

## Spring Training Rundown: Tribe's Remaining Battles Come Into Focus

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, March 19 2013 11:00 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, March 19 2013 7:40 AM

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I can't get it together here. I'm not sure what's going on.

I will apologize in advance for two things. The first is for my lack of titles. For some reason I think I need to be catchy and awesome when I put in section headers. And well, I'm failing quite miserably with that in this Spring rundown.

I'm also going to apologize for my incredibly bad introduction.

How do I know this is going to be a bad introduction? Probably because I have nothing to introduce my main topic. I know, you are probably saying, well what the heck man, why do you need an intro? I just want to read about the Indians, I skip your intro every day anyway.

Chances are, if you do just that, you didn't see what I just said considering you skip the intro, so why should I even bother?

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To give myself an intro?

Sometimes I'm amazed at how ridiculous I am.

And there my friends is my lead in. You didn't think I would waste your time did you?

Don't answer that.. Just remember the word ridiculous.

### [DICE-K STICKING AROUND]

Dice-K sticking around? See how lame that was?

**Daisuke Matsuzaka** will be hanging around after the Indians announced that he will not be a part of the team's Opening Day roster, effectively eliminating him from the rotation competition. After talking with Antonetti and Francona sat down to discuss options, Dice-K [was open to sticking around](#), even though it was in the minor leagues, just like what we had probably all thought.

*"They told me that they want me on this club, and that they see me on this club," Matsuzaka said through his interpreter, Jeff Cutler. "They see me as someone who can contribute to this club. Having heard that directly from them definitely made me feel comfortable staying here."*

So Matsuzaka will presumably be a part of the Columbus Clippers rotation to start the season, if he is in fact ready to go and start. He doesn't have to be able to go to the limit, but I think if he can at least start and get five innings, he should be fine for the Clippers.

Francona noted that he simply was too behind in terms of building up innings to expect him to be ready to go without restrictions for the start of the season, mentioning he was behind coming

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in to begin with. Throw in a calf injury that set him back, it just would make it difficult for the Indians to get him up to where he needs to be innings-wise.

And not only that, Matsuzaka can now also work on some things he knows he needs to get sharpened up for the season.

*"The life on my breaking pitches and everything needs to improve," Matsuzaka said. "There's still a little bit more that I need to do. More important, I think my velocity can improve. It's not where I know it can be, and that was probably one of the reasons why the front office also decided to make this decision."*

It is hard to really judge any of what he's saying based off spring numbers and not knowing if his velocity really is in line with what he's looking for and used to do. Let's also remember this. Matsuzaka is still making his way back from that Tommy John surgery he underwent. Last year was his adjustment year and now, based off what others say, should really start to be getting back to normal.

So that's that. Dice-K going to the minors, not playing into the spot, like it was assumed after he suffered the calf injury. But also sticking around like we thought he would. Because again, this isn't him getting squeezed out of a spot, this is him not being able to go, for the Indians, or for anyone.

I promised you something ridiculous.

Can we just talk about this specific quote real quick?

*"I think Daisuke shares an interest in staying here," Antonetti said. "Now we need to work through the **logistics with [agent Scott Boras] about the conditions of him staying here and going to Triple-A and things like that.**"*

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I went ahead and put in bold the specific part of that I'm referring to.

Ridiculous? You bet.

Now because Matsuzaka has these veteran rights that the newest CBA calls for, he will get a \$100,000 bonus for being optioned out to the minor leagues and if he isn't on the major league roster by June 1, he can opt out.

That's not what is ridiculous. It's the part where the Indians may opt to release Dice-K so that he can renegotiate something else that is more appealing. Certainly something Scott Boras will probably try and want to do.

If this were any other guy? If this were any other agent? Would this really happen? I'm not sure how keen the Indians are spending on \$100,000 on a guy to go to the minor leagues, but it may be better than what that nincompoop Scott Boras may try and want to negotiate for.

You actually have to work through minor league specifics with Scott Boras? Here's an idea, he didn't make the roster, he doesn't deserve anything more than what contracts say he'll get, so he's going to get that and if he does well, he'll get what he deserves.

Maybe I'm just being a tad ridiculous myself in seeing something like this as an issue. I probably am. But Scott Boras is a jerkface, and I won't let it go by without mentioning something. And writing a complicated introduction that hints at that. What can I say, I AM ridiculous.

**[INDIANS - 4 | BREWERS - 2]**

**[BOXSCORE]**

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The Indians win again with a victory over the Brewers on Monday and they'll head into an off-day having seen **Ubaldo Jimenez** pitch rather well, [despite giving up some runs](#) .

*"I felt really good," Jimenez said. "My first couple innings, I was a little bit off with my fastball and I was falling behind in the count. And they were taking good swings. But as the game went on, I felt a little bit better getting the first pitch for a strike and having better command with my fastball."*

Jimenez did give up some runs off seven hits, but he once again kept the walks down, only one, and struck out five in 5.1 innings of work. He doesn't need to be amazing, but if he can put up those kinds of numbers, keeping his team in the game and not excessively walking people, he will be fine for the Indians.

There has been some chatter about him and Bryan touched up on some great numbers regarding Jimenez. But here's the thing. The Indians do not need 2010 Ubaldo Jimenez. They just can't have 2012 Ubaldo Jimenez. Period.

