

## Quick Thoughts On Peralta Trade

Written by {ga=consigliere}

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If you have not heard already, the Indians traded infielder Jhonny Peralta to the Detroit Tigers for Low-A left-handed pitcher Giovanni Soto. For a recap of the trade along with some quotes from GM Mark Shapiro, Indians.com beat reporter Anthony Castrovine has [a very good writeup on the trade](#)

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Here are some quick thoughts on the deal:

- Make no mistake about it, there was little interest in on the trade front for Peralta. The little interest the Indians received required them to pay a hefty amount of his remaining 2010 salary, which is what they ultimately had to accept in the Tigers deal.

- The Indians will save nothing this year by dealing Peralta as they are paying the remaining portion of his salary minus the pro-rated minimum. The savings on the pro-rated minimum will simply just go to the player on the roster who is replacing Peralta, so in the end it is a trade where they save nothing this year. They will save the \$250K buyout next year that they would have had to pay when they declined his club option for \$7 million (they were going to decline it), so that is the only savings as far as payroll goes in the trade.

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- For anyone thinking the Indians lost out on the opportunity to keep Peralta around to get Type-B draft pick compensation for him in the offseason, it just was not going to happen. First off, Peralta is hardly even a sure thing to gain Type-B free agency status as the way things currently stand he is not. But that is moot anyway as the Indians were very likely not going to offer him arbitration because it is quite possible he would have accepted it and they would be stuck with him next year. Had that happened, he'd have at least gotten a one year deal in arbitration around \$3.5-\$4.0 million, which is something the Indians obviously did not want to on their plate considering they have other plans for third base in 2011.

- I will admit I am mildly disappointed we are picking up so much of Peralta's remaining salary this year. It would have been nice to use some of the savings on an extra draft pick or two from this year's draft. That said, there are likely other cost saving opportunities coming their way in a trade with the likes of Kerry Wood and Jake Westbrook, or (gulp) even Fausto Carmona. When or if they trade any of those guys they should be able to save a couple million on this year's payroll, even if they have to send cash as expected in any deal for the likes of Wood or Westbrook.

- With Peralta's exit, third base is now wide open for the rest of this season and for most of next season. They will initially take a look at the trio of Andy Marte, Jayson Nix, and Luis Valbuena at the position, and then later on Jared Goedert is expected to get a crack at it. Whoever they settle on at the position will just be considered a stopgap until eventual long-term option Lonnie Chisenhall is (hopefully) ready by July/August next year to handle everyday duties there.

- There has been some disappointment with the trade because the Indians called up Valbuena instead of Goedert. There is no doubt the time may be now to find out about Goedert, but his callup is being delayed some in order to get a look at the Marte-Valbuena-Nix trio and see if anyone can be reliable at third base next year. I don't expect the experiment to last long, and really, this is a good opportunity to find out once and for all about Marte, Nix, and Valbuena, three guys taking up valuable spots on the 40-man roster. They will likely want to keep one of them around for next year as insurance for Goedert or as the starting option at third base until Chisenhall is ready, so auditioning them at the position now makes a lot of sense.

- As for Goedert, he can use the rest of his time in Triple-A to continue to work on his defense. It's the one thing holding him back and the one thing the organization has stressed needs improved to ensure he is at least an average major league defender. I am not entirely sure when they will call up Goedert, but in conversations I have had lately with people they believe

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the bat is as ready as it ever will be and it just may be time to find out what he can do (at least offensively). I expect him to be a September callup and get a majority of the at bats in September at third base, though I think there is a chance he is called up sooner.

- Lastly, the Indians received a Low-A pitching prospect in the deal, left-hander Giovanni Soto. He is not considered a blue chip prospect at this point by any means, but he is very intriguing because of his age, projection, performance to date, and, well, because he is left-handed. He was a 21<sup>st</sup> round pick in last year's draft out of Puerto Rico and had an impressive showing in the Gulf Coast League last year at 18 years old where in 13 appearances (6 starts) he went 4-0 with a 1.18 ERA (45.2 IP, 33 H, 20 BB, 37 K). He has followed that up this year where as a 19-year old in the Midwest League (Low-A) he is 6-6 with a 2.61 ERA in 16 starts (82.2 IP, 75 H, 25 BB, 76 K). His 2.61 ERA is ranked third in the league, and amazingly he has thrown two complete game shutouts this year which is almost unheard of at the Low-A level. So it's kind of nice to get a guy who is for once combining performance with projection.

- Soto has a long, wiry frame (6'3" 155 pounds), which is typical of young Latin pitchers. He doesn't throw very hard at the moment as his two-seam fastball sits in the mid-to-high 80s topping out at 89 MPH, but because of his youth and projection it is possible that as he matures he could gain more velocity. Remember, at Low-A in 2007 that Hector Rondon was mostly throwing in the high 80s too. The key is arm strength as Rondon had it, while I am unsure on Soto as that is something I am still finding out on. His cutter is said to be his best pitch and he also shows a good feel for a slurvy curveball and changeup, though both pitches are a work in progress. One thing going for him is he shows good command at his age and creates some deception with his delivery with a quick arm, two things which will surely help his stuff play up more as he moves up the minor league ladder. Like I said, he is an intriguing pitching prospect. Not one to get overly excited about at the moment, but one to keep an eye on for sure the rest of this season and next season.

So, with Peralta gone, who is next? We will see, but it looks like some interest is brewing with Jake Westbrook, so he could be the next to go though the Indians really don't want to trade him and would love to bring him back next year. Austin Kearns and Kerry Wood probably will be traded in August.

*Follow Tony and the Indians Prospect Insider on Twitter [@tlastoria](#) . His new book the [2010 Cleveland Indians Top 100 Prospects & More](#)*

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