Yeah I know, the questions. You're still watching this team? How can you? The answer is really simple. I love baseball.

September 19th, 2012

Minnesota Twins - **6**

Cleveland Indians - **4**

W: Liam Hendriks (1-7) L: Zach McAllister (5-8) S: Glen Perkins (13)

[BOXSCORE]

The response to that is... You love baseball so much you are willing to endure the riveting matchup of Zach McAllister and Liam Hendriks?

I'm surprised the question isn't: Who is Liam Hendriks?

Look, I don't expect you to understand. How can I do it everyday? Watch this team? Write this every morning?

I can't really explain it to you if you don't understand. If you do understand, you can just nod your head and continue on.

If not, go watch the Browns. Seriously. I'm not here to convince you. I'm a baseball guy. That's why I do what I do. I still love this team, even if they have broken my heart time and time again. Even if they frustrate me to no end. Even though this crucial Hendriks v. McAllister matchup is nothing more than a battle to stay out of last place.

Oh last place, where the Indians now sit after this loss. I'm not really sure where you can start. The Indians made a late push, scoring a pair in the eighth inning and bringing the tying run to the plate in the ninth. But it was just not mean to be and now they're occupying the last spot in the AL Central all by themselves.

And Liam Hendriks has a win! Wooooohooooo!

I think if anything, you have to be pleased with the fact that the team is playing at least. I know some of you probably have tuned out for good and stopped watching, but you'll be pleased to know that despite the fact that this season is over and despite that horrific August, some players are still trying to win ballgames
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"They've been pretty good," Acta said prior to Wednesday's game against the Twins. "Some of those guys are obviously a little fatigued, and [August] took a toll on them mentally, but it's been a good response this month."

"Its time to evaluate and see character," Acta said. "We've seen how people's character was tested throughout the whole ordeal of the second half. That's something that's being evaluated. Who can handle it? Who can't? Who's going to point fingers?

"Who's going to take responsibility? Who's going to move forward? Who's going to keep their head down for too long? Those are things we're evaluating."

That all being said. That's what is making it bearable. Sure, if that crap from August would have continued and the effort wasn't there, I probably would not be able to watch this team. I'd probably tune them out and mail it in here every morning like they do every evening. It wouldn't be worth my time.

But the fact that they are out there doing what they can and trying hard, and of course the fact that I just simply love this team and love this sport, I owe it to myself to keep watching and living with every pitch I can.

Rationale aside now, what went wrong in this one... Well that damn Josh Willingham for one . Indians - 4, Josh Willingham - 4.

Well in this game at least. It seems like maybe he's outscored the Indians this season. Heck him and Morneau alone have probably done just that.

"He's really been a bright spot this season," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "He's been out there pretty much every day and has driven the ball for us, gotten big RBIs. Kind of what we hoped for when we signed him."

Oooh, yeah that signing thing. That's a little touchy subject around these parts. Let's just ignore that.

Ultimately you had a good lineup doing their damage against a pitcher in **Zach McAllister**, who, well just wasn't any good in the four-plus innings he was out there. It wasn't abysmal, it was just a good hitting team having their way.

"Just look at their numbers," McAllister said. "They have guys that hit homers, that drive in runs and can hit for average. That's a good lineup right there. You can put them with anybody you're facing. That's a good lineup."

If they had that lineup a few years ago when they had pitching, they might have had a World Series title. Just saying. With Morneau healthy, a productive Mauer, the additions of guys like Willingham and Doumit have solidified things for them. They're a bonafied hitting machine from top to bottom. They have key pieces producing at every spot. They are getting production from table setters like Denard Span and...Jamey Carroll? Yeah...

They are getting numbers from Ben Revere and whatever else they can find to fill their gaps. But that middle of the lineup, that is what is carrying them and making them go right now. Liam Hendriks won his first game last night. Do you think it is mostly because he held the Indians to to two earned runs off two hits and two walks in six innings?

I mean that had a lot to do with it yes, but credit that lineup the Twins have. They can certainly put up the numbers that will stick them with most American League teams on every single night.

Random Details...

There is another person named Herrmann in the world? There's another person named Herrmann in the world and he plays catcher for the Minnesota Twins? Mind blown. We were two batters away from witnessing Frank Herrmann versus Chris Herrmann. No relation.

