



There's not much to wrap up this weekend. There's no Tribe, no Browns, no Buckeyes. So what you get is what you get. You're at the mercy of my mood and my temperament if you choose to continue on. And if you read this column regularly you'll know that my mood and temperament are typically perfectly reflective of this city's sports teams: 75% rotten with an occasional glimpse of hope.

It's the Weekend Wrap.

It doesn't make much sense to get clinical regarding the Cavaliers strengths and weaknesses just five or six games into the season. Suffice it to say they are young and they are prone to making mistakes young players make, but they are substantially more interesting and athletic than they have been the past two seasons.

There is some cause for hope with the Cavs and I find it amusing that much of that hope is provided by a guy most fans never heard of and hated on draft day, Dion Waiters. Cavs fans were beside themselves when Waiters was selected with the 4th pick last June over such known commodities as Harrison Barnes, Thomas Robinson and others.

People wondered if Chris Grant had finally and formally lost his freaking mind when he took Waiters, a 6th man at Syracuse over the highly pedigreed players he left on the board. There was no interest in waiting to see what Grant and the Cavs had in Waiters. Rather, it was instant dislike of the pick and condemnation for the man who made it.

So, how do you like Waiters so far, Cleveland?

All he's done thus far is average about 17ppg while leading all NBA rookies in 3-point percentage. He's also handling the ball a ton to give Kyrie Irving a break at PG and Waiters is taking better care of the basketball than Kyrie is when it's given to him. Waiters has had nights of 28 points and 23 points against the Clippers and the Suns in the past week and he's one of those physically well-built players who can take and give contact and still finish at the basket.

At first glance, when I watch Waiters, in many ways I see former Cavalier Bobby Phillips. Phillips never was handed a starting spot based on where he was selected in the draft, but Phillips was fearless taking the ball to the basket and he became a good outside shooter. Waiters is a solid physical specimen able to take the contact of the NBA and Phillips was too.

What I like most about the rookie is that he has a maturity and a confidence I didn't expect to see from a 6th man from Syracuse. I haven't seen Waiters be intimidated yet and he seems to have the confidence that he can get to the rim against anyone. Once Waiters gets there, like Kyrie, he has a lot of ways to finish. He has great touch and he has excellent strength.

The Cavs have two guys on the floor at most times who can get to the window at will. That's huge in this league. Once they have a shooter (and it's exponentially easier to find a shooter than a guy who can take anyone in the league to the basket AND finish) they can count on (to actually play 70 games AND knock down shots which eliminates Boobie Gibson) they're going to be a rough night for all but the elite NBA teams. The elite teams already have all those components the Cavs are building and their components are All Star-caliber.

Waiters has a long way to go but anyone who's watched him in the season's first couple weeks should probably understand why the Cavs fell in love and had to have him, despite knowing the casual fans in this town and around the NBA were going to criticize them for the pick. You have to like what you've seen and you have to also like the fact the kid looks and acts like he belongs and he competes hard on both ends of the court.

Conversely...

Why is it that we hate picks whose name we don't know and then get ridiculously and overly

attached to players whose names we do know?

This is the only explanation I have for fans treating the potential trade of Asdrubal Cabrera like it was the second incarnation of the Rocky Colavito trade.

Are all fans 7-years old? Just because Cabrera plays for the team you root for doesn't mean he's actually worthy of caring about. The fact he's been an All-Star surely makes him more worthy of that love than some hump like Shelley Duncan, but even Cabrera's All Star appearances are tainted. The guy has put a couple solid first halves together the last two years and has made the AL squad. Two straight years he's done it. That's impressive. And then two straight years he's mailed in the second half of the season and looked fat and lazy in doing so.

In the first half of 2012 Cabrera hit .286 with 11 HRs, slugged .467 and put up an OPS of .832. His slop-fest of a second half this season consisted of hitting .251 with five HRS, slugging .371 and putting in an OPS of .676.

