth or ninth gear to scamper all the way to third. He beat the throw with a head-first slide to the outside of the bag and pumped his fist upon being called safe. Lou Marson came in to run for Hafner.

Aaron Cunningham, who had entered the game as a defensive replacement in the top half of the seventh, stepped to the plate. With the Indians acquisition of Brent Lillibridge today, the consensus opinion is that Cunningham will be the roster casualty when Lillibridge is added. Cunningham made what could be his last at bat with the Indians a very memorable one. Manager Manny Acta called for a suicide squeeze and Cunningham got the bunt down. If we're nitpicking, the bunt was a little bit too close to the pitcher, as Fister had a play, but made a bad throw to Alex Avila. The ball either hit Marson or he kicked it away from Avila and it went toward the backstop. Cunningham wound up on second and the Indians wound up with the lead.

Vinnie Pestano and Chris Perez have been dominant in the season series against the Tigers. Pestano has appeared in all six Indians wins and hasn't allowed a run in six inning. Perez shut the door in the ninth for his sixth save against the Tigers and 28th overall.

With the win, the Indians trimmed the Tigers' lead in the AL Central down to three games and got back over .500 to 49-48. Joe Smith got the win, despite receiving a blown save for losing the 2-0 lead, to move to 6-2. Doug Fister was saddled with the loss, dropping to 4-7. Perez notched save #28.

Stat of the Night: □ Tonight was Vinnie Pestano's 60th career appearance at Progressive Field. In those 60 appearances, he's 3-0 with one save, 25 holds, and a 2.26 ERA. In 15 appearances against the Tigers, he now has a 1.72 ERA.

Player of the Game: Though he didn't factor in the decision, it has to be Ubaldo Jimenez. He's been maddeningly inconsistent at times, but he's now 3-0 with a 1.93 ERA against the Tigers this season.

Tomorrow's Game: Tomorrow's box score could look like a slow-pitch softball game. Derek Lowe has an 8.31 ERA in his last 10 starts and a 12.21 ERA in his last three home starts. He'll take on Max Scherzer who is 0-3 with a 7.48 career ERA at Progressive Field. First pitch is at 7:05.