The Indians went 11-7 in Interleague play. They nearly swept the Cincinnati Reds twice, and aside from a sweep to the World Champion San Francisco Giants, won all their series. Their biggest competition, the Detroit Tigers went 7-11. The biggest statistic is that the designated hitter is back in play Monday evening when the Indians face off against the Yankees.

[SEE YA CINCY]

Instead of just recapping this past game against Cincinnati, I figured I'd wrap the entire series and even all of Interleague in a nice big bow.

As I recapped above, the Indians were very successful in Interleague play, more so than their division counterparts in Detroit. They also claimed the Ohio Cup with a 5-1 season series win over Cincinnati.

Big first two wins. It was great to get in there and win the first two. You would have liked to see

the big time sweep, but you'll take 5-1 any day of the week. You'll also take 4-5 on this road trip without your designated hitter and your right fielder. And one of your starters going out after a few innings in one of those starts.

The odds were stacked against the Indians go through this stretch and completely falter. Yet they got through it with four wins and three of those loses to San Francisco, any one of them could have been a win.

So, take the silver lining from this trip and realize that the club is coming back home today for a Fourth of July celebration where they should intend to beat the New York Yankees into submission. Fingers crossed at least.

Friday, the offense came to life, showing that the Arizona weather wasn't just the reason for the bats to wake up. They beat up on Arroyo pretty good once again and Justin Masterson finally got some run-support. Now maybe will re-take notice of him and his 2.85 ERA.

Saturday it was all bullpen. Michael Brantley provided the big home run and the bullpen did all kinds of amazing stuff. Carmona pitches two innings, takes a tumble, and in comes the Professor . How about that guy? What more can you say about him getting the Indians through three innings with very little trouble? Perez and Smith trend from being usual matchup guys and go full innings, and of course a gangster-like save from Vinnie Pestano.

Sipp struggled, gave up the solo job to Joey Votto, but who hasn't done that? A little worried about Sippster lately, seems to be going through a rough-patch, but nothing like his "rough-patch" from last season in which he got destroyed. If this is his small spot to struggle, you will take it.

Photo - Getty Images via Yahoo! Sports

And then on Sunday. It was a valiant effort in the last few innings. They seemed to brew something up in the sixth and seventh with some runs. But that fourth inning by **Mitch Talbot**.

That was a back-breaker right there. He just gave up single after single after single. One run scored on a single, two on sacrifice flies. If not for a heady play by Lou Marson to gun over to third and get Brandon Phillips, that inning may have continued.

And in the second it was the same batch of players doing it again, single single single. He was pretty much just getting clubbed to death. Taking small beatings one by one until he painful and mercifully was unable to continue. But what can you do after you bullpen had to throw seven innings the day before? You had Josh Judy who went two, Smith had to go another inning and Durbin was available for a frame. But the pen had just worked a lot the day before. You couldn't have removed Talbot any earlier if you wanted to.

According to Talbot though, he's making "semi-decent" pitches. I'm not making this up.

"I didn't feel terrible today," Talbot said. "I mean, I may be wrong, but just from what I've thought about, it's only one extra-base hit, and that was a home run. So that tells me that I'm making semi-decent pitches, but they haven't been on the ground like they should."

That's like saying. Yeah other than the whole building collapsing, I put together a semi-decent base to the structure.

Are you serious? Talbot says that they aren't "getting great looks" at his pitches but "good enough."

I'm sorry but good enough is not enough for you Mitch. His issue is struggling early, where he gives up six-one percent of his runs in the first three innings. The problem is if he gives them all up in the first three innings, he isn't lasting past that and certainly not giving his team a chance to be in the game from the beginning.

Talbot in the end simply said he is puzzled and he is going to work with Belcher to see what he can do. I know people want to oust him from the rotation and me, I'm getting to that point. The thing is we know what we get from Mitch. It's not going to be spectacular, but if he is right he can keep you in games.

Until we know we have someone capable of replacing him, I'm hesitant to say, make the move. But he's likely nearing that point with me. I think we have capable options to replace him with so it may just be time to replace him.

[DOWN GOES FAUSTO]

Wow... Carmona's tumble was. So bad that even he didn't want to watch it.

Let's not laugh at the guy. He's a pitcher, not a freaking baserunner. Sure you want to look like some sort of an athlete out there and not embarrass yourself, but how often does he run the bases? It's not even fair that someone unaccustomed to the practice has to do it once or twice a season.. Another reason having the American League pitchers hit is stupid. But that's not-here-nor-there as we are done with Interleague and continuing to complain about it is going to do nothing.

The guy put down a bunt and was running hard. That's all you can ask of him. At least he was trying.

