It's another Lazy Sunday with Paulie C here on the site, and there's just no way to avoid talking about the A-Roid revelations from this weekend. Paul gives his thoughts, and links the thoughts of some others he respects. Paul also looks ahead to the start of spring training later this week, linking and hitting on all the biggest issues as the pitchers and catchers commute to Goodyear. Paul also hits on some of the free agents that are still out there, noting that AL Central teams in the mix on some of them.

With the in-laws in town for the weekend and my "basement time" (you know, in my sweatpants...at my parents' house...because I'm a "blogger") kept to a general minimum, let's get going on a Lazy Sunday before The DiaBride comes down and asks me when

I'm going to get going so we can make our way to whatever the day holds in store for us (no, she'd never do that...but mixing a full Cavs-Lakers game into the day's plans may be a tall order, which is why the DVR is running).

Regardless of what my day has in store for me, we're off:

Obviously, the big news of the weekend is about Alex Rodriguez's failed drug test in 2003 and while nothing should really surprise us regarding athletes and the use of performance-enhancing drugs anymore, the revelation that A-Rod tested positive comes as one of the things that could constitute even a slight surprise. Not that A-Rod is this holier-than-thou guy who we thought would NEVER do something like that (as it seems that those players are awfully hard to find), more that A-Rod's body of work shows an unbelievable consistency in terms of performance.

From his first full season as a 21-year-old, Rodriguez has posted an OPS between 1.046 and .846 , never varying wildly or showing an unusual uptick like some other players have (check out the SLG in Bonds' 2001 season

). In fact, A-Rod's 1996 season as a 21-year-old was not surpassed in terms of sheer statistics until his 2007 season as a 32-year-old and while his HR numbers certainly went up, they peaked in his 2002 season as a 27-year-old, which has been proven by many to be the peak of a baseball player's career. If you take away that 2007 season (and now how much doubt is cast on everything he's done), his HR total steadily decreased from that high in 2002.

Who knows what went on here and what has gone on since (and here's a pretty damning aspect to the story
), but A-Rod's legacy is unquestionably tarnished and I don't think there's much question that his name doesn't figure to be the last in this whole steroid mess.

As a quick aside here, kudos to Sports Illustrated for breaking this story and acting as the sports media is designed to operate, casting a critical eye to the subject it covers and not simply enabling or promoting the subject in the interest of ratings, advertising tie-ins, or "weekends" devoted to promoting a particular network.

Regardless of where you come down on the A-Rod thing (and, as usual, Joe Posnanski pretty much nails it squarely on the head
), let's just say this:

Enjoy Tampa this Spring, CC...you wanted to be on a bigger stage with more zeroes on your paycheck. That does not come without strings attached, so please try to remember that when you answer your 10,000th question about A-Rod in Spring Training as the new guy on the team, attempting to simply fit into that Yankee "mystique"...the one that seems to fade with each passing month these days.

Back to things pertaining to the Reservation and feeling like I need a shower to remove all of the A-Rod dirtiness off of me, Terry Pluto has a Sunday piece on how valuable Mark DeRosa could prove to be for the Indians and why the Indians targeted him specifically to fill their infield hole
. Really, though, Pluto's big bullets were fired this week in
a piece on Friday detailing why he's excited for Spring Training to start
, hitting all of the high points of what the 2009 season could hold for the Tribe. Most interesting to me in the 10 points was Pluto's admission that nobody seems to know why Jeremy Sowers has been unable to re-capture even a modicum of success since his 2006 season. Pluto, who has been as high on Sowers as

anyone publicly, throws all of the confounding aspects to the situation out there; but, he (like everyone else) is unable to pinpoint what Sowers' issue may be, outside of perhaps not getting enough "separation" in MPH from his fastball to his change-up. For as cerebral as Sowers is purported to be, it wouldn't surprise me if Sowers tries to re-invent himself and perhaps tries to add more pitches to his repertoire in an attempt to make himself more effective...and not just at AAA.

On a personal note, let me just say that this Pluto piece showed up in my Google Reader (a tool that allows you to "subscribe" to individual pages online, automatically letting you know when a new piece has been posted) at about 11:15 PM on Saturday night. It's fantastic to make the Internet work for me, instead of me having to go through my list of preferred writers (like Pluto, Posnanski, Rosenthal, etc.) and sites (CastroTurf, TCF, LGT, etc.) all the time.

What that all means is that Pluto's "Terry's Talkin'" in this morning's PD on my doorstep was already something that I had read. Tell me again why the newspaper business is hurting...

Outside of that, there's very little coming by way of news about the Tribe other than the occasional mention in the pieces that don't seem to be stopping about all of the FA that remain unsigned. SI's Jon Heymann mentions the Tribe kicking the tires on Pete Martinez (to which Pedro did not "jump at"), presumably as part of their due diligence in their search for a veteran starter that ended with Hot Carl Pavano donning the Wahoo for 2009. As indifferent as I am about the Pavano signing, isn't it an upgrade over what Pedro would bring to the team...which would be a cloud of sourness and ineffectiveness?

