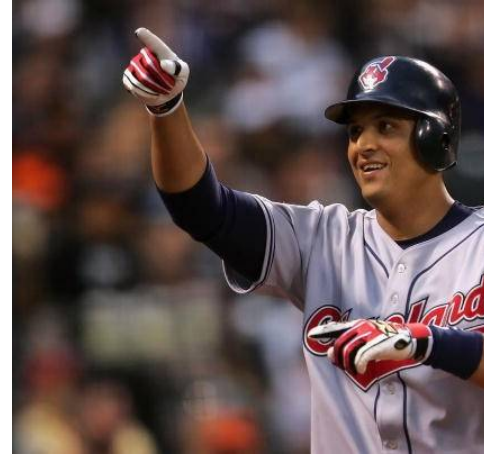


Farewell To El Capitan

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As the expected purge initiated by the Lee deal continues, Victor Martinez is on his way to Boston for Red Sox RHP Justin Masterson, LHP Nick Hagadone, and RHP Bryan Price (the latter two pitching in A ball) as the movement to jam as many arms as possible into the organization in the shortest amount of time continues with El Capitan making his way (quite unfortunately) to a team that cannot be cheered for. Paulie C checks in to say goodbye to Vic the Stick, and also take a look at the prospects acquired from Boston.



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Nobody should feign surprise at the news that Victor finds himself on another team today as the move was obviously coming once the writing on the wall from the Cliff Lee had dried in that the Indians felt that their window of opportunity to contend past this year was slim enough for them to simply make a clean break from their current (or at least as of last week, current) "core" group of players and cast an eye toward the future, stockpiling as many players as they possibly could for the next decade.

Of course, this knowledge that it was coming isn't going to make it any easier to think about Victor donning a Red Sox uniform, but the emotional chasm that we already have found this week almost doesn't allow any further sadness or despair...though it certainly doesn't feel that way knowing El Capitan is going to the Dark Side.

As for the return for Vic the Stick, it would seem that the Indians netted the MLB-ready arm, ready to join their rotation or (less likely) their bullpen from Day 1 in Masterson and two more high risk/high reward...wait for it...power arms into the system.

[Justin Masterson](#) is obviously the most advanced of the three and comes to the Indians with an interesting skill set as a sinkerballer who was a dominant starter for the Red Sox in the Minors (career MiLB stats - 3.79 ERA, 1.18 WHIP, 7.5 K/9, 2.3 BB/9, 3.27 K/BB) until he made the transition last year to the bullpen and moved very quickly into the back-end of the Boston bullpen, where he thrived to the tune of a 3.16 ERA, a 146 ERA +, and a 1.22 WHIP while solidifying the Red Sox relief corps.

As for this year, Masterson is a now-24-year-old RHP who has pitched 72 innings to date for Boston, starting in 6 of the 31 games he's pitched in, but also finishing 4 of the 31 games he's pitched in, showcasing the versatility that he has as either a starter or as a reliever. To date on the year, he has posted a 4.50 ERA and a 1.35 WHIP with 67 K and 25 BB over those 72 IP. Interestingly, his numbers this year look mildly similar in terms of what he's done as a starter and as a reliever:

Starter 2009 - 6 games

4.58 ERA, 1.44 WHIP, .778 OPS against in 35 1/3 IP

Reliever 2009 - 25 games

4.42 ERA, 1.26 WHIP, .715 OPS against in 36 2/3 IP

How the Indians plan on using him remains to be seen, though it would certainly seem that there would be some opportunity in the rotation with Lee gone and Pavano likely to not make it through August...if even today. Masterson's arm intrigues and he's definitely experienced success at the MLB level as a reliever with the track record in the Minors that he may be simply an extended chance away from thriving in a MLB rotation, though his MLB splits (.601 OPS against vs. RH batters, .820 OPS against vs. LH batters in his 160 1/3 MLB innings) are a little concerning for a pitcher that you would hope to be a middle-of-the-rotation option.

Past Masterson, the Indians netted the #8 prospect (Hagadone) and #10 prospect (Price) in a loaded Red Sox system prior to the season, [as ranked by Baseball Prospectus](#); [Kevin Goldstein](#) with the idea that the Indians continue to just add power arm after power arm into an organization that was previously bereft of them is the solution to the ails of the 2009 pitching staff, rotation and bullpen included.

[Hagadone](#) is a big (6-5/230) LHP who throws a 96-98 MPH fastball, complemented by a hit-and-miss slider and a still-developing changeup and whose 2008 season was derailed by Tommy John surgery, which he is now only starting to work his way back from. Despite being a college reliever, he has started all 23 (yes...just 23) games he's appeared in while in the Red Sox organization and his numbers to date look solid as he's posted a 2.52 ERA and a 1.08 WHIP with 32 K to 14 BB in the 25 1/3 innings he's pitched this year in A-ball as a 23-year-old. While his age and short time in the minors certainly raise some red flags, Hagadone is a power pitcher that can either likely slot into the rotation or the bullpen as time goes on, bringing his power arsenal with him...continued health, of course, assumed.

The other big, flamethrowing arm (have we received any other kind of arm this trading season) is [Price](#), a 6-4/210 RHP who, like Hagadone, was a reliever in college at Rice and boasts a 92-95 MPH fastball and a power slider, though his command of those pitches have resulted in some high BB rates (2.9BB/9 this year) to go along with his ability to induce swings and misses (as his 9.1 K/9 this year shows). He's started 28 of the 31 games he's pitched in for the Red Sox organization and, again like Hagadone, could slot eventually as a power reliever if the Indians make the decision to move him out of the rotation.

When it's all said and done, the edict to concentrate on pitching when making these trades (once the decision was made to make these trades) has certainly bore some fruit as it's difficult to even keep track of all of the names that the Indians have added to their organization for future years.

Obviously, this move does not come as a surprise and does not come without some emotion attached to it as Victor has become unquestionably one of the most popular players of the post-90's Indians teams. But the trade of Lee signaled that the overhaul was on and keeping Martinez past today (which could certainly be looked at his point of highest value going forward) was tantamount to not going all the way in terms of making the complete shift to the future.

It hurts right now...it really does.

But it kind of feels like we're tearing off a band-aid and we might as well get in all the pain that we can at once to let that next stage begin as soon as possible.