



Whoaaaaaa! The Indians do not waste any time when the World Series is over. For the third straight year, they've made some big time decisions shortly after the last official game of the MLB season was played.

And one of them is going to dramatically impact their team and their offseason plan.

So with that, let's skip the gibberish and fluff and get right to the meaty part of our first big piece of offseason news because it is quite tasty.

[FIRE EXTINGUISHER, TRIBE CUT CP]

That's right, the Indians [have cut ties with their closer for the past few years](#) , **Chris Perez** in what was an unexpected first move of the offseason. The writing was pretty much on the wall that Perez would likely not be with Cleveland in 2014, but in the manner that this went down is

pretty surprising. The Indians wasted no time in cutting ties with their controversial back-end reliever who is due yet another raise in the arbitration process, his final year of it before free agency.

"He was arbitration-eligible again this year and he was due for another raise," Antonetti said. "We had to make some determinations of where our team needs are and how we're going to allocate our resources moving forward."

And this is why the Indians cut him. It has nothing to do with him getting charged with possession or the comments or anything. This had everything to do with money. You don't pay a closer what could be close to a \$10 million dollar salary. And considering he would get that in the process, why would he sign a shorter deal?

Now he can go on the market, and while he may not make \$9 million next year, he'll get some long term security, because despite all the rigmarole about him, there will be a team out there willing to pay him some money to closer or be a primary arm out of the pen, because that's something he can do, despite how this season ended. He's going to get healthy, and you know he'll be super motivated to pitch well next year to show he still has it.

The move is curious from Cleveland's case because the thought surely is, "you could get something for him, right?"

Wrong, unless there is a team out there that thinks paying him nearly \$10 million for one season is a good idea. Which, there likely is not. The Indians have done their research, they surely have figured out what Perez would go for for on the market and they surely figured out that no team would trade anything of real worth for Perez knowing that they'll have to pay him way more than it makes sense to.

You look at a guy in Joe Nathan who has an option for \$9 million this offseason. The Rangers may not even exercise that for a guy who was really good last year. So that kind of sets a good standard for you in evaluating what kind of market would be out there and what others teams would be willing to pay .

So that is likely why they had to resort to simply cutting him. There is no opportunity to get anything for him other than to trade him, and that was not something that was going to net the Indians much of a gain. And the Indians decided, in no way did he fit their team, even at a lower price.

"We worked through our offseason planning process in our meetings," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said, "and we made the determination that Chris wouldn't be a fit on our roster next year. Once we got clarity on that, we felt it made sense just to move forward with the transaction now rather than wait."

The Indians clarity is our clarity, because we can now begin to see the plan of attack for the Indians this offseason in regards to their bullpen. Yes, Joe Smith is a free agent so that will be something interesting to look at and consider. But it likely does not play into their plans for a closer. Antonetti went on to delve into what the Indians may be considering and it looks to be two internal candidates with **Bryan Shaw** and **Cody Allen**.

"I'm confident in the guys we have internally," Antonetti said. "Cody Allen and Bryan Shaw are two guys, specifically, who have demonstrated the attributes you're looking for in a closer. They've got a good combination of stuff and performance, and they've both pitched in high-leverage roles this past season and got very meaningful outs for us on a very competitive team. So I'm confident that one of those two guys could potentially do that role, if we get to Spring Training and we feel that's the best alignment. At the same time, we're not going to limit ourselves as we go into the offseason. We will search for opportunities to improve the 'pen. That could come in the form of an established Major League closer, or it could come in the form of us bringing in more guys with bullpen experience, and then we'll potentially look to Cody or Bryan to close games to start the year."

So what we get from that, Allen and Shaw specifically named by Antonetti. No Pestano, no Smith. Smith probably because he's a free agent, but I would think that even if they re-sign him, they won't be inserting him into the closer's role because of how valuable he is in terms of how many innings he can pitch and the situations they can use him in. It just doesn't make sense to close some guys, even if they could do it.

It makes sense to put Cody Allen in a ninth inning role. And to replace him, you go out and deepen the rest of the pen, which is something Antonetti mentioned. I think the Indians will load up on some more experienced arms, go with an internal candidate, and let things work out from

there. Sure you don't want uncertainty, but I'm sure after the dust settles in Spring Training, the Indians will have a closer, or at least a plan in place.

The Indians showed some slight intentions of that plan in the past week, not just with the acquisition they made yesterday, but the move they made last week. First off, they added lefty **Colt Hynes**

from the San Diego Padres. Hynes is a bit of a late-bloomer having made his major league debut this past season at the age of 28. He did not fare well in 17 innings, giving up 17 earned runs, striking out 13 and walking 9. He was pretty shutout in the minor leagues though, going 2-0 with a 1.52 ERA in 47 innings. He is a lefty specialist though and in the majors he did hold them to a .156 average compared to the .476 right-handers hit off of him.

"He's been extraordinarily effective against left-handed hitters," Antonetti said of Hynes. "He actually recently -- this past year -- lowered his arm slot a little bit and was dominant against left-handed hitters in Triple-A and was very effective against them at the Major League level."

It will be interesting to see how he plays into the pen, because the Indians certainly could use another lefty to go along with Letters that isn't named Rich Hill. [The Indians acquired Hynes from the Padres](#) in exchange for cash, as Hynes was designated for assignment last week. He is now on the Indians 40-man roster.

