I don't have the urge to kiss people's feet often, but I feel like kissing Jeanmar Gomez's this morning.

**August 30th, 2011**

Oakland Athletics - **2**

Cleveland Indians - **6**

W: Jeanmar Gomez (1-2) L: Trevor Cahill (9-13)

**[BOXSCORE]**

How do they do it, right?

Granted, Trevor Cahill isn't have the season he did last year, but you got **Jeanmar Gomez** of all people getting called up and out-pitching him? Jack Hannhan hitting home runs? The team that shouldn't have contended, then fell off their high horse when they probably weren't expected to, is now trying to contend again when they shouldn't.

Maybe sometimes it just takes being counted out. So let's just continue to hope people count them out, because the Indians are winning ball games again all of a sudden. It's unfortunate that the Tigers came back last night to keep their lead at 5.5 games, but just need to be concerned with winning games right now.

So first, how about Gomez? This is the A's, who have a very weak offense to begin with. But they are young and hungry, sort of like the Royals. They've got played like Weeks and Allen up with the team and in prominent roles. Surrounded by some vets like Coco and Matsui. So while they aren't some stellar murder's row of hitters, they aren't dead meat. But they are on the bottom end of AL offenses.

Don't let that take away from Gomez's outing though.

*"He gave us a very good outing," Indians skipper Manny Acta said. "He gave us an opportunity to put together a couple of runs."*

Acta said there was some movement to Gomez's fastball and that he made the pitches when he had to. Watching Gomez, he was just efficient. I mean, he didn't have any control issues, walked just one hitter. He did give up a hit per inning, and he did have runners on second base in the first three innings, but he was getting outs and like Acta said, making pitches.

Gomez needed this start really. After last year, there was some expectations hurled upon him that he'd be a decent option for the Indians rotation if need be. A few if need be situations came up earlier this year and he kind of disappointed. So it's good for Gomez to re-establish that he's still got it in him and can me a major league option.

He's had success at Triple-A, but not here this year when called upon, until last night. And as Acta said, Gomez gave this team a little bit of a lift.

*"I don't feel any pressure," Gomez said. "I don't feel nervous. I just tried to do what I've been doing at Triple-A. I tried to keep the ball down and throw strikes."*

These youngins are setting a dangerous precedent of expectations. Between Huff and now Gomez pitching well. We can't expect this every time out, but we will certainly want to after seeing them go out one after another and get the job done and pick up two wins.

It was a real big night for the offense though. They broke through in the third and it was, guess who? Kosuke Fukudome again coming up with a big hit. He's got a little magic going in that second spot in the lineup. His third inning double plated both Lou Marson and much like the night before, Ezequiel Carrera.

Fukudome has been so important to this team since coming over and the rash of injuries has occurred. He's been able to fill in wherever needed and quite frankly, with the likes of Brantley and Choo out, him in the two hole is perfect. It let's Cabrera hit third, they can get by with Zeke leading off (the combo has produced two nights in a row now), and the rest of the order can just be maintained with Thome and Santana, etc.

The other big hits came from Carlos Santana, who has now homered two nights in a row as well. Could he finally be hitting the big stride we've been expecting him to hit all season? Do we have a Mr. September on our hands? If Senor Santana can carry this offense, that would be huge.

It sucks that Lonnie Chisenhall has to ride the bench right now, but you can't sit **Jack Hannahan** . The guy is on fire since the birth of little Johnny Hannahan . Hannahan is 17-for-41 with a homer and 10 RBI since his son was born.

With Duncan hit by a pitch before Cahill's exit, Hannahan delivered what very much felt like a knock-out punch to the A's in the sixth when he met new reliever Fautino De Los Santos with a home run to right field.

*"I'm using my hands more and doing what the pitcher allows me to do," Hannahan said. "I'm just not trying to do too much."*

Well keep it up Jack. This team was rolling earlier in the season when uncommon pieces like Hannahan and Orlando Cabrera were contributing. Hannahan is getting the job done, so are players like Zeke Carrera and Jason Donald. They are contributing where needed and that's why it is working lately.

And big Jimmy with his best game since coming over, on base three times, twice via the walk. Everyone was on base last night in some way shape or form and all but Shelley Duncan hat a hit. That is a well-needed offensive performance to back a pitcher who really put it all out there last night for a win. Let's hope this momentum sticks.

**Random Details...**

Man does Jason Donald look good. That double he hit after the Hannahan home run was a solid hit. It was also nice to see so soon after he was scratched from the lineup with a finger injury.

The Mafia gave up a run in the ninth, but good grief Vinnie Pestano. After a little hiccup, he's starting to re-find the groove he was in earlier this year when the bullpen was at it's peak. Comes in, gets Sweeney on swings and gets Weeks to ground out with a runner on. Vinnie, FN, Pestano.

Gomez only threw 88 pitches, so Acta could have sent him out there for the seventh, especially after how strongly he finished the eighth. But I like the call to just hand it over to the best part of your team. Acta could have sent him out there after the club added on, but that would be even more of a reason not to if you ask me. You wouldn't want Gomez to relax and feel like he's' done his job. Acta made a good move to replace Gomez when he did.

Big ups seeing Neil Wagner pitching for the Athletics. Neil Wagner was a Indians farm hand as late as last year. He was with Akron in 2010 and kind of had hit a wall with the organization. The incoming depth really kind of put a stop to him progressing and the Indians sent him to Oakland for a new opportunity. I'm sure he thought he was going to make his major league debut in Cleveland, but he probably never thought it would be with Oakland. Wagner is a smart guy, very articulate. It's good to see him break through, even though it's with Oakland. He deserves it. Congrats on the major league debut and one inning of shutout ball, Neil!

