When your starter can't get out of the fifth and you have to go to the bullpen, you can only do so much as a bullpen. Of course when your opponent's starter can't get out of the third, you have no excuses.

August 2nd, 2012 - F/11

Cleveland Indians - **6**

Kansas City Royals - **7**

W: Aaron Crow (2-1) L: Esmil Rogers (1-3)

[BOXSCORE]

Corey Kluber, no bueno early. Credit him for being able to come back and at least give the team some length to his outing. But he battled in every inning and before the fifth was finished, Manny Acta was forced to go to his pen if he wanted to keep the game tied.

And he did and the game was kept tied for a good amount of time. Five more innings to be exact. So the Royals bullpen. The ROYALS BULLPEN!?

Herrera, Collins, Holland, and Crow, five innings of shutout ball. They gave up a combined one hit and struck out six hitters. They didn't surrender a walk so when I say the Indians had not a single shot to get a hit that mattered, I mean it. They had Jose Lopez single with one out in the eighth and that was it.

It doesn't matter what happened in the 11th or what Kluber did. Sure being down six after one inning is tough, but when your bullpen comes out and gives you that many zeros, regardless of how many runs you had to score to catch up, you need to do something with that.

Acta and Kipnis can talk about fighting all they want, but fighting doesn't cut it.

Fighting doesn't score runs. I'm glad they fought, that's what they're supposed to do. But the opportunity was there
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"Even when we were in a big hole, they just continued to push," Acta said. "Other than not winning, I'm happy with the way things went today compared to the prior games."

They fought to get six runs and make sure this wasn't another pack-in job. But is the Royals bullpen really that good? To go out there and do that? I mean, maybe, but damn. They got some decent ERAs over there, some people pitching well. But one hit in five innings? You have to tip your hat to them, but wonder why.

I mean yeah the Indians bullpen practically did the same thing, heck if you count Kluber after the first, they did one hell of a job of a pitching staff to hold things at six from the second inning all the way to the 11th.

But that just makes it more important for the offense to score.

I'm not sure what else to say. Kluber was maybe a little antsy? Who knows, I missed his first disaster inning thanks to class. But I can only imagine that it being his first start (let's not even count last year's relief innings) he was a little jittery.

"The kid had a very rough first inning," Acta said. "But, after that, he gave us a few good innings. I liked what I saw out there. I liked the stuff. I think he can compete up here."

I will give him beyond the first. He did settle down. He had a few clean innings there. But in the fourth he had some issues that were erased on some over-aggressiveness on the basepaths by the Royals and he only got one out in the fifth before Acta yanked him.

So I'm not convinced at anything. I don't think he's as bad as that first inning, but we'll need to see what he's all about in his second start.

Unfortunately his first one got us off on a bad foot and there wasn't anything the Indians could do about it other than tie the game. I mean they put together enough hits and **Carlos Santana** certainly had himself a game with a two-run shot and two more RBI to pile on to that. But anyone else? The bottom of the lineup went a combined 0-for-12. So the top of the lineup was able to get on and create some of those run scoring opportunities that mostly Santana cashed in on, but the bottom of the lineup, most notably Vinny Rottino, came up dry.

The Santana resurgence has put him at 11 home runs on the year and in his last 15 games he has six home runs, 16 RBI and is 16-for-49 at the plate. He's definitely entering a good zone, which is important if this offense is going to go forward and do something, anything.

Random Details...

I'm not sure what Manny Acta was thinking by putting Mr. Brent Lillibridge in the two spot for this game. No other option? I mean I know you give Kipnis a day off and need to shift some people around, but... Brent Lillibridge hitting well below .200?

I know I can't question it now that he got two hits and scored a pair of runs, which was excellent on his part, I'm glad he did. But that doesn't make doing it in the first place a smart decision.

During his trot around the bases on the home run, Carlos Santana stopped at second, leading most people to believe that he thought it was a double. Not sure how or why he thought it as the ball cleared the fence, or if he even did. Given the way he was smiling that must have been the case. He did take off his shin protector but he did so exactly at second so it makes me think he thought he doubled.

Either way, I thought it would make for a horrific time on the Tater Tot Tracker, but I was informed because he stopped, Santana's time on the trot is not valid .

I will say that overall the bullpen did a bang up job, but the guy who probably saved the Indians more than anyone was Tony Sipp. I'm not sure if he's all the way back into the form where we can trust him late in games with a lead, but I'm certainly no longer fearful anytime he trots out there, which is significant progress for him from where he was at.

Sipp gave the Indians shutout ball and looked very good in striking out a pair in an out short of two innings of relief. He's also been really good over the past month as the Indians have eased him into situations and all that. He had a 1.93 ERA in July and looks to be returning to the form we've come accustomed to from Sipp.

Not much Chris Perez can do when he comes into a situation like that in the 11th. Again, I'm not even going to bring it up, nor am I going to blame the bullpen. They did their part for more than enough innings, the offense needed to come through for them.

I guess I should point out the 3-for-6 RISP number, which is way better than what we've been seeing. Of course they made their hits count but certainly didn't get enough of those

opportunities late when it really was needed.

[CALL TO ARMS]

I purposely did not mention that the Indians had themselves a team meeting prior to the game in going over yesterday's game for a reason.

But they did and it seems like **Jason Kipnis** is the one that was heavily involved in such as he was the most vocal about it post game.

"The meeting today was a good meeting," Kipnis said. "Stuff was said that needed to be said, but I'm not going to go too deep into it. To have a meeting like that," said Kipnis, "to kind of wake guys up to keep fighting, and come out there and have a guy go first-pitch home run, and first inning [give up] six runs, that can be pretty deflating, especially with the previous five games."

