It's such a fine line between a slump and a trend that sometimes it's hard to tell which is which. But anyone watching the Cleveland Indians sleepwalk their way through the current homestand probably doesn't care which it is. They just want it to change. And with the Indians making no moves of significance at the deadline, Gary Benz says they have to make some changes internally if they expect improvement.

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The questions, as always, are how and how soon. As it stands, the Indians made no moves at the trade deadline, so we now know that any change will come from within, barring some sort of waiver wire deal between now and the end of August. What remains is the more problematic question of how soon.

The failure to make a trade has likely unglued many of the faithful most of who see the Indians failures, particularly of late, as more indicative of a trend and not a slump, meaning that left undisturbed, things aren't likely to magically turn for the better. For those in that camp, there is plenty of ammunition.

For example, it might be useful to update the numbers from the analysis provided a few weeks ago (see article here) detailing the offensive problems of this team, despite its overall run total and record. On the other hand, that update isn't really

needed. There is nothing that's occurred in the last 10 days that suggests any improvement. If anything, the numbers are worse, meaning that the Indians of the last 10 days are hitting worse in every key situation-runners in scoring position, runners in scoring position and two outs, bases loaded, etc.

Anyone who watched the Indians play the Texas Rangers on Tuesday night knows this is true. Travis Hafner was 0-4, again, and looked bad doing it. His off-balance whiff at a high fastball for the third strike in his first at bat was typical, just as was the two pop outs that followed. Yet manager Eric Wedge keeps putting Hafner in the fourth spot in the order hoping, against hope, that things will change. They haven't for awhile.

But Hafner was hardly alone in making Brandon McCarthy look nothing like the pitcher who, until tuesday, had failed to make it to the seventh inning in any start this season. The Indians had four hits and looked completely disinterested and uninspired, despite having had the previous day off. For fans in the camp of change is needed, nothing provides greater fuel for that argument than a team seemingly stuck in neutral.

For those who don't necessarily think the Indians needed to make a move, there is plenty of ammunition for them as well. For example, it is true that even the best teams are flawed in some respect and thus can always use reinforcements. But having failed to obtain those reinforcements need not be fatal to the Tribe, particularly this year as pretty much every top tier team is flawed as well. Moreover, none of the contenders in the AL Central made a move either so in that regard, the Indians stand no differently vis-à-vis the competition today than they did, say, last Wednesday.

There also is the fact that despite how much he is hurting the team presently, Hafner's career stats are still more suggestive of a prolonged slump than anything else. His lack of production this season in every key category is so far below where he has been historically that more patience seems a reasonable approach for even minimal improvement now is likely to make a noticeable difference in the

offensive direction of the club.

But whatever camp you may be in as a fan, it's pretty clear where Shapiro clearly stands. Believing that the price to be paid for reinforcements was too great, by default he put himself in the category of believing that internal adjustments are likely to yield sufficient results. We'll see. So far the minor adjustments that have been made have been inconclusive, to say the least.

The trade for Kenny Lofton last week ultimately is of minor significance but the thinking behind the acquisition is still puzzling. For one thing, Lofton, at his age, is no longer an everyday player and if this team has anything in spades, it's platoon players. Second, he's a classic leadoff hitter, a role being ably filled by Grady Sizemore. Going into Wednesday's game, Lofton has had a total of 7,979 at bats during his 17-year career. Of that, 6,926 have been as a leadoff hitter. He's had 776 at-bats from the second slot in the order and a smattering of at-bats elsewhere in the lineup, but clearly Lofton's career has been built on batting leadoff.

No question that the Indians need an impact hitter, but it's hard to figure Lofton for that role since he's never really played it at any point in his career and he isn't likely to begin playing that now.

The other adjustments Shapiro has made, sending struggling Cliff Lee to Buffalo and the outrighting of Fernando Cabrera after Tuesday night's game to allow for the return of Aaron Fultz are simply too new to have had any impact.

But standing back and allowing more time to assess what's been done so far isn't the answer, either. Adjustments need to be made, now. For example, given a piece he didn't necessarily need, Wedge now needs to rethink his decision on where to bat Lofton. It's somewhat easy to understand why Wedge bats Lofton second, but in doing so it takes Lofton out of his comfort zone and, incidentally, has negatively impacted Casey Blake. Blake's current batting average of .268 is

nine points higher than his career average. But interestingly, most of that uptick happened when Wedge moved Blake to second in the order. Since the acquisition of Lofton and the subsequent dropping of Blake to the bottom of the order, Blake is hitting only .190.

This isn't to suggest that Lofton move to the leadoff spot, either. Nothing that disruptive needs to be done. Instead, a potentially better move might actually be to have Lofton bat ninth. This would allow Wedge to bat Josh Barfield eighth and move Blake back to the number two spot. This also would put the Indians in the position of having three hitters with good speed in succession for most of the game batting in front of hitters like Blake, Victor Martinez, Hafner and Ryan Garko, all of whom can drive the ball. As it stands, with Blake batting eighth, the Indians lineup lacks a theme and is out of sync.

Wedge also needs to rethink Hafner's spot in the lineup. At a minimum, he needs to switch Garko and Hafner. Though Garko of late is struggling like the rest of his teammates, he did hit .369 in the last month. Of his 24 hits during that stretch, half were for extra bases (7 doubles, 5 home runs). By comparison, Martinez is hitting .241 during that stretch with 8 doubles and 3 home runs. Hafner is hitting .250 with 3 doubles and 4 home runs.

Following Tuesday night's loss, Wedge told the media that his offense needs to put better at bats together, be tougher outs. He challenged each of his hitters to step up and make a difference. All true, but that same advice applies to Wedge as well. Right now, he has to put the offense in a position to get better, something he hasn't done yet. The lineup needs to be shaken up and now. With the most critical part of the season upon them simply waiting for better results isn't the answer.