Another day, another aspect of the team to turn a victory into a loss and Paulie C was there to witness the whole bloody mess from his perch in the Mezzanine with trusty Bob the Beer Guy nowhere to be found with Paul desperately looking to drown my sorrows in some $7 beers. Paulie hits on Hafner's shoulder, the 14 man pitching staff, calling up LaPorta and Valbuena, Ben Francisco, and poor attendance in his latest piece for us.

Another day, another aspect of the team to turn a victory into a loss and I was there to witness the whole bloody mess from my perch in the Mezzanine with trusty Bob the Beer Guy nowhere to be found for the third straight game down there and me looking to drown my sorrows in some $7 beers.

Alas, let's fire some Tomahawks from the Mezz the way that the new Progressive SUV in right-center field fire T-shirts (at least, I think they're T-shirts) out of the car doors after an Indians' HR...no, seriously - you have to see this thing that looks like it came straight off the "Transformers 2" set after a HR to believe it...and I don't mean that in a good way.

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Going into the 2009 season, one of the great mysteries was which Travis Hafner would appear in the Indians' lineup and how frequently he would be able to appear in it, due to the lingering issues in his right shoulder. There were two

"worst-case scenarios" with Hafner - one being that he had a clean bill of health, but was simply ineffective, and the other being that the underlying and mysterious issues in his shoulder would prevent him from contributing on anything close to an every day level.

While the first three weeks of the season seemed to answer the question of whether he could be an effective hitter, sore shoulder or not, as he posted a almost "Pronkian" line of .270 BA / .370 OBP / .540 SLG / .910 OPS, news that "shoulder soreness" has placed him on the 15-day DL could mean that the second "worst-case scenario" may be unfolding before our very eyes.

What does this "shoulder soreness" mean and why is he going back to see Dr. James Andrews after the Indians had stated that he essentially had a clean enough bill of health to break camp with the team and play for three weeks?

In the Indians' cloak and dagger world of injury disclosure...who knows?

But if this "shoulder soreness" is what it sounds like, the Indians are facing the very real possibility that this right shoulder situation is a chronic condition that only rest seems to remedy, meaning that he'll have to be coddled and managed almost as a part-time player so this "fatigue" and "soreness" doesn't result in a 15-day DL stint every month or to from overexertion. Even if it is a "two-week" thing as The Atomic Wedgie hopes, this avenue to and from the DL could become a well-worn path for Hafner if his shoulder issue is something that's not fixable and is simply something that the Indians will have to live with and manage.

I suppose you can wonder which is worse - a "healthy" Hafner who plays every day but can't contribute too much at the plate or a "fragile" Hafner who is able to play 3 or 4 times a week and may or may not be a solid contributor in those sporadic starts?

Maybe I'm being overly pessimistic, but since you could make an argument that either option could fall under the "worse" category, the ramifications are pretty grim...particularly for a player guaranteed to make $37.5M over the next three years (not counting 2009) for the Tribe. For an ineffective everyday player or for an effective, but part-time player, any way you slice it, it's not good news...

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Regardless of the long-term effects on the Indians, what does the Tribe do now with Hafner's spot on the 25-man roster?

Don't you dare suggest this 14-man bullpen abomination...13 is too many, 14 is a joke.

In the short-term, the Indians will call David Dellucci up (sorry, folks, that's what it's going to be) to take the place of Hafner as a LH DH to play sporadically against RHP.

The lineup is probably going to have more than a few moving parts over the next four weeks until LaPorta gets the call up at the end of May/beginning of June as Garko and Shoppach are likely to see more time in that DH spot to the point that the breakdown will probably shake out like this:

C/1B - Vic the Stick
C/DH - Show Pack
1B/DH - Garko...Polo

Dellucci will likely be used as the DH against certain RHP or could be used as the LH complement to Shoppach in a DH platoon as Shoppach's numbers against RHP this year have been underwhelming (.200 BA / .250 OBP / .333 SLG / .533 OPS), small sample size considered. Shoppach's career OPS vs. RHP (.719) against his career OPS vs. LHP (.990) suggests that a happy balance may find some AB for The Looch for a few weeks while Shoppach can be put into positions in which he may be able to succeed and get back onto the roll that he rode throughout the second half of 2008.

Of course, a promotion of The Looch would mean that the Indians have 5 OF on the roster with two other players (DeRosa and Garko) who can also play OF, but you can't really look at Dellucci as an OF anymore and this upcoming stint is more as a DH than anything else.

As unappealing as three or four weeks of Dellucci may be, in terms of him getting

regular AB, you have to think that he's fighting for his spot on this team as the reinforcements are going to be poised to emerge from Columbus in about a month and The Looch holds his own fate in his hands.

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As for other roster moves, you want a little outside of the box thinking?

How about calling up Luis Valbuena?