So yeah, when you put it like that, the fighting thing, it was great that they fought. But they didn't fight hard enough to win.

What I do like from this is Jason Kipnis becoming more of a leader. I think Asdrubal Cabrera has really assumed a lot of the vocal leadership part of this team, but he's a Latin guy and I'm not sure how that comes across to the half of the team that doesn't speak Spanish. Asdrubal isn't the most polished with the language, he rarely talks to the media so, he's not the greatest there.

To have someone like Kipnis now step up and be more of a vocal rah-rah guy should help. I'm not sure what sort of lack of fight was present and who it was present in, but if there was any of it, let's hope Kipnis and the meeting did what needed to be done.

"We still have two months to go," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "Yeah, I understand that

losing six in a row doesn't help, but we have plenty of time to go. We need to win one ballgame. We can't be thinking about anything else. Right now, we need to win one ballgame."

Because that's still true. There are two months left and I know the deficit looks bad. So bad I don't want to go look it up and see if it changed from yesterday based off what happened with the White Sox out of fear it looks worse than it was.

This team has plenty of time if they start playing good baseball. But when you lose six straight, the biggest question of "When is that going to happen?" just lingers around.

If this pep talk meeting type of a thing did what it needed to do and changes things for the better. Great. But will it have come too late? You just lost two straight series to Minnesota and Kansas City. The two worst teams in the division, nay, the entire American League. You might as well be the third worst. In fact, according to win percentage, the Indians are the fourth worst, just ahead of Seattle.

That's the reality of where we are. Yeah there's time left, but if wins don't start happening, that time left will be time the Indians utilize to slip further into the jaws of uncertainty and frustration.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Well, Corey Kluber didn't go over so well in replacing Josh Tomlin, so I can only imagine what we'll get for the **Derek Lowe** replacement if there's not much of an upgrade there. The Lowe decline is something that is is ultimately very strange and weird . We knew he wasn't as good as he was pitching early on, but I think we also assumed he was bouncing back from his lousy 2011.

So the decline is just, odd.

"I don't have an answer for it," Acta said on Thursday. "I just don't know how it could happen in

the middle of the season like that. I know we're all human and we all reach a point, but he was pretty good earlier in the year."

Can someone age considerably enough to where they decline to that point in a matter of weeks? I don't think so. But what else can you say? Is he injured? What other excuse can you come up with? Acta says that age was never an issue in his eyes and that Lowe prepares as well as anyone does.

We'll probably never know and it will certainly be interesting to see if he latches on somewhere in the big leagues. I mean, Jamie Moyer got several chances, albeit minor league opportunities, so you have to imagine Lowe is in line to have someone knocking on his door to see if he has a few of those good starts in him. Perhaps an NL team. The Orioles (who tried Jamie Moyer) and Red Sox have reportedly had some discussions/interest in Lowe.

I hope Lowe imparted some wisdom on **Zach McAllister** in terms of controlling the running game before he left. The boy certainly needs it as he was exposed big time by the Royals the other night. If McAllister would have been able to keep that aspect of the game in check his line might have looked rather better than it actually did. Probably because he A) Would have maybe gotten a few more outs and B) Some of those hits wouldn't have been so damaging.

Z-Mac says that being a bigger guy makes it a little more difficult to be quick.

"I need to mix up my times and my holds and try to be as quick to the plate as I can," McAllister said. "I try to slide step and mix up my times. To me, you have to realize who the baserunners are and who you can be a little slower with when they're on base."

McAllister has had an issue with his even in the minor leagues as Bastian notes that he's allowed 45 steals in 52 total attempts between his starts with Cleveland and Columbus. That's um... incredible. It's like a guarantee and the Royals pretty much had him each time to the point that Santana's throws didn't even matter.

That will definitely be something he needs to work on from here on out. It can be an important aspect against a team that can run and even against a team that maybe doesn't run as much. If they know it is a weakness, usually they'll have some sort of personnel that can exploit it.

Acta said that **Vinny Rottino** brings, as he put it, "good energy" to a ball club and that some of his Mets contacts felt they lost someone useful. Turns out Rottino is ready to play anywhere you need him to as he has a glove for every occasion .

"I've got a lot of gloves," said Rottino, who is currently filling a utility role for the Indians. "I have one for catching, one for the outfield, first base, the infield, and I have backups for each. So, maybe eight?"

It was noted that Hafner returns on Saturday and that Rottino could be the guy they move. I think it will work out to where Rottino will probably get DFA'ed by the club so the Indians can add someone like a Chris Seddon to make the start on Sunday. That's just my best guess.

Just keep one thing in mind. Fausto Hernandez is slated to make a rehab start on Sunday. Which puts him directly in line to start whenever Lowe's spot in the rotation comes up. So whatever the Indians do with the start on Sunday will likely be temporary.

A bunch of Happy Birthday wishes were sent out to 30-year-old **Grady Sizemore** yesterday. With that in mind the media
asked questions about him and his whereabouts
. We know by now what the deal is. There is none. It's like waiting for something, like your flight to leave. You know it is set to depart at a certain time, but you know that's not really the case. So you just kind of sit around waiting. Then things finally start to get going.

When we get to that point of it actually getting going,t hen wake me up. Otherwise, I really do not care that he may "increase running activities" next week. That's uh... Yeah that's some great progress there.

Rafael Perez on the other hand is throwing again and should resume his rehab experience

sooner than Grady Sizemore is expected to re-position himself in his recliner.

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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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