

Spring Training Rundown: Ubaldo vs. The Rockies

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Monday, April 02 2012 6:00 PM - Last Updated Monday, April 02 2012 6:58 PM



Well Sunday was one for activity... That's for sure. We had a benches clearing situation in the Indians and Rockies game, a possible contract extension, and oh yeah, the roster was finalized... Where should we start?

[UBALDO OUT FOR VENGANCE?]

A few weeks ago, we talked about the comments made by **Ubaldo Jimenez** about his time with the Rockies. He seemed a little bitter, upset he had not been extended when guys like Troy Tulowitzki and Carlos Gonzalez were.

Little was made, the story lasted about a day, it didn't seem to be a big deal anywhere else. If anything it gave us something to talk about for a boring day.

Then this happened on Sunday.

Ubaldo uncorked a first inning pitch to old teammate Troy Tulowitzki and chaos followed. Jimenez was not ejected from the contest [for hitting Tulowitzki on the elbow](#) , but the benches cleared, there was some jawing back and forth, yadda yadda. There is no video, no picture, no

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available media on the incident. And reportedly Ubaldo challenged Tulowitzki to charge him because Tulo was "[calling him a chicken](#)"

."

Now how are we to know if it was intentional or not? You ask me, based off what he said, the fact that it was early in the game, and the fact that there may be some bad blood between the two, then I probably say it was. You ask me based off Ubaldo's control and the fact that I root for the Indians then I don't think it was.

With no video ([or at least, we think...](#)), it's hard to tell for sure, but even if you did, you still don't know if it was intentional because there root word of intentional is intent and we'll never know his true intent. Just what he says to the media.

"It's one pitch that got away," Jimenez said. "That can happen in a thousand games. It's one pitch."

Oh... But Tulo did say something, so I find it very likely there was some intent to at least throw inside.

"If someone doesn't want to be here," Tulowitzki said Friday, "We always say, 'Please, go up to the manager and tell him you want to leave or that you don't think this is the best place for you.' That was kind of the case with him."

"He has come out and said there were some contract issues after CarGo and me got paid. It doesn't make any sense to me. He had signed his deal and had years left on it. Why would we give him something new when we didn't see anything out of him?"

Those are fightin' words really. Basically saying that Ubaldo wanted out then went on to say that "we" shouldn't have given him anything because he wasn't performing. Nice Tulo.

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And Jimenez claims, he didn't mention any names. And to his credit, he didn't. But he was clearly specifically talking about Tulowitzki and Gonzalez... Let me take you back.

"I read in the paper that the Rockies said they were only going to sign two guys, they couldn't do three guys," Jimenez told FOXSports.com. "I was the third guy. They signed the two guys they were going to sign and they gave them more (years) and bigger (salaries)."

No names, right, who else was he talking about? So you could understand if Tulowitzki was a little upset at getting thrown in to that. But whatever.

Jimenez contends he was wild. Five walks in four innings, a wild pitch, a hit batter. You could really say he was...

"I didn't have good control of my fastball," Jimenez said. "You guys could see. I walked the first guy probably on four pitches. [Tulowitzki] is one of the best hitters in the game. You have to try to go inside on him and that's what I tried to do."

If you think that is the end of it though, you're crazy, because Jim Tracy [had something to say](#) .

"It's the most gutless act I have seen in 35 years of professional baseball. I have lost all respect for him. To do something like that and walk down off the mound, and if there's any suggestion whatsoever that the ball got away, I don't want to hear any of that (expletive). He intentionally threw at him. He should be suspended. I am going to be very disappointed if he doesn't get suspended. He deserves to be," Tracy said, his voice rising in anger.

"Are you kidding me? Five days before opening day and you are going to take a potshot like that? It was the worst I have seen. I have lost respect for him and that's a very difficult thing for me to say."

Oh he's not done...

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"It's (expletive). I watched exactly took place," Tracy said. "I give our player all the credit in the world because he looked out at him and asked him what the (expletive) he was doing? And that's exactly what I would have said to him. Now this guy starts marching down off the mound. And you don't think there was some intent when we were warming up to pitch this afternoon's game? That's intent right there. That's intent."

"Look at where we were at last spring. At what took place after the 2010 season and what we did in the beginning of the 2011 season without him. Waiting for him. Taking bullets for him. All the different things. And to pull that (expletive). Out of line. Out of character. As I have said, the most unprofessional thing I have ever seen since I started in professional baseball."

So did he lose respect for Ubaldo Jimenez?

Okay look. Was it the right thing to do? No it wasn't. It's never right to throw at someone, but here's the thing. Anyone who is anyone involved in baseball knows that, like it or not, this is "part of the game" and is one of those "baseball codes." It happens, people do it. Is it the most decent thing to do in spring training? Probably not and that's when the code's lines start to get blurred. You also have to account as to why he's throwing at Tulowitzki.

