One of the most frustrating Indians games of the season goes down in the books as the loss that puts them into third place in the American League Central Division. Derek Lowe pitched six innings, five of them were perfect, except for a leadoff walk in the sixth that was erased on a double play, but the one bad inning Lowe had did the Indians in. Their offense struggled and they swung through a lot of pitches right over the middle of the plate as the Tribe fell to the Blue Jays 3-0.

The Indians had a chance to jump on Carlos Villanueva in the first, but they let him off the hook and that confidence helped Villanueva to the best start of his career. With one out, Asdrubal Cabrera singled to center and took second on a wild pitch. Jason Kipnis walked to bring up Travis Hafner. Hafner worked into a prime hitter's count at 3-1 and popped out to left field. Carlos Santana also got into a 3-1 count before embarrassing himself on a 3-1 change up and bringing shame to his family with a horrendous swing on a 3-2 breaking ball in the dirt to end the inning.

Derek Lowe, who entered the game with a 6.26 career ERA on Astroturf, looked sharp in the first inning, striking out Brett Lawrie and inducing two groundballs to end the inning in order. The Indians blew another opportunity in the second. Michael Brantley extended his hitting streak to 13 games with a leadoff double. Casey Kotchman did his job, advancing Brantley to third with a flyout to right. Johnny Damon, in a spot where a veteran needs to come through, popped up to second and Jack Hannahan struck out to strand Brantley at third.

Both Lowe and Villanueva set the side down in order during their next turns on the mound.

Lowe's one bad inning came in the third. He issued a walk to leadoff hitter Kelly Johnson. Johnson went to third on a stolen base and an errant throw from Santana that went into center field. Old friend Ben Francisco struck out swinging before J.P. Arencibia sent a broken bat single into center field to open the scoring. After Lawrie grounded out to third, Colby Rasmus hit another soft RBI single to extend the lead to 2-0. Lowe's only bad pitch of the inning resulted in a sharp single to left center by Jose Bautista. Bautista stole second and Edwin Encarnacion was issued an unintentional-intentional walk that backfired when Lowe walked Adam Lind on four pitches to score another run. Yunel Escobar struck out swinging with the bases loaded to end the threat.

For Lowe, the third inning wasn't as bad as it sounds, except for the lack of command. He made some good pitches that just happened to land in the outfield for hits. The walks were what killed Lowe in the inning and it was exacerbated by the fact that the Indians looked downright awful at the plate and couldn't muster any offense.

In the fourth, the Indians got a runner into scoring position, but like they have all weekend, they left him there. Santana beat the shift with a one-out bunt single down the third base line. With two outs, Kotchman walked, but the inning ended there when Damon struck out swinging at a breaking ball in the dirt.

Lowe and Villanueva kept exchanging zeroes in the middle innings. The Indians had the only semblance of a scoring threat in the sixth when they worked back-to-back two out walks. But, Kotchman struck out swinging at a cutter/hanging slider right down the middle of the plate to end the inning.

Joe Smith relieved Derek Lowe and gave up a one-out double to Ben Francisco. Pinch runner Rajai Davis darted for third on first movement, but Smith nipped that in the bud and picked Davis off. The Indians did nothing in their half of the eighth and Smith came back out for another inning, getting two outs before allowing a ground-rule double to Bautista, but Encarnacion grounded out to third to end the inning.

Needing one heck of a rally in the ninth to tie the game or take the lead, Jays manager John Farrell kept Darren Oliver in the game since the Indians had three lefties due up. Plus, Jays closer Casey Janssen threw 1.1 innings yesterday in a save. Brantley continued his torrid pace, driving a double over the head of Rasmus in center. Kotchman, ahead in the count 2-0, inexplicably swung at the borderline 2-0 pitch and grounded out to third. Shelley Duncan pinch

hit for Johnny Damon and went up there hacking, including swinging at a 0-1 pitch that was at forehead height. He grounded out to short on the next pitch. Last hope was pinch hitter Jose Lopez, batting for Jack Hannahan. Lopez got ahead in the count 3-1, chased ball four, and grounded out to short to end the game.

With the loss, the Indians fall to 45-43 and will drop to third place because Justin Verlander and the Tigers have a 3-0 lead over the Orioles and Verlander is dealing. The White Sox lead the Royals 2-1 in the middle innings.

Derek Lowe is the tough luck loser today thanks to no offense. He drops to 8-7 on the season. Carlos Villanueva is the winner and now 4-0. Darren Oliver picked up his first save of the season.

**Stat of the Night:** Not related to this game, but Akron Aeros lefty Giovanni Soto tossed a no hitter today against the Altoona Curve at Canal Park. Congrats to him for an impressive accomplishment.

**Player of the Game:** Michael Brantley. He was the only Indian to record multiple hits and both of them were leadoff doubles that he never came around to score on.

**Tomorrow's Game:** The Indians will lick their wounds on a long plane ride to Tampa to kick off a four-game series against the Rays. Zach McAllister will take on Alex Cobb at 7:10 p.m.