

Morning Rundown: Just Wanting to be Wanted

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, July 25 2012 7:12 AM - Last Updated Wednesday, July 25 2012 7:13 AM



I have had class every Tuesday and Thursday for the past two weeks. So I have had to deal with this whole "Hey the Indians are playing" thing when I'm right in the middle of class. I've resisted checking my phone, being a good student. Until last night when I couldn't stop checking and getting quietly excited with every inning that passed and the Tigers runs scored column continued to read '0'.

July 24th, 2012

Detroit Tigers - **2**

Cleveland Indians - **3**

W: Joe Smith (6-2) L: Doug Fister (4-7) S: Chris Perez (28)

[BOXSCORE](#)

In the process I did learn that the At Bat Lite app absolutely kills whatever battery life I have left. It almost drained it in just two hours. Especially since I didn't even close it and just kept it up so I could quickly peak at random points.

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That's how big this series is. Big enough for me to check my cell phone during class. I'm not really sure what falls on the meter though, so don't ask me.

But it is pretty big and to get a performance like that out of **Ubaldo Jimenez**. That's story number one as far as I'm concerned. The guy has become a professional at being an enigma. So much so that I'm just going to call him the Professional Enigma. No more Ubaldo, Big U, Uh-bald-o, or Ewwwbaldo. I don't know anymore so it's just going to be Professional Enigma.

You can't really ask anything more out of a guy than six scoreless innings. Sure he gave up seven hits and two walks and had a runner on in every single inning. Who cares right? He put up zeros. He should have received the win. He did his job in every way he could.

"They just gave me a fight," Jimenez said. "They have a really good lineup. Especially the leadoff guy of every inning, they found a way to get on base. It was really tough, but I was able to execute my pitches and get ground balls."

And it starts like that that can help the Indians win. He doesn't need to do that out every night, just keep his team in the game, but if he does that against the Tigers every night, I will celebrate him to no end.

It is weird that this is right around the time that he and Doug Fister arrived in the American League Central and the two squared off last night. Many thought the Tigers had the better trade, in that they didn't give up as much as the Indians and got someone just as capable. And someone that ultimately ended up being a stud for them last year down the stretch.

It is hard to argue with that point, but on this night, the Indians pick ended up besting the Tigers' and there is nothing you can deny Ubaldo in this one. He may not go out and do that every night, but against the Tigers, he did and that's all that really counts right now [as we take this approach](#) to the series one game at a time.

"I thought Jimenez was the best I've seen him since he joined Cleveland, against us," Tigers

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manager Jim Leyland said. "He had a good split. But we had some chances. We just couldn't do it."

Perhaps his biggest moment was in the sixth inning with him racking up the pitches and it likely being his last frame. Of course he gives up the leadoff single and gets out, but then things start to get dicey with a Brennan Boesch "single" that fell a little bit between Johnny Damon and Jack Hannahan. Of course it is always easier for the outfield coming in to make the catch and Hannahan was simply that far back because of how high the ball was hit and ultimately just there as backup.

But Damon, the agile outfielder that he is, and almost too smart and aware of his limits, decided it would be a great idea to just let Hannahan field the ball. Of course you never just concede that unless you hear the guy, so it makes me think that Damon simply just over-thought the entire situation.

Which would lead me to believe Ubaldo would do the same thing, implode and I would be a very angry person this morning. But that wasn't the case as he buckled in and found what he needed. He initially went down 2-0 to Alex Avila, only to battle back despite the runners moving up a space on a wild pitch. He gets a few strikes, throws another walk in there in the process of throwing a few balls that were fouled off. But he got the count full, forced the groundout and kept his composure when he really shouldn't have been in there anymore.

He probably pitched the most clutch game of his Indians career last night and perhaps the most vital start of the season so far for the Indians as a whole. And now we can honestly say that this is the Ubaldo Jimenez the Indians believed they acquired. It only took a year to see it, but at least we saw it. Leyland said it was the best he's seen of Ubaldo since arriving in Cleveland, but really he's managed to give Detroit his best every time out this year. He has struggled this year, but not against the Tigers.

Perhaps overall Ubaldo knows what is at stake and what exactly this team is up against. Hopefully the entire team knows that and is treating this game at such. Maybe they are awake and alert. Maybe, they just needed that "wake up" opponent.

"Everybody knows what we're playing for," Jimenez said. "Everybody knows that we're trying to

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compete and trying to win the division. If we want to do it, we have to start right here, with these guys."

