

Morning Rundown: Defense Botches Hernandez's Debut

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, August 15 2012 10:10 AM - Last Updated Thursday, August 16 2012 10:22 AM



Now pitching for the Cleveland Indians... Number fifty-five, Roberto Hernandez...

August 15th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **4**

Los Angeles Angels - **8**

W: Ervin Santana (6-10) L: Roberto Hernandez (0-1)

[\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

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And now getting really frustrated at his defense, number fifty-five, **Roberto Hernandez**....

Not too long ago I blasted youngster Zach McAllister about not picking up his defense. A few runs off a groundball out or a sac-fly after an error, or even a few singles that end up scoring a few runs. Whatever.

But when you go out and get consistently pounded hitter after hitter, and wearing how much it is getting to you on the outside of your jersey like McAllister did, that is when you run out of excuses. So sure, McAllister you share the blame even if the defense shouldn't have put you in that position.

I shouldn't have to take the trash out if it isn't my night to do it. But if I don't take it out, it doesn't get done and then guess what? You have two piles of trash at the same time next week and the first one is probably starting to smell.

In regards to the adventure that went on during Fausto's re-debut last night. I have no words. He comes out and gets three patent Fausto groundball outs and looks to be in control.

Then the second inning hits and despite putting a few on, his defense completely hangs him out to dry. Just dumb errors that didn't really extend the inning so much that they compounded things. Then both Fausto AND Santana think they strike out Aybar on a 1-2 count, only to not realize that, they didn't. And he proceeds to triple.

Ugh.

All in all, I guess you could have expected better, but also seen a lot worse given how you had no telling what was in store for Fausto's first start.

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"I thought it was impressive the way he kept his composure throughout that whole inning and that whole game with the defense we played behind him," his manager, Manny Acta, said. "He's guy that in the past, in those situations, he'd start flying open, letting it fly, and making it worse. I thought he showed great composure today."

"We played terrible defense behind him, especially in that second inning," Acta said. "He threw two double-play balls, and we couldn't turn either of them. On one of them we didn't even get an out. ... I thought he deserved better."

Just to get to six innings, despite giving up a few solo shots following that disaster of an inning, was real big for a bullpen that has been overworked and stretched thin and when it comes down to it, there's some positives despite the eight runs, five of them earned. He did give up 10 hits, but he also did not walk a batter. He did hit a batter, but one wild pitch is better than four. He had 56 strikes to his 91 total pitches and even that is a plus, the fact that he only threw 91 pitches to get through six innings, with one of them being a really long frame tat the Angels did a lot of damage in.

So while the numbers look bad and the results indicate a bad start, new Fausto has some underlying positives to move forward with.

"It felt good. I was throwing every pitch, trying to make it go down and get ground balls," Hernandez said. "I left a little bit up, tried to throw a few strikes, left them up and they hit them. Sometimes, they hit them."

"His velocity was where he was in the past, sitting at 91, ball sinking down at the knees, and once in a while he'll pop a 93," Acta said. "That's good enough, especially if you're throwing strikes. ... We didn't catch the ball for him, didn't help him at all."

No they did not and that has to hurt. But Fausto can now look forward from here on. The first stat is over, he can now begin the rest of his career and more importantly, begin his season. Because while the Indians' season is theoretically over, his is just beginning. Although it is an abbreviated one, he has a lot to show and some things to prove moving forward.

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"I was very very excited," Hernandez said. "I don't think about [the past year] before I pitch. ... I just go into the game and think about pitching. I'm really very happy to have a second chance to pitch in the big leagues. ... I was just thinking today's a new day. Throw a good pitch."

You wouldn't hear that stuff from Fausto in the past. He seems different. He seems a little bit more like he's a little more relaxed. Maybe we are starting to see a little bit of his real personality. The person that was in there before he had to start tensing up and lie about who he really is. That more than anything is good. Baseball aside, the guy can now live his life.

Overall, the baseball performance side is far better than what we've been getting from the likes of Derek Lowe and Josh Tomlin, if only the defense wouldn't butcher things, this might have had a different look to it. It might have not though, as it took the lineup awhile to get going, because they certainly didn't against starter Ervin Santana, which is strange for the Indians given their history against him.

The Indians squeezed in a run in the sixth inning to make it 7-1, but the Angels quickly erased that effort in the bottom of the frame with Iannetta's home run. Then they were able to get to reliever Jason Isringhausen, mainly on the strength of **Shin-Soo Choo**, who hit a three-run bomb with two outs.

Choo had one hit, Cabrera had a pair and the other RBI, while other hits and baserunners were hard to come by. Santana is usually someone the Tribe can take advantage of, especially at Progressive Field. But this was in Anaheim and he looked to have them under control for once only allowing one walk.

In the end, the defense was the ultimate killer of hope. Yeah maybe he didn't pitch well enough to win or the offense didn't get going until late, but when you are down 7-0 real early because your defense botched more than a few plays, it kind of drains any sort of energy out of what you have going on.

Random Details...

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A [scary play occurred in the fifth](#) when a throw by Choo was thrown into the infield and then relayed to home in an effort to get Torii Hunter at the plate. Morales went in with a double and then Hannahan from the lip of the infield delivered a good throw to Santana at home, Hunter was out.

And so was umpire Greg Gibson after he took a wicked shot to the face from Torii Hunter's errant spike. The spike caused a big gash above Gibson's eye and knocked him down making him unable to even make the call.

