Little worried there weren't you? After those final two games against the White Sox, you got a little nervous that maybe the steam was running out. Perhaps the start was a fluke and now they would falter. But just as quickly as that looked to be happening, the Indians got to go on the road and face the fabulous enigma that is the Boston Red Sox

May 10th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **8**

Boston Red Sox - **3**

W: Derek Lowe (5-1) L: Josh Beckett (2-4)

[BOXSCORE]

The road has been a happy place for these Indians. Maybe they feed off the opposing crowd and the unlikely energy they would get from playing in front of crowds larger than 15K. Maybe they just are more relaxed away from Progressive Field. Maybe it's a happy coincidence.

Maybe they just face the right people on the road. But I'm expecting the Indians to come into this series and take three games at least and after beating the guy that is likely Boston's best starter in Josh Beckett, and beat him bad, that belief is even higher.

The Indians hit Josh Beckett early and hit him hard. They were just teeing off on whatever Beckett was giving them. In the third, it was Michael Brantley's double that had the knock out punch, chasing the former World Series MVP after his eighth run and only one out in the inning.

And you have to love all the golf metaphors, Am I Right?

What seemed to be the biggest topic of discussion though is the fact that he Red Sox fans were booing Josh Beckett, who said after the game that he quote, pitched like, uh... Dookie. Only the curse version of it.

Um, really? Whatever, say what you want about Beckett, the golf, his struggles, his injury, his back, whatever. He's still always has the potential to be a good pitcher. And the Indians got to him good
Thursday night.

"[That's] very important, because he's one of the best guys in the league," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "We've seen some games where we've been dominated by him. Today, the guys just came out swinging. We got into some good counts and hit some mistakes pretty good."

And really this was the offenses night despite a good performance by Derek Lowe, who just did what he had to do and what we've become accustomed to this season. He not only was the routine Lowe, as Adrian Gonzalez said, keeping the ball down and getting ground balls, he stopped another losing streak dead in it's tracks.

But he had a little help and the start of it all was Michael Brantley, who for some reason, I continue to poke fun at. Maybe it's because I'm still waiting for him to develop that consistency and prove that overall potential. I don't know what it is. Don't get me wrong, I like Brantley, but I guess I'm still waiting. I'll keep waiting though if he's got more of these games in him. 4-5 with a pair of doubles, just putting bat to ball and making things happen. The four hit game is a yearly-occurrence for Brantley as he does this once every year and has every year since his debut in 2009. What it did do this year was mark the third time he knocked in more than just one run in a game. Other than that, a solo shot from Jason Kipnis was a nice addition in the third, Choo had a RBI double. The biggest hit to me though was Jack Hannahan's home run in the second. With two outs after Kotchman got that run home off the sac-fly, Super Mannahan appeared and got his two-out magic stick out and whacked a two-run shot around that left field foul pole.

"I had fun watching the offense," Lowe said. "It doesn't matter where you're pitching, you can't ask for any better start than getting seven runs in the first three innings. ... You don't have that emotion where maybe three years ago I had it, because there were still a lot of guys [I played with] there."

It was really a complete game from the offense. Hafner was the only one without a hit or RBI, but he did score a run and was on base via the walk. It sets the Indians up nicely for the rest of the series. Hopefully that good-hitting karma will carry on into the rest of these games. The starting ERA of the Boston starters would indicate that as a likely probability.

Random Details...

Lowe's final line over six? He gave up a pair of runs off nine hits, but he walked just one. Another solid outing Mr. Lowe.

How about
Vinnie Pestano
? The Gangster threw 41 pitches just to get out of that eighth inning. It was a close game, him making probably closer than it was supposed to be by loading the bases with a four run lead. But he got out of the jam after throwing half a game in one inning.

He did get a strikeout though despite having to deal with that bases loaded jam and it set a streak for longest string of games

to start a season with a strikeout. He beat Doug Jones' record of 15 and with a few more he can pass Paul Shuey for longest strikeout streak for a reliever since 1918. He has 18 going back to last year and with four more, he'll tie and pass Shuey's mark.

Then Nick Hagadone came in and threw nine pitches to get out of the ninth. You know, ho-hum.

It's a good night when you score eight runs and go 4-for-14 with runners in scoring position. As long as you win, of course. A few sac-flys will count, especially if you make all four of those count (and the Indians did).

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

It was **Casey Kotchman** who really started things last night. His solid at-bat brought home the game's first run and it was all up-hill from there for the Indians. Told ya to give him some time.

"That was coming," Acta said. "He's been working hard and minimizing the body movement at the plate. It seems like in the last couple of series he's been staying behind the ball better."
Even if Kotchman doesn't repeat his grand success in 2011 with the bat, as Manny Acta pointed out he's still a career .265 hitter and he's going to do better then the below-bunker average he was bringing to the table. Throw in that solid glove and you should have no reason to worry about Kotchman being the first baseman on this team.

One guy still searching is
Johnny Damon
, who was 1-5 last night. But again, give the veteran some time, especially after him basically coming in behind just about everyone else.
No one knows better than
Damon that his at-bats are important. And to his credit, he's not even using that late start as an excuse.

"That's not an excuse anymore, or ever was," he said. "It seems like lately I've been swinging at the pitches just off and taking the really good ones. [Doing that] in this game is going to be really tough to produce. That's pretty much what I'm doing. The swing, I think the first couple days, may have been a little lazy and not where I want it to be."
Acta meanwhile said that basically, he needs to get his at-bats and that even though he isn't making it an excuse, other players have had the reps and have adjusted, Damon still is in that period that others are in spring.
"He's had some good swings. He's hit some balls hard. Hopefully, he starts contributing for us.

You have to appreciate that the guy owns up and understands the situation."

I mean it is a valid point, but hopefully Damon soon makes this a non-issue.

If you are as curious as I am about the sudden emergence of **Josh Tomlin** as a strikeout pitcher , don't go to Josh looking for answers. Just chalk it up to him being Sinister Tomlin. Josh said he really has no idea, but did offer up a possible idea.

"I think I'm making better pitches 0-2 this year," Tomlin said. "That's really the only theory that's actually comprehensible. I don't know if that's the reason or not, but I've felt like I've made better pitches that look like strikes that are not strikes on 0-2 or 1-2 than I have the past couple years."

Tomlin also noted that he doesn't care about strikeouts. He takes the Crash Davis theory on pitching that strikeouts are fascist and his groundballs are more democratic. He wants his defense to work, he wants to get out with as fewest pitches possible. Quick strikeouts are cool, but it's all about throwing as few pitches as possible.

Of course, his strikeout numbers will not continue to be this high. He may set his career high, in fact he will baring an injury, but he won't be leading the team at the end of the year, or at least I don't think he will. Very cool move by the Red Sox's PA microphone's going silent during the game
in honor of their late PA Announcer, Carl Beane.

If you aren't following me on Twitter.
You probably missed a good thing
. There was a string of puns off Red Sox outfielder Daniel Nava's name. I think I had a little too much fun with it as myself and Wahoo's On First
Lewie Pollis
went all game and then some
with the Nava-Puns
. You're welcome universe.

[TIGER WATCH]

The Tigers bullpen had a little fun, taking the fun out of a more than decent start for Max Scherzer, who gave up just two runs and pitched into the seventh striking out nine Athletics. In the eighth they surrendered another grand slam to the monster that is Brandon Inge, as he pays his old team back dearly for releasing him. Their offense really broke out in the third, scoring eight runs that would really be the reason they won this one. Still it made for taking away the

ease of finishing this one out. The Tigers still won and got above .500, but still trail the Tribe by two games.

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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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