Part of me thinks that there is still some fight left in this team and that this season, although it looks like it is spiraling away, can still be something. That the Indians, despite this patch of games that looks to be taking them out of the race, they can still make something happen. The other part of me is disgusted to watch the team lose like this, because there is no part of me that doesn't believe the first part is not true. This team can do make something happen, but they simply are not.

August 1st, 2012

Cleveland Indians - **2**

Kansas City Royals - **5**

W: Luis Mendoza (5-7) L: Zach McAllister (4-3) S: Greg Holland (1)

[BOXSCORE]

Manny Acta said it best before the game...

"It changes the way you're going to play the game right away," Acta said. "When you're trying to catch up down by five or six runs, you don't play the game the same way. You're not as aggressive running the bases. You're down by a ton of runs. You're not going to be bunting. It's just a difficult game. It changes the dynamic of how you can play the game."

They weren't down by five or six right away, but they were down right away and the Royals just continued to build in this one.

It's a different game regardless of how much you are down by. Trailing is no fun and when you are down from the get go, it's a little demoralizing if you ask me. It was especially demoralizing how the Royals went up on the Tribe.

They showed their speed and ran like they were being chased by a heard of bears all game long.

And the Royals took advantage of the mistakes made by being aggressive on the base paths. Four stolen bases all off the McAllister/Santana duo. One that led to an overthrow at third that led to some runs. It was the speed and the aggressiveness. Credit the Royals for that type of play because it's really what won them this game and allowed them to get to **Zach McAllister**.

Because after that little run in the first few innings, Zach had things pretty much on lock down aside from a run in the fifth. He gave up just five hits and two walks in his six innings of work. One of his runs was unearned, but largely his five runs were a product of the Royals putting themselves in a position to score and getting that key hit.

The first run that scored was from aggressiveness and because of that, a groundout scored the

second run in the first. In the second McAllister got two outs before walking Getz. Then he steals second and scores on a two-out single to continue the inning. The Cain gets into scoring position on a steal.

It was just a line up, gun shot, run type of an evening for the Royals and you have to credit their strategy to this one.

"He was mostly two-seamer in and a slow, slow curveball to me," Cain said. "Good pitcher, sneaky fastball. I felt like we all battled and found ways to get runs in when we had guys on base, that's the most important part."

That was McAllister. Was he good enough to get a win? No, but he kept his team in the game like he's always done this season and he pitched deep into the game. To me, that was a good effort. And he owned up to the runners taking the bases off of him, saying he needs to get better at holding them. But Manny Acta continues to preach that in order to get out of this slump, they need a well-pitched ball game and that it's hard to believe they've done nothing to win since facing Detroit last week.

"We need a well-pitched ballgame. That's what we need," Acta said. "That's what usually takes you out of a losing streak, a well-pitched ballgame that gives the offense a chance to score a couple of runs and win it. Hopefully we'll get it [Thursday] with Kluber."

I think they kind of got one in this game. It was well-pitched. It wasn't a shutdown performance, but McAllister did a good job. He didn't get shelled, that's for sure.

What the Indians also need is to get some sort of hit that means something. The deficit hurts, but this team had some opportunities in this one and squandered them. Yeah Luis Mendoza pitched well, but he's Luis Mendoza, so he's going to give you chances at some point.

You just need to be able to come through.

The Indians got the leadoff guy on base in three innings, the first, third, and seventh. I the third it was a Jack Hannahan double, so really they could have scored a run by not even getting a hit if they put together the right type of at-bats. But a groundball on the left side of the infield and a strikeout are not going to do the trick at all.

Overall the 1-for-7 RISP number is still there, so that tells you what you need to know about the offense. You got a Carlos Santana home run and a one-out single by Asdrubal with two on. There was a chance in the eighth to rally in that situation with the bullpen in and Mijares having hit Choo in his first at-bat. But he settled down after letting up the hit to Cabrera and the Indians could not take advantage of that situation.

Acta said it's been a hard five days and you can sense a little bit of exhaustion in the fact that the Indians have lost five straight to the two worst teams in the division. The two teams that have no horse in the AL Central race but the one that is looking to trip up the other three.

Remember, these are the key games. Not because they are going to decide what separates the top three in the division, but it has the potential to eliminate one team if they don't keep up.

Right now, it looks like that's coming to ahead with the Indians as the more of these games the Indians lose, the quicker they fall behind the pace.

Random Details...

The Royals committed one error, but played some seriously good defense. Mike Moustakas, who made the first error (although questionable as to if it was really his fault), came up with two good plays, one later in that inning and another in the seventh to start a double play that really killed any momentum the Indians got by getting the leadoff hitter on to start the frame.

Jack Hannahan had two hits in the game and that was almost half of the hits the Indians had total, so that's not a good thing. They also only drew one walk, by Santana, which means they

had very few opportunities considering one of those hits came with runners on base.

Even then, they had opportunities and they squandered them.

There's not much more you can say about the offense.

Chris Perez was super efficient, nine pitches, eight strikes, three outs. Money.

The Indians actually had more plate appearances by the Royals. It just shows you even more how that running game really did the Indians in as they were able to move players without getting hits, so that when they got the hits, they really counted. Even though they were 2-for-7 with runners in scoring position, they did what they had to do.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Some may wonder after the Indians called up **Vinny Rottino** to take the place of Travis Hafner on the active roster, why Rottino? Why not Matt LaPorta?

