

Morning Rundown: The Lowe Point of the Season

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, July 31 2012 3:35 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, August 01 2012 8:49 AM



This could be the point in the season where the Indians are at their lowest. Or it could get worse from here. Who knows? I mean if they end up losing two more to the Royals, that is certainly pretty bad, but I can't imagine things getting much more frustrating.

July 31st, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **3** Kansas City Royals - **8** W: Luke Hochevar (7-9) L: Derek Lowe (8-10)

[BOXSCORE] *"I'm not going to be making a knee-jerk reaction right now, right after the game," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "But we're going to have to sit back and analyze things, because it's been rough for a while. We're going to sit down and look at what the options are right now."*

Oh well, [I am going to make a knee-jerk reaction](#).

Derek Lowe is done.

I can appreciate a starting pitcher who is older trying to stay alive. He did a great job earlier in the season, showed a lot of good things and made us think we could count on him throughout the season as being more than just a capable four starter.

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And even if he couldn't be more than, we at least thought we had a capable four starter, you know?

Well that time has gone and passed, you can't count on Derek Lowe to give you anything other than three really horrible innings, if that. Get ready to be scared.

Lowe has won one single solitary game since June 1st when he won against the Twins. He's given up the following number of runs in each start since he gave up just one run: 7, 3, 7, 3, 4, 3, 3, 8, 4, 7.

My autobiography, whenever that comes out, will be simply called "I Hate Roller coasters." I really do. I don't like the physical roller coasters at Cedar Point, I don't like the emotional roller coasters that I can go on in life and I certainly don't like to see the starting pitcher of my favorite baseball team mimic one in his pitching performance.

Lowe has given up less than six hits in five of his 21 starts this season. There's only one pitcher in baseball that's given up more than him, and that's James Shields with 159. Lowe's average against however? It trumps all of the competition as it currently stands at... wait for it...

.321!

Are you serious? That's higher than any single average the Indians have on their team. I mean, at least we have a .300 hitter, but damn, that's not the one you want.

Only 10 single players in Major League Baseball have a higher batting average than that! He's giving up hits at a higher rate than Matt Holliday is collecting them.

For the past several starts Lowe has commented that he just needs to focus on what is wrong and worry about turning it around. I wonder what he is going to say in response to this one?

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"Those are definitely things that you can't worry about," Lowe said. "You have to be more competitive, there's no doubt about that. There have really been a lot of seven- or eight-run games. [Five] of them, I believe. I don't sit here and worry about [losing my spot]. You just go out and try to figure it out."

I will give Lowe credit for one thing. He's not ready to say he's made progress or "things are coming along" or as he put it, "got a few bad breaks". As a veteran he's taking his lumps and he's being flat out honest. He's not pitching good.

Why? I don't think even Lowe knows that. Maybe he is just old and age has caught up with him. It would be weird to think he can magically get too old to be consistent or at least throw in a good outing here and there in just a few weeks from when he was good to when he started pitching horribly.

But what else could it be? Is he hurt? Is he doing something wrong mechanically? Manny Acta just said he didn't have good stuff. Does he not have good stuff every night?

He struck out one hitter again. He isn't giving up home runs, in fact he's given up just eight this season. He's simply getting hit and hit and hit and hit. Hitters are just swinging and making contact. They're doing damage by just playing a solid stick-to-ball contact type of game.

So what do you do with him?

Do you continue to run him out there and see if it gets better until Fausto Hernandez is ready to go in less than a few weeks?

You cut him and replace him with someone downstairs, as bleak as it may look in the basement?

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You can't make a trade...

Um I don't really know. The Indians have already replaced **Josh Tomlin**, opting to send **Corey Kluber**

out to the mound tomorrow night in the finale against the Royals. That decision was solidified when the blind came in to assist the blind and Tomlin pitched in relief of Derek Lowe. Of course Tomlin started to get hit around giving up more of Lowe's runs and then giving up some of his own.

I'm quite done with Tomlin too, so the move had to be made there. I'm not really sure if Kluber can be any better but at this point, what do the Indians have to lose? They certainly can't do any worse than the clunkers Tomlin was putting up or the ones Lowe is serving.

I'm done with both. Heck, if the Indians wanted to call up Chris Seddon to take Lowe's place, I don't think I would complain. At this point, the Indians season is fading away and running that man out there on a consistent basis to get his ass kicked isn't going to help. Make a switch.

Random Details...

Eight hits, five walks. Lowe's performance certainly didn't let me forget about the offense, which continues to be of no help. It's hard to blame them when the pitching staff gives up eight runs and that is lower than usual as to what has lately been allowed.

A big reason for 2-for-11 with RISP and just three runs off that many baserunners? Try nine strikeouts on for size. Try five hitters in the lineup with three or more left on base. Try Choo striking out four times. Anomaly, whatever, but that isn't going to help.