Providing some offense was Lou Marson, Cord Phelps (more in a second), Zeke Carrera and Mark Reynolds. Drew Stubbs doubled and Zeke stole his ninth base of the spring.

Vinnie Pestano was able to rebound from his WBC outing with a scoreless frame, but not before giving up a pair of hits. Scott Barnes struck out a pair and walked one as he continues to look for a bullpen spot.

No game on Tuesday, but minor league action will take place. The rotation hopefuls will be in action in the next few days with Kluber going in the minor league game and Trevor Bauer starting on Wednesday in the major league game against the Angels.

**[RANDOM RUNDOWN]**

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**Chris Perez** says he'll be in the bullpen on Opening Day. His injury is "gone" and he is at 100 percent. [He's just needing to do one thing](#) .

*"I'm ready," said an obviously excited Perez. "I want to face hitters again. I'm tired of them walking by and all of them laughing at me. It's getting to be that time of year. You see the light at the end of the tunnel. You're two weeks out. Cuts start happening. Guys start seeing how things are shaking out. You start getting those competitive juices flowing again."*

Perez deviated from the original plan and was able to throw a full bullpen session with all his pitches. That deviation could have him throwing batting practice this weekend, which puts him well in line to get into some games before camp breaks. Perez also noted that there's a difference from how he's proceeded this year, compared to last.

*"Last year taught me really how to go about my rehab. Last year I was more of a bull in a china shop, saying, 'I feel good today. Why can't I pitch?' This year, I'm letting the process run its course. I'm becoming more of a veteran. It's part of growing up in this game."*

There are a lot of things that I think Chris Perez could be compared to and a bull in a china shop is actually one of them... Yup.

Not only is Dice-K out of the running for a rotation job, **Matt Capps** was told he is also no longer [in consideration for a bullpen job](#) . As for what will happen with him, that wasn't immediately determined as Capps is taking some time to think.

*"He's feeling healthy," Antonetti said. "He's just working back to getting to the point where he has full strength in his shoulder and is capable of pitching the way he can pitch. We think he's headed in the right direction. We just felt there may be some other guys ahead of him come Opening Day."*

This may be a similar case to Dice-K and one where Capps should just take the Indians up on

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going to Columbus. It is a little different in that he only needs to go one inning as a reliever, so he's not really behind. But we haven't seen much of him in major league games and it would lead me to believe the Indians have had him only a little different path than everyone else.

It can't hurt to have veteran options in Columbus, so I think the Indians would like to hold onto Capps if they can.

[Officially sent to minor league camp](#) were Juan Diaz, Cedric Hunter, Matt Langwell, Preston Guilmet, and Joe Martinez. Soon to join them will be Brian Jeroloman, Omir Santos, Matt Carson, and Luis Hernandez, however they will stick around as guys to take up innings for the regulars.

So that leaves the final spots on the roster looking like this:

Final bench spots: Jason Giambi, Yan Gomes, Ryan Raburn, Ezequiel Carrera, Chris McGuinness, Cord Phelps

Final bullpen spots: Bryan Shaw, Matt Albers, Nick Hagadone, Scott Barnes

Final rotation spot: Scott Kazmir, Carlos Carrasco, Trevor Bauer, Corey Kluber

And how about that **Cord Phelps**? He's really quietly having a great spring offensively and putting himself on the Indians radar. Perhaps to do what the Indians tried to do with Jason Donald but couldn't quite get going.

*"Cord's had a great camp," Antonetti said. "Offensively, he's swung the bat as well as probably anybody in camp. And I think he's a little bit more relaxed. I don't want to speak for Cord, but he's got a great energy about him. He's tried to work all over the diamond and really embrace that opportunity."*

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Remember the Indians tried getting Donald work in the outfield and they've tried to do the same for Cord. They'll now get him work at first, which would pretty much make him available to play a majority of the positions on the diamond. It could definitely come in handy if the Indians run into a position where one of the regulars goes down and Aviles has to step into regular duty (which he is definitely showing he can handle in the WBC).

I don't think he claims one of those bench spots, but he's definitely in better standing than he was coming into spring with what he's come out and done so far.

Mentioned yesterday that Terry Pluto had noted the Indians were going to explore long term deals with **Michael Brantley** and **Jason Kipnis**. Ken Rosenthal [has somewhat confirmed this](#), or at least that they've begun discussions. The report notes that the Tribe would be looking at five year deals, buying out arbitration and a few free agent years, a strategy they've become accustomed to working with as they did with Carlos Santana most recently.

It would make much sense to get both of those gentlemen extensions that last into free agency. It would align things with the new signings of Bourn and Swisher and pretty much set a core that is locked up for several years.

[Fun article over on SB Nation by Rob Neyer](#), where he named all the "Mr.'s" for each MLB team. Cleveland's? None other than Nap Lajoie was Neyer's Mr. Indian. Agree? Disagree? I'm no historian, so it may not be my place to judge. Obviously Bob Feller is one of the best Indians ever, probably the best. But that isn't the question, so Lajoie may fit perfectly.

With no game on Tuesday, news should be pretty slow. Bryan will return with another look at the Indians rotation, this time talking about Brett Myers, so get ready for that exciting piece.

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

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*the fun, photoshopped Indians players, and LOLTribe ridiculousness.*

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