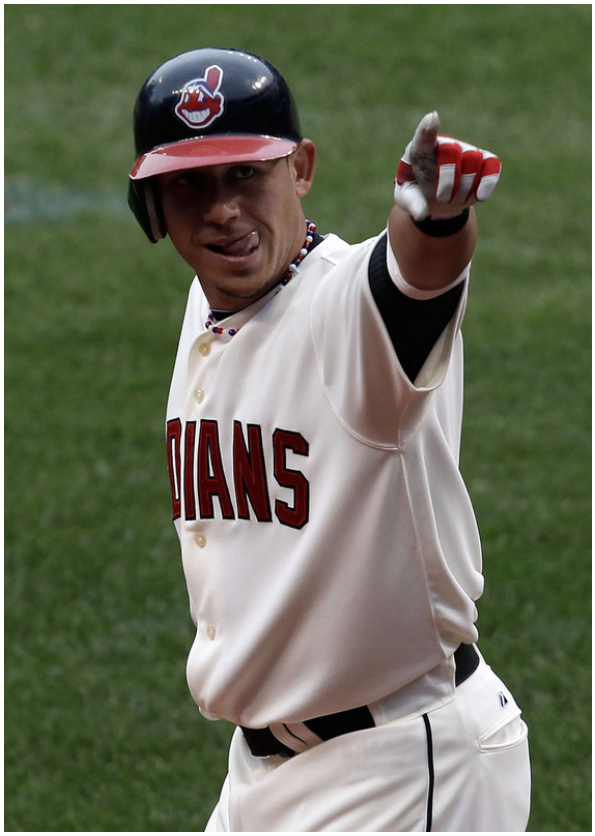

Welcome to The News Cycle, where we take the most recent news items concerning Cleveland Indians baseball.

To show my ever-changing ways, I've nixed the whole idea of featuring five news items and put no restrictions or limitations to how many topics get covered. Extraordinary cases, maybe more, but run of the mill, weekly versions of this column; it will be less than five.

Why? Because Dan Haren told me to.

And whatever Dan Haren tells you to do... Well, you do it, because he's pretty good. And quite frankly, his look scares me. I mean look at that guy . You don't mess with a dude that grows his hair out like that and doesn't shave. They've got killer instinct.

[THE CARTHAGINIAN GENERAL]

If you really want to get frisky and give **Asdrubal Cabrera** a menacing nickname, something other than just calling him "Droobs", may I make a case for The Carthaginian General?

I call him Droobs, everyone calls him Droobs or AC. But the way this kid is hitting the ball, we might as well make him sound more menacing than what you'd name a two year old that has snot running down his nose. Seriously, that's what I think of when I think of "Droobs" other than Cabrera himself.

Okay so why The Carthaginian General? What does that even mean? I can't even pronounce that at first glance!

One semester I took a basic general requirement humanities class and the teacher told us about this guy named Hasdrubal. I thought he actually said Asdrubal. This may have been the one day I paid attention, interestingly enough.

Anyway, Hasdrubal was in command of some army, Carthaginian's I guess? I don't know I'm just looking this part up. The only part I remember is that Hasdrubal was beheaded and as a sign of "Hey we're not being messed with" the people that cut his head off tossed it back over into their enemy's camp. Now that's sending a message.

So there we have it. The Carthaginian General. Let's just not remember the part where he gets beheaded and play it off like he did the beheading. Cool? Cool!

Anyway, Cabrera took home AL Player of the Week honors for his performance last week. He shares the honor with Paul Konerko on Monday he celebrated by hitting his fourth home run of the season off Tyler Chatwood. He's the first shortstop in a long time (some 50 years) to hit as many homers as he's hit in the first 10 games. Not even a "power" shortstop in Jhonny Peralta has done that.

What's with this power surge though? Cabrera has never hit more than six home runs in a

season and he hit just three in 97 games last season. Now he did hit 42 doubles in 2009, but I think we all know most of those weren't exactly "power" doubles off the wall.

Looks like Uncle Orlando chimed in on what the younger Cabrera was doing in batting practice , saying he should put a few of those types of swings he was taking on gopher balls and trying them out in a game.

Here's the not-scary part of what would sound initially like frightening news. Hitting coach Jon Nunnally supports the idea and Asdrubal himself isn't exactly straying away from what he does best. It may be easy for Orlando to tell him to hit the ball like it cursed out his mother, but for him to do it and not do it all the time? That would be dicey.

As long as Cabrera isn't falling in love with the idea of hitting a home run every time up, I don't think I have much of a problem with his new found power-stroke and approach to the plate.

[TO MY 'PEN PALS]

I was cautious to not say how much I loved the makeup of the bullpen during spring training. Especially with the injury to Joe Smith and the way Jensen Lewis pitched, the depth looked to be getting tested. Remember the last time the Indians had a legit pen? Or at least, so we thought? It turned out to be udder crap.

For one, it all starts with a closer and when you have a guy like **Chris Perez** at the back end who hasn't blown a save since, since I don't really remember when last year, that's a good thing. That's the best thing actually. Just ask Ozzie Guillen, who proclaimed he didn't have a closer yesterday, yikes.

With a closer, you can just build backwards. While not official, **Tony Sipp** has pretty much locked down the role
as eighth inning setup guy
. He's been the guy Manny Acta has trusted most in those situations near the end of games leading up to Perez. He won't say it officially, maybe he doesn't want Sipp to lose focus, but his

actions speak for themselves, Sipp is the guy.