Whatever happened, it will cost **Fausto Carmona** at least one start. Because of the All-Star break, the Indians may catch a break with him. They get the best of the situation with Carmona being given a short break, but not missing much actual game time.

Carmona is pleased with missing as little time as possible and the injury may cause him to just miss this one start before the break kicks in. As for his replacement for that upcoming start.... Well...

"A lot will have to do with who's lined up or close to being lined up for that day," Acta said. "Also, obviously, being on the 40-man roster will play a role, which I don't think is going to be an issue with the guys we have starting there."

It probably won't be Jeanmar Gomez, who just pitched yesterday and went eight innings. Eight brilliant innings might I add. It will probably be someone on regular rest. David Huff or Zach McAllister, both on the 40-man roster and both could pitch on normal rest at this point if held out from their next start. Huff is set to go on Monday, so whether he goes tonight or not should give us an answer.

Carmona was also injured on his pitching hand when a comebacker was hit off it. He says that wouldn't have kept him out and he would have kept pitching had the leg injury not occurred.

But let's be honest. He got hurt because of Interleague play. You usually can't blame injuries on anything, but he got hurt directly because of Interleague rules. And that sucks.

[CHEAP ADD]

A vast amount of veterans were released this past week. It's no coincidence really. A lot of younger prospects got called up from the minors. Heck, the Indians did it themselves with Lonnie Chisenhall and with that, released Adam Everett.

Teams probably have reached that point that A)They can safely avoid super-two status with some of their bigger elite prospects or they B)Simply are looking for a young spark with some infusion of young blood. The Indians probably fall into both categories.

Some of that excess veteran talent that sign early in the season on one year deals or even minor league deals are now running the intended route of travel. Teams have no more use for them. They've taught their lessons and their so-so bats are now no longer worth the roster spot they occupy.

Some fade off into the sunset, like Mike Redmond last year and likely Adam Everett this year. Others latch on somewhere, or try to do the whole thing over again the following season, knowing they can latch on to a major league situation, because every team needs a veteran.

And some, some try and actually do find a spot. There some teams in contention that do need those veterans, because they have no other options. Or they need a specific type of player, that does a specific type of a thing. That veteran can do just what that team wants.

The Indians are in need of a right-handed bat. Let's look at the statistics real quick.

Average tells you very little (they have a higher average against left-handers than they do right-handers) and you can't look at statistics like home runs or runs scored because they skew heavily towards right-handed pitching because of the skewed amount of right-handed hitters there are.

Vs Right-Handed Pitching

.248 AVG, .318 OBP, .406 SLG, .724 OPS

Vs. Left-Handed Pitching

.252 AVG, .318 OBP, .368 SLG, .686 OPS

That tells you right there there is less pop, and less overall production against the left-handed pitching. This left-heavy lineup of Hafner, Sizemore, Choo, etc. doesn't have that right-handed bat to stake in there. It was supposed to be LaPorta, but we know how that has gone. He hasn't exactly been the absolute difference maker. But he hasn't been horrible.

Now any veteran you find at this point, isn't going to be a difference maker. If you want to find that difference maker, you'll have to go the trade route. And more on that later.

If you want to just plug-in a right-handed bat who plays against lefties, maybe can be serviceable off the bench, you can find it in this pool of released veterans looking for a job.

The first name that comes up to me is one that would fit perfectly with the injury to Shin-Soo Choo. Outfielder **Mike Cameron**, who was designated for assignment by the Boston Red Sox . Cameron, even if he doesn't provide an impact sort of a presence in terms of his bat, is a well-traveled outfielder who can still bring it with the glove. Is he still the Gold Glove center fielder he was five or so years ago?

No, but he isn't Shelley Duncan. Point made, let's continue.

Cameron has only played in 33 games this year, and 48 last year with the Red Sox. He's been a severe disappointment for them after signing a two year $15.5 million deal with Boston. This year he's hitting .149 with three home runs and nine RBI. That's still more than Austin Kearns.

Career line against left-handed hitters though, Cameron could be a good plug in. He has a .264 average with a .366 on-base percentage. Also slugging .487 with a .853 OPS. This season all three of his home runs and seven of his nine RBI have come against left-handed pitchers.

A quick look at Austin Kearns painfully reminds you that he is hitting .239 against left-handers, but with just one RBI. He provides no production what so ever. He's played in just as many games as Cameron has.

Cameron presents the second best option in my opinion, but he is not necessarily the only option. The other ones include:

Melvin Mora who is more of an infielder than an outfielder. He's spent the majority of his time this year at third. But he can play first base (however it wouldn't exactly mesh with how you want to play LaPorta) and has spent time in the outfield as recently as last season (four games). Mora was recently released by Arizona after signing a one year deal with them in the offseason.

