I really thought the Indians were going to let me get a few games in without me having to scream in my car. But low-and-behold as I was on my way home from campus, sitting at a red light, there's Nino in his white oldsmobile screaming at the radio. The people around me that caught a glimpse, we're probably perplexed but if they only knew, I assume the would understand. If you were on Kent Road in Cuyahoga Falls around 6 P.M. yesterday, I wasn't crazy... I promise...

April 5th, 2012

Toronto Blue Jays - **7**

Cleveland Indians - **4**

W: Luis Perez (1-0) L: Chris Perez Jairo Asencio (0-1) S: Sergio Santos (1)

[BOXSCORE]

First and foremost, I missed that... Ahh the sense of normalcy...

And in normalcy we've got, angst and Opening Day downs for four years in a row now.

Of course, if I didn't say it clearly last year, then let me say it now... Step off the freakin' ledge, it isn't the end of the world. It really isn't and this isn't the end of the season as we quickly learned last year after a few weeks.

Is it painful? You bet. But here's the thing, the team can easily erase it on Saturday.

So reel back and let's relive this pain together, because there are most definitely things that need to get addressed, around the whole "losing" thing.

I'd rather start with the good and the best of the good was **Justin Masterson**. Can I just say that it is so nice to finally have an Ace again. It has been a few years that the Indians could run a guy out there on Opening Day and get a performance like that. Justin Masterson is actually 1-0.

Eight beautiful innings, Masterson walks just one and strikes out 10, showing that he may actually be better than he was last year and that's a great thing for the Indians. You obviously feel bad for him about not getting a win here where he should have had it, but it isn't like he isn't accustomed to this scene.

"He did everything you want in an ace," Perez said of Masterson. "He dominated them, obviously. Two hits in eight innings with 10 strikeouts. I mean, that's awesome. I don't even

think he had his best stuff today and he still did that. So, yeah, it feels twice as bad.

The question, or I guess the first of many as we get underway with our recap here is: Should Manny Acta have left him in there to finish this one out?

In a few weeks, when he's pitched in a few games, absolutely. But I'm not sure it was necessary this early on. I would also say that I'm not in a position to say definitely yes because I did not see him pitch the eight innings that he did. From all accounts, he was great and probably could have gone out there and got three more outs, not in any danger of looking fatigued.

But you need to be a little cautious this early on, so I'm not going to get angry at Acta for leaving him in.

And now that brings us to question two. I hate having to question Manny like this early on, and normally I would agree with what he has to say in regards to leaving **Chris Perez** in to either sink or swim in that ninth inning
.

"He's our closer and he'll be back out there," said Acta. "There are no excuses. He was ready to go. He faced seven hitters and threw first-pitch strikes to only two of them."

There's an extra circumstance here. Generally if a closer doesn't have it, you have to still hope that he can bear down and do the job. Jim Rosenhaus probably said it best on the radio. The good closers find a way to get the job done even if they don't have their best stuff. This isn't about if Chris Perez is your closer or not... This is about him not having it on this particular day, with the extra circumstance of, oh the man barely has been in game action until now.

Perez has two pitches. Fastball, slider. Fastball isn't as fast, slider isn't hitting the zone, what is your reasoning for keeping him out there? In a different world, with him not coming off this special circumstance, I'll go with Chris Perez throwing his guts out there because I know he'll at least have some sort of fastball.Chris Perez didn't have his best stuff, but he also didn't sound like he should have been out there. Again, I did not see Perez pitch, but based off the trusting

words of Tom Hamilton and everyone else that replied to me on Twitter and what I've seen on replays, Perez didn't look good. Reportedly hitting in the low 90's on his fastball? Control problems? If a pitcher is coming off a spring in which he barely saw any real live game action and is still proving his injury is not a concern is struggling in those two aspects, I'm going to be inclined to pull him.

But the guy wasn't sharp, his fastball wasn't there and there should have been no reason he was kept in there as long as he was. I'd have had Pestano warming up after a few batters and in there before the game was eventually caughed up. It's easy for me to say that, but given this situation here, Acta should have broken from the code of leaving your Closer in there until he blows the save.

Again, I agree with his principle and his point of view, but this was a different circumstance. He needed to make that call.

The other glaring part of this loss has to be **Asdrubal Cabrera**'s opportunity to win the game in the 12th inning as he had the bases loaded and one out. Radical shift means nothing, all you need to do in that position is get the run in by plopping the ball over the infield.

But first, before any of that, the fact that Perez was not hitting the strikezone AT ALL should make you say to yourself as a hitter... "Hmm, maybe I should wait and see what he throws on the first pitch since he walked Michael Brantley on four pitches."

