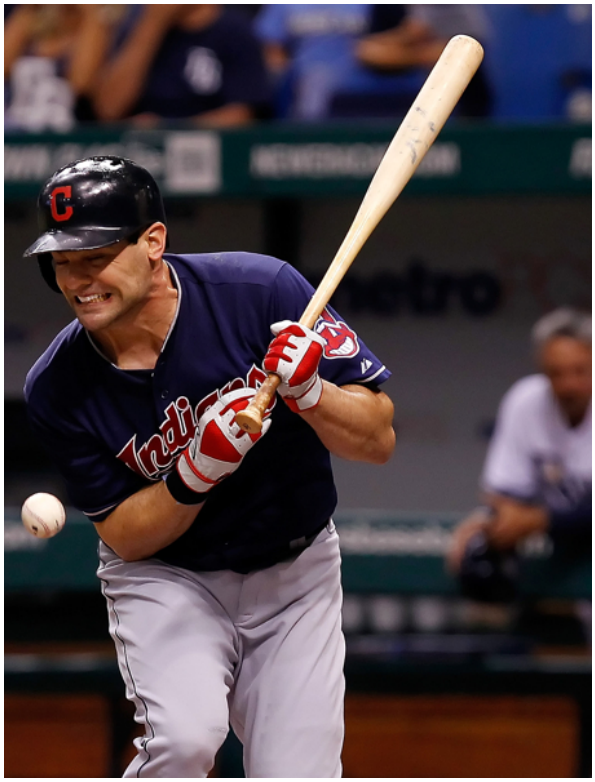

There's a good chance that the Loch Ness Monster and Bigfoot have made more appearances since the start of baseball season than the number of hits the Indians have with the bases loaded. Well, maybe not, since the Indians have 16 hits with the bags full this season. Of course, that's in 83 at bats. The struggles for the Tribe with runners in scoring position, specifically with the bases loaded, continued tonight as the Indians dropped another low scoring affair, 4-2.

In the first inning, facing hard-throwing lefty Matt Moore, the Indians went down in the blink of an eye, with a trio of lazy flyballs. The Rays had a significantly better first inning. BJ Upton singled and Carlos Pena homered to put the Rays on top 2-0. Those two runs were more than Indians starter Josh Tomlin gave up in his seven inning start on July 5 against these same Rays. The Rays' bats weren't done. Ben Zobrist walked and scored on a two-out triple by Luke Scott.

If you'll remember back to 2011, Adam Dunn was awful. He hit .159 in 122 games. Fifteen of those games were against the Indians and Dunn hit .283 with 15 of his 66 hits for the season, or 23% of his season output. Luke Scott is batting .208 with 47 hits. Eight of them have come against the Indians in six games. Scott is 8-for-25 against the Indians. He's 39-for-203 against everybody else. For his career, Scott is a .346 hitter against the Tribe.

In the second, Tomlin “hit” Elliott Johnson who appeared to move in front of the pitch with one out and then gave up a single to Upton. Pena, who homered in the first, had far less success in this at bat as he bounced into an inning-ending double play. The third inning brought Tomlin more trouble. Zobrist led off the inning reaching on an error by Casey Kotchman, just Kotchman’s fourth miscue of the season. After getting Matt Joyce, fresh off the disabled list, to pop out to left, Jeff Keppinger singled to left to put two on with one out. The aforementioned Scott grounded into a fielder’s choice that looked like it could have been a double play, but Tomlin struggled with his footwork covering first base. Luckily, Desmond Jennings hit a routine grounder to second to end the threat.

The Indians responded in the fourth, but they could have done a lot more. Asdrubal Cabrera snapped broke a 1-for-26 funk with a sharp leadoff single to center. Jason Kipnis worked a walk and so, too, did Michael Brantley. With the bases loaded, Jose Lopez did his job, hitting a deep flyball to right field to score Cabrera and move Kipnis to third. Following a wild pitch, the Indians had a prime opportunity to get a couple more home. Carlos Santana, who has 19 hits in his last 103 at bats, struck out swinging. Shelley Duncan flew out to center and the Indians stranded two more runners in scoring position.

To Tomlin’s credit, after really laboring through the first three innings, when the Indians offense showed signs of life, he buckled down. Tomlin went six up and six down in the fourth and fifth while the Indians got a run closer in their half of the fifth. Kotchman began the inning with a whiff. Lou Marson drew a one-out walk and went to second on Choo’s single to center. Cabrera hit the ball hard, but right in the tracks of the center fielder Upton. Kipnis followed with a big two-out RBI single just past a diving Zobrist at second to draw the Indians a run closer at 3-2. Brantley walked to load the bases and Lopez got a big piece of a pitch right down the middle of the plate, but he just got under it as it fell harmlessly into the left fielder’s glove in the middle of the warning track.

With Wade Davis into the game in the sixth after Moore issued a leadoff walk to Santana, the Indians went in a hurry after the walk. A blown call in the sixth cost Tomlin a run and ended his night. Keppinger led off the inning with a single. Following a Luke Scott flyout, Jennings bounced into a fielder’s choice. Jennings, a much faster runner than Keppinger, took off on Tomlin with two down and was ruled safe by 2B ump CB Bucknor. Replays showed that it was a bang-bang play, but Jennings was out. That was the first stolen base off Tomlin since September 19, 2010. In fact, with two stolen bases allowed in that game, that was the only other game Tomlin had allowed a stolen base in hi scareer. The Indians didn’t catch a break and .216 hitter Jose Lobaton subsequently drove in that run in with a seeing-eye single through the hole on the right side.

Tomlin's night was over, going 5.2 innings, allowing four runs on seven hits, striking out just one. In all honesty, Tomlin deserves credit for battling when he really didn't have very good stuff all night. He kept the Indians in the game and a couple hits here or there and the end result may have been different. Tony Sipp took over and struck out Johnson to end the inning.

Davis struck out Marson in the seventh before giving way to Joel Peralta and his incredibly irritating way of pitching. Peralta is very demonstrative with all of his movements on the mound, falling off to the first base side on 90% of his pitches and looking like he's going to topple over. Choo grounded out and Cabrera struck out, as Peralta continued his BS, quick-pitching Cabrera twice.

Tony Sipp worked a scoreless seventh. Peralta picked up the first two outs of the inning, a strikeout, and a fly out to deep center, before giving way to Blake Badenhop. Badenhop struck out Lopez to end the inning. Jeremy Accardo entered for the Indians, who were attempting to give Pestano and Smith a night off. Accardo worked a 1-2-3 eighth to keep the deficit at two.

Rays closer Fernando Rodney entered and he has been almost unhittable this season. He began the inning by drilling Santana in the right elbow. Interestingly, Acta opted not to pinch hit Johnny Damon for Duncan against the righty. Duncan was facing Rodney for the first time, while Damon was 1-for-7 against him. Duncan hit a soft broken bat liner to Rodney. Santana inexplicably took off from first and was easily doubled up. Kotchman smoked a line drive up the middle with a good piece of hitting to give pinch hitter Travis Hafner a chance, batting for Marson. Hafner got under a pitch and flew out to right to end the game without any excitement.

With the loss, the seesaw season saunters on, with the Indians falling to 46-44. Josh Tomlin was the loser, sending his record to 5-6. Matt Moore was the five-and-fly winner, moving to 6-6. Fernando Rodney picked up save number 27. The Indians will likely fall another game back of Chicago who is rolling in Boston. The Tigers got bombed tonight, so the Indians will stay a half-game behind them in third place.

**Stat of the Night:** The Indians were held to two runs or less for the 28th time on the season. They're 6-22 in those games.

**Player of the Game:** Um? Tony Sipp? The Indians only had four hits and nobody had more

than once. Guess, by default, Sipp did the best tonight by working scoreless 1.1 innings.

**Tomorrow's Game:** Justin Masterson will battle his Achilles' heel, the Tampa Rays. Masterson is 1-7 with a 7.69 ERA against the Rays in his career. Jeremy Hellickson takes the bump for the Rays with first pitch at 7:10 p.m.