The Indians put together a valiant effort in the ninth inning, scoring more runs than they have in their last three games, but it wasn't enough as the Orioles held on for a Sunday afternoon 4-3 victory. The loss dropped the Indians below .500, put them 4.5 back in the division, and was another frustrating game. Josh Tomlin struggled in the first, but recovered to have a pretty good start. The offense was the story again as the Indians mustered no runs for the first eight innings.

On a sweltering Sunday afternoon, Josh Tomlin put the offensively-challenged Tribe down after facing just two batters. Nick Markakis reached on an infield single and J.J. Hardy homered to the first section of the bleachers to give the Orioles a 2-0 lead. For much of the afternoon, it looked like that would be all that the O's needed as left hander Zach Britton kept the Indians from hitting anything hard and had much better command than his last outing where he walked six in just four innings. Tomlin labored through the first, giving up four hits, but limited the damage to only two runs to give the Indians a chance.

To Tomlin's credit, he really settled in nicely and scattered four hits over the next five innings, not allowing anymore Baltimore runs. The Indians just couldn't string anything together against Britton, who went six strong innings allowing just six baserunners. No Indians runner reached third base until the sixth, when Britton loaded the bases with a couple of walks and a Jason Kipnis bunt single right off of home plate. Carlos Santana struck out looking to end the threat.

After Santana's bases loaded K, the Orioles tacked on insurance runs in the seventh and eighth and they definitely needed both of them. Esmil Rogers relieved Tomlin and gave up a run on a J.J. Hardy single to left. Rogers walked the leadoff hitter, who advanced to second on a sac

bunt, and then Markakis reached on another infield single to push Flaherty to third. Rogers only gave up that one run, but it was costly to an Indians offense that has scored just 30 runs in 10 games since the All-Star break, and 19 of them came in two games.

In the eighth, first batter Wilson Betemit dug out a pitch from Jeremy Accardo and deposited it into the right field seats to push the lead to 4-0. Accardo would not allow any more runs but it was that Betemit homer that would prove to be the difference in the game. The Indians have struggled to get consistent innings from their middle and secondary relievers and it cost them today.

In the ninth, the Indians mounted a rally that would be too little and too late. With one out, Michael Brantley had a solid at bat and singled to center off Luis Ayala, who was out for his third inning of relief. Santana hit a two-run bomb to right field to cut the lead in half. Ayala left the game, falling short of the three-inning save by two outs. Orioles closer Jim Johnson, who has been nearly automatic this season converting 29 out of 31 save opportunities, came on to look for save number 30. Shelley Duncan greeted him with a double high off the wall in left field. Travis Hafner pinch hit for Lou Marson and ripped a single into right field to cut the lead to just one. Johnny Damon pinch hit for Aaron Cunningham and flew out to left.

With Shin-Soo Choo at the plate, Johnson had to pick his poison. Did he want to face Choo or the on-deck hitter, Asdrubal Cabrera? Johnson walked Choo on four straight, none of them particularly close. His decision proved to be the correct one when he struck Cabrera out swinging and notched save number 30 and winning the series for Baltimore.

With the loss, the Indians fell to 47-48, 4.5 out of first in the Central, and now four out in the wild card. The Orioles, winners of five straight, are back up to 51-44 and lead the wild card chase. Josh Tomlin was the tough luck loser, dropping to 5-7. Zach Britton picked up his first win of the 2012 campaign. Jim Johnson notched save number 30.

Stat of the Night: The Indians, with the exception of their nine-run outburst on July 14 and their 10-run outburst on July 18, have scored just 11 runs in eight games. They were an inning away from being shutout for the fourth time this month.

Player of the Game: Going to give this one to Josh Tomlin. He battled in his six innings, when

it was clear that he wasn't real sharp out of the gates. He gave his team a chance to win and that's all you can ask for from a guy like Tomlin.

Tomorrow's Game: The Indians will try to avoid being swept in a four-game series at home by the Orioles by sending Justin Masterson to the mound. He'll square off against Orioles right hander Tommy Hunter at 7:05 p.m.