It's hard to remember, but the Indians are still playing baseball.

July 31st, 2011

Kansas City Royals - **5**

Cleveland Indians - **3**

W: Danny Duffy (3-4) L: Fausto Carmona (5-11) S: Joakim Soria (20)

[BOXSCORE]

Unfortunately, not as much winning baseball as you would hope for against the Kansas City Royals. It was a disappointing loss on Sunday that dropped the Indians one game away from an even .500 record and with the Tigers win, two and a half games out of first.

So hold the phone here.... Danny Duffy? What say you here? Nane Fefe? You kidding me right? Duffy was a last-minute replacement to Kyle Davies, who was scratched. Duffy compared

himself to a microwave, saying he just needs 30 minutes and he's ready.

Duffy is a starter, in case you were wondering and he did a damn good job against the Tribe in this one . Aside from a rough go against Boston earlier last week, he's actually been putting together some good games, especially against Central foes.

He threw a good game, but the Indians got hits and coaxed out some walks off Duffy and the bullpen, 10 hits and six walks to be exact. So they had their opportunities, and let some of them get squandered.

"We were able to get some hits today, but didn't execute when we had to," Acta said. "We had a few opportunities where a hit would've been huge for us, but we couldn't get it."

You can easily point to a few instances were the breaks just weren't there. Lou Marson clobbered a ball that was oh-so-close to being a home run that would have given the Indians the lead, and later on Brantley almost fit one in. So really, there was some good efforts and some opportunities out there, but they didn't get converted, so you can't say much more.

I do tip my hat to **Fausto Carmona**. It wasn't the best game he's ever pitched, but also wasn't the worst. He went into the eighth and aside from a few mistakes to the Frenchman and Alex Gordon, he was relatively good. Guy just needs a little run-support there and things are good.

"He's throwing well," Acta said. "That's all I'm going to say. I've seen him and I've seen a couple of our guys put together six, seven good ones and then go back. I don't want to swallow my words. ... Hopefully he continues to give us a chance to win every five days."

That's all you can ask from Fausto, especially with Jimenez now in the fold, you got three, heck even four guys that the Indians can count on to go out there and give them at least six solid and to keep them in the game on a regular basis. Pressure is off, so go out there and don't think about it. Do the job, and I think we're going to be okay.

Random Details...

Asdrubal Cabrera, 3-3 with two walks. On base all five times. How did he only score once? Especially with Carlos Santana getting two hits. Sigh...

Matt LaPorta's debut in the five-hole, 0-3 with a walk. Bring back Hafner please.

Fukudome had his first hit as a member of the Tribe, a double. Austin Kearns had his 30th hit this season. I'll stop.

In his first Major League game of 2011, Jason Donald worked a walk. Donald is wearing a padding on his hand/batting glove for some extra protection to the hand he fractured during spring after getting hit.

THE KIP SHOWWWWWWWWWW!

Anyone else notice the sweat circle formed on home umpire Wally Bells' stomach? Fausto is jealous.

Indians haven't won a series in a long time... Not since the Yankees series. And now a seven game road trip to Boston and Arlington. Oh boy. After those games, 40 of the remaining 51 games come against the Central. Buckle down.

[UBALDO MANIA]

Many people don't go back and read what they wrote during the hectic time of the trading

deadline... But I do, even if it makes me look like a fool. I'll even be the first to tell you, I definitively said that the Indians, in no possible way, would obtain the services of Ubaldo Jimenez.

Then...

Yesterday I dismissed Ubaldo Jimenez and continuing the trend of things I dismiss entirely, Jimenez now seems like a strong possibility for Cleveland according to FOX Sports' Ken Rosenthal. At least, there is a strong desire from the Indians side to get him.

Again, let me repeat this. Teams can want Jimenez, but that doesn't mean the Rockies want to give him up.

Yup, I said that. At least I didn't say the Indians were a real longshot to get Ubaldo Jimenez and the Yankees were the front runner, right Danny Knobler, insider who has more knowledge than I?

