One way to get the world off the backs of MLB Umpires? Let the NFL bring in replacement refs. Then those boys in blue aren't so bad after all and the calling for machines doesn't seem to be a big topic of discussion. That's pretty cool.

September 24th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **4**

Chicago White Sox - **5**

W: Brett Myers (3-7) L: Vinnie Pestano (3-3) S: Donald Veal (1)

[BOXSCORE]

Whatever controversy there was in this game due to bad umpiring was forgotten. This was a postseason game right here. Back and forth, good pitching, timely hitting, good defensive plays. Unfortunately the team that won is in the postseason race and the team that lost isn't. But that's

good that the team that isn't is still putting up games worthy of challenging their opponent.

I'm sure the White Sox don't mind, considering that they need to be challenged, it could only help them if they do make the postseason.

Heck, the Acta said they're going to go out there and play the game the right way, for the respect of the AL Central race
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"That's what we're doing," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "We'll try to put the best team on the field. You've got to respect the game."

And the Indians did their best, but it was simply not enough to overcome whatever Adam Dunn eats for breakfast.

In addition to his solo-shot early in the game, Dunn would then have the hit of the game, clobbering a three-run shot in the bottom of the eighth off **Vinnie Pestano** to give the White Sox a 5-3 lead. Pestano simply said, "I go in there and blow it."

I tend to have to side with Manny Acta however. He's been so good that you can't really get upset over one bad outing for him
. He just made a mistake in this one.

"Today, just the walk to Johnson hurt him. And that 0-2 pitch to Dunn, we could've executed better there."

Pestano says that he was trying to throw in and get him to move a little bit having been up on him 0-2. But he simply just missed and he missed badly. Dunn, who says he's been struggling a bit as of late said he just happened to get into it.

"We were struggling to score runs," Dunn said. "[Pestano] is tough, man. I hadn't been seeing the ball real good. He left the pitch over and it was one I was kind of swinging and missing at for about a week. Just happened to hit the barrel."

Credit where credit is due.

That hurts, it hurts to see a game go like that, and it hurts even more to see the comeback in the ninth fall short. Add in the fact that **Zach McAllister** pitched, what I would say, is a brilliant game from his end. He too was just basically victimized by a mistake to Adam Dunn in his six innings, giving up two runs off four hits and two walks. He struck out seven White Sox and looked impressive doing it. He was efficient, he was moving the ball around, elevating his fastball where guys couldn't touch it, but still wanted to swing at it.

He looked impressive out there against a REALLY good hitting team in Chicago.

"I felt good," McAllister said. "I felt like I had a pretty good fastball today and pretty good command for the most part. I didn't mix, really, as well as I would've liked, but I felt good with my fastball and I stuck with that."

It is rather encouraging after what we talked about after his last start, how he needed to consider making adjustments and needing to be the guy that changed his game now that the opposition has changed their game toward him. It isn't fatigue or number of innings, it is simply the game of baseball with McAllister, and he understands how to play it.

That probably more than anything is the thing you have to take away from this game as a real big positive.

Heck, he out-pitched Chris Sale, who the Indians made work extremely hard in his seven innings. He gave up just the three runs, but he gave up 10 hits and threw 25+ more pitches than McAllister did. McAllister looked good and I was really impressed with what he showed out

there.

That being said, there were a few blown opportunities to score a few more runs against Sale. There was the first inning when they started a two-out rally and had runners on first and second, but in that instance, more than anything it was good to make Sale work and throw a lot of pitches.

Cabrera doubled home the first run in the third, then Santana walked with two outs, setting up the identical situation from the first inning with Canzler at the plate, two outs, and Cabrera/Santana at second and first. He couldn't come through both times, but the two-out hit is hard. It isn't anything compared to the fifth when Zeke and Choo lead off the fifth with singles, Kipnis gets half-good results with his bunt, getting Zeke to third but Choo being out at second. The problem there was Cabrera's double play the next at-bat.

So yeah, they had a few opportunities to do something more than three runs. The ninth inning was also painful considering they had three hits, including a double, normally that would be good for a few runs, but Kotchman's first pitch single off Matt Thornton was quickly erased on Lou Marson's double play. Then after Zeke singled, Choo was able to drive him home with a double down the line.

Good for show, but not enough for the win.

Random Details...

If some of those hits had only come through with guys on, the box score would look even better. Canzler had several opportunities to cash in with the two-out hit, but he did come through with a two-run homer in the sixth inning to sort-of make up for it.

Carlos Santana was a machine, 1-for-1 with three walks. They simply just avoided him like the plague.

