Ehhh the big guy still has it after all?

October 2nd, 2012

Chicago White Sox - **3**

Cleveland Indians - **4**

W: Chris Seddon (1-1) L: Matt Thornton (4-10)

[BOXSCORE]

It wasn't some sort of heroic comeback, but it was a comeback none-the-less. You would probably feel demoralized if you went into the bottom of the ninth inning having just given up two runs to the opposing team in a tie game.

Enough reason to pack it up and pack it in. All you've mustered is a Shin-Soo Choo solo home run, what could possibly happen for you to tie this thing up with a pair of runs? Jake Peavy is still on the mound, going for the complete game. Pitching like Jake Peavy does.

Which is well.

He has walked just one hitter all night, given up just two hits. That is dominant stuff, there's no way you're getting to him, right?

You know how this story ends by now. I'm not sure where it came from but all the Indians needed was one big hit and they got one from **Travis Hafner**. And what a hit it was for him pinch-hitting for Lou Marson and coming up with an absolutely huge hit not just for the Indians, but himself.

This very well may be the end of the line for Hafner as a Cleveland Indian. Never say never at this point, but you have to appreciate the time he's given to this team, even though it hasn't been ideal since he signed that extension.

Sandy says that he'll start tonight, that was the plan all along to give him this game. But even if he doesn't do anything, he'll at least have that big home run to fall back on .

"Maybe I should just leave it at that, right?" Alomar said. "No, we talked. We had a conversation and we agreed that we would give him the last day here. He's in tomorrow as the DH unless he comes in and he has two broken legs."

Hafner would go on to say he's just going to try and have fun and enjoy everything, sort of knowing that he could be playing his final game with Chief Wahoo on his helmet.

"It's a possibility," Hafner said. "There's a lot of uncertainties right now. I haven't talked to anybody. The organization, I've been here so long and a lot of these guys are like family. I've really enjoyed playing in this city and the fans have been great. I've had a great time here."

Hafner not only lives in the city now, he married it. Not just with his wife, but everything he does off-the-field. I'm would not be surprised if he said "what do you want me for" to the Indians and

tried to come back and make up for not producing as much as everyone, including Hafner himself, hoped.

And regardless of the man who came through with the big hit to win the game, this seemed to be Hafner's moment, and **Jason Donald** even recognized that.

"Haf's been a mainstay here," Donald said. "And he's been a pro through it all. He's battled through injuries. He's a consummate professional. He comes in every day and gets his work done. I have a great deal of respect for him, just watching him, how he goes about his work."

So that is nice to see among the fact that JD was the one who came through with the hit. And boy did he celebrate. I'm not sure I've ever seen someone sprint across the diamond like that. It was so nice to see that sort of excitement. And I'm not really sure I've ever seen someone actually run INTO the mob of people instead away from them.

"I've always been on the other side of it when you rush out to get the guy," Donald said with a grin. "The guy always runs away from you. That makes it a little hard to get to him. I just thought I'd nip it in the bud and go right at them, take them by surprise."

Either way, a little bit of excitement and joy to end this season is a nice thing. **Justin Masterson**
ending his season on a high note with a decent performance is also pretty good. But let's not forget there's one more game left to be played.

Random Details...

Jose Lopez anyone? Anyone else notice that buddy sitting around? He pinch-ran for Dan Johnson and scored on the go-ahead Viciedo home run. Good for him... Good for him...

Despite Chris Perez's hiccup, the bullpen atoned for the previous night's debacle and pitched

very well. It was all good until that ninth, but then they came back and extended it long enough for the offense to come through. This after a rough night on Monday and that 14-inning marathon on Saturday.

Shin-Soo Choo's homer extended his hitting streak to 12 games... Just keep that in mind next year if he gets a hit tonight.

Chris Seddon picked up his second major league win. Okay.

You know for not having more than two hits going into the ninth inning, the Indians sure did get some work done in extras to come away with eight hits total. Jason Donald did have two hits on the night after all and he didn't even start the damn game.

Vincent Rottino playing catcher.... Okay.

It's interesting to watch how Sandy Alomar uses the same players Manny Acta did. Granted he's playing at the end of the season so he can go a little crazy. But he's got Chisenhall in the five-hole, he uses Matt LaPorta a little more. With Brantley down he throws Lillibridge in center field with Russ Canzler in left. It's different. And in that light, Donald comes in and plays center after Brantley came in to get that key pinch-hit.

And let's not forget that both Brantley and Hafner were pinch-hitters in that ninth. THAT'S how you use a pinch-hitter in both cases. Sandy just pushed the right buttons there.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I thought we were going to put this **Manny Acta** thing to rest, I really did... But that's until **Chris Perez**
opened his mouth. Right on time.

I love them both, I really do, so I'm not going to pick sides. But it sounds like CP had a problem with MA . He says that there was a communication problem between the players and Acta, and that he "meshed" better with the media than he did with the team.

"Something needed to change," Perez said. "Just the personality, a different dynamic in the locker room. Something needed to be different."

He also said most of the problems walked out the door last week, referring to the fact that Acta is gone, clearly.

And I think we now know who it was that said that anonymous quote that "it was too late" after Acta held the team meeting in Seattle, because he referenced the same incident. He also revealed that his comment that he's made had to do with "what walked out the door" and that he isn't frustrated about being in Cleveland and that he wants to be here.

However, this decision is no longer up to him anymore in the way he's handled it. And not just because of that, but because of the economic and talent sense it makes for the Indians to trade him, promote Pestano and save some money by shipping him off. Even Perez knows that saying he finds it hard to see the Indians keeping him and trading others.

"That's a business decision that they're going to have to make," Perez said. "That's not up to me. That's not my decision. I have two years left here at least. Right now, it's up to them. I think whatever they decide to do is definitely going to tell you which way the team is going one way or the other."

So, in a few weeks, we'll start to see which way the team is going.

Sandy Alomar Jr. is reluctant to take over Manny Acta's office quite yet, even though it is technically his for this past week and until the Indians name a permanent manager. Not sure I

can blame him for that.

"It's not my office yet," Alomar said with a laugh. "I'm sitting on the couch -- not in the chair -- just so you know. I haven't. I haven't used Manny's chair at all. It's there, but I don't know if there might be a ghost there or something."

In addition to the "ghost" of Manny Acta that may still be around, at least for Alomar, he knows what he's up against in getting this job to be his full-time. He recognizes what Terry Francona can bring to the table and realizes he doesn't have the resume that he does, calling it a slam dunk, where he is not that quite yet.

"Who wouldn't want a guy like that? He has everything. He has championships. He's a great guy. He's a great communicator. He's the perfect guy to have; I'm not going to hide it. I'm not going to say I'm already a slam dunk, because I'm not. Nobody owes me anything. That's always been the approach in my life.

"I have a ton of respect for him. The organization has to make a huge decision. It's not about who's the most popular guy or that I played here or did this in the playoffs. They've still got to make a decision for the organization. I feel like I'm prepared for it." That's a humbling point of view to take in the public, but you know when it comes down to it, Sandy will go into that interview and fight for every opportunity. While he knows what he is up against, I think he also knows he has a lot of things in his favor that Terry Francona probably does not have and he can use those to his advantage. It will be an interesting battle between the two, because again, we know it is these two or the road.

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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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