Valbuena's hitting at a .329 BA / .447 OBP / .529 SLG / .976 OPS clip in Columbus and would add some versatility to a lineup that sorely looks to be in need of it, in addition to finally adding a LH bat at the bottom of the lineup.

The idea would be to periodically give Valbuena some starts at 2B, move Cabrera to SS on those days and have Peralta either play some 3B or DH with DeRosa maybe taking some games in LF, moving Francisco to the 4th OF role.

It looks more confusing than it really is and what it really does is allow the Indians to play someone NOT named Tony Graffanino to utilize the versatility of DeRosa and give Peralta some time to himself...at a time when he certainly looks like he needs it.

The net effect of the move could be to move DeRosa into more of a super-utility role filling in for a slumping player. DeRosa could either stay at 3B with Cabrera and Valbuena to his left or could go to LF, assuming Peralta can handle 3B every so often and it wouldn't throw off his already-fragile confidence, where he could at least take some AB as the LF and relegate Ben Francisco to more of the 4th OF role that his numbers suggest he is best suited for.

Don't believe me that Frisco isn't a viable everyday player?

Ben Francisco's first 19 games in 2008

.365 BA / .397 OBP / .619 SLG / 1.016 OPS in 63 AB

Ben Francisco since those first 19 games

.247 BA / .317 OBP / .368 SLG / .685 OPS in 440 AB

Want some perspective on those last 440 AB by The Ben Francisco Treat?

Remember how everyone HATED how little production the Indians got from the LF platoon of Jason Michaels and David Dellucci, affectionately referred to as Dellichaels?

Dellichaels from 2006 to 2008

.252 BA / .314 OBP / .389 SLG / .702 OPS in 1,333 AB

But I digress...

Calling up a guy like Valbuena may be a move to see if shaking things up might put some life into the offense and could allow the Indians to utilize the versatility to play where the current hole exists, be it staying at 3B if Peralta continues to struggle or if LF if Francisco continues to struggle.

One issue that may prevent a move like this would be the thinking to keep Valbuena getting everyday AB in Columbus...but, last time I checked Tony Graffanino has started 6 of the 16 games he's been an Indian and...well, he's almost like the "nobody else is available" option - so I think that regular AB could be there for Valbuena. Maybe not every day AB, but enough to keep him busy.

Maybe that's overthinking the whole mess or tinkering a little too much and not relying on a more patient, level-headed approach...but at least it would add some versatility and depth to an offense that is certainly in need of some.

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Speaking of call-ups, if you're still thinking that a LaPorta call-up is still happening before that magical date sometime at the end of May or beginning of June, here's

a little back-and-forth at LGT between Jay Levin, myself, and a few other savvy Tribe fans
about why, ultimately, LaPorta being called up a month earlier than that date doesn't make sense.

As much as we want it to make sense and as much as our heart tries to pull rank on our head...it just doesn't make sense.

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I'm not sure if anyone had a chance to make it to any of the Red Sox games, but having gone to two, let me just say this...yeah, the attendance this year...that's going to be a problem and a developing story.

I know it's the end of April, kids are in school, the weather is supposed to stink...but the Red Sox in town for their only series of the year, with Monday looking like mid-July and THAT'S the turnout.

It's pretty telling when I can get off of the InnerBelt onto East 9th Street on both Monday and Wednesday (not even tapping my brakes once for traffic) at 6:45 PM for a 7:05 PM start, be in the parking garage at E. 9th and Bolivar less than 3 minutes later and be in the stadium a solid 10 minutes before the beginning of the game.

All I could think of as I passed over Carnegie on E. 9th (with no cop directing traffic because it simply wasn't necessary) was what an emerging issue the attendance (or lack thereof) at these Indians' games is going to be.

It could be a long, lonely summer at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario...especially for me in the Mezz if I can't find Bob the Beer Guy soon as the other vendors in the Mezzanine don't know the 3-inning pattern...you know, be there in the 1st, 4th, and 7th for my perfect game enjoyment.

What do you mean, you didn't know about the 3-inning pattern?

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[illegible] Sheffield's , a bar three blocks away from Wrigley (far enough to converse with people, but not too far) that serves Great Lakes Brewing Company's finest.

Cy did ask, though, if we could get some sort of early head count so he can see if we could even get a space reserved or get some drink special, or just to let them know how much Dortmunder Gold they should be ordering.

So, long story short, if you're making the trip that weekend, or live in Chicago and are just going to the game and would have an interest in something like this, just shoot me an e-mail at cousinpt@hotmail.com or put a comment down to express some interest and see if we can pull this thing off, considering we're approaching it early enough...for once.

Also, maybe we can finally put that Facebook page to use and get some details on it once we figure out the time of the game and whether a pre-or post-game is more feasible for everyone who does express an interest.