Nothing like it... Three close ball games in a series between two teams that are in definite playoff contention this season. It just feels good to get one.

June 22nd 2011

Colorado Rockies - **3**

Cleveland Indians- **4**

W: Josh Tomlin (9-4) L: Jason Hammel (4-7) S: Chris Perez (18)

[BOXSCORE]

Breath in a little more. And unlike Archer, no need for RAMPAGE!!!!!!

The Indians took home a solid win last night. Every game in this series was decided by a run and every one had some late inning drama. Thankfully for everything, and my own personal sanity, as well as yours, the Indians were able to salvage this series.

They didn't deserve to get swept though. So it's good to pick a win up. This team played well enough to win in all three games, so despite losing the series, you can take that away from this series.

Can we talk about **Josh Tomlin** first?

Other than two pitches to Ty Wigginton, this guy was spotless. But isn't that usually the case with him? He has one or two bad pitches and sometimes they hit them far, sometimes he gets lucky and they miss. Wigginton hit a few, one with a guy on base, but that was it. He gave up three other hits, once again didn't walk anyone, and won his ninth game. He's in a position to get double digits by the All-Star Break, even by the actual halfway point of the season, which is still at least one start away for him.

Here's my favorite stat of Josh Tomlin. Other than the first two starts of the season, the guy hasn't walked more than two hitters in a game. He's walked TWO hitters this month. TWO. That's two in five starts, 30 innings.

He did that last month too! This guy is just unreal. He's Greg Maddux redux. Not quite as good as The Bulldog, but if you want a comparison, you'd be hard pressed to find a better one. The great thing with Tomlin though is the fact that Manny Acta knows he'll get at least five every time the guy goes out there.

"With Tomlin, I know what I'm going to get. I've never had to go out there and get him before the fifth," Acta said, pounding his fist on his desk to embellish the "knock on wood" superstition. "He

makes our job easier."

Tomlin knew he made errors to Wigginton. But luckily for him, they were his only two mistakes.

And thankfully he didn't make a mistake to Seth Smith, who was a son of a Seth Smith in this series.

"I thought it was too low to go out," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Boy, [Smith] was a pain for us this whole series. He can really hit a fastball."

Chris Perez had his issues with Smith, who almost tied it up with another home run in the ninth. Perez said he was gunning for a strikeout on Smith, but he had other plans for that. Rage welcomed the challenge of their best hitters and trying to get out the guy who touched him up the night before.

We talk a lot about **Travis Hafner**'s impact on the lineup and his presence being so much for the Indians hitters around him. Choo and Santana were on base twice, Asdrubal scored a run after his single. But how about the fact that Hafner's impact is also felt with him blowing up opposing pitchers by swinging that piece of dynamite that he calls a bat.

Hafner's hit streak is now up to nine and he's gone deep twice, coulda been three times. Now look. Travis was starting to find that power stroke before his stint on the disabled list. He had four extra base hits in the three games before his injury and in those three games, he knocked in eight runs.

With that power stroke, came the run production. And now you are seeing that power stroke return. Not just the power stroke, but the Pronk Power Stroke. Remember 2005 and 2006 Hafner? How we thought he'd never return.

I don't think THAT Pronk is coming back. But man, it certainly looks like something close to it.

Pronk demolished that ball last night. Absolutely obliterated it.

Here's the sad part... He won't start for another nine games. The next week and a half he's going to be reduced to one at-at per game, if even that. So that hit-streak, unless he gets a hit in his one at-bat, is likely going to end and is overall effectiveness, is now reduced to making things happen by swinging the bat once. There's less fear, there's less strategy in dealing with the hitters around him, there's less Pronk.

Crap.

Random Details...

I'm not going to complain about scoring so many runs off the other pitchers balking them in, but man have the Indians received a few of those this year or what?

And as much as we want to say, "Hey the offense is back! The offense is back!" I don't think we've seen anything yet. Not only were Choo and Santana on base twice, so was Sizemore. If those three are getting on base twice a game each, in addition to whatever Hafner and Cabrera have going, things will be alright.

Vinnie Pestano's Movie Quote of the Day on Twitter yesterday was: "As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster." from GoodFellas. You may have heard something like "Vinnie The K" as Pestano's nickname, which is quite fantastic. But I've always called him Vinnie The Gangster.

And he couldn't have been more gangster than last night when he struck out all three hitters he faced. Intense!

