They say patience is a virtue. Guess some of the new Indians do not believe in that virtue.

Now look. A way back ways when the Indians had Eric Wedge as their manager, Derek Shelton was the hitting coach. He preached an approach of patience. It also worked out that the hitting talent that the Indians had really fit that mold.

That approach was annoying. For a few reasons.

It didn't really preach putting the ball in play as much. It meant waiting for your pitch, which is a good idea. The problem is that sometimes your pitch didn't come or that your best pitch was one you passed up as a hitter.

It led to strikeouts. Or it led to plain out bad outs.

So now I ask. What's the big deal in that the Indians acquired a bunch of guys who strike out? At least they're going to try and swing the bat. A high amount of walks is great. I love walks. But walks don't score runs, only give you the opportunity to.

You know what scores runs? Hits. Big hits. And that my friends is where we take off in today's version of the Spring Training Rundown.

[A PILE OF Ks]

A lot of people have made a big deal about the fact that the Indians have acquired a few guys who strike out a little more. I think it is a given the Indians strikeout numbers will rise a bit, but I think it's a little exaggerated. Sure, grabbing one of the strikeout kings of the universe in **Mark Reynolds**
will inflate that number, but let's not go crazy in our thinking here.

There's a few counter arguments to that, one made by Francona, who noted that the speed the Indians acquired should help
.

"We're going to have some. That's the way it is," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Now, the one nice thing that's changed over the winter is we've acquired so much speed that we should be able to manufacture some runs. We are, we're going to strike out a lot. We have guys that strike out. There's going to be periods where the team is in a funk or whatever, and you're going to see a lot of strikeouts. But the good side of that is we have some guys that really can run."

The other argument against it is that the Indians simply didn't score any runs last year, so how can this be any worse? And really, let me show you.

What I find a little fun is the stat in that little note snippet. The Indians have never had more than two people strike out 140 times in a season. They just acquired four guys who did it last year. The thing with that is though that they only had one last year and he is now in Cincinnati.

So really, is this a big deal? Let's look a little deeper...

If you assume that each player averages his career average of strikeouts next season, the numbers look as such.

Jason Kipnis - 123

Carlos Santana - 124

Asdrubal Cabrera - 113

Michael Brantley - 84

Nick Swisher - 143

Michael Bourn - 126

Mark Reynolds - 213

Mike Aviles - 87

Drew Stubbs - 196

Lonnie Chisenhall - 113

That's... 1322 strikeouts, if every single one of those players were to play 162 games next year, which will not happen.

Let me show you something real quick.

Albert Pujols - 89

Howie Kendrick - 114

Erick Aybar - 73

Alberto Callaspo - 52

Mike Trout - 153

Vernon Wells - 89

Kendry Morales - 112

Mark Trumbo - 151

Chris Iannetta - 132

Josh Hamilton - 138

That's the Los Angeles Angels 10 comparable players and they total 1103 strikeouts. Again, same ramifications. I picked the Angels because last year they had 1113 strikeouts. That is 10 more than the number they come out with and they are a rather loaded lineup that scored in the top three in runs last season. That more or less is what they'll end up with again because other than Hamilton, their personnel will not change much. Yeah there's spare parts and what not.

But here's what you're looking at with the Indians, who were in the bottom three in strikeouts in the AL last year, yet second to last in runs scored. If you take the 1087 strikeouts the Indians had last year and subtract the strikeouts of players like Duncan, Damon, Hafner, Choo, Hannahan, Kochman, and Jose Lopez. Add in the strikeouts of Swisher, Bourn, Reynolds, Stubbs, and Aviles, it looks like this...1370

That's not going to happen of course, because I'm not being even and well, if you strike out 1370 times, well... You are Houston Astros 2012 bad. This team is not that bad. You can also put together the number of steals, home runs, and RBI they collected last year as individuals and put it together and get numbers just as ridiculous. So really, what matters?

"Ultimately what matters is how many runs you produce," Francona said. "Certainly, it's nice to have guys in your batting order that, with like a runner on third in a tight game, can put the bat on the ball. But we don't want [someone like] Reynolds to shorten up, to put the ball in play at the expense of his power. He is what he is. He's going to go up there and try to whack it. Well, go ahead."

