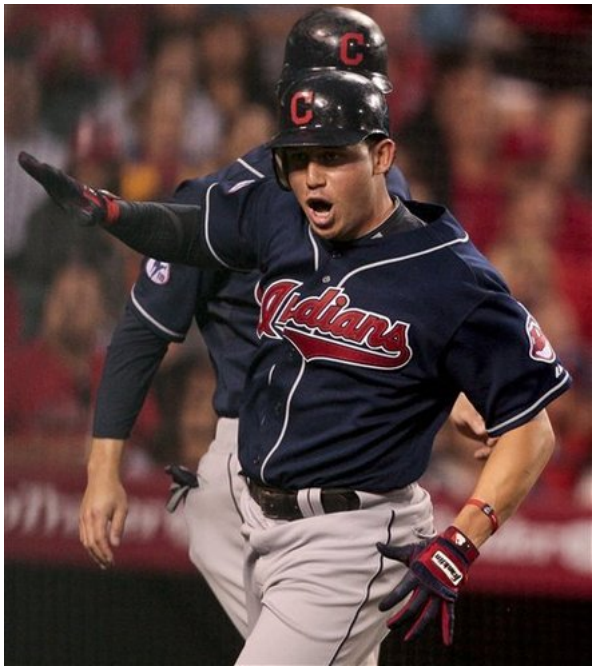

May 22nd, 2011

Cincinnati Reds - **4**

Cleveland Indians - **12**

W: Carlos Carrasco (3-2) L: Edinson Volquez (3-2)

[BOXSCORE]

The plan was simple. Edinson Volquez entered this game with a 17.00 ERA in the first inning. Get on Volquez early and get on him often. The Indians did just that. Not only did they do it in the first, they did it in the second, and they did it in the third. It gave them the ability to dip into that Reds bullpen and eventually add on even more late, which would be much needed after **Carlos Carrasco**
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I can't believe I wrote a whole paragraph without mentioning **Asdrubal Cabrera**. The guy did have five hits after all. And he had five RBI. And that was both more than the Reds had as a team in this one. As Manny Acta said, he stole the show. I'd even go one step further and say he not only stole the show, he was the show. Every time he stepped up to the plate, Cabrera notched a hit. He went deep twice, to increase his team lead in that category to nine. He had solid singles that scored runs and even a hit in which he had no business making contact with.

It was some kind of zone.

"Cabrera just took over," Acta said. "He was remarkable. He was on every pitch, including that last one. He did a great job. I don't even know how he kept it fair. He just had terrific at-bats all day. He continues to play like an All-Star for us."

Don't forget though, because Cabrera, didn't. He made a pair of errors. One that put the first runner of the game on the base paths. But Carrasco brilliantly picked Stubbs off, and thank god he did because Joey Votto's home run would have scored a pair rather than one. Of course in the end, the way Volquez unraveled, it wouldn't have mattered, but who knows what it might have done for Carrasco.

They haven't been super pretty for Car2 this season. This was his second start since returning from the DL, so he could still be considered a bit of a work in progress, but Carrasco had a decent effort. You can't blame a guy for picking up the win after pitching well. He ended up giving away four runs, two of them off solo blasts, but Carrasco still doesn't look 100 percent sharp. If anything though, It was nice to give him a lead and let him go out and just be aggressive and throw strikes. That's what Carrasco does best, attack hitters, and with a big lead, he can afford to do so.

Carrasco and Cabrera weren't the only names in this one though. Choo had a pair of hits and a pair of RBI. Brantley was 3-4 with a pair of RBI and three runs scored. At one point, through the first three times in the order, those three were 7-for-7. They couldn't be stopped.

And then they started driving them in when Hannahan and Kearns got on in front of them.

Hannahan walked twice, even knocked in a run, but how big was that staying patient against a clearly out of sorts Volquez.

This was Cabrera's game though. There was no other story here. Cabrera owned the day and he's now established himself as quite possibly the best offensive shortstop in the American League right now. He has more RBI than all the shortstops in the game, even Troy Tulowitzki. He's the shoe-in at shortstop for the American League, if they didn't do fan voting.

Maybe the universe will combine super powers to take out Derek Jeter and not let him win what is not rightfully his.

We can only hope.

Cabrera is tops in the AL right now. No one can dispute that. He's been the offensive MVP for the Indians, without a doubt. He hasn't put together a hot-streak as hot as this past week, other than that first week, but that's good because he's been quietly consistent. Now with Sizemore and Hafner down, we keep calling for Santana and Choo, but maybe it's this guy who's ready to step up and be the man.

Random Details...

Josh Judy made his major league debut, congrats to him on a scoreless ninth inning and first major league strikeout.

Michael Brantley stole his sixth base of the season, as did Asdrubal Cabrera. Brantley's only attempted eight steals. I say only because it seems like he should run more. I think it has something to do with always hitting with runners on (or hitting in the 7th spot) in front of him or getting on base and not having to run. I mean, he's scored 25 times this year, so he's getting driven in with ease from the people behind him.

Zeke Carrera came in as a defensive substitution late in the game and made a great diving catch. Get used to it, he's got leather. This may be one guy that forces Acta to play Sizemore in left, he's that good.