I did say, as a side note that it would be pretty cool to get Ubaldo. This was way before I knew the steep price of both Drew Pomeranz (I mean the player to be named later) and Alex White. However, like most trades, I warm up to them and see them in their full-context.

Most of the knee jerk reactions to the trade, is that this was way too risky. Of course, those were probably the same fans that said "Hey why are we always trading our superstars away!" You can't win. But let's look at this with a backed up view and some feed from Chris Antonetti , who surely has made his mark as Indians General Manager after this deal.

"It was really difficult," Antonetti said. "To part with the level of talent that we traded in this deal was exceptionally difficult for us to do and it would take a very rare set of circumstances to come together for us to consider it. I think this met that criteria.

"Those guys [star players under club control for at least two years] do not get traded that often. And we, in our market, don't have the ability to acquire these guys through Major League free agency. There are very few opportunities for us to do it.

"That was really the impetus behind the trade and the motivation behind it."

Simply put, this was a unique opportunity that isn't presented much. Fans wonder why the Indians don't spend money on players like Ubaldo Jimenez, and it's quite simple. They can't win. This was a situation, where not only could they win, they were likely the only team that could win. They had the prospects, they had the "currency" if you well, to get Jimenez in the fold.

Something the Yankees didn't have. Which makes it even more laughable when you think they were the lead dog in acquiring him. They weren't and didn't stand a chance unless they were willing to part with a large portion of their farm system. They don't have what the Indians brought to the table.

Not only that, the Indians may be one of the few farm systems that can sustain a blow like trading your two best pitching prospects, mainly because of the depth they've built up over the past few years. More on that in a second.

As you Cleveland Fan readers may have not seen, I broke down the Jimenez deal Sunday morning on my blog space. If you are interested in just a long narrative of uncollected thoughts, go ahead and give it a read. I kind of pieced together some of the reaction on the trade, but didn't get to put this gem of a piece in by Jeff Passan of Yahoo! Sports .

Passan has an overall excellent point that isn't given proper justice without just giving you a direct quote.

Baseball's prospect fetish is more pragmatic than some font of avant-garde theory. In a nutshell: Prospects are cheap. Whether it's the Indians, with their revenues in the bottom 10, or the New York Yankees, everybody likes a sale. So the smartest teams horde prospects and use them

judiciously – sometimes to trade for the best player on the market, like the Indians did with Jimenez, and other times to complement their major league team, as they've done with third baseman Lonnie Chisenhall and second baseman Jason Kipnis.

And according to Passan's pitching prospects flame out more often than you could even imagine. Passan goes on to talk about Jimenez and the risk the Indians are taking by acquiring him. But towards the end, a quote from a scout really stands out... If you can get yourself an ace, you get yourself an ace.

Boom... On Sunday I was going every which way. I honestly and truly didn't know which side to fall on. And that's fine, as I've mentioned, you don't know the ultimate out come of a trade until years down the road. But I'm most definitely backing this deal after reading that quote.

Because it simply makes sense. Too much sense. If you can get yourself an ace, you get yourself an ace. Masterson, Jimenez, Carmona, Tomlin, Carrasco, and a plethora of young arms that are still there, such as Scott Barnes, Zach McAllister, Jeanmar Gomez, and David Huff. We'll never know how Pomeranz would pan out as a member of the Tribe. But I'm okay with that.

[INTRODUCING...]

Chisenhall and Kipnis are now major leaguers. We've been exposed to Cord Phelps, Zach McAllister, and Ezequiel Carrera, all of who could have a hand in the Indians squad later this year, or even in 2012. Pomeranz and White are gone, so is Joe Gardner. So, damn, who's left in this farm system that was regarded as very deep and one of the best in the entire game of baseball?

Is it still one of the best? Probably not, because quite frankly, when two of your best prospects get traded and the other two graduate, what really can you say? Yeah, it's still pretty deep (still love the pitching depth, regardless of the loss of Pomz and White), but certainly not one of the best. It will take some time to get back up there.

