Alright I jinxed myself. Maybe they were running a free preview or something, but my few days of joy watching the MLB Network again was just that. A few days and very short lived.

MLB Network once again became unavailable, meaning I don't actually have the 24/7 baseball station.

I don't have the 24/7 baseball station. I'll say that one more time.

I don't have the 24/7 baseball station.

My birthday is coming up, so if someone wants to make things right. You guys know where to find me.

[BAUER OUT(AGE) OF RACE]

After his outing Wednesday, starting pitcher **Trevor Bauer** said that he is undergoing some neuromuscular programming in regards to his pitching mechanics.

...Oookay Sheldon Cooper.

On Thursday, Bauer was optioned to Triple-A Columbus , along with Corey Kluber, signifying his (and Corey's) elimination from the rotation race. Which means it is all down to Scott Kazmir and **Carlos Carrasco**, but more on that in a second.

Bauer, not disappointed, but rather cognizant of the fact that he will be in the big leagues at some point, knows he has some work to do. If that wasn't clear by the neuromuscular programming comment, not sure what is.

"I don't think about making a big league club or not," Bauer said. "I think about my improvement and getting better. If I can improve every day, then that's all I can handle. I made a decision to make some changes that are going to help me long term. That's what I'm doing."

Francona says that Bauer understands what the Indians want of him and that he is working on finding a way to stay as healthy as possible, but still productive.

This kid will be up this year, fingers crossed with injuries of course. It is only a matter of time before the Indians bring him up and make this thing permanent It's just a matter of when the opening will be and who will vacate a spot. It could be whoever wins the spot, or it could be anyone. No rotation stays completely in-tact all season, and it would be a bigger upset than Indiana losing in their first round game on Friday if the Indians rotation in 2013 did just that.

So we haven't seen the last of Bauer, and if anything, this may be welcomed for him. He gets to go down in an environment where he will not be highly pressured or expected to do completely amazing and continue to work on what he's been doing.

But now, with Bauer (and Kluber :-() out of the race, that officially leaves the final spot in the rotation up for grabs only between Kazmir and Car-Squared... Which is rather convenient considering Carrasco was the starter in Thursday's game against the Diamondbacks.

[INDIANS - 5 | D-BACKS - 4]

[BOXSCORE]

Francona says there will not be a "pitch-off" to determine the last spot, so that's good news as far as it goes for Carrasco and his latest start, because while it wasn't bad, it could have been better.

Carrasco gave up four runs off eight hits with no walks and three strikeouts in five innings of work. There are several reasons why that is not bad. The first is that he didn't walk anyone, which is always good. The other is that he got a little let down by his defense , so the runs are a yes/no/whatever thing to look at. Francona remains impressed with his progress, regardless of anything.

"I think he continues to show good stuff," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "The one inning when they got the runs, we lost a ball in the sun, things like that, and then they hit the ball hard. I think he's making progress. His arm is good. He looks healthy. I think it's exciting. That's the best way to put it."

Stats are not really something we need to look at. What matters most is if he's sharp and if he's up to a point where he can go all-out. Both would seem to be the case, but then there is Scott Kazmir, who is probably more sharp and certainly ready to go all-out.

And well, he doesn't have a six game suspension to serve.

Either way, the Indians said they'll go with the guy that they think will give them the best chance to win. I think both give them a good chance, but the main point is that both can give them a good chance to win. Kazmir doesn't have a roster spot, Carrasco does, so perhaps Kazmir will get that first chance.

Bullpen: Joe Smith is sharpening up himself, a scoreless frame for him with a walk and a hit, showing progress as he makes his way towards opening day. Cody Allen rebounded from that disaster the other day with a clean frame, and Bryan Shaw keeps proving he deserves a bullpen spot with two strikeouts in his 1-2-3 inning.

Big Brantley: Michael Brantley went deep for a three-run shot and was 2-for-3 on the day to help power the offense. "Rakin" Ryan Raburn is still hitting with two more hits (both doubles), a walk, and a run scored. Omir Santos had the other two runs batted in for the offense.

Next Game: A night game! Yes a night game in the sense that it is at 10:00 for people on the East coast, but rather actually an afternoon start for where the game is actually taking place in Arizona. It will be televised and it will feature the Opening Day starter, Justin Masterson. It also features the return of two WBC guys...

[SANTANA OVER THE WORLD]

After his team defeated Mike Aviles' Puerto Rico squad 3-0 on Tuesday to claim the World Baseball Classic and finish off an undefeated run through the tournament, **Carlos Santana** made his big return to Indians came this week.

Santana only had six hits in his eight games played, but he hit a few home runs and was a big part of the DR's run. **Mike Aviles** was a huge reason Puerto Rico made it as far as they did as well, going 10-for-31 with nine RBI.

"I'd like to think so," Aviles said, "because I definitely think that it gives the kids in Puerto Rico a chance to understand that, 'Hey, there's a lot of good going on.' There's a lot of good ballplayers there, and it's just a matter of you've got to believe in yourself."

