Off the schnide! After dropping their first five games, the Tribe finally got one yesterday, defeating the Blue Jays 8-4 to erase the 0 in the win column to end a long first week of the season. And the Cavs, wow. They absolutely laid the smack down on the Celtics Sunday, leaving absolutely no doubt that the road to the NBA Finals goes through Cleveland and it's going to bumpy as hell for anyone that has to travel it. Peeks recaps the entire weekend that was in Cleveland sports in this Monday's Weekend Wrap.

Good News, Bad News

A five game stretch in a season of 162 games gets lost in the volume. Teams will win five in a row and lose five in a row without a ton of attention. But when you lose the *first* five of the season in a season where expectations are high, well, that tends to stand out.

And it did.

Judging by public reaction you'd have the thought the season started last Monday and ended Saturday. But Sunday the Indians figured out the ‘win' thing again and put a game in the good side of the ledger with an 8-4 win over the Blue Jays.

A 1-5 record doesn't immediately fill one's head with visions of October baseball but it sure beats the teeth grinding losses that were piling up before Sunday. The losses mostly followed a similar pattern; rotten starting pitching supported by atrocious defense and poor situational hitting. That's a really bad pattern to fall into and whether Sunday brings an end to the uninspired and sloppy play remains to be seen.

But it hasn't been all bad.

The offense has clicked from the start with the exception of the season opener in Arlington. The Indians have scored nearly seven runs a game since the opening day loss to Kevin Millwood. One of the biggest contributors to the offensive production has been the much-maligned Travis Hafner. Hafner hit three home runs in the first six games, batted .300 and has an OPS of over 1.20 thus far. More encouraging is the fact that Hafner has shown a quick bat to the ball and has turned around some good fastballs in hitting those three homers.

A return to production for Hafner would be a huge boost to the Tribe. His return would be even more of a boon if the pitchers the Indians run out there don't wet the bed each time through the rotation. At the very least the Tribe needs to get something from Cliff Lee and Fausto Carmona. Neither has clean sheets after week one.

But, you know the old adage: at this stage of the season the hitting is always ahead of the pitching.

Wait a second. Scratch that. I know Holy Week is over but let us pray.

Good News, Good News

Wonder if the Celtics got a ride back to Boston on that bus that ran them over on Sunday at ‘The Q'?

How enjoyable was Sunday's game against the C's? A 31-9 lead at the end of the first quarter, a 30-point lead in the first half and a blowout win when the buzzer sounded served notice, if it hadn't yet been served, that the road to the NBA Finals goes through Cleveland and it's going to bumpy as hell for anyone that has to travel it.

That the defending champs came into the game with little to play for and without Kevin Garnett means absolutely nothing to Cavs fans who have come to despise the Celtics wholeheartedly. Most Cavs fans couldn't care less. They want to see Paul Pierce whine and Ray Allen shoot 2-8 on the day. They got both on Sunday. They got it to the extent that Doc Rivers decided to rest his starters for most of the 4th quarter

given the fact they were the ones who dug a 30-point deficit to begin with and they showed no signs (or willingness)of being able to dig themselves out.

This version of the Celtics also has to sleep at night knowing they were the last real chance to stop the Cavs from equaling the '85-'86 Celtic's mark of 40-1 at home. I like to think that was the final kick in Boston's ass as they headed out the doors of ‘The Q' for their trip home.

With the win the Cavs also move closer to sticking a finger in the face of the Los Angeles Lakers from 3,000 miles away. One more Cavalier win gives Cleveland home court advantage throughout the playoffs and means that the Cavs and Lakers ultimately meet for the title that a deciding game seven would have to be played in Cleveland. Yeah, I'm aware the Lakers were responsible for the lone Cavalier home loss, but give me a break. Would you prefer that game, if destined/necessary, be played in LA or right here where a proper celebration and coronation could possibly take place?

Yes, I feel that damn good about this basketball team.

Etcetera

- Rough Tribe start for Mark DeRosa. A 1-19 beginning had Tribe fans and message board denizens reaching for their weapons. But DeRosa had a huge hit in Saturday's failed comeback loss to the Jays and then homered on Sunday to give the Indians and himself some breathing room.

DeRosa is a solid pro. He's hit in each of last two seasons with regular playing time and he'll hit here. I know we've been without baseball for six months and everything thus far has been played in a fishbowl, but seriously folks, shake yourselves and let things play out a bit.

No one is or has been more concerned about the pitching staff than I have. But most of that is based on track records. Cliff Lee, before his blow-up year of last season, and Fausto Carmona, who regressed in 2008 after a big 2007, are not sure things in the first and second spot in the rotation. And the three guys behind them (one, Scott

Lewis, who is already hurt and on the DL) don't have awe inspiring track records either. But this offense is loaded and can score runs. DeRosa will be a big contributor to that offense this season.

If you want to ledge, at least stand on the pitching building ledge where you'll have more company.

- Two weeks until the Browns select 5th in the 2009 NFL draft. If you're in the area you could do worse than heading down to the Winking Lizard in Lakewood for The Mother of All Draft Parties. Drink specials, a full menu, bowling and TCF personnel all day from about noon until they kick us out. If and when disaster strikes it's always best to be with loved ones. Well, you'll be at home at the Winking Lizard in Lakewood if you consider yourself a Browns fan on Saturday, April 25th.