



If you have been a regular reader of mine for a long time, you will probably remember how I used to do offseasons in Cleveland. Or you probably don't. I seriously don't remember vividly. I know I used to do some offseason awards and then some other random things that a younger, less-busier version of myself had the ideas to do.

Here's the deal. I'm one man, one man with graduate school, an assistantship, a part time job, big boy chores that you have when you live on your own, and of course, the good old actual life. The thing is, I have time to sit around here and profile players, get a chart laid out, list targets, all that fun stuff that I used to do.

If anything though, I didn't do it to do it, I did it to keep myself in the know. And that was great. I sat down to get started on some of this stuff and then it hit me.

I don't want to do any of that. I also don't need to do any of that. Because here's the thing about this here offseason with the Cleveland Indians. It is sort of predictable. Yet, the parts that you can't predict are usually the ones that I sit here trying to figure out.

So I'm going to take the same approach that I did last season. Come to me if you want to hear about the news that happens or if you wanna see me rant about a particular thing that I read about and link to. Come to me if you want that different look at the Indians and their offseason as it progresses. And just come to me if you want to see me make a whole bunch of ridiculous analogies, which I will do in this upcoming piece on Scott Kazmir that will be up this week.

If you want to see a profile of someone the Indians may target, there are plenty of excellent

places [out there doing that](#) . If you want to see a plan of attack as well as some well-thought out awards and season recap posts, [you have places to go](#) . Fact of the matter is, I keep abreast on that through the other blogs that are already doing that, so I'm not going to reinvent the wheel so to speak.

What I'm going to do is chime in once or twice a week, maybe more if it gets busy, on the latest happenings. Because that's what I do. I was thinking the other day how this used to be an actual daily occurrence during the year and that I would have two, sometimes three posts a day.

Not get into a history lesson for you both readers on TCF and the blog, but I'd like to think that there has been this evolution to what we do now. I think it is better, and I think it serves the purpose and fills a little space in the big picture that is Indians analysis on the web.

What I definitely don't do is take questions about why the Indians didn't draft a particular player. And at the risk of sending more useless clicks his way, I'll simply tell you that you missed nothing in the latest Hey Hoynsie, and you shouldn't bother reading.

I don't have one particular topic to go over in this rundown, so, in a bit of a first. The straight-up rundown edition.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

I will send some clicks his way for this one, because he is the only guy talking about it that I can find, but Paul Hoynes had something on **Ubaldo Jimenez** and how [it is expected he is going to decline](#) the qualifying offer the Indians made him.

Uh duh. Today is the day that Ubaldo has to make a decision on if he is accepting or declining and he will most definitely decline that and become an outright free agent. That isn't quite the topic at hand. What I wanted to bring to light, just to reiterate that pitching will be sought after this offseason and he will get a good deal somewhere, is that Ervin Santana and Ricky Nolasco

[are both searching for salaries](#)

north of \$70 million. Santana wants triple digits, Nolasco \$80 million. But don't think that they won't get something close to it.

Which means Ubaldo is going to get himself a deal, and the Indians are going to get a draft pick. Was it really so risky to be extended that qualifying offer after all?

Today is also the start of the GM meetings in Orlando. So there is a bit more. Also from the Hoynes article is the pieces of info that it is likely the Indians lose all four of their free agent pitchers and what they might lose them to. Kazmir, more on that this week as I noted above, would like multiple years and the Indians want a one year deal. **Joe Smith** and **Matt Albers** are also looking for multiple years beyond what the Indians would prefer and as we've seen in the past, the Indians will not budge in this, even if it is just an extra year. Oh, Joe Smith you want three? Too bad, we want two, we'll find a replacement.

And that's exactly what the club will do. And the Indians can do that because they feel comfortable about their pitching depth, and they expect to add on, look at what Antonetti said.

"We have seven quality major league alternatives in the starting rotation with Justin Masterson, Danny Salazar, Corey Kluber, Zach McAllister, Carlos Carrasco, Josh Tomlin and Trevor Bauer. And we have some talented pitchers in the back end of the bullpen."

Primarily, the Indians figure to focus in on a veteran starter and an arm or two in the pen, and from there, Antonetti [told Jim Bowden on the good old medium of radio](#) that bullpen and a "complimentary bat" are the biggest needs in the offseason.

So, it appears as if the Indians are ready for Smith, and even Albers to leave for other destinations. Maybe Albers comes crawling back if he can't find what he exactly wants, but Smith should be a coveted arm. The Rockies, [who are aiming to strengthen their terrible bullpen](#), are in pursuit of Smith.

That means a focus towards adding options in any way they can. We saw the Hynes add on

and that was just a small piece. You could see a guaranteed deal, but I think you'll most likely see more signings like the Capps variety. Relievers are dime a dozen and if you hit on one coming back, you can save a lot of cash and a lot of headaches. Multi-years are dangerous and that is why you won't see the Indians budge on giving Smitty anything longer than a two-year contract.

That is also the reason you won't see Joe Smith settle for anything less. Relievers need to take advantage of any sort of long term security that they can get because you can have on bad year and be tossed on your butt. Just look at how teams probably won't give Chris Perez anything longer than a one or two year deal and not nearly what he would have made in arbitration.