But here's the thing. The most gutless act in 35 years of professional baseball? Did Jim Tracy see Roberto Alomar spit on an umpire? Did he see the fact that players have been caught cheating in multiple ways? How about every other pitcher who has intentionally thrown at someone?

You mean to tell me Jim Tracy that you've never instructed someone to throw at the opposition?

Right. Right. Okay, if you can tell me you haven't, then you can probably call it gutless. And on top of that, you must have been wearing blinders for you're entire 35 years in baseball (some Pirates fans may almost say that he at least did so when managing Pittsburgh).

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I'm not arguing for Ubaldo here, or defending him, or saying it's right to intentionally throw at someone. But Tracy looks like a complete hot head and that rant was completely unnecessary.

Now there's still another piece to this.. Tracy mentioned a suspension. Could it happen? Maybe. With no video (or so we think), it's hard to judge, but you have first eye accounts, including... Bud Selig.

Of course. According to Tracy Ringolsby, Selig [was in attendance](#) and saw Jimenez throw the pitch, then beat his chest after throwing down his glove. I don't feel good about this. Someone call Kevin Slowey, spoiler alert.

[ASDRUBAL EXTENDED]

It's not, as you would say, official, but if the Indians are letting it get [posted on their website](#) , then I'm sure it won't go down in the Bobby Abreu history of trades not happening.

Asdrubal Cabrera

has

[been locked up for an extra year](#)

after he and the Indians came to an agreement on a two-year deal. This has nothing to do with 2012, but rather, 2013 and 2014.

Cabrera's extension is worth \$16.5 million over the two years. One year is his final arbitration year, the other is his first free agent year. Basically, Cabrera gets a nice little raise without the need for arbitration and in-return, the Indians get him for an extra year.

This seems to be a happy medium and a nice way to kind of monitor Cabrera. You aren't playing it year-by-year, but you also aren't locking yourself in to Cabrera. The Indians haven't commented on it because it is not official, but Manny Acta kind of did anyway.

"I can't comment," Acta said. "I'd be happy for him. I'd be happy for the franchise. It's good to have one of your best players locked up and have him the next few years here without having to worry about arbitration hearings or anything like that. Yeah, it'd be nice."

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I can't comment, but let me go ahead and do so anyway. Love ya Manny.

We'll see more details soon, but you have to imagine it is a little staggered, with Cabrera getting something like \$7 million the first and \$9 million the next. Who knows exactly, but I think it's a fair price and the Indians now have someone locked into an actual contract beyond this season. So there's that.

[ROSTER IN-FOCUS]

We have a roster! With just a few games left before they actually count (what is the Indians spring record again?) the Indians have aligned the 25 guys they are bringing to Thursday's opener against Toronto. Of course that's hoping nothing last-minute comes up for the bad.

The first decisions that came down were one's that were kind of obvious, sort of. The Indians announced on Friday that **Jason Donald** and **Shelley Duncan** [were both going to make the team](#), Duncan as the left fielder, Donald as a backup utility player.

They also picked one of their bullpen spots, awarding it to **Dan Wheeler** in a bit of a surprising move. Wheeler had turned in a few good innings since starting the spring out in a rocky way, then after having won a bullpen spot, went out and gave up three home runs en-route to five earned runs and five hits in his celebratory inning of work.

Yay...

So why Wheeler over someone like Jeremy Accardo, who had a better spring or Frank Herrmann, who can give you some length? Eh, track record.

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"He's had some ups and downs during Spring Training," Acta said. "We're relying a lot on track record. Obviously, this guy has been good for years now in the league. The last four outings he had been good. He had a bad one today."

You might as well have signed Wheeler to a major league contract if you're going off track record.

Saturday was the day the Indians made their rotation decision, which also cleared up the status of both **Jeanmar Gomez** and Derek Lowe, as Kevin Slowey was given the bad news that he was not going to Cleveland. Gomez wins the spot, [Lowe is okay](#) [injury-wise](#), or else Slowey would be needed.

"I'm a durable cat," said Lowe, who is entering his 16th season in the big leagues. "Nine lives."

Kevin Slowey should take no offense [in that he lost out](#) to Jeanmar Gomez in the rotation battle. Slowey knows it, Acta knows, Antonetti knows it.

"He's been one of the highlights in camp," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said of Gomez. "I think it's fair to say that Kevin had an opportunity to win the job in camp and Jeanmar out-pitched him. That's really what the decision came down to."

