I think the most frustrating part about watching Ubaldo pitch is the fact that he shows us those flashes. Those flashes that not only make us think he can do it, but suggest that maybe there's something coming up.

**May 16th, 2012**

Seattle Mariners - **3**

Cleveland Indians - **9**

W: Ubaldo Jimenez (4-3) L: Felix Herndandez (3-3)

**[BOXSCORE]**

You can't exactly count six innings, three runs, five hits, two walks as having arrived to that point where he's going to be **Ubaldo Jimenez** again. I mean this is not a bad start because it is a quality start and he got the win. Against a King Felix that doesn't struggle, he may not pick up his fourth win of the season.

I think this game more than anything explains the frustration with Jimenez. He goes out in the first inning, only gives up a run, but throws almost 30 pitches, looks like he is laboring, and just has an overall unsettling first that leads you to believe the worst has yet to come.

But then he comes back in the second after being given a lead and retires the side quickly and in order. Then in the third, walk, homer, walk and things are looking shaky again. Next inning, side retired in the order.

In a nutshell, Ubaldo confuses us. He is inconsistent and sometimes efficient looking with a curve that makes most hitters look foolish as they swing and miss at it. Then he'll throw 30 pitches in an inning and make you wonder how much worse is it going to get.

As like the last time he went out and pitched sort of well, I'm not going to come out and say old Ubaldo is here. Manny Acta says it's the best he's thrown the ball so far. Jimenez agrees?

*"I think it's true, because I was able to throw a lot of strikes," said Jimenez, who threw 69 of his 107 pitches for strikes. "Since the first inning, I was able to just attack the strike zone and just make my pitches."*

Yes, he threw a lot of strikes, which is a vast improvement. However it is not the best he's thrown so far. His best was his first start of the season when he not only threw a lot of strikes and got ahead of a lot of hitters, but worked quickly and looked efficient.

The best part about this start is the two walks and how he seemed to have some sort of control. Low walk totals always make me believe things are getting better, but he still threw a heck of a

lot of pitches in that first inning and had he not done that, he is probably able to give you a little more length than six innings.

That was good enough to win in this game though, so you be happy with the effort, be happy that it looks like there may be some light at the Ubaldo tunnel in regards to him being somewhat consistent this year and now talk about this incredible offensive out-put.

They've done it on the road, and they've done it before, but I'm not sure they've really busted out in a big way against anyone at home. And it's just in the way they did it too, the offense was a well-oiled machine and they did it against a guy who can be the best pitcher in the game any given time out. Credit the aggressive approach and just catching the King on a bad night.

*"They came out with a good approach, swinging early," Hernandez said, "but not swinging at my breaking ball. Everything was flat today. My location was not that good, and they got me pretty good."*

That was the biggest thing that I was impressed with in everyone. No one was offering at his breaking stuff. It wasn't being thrown for strikes, but rather outside or inside the zone. They weren't offering at it, simply taking it for a ball because they knew he couldn't throw it for a strike. That gave them a real advantage to when Felix had to come into the zone with his secondary stuff, and the Indians knew it was coming.

You can call the first inning a little fluky, which it was, but that fourth inning when they chased him was a thing of beauty.

Choo: Singles on 3rd pitch slider

Kipnis: Doubles on 6th pitch cutter

Hafner: Doubles on 7th pitch curve

Santana: Doubles on 2nd pitch change

Brantley: Singles on 6th pitch slider

Each approach was different. **Shin-Soo Choo** was aggressive all night, he swung at the first pitch offered up by Hernandez on the night and got a hit. And the 'changeup' that Santana hit was 90 mph on the gun, so it was far from your standard changeup and it was the same pitch Choo hit in the first inning.

Speaking of the first inning... All you can really say is wow. It was created once again by some aggressive play. With Santana on first and Cabrera on third, Manny Acta probably thought he needs to put the pressure on Felix early. He could settle in after the first and cruise to an eight inning, two run beauty after a shaky first. And with Jimenez pitching, he probably thought, we need runs.

So with two outs and the stage set to be aggressive, he called for a double steal. It worked better than he could have ever thought it would. You've seen the play by now, but if you don't understand, it was a product of Montero just second guessing himself. Cabrera was delaying his steal until Montero would throw through to second base in an attempt to get Santana. But Montero thought he had Cabrera far enough off third that he panicked a little. Would he have nabbed Cabs at third on the pickoff with a better throw?

Who knows because the throw he made was that awful. It of course led to one run, but it was Chone Figgins throw that complicated things. It wasn't even a horrible throw, it was more less Montero not being able to corral it and simply losing track of it that allowed Santana to score from second and if you think about it.

Santana scored all the way from first on one play.

He'll probably never do that again, especially in that fashion. But man did it really dictate a lot of

things. Did it unravel King Felix? Probably not, he was doing a good job of simply not hitting his spots and getting the Indians to swing at his garbage pitches because he couldn't throw strikes.

But the pressure, the pressure early on may have done good things for Ubaldo in that he might have been able to relax a little and settle in.

It also gives you a swagger. Hey look, Felix is on the mound, and after one inning, we lead 4-1. Look at us. As Acta said though, you don't want to let Felix get into a comfort zone, which is exactly why he called for that aggressive play. It almost backfired, but the point is it didn't and it worked better than he could have ever wanted and it was perhaps the catalyst for this win.

*"When you get opportunities off a guy like that," Indians designated hitter Travis Hafner said, "you never know how many opportunities you're going to have, so you want to be able to take advantage of them and at least push a couple across."*

And they did just that.

