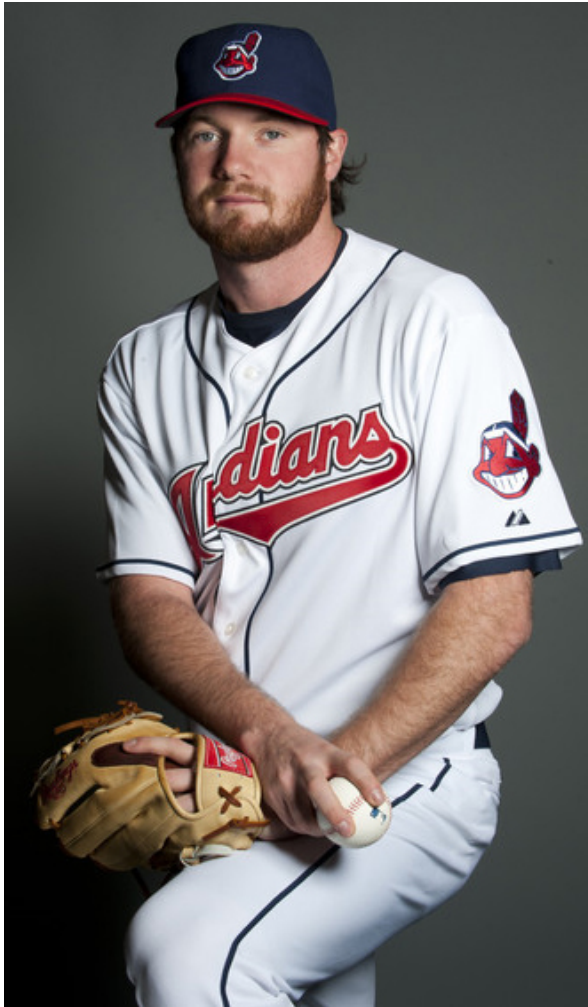


## The Cycle: Here Comes Alex White

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Friday, April 29 2011 10:00 AM - Last Updated Thursday, April 28 2011 10:40 PM

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Welcome to The Cycle, where we take a look at the most recent news items concerning Cleveland Indians baseball and just talk about them.

Admit it, the lull over the weekend against the Twins made you think the worst. Combined with the blown save last Thursday and the overall way the Indians looked in those two games with the Twins, I wouldn't blame anyone from thinking that.

Heck, I thought it. But you know what; I chose to believe it was just that, a weekend lull. Three losses in a row was the most consecutive all season but they've now followed that up with a sweep of Kansas City and some home cooking that looks really good and tastes even better.

The Indians now go into Friday's action 4.5 games up on both Detroit and Kansas City after everyone in the division but Cleveland lost on Thursday. They're in possession of the best run

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differential in the entire majors and only one team has scored more runs than them.

I don't care who you face, when you win 16 games in the month of April, you are more than just a flash in a pan. Again, this isn't to say this is going to be a year-long thing, but I think I feel pretty good in saying this club is going to be hanging around all year if the main group remains healthy.

And that brings us to our main topic in this particular edition.

In this version of The Cycle we discuss the injury to Carlos Carrasco and the madness that has ensued with naming his replacement. Also, some home cooking for Cleveland and homemade Jack Hannahan campaign.

### [WHITE-AWAY SIR]

When **Carlos Carrasco** left Sunday's game against Minnesota after just three innings due to injury, it made a whole lot of sense. For one, Manny Acta wouldn't pull a guy that early in a game that wasn't yet out of reach just because "he didn't have it."

Then when you find out he had left with elbow related concern, had been down in velocity, and overall just [did not look right](#), that just adds to it. It just wasn't the injury you want, if you have to leave due to injury.

The hope all week had been Carlos Carrasco would be fine to pitch Saturday, pushing his scheduled start back a day with no game on Monday and Jeanmar Gomez not overly exhausting himself in relief of Carrasco on Sunday.

An MRI on Monday revealed no structural damage and encouraged the Indians that Carrasco would do just that, start on Saturday provided his workouts went well. After Tuesday's [round of catch was positive](#)

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, Wednesday would bring the final test, a bullpen session.

Unfortunately for Carrasco, he couldn't even make it to that without feeling some discomfort playing catch and not only was he deemed not ready to start Saturday, [he was placed on the disabled list](#)

Throughout all of this, there was much debate as to who would start in place of Carrasco on Saturday if he couldn't go. If he wasn't placed on the disabled list, they could have gone with an all-bullpen game, spot-starting Justin Germano and using Chad Durbin to string some innings together for one start. That would have been a nice option to explore if it was a temporary, one-start miss. But it makes no sense to do if Carrasco is going to miss extended time and be placed on the disabled list.

Even if he is going to miss two starts, which is the hope now, it makes more sense to call up a starting-capable arm. Option one is obviously the last man that was in the spring training rotation battle that hasn't receive an opportunity in Cleveland, David Huff.

The problem there is that Huff started on Tuesday of this week, which would give him just three days rest to start on Saturday. I don't think the Indians want to handcuff Huff in that way for his first opportunity. Was it an oversight to let Huff pitch a full game and be unavailable in case needed on Saturday, or did they just really believe Carrasco would be good to go?

Who knows the real answer? But to answer the original question posed here, **Alex White**. The Indians will call up former first round pick Alex White [to make his major league debut against the Tigers](#) on Saturday. White's rotation spot falls perfectly aligned and he's been pitching well in Columbus.

But he's only pitched in four Triple-A games, period. Not just this season, but period. He's a college pitcher, so he comes armed with a lot of experience, but this goes directly against a lot of the principles this team has held in fostering young talent. Does the fact that they are off to such a great start and are in first place play into this?

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What if White is impressive in two starts and Carrasco is ready to come back? Does Jeanmar Gomez get sent back down?

I'm getting ahead of myself, what's new, but the Indians may be opening up an interesting can of worms with this decision. Not to play the if game, but let's forget about the arbitration clock for a second and just focus on what this could mean for the entire season. Super Two discussion takes a back seat when you are winning and have a chance to compete. It's reserved for the situations when you are not winning and have no need to rush prospects up to the next level.

The first question in regards to this situation: Is Alex White worthy? The answer: Absolutely yes... If you consider four starts worthy.

Let's put it this way. David Huff has 40-man status and major league experience. He was in the rotation battle and if you consider it, four starts really make no difference when you are talking about holding Alex White from the battle in the spring. So what has changed?

Maybe four starts do not make that much of a difference, but the way both White and Huff have looked in those four starts do.

White's basic numbers are great, 1.90 ERA in 23 innings over four starts. He's struck out 28 and walked just five.

And you don't have to go much farther than that. David Huff isn't bad himself with a 3.00 ERA in 24 innings over four starts. But what is concerning is the 10 walks to just eight strikeouts. I'm not really concerned about the strikeouts so much the amount of walks. If he's walking that many Triple-A hitters, how is going to handle the American League?

That alone tells you this. Alex White is throwing strikes, regardless of striking out 28 (and that is impressive), and that is something we've talked about endlessly here under the Acta movement. David Huff may be throwing strikes, but he isn't doing it as effectively as White is and he's walking more hitters.

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So I'm on board. Arbitration clock, too early with not enough experience, and 40-man roster move all be damned. Alex White is doing what Manny Acta wants and what Manny Acta wants is working in the big leagues right now. So get the kid up here and see what he's made of. If it continues, then you have a fantastic problem on your hand.

### [HOME COOKING]

It may be hard to believe, but the Indians have not lost a home game since April 2nd, their second game of the season against Chicago. They've [been a terror at home](#), with their offense especially heating up these past few games.

They've won an even 10 straight home games; have swept three sets of games with Boston, Baltimore, and now Kansas City. The home-streak is the longest since 1996 when they went 13-straight. They have a chance to match that this weekend against Detroit.

The offense has really taken off though in these past three games. They hit five home runs in a home game for the first time since 2008 and had last done it overall in 2009 against New York.

And speaking of sweeps, as MLB.com's Jordan Bastian notes, the Indians have already [matched their sweep total](#) of 2010 in one month with four. Additionally in terms of records, the Indians are also one game away from setting a record for wins in April. They've already tied the mark of 16 that they did several times in the 90's.

Manny Acta said it best though. You can't order on the road what you eat at home. Which brings me to the first plea of this edition: Go to Progressive Field...Please! The weather is getting nice and this team is in first place. I'm heading out to my first game as a normal fan spectator Friday night, and you should join the party. Now is as good time as any. The Indians are playing well at home so, not only give them a reason to continue that play, but give them even more of advantage.

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Chris Perez may be able to hype himself up, but it may be a lot easier with more than nine thousand people (if that) cheering him on.

### [OUT OF THE PEN]

Taking Carlos Carrasco's spot on the roster for the time being is **Frank Herrmann**, who has been recalled from Columbus. I can see Herrmann possibly drawing the short straw and having to be that shuttle reliever this season. Just ask Jensen Lewis how that feels. He'll most definitely be called back down to Columbus to make room for White on the active roster.

However, the Indians need to make a 40-man roster move to accommodate Alex White, and Manny Acta has seemed to indicate that it will be a pitcher. Could Herrmann be the guy that is waived? Or could the Indians designate another 40-man reliever for assignment? **Jess Todd** seems like a prime candidate the way he's pitching in Columbus.

In seven games he's given up 11 earned runs off 18 hits and six walks. He's given up a hit in every game and a run in all but one game. He's three times given up more than one run and in his last appearance, walked three hitters and gave up two earned off three additional hits.

Seems like it may no longer be "[The Todd Time](#) ." And if you've never seen Scrubs, don't bother clicking the link, it may be too weird for you.

It is Hannahan time now though. I'll shamelessly continue to campaign for **Jack Hannahan** to get write in ballots for the MLB All-Star game voting. Let's be honest here. The entire process can sometimes be a joke with how many undeserving Yankees and Red Sox get in due to their far-reaching fan bases and overactive homers. Why not we break the system and take advantage of the hot start.

Come on Cleveland, pull together and # [WriteInHannahan](#) . Wouldn't it be fun? And don't think Hannahan doesn't deserve some votes. For one, he's likely the best fielding third basemen in the American League. I mean, have you seen Mark Reynolds lately?

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He's tied with Kevin Youkilis for third in RBI with 14. He's fifth in OBP, third in average and slugging, fourth in home runs, and second in OPS.

Stranger things have happened people. Go out and give into the ridiculousness of the system. I've seen you single-handedly put Peyton Hillis on the cover of Madden; I know you can do this.

Also, [vote Pronk](#) .

Jack Hannahan has produced and so has the Indians "B-Lineup." I like Acta's take on playing backups. He has a bench full of right-handers and he uses them all wisely against left-handed starters, specifically ones like Jeff Francis. It makes a whole lot of sense. Play your bench against a lefty like Francis. This way you get your starters a rest and your bench guys in, and you get them all in at the same time against a pitcher, like Jeff Francis.

I'm not calling Francis bad, but he was bad on Wednesday. It's maximizing your production when you can put a lineup with three backups in and still win. Acta's has done it four times this year and has won three out of the four. They've produced five runs a game and each has had at least five right-handers in against a left-handed pitcher.

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*You can follow Nino on Twitter @ [TheTribeDaily](#) where he tweets about writing-in Jack Hannahan. You should also like his [blog on Facebook](#) because some people say it is really cool.*