The mood was trending towards being one of those days and I should have known after Butler's home run that there would be doom on this day... I should have realized this early and not gotten my hopes up that our Tribe would be able to dismay the Royals once again.

April 25th, 2012

Kansas City Royals - **8**

Cleveland Indians - **2**

W: Luke Hochevar (2-1) L: Ubaldo Jimenez (2-1)

[BOXSCORE]

I like a good nickname. And if you are good, I'll use that nickname more than your real name. I also like a good nickname that can be used if someone sucks and you don't want that. Not that as a player you care with this random guy in Akron, Ohio with 1,000 Twitter followers thinks.

But you should, because I did create Bullpen Mafia, yes?

Yes.

Let's put it this way. I don't want to be using **The Big Eww** and Ewwbaldo, but, I'm going to start.

Ewwbaldo reared his ugly head once again against the Royals and it helped them snap their hilarious 12-game losing streak. Luke Hochevar aside, Ubaldo sucked.

Manny Acta can say he battled all he wants. He sucked. He did the same thing he did last time out. He worked slow, painfully slow, threw too many pitches, just wasn't real aggressive. He was throwing these looping breaking pitches that were nowhere near the zone, bouncing in front of the plate, sending Santana diving to the side.

It's truly ugly. Eww-baldo... Uh-Bald-O... U-Bad-O... We can go all day with this and as it pains me to do, it has to be.

This cannot continue. It absolutely cannot. We talked vaguely about the possibility, hoping it wouldn't happen. Hoping that Jimenez would come out and not make any issues for this rotation. He'd pitch good, if not out of this world, ace-like starting pitching, he'd at least be worthy to be a complimentary to Justin Masterson, being a more than capable number two.

Well Masterson's struggles aside, Ubaldo is not doing it and him not doing it is more concerning, because he's more of a wild card than any other starter.

Someone needs to slap him across the face and tell him that the Indians need him. I'll do it. I already threatened to punch Matt Underwood in the larynx. I have no shame at this point.

The big story of the game however seemed not be Jimenez, but the Indians offense. Make not mistake about it, both sides of the coin need blamed in this one. I just think in this instance, Jimenez is more crucial because he can't be doing this every night. Sure, his outing came down to two pitches he made that harmed him in two two-run home runs...

But the offense was not good. They scored two runs, but could have scored more and had an opportunity to tie it up late. Yeah Hochevar pitched well, but the Indians let some opportunities slip by. Opportunities that they've been coming up in. Casey Kotchman probably said it best when he was good enough to win and get outs.

And as Acta said, you can't give your outs away. As good as Hochevar was, he let the Indians give some outs away
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"We're not going to be hitting people around every night," Acta said. "In order for you to win some of those games like tonight, you're going to have to take care of your 27 outs better. You just can't be giving outs away, because we don't have five or six guys hot right now in our lineup."

That biggest opportunity came late in the game as the Indians were actually wearing Hochevar down.

Sixth: Brantely and Cabrera get on base with an out, Brantely makes it to third on a steal and then Santana walks, loading the bases. Travis Hafner gets his fastball on the first pitch and hits it good, but close enough to Alcides Escobar to get an out at second. A run scores, but it effectively ends the opportunity because Shelley Duncan had an awful night.

Seventh: Same situation in the seventh with Kipnis and Kotchman on base, but this time Aaron Cunningham comes through with a one-out single up the middle that knocks in Kipnis. Mind you that Cunningham's hit and Kotchman getting hit are the first two batters Tommy Hottovy faced in replacing Hochevar. Very crucial for Brantely to continue to keep him on the ropes, but he strikes out on four pitches. At least he gives Cabrera an opportunity, right?

Ehk, Aaron Crow comes in and it's a good battle between the two, and Cabrera gives it a good ride, but it's a deep fly out to end the inning.

It just isn't their night. It should have been clear after the first inning when the Indians had their other best opportunity, and it got spoiled by some bad baserunning and unlucky Hafner. Cabrera singles with one out and that brings up Santana to do the same. Although Santana's single is a little more interesting as it bounces off Eric Hosmer and sort of to Jeff Francoeur, who fumbles around with the ball. Cabrera hits third, cause he can actually run and has the time.

And someone will have to explain to me why Santana thought it was a good idea to break for second on that when he's A) not fast and B) Jeff Francoeur is in right field. Dead duck at second and it kills a golden opportunity with Hafner coming up.

Because with runners on the corners, it's likely the Royals infield alignment is sort of normal and ready for a double play. Instead, they can shift like normal and guard the middle, which is right where Travis Hafner smoked the ball in his at-bat. Instead of a one-run single and runners on the corners again, Hafner grounds out.

Opportunities, given away. You could call it bad luck on Hafner, but I call it what Manny Acta said, giving away outs.

That will not win you the ball game.

Random Details...

