

## Offseason Rundown: A Lesson Learned for Bauer and WBC News

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

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All of a sudden, we're closing in on the season. The NFL is winding down with just three games left in their season, and once that is done, baseball is at the next exit. Teams report to spring training and that is as exciting as you can get

How the heck did it get here so quick? Usually the offseason is cold and long. So far we've had it be cold, but not blistering, with little snow, and really, how many of you believe it is the middle of January already? I certainly don't.

I've only been able to do a few parts in the "Piece by Piece" series and I know I've promised a new edition some time ago, but with all the fun with Nick Swisher and what not, it fell on the back-burner. But with the big additions over, and the stretch run of the offseason now in motion, we must finish Piece by Piece. So look for that late this week, early next week as news is sparse.

### [BAUER POWER]

I'm still excited about **Trevor Bauer** for the simple fact that he shares the last name of fictional bad-ass Jack Bauer. I can have much fun with that as a fan of 24 and firm believer in all the facts that are true about Jack Bauer and what he's capable of

It has nothing to do with Trevor Bauer, but let's just pretend he's Jack's son, groomed to be a pitcher with the lethal smarts to shred batters at the plate.

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You laugh, but a guy who throws the length of a baseball field to warm up certainly has some tenacity to his game. Bauer met with the media last week and he had a lot to say. He talked about his reputation, his routine, and his new start. He's still young, he's still rather green in the eyes of professional baseball as well. But he has [a lot of good qualities](#) and does not seem to be the headcase that Arizona tried to make him out to be by wanting to "get rid of him".

*"I just love knowing why things work the way they do," Bauer said. "I'm guilty of it in relationships, too. I'd be trying to figure out why does this person do this, 'Well let's see.' I have to remind myself that we're not machines. There's probably not a formula for why people do certain things."*

Bauer said that he's excited about his fresh start and his team doesn't seem to be worried about his past issues with his former club.

*"If he aggravated somebody else on another team, I don't care," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He's got a fresh start."*

And what better manager to work with this young guy? Terry is a people person, a player's manager. He won't have a hard time establishing a relationship with a young guy like Bauer. What's interesting is that if you [read Castrovince's piece about Bauer](#), you come to find out he is a rather shy guy. He was a loner growing up, didn't do much other than focus on baseball.

*"I didn't have a lot of friends growing up," said the soon-to-be 22-year-old native of North Hollywood. "I had a lot of free time. Instead of going to the movies with friends, I'd be up at the park working out. Everybody would be talking about the movie they saw. Well, I couldn't be a part of that conversation."*

Bauer even admits that he's still learning to "fit" into a social setting and he has discomfort in large groups. I mean, you go from high school where you are very much still a kid, to college, to professional baseball? If you don't spend much time in college (and I can only imagine the time he spent there was once again working on baseball), learning about socializing, you can be put into a real world setting and be incredibly shocked.

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What I find admirable about Bauer is that after he found out about the bad impression he left on his teammates in the big leagues, he had the guts to call them up and ask what he did wrong.

*"I just kind of wanted to reach out and get some opinions on it," Bauer said, "It was really beneficial for me to hear. It wasn't easy to hear in a lot of ways, but it was beneficial for me to hear kind of the perception of me: 'You do this, and it's perceived this way.'"*

So if the D'Backs largest problem with him is that he was just young and didn't know any better, they potentially gave up on a stud pitcher because they simply didn't take the time to get to know the kid. And hey, if the Indians are better for it, that's cool. It seems like they will be as Bauer does not come off as some problem child, some diva that the media made him out to be when it was described about how Arizona was looking to unload him.

And maybe Arizona wasn't looking to unload him for that reason. Maybe they did just have a pitching surplus and it was Bauer they liked least out of all their prospects and if they could get themselves a future shortstop for Bauer, then so be it.

We don't and will never know the reason why. But Bauer is an Indian now and he seems perfectly normal. He seems like a kid who just is focused and determined on being an excellent baseball player. His Twitter is full of tweets about baseball and discussing mechanics and the nuances of pitching with people. His routine is developed to prevent injury and build consistency mechanically.

