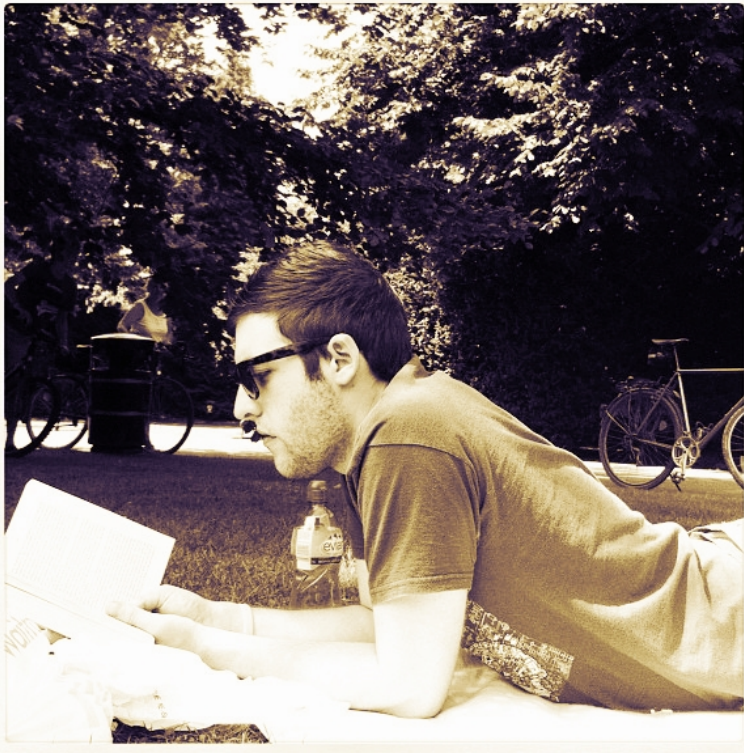


Talking Indians Baseball with England Tribe

Written by {ga=tommoore}

Thursday, March 28 2013 6:00 PM - Last Updated Thursday, March 28 2013 5:30 PM



Being a fan of Cleveland sports is one of the better aspects of life, aside from the no championship thing, of course.

The allure of the Indians, Browns and Cavs is not just confined to Northeast Ohio, however, but extends not only across the country but internationally as well.

Which brings us to Ash Day.

Ash is a 24-year-old from Dorset, England, and the author of [England Tribe](#), a blog about the Cleveland Indians as written by an Englishman. You can also find him on Twitter [@AshKetchup29](#).

We recently came across Ash's blog (h/t to [@TalknCleveland](#)) and Ash was kind enough to sit down for a virtual Q&A on how he became a Tribe fan and the team's prospects for 2013.

Q: So how does someone from Dorset, England, become a Cleveland Indians fan?

Ash: Well it all started with basketball. When I was in school I played for my school team and naturally started to develop a keen interest in the NBA. Everyone at school knew who Michael Jordan and the Bulls were, but I wanted to pick a team nobody else supported and follow them. In 2004, at one of my local sports stores, they had some NBA jerseys for sale and I chose a Cavaliers one with LeBron James on it. I liked the colors and thought it looked good, and I'd heard his name before, and that's how it started, I was a Cavs fan from then on. Over the next two to three years I started to get interested in the other two big U.S. sports, football and baseball. In 2006 I chose the Browns as my NFL team, deciding to stick with Cleveland as my city of choice and then, in 2007, I got into baseball and opted for the Indians to complete my sporting trilogy. Since then my interest in the NBA has waned a bit and now I pretty much focus solely on the Indians and Browns year-round.

Q: How well are you able to follow the Tribe?

Ash: It's pretty difficult but it's just become a hell of a lot easier since I bought MLB TV a few days ago. Now I can watch every game! But over the past few years I've had to settle for online streams or the MLB.com free game of the day. If the Tribe played an early afternoon game I had a much better chance at watching it, since they begin around 6 p.m. here in England. Night games are more difficult as they start at 1 a.m. I used to stay up a lot in my single days, but a relationship kind of put an end to that! A few years ago one of the British TV channels used to show MLB games every Wednesday and Sunday night. They did this for years but it unfortunately stopped a couple of years ago because of licensing fees. I learned a lot watching those games and got to see a lot of teams and players to help increase my knowledge of the sport. I even got to watch an Indians game on that TV channel, as we beat the Yankees (the majority of the games on that channel featured the big clubs like New York and Boston.) My routine since 2007 has been waking up in the morning and opening MLB.com to see how the Indians got on the night before, and then watching the highlights and reading the box scores. It'll be a lot easier now, though; I can watch the Indians at my leisure.

Q: How much interest is there in American baseball in England (or American sports in general)?

