



You want a real wrap up on this weekend? Here you go: endless driving, endless rotten weather, two kids playing two different sports in two different venues 90 miles apart and a swing of the bat Friday night that made it all okay. Here's my Weekend Wrap.

The Setup

Anyone familiar with the state of Ohio, traveling with kids and family as well as the ridiculous amount of rain we've had in the last few weeks can have a laugh at my expense now (if you actually needed another reason or permission for that matter). Because this weekend was spent traveling to Columbus to set up a base of operations for my wife and 13-year old daughter to attend a huge volleyball tournament in the Columbus Convention Center while me and my 10-year old daughter drove back up 71 to Lodi for a soccer tournament.

That sounds like a good time right off the bat, right? I mean, you have the typical inability of kids to synchronize their bladders or their appetites. You also have their inability (or mine) to agree on what type of music (or sports talk) to listen to and you have their mother throwing the "You're the adult and should know better" glances and daggers my way from pretty much Perry to Polaris Parkway.

Did I mention the weather?

It was absolutely beautiful as we drove the three days...err..hours to Columbus. Woke up at 6am the next morning to take the youngest to Lodi. It was beautiful in Columbus. An hour and a half up the freeway in Lodi? Not so beautiful. But they got the first game in at 930am and then

their next game wasn't scheduled until 430pm in Lodi.

And a huge and hearty "Thank you" to the jagoff schedule-making a-hole who came up with that tremendous plan. I hope your second attempt at actually scheduling a tournament goes better than your maiden voyage. I also hope your hair falls out in patches and your skin ulcerates, blisters and rots.

So after watching another game and then getting lunch we only had 6 more hours to kill in Lodi. Lodi has more truck stops and truck washing facilities than theaters, restaurants and bars combined and you can only watch trucks get washed for so long before you long again for the excitement of watching 11 yr olds play soccer. So it was back to the fields for four hours of lying in the back of a Jeep Cherokee listening to a 10 year old girl who knows everything tell me everything she knows.

But I survived that.

And we made it to 4pm when we headed over to the field for the second game of the day. And just as the girls were getting set to kick off a blast of thunder followed a sky-splitting bolt of lightning, the horns sounded delaying play and we made it back to the car just five minutes or so after the heavy rains started. That's where we waited out a 2 hour delay before they cancelled the games for the night and sent us driving the 90 minutes back to Columbus.

There is a really, REALLY good chance that hell looks a lot like Lodi.

There Was Some Really Good News...

That's a bad 36 hour run really. But the good news is we did make it Columbus in time for me to watch the Tribe take on Seattle Friday night.

It was depressing for the middle five innings. My oldest stayed with her grandmother and texted

me updates as the younger two fought over Bruno Mars and Jason Aldean on the car radio so I knew that Shin-Soo Choo and Michael Brantley solo home runs had given the Tribe a lead.

But then I watched as Fausto gave up a couple runs and I sat there almost fearful of watching the Indians lose on a night when 35,000 went down to Progressive Field to watch them. All I could think about was this being the third loss in a row for a team most expected would have a number of three game losing streaks. All the losses would have been at home and 35,000 would leave with a bad taste in their mouths that had nothing to do with the number of dollar dogs they'd thrown down.

So I'm sitting on a hotel bed while the wife and kids headed down to the hotel pool and I'm drinking a couple beers to help chase down the valium and Xanax sandwich I made after the ride, and I'm resigned to the fact the Tribe has wasted a really good opportunity to excite some casual fans down there for the hot dogs and fireworks.

That's when the combination of Brandon League and Carlos Peguero combined to potentially save the season in Cleveland. League had coughed up late inning leads in Baltimore seemingly all week long so when he threw up all over himself it was no surprise. But he did need help, and that came in the person of Peguero who foreshadowed his adventurous bottom of the ninth inning by forgetting the number of outs in the top half of the inning and getting doubled off on a routine fly ball.

