

Offseason Rundown: So-Long to a Short Offseason

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Thursday, February 07 2013 7:00 PM - Last Updated Saturday, February 09 2013 12:34 PM



It dawned on me, finally. After several slaps to the face, I composed myself.

By George, it is already February. Where has time gone? All of a sudden February is here, pretty soon it will be gone and two months of this 2013 year are going to be in the books. Is it October yet?

With the realization that it is already February, this whole Spring Training thing snuck up on me. I guess I continued to wade through the offseason as if it was a flowing thing that was going to keep changing and keep us on our toes.

I'm not saying that that didn't happen, in fact, I'm saying that it did. It did so much that I can't believe where we stand right now with P's and C's just about ready to officially arrive. February ushers in the hope and optimism that everyone has at this time of the year in regards to their baseball team. What's sweet about that is the hope and optimism lasts a few months, well into the excitement and anticipation of Opening Day. Regardless of a team's spring training record, everyone has a chance. Yeah okay, football may have the same feeling or a bit, but after the first game, if you lose, you're already in the hole and especially in Cleveland, depression sets in.

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For two whole stinkin' months, we can sit around, and we will, and posture about this club, talking about the What ifs (you know I will), the how abouts, and the it can happens. The start of that begins real soon. The start of that begins, after this.

It's the last Offseason Rundown. As sad as it is to say goodbye to what has been an eventful and fun offseason, it is just as joyful to welcome in what will be an equally exciting spring. There's a new manager, a ton of new faces, and a different type of outlook and expectation towards this team. There will be just as much to watch out for.

Next week for you I will kick things off with the annual Spring Training Primer, a rite of Spring passage around these parts, and one of the most comprehensive posts I do all year. It kicks off spring and it feeds the fire before real news starts rolling in. The first few days of spring are fun, but it really is the same each year and nothing of substance as players are unpacking, having meetings and getting their check-ups.

As that happens, I want to prepare you for what's next.

[BRAND NEW LOOK]

First off, if you're reading this on The Cleveland Fan, Hi. I have a blog and I know you probably know that. But if you don't, give me a little click, [right here](#) . Is the content the same? Yeah, you can find my Rundowns here as well as the Blog, but I do other stuff, a lot more in the offseason. The ridiculousness is upped even more and the fun never stops. Well, sometimes it does. But really, give me a little love, I promise it will be worth it.

[I have Twitter](#)

(which goes a little beyond the Indians sometimes as well), and you can

[like the blog on Facebook,](#)

which I would much appreciate.

If you're reading this on the blog, well, take a good long look around. Take it in, remember it, enjoy it, breath in the scenery. Because in a few days, it all goes away. Last time I changed the layout, I said I wouldn't be changing it for awhile, and well, I didn't. In fact it has been awhile

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since I last changed, so naturally, it was time to change it up. Yeah we went all of 2012 and most of 2011 with the current layout, and with a new manager, some new faces, and just a whole new type of ballgame for this blog to begin with, I needed to change things up.

So as the team enters spring training in the next few days, The Tribe Daily enters a new look. I hope you like it. I hope it feels good to you visually because I really enjoy it and think it is a nice slick new look that is way better than what there is now. Not that I don't like what is there now.

[SPRING FLINGS]

Pitchers and Catchers officially report on Sunday, with all the physicals and fun happening in the days after. Later that week everyone else officially reports and by next Friday, the first official workout will happen with everyone in camp.

That is important to know because a week after, the games actually start. Yup, in just about two weeks the Indians and Reds will throw out their first pitches of spring training and the party is underway.

[FINAL FEW SIGNINGS AND...BOURN?]

The Indians may be finishing up their work with some minor league signings and invites to spring training. A few more come into play, but it looks like the Tribe is about done after inking catcher **Omir Santos** and outfielder **Jeremy Hermida**.

