March Madness. The Big Dance. The Madness. I never knew that there were so many different nicknames to describe Spring Training. I always assumed that those names were exclusive to college basketball's big tournament, but it turns out that they are used to enhance the excitement over the Paul Phillips/Lou Marson battle to play one or two games a week.

I open this week's column with a look at the future rather than examining the past week. Grady Sizemore is expected to play on Sunday , serving as the DH. No word on if they will request the services of four-foot-nine Jamey Carroll to be the special DR (designated runner). I would make Austin Kearns be the designated runner. And I would make him RWI (run while intoxicated), thus, fulfilling his punishment for the DUI I mentioned last week. Perhaps put a keg in the coaches' box. Granted, this implies that Grady Sizemore would do something at the plate worthy of a trip to first base.

All kidding aside, this is a huge rehab step for one of the most exciting Cleveland Indians in recent memory. The team is better with Sizemore in the lineup. Not just from a defensive standpoint, but he also works the count, seeing 4.02 pitches per plate appearance. This can

shorten the outing of a starter and also force prolonged innings for the opposition hurler. Even if he is having a down year, he can still take you deep in any given at bat. With very few power threats in the lineup, that cannot be understated.

Now, for a look at what happened this past week. The biggest story, at least among the fan base, is that Lonnie Chisenhall was sent to minor league camp. This comes as a shock to all friends of the feather who have been living under a rock ever since Mark Shapiro became the GM. The Chiz Kid had zero chance at making this team out of Spring Training. He has zero Triple-A at bats and was impressive off future grocery baggers and cart retrievers in a hitter-friendly environment. By no means am I anti-The Chizzard (as Paulie C calls him), I am a realist. I knew from the get-go that the chances of Chisenhall at the hot corner on April 1 at Jacobs Field were about on par with my chances of sharing a bed with Carrie Underwood. (For those who don't know, I'm engaged, she's married, and I have no chance regardless, because, while I may be a hockey player, I am not a well-known rich one, nor am I a practicing Christian, something she values greatly.)

While Paul Cousineau already went well in-depth with this in last Sunday's Lazy Sunday , allow me to add my own thoughts. First, the best case scenario is that Chisenhall comes up and does some yardwork. He rips to a .300 average and hits four or five dingers in April. Chisenhall had one minor league month last year where he hit .300 (.325 in April, with 21 singles and five doubles, zero round trippers). Maybe .275 would be very reasonable. Does .275 in the minors translate to .275 in the bigs? Absolutely not. So, the more likely scenario is that Chiz struggles and gets sent down. In the process, the Indians burned a year of their contractual control over him. As a small market team, we cannot afford to do business like that. Chisenhall will be here sometime in 2011, if healthy. You can bet on that. April is not that time.

I would also like to point out that Chisenhall was 9-for-14 with the bases empty. That would leave him 2-for-9 with 5 K's with runners on. Just a little nugget of knowledge.

As for the results on the field this week, the Spring plodded along, with the Indians winning three of six and kissing their sister once. Fausto Carmona was excellent this week, tossing 10

innings, allowing two runs on seven hits with a K/BB of 10/3. He threw just 17 balls over those 10 innings. In his March 8 start that I discussed last week, he got tagged for six runs in three innings. I cannot express how encouraging it is to see Fausto Carmona making adjustments and subsequently pounding the strike zone. He also averaged out to a 3.90 GB/FB ratio. That is the Fausto we know and love.

Mitch Talbot also finally relaxed in his last start and threw five solid innings allowing a lone run. Justin Masterson struggled again, allowing five runs in the fourth inning, after being perfect for the first three. Consistency continues to be Masterson's Achilles' heel. The fact that he challenged hitters and threw strikes is good, a definite improvement over what he saw for the first four months of last season. But, they also have to be quality strikes.

In the battle for the fifth spot, Josh Tomlin remains a leg up on his competition. Jeanmar Gomez struggled this week, especially with his secondary pitches, allowing two home runs (both to Chris Carter of the A's) and walking a pair in his 2.2 innings of work. David Huff has allowed eight runs over his last four-plus innings on the bump.

I like the idea of Tomlin making this rotation. Outside of my concerns with an all right-handed group, Tomlin is a bulldog on the mound. He does not have overpowering stuff. In fact, he has an average fastball and a slightly above average changeup, but he has stones the size of World's Strongest Man competition boulders. He will challenge hitters. He has a winning personality on the mound, despite his very quiet demeanor off it. Work ethic and a will to compete is very admirable, and something that the guys in the clubhouse will take notice of. Meanwhile, last season, David Huff and Manny Acta quibbled and Jeanmar Gomez could use more minor league seasoning.

Travis Hafner has begun to swing the bat well. I have seen two Travis Hafner at bats this Spring. One of them was in the first game and he looked helpless on a changeup down and away. The second was against Oakland closer Andrew Bailey. He ripped a seed to RF on a 96 mph fastball that ate up the outfielder on one hop. I excitedly jumped for joy like a four-year-old girl being told that she gets to go to Disney for her birthday this year. Maybe I didn't do that, but I did smile and immediately text a buddy the good news. Hafner is hitting .353, however none of his 12 hits have gone over the fence.

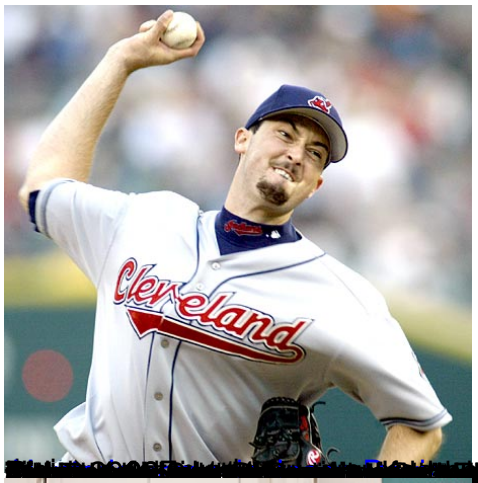
Matt LaPorta raised his average this week! Let me reiterate, MATT LAPORTA RAISED HIS AVERAGE THIS WEEK. He is now hitting 73% of his weight. I would be able to deal with that if he were the size of Maurice Vaughn. Because he is not, .158 sucks.

Lou Marson is the only regularly-playing Indians hitter to have not touched home plate yet this Spring. Maybe he forgot where third base was since he never gets there.

The Flying Cabreras are a combined 19-for-52 with four doubles, a triple, and a home run. By no means do I think Asdrubal will have an OPS anywhere above .850, but I have to be encouraged by what he has done so far.

Carlos Santana has not struck out or walked in 24 at bats. How refreshing is it to have a guy who constantly puts the bat on the ball? After years of watching Sizemore, Hafner, Choo, and assorted others rack up 100+ strikeouts, we have a kid who makes contact and hits the ball hard.

This week's transactions: Other than the minor league camp contingent of Chisenhall, Jason Kipnis, Alex White, and a handful of other promising prospects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