



When a Cleveland team makes national headlines, it's either because something really amazing happened or something bad happened. And let's be honest, since this is Cleveland Sports we're talking about, Cleveland teams only make national headlines when something unfortunate happens.

The Cleveland Cavaliers made national headlines last week when [ESPN's Brian Windhorst reported that a players-only meeting got contentious after the Cavaliers' blowout loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves](#)

This in turn led to speculation that [Dion Waiters' ill-timed, um, illness](#) was [the by-product of his would-be benching and not actually an illness at all](#), which in turn led to the media bestowing the ['poor chemistry'](#) label on the team.

I'll say right off the bat that I have no inside knowledge of the Cavaliers' locker room dynamic. It's certainly possible that Kyrie Irving and Dion Waiters don't get along. It's certainly possible that Waiters is terribly afraid of forever losing his starting spot to C.J. Miles. It's certainly possible that [Irving really dislikes Mike Brown's coaching style](#). Hell, maybe [Irving is an Xbox One guy and Waiters is a PS4 guy](#)

But that's the thing. I just don't know.

Here's what I do know: The Cleveland Cavaliers are currently 4-7. They are ranked 29th in the Association in offensive efficiency (points scored per 100 possessions) at 93.5, only ahead of lowly Utah according to NBA.com. Their offensive sets alternate between

[Clogged Toilet and One Dribbler, Four Watchers](#)

. Their marquee free agent center, the guy who makes the Cavalier offense look like an actual NBA offense,

[can barely get on the court](#)

. This is a team that needed a 41 point outburst from Irving in double overtime just to beat a terrible Wizards team with

[chemistry issues of their own](#)

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In other words, this is just not a very good team right now.

It's no shock that tempers flare when the team is struggling so much; it's only human nature to get frustrated when things aren't going your way. In fact, I would say it's a good thing that things are getting a little heated. At least it shows that these guys give a damn. It would be infinitely worse if the Cavaliers were struggling and the players were just drifting through games and accepting the losing as inevitable. The in-game outbursts and post-game tirades are proof that this team has a passion to win and a desire to right the ship. Their frustration shows that they are giving it their all every night, which is all that fans can ultimately ask for.

When things begin to go south for a team, media and fans are quick to point to lacking team chemistry as an explanation. But this is just a post-hoc analysis, and a poor one at that. If the Cavaliers' offense was humming along and they were scoring more than 92.5 points per game, there would be none of this chemistry nonsense. That's the thing about sports; if you win, everyone is happy, and if you lose, player-only meetings are called and apparently players fake illnesses. A team's chemistry is determined by how well they're playing, not the other way around.

That right there is the crux of the issue. If this team can reel off a solid stretch of basketball, all the concerns about chemistry will be quickly forgotten.

For now, I'm just thankful someone was able to [find Dion Waiters](#) .



The Cleveland Indians made their first notable free agent signing when they agreed to a [two-year contract](#) with former Texas Rangers outfielder [David Murphy](#). The deal is [reportedly worth \\$12 million with a third year club option](#).

The benefit of this deal for the Tribe is twofold. Despite struggling to a .220/.282/.374 line in 2013 due in large part to a .227 BABIP, Murphy is still a career .275/.337/.441 hitter and a career .280/.347/.469 hitter against right-handed pitching. Murphy will likely form a platoon with Ryan Raburn in right field.

This move [alleviates concerns about losing Drew Stubbs](#), as Murphy will see the lion's share of the playing time in right field as the left-handed side of the platoon, thus sliding Raburn back into his preferred role as a part time player. If Murphy can regain the form he showed in 2012 and Raburn can come close to what he did in 2013, the Tribe may be able to eek out three to four WAR from their right fielders next season. Considering that they're paying the tandem something around \$8 million, that's great value.

The other benefit of this deal is that it allows the team to trade Drew Stubbs. Stubbs' ability to play center field makes him an attractive trade target that can help the Tribe land the bullpen help that they clearly need. Not only that, but Stubbs should be able to land the Tribe at least one quality reliever still making the league minimum with multiple years of club control remaining.

That's the beauty of this signing. Not only will the Tribe benefit from having Murphy in right field, but they can also bolster the bullpen without dipping into their free agent budget. It's a creative use of resources from a front office working on a limited budget. David Murphy may not be a flashy signing, but it's the type of forward-thinking move the Indians need to make to stay competitive.

Jeremy Klein is an unabashed Cleveland Sports fan who is probably a little too excited about the David Murphy signing. You can follow him on Twitter [@PapaBearJere](#).

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