

As the Indians robot their way through their most disappointing season in decades, it becomes increasingly difficult to find positives. No team speed, not much defense, and a bullpen that has had more faces in it than a Shawn Kemp family portrait. However, Jarad Regano sees a silver lining in all of this, as the frugal Larry Dolan may have finally been woken up to the harsh reality that spending = winning.



### **Why You Should Expect More From The Dolans In 2007**

As the Indians robot their way through their most disappointing season in decades, it becomes increasingly difficult to find positives. No team speed, not much defense, and a bullpen that has had more faces in it than a Shawn Kemp family portrait. It truly has been a worst case scenario for management. But it may not be the worst case scenario for us as fans.

Despite the aloofness in the front office, something this year had to strike a nerve. It is virtually impossible (see 2005) to make a run at the playoffs without spending any money. While Mark Shapiro and company do not listen to fan opinion, they do listen to the attendance figures every night at Jacobs Field. Fans are irritated and annoyed at unfulfilled promises. Last year's aberration just postponed their feelings.

So what is the good news? The Indians will have a \$70 million payroll next year. That is plenty of money to add some impact pieces around the "core." How do I know they can afford this? Because they told us.

#### **1. WE HAVE ALL THIS MONEY ...**

Mark Shapiro has been regurgitating the same message since Opening Day. Even though the

Tribe payroll was a paltry \$56 million after a 93 win season, we have heard of the money in the famed Dolan vault. You know, the money that was earmarked for B.J. Ryan or Trevor Hoffman's bank account? Shapiro has told us over and over again that we can afford to add just about any contract in the game today. That unused money should be there for next year. While the hype of taking on "any contract" sounds large, lets play it safe. Assume the Tribe has \$6 million of unspent money in 2006.

### 2. DID I SAY \$56 MILLION?

The Indians may have *started* the year with a \$56 million dollar payroll. After their "We're Out of It Already" giveaway, though, their true obligations are much less. While the Indians picked up part of certain castaway's salaries, the Dolan's were relieved of several million dollars in salary due. When considering Wickman, Johnson, Broussard, Hollandsworth, Perez, and Belliard, I would guess that the Tribe saved around \$5 million. That is more money in our 2007 expense fund.

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Sports Time Ohio, as we have been told, is a tool for a "small market" team to increase revenue. While a ballpark number of what the station will bring in is still up in the air, I would venture we are talking in millions and not thousands. And while the numbers may get bigger over time, a few million towards the 07 club sounds fair. Lets round up to \$3 million.

The final variable that comes into the equation is attendance. Shapiro and the rest in his math department spend half their off season predicting attendance figures for the following season. This, as they tell us, gives them an idea of what they can afford. I can help save them some time. The two leading indicators for asses in the seats are:

-How you were the year before (hint: not good)

-What you did in the offseason to generate fan interest

The first went bye-bye in May. The second is the key to bringing in the attendance figures the Dolans need to operate. Yep, build it and they will come. Not come and they will build it.

So those of you who are holding out one more offseason before unhitching yourself from management's bandwagon, do not fret! They are going to spend money now. They told us. Maybe not in black and white, but they have told us.