You guys know what tomorrow is, right? I didn't think I'd have to remind you. One more Spring Training Rundown for the road. Enjoy it.

**[TO ZEBULON AND BACK]**

Zebulon sounds like a far-away planet inhabited by unreal life that is most likely neon green. At least in my mind. But I don't think the people in Carolina are green. I've been there, I'm pretty sure they aren't.

The most fun about the Indians playing the "Mudcats" in a North Carolina exhibition game to welcome the new franchise to the Indians organization?

The 11-0 score the real Indians put up offensively against their own minor league pitching. It's what Michael Scott calls a win-win-win.

*"It's a great opportunity for us to start our affiliation here in Zebulon and start a new chapter for our A-ball guys," Acta said. "It's also good for our guys because they know where they're going and that they never forget where they came from. It's good to be humble once in awhile."*

Main damage was done by **Jason Donald** as he hit a three-run homer and knocked in five total to conclude a very successful spring. Shelley Duncan hit a solo shot as did Asdrubal Cabrera.

Travis Hafner was 1-2 with a RBI double and there was also some walks galore. Rhett Rholinger (ya you know it) and Beau Mills had two each and fourth outfielder Aaron Cunningham had three (with two runs). Jack Hannahan and Jose Lopez also doubled.

A very productive day for the Indians offense against Scott Barnes and Giovanni Soto.

Derek Lowe was masterful, throwing three shutout frames with just a hit and three strikeouts. He threw 16 pitches, all for strikes. Seriously? That's what the numbers say. Fantastic.

I'm ready to play for real, let's go.

**[PRIMER RECAP]**

Usually I take a giant post to recap the primer , but I'm going to do it now on the eve of Opening Day because this year, it wasn't that... well Spring Training was kind of dull until towards the end.

**Three to Keep An Eye On: Michael Brantley, Aaron Cunningham, Russ Canzler**

Brantley certainly was interesting to watch as he came up with an injury, took a little break, then came back and started cracking some home runs. I said it was a put-up or shut-up year for him and he looks to be ready to go.

Aaron Cunningham won the fourth outfield spot, but it was pretty much by default. Hopefully it's one of those cases where someone has a whatever spring and then comes into the regular season and surprises you.

Russ Canzler did his best, but his defense likely kept him off the roster. He did hit and he hit enough to where you have to imagine he's one of the first guys up if there's a need at a spot he plays.

**Injury Watch: Grady Sizemore, Carlos Carrasco, Hector Rondon, Nick Weglarz**

No sign of Hector Rondon and Carrasco has made progress in terms of his rehab.

But of course, labeling Grady Sizemore with the injury of "Body" perhaps was a bad omen on my part. It wasn't his knee, or his oblique, or whatever injuries he's had previously, it was a back that acted up on him and has forced him out for the foreseeable future. Oh well.

Nick Weglarz reportedly looks healthy. From the multiple accounts of people who were at Arizona who saw him, he may be ready to re-start his career with a clean bill of health and a confident attitude.

**40 Man Endangered Species: Corey Kluber, Danny Salazar, Thomas Neal, Nick Weglarz**

All remain on the roster (for now), as the space needed was cleared up in other ways... Jose Lopez has still not officially been added though, so, it's not out of the woods yet.

**Position Battles**

Final Bullpen Spots: Dan Wheeler and Nick Hagadone were my picks.... Who would have

thought that Dan Wheeler would have been right after the spring he had. Hagadone had a decent spring, but addition Jairo Asencio claimed the final spot.

Final Rotation Spot: I actually picked Jon Garland, with the requirement that he actually signed. He didn't, so I didn't really give a backup, but I thought Slowey would get it after that. Gomez, winner.

Starting Third Baseman: I had Jack Hannahan, with the inkling that the Indians would just go with him no matter what. We'll never know for sure, but it seemed that way, especially when Chisenhall did not hit.

Final Bench Spots: We didn't have the Left Field job up there, because we didn't know Grady Sizemore was hurt, so Shelley Duncan got a bench spot, and Jason Donald got the utility job, with Aaron Cunningham getting the "fourth" outfield job. That is sort of right. Sort of. Jose Lopez really benefited from Sizemore going down when you look at it that way.

**Burning Questions**

Why Did the Indians Sign So Many Veterans: You now see? They signed a lot for the relief pitching battle and they still had to go out and make two waiver acquisitions to find someone to take one of those spots. Then Sizemore goes down, which as I just mentioned, helped Jose Lopez. It could have helped a guy like Ryan Spilborghs or Fred Lewis (provided he didn't get hurt).

Who Stands to Benefit the Most from an Injury: Mentioned Sizemore specifically and then the glut of outfielders. Of Course Shelley Duncan gained the most out of all of it, but again, Jose Lopez is not on this roster if Sizemore is healthy.

First Base Competition: Yup, over.

Carmona? Heredia?: Neither. It's Roberto Hernandez. We still don't know when or if he's coming, but we've seemed to make some headway and it's officially Roberto Hernandez, so get it right.

Only Two Starter Spots: Yeah it was a joke, because a third came open when Sizemore went down. We all should have known better.