Here's my point, which brings it around to the Francona quote. The Angels were kind of slapped together last year with the Pujols signing. They scored some runs because they had some talent. The Indians are going to score runs, because they have talent, regardless of how many times they strikeout. The Indians are going to score runs, because they've got speed. They'll get on base, they'll get those guys in and heck, we don't even know how this lineup is going to get constructed.

And that there alone is a wild card in how the lineup will produce. You get a few guys on, maybe Stubbs steals a base and is at third with one out instead of at second. Reynolds will go and try and whack it. If he doesn't, he doesn't, but he has the power to hit something far enough for Stubbs to score. It's better than a ground ball to third that doesn't do the job. If he strikes out, the next guy still has a shot.

Let's stop freaking out about the number of strikeouts this team could have. Guys like Bourn, Swisher, Reynolds, and Stubbs have found success despite it. They do other things very well to make up for their strikeouts. And probably the biggest point of all.

Sometimes a strikeout is not bad. If we acquired the top five guys who grounded into a double play last year, then I'd be freaked. But strikeouts? There's a lot more troubling statistics of failure than strikeouts. One thing this lineup will do is hit some more home runs than it did last year and if there's more guys getting on base, the Indians will score more runs.

And more runs than last year is not only a good thing, but it is the bottom line. And that's really all that counts, the bottom line.

[WHERE'S YOUR ENTHUSIASM?]

Here's something I'm wondering, just at this point in time before the spring games get underway on Friday.

There have been mass amounts of excitement and positivity extended towards the Indians after this offseason, from fans. That has been great. Reports are that ticket sales are up, traffic to the website is up, everything is looking good.

But the biggest thing is the excitement surrounding this club. Not talking about how we are all excited to have new players and to see the Indians spending money. I'm talking about the team's internal excitement. Just look at these two stories from national writers on CBS and MLB.com. Tracy Ringolsby has one and Scott Miller has another .

This club is excited, the fans are pretty excited, you even got some writers in on the game. The Indians, much to the opinion of Ken Rosenthal after the Indians signed Bourn, are relevant.

Holy Crap.

So here's just a quick point I want to make and a question I'd like answered.

Where is our enthusiasm? Right now we're good and we're ready. But are we going to get that Opening Day "sell out" and then 4,000 fans the next game? What's going to happen here? Last year it was pretty sad how attended the games were early on. Weather aside, it's baseball and those were some really pathetic looking crowds.

Most of the detractors have said "I'll attend when the Indians spend."

Well the Indians have spent, some it's time to attend. Right? Let's hope so. Remember, we're relevant again, and this shows it.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Congratulations to **Carlos Baerga**. The Indians have elected Baerga to their Hall of Fame and will induct the second baseman into Heritage Park on June 22nd. They also elected former general manager **John Hart** to their non-playing wing.

It was the trade for Baerga and Sandy Alomar Jr. that really set the tone for Hart to assemble the machine he did in the mid-to-late 90's in Cleveland. And now both go in at the same time.

"This means a lot to me," said Baerga, back in an Indians uniform again this spring, working with middle infielders. "I never thought I would even make this team as a utility guy. But when I did, from that day on, it was magic. It was a miracle I became a [starting] player here. It was something special."

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"I'm not really an emotional guy, but when I received the call I have to admit that my eyes misted," Hart said. "It means a lot. It really, really does. There are special times in people's lives and that was about as good as it gets all the way from when we were terrible, building it to the run we had. As you always say, we had great players and so many good people around there. You look around and it was a good run."

Congrats to both guys, big important pieces to the 90's revitalization, as they take their rightful places in the Indians Hall of Fame.

Matt Capps (Or if you prefer to call him by his middle name, Dicus) will be competing for a pen job, but he first has to prove to, not just the Indians, but himself, that he's healthy and over his shoulder problems that plagued his final season with the Twins.

"For the last eight years, I've been on a roster and I kind of knew where I was going to be," Capps said. "But, I get it. After being hurt last year, I need to prove I'm healthy. I know when I am healthy, I'll take my chances with anybody. It's just a matter of being healthy through Spring Training and, here in about two weeks, start working on competing. If I'm healthy in two weeks, and I can go out and physically compete, everything is going to work out pretty well."