But who's out there? Who do we now have to look forward to with graduates and trades taking the names most fans knew?

You're all educated, so you probably know some of the names I'm about to throw out at you. If you wanna freshen up on some of the names the Indians have, by all means, check out the Prospect Board .

Pitching wise, the names that jump to the top of the list for me are Scott Barnes (Garko trade), Mike Rayl, Matt Packer, and Felix Sterling.

Barnes has had a good year with Columbus, but recently hit the Disabled List. He's a strikeout machine showing a lot of promise. A 2010 draftee, Rayl was recently promoted to Kinston after turning in a most excellent start with the Captains this year. Packer has had a meteoric rise and with the trades, could possibly be on his way to Columbus soon and is in the midst of a hot-stretch in Akron. He's a left-hander comparable to Aaron Laffey, with a little bit of versatility.

And Sterling is probably the most promising of the bunch. He was just promoted to Lake County after starting the year with the Arizona club. He's a Latin prospect that has received a good amount of praise thus far.

Let's not forget about injured Hector Rondon and Jason Knapp either. But they are injured, so...

Offensively, with Kipnis and Chisenhall advancing, the attention has to turn back to Nick Weglarz, who just hit the DL in Akron yet again. Chun Chen is teadily making his way through the system as the best catching prospect, and that Lake County team, they've got a lot of bright spots that can swing the stick.

All is not bare. It might be a few years away before they reach the status of a Chisenhall (and it might take a few more drafts to rebuild the depth to what it was going into this year), but things are still good. The Indians can do a lot in terms of high-impact arms if they sign the two High School pitchers they drafted, second round pick Dillon Howard and 20th rounder Dillon Peters. Both are high school arms, so come with a lot of promise, but a lot of growth needed. But it

would be a nice start.

[OUT OF THE GOPHER HOLE]

If you didn't think Chris Antonetti was in the gopher hole doing some work this weekend, you must be naive. Not only did he leave the Cleveland Indians Golf Charities outing early on Thursday to complete the Fukudome deal, Jordan Bastian reported that he and the Indians discussed as many as 75 players leading up to the deadline.

It must have taken a lot of discussion both with the Rockies and internally to arrive at the decision to trade Pomeranz and White for Jimenez. So you can only imagine how much additional discussion the Indians had with clubs on other players. We know the Indians were interested in Hiroki Kuroda, B.J. Upton, Ryan Ludwick, Aaron Harang, and Carlos Beltran, just to name a few names. Imagine all the leg-work that went into discussion like that.

Speaking of Ludwick. The Indians didn't bring him in, after many believed the Indians were close to a deal. There was some belief that towards the end, the Padres were asking for too much from the Indians. How they ended up with a PTBNL or cash deal with the Pirates is beyond me, but that's that.

No other deal was made, so unless the Indians pull a waiver deal out from nowhere, this looks like it is your squad going forward. The biggest addition is weeks away though. Or so we would think. Getting Shin-Soo Choo back in a few would be quite the boost and at that point, I don't really think an additional bat would be needed.

[RANDOM UBALDO]

- Ubaldo Jimenez's physical went well and of course, Antonetti said that if he wasn't healthy according to the Indians standards, there certainly wouldn't have been a deal. I think it's telling that the Indians were able to get the Rockies to go through with a deal without giving Alex White a physical. The Indians were in the drivers seat there. Good job on their part.

- Jimenez won't pitch until the weekend against Texas because of his travel yesterday just to take his physical and get back to Colorado. He'll be with the team in Boston at some point, but after pitching on Saturday, and the madness, I think we can reasonably wait until the weekend to see the shiny new car be brought out onto the street.

