

If You Buy It: Has the Dolan Family Renewed their Contract with Indians' Fanbase?

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Friday, June 21 2013 5:55 AM - Last Updated Tuesday, June 25 2013 8:14 AM



If you build it, they will come.

Right right right. Field of Dreams, it's actually "If you build it, he will come," but let's not split hairs. We've all heard the term before.

In real, present day baseball though, it goes along the lines of something like this.

If you buy it, they will come.

The Indians definitely purchased more than they purged this past offseason. Their idea was that if they bought it, maybe the fans would come. They also thought they'd win a few more games and better contend for the playoffs, but that alone would create some interest and fan support.

The number one criticism with the Dolan family has always been the same. Why do they not spend any money?

Let's be clear, the Dolans spend money, they just leave it up to the management to utilize what their allowed to spend in what way they want. Management knows they can't compete with the

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"Buy it and they will come teams" in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York. So why do that?

This year, things were different. The Dolan family had a little more money to offer [after the sale of Sportstime Ohio to FOX Sports](#)

. More money to spend and an attitude that basically said that they were fed up with the situation of not winning led to them bringing in the likes of Nick Swisher, Michael Bourn, and Mark Reynolds and keeping around guys like Asdrubal Cabrera, Chris Perez, and Justin Masterson. The

[payroll jumped a little over \\$15 million](#)

to \$80 million overall. Let's not forget they lured in Terry Francona, which is not cheap.

So here's the question that I think needs asked right now: Did the Dolan family renew their contract with the Cleveland Indians fan base?

I think the answer to that question is yes. If you think I'm wrong, too bad, we disagree and I think you're pretty much wrong. I was a little fed up with the front office and ownership after last season and the way it ended myself, and for that to happen, is saying something as I've been a staunch Dolan supporter from the get-go. I've been a believer in the plan and the circumstances the Indians have been operating in.

And because I think the answer to that question is yes, I have a new question that needs answered.

How come the Indians fans are not holding up their end of the contract? Wait, their end of the contract?

It is a contract after all, yes? Two sides agreed upon something, you sign a deal, right? I mean, was it not "Dolan is Cheap Fan" that constantly said "Until Dolan spends money on this team, I won't either."

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Correct me if I'm wrong, but you won't, because I'm not. I think it is time to hold up our end of the bargain, time to support the team that the ownership supported. Summer time is here, the weather is nice, the Indians are in second place and an exciting team to watch, and above all that, we actually love this team, do we not?

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The Cleveland Indians [rank second to last in all of baseball](#) as far as total attendance and average attendance. They've played in five more home games than division rival Chicago and still have 25,000 less fans. Their 17,879 average fan attendance is also behind their finishing average from 2012.

A last place Dodgers team is the tops in attendance, both in total and average and they've got six less wins than the Indians. That's okay. That's a big market. It is understandable that a team like the Dodgers are going to be doing well in attendance, especially since they too just spent a lot of money and are expecting to win.

But, look at the teams the Indians occupy the bottom five with. Miami, Tampa Bay, Houston, and Seattle. Two teams well below .500 and in the basement of the AL West, neither expecting to contend, the worst team in the major leagues with the no fanbase, and a team that is really good but can never draw any fans because of their location.

I mean, these are all lesser markets, don't get me wrong. These are teams in the same fan and payroll bracket as the Indians. After that comes Kansas City (also playing well), Chicago, Oakland, Pittsburgh, and San Diego. Oakland is in first place and Pittsburgh would be a NL wild card if the playoffs started today, but don't tell their fans that.

It isn't a Cleveland problem overall, most of these franchises cannot draw a crowd very well. The reality is that they are in towns where other sports are a priority and even though those other sports may not be playing, if you have 10 dollars in your wallet to spend on one thing and you have to choose between two, you have to make a decision.

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Are you going to spend that money on the Cleveland Browns or the Cleveland Indians? Most people, as sad as it may be based solely off the level of promise each team has shown, the Browns will get picked 8/10 times. This is the Cleveland fan base, they are a football town. The Indians could show all the promise in the world and the Browns could be coming off an 0-16 season and the Browns are still going to be the favorite team and the place people choose to put their money into.

Never mind the fact that it is cheaper to go to a baseball game, it is still expensive if you want to go to even one of them and go all out. Trust me, you could give me a ticket and I'd spend as little as possible and have a great time. I'll eat beforehand, not buy a drink, find the cheapest place to park and get out of there having spent as little as possible.

But if you take the whole family and are in that position to do so, you will be spending at least \$40 in tickets depending on where you sit (it only goes up from there if you are taking four people), you will pay to park, you will purchase food and beverage or go out to dinner before/after. You might as well go on a vacation when all is said and done.

The question is, how much do you love baseball? How much do you love your Cleveland Indians?

But even if you are the most hardcore fanatic of the Tribe, that doesn't mean you have the means to go and show it.

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I'm not going to pretend that I have an extensive history of ticket prices for the Boston Red Sox, but I'm only using them because they are the best case scenario we have to work with for the past few years. Let's just work with the bare minimum in with what I want to do.

What do I want to do? I want to figure out just how much a team can make in ticket sales, at

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least a floor, which means the actual number is much higher. We need somewhere to start.

The Red Sox over the past few years have been selling out every game. That streak ended this year in April at 820 overall home games, 794 regular season games. [Both numbers trump the Indians mark of 455](#) consecutive sellouts from the glory days by a mile.

If I wanted to purchase a bleacher ticket at Fenway Park, on a random Wednesday in July against a team like, oh I don't know, the Seattle Mariners, [it would cost me \\$38 dollars](#). A low draw, in the middle of the week, the cheapest ticket in the park; let's just say we are working with a \$40 dollar ticket. Take in mind, there are much more expensive tickets, ones that double and triple that, but remember we're working with a floor right now.

[With a seating capacity of 37,493](#), if the Sox were to sell each seat they had for that \$40 dollar price, that number alone would net them just short of \$1.5 million. Multiply that over the course of a 81 game regular season and we're talking about over \$121 million dollars.

Reminding us that the number I just figured out is an absolute floor if the Red Sox sell out every game, ticket prices alone would cover their \$154 million dollar payroll, easily. This isn't to account for concession stand profits, which are sure to be high as well given that you are selling out every game. Boston's total number of attendance last year? 3,043,003 fans in 81 games. What is that number times 40? Just about over \$121 million dollars.

Of course you pay a lot more than your payroll, from general ballpark utilities (likely a very large sum), to team travel, employees, and probably dozens of more things that I'm not choosing to list or forgetting. Now let's assume that the Indians are working with the average they have this season. Let's take that average and apply it to the 81 game regular season home schedule.

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