

## The Particulars of the Choo-Bauer Mega Deal

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Wednesday, December 12 2012 3:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, December 12 2012 1:59 PM

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I know why you're here. Well, at least I'm assuming you are here for that. If you are here for something else, I can't help you.

Because you know this is all about the Shin-Soo Choo Trade. I'm even capitalizing the word trade so that you understand that this is an event. Ubaldo Trade, CC Trade, Cliff Lee Trade. It will even get it's own tag.

There's a lot of moving parts here, so try and stick with me because there's some chain-reaction type things involved from each player and how this deal went down, so I will try and be coherent.

### **[WHO'S LEAVING?]**

I think the best place to start is what the Indians gave up. When all is said and done they sent Choo to Cincinnati, who is the main guy in this whole thing. They also dealt spare parts of Jason

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Donald, Tony Sipp, and Lars Anderson.

I'll start with the spare parts, because that's all they are.

I'm sad to Jason Donald go because I love his style of play, I think he can be an asset to a team and he's a good guy, flat out. But the reality is that he is just that, an asset, a small asset. He is not a key piece. He's a nice player to have (if he pans out), but the Indians just traded for Mike Aviles, so they got that.

I guess I'm not as sad to see Tony Sipp go because I wasn't a big fan of his. I think he's fallen out of favor in Cleveland, has kind of half-assed it at times, and ultimately is not worth the price he would start earning as a player who is gaining some service time.

And of course Lars Anderson. Really? Someone wanted this guy? I'm surprised the Indians wanted this guy. Who is Lars Anderson anyway? Did we even really get to know him? I know his name is Lars. But for some reason all I picture is Ryan Gosling carrying around a human doll that he thinks is his girlfriend.

I think I've said enough.

And of course we have Choo.

Again, I'm sad to see the two sides part ways. Choo [was a great player for this squad](#) , did a lot of good things, endeared himself to the fan base. Had some rough times, but he became a good player in Cleveland.

*"I expressed my profound appreciation not only for his ability as a player, but for the person that he is and the teammate that he was," Antonetti said. "He's a guy that we will certainly miss -- not only for his on-field contributions, but everything else that he's meant to the organization."*

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But he made it clear he had no plans on staying after 2013. So the Indians did what they had to do. They shipped him off and they got something in return. And rightfully so.

I will challenge anyone out there that has a problem with that to a fight. You can be upset and throw a fit over trading Cabrera right now if you want, if the Indians were to do that. But don't you dare sit there and whine about this.

Choo was not coming back and made it perfectly clear he was gone by refusing to negotiate a contract extension. This team had no business holding onto him. Whether it is trading him now or at the deadline, they needed to do it. They did it now because they found a deal that they wanted and one that would maximize his value.

You need to applaud them for that or get your boxing gloves on, because I will fight you.

That's all that needs to be said here. It's something we have talked about all offseason. The problem of course was the value and if the Indians would get something that they desire for Choo. Well, turns out that they did and the Revere/Span trades really did not have much of an impact. Perhaps it stalled things a little, but in the end, the Reds forgot about those trades and made the move for Choo.

And the Indians got exactly what they wanted...

### **[WELCOME TO THE TRIBE]**

So after all the mess that is involved in three teams making a trade, this Didi Gregorius kid that Cincinnati had is going to Arizona, which helps facilitate getting the Indians who they want, which is Trevor Bauer.

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As spare parts Tony Sipp and Jason Donald are, so are some of the other names coming to Cleveland. But they are, in my opinion, better, smarter, and more efficient spare parts. More on that in a second.

The crown jewel to the trade is obviously Trevor Bauer, the young right-handed starting pitcher who was selected third overall in the 2011 draft. Last year he went 1-2 in four starts for the Diamondbacks, but in two minor league seasons he went 13-4 with a 3.00 ERA. He flew threw the minors, making just three starts for Advanced-A and four for Double-A in his 2011 debut after being drafted. Last year, in his first full professional season he started to shine.

He went 7-1 with a 1.68 ERA in eight Double-A starts and then 5-1 with a 2.85 ERA in 14 Triple-A starts. So clearly those 2011 stats bring his numbers down and not really conducive to what he is bringing to the table in terms of his pedigree. We're talking about a soon-to-be 22-year-old starting pitcher who is ready to go. He is under team control for a long time (although the Diamondbacks were stupid and he will get paid more than a half a million next year if he is on the major league roster).

