So an 8-4 lead isn't anything, especially since you trailed until the sixth inning. So I guess that the game all in all was a very up-in-the-air affair. The final score isn't really indicative to what happened, especially in the weekend as a whole considering the Tribe dropped the previous two meetings on Friday and Saturday.

September 23rd, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **15**

Kansas City Royals - **4**

W: David Huff (2-0) L: Jake Odorizzi (0-1)

[BOXSCORE]

I have an analogy to the Tribe's season. I've kind of figured out the whole sudden drop-off and the horrible feeling associated with it.

I went to Horsehoe Casino on Saturday, my first casino experience really. Heck, other than fantasy football, my first gambling experience. And however 'lucky' you have to be in fantasy football to get the right breaks, it still takes a certain amount of skill to actually be good. And although it is gambling, I feel good that I at least have control of whether I win or lose, to some extent.

That is not the case at a Casino, especially if you play a game where you put money in and press a button and just hope you win something. Sure I was a high-roller on the Chuck 'E' Cheese circuit, but that was golden tokens and I was playing for toys and stuff to clutter my houses basement with, not money for more money. Especially with bills to pay.

Okay so finishing of the story. I went with the intent of not spending more than $20 dollars. I know nothing about card games and I'd be foolish to step onto any sort of table game. So I'm sticking with slots, the most simplest of things. Put your nickel in and pull the lever.

Let's just say the $20 dollars went away rather quickly. As quickly as the Indians season fell a part. But not before I was ahead and had $24 dollars, four more than I started with. The decline was not real slow, my voucher hit $0 rather quickly and it hit it rather hard.

The morale of the story is, the Cleveland Indians 2012 season can be compared to my experience at the casino. And, don't go to Horseshoe expecting to spend just $20 dollars and leaving happy, at least about your winnings.

Anyway there was a whole lot of stress relief in the sixth and seventh inning, but if you thought that was great, how about almost doubling it up in the ninth with a big seven run frame?

It has me wondering. Where did THAT come from ?

"It's baseball. It's one of those things where you can struggle and struggle and struggle, and then have a day like today, and then go out and do the same thing the rest of the year," said third baseman Jack Hannahan. "We've been capable of it. We've shown signs of it. We just haven't put it all together, which is the frustrating part. But it's always a good sign to come out and have an offensive day like we did today."

Seriously now, that was insane. I think all teams, regardless of how bad they are, can go out and have a game like that. So I don't necessarily buy into what Hannahan is saying because all teams probably really believe that. He could be right in this case of course.

The **Carlos Santana** homer in the sixth put the Indians up 3-1 after Asdrubal's RBI single. It wasn't until the seventh that things started to get fun though. Cabrera and Santana plate a few more and the rest of the team gets into the action. At that point, it was the return of Vin Mazzaro, much to the Indians' delight, giving up three runs and not recording an out. That guy just can't catch a break. The last time that guy saw the Tribe, they battered him for 14 runs off 11 hits and three walks in just a little over two innings. Of course this wasn't Mazzaro's 'return' but rather the first time since that day last year in which Mazzaro was obliterated.

It wasn't long before the Royals had to replace Mazzaro. Four hitters, four base-runners, it was just not pretty. The good news for Mazzaro is that now that it is September, he can't get called down, at least not to Triple-A.

The Indians also had some fun at the expense of bad defense and getting extra outs, but as Acta said, the Indians have certainly done that too.

"We've seen it done to us, too," Acta said. "That's what baseball's all about. It's 27 outs, no more. If you get extra outs in any inning, you should take advantage of it if they're given to you. And that's what we preach over here, so I'm glad we were finally able to take advantage of that."

The fun really began in the ninth though. What's really encouraging is that after the Royals added those runs in the eighth, it was right then that the Indians came right back and put up that big seven spot. Santana's econd homer capped it off and a huge five-RBI performance. All in all he's got 75 RBI on the year, could even still get to 20 homers if he gets really hot.

In other news, **David Huff** pitched well again and improved to 2-0. He went into the sixth, giving up just a run off a few hits and a walk. The run was just a solo shot, so he played with minimal traffic until the sixth when he had two on, at the point he was replaced by Esmil Rogers.

