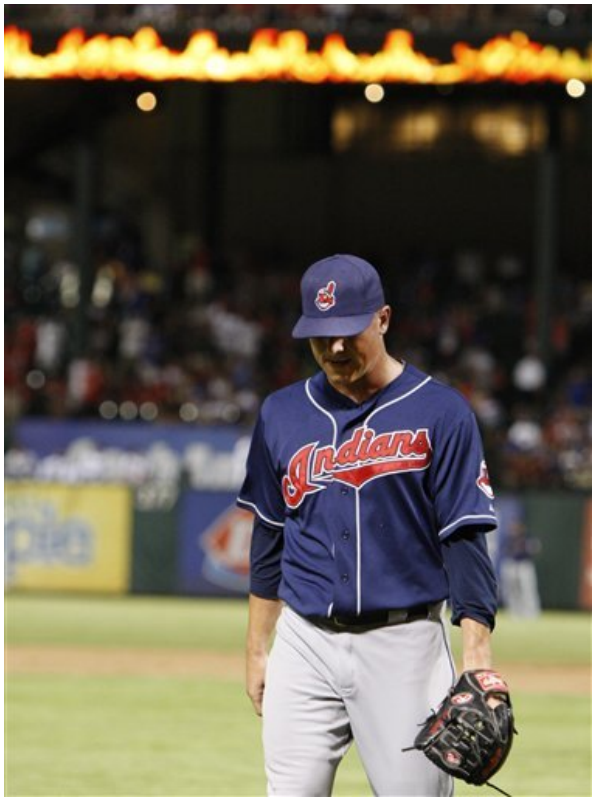

Just... Just... Don't talk to me right now...

August 7th, 2011

Cleveland Indians - **3**

Texas Rangers - **5**

W: Darren Oliver (4-5) L: Joe Smith (2-3) S: Mike Adams (2)

[BOXSCORE]

And it all came apart.

Photo - AP via Yahoo! Sports

You have seven games on the road against the division leaders from the other two divisions you don't play in. That right there is tough enough. Then you have to realize that these two teams are some of the best offenses and their ballparks are also made for hitting.

Given the circumstances, you have to be pleased winning three games and the offensive and pitching performances by your club.

But when you look back and check out the multiple bullpen cough-jobs and look at the fact that the Indians very well could have gone 7-0 just as easily as they went 3-4, you can't help but get extremely frustrated. That isn't to say they should have gone 7-0, but the Indians should have at least won one of these two sets, rather than split and lose to Texas 1-2.

Check this out... The Indians lost their two in Boston via the walk-off, their Friday contest the same way in the 11th, and it took an eighth inning for Texas to win it on Sunday. Losing in the eighth inning or later in all four games? Losing by seeing them have a grasp on the lead, only to have Texas and Boston take a sledgehammer to their hands?

Someone take a sledgehammer to my head.

Manny Acta is pleased overall because he believes that the road trip was going to make or break the team and despite the results , the club "kept their heads above water."

"Despite the four heartbreaking losses," Acta said, "these guys kept their heads above water. That's what we wanted. We didn't want to come on the road and get buried by these two ballclubs. ... We're going back home now, playing our division and taking care of our own destiny."

Well congratulations, you didn't get buried, but you did have an opportunity to really take this road trip and make a statement and that wasn't made.

And if you don't believe me, ask **Josh Tomlin**, who was absolutely dealing last night until the eighth inning.

"It's disappointing," Tomlin said. "It's disappointing for us as a team. We were in every single game. We obviously want to win those games. Everyone is working hard and trying to do everything they can to win these games.

Tomlin said that they lost and that's just that and he couldn't be more right. Yes it is a moral victory that you just faced two teams in first place and didn't get swept and are still very much in your own divisional race and that you could have very well won any of the games.

"It definitely hurts," he said of the road trip's end result, "but we were in every game against two of the best teams in the AL, who are playing pretty good baseball right now. We've got a lot of games left in the division."

But you didn't, you won three and lost the other four in very rough heartbreaking fashion.

So let's not be happy about this? Okay?

Everything was fantastic until that eighth inning. The Indians had a 2-0 lead and were able to add a Michael Brantley solo shot, so surely that would be enough, right? Two innings for Tomlin and or the Mafia to do their job? Perfect. But then again, this is Texas.

And I hate Texas. Thankfully the Tribe wasn't done in by any cheap home runs like they have in the past, but damnit, the Ranger offense is too good.

It was like a flick of the switch in the eighth and it was all she-wrote. Five-run eighth? After being shutdown most of the night, they just came alive. Acta claims that Tomlin ran out of gas in the eighth, and he let the first two on, so perhaps he did.

But if Tomlin ran out of gas, the bullpen never had any before they attempted to drive up the hill. Manny said that walking Kinsler with the bases loaded is what killed **Joe Smith**. I disagree, Manny Acta leaving Smith in to face a left-hander is what killed Smith. To his credit, Smith shouldered the blame.

