Not a pretty picture for the Indians this weekend. After winning the series opener Thursday night in Tampa, the Tribe proceded to lose the final three games of the series, setting the tone for the weekend by blowing a 7-0 lead on Friday night. In this week's Weekend Wrap, Peeks talks about the meltdown, the bench clearing incident on Sunday, and the Orlando Magic ... the Cavaliers freshly annointed opponent in the Eastern Conference Finals.

Damn This Abyss is Deep

It was the same old same old this weekend as far as winning baseball goes in Cleveland.

The Indians dropped three of four in Tampa Bay this weekend to fall to 14-25 on the season and 7 ½ games back in the AL Central.

But that doesn't begin to tell the story of the series.

One of those losses was Friday night when their starter, Anthony Reyes, couldn't nurse a 7-0 lead through more than 5.1 innings and the bullpen finished off the unmitigated disaster by coughing up what was left of a 7-4 game when Reyes was replaced.

On that night Luis Vizcaino, up to that point the newest member of the Tribe pitching staff and facing the first hitter of his Tribe career, immediately served notice that he belonged with this current group of relievers by giving up a leadoff home run to BJ Upton in the bottom of the 9th inning. Upton preened a bit after the home run, long enough to be able to positively identify the fan that caught it, just a night after he apologized to Indian catcher Victor Martinez for stealing a base while his team was down 9-0. That's a violation of one of baseball's long standing unwritten rules and Upton's apology is an admission that the rule was violated.

I'm not sure what Victor's response was because he was still stewing about a pitch that nearly hit him in the head during that same game. Apparently Martinez was curious as to whether his four hits on Thursday and his two hits on Friday had anything to do with the pitch thrown by Jay Howell.

All that brings us to Sunday and the reason we're discussing this abomination of a series to these lengths.

Frustration in the Tribe clubhouse is at an all-time high. The

team is struggling, losing games they have no business losing and, in general, imploding before our eyes. On Sunday afternoon they run another rookie to the mound, David Huff, and after taking a brief lead they find themselves in another 7-3 hole. But they battle back to make it 7-5 and when Ryan Garko hits a clear double in the 8th inning it looks like they are creeping firmly back into striking distance.

Only the umpires blow the call. They rule that Carl Crawford made the catch even though live action and replays confirm the ball hit the padding of the wall before settling in Crawford's glove. The inning is essentially over even before David Dellucci strikes out to officially end it.

That brings us to the bottom of the 8th when the Indians finally show some life.

Kerry Wood is called in to face Upton. Kerry Wood is a guy who can stand on the mound at Progressive Field and dot the "i" in Indians on the centerfield scoreboard. He throws with great velocity and with great accuracy. His first

pitch is thrown a foot behind Upton.

Notice served. Wood knows something about how the game is played and he lets Upton and the Rays know with that pitch that the Indian remember Upton's transgressions from the nights before. *Tran sgressions, once again, that Upton apologized for.*

But that's not enough.

Wood's next pitch nearly knee caps Upton. That's for the ball at Victor's head on Friday night. Rays manager Joe Maddon starts chirping about the two straight messages and Martinez is ready to go Mike Tyson. Victor has to be restrained from breaking Maddon in half while both benches empty. Order is restored and the Indians go quietly in the 9th inning to lose 7-5 while Troy Percival, who retired Jamey Carroll to end the game, does his best Jonathan

Papelbon impression in terms of fist pumps and celebratory gestures. And believe me, I wasn't the only one who noticed that display.

I'm no fan of moral victories. In fact, I hate the idea of moral victories. But I will say that I couldn't be happier with Wood's ‘sudden bout of wildness' in Sunday's game. Kerry Wood sent a couple of very loud announcements with his pitch selection. The first message was that arrogant punks like BJ Upton, at some point while facing the Indians, are going to be accountable for their actions and indiscretions when Wood is on the mound. You want to use your legs to show up the Tribe, fine. See if you can run with the damage caused by 95mph worth of baseball off those knees. You want to pose and preen after hitting a home run? That's cool too. But you'll have reason to move more quickly in the box if you'd like to avoid that fastball in the back.

Sometimes the only thing that can get through the thick skull of a prick like Upton is pain.

More importantly than the message Wood delivered to the Rays were the messages he delivered to his mates in the dugout.

Message number one: I have your back. You will not be a human bull's eye without some type of retribution from me.

Message number two: Stand up for yourselves, stop sulking around the diamond like beaten down dogs with your tails between your legs and show some pride in yourselves and some support for your teammates.

Quite frankly, in Cleveland that message to one's teammates is long overdue. The Indians last year led the AL in being hit by pitches. Some of those were even accidental. But when opposing teams can feel relatively secure in the fact their hitters won't face retribution they can throw up and in with impunity and open up the outer half of the plate effectively.

Make no mistake. Sunday's message was Wood's and Wood's only. That wasn't orchestrated by Eric Wedge. Wedge hasn't gone that route in recent years and I don't blame him. Ordering a guy to hit a batter won't get you far. Not if the guy doesn't have it in him to do it. It's not that Wedge can't be a red ass and confrontational. He can. But playing the game aggressively and meting out punishment in appropriate doses has to come from within. Wood showed his teammates and young pitchers in the organization how to go about

sending a message on Sunday. There was nothing thrown at the head and there were no theatrics or gestures afterward. Hell, he didn't even hit Upton. But no one who saw that game yesterday and who has the slightest understanding of baseball walked away not knowing what the intent was.

That said Wedge would be wise to praise Wood inside closed doors and hold him up as an example of what responsibility one has to a teammate. We'll never hear it. We'll hear how ‘Kerry is a competitor and plays the game like a professional'. But that will be enough.

This season has been hugely disappointing thus far and it may very well end up that way. But it was good to see two guys in Wood and Martinez display that they have the passion and

intensity that up until Sunday had been missing.

Magic-al Conference Finals

The king is dead. Long live the king.

The Orlando magic went into the serpent's den and knocked off the Boston Celtics three points at a time Sunday night. With the win the Magic earn a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals against the Cavs starting Wednesday night at 8pm.

I'm not going to lie. I'd rather be facing the Celtics and their worn down, injured roster.

The Magic present the Cavs with a stiffer challenge than Boston would have. Not to mention it would have been nice to do the Celtics ourselves. Just for us.

But I'm not as concerned as others appear to be at the prospects of facing Orlando. They are younger, healthier and more dangerous than the Celtics but their play ebbs and flows and they are prone, due to their style and reliance on the outside shot, of meltdowns and periods of uninspired play. That it took them seven games to vanquish Boston is less a testament to Orlando than it is to the heart of the Celtics. Boston was on fumes going into the series and Orlando was still pushed to the brink.

If the Cavs take care of business defensively they will move on in 6 games. But they will be tested.