Huff says he's being aggressive, which is great, I'm glad he's finally doing that, but will that even keep up? We'll see. Acta says he can make a lasting impression going into the offseason.

"He's thrown the ball well for us," Acta said. "Hopefully his next outing, he can go out there and pitch well and go into the offseason on a positive note. ... That's what we're going to be remembering all through the offseason and in Spring Training. He can only help himself out."

I personally don't think it will matter a whole heck of a lot, but whatever can help the Indians sleep at night thinking they might have finally seen Huff turn a corner.

Random Details...

Some fun facts from this game's boxscore. Every hitter in the lineup was on base, everyone but Kotchman and Carrera were on twice. Everyone knocked in runs expect Brantley and Marson, but they both scored. Kotchman was the only one to not score.

Marson walked eight times and that was a total of eight, which is April-May-type Indians stuff there.

The Indians may actually have two people with 20 steals on the team. That happened in 2010, but it was barely by Trevor Crowe and Shin-Soo Choo. Kipnis and Choo are legit base-stealers with regular playing time though and I hesitate to say that the Crowe year mattered all that much. So I will. The other year that two regulars had 20 steals or more? 2004 with Matt Lawton and Coco Crisp, again barely. So I hesitate to even count that. So there you go.

Has Tony Sipp become an afterthought in this bullpen or what? Two more earned, his ERA is creeping closer and closer to 5.00 and he just never seems to be in many games with positives now a days.

The 15-4 win is also the first time in the last eight wins that the Indians did not win by one run.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I don't think you will see **Roberto Hernandez** make another start this season, but that's just me. He threw a simulated game on Friday but that isn't quite enough for him to go out sometime this week. There's an outside shot he can make a start in the final series against Chicago and he's going to toss another simulated game on Wednesday, but who knows and really, will one start really matter?

If anything he should just pack up and play Winter Ball and the Indians can help use that to make their decision as to if they bring Fausto back. He's not being able to run on his ankle very well, so why risk damaging?

"We're going to have another simulated game in Chicago [on] Wednesday for him, and then we'll make a decision after that one," Acta said. "The whole thing behind the Roberto issue is to have him healthy by Oct. 3. So whether it's going to be two simulated games or pitching on the field, that's going to be dictated after the next one."

So, we'll see on the Fausto front.

Manny Acta said that **Travis Hafner** was "ready to go" but that he'd play just three times a week , which is probably why he only played on Friday against the Royals. So, so much for that right? Rather confusing if you ask me.

Of course **Asdrubal Cabrera** returned to the lineup Friday and seems to be doing just fine after his big game on Sunday, so it's good to see him tough out the rest of the season.

You probably won't see **Jason Donald** finish out the rest of the season as he deals with a wrist injury that seems to have just stalled him making any more progress. Acta says it has been slow and that it has been "an issue" for him to just swing a bat.

Lonnie Chisenhall is able to play more and more , getting to play in back-to-back games and more regularly now.

With all these injuries, you would probably wonder why someone like **Cord Phelps** isn't playing more over a Brent Lillibridge or a
Thomas Neal
isn't getting some time to play
. They both started on Saturday, but Acta says Neal especially has simply just hasn't gotten many at-bats but has been able to watch from close up.

"It's been kind of smooth, to be honest with you," Neal said. "I've had time to sit down and watch some games and learn a little bit, talk to some of the older guys. At the end of the day, the game's pretty much the same game. They still have to throw it over the plate for strikes, and you have to stick to your approach. It's been a fun experience so far."

Acta says he's been a professional and that he asks questions and works extremely hard. Phelps is sort of taking that "being a professional" approach and when he gets his shot, just play.

"It's not my job to think 'If I get a couple hits today, what happens? If I go 0-for-4, what happens?' I just try to take every moment as it comes, and something good will come of it."

As someone who probably ends up being a utility player anyway, it's probably good practice for Cord anyway. But it would be nice to see a little more of both him and Neal. Not everyone can

play in September though, even on the teams that are trying to find out what they have.

We're not even going to talk about the "warnings" and all that went down on Friday against the Royals. I can't believe there's still issues around here. Just because this team had a little bad blood earlier on in the season doesn't mean they're still out there trying to kill each other, let's stop it. These umpires just digest too much prior information and have it pop up in their heads when something even sniffs of danger.

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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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