

With the Indians 18.5 games out of first place 87 games into the season, their post season aspirations have long been dead in the water. Papa Cass is in favor of dealing as many players as possible who will not likely be here in 2007, and doing everything humanly possible to improve next years version of this team. In this excellent piece, Cassano breaks down all the Indians players likely to be on the block, and what the Tribe can realistically expect to get in return for them.



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We know that the Indians are seven games under .500. We know their 18 1/2-game deficit in the division is their worst since the abysmal 105-loss season of 1991.

We know that all logic states that this team should throw in the towel on 2006 and look to next year. Still, letting go of a season with 70-plus games remaining seems so defeatist. And when you factor in what the Indians could receive by purging the roster of most of its veterans, it almost makes sense to hold onto your seasoned players and let the season ride, wherever it's going.

But that would be too inactive for my tastes. Which means the Dolans will probably love it.

If GM Mark Shapiro succeeds in trading off all of his expendable veterans, it would leave the Indians with a pool of grit to try and sift through, looking for a few gold flakes that might or might not be there.

Below I size up with the Indians could reasonably expect to get for some of the team's tradeable veterans, and whether trading the player would even make sense.

Bob Wickman

What the Indians could get for him: A halfway-decent major league bullpen pitcher, fourth outfielder and/or a solid minor-league pitching prospect.

Trade value is: Increasing. Bullpen help is hard to find, and if they wait until right before the trade deadline, the Indians might find a desperate team willing to overpay.

Would trading him make sense? Yes. Wickman will almost certainly not be back next year. He might even retire. Fausto Carmona has looked good enough to merit a shot at the closer's role for the remainder of the season, at least when a save situation comes up.

On pace for 90 losses, this team is not in need of a fulltime closer right now.

Aaron Boone

What the Indians could get for him: cash and a marginal prospect or two.

Trade value is: Steady. Let's face it, it can't get much lower.

Would trading him make sense? Yes. The only reason for the front office to hold prospect Andy Marte back is the fear that he will struggle and make the Coco Crisp trade look like a bust. Sooner or later, Marte is going to need to be given his shot to stick in the bigs.

Ronnie Belliard

What the Indians could get for him: another big-league infielder (a must), maybe a solid minor-league prospect at Class A or AA.

Trade value is: Steady. He's already been a commonly-spoken name in trade rumors. I expect Shapiro has been and will continue to field calls concerning Belliard.

Does trading him make sense? Only if they get another second baseman in return. The Indians have virtually no organizational depth in the middle infield, so if they don't get a replacement for Belliard, the options are to play out the string with Ramon Vazquez (eek!) or rush recently-acquired Asdrubal Cabrera to the majors. And we saw what wonders a premature major league debut did for Brandon Phillips. It's like saying, "Here, Reds. We want to destroy this kid's

confidence so we can get fed up with him and trade him to you guys, where he'll turn into an instant all-star."

Paul Byrd

What the Indians could get for him: A good-to-decent prospect depending on how desperate a team gets. Also the likely knowledge that they will continue to pay a part of his \$7 million salary this year and next.

Trade value is: Increasing. He's a pitcher. He's healthy. He's pitching fairly well. Some team would bite.

Would trading him make sense? Not this year, but maybe next year. If the Indians trade him this year, they'll get a prospect or two, but might have to continue paying a portion of his salary next season. If they trade him next year during his contract season, they could still get the same caliber of prospects without the ensuing financial obligation. Also, history has shown Byrd tends to pitch better in his contract years. Hold onto him.

Guillermo Mota

What the Indians could get for him: another middle reliever and a marginal prospect or two.

Trade value is: Steady. Though he is a veteran bullpen arm who has been pitching well of late, interest will be cooled by his recent history of arm problems.

Does trading him make sense? If either he or Wickman yields another major-league bullpen arm, yes. Considering that Wickman would probably be the first out the door based on demand, the Indians can't thin out their bullpen too much, at least until September callups. Mota might be a good candidate for a waiver-deadline deal at the end of August.

Todd Hollandsworth

What the Indians could get for him: Maybe a decent lower-level hitting prospect.

Trade value is: Increasing. The more he plays, the better he has done. The fact that he's signed for one year at a dirt-cheap price helps.

Would trading him make sense? Only if Jason Michaels and Casey Blake can stay healthy. The Indians' outfield is not very deep, and without Hollandsworth, Wedge would be one pulled hamstring away from using Joe Inglett seven days a week. I don't think anyone wants to see that.

Ben Broussard

What the Indians could get for him: A decent upper-level hitting prospect.

Trade value is: Increasing. The Indians had just better hope he doesn't go into one of his trademark six-week slumps that knocks his batting average down to .260.

Would trading him make sense? Yes, but at a price: Victor Martinez would have to abdicate his prized catcher's role for a gig as a fulltime first baseman, at least for the remainder of the season. For the Indians, that could be toying a bit too much with a very important heart of the order hitter.