Ahhh... but routine fly balls were the bane of Peguero's existence on Friday the 13th because he misplayed Michael Brantley's fly ball to him in left field to lead off the bottom of the ninth inning. Brantley had himself a gift double and the Progressive Field crowd swallowed down their last dollar dogs and made a bit of noise that had less to with the fireworks that were coming up than with a little excitement provided by the game.

But Peguero wasn't done exciting them. Because on the very next ball put in play by Asdrubal Cabrera, Paguero again completely butchered it and watched IT sail over his head to the wall for another gift double that made the score 4-3 and that got the crowd into full throat.

Choo move Cabrera to third base with a groundout and despite 35,000 begging for him to be a hero, Carlos Santana rolled over on a ball for about the 300th time this season for out number

two in the inning and didn't get the run in.

But Travis Hafner did.

On a one-strike pitch from League, Hafner turned the clock back to 1995 (or at least 2006) and hammered a ball to the deepest part of the park that cleared the center field fence and had 35,000 people at Progressive Field for hot dogs and fireworks screaming and jumping up and down for a baseball team that they couldn't help but love right then and there.

Hafner's homer also had complete strangers in a Columbus hotel hallway and elevator high-fiving each other and talking about the Indians even while a Reds game played on the television in the lobby.

It was magical and it may have been critical. Those two game losing streaks that stretch to three can take a toll on a team that unexpectedly finds itself the talk of baseball in the early going. Losses like that can linger not only with the team but with a fan base that's reluctantly heading down to games only when tempted with Dollar Dogs and fireworks.

But what happened on the last pitch Friday may have meant more than just a win in the standings where a loss looked certain to sit. In that crowd of 35,000 were people who wanted to believe but who have been around long enough to feel foolish for doing so again. In that crowd were 20-somethings whose lasting memories of the night will be that the kind of electricity that a game and team like that can produce is a really good warm-up for the bars and clubs afterward.

In that crowd were teens and 'Tweens who saw their parents and adults get geeked up over a ballgame and who, at the end of the night, saw the game not for the middle five innings where the Indians were neutered by Doug Fister but for the images of their moms and dads and cooler older siblings jumping around with joy and high-fiving complete strangers.

And in that crowd were young kids who watched a walk-off home run for the first time in their lives and who will forever more be chasing the dragon for more moments like that, just like many of us still do after seeing Boog Powell, Gorman Thomas, Toby Harrah, Joe Carter or

Albert Belle do what Travis Hafner did Friday night.

To have disappointed 35,000 people with a clunker of a game and having let an opportunity pass to impress that crowd would have been difficult for the Indians. They've basically been begging for fans to come down and see what's going on. Friday night people took them up on the offer but they hedged their bets on the team with the value of those hot dogs and the guaranteed joy that the fireworks induce.

With one swing of the bat Friday night Travis Hafner made sure that the ballgame was first and foremost on the minds of the people who attended and watched and he may have swung the pendulum of interest in this Indians squad.

How exciting was it? It put Friday's chaos, bickering and hourly bathroom breaks in the rearview mirror.

And coupled with the fact that Jessica's team took the silver medal in her 13-U bracket and played their best volleyball of the season at the biggest moment of the season, well, not too bad a trip at all. Nice work ladies.

LeApology

Take your half-assed apology and light it and yourself on fire LeBron. No arguments in that you made the right move from a competitive standpoint and that you've given yourself a chance to win a title for the next six years. And there are no arguments that you remain probably the most physically gifted and talented basketball player on earth. But there's no justification for being an ignorant asshole that made what may be one of the top ten public relations mistakes of all time, all because you're an arrogant ego-maniac who thinks the sun rises and sets on your ass.

Own that and don't expect anyone here to think otherwise.

Go Bulls. There's no bigger Joakim Noah and Carlos Boozer fan than me for the next two weeks. And anyone that could make those two douche bags seem palatable from a rooting interest standpoint might be the devil himself.

Probably lives in Lodi too.

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