

Morning Rundown: The Big Ooooooh on Display in Second Straight Win

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, August 09 2012 1:59 PM - Last Updated Friday, August 10 2012 6:43 AM



Lou Brown invoked, they call that a winning streak. Of course two in-a-row is simply back-to-back wins, but after 11 straight of the bad kind, you will call this a win streak and you will like it.

August 9th, 2012

Boston Red Sox - 3

Cleveland Indians - 5

W: Ubaldo Jimenez (9-11) L: Felix Doubront (10-6) S: Chris Perez (30)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

Probably the most frustrating thing about watching **Ubaldo Jimenez** pitch?

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I used to think it was the bad starts. The ones earlier in the season when he'd go out and just take forever, lollygag around on the mound, and just pitch an overall real slow and... frustrating game.

But I've now changed my mind. The most frustrating thing about watching Ubaldo Jimenez pitch is watching him pitch last night. The most irritating thing about watching him pitch is what I just mentioned. The most frustrating? It's watching him pitch well and watching him, out-right go out there and dominate. Because that is exactly what he was last night. He was dominant. When you walk one (the first hitter of the game) and then go on to strike out 10 people in just six innings? I don't care that you gave up three runs, [your stuff was dominant](#) . You were dominant.

Oh and um three quality starts in a row, which is sad to get excited about, but what else can you do after 10 straight games of horrific starting pitching? Acta was impressed.

"Great job by Ubaldo," manager Manny Acta said. "That's the most aggressive I've seen him here with his fastball and probably the best command of his fastball that he has shown so far. He was just dotting it to both sides of the plate."

It's funny because Jimenez's best performance comes directly after the Indians let pitching coach Scott Radinsky go. Maybe that's what it took? A warning sign to everyone. Hey, this is real, if you don't start producing, heads are going to roll? I mean, I doubt it, but maybe that's what it took for Ubaldo to deliver his best yet. He was in command of everything, throwing 70 strikes and as Bastian noted, 18 of them were first pitch strikes to 27 hitters.

"I think the clubhouse is really sad," Jimenez said. "He did everything possible. It's my fault. It's all the starting pitchers' fault. We haven't been consistent, but that's baseball, man."

We seem to do this every time he pitches well, so you might as well take this start with a grain of salt. If he starts putting in efforts like these on an more consistent basis, I'll be ready to buy in. But this is just typical Ubaldo for all we know right now. Up one game, down the next.

He was good, no doubt. Probably in terms of his command, the best we've ever seen him.

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Those strike ratios are Cliff Lee good. I'm not sure what is to credit for his extra sharpness, maybe it was his focus? Maybe the fact that Radinsky was let go made him sort of perk his head up and say "Hey, maybe I should zero in on one what I'm doing or else someone else is going to lose their job that doesn't deserve it."

I mean, that's probably what I would think... But I'm not Ubaldo.

Other than a mistake to Adrian Gonzalez, Jimenez was great. And the mistake ended up not costing him because his offense bailed him out.

And as I'm going to mention here in a bit, they put together some tough quality at-bats that got the job done, without having to get a hit. That is probably the biggest reason other than Ubaldo on why the Tribe won their second straight.

Pitching will take you a long way, especially good pitching. It can breed good offensive games like this one even though by most standards, this type of offensive game wouldn't be that good. It would have been equal to a few of the ones the Indians put in during the streak.

But if you throw a well-pitched game in there, all of a sudden, the offense looks just a little bit better.

Random Details...

Vinnie Pestano ran his scoreless innings streak up to 20 with a shaky, but otherwise scoreless frame. He put a few on and looked a little scary out there, but once again seemed to kick it in gear when it counted, getting a huge strikeout and then a pop-out to end things.

The play of the game was made following Jimenez's exit in the seventh. With one out and Pedro Ciriaco on second, a Carl Crawford grounder to Cabrera had Ciriaco in no-man's land. Cabs and Lillibridge played it perfectly and in the end Cabrera made a great fake to get Ciriaco

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tagged out and then an on-point throw back to Donald at second to nail a trailing Crawford for the double play to end the inning. You won't find worse baserunning or better infield defense than on that play.

Give some props to Tony Sipp there because he came in for Jimenez with the runner on and got a strikeout for the first out. I'm sure he was on the verge of getting out of the inning regardless of the double play, but it is always nice to get some help. He's given up just three earned runs in the past month and a half.