[Santos comes over](#) after a season shared with Detroit and Colorado. He's a former Met who will probably be the guy the Indians have in Triple-A as the starter or backup, but his main purpose is to be a depth guy in spring training, catching all those innings no one wants to catch. He and Brian Jeroloman will either fight it out for the starting job in Triple-A, or each other for a spot there. Santos was in Triple-A for both those aforementioned squads and he hit .310 in a few games.

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Meanwhile, Jeremy Hermida [adds yet another decent depth option](#) to the Indians outfield plan. With Ben Francisco already in the fold, Hermida is a younger guy who may stand a chance to need another shot somewhere. He was in Boston 2010 under Francona for a little bit, but has not really been a big league factor the past few years. He was supposed to be a impact player for the Marlins some years ago, but never amounted to much and ended up bouncing around the league. He has hit a little in the past, but nothing spectacular.

More importantly, that whole depth thing gets tested if the Indians play out this little gem from Buster Olney. On Twitter the other day he [mentioned that the Indians COULD](#) (UNDERLINED, BOLDDED, BEDAZZLED IF I COULD), have some interest in

Michael Bourn

if his price tag were to be lowered, and that 'A LOT' statement makes it seem it needs to be a significant amount.

Hey, I suggested the Indians go out and sign Michael Bourn to a one year deal that paid him a nice amount. They could get someone who would help and if they ended up out of competition, trade him for something useful. Bourn would get a year of good salary and chance to improve his stock for perhaps a better market the next season.

At this point, it seems as if all Bourn really wants is a job. That or Scott Boras continues to suck a whole lot. Either way seems just about right.

Bottom line, I don't see the Indians going that Bourn route. The price would really really have to suck for Bourn for the Indians to consider it and the Bourn idea I had was well before the Stubbs-Brantley-Swisher trio was formed officially.

Anyway, whoever gets the guy could bring in a nice little bargain. How has not been signed is my question? I know there is draft picks involved but the guy can play and he brings a unique skill set. But hey, whatever man.

In other news, Ken Rosenthal noted that the Indians are [looking to solidify their infield depth](#) and one way they could do that is by adding

Ryan Theriot

. I'm not sure if that takes a guaranteed contract or not, but if it does, it would essentially take

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another bench role away and give the Indians two middle infield types for their bench.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

The streak lives! The Indians and **Mike Aviles** have [avoided the arbitration process](#) with an agreement on his contract for 2013, and bonus, the 2014 season. The Indians have still not been through arbitration with a player since 1991. Perhaps the process took a little longer because the two sides were discussing a two-year pact instead of just a money number for 2013, or perhaps it went to two years after the two sides were a part on a one-year deal.

Aviles' contract is worth \$6 million over the course of two years and includes a club option for 2015, meaning the Indians now have control of him for potentially three seasons. This obviously, first and foremost, gives them flexibility in what they can do at shortstop if they are in a position to deal Asdrubal Cabrera at some point, which seems like a certainty at this juncture with a deep line of shortstops waiting in the wings.

"We thought that it made sense to provide [Aviles] with some security and get us some cost certainty for the next few years," Antonetti said. "That was the motivating factor behind the deal."

Also of note in that report is the news that the Indians have added one more name to their bullpen mix, signing left-handed pitcher **Rich Hill** to a minor league contract and inviting him to spring training. He'll be in the mix for a bullpen spot and should directly compete with the likes of Nick Hagadone and Scott Barnes as a left-handed option for the Tribe.

A few scattered notes of semi-importance, only because there isn't anything more important floating around right now...

The new PED/Doping scandal that is rippling through baseball is one that needs to happen. I know this isn't centrally Indians related, but I think it needs to be said. I'm glad that baseball is in on this, as they look to be on the witch hunt for anyone and everyone who has used PEDs or some form of it. It needs to happen because MLB needs to take back their sport. After what

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happened with the Hall of Fame, we now see the steroid era has completely ruined the game. We don't know who to trust, who to believe, who to accuse or not accuse.