Speaking of long term deals, the last piece of that Hoynes article is a note on how the Indians are going to try and work on a contract extension for starter **Justin Masterson**. When they plan on that is unknown but I would have to imagine it will be after they make all their major offseason moves and have a better idea of their Opening Day payroll.

Either way, I think it is worth exploring. If this team is going to contend beyond 2014 they need to have a guy like Masterson in the mix and you have to figure he has four or so more years of this level of production. Buy out his last arbitration year and make it worth signing long term. He's as durable as they come in terms of starting pitchers and the end of last season showed that if something like what flared up does occur, he can work through it.

More on extensions. This is way too early to think about it, but if **Danny Salazar** has a rockin' good year next year, I'd almost think about a deal that looks [similar to the one the Rangers just gave out](#) to young rookie Martin Perez and in similar fashion to what the Indians did with Fausto Carmona, when he was still Fausto. Perez got a four year deal with three club options that eats into free agent years.

A young pitcher is almost crazy to not take that guaranteed money that buys out not just arb years, but pre-arb years, but they have to realize they are losing a few free agent years as well. Still, it is so early in someone's career that it makes sense to have that longevity. The team signing the deal is in a no-lose situation because if somethings happens ala what happened to Carmona Hernandez, the options don't have to be picked up.

Just something to ponder going forward.

The Indians [made some moves last week](#) in terms of their 40 man, activating 60 day disabled list players Scott Barnes, Frank Herrmann, Lou Marson, and Cord Phelps. With Perez's release, and all the free agents, there was plenty of room to do such.

I almost don't want to get excited and think **Terry Francona** [will win the Manager of the Year Award](#), but how could he not? I mean, I know, John Farrell did a great job and he deserves it too, and that's the pick most people will make because it is up in Boston. So that's why I don't want to get excited.

But part of me wants to because of such a good case he has. It was nice that he was at least nominated. And what Vinnie Pestano would say in that above link sparks something else I've been thinking about.

"If Tito doesn't come here, I don't think we make the moves that we made," Indians reliever Vinnie Pestano said in September. "I think when the front office made the commitment to Tito, they were also making a commitment to fill out this roster. He was definitely the first domino to fall."

Look at this roster right now and some of the holes that have opened up because of free agency. Don't think that this team isn't going to make a move. And don't think Tito won't have anything to do with it. Something will happen and it will be because of Francona in some way. He just has a way of influencing players and swinging them in the Indians favor. Not to mention he can prove that this team is a winner by pointing to this past season. One year and he has a team in the playoffs. What will he do in his second year?

Look back to a few years ago when Carlos Beltran was a free agent and decided to sign with the Cardinals over the Indians despite the Indians offering one more year than St. Louis. Would he still make that selection had this been the situation last time around? I'm not going to say yes, but it would definitely be more of a decision for him.

The Indians are in no way going to be pursuing Beltran, he wants an even longer deal and will get it given his stability the past few years, but I'd almost be interested to see if he would listen this time around if the Indians had a need and made an offer. I bet you it would entice him just a little more.

Speaking of managers, three spots have filled up and it is now guaranteed that the Indians will once again hold onto **Sandy Alomar Jr.** Look, Sandy has a long career of managing and coaching ahead of him, so he will get a shot one day and it is nice to have him again. But seriously, how much longer will it take?

The Cubs didn't go with Alomar or even Manny Acta, [they hired Rick Renteria](#), a relatively unknown commodity because he didn't have a big playing career. And thankfully he isn't related to Edgar. The Mariners replaced old friend Eric Wedge [with old nemesis Lloyd McClendon](#), who didn't get the job in Detroit (Brad Ausmus did, interesting....) and is a former skipper for the Pirates.

Former Indian Matt Williams has the job in Washington to round out the new managers, joining Bryan Price in Cincinnati, and yet again Sandy is on the outside looking in of the manager carousel.

Finally on the lighter notes, if you are not familiar with the section on the blog that details things that no one else would really care about, perhaps it is time to brush up, because it is now time to update it with one of the last remaining pieces (in my opinion at least) of weird Progressive Field quarks and characters.

A few years ago I got an e-mail from a reader named John asking me if I had any clue about some gentleman who was wearing all yellow with an LED belt buckle. I immediately knew who he was talking about because I've encountered him, just about every time (or so it seems like) I attended a Tribe game. Only I've seen him in shirts that would say "I'm a sexy mother father" or something to that ilk.

I was overjoyed, almost to the point of a small kid on Christmas when [I saw this incredible post on Cleveland Scen](#) e by the great Vince Grzegorek. Turns out that this gentlemen is actually more famous for his exploits at the mall, which is why he's actually called Mall Guy and not "Weird LED Belt Guy" at Indians games. But you'll be happy to know that he spends his hard earned money on 25 or so Indians games a year.

This man just went up five extra points in my book.

The opening few paragraphs hits it though. He isn't always at Indians games, but it feels like he is. Because it feels like every time I'm there, I see him and his colorful attire.

Oh Mall Guy, another mystery solved... Now we just have to figure out what happened to neon hat guy (I hope he is still alive) and what the story is behind the old guy in the feathered head dress.

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