Perhaps things looked better if Kipnis and Cabrera wouldn't have let an Alex Gordon grounder get through as Eric Hosmer homered with two outs. I mean, that is true that if you want to blame Santana for the blunder costing a run, you have to blame Kipnis (more so) and Cabrera for letting a grounder by Gordon go by. It would have been out number two, and Butler would have popped out to end the inning and Hosmer wouldn't have had a chance to hit a two-run bomb to make it a 4-0 lead.

"Somebody," Acta said. "It probably looked like Jason was closer to the ball, but that's not what we preach around here. What we preach around here is you collide going after a ball. You don't look at each other. We've been saying that for three years here. We have ice. We have a training staff here. We don't look at each other and let a ball drop. Unfortunately, that cost us."

And those two runs tie the game for the Indians, make the Royals hang their heads and Acta not go for the Jairo Asencio show.

What a bad show this is. I think it's about time we've nixed this experiment. Far be it from me to pull an early plug on someone because it is only April, but I'm done with Jairo. I'm willing to roll with someone like Dan Wheeler because even though he looked like cow dung, he's at least a veteran who has a proven track record and innings like the seventh last night are reasons to keep him around awhile longer.

Innings like that from **Jairo Asencio**, when the game is still in reach against a sputtering Royals squad, and you get absolutely bombed? Forget it. I'm done with you. Even to be a batting practice dummie, I'd rather trash him right now. That's what Wheeler is for. Get someone who can produce up here.

How about Rafael Perez? Guy walks two, gets a double play, somehow out of the inning despite throwing just FOUR strikes. You heard me, FOUR Strikes out of 16 pitches and he gets three outs without damage. Perez did not look right as his velocity was way down and he had no control what so ever. It's typical of Perez to be a little erratic, even when he's good his slider moves lots, but he just didn't look right even for not having it. I'd be a little concerned and it may be a reason that the Indians can't get rid of Jairo, as they may need his arm to throw out there

just in case.

Shelley Duncan struggled and looked visible frustrated after each at-bat. Maybe it may be time to give him a rest. I'd sit him Friday against Jered Weaver, who is not only right-handed, but really good. That is of course if Choo is ready to go.

I may not want to admit it, but Duncan's struggles against right-handed hitting suggest he'd be better off platooning with Johnny Damon, letting Damon play the majority of time against tough righties. He's 5-30 with 10 strikeouts and 8 walks to being 7-18 with 6 strikeouts and 4 walks against the left-hander. He should play everyday against the left-hander, that's for sure, but with his issues, it may be better if Damon plays the majority against right-handers, at least the tough ones.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

The big news is that **Shin-Soo Choo**'s hamstring kept him out of the lineup on Wednesday and given the early start, could keep him out Thursday as well. It appears it shouldn't keep him out long though as Manny Acta is not expecting to have to place Choo on the disabled list with a bum hamstring. He also said he showed up better than expected on Wednesday.

"We could tell that he went kind of slow after a ball ... hit to right-center field," Acta said. "So we were approached by the training staff and we talked to him and he just felt it was sore. If it was up to him, he probably would've stayed out there."

But Choo was removed on Tuesday and sat Wednesday. It's for the best. Healthy Choo > Anything else we see thrown in right field at this point.

Rafael Perez is mysterious, Dan Wheeler did something decent last night, and uh, Jairo Asencio.... There's not much going on beyond that and if we don't get Nick Hagadone, the Indians need **Tony Sipp** to be good and not bad. He's been good lately, which was definitely not the case early on when he looked like cow dung.

"He's had about three or four now in a row where he's been good," Acta said. "We need him. We know how big he's been for us the last couple of years. I feel now that he's gotten back. Three good outings in a row pretty much would help anybody."

You need everyone of course, but that 7th/8th inning when Acta needs to get a tough lefty out, this will be the guy. He has to be right, no ifs about it. Hagadone or not, Sipp has to be right because he's got the most experience, he's proved the most, he will be the one that is called on.

Good to see the Indians make no light of the issues they had with Kansas City a few days ago. Heck, even with Sanchez plunking Kipnis to start things off there were no thoughts of intent .

"That was a curveball," Indians third baseman Jack Hannahan. "That stuff is over and done with. We're just playing baseball."

And this is a forkball.

On the injury front, **Grady Sizemore** started running and throwing . Great to hear, but still very early. Manny Acta still has not acknowledged any sort of wrist issue for Michael Brantely.

[TIGER WATCH]

What saved this night from being a total let-down was the fact that the Indians remained tied for first place with the Tigers and White Sox both losing. Detroit finally learned why they can't have crappy hitting because when they face pitchers like King Felix, who can shut them down, their offense cannot save them.

It was another long day for their bullpen as their starter went just two innings and they got shelled to the tune of 8-1 against the Mariners, effectively losing the series, something the

Indians did not do.

And then you look at the White Sox, who dropped their series to Oakland after two games, something the Indians also did not do. Thanks Cyborges!

It's extremely crucial now that the Indians take this series from Kansas City, or their division foes follies against the weakness of the West will be all for nothing.

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Nino has a blog that he creates dumb nicknames, even for players not on the Indians. Give it a vist at *The Tribe Daily* *.*

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