Choo, Kipnis, and Cabrera all had two hits. It was Kipnis mainly who couldn't come through with his hits when it mattered. The lack of big hits for the Indians, despite scoring four runs, is evident in the 0-for-6 number with runners in scoring position.

One of my biggest pet-peeves is manager's not challenging their young hitters. I understand Acta is trying desperately to win the game, and Kotchman got a hit, so he pushed the right button.

But at this point in the season, I would rather lose the game with Lonnie Chisenhall failing than winning with Casey Kotchman succeeding. That's just me. I'd like to see Chisenhall hit in that scenario. It is a perfect situation to give him a MEANINGFUL at-bat. We talked about him getting meaningful big league at-bats in him returning earlier than expected from his broken arm.

Well that's a meaningful at-bat. Against a left-handed pitcher in Matt Thornton, in a game you are down two. Challenge him to come through. Again, I know Acta is trying to win the game, but I just hate it when there is a situation to give a young hitter a chance to grow, and you take it away from him.

Joe Smith was lightning in his seventh inning. He struck out the side with a little vinegar there. Any doubts about him being capable of handling a part-time eighth inning rule have been eliminated as far as I'm concerned. He is up to the challenge if the Indians can have a left-hander to pair him with so that it isn't the same guy every time.

How about the relay that pegged De Aza at home? I don't know if Rottino was trying to throw to Chisenhall, but if he didn't mean to, then Chisenhall made an excellent play to grab the ball and give a nice throw to home. Yeah De Aza was probably safe, but the result was that he was out. Again, at least it isn't a replacement ref.

And one note on Adam Dunn. He's like death and taxes. Only homers and strikeouts. He homered twice, struck out twice. Death and taxes. Always a given.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I feel like Anthony Castrovince needs punched in the face for penning such a heart-breaking, yet beautifully written piece of fiction
that could have been reality.

I still remember those final, anxious days before the trade was made in early July of that year. The Milwaukee Brewers were vying for their first playoff berth in forever, had a loaded Double-A team and were therefore viewed as the top suitors for Sabathia. The Indians did, indeed, almost pull the trigger on a trade centered on Matt LaPorta, though I think there were concerns about LaPorta's ability to make the mental adjustments he'd need to be a viable power threat in the big leagues (LaPorta still hasn't amounted to much).

So instead, the Indians went a different route and dealt CC to the very place he was expected to land in free agency, anyway — Los Angeles.

Well, suffice to say that trade worked wonderfully for the Dodgers, who won the 2008 World Series with CC fronting their rotation and signed him to a long-term deal. But in the back of their minds, the Dodgers still have to wonder what life might have been like with Clayton Kershaw in their rotation.

Castrovince basically went back as far back as 2008 and re-wrote Indians history as he imagined it. Trading CC to the Dodgers instead of Milwaukee, re-signing Victor Martinez, trading the likes of Asdrubal Cabrera and Chris Perez after last season, heck, hiring Bob Melvin instead of Manny Acta.

Even making Adam Miller healthy!

Give it a read, unless you want to hate yourself even more for seeing the team that is on the field right now. It is a brilliant mix of "What If", comedy, and evaluation of the Indians moves in the past three-to-four years.

Instead of Clayton Kershaw, Chris Sale, and Adam Miller, we're stuck here wondering if **David Huff** h
as turned a corner. I'm really not going to entertain the thought, because I'm simply tired of doing just that. S
ure "he feels good"
but he's made a few starts, he's pitched a few innings. He largely struggled at Columbus this year and like with Matt LaPorta, we've been down this road before.

"I'm happy that I'm getting the opportunity to pitch here, first of all," Huff said. "I've still got the same mentality. Whatever they want to use me for, whether it's long relief, lefty specialist, starting, throwing right-handed."I don't know," he continued. "Whatever they want to use me for, I'm pretty much going to do it. Just as long as it's up here and not in the Minors again."

And perhaps maybe he struggled because he didn't want to be there. That's fine, no one wants to be in Triple-A when they have been in the big leagues. But he injured himself in spring, he had no other place to go and maybe the injury contributed. He said he developed bad habits through it, but honestly here's my thought.

If you don't want to be in the minor leagues, that's fine. But pitch to show you shouldn't be there. That to me is better than just throwing your mitt on the field and hoping for the best, or only going 50% because you don't feel like you should be where you are.

I'm not saying that is what David Huff did, but I just get the feeling like... We shouldn't bother to find out or not. We've been down this road before. It's time to move on. David Huff isn't winning this team a World Series next year, or the year after, so really, why bother?

Jason Donald took batting practice on Monday. He's "hopeful" to play in the final homestand this weekend. But we'll see about that. He has a week left to get in there, but if he doesn't, it won't be the end of the world.

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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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