

## Yankees come together at Tampa Improv outing

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By **Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger**

TAMPA, Fla. — Neither Nick Swisher nor Ivan Nova would reveal any details. But the Yankees may have discovered an improvisational comedy star in Mark Teixeira.

"I got one quote for you: Mark Teixeira, MVP," Swisher said today. "That's all I can say. I wish I could give you more, but I can't."

On Twitter, outfielder Chris Dickerson praised Teixeira's rendition of Michael Jackson's Billie Jean, offering a hint of the vibe at the team's annual team outing. The Yankees spent their afternoon at the Tampa Improv, where manager Joe Girardi hoped his players would bond over performing skits for one another.

Based on the early reviews, the outing accomplished just that.

Teixeira, the slugging first baseman, has a straight-laced reputation in the Yankees clubhouse. But he revealed a different side of himself to his teammates.

"I saw Tex today in a way that I could have never imagined," Nova said. "You should have seen him. I couldn't stop smiling. It made me think about how we come from so many different places to become teammates and friends."

Girardi started the tradition in 2009 in hopes of promoting team camaraderie. Also, by having veterans interact with the team's younger players, Girardi hoped to make the transition easier for those who are called up during the season.

"It's nice to get the players together away from the field in a big group," Girardi said. "They are going to spend time together in small groups. But I think it's good to get them all together and just see how they interact together, and see the young guys with the veteran guys. I love it."

Prior team outings have included a billiards tournament and an afternoon at a video game arcade, though Swisher said the improv outing stands alone.

"Number one, no doubt," he said. "This and Old Timer's Day are my two favorite days of the year."

Reggie Jackson arrived in camp this morning to begin his annual stint as a guest instructor.

The Yankees begin their exhibition schedule Friday at 1 p.m. against the University of South Florida.



New York Yankees

Yankees players took the stage this afternoon for a group improv session led by Steve Shenbaum, center, head of communications at game on Nation



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