

Morning Rundown: Some Valid Hope to Shock the World

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Monday, April 01 2013 11:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, April 03 2013 7:21 AM



So we meet again.

It has become a little tradition for us to all meet this way. With baseball season here, or at least, Indians baseball season, for us to talk. We meet, thinking baseball, talking Tribe, and hoping for glory.

Hope. That's this year's theme. It has been a running line to mention the possibilities that the Indians could shock the world, if. Only if, it were to all fall perfectly for our little Indians that can. Would winning the AL Central shock the world?

The Baltimore Orioles went to the playoffs last year, so no, it wouldn't. Winning it all would.

But this is a one step at a time sort of a thing when you are talking about 162 games of baseball, so let's start with winning the division and making the playoffs. With that in mind as our requisite for "shocking the world," take a trip with me around the internet to see what they're all saying.

[GOING MAINSTREAM]

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Might as well start with the mainstream media that has the most to look at, which is always ESPN.

The best you will get is nowhere to be found on the [ESPN 'expert' prediction page](#) . For as many damn people they have making picks no one cares about, they don't even have everyone on there! I mean, Matt Szefc and Doug Mittler (WHO!?) get picks put up there. What? Hence all future mentions of 'expert' with caution thrown out.

The fun part is that video that is there with last year's manager, Manny Acta. What's even greater is that Doug Glanville (not on the 'expert' page) picks the Cleveland Indians to win an AL Wild Card. I can sense a little tension when Glanville boasts about Terry Francona and all the money the Indians spent on free agents.

Glanville's selection is the height of it all friends, as no one, including Acta has the Indians sniffing the playoffs. There isn't more than 10 'experts' (and there's a lot more than that) that have a team other than Washington or Detroit winning it all. The Tigers have a clean sweep of the AL Central and the only other giving Indians due as a wild card is Peter Pascarelli.

The only one to come close to the number of experts that ESPN unfurls is CBS. And uh, well, six isn't really close, but when you have 50 people making picks, nothing is. [CBSSports brings six people to the table](#) , all who like the Tigers. What's even more interesting is the Royal love, which all but one has them in the third. And the Indians range from second (the one who doesn't like the Royals) to fourth. The one Indian second place pick is not a wild card, but the Royals got three wild card picks, so interesting.

The height of the Royals love is FOX Sports Jon Paul Morosi, [who picks them to win the division](#) . Yup. The same guy that picked the Detroit Tigers last year to go to the World Series, picked the Royals to beat the Tigers for the AL Central. The exact opposite of that is Morosi's FOX friend, Ken Rosenthal, who says the Indians finish fourth and that "pitching will make Terry Francona [wish he were still with the Red Sox](#) ." That's a little rude sir.

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[Yahoo! Sports likes the Indians just as much](#) as they like the Royals, with the two splitting second place between the four representatives and the Indians no lower than third from the other two. Now we're starting to get a little more love here. Until you get to MLB.com, the last of our mainstream picks, and actually the closest to ESPN in the amount of people they have picking. There's nothing to feel good about things because they just show division winners, [and everyone picks the Tigers](#), including 13 of the 20 experts picking them to win the AL pennant.

There is one though! Like ESPN, the volume of people picking gives us a little hope. Little old Mike Siano has the Indians as a wild card. He also has Boston and New York in the playoffs though, so I have to question him there. Who in their right mind thinks that is happening and who the heck is Mike Siano anyway?

A damn good guy for having the Indians in the playoffs. That's who!

Perhaps we need to dig a little deeper to find some sort of sliver of hope to shock the world...

[SECOND TO NONE]

I enjoy people who do not take themselves too seriously. I don't do that here or anywhere else. Like really, they're predictions. If I were in a position that some of the folks mentioned up top were in, I'd hope someone would copy and paste my link and make fun of my picks.

I mean, some guy like John Paul Morosi makes one good pick and boasts about it until the end of time. Who cares if you picked the Tigers and Giants last year? So you got lucky. I picked my nose once and that was successful do you see me bragging?

I'm kidding of course. Hardball Talk is one of my favorite blogs and the main guy who runs it and writes the content is Craig Calcaterra, a good and decent fellow. He knows picks are always wrong. But he also [picked the Indians to finish second and in the Wild Card](#), and he's a

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Ohio guy. So he's good people. And I hope he is not wrong in this instance.

His colleagues are less-nice, but the Indians do garner a second second place pick, along with a few fourth place finishes. Sad face. For your perusal though, HBT [has a great Indians preview](#) though by Aaron Gleeman, who picks the Indians to finish third.

Although we already heard from them in the Yahoo! Experts post, Dave Brown and Mike Oz of Yahoo! blog Big League Stew chime in again with [their own AL Central preview](#) which is always good and to give their division player awards (don't worry, the Indians don't get anything). But you have to love both of them putting the Indians second.