I think it's good that the MLB is on the war path for whoever. I mean, would anyone surprise you at this point? I know bitter Indians fans like to point to Travis Hafner and say things like "He needs to get back on the roids!" because of his past few years. But heck, I'd be more surprised that Hafner was on roids than I would other people at this point. It isn't about 'getting big' so much as it is about staying healthy. I mean, shoot, look how unhealthy Hafner has been the past few years. Look at Grady Sizemore too. I'd almost be a little upset at the two.

Everyone else is doping to stay healthy and on the field, and to get better, and here we have two of our best players playing the right way and costing us precious years of chances to compete.

Is that wrong of me? Perhaps. But that's the reality of it. This is beyond Barry Bonds blatantly juicing to hit a lot of home runs. This has progressed from the steroid era as we know it to the PED era of gaining that advantage. No one is immune from it. No one.

And that is why MLB needs to continue what they are doing and do this. I bring all this up in a round about way to mention that Jhonny Peralta's [name was dropped in the shadow of](#) Ryan Braun being accused. This Tony Bosch character has records and Peralta's name has come up. Jhonny has jumped out rather quickly to say that he has never used PEDs and anyone who says he has, is "lying". So far, no one actually has said that though, because he's only in Bosch's records, not directly linked to a cycle or anything like that.

So, that's fun.

Kevin Millwood [retired](#). Yeah he spent one whole year with the Indians, but it was a very good year that got his career back on track and helped him make a whole bunch of more money than he could have ended up with. After a few cruddy years, Milly was with the Mariners and had a decent season with a 4.25 ERA, better than anyone could have expected at his age. Someone probably would have given him a shot if he wanted it, but he was looking at two teams, Tampa or Atlanta due to proximity to his home. He didn't get bites, so he's outtie.

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Millwood pitched for the Indians in 2005 and was instrumental in their little run with his 2.86 ERA and a below .500 record of 9-11. He lead the AL in ERA despite the record and was a big reason CC Sabathia turned into the pitcher you see today, a more polished version of himself. Best wishes to Millwood in the next stage of his life and a big thank you for his short, but impactful time with the Indians.

As noted by prospect guru Al Ciammaichella, Keith Law has [ranked the Indians as the 19th](#) best farm system in baseball in his organization prospect rankings. I can't even imagine what it would look like without Trevor Bauer.

There's another type of countdown going on over at [Indians Baseball Insider](#) . The annual prospect countdown, from the very top of 100 to the very bottom at #1 is underway. The crew is up to the 30's right now with some interesting names still left on the board.

Crusty found a little home! For now at least. Who knows at this point. The man has been dumped and picked up so many times this offseason he might as well invest in a backoe. **Russ Canzler**

was claimed by Baltimore,

[marking the fourth team that has claimed him this offseason](#)

, after being dumped by the Indians initially, he went on to Toronto, back to Cleveland, to New York, now to Baltimore Maybe he'll stick for spring training at least?

"He told my agent, 'We assure you he's not going to be designated for assignment before Spring Training,'" said Canzler, who then chuckled. "I think we're set. I think I can book a hotel now."

They probably won't make a signing (watch them do it right...now.). That's good at least he has the ST assurance, so he can at least settle in somewhere. Good luck to the Crustied one this spring in his quest for a job. Things looked like they were going to work out for Russ as the Yankees train in Tampa, close to relatives for him, and have their Triple-A squad in Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, which is really close to his new home with wife and new baby. Then Hafner came in and screwed it all up again! That damn Pronk stepping all over Crusty. [At least he didn't get traded 600-miles into his trip to spring training](#)

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Hey, we may have not seen the last of Crusty. If Baltimore makes a move towards the end of spring, the Indians may maneuver or have space to get him back. They definitely would like him in the system and at that point, they could probably find a way to sneak him through waivers. Depending on the spring he has and of course what Baltimore does with him.

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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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