Simple as that. Slowey didn't pitch bad and he didn't "lose" the competition. Jeanmar simply won it and he earned it. The Indians gave Slowey the option of taking the day off after the decision, but he was back at work the next day. That's a man who went to Winthrop ladies and gentlemen. I mean, he could actually end up making a start before you know it.

David Huff is likely [to start the year on the disabled list](#), so that's that. Extra spot in Columbus' rotation.

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The Indians then made their decision for the final bullpen spot a little easier on Saturday [when they optioned out Frank Herrmann](#)

to Columbus. That decision for the final spot was made on Sunday

[when the Indians picked](#)

newly acquired

Jairo Asencio

over Jeremy Accardo.

The remaining roster spots went to **Jose Lopez** as a utility player and **Aaron Cunningham** as the fourth outfielder. Cunningham probably ended up winning based off the simple fact that he was on the 40-man roster and if the Indians can avoid cutting someone from that, then, why not?

"We feel good about the talent that we have on the roster," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said. "We think we have a team that's capable of contending for the division. Now, it's our job to go out there and do that."

Asencio's addition was probably because the lack of performance in the bullpen competition. The shame of it all? Accardo actually performed well this spring. To me, I think it really doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things because if one doesn't pan out, someone else can be called up. The end of it all is Nick Hagadone and CC Lee both ending up in the bullpen, because eventually, they'll be there.

Right now, the Indians need a 40 man spot for Jose Lopez. There's no telling where it will come from, but if I had to guess, if Grady Sizemore is really going to be out until close to the All-Star break like some expect, there's no reason to not place him on the 60 Day DL, considering they could also probably do it retroactively.

Gone, but semi-forgotten are Ryan Spilborghs and Jeremy Accardo as they head to a crowded Columbus roster, unless of course there are other opportunities out there that the Indians will let them pursue. With the new regulations in-place, and with the log-jam, some people might not be there.

So there you have... You're Opening Day roster and it will likely look different in about two

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weeks in some way.

Rotation: Justin Masterson, Ubaldo Jimenez, Derek Lowe, Josh Tomlin, Jeanmar Gomez

(Gomez will get skipped first time around)

Bullpen: Chris Perez, Vinnie Pestano, Rafael Perez, Tony Sipp, Joe Smith, Dan Wheeler, Jairo Asencio

Lineup: C Carlos Santana, 1B Casey Kotchman, 2B Jason Kipnis, SS Asdrubal Cabrera, 3B Jack Hannahan, LF Shelley Duncan, CF Michael Brantley, RF Shin-Soo Choo

Bench: C Lou Marson, IF Jason Donald, IF Jose Lopez, OF Aaron Cunningham

[GAME RUNDOWN]

Friday: The Indians [lost 6-5 to the Reds](#) with Jose Lopez doubling in a pair and Carlos Santana and Asdrubal Cabrera hitting solo shots. Jeanmar Gomez made the start going 3.2 scoreless, and of course, Dan Wheeler gave up the three bombs.

Saturday: It was a [7-4 loss at the hands of Texas](#) as both Michael Brantley and Jason Kipnis hit solo shots, Brantley also doubled and Jose Lopez knocked in another run. Justin Masterson was shelled for six runs just short of four innings, striking out three and walking none. Jairo Asencio pitched two scoreless.

Sunday: And of course the Indians and Rockies while not getting into a slugfest on the field, did get into one on the scoreboard with [the Indians winning 12-10](#). Travis Hafner was 3-5 with a grand slam and not to be out-done, Shelley Duncan hit a granny as well. Two of the other four

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runs were produced by Big Bad Beau Mills.

The pitching lines were not pretty. As recapped, Ubaldo Jimenez gave up six in four plus off four hits and five walks. Minor league J.D. Reichenbach pitched and gave up four runs.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Some news in the case of **Roberto Hernandez**. Ohio senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman are [lobbying for a quick decision](#) in the case of Hernandez. In other words... GIVE US ROBERTO HERNANDEZ!

"In a show of bipartisan support, the senators have asked the State Department to expedite the decision," said Stephen Payne, a visa expert/lobbyist hired by Hernandez's agents. "They're not trying to influence the State Department's decision, they're just asking that it be moved along as quickly as possible."

So yeah they aren't saying that they should let him back, but that they should simply speed up the decision making process. But really, how does this end other than Hernandez being let back in?

Someone said that they expected a decision to be rendered in days rather than weeks. It's been a few days, so I wonder how many days they actually believed this would happen. Ehhh...

A quick plug to the guys at Stadium Journey, who [ranked the Triple-A ballparks](#), with the Columbus Clippers coming in at nine. Of course just a few years ago, Huntington Park was the toast of the minor league town. I hope to see it this summer myself.

I took part in a round table for Wahoo's on First. Our bold predictions are up and [I'm not sure what I was thinking](#) .. But there ya go.

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