Gibson would get cleaned up and exit the game with a smile on his face.

But can I just say that Torii Hunter is so stand-up. He immediately went over to Gibson, not caring one bit about the play at the plate making thinking he didn't get tagged or didn't touch the plate to go back and touch it. He immediately attended to Gibson and was there the whole time he was getting fixed up. Class act there.

Probably should name Brent Lillibridge 'Choppy' after that display at short. Acta may hesitate to give Cabrera another day off here on out with that. He certainly didn't do anything for his case for a roster spot next season.

Santana, Brantley, Kotchman, and Lillibridge, all hitting in the four through seven spots went a combined 0-for-16 with five strikeouts and no walks. This really was the top of the lineup as they accounted for six baserunners (two walks, four hits) between the three (Kip, Cabrera, Choo). One day it is a few players the next it is another few. They can never all be firing at the same time unless they aren't firing at all.

Shaky outing or Cody Allen giving up a hit and two walks, but he wiggled out of that jam with no runs surrendered, keeping his streak of innings completed without a run given up alive.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

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I'm not really sure **Chris Seddon** is a "young arm" but he is certainly versatile and not unlike many of your other minor league veterans that you pick up as depth options. He's under 30 and has had minimal big league experience. That could be for one reason or another. But one thing he has done is switched between starting and relieving and if anything, that's [enough experience to last a life time](#).

"It can be difficult if you let it get to you," Seddon said. "When I was with Seattle, though, I was a long guy, so I have some routines from over there. I have those routines to fall back on, and if they made the choice to have me start, I'd be able to do that."

Seddon says that he's accustomed to the long relief role, but not the one-hitter lefty role. But he'll learn because it's one or two batters. Acta says that with that value in mind, they're keeping him around.

He is staying around because the Indians [want the extra arm](#). Right now things are so bad with the starters not going deep, that the bullpen needs more than a few options to throw out there for multiple innings on any given day.

Jason Kipnis' injury tested the strategy and the Indians seemed to have come out the other end with it. But right now, that is the plan and until further notice, it won't change.

"We don't have a timetable, but if we feel like we get to a point where we need a position player, we'll do it," Acta said. "For now things are status quo. I think you can get away with it in the American League because you're not pinch-hitting that much," Acta said. "To be realistic, our bench hasn't been the strength of our club so it's not like we're pinch-hitting every single night. ... Right now it's convenient to have those eight arms."

Essentially the bench players are your backup catcher, a backup infielder and for awhile one of the outfielders was essentially a defensive replacement. As long as they have a guy that is able to spell someone at every spot, there really is no need for more than a three man bench with the way the pitching is going.

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Heck though, some of these players might need spelled. **Jason Kipnis** even a [dmited that he's tired](#) right now. It is his first full big league season, but the minor leagues are still playing, so he should be accustomed to this conditioning wise. Maybe its more of a mental fatigue than it is physical and he is just getting impacted in that way.

"I'm a little bit tired," said Kipnis. "I haven't had a slump like this in a while. It's definitely not pitchers making an adjustment. They're not throwing anything I haven't seen before. I'm fouling off fastballs I usually put in play. My bat is just dragging a little bit behind."

Sometimes when you get mentally exhausted, your body also suffers that effect. Maybe he's had a lot of pressure on him this season and just the overall nature of this season in the big leagues has caught up to him. At least that is the reason for his slumping and not something else. At least he is someone you know you can probably count on down the road.

Another reason for the big pen is the emergence of rookie **Cody Allen**. Not only as he assended through the system at a rapid pace, he's having so much success in the early going not having given up a single run thus far through 12+ innings. Allen says that the travel has been rough as a big leaguer, but it doesn't seem to be stopping him much.

"I'm just throwing strikes, trying to stay ahead of these guys. A lot of these guys, they've never seen me before, so that's an advantage for me to get ahead in the count," Allen said. "When you get behind in the count, everybody throws a fastball, but they haven't seen my breaking ball. If you get behind in the count, they know what's coming."

That really is a key for any young guy making his major league debut. People do not get a good look at you until you face them a few times. So right now, there's no real book out on Cody Allen, which could be in-part helping him. Otherwise, he is just doing what he needs to do and not asking any questions. Allen very much takes the "if I throw a pitch and it is hit, so what, just don't go driving off.

He's been introduced to every level thus far and has perhaps used the similar "they don't really know me strategy, but that is when he gets tested. If he gets through and there's a book out, he'll need to re-write the chapters. If he can do that, well then, you've got yourself a good one

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there.

And maybe when he gets done, he has a future as a pitching coach as it was Allen that showed Herrmann how to grip his now famed spiked curve.

Finally, Manny Acta was on above the umpires again a day after the Greinke hitting incident. This isn't the first time he's brought this up about umpires, but he's basically saying that the umpires need to [utilize the rules given to them more often](#) in this case and stop making up their own guidelines.

"I understand that the umpires are just trying to cover themselves, but that's just not right," said Acta. "The rule says that if you know, and you're sure that a guy hit a guy on purpose, you can throw him out of the game. He knew he hit him on purpose. If the umpire considered that he hit him on the purpose, what's the ruling? So now he puts a warning so we can't retaliate? That's not fair."

Like I said, Acta has rallied against this before. He says that the way umpires treat the beaning situations is rather inconsistent and I'd have to agree. There seems to be no method to making those calls and the umpires seem to just go by their own little code.

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