"The infield hit is what it is," Smith said. "When you throw sinkers, you're going to give those up. Everything else was just over the middle of the plate and up. I completely [stunk]. Tomlin throws seven great innings and I came in and I did not get the job done at all."

The infield hit is what it was, but he should have been yanked. You have Sipp and Perez and I understand your closer isn't available tonight, but you only have two innings to take care of.

The wheels fell off... The Mafia had a bad week. They essentially blew all these games. It's not Mafia like at all, and it makes you make strange faces when Ian Kinsler says "once we got to their bullpen, we felt like we had a chance."

Weird. That shouldn't be the mentality teams are taking facing the Mafia. But lately, you can't blame them for that.

The offense did their part, they did enough to win this the way Tomlin pitched. And Tomlin pitched great until the very end when he "ran out of gas" as you can put it. Going into that eighth inning he had given up three hits and two walks with no runs. It's a shame it ended the way it did, but it certainly wasn't Tomlin's fault.

Tomlin threw 65% of his pitches for strikes last night. He was 9-for-5 on the groundouts to flyouts and had four strikeouts. Remarkably, in Texas of all places, he didn't give up a home

run. Which makes the three walks a little more understandable (especially since he walked Napoli twice).

For a game involving two of the AL's leaders in home runs surrendered, for only one home run to be given up in the park that one is most likely to see the ball fly out, that was pretty crazy.

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Let's just move forward and look ahead. We've got new additions going in two straight as the Indians return home for a huge three game set between the top two in the AL Central. It will also conclude a run of three straight division leaders in the span of 10 games, something that hasn't happened very much in the past, if it's happened at all.

Doug Fister will go for the Tigers on Tuesday, while Ubaldo Jimenez goes for the Tribe on Wednesday. The Tigers even shifted their rotation, showing how important this series is to them by moving Verlander to pitch Thursday.

It's on people. Get to Progressive Field, support the team. Don't Detroit come down and infiltrate the park and eliminate home field advantage.

Random Details...

Three walks, no home runs for Josh Tomlin. Things I would have never expected to say for 100 Alex. Incredible. He's done it just two other times this year, his first start against Boston and earlier against Seattle. He rarely ever walks one, let alone one guy, Mike Napoli, twice.

Joe Smith has been great with no one on base and when he's just doing his business. Don't believe these lefty splits, he still isn't to be trusted against the left-handed hitters. He's also been a disaster coming in and cleaning up for the pitchers who leave runners on. He has given up eight earned runs (two last night), but in terms of letting inherited runners score? He's now let

11 of his 25 inherited runners score.

Congratulations to Michael Young for getting his 2,000th hit. Unfortunately one of those earlier ones there produced a loss for the Tribe, but I'll take his 1,999th and 2,000th hits going for messily infield singles that didn't harm anyone. A great player in the game and really underrated.

[INTRODUCING...]

Carrying on the theme of introducing some of the other lesser-known prospects since the Jimenez deal went down, every day we'll learn a little more about one of the prospects in the Indians system.

So Matt LaPorta has been a big disappointment in the power department, and the Indians continue to search for a power-hitting first baseman that they haven't had since the days of Big Jimmy. Beau Mills hasn't exactly flourished, although he is having a comeback year in Akron and Columbus this season. So let's look down to Kinston, where a power threat has emerged. It all started in Lake County with **Jesus Aguilar** , a slugging one bagger from Venezuela.

Aguilar hit 19 home runs in 95 games for the Captains. If you think he's all power, think again. Aguilar also hit .292 with a .370 on-base percentage. Showing ability to hit them between the fences just as well. Aguilar has a total of 49 extra-base hits between the levels of Kinston and Lake County, 28 of them going for two-bases. Overall he's knocked in 70 runs thus far and with his recent promotion to Kinston, could be making a rapid ascent up through the system at just 21-years-old.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

After a successful round of batting practice at Classic Park, the Lake County Captains will have **Shin-Soo Choo**
on his rehab assignment,
which will start tonight

. Yes, that means by the end of the week, we could have Choo back in the lineup as he returns from his finger surgery.

But of course, just as one injury heals up, and the Indians seemingly dodged the Brantley bullet, another one flares up. **Matt LaPorta** missed his second start in a row due to ankle soreness .

"He got hit on the foot two days ago," Acta said. "His ankle was swollen [Saturday] and he couldn't even take batting practice. He feels better and he's available today, but we decided to give him one more day off just to put it together with tomorrow's day off and have it heal completely."

Of course the good news is that LaPorta was available and came in defensively last nigh. I'm sure the Indians decided to just give him an extended break with today's off day. **Shelley Duncan** was on fire anyway, so I think it was a sound move. Matt will probably be back in the lineup on Tuesday, but him playing defense late in last night's game shows you that he's healthy enough to play.