*"My routine is always changing," he said. "The one constant in it is I know there's a certain feel that I have where I know I'm ready to go. When I get that feel, I know I'm ready to step on a mound and get ready to pitch in a game."*

He's been successful up to this point, so there's no reason to change what he does. He had a shaky debut. The focus on him and his routine has been a little overblown. He said he was dealing with an injury and he owns up to the fact that he just didn't do his job the first time around. He's young, he's inexperienced at this level. Give him some time and let him settle in. He's had success everywhere he's gone and he's had success rather quickly.

Maybe some people think he is immature. But for someone to call his teammates and ask what he did wrong shows advanced maturity to me. Some may have the opinion that the Indians got a problem child, but maybe in the end they've got themselves quite the opposite and a potential elite starter for years to come.

### [PESTANO AND PEREZ IN WBC]

It's that time of the... well not year, but. Well, you know. Every four years the World Baseball Classic returns. The brainchild that is supposed to be baseball's answer to the World Cup. It's back and it takes up spring training and it is really really annoying for a lot of teams because their star players are not only not with them to be monitored, they're going full-boar in an attempt to play for their country and win, thus giving them the greater opportunity to be hurt.

[The Indians will send people](#) , as will mostly every team. Baseball is perhaps the most global game, aside from soccer. With many nationalities from many teams, teammates will become enemies, enemies will become teammates.

The United States squad, which will surely be expected to have a good showing, if not win, will feature a Bullpen Mafia flare with two Indians at the back end. Both **Vinnie Pestano** and **Chris Perez** have committed to play for the Red White & Blue this spring.

*"That'll definitely help break the ice," Pestano said. "I won't be going into a brand new clubhouse, where I don't know anyone and there's Ryan Braun, Adam Jones and Mark Teixeira and all these great athletes. Having C.P. there to talk to and mess around with before getting to know everybody else will be huge."*

No telling if there is anyone else that will be participating from the Indians, at least outside Asdrubal Cabrera playing for Venezuela and Yan Gomes with Brazil. But if it's just four people, with two being relievers who will pitch just an inning anyway, then the Indians are probably feeling okay. Even starters like Asdrubal are not to be worried about as much as you would quiver in fear of a starting pitcher participating. But the good news is that the U.S. is practicing in Phoenix and their first round games are at Chase Field, meaning that the relief duo will not be far from Goodyear for a good portion of the event.

And again, relievers will pretty much do the same thing in the WBC that they would in spring training. The only difference probably being is that Chris Perez isn't going to try and "work on some things" in spring. Little concern if you ask me.

Rosters are officially unveiled on Thursday, but seeing as how no one else has said anything, it is likely that the representation ends with those four.

### [RANDOM RUNDOWN]

Paul Dolan [was approved last week](#) as the "control person" for the Indians organization. I'm not sure how much this has to do with anything really. Paul has been the front man for some time now with Larry Dolan not having much of a public image. Paul is the chairman and CEO and when there's a quote from the owner, it comes from Paul, not Larry. If anything, it's just making a formality official.

Things might get interesting between the Terry Francona and his old squad [when the publication of his book is finished](#). Francona will be releasing an biography of sorts about his time with Boston. Local Boston writer Dan Shaughnessy is the co-writer and there's a portrayal of the Red Sox in the book that may burn a bridge with his former employer.

It is rather interesting as Francona reveals why the club went after players like Adrian Gonzalez and Carl Crawford, and how the ownership group wanted "sexy" players on the team that they could market and that they needed to start "winning in more exciting fashion" for ratings purposes.

That is as asinine as it sounds, don't worry.

*"They come in with all these ideas about baseball, but I don't think they love baseball," he said. "I think they like baseball. It's revenue, and I know that's their right and their interest because*

*they're owners ... and they're good owners. But they don't love the game. It's still more of a toy or a hobby for them. It's not their blood. They're going to come in and out of baseball. It's different for me. Baseball is my life."*

*"The last chapter is hard because it was a hard ending," Francona said. "I'm sure there will be a thing or two that will piss somebody off that I didn't think would, but I've read it seven times and me and Dan made change after change because I wanted it to be good, I wanted it to be interesting and I also wanted it to preserve the clubhouse because I do believe in that so much."*

And some of you people want to complain about the Dolan regime? I'd take them over those clowns in Boston any day. Win in exciting fashion? Sex symbols? Find some sizzle? No wonder Theo Epstein left one time and then again. No wonder Francona was ushered out and they brought in that headcase Bobby Valentine. Well, the Red Sox got their drama and how did it work out for them?

