

In Cassano's latest, he addresses the rumors in the most recent copy of ESPN The Magazine that say that the Cavs and the Bucks are discussing a deal where they would send Drew Gooden to Milwaukee for center Jamal Magloire. Papa Cass speculates that this could in turn lead to a deal of Big Z, and he's not sure how much he likes that idea.



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A recent rumor in ESPN The Magazine might be another example of ESPN stirring the rumor mill by reporting conjecture as fact. We in Cleveland can only hope so.

The magazine reported that the Cavaliers are trying to get restricted free agent Drew Gooden to agree to a sign-and-trade deal so they can ship him to the Bucks for Jamaal Magloire. The deal, ESPN says, would allow the Cavs to rid themselves of Zydrunas Ilgauskas in a subsequent trade.

A great many fans would hold a parade down Euclid Avenue if the Cavs found a way to dump Z. His critics point to the fact that he has a terrible lack of athleticism, long injury history, pet moves he falls in love with and a history of coming up short in big games.

(Ironically, that essentially makes him the basketball equivalent of Bernie Kosar, who is revered as a legend in Cleveland. But that's another story for another time.)

But unless a Z trade yields a stud power forward, I fail to see how a Gooden-for-Magloire/get rid of Z sequence makes the Cavs a better team.

You might think Z is a stiff and Gooden is terminally inconsistent, but be careful what you wish for. Z isn't going to land you Kevin Garnett or Allen Iverson, so get that out of your head right now. The most talented power forward the Cavs could reasonably expect to land in a trade this summer is Kenyon Martin, and he's vastly overpaid and overrated in equal amounts.

Ben Wallace in a sign and trade? Not bleemin' likely.

Once the sexy names are crossed off the "who can we get for Z?" list, the appeal of Jamaal Magloire in the pivot drops like a rock.

Essentially, you'd be trading a stable-if-not-spectacular center in Z and a flawed-but-athletic power forward in Gooden to get Magloire and an unknown quantity alongside him.

Magloire averaged double figures in rebounds in only one season: 2003-04. That year, a weak crop of Eastern Conference centers allowed him an all-star berth. Not exactly what you want if you think Z doesn't grab enough rebounds.

Z's career averages: 15.0 points and 7.7 rebounds. Magloire's career averages: 9.5 points and 7.8 rebounds. If you are expecting Magloire to come in and do what Z can't, you are mistaken.

Alongside Magloire could be a conveyor belt's worth of underproductive power forwards. Start Anderson Varejao, you say? OK, but you'll lose that depth off the bench he provides. Remember, Varejao can't stay out of foul trouble, so if he starts, the probability of him spending many second quarters and third quarters glued to the bench is high.

Reggie Evans has been rumored as a possible Cavs target this summer. You know, the guy who got fresh with Chris Kaman in the playoffs? He could be a rebounding machine for the Cavs. Or he could be nothing more than a part-time player as he has been in Denver. He's undersized for a power forward at 6'-8," so I am leery of signing him with the idea that you are going to hand him the starting power forward's job and leave him there.

Look at the tandem of Z and Gooden. Then look at a frontcourt with Magloire and a power-forward-by-committee of Varejao, Evans and Donyell Marshall. Do it before you wish on a star that Z is drop-kicked out of town.

This is supposed to be the summer that the Cavs turn the corner toward becoming a legitimate title contender. For a team that won 50 games and reached the seventh game of the second round in the playoffs, I doubt that corner is going to be turned by dismantling the frontcourt and rebuilding it with masking tape.