Hey, not only did Jason Donald hit the big home run in the first to lead things off, he walked, knocked in that insurance run in the eighth inning and scored a pair of runs. I'm glad he's back. I love the way he plays the game and really think he needs his shot now. He accounted for the difference and then some.

"Coming up here," said Donald, who was promoted from Triple-A before the game, "I just want to be as aggressive as I possibly can."

Donald's other RBI came with a groundout, so it doesn't count as a RISP hit and neither did Brantley's sac-fly. So the moral is that if you are having these 2-for-7 RISP hit nights, that you better at least putting runs in when you are making outs like the Indians did last night on several occasions. That is the situation when the RISP failures can again be overlooked, especially when you win. Chris Perez got the save and pretty much recapped it as a good pitched game with some runs and a easy hand off to the bullpen.

As if that's how they did before. Hmmm.

In fact it really was the way things worked a few months ago and jeeze, look what they did when it worked.

Perez debuted a clean-shaven look last night. Who knows if it had anything to do with the blown save and the streak but I'm going to assume so. Looking at Perez without the beard is just straight up crazy. His bio pic on the Indians.com site has always had the clean-shaven Perez.

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It's just weird man. I hope he lets the beard grow back in and that this is just a temporary "cleansing".

Quirky numbers with 10 Indians hits from nine different players. The lone starter was Shelley Duncan, but left field did have a hit as his replacement, Zeke Carrera singled late.

[RADINSKY REPLACED]

The big news coming from yesterday (other than Chris Perez shaving) [was the dismissal of Scott Radinsky](#)

as the pitching coach of the Cleveland Indians. The Rad-Man lasted just most of this season in his new role as pitching coach, taking over for Tim Belcher after he moved back into a part-time front office role. Radinsky of course was the leader of the Bullpen the past few years and as a former reliever himself, he filled the role nicely and all the relievers have good things to say about him.

But the starting pitching has been bad and in cases like this, there needs to be a fall-guy. It sucks because here's the thing, Radinsky is a good coach. He deserves a major league job if you ask me, be it in the bullpen or whatever. But this is a classic case of a team not really have any talent and then when they fall on hard times, using their coach as the scapegoat. It's the sad and unfortunate truth of baseball.

"We talked to Scott today," Antonetti said. "Certainly, we were mindful as we were going through the losing streak of how we were pitching at that point, but at the same time we didn't feel it was appropriate to make that decision while we were in the midst of it."

He'll be okay though, because if he doesn't find a major league job, he'll find a minor league job with an opportunity down the line to come back up and he still remains the only coach I know of that is also a front-man for a band.

Kidding aside, I've always liked Radinsky since his days with Columbus. But the guy replacing him, in the interim, **Rubin Niebla**, has just as much of a proven record in Columbus as Rad

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did. This is what the replacement of Nunnally as hitting coach last year was, a change in voice.

The drop-off from Belcher to Rad has not been drastic, but to me, it sure does seem like this team misses their old pitching coach. Belcher seemed to get the best out of Masterson if anything, but you can't discredit Radinsky's success with the bullpen. Sure the pitching coach assumes a lot of credit and blame in regards to the entire pitching staff, but Radinsky is the guy in there with the pen, working closest to them.

"I wasn't coming to the ballpark expecting to deal with that today," closer Chris Perez said. "The thing Antonetti said to us was it's one thing to be underperforming and not doing your job and not pitching well, but he didn't see any signs of us getting better. That was a big thing for him to let Rad go. He didn't see anybody making any kind of strides, which I can agree with. It's been one of those, especially this last stretch here, it's been bad. You can't really put a finger on it."

Despite what Perez said in regards to what Antonetti told the team, you'll see the manager stick up for his guy. Acta said that Radinsky was not to be blamed by himself. Blame needs shared by himself and the pitchers. Josh Tomlin probably [put it the best and most honest way anyone could have](#)

"It wasn't Rad's fault, the problems we were having this year as a staff," starter Josh Tomlin said. "The people that need to be held accountable are the guys that are in this room, not the guys that are sitting in the dugout saying who pitches and when."

Well said, couldn't say it any better and will just leave it at that. Good luck to Scott Radinsky.