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Orlando Cabrera made his second start at third yesterday. He doesn't sound like he enjoys it that much . I thought he wouldn't care as long as he is playing, but apparently he isn't faring too well. And of course he isn't one to sugarcoat things.

To me, there seems to be some, and I'll choose my words carefully here... But there seems to be a little "Acta says something for Orlando... Orlando says the opposite." Acta says he feels comfortable over there, and Orlando says "Not really." Acta says Orlando took the demotion well.. Orlando says, no I didn't.

In a nutshell. Now Orlando could have been joking in response to "How is third base treating you." Who knows. But it just seems like Acta keeps speaking for Orlando and he's saying stuff that Orlando probably wouldn't say.

Make of that what you will... But Orlando doesn't look bad out there. It's helping the team right now and I said this the first time, it gets the Uncle into the lineup. So he should welcome it.

I'm intrigued as to what the Indians think of **Lou Marso**n. They acquired him after they acquired Carlos Santana, so it makes you wonder what their overall plan is for the tandem . Was it to give themselves a quality backup, ala Kelly Shoppach? Was it to breed him into a catcher worthy of starting so they could move Santana?

"This is a good opportunity for us to play Lou more often," Indians manager Manny Acta said on Wednesday. "Lou's a guy who we all think has a chance to be an everyday catcher at the big league level. We don't see Lou as just a backup guy."

If they don't see Marson as just a backup, what do they want to do with him? He's clearly the superior defensive catcher to Santana and he can call a game with the best of them. If he can put the hitting in, he becomes a good all-around player that has lots of value. Is the long term plan to have Marson as the starter and Santana as a first baseman? Especially if LaPorta can't get it, there's no one really down at first base waiting in the wings.

It will be interesting to see how this stretch works out. With LaPorta out, Marson has a big time opportunity to build a lot of value. Both with the organization and around baseball. There would be plenty of teams that would like a catcher like Marson if he puts it all together.

Speaking of **Matt LaPorta**, he will be out of his walking boot this weekend and can begin his road to partaking in baseball activities. In other injury news,
Alex White
will begin his throwing program tomorrow by playing catch in Goodyear.

How about **Cord Phelps** in the second spot in the order? The past two games with Sizemore and Brantley both getting days off, Phelps has slid up into the two hole and has done a good job. Acta says he's handling himself well in the big leagues .

"He's in a good groove right now," Acta said. "He's been squaring the ball up very good. Hopefully, his confidence continues to grow. I was very happy to see him hit the ball the other way [on Monday] because I hadn't seen that yet."

This is the reason the Indians are not in any rush to get Jason Kipnis up to the major leagues. They would like a nice long look at Phelps and what he has to offer at the major league level. He projects to a utility player with Kipnis and Chisenhall closing in, but in my mind, he's more of a Mark DeRosa utility player. Someone who plays a lot more than the average bench player, but plays in multiple spots.

I think that's how the Indians view him too, which is why they got him experience at multiple positions.

Speaking of **Lonnie Chisenhall**... He made his return to Columbus last night after a very small stint on the disabled list, and he came out with some fire. The Chiz Kid was 4-for-6 with a pair of runs scored, a triple, a three-run home run, and six total RBI. By far his best game of the year.

On the season he's hitting .261 with six home runs, 36 RBI, and a .349 on-base percentage. I think a little higher average, and that's what you expect from Lonnie. He's had a little bit of struggles this year, mostly against the lefties (hitting just .183). If he gets that up, he'll be right where you want him. That being said, he certainly isn't totally ready and with no immediate need for his bat, I think it will be another few months before we see him in Cleveland.

Unless he turns it up and a sudden need arises, I think him continuing at Columbus for another few months is the right move.

[STAT OF THE DAY]

For your amusement the "Bullpen Mafia, Stat of the Day."

Right-handed batters are no match for Chris Perez. The closer has given up just three walks to the righties and held them to a .178 average. Only one extra-base hit, a double, and one one surrendered in 45 at-bats.

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

Archer Quote of the Day: "Because I told you to buy lemon curd, Woodhouse. Now what am I going to spread on my toast? Your tears?"

I can't find a video for that one. Trust me, it's funny though.

Days Without a Tweet: 36

-

You can follow Nino on Twitter @ TheTribeDaily where he tweets about Vinnie Pestano being gangster. You can also read more Morning Rundown and other features at his blog, The Tribe Daily
.