The Chicago White Sox pushed Jake Peavy back a start. The ultimate slap in the face for a team not in the race as they prepare to face a much stiffer test in Tampa. I can understand why they did it, but if I'm the Indians, I use that as enough motivation.

September 26th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **6**

Chicago White Sox - **4**

W: Tony Sipp (1-2) L: Matt Thornton (4-9) S: Chris Perez (38)

[BOXSCORE]

And maybe that is exactly what they did in the game they won to win the series against the Chicago White Sox. The downside is that they're now behind evil-Detroit.

But who cares about that really.

Chicago decides Jake Peavy should be reserved for a much stiffer challenge in Tampa Bay, so the Indians come out and pounce on the left-hander they decided to throw out there. And in the ultimate sign of "har-har, na-na-na-na" the loss went to a left-hander in Matt Thornton .

"It shows a little character," Kipnis said. "They've still got a lot more to play for than we do. We're obviously not going to be doing anything after Oct. 3, but the fact that we're still competing like we are right now, I think, shows signs of some character."

I don't know if it was just in the air last night, or if it's an overall problem with the White Sox, but the Indians walked 12 times last night. 12 times! Jason Kipnis, Carlos Santana, and Lou Marson (again!) all had three walks each.

I mean, I knew this team was patient and that they could do stuff like this as they did earlier in the year.

But 12 walks?!

"We do have a lot of patient guys at the plate," Acta said. "If guys aren't around the plate, we'll take advantage of it."

Wish we woulda been taking advantage of it a lot earlier, but okay.

The Indians went ahead in the first inning right off the bat. But then they fell behind 3-1 after a rough inning from Justin Masterson. More on that in a second. After that they'd battle right back to tie it up, only to see Masterson surrender the lead again.

One more time and a few more runs to take the lead and you can almost just wonder where the hell did this team come from? The even more frustrating part, even though it was a win and the Indians scored six times, is that they left 24 men on base. Yes, 24! They were 2-for-11 with runners in scoring position. The bases were loaded several times. They had amble opportunity to completely blow this game out of the water.

And yet they didn't. But because they did get the win, I won't raise a big fuss.

What I can raise a big fuss about is **Justin Masterson**.

This was supposed to be the ace right? Okay just checking...

Throws over 100 pitches, can't finish the fifth inning, strikes out just two hitters, walks four, gets off to a bad start. I'd expect that out of a Corey Kluber, a fourth or fifth starter, and be okay with it. But after Kluber goes out and pitches into the seventh, this is how you follow it up?

Masterson is not an ace. He's not a top of the rotation guy. I hate to keep saying it because I love him and he has all the potential in the world. But he doesn't have the consistency to do it and I think the fact that he was thrust into that position has hurt him.

I don't care if he's back next year, but the Indians simply cannot count on him to be their top guy. It just isn't going to work. Regardless of what Manny Acta says.

"It's been a roller coaster, let's put it that way," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "It's been hard. But still, when he goes out there every five days, I feel like he can get out and dominate. It's just that it hasn't happened with the consistency that we were hoping for."

Hey, he can do that. There have been plenty of pitchers in MLB history who have the capability of going out on any given day and dominate the opposition. Some of them are great pitchers and go out and pitch well more times than not. Then there are some who are just that erratic. Sometimes because they have the stuff, they go out and can't find the zone.

I don't know what Masterson's problem is. I really don't. I can't really put it all together as to why he is the way he is. Why he can go out one day and pitch well and the next look, well, look like that.

"Masterson was erratic in the first inning," Acta said. "But he got into a better groove later on up until the fifth inning when he couldn't finish."

Why? Why? Why? I can only go back to that idea we had all been pondering about a few weeks ago when we were talking about Ubaldo and Masterson and the future of this team. Concentration. It has to be a lack of focus or a lack of concentration.

"It was really that first inning," Masterson said. "We spotted them three runs there, but we were able to hold it and the bullpen came in and did great, and the guys scored runs. That was really the story."

Um, no Justin. That is not the story. The story has been season-long. The story has been you coming out one day and looking brilliant and the next, looking like you belong on the first train back to Columbus to get your head straight. It's a shame because there is no one better than Masterson in terms of a person. He is a great guy and I hate to criticize someone I've grown to respect as a ball-player and enjoy watching.

But the proof is in the numbers, the results, and even watching him. It's beginning to be get really hard TO watch him. And he's got one more outing, so let's hope that isn't the case and I don't have to turn off his last start.

Random Details...

As frustrating as Masterson was, you need to tip your cap to the bullpen. From Frank Herrmann throwing a scoreless frame, to Chris Perez closing it out in lesser dramatic fashion as he did the day before. Tony Sipp pitches to one hitter and gets the win, his first and probably last win of the season. I mean, hey, that's cool.

Vincent Rottino with a solo home run, his first as an Indian helped pad the lead. It came when he replaced **Russ Canzler** in his only at-bat of the game. The shame in all of it, despite Canzler's 2-for-4 effort is that he should have had a much better game.

Canzler, in the box score, had a good game. But if you watched, it was downright horrible. The two strikeouts that Canzler accumulated came in twin-situations with the bases loaded. One with no outs, one with two outs. You'd at least expect, even if he couldn't come through the first time, to at least be able to knock in one run in the no-outs situation.

