



The Indians played a fairly solid game in the series opener in Oakland, but it wasn't enough as the Tribe managed just one hit over the final five innings in a 6-4 loss to the Athletics on Friday night. Shelley Duncan blasted his first career grand slam, but the Indians situational hitting continued to be their downfall. Oakland didn't have that problem and it's what propelled them to the victory.

The first three innings saw nine zeroes go up on the scoreboard as Zach McAllister and Tomaso Milone scattered some hits but kept both offenses at bay. In the fourth inning, the Indians finally struck. Carlos Santana drew a leadoff walk and went to second on a pop up to left that Athletics left fielder Yoenis Cespedes lost in the twilight sky. It fell to the grass and went as an error. With Santana at second and Brantley at first, Jason Donald sharply singled to left to load the bases for Shelley Duncan. In 304 career games, Duncan had only 20 at bats with the bases loaded. He was 7-for-20, good for a .350 average in that situation. Duncan got ahead in the count 3-1 and was out in front of that pitch, fouling it off. With a 3-2 count, he got a fastball down the middle and was slightly out in front, but still got enough of it to hit it over the left field fence for a grand slam. It was Duncan's 11th home run of the season and gave him 31 RBI.

Staked to a 4-0 lead, McAllister stumbled in Oakland's half of the fourth. He set up the inning by giving up a single and a walk before getting the first out on a strikeout. Josh Donaldson came up and smoked a RBI double to get Oakland on the board. The A's manufactured two more runs with a ground out and a RBI single to make it a 4-3 game. McAllister allowed another run in the fifth on a sacrifice fly to officially erase the Tribe's lead.

The Indians offense disappeared after the fourth, and, as a result, it stayed a 4-4 game until the eighth. Joe Smith, who got the final out in the seventh inning, allowed a walk and a single

before turning the game over to Vinnie Pestano. Pestano allowed a cheap, bloop single to Josh Reddick to load the bases. Josh Donaldson picked up another clutch hit, a tiebreaking RBI single off Pestano to put the A's ahead 5-4. Pestano struck out Derek Norris for the first out. Cliff Pennington hit a sac fly to tack on an insurance run, with Brandon Moss just barely getting in ahead of the throw with a nice hook slide. Coco Crisp flew out to end the inning.

Grant Balfour slammed the door shut in the ninth for the save.

With the loss, the Indians fell to 54-65. The A's kept pace with the Tigers and Rays who won and are now just a half-game back in the wild card race.

Stat of the Night: Before the Duncan grand slam, the Indians were batting .202/.241/.273/.514 with the bases loaded this season. Duncan's blast was their second grand slam of the year.

Stat of the Night Pt. 2: The Indians are batting .219 with runners in scoring position since the All-Star break.

Player of the Game: Shelley Duncan. Why not? First grand slam for Duncan in his career and all of the Tribe's offense.

Tomorrow's Game: Corey Kluber will battle old friend El Gordo, er, excuse me, Bartolo Colon at 10:05 p.m.