Aviles said he received more at-bats in the WBC than he would have had he been in camp and feels ready for the actual regular season both offensively and defensively. He was also excited by the response from the fans and support they had for each game. He also says that he can hang his hat on the 2-for-2 run over Vinnie Pestano, who had been hitless against in six at-bats. That should stick for some time.

Santana meanwhile will also probably pretty ready to go. Having had some major at-bats and getting A LOT more work than he would have behind the plate had he gone through a regular spring. The only thing Francona says is that he needs is to get up to speed on the signs.

"All he really needs to get up to speed on is making sure we're all set on signs," Francona said, "and the communication of the signs. He's probably ahead of everybody else as far as playing goes. He caught so many innings and was under real game situations, so he would be ahead of the game as far as that goes."

Thankfully, Santana has caught Masters, Jimenez, and McAllister, so there isn't any issue there. He's also caught Carrasco, so if he's to make the team, that won't be anything. He will need to get on the same page with Brett Myers, and if he makes the team of course, Kazmir. He should be fine though.

The only question that remains... Did Carlos grab any magic plantains before he left?

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

We talked about the rotation, and have considerably the past few days and most of this week after Dice-K was eliminated and now with Bauer out. The bullpen is also starting to come into

focus with **Scott Barnes** having been ruled out and Matt Albers looking like he is in.

"Barnesy, he took it a little bit hard," Francona said. "It's not necessarily the best day. Guys don't process things a lot. All they hear is they're going down. So everybody is a little different. With certain guys, you'll follow up maybe a day later, two days later, three days later, because you want them to understand the message."

"Barnesy" as Francona calls him, did have good numbers this spring and is a good arm. He will most definitely come into play this year at some point, the question is just when. If he goes down and does his job in Columbus, it won't be long before you see him up. He was in and out last year and definitely someone the Indians have in their future plans. But as Francona said, there are a couple guys ahead of him.

That means Shaw, Nick Hagadone, and David Huff are left. Hags and Huff would make a second lefty, which is probably needed with just Rich Hill in the pen. Huff is the only one without options. Meanwhile, **Matt Capps** has his agent looking around to see if anyone wants him on their active roster. He says if he ends up not finding one, he would be happy to go to Columbus and wait for his chance with the Indians.

On Saturday, Chris Perez will pitch a minor league game. I think once the Indians know if he's going to be good to go, they'll make some final decisions on that bullpen. All three could be in it if Perez is not available for Opening Day, so you just really do not know right now.

The Indians also told Jerry Gil he'll be in Columbus to start the season, but they do like him. Not bad for a position player turned pitcher.

Alright, a little off-the-field non-spring news...

Two excellent stories you need to read, the first regarding current Indians **Brian Jeroloman**, and the oddity that he is. A Major League catcher, who technically has not had that elusive Major League chance

. Jeroloman was called up at one time, but never got an at-bat. He's been waiting ever since.

"It's not like I sat and I did nothing," Jeroloman said. "I was in there so early. For a night game, I was at the field from 10:30 [in the morning] to almost 11:30 or 12 at night, studying non-stop. I wanted to see all these guys pitch through videos, and learn all the ins and outs."

It is not for effort or anything. So for story's sake, hope Jeroloman gets that at-bat. Sometimes that's all that these players play for, one at-bat. One chance. Jeroloman looks like he's a future manager or coach, like most journeymen catchers seem to be because of the work he puts in behind the scenes and in the film room. But right now, there's one goal in mind and it would be nice for him to get that goal.

Twenty years ago, today... Anthony Castrovince as only he can brilliantly do, has the 20-year aniversary story on the death of Steve Olin and Tim Crews
. It's a long one, so buckle in, but well-worth the read and your time as he updates us all on the families and how they've lived on with the memories of their fallen Indians.

The Indians went to work this offseason, not only with the roster but with the ballpark. We all know the lowering of concession prices, but the Indians added yet another innovative feature to the park. The first team to really embrace social media, to the point of creating a suite dedicated just for it, have a nice new 5,000 square feet lounge.

Dan Wismar has all the goods, having attended on behalf of the The Cleveland Fan , from a in-person perspective. You can also have a
virtual tour guided by Tom Hamitlon
on the Indians website. Dan has a full report on the specifics of the place, that includes a bar and buffet for all attendees, as well as news on all the other changes at the ballpark, which includes the relocation of the aforementioned Social Suite.

The coolest addition? The Indians removed some rows behind home plate and there are some tables and chairs specifically for group outings. How COOL is that? All parks should have something like that, that close to the action. Love it.

Just in case you were curious, Michael Bourn likes playing pool , Lil Wayne, MTV Jams, and oh yeah, his son. You mean MTV has shows that play music still? Never would have thought.

And in case you were curious, I like playing ruzzle and The Big Bang Theory. Two references in one entry! I'm gonna quit while I'm ahead. Bazinga.

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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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