The Boys of Summer are back. Baseball officially gets underway tomorrow as pitchers and catchers report to Chain Of Lakes Park in Winter Haven, FL. We will be all over the action from the Tribe this year, from the big league club on down to the minors, and our 2007 coverage kicks into gear as Spring Training opens and Opening Day nears. Tony Lastoria gets the party started for us here at The Cleveland Fan, unveiling his Spring Training Primer to get us all ready for the open of camp.

Well, beat the drum and hold the phone - the sun came out today!
We're born again, there's new grass on the field.
A-roundin' third, and headed for home, it's a brown-eyed handsome man;
Anyone can understand the way I feel.
Oh, put me in, Coach - I'm ready to play today;
Put me in, Coach - I'm ready to play today;
Look at me, I can be Centerfield.

Ah yes, the sounds of John Fogerty singing "Centerfield" and a new baseball season on the horizon.

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In the coming weeks, we will have:

- In-depth preview articles highlighting the Indians starting rotation, bullpen, infielders, outfielders and bench.
- Full previews for the four full-season minor league affiliates Buffalo, Akron, Kinston and Lake County will be featured.
- A weekly recap called “Spring Training Happenings” will highlight and discuss all the Indians and minor league news in camp from the previous week.
- A weekly roundtable session called “The Indians Roundtable” that opines on current issues surrounding the team.
- For the week of March 11-16, Tribe Insider Tony Lastoria will be in Spring Training offering a first-hand look at the Indians and minor leaguers with a daily account of what was seen.

All this, plus numerous commentary pieces from the TCF team as Spring Training rolls to the start of the season. When the regular season begins, expect lots of coverage with the return of staples from last year such as " *The B-List*" and "*Minor Happenings*" and also a few new features like " *The Indians Roundtable.* "

Also, you can go here to view all the vital information regarding the Indians team payroll breakdown, player control for the next several years, options and service time, contract info, and their minor league depth chart.

We will definitely be on top of things in our sophomore season covering the Tribe. With our recent partnership with the Indians cable network SportsTime Ohio (STO), the coverage will only continue to get better.

For now, here is a quick primer with some of the key information as Spring Training opens:

Key Dates:

Feb. 15: Pitchers/Catchers report
Feb. 16: Pitchers/catchers take physicals
Feb. 17: Pitchers/catchers hold first workout
Feb. 20: Position players report
Feb. 21: Position players take physicals
Feb. 22: First full team workout
Mar. 1: First game, vs. Houston 1:05pm at Chain of Lakes Park (Winter Haven)
Apr. 2: Regular season opener, vs. Chicago WS 2:05pm at U.S. Cellular Field
Apr. 6: Home opener, vs. Seattle at 4:05pm at Jacob's Field

Key Off-Season Transactions:

- Traded Kevin Kouzmanoff (3B) and Andrew Brown (RHP) to San Diego for Josh Barfield (2B)
- Signed Roberto Hernandez (RHP): 1 year $3.5M ($3.7M club option in 2008)
- Signed Aaron Fultz (LHP): 1 year $1.65M ($1.5M club option in 2008)
- Signed Joe Borowski (RHP): 1 year $4.25M ($4M club option in 2008)
- Signed Keith Foulke (RHP): 1 year $5M ($5M mutual option in 2008)
- Signed David Dellucci (OF): 3 years $11.5M
- Signed Trot Nixon (OF): 1 year $3M
- Signed Jeff Harris (RHP): Minor league contract with invite to camp
- Signed Luis Rivas (2B): Minor league contract with invite to camp
- Signed Keith Ginter (2B/3B): Minor league contract with invite to camp
- Designated Brian Sikorski (RHP) for assignment (still with Indians)
- Designated Jeremy Guthrie (RHP) for assignment (claimed by Orioles)

Spring Training Roster:

Pitchers: Rafael Betancourt, Joe Borowski, Paul Byrd, Fernando Cabrera, Fausto Carmona, Jason Davis, Keith Foulke, Aaron Fultz, Roberto Hernandez, Juan Lara, Cliff Lee, J.D. Martin, Tom Mastny, Matt Miller, Edward Mujica, Rafael Perez, C.C. Sabathia, Brian Slocum, Jeremy Sowers, and Jake Westbrook.

Catchers: Victor Martinez and Kelly Shoppach.

Infielders: Michael Aubrey, Josh Barfield, Casey Blake, Ryan Garko, Travis Hafner, Joe Inglett, Hector Luna, Andy Marte, Jhonny Peralta, and Mike Rouse.

Outfielders: Shin-Soo Choo, David Dellucci, Ben Francisco, Franklin Gutierrez, Jason Michaels, Trot Nixon, Grady Sizemore, and Brad Snyder.

Prospect invites: Aaron Laffey (LHP), Scott Lewis (LHP), Chuck Lofgren (LHP), Adam Miller (RHP), Tony Sipp (LHP), Armando Camacaro (C), Javi Herrera (C), Max Ramirez (C), Wyatt Toregas (C), Asdrubal Cabrera (SS), and Trevor Crowe (OF).

Non-Roster Invites (NRIs): Jeff Harris (RHP), Brian Sikorski (RHP), Jason Stanford (LHP), Mike Rose (C), Keith Ginter (IF), and Luis Rivas (IF).