[SB Nation has a nice preview](#) themselves of the AL Central, with their team bloggers who know the teams best, chiming in with the best and worst case scenarios. You can go a long way and not find as good of a preview as this one. Marc Normandin [goes further in his own prediction piece](#), and no, he doesn't pick the Indians. Neither does Jonah Keri of Grantland, [but he has a really good well written piece](#) with knowledge on every team, and he does have the Indians second.

And finally, [Baseball Prospectus gives us a statistical version](#) (cause that's what they do!) of their picks with all their staff members. The Indians do not receive any of the 42 first place votes up for grab, but the Royals and White Sox each do get one. Despite that, enough people have the Indians second to statistically be second in the final tallies.

[IN THE TRIBE]

Wonder if there's anyone inside the Indians wigwam willing to go out on a limb?

No not really. But you'll find a few good things from It's Pronounced 'Lajaway' in ESPN's Sweet Spot preview and Let's Go Tribe. [On ESPN](#), the Indians are yet again second and It's Pronounced 'Lajaway' gives a best and worst case scenario of sorts, outlining what the Indians

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need to do to get 85 wins, or how they can end up with 74.

I miss the days Paul Cousineau would grace the internet with his presence for a season preview that literally went from day one to the end of the season. And it was a glorious look into the future of what would likely never happen, but was really fun to imagine.

[Let's Go Tribe kind of did that](#) , interweaving their division outcomes, saving the American League Central for last. And yes the Indians are second again, finishing with an 82-80 record, but what's fun is seeing how LGT had the Indians get to that point. So go ahead and give it a read.

But really, if you want some honest assessment on the Indians in essay form. [You know where to go](#)

right?

[Right...](#)

[Right...](#)

[Right](#)

?

[SO CATS ARE PICKING THINGS NOW...]

No really, cats are making predictions at this point.

And if there is ANYONE other than me or someone with a crazy brain to pick the Indians, it would have to be a cat, right?

Right?

[Our first cat comes from SB Nation](#) and he goes with the Royals to win the AL Central. That's fun. Only several in the universe to think that the Tigers will not win the Central and the Kansas

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City Royals will and one of them is a MLB 'expert' named John Paul Morosi and the other is a feline.

[The other cat picked the Twins](#) , and we know that's wrong, so. Yeah.

[THROWIN' DARTS]

I figured in light of these awesome predictions made be cats, I figured I'd be just as good as throwing darts at a dart board.

So I did just that. Courtesy of the dartboard my girlfriend got me for Christmas, I put the logos in random order on the dart board, and threw away. It was a little difficult and I put a few holes in my wall (oh boy), but after finding the order of each division, wild cards, and the playoffs matchups, I definitely need to make a trip to Lowe's for some wall puddly and paint.

I will put the dart picks up against mine, because as much as I would like to say I have great aim and tried to hit the Indians to win the World Series, I had no clue where the dart was going and most of the time, it didn't even stick. So much so that the Dodgers and Padres couldn't even get anything to hit them. Must mean something, like, how they're going to finish tied for last place, even below Houston. I'm in blue, the darts are in red.

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AL East: Boston, Tampa Bay, New York, Baltimore, Toronto

AL Central: Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Chicago, Minnesota

AL West: Seattle, Los Angeles, Texas, Oakland, Houston

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Wild Cards: Los Angeles over Tampa Bay

AL East: Tampa Bay, Baltimore, Toronto, Boston, New York

AL Central: Detroit, Cleveland, Kansas City, Chicago, Minnesota

AL West: Los Angeles, Texas, Oakland, Seattle, Houston

Wild Cards: Texas over Baltimore

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NL East: Washington, Philadelphia, Miami, Atlanta, New York

NL Central: Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis

NL West: San Francisco, Arizona, Colorado, Los Angeles/San Diego

Wild Cards: Philadelphia over Arizona

NL East: Washington, Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York, Miami

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NL Central: St. Louis, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Chicago

NL West: San Francisco, Arizona, Los Angeles, San Diego, Colorado

Wild Cards: Cincinnati over Atlanta

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ALCS: Los Angeles (Beat TB, BOS) over Seattle (Beat CLE)

NLCS: Cincinnati (Beat WAS) over San Francisco (Beat PHI)

World Series: Cincinnati Reds over Los Angeles Angels

ALCS: Los Angeles (Beat TEX, BAL) over Detroit (Beat Tampa Bay)

NLCS: Washington (Beat St. Louis) over Cincinnati (Beat ATL, SF)

World Series: Washington Nationals over Los Angeles Angels

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AL MVP: [Miguel Cabrera](#), DET

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NL MVP: [Joey Votto](#) , CIN

AL [Cy Young](#) : [Chris Sale](#) , CHW

NL Cy Young: [Stephen Strasburg](#) , WAS

[THE INDIANS CAN SHOCK THE WORLD IF...]