**Random Details...**

Johnny Damon had a perplexing night. In addition to getting a hit off a pop-fly and walking twice, he swung at a pitch, tried to hold up and uh, lost handle of his bat. He ditched his bat and started walking to first only to turn around and shake his head that a Felix Hernandez pitch was called a strike, not ball four. It was of course in response to a strike (clearly) called a ball earlier in the count. That just makes the ump look bad if you ask me, but Johnny's night, although much more successful than one's in the past, was a rather strange one.

**Travis Hafner** should/could be 3/5 with four RBI instead of what he finished with, but he isn't. He hit the ball well enough for his groundout to Dustin Ackley in the first inning to be a hit and knock in a pair of runs, rather than just one on a groundout. But Ackley was in the right spot and made a great play. He learned from his other two hits though, clearly. A great night for Pronk.

Shin-Soo Choo in the leadoff spot, 6-for-13 with a HR, 2 RBI, BB, but look at this, four runs. Creation is the key and he's doing that up there. Whatever approach he takes, it doesn't matter, he's getting the job done.

Jason Kipnis may be benefiting from it more than anyone as with Choo there, he'll probably continue to get good pitches to hit. If Choo heats up, pitchers will not want any part of him, letting Kipnis pretty much choose what pitch he wants to hit.

Successful debut for Jeremy Accardo as he pitched a real clean seventh inning with a strikeout. He threw 11 pitches, seven for strikes, got three outs, and did it quickly. You got a fan in me so far.

**[RANDOM RUNDOWN]**

And... **Grady Sizemore** watch is officially on, not because Johnny Damon's scuffling at the plate or the lack of offense, or anything really other than the fact that Sizemore is swinging a stick and just the thought of his impending arrival gets people in this town buzzing. Sizemore took a round of live batting practice
and he had his own manager doing the tossing.

*"He looked good for the first time," Acta said. "He swung the bat good, but it's just a start. We're not going to rush anything. He's going to continue his rehab, and I'm anticipating that he's going to go on a rehab assignment where he's going to have plenty of at-bats before he comes up here and plays."*

This is a very Indians-controlled rehab for Sizemore. They have planned it and will no doubt stick to the very regimented blueprint of how and when Sizemore will hit his spots. One thing is for sure, Manny Acta says that he won't be ready by that June 3rd date that he'll be eligible to come off the 60 Day Disabled List.

Coming a lot sooner, hopefully, is **Josh Tomlin** from his unknown wrist injury. It was originally thought that he'd only miss a few starts, but now that is in question as he's

set to undergo an MRI today for an injury that he isn't really sure a whole heck of a lot about. Right now he's wearing a brace on his right arm but doesn't believe surgery will be neccessary.

*"Hopefully we'll get some more answers," Tomlin said on Wednesday afternoon. "That's maybe the most frustrating thing. There's not one particular thing that I did that I can say, 'If I didn't do that, we could've prevented this.'"*

Acta went on to say that they'll know more after the MRI, but that if it was what they originally thought, he may not miss a whole lot of time and will not likely spend any more having to rehab or go on outings or anything like that.

With one MRI scheduled there is one pending as the Indians await the results of **Jack Hannahan**'s on Wednesday. It's also about how he comes in to work on Thursday, but again with this day-start, I'd say it's unlikely he's in the lineup. Jordan Bastian went as far to note on Twitter that it could be a possible DL-situation, which leads me to believe there's an ounce of concern there with the Indians. If it's going to linger a little longer, they may just retroactively DL him until things clear up.

Before you go clamoring for Chisenahll, he's on the Columbus Disabled List. Nice try though.

And rounding out the infirmary report is reliever **Rafael Perez**, who is not on any sort of timetable, but did make a bullpen session appearance yesterday. If anything, that could mean a rehab stint is likely very near.

**[MINOR ISSUES]**

Hey, it's time to get it going here with the Columbus team. They're playing good ball, they'll probably go to the playoffs. Whatever, it's time to cut the trash. With Dan Wheeler clearing waivers, if he accepts his assignment, he'll be assigned, essentially taking Jeremy Accardo's

spot. But Robinson Tejeda was released and the Indians better start cutting more fat. Chris Seddon? Thanks, but time to get someone else up there.

Source for this little mini-rant? T.J. McFarland is ripping up the Double-A hitters, as he is now 7-1 through eight starts with a 1.86 ERA. But that's not all, he's given up 11 walks struck out 30 and this is all building off a year in which he was 9-9 with a 3.87 ERA.

On the Carolina side of needing called up is Jeremie Tice, who's mashing around the Carolina League pitching like it's his job (but it is!). He's spent enough time in Kinston/Carolina that his seven homers and 28 RBI in 26 games says enough for me. Get him up there!

**[TIGER WATCH]**

People keep saying, "When the Tigers wake up." Hey guys, the Tigers are awake. They're conscious, they know what's going on. They're hitting the ball. This is the Tigers! They have no pitching beyond Justin Verlander and if they do, it's inconsistent at best. They'll probably be on the right side of .500, but this is a .500 division. The Indians may be playing above their probable standard, but the way the Tigers are playing. This is them and it's irritating that the mainstream hasn't really caught on.

Rick Porcello only gave up two earned runs, but gee would you look at that, four errors, one by Rayburn, one by Prince Fielder, and one by Miguel Cabrera. And just to make sure the infield was completely represented, shortstop Ramon Santiago made one as well. Sure the Tigers put up seven runs, which on every night except for this one is good enough to beat the Twins.

Bad defense, inconsistent starting, lead to an early entry for the bullpen. So go ahead, keep thinking the Tigers are going to 'turn it around.' They might and they might have a better record, but for anyone thinking the Indians are a flawed team despite the success, the Tigers are proving they are a flawed team with their lack of it.

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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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