A team cannot win by simply not cashing in on their opportunities. They may be able to get a few runs here or there and if they get a good pitching performance, win the game. That is kind of how the Indians are going right now. They don't look bad, the offense doesn't look horrific, the pitching is here and there. Their biggest issue is coming up with the big hit that gives them the win. Sometimes it isn't needed, but if the team is going to win consistently, it's something that better start happening.

July 17th, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **2**

Tampa Bay Rays - **4**

W: Matt Moore (6-6) L: Josh Tomlin (5-6) S: Fernando Rodney (27)

[BOXSCORE]

Carlos Carlos Carlos.

I saw one half inning of this game on television, so naturally that is what I'm going to spend 300-400 words on, the last half inning of this game.

I'm reaching that point right now where I just do not know what else I can say other than to sit here and wonder. There are no words. **Carlos Santana** was 0-for-2 with a walk and a hit by pitch on this night. He got hit in the ninth, so he was on with no one out and runners coming up.

And then he gets doubled off on what really should have been a simple liner back to the pitcher that was caught, not a liner that was caught by the pitcher and thrown to first for the second out.

To me this shows some laziness. It shows him not having his head in the game. It shows that right now, he's just really worthy of playing everyday. He's throwing his helmet out there and just taking whatever the results are.

Am I right? I don't know, I can't say for sure, but that's how I feel. He's gotten to the point where he's hitting sixth. SIXTH! Behind Jose Lopez! I mean really? Michael Brantley is hitting cleanup because Santana isn't doing squat. Santana should be hitting cleanup and doing just that, cleaning up. The way the hitters ahead of him are doing their job, this should be a career year. Not a .221 average all I can muster is five home runs and 30 RBI in 74 games type of a year.

So here's the deal. I don't know what happened in the first eight and a half innings. There are instances where I will get to that I can point out that hurt. If he goes 2-2 with that walk and does not get doubled off, whatever, they probably don't win. But it is to the principle of the matter now. Santana is not getting it done and to me, it looks as if it's because he isn't trying as hard as he can or that he's dealing with some other sort of issue in which has his mind not on the game.

Again, I hate to have to suggest it about someone who I know nothing of and has no sort of rumors attached to, but it's perplexing right now as to what Santana is doing at the plate. It's a big jumbled mess and overall, it is thing that is costing the Indians the most.

This is not a major story line to this particular game though. It didn't cost the Indians anything but a potential rally. They still lost 4-2 and squandered more opportunities beyond Santana getting doubled off.

"We just, unfortunately, couldn't do much offensively," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "We just couldn't get that hit to get us over the hump."

The Indians got a sac fly from Jose Lopez with the bases loaded. Great a run, but the lack of hit there prevented anything else from happening because Santana struck out and Duncan flew out to end the inning. It's hard to blame Lopez after he knocked in a run because no one else did, but in the fifth he got another based loaded opportunity with two outs and couldn't come through with the hit.

It just shows you how bad the Indians are now with runners in scoring position. Not just lately, but the entire season it has been woeful. They're hitting .195 as a team with the bases loaded. How do you do that? You are in the position to come through because you are the one in the advantage. To me, that type of statistic is unacceptable and it goes back again to a guy like Santana, striking out in that situation with a few guys on and nobody out.

Duncan comes up an inning later with a runner on and nobody out and grounds into a double play in a one run game. Moore walked five hitters in his short amount of time in the game. But he only gave up three hits. That is a situation in which you cannot let the other team off the hook. Those are situations that have killed the Indians in the past in which their pitcher has walked hitters and the team has come through with the hits.

It is time for the offense to put it on themselves and start coming through with the big hit. Getting runners on base and in position is not a problem. Again this just continues the nasty trend that has been present the past few weeks. The team is getting on, the team is getting their hits. But they are not getting the hits that help them score their runs and it has to change.

Josh Tomlin is going to take some blame for putting his team in a hole. But I don't think you can outright blame him for the loss.

"It's tough putting the guys in a hole like that," Tomlin said. "It's tough to battle back from that. I've got to do a better job of limiting the damage right there."

Tomlin did put his team in a hole and give up four runs in five plus innings. It isn't the greatest start in the world, but not one that didn't give his team a chance. You have to credit him for coming back and just getting out of that first and not allowing much more damage.

Yet he will take blame, he does not deserve it. It was a lot better looking Tomlin outside the first inning. He gave up the triple to Scott and the homer to Pena which both hurt, but other than that he kept the Rays in check. **Random Details...** You could even say the fourth run that scored shouldn't have scored, as Desmond Jennings stole second base in the sixth and then promptly scored off a Jose Lobaton single. Acta disputed the fact Jennings was in safely to second and fully believes that the umpires got the close call wrong.