Maybe Cabrera' was playing psychological warfare, banking off Perez wanting to throw a first pitch strike to get ahead of Cabrera. The pitch didn't look like one you should pass up to me, so in that instance, whatever Cabrera was thinking, he failed.

Swinging at the first pitch, regardless of what is going through your mind, is a stupid idea when the guy just walked someone on four pitches and was not even close on several of them. You take one, maybe two if he can't hit the first one before you start hacking, because this is a prime opportunity to win the game.

Not sure what Asdrubal was thinking, but he should have been thinking my way. Of course.

Acta calls it irrelevant...

"Irrelevant," said Acta. "We should have won the game in nine innings. All those things you're commenting about our offense are out the window. ... I'm not going to sit here and judge my offense in one game."

But it's still a fundamental of the game... And it's irritating that he didn't do it correctly.

Random Details

Probably the first time I've seen a guy come in at Left Field and play as a fifth outfielder.

Probably the first time I've seen said defensive replacement cheered by the opposing crowd.

Only one man could do both of those, Omar Vizquel. Love ya O!

Jairo Asencio was off to a good start. Had to get some magic to get out of some of the jams, but he really killed himself in his third inning of work, not with his pitching but his defense. Trying to get the guy at second really opened up that inning ultimately it put him in that situation in which he gave up the home run to Arencibia. Asencio has a nice slider if he can run it in on the right-handers.

One of those jams Asencio got out of is when Rajai Davis attempted to bunt, and it ended up in a double play because it got to Hannahan quickly, and he was able to throw to second for one out and then get Davis at first because... he stopped running! It hurts when a team makes a gaff after you make one and you still don't take advantage.

Aaron Cunningham certainly fits in well with Brantley and Sizemore in the arm department, but he did make a few plays back there. If Duncan was back there, the game is over earlier.

It's a shame that his 3-6 effort is a footnote, but Super Mannahan with yet another Opening Day bomb. The guy has a way of starting things off with a bang.

Five walks between Choo and Santana, two more from Kipnis. The guys around them need to take advantage of those opportunities if they're going to be out there. Choo/Santana on base six times and just one run to show for it?

For those of you wondering about the Choo-Luis Perez spat... Yes there was a warning given earlier after a Masterson pitch, but you don't really eject unless there was an actual beaning. Perez did throw inside and knock Choo back, rather close to the head, and Choo got angry. He kind of charged, but didn't really. Should either have gotten ejected? No, I think the umps made the right call.

Oh and yeah 16 innings is a MLB record for Opening Day ... As if you didn't already hear about that.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

One of the problems that I think we have with **Shelley Duncan** in the starting lineup dawned on me while watching the marathon of a game.

There's no ace-pinch hitter on the bench. It hurts the bench options that he's not available, but I guess you have to live with it for now as he did double and walk in this one before being replaced for defensive reasons.

"We know that he can provide some power and some leadership for us. This is going to be a new venue for him, being able to do it on an everyday basis. It's a great opportunity for him and hopefully he takes advantage of it."

If Duncan produces in the manner he did in Game One, hitting the occasional bomb, then he'll do just fine for now.

Acta gave a little pep talk to the team prior to the game in a team meeting... He summarizes.

"That whatever happened last year, it's in the past," Acta said. "That we need to continue to play good baseball and be consistent throughout the whole season and make sure that you work hard and prepare yourself. Hold your teammates accountable. Things like that. Nothing out of the ordinary. This group has been together for a while now. They know what we expect and what this city expects. Go get 'em."

Rah Rah...

Poor **Thomas Neal** was designated to make room for the Dan Wheeler/Jose Lopez combo the other day. The 40-man spot was needed and Neal was the man the Indians chose to try and sneak through waivers. Luckily he did pass through and will still be around Columbus. Neal is a fun guy on Twitter and easy to root for.

[TIGER WATCH]

It may not be as entertaining as Rafael Perez's Tweet Watch (still Zero by the way, I lost count of the days), but it is just as important. Since this division is said to be Detroit's, why not keep our left eye on them?

The Tigers beat the Red Sox 3-2, but not without some drama. Jose Valverde finally blew a save, but ended up with the win after Austin Jackson knocked home the winning run in the

bottom of the ninth. Justin Verlander tossed eight scoreless innings of two-hit ball, definitely feeling the Masterson effect.

Suck it Valverde...

Miguel Cabrera committed error number one and was walked three times. This is where I snarkly mention that he's on pace to committ 162 errors, but that's very well a possibility (can you believe some Tiger fans thought that was awesome?). Prince Fielder had a hit and a RBI. Jon Lester kept them in check though.

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Nino has a blog and it's so entertaining it should be nominated for most entertaining blog competitions. Give it a vist at The Tribe Daily .

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