

## Spring Training Rundown: Cody Allen Claims Bullpen Spot

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Monday, March 18 2013 6:00 PM - Last Updated Monday, March 18 2013 10:08 AM

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I'll make this long and un-important, but baseball related story short.

I had the MLB Network. Loved it, kept it on my television almost all the time, rarely changed. When spring started, it dominated being on my TV when my TV was on.

When I moved, I had to make the tough decision and downgrade my package to save money since I was now paying the cable bill. It was tough, but I managed. The true test would be the MLB season in full. I had contemplated adding it back for the extra \$10 a month, but decided I would just go without, because I still have to eat once and awhile.

Then I had noticed this weekend that MLB Network was suddenly available for me. Here I am hoping that this isn't a tease and that it will now be available for me forever, because I have it on...all...the...time. I hadn't watched a lick of ESPN from March of last year until, well, really September, and even then when I did, it was for a specific reason, a game or something else.

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What does this have to do with anything? Look, nothing really. It was just a side story to ease you into this edition of the run down. It is also a convenient way for me to point out the Indians were on television on Sunday and under the new-but-old FOX Sports umbrella. It begins the stretch of televised games on FOX Sports Ohio's SportstimeOhio (I guess that's what we're calling it?).

**[INDIANS - 7 | REDS -7]**

### [\[BOXSCORE\]](#)

The Indians first televised spring game of the year was quite eventful. The Tribe came back to tie the game up with three runs in the ninth to end things in a tie, but it did not look good early.

**Justin Masterson** struggled in the first, giving up a three run shot to Xavier Paul and a two-run blast to Todd Frazier. [After that though, Mastey cruised](#) , he gave up four hits total and walked two with six strikeouts. Despite that, Francona said he saw his best stuff thus far.

*"First of all, I thought it was his best stuff of the spring by far," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Velocity. Life on the ball. He left a couple up that, kind of like Cody [Allen] did [in the seventh], went a long way. The good side of it was he settled back in and started getting the ball down. And when it was down where he wanted it to be, it had tremendous sink and movement. In this game, hitters will kind of show you that you better throw it where you want to."*

Mastey did get five groundball outs though, so business as usual after that rough first.

Cody Allen gave up a pair of solo shots as his two blemishes, but he also struck out two. Matt Capps pitched a scoreless frame but walked a pair. Bryan Shaw was good in two scoreless.

You know who looked good to me? **Chris McGuiness** had some solid hits, one a deep double

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to center field. Maybe Francona talking to him did the trick. It'll be too little too late for him making the roster, but I would hope the Indians can find a way to keep him. Both hits he had were nice and he looked like one of those guys who doesn't try to do too much at the plate. So maybe he was pressing.

The Indians face the Brewers at Goodyear Monday, with Ubaldo Jimenez falling in line for his next start. Nick Hagadone and Scott Barnes look to make their bullpen case.

### [ALLEN MAKES PEN]

Turns out that **Cody Allen** has had a spot in the Indians bullpen just as long as Rich Hill has. Francona told Allen he was going to break camp [with the Indians as a member of their 25 man roster last week](#), something we are just now finding out.

Francona went to Allen after the game against San Francisco on March 7th and knew what he had to do after Allen got roughed up.

*"We were like, 'We've got to tell this guy he's on the team,'" Francona said. "We called him in the next morning and I said, 'If we tell you you're on the team. will you just get ready for the season?' He said yeah. It was kind of all in fun."*

Francona admired Allen's focus and determination, fully knowing he was competing for his spot. So in an effort to get him to focus on preparing for the season and not trying too hard to do anything, he cemented Allen's spot.

Of course, Allen struggled yesterday against the Reds, but that is besides the point.

The bullpen is now taking shape. I admittedly didn't see Allen starting the year there, fully believing the way the Indians have been aligning their bullpen to start the year the past few

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seasons. But Allen is a dangerous guy to have back there because his stuff is so electric and he's more than just a veteran arm you have to fill innings.

He'll probably be in a position where he has to come in and keep games close when the Indians are behind. That isn't an easy role or situation, but it is better to be in a game than have it surrendered by the 6th or 7th inning. That's what makes the good teams good, when they can come back and win games like that.

Allen said he'll now focus on things he needs to work on instead of focusing on getting outs.

And the Indians can focus on what's left to decide on their roster...

### [ROSTER RUNDOWN]

The one thing I'll say about what Terry Francona has done this spring is that he's made decisions quickly. And that to me, is awesome. He's not drawing these competitions out very long, giving guys their notice rather quickly that they're in so that they can start to prepare. That is awesome and should be a benefit to most with still a few weeks left until the season starts.

Of course there are still a few more battles left to decide and those could last for another week or two. There are still two unnamed spots in the pen, and if the Indians go down that "three man bench" road, a third. Seems like **Matt Albers** will be in and if you ask me, how I viewed it before spring and even now too, Bryan Shaw should be in.

And even though I mentioned how Cody Allen is a pick against the way the Indians have handled their bullpen spots the past few years, **Matt Capps** is still out there and could get selected over a guy like Shaw. Capps has a March 26th out-clause, so that has to be considered, although I think the decision is made before then.