They certainly woke up after the game was tied. Acta said that "you can only get Cabrera out so many times" with runners on base, and he finally made the Indians pay when Joe Smith was in there in the seventh. If that was just his bad luck, then so be it, but the response was as great as you can get with Hafner's triple. What followed was really what made this game intriguing in many aspects.

A man who could be out of a job by the time today's game rolled around pretty much was the reason the Indians won last night.

"He's a good bunter," Acta said of Cunningham. "He's shown that throughout the year. Fister could be very tough on right-handed hitters. After that first swing that he took on a 1-0 count, we decided it was a good time to take a chance."

And that is why **Aaron Cunningham** is on the roster. Not really, but never underestimate the power of fundamental baseball. Jimmy Leyland said it was a great call by Manny and of course because it worked, it was a brilliant call as Lou Marson was able to score on the suicide squeeze.

"I'd do anything for this team," he said. "If they want me to rub [baseballs] down or whatever, I'll do it. To be able to do something, to come in late in the game like that, and be able contribute, it's unbelievable."

I mean, how bad do we kill this guy? Day in and day out he's been on this roster from the start and because he never plays or gets to hit much, his numbers look like dirt. He does play often as a defensive replacement, but he rarely gets his at-bats. So when he does get some sort of consistent playing time, we kill the guy when he doesn't do something.

But now he gets the chance to be the hero and he comes through, perhaps in one of the biggest games of the year. A game that if the Indians turn this around and make a run, they'll look back

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on and point to this as the starting point.

And all the guy really wants to do is be a part of the team and contribute so people like us don't rub dirt in his face game after game. And now everyone will celebrate him and if he gets cut, laugh because they think he deserves it because his numbers are dirt.

Here he is saying he'll rub baseballs down for this team just to contribute or do whatever it is the Indians want him to do.

I have a lot of respect for him. If the Indians end up getting rid of him today, I can't say I will disagree with the move or argue for them to do something else, but I certainly will respect him as he goes out and thank him for his service. He deserves that much.

Random Details...

[This is why Casey Kotchman is on the roster](#) . Okay? Good? Are you satisfied? Good.

Think Detroit caught a little bit of the Tribe flu? How about starting six of their nine innings with a runner on base and not getting a single run from that? Their only runs were a two-out home run. It's like, give me more of that, right? All of them were singles though and five times it came off of Ubaldo.

More times that not it was routine how he would work out of it, but he got a double play in one inning, the previously shown play. Other than that he simply worked around the trouble. One of his two walks by the way? Came in that inning where he got the leadoff hitter out and the other came after two outs even with a runner on. So both walks were with one more out left to get and in situations that were not liable to come back and bite him if he didn't work around it.

I did not get a chance to see it as I was on my way back home from class, however Tom Hamilton seemed to make a big deal about Vinnie Pestano after he recorded the double play.

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He noted Pestano doing some stretching and then proceeded to blame five straight balls that included a walk on the fact that he looked "not right" or perhaps hurt. We will see if anything comes out of it, but the only thing I can think of is when he jumped into the air to the field ball and just tweaked something. Either way, after making us sweat to death, Pestano came back real quick and got the out he needed.

One of those "for your info" types of things. Travis Hafner has now hit 12 triples in his career. But just to show you that Progressive Field is not much of a "triples" park, last night he hit only his third triple at home. Coming into the year, he had just one triple at Progressive Field. He doubled that total in less than eight months. Even though he's a big guy, that's a big difference. Crazy...

Joe Smith totally deserved that sixth win of the season. You have to be really good to know that you can give up a two-run homer to Miguel Cabrera because Travis Hafner is going to triple in the next inning. I mean, that's serious precognition there.

You should also note that Joe Smith got the first two outs of the inning. Pestano didn't and got out of it, just like Ubaldo did all night. Smith did not escape unscathed, just saying man.

Chris Perez doesn't count. He's his own guy and his hair nulls anything else.

All of this hoopla and we haven't mentioned the fact that Asdrubal Cabrera had three hits and Carlos Santana had a pair. Granted Cabrera was essentially a non-factor as his three hits didn't produce any sort of run production as he didn't score or knock in a run himself, but that isn't his fault. Santana did manage to not only knock a run in, but score himself.

