With opening night set for tonight, I asked the Swerbs Blurbs team of Indians correspondents for their predictions on what would take place this season.

Chime in with your predictions here.

## SWERB

AL Division Winners: Yankees, Indians, Angels
AL Wild Card: White Sox

NL Division Winners: Mets, Cardinals, Padres
NL Wild Card: Brewers

ALCS: Yankees over White Sox
NLCS: Mets over Cardinals

World Series: Yankees over Mets

Indians record: 93-69

I'm predicting the same record as a season ago for the Tribe, but this year it will be good enough to win the division. I think they will not play quite as well in interleague play, but should play better against the White Sox. I'm still not sure if swapping Millwood and Elarton for Byrd and Johnson is a wash, but I like what we have behind them better in Carmona and Sowers. Offense should produce similarly. I expect big seasons from Hafner and Sizemore, but a slight drop off in left field, and likely more injuries. The Indians bench is weak. And the ripple effect of a Wickman injury in the bullpen is concerning. That said, this is a young & exciting team that easily could have won over 100 games last year if they

played anywhere close to .500 in one run games.

AL MVP: Alex Rodriguez, NYY
AL Cy Young: Johan Santana, Min
AL Rookie Of The Year: Delmon Young, TB
AL Comeback Player: Mark Loretta, Bos

NL MVP: Albert Pujols, StL
NL Cy Young: Ben Sheets, Mil
NL Rookie Of The Year: Matt Cain, SF
NL Comeback Player: Carlos Beltran, NYM

## CRIS SYKES

AL Division Winners: Yankees, Indians, Angels
AL Wild Card: White Sox

NL Division Winners: Braves, Cardinals, Dodgers
NL Wild Card: Mets

ALCS: Yankees over Indians
NLCS: Braves over Cardinals

World Series: Yankees over Braves

Indians record: 94-68

The return to the playoffs! The 2006 Indians are geared to return the playoffs for the first time since the end of the “Era of Champions” in the 90’s. It all starts with the Opening Day Special against the White Sox, which will set the tone for the entire season. They will again have one of the best lineups in the American League, and have some serious quality arms in the bullpen. If they can get more than 20 wins total out of Paul Byrd and Jason Johnson, which will in effect replace Kevin Millwood and Scott Elarton.

AL MVP: Gary Sheffield, OF, NYY
AL Cy Young: CC Sabathia, Cle
AL Rookie of the Year: Ian Kinsler, Tex
AL Comeback Player:

NL MVP: Lance Berkman, Hou
NL Cy Young: Jake Peavy, SD
NL Rookie of the Year: Hanley Ramirez, Fla
NL Comeback Player:

## STEVE BUFFUM

AL Division Winners: Yankees, Indians, A's
AL Wild Card: White Sox

NL Division Winners: Braves, Cardinals, Dodgers
NL Wild Card: Mets

ALCS: A's over Yankees
NLCS: Cardinals over Dodgers

World Series: A's over Cardinals

Indians record: 92-60

I just don't see where all this perceived "dropoff" is coming from. Boone will be better or Marte will; Blake will be better with runners on because that's fluky and he's over his personal problems, or he'll be replaced. Broussard was an acceptible hitter against right-handers, so if Perez can hit lefties 1B is not a problem. As for guys like Peralta and Sizemore regressing, I don't understand the logic. Any luck we lose from the bullpen should be offset by winning a few more 1-run games as we regress (progress?) to the mean there. It's a good team: not without weakness, but damn good.

AL MVP: Alex Rodriguez, NYY
AL Cy Young: Roy Halladay, Tor
AL Rookie of the Year: Howie Kendrick, LAA
AL Comeback Player: Aaron Boone, Cle

NL MVP: Albert Pujols, StL
NL Cy Young: Jake Peavy, SD
NL Rookie of the Year: Prince Fielder, Mil
NL Comeback Player: Oliver Perez, Pit

## JARAD REGANO

AL Division Winners: Yankees, White Sox, Angels
AL Wild Card: Indians

NL Division Winners: Mets, Cardinals, Dodgers
NL Wild Card: Braves

ALCS: Yankees over White Sox
NLCS: Cardinals over Braves

World Series: Yankees over Cardinals

Indians record: 88-74

The Tribe should have made the playoffs last year, with or without their late collapse at the Jake. The core of the team is a year older, which should help offset some of the off-season losses. Losing Bobby Howry, Kevin Millwood, and Coco Crisp though are going to be large holes to fill. Even GM Mark Shapiro admits the team right now is not as good as the team that was applauded as they walked off the field for the last time in October. A key trade though could make this a mid-90's win team.

AL MVP: Alex Rodriguez, NYY
AL Cy Young: Johan Santana, Min
AL Rookie of the Year: Francisco Liriano, Min
AL Comeback Player: Aaron Boone, Cle

## TONY LASTORIA

AL Division Winners: Yankees, Indians, A’s
AL Wild Card: Angels

NL Division Winners: Braves, Cardinals, Dodgers
NL Wild Card: Cubs

ALCS: Indians over A’s
NLCS: Braves over Cardinals

World Series: Indians over Braves

Indians record: 92-70

The AL Central race should be a four team race (Twins, Indians, White Sox, Tigers) all season, with the winner being decided in the final week. The division will prove to be the best division in baseball as four teams finish over .500, with the winner getting just above 90 wins. Ironically, the Indians win the division, this time by closing out the season at home with the White Sox and Devil Rays on a positive note. Indians go 92-70, winning the division by two games over the White Sox.

The Indians arguably have the deepest team in the AL, and will use some of that depth as trade bait for a big need around the trade deadline to solidify this team as a dangerous World Series contender. Even without a significant trade, the team is good enough to win the whole thing. The only thing that truly stands in the way of that happening is a serious rash of injuries to key players…..Eric Wedge….or, of course, TCE. If Wedge continues to have trouble managing in tight game situations, he could prove to be the Achilles heel of the team and they'll get bounced in the first round. But, if he progresses as a manger like his young players have progressed on the field, there will be a victory parade on East 9th St for the first time in this town in over 40 years.

AL MVP: Travis Hafner, Cle
AL Cy Young: Johan Santana, Min
AL Rookie of the Year: Francisco Liriano, Min
Al Comeback Player: Jim Thome, ChiW

NL MVP: Derek Lee, ChiC
NL Cy Young: Jake Peavy, SD
NL Rookie of the Year: Jeremy Hermida, Fla
NL Comeback Player: Scott Rolen, StL