Was 2012 an anomaly? Well, in the first of 2011 Cabrera hit .293 with 14 HRs, slugged .489 with an OPS of .836. In the second half he was at .244, slugged .419 and saw his OPS drop more than 100 points. Once may be an anomaly, twice is a trend. And Cabrera is on the wrong side of the trend. Cabrera's error totals have risen in every single season since he took over the regular SS job, increasing from 15 in 2011 to 19 last season.

Next season Cabrera costs you \$2million more than what he cost you this season and he's not getting better. If you can deal him for a package that puts some young, major league-ready players in the system then you do it and you never look back. This is an area where the Indians front office actually shines (you may remember they actually acquired guys like Cabrera and Shin-Soo Choo in such deals and it's actually the one area where confidence in the front office might be warranted).

But please stop turning every damn guy that doesn't blow and who wears a Wahoo logo on his jersey into a non-tradable, Hall of Fame caliber player whose loss will be a death blow to the pennant chances of the Indians. There isn't ONE indispensable player on that roster.

Not a single one.

There is no one on that 25-man or 40-man roster that you don't deal tomorrow at the risk of setting your club back two or three years. Not Chris Perez, Vinnie Pestano, Michael Brantley or Jason Kipnis. Not Justin Masterson, Asdrubal Cabrera or Carlos Santana.

No one.

If they go they go. The hope being someone in the front office can bring back a sum total that's greater than what is traded and that it can be much sooner rather than later. I'm perfectly fine cleaning house. I don't see a single, indispensable reason not to. Neither should you.

The Stretch Run

The bye week for the Buckeyes came at a good time for Urban Meyer's team. This week's break let's Braxton Miller catch his breath and completely get past the stinger he sustained a couple of weeks ago. Yes, he came back and played against Penn State and Illinois, but a couple weeks of limited contact and taking it easy should ease erase any lasting effect of his injuries.

A lot of guys are banged up at this point in the season and with the Buckeyes having no Bowl game this season they can fully commit to getting guys healthy while the coaching staff goes all-in on preparations for the Wisconsin and Michigan games that close out the season.

It's been an odd year for OSU. They're 10-0 but even the most ardent Buckeye fan has to wonder just how good this team is. Had they been eligible for postseason play they'd surely be in the BCS title game conversation, but in my opinion all of the remaining unbeaten clubs, as well as more than one 1-loss team like Alabama and Georgia, and even 2-loss LSU are better and more complete clubs than Ohio State.

I wouldn't be fearful of Meyer and OSU matching up against any team, but there would be some trepidation if this Buckeyes defense had to face Oregon's or Kansas State's offense. I'm not sure they're up to the challenge. In fact, a dynamic player like Michigan QB Denard Robinson is going to give OSU fits if Robinson's right elbow issues subside enough for him to play in the season finale two weeks from now.

This bowl-less season may actually benefit the Buckeyes. If they can win out and go 12-0 without having to face Alabama, K-State or Oregon in the championship game, Meyer is going to get a lot of bounce in the recruiting arena and no one is going to have the opportunity to criticize OSU as a pretender, as they might if the Buckeyes was gutted in a title game.

Meyer has a couple dozen prized recruits coming in to visit for 'The Game' and if he can go into Wisconsin and beat Brett Bielema and then beat Michigan a couple days after Thanksgiving, those recruits are going to walk away with Columbus with visions of grandeur in their eyes.

There's no way the Buckeyes can do any worse than 10-2 in Meyer's inaugural season, one that was necessarily a big transitional year in terms of talent and scheme. If Meyer can run the table and finish without a blemish the expectations in terms of recruiting and the 2013 season are going to be justifiably off the charts.

It's disappointing that the Buckeyes won't reap the benefits of all those practices leading up to a bowl game. But the big picture is that OSU needs an influx of talent on both sides of the ball, especially on defense, and they just may be better off leaving the taste of 12-0 in the hearts and minds of the kids considering OSU for next year.

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