



I know the thing that brings us all together is our love for the Cleveland Indians.

But at the core of that common bond is the sport the Cleveland Indians play: Baseball. Boy, do I love baseball in general. I'm the guy that watches those televised spring training games on ESPN in mid-March. I'm the guy that reads every inch of the preseason previews put out by ESPN Magazine, Sports Illustrated and Sporting News.

In-addition to, I'm a fantasy junkie, so I buy Rotoworld's digital guide, which not only helps my fantasy teams, it feeds the hunger for more baseball information. I've fallen in love with the daily 12-link round-up posted by The Big League Stew over at Yahoo! Sports. Last year I put in the RSS feeds for a local newspaper and the coverage they provide on their baseball team into my Google reader.

As much as I love the Cleveland Indians, I just love the sport of baseball in general. In past years I'd take on the task of previewing every single team and making a big production out of it. I've brightened up over the years because that effort involved much labor.

## Life in the Central: An AL Central Outlook

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Saturday, February 26 2011 11:38 AM - Last Updated Saturday, February 26 2011 12:39 PM

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I still have that itch to talk about other teams. So here is my compromise. Considering you want your Indians fix and I want to get my other team fix, I've put together a mini-AL Central spring preview and offseason review, Indians excluded.

### Chicago White Sox

#### Last Year: Finished Second

Doctor's Note: SP Jake Peavy

Meet the Grady Sizemore of the Chicago White Sox. Like Sizemore, there are questions surrounding when Jake Peavy will be ready and if he'll be there Opening Day. Peavy pitched in 17 games last year, missing the entire second half after he suffered a detached lat muscle in his right shoulder. Mark Buerhle will always be the White Sox guy on opening day, but it will be interesting to see if we get a Peavy/Sizemore matchup opening weekend.

Signing to Like: 1B/OF Adam Dunn (4 Years, \$56M)

I usually don't like signings that spend a whole lot of money, but this was the most talented player the White Sox signed and by today's standards, the price tag doesn't seem all that cumbersome given that it's a four year deal. Dunn gives this lineup a stabilizer and someone to protect Paul Konerko and Alex Rios.

Signing to Shake: RP Jesse Crain (3 Years, \$13M) and Will Ohman (2 Years, \$4M)

The White Sox spent \$17 million on both Jesse Crain and Will Ohman. I would have rather paid the following guy so I knew I had someone capable of closing. Plus giving middle relievers like Crain \$4 million per year is not bright. Aaron Fultz!

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### Biggest Loss: RP J.J. Putz

They let their closer Bobby Jenks go as well, but I think the loss of J.J. Putz will prove to be more damaging. They have to like the young kid, Chris Sale, and the torque he brings, but Putz is a veteran. Can Matt Thornton close? Will Matt Thornton close? The White Sox should have considered bringing back someone who's done it before.

### Won't Be Missed: OF Manny Ramirez

Out of all their losses, I think the mid-season acquisition of Manny Ramirez is the loss they'll be able to live without. They essentially replaced him with Adam Dunn, who is in the prime of his career. Not that Manny provided much anyway.

### Breakout Year: 2B Gordon Beckham

Beckham put together a horrid first few months in 2010. He had just two more home runs through June and was hitting .216 at the All Star break. Then something clicked, and in the second half he hit .310 with a .380 on-base percentage. Beckham is still young and he's poised to use that second half momentum for a breakout season.

### Down Turn: 1B Paul Konerko

This isn't an indictment on Paul Konerko, more so it's a reality check. Konerko is 35 and he had one of his best offensive seasons ever. There is little chance he repeats that effort, but while he'll probably regress in performance, he'll still be one of the major contributors.

Other Signings/Additions: Paul Konerko, 3 Years, \$37.5M; A.J. Pierzynski, 2 Years, \$8M; Lastings Milledge, Minor League

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Other Losses: Freddy Garcia, Bobby Jenks, J.J. Putz, Mark Kotsay, Manny Ramirez, Andruw Jones

Position Battle: Third Base

The White Sox are set in a lot of areas, but the one position they have some uncertainty at is third base. Wow, that sounds familiar. The White Sox though pretty much look like they're going to settle with young third baseman Brent Morel. Mark Teahen has been the guy in the past but it looks like they're ready to make him more of a utility player and hand the job over to someone who could be their future. Don't forget good friend Omar Vizquel is back with Chicago and at one point was a regular starter at third in 2010. You just never know with that old guy.

### **Detroit Tigers**

#### **Last Year: Finished Third**

Doctor's Note: 2B Carlos Guillen

Pull up a game log from Carlos Guillen and expect to see multiple "Did not play" strings throughout the season. Guillen missed most of May, most of August and all of September and now he is yet again going to have to get moved to a new position. The Tigers are always trying to put him somewhere to reduce the wear and tear on his body but that just never works out.

Signing to Like: SP Brad Penny (2 Years, \$3M)

I like signing Brad Penny to a small salaried deal. Yeah, he might get hurt like he did with St. Louis last season, but for a team like Detroit who's made worse money commitments; Penny is more of a lower-risk to take on.

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Signing to Shake: SS Jhonny Peralta (2 Years, \$11.25M)

You could have signed him for five bags of peanuts and a milkshake and this would still not have been bright. Milkshakes are not to be wasted. What makes this more painfully comical is the fact they signed him to reprise his role of shortstop. I wonder if Jhonny ever made any errors against Detroit, perhaps they never saw him?

Biggest Loss: OF Johnny Damon

They didn't lose much, so that makes this a difficult pick, but Damon did provide some good offense. The price tag certainly won't be missed (neither will the fact the Rays got him for a cheaper price) but they've replaced him with a much better designated hitter.

Won't Be Missed: C Gerald Laird

Martinez's addition also makes the loss of Gerald Laird not such a big deal. Youngster Alex Avila came on strong and he'll pair an on-again, off-again tandem with Martinez that makes Laