

Every season, the Major League Baseball trading deadline throws fans of teams all across the country into a tizzy. Fans assault message boards with unrealistic trade proposals and spend the next couple of weeks leading into the deadline thinking up ways that every star from any team under .500 could make their way to their favorite team. This just in, says Brian McPeck ... there hasn't been a blockbuster deadline deal since we dealt Colon to the Expos in 2002.



***“Among the more notable players changing uniforms were Preston Wilson, Bret Boone, Joe Randa, Matt Lawton, Kyle Farnsworth, Jody Gerut, Jay Payton, Eric Byrnes, Shawn Chacon and Phil Nevin.”***

**Jim Molony, MLB.com, August 1, 2005**

Notable is a relative term.

While Jody Gerut, Joe Randa and Shawn Chacon are probably more notable and recognizable than you and me, they are hardly big names in baseball. Yet here we sit, a couple days away from the trade deadline date again, this time in 2007, and I can't help but notice ESPN's "COUNTDOWN TO THE TRADE DEADLINE" clock prominently displayed on their website, as it has been at this time the last few years, filled with empty promises and false hope.

2005's lack of trade action and drama did little to dampen ESPN's excitement for 2006. The old countdown clock was back in 2006 and it paid dividends. People logged on and were treated to the deal of the season: Bobby Abreu to the Yankees for four of their lower level prospects.

That was pretty much it.

A broken down Nomar to the Cubs in 2004 featured 4 teams but just Garciaparra and Orlando Cabrera as guys people may have heard of. In 2003 the Giants dealing for difference maker Sidney Ponson and the Yankees picking up Aaron Boone from the Reds headlined the trades made.

The Bartolo Colon to the Montreal Expos deal in 2002 may be the last blockbuster deal that occurred involving a successful (Colon was 11-1 at the time of the deal) player who was also in the prime of his career. The Indians, of course, sent Colon and Tim Drew to the Expos for Lee Stevens and a few prospects named Grady Sizemore, Cliff Lee and Brandon Phillips.

So how to explain the trade infatuation and the buildup that takes place prior to the deadline?

It can be tied in to two things. One is human nature and the other has to do with the game itself.

It's human nature to want something for nothing. All the better if you're getting a whole lot for nothing. Most baseball fans recognize big names. They'll also recognize smaller names made bigger by local and national media attention.

For example, there are few fans (outside the hard core fans wandering this site) that have any knowledge about Octavio Dotel. They have no idea where he's from, they have no idea how old he is, who he pitched for previously or how well he did, and they have no idea what pitches he throws for outs.

But they know they want him. Mostly because they've heard the rumors and the speculation. So now he's an object of desire for them because he can help the beloved home team win some ballgames.

They can conceivably have him for another guy few of them have heard of: Ben Francisco. Now, they don't care whether this deal makes sense on any level. They are told they need bullpen help, they can have bullpen help in the form of Dotel, and they get it all for a guy they never heard of.

That's getting something for nothing.

The other contributing factor is the game itself. It lends itself so easily to second-guessing and even casual fans are expert at that. Everyone looks back at a decision in a game and makes a judgment on how it turned out. More so when it turns out badly. Look at these boards light up when Wedge brings in a pitcher to face a hitter in a match up he likes. Never mind the fact his decision was based on years of data being accrued analyzed and pored over. If it doesn't work, he's an idiot. Not because people have pored over the same data and determined he should have gone with someone else. Simply because it didn't work out.

The MLB trade deadline is second-guessing on steroids, fittingly enough. It's actually first guessing without ramifications for being wrong. We're told we need to get someone. Team X has someone. Let's get him for prospects and promises. Now get it done.

You have to believe the fans of the Expos were ecstatic when they fleeced the struggling Indians for Colon. And while the situation was different for the Expos given they were soon to be the Nationals, the fans of the Nationals are probably feeling less giddiness over the deal.

It's all about short-term gain and damn the repercussions. So ESPN will continue to attract fans to the site with the countdown clock and Rumor Central and fans will continue to demand their teams get them something for nothing. And hopefully, those responsible for the long-term well being of the Tribe will continue to tread lightly and pay no attention to us or the media outlets that feed the frenzy.