"It's unfortunate," Acta said. "It's part of the game, but [Tomlin] got out of the inning. The guy was out at second base. But what are you going to do? You can't blame it on the umpire, but he was out. I just didn't find anything tricky about the play. The throw beat the guy. Clean tag. Out. [Bucknor] didn't see it that way." All-in-all it does not matter considering the Indians couldn't score a third run. It could have changed the complexion of the game, that's for sure, but it was hardly a call that robbed the Indians of a win. T he hit-less streak for Michael Brantley continues as does his walking streak. Brantley was shutout again but he was walked twice. If Jose Lopez was not hitting behind him, maybe he scores more. Not only is the kid hitting now, he's carrying a .356 OBP and has 10 walks this month. He has 30 walks total on the year, so you know he's really locked in lately.

Runners in scoring position, I hate to keep pointing it out, but 1-for-5. They didn't even have many opportunities tonight, but the ones they did were so easy to come through with. Bases loaded on several occasions, less than two outs. You just, you can't squander that stuff.

Add on to the fact that you have to take advantage of a rocky starting pitcher when he is...rocky. Moore only went five and they had their chances. When the Rays bullpen took over, they shut it down completely. The only hit they allowed was in the ninth when Fernando Rodney let up a two-out single to Casey Kotchman, which was meaningless considering it came right after Santana got doubled off at first. Other than that, no walks, no hits, nothing from that Rays bullpen.

Tony Sipp needs a hats off for four shutout innings and a punchout. So, hats off.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I noted the struggles of **Asdrubal Cabrera** yesterday, noting how drastically his average has dropped in just a few games. Of course a media member threw out the 1-for-25 number and all of a sudden, it's a big story and everyone is asking Manny Acta if he's going to give Cabrera a day off
.

1-for-25 is five games people, settle down.

For one, there is a reason Asdrubal Cabrera is not going to get a day off any time soon and it has nothing to do with the fact that he can break out of his slump at a moments notice.

There's no other shortstop on the roster. Jack Hannahan is the emergency backup and unless Manny Acta has to, he will not play him there. Cabrera will continue to start for that reason and that reason alone. The last time the Indians gave Cabrera a day off before the break was when they had called Jason Donald up for a few days because they had the extra roster move to make.

Do not even think Acta is considering sitting Cabrera for that reason and also because he really does believe in Cabrera's chances of breaking out at any point. Here's his explaination as to why Cabrera is currently scuffling.

"Right now, he's expanding the strike zone a little bit more than he was earlier," Acta said. "It happens. When guys start to scuffle a little bit, they want to do too much. He's just missing his pitch, basically. He's fouling off some pitches that he's able to handle."

There is that. Acta will continue to put Cabrera out there. He's one of the better hitters regardless of slumping and as someone pointed out, just because you give the guy a day off does not mean things are fixed. Carlos Santana was given a few days off and has he magically

flipped a switch? Nope. And another thing. If you sit Cabrera and put in Hannahan, is that really making a difference? The guy isn't hitting so hotly himself.

So cool the jets on giving Cabrera one day off. It is not a big deal. **Shin-Soo Choo** felt he should have earned a triple on the overturned home run call on Monday. I say, he scored so it really does not matter and I don't really care. Acta is correct in that generally, you give them a double on an overturned call like that, unless of course Choo was flying around the bases and ended up at third when the play was called dead.

Rafael Perez
pitched on Monday for Double-A Akron and pitched a shutout inning. He'll be in Columbus soon and I think it is only a matter of time before he's back with the big club.

No issues with
Zach McAllister
, who took a liner off the forearm in the start on Monday. Of course he stayed in the game but he won't even miss a bullpen session at this point. Great news the way he is pitching.

If you are like me and holding out an inkling of hope that Ryan Dempster can become an Indian at a minimal price, you are not going to like the news that the Boston Red Sox are in hot pursuit for him. The chances of the Indians actually nabbing Dempster from the Cubs is minimal, but a boy can dream.

I continue to follow the Paul Cousineau line of thinking in that this team is not in need of stick, but an upgrade in their rotation. The point remains the same for me and we covered it earlier enough, but Carlos Santana needs to hit. Santana hits, this team is better and gets that missing ingredient to what is currently ailing them.

From the horses mouth, Mark Shapiro says that the trade market is slow because the high competition for playoff spots in the American League (the added wild card gives a lot of hope to people) and other things.

[TIGER WATCH]

Just when we thought the Tigers offense was getting going they get shutout. In addition, their pitching got battered around in the Motor City as the Angels gave the Tigs a steady beat down from start to finish.

Did that sound like I enjoyed it a little? Because I did.

Garrett Richards (who?!) held the Tigers to no runs in seven innings and contributed to the shutout. All he really needed was like a few runs here or there, but the Angels gave him 13, including seven in the first two. Trumbo, Trout, and Pujols led the way with home runs and those two innings were all young Jacob Turner could handle before Jimmy Leyland gave up. Of course his bullpen had to make up for all that and by the end, they were giving up runs too. It kind of goes along that formula I presented earlier in the year for a team with no pitching.

Remember, they're going to win a lot of games by out-slugging people, but they're also going to lose a lot of games by getting pounded because they have no pitching. This was one of those games. Unfortunately it doesn't do much for the Indians as they lost and it only puts the White Sox up another game on both of their foes as they now sit 10 games above .500.

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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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