Last week, [the Indians also re-signed Matt Capps](#), the veteran righty who spent all of last season nursing a shoulder injury. He made just six appearances for the Clippers before opting for surgery. So they'll definitely be adding him to the mix just as he was last year. 100 percent unlikely he figures into a closer situation from the outset, but that's just another experienced arm you add to the depth of the team to get a guy like Allen or Shaw in the back end. And these are the types of guys the Indians may go after, only they made make a guaranteed deal with someone, especially if Joe Smith isn't retained.

And all of this, not possible if the Indians bring back Chris Perez. That's a lot of money to devote to one spot in that bullpen and even now with the \$7+ million Perez earned last year, the Indians have some room to maneuver, be it in the pen or outside of it.

This all being said, no one is going to miss Chris Perez. A lot of fans are on his bad side. The ones that aren't don't particularly care for him. And the ones who are neither, like me, supported him for their own reasons. Mine? I have had correspondence with him, so I have a soft spot for him, regardless of what he's done or said. I don't think he is a bad guy and I think he has gotten a bad rap for essentially caring too much. The stuff that he has said in the past is out of passion.

You may have not agreed with it, and that's fine, you aren't supposed to agree with everything everyone says. I'm sad that it couldn't have ended better for Perez and the Indians and that in the end, his tenure was one that will be looked at as a failure because it really wasn't. He had a good career here and stabilized a position that has long been a tumultuous one for quite some time. It would have been nice to have a better fate, but that isn't how it works most of the time in baseball.

This was the right move to make though. He was due too much money and it does not make sense to put that much coin into one spot. It was time to move on and it is time for the Indians to be looking towards improving and deepening their bullpen, and they can't do that if they are paying Perez.

[THE BIG G IS BACK!]

Letting Perez go wasn't it. The Indians had to make a few more waves. The Indians wasted no time and didn't let **Jason Giambi** get involved in any managerial searches, [they re-signed him to another minor league deal](#)

"I don't think there's any better way to start our offseason than re-signing Jason," Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said. "He made such a huge impact on our team. He embodies everything we're looking for in our players -- his professionalism, the way he works, the way he prepares for a game, the teammate that he is, the energy he brings to the team and the clubhouse."

And while it is a minor league deal, it seems almost certain that Giambi will end up on the active roster. Perhaps the minor league part just lets the Indians be flexible this offseason in using

their 40-man roster. And perhaps that is the agreement the Indians and him have. Giambi knows he'll be there, the Indians know he'll be there, this simply helps them maneuver in the offseason and make the necessary moves when they need to.

This was a move that needed to happen. Giambi means so much to this team, and it is impossible to see the Indians without Giambi's presence again. 100-percent the right move.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

It seems unlikely then that the Indians would have any interest in full-time DH Billy Butler, who is owed \$20 million over the course of the next two years, and would take [some sort of return for the Royals to deal him](#)

But it is interesting to look at KC's willingness to trade off the guy who I think really makes that lineup what it is. He is their guy in the middle of that lineup. He is the guy that makes Hosmer better in front of him and the people behind him better. If they deal him, that would be a significant blow in the here and now.

What I think the Indians could be interested in, in a more realistic way is starter **Jake Westbrook**

, [W ho had his option declined by the Cardinals yesterday](#)

. The former Indian becomes a free agent and the guy continues to maintain as he gets older, but has seen a few bumps in the road with his elbow last year. What makes Westbrook appealing other than his former ties to the club? Perhaps the fact that you may be able to get him on a minor league deal and the Indians are known to go for that type of add on.

I think the Indians would want a few solid depth options and if they could get Westbrook at the right price (read, no price at all initially to bring into camp), it wouldn't hurt.

Might have mentioned that Manny Acta was possibly in the running for the Cubs opening, along with Sandy Alomar Jr. Well perhaps Manny Acta [is also a candidate further up north](#) with the division rival Tigers, who now have an attractive opening with Jim Leyland retiring.

I know, what does this have to do with the Indians directly? Not much, but indirectly, it is incredibly interesting to think of Acta with the Indians most bitter rival.

And no doubt a move a lot of people in Cleveland would like to see. I personally think that Acta would be a great hire for the Tigers because of the makeup of their team. Acta wore out his welcome with the ballclub and I think it had to do with the youth of the team. It happened in Washington too. I think he is more of a manager suited for an older more veteran-like squad. That really is what being a manager is, being a fit for your team personality-wise.

Of course, you have your rare guys that are just awesome and can fit into any situation because the situation fits with them. But then you have situations like the one in Detroit and one that I think Acta would slide right into and do well with. That team's personality seems to fit the rigid and more tough exterior of Acta. One that would be respected by his veteran clubhouse.

Again, not a direct effect to the Indians, but something we should obviously care about considering how many times the Indians play the Tigs, and even more curiously because Acta used to manage in Cleveland.

Finally, just a friendly reminder that voting is [on-going for this year's Bro of the Year](#) , your chance to pick the Indians something of the year. Player of the year? I mean, sure, you can go with that. But it's BRO of the Year and Bro is whatever you want it to be. So vote for whoever you want to be whatever you want. Because, that's awesome.

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