Look, I'm not sure how to approach this section this year. A lot has to go right. The Detroit Tigers started last year in a bad way. They were vulnerable and continued to sputter well into the summer. It gave the Chicago White Sox a legitimate opportunity to take advantage of that.

Just like we thought would happen last year in examining the Indians chances, the Tigers could open the door in the AL Central for other teams if they did not play well. They did not play well. The Indians however, after starting the season off good, sputtered themselves and it was not pretty.

But the Tigers are different this year. They made moves last season that have stuck for this season. [Anibal Sanchez](#) is in the rotation from the get-go, [Max Scherzer](#) has come into his own. The pitching looks a lot better. Miguel Cabrera may not be so much of a liability after all at third and they've got

[Omar Infante](#)

(not

[Ryan Raburn](#)

who I DOGGED) at second this year instead.

The bullpen isn't weak, but their closer situation is up in the air. And if that's the only bad thing you can say about them, where's the opening?

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Where's the opportunity for a team like the Indians to slide in?

If there is one, it's very small. Which makes this section difficult. Because for any of it to mean anything, the Tigers have to give the Indians an opening they did last year, or one like it.

Or a whole lot of things have to go right. Just about everything that I mention in the following few lines, and then some.

The Indians can win the AL Central...

If [Scott Kazmir](#) has the magical comeback rebirth of a lifetime.

[Ubaldo Jimenez](#) is not bad.

[Justin Masterson](#) is an ace.

[Zach McAllister](#) is really good.

[Brett Myers](#) does not fall to pieces or [Carlos Carrasco](#) comes in and is awesome.

No all of that, just in one little pod. The Indians rotation needs to be good, like really good to be able to compete in this division, regardless of what the Tigers do. The Royals have a good young offense, the Tigers are loaded, they need pitching, and lots of it.

If this lineup gels as well as we think it can. With speed, power, a little bit of everything, this lineup has the potential to do some impressive things. From the speed of Bourn, Stubbs,

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Brantley, and Kipnis, to the power of Reynolds, Swisher, Santana, and [Asdrubal Cabrera](#) , there's a lot of everything. This lineup has special pieces and if they all gel and mesh at once, the Indians will be right up there with the Royals and Tigers.

If the new-look Bullpen Mafia is as good as the last edition. This is a very much retooled bullpen with new faces and some spare parts changed. The principle players of [Chris Perez](#) , [Vinnie Pestano](#) , and [Joe Smith](#) are still there, so it's like just as good as The Godfather, but still a sequel. It could be better, or it could be a worse. You have to like some of the live arms in youngsters like [Cody Allen](#) and [Nick Hagadone](#) , but it remains to be seen if they can play into the success of the bullpen over the past few years.

If this outfield defense is as good as we think it can be. With so much speed with Stubbs, Brantely, and Bourn, that outfield can make a lot of the pitchers look really good. There's no telling what kind of confidence it can inspire to have balls that normally fall in be caught on a more regular basis.

If [Trevor Bauer](#) is our savior. If at some point, Trevor Bauer comes in and is the much needed answer to "who is going to be this team's ace for years to come" question, this team will progress a few years in a few months. Enough said.

If the magic is back. What was missing last year, despite some of the good vibes early on? The magic. The magic needs to be back at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario. Walk-offs create some sort of mystique and swagger that can't be matched. The more time Hammy says "the magic is back" the better. So let's get some big wins early and often and ride that momentum wave.

If this really is Tribe Town and Terry Francona is the magic maker we think he can be. Stranger things have happened, but if Terry Francona can will this team to wins, they can make a Baltimore Orioles like run. The big thing that the Orioles had though was some pitching from unlikely sources. The Indians will need that, but they certainly have a manager who could make

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something happen and inspire to do great things. Save the walk-off magic, especially if Francona brings his own little kind of magic.

[FUN STATEMENTS]

I'm going to make some statements. They may end up being true, they may not. Either way, you may not really remember any of them, so it doesn't matter.

[Yan Gomes](#) out-homers [Lou Marson](#) .

Lou Marson out-homers [Travis Hafner](#) .

[Michael Brantley](#) out-homers Yan Gomes, Lou Marson, and Travis Hafner combined.

[Mark Reynolds](#) out-homers Yan Gomes, Lou Marson, Travis Hafner, and Michael Brantley combined.

Mark Reynolds and [Drew Stubbs](#) strike out less than 400 times combined.

The Indians lead the American League in steals...

...but are second in strikeouts.

Nick Hagadone leads the Indians relievers in strikeouts (I'm stubborn).

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Cody Allen has more innings pitched than each [Matt Albers](#) , [Bryan Shaw](#) , and [Rich Hill](#) .

Justin Masterson leads the Indians in innings pitched again and in strikeouts, but Scott Kazmir leads in wins.

[Corey Kluber](#) , Carlos Carrasco, and [Daisuke Matsuzaka](#) make a combined 22 starts.

Carlos Carrasco makes 15 of them.4

I will get at least 75 percent of my division picks wrong.

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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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