Yet he didn't. He struck out on 2-2 breaking pitches (first time curveball, second time slider) both times. It was a little depressing to see. He's a young hitter in terms of the major league level, and that's usually their greatest weakness. Is it one he can overcome? Who knows, we need time to find out, that's for sure, but it certainly is a little disappointing.

The only guy that had possible a worse outing in terms of leaving people on base was Travis Hafner, who was 0-for-5 and after Canzler struck out the second time with the bases loaded, Hafner hit into a weak double play. Not even one that got past the pitcher and was turned by the infield. It was one of those weak-tappers to the mound that got the runner at home and Hafner at first.

I remember a few years ago, in the similar situation of a bad season, Hafner doing that same exact thing. It's sad. I have to wonder what the point is in playing him though. He's played so inconsistently that I think it does more harm than good. Again, what's the point? He's not sharp.

Overall it's good to see Jason Kipnis finish the year strong. He was on base three times through the walk, but came up with the big two-run hit in the fourth inning. Not to mention he swiped two more bags to reach it to 30 steals on the year. Can you believe that? I never thought Kipnis was a 30-bag guy, but if he is, fantastic.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Paul Hoynes has the exact questions and answers that recently took place between **Chris**

Perez and the media. He's simply not talking or saying anything of substance, and he's doing it on purpose.

There are some suspecting that Chris Perez has been gagged by the Indians. His answers have been short, quick, snarky, and when asked what he thought the team has learned from, he simply said he had no comment and that while he has opinions, he wasn't going to say them at this time.

Then Hoynes reported that he told the reporters that he will have fun in the final days of the season when he is "allowed to talk again."

That would certainly seem like he's under some sort of gag order to not speak.

If that's the case, it doesn't sound good for the relationship between the club and Perez and only makes his trading all the more a future reality.

But I'm also highly intrigued now to hear what he has to say. Will it be fun? Or will it just be a mess of the same stuff we already had to go through with him at several points this year?

I guess we will have something to talk about in the final games, so if anything, that's great.

So you're telling me you don't want to see **Ubaldo Jimenez** pitch ever again? We'll, I don't think I can make that happen, but what if I told you that you wouldn't have to watch him at all the rest of the season?

You'd take that? Make me king? Pay my rent? Okay cool. Well you don't have to see Ubaldo Jimenez pitch again this season. Now pay me.

"The good thing," Indians head athletic trainer Lonnie Soloff said, "in my opinion, is that it's a minor issue that's going to respond exceptionally well to rest and rehab." Well if there is ever a good thing about an injury, it sure is that!

Kidding aside, Ubaldo was shut down from his final start after a sprain in his right ankle. Man him and Fausto really are a like.

So Jimenez is done for the season because of that, which is probably for the best. I'm not sure I could stomach another start, good or bad. Jimenez's absence will shuffle the rotation and see both Jeanmar Gomez and David Huff make starts here in the final few games.

It is undecided if **Roberto Hernandez** will start, but that could come tomorrow .

"He threw the ball very well and moved around better than the last time I saw him," Acta said. "We're going to see how he bounces back, how he shows up on Friday, and then we'll make a decision then." Fausto's four inning simulated game went reportedly well and Soloff said he has steadily looked more confident on the ankle each time he's gone out. So, we'll see how he "feels" Friday and if the Indians determine how good he has to be to make one more start.

In other news, **Rafael Perez**, who is done for the season, underwent surgery on his left shoulder . It was a arthoscopic type deal and was the last resort when the rehabbing didn't work to clear up his issues.

"Everything went as expected," Indians head athletic trainer Lonnie Soloff said of the 30-minute operation. "He'll initiate a throwing program in approximately two months and is expected to be full-go by Spring Training."

Perez is eligible for arbitration one more time this offseason before he eventually hits free agency. Given that he barely pitched, his price should be around the same if the Indians are interested in bringing him back. Considering Soloff said they expect him to be ready for spring, I could only assume he's at least in their plans.

Honestly, the way Rafael Perez has been used, is it any surprise this was necessary? The guy has been durable, but he's been used to the point where Manny Acta says that he has a "rubber

arm." No one has a rubber arm, eventually it snaps after wear and tear and I'm not shocked he needed something done. Hopefully he's good as new in 2013 though. The Indians really missed his innings and the fact they had another dependable lefty.

In other injury news, **Asdrubal Cabrera** has yet another issue as he was removed after just his first at-bat due to a mid-back strain. That adds on to his left wrist and just adds onto the current Indians battling some small ailments. Michael Brantley and Jason Donald were both kept off the field once again, but Acta hopes to have both be available on Friday for the series against the Royals.

The Wall Street Journal did one of their fun little "rankings" of things in baseball. Somehow they come up with these rankings and formulas for I don't know what, but they claim that White Sox broadcaster Ken Harrelson is the biggest homer in the announce booth . I say that Hawk Harrelson in there and not include Steve Stone because, that's just not fair.

The finding in the rankings though is that the Cleveland Indians duo of the lovable Matt Underwood and Slick Rick Manning checked in at number two. Harrelson was too proud of the effort, but he's an idiot, so whatever.

Apparently, there are numbers associated to this. And the study found that the biggest reason Manning and Underwood were second had to do with the often use of "we" in reference to the Indians. Of course Manning, a former Indian player and coach, is the one you can blame. But you can't really blame him.

And Matt Underwood, well, let's just not go there.

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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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