



Welcome to The News Cycle, where we take the five most recent news items concerning Cleveland Indians baseball.

I've already changed the name, because it looked like I was talking about the actual starting rotation in the headline. These are the types of progressive changes we make here in The News Cycle. I'm drilling that name into your brain.

Today, we look at the (almost) finalized roster, the lined-up rotation, an improved defensive set, and answer some questions about power. Plus the Tribe's dip into social media and one former player who made a Hall of Fame claim.

[ALMOST FINAL]

The Indians [have finalized their Opening Day roster](#) and are in the process of putting the

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Written by {ga=ninocolla}

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finishing touches on their entire 40-man roster. They've yet to make any moves in regards to 40-man status because they still have time, but as they depart from Goodyear, their intentions are known.

Catchers: Lou Marson and Carlos Santana

Infielders: Asdrubal Cabrera, Orlando Cabrera, Adam Everett, Jack Hannahan, Matt LaPorta

Outfielders: Michael Brantley, Travis Buck, Shin-Soo Choo, Shelley Duncan, Austin Kearns

Designated Hitter: Travis Hafner

Starting Pitchers: Fausto Carmona, Carlos Carrasco, Justin Masterson, Mitch Talbot, Josh Tomlin

Relief Pitchers: Chad Durbin, Justin Germano, Frank Herrmann, Vinnie Pestano, Chris Perez, Rafael Perez, Tony Sipp

Disabled List: Trevor Crowe, Jason Donald, Grady Sizemore, Joe Smith

Jayson Nix needs to be removed from the 40-man roster and the Indians [will look to trade him](#) , if not designate him for assignment. Buck, Everett, Germano, and Hannahan all need roster spots and there is currently one open.

The Nix removal will open up one and the club could potentially place Crowe on the 60-day disabled list, opening one more. The question now becomes, where do they get their last 40-man spot?

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I was partially shocked by the **Lou Marson** inclusion, but it became necessary after the other moderate shock of **Adam Everett** making the team. You can't put five non-roster invites on the roster, there just aren't enough spots. There isn't even enough for four in my mind.

Marson is a shock this week, but a few weeks ago (before injuries to Smith and Donald) I would have said it would have been likely, yet it would benefit the Indians most to keep him. I still think it would be a benefit to keep him because he's on the 40-man. Yes he does need at-bats, but sometimes you just have to go with the situation you are given. He really made it difficult by not hitting this spring.

When they made it apparent Hannahan was the guy and both Duncan and Buck would be on the roster, it signaled the end of Jayson Nix, especially since they could give the spot to Luis Valbuena, who is already on the 40-man roster. However that situation turned interesting with the DESERVING inclusion of Adam Everett, who has won the utility infielder job.

I think Everett has outplayed Nix and Valbuena offensively this spring and he is way better defensively, especially at shortstop. So while I'm shocked to see him on the roster, I definitely think he deserves it.

No surprises, at least in these final few days of camp, in terms of who made it into the bullpen. It was a heated competition for the final few spots, with even Doug Mathis making a valiant push for a job. In the end, **Justin Germano** can give some length and put up an excellent under-the-radar performance this spring, **Frank Herrmann** also has some multiple-inning capabilities, and **Vinnie Pestano** flat out earned his job.

Jess Todd will open up in Columbus' bullpen, while Luis Valbuena will man shortstop, and Paul Phillips and Luke Carlin will likely form the catching tandem. Valbuena will play shortstop after the Pirates have indicated they have no plans on returning Josh Rodriguez to the Indians, at least not right now, by making him a **member of their active roster**.

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[ROTATION IN ORDER]

Along with naming **Josh Tomlin** to the rotation, Manny Acta [decided on his exact order](#) for one-through-five, with no skipping going on the first time through.

After **Fausto Carmona** makes his first Opening Day start, Carlos Carrasco, Justin Masterson, Tomlin, and Mitch Talbot will follow. Tomlin winning the fourth spot is by virtue of his excellent spring and no doubt, partially thanks to Talbot's struggles.

While he didn't gain the spot based off his spring performance (seven home run balls is pretty frightening, even in Arizona), **Carlos Carrasco's** inclusion as the number two behind Carmona shows the excitement Acta has for the young product. Carrasco showed a lot last year towards the end and while he didn't perform well this spring, he has the most potential in the rotation.

Acta mentioned that Carrasco [is second to break up](#) Carmona and Masterson, both sinkerball pitchers, but I'm sure Acta's love for Carrasco had something to do with it as well.

