

Offseason Rundown: Victorino Spurs Indians Offer for Boston

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, December 04 2012 10:38 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, December 05 2012 8:22 AM



Last year, the Cleveland Indians fell short in their bid for Carlos Beltran.

It was seen as an absolute joke that the Indians could offer someone, like Beltran, more money than a team like St. Louis and they still couldn't sign him. If the Indians of all teams can't out-bid a team for someone, who can they sign?

The reasoning for Beltran was quite simple. He got to be on a contending team that had an outstanding chance to not only win a division or a wild card spot, but go all the way. Beltran was after the ring, not a few extra bucks at the expense of being on a team that could possibly trade him at midseason, probably to a destination he had no choice in going to.

The other crusher for the Indians in last year's Hot Stove League was the negotiations with Josh Willingham. The Indians were hesitant to offer a third year to Willingham. The Twins did, so he went there. Both players would have been great additions to the Tribe's lineup.

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So now that brings us to here, the point where the Indians are trying to set their sights on an outfielder for their 2013. It is an obvious need and one they are trying really hard to address.

It brings us to this year's subject, Shane Victorino.

[DON'T WORRY IT WILL BE ALRIGHT]

I know what most people are going to say after I get done with this section.

How could you be against someone that improves this team? How could you be happy that the almighty Boston Red Sox went out and signed someone for less than what the Cleveland Indians were offering? How can you sit there and be happy about this?

When I get done with this section, maybe you will understand.

But I fully expect people not to. I fully expect, and even respect, the fans that are out there that view this as an incredible let-down and are frustrated that a free agent decided to go elsewhere. That a free agent was wooed and given an offer that most players would willingly accept and decided to decline it.

I can understand the frustration of always being the team that just can't compete with some prices and the few times they go to compete, money doesn't really factor into the overall decision and the Indians, of all teams, lose the bidding war, despite outbidding everyone else.

If you haven't gathered it by now and have been living under a rock, or simply haven't been paying attention to the [Live Winter Meetings Blog that Adam Burke and I have been maintaining](#) over the course of this week (cheap plug!), then you must know after this sentence.

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Shane Victorino [agreed to a three-year deal](#) with the Boston Red Sox, worth \$39 million dollars. [The Indians offered Victorino](#) one more year, and technically more money (\$44 total), but less money spread out over the course of the contract. With the Red Sox he will make \$13 million per season, with the Indians deal he makes \$11 million per season. Sure, that's \$2 million he loses next year, but we're talking about \$5 more million guaranteed dollars and another guaranteed year of being paid.

The Indians out-bid the Sox, anyway you want to look at it.

And the Flyin' Hawaii'n chose Boston anyway.

But why is this a good thing you ask? Why are you sitting here telling me that the Indians caught a break in Victorino choosing the Bo-Sox?

Simple. That contract the Indians offered was atrocious. Victorino is a good player and helps this team's lineup in 2013, but at what cost? Being saddled with a contract worth somewhere around \$11 million for three years after with a team that is uncertain from year-to-year. Remember how frustrating it was to have Hafner and Westbrook's contracts hanging over this team's head after 2007? Look how quickly things changed. Why would the team want to waste money in 2015 if they are not contending or going in a new direction?

Sure, you are not supposed to think that way. But contracts like the one the Indians wanted to hand to Victorino are ones that can hold a franchise like the Indians back. If you want to look at it in a different perspective who's to say Victorino is worth the \$11 million in two years. If you are telling me we could have signed him for \$25 million for two years, I'd be open to that.

But \$44 over four years? I will pass on that. Victorino has a good skill set, one that I love and prefer to have on my team. Someone who can give you some speed and hitting. He plays a good outfield. He would be an excellent fit.

But he isn't someone a team like the Indians sign as a secondary piece to what they have at that price. This team has more holes to fill and had left field been their ONLY need, then maybe.

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If this was the one thing holding them back from contending for not just a World Series, but even a playoff spot. Then it makes more sense.

This team doesn't even know what it wants to do with its two best players though. They're still trying to figure out if they're going to trade Asdrubal Cabrera. If they get the right price, they'll deal him. Is that really a team that is going to add someone like Shane Victorino? A team that isn't sure if they are going to contend or not?

Don't give me any thing along the lines of them saying "Oh well, we intend on trying to win". No duh, that's the company line for all 30 MLB teams. This team isn't sure what it is doing, so why sign a guy like Victorino to that type of commitment?

To me, it just doesn't mesh and in the end, I'm glad he went to Boston. I'm also sorry I spent more than 750 words to get to my point, but you should know that's just how I do things.

[TO TRADE OR NOT TO TRADE]

There is no easy way to organize all these notes and links that I have. But I again need to point you to [the live Winter Meetings Blog](#) that Adam and I are keeping on The Cleveland Fan's Hitting the Fan portion of the site. If you are not following along, well, you should be. The one thing that both of us are battling back and forth, both in the post and actually in conversation with each other is what this team is trying to do with **Asdrubal Cabrera**.

As we have learned, the Indians are open to dealing Cabrera. In fact, it is the one name that most people felt [was likely to get traded](#), along with Tampa's James Shields. The one thing that has become clear in all of this, is that the Indians are going to need to get exactly what they want, and that is the way it should be if you ask me.

I think it is important to point out that in the Jayson Stark piece I just linked, an AL executive said that the market is weak for shortstops, so obviously he is a really attractive piece to some teams. The Indians are in a position to basically entertain the best offer. There is no better

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option, especially if the Rangers don't intend on dealing Elvis Andrus, and even then, Cabrera is still the better player, he should bring the most in return.

