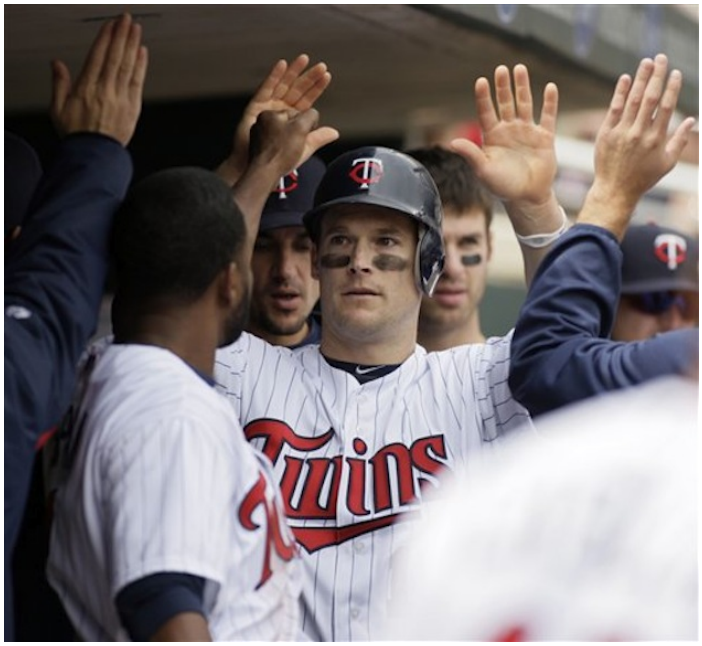


While the Indians offense looked lifeless and pathetic yet again, Justin Masterson was victimized by two blown calls that snowballed into a 12-5 Twins rout. Just as quickly as the season appeared saved on Thursday night, now, just four days before the trade deadline, the Indians are back below .500 and will likely trail the White Sox by 5.5 games. All of this at the hands of a Minnesota team that has been downright awful for the majority of this season. The Indians have been outscored 23-5 in the first two games of the series and things aren't looking very good.

Justin Masterson began the game by retiring the first 11 hitters he faced while being staked to a 1-0 lead. The Indians scratched a run across in the first on a single by Shin-Soo Choo, a stolen base, a groundout, and another groundout. In between, Michael Brantley walked. Travis Hafner walked to extend the inning, but Johnny Damon grounded into a fielder's choice with two men on to end the inning. It was the last inning in which the Indians had two runners on. The wheels fell off in the middle innings.

In the fourth inning, Masterson walked Joe Mauer on four pitches with two outs. The next batter, Josh Willingham, got a gift from home plate umpire Bill Welke on a pitch that looked in the zone for strike three. Instead, it was a ball and Mauer stole second on the play. The next pitch was blasted deep into the night to give the Twins a 2-1 lead. Masterson ended the inning without further damage, but irreparable damage would come next inning.

The fifth inning was set up by another blown call. With one out, Danny Valencia hit a ground ball

to third. Hannahan's throw was a little offline, but Kotchman made the catch on the foul territory side of first base. First base umpire Chris Guccione said that Kotchman was off the bag. Replays showed that, not only was Kotchman on the bag, but Valencia never even touched the base. Brian Dozier followed with a single, Alexi Casilla tripled to right on a ball that Choo misplayed to score a pair of runs. After a groundout, Masterson gave up another run on a two-out single to Ben Revere. With the Indians down 5-1, the deficit looked insurmountable given their offensive prowess of late.

The game was especially put out of reach in the sixth. This time, Masterson had nobody to blame but himself. With one out, he hit Morneau with a pitch. Ryan Doumit singled and then was erased on a fielder's choice. With two down, Masterson turned a bonfire into a raging wildfire. Casilla doubled home a pair, Denard Span doubled home a pair, and Ben Revere singled home another run off Esmil Rogers. Masterson's final line for the game was 10 runs allowed, eight earned, in 5.2 innings of work. He allowed seven hits, walked two, struck out two, and hit a batter. Rogers gave up another run in the seventh.

Just as last night, the Indians looked like a lifeless, defeated team. They were shut down by eight-year minor leaguer Samuel Deduno. It was an embarrassing, ugly, pathetic, inexcusable display. Carlos Santana stayed hot, hitting a two-run homer off reliever Tyler Robertson, but that was it. The Indians loaded the bases in the ninth off former Indians farmhand Luis Perdomo and got a couple gift runs thanks to a throwing error by Valencia on a Jose Lopez grounder and a Jason Kipnis bases loaded walk. Santana struck out to, mercifully, end the game, one pitch after he hit a foul ball that had the distance to be a grand slam.

With the loss, the Indians fell to 50-51, and what looks to be 5.5 games off the pace with the White Sox leading the Rangers late in the game. Justin Masterson registered his ninth loss of the season.

**Stat of the Night:** Justin Masterson has allowed eight or more runs four different times this season. The teams who have done that: Tampa Bay, Minnesota, Boston, and Seattle. Aces don't do that.

**Stat of the Night Pt. 2:** 18 of Minnesota's 23 runs in the series have come with two outs.

**Player of the Game:** Nobody.

**Tomorrow's Game:** The Indians try to avoid a sweep by sending Ubaldo Jimenez to the mound. He'll be opposed by left hander Francisco Liriano. For the masochists out there, the game starts at 2:10 p.m.