How about that incredibly crazy error in the first? Was that like a designed play by Travis Buck? If you didn't see it, then there really is no explaining it. That's something you read in a box score and don't get the entire story of.

Buck tries to steal second, stops like halfway and turns around and starts running from Brandon Phillips, who had to corral a high throw. Instead of chasing Buck down, he realizes that Choo is going home, but Choo stops and tries retreating to third. Hernandez gets the ball back and once again throws one high. Unfortunately for Hernandez and the Reds, this one was too high to catch. There was pretty much no one in left field, so the Indians end up in a beautiful disaster.

You've never seen that one before, right?

[WHITE OUT]

Real tough break for **Alex White** as he will miss at least two months , maybe three with a sprained middle finger. Here's the good news, it is nothing like Adam Miller's finger injuries that required multiple surgeries. White's injury is just a strained ligament that can heal without surgery. That's great news. Take as much time as you need. I think White will be back in Cleveland this season. If he's all healed up, he'll be a part of this team moving forward in 2011 because the Indians want him to.

Here's the troubling part. While it is unlike Miller's injury, lead trainer Lonnie Soloff says this was bound to happen at some point because the injury is possible with some pitchers.

Here's more good. Despite the injury, he was able to go out there and still finish the inning without a dramatic decrease in velocity or effectiveness. He struggled with some control, but I think it was more of a mental issue than a physical one. So, there's your pros and cons list. Hopefully this becomes nothing more than an isolated incident.

I'm not sure this is how the Indians wanted to make their decision as to what to do with Mitch Talbot returning, but it certainly makes it a lot easier. He will now start on Wednesday against Boston. And with David Huff banged up and Jeanmar Gomez pitching so-so, I'd have to venture off and guess 7-0 Zach McAllister down in Columbus would be the next in-line if a need arises. But, cross your fingers that isn't needed.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

This was a huge sweep because of two things in particular. The first, this sets a fantastic tone for Interleague play. You need to do well when you play the NL, it can turn your season around, or end it. The Tigers didn't have much fun with Pittsburgh over the weekend and in the past, teams in their position have used Interleague play to vault their season back to meaning.

So to sweep your Ohio rival, that's big.

Another reason is the fact that Boston is coming to town and they are not the same team that got swept in early April. In fact, they are hard-charging and gunning for first place in a crowded AL East. They're bats have especially woken up in the past few weeks and Adrian Gonzalez has been ripping things up.

No guarantees that **Grady Sizemore** is ready after the conclusion of this Boston series when the Indians hit the road to visit another AL East team, Tampa Bay. The upcoming three days will be big for him as he increases his work load. There's been no mention of a rehab outing though, so that's good.

Chris Perez will be dominant if he figures out his left-handed hitter issues . 10 of his 12 walks issued have come against left-handed hitters. That's Justin Masterson-type skewing. Luckily, Perez says he has the solution.

"I just need to start picking up my sights differently," Perez said. "I need the catcher to start

setting up just down the middle, so when I come through and I pick up my sight, he's down the middle and I can throw it to him and let the movement take it to the corner."

Hopefully he gets that worked out because while it hasn't burned him yet, he's starting to give us some Bob Wickman-like save opportunities as of late. We're supposed to start the fire, not re-light the wick. We're dealing with Pure Rage, not Pure Chaos.

What a treasure **Travis Buck** may turn out to be. Seems he is back to hitting the way he was in spring training after that home run on Saturday. And chalk up another correct button pushed by Manny Acta with the pep talk he gave to Buck.

Kearns had a better week than he has all season, but Buck brings more to the table. He's a better defender, little younger, little faster, better hitter it would appear. Let's not forget this was a very talented player when he was selected by Oakland in the draft. If not for injuries, he might have had a different road. But the road he's traveled has led him here, so we can't complain.

Speaking of talented players and the draft. From the Athlete Department. Frank Herrmann is the best basketball player in Cleveland from Montclair Kimberly Academy in New Jersey. That is until Kyrie Irving gets drafted to the Cavaliers.

"I scored 1,200-plus points and Kyrie scored just over 1,000," Herrmann said. "But the only reason I've got him beat is because he played only two years before transferring."

Herrmann is such an athlete. It amazes me how he went undrafted with 800 players being selected in a MLB draft.

The 18-4 home start is tied for the best start through 22 home games . Matching 2007 and 1995, both years the team went all the way to the ALCS of course.

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

From Monday to Friday you can read the Morning Rundown on The Cleveland Fan. But if you are reading this on TCF right now, feel free to come over to my blog every day as I still provide all the random notes and game recaps on the weekends. You can also stay up to date on trends and... I really don't know how to explain some of the stuff I do.

Like really, watching to see and counting the number of days Rafael Perez has not tweeted is not really something you can simply categorize or define. But that's what I do. Perez has been known to not comment to the media, so how likely is it he submits a tweet on his Twitter account ?

Unlikely, which is why I'm counting the days he hasn't tweeted.

Days Without a Tweet: 4

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ TheTribeDaily where he tweets about Rafael Perez not tweeting. You can also read more Morning Rundown and other features at his blog, The Tribe Daily
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