- Why on earth did the Rockies even run him out there for an inning? Who the heck knows. Antonetti said there was a level of anxiety and if I was him, I would have yelled at Dan O'Dowd for letting that happen. Of course Antonetti said it wasn't his place. But what was Colorado thinking? They knew he had to go through a physical, so why would they jeopardize the deal by even letting him go out there for an inning?

- I give him a mulligan on that. I know it looked pretty bad, but he said after the game he just had no clue what to think. He clearly was not in the right frame of mind. He even said "I don't know what I'm doing here."

- What about Drew Pomeranz? He's technically the Player to Be Named Later because he can't be included in a trade until after one calender year from when he signed his deal. That isn't until Mid-August, so he actually is still in the organization. He won't be appearing in any games though, probably just stay sharp with some bullpens until the Rockies can get their hands on him. We should let him throw 48 pitches against Erie or Reading just as payback.

- Acta has a past with Jimenez, apparently knowing him very well. Nothing but good things about him coming out of Colorado. So we definitely don't have to worry about the person the Indians are getting.

- Oh and Mitch Talbot was designated for assignment, who would have heard that with all the commotion going on? Thomas Neal is actually a part of the 40-man roster, so Orlando Cabrera's trade didn't actually create a spot for Jimenez.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Do you guys remember when the Indians acquired Michael Brantley in the CC Sabathia trade? It was the Indians choice if the Brewers made the playoffs (they wanted Brantley) and if they didn't, it was their choice (they would have preferred to give up second baseman Taylor Green). Well, I was kind of curious the other day when I saw someone mention Taylor Green getting a promotion on Twitter the other day. What's the almost-Indian up to right now?

Last year, Green at the age of 23 spent his entire year repeating at Double-A Hunstville and hit 13 home runs and knocked in 81 runs. This year, he was in Hunstville for a very short time before arriving in Triple-A Nashville. This year he has hit 17 home runs with 70 RBI in 97 games with a .330 average and a .415 OBP. He's actually made a transition to third base, where he's played most of his games.

And we have **Jason Kipnis** now, who hit his first major league home run yesterday , as well as Chisenhall at third. I'd say that deal worked out pretty well for the Indians.

It was almost as if Kipnis celebrated the news of him being the full-time second baseman after the trade of Orlando Cabrera with his first jack on Sunday. Acta said that Cabrera handled the news well and understood the situation. I'm not sure he minds either. He's going to a team that is likely one of the favorites to win the National League pennant and are almost a lock for the playoffs at this point. Still, the impact of Uncle Orlando cannot be forgotten.

"I thought he handled it very well. He was very professional about it," Tribe manager Manny Acta said. "He had a lot to do with the success we had here in the first couple of months of the season. He really helped Asdrubal [Cabrera] and helped a lot of the young kids. But the main thing was for us to get Kipnis the playing time that we think he deserves."

And on Sunday, Kipnis rewarded the Indians with his first solo blast. The first of many to come, right?

Sad to hear **Matt LaPorta** deleted his Twitter account after some fans said some very stupid things after he had that disappointing and horrid at-bat a few games ago against the Angels. It's sad a few bad apples can spoil something for him, but he's probably better off not dealing with it.

And for him, it had to be quite satisfying to hit that walk-off shot on Saturday.

Oh hi **Jason Donald**! The kid that was supposed to be the Indians starting third baseman a long time ago back in March finally made his 2011 debut in a Tribe uniform. Horrible timing, but with Orlando Cabrera traded, looks like Donald will be in it for the rest of the season now as a utility guy. He can handle it too, as he's played all the infield positions necessary. Hannahan will probably be the primary third base replacement, despite Donald's star there Sunday, as well as the go-to-guy at first in a pinch. I'd expect Donald to mostly spell Kipnis.

K... I... P... Oh, that spell Kipnis. Right....

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

I'm thinking of nixing the television reference of the day and filling up the Rafael Perez tweet space with something else. Now taking your suggestions. Leader in the clubhouse, LeVon Washington featured Tweet of the Week
.

Oh LeVon .... You so crazy.

Days Without a Tweet: 69

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