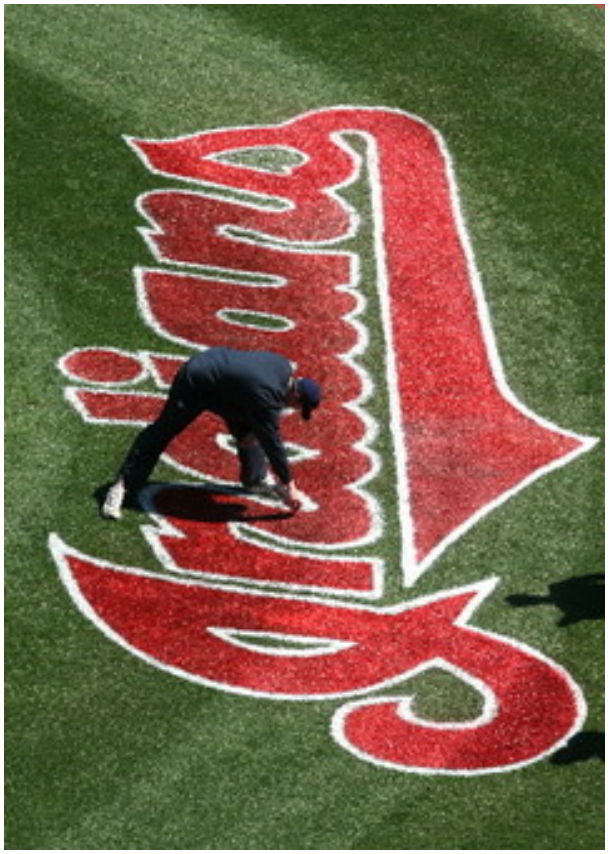

Indians Charities

Times are tough out there.

You’re still looking at big unemployment numbers, depressed financial markets, a lingering recession and people clinging to their belongings like they’re a life raft in stormy seas.

But not our Indians; they’re in a charitable mood offensively, on the mound and in the league standings. Because while everyone else is being stingy the Indians are giving away outs, walks and wins like it’s their job.

The Tribe comes home for Monday’s home opener having been swept in Detroit this weekend. That’s bad enough under any circumstances, but when the losses come by way of a 3-run throwing error on Friday, nine walks from the pitching staff and nine strikeouts offensively on Saturday and a walk-off wild pitch that finished off the immolation of a 7-1 lead Sunday, well, that makes things even worse.

The bottom line through the first week of the season; the Indians aren’t hitting when they need to and they’re not throwing strikes nearly often enough.

The offense will come around. Guys are adjusting to playing in 45 degree weather against pitchers who are competing now as opposed to just getting their work in in spring training. You'd like to see more contact from key guys but I firmly believe the bats will come around.

At the level we're talking about we really shouldn't have to look so hard. Not up and down the rotation.

But it's still early. There will be plenty of time to wring our hands after the opener on Monday and going forward if the complex principles being taught by Tim Belcher don't take root.

Rest or Rust?

That's the question Cavs fans are asking in regard to whether shutting down LeBron James and resting his other key running mates is the right way to go.

Head Coach Mike Brown knows his team far better than we do so we'll assume resting the reigning MVP is something Brown feels is necessary to allow LBJ to get past the bumps and bruises he accumulates on countless runs at the rim over 82 games.

Brown has also sat down Mo Williams, Antawn Jamison, Anthony Parker and nearly everyone else for one game or another over the last week to allow them some healing time and to get other players extensive minutes.

The Cavs have lost their last three games and could head into the playoffs with a four game losing streak if they don't get the regular season finale Wednesday night in Atlanta.

Personally, I'm fine with Brown anchoring LBJ to the bench and letting him freshen up for what promises to be a long and grueling playoff run. I'd probably rather see James out there for 20-24 minutes per night just to retain whatever rhythm, touch and flow James has going but LBJ isn't all that much of a 'flow' player. He's a freight train that relies on his speed and strength to get things done while occasionally finding a groove with his jump shot that makes him completely unstoppable. James doesn't have to rely on touch, though there have been way too many occasions in the past where you could argue he's been way too quick to settle for jumpers.

I'd be much more concerned if LBJ was strictly a jump shooter but when you consider his game it's hard to make a convincing argument that resting him isn't the right thing to do.

It's also been encouraging to see different guys on different nights step up their game to help fill the huge void left by LeBron's absence. Jamario Moon, Parker, Williams and even newcomer Sebastian Telfair have had nights that left you just shaking your head at the talent and depth of this club.

I guess these are the coaching decisions you should hope to be able to critique every season. The Cavs earned home court advantage with about a week and a half left in the regular season and they've earned the right to use the remaining portion of the schedule any way they want.

Etcetera

- We're getting down to it with the Browns and how they'll approach the 2010 NFL Draft that begins Thursday, April 22nd with the first round. The draft has become a cottage industry of its own in the last 20 years and you can make yourself dizzy with all the speculation and by reading all the 'expert opinion' out there.

One thing you can be fairly certain of is that this Browns regime will have done their homework and will have a plan for the first night of the draft and every day there after. There are plenty of mock drafts out there for you to take a look at if you're interested but suffice it to say I really love those mocks that have the Browns ending up with Tennessee safety Eric Berry.

It's been a long time since the Browns have had an imposing bad-ass in the defensive backfield. You probably have to go all the way back to Eric Turner to find that guy, if not all the way back to Don Rogers. I think whoever gets Berry gets a similar player. Berry doesn't have the intimidating physical size that either Rogers or Turner had but he makes up for it with tremendous ball skills as well as a speed and explosiveness. This is a kid that throws his body around fearlessly and plays the run as well as he plays the pass.

That's the guy I'm praying slides to Cleveland at #7. For that to happen I think there's going to need to be a run on tackles in the picks preceding the Browns' selection. If, as expected, Sam Bradford goes first you could see five straight tackles go before the Browns make their selection. Two of them will be defensive tackles, Ndamukong Suh and Gerald McCoy and then possibly three on the offensive side of the ball; Russell Okung, Bryan Bulaga and Trent Williams.

That chain of events would leave the Browns with Berry on the board. That's the way my man Scott Wright at www.draftcountdown.com sees it going down and the man has picked his share of selections in recent years.

If Berry is selected before the Browns are on the clock, or someone trades up and disrupts the entire top ten, then all bets are off.

I do know this; if the Browns make their selection and the words, “With the seventh pick in the first round of the 2010 NFL draft, the Cleveland Browns select, from Notre Dame ….” I will eat my mouse pad and head out immediately for a long walk off a short pier.

- Great action at The Master’s this weekend. It was good to see Phil Mickelson win another green jacket after a year that saw his wife and mother both stricken with breast cancer. I do wish the media would have thought to give us an update or two on what Tiger Woods was doing during the tournament though.

Things have to be pretty good if you’re Mickelson though. His wife and mother are both recovering and a guy whose work ethic and devotion to the game was questioned while Woods was tearing up golf courses and IHOP waitresses all over the world took home another green jacket. You have to imagine that Mickelson, like many other players on the tour, knew of Woods’s dalliances and hypocrisy and, when the day is done and the course and camera are lights have gone dark, has to be pretty damn satisfied with his life as well the Karma Gods taking a chunk out of Tiger’s behind.