Capps is one of those players that the Indians will need to release by March 26 (otherwise known as Nino's Birthday!) or pay a Minor League assignment bonus. That's the rather new thing about holding onto those minor league free agent vets. Capps is on his game having worked some pen sessions, but finally threw to hitters on Wednesday. The Indians had been working Capps in slowly, having him throw on a more gradual pace due to his shoulder issues.

Speaking of throwing to hitters, Terry Francona has made it an option for his pitchers to use the protective L screen.

"They get more out of it throwing without that L-screen," Francona said. "I think they're all more comfortable doing it, and the drill is all for the pitchers. The hitters, for the very most part, just track balls. A couple guys swing, but they know going in this is still the pitchers' time to get ready in their progression. I thought everything went pretty well."

The result of the L Screen removal? Justin Masterson and Vinnie Pestano got hit, Pestano being left with a bruise at the hands of his roommate, Jason Kipnis. Pestano said it was a lesson learned to not throw the pitch he did, so there's that. But really, it is more of an in-game field, which is great. The pitchers don't like an L screen, so why make them use it? Protection? Yes, but practice makes perfect and if you aren't accustomed to balls being hit back at you, how do you prepare for it in the game?

It's one of the few changes Francona has brought with him . The Indians have done "pitch tracking" the first day of batting practice under Manny Acta. With Francona, swinging is optional for the players. This is perhaps why Francona is regarded as a player's manager. Options! Options are good, especially when you are dealing with how one prepares and how everyone is different and feels comfortable differently.

And while we are on the discussion of preparation, I guess it makes sense to throw in this note about how Francona actually likes
Trevor Bauer
's long-toss routine.

"I like it," Francona said. "Long tossing is great. It's something as an organization we're trying to incorporate more, as long as you do it correctly. It's all about building arm strength. Sometimes throwing builds arm strength and sometimes it depletes it. People are different. As an organization, we've really tried to increase our long toss."

Looks like the D'Backs made a big deal out of something the Indians actually like, or at least Francona likes. So, different strokes I guess? If Bauer was out there doing something that could hurt him or damage him, you can bet your butt that the Indians would be putting a stop to it. So

really, if it's not hurting and it is something he is comfortable with, why prevent him from doing it?

I mean, look at the silly looking thing he's warming up with in this picture . He's clearly a different type of dude. So, good for him. Let him do what he does, especially if it doesn't hurt himself or pose a serious risk.

Random Bits

- **Chris Perez** and **Vinnie Pestano** will not return to the club in Goodyear after leaving to play for Team USA. It turns out that Team USA will be playing exhibition games and that they'd be pitching at the same time if they returned anyway. All is good.

- **Yan Gomes** is officially out for the WBC. He's decided against it.
- For those of you who filed away Manny Acta's opinion on pitch counts, you can file this away too. Francona says that he pays attention to them , but it is not a sole factor in decisions he makes with his pitchers. He looks to protect guys, especially if they have a particularly stressful inning, but that he largely goes on how the pitcher looks. So yeah.

- Looks like Michael Bourn will automatically slot into the leadoff role, as Francona said that is why they've brought him on. When looking to fill out the rest of his lineup, Francona says Cabrera might fit there the best
because he can split the lineup, batting wise. Tito notes he wants some stability to how it looks with the guys that are there every day.

- Things have been closing in on **Carlos Carrasco**. He's had the same locker for an entire year. Normally that's a good thing, but this locker is isolated in Arizona and away from the big leagues and Carlos' teammates. Bastian has a good story on Carrasco
and his process to get back to compete for a rotation spot this spring.

- Scott Kazmir was going to start the first game on Friday, but Francona has decided that he's going to throw another bullpen session
instead of seeing game action right away. Instead, Gio Soto will make a start before he heads off to pitch for Puerto Rico in the WBC. Brett Myers makes his Indians debut on Saturday as he gets the start there.

- Rain took away the Indians outdoor practice on Wednesday. Instead they hit inside the complex.

We get real live baseball on Friday. Can you believe it? If you haven't, I'd go out and get the MLB At Bat App on your mobile device. You can get the radio feed for most games. If the Indians aren't producing it, the other team might, and that means you can listen to just about a majority of the spring games. You can listen to any MLB regular season game too, which is pretty cool if you are like me and like that.

Play (exhibition) Ball!

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Nino is in full baseball mode here and on The Tribe Daily , his own Indians blog. Don't miss all the fun, photoshopped Indians players, and LOLTribe ridiciulousness.

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