



A few weeks ago, when the playoffs were anything but assured, someone on twitter asked whether or not Pauly C. and I would combine for a joint, mega-edition of Lazy Sunday if the Indians made the playoffs. Well wouldn't you know it, but the wi-fi down in Del Boca Vista was working this week, and what started out as an innocent e-mail exchange turned into what you see before you here today. We're heading into the most important offseason for the Indians since the winter of 2007-08, when the 96-win Indians took the Red Sox to the brink of elimination in the ALCS, falling just one game short of a World Series berth (and eventual win over the Rockies, and no one will ever convince me otherwise). That club made only minor tweaks to what we all thought was a pretty solid roster, then promptly went out and fell flat on their faces in 2008, stumbling so badly that reigning Cy Young winner C.C. Sabathia was dealt in early July. Even a 22-3 (167 ERA+!) season from Cliff Lee couldn't save that club. There's a lot of pressure on Chris Antonetti and company to avoid a similar fate in 2014, as the Cleveland fanbase has shown an unwillingness to trust the front office and ownership group despite a playoff* season in 2013. So with that level of gravity established, it is with great pride that I bring to you the return of THE DiaTribe, The Westside Kid, the biggest Pat Tabler fan outside of the Tabler family...that's right, none other than Paul Cousineau himself! Time and schedule permitting, Pauly and I will try and get together for a little offseason miniseries, so consider this installment one of several still to come in the fall/winter months ahead.

Paul Cousineau: So if you're down at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario, [what "levers" are you pulling?](#)

Al Ciammaichella: To start, they need to figure out whether Ubaldo will pick up his end of his

option (which he won't, unless he's crazy). After he declines it, I think they need to figure out if he'll sign for a reasonable #, or if they just offer him the qualifying tender and move on with a draft pick. I think that's the most likely scenario. As good as he was in the 2nd half this year, that delivery still has a lot of moving parts, any of which can break down at any point and he turns back into 2012 Ubaldo. I just think he's better off being someone else's risk, especially at the \$\$ he'll command on the open market. Everything hinges on that decision though, and with the remote chance that the Big U will offer a big "hometown" discount for the team that kept giving him chances until he got himself right, that scenario has to be given a little bit of time to play itself out.

Next comes Kazmir. Is he worth 2 years/\$17 million? Yeah, probably, especially considering he'd be the only lefty in the rotation and there are no sure things to step up from the farm next year. They almost have to resign one of them, and I think Kazmir will come cheaper and with less risk (and lower upside). So after Ubaldo (likely) leaves, they need to do what it takes to bring Kaz back into the fold for next season.

Step 3 is feeling out the trade market for Asdrubal. Even if they have to trade him for \$.75 on the dollar, I think they have to move him to free up \$\$\$\$. You can't pay him \$10 million next year to be a replacement-level SS. By B-Ref's WAR, he was worth 1.2 wins last year. That's a CAREER LOW, including his rookie year when he only appeared in 45 games. Yikes. He reports to camp in lousy shape, is always dinged up throughout the season, and doesn't seem to be a team leader. With the raises coming to Bourn and Swish, they're going to need every dollar to maximize payroll. I'm not in love with Aviles, but he can keep SS warm until Lindor (who I am madly in love with) is ready. And I think Lindor will be ready at some point in 2014, and will be able to contribute enough with his glove that he'll be able to provide the value of Asdrubal at a fraction of the cost, and be 10 times more adorable while doing so.

What do you think they'll look to do?



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