



Our long suffering nightmare is over, Tribe fans. Not only is the offseason finally finished, but the Indians actually look like must see TV this season. They're going to play an exciting brand of baseball with a lot of passion and it appears that changes on the business side will help with attendance and affordable options at the ballpark for both tickets and concessions. This has the chance to be a special year.

It will take a lot for the Indians to unseat the defending Central Division Champs and overwhelming favorites, the Detroit Tigers. The Tigers have one of the best rotations in the American League, with the staff bookended by \$200 million dollar man Justin Verlander and strikeout wizard Max Scherzer.

To use a cliché that I hate...that's why they play the games!

As I [wrote about back in February](#) , the Indians took a cue from the 2012 Athletics and 2012 Orioles and put together a team that walks a lot, hits for a lot of power, and strikes out a lot. The second wild card spot gives teams a lot of incentive to try to contend. Think about it. The Tigers are the heavy favorite. The AL West and AL East both have two or three good teams. With only one wild card, the Indians would have to drastically overachieve and the Tigers would have to horribly underachieve. Now, with two wild card spots, there's additional hope for the Indians.

There's no sense in writing up a season preview. Just go to [my writer page](#) and see all of the player-specific articles I have written. The Indians will score runs and have one of the best outfield defenses in baseball. The bullpen looks like it will be solid. The starting rotation could be

the death of the 2013 Indians. That's nothing new to any of you and it's a series of points that have been discussed ad nauseum in every article about the Indians.

Instead, I'm going to speak from the heart. Most of my articles are analytical in nature, with a lot of statistics, a lot of sabermetrics, and a lot of confusing numbers. Baseball doesn't have to be a confusing game for the fans. Numbers and all of the acronyms that come along with sabermetrics don't have to take away from the game that you're watching.

I write about sabermetrics because they interest me. I think that the fans have a responsibility to try and educate themselves on the current ways of baseball and why the front office thinks the way that they do. There's a reason for every move the Indians make or don't make. Far too often, fans spout off ignorance, taking no time to understand the why or the how, but just to criticize as a "Monday morning quarterback". Hindsight is always 20/20.

If you don't give a shit about numbers or front office ideologies and methodologies, fine, that's your prerogative...though I'm not quite sure why you're reading my stuff. It shouldn't keep you from supporting the team and going to the ballpark. It shouldn't keep you from cracking open a cold beer after work and turning on the game. It shouldn't keep you from turning Tom Hamilton on in the car on your way to take the kids to baseball practice.

Somewhere along the line, you developed a love for baseball. Or, at the very least, an interest in the game. It's hard to be a fan when times are tough. Everybody has enough bullshit to deal with in their daily lives that they don't need a 68-94 team to bring them down. Not everybody stays loyal through the good and the bad. Not everybody buys tickets to sit on a chilly night in September with a team that's 25 games out of first place.

Now, after this past offseason, morale has greatly improved, ticket sales are much better, and there is a buzz about the team that we haven't seen in years. Even in 2008, after the unexpected run to the American League Championship Series, I don't remember it being like this, in large part because the Indians sat on their hands that offseason and made next to no improvements to the team.

I'll admit that I'm jaded towards the baseball fans in Cleveland. The "diehard" part resonates with me. They're my team no matter how good or how bad things are. I'll still go to as many

games as I can, I'll still watch or listen to every game I'm not at, and I'll still talk Indians baseball until I'm out of breath. I cannot stand bandwagon fans. The harsh reality for me is that the Indians need bandwagon fans. They need that support. Diehard fans don't fill the stadium. Ultimately, the atmosphere at an Indians game is a lot better with 42,000 people than 9,000 people.

It's time to look forward instead of looking back. What's in the past is in the past and the Indians have turned a corner. The sale of SportsTime Ohio to Fox Sports and the new TV revenue deal for the league's 30 teams has given the front office the chance to spend money. The future looks significantly brighter.

At the end of the day, all baseball teams have is hope. There are no foregone conclusions. No matter how heavily favored a team is to win a game, win their division, or win the World Series, anything can happen. A rash of injuries. A string of bad luck. Regression to the mean. Overachieving. Underachieving.

The 2013 Cleveland Indians may not make the playoffs. Hell, they may not even be a .500 team when it's all said and done. They also might win the whole f'ing thing (yeah, I watched Major League last night).

We don't know. That's the beauty of it. We'll be able to start finding out on Tuesday what this chapter of Indians baseball holds.

When I read a book, I have a hard time not skipping ahead to the bottom of the next page or turning the page and taking a peek at what's going to happen. Hopefully that's what the story of the 2013 Indians will be like. We won't want to wait to see what lies ahead. That would be a big difference from the last few years where we couldn't even make it past the first couple chapters.

I'm excited to see the revamped lineup. I'm excited to see if Zach McAllister can develop into the strong middle of the rotation starter I think he can be. I'm excited to see if Justin Masterson and Ubaldo Jimenez can somehow, someday return to being above average Major League pitchers. I'm excited to see if Lonnie Chisenhall blossoms into the answer we've needed at third base for a long time. I'm excited to see a lot of things this season. Things that should keep bringing you back to the Indians as well. Things that are worth watching. Hell, I'm excited to

watching exciting baseball.

Most of all, I'm just excited to have baseball back.