Here we are at the longest losing streak of the season. In a way it is a positive that it took this long just to lose this many in a row. But of course you'd rather not be in this position. If they hadn't lost twice to the Astros, this wouldn't really be an issue, but perhaps there is something that should be focused on regardless of what happened in Houston.

June 27th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **4**

New York Yankees - **5**

W: Freddy Garcia (2-2) L: Ubaldo Jimenez (7-6) S: Rafael Soriano (17)

[BOXSCORE]

The Indians are being tested. This stretch of games they started this week in New York, it started that test. It doesn't matter if Baltimore is for real or not, they're playing good ball in a

tough division with teams that we know are for real. They're going to get tested there just like they got tested in New York.

So far, they are failing the test.

Maybe they are just in a bad stretch of baseball. Their best hitter is struggling so much that his manager is choosing to hit him BEHIND Jose Lopez. The freshly anointed three-hole hitter that is still young is not really consistent at this point in time. Asdrubal is hitting, but he can't carry the lineup. Choo is getting on, but not getting picked up. Brantley has cooled off.

And of course the bottom of the lineup is the bottom of the lineup. They're a bottom of the lineup that will produce at times, but not all at once. So just as Lou Marson had a good game on Wednesday in going 2-for-4 with a run, Johnny Damon had the good game the night before that.

The point is whether this is a test or not, the Indians don't seem to have studied real hard. They don't have their best effort, maybe didn't get a good nights sleep the night before. Regardless of excuses, they are failing this test right now. Wednesday's attempt was much better, at least offensively as they showed some promise, getting to Andy Pettitte before fracturing his ankle, then digging into the bullpen.

"I think it was a step in the right direction," Kipnis said. "It thought we played better today. We're getting closer to playing more of a complete game. I thought Ubaldo still pitched great. We've just got to have more consistent at-bats. We just haven't been hitting with runners in scoring position."

Acta maintains the argument that it is a bad stretch .

“It’s encouraging. The guys understand we’re going through a tough stretch right now. We’ve just got to ride it out. You’ve just got to continue to keep your head up, play hard and snap out of it.”

I'm not going to argue with Acta. I think the Indians are in a bad stretch myself. However as I said earlier, the Indians are failing their test. They are playing hard. That is never a question. They just are not playing any good. Why is this such a test? Because of all the "weak schedule" talk earlier in the season, with the schedule looking a little tougher, this is realistically a point in which they need to prove that their early success wasn't a fluke. Maybe it is an ill-timed test, but they need to find a way to get through this stretch and start getting the questions right. One positive that I'll take away was the final inning as the Tribe, although in the game for the entire nine innings, made a big push to win. Coming as close as putting the go-ahead run on second with two outs, you could taste a comeback as Rafael Soriano got more and more frustrated.

But he found a way and the one run in the ninth to bring it within one and put such an opportune situation on the table was simply just a tease that ultimately just adds to the frustration.

So with that positive in mind, let's look at another.

Ubaldo Jimenez
just got beat in this one. He wasn't bad. He wasn't really dominant or really good, but he pitched another winnable game, kept his team in it and ultimately wasn't frustrating to watch. What simply happened was that he got beat by some good hitting, particularly the two-run shot by Robinson Cano.

"He's a great hitter," Jimenez said. "We were trying to throw a backdoor slider, and it was. It was a backdoor slider, and it was even off the plate. I saw the replay. He was able to just to hang in there. You could even see he hit it with one arm, and he hit it out. That was a really good pitcher's pitch. He's a really good hitter. He's a great hitter. Right now, he's hitting everything."

Cano is considerably hot right now, with that being his 10th home run in his last 21 games. It is probably the only thing that could have trumped Jimenez, who is hot in his own right putting up his fifth straight good start despite taking the loss.

“He threw well, man,” Acta sad. “It’s been five in a row now. We’re very, very happy to see Justin [Masterson] and Ubaldo have five straight good starts. That what we’ve wanted, our No. 1 and No. 2 guy throwing the ball like that.”

He's starting to settle into some sort of good groove. He did walk four in this one, but he struck out seven and was not putting himself in some overly bad jams so he was able to get through six. That's really what a good pitcher is supposed to do when he isn't having a dominant game and he did. In the past, he hasn't done that, he's floundered around. There's a lot to be excited about with this 1-2 punch now that they seem to be on track. If they can get some offensive support, then these 'bad stretches' will surely be avoided and the Indians... well, they

won't be going on many five game losing streaks.

Hopefully for now, this one ends at five.

Random Details...

To say I feel sympathetic for the Yankees would be laughable. After what the Indians went through last year, I never really have any sympathy for any team that gets injuries. It sucks but it is part of the game. Everyone has a year that they deal with a rash of them. If you can overcome them, I can respect you more than I would feel sorry for you if you didn't overcome them.

But I do feel a little sympathy for a player getting hurt. Pinstripes aside, I'm sure Andy Pettitte put a lot of effort into his comeback and to see it get dealt a blow like that kind of sucks. The Yankees will definitely need to buckle down and find someone to replace not just him, but CC Sabathia as he was placed on the disabled list on the same day.

Can't think if he's been on the DL since arriving in New York, but got to think it is the first time since leaving Cleveland. He's really been durable since that one year he missed the first month because of a spring training injury.