I'm not sure who goes down for Kluber when he returns. Jeremy Accardo pitched well in relief and Cody Allen has been used sparingly. Tomlin will continue to roll in the pen as the long man, so either of those two who have been commonly used as "long men" will be on the chopping block. If you are the Indians and you are committed to making Cody Allen good, you'll do him right and either cut Accardo and give him regular time, or send Allen back down to Columbus to

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get time. Don't cut Accardo and still not use Allen.

Carlos Santana finished July by getting on base in every game except for two.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

As you probably read by now, the Indians did make a deadline deal, but it wasn't flashy, it wasn't big, it didn't really address an immediate need, and none of the Indians big chips were dealt.

The Indians [went out and got](#) **Lars Anderson** from the Red Sox for knuckleball extraordinaire Steven Wright. A small price to pay for someone who may still have the potential to be a good major league hitter. That potential never really got a shot in Boston, but he's never really been overwhelmingly deserving of one based off some of his numbers in the higher levels of the Red Sox system.

Anderson is a first base/outfield type, which fits in nicely with everyone the Tribe has stockpiled in Columbus, from Vinny Rottino, to Matt LaPorta, Russ Canzler, Jared Goedert, do I have to keep going?

"He's a big, physical left-handed hitter," Antonetti said. "He's very good around the bag and has a good approach at the plate. He has good strike-zone discipline. We feel he's got ingredients to be a potentially productive Major League player for us."

Just that though, he won't do it immediately. He'll go to Columbus and Rottino will likely get the boot off the 40-man and the roster. They're the same player, only Anderson is, well, younger and has had less of a chance to make his mark.

It is kind of sad to see Steven Wright's saga with the Indians end, but you have to credit that guy so much. To build himself back up into a player of value that can be traded in a deal that

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perhaps brought the Indians some sort of player in return that could make an impact? Jeeze a few years ago he could have been released and no one would have a care in the world.

I hope his story isn't over.

The Indians trade deadline saga certainly is though and Manny Acta was never worried about the "rumors" surrounding the likes of his younger guys like Shin-Soo Choo and Justin Masterson.

"That's why I didn't think it was such a distraction in our clubhouse," Acta said. "And I don't think it should be, because we're in it and we're young. Those guys are young and the guys that people were after are guys that are being productive for us right now. It would've been a different environment in our clubhouse if we would've been 20 games out with five veteran players sitting there in the clubhouse and it was probably time to unload them."

Chris Antonetti said that the Indians looked until the deadline passed and that there wasn't anything that they could get done. When you look at the number of teams that probably considered themselves in it, there wasn't much to go after. I mean look who did all the trading this month. Chicago and Miami were the two big teams unloaded talent. If you didn't have a need that matched up with them, why bother?

The Royals and Twins unloaded a few people, but other than that, the other teams in the doldrums, like Colorado, San Diego, and Houston, really stayed put. They didn't have much to offer and what they did, they really didn't trade away.

The market was not very good for a buyer, so when you have a team like Cleveland that was probably looking to add a marginal piece that didn't involve a lot of prospect value going the other way, trade chances significantly decreased.

Sure I would have loved to see the Indians grab a starter on the cheap, one that wouldn't cost much. But they were not out there. I'm sure the Indians would have loved to add a starter, especially after watching Lowe vomit on himself again. But if they could have, I'm sure they would have.

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The biggest line in having not dealt anyone themselves [is the one that includes not trading Shi n-Soo Choo](#)

Ultimately, he says he wasn't worried about being dealt. Maybe he wasn't, because he just went out after the deadline passed and whiffed four times, but whatever.

"I still have very good confidence in this team," Choo said. "We had a winning series against Detroit and everybody had a lot of energy. It was exciting. We were closer to having a chance at the playoffs and then we lost three games against Minnesota. But that's part of the game, part of a season."

The Indians will now take their Choo saga into the offseason. It will certainly be a topic of debate and the discussion will revolve around keeping him or trying to unload him to make the team better in several aspects. Those deals are hard to do, but in the offseason with more teams open to adding a player like that, well, you certainly have more clubs to look at in terms of finding the right fit.

I don't care if **Roberto Hernandez** gave up five runs on nine hits for the Clippers on Tuesday. He went five innings, which is more innings than Lowe and less runs than Lowe. So really, upgrade?

It was his second start, so you can't look at numbers though. He made 83-pitches, only walked two and [continues to look like he's rounding into baseball shape](#) .

"The performance has nothing to do with it," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "We're not judging him on going over there and having to throw a no-hitter or a two-hitter every time he goes out. All we want to see is the type of shape he is in, how the ball is coming out of his hand, the stuff. That's all. He's just going down there to finish the rehab and be able to come over here."

Fausto is now set for another rehab start on Sunday for the Captains. If he were to come back

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after the suspension is up, he'll probably make two more starts including that one on Sunday. But that is not for me to say, just for me to speculate.

[TIGER WATCH]

No more.. No one cares about the Tigers.. Just worry about winning games. We need some new karma, Tiger watch is over....

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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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