Vinny Rottino a regular one-man-wrecking crew. In the third he walks, steals second, advances to third on a groundout and scores on a Kipnis single. The universe just completely stopped him from doing anything more though in the ninth inning with Chisenhall on first. Can't complain about two times on base and two runs though.

"We like Vinny," Acta said. "We like what he brings. He's very versatile and plays hard. He does all those little things that help you win games. Things that you can't teach."

Unfortunately they've had several people like that and that is simply not the answer in left field. Sorry Vinny.

Asdrubal hit his 15th as he tries to keep pace with Carlos Santana. What's sad though is this team will likely not have a 20 home run hitter.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

The Cleveland Indians returned **Travis Hafner** to their lineup on Wednesday as they activated him from the 15-day disabled list
. Many are simply asking the same question in regards to that as they are asking me in regards to why I'm still watching the Cleveland Indians: Why?

I think that is a reasonable question to ask. Why? Why bring back someone who is likely not in the plans next year? Why give at-bats to someone who does not need them? Why even bother with someone as injury prone as Hafner?

Hafner went 0-for-3 with a strikeout in this one, but Acta and the Indians believe they're a better team. So regardless of what you think as to why he shouldn't be there, they want him there.

"We're a better team when Hafner is in the lineup," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Hafner has been here for a long time, and if he's ready to play, he deserves to play. Plus, he's not

going to be taking any at-bats away from the guys that we really need to see."

Hey, as far as I'm concerned, he's right. If anything he wont be playing much and when he does, he takes Casey Kotchman's start, who really wont be here next year. He does that because Russ Canzler starts at first.

And if that isn't a MAJOR slam towards **Matt LaPorta**, then I don't know what is. You must feel pretty cruddy that your manager pretty much told you that you're done here by saying a 35-year-old DH who has played in 60 games this year isn't going to be taking at-bats away from anyone they need to see.

Ouch sir. Ouch.

Speaking of LaPorta, he owned up to messing up on Tuesday by not covering first on a ball that he thought was going to get through the infield, but didn't, because Jason Kipnis made a great play.

"Did it cost us a game at that point in time? Yeah, of course," he said. "I made a mistake. I thought the ball was going to go through; obviously, it didn't go through. I messed up. There is nobody to blame but me right there.

"It's obvious, if you're watching the game, what not to do: You don't go to the cutoff."

What's more interesting is the fact that some people thought LaPorta was ducking the media, so they said something, maybe to the effect that "LaPorta wasn't available to the media" after the game. MaTola took issue with that and said he did what he does every game, he ate and then left but he was there Wednesday to answer his screw-up.

So I guess you gotta give him credit there. But he said something far more interesting than all of that and it relates to what I just mentioned in Hafner taking at-bats away from him.

"I don't really talk to Manny a whole lot," LaPorta said, "and he doesn't speak to me."

I don't think those two really like each other. What do you think?

Another person the Indians will need to make a decision on in the offseason is **Roberto Hernandez** , and he is someone they'd really need to see as much as possible of, but that hasn't happened like they would have liked.
They may get to see him soon though
depending on what he does in his next bullpen session.

"He's OK throwing the ball," Acta said. "But he's still not moving around 100 percent. I think the next bullpen and workout will dictate what we're going to do going forward."

Robbie Faustorian's ankle presented no problems to him on Tuesday when he threw a bullpen session. He's made three starts and the Indians would really like to see more before they have to make a decision on his $6 million option in the offseason. Acta says it isn't tough, and although though it totally is not his decision, three starts simply can't give you enough to make a proper evaluation as to if he should be brought back.

Of course if $6 million is a price you can take given what you think you will get, then there isn't much evaluation that needs to be going on. Either way, there is not much time left and if the Indians want to get another look at Fausto, he needs to look good the next time out he throws a bullpen.

Jason Donald still is having some issue with his sore wrist and is not available to hit. He can pinch run and can play defense in "emergency" situations. You won't see him until he's completely ready though, in any capacity thanks to all the bodies that are around. That's a shame because this could have been a great opportunity for him to get some regular playing time.

Turns out that the Indians were one short of using a major league record 11 pitchers on Tuesday. They had the pitchers to use too.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a visit at The Tribe Daily , because Shin-Soo Choo will certainly be

dancing 'Gangnam Style' somewhere there.

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