

The Indians will take a big step today towards shoring up the future of the starting rotation, signing Jake Westbrook to a three year contract extension that will keep him with the team through the 2010 season. Reports are that the extension is for three years, and worth 33 million dollars. Press conference: 4:30 on Sportstime Ohio!Details and analysis inside ...



The Indians will take a big step today towards shoring up the future of the starting rotation, signing Jake Westbrook to a three year contract extension that will keep him with the team through the 2010 season. Reports are that the extension is for three years, and worth 33 million dollars. Westbrook's agent, Ron Shapiro, is the father of Indians GM Mark Shapiro. The team has scheduled a 4:30 PM EST press conference, which will be shown live on Sportstime Ohio. Coverage will be within "All Bets Are Off with Bruce Drennan", which begins at 3:00 PM, with coverage of the press conference continuing after and throughout the show.

Simply put, Westbrook has been as consistent as they come for the Tribe since the 2004 season. He's one of just four pitchers in the AL to post at least 14 wins in each of the last three seasons, and made 30+ starts and had over 210 innings pitched each of those years. Jake was an All-Star in 2004, a season he ended up finishing third in ERA (3.38) and tied for first in complete games (5). And he's done all this as an extreme groundball pitcher on a team that always hasn't had the best infield defense.

Westbrook was the 21st overall pick of the 1996 draft out of Madison Country High School by the Rockies. He was dealt by Colorado to the Expos in 1997 as part of a package for infielder Mike Lansing. The Expos then dealt Jake and Ted Lilly to the Yankees for Hideko Irabu. He was then acquired by the Indians as the player to be named later in the deal that saw the Tribe send Dave Justice to the Yankees.

The signing really solidifies the Indians rotation into the near future. C.C. Sabathia is still under contract for this year and next year. Cliff Lee was signed to an extension shortly after last season ended. The team controls the rights to Jeremy Sowers for several more seasons. And top prospect Adam Miller is waiting in the wings, likely set to replace Paul Byrd no later than the start of next season.

As an alert reader [pointed out in our Indians message forum](#) , Westbrook's career here has been very similar to the first half of Charlie Nagy's career as an Indian. One can only hope that Westbrook's next four years with the team are as solid as Nagy's stretch with the team in the late nineties. The team is now likely to turn their attention to extending slugger Travis Hafner, [who is still under contract with the team for another two seasons](#)

.