*"We feel we're getting a young pitcher with a ton of potential," Antonetti said, "a guy who we feel has a chance to pitch at the top of the rotation once he develops and a guy who we had longstanding interest in."*

Bauer has seemingly fallen out of favor in Arizona for some reason. He does have that crazy warmup thing where he does long tosses that span the distance from home plate to the outfield wall, but there is a reason why Arizona was willing to trade him. I'm not sure what that reason is. I'm a little weirded out by it, but let's just hope they simply talked themselves out of a good player and the Indians steal him away. Kevin Towers did say, that "his gut" is telling him that Bauer will have a good career and blah blah blah, we were able to part with him because of depth.

But what else do you expect him to say? Yeah we all of a sudden hate the kid, wanted to deal him, he sucks... I mean, he went third overall, so there's something big that can be there, and that should tell you all you need to know.

The other big part of this deal in my opinion is the acquisition of a left fielder. HEY! A left fielder!

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Drew Stubbs is also coming over in the deal from Cincinnati and he should slide very neatly into left and ideally, towards the bottom of the lineup. The Indians have another quick guy who can play good defense, but is also no slouch in the power department. He has a little pop, so he's a guy that can do a little bit of everything.

His best season came in 2010 when he hit over 20 home runs, knocked in 77, stole 30 bases and scored 91 runs. But he played as the top of Cincy's lineup and was able to be a run scoring machine for them the past three seasons. Last year he was down a bit, but still managed to produce. He's a legit 15 home run, 30 steal guy. He will score runs if he is out there and he can knock runs in too.

He does strike out a whole heck of a lot though. He took over for Mark Reynolds in the National League in terms of being the strikeout king. He struck out 205 times in 2011 and will probably strike out a good 150-160 times for ya. But hey, again, he still finds a way to get on base and be productive. He is really an ideal bounce back candidate and someone who can come in and be a nice piece as he starts to hit his prime years.

Not to mention he has more control than Choo does. The Indians were a year away from losing Choo, whereas Stubbs will be under team control for three more years and at a significantly lesser price than Choo. We'll talk about money later though.

As for the spare parts going the Indians way, I like them both. Matt Albers may cost a little more than Sipp in the arbitration process, but he is an excellent right-hander out of the pen. And not only does he nail against the right-handers, he can handle the left-handed hitters too with similar splits going each way. If anything, Albers is an upgrade over Sipp.

And the other arm is Bryan Shaw, who should be able to help replace what the Indians lose in trading Sipp and letting Rafael Perez walk. Now you are looking at a bullpen that is really deep with some major league experience and some young arms floating around.

Albers split his time last year with Boston and Arizona, having been traded over to the D'Backs, but pitched well and in 63 innings. He carried a 2.39 ERA and really broke out in his best year as a reliever.

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Shaw is still a young guy, he's 25 and has about a year and a half under his belt. He has put up solid numbers out of the pen for the Diamondbacks, but is very much a Joe Smith type in that he has some issues against the left-handers. Still, that is something Smith has progressed on and maybe Shaw will too as he gets older. He is great against the right-handers though and seems to be just a solid relief arm. A nice fresh spare part face to throw into the mix.

### [SHOW ME THE MONEY]

A few numbers before we get started. These are the projected salaries that [MLBTR has for the players](#) involved in the trade.

Matt Albers - \$1.7M

Choo - \$7.9M

Tony Sipp - \$1M

Drew Stubbs - \$2.9M

Let's also take note that the Indians [are going to be sending the Reds some cash](#) to make up for the difference in Choo/Stubbs. That's nice of them. I guess. \$3.5 million could be the price going to Cincinnati, which judging by the dollar amounts listed above, is a little less to make up the difference if both players get exactly that.

One would think trading Choo frees up a little cash that wouldn't have to be spent, but the particulars of the deal if those numbers are the base show that it really is not the case.

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If the Indians are sending money towards the Reds for Choo, then Albers and Stubbs pretty much make up for what was going to be paid to Choo and Sipp. So there's no real saving here.

Some would think, hey, save money on Choo, go after a guy, but I don't think this has a particular effect on that. It may make them more aggressive though in going after someone in the outfield, particularly Nick Swisher.

Because as it stands, a Stubbs-Brantley-WHATEVER outfield is really scary, especially since it is now right field that is open and not left. Swisher would fit and make a real nice fit if that is the way the Indians went, but it appears Boston is in on him now too with Mike Napoli potentially failing his physical and the Red Sox just being greedy to begin with.