It didn't. It crashed and burned quicker than one of my poorly made paper airplanes. And let me tell you, my paper airplanes crash pretty quickly.

Hopefully for MLB's sake that their [new mobile bullpen phone idea](#) doesn't crash and burn. MLB is partnering with T-Mobile (their service sucks, why?) to produce wireless bullpen phones. Yup. You heard that. The WBC will be the guinea pig for the venture and hopefully the signal doesn't cut out and result in wrong relievers being warmed up or brought in.

Speaking of relievers being brought in. In addition to the official signing of Scott Kazmir to a minor league deal, the Indians have also brought in relievers **Jerry Gil** and **Edward Paredes** on minor league deals with invites to spring training. Gil is a righty and Paredes is a left-hander. Kazmir could fit into the bullpen mix as well.

Gil was last in the major leagues with Cincinnati back in 2007 (eek). Here's the fun part though. Gil was last in the major leagues as a utility player. Yes, he played as a position player who hit, but not very well, which is why he moved to pitching. [In 2008 he started pitching](#) and the last two years he actually has had decent number for Toronto's Triple-A squad in Las Vegas, going 7-1 with a 4.92 ERA and in 2011 with Louisville going 5-6 with a 3.59 ERA.

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So if anything, this isn't just another depth arm that the Indians are adding for their minor league deal. I mean, it is, but there could be a little bit of potential there as Gil continues to grow as a pitcher. Sure he's 30, but he's really only in his fourth or so year as a full-time reliever in the professional leagues.

Edward Parades is much less exciting. He is just another depth arm. Sorry Edward.

On a final note, I couldn't let this go without mentioning it. As you know by my Twitter bio, as well as constant mentioning at any chance I get, I have a strange following of **Jody Gerut**. I don't know why I am such a die-hard fan of the guy, but ever since his time in Cleveland, I have a respect for Gerut and the way he played the game.

Perhaps this is why. Gerut is now spending his time as an advocate for the players, aiding them in how they manage their money. Anthony Castrovine has a wonderful piece up on MLB.com about Gerut and what he's doing and it is well worth the read, fan of the Indians or not, fan of Gerut or not. Many wonder when they see a former athlete turn up as "broke" or "out of money" how it could be possible, especially if they made millions. If any of us Joes made a million bucks, we'd be set for life. But Gerut says there's a lot at play.

*"In a lot of cases, there's a lot of trust being put into people that shouldn't be trusted," Gerut says. "There's a lack of understanding of what power of attorney means and the implications of giving the wrong person power of attorney."*

*"If there's one consistency through my interviewing with bankrupt or financially distressed guys, it was, 'I couldn't say no to family.' So you've got some really difficult human situations, compassion situations."*

Jody is a smart guy, went to Stanford, was the only guy on the Indians who could properly spell Mark Teixeira when prompted. He's also a soft-spoken individual who worked hard at the game, especially in coming back from injuries and being on the brink of early retirement. And he now has a meaningful goal in mind.

*"My life's work," he says, "has become the reduction of athlete bankruptcy down to zero percent. As much as I want to be an agent that pushes the market appropriately, I also want my*

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*identity to be the anti-bankruptcy agent."*

It is a fascinating thing, the whole "broke athlete" story. It is admirable that Jody, a player who has been there, has taken this on as his goal. Where there are agents out there, cough Scott Boras cough, who are interested in getting rich off his clients, this guy is interested in his client's well being. If there were more agents like Jody, ones who had been players and understood what it is all about, perhaps there would be less ridiculousness and less broke athletes.

Who knows...

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*Nino, willing to remove the "I Hate Nick Swisher" line from his Facebook profile is also on [The Tribe Daily](#), his own Indians blog. As long as JoAnna Garcia-Swisher's "Better With You" gets another shot on television.*

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