Another executive says he knows exactly what the Indians want and that it is so steep, teams are not likely to offer what they want and he'll end up staying. A school of thought with that is, good, don't get anything less than you think you should get for him.

The Indians have been burned by Cliff Lee and CC Sabathia in not getting a huge return or multiple pieces back, they damn sure better make a trade like Cabrera count. We're not talking Bartolo Colon haul, but you need at least two viable pieces that you can worth with to come from trading someone like Cabrera at this juncture. You need a lo of potential.

The other train of thought is... This is the time to strike. Cabrera is the best commodity. His value has never been higher. You have the chance to strike it rich with a major leaguer and one, maybe even two really good prospects. Heck, if you believe that the Indians had a deal for a major leaguer and two high level prospects, they could get that and many teams would probably do that deal.

But if they want three prospects and a major leaguer, then they should try and get it. That's just my point of view.

The other name of course is **Shin-Soo Choo**, but I think that has been complicated a little bit. I even mentioned it last week when Denard Span was dealt to Washington. That really makes things interesting because Span is not a better player, but he's under control longer. He netted the Twins a quality pitching prospect.

Choo, by rights should be able to net something of the same value, if not better. But because Choo is under less control, teams might be sour on the idea right this minute. Adam on the blog made the excellent point that Choo may just hold more value to the Indians at the trade deadline in 2013 as a "hired gun" for a team making a playoff push.

So there is that. It appears that if there is anyone the Indians are going to deal while they are in

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Nashville, it's Asdrubal. The one name that has not come up at all is **Chris Perez**. In fact, Vinnie Pestano's name has come up before Perez. Granted, it was simply the New York Mets [saying they had interest](#), but it still came up. Perez may fall into that category along the lines of Choo in that he may have more value to the Indians as a mid-season trade candidate. Sure team's have less time with those players, but they also pay them less and if a team really thinks they have a chance in the heat of the moment, they may be more inclined to include better pieces.

Of course, you had Jim Bowden saying that the Indians [would make more trades than anyone](#) at the Winter Meetings. So far, they've made none. Of course, nothing else has really gone down, but... If you are to believe Bowden, Wednesday may be really busy.

And if you are one for speculation. Bastian notes that Buster Olney [says that Arizona is laying groundwork](#) for a four-team deal involving Cabrera. If you believe other reports, the Indians desire Tyler Skaggs in the deal. And [if you saw the picture that was floated out](#) there, Chris Antonetti and Terry Francona were in the D'Backs war room on Tuesday. Intrigue!

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Winter rumor has an AL Central team courting **Jack Hannahan** and it isn't the Indians. It could be the Twins (hometown guy!) or even the White Sox. The Indians [have not closed the door](#) on Hannahan after non-tendering him last week, but I just don't see it ultimately happening. Looks like if he has a better chance for a full-time job elsewhere, which he might, that is something he will jump at.

One guy who I think the Indians would prefer over Hannahan if they could get their hands on him is **Kevin Youkilis**, who they would prefer to play at first base. Definitely have the Terry Francona vibes working on this one, [but the Indians met with his agent on Tuesday](#). We're talking about a guy who really first that first base slot if he is open to playing it full time.

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The name we threw around and that I threw a big fit about based off a silly Hoynes story that is being mentioned as of late is Jason Bay. Early reports from Tuesday said that he was close to signing with the Seattle Mariners, but it appears as of late if that is premature and he is still weighing options. The Indians are now definitely in on Bay as they've been mentioned and the fact that the deal with Seattle hasn't been finalized makes me think the Indians might be having a play in on him.

Some pre-Winter Meeting news for you that I want to catch up on. The Braves [traded Tommy Hanson to the Angels](#) for Jordan Walden. I think this is an interesting deal in that Hanson was once regarded as a huge prospect, and for awhile was really lighting it up. He was had for a younger relief pitcher that briefly had some success as a closer, but is ultimately someone who is just a reliever. Boy would I love to have a guy LIKE Hanson in the Indians rotation. I'm not saying I prefer Hanson, but the guy has serious ability and if not for the shoulder issues, may be lighting it up.

I'm just saying. That's a good risk of a move for the Angels to make.

In other dream scenarios, the Nationals [are probably going to deal Mike Morse](#), especially with Denard Span in the mix and them in the running to sign Adam LaRoche to a two-year deal. Morse might be out of the equation, which means that is a really good power option out there for the Indians if they want to swing a deal. You can probably get him for really cheap considering he is in his early 30's and is one year away from free agency.

In the news of other pitchers, [both Rich Harden and Brandon Webb](#) are trying to return in 2013 to pitching. Webb is long removed from a major league mound while Rich Harden missed 2012 thanks to shoulder surgery. Definitely two name that the Indians should be on given their history with reclamation projects.

Actual in relation to the Indians... **Carlos Santana** was lifted in a game down at winter ball for [fouling a ball of his leg](#). Everything appears to be fine, it was just precautionary, but it is a little bit of hold your breath type stuff when you hear an important player gets nixed up in winter ball.

I think that is it... For now. Wednesday is set to be busy with everything that has been discussed

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in regards to the Indians. And we now know that they offered Shane Victorino a whole lot of money, so they are suddenly a little deep in the pockets and seem like they can make a move or two in the free agent game. I'd e shocked if we didn't have some sort of substantial move made by the Tribe by the end of the week.

Again, make sure you are following the live blog on The Hitting the Fan portion for all the latest.

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Nino can be found with glue and scissors and pictures of Vinnie Pestano and himself on The Tribe Daily, his own Indians blog. Hearts may or may not be invovled.

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