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Ash: For baseball, there isn't a great deal of interest, at least not on a national scale. The game is very similar to cricket and even that is pretty low down the list in terms of relevance on the British sporting spectrum. I don't think many Brits have the patience for baseball, which is a real shame. We play a game over here in schools called rounders, which is similar to baseball, and most Brits tend to associate the two sports a little too closely. "Oh you like baseball? Isn't that just glorified rounders?" is something I have to put up with constantly. But the fans that do love baseball over here are legit, guys and girls who really love the game. The fanbase for baseball in the U.K. may be relatively small but it's passionate. There's a great fanbase online especially, lots of U.K. fans coming together on forums to discuss your national pastime. But I do think the interest in American sports as a whole is growing significantly. The NFL is especially getting much larger attention. The whole notion that people are contemplating the idea of a London NFL franchise proves that. I disagree on that whole idea, though; the UK should not get an NFL team.

Q: What made you decide to start England Tribe?

Ash: Well I enjoy writing blogs and my enthusiasm for the Indians has never been higher before the start of a season. I figured if I was going to start a Tribe blog, there was never going to be a better time for it. I actually started a blog in 2010 called Escape to Forest City, which was my little space to write about the Cavs, Browns and Tribe, but it quickly became a blog about my football (sorry, soccer) team Arsenal and morphed into Escape to N5 (the area in London Arsenal are from). I had a hard time writing anything meaningful about the Cleveland teams on a regular basis, but England Tribe is almost certainly going to be 100 percent Indians. I can focus on just them and the blog posts should be a bit more consistent than they were in the past. You might see a Browns or Cavs post from time to time, depending on my mood, but I'm hoping England Tribe can have some staying power and last for a good while.

Q: Have you run into any other Cleveland fans in your daily life?

Ash: I was in a pub last year and a guy stopped me at the bar and said "I really like your hat!" I was wearing my Indians cap and he said he was from Akron and was over here on holiday, and we had a little chat about the Tribe for a bit. I thought that was really cool. I went to Wembley Stadium last October for the Patriots-Rams game and saw a handful of Browns fans at the game, fellow Brits like myself. Apart from that I've never met any other Cleveland fans, aside from a few on the online forums I've been on in the past.

Q: Have you ever been to Cleveland for a game (or have plans to visit)?

Ash: I've still never been to the States at all, let alone Cleveland. It's at the top of my wish list and I do have plans to visit when my funds enable me to do so. I definitely want to get to the Jake (Progressive Field) at some stage in the near future. A few U.K. fans do ballpark road trips, which sounds like heaven to me. I'd love to travel to a few select cities and catch a game in each one.

Q: Which off-season move by the Tribe do you think was the best?

Ash: I love the Nick Swisher and Michael Bourn acquisitions, but I think the best move was probably grabbing Brett Myers to shore up the rotation. If Justin Masterson and Ubaldo Jimenez melt down again, Myers could quickly look like an ace compared to them! I obviously hope that doesn't happen but, yeah, I think getting the reliable and solid Myers was probably the best move the front office made. We need some stability in the starting rotation for sure. Oh, and the Trevor Bauer trade for Shin-Soo Choo was also a fantastic move further down the road.

Q: How do you like their chances this year?

Ash: I don't think we'll be going to the World Series but I at least like our chances to challenge the Tigers and their dominance in the division. My dream scenario is to make the playoffs, something I've only ever experienced once back in 2007. (And I was still a total baseball noob then and didn't appreciate it like I should have!) If the team can stay healthy and the pitching holds up, who knows? At the very least, I hope we can maintain the same level of play after the All-Star break, and not fade away again like the last two years.

Q: You also write about Arsenal FC on your blog, [Escape to N5](#) . So, Arsene Wenger: Stay or Go?

Ash: Stay. My first year of being an Arsenal fan was Wenger's first season in charge, way back in 1996 at the age of 7. He's all I know. I don't think Wenger is to blame entirely for the drop in success at the club, and people who think firing him will make things better are naïve and

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should know better. Football doesn't work like that. If we're to succeed and challenge for the title again, changes have to be made at the top. Wenger needs support and help. Changing the manager would only set us back even more.

Q: What do you think of England's chances in the next World Cup?

Ash: Slim. It's sad to say but the England team just isn't at the level of Spain, Germany, Italy and Holland. We're probably not even as good as France. England have some good players, especially my boy Jack Wilshere (Arsenal central midfielder), but they also have some duds that the management insists on playing (Manchester City's James Milner). I don't think anyone here in England realistically expects us to come back from Brazil victorious. Who knows though, tournament football can throw up all sorts of surprises.

Q: If the Tribe was a Premier League team they would be ...

Ash: Great question! Let me think ... I'll go for Aston Villa. A team with great history, a great stadium and a city that loves their team but have made their fans suffer in recent years. Aston Villa are really struggling this year, so I hope the similarities to the Tribe end there in 2013!

Thanks again to Ash for taking the time to talk with us and be sure to check out his blog.

(Photo courtesy of Ash Day)