

Porcello, Tigers rout Indians 7-0

Written by Nancy Spencer
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BY TOM WITHERS

AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND — Rick Porcello pitched seven sharp innings, Jhonny Peralta drove in two runs and the Detroit Tigers beat Cleveland for the sixth consecutive time, winning 7-0 on Friday night to extend their lead in the AL Central over the second-place Indians.

Porcello (5-6) allowed five hits and was never really threatened until Carlos Santana flied out to the warning track in center field to end the sixth. The right-hander set the tone for the Tigers, who dominated the opener of the four-game wraparound series.

With their fourth straight win, Detroit moved 2½ games ahead of Cleveland, which returned from an 11-game road trip to just its second sellout crowd at Progressive Field this season.

Ramon Santiago had a two-run single in the second inning off Justin Masterson (10-7), and Victor Martinez went 3 for 3 with two RBIs.

The Tigers improved to 7-2 against the Indians this season.

About the only bright spot for Cleveland was Jason Kipnis pushing his hitting streak to 16 games.

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The matchup between Masterson, a probable All-Star, and Porcello seemed to favor the Indians.

However, Detroit's No. 5 starter, who had lost his three previous starts and is an afterthought on a staff with Justin Verlander and Max Scherzer, silenced the Indians and a sedated a crowd of 40,167 that came hoping to see if this Cleveland team was ready to challenge the defending division champs.

At least on this night, the Tigers were too much for the Indians, who are just 18-29 against teams with winning records.

Before the game, Detroit manager Jim Leyland and Cleveland's Terry Francona both dismissed the idea that this four-game set was critical.

"I don't really pay that much attention to the standings until September," Leyland said. "If this was a four-game series in September, I'd say it's probably a big series but I would not say that on July 5."

Porcello took a three-hitter into the sixth when Kipnis and Nick Swisher singled with one out. Porcello could have ended the inning with a double play, but his throw to second was high, allowing Michael Brantley to reach on a fielder's choice.

Santana followed with a drive to deep center that Austin Jackson ran down a few feet short of the wall, ending Cleveland's best threat.

Peralta's two-run double in the fifth put Detroit ahead 6-0 and chased Masterson, who had pitched his major league-leading third shutout in his previous start against the White Sox.

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Andy Dirks walked with one out and moved up on a wild pitch before Masterson retired Miguel Cabrera on a grounder for the second out. However, Prince Fielder drew a four-pitch walk and Martinez followed with an RBI single to make it 4-0.

Up came Peralta, who had gone just 1 of 17 (.059) with zero RBIs in his career against Masterson. But he lined a 1-0 pitch into the gap in right-center to easily score Fielder and Martinez, the Tigers' two slowest runners.

Cabrera's RBI single put the Tigers up 3-0 and continued Detroit's trend of quickly jumping ahead of the Indians this season.

Dirks doubled leading off and Cabrera followed by grounding a hard single under diving shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera's glove and into left-center for his 86th RBI. Through nine games so far in 2013, the Tigers have outscored the Indians 32-10 in the first four innings.

Santiago, who entered the series batting just .169, helped Detroit get off to a fast start.

The Tigers loaded the bases in the second on a fielder's choice, single and two-out walk before Santiago, with just one hit in 14 career at-bats against Masterson, lined the first pitch to center, scoring Peralta and Don Kelly.