Tony Lastoria has made his annual sojourn down to Indians spring training, and after sucking it up and putting in some family time his first couple days there ... it's down to baseball for T as he begins to spend the better part of two weeks watching the Indians prepare for the 2008 season. In his first Winter Haven Notebook for us, Tony provides the type of insight on this team that you'll struggle to find elsewhere, collecting his initial thoughts in this piece for us.

I finally made it down to Winter Haven yesterday morning. After spending the better part of four days in Tampa visiting family, and another two days in Disney with the kids.....I was ready to make my life simple again and just take in some baseball.

Yesterday was a camp day where all the minor leaguers were on site as no games were scheduled. Instead, an inter-squad scrimmage was played between several players on the Triple-A Buffalo and Double-A Akron roster versus those on the Single-A Kinston and Lake County rosters. On the other three fields players from the rest of the system took part in drills as Farm Director Ross Atkins looked on from the crows nest.

The complex was very quiet as the Indians were playing away at Legend's Field against the Yankees, which left the minor leaguers all to themselves. Things got rolling around 10am and ended pretty quickly by about 11:45ish and the players quickly dispersed as they had their whole afternoon to themselves since they normally are done with games at 4pm and do not have to be at the park until late morning today.

Here are some working rosters of some of the guys who were playing with what team. Being my first day, I did not pay as much attention as I should have, but this

was mostly due to the fact I was talking to several people throughout the scrimmages. The game I saw looked like a combination of Buffalo/Akron vs. Kinston/Lake County. Here are some of the guys who were on each roster that I can recall:

Buffalo/Akron

Chris Gimenez (C)
Jordan Brown (1B)
Ryan Mulhern (1B)
Michael Aubrey (DH)
Brandon Pinckney (SS)
Brandon Chaves (2B)
Wes Hodges (3B)
Ryan Goleski (OF)
Trevor Crowe (OF)
Jose Constanza (OF)
Jeff Stevens (RHP)
JD Martin (RHP)
Scott Roehl (RHP)

Kinston/Lake County

Nuiman Romero (3B)
Abner Abreau (3B)
Carlos Rivero (SS)
Brian Finegan (2B/SS)
Jason Denham (OF)
Todd Martin (1B)
Mike Butia (OF)
Luis Rincon (1B)
Lucas Montero (OF)
Luis Perdomo (RHP)
Kyle Collina (RHP)

Others that played in the game who I cannot recall what team they played on are Jared Goedert and John Drennen. I'll pay much more attention to the rosters going forward.

No surprises really on the makeup of the rosters, although Abreu playing with Kinston/Lake County seems to signal he may indeed be the starting third baseman at Lake County. The organization is very high on him, and he could be another Latin kid the organization pushes through the system a little more quickly. He is tall and very skinny, but definitely has a body that will allow him to gain weight and grow into it more. I have some pictures of him I will share sometime this week in another update.

Here are some random nuggets from camp today:

- Got news that right-hander Justin Hoyman has called it a career. He reported to camp, but left a few days ago. Just did not have it anymore as injuries caught up with him and his fastball never recovered (reportedly around 82 MPH).

- Roster cuts are looming sometime this week. This is always tough, as several of the players in camp will see their major league dream come to an end when the first round of cuts are announced possibly as soon as Tuesday or Wednesday morning. There are a lot of players on the bubble, so it will be interesting to see who stays and who goes this week and in the coming days when more cuts are made before camp breaks at the end of the month.

- Talked to left-hander Dan Cevette for a little bit, and I will actually be conducting an official interview with him possibly tomorrow or later this week. In our short talk, he says he is completely healthy and ready to go and believes he can get the job done and perform well. He has had injury problems in the past, and was once one of the Indians top young lefty pitchers. He most likely will pitch in the bullpen at Akron or Kinston this year. He is also a HUGE Penn State fan, but more on all that later.

- Some guys who look noticeably bigger (in a good way) and stronger are Erik Stiller and Carlos Rivero. Rivero looks like he gained about 10-15 pounds and filled out his frame more. Stiller is rock solid and gained 15 pounds of good weight, looks strong, and has seen an increase in his fastball velocity. He worked really hard in the offseason and is someone who could be due for a breakout year. I'll be talking to him sometime this week too. Right now he supposedly will either start the year in the Akron bullpen or Kinston rotation.

- Right-hander Cody Bunkelman is still in camp. There were rumors he was about to be released from the organization last July when they sent him to the GCL. He

is surely one of the guys on the bubble.

- No sign of third baseman Kelvin Diaz, the legend from the Dominican Summer League. He is also not listed on the working roster sheet, so it looks like his ongoing Visa issues are still a problem.

- I did not see these players play at these positions, but according to the roster sheet Dustin Realini is now at first base, Jerad Head at catcher (more to become a super utility option), Jay Nilsson at catcher, and Stephen Head is still playing in right field.

I'll have another update tomorrow and report on what I saw in the Triple-A and Double-A games against the Braves' affiliates. The Single-A teams will be at the Braves' Disney World complex playing their Single-A teams. Also, I will hopefully have an interview or two.