I can think of a few reasons that some might automatically not think of immediately. Sure I think LaPorta makes more sense. But I would look at it this way.

This is really temporary, like a few days. Heck Hafner could be back tomorrow. So why call up LaPorta for three days worth of what could likely be him just sitting around? Who's to say Rottino even gets a start?

"Vinnie's going to be here a couple of days up until Hafner comes back, unless something changes," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "He's a guy that can play in the corners in the outfield, the corners in the infield and even catch. That's what he's going to do."

You can even tell by Acta saying what he said, Rottino will be here a few days. He did say that Rottino will likely get a start though, when lefty Bruce Chen pitches today. The Royals by the by, moved Chen up to Thursday for the simple fact that the Indians struggle against the lefty, duh.

The Indians acquired **Lars Anderson**, who will require a 40-man spot. Before today, that probably would have come at the expense of Rottino, but now that won't be the case with Lowe's spot open. Rottino is the same player as Anderson only older, so I don't believe there will be much hesitation to drop Rottino now.

I don't think it is an indictment on LaPorta or anything like that. Last time the Indians called up LaPorta it was for a Johnny Damon paternity leave. He wasn't around long and this time, because they didn't call him up it makes me think Hafner will be back rather quickly.

Or the Indians just hate LaPorta now. Either way.

Anderson talked about coming over to Cleveland and the new opportunity he has. He thought he was going to be sticking around with the PawSox again when the deadline passed on Tuesday. After a failed trade to Oakland last year, you have to kind of wonder of your standing in an organization, especially one that has Adrian Gonzalez locked up at your position.

"It seemed liked the most logical thing to happen, given the circumstances," Anderson said. "I'm pretty thrilled and ready for a new scene. I'm thankful for the Red Sox for every opportunity I've gotten. I think it's a pretty good time for me to go to a new place."

I'm excited to see what the Indians got in this deal. I like Steven Wright, but let's be real, he probably is not the next R.A. Dickey. It would be cool if he was and I like the guy a lot, but those are lofty expectations for someone who just changed over to the knuckleball last year.

Anderson was a legit prospect that soared through their system up in Boston. He's got talent and he's been blocked by a big contract player. He hasn't had a real good opportunity in

Boston. So maybe just maybe the Indians got themselves a low-risk option to try at first base that could be their answer for the future. We'll see in that regard, but you have to like the idea behind grabbing Anderson.

Hafner by the way, and his wife Amy welcomed an eight pound baby boy into the world on Wednesday. The child is currently nameless, giving us plenty of time to propose names before Travis and Amy name their second son after Casey Blake again.

Here's my sons.. Blake and Casey...

After the discussion yesterday, there was no timetable on a decision as to if **Derek Lowe** would make his next start on Sunday. But then after the game on Wednesday, the word was out, the Indians are cutting ties with Derek Lowe so they can add
Corey Kluber
to the roster. It would have been an interesting decision to have seen them made, but now that decisions comes Sunday as Kluber goes today.

"He's going to get a legit opportunity," Acta said of Kluber, who has gone 11-7 with a 3.59 ERA in 21 starts for Columbus. So right now, Josh is in the bullpen and we're not thinking about bringing him back to the rotation unless we have to, for the time being."

As for Lowe, Acta said the Indians'analyzed' everything and that they've talked to Lowe. You got a sense the Indians were running out of patience in wanting to wait for Lowe, but that they may have been open to keeping him around a little longer. With Roberto Hernandez coming back soon, they know they can fill his spot in the rotation, but for now, they'll have to fill it with some spot starts after cutting him .

Lowe did not comment after the game on his release and Manny Acta did not provide a comment either. For awhile Lowe was looking like a heck of a trade acquisition as the Braves assumed most of his salary and the Indians gave up nothing but minor league pitcher Chris Jones.

And regardless of how things turned out, Lowe did turn out to be a good trade. They got a few good months out of him, but more importantly he passed a lot of wisdom down to some of the pitchers on staff. You can't underestimate what a few months of being able to pick a veteran's brain can do for a young guy.

So for that at least, the trade was well worth it. Lowe is a good dude and a top shelf professional in this game. Who knows if this is the end of the road for him, but given how other teams could take one last chance on him with a lot of season left, I don't think it will be. All of the best to D-Lowe in whatever he does from here. He's good people.

Acta also mentioned in that quote earlier that **Josh Tomlin** is in the bullpen and is not going anywhere , unless he's needed to.

"I wasn't performing as a starter," Tomlin said on Wednesday. "I wasn't performing up to my expectations or the team's expectations. Every fifth day, you don't know what you're going to get out there. It's kind of tough to put that burden on the team. No one is more upset about it than I am, but it's the reality of the game. It's a business and that's the kind of stuff that needs to be done if you want to win."

He knows. He knows he hasn't been pitching any good. He really hasn't gotten himself straight all year. He's had good starts here and there, but as for one good stretch? No, not really. Acta believes Tomlin can help out the pen and it could be the start of the rest of his career. He was always labeled as a possible pen arm and ideally you have a rotation that doesn't need Tomlin so he can be in the bullpen.

Acta said this is a season-long move provided there's no emergency. I could see them using him in a spot-situation if needed, but I believe it. It isn't to say either that he's there for good. It could be for good, but he could very well be right in the thick of a rotation race next year if he pitches well and gets himself back on track.

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Nino has a blog! Give it a vist at The Tribe Daily , or else Will Smith will drop down and erase your alien face memory.

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