

## Tomahawks Springing Up

Written by {ga=paulcousineau}

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With the Indians finally in Goodyear, readying themselves for an actual practice, we find ourselves in that glorious time of Spring, when we search for any little nugget of information as guys play long toss and run around the outfield between taking batting practice and hanging out around the batting cage. Of course, any nugget that doesn't simply proclaim that "X is in the best shape of his life" is handled like gold and analyzed to no end because...well, that's what baseball fans do while their Boys of Summer mosey around practice fields a couple of time zones away.

That being said, pictures of players milling around the diamond are still a welcome change from the off-season of inactivity that we've endured. Of course, not being in Goodyear and since what I do here is more the "how" and the "why" and not the "what" or the "who" – and I would recommend [Jordan Bastian's blog](#) for the "what" and the "who" as Bastian has acquitted himself quite nicely to the Tribe beat and his daily blogs offer (to my eye, at least) a little more candor and insight than the official site stories – Spring Training will still be handled with that emphasis on the "how" and the "why" instead of attempting to provide the most up-to-the-minute updates on the batting order or Grady's knee or the 5th starter...ahem, competition.

That's not to say that there aren't compelling things to watch this Spring and though I haven't used this space to do the whole "Spring Training Preview" piece in some time, that doesn't mean that there aren't some pieces that are definitely worth reading to get you better prepared for what's coming in the next 6 weeks. To wit, my TCF colleague Nino Colla has been running a great series over at The Tribe Daily, breaking down the [non-roster invitees](#) , the [pitchers on the 40-man](#) ,

the

[position players on the 40-man](#)

, and finishes it up with

[a final overview](#)

. The whole series provides a nice encapsulation of the actors in the play and the breaks down

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the plot that figures to unfold in Arizona.

Even our old friend Anthony Castrovince takes some time to make [his Opening Day roster predictions](#) while the emotions that are welling to the surface as camp begins are examined by Andrew Humphries of LGT, [g to quantify what it has meant to be an Indians' fan](#) [attemptin](#) for the last few years and how it is likely to feel going forward.

With Indians under the Arizona sun, it means that the promise of Opening Day and meaningful baseball is not far off, and that's enough to warm any Tribe fan this time of year, while we watch the Tomahawks fly...

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With the Orlando Cabrera signing now official, the 40-man would look to be set for the time being. However, Nick Cafardo of the Boston Globe took some time off from suggesting that Sizemore and Carmona are on the Trading Block and from intimating that Masterson will eventually make his way back to the Red Sox as a reliever because...you know, the Indians are subject to the whims of the other teams in terms of making players available that would solve other teams' problems, to [provide this little nugget on Bonderman](#) :  
*A National League scout says he liked the way Jeremy Bonderman was pitching toward the end of 2010. "I'm really surprised a team hasn't jumped at him," said the scout. "But some of that is up to the player and the agent, too. If he's asking for too much, nobody's going to do it no matter how desperate teams are for pitching."*

Allegedly, the [Indians and Bonderman are at an impasse because of the MLB/Minor League deal hang-up](#) and Millwood has not come down off of his asking price for a deal (and for Kevin Milwood, v.2011...let's hope the Indians stand firm on this one), but as time goes on this Spring, it will be an interesting situation to monitor as one would have to assume that Bonderman and Millwood would like to ply their trade somewhere in 2011. If the Indians can play the waiting game with them, maybe they can ink a guy like Bonderman to a Minor-League deal that would fall into their growing low-risk bin out in Goodyear.

Back to that Cafardo piece though, as the comment from the scout that he liked the way Bonderman was pitching toward the end of 2010 is surprising when you consider what Bondo did "toward the end of 2010". That is to say, look at the disparate nature of Bonderman's 2010:

### **Bonderman - First 13 games (2010)**

4.06 ERA, 1.27 WHIP with 59 K and 20 BB over his first 75 1/3 innings.

### **Bonderman – Last 17 games (2010)**

6.68 ERA, 1.68 WHIP with 53 K to 40 BB in his final 95 1/3 innings.

His ERA totals down the stretch don't exactly justify the scout's feelings as in the last 3 months of the season, he posted ERA's of 7.77 (July), 6.11 (August), and 6.55 (September/October), so his performance "toward the end of 2010" must have included some positive signs for this particular scout that certainly didn't show up in Bonderman's stat sheet.

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That all being said, you want a crazy comparison?

### **Jeremy Bonderman – 2010, through July 10th**

4.79 ERA, 1.36 WHIP, 68 K, 27 BB in 97 2/3 IP over 17 games

### **Jake Westbrook – 2010, through July 10th**

4.75 ERA, 1.48 WHIP, 62 K, 36 BB in 108 IP over 18 games

Is that cherry-picking a date to make the comparison work?

Yeah, probably...but Bonderman's start in 2010 was actually better than that of Jake Westbrook and if the Indians are looking to add that veteran arm to the rotation to buy them some time before a guy like Al White is deemed to be ready for promotion, looking for a few months of production from Bonderman (who was effective in the early part of 2010) before looking to flip him still may represent an opportunity for the Tribe.

If you remember (or even if you don't), Westbrook was moved for Corey Kluber who, as Al Ciammaichella said in [his Top 50 Prospect countdown](#), will be jockeying for position "to be the first starter called up to Cleveland in case of injury or ineffectiveness in the big league rotation" with the upside of a "productive #3/#4 starter" if he can "refine his changeup" and while that may not look like a shiny bauble, that's what the Indians netted for 1/2 of a season of Jake Westbrook, who actually had worse numbers than Jeremy Bonderman last year in mid-July.

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With the 40-man apparently set (for now), the Indians have turned their attention to filling out their "honorary coaches/special assistants/attempts to cash in on some past goodwill" staff as players arrive in Goodyear. Certainly, the "addition" of Kenny Lofton, who will be in Goodyear to work with OF and baserunners before becoming an "ambassador" for two weekends at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario and the fact that the only bobblehead this year will be of The Human Rain Delay have the stink of culling up the "Era of Champions" for some nostalgic fans. However, the Indians actually did add some former players that figure to play a role in development while providing some input as they added Jason Bere and Eduardo (1/2 of the famous "Benuardo" of years past) Perez to serve as ["Special Assistants to Baseball Operations"](#), even if Perez will oddly continue his work on ESPN while providing input to the Tribe on player development.

While you may have thought that Bere was already in this position and that Perez is simply replacing a position most recently filled by Ellis Burks, let's all remember [this little swipe that Hoynes took](#) at the

Tribe's cost-cutting measures when discussing the Indians' Front Office alignment:

*It would be nice if they hired some consultants with big-league experience to replace Jason Bere and Ellis Burks. Bere and Burks were let go in budget-cutting measures after last season. The Indians used to have four former players in that capacity. Now they have one, Robby Thompson. Tim Belcher moved from that position to become pitching coach for the 2010 season.*

That was from last September and well, Hoynsie...sometimes wishes do come true, so this must mean that the days of "budget-cutting" measures are past us, right?

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