Spring training is on the doorstep. No, really, it is. Just don't turn on the weather forecast or look outside, and you'll realize it's OK to mouth the six-letter S-word. It appears the Indians, with the fortune of good health, should be able to once again field one of the most complete teams in baseball, a team that is superlative at nothing but competent at everything. As has been the case the past few years, the overall success of the 2007 Indians will hinge on some questions that need satisfactory answers. Papa Cass asks them.

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Pitchers and catchers report today to what will be the Indians' last spring training in Florida. The team will re-locate their February and March home back to Arizona next year, ending a 14-year run in Winter Haven.

This week is the beginning of what could be a make-or-break year for the Tribe.

In the second halves of 2004 and '05, this team proved they can mount a playoff run. Last year, hindered by a clunker of a bullpen, bad defense and inconsistent starting rotation, the Tribe managed to field one of the best offenses in baseball, outscoring their opponents by 88 runs, yet ended up in fourth place of the powerful AL Central with a 78-84 record.

Since the offseason began, GM Mark Shapiro has added another promising young player to the team in Josh Barfield and has fortified the outfield and bullpen with solid, if unspectacular, veterans.

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As has been the case the past few years, the overall success of the 2007 Indians will hinge on some questions that need satisfactory answers. Below are five of them:

1. Is Eric Wedge the right manager?

The longer Wedge stays as the manager, the less impressive he seems. His teams always find a way to bookend the season on bad notes.

Sluggish Aprils and late-season collapses have become yearly events under Wedge. One year, a lack of hitting is to blame. The next, it's a bad bullpen. Shapiro is to blame for some of that -- in the case of 2006, most of that -- but it's hard to ignore the fact that the common denominator through all of it is Wedge.

Some of his players don't appear to like his leadership style, which seems to bounce back and forth between ineffectual and controlling. It was a major factor in why the Indians underachieved to the extent they did last year.

Wedge and Shapiro have been scolded numerous times for giving the appearance that they are blindly loyal to each other. But that might be starting to change from the front office's standpoint. For the first time since becoming manager in 2003, Wedge has some real pressure on him to perform.

If this team continues to underachieve, Buck Showalter is waiting in the wings. Make no mistake: Showalter, a special assistant to Shapiro, is not a ceremonial hand-shaker and storyteller like Mike Hargrove was during his brief return to Cleveland in 2004. Showalter is on this staff to make Wedge produce results. If Wedge doesn't, Showalter will be chomping at the bit to replace him.

2. Will a closer emerge?

One of the reasons Shapiro went all-out in unsuccessful attempts to land B.J. Ryan and Trevor Hoffman a year ago was because he knew how weak the free agent class for relievers would be this winter.

Alas, Shapiro was outbid for Ryan and couldn't break Hoffman's long-standing ties to San Diego. So he was forced to belly up to the craps table and do some gambling this winter.

The Indians' free agent reliever class of Joe Borowski, Keith Foulke, Roberto Hernandez and Aaron Fultz are loose puzzle pieces right now. Foulke is the career closer who has been sidetracked by injuries the past few years. In a best-case, scenario, he would take the closer's role and hold it all season, allowing everyone else to find their places in setup and middle relief.

In that sense, Foulke is arguably the most important acquisition the Indians made this offseas on .

Even if Foulke will never again be the pitcher he was in anchoring the Red Sox's 2004

championship bullpen, he can still close games effectively when healthy. If he is not healthy, the same cascading effect that clobbered the 2004 and '06 bullpens will begin again. Borowski will be forced into the closer's role, depleting the setup corps and forcing other pitchers to pick up the slack.

But at least we know that Borowski can close games, which is a good insurance policy to have. Now if Wedge can just break himself of the habit of riding one or two relievers for huge chunks of the season.

3. Can Jhonny Peralta rebound?

In 2005, Peralta was very nearly the total package. He hit for power, setting a single-season record for homers by an Indians shortstop. He hit for average, he showed good plate discipline and, after a shaky April, was competent defensively. His first full season in the majors earned him a five-year contract extension.

Then 2006 arrived and it all came crashing down: Brutal defense, backsliding offense and an attitude that screamed "I don't have to prove myself anymore."

By midseason, Peralta was becoming the bane of Wedge's existance. He went so far as to openly rip Peralta in the media on several occasions. If you know the company line-embracing Wedge we all do, you know that's way out of character for him.

This year, few players are at a bigger crossroads than Peralta. He is right back where he was at the start of '05, needing to prove himself.

As of right now, the Indians have no real fallback if Peralta stumbles. The backup shortstop is Hector Luna and prospect Asdrubal Cabrera is not ready for prime time. So, much like last year, the Indians have a lot riding on Peralta. Hopefully he comes to spring training ready to play, otherwise the Indians are going to be scrambling for a new shortstop.

4. Is Ryan Garko the real deal?

Garko took the Indians and their fans by storm in the second half of last year. After Ben Broussard and Eduardo Perez were both pawned off in midseason, Garko took the first baseman's job and ran with it.

He drove in 45 runs in 50 games and quickly became every Tribe fans' favorite underdog. And his reward for that is ... to likely start the season on the bench.

Few moves this offseason have generated more controversy than the move the Indians haven't officially made yet. As of now, the plan is to platoon Garko with Casey Blake at first. Blake will get the lion's share of at-bats at first base, starting there against right-handed pitchers. Against lefties, Blake will move to right field and Garko will start at first.

Most fans can't believe the potentially-potent bat of Garko will be relegated to part-time duty in favor of giving Blake -- long accused of being a managerial lap dog -- a fulltime gig. But Garko has more control that we might realize.

All Garko has to do is continue to hit the snot out of the ball. If he does that, even the most ardent Blake supporter will concede that Garko needs to be in the lineup every day.

All he has to do is prove himself and keep doing it. What a novel concept, eh, Jhonny?

5. Is Andy Marte the real deal?

He had better be, because if Marte can't stay in the lineup, it's going to mess up a lot of other things for this team.

The Indians committed 100 percent to Marte as their third baseman of the future when they dealt Kevin Kouzmanoff to the Padres for Barfield. You'd like to think that was based more on what Marte has accomplished than what the Indians gave up (and blew up) to get him.

So far, Marte has shown Cleveland fans that he could be a Gold Glover at third. He should also hit for some pretty decent power for a corner infielder. But his ability to get hits is going to determine whether he can become a rock at the hot corner. To that end, there is some work to be done.

Marte hit .226 for the Indians last year, and is a career .204 hitter in parts of two seasons with the Braves and Indians. It's a small sample, too small to really get an accurate gauge. But let's just hope it's growing pains and not an accurate depiction of the type of major-league hitter Marte will be.

If Marte is Brooks Robinson in the field and Russell Branyan at the plate, it's not going to add

up to long-term success.