Hot in Cleveland: What Kept Cleveland’s Winning Streak Cooking? U.S. Born Pitchers and Foreign-Born Hitters
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The Cleveland Indians have secured themselves a place in history with a consecutive 22 game winning streak. This accomplishment was almost surrendered last week, yet Francisco Lindor came through in the bottom of the 9th inning hitting a double to tie the game sending it into extra innings. Cleveland secured their 22nd win with Jay Bruce hitting a double in the bottom of the 10th inning winning the game.

This accomplishment is indeed a team effort and one that should be celebrated. While 67.5 percent of players on the 40 man roster are born in the U.S., 27.5 percent of players on Cleveland are foreign-born and 5.0 percent are born in a U.S. territory.

When you compare position by birthplace, you see a different picture. Overall, 90 percent of Cleveland’s pitchers are born in the U.S. and 90 percent are white. However, this number changes when you look at who is starting: two-thirds of starting pitchers on the Cleveland Indians are born in the U.S. and one-third are foreign-born.

With regard to hitters, overall 45 percent of Cleveland hitters on the 40-man roster are foreign-born, 10 percent are born in a U.S. territory, and 45 percent of hitters are born in the U.S. Additionally, half of the hitters on Cleveland are Hispanic, 35 percent are white, and 15 percent are black. It should be noted that over the 22 game winning streak half (50 percent) of the hitters on Cleveland were foreign-born, 11 percent were born in a U.S. territory, and 39 percent were born in the U.S.

Over the 22 game winning streak, of the top 10 players with the greatest number of hits per at bats and runs batted in (RBIs) 60 percent are foreign-born and 20 percent are born in a U.S. territory. For example, Francisco Lindor had 30 hits over the last 22 games followed by Jose Ramirez (28 hits), Carlos Santana (26 hits), Yandy Díaz (20 hits), Edwin Encarnación (17 hits), Roberto Pérez (14 hits), Austin Jackson (13 hits), Yan Gomes (12 hits), Giovanny Urshela (11 hits), and Brandon Guyer (10 hits). Of the top 10 players with the greatest number of runs scored per game, 70 percent are foreign-born and 10 percent are born in a U.S. territory. Additionally, of the top 10 players with the fewest number of strikeouts per game 70 percent are foreign-born and 10 percent are born in a U.S. territory.

While foreign-born players have played a key role in Cleveland’s offensive output, native-born pitchers have also contributed to the success of Cleveland’s winning streak. However, while only 10 percent of pitchers are foreign-born and 90 percent of pitchers are born in the U.S. and 90 percent are white, of the six rotational starting pitchers, the pitcher with the greatest number of strikeouts and the second largest number of strike outs per game is Carlos Carrasco, who is from Venezuela.

As the Cleveland Indians take their place within MLB and American history it is hard not to see how foreign-born players and immigrants have helped shape the success of the team and game. Although, Cleveland lost to the Kansas City Royals ending their historical winning streak, they clenched the American League Central divisional title and have paved the way to secure a spot within the playoffs for the upcoming 2017 World Series.