**[UBALDO SUSPENDED, PLANS TO APPEAL]**

Manny Acta is less than pleased with Major League Baseball's quick ruling on the Ubaldo V. Tulowitzki case on Monday. **Ubaldo Jimenez** was suspended five games, the equivalent of one start for a starting pitcher. Acta said it is inconsistent base off other cases in the past, most notably Roberto Hernandez's plunking of Mark Teixeira last year.

*"It's disappointing, but I'm not surprised," Acta said. "I'm just very disappointed at their inconsistency on how they make their decisions."*

*"I thought it was worse than this situation," Acta said of the incident involving Hernandez. "Both dugouts knew they were thrown at. I raised a stink about it, but I don't know. Maybe they don't get [SportsTime Ohio] over there or whatever. I'm very disappointed at the inconsistency of their decision making."*

Acta believes that MLB went a lot on what people said in the media and it does seem like the media had a big influence in this, given how wild the discussion went.

What gets me is how quick the ruling came down, but that's cool. This really is all a moot point because Jimenez is appealing his suspension in order to make the start on Saturday . Then he'll likely drop the appeal, start serving the suspension, let Gomez make a start, and just pitch again the next Saturday with the rotation slightly shuffled, making the suspension a slight inconvenience.

I'm not unnecessarily in disagreement with the suspension and if you want a good reason as to why, Anthony Castrovince put it the best . Jimenez's didn't seem to be very remorseful about what he did, chalking it up to an errant pitch, very nonchalant. Perhaps he did get a little riled up because of Tulowitzki's actions.

Regardless, he needs to handle himself better in that situation. It makes his comments earlier in spring about his contract and how he was "treated" in Denver look like hes pouting and the Indians do not tolerate that type of stuff around here.

So he needs to learn and learn before things get out of control and this ends in disaster for everyone involved.

**[RANDOM RUNDOWN]**

On the topic of suspensions, it looks like there is some hope that Roberto Hernandez could avoid a possible suspension upon his return to the states. Last time we had a quote from some lobbyist about them expediting the process and possibly getting something done in a few days.

Well here we are, a few days, nothing. But we do have this bit of news . Apparantely based off the fact that the Indians restructured Hernandez's contract, the MLB could just not suspend him and use the reduction in salary as a defacto "fine".

*"I'm somewhat familiar with the negotiations between the Indians and Roberto," Stephen Payne, a visa expert and lobbyist hired by Hernandez's agents, told the Cleveland Plain Dealer on Monday. "I feel there was a general understanding between all parties that the punishment would be a $7.5 million reduction in pay [as opposed to a suspension].The State Department could come back and ask for a suspension in addition to the reduction in salary that the Indians and Roberto have agreed to."*

I guess like seeing this process expedited, we'll see if there is no suspension involved. Right.

**Chris Perez** is ready to roll with no restrictions as the Indians closer as he pitched in a bullpen session on Monday and Tuesday, back-to-back, his last step to... well just being the closer with no worries, limits, restrictions, or what have you.

*"I'm ready to go," Perez said. "I feel good, I feel strong and my body is responding well. It's not the most ideal of circumstances, missing four months of Spring Training, but it is what it is. It might be a battle, but I'm going to roll with it."*

Four months? Was that a misquote by Bastian, a mispeak by Perez or just an intentional way of saying Spring Training is too long?

I'm going with the latter. Acta did say that if the situation dictates, he won't rely heavily on Perez and that Pestano would go if a situation was needed three or four days in a row. I can only hope that's the case.

Status of some of the players who didn't make the roster ?

**Ryan Spilborghs** is deciding what to do as he is reassigned to Minor League camp. A lot of these players may find an opportunity somewhere else as other teams make their decisions. If not, he'll be in Columbus.

Meanwhile he won't be joined by Fred Lewis, who was outright released by the Indians. **Chris Ray** will however be in Columbus as he has not exercised his inputted out-clause.

Good news.. **Manny Acta** is not on the prop bet for "First manager to be fired." Charlie Manuel and Mike Scioscia are. Either we live in bizzarro world, the people making these prop bets don't think the Indians would fire anyone in-season, or they just never heard of the Indians or Manny Acta.

Acta was very dismissive of the Indians record. Probably for the first time in awhile, I didn't even pay attention to whether they won or lost. Remember at the beginning when we said this was going to be a spring were not used to? A little different? Well the fact that the record shouldn't be the focal point is dead on because the regulars are not playing to win spots or compete, they're playing to get ready and get their work in.

*"With Spring Training, the main thing is to get some work in," he said. "You win Spring Training games when the free agents you bring in or the Minor League kids you bring in play well, because your starters are out of the game after the fifth inning. We had some competition in the outfield, and guys didn't play up to their capabilities. The record is irrelevant to us. We just wanted to stay healthy. If you look at the record, that should erase Tampa Bay from the competition, too. They had as bad a Spring Training as we did."*

And health is the key there. Everyone that was a key piece except for Grady Sizemore made it through. Yeah there were some bumps, but this team is ready to go with as close to their full arsenal as you can get.

And their ready to go with **Justin Masterson** tomorrow afternoon. Read this nice story on him by Jordan Bastian, and just wait, because first pitch is oh-so-close my friends.

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*Nino has a blog and it's so entertaining it should be nominated for most entertaining blog competitions. Give it a vist at The Tribe Daily .*

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