Then you have an odd combo off **Rafael Perez** and **Chad Durbin** trying to bridge the gaps between the innings the starters give and the Sipp/Perez back-end combo. So far, so shaky. Perez has been decent, a lot better than what we've been accustomed to from in April's of the past. However Chad Durbin, well, as he put, he's stunk.

Manny Acta says it is way too early right now to draw any conclusions about Chad Durbin. I say, okay. That was until Wednesday, because that was painful to watch someone literally throw the game away.

Look, if this was Justin Germano, different story that we'll touch up on in a bit. But you paid a nice little price tag to acquire Durbin and as Manny put it, he got a big strikeout the other day.

But he lost the game yesterday. While Durbin's performance made me a little uneasy, you can't throw him away quite yet. I won't let the emotions of one loss sway me, Durbin was paid, and he needs a little more time. He has a little more leeway than some others and while that may not be fair or make much sense, it's the facts.

Joe Smith just made a back-to-back appearance for Akron, marking the first time he's done that in any fashion this year, spring or rehab assignment. With Akron ending their home stand, it wouldn't make much sense for Smith not to be activated in time for the series against Baltimore.

So, it's decision time. Durbin has been filling Smith's role as the guy to come into a game before the eighth with a small lead and get out the right-handers. Vinnie Pestano has been sort of the guy who comes in to pitch a full inning, quite effectively if I can add.

Then you have the two long-men in **Frank Herrmann** and **Justin Germano**. Herrmann hasn't been horrible, and Germano, well, he's been used sparingly.

The fact that Germano has been used sparingly is a good thing, but for him it has been a bad thing because half of those uses have turned out to be bad appearances. Yeah it's only been two appearances, but that means one is half and he's had one bad game in relief of Fausto on Opening Day.

So what do you do? Do you hold onto Germano longer because not only is he your main "long man" but he cannot be optioned. Or do you keep someone like Frank Herrmann, who can be optioned and may not be suited for the typical long-man role that Germano fills. With rotation in the early going, the need for a long man hasn't been existent, so you can bank off the fact that will continue to be the case and get rid of Germano.

You certainly are not getting rid of Vinnie Pestano the way he's pitched and Durbin has a guaranteed deal that I lean towards honoring for a little while longer.

I think Herrmann may sadly be the odd man out. His one out recorded against the Angels was the first game he appeared in was the first game he didn't give up a run. He actually has more rough games than Germano and can serve some of the same purposes Smith would.

And of course, he has options.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I'm going to hold off on the **Jason Donald**/**Grady Sizemore** discussion until we have more of a definitive word when they are coming back. Donald joined Sizemore and Smith in Akron to rehab and recently played two games in a row, one of them being at DH. Sizemore will now be with Columbus to continue his rehab assignment, but the feeling is he's close to returning.

The main issue with Sizemore is where in the lineup he will hit, because we know he's going to play center field. The issue with Donald is will he even be on the roster? I have my opinion, but

there's still time to see what Jack Hannahan does with regular playing time that could impact what should be done. Donald will join Sizemore in Columbus and in actuality, could be there long term depending on what the Indians want to do.

They could dump Adam Everett and make Donald or Jack Hannahan the utility player, or continue with what they have going with Hannahan starting and Everett backing up the infielders.

Matt LaPorta looked abysmal at the plate against the Angels on Wednesday. I'm just saying, some of the at-bats he put together were not very good. It's funny because the same day, there was this snippet where he said he feels like he's putting together really good at-bats.

When I was watching Chad Durbin throw every other pitch into the dirt on Wednesday, I couldn't help but think of how good **Carlos Santana** looked defensively. I also couldn't help but think of all the other instances this year in which a ball got passed him. Couldn't think of one and I'm not going to go look up his passed ball statistics either. But Santana looks good behind the plate.

And Acta credits him with having a hand in the success of the rotation. Overall he's just done a great job. You don't see a whole lot of teams running on him, he's allowed all three attempts to successfully steal, and Durbin certainly tested his blocking on Wednesday. It's fantastic defense that make good players great, because they're still contributing, even when they are in a cold streak like he is.

Having his entire family at the ball game to see **Vinnie Pestano** have a clean 1-2-3 inning against the team he grew up watching, at the stadium he grew up "in the shadows of" is precisely the reason they play the game. Pestano had somewhere around 50 people there in support, including family, former teammates from college and high school, their parents, neighbors.

It was like a graduating party for Vinnie, only they all attended a baseball game. And for Pestano to get to throw in front of his grandmother for the first time in a long time? That's a special thing that makes you feel good about what the game means to some people.

Anyone else ready for **Drew Pomeranz** to just get here already? I know he has to go to Akron, and trust me I want him to so I can see him, and then Columbus first, but really, can we just fast forward? The kid is destroying Single-A pitching in just two games. He took a no-hitter into the sixth in his last game, and so far has struck out 17 hitters in 11 innings. Are you freaking kidding me with this? Just two walks, 17 strikeouts, three stinkin' hits?

Seriously, if goes out and does it again in his next start, just get him to Akron. It doesn't sound like he has any business facing Advanced-A hitting, because he's even more advanced than they are.

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ TheTribeDaily where he tweets about Asdrubal The Carthaginian General. You should also like his blog on Facebook because Shelley Duncan is Hawkman.