Key Battles: What to watch for this Spring Training

Barring injury or trades, the Indians opening day 25-man roster is virtually set. If an injury or two were to occur to a starting pitchers or position player it would add more opportunities and competition in camp, but if the Indians are healthy 23 of the 25 roster spots appear to be locked up. Here are the locks, with the number in ( ) showing how many roster spots likely will be delegated to this roster position:

Starting Rotation (5): Sabathia, Westbrook, Lee, Byrd, and Sowers.

Bullpen (7): Foulke, Borowski, Hernandez, Fultz, Betancourt, and Cabrera

Starting lineup (9): Sizemore (CF), Nixon (RF), Hafner (DH), Martinez (C), Dellucci (LF), Blake (1B), Peralta (SS), Marte (3B), Barfield (2B).

Bench (4): Kelly Shoppach (C), Ryan Garko (1B) and Jason Micheals (OF)

Some may question if Ryan Garko has a spot locked up, but as long as he stays healthy, he fills a great need as a right-handed bat off the bench and he likely gets the majority of the playing time at 1B against a left-handed starting pitcher. The key battles to make the club will essentially be for the 24th and 25th spots on the Indians roster. Here is a breakdown of the two key camp battles:

1. 7th Bullpen Spot

The Candidates: Jason Davis, Matt Miller, Brian Sikorski, Tom Mastny, Juan Lara, Eddie Mujica, Rafael Perez and Tony Sipp.

The Skinny: Sipp and Perez are vital pieces of the Indians pitching staff in the near future, but they need to go to Buffalo for more seasoning. Sikorski will either be a Spring Training cut and latch on somewhere else, or accept an assignment to Buffalo. Mastny, Mujica and Lara likely will be the first options the Indians turn to when they need a fresh arm for the bullpen, or a reliever is injured. The Indians could use a second lefty in the bullpen, so Lara (and possibly Perez) is a dark horse to win this spot, but this essentially is a two-horse race between Jason Davis and Matt Miller. Davis is experienced, has shown flashes of talent, and is out of options. Miller is also experienced, but has battled injury problems. When he is healthy, he has been very effective on right-handers with his unique sidearm delivery.

2. Backup Infielder (utility player)

The Candidates: Joe Inglett, Hector Luna, Luis Rivas, Keith Ginter, and Mike Rouse.

The Skinny: Inglett is probably the most versatile of the bunch, and a huge fan favorite, but he does not play SS well. Indians GM Mark Shapiro wants the backup middle infielder on the team to be good defensively, so this will be a tough obstacle for Inglett to overcome. Ginter will likely go to Buffalo and play 3B. This should be a three horse race n camp between Rouse, Luna and Rivas, with Rivas maybe having the edge because of his defensive abilities and speed. But it all may be moot, as it is likely the Indians may trade for a utility player near the end of camp or pick one up off waivers.

Schedule:

(courtesy of www.springtrainingonline.com)

Date	Time	Opponent	Location
March 1	**1:05 p.m.**	**Houston Astros**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 2	1:05 p.m.	Philadelphia Phillies	Bright House Networks Field
March 3	1:05 p.m.	Detroit Tigers	Joker Marchant Stadium
March 4	**1:05 p.m.**	**Detroit Tigers**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 5	TBA	New York Mets	Traditi on Field
March 6	**1:05 p.m.**	**New York Yankees**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 7	TBA	Tampa Bay Devil Rays	Al Lang Field
March 8	**1:05 p.m.**	**Philadelphia Phillies**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 9	TBA	Cincinnati Reds (ss)	Ed Smith Stadium
March 9	**7:05 p.m.**	**Pittsburgh Pirates (ss)**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 10	**1:05 p.m.**	**Cincinnati Reds**	**Chain of Lakes**

March 11	TBA	New York Yankees	Legen ds Field
March 12	TBA	Pittsburgh Pirates	McKec hnie Field
March 13	**1:05 p.m.**	**New York Mets**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 14	**1:05 p.m.**	**Toronto Blue Jays**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 14	TBA	Toronto Blue Jays	Knolog y Park
March 15	**7:05 p.m.**	**Tampa Bay Devil Rays**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 16	**1:05 p.m.**	**Washington Nationals**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 17	TBA	Tampa Bay Devil Rays	Al Lang Field
March 18	**1:05 p.m.**	**Los Angeles Dodgers**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 19	TBA	Atlanta Braves	Ballpar k at Disney's Wide World of Sports
March 20	TBA	Tampa Bay Devil Rays	Al Lang Field
March 21			
OFF DAY			
March 22	6:05 p.m.	Detroit Tigers	Joker Marchant Stadium
March 23	**7:05 p.m.**	**Houston Astros**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 24	**1:05 p.m.**	**Atlanta Braves**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 25	TBA	Los Angeles Dodgers	Holma n Stadium
March 26	**1:05 p.m.**	**Tampa Bay Devil Rays**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 27	TBA	Houston Astros	Osceol a County Stadium

March 28	**1:05 p.m.**	**Toronto Blue Jays**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 29	TBA	Atlanta Braves	Ballpark at Disney's Wide World of Sports
March 30	**1:05 p.m.**	**Toronto Blue Jays**	**Chain of Lakes**
March 31	7:10 p.m.	St. Louis Cardinals	AutoZone Park