The Yankees essentially saved their bullpen by pitching the schedule starter to replace Sabathia, Freddy Garcia, for two-plus innings. When a pitcher exits after just four completed innings, you'd expect to win that game, especially when the manager ends up using three MORE pitchers in that same fifth inning. But again, the Yankees will worry about that upcoming spot in the rotation later on, it was really a move that pretty much saved that game.

Carlos Santana exited in the ninth inning , getting lifted for Lonnie Chisenhall when it was his turn to bat. Of course with his struggles, if you didn't think it was an injury, you'd have thought Santana is a regular Lonnie Chisenhall. But Santana was dealing with some bruised ribs. After the game, Acta called it "mid-back tightness" and that it will be a fluid situation with a determination on if he plays depending on how he comes to the field today.

I think it is also worth noting that in the month of June, Santana has yet to homer and has collected a measly 11 hits. He's got just one hit in his last six games and has walked a grand total of three times in the last nine games. Oof, if that ain't struggling, I don't know what is.

The Indians rested their regular right fielder and leadoff hitter Shin-Soo Choo a day off on Wednesday. Or a half-day at least as Choo came into the game late to hit. But he got a full day off from the field in preparation for what is going to be a run of games until the All-Star break early next month.

Acta used a left-handed pitcher as a reason to give Choo the off day, which he is hitting considerably worse against.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

The aftermath in the Mike DiMuro/Jack Hannahan situation has spawned the response you would think it would. Of course, I'm talking about the only thing that is always brought up when there is a disputed call that is abhorrently wrong. Replay.

Not what you would expect from Jack Hannahan though. I have to credit him for keeping his stance even after getting so blatantly robbed.

"I'm just not a big fan of more instant replay," Hannahan said on Wednesday morning. "There's always been that aspect of the human element in there. Umpires are humans. They're going to make mistakes. The game is really fast. It's a job where you're going to make mistakes."

Hannahan rather feels like that umpires should be held "accountable" for their performance.

"But I feel like umpires should be held accountable. Players are. If I consistently don't do my job,

I won't be here."

I'm not really sure how you can hold an umpire accountable for making mistakes. If a player makes a mistake, he gets benched by his manager. Umpires are not really on a team playing to win. I mean, they are getting paid to do a job, but what do you do? Send them to the minors? You can't really punish an umpire can you? And why would you? He made a mistake, it happens. The only way to make it a non-issue is to create replay situations that would eliminate the mistakes they make like this one.

Acta meanwhile said that he thinks there are some aspects of replay that are going to be added on.

"I think it's in the works," Acta said. "It's probably going to be expanded. I think it's going to be helpful for just about everybody, because of cases like [Tuesday] night. ... For me, you've got to have a fine line that you don't want to cross. You don't want to take the human element out of the game completely."

The Indians got the short end of a few calls in that series. What can you do? I mean you can continue to hound for replay all you want. There won't be any replay until Bud Selig decides to expand upon it and everyone in the position agrees with him.

Acta did say that he didn't see a replay, but knew it was missed watching it live. He also noted that Hannahan got tossed for basically something you absolutely cannot do, and that is go in, watch a replay on a television and then come out and argue with the umpire that he got the call wrong.

"You're not supposed to argue after replays," Acta said. "It's an automatic ejection if you go in and you mention that you've been watching replay and they're missing pitches and all that. If you're allowed to do that, then the game would last 10 hours." Did not... know that... Travi s Hafner Update: The Pronkster went 1-for-3 with a strikeout before being lifted by LaPorta in his rehab assignment with the Triple-A Columbus Clippers. Nick Camino of WTAM said he couldn't see Hafner
 needing more than 5-6 games of rehab
.

You can probably expect Scotty Barnes to get the call down when
Zach McAllister
is called upon to make his return to the Indians and claim a spot in the rotation. McAllister will be looking at a new opportunity
to be a regular member of the starting rotation.

Matt LaPorta, Russ Canzler, and Cord Phelps
were selected to the 2012 International League All-Star team
. For the second year in a row it will be
Mike Sarbaugh
flanking three of his players in the game as he was selected to manage. So did former Indian, Clipper, and original Bullpen Mafia man Justin Germano. So did Fernando Cabrera, who is also a former Indian, but never even close to being Bullpen Mafia material.

Finally, the Indians made a roster move for a huge right-handed power bat. Not really. they acquired
Vinny Rottino
off
waivers from the Mets
. He's 32, has four home runs this year in Triple-A and two career major league home runs.

They designated
Chris Schwinden
for assignment. We didn't even get to see what he looks like. Rottino by the by looks exactly like how you thought a first baseman named Vinny would look like. Minus a beard, big muscles, a toothpick in his mouth and.. Yeah he looks nothing like I thought he would.

I was asked on Twitter what the point of adding Rottino was. And honestly, I can't tell you. He was there so the Indians figured "Why not?" and picked him up. Same reason they picked up Schwinden. They have the spot, so why not try it. Fact is that 40-man spot is one they'll use when they need it for something important. Schwinden, Rottino. They're all the same. I used a really stupid analogy that ended up not making any sense involving dirty pennies.

So I'll just put it in the correct way. One may be dirty, the other might be clean. You can clean that other one off, but they're still both as worthless as they are when they're dirty. These waiver claims are generally, dirty pennies. That's the lesson we can learn from this.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a vist at The Tribe Daily , because he's more Italian than Vinny Rottino. Pizza Pie!

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