I also think this sort of, retooling if you will, of the bullpen has led me to believe even more that Chris Perez is staying put, which is good news in my opinion. Why put yourself in the position of trading him now? Because he'll make a lot of money? So what, it isn't a long-term contract. Yeah you risk losing value, but how much can you really get for a closer now a days on the trade market? They're volatile, which is perhaps the reason you trade him, but you also won't get correct value.

So all is well in payroll land, and the Indians may be even more inclined to sign an outfielder who can hit. So that's good news.

### **[PARTICULARS]**

What does this mean for Asdrubal Cabrera then?

Eh... I think he stays and he should. Some mentioned that the Indians were able to get Bauer and still hold onto Cabrera, which is a fair point. Do you now flip Cabrera? Again, unless you get value that is worth it, no, you don't. You do not have a reason to trade Cabrera right now like you did Choo.

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The Indians were in this position with Choo for some time now, but they did not pull the trigger. The same can be said for Cabrera. You don't pull the trigger unless a team makes an offer that gets you exactly what you want. And not many teams, as we've seen, will do that right now. Arizona did not want to part with the necessary pieces to get the deal done for Cabrera. They were willing to deal Bauer, but the Indians wanted more, as they should.

And look, they still got him, for one year of Choo. Granted, they turned that into a shortstop that the Diamondbacks wanted, but it makes sense the way they worked the deal. Chris Antonetti deserves major credit for sticking to his guns and ultimately finding a way to get something they wanted for Choo. He really did well on this and I'm sure the background talks with Arizona for Cabrera helped him get this deal for Choo together.

I would look no further than the piece Yahoo's Jeff Passan [penned about the deal](#) . Antonetti "swooped in" and took advantage of two teams looking to win now. He fleeced the competition by gaining six years of Trevor Bauer, three years of Drew Stubbs, and some effective relief pitching all for one year of Shin-Soo Choo and, as he put it, spare parts. I've been screaming it since the deal went through, Choo and spare parts.

*Preying on desperation is an art, and we're seeing more and more of it. It's how Andrew Friedman poached minor league player of the year Wil Myers in the Shields trade. It's how Antonetti coaxed Bauer out of the Gunslinger.*

The "Gunslinger" is Kevin Towers, Arizona General Manager and Passan calls him that for his curious deals. Deals that sometimes turn out to be brilliant or bombs. Passan wonders what the thinking was behind this one, in that it would appear he has been completely fleeced or a shortstop who some say "can't even hit" for a pitcher with mega upside and had simply fallen out of favor with his team.

I don't know. But to me, on the surface, it does look really good for Cleveland. As Passan mentions, Bauer could never live up to the potential. But after the failed trades of CC Sabathia and Cliff Lee, it looks as if the Indians really hit on this. And if they didn't, then I don't think it is of any fault of the Indians. They made, what looks like, a great deal on the surface. They traded someone they did not plan on having after 2013 and, as I keep saying, spare parts. Yes you need to hit on the deal to become a player, of course. But you can't blame them for pulling the

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trigger on this one, for these parts.

And as he touches up on from the Reds perspective. The decision to play Choo in center is a rather curious one. But one that could, as he says, end up working like the Tigers moving of Miguel Cabrera to third. It may be ugly, but it may just work. And if it doesn't, you always move Jay Bruce to center. Choo is not the greatest on his routes, but really he has to learn a whole new ballpark anyway, so the adjustment shouldn't be that big of a deal. I don't think the "moving to center" thing is as big of a catastrophe as people are making it out to be. It's certainly weird and unorthodox, but something that can work, especially offensively as he fills their leadoff void and brings a lefty into the fold.

Filling out that bullpen with Shaw and Albers will be the regulars in Smith & Pestano and likely Cody Allen, but the big thing is that the Indians have quickly lost two of their many left-handed pitchers. It does open the door though for Nick Hagadone to fit in as that primary left-handed matchup guy and will also let Scott Barnes get more of a good opportunity.

Long story short on that bullpen situation, lots of arms to pick from, lots of flexibility, lots of excitement. And if you ever do need to deal Perez down the road, you are well equipped to handle losing him.

And finally, a big no thanks and more harsh words that I cannot put on here to Scott Boras. You are a virus to baseball and clearly orchestrated this situation to happen. Thanks for nothing.

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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 involved.*

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