As for the bench? Doesn't seem like the Indians are any closer to making that decision, but it

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seems as if the decision is clear. **Jason Giambi** homered on Saturday against the Giants and has been gushed about by Francona. □ **Ryan**

### **Raburn**

has received the same love and has mashed and reached base every way possible this spring. Yan Gomes' momentum

[has been slowed a bit by an injury he sustained last week](#)

and may not be back until mid-week, that shouldn't hurt him too much, but out of sight, kind of out of mind right now.

**Scott Kazmir** threw in Sunday's 'B' game and his spring perfection [went aside as he gave up four runs](#) in five innings of work. I think he still remains the favorite though. Kazmir did throw 54 of his 77 pitches for strikes, but has upped his strikeout total to 18 and only walked one hitter.

*"He was kind of battling it the first few innings," Indians pitching coach Mickey Callaway said. "I thought the last two, his slider was a lot better. He was just trying to get his arm going."*

Still, one outing with a minor league defense behind him is hardly a reason to sour on what he's done this far. He's missing bats and looking real sharp with few walks. I think the decision is rather clear thus far, he deserves an opportunity and it would behoove the Indians to take that chance and see what he can do.

And with **Daisuke Matsuzaka** [being slowed down, work-wise](#), the choice to go with Kazmir is even more clear. Yes Dice-K pitched on Saturday, but he only pitched three innings, way behind what guys like Kazmir are already up to.

*"We've got to figure out what to do going forward," manager Terry Francona said on Saturday. "Because of the setback and kind of coming in without throwing bullpens, he's only out to three innings and we're starting to run out of innings. So we're going to have to sit down tomorrow and kind of figure this out a little bit, and we will."*

I'm not sure who out there would be ready to insert Matsuzaka into their rotation. Stranger things have happened, but I think Dice-K will understand that and will take the assignment until the chance opens up. It could come quickly and it could come somewhere else. Not to mention,

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[he gets \\$100,000 if he has to "accept" a minor league assignment](#)

Expect some final decisions this week. It does not seem as if Francona is a guy who likes to wait long to make his choices and decisions. With deadlines also looming and next week essentially being the final stretch, the roster should take its final shape as this current week comes to a close.

### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I don't think he stands a chance at the roster, but the impression **Matt Carson** is making in camp is quite a good one thus far.

[He's got Francona talking about him](#)

and he's making the most of the chances he is getting to play, both offensively and defensively.

*"He goes to play center field and he plays a good center field," Francona said. "He throws as good as anybody we have. There's a lot to like."*

Carson ran into a wall last Saturday making a catch, and in addition to that, has had a great spring offensively with four home runs and eight RBI. He said that whenever his opportunity comes, he knows he has to be ready. Some guys are just signed as minor league depth and Carson is that guy. It certainly is not a bad thing to have one of your depth guys playing good though. Columbus needs some talent too.

How about the talent the Indians are going to have on that bench of theirs? Carson may not be there, but Mike Aviles will and he's having quite the performance on the World Baseball Classic stage. Last night [he helped oust defending champion Japan](#) in Puerto Rico's 3-1 victory to advance to the finals. Aviles was 2-for-3 with a run scored, an RBI, and a walk last night.

Carlos Santana [had his fun on Saturday](#) when he hit a crucial home run against Aviles' PR squad to gain the higher seed. The Dominican Republic will now take on the Netherlands with the opportunity to get another crack at Puerto

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Rico for the championship.

**Vinnie Pestano** was [all kinds of upset at the elimination](#) of Team USA from the World Baseball Classic as he returned to the club this past weekend. Pestano ended up giving up two runs in the sixth inning of an elimination game against Puerto Rico. The USA would end up scoring three runs, so the runs he gave up very much came back to bite the Stars and Stripes.

*"Choked on the biggest stage of my career," Pestano wrote on his account on Friday. "Let a lot of people down tonight, this is something I cared deeply about and will stick with me. ... Being someone that prides himself on pitching in big moments this was unacceptable, gotta learn from it and be better for it in the future."*

Vinnie went on to say that it was not another game and he failed his country. And of course his new teammate got him again as Mike Aviles greeted Pestano's entrance with a single. Pestano [did say he had a great time](#) and looks forward to being a part of it again in four years time.

The other part of the Bullpen Mafia's back-end duo is on his way back as well, only in a different way. **Chris Perez** threw a 15-pitch mound session on Saturday and [will do another one today](#) with the hopes of then being able to return to the mound for a full-out bullpen session.

*"He's doing really well," Francona said. "His intensity probably exceeded what we were expecting or hoping, but he still feels really good. That's terrific."*

Francona did say that he will not be sending Perez out there if he's not ready for Opening Day and that he's perfectly content waiting for the pitcher to be 100% ready to go.

Terry Pluto noted that he thinks the Indians will approach both Jason Kipnis and Michael Brantley [about contract extensions this spring](#). Well, spring is a few weeks away from being over, so, that must be happening, soon...right?

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Just as an aside, there are still a few spots left in the Tribe Daily Fantasy Invitational II. The draft is a over a week away, so help me fill the league! [Shoot me an e-mail and I'll get you in](#) .

Finally, Nick Swisher was away from the team, but is now back, having left camp for personal reasons. He already missed some time early on after the death of his mother. Hope everything is good in Swish's camp.

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*Nino is in full baseball mode here and on [The Tribe Daily](#) , his own Indians blog. Don't miss all the fun, photoshopped Indians players, and LOLTribe ridiculousness.*

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