As the Indians' nightmarish season rolls on, when not even the midges could save them from Justin Chamberlain's best start of the season, the newest development in the tumble down the hill is ... injuries! With Grady's elbow finally sending him to the shelf, with El Capitan taking one off of the knee (though it seems he's OK), and now with Asdrubal walking off the field like Martin Riggs after getting out of a strait-jacket, the Indians' season just on as the hits just keep on coming ... and they're not coming off of anyone's bat.

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While the injuries may be the reason du jour of what's gone wrong with the Indians, it goes a lot deeper than that if you simply take a quick look at the Opening Day roster and realize that the players in bold are the only players who have remained on the 25-man roster for the whole year:

C - Martinez
C - Shoppach
1B - Garko
2B - Cabrera
SS - Peralta
3B - DeRosa
LF - Francisco
RF - Choo
CF - Sizemore
OF - Crowe
IF - Barfield
IF - Graffanino

DH - Hafner

SP - Lee
SP - Carmona
SP - Pavano
SP - Reyes
SP - Lewis

RP - Wood
RP - Lewis
RP - Perez
RP - Betancourt
RP - Smith
RP - Kobayashi
RP - Jackson

By a quick count, 13 of the 25 players that the Indians broke Spring Training with have remained on the team, without interruption, for the first 53 games, just shy of the 1/3 mark of the season.

The reason that this is important to look at is because while injuries have certainly played an issue in the decimation of the Opening Day roster, ineffectiveness has played a role that is just as significant. Since you could argue that Carmona and Lewis would have found themselves in Columbus if Rome wasn't burning around them and that Asdrubal could be headed to the Tribe DL, the number of players that remained healthy AND effective throughout the season from this list is staggeringly low.

CP Lee, Victor, Cabrera (who may have to be scratched from this list tomorrow), The BLC...am I missing anyone?

Pavano? I guess if we're reaching...but that's it.

We knew at the outset of the season that some cavalry would be arriving from AAA to fill holes that exposed themselves throughout the course of the season, but watching the roster turnover gives off a sense that leaks are springing up everywhere in the dyke and the fingers that the Indians are sticking in either don't fit or they're simply out of fingers to prevent the coming deluge that looks to be all but a certainty at this point.

Of course the news that Grady could be out for two months - which would take us to August - hurts quite a bit in terms of the Indians losing their best player. But, not unlike last year when Victor and Hafner hit the DL after nursing injuries (and where is the learned lesson in all this?), what the Indians were getting from Sizemore prior to the DL stinT wasn't having too much of an effect on a very productive offense, sitting 3rd in the AL in runs scored and 1st in the AL in OBP...all with Sizemore sporting an OPS of .726 in 235 plate appearances.

Yes, Sizemore hurts as he is the Indians' best player (when healthy), but Betancourt's injury could be the kill shot to the team's 2009 hopes (if any still remained) because the majority of the "effective" relievers in the bullpen (Herges, Aquino, Vizcaino) have the capability to stop pitching above their heads and regress back to the veteran bullpen fodder that we all thought they were when they were signed in the off-season to basically fill out the Columbus relief corps.

Essentially, what we'll see with Sizemore and Betancourt hitting the DL is a further watering down of what was already a flawed team. The Indians, going into the season, hoped that their Opening Day roster could remain moderately productive (and obviously healthy) long enough for some of the reinforcements to arrive; but that just didn't happen.

There were too many question marks going into the season relating to health and related performance, from Hafner's shoulder to Martinez's power and from the hope against hope that Pavano, Reyes, and SLewis could all stay healthy and contribute some meaningful innings, that the Indians needed EVERYTHING to go right for the season to not be what it is today, which certainly looks like a lost cause.

Before anyone throws the white flag up as we've just hit June, though, let's be very honest about this - if the Indians tread water against the Central and don't make up significant ground in the next three series before Interleague play starts, the writing is on the wall that the team is too flawed and playing too far below optimal capacity to compete. If the Indians flounder, or even just play .500 baseball against the Twins, White Sox, and Royals (the three teams that separate them from 2nd place) before next Friday, it's very much time to acknowledge that the AL Central (weak as it may be) simply isn't attainable for this group of players.

If the Indians can start to make up ground and leapfrog some of these teams

ahead of them at a time when the other teams' schedule gets tougher (the Tigers' next two series are against the Red Sox and Angels) or the other teams are losing as a direct result of the Indians winning, the thought would be to attempt to hang on for the expected returns of Jake Westbrook, Aaron Laffey, and maybe Travis Hafner to fortify the roster for what could be a long, winding road to .500 with the hopes that the Tigers fall on hard times.

However, even if the team sticks around or makes things interesting, the shortfalls or questions as to whether some of the principals in the rotation will return at 100% and the lack of viable internal options still point to a trade for this team to augment the rotation and/or bullpen, particularly if Carmona's struggles continue or if Betancourt's injury looks to be serious enough that a lengthy DL stint looks likely.

The obvious move is to take the player with the most worth to other teams on the roster who essentially became a redundancy on the roster and an unnecessary luxury when Jhonny Peralta made the move to 3B and move Mark DeRosa for some pitching that can help right off the bat, be it in the rotation or the bullpen. It could be argued that Cabrera's injury potentially affects this thinking, as Peralta would likely move back to SS, meaning that DeRosa's old 3B spot would likely be his again, but Jamey Carroll may be able to fill the 3B void for a short time (or even Valbuena) and DeRosa's usefulness diminishes for the Indians with every start for him in LF and 1B as the Indians organization is awash with guys able to play LF or are playing out of position at 1B.

Before taking a brief hiatus, Castrovince implied that something could be afoot with the Cardinals , looking for a 3B to replace Troy Glaus whose versatility would become an asset upon Glaus' return. The Cardinals, however, wouldn't be the only suitor for DeRosa, Teams like the Cubs, the Braves, and the Mets would all figure to have an interest in upgrading their infield and versatility with a veteran like DeRosa.

According to AC, the Cards would offer Mitch Boggs, Chris Perez, or J.P. Walters for DeRosa and if Perez is on the table, this deal should have been done last week. The other teams that may have an interest may have young arms that would intrigue (Cubs - Jose Ascanio, Kevin Hart; Braves - Kris Medlen; Mets - Bobby Parnell, Jon Niese), but potentially moving DeRosa goes back to the idea that the Indians need arms as soon as possible to contribute at the MLB level, be it in the rotation or the bullpen. If DeRosa is the piece most likely to net such a

piece (and trading him now gets a better return for 4 months of him instead of waiting for July 31st, which would translate into 2 months of him), then the Indians shouldn't wait to make this move. Plus, seeing how the (allegedly) interested teams have a rooted interest in keeping DeRosa potentially out of the hands of a divisional rival, maybe some sort of bidding war for DeRosa could drive up the price to...say...keep him out of returning to the North Side.

The Indians' Front Office has some success stories pertaining to flipping veterans for position players (Benuardo for Choo and Cabrera, Blake for Santana), but it's time to add some arms to this mix, whether the idea be to augment the team for a run at .500 and to get back into the AL Central mix (throwing caution and logic to the wind) or simply to finally load up on some hard-throwing impact starters and relievers that don't seem to be found internally at the upper levels.

Regardless of whether the Indians make a move with DeRosa or anyone else, the injuries suffered by the Indians in the past week or two certainly has put a damper on any hope that the Indians would be able to hold it together until some of their stalwarts could remain healthy. By no means, however, should these injuries be used as an excuse as the Indians' season had plenty of unfortunate incidents that took place before these injuries started piling up and made 2009 look more and more like a lost season.