Around the Central, Heymann also notes later in the piece that the Twinkies look like the front-runners to land Joe Crede, which would solve their issues at 3B, assuming Crede's healthy and is inked to a one-year deal that would serve as motivation this year to merit a long-term deal next off-season. If the Twins are still looking at available FA, it will be interesting to see if the Twins dip into the FA pool as well in terms of filling out their bullpen with some relievers (like Will Ohman or Joe Beimel) who are still available at what could be bargain-basement prices.

Finally on the topic of Minnesota, Joe Christiansen passes along a blurb from

Seattle that the M's and Twins may be talking about a Delmon Young deal for Jarrod Washburn and Jeff Clement , which doesn't make much sense to me for the Twins unless they're just looking to move Young out of The Twin Cities. Interestingly, Christiansen says that the Washburn interest makes sense to add a veteran because "as good as the Twins' five young starters were last season, it's overly optimistic to think they'll all be that healthy and good again in 2009".

Sound like any other team you know with a plethora of young, promising starters?

Elsewhere in the Central, the White Sox have allegedly made an offer to Bobby Abreu, which would mean that Jermaine Dye would be on his way out of Chicago and would mean that Abreu could possibly be bringing his defensive atrocities to the South Side of Chicago because, last time I checked, the White Sox are pretty loaded up with aging sluggers who don't play the field all that well, if at all.

Back to the Indians, with the full knowledge that a number of the Tribe beat reporters have been pulling out their Spring Training previews, I'm simply not going to throw a link up there for them unless you really like your Spring Training previews to be nice, neat, compact, and vanilla. Personally, I don't...but that's just me.

If you're really yearning for some preview pieces, not surprisingly, Castro's at the official site
have been the best in terms of laying out some of the pertinent topics, though (while I'm obviously biased) I would say that if you want to read Spring Training previews, just check out the Arizona Dreamin' series that I've been working on (here
,
here
, and
here
) with the final installment on the infield due this week as they cover essentially what the boys at the PD and ABJ have been doing, without the limits of space and...you know...with some actual thought and analysis put into it.

In last week's LS, I did a little bit on what's been done this off-season by the teams

in the AL Central who don't play their home games at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario, providing links to the Yahoo pieces on each. I'd be remiss if I didn't also include the Yahoo piece on the Tribe off-season , which is pretty fair, though the comment that "Shapiro could not add the shortstop that would have enabled the Indians to move Jhonny Peralta to third base" shows that the author is not as familiar with the Indians as he should be if he's doing this preview.

"Add a shortstop"...you mean to compete with Asdrubal when Jhonny moved to 3B?

Speaking of previews, I'm pleased to finally be able to announce a preview book that I had the honor of contributing to, the...wait for it...Indians Annual 2009, a 128-page magazine edited by Jay Levin at the LGT and featuring nationally-known writers like Joe Posnanski and Vince Gennaro as well as sawed-off hacks like yours truly. The Annual (or, as serial poster and contributor to the book Tyler Chirdon calls it, IA2K9) features an interview that Jay conducted with Tribe Assistant GM Chris Antonetti, as well as including a plethora of information, all presented by excellent writers and analysts. The content that I've seen is pretty incredible (except for the contributions from this one guy with a French sounding last name), so I would highly recommend it to anyone, whether I was involved in it or not. Having seen some of other Annuals that this publishing company has put forth in the past as well, know that we're not talking about a cheaply bound piece here as the quality and layout are absolutely top-notch.

If you're thirsting for more than just the cursory looks at the season that you're going to find everywhere else (and, if you're reading something by me, you likely are...as brevity is not my strong suit), this is absolutely something that you will enjoy as it does not contain the same tired content or pieces that you'll see elsewhere. The content and the enormity of the project is something that you'll marvel at as you motor through all 128 pages (that's without ads too, kids).

Off my soapbox and with my index cards back in my breast pocket, here's Jay's write-up of IA2K9 with more information on it
,
a more complete breakdown of the content is here
, and finally you can
order the Annual here
.

Actually, as long as I have my earpiece going and am telling you how to spend your hard-earned money , Tony Lastoria's Prospect Book is being shipped and having my copy in my...um...office, I highly recommend it for anyone who has even a passing interest in the Indians' farm system as the depth and breadth of information that it contains on about 130 Indians farmhands is pretty incredible. It's a handy resource that I use as a reference point throughout the season and goes pretty in-depth into all of these guys with the likes of Lake County's utility IF being profiled in this thing. The book is available by e-mailing Tony at **tlastoria@gmail.com** and he is working off of his third shipment from the publisher already, so if you haven't ordered one, I'm not sure what you're waiting for.

Pitchers and catchers report THIS WEEK and to keep myself busy until then, it's time to talk to my father-in-law about what time we're going to have our first gin-rocks of the day.

Maybe while watching some "FANTASTIC" stuff on TV...does the NBA even use that catchphrase anymore or am I still stuck in the NBA marketing era of " Superstars "?

For now, I'm going to try to remove all of the questions I have about A-Rod from my greater consciousness and ask a more pertinent question...have Pitchers and Catchers reported yet?