Stop me if you've heard this before: The Indians struggled to score runs against a left handed starter. With Sunday's loss to the Astros and lefty J.A. Happ, the Indians are now just 5-15 on the season against left handed starters. It was another long day at the yard for the Indians, who managed just five hits, one of them a Derek Lowe bunt single, and scored their only run on a wild pitch.

With the loss, the Indians lost the series to the Astros, who were just 2-7 in the previous nine games before the Tribe came to town. To say that this series was frustrating is an understatement. The Indians got one good start, one bad start, and one pretty decent start in the series but the Astros got three great starts and another lefty on Sunday spelled trouble for the Indians.

Just like the other games in this series, there was next to no offense to speak of early in the game. The Indians and Astros both went down in order in the first inning before the Indians scratched out a run in the second. Jose Lopez led off the second with a double to left center field, advanced to third on a Michael Brantley broken-bat groundout to first, and scored on a wild pitch. In the same at bat, Shelley Duncan walked and then Casey Kotchman singled to left. Lou Marson flew out to deep center, sending Duncan to third. Unfortunately, because it's the National League, Derek Lowe had to bat and he weakly grounded out to end the inning.

Like Jeanmar Gomez on Saturday, Lowe was excellent early in the ballgame. Lowe retired the first 11 Astros hitters in order before Carlos Lee started a rally with a two-out single between

short and third. Brian Bogusevic picked up an infield single and then Chris Johnson hit a single so softly to center that it allowed Lee to rumble around to tie the game at 1-1.

The Indians tried to answer in the fifth but came up short. Casey Kotchman legged out an infield single to lead off the inning. After Lou Marson took strike three directly down the middle of the plate, Derek Lowe put down a sacrifice bunt attempt and got rewarded as the ball hugged the foul line and stayed in play for a bunt single. With runners on first and second, Shin-Soo Choo picked up the second of his three strikeouts on the day and Asdrubal Cabrera flew out to the warning track in left.

Neither the Astros nor the Indians scored in their next trip to the plate. The Astros did, however, take the lead for good in the sixth. After Brian Bixler, who replaced the injured Jose Altuve, flew out, Jed Lowrie, narrowly missing a double a couple of times down the right field line, kept one fair and rolled into second with a stand-up two-bagger. The next hitter, Lee, singled up the middle past a diving Jason Kipnis to put the Astros ahead.

After three more useless at bats from the Indians, the Astros added another run following the seventh inning stretch. Johnson and Jason Castro started the inning off with back-to-back singles, but Lowe got J.D. Martinez to hit into a nifty 4-6-3 double play. The run scored, but the Indians got two outs. After walking Jordan Schaefer, Manny Acta went to the bullpen, much to Derek Lowe's chagrin. Lowe, visibly upset on the mound, went into the dugout and launched a bucket of what looked like empty sunflower seed bags. Lowe took the time to clean up the contents from the dugout floor, but was still upset, and probably with good reason. Joe Smith came in and gave up a single to the pinch hitter before getting a groundout to second to end the inning.

Carlos Santana singled leading off the eighth as a pinch hitter, but never moved from there after three things loosely considered at bats, including Choo's third strikeout of the game against left handed pitching. Cabrera flew out on the first pitch off new pitcher Brandon Lyon and Jason Kipnis grounded out weakly against the third pitcher of the inning, Xavier Cedeno.

Nick Hagadone effectively removed all doubt and Esmil Rogers poured kerosene, gasoline, and lighter fluid on the fire while throwing some aerosol cans on top for added effect. Hagadone walked leadoff hitter Jed Lowrie before getting Carlos Lee to fly out. After a fastball hit Carlos Santana right in the glove, yet bounced 40 feet behind him to the backstop, Hagadone retired Bogusevic on strikes. Johnson took a perfect approach to a 94 mph fastball right down the

middle and hit it into the right field seats to push the lead to 5-1. Hagadone then gave up a double to deep center field before turning it over to Esmil Rogers who hung a slider to Martinez and watched it hit the left field seats for the second two-run homer of the inning. The four runs the Astros scored in the eighth matched the Indians total for 27 innings in the series.

Houston went to closer Brett Myers in the ninth to get some work and the Indians went down with what could best be described as a mild whimper as Shelley Duncan walked to prolong the agony one more hitter. Brantley and Choo both had six-game hit streaks snapped on Sunday.

With the loss going to Derek Lowe, he drops to 7-6 on the season. J.A. Happ picked up the win to move to 6-7. The Indians now sit at 37-34 and could fall out of first place in the AL Central Division to a half-game behind the Chicago White Sox, who were in extra innings with Milwaukee at time of post.

Stat of the Night: Shin-Soo Choo and Jason Kipnis are now a combined 38-for-186 off left handed pitching this season. That's good for a .204 average.

Player of the Game: Uh....Derek Lowe, I guess? He pitched pretty well and had 20% of the Indians hits.

Tomorrow's Game: The Indians get a breather now after playing the phenomenally-talented Houston Astros as they head to Yankee Stadium to play the New York Yankees. First pitch is at 7:05 p.m. between Josh Tomlin and Hiroki Kuroda. The game is on ESPN2, so enjoy muting that and listening to Tom Hamilton on the Indians Radio Network.