

Cassano checks in on the Drew Gooden negotiations, noting the stand still things have come to. Reports have surfaced that the Cavs had free agent Reggie Evans in town, which may act as a catalyst to a deal with Gooden. Papa Cass has all the latest on Gooden and Evans in this mornings piece.



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It looks like the Cavaliers are starting to get rather impatient with the Drew Gooden contract saga. It's about time somebody got antsy.

Gooden has formally been a free agent for nearly two months, and the only thing we know is that he wants the kind of money Nene received in his six-year, \$60 million extension with the Nuggets. We have no idea if other teams are willing to offer him anything close to that, we have no idea if Gooden's camp still thinks that's a realistic possibility, we have no idea if the Cavs have been able to talk Gooden off the ledge.

It seems like both sides met at the negotiating table in mid-July, discovered they were an ocean apart, shrugged their shoulders and busied themselves with cookouts and trips to the coast.

When I thought about it last week, I wondered if Gooden's agent was going to be pouring himself a beer sometime in mid-September and suddenly smack his forehead and say, "Holy crap! Drew doesn't have a contract yet! I totally forgot!"

Well, if Gooden's posse hasn't yet tired of the back-burner waiting game, it looks like the Cavs have. Reports say the Cavs met with [free agent forward Reggie Evans](#) this week.

Evans was a sometimes-starter for the Nuggets and Sonics last year, averaging nearly six points and 7.5 rebounds in about 20 minutes per game. With a reputation as a tenacious rebounder with a mean streak, he'd fit the Cavs' roster well, though his overall game is far more limited than Gooden's.

The Nuggets reportedly think they can re-sign Evans, but they are about to bump into the salary cap. They have about \$3 million worth of wiggle room. If they go above that, they will begin paying the league's dollar-for-dollar luxury tax, a prospect that horrifies most teams.

The Cavs don't have that issue, still possessing both their \$5.2 million midlevel cap exemption and their \$1.8 million biannual exemption.

In a perfect world, the Cavs could burn their midlevel exemption on Evans, then coax Gooden into signing a one-year qualifying offer. That would give the Cavs a deep and multitalented corps of big men with Gooden and Zydrunas Ilgauskas starting and Evans, Anderson Varejao and Donyell Marshall off the bench.

Next year would serve as a proving ground to see if Evans or Varejao could perform at a starter level. If one or both can, the Cavs don't have to bother with Gooden when he becomes an unrestricted free agent next summer. If neither can, it might be time to reorganize the frontcourt and commit to Gooden long term.

That probably won't happen, though. Odds are Gooden will only take a one-year qualifying offer as a last resort. I still think the Cavs will work out a sign-and-trade for Gooden.

But it's all speculation until Gooden makes a move. It would be nice to have a clue of where Gooden stands sometime before the leaves start turning.