Speaking of the Hawkman, has he given any reason to be sent down when Jack Hannahan re-joins the team after the birth of his child this past weekend? As much as I'd like to keep him around due to his speed as a pinch runner (he'll probably be gone once Choo gets back regardless) I think I'd rather send Zeke Carrera down and keep Duncan. Hawkman has proved time and time again he belongs on this team.

I say all this though, because I've given up all hope of Austin Kearns being jettisoned. It's sad though. I know what Acta has said time and time again about Kearns being a backup now and adjusting... But why not keep a backup that is used to being a backup in Duncan?

All Acta would say is "There's a chance of everything." But once again, made it sound like Austin Kearns isn't going anywhere and status-quo will remain in regards to the current configuration. Duncan probably goes back down, Zeke does when Choo comes back, and life with The Kearnal continues.

And of course with **Kosuke Fukudome** and the production he's putting up right now , whenever Grady Sizemore returns, you'd have to think it would be Kearns as the odd man out then, but by then, rosters will probably expand and carrying all of these outfielders will be no problem.

As the above link mentions, Fukudome is starting to fit in and he's really put up some solid numbers since coming over. He's doing exactly what was expcted and even then some. He's getting on base and even coming up with some big hits late in the game.

By the by, congratulations to the Hannahan's, Jack and Jenny on the birth of their child. Hopefully he was named Jacob so the JH trend continues and one day, he can be Jumpin' Jake Junior, just like his daddy.

Facing Texas really gave me a good idea who **Jason Kipnis** is comparable to. The rookie second baseman seems like he can provide some production on the level of an Ian Kinsler. Someone who's got a little bit of speed and a little bit of power. Someone who's going to hit towards the top of the lineup and do a little bit of both of those elements.

Of course with the streak earlier last week and his fifth home run on Saturday, Kipnis is showing a little bit of power
that is not much of a surprise to the Indians brass.

"That's been the report," Acta said on Sunday. "Our Minor League people have always felt that he can hit for power. He's made quite an impression here in a week."

Thank the heavens he isn't playing him based off matchups "and stuff." Right?

Sucks to see a founding and original member of the Bullpen Mafia leave, but **Justin Germano** got an incredible opportunity overseas in Korea with the Samsung Lions. A former Japanese pitcher before coming to Cleveland, Germano had a better opportunity waiting and most likely of

more importance, more money ($210K and a $50K bonus) over there. Good luck to him, he's a good person and deserves the chance.

More importantly, although I'm responsible for coming up with Bullpen Mafia, it was Germano who really spurred the movement by retweeting and hashtagging the whole thing. I'm sure he also told all his other bullpen friends about it. Thanks Germ for starting the movement and not skipping out on the credit.

Even though Matt Underwood did.

Anyone else not surprised that **Fausto Carmona** enjoyed the Texas heat ?

"I didn't sweat through one cap," said Carmona. "There was a nice breeze out on the mound."

That's a joke right? This is the same guy who went through six hats, a few jerseys and a crapload of more undershirts back on July 18th against Minnesota and he didn't break a sweat? This is the same man that walks out to the mound and he has sweat dripping down the brim of his hat.

Unbelievable...

Finally, in more unbelievable news... In an effort to find some more tidbits for the Rundown, I made the mistake of venturing into Paul Hoynes latest Hey Hoynsie! for the first time in, well, a long time. And it was mainly because of the teaser headline "Where have you gone, Jhonny Peralta?"

Say what?

The fan asks if the Indians are having any regrets about keeping him , after his career year with Detroit. Hoynes, well. Okay I know I shouldn't get into this, but too late.

I always thought Peralta got a raw deal from the fans in Cleveland. He's a solid ballplayer, but the fans were never satisfied.

When the Tigers traded for Peralta, they put him back at shortstop and he's been producing ever since. When the Indians moved him from short to third to make room for Cabrera, he did a nice job there as well. If you want proof, just check the errors Indians third basemen made after Peralta was traded.

Of all people, Hoynes would defend Peralta. He would.

Second, just check the errors? Yes, he didn't butcher the position like Nimartuena did, but that's because he didn't have much range. He didn't have much range at shortstop either, which is why he was moved. Yes, he was serviceable enough to not make a bajillion errors, but that doesn't mean he did a "nice job" at third. And errors don't show that "proof."

Alright, I'm done.

[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]

Your Minor League Tweet of the Day comes from Mahoning Valley Scrappers First Baseman Jerrud Sabourin
.

Chillin' on a charter bus, laid back swervin like I'm walt jones Condensation foggin up them windows, an ice cold pack sittin on my elbow

A little freestylin' from the Undrafted Free Agent out of Indiana.

Days Without a Tweet: 76

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ TheTribeDaily where he doesn't tweet about Jhonny Peralta being "nice" at third base. You can also read more Morning Rundown and other features at his blog, The Tribe Daily .