His replacement Niebla, who is no stranger to the big league club as he's spent some time as a major league coach, actually saw his season come to an end at one point in 2010 when he hurt himself shagging fly balls. He was the assistant to both Radinsky and Belcher and now after mostly working with the AAA club in Columbus the past few years, he's got the Indians staff to himself.

And he has a few familiar faces in Zach McAllister and Corey Kluber. He deserves some credit

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for their success in Columbus as he's really helped turn McAllister into something good. Let's see if he has any different answers for Ubaldo or Masterson now.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

More playing time will be up for grabs for the Indians as their designated hitter [is back on the disabled list](#).

We may see Matt LaPorta or Russ Canzler really soon, but in the meantime, let's talk about the recent reason for

Travis Hafner

hitting the DL and what it really may mean. I want to at least put the thought in your minds that this could be the end for Travis Hafner with the Indians.

I doubt we've seen the last of him this season, but who knows, if things linger and it gets to that point, the Indians may just opt to not bother with him and go with players that need at-bats, because they certainly could use that.

Hafner's back stiffness has forced him onto the injury list once again and Chris Antonetti said there's no real idea when he'll be back just yet.

Heck, have we seen the last of Travis Hafner in an Indians uniform? There's not one player that I love more than Travis Hafner. I make no bones about it, I've supported him since he was first up with the club early on when times were tough. I've stuck with him and sometimes defended him to a point where no one else really would.

He's a good ballplayer and a great person. I hope this isn't the end for him in Cleveland (I'm not saying I want the Indians to re-sign him, so don't think that), but if it is, it's been a heck of a ride.

His roster spot went to **Jason Donald**, who was called-up and due to a scratch of Jason Kipnis, saw action and made an immediate impact with his early home run to start the game. Donald will see some good time in this stint and he's probably here to stick around this time. Acta said he will probably see most of his time at third, but if the Indians were really frisky, they'd get him

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in left field a few times and see if they could make it a frequent/more permanent position for him.

Jason Kipnis missed the game with stiff neck, no word on what his status is for the game today or moving forward, but it is likely not all that serious. The Indians are still rolling with an eight-man bullpen thanks to some early exits from starters and lack of an off-day. It will probably be for a few more games and then they'll make another move. It's worth noting though that if Kipnis misses anymore time, the Indians really only have an extra outfielder and Marson on their bench.

While we may have not seen the last of Hafner, [we have seen the last of](#) Johnny Damon and Jeremy Accardo. Both were just out-right released after being designated for assignment not too long ago. Next could be

Derek Lowe

as the Indians have not yet released him. I'm not sure if they may have a taker for Lowe and have something in the works, but the fact that they didn't just release him with Damon and Accardo tells me there is something different there with him.

Tonight, Roberto Hernandez makes a rehab start for the Columbus Clippers. Chris Seddon will pitch for the Indians. Next week, Chris Seddon will probably lose his roster spot and Fausto will start for the Indians in his place. Just saying.

Footnote...

I don't want to turn this into a Dolan-bash session, so please don't get that impression that you may do so in regards to what I'm about to say about a particular quote.

You can credit the Dolans for one thing... [They speak](#) . They might not always tell you what you want to hear or answer the questions head on with everything they can honestly say... But they talk. They will stand up there and talk and just take whatever they need to take.

However I'm a little perplexed as to the following quote by **Paul Dolan**.

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"That was probably the most disappointing stretch of baseball in our tenure [as owners]," Dolan said. "It was so dismal. It changed the entire season. We had an opportunity to make up some ground in attendance. We were set up for a drive for the playoffs."

I'm not going to lie, my immediate reaction to the last part of that quote was... If we had an opportunity, with an increase in attendance in mind and a run at the playoffs perceived to be the opportunity, why did the Indians not do a single thing to better themselves?

Part of it is simple. Chris Antonetti couldn't find a suitable deal that helped the Indians this year and also next year, because that was the goal. That's fine and dandy. But it just stings a little more to see Dolan say something like that after the fact of things going south and with not having actually done something to help set up that "drive for the playoffs."

Dolan would later say that the Indians are not doing "particularly good" this season in terms of finances, so again, a reason to not add.

We can get into more of these quotes down the line. This is one link to definitely save and bookmark for later discussion, because it brings up so many things that need to be said but provides so few answers.

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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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