Mora in 2011: .228 AVG, .520 OPS, 0 HR, 15 RBI

Mora in 2011 Vs LHP: .293 AVG, .661 OPS, 0 HR, 4 RBI

Mora Career Vs LHP: .271 AVG, .351 OBP, .802 OPS

Mora has good numbers against lefties in his career, even this year he is holding his own. But his position would have to change pretty drastically, because Chisenhall is playing third and when he doesn't, Hannahan is the defensive backup and he too will play against left-handers.

You also have recently jettisoned **Jose Lopez**, let go by the Marlins, who I wouldn't touch with a ten foot pole, and old friend **Jayson Nix**, who was shipped off by Toronto. The upside with Nix is that we know what we are getting and he is hitting .273 with a .407 OBP against left-handers this year. The downside is he is Jayson Nix.

To me though, the best option came available just yesterday when the Blue Jays also designated **Juan Rivera**. This year Rivera is hitting .243 with a .205 OBP in 70 games. His positions fits just as good as Cameron does and he probably, while not the most graceful, won't at least shoot you in the foot. he can also play first base.

This year he's hit .327 against the left-handers in 26 games with two home runs and 13 RBI. He's a leftie masher all of his career, hitting .47 home runs with a .291 average a .838 OPS. The numbers that Rivera has against the left-handers and the fact that he is actually still doing it this season, for me makes him the most attractive option.

And also, he likely isn't Shelley Duncan in right-field.

And he certainly isn't Austin Kearns at the plate. Argument won.

[EXPENSIVE ADD]

Now if you want to get expensive and go for someone that isn't so cheap because you feel like you have a bigger void to fill, there are some pieces out there.

The best piece, might be tough to get, and while he may not be the most expensive, if may be a little more tougher to pry away because he's within division.

Michael Cuddyer, career .293 hitter with a .382 on-base percentage against left-handed pitchers. There's your trade option. Not only a difference maker, someone who can play everywhere and also still play against right-handers. Also serves your main issue with right-field and Choo being out.

The biggest problem though is his current team, which is a division rival in Minnesota. Now that isn't to say the two teams wouldn't be able to complete a deal at all. Just as recently as a few years ago, the Indians and Twins swung a deal for Carl Pavano.

But that was Carl Pavano at the time. This is Michael Cuddyer, who is 32-years-old and hitting .289 with a .357 on-base percentage and 11 home runs. The good news he is making a cool $10 million and the Twins may be willing to cut out the prospect price for salary relief.

The bad news is, the Twins may be willing to cut out the prospect price for salary relief. Right now, the Twins are still in it. They re eight games back of first place and have made a recent run that would suggest they stil have an outside shot.

Although a few more weeks, they may not have that same attitude. Of course if they keep the attitude that they can keep Cuddyer beyond this season or that they can stay in the race this season, Cuddyer comes off the table.

But above them all, Cuddyer probably fits the bill for what the Indians want and can realistically obtain.

Other options include: Rightie-masher and Cuddyer teammate Jason Kubel (who's more of a DH than an outfielder, but can still be put out there), Jeff Francoeur (who provides a solid rocket outfield arm replacement for Choo and is hitting a robust .333 with six HR in 72 at-bats against left-handers), and former Indian Ryan Ludwick (who's remarkably hit five home runs in PETCO park).

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Do I want to get into this whole All-Star thing again? No. No use wasting more breath, like with the Interleague play, on something that is unlikely to change. Especially since I'm unlikely to change anything. But you know it does make me wonder. People who argue for the fans pick of Derek Jeter for the game say "that this is what the fans want." No.. It's not. The Yankee fans want Derek Jeter. Most fans want to see someone who deserves it.

So this isn't what the fans want. Using that argument is invalid and it is a total cop-out. Use that all you want, but it still doesn't prove any point. **Asdrubal Cabrera** should be the starting shortstop. I'm glad he is there, but it sucks for him that he isn't starting and that Jeter took away a spot from some other deserving shortstop or player who should be on the team.

If he really cared about the game and was such a Captain's Captain, he'd give up his spot to Asdrubal and let him start. He certainly has the pull to do so.

But again, let's just congratulate Asdrubal Cabrera and his teammate **Chris Perez** for making the team. I'm glad
the Indians got a pair of players on there
, especially happy for Rage.

"It kind of picks my spirits up a little bit after the week I've had, for sure," Perez said. "I landed in Cincinnati, turned on the phone and got about 50 text messages. And I had a bunch of voicemails from my family and stuff. It was pretty exciting for sure."

There is still a good chance the Indians get another representative in the form of a starting pitcher, of which they have three really good candidates. Carlos Carrasco, Justin Masterson, and Josh Tomlin could all get a nod to replace pitchers who pitch on Sunday, who are ineligible to compete in the game.