And while he may not have any options left, you have to figure that Mitch Talbot is on some shaky ground as far as his position goes. He'll get ample opportunity, but if David Huff or Jeanmar Gomez pitch well in Columbus, and Talbot doesn't in Cleveland, there will be valid reason to make a switch. The thought is that Huff and Gomez will get opportunities one way or another and barring an injury, Talbot could be the first of the current starters to lose his spot.

[THE DEFENSE RESTS]

I have to [agree with Terry Pluto](#) , the infield defense is definitely improved. When you remove Jhonny Peralta from the equation, how could it not be?

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Jhokes about Jhonny aside, Chris Antonetti was serious about seeing an improvement defensively and while he may have not planned it exactly the way it worked out, his additions did just that. It was Antonetti who signed both Adam Everett and Jack Hannahan to minor league deals and it is both Everett and Hannahan that make up much of the improvement.

Everett's inclusion shows just how committed the club is to improving the glove work as Everett is superior to Nix in that regard. He could probably translate over to second and if need-be, third (he'll have to given the current layout). Nix meanwhile was good at second, incredibly shaky at third, and an unknown at shortstop.

Meanwhile **Jack Hannahan** brings a [steady presence](#) to third base and comes "as advertised" according to Antonetti and Acta. I lobbied for the addition of Nick Punto in the offseason, with full knowledge and understanding that Nick Punto should probably never step up to the plate. But his defense would bring so much more value to the team than any harm his bat would do.

Hannahan serves the same purpose and he's even shown a very capable stick in spring. He'll be a nice luxury for Asdrubal Cabrera over at short, who has looked incredible himself, at least in Acta's eyes.

Then you have the veteran addition of Orlando Cabrera, who Acta insists can play second with his eyes closed. While I'd rather see him play with his eyes opened, that is certainly high praise and the fact that he hasn't had any troubles this spring backs up that claim.

Say what you want about how "inactive" Chris Antonetti's offseason was, but he did pay up on what he wanted to see. Maybe he didn't plan for Jack Hannahan to win a roster spot, but that's the way it worked out and I think the Indians are better for it. And when you boil down the numbers, six free agent signings will make the Opening Day roster, and that's likely five more than you thought would a few months ago.

[POWER SOURCE]

Another excellent point brought up by Terry Pluto [in regards to the Indians power](#) . If Matt

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LaPorta, Travis Hafner, and

Grady Sizemore

are all healthy, the Indians might be using a few more fireworks before post-game firework shows than usual this year.

However that remains one of the biggest questions concerning the lineup. Yes, Sizemore is expected back, but does he come back healthy? After that, does he come back ready to hit a good amount of home runs?

Even so, **Hafner** is healthy, so there is one guy who you know you can count on for some pop. However Hafner, although healthy and ready to go, has shown more of a tendency to hit singles rather than doubles and home runs this spring and even last year.

Then you have **LaPorta**, who was the big time power bat addition the Indians were in search of when they acquired him. But he has been a disappointment and this spring, despite knocking in a good number of runs, has not shown anything to make you feel confident about his outlook.

Pluto says that odds are one of those three can make an impact and that if two of them do; it will be "fun to watch."

What if all three do? With a capable rotation, are we looking at playoffs?

I'll pump the breaks on that, sorry for getting excited of the thought, but in a perfect world, the Indians will have all three healthy and hitting by the time May rolls around. And if that does happen, then you know we can't have all the nice toys from the expensive aisle, so Santana or Choo might go in slump mode.

LaPorta [has no concerns](#) about where he is hitting right now, but admits he'd like to be up higher. He likely knows he has to prove that.

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Hafner will get the luxury of hitting behind wunderkind Carlos Santana, which could benefit him very much as clubs could potentially avoid the potentially fatal tandem of Choo and Santana. And it also appears that Acta [has decided](#) he'll play more often than originally expected prior to spring starting.

Then of course there is Sizemore, who is just looking to make it to the big leagues [as soon as possible](#)

[SOCIAL SAVVY]

I will readily admit, like many others who have now been hooked, that when Twitter first started making waves, I laughed at the idea. The concept to me was, quite frankly, asinine in principle. Why would I want to tell everyone about what I'm doing in 140 characters or less? I'm a man of many (and often times, unneeded) words, so to limit myself would be challenging.

On top of that, while I may think what I'm doing is interesting, millions of people on the Internet certainly will not.

Yet here I stand, or sit, years later with over 450 followers and not obsessed, but genuinely enthralled with what happens on Twitter. Much of that has to do with the fact that Twitter has grown from a status update about what's on the sandwich you're eating to a much more free-wheeling type of social media outlet. I can get connected to things I want to hear about, um, like the Indians.

