



The night owls that stayed up to watch Monday's series opener against the Angels got treated to a great pitcher's duel between Justin Masterson and CJ Wilson. Both teams played good defense and it was a well-played game that resulted in a 6-2 Tribe victory.

The Indians got a strong start from Masterson who got some confidence in the first inning and didn't look back until the seventh. He issued a leadoff walk to uber-prospect Mike Trout, who immediately stole second. But, Masterson struck Torii Hunter out looking, got Pujols to ground out to short on Asdrubal Cabrera's first barehand play of the inning, and got a gold-hand caliber play from Cabrera to end the inning. Kendrys Morales chopped a ball towards short and, with the shift on, Cabrera had to come running over from the second base side of the infield to barehand grab and throw all in one motion. It was a tremendous play and a very big play in a game where runs were scarce.

After neither team scored in the second, the Tribe broke through against Wilson in the third. Brent Lillibridge smoked a one-hopper at second baseman Howie Kendrick who let the ball play him and it caromed off his glove into right field. After Casey Kotchman moved Lillibridge to second, Lou Marson battled back from a 1-2 count to walk. With Jason Donald at the plate, Manny Acta got creative and sent both runners on the first pitch. Donald didn't spot Wilson a first pitch strike and smashed a belt high fastball to center for a RBI single. The next batter, Cabrera, served a breaking ball through the hole on the right side to give the Tribe a 2-0 lead.

Masterson got a little bit of luck in the bottom of the third. He walked Chris Iannetta to start the inning, but erased him on a double play line drive to Kotchman. Kotchman dropped the ball, tagged first to get Trout, and then got Iannetta in a rundown. Replay showed that Iannetta was

safe at first when Kotchman failed to apply the tag in time, but the bases were empty when Albert Pujols singled and was stranded there.

Lillibridge blasted his second home run in three days in the fourth, a two-out rocket shot to left center. With the offense done for the time being, Masterson sailed until the seventh. In that seventh inning, he gave up a leadoff single by Mike Trumbo that bounced straight down onto home plate and then Alberto Callaspo nearly beheaded Masterson with a single to center. With a quick hook, Acta pulled Masterson in lieu of Joe Smith. Smitty did his job, recording a couple of strikeouts and a deep fly out to right to preserve the 3-0 lead. That proved to be huge as Vinnie Pestano's scoreless inning streak would come to a close in the eighth.

Pestano walked Trout to leadoff the inning and then retired Hunter on a fly ball to center. Pujols hit a ball that might land sometime tomorrow for a two-run homer to cut the Indians lead to just one. Pestano, rattled by what happened, fell behind 3-1 to Morales before getting him to fly out for the second out. Trumbo popped up to end the inning. Pestano's scoreless inning streak ended at 21.1 innings, but he kept the Indians ahead going to the ninth.

The Tribe might have been away from Progressive Field, but they still added on some insurance in the ninth. Against left hander Hisanori Takahashi, the Indians loaded the bases on three straight singles from Ezequiel Carrera, Lillibridge, and Kotchman. Jason Isringhausen entered and, with the the infield in, Marson got ahead in the count 3-0, took a strike, and then walked. It was the 11th RBI on the season for Marson. Jason Kipnis, making his first appearance since August 8, drove Trout to the warning track in center for a sacrifice fly to make it 5-2. It also sent Kotchman to third. Cabrera struck out swinging at a pitch at nose level. With Choo at the plate, Isringhausen uncorked a wild pitch to make it 6-2. Choo popped out to round out an 0-for-5 night.

Esmil Rogers came on for the ninth and needed a GPS to find home plate. In the meantime, he gave up back-to-back singles and Acta went to the mound to bring in Chris Perez. Perez struck out Erick Aybar for the first out, struck out Ianetta for the second out, and struck out Trout to end the ballgame.

With the win, the Indians improved to 54-62. Justin Masterson picked up his ninth win of the season and the Indians (ho hum) beat yet another lefty.

**Stat of the Night:** In what has been a feast or famine season for Justin Masterson, Monday night marked the eighth time that Masterson went at least six innings and allowed one run or less.

**Player of the Game:** Joe Smith. Justin Masterson was good, but the game hung in the balance when Joe Smith entered protecting a three-run lead with the tying run at the plate. It proved to be even bigger when Pestano finally cracked for the first time in forever.

**Tomorrow's Game:** Ubaldo Jimenez squares off against Zack Greinke at 10:05 p.m.