Carlos Carrasco will actually start on Sunday if the Indians do not juggle their rotation, so he'd be ineligible himself. Josh Tomlin or Justin Masterson (who I'd pick at this juncture) would be great candidates and definitely worthy.

And of course, no Indian got picked for the "Final Vote." Not that we'd stand a chance against Paul Konerko or Victor Martinez. I'd give Martinez my vote there though. He definitely deserves it... On a side note, it was nice to see the Tiger faithful get the horses up to vote for Alex Avila and prevent Russell Martin from taking the spot. Too bad we didn't have the horses to support Asdrubal in his fight against the evil empire.

Are we whining? Sure, let's whine a little bit. Who's going to whine for the small guy if the big guy is getting whined for too
? Oh, boo-hoo, CC Sabathia and his fake 11 wins didn't make the team for once. Cry me a river.

The Indians made a few notable signings in the international waters this past weekend. Not really ones to make headlines in that regard, the Indians made two with the team record bonus of $1.1M given
to
Dorssys Paulino
a shortstop from the Dominican. As well as
the $385K given
to outfielder
Anthony Santander
from Venezuela. Baez holds the record for largest amateur signing bonus, but the Indians have never given a prospect this young that much coin.

They have also signed another outfielder, Franicsco Miguel from the Dominican Republic.

That's already over a million and a half given to three International prospects. Is this a sign of things to come with the draft? They're going to give a lot to first round pick Franicsco Lindor, whatever it takes to sign him. That's pretty much a safe bet, they won't let their first rounder walk. But does it clue us in to them signing second round high school pitcher Dillion Howard (looks like a very real possibility
)? How about super-prospect Dillon Peters who they nabbed later in the draft and may take way over-slot to sign?

Are the Tribe going to be dishing out some more cash to bolster their already strong farm system? Let's hope so. This is what Baseball America has to say about Paulino.

"Paulino, a 16-year-old righthanded hitter, is the son of former big league lefthander Jesus Sanchez, who pitched for the Marlins, Cubs, Rockies and Reds from 1998-2004. Paulino, who is from Bani and trains at La Academia, is 5-foot-11, 175 pounds and has one of the better bats among infielders in this year's July 2 class, though he might end up at second or third base because of his body type."

BA says Santander is a switch-hitter with a 6'2, 185 frame that is just 16-years-old right now.

[ROAMING CINCINNATI]

As you may have been able to tell from my Twitter feed, I took in the sights of Cincinnati this weekend and topped it off with a visit to the Great American Ballpark to watch the game yesterday. Give a look to my blog's Facebook page for a complete look at all the photos I took.

Anyway, perhaps the Indians were kept awake from the ruckus going on across the street from the hotel Saturday night. I stumbled upon to their downtown Cincinnati digs across from Fountain Square. Saturday night, after a meal in Kentucky, I was sort of hell-bent on trying

some of this "amazing" Graeter's ice cream that I've heard about when it comes to Cincinnati. Having struck out at a Kentucky location, my girlfriend and I stumbled across a location down the street from our hotel.

As I was standing on the steps with my ice cream, we watched some duo rap on a big television screen above the stage. Then I turned around and saw him. It was a slender man with a clean shaven bald head leaning up against a street sign smoking a cigar.

The fact that Manny Acta can blend in so well with a crowd is a true testament to his awesomeness. He certainly knows when to wear a fedora and when not to. So, did I see Manny Acta smoking his victory cigar on the streets of Cincinnati? Yes, yes I did.

Did I choose to interrupt him from that taste of victory? I did not. I let him savor that victory cigar.

And then Tony Sipp walked passed us.

It was really cool to visit the park in Cincinnati. It's nice, but nothing compared to Progressive Field in my opinion. It's a nice standard ballpark, good seating, everything is nice. But it just doesn't have the same feel Progressive Field does.

We did chat it up with one of the ushers at the end of the game. Having enough of the hot sun and the obnoxious Reds fan that sat next to us, we ventured around the park where we eventually ended up by the Indians bullpen so I could watch Joe Smith and Rafael Perez warm up. This usher was really nice and we talked for the entire ninth inning. Very hospitable and has been around for awhile, so this was his retirement job and he's been all over Ohio.

Other than the one dumb guy telling Michael Brantley he was "unathletic" until another Red fan told him to cut the crap, Cincinnati was very welcoming.

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

Nino's TV Reference of the Day: *Always Sunny* - "Rock, Flag, and EAGLEEEE!"

I'll avoid using the same show two times in a row, but the Fourth of July circumstances called for it.

Days Without a Tweet: 45

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ TheTribeDaily where he tweets about running into Manny Acta on the streets of Cincinnati. You can also read more Morning Rundown and other features at his blog, The Tribe Daily .