Keith Foulke ... buh bye. Cliff Lee and Matt Miller? On the shelf. Travis Hafner and Grady Sizemore both can't buy a hit in spring. And now it's possible that C.C. Sabathia could miss some time at the beginning of the season. Could this add up to the fourth straight poor April of the Eric Wedge era? Papa Cass hopes not, but fears it may.

Winter Haven is getting a few good parting shots in before the Indians pack up and leave for the last time at the end of the week.

Prior to yesterday, spring training 2007 had already signaled the end of the road for should-have-been closer Keith Foulke, claimed the first month or so of starter Cliff Lee's season, claimed the first who-knows-how-long of the season of oft-injured sidearmer Matt Miller, and stifled the bats of the Indians' two best players, Grady Sizemore and Travis Hafner. As of Thursday, Sizemore was batting .118 in 51 spring at-bats, Hafner was hitting .227 in 44 at-bats with, glaringly, no home runs.

Then, Wednesday, the cherry on the sundae. Would-be Opening Day starter C.C. Sabathia was possibly knocked out of his turn in the rotation when a line drive nailed his left forearm on the second pitch of his final spring training start. X-rays taken Wednesday were listed as "negative," but an MRI will probably give the Indians a much better idea of how long C.C. will be sidelined.

As injuries go, it wasn't quite LeCharles Bentley destroying his knee on the first contact drill of training camp, but it's still a significant blow, if for no other reason than psychologically.

Now, the Indians enter the season with two-fifths of their starting rotation in doubt.

Sure, there is a silver lining, as stud prospect Adam Miller could be given a shot to head north with the team. But this isn't what the Indians need right now.

What they needed was to head into the regular season with momentum, with a full deck of pitchers and hitters rounding into form. Instead, they're plugging holes and bailing water and it's

not even April yet.

Slow starts have become a yearly tradition under Eric Wedge. Typically the Indians have a sluggish April with single-digit wins, fall five-to-seven-to-10 games off the pace by month's end, and spend the rest of the season playing catch-up.

This season might be the worst yet. Not only do the Indians not play a guaranteed warm-weather game until they head to Tampa Bay on April 20, they get road trips to Chicago and New York and a homestand that features Los Angeles and Chicago beforehand. Not to mention a pair of games in Minnesota immediately afterward.

Cold weather does not help injuries heal, nor does it help bats spring to life. Sabathia and Lee will likely be non-factors in the season's first month, and it would seem like a safe bet to predict that the Indians won't exactly be hitting the cover off the ball between now and that trip to St. Petersburg, Fla.

Then there's the case of closer Joe Borowski's fragile shoulder, sitting, inactive, in an ice-cold bullpen for hours and hours at a time. If he is used with the infrequency that marked Bob Wickman's workload last year, what are the odds of his shoulder completely seizing up by April 20?

Wait, let's not think like that. A warm-air mass will cover the Midwest. The Indians will play the first three weeks of the season in unseasonably warm temperatures. All this bellyaching will be rendered moot.

Nah, that's too good to be true. We all know that winter is a fickle mistress, and she doesn't like to be forgotten. And like most women, she wants us to turn off the damn game and go shovel the driveway.

By April's end, shoveling the driveway might seem like a picnic compared to sitting through nine innings of an Indians game.