Despite his early hitting woes, Santana has managed to reach base every single game this month, either by walk or hit. So there's that.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

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[As you saw by now](#) , the Indians acquired **Brent Lillibridge** from the Boston Red Sox yesterday and today we're expected to learn who he'll replace on the roster. He's already taken the 40 man spot of Lonnie Chisenhall, who was transferred to the 60 Day Disabled List. He could take Aaron Cunningham's roster spot, which makes yesterday's game winning suicide squeeze that much more interesting as it seems like every time he's on the brink of losing his job (if you can call it a glamours job?) he does something meaningful.

The Indians [like his versatility](#) , certainly not his career .212 average and .279 on-base percentage.

"Versatility, man," Acta said. "He's a guy we've seen in our division the last couple of years. He can play the outfield. He can play the infield. He can run. It's a guy that we'll welcome here."

It sounds as if he is taking Aaron Cunningham's role as he is taking the "late inning left field defensive replacement role" that usually goes to Aaron Cunningham. In fact when Cunny is listed on the roster that is his position LILFDR. Lil' FDR? That sounds like a good idea for a cartoon. Or a subplot on Parks and Recreation.

It could also be Shelley Duncan or Jose Lopez, who I wouldn't rule out. Lopez seems to have love here and while I think more people outside the organization (IE myself and some fans) would prefer The Dunc Tank over someone like Lopez or Cunningham, he could really be axed if Cunningham isn't. Acta certainly doesn't like the media singling out Cunningham.

"We haven't made the decision yet," Acta said. "We're working through that. [On Wednesday] we'll have a move for you. Can you bring up a couple of more names? He's not the only one. We have 25 guys in there."

Ultimately Lillibridge would fill a role that could and was for awhile filled by Jason Donald. But again, Donald is playing full time in Columbus, so his biggest benefit is down there, not as a defensive replacement. I guess? Ah don't ask me, I really don't know anymore.

I do know that this is like the third or fourth day that I've been allowed to bold **Roberto**

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Hernandez

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name in related news in the rundown. Can I say I'm tired of it? I'm just going to go back to calling him Fausto. Seriously why not? He doesn't care what anyone calls him and Robbie is just weird. Roberto makes it sound like I'm referring to this guy, and I can't do anything what so ever with the name Roberto Hernandez in terms of nicknames go. I could go Fauberto or Fauxberto or whatever, but. No. Fausto.

So Fausto is going to be making his return to the mound on Thursday, that's tomorrow night, in Lake County. A team he thrived for when he was in the minor leagues.

"We have to play it by ear," Acta said. "I'm sure if he throws the ball around the plate, he's going to be able to do OK. But I've seen so many guys go on rehab assignments and just get lit up by those kids, because guys are trying to work themselves into shape and throw strikes, and those kids are just hacking. It's not like I'm expecting him to go no-hit for four innings or anything."

I'm expecting a no-hitter. He's become accustomed to pitching to those 20-year-old kids that just go up there and hack away. No not really, but that is the goal right now for Fausto. Go out and make his pitches and prepare for August 11th. He'll throw 75 pitches OR four to five innings. Whichever comes first.

He'll probably make multiple stops, whoever is in the area at the time of his starts. **Rafael Perez** is on his way back and made his latest stop in Columbus, where he threw two scoreless on Monday. He will not make his return, or at least is not planned to as of right now. He will rest and then come into another situation the Indians think they'll use him in later this week.

I'm not sure what is going to be up with Vinnie Pestano after last night, but I would consider Perez's plans tentative and the situation to be fluid.

Giovanni Soto (the no-hitter guy!) earned the Indians weekly minor league player award. The guy he was traded for is in Cleveland right now. Yeah that guy.

The Indians are getting a little relaxed in this current stretch of games with no off-day, [letting](#)

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players arrive later than usual

(in by 5:30 pm for a night game) and skipping out on the outdoor batting practice for sessions indoors. It has netted a two game win streak, so whatevs man.

Not much on the rumor front to report, but it should definitely be noted that the Pittsburgh Pirates are not only buyers, but they swung what is in my opinion, an excellent deal [to nab a solid starter in Houston's Wandy Rodriguez](#)

. It is a little bit better than what the Indians should be aiming for if they were to get involved in the market, but now that Fausto is coming back, this discussion may all be totally moot. Chris Perez probably put it the best anyway.

"I don't see anything big on the horizon," Perez said. "It might be a piece here or a piece there -- like Lillibridge. Maybe a starter that's not on anybody else's radar. It seems like the same four or five teams are trying to go for the same guys. We usually don't win those battles."

If you win with what you have, none of this matters. So why not just win with what we have for now and see where the chips fall.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a vist at [The Tribe Daily](#) , or else Will Smith will drop down and erase your alien face memory.

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