Manny Acta stated that the performance earned Gomez another start. I don't think any of us know what Carrasco's status is other than the Tribe, but they don't really have any other options at this point. I think Gomez has earned a few more starts by default. It is reassuring to see him pitch well in that case.

**[THE END OF LAPORTA]**

Is this the beginning of the end for **Matt LaPorta**? Or just the beginning of the start? Matt LaPorta can go one of two ways right now. He can use this to spark him into becoming the player, or at least a little spec of the player we all thought he could be and thought the Indians were getting when they dealt CC Sabathia. Or he can downward spiral and become Andy Marte.

*"Expectations have always been very high for him," Acta said prior to a 6-2 win over the A's on Tuesday. "So far, it's been a challenge for him."*

To make room for Jeanmar Gomez in the rotation, the Indians optioned Matt LaPorta to Columbus . The Indians say it was a depth move more than a performance move, but you can tell by this they aren't real pleased with his

contributions. He'd already lost a significant time at first to light hitting Lou Marson, who did a lot of the catching lately with Santana manning first. But given the choice, I think I'd take Marson behind the plate the way he improves the pitching staff over whatever it is LaPorta brings to the table offensively. It isn't anything to write home about. It isn't horrible. It's Ryan Garko. Which is nice, but not what the Indians thought they were getting.

I loved Ryan Garko, still do, but that isn't what Matt LaPorta is supposed to be.

*"The move was not made based on Matt's year," Acta emphasized. "It was pretty much strictly [based on that] we can't send any infielders down with the situation we're in right now. We can't send any outfielders down with the situation we're in right now. We could not send a pitcher down."*

Certainly if LaPorta was hitting well, it wouldn't have happened this way. He'll be back in a matter of days when the roster's expand, but this should tell him all he needs to know about his standing within the organization. He's on a bit of thin ice in regards to his future. The Indians may very well be looking to acquire a first baseman this offseason to help their offense. Point blank, Acta and the Indians can't put up with Matt's inconsistencies.

*"A lot of inconsistency," said Acta, referring to LaPorta's showing this season. "He still shows the flashes of the player that we are envisioning him to be, but it's very inconsistent. He still*

*needs some work on his plate discipline. He's a guy who's projected to be a walks, power guy, and that's still not there."*

And in a way, it isn't fair to a guy like Matt, who has a lot more expectations on him than most. He's a nice guy and a good person. He works hard and has been dealt a bit of bad luck in the past with injuries. But he isn't producing and if you don't produce in this game in this era, you aren't going to last long. You will get opportunities, numerous ones if you are a guy like LaPorta with a high ceiling, but you got to do something with those opportunities or eventually, it won't matter.

So we'll see where he goes from here. He can use this as the motivation to turn into the player everyone thinks he can be, or he can just continue to mill around the status he has right now. Which is nice, it's major league caliber. Ryan Garko made a living off of it for a few years... But it isn't good enough for this team and this situation.

**[RANDOM RUNDOWN]**

**Grady Sizemore** will be the designated hitter in Akron tonight as he begins a rehab stint with the Aeros . This is his last opportunity as the minor league season winds down this week. He will serve as the DH today and play in the field for a few innings on Thursday, possibly six innings.

Akron is done at home on Thursday, so if Sizemore were to go anywhere after that, it'd likely be Columbus. He'll receive an off day on Friday to get evaluated and the club will go from there.

*"Chances are, he'll stay [at Akron] for a few games, and then probably move to one of those other teams," Acta said.*

Sizemore stated himself that he's given things a lot of time to heal and he's ready to just "ramp it up" at this point. There's some urgency in Sizemore to get back on the field and contribute for a team that could use any help they get with so many injuries. If that pushes him to coming back and coming back in a big way, I think we'd all take that.

*"We're in a race right now, and there's definitely a sense of urgency to get back as soon as I can," Sizemore said. "I don't want to put my body at risk; I don't want to rush anything. I'm going to play it smart but also be as aggressive as I can ... to get back as soon as I can."*

One outfielder rehabbing with Columbus is **Trevor Crowe** and he made his first start last night for the Clippers after playing out in Arizona. He was 1-for-4 last night with a stolen base.

Speaking of Columbus, **Mike Sarbaugh** was named International League Manager of the Year. Duh, right? It now continues a run for Sarbaugh that has seen him win three straight Manager of the Year honors in a row. Sarbaugh was named Baseball America's Manager of the Year in 2010 and the Eastern League Manager of the Year with Akron in 2009. He also won the 2007 Carolina League Manager of the Year award while with Kinston.

Sarby has a future in the major leagues. Hopefully it is with Cleveland in some capacity, not to say any of the coaches now aren't doing a good job. But this guy is going to get scooped up by someone sooner or later and I would hope it is the Indians that do it and not someone else.

Finally, congratulations to radio guy Mike Hegan and the late Herb Score for being nominated for the 2012 Ford C. Frick award. The award is given to highlight excellence in baseball broadcasting.

**[RAFAEL PEREZ TWEET WATCH]**

I should just call this, "What funny thing did Cole Cook say today?"

*Dear guy who just told me to "have a good night" - it's 1:42 in the afternoon.*

*It's even hotter than other times I've complained about it being really hot*

**Days Without a Tweet: 99**

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