As blogger and aspiring journalist, Twitter is almost a necessity. As an Indian fan who wants information as soon as possible, you couldn't live without it and for those of you who do; I guess you just read blogs like Paulie C's and Let's Go Tribe, and hopefully mine. As a resource, provided you are following the right people, it is invaluable.

And for Tribe brass, it presents an incredible opportunity to connect with the fans, some of which who have been highly critical. It is now easy to interact with and confront [Mark Shapiro](#), [Chris Antonetti](#)

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, and

[Manny Acta](#)

, so if you want to tell them something to their face (err...computer screen) you can.

And it gives an opportunity to those three gentlemen to defend themselves and be as upfront and honest as they can be. Maybe now they can get a few of the restless natives to at least respect them and their point of view. They get the opportunity to see these larger than life decision makers state their case and they can choose to agree, but they certainly will have to respect their guts to put themselves out there for where just anyone can say anything to them.

The entire effort the Indians are [making with social media](#) is fantastic. They are probably the most connected franchise in all of sports and with a team that is losing and has a really disgruntled population, doing anything they can to bring the game closer is a plus. A good portion of fans need reasons to be intrigued and to follow if the team isn't winning.

And the whole Social Deck turned [Social Suite](#) ? As someone who's experienced the Social Deck and will get the incredible opportunity to experience the Social Suite on Opening Day, do I even need to say anything? From a first hand account, like most things with the Indians, it is a first-class operation. The idea was in its infancy, but it was intriguing and now that it has turned into an entire Suite.

That is just incredible.

[OUT OF THE BULLPEN]

While we are on the subject of social media, perhaps we should turn our heads to the Twitter account of one former Indian. **Ben Broussard** hasn't submitted a tweet since last summer; however [the bio he entered](#) really could use some adjusting. Broussard's bio reads as follows:

Played in the major leagues w/Indians, Mariners & Rangers. Also in the Baseball Hall of Fame for the most pinch-hit grand slam homeruns.

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Wait...What? Also in the Baseball Hall of Fame...for the most pinch-hit grand slam home runs? It's one thing to say you are in the Baseball Hall of Fame for a record, but it's another to say you are in for a record as silly as pinch-hit grand slams. I mean really? You hit three of them, so did a few other players. Now if you were the all-time grand slam leader, then okay, make that claim but why did he hit those grand slams? Likely because the pitcher knew he might have a better shot at getting a fastball past Broussard than he would whoever was on-deck. They were wrong, that was their mistake.

Not to discredit his feat, it is three more pinch-hit grand slam home runs that I'll ever hit, but you just look feeble to all other players when you pull out a random record like that.

I always like to say that in baseball, you haven't seen it all. Of course ESPN's Tim Kurkjian always says that, but I say it because he says it and it is true. And I don't think I ever remember hearing about someone [throwing up on the mound](#) and getting pulled.

And of course in this world of Twitter, after that happened, beat writer Jordan Bastian provided the update and everyone knows about it. And because **Chris Perez** is on Twitter, I'm sure everyone got on him about it. And because everyone got on him about it, he gets the chance [to clear the air](#). Then Luke Carlin [confirmed](#) that "he didn't see any chunks."

You just have to love the Internet. But in all seriousness, Perez is fine. He didn't eat enough before the game and felt light-headed.

I love all the [Indians Memories](#) being shared on Twitter through the [Indians PR Twitter account](#). So let me share mine and I'm going to go with one in-person account.

Yes I was at multiple recent playoff games, but one of the first games I remember being at vividly was when Bill Selby hit a walk-off shot against Mariano Rivera. I mean, BILL FREAKIN' SELBY! Bill Selby?! The only thing he did was contribute to the nickname of Pronk and that home run. The Indians were dead in the water earlier in the game and after Mo' walked Thome

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intentionally; everyone thought the comeback would die.

Then Bill FREAKIN' Selby let one rip. Now that's a memory.

As for actual team news, news on **Trevor Crowe** should be coming down the pipeline very soon, considering rosters need to be finalized Thursday. I mentioned Crowe could be a candidate for the 60-day disabled list so they can use his roster spot and that seems like the likely course of action. Crowe [was on a flight back](#) to Cleveland with Mark Shapiro the other day to [get his shoulder re-evaluated](#).

Doug Mathis pitched decent enough this spring to where I think he can land another job somewhere. He thought so too as he was [granted his release](#) by the Indians.

You can follow Nino on Twitter @ [TheTribeDaily](#) where he doesn't tweet about "seeing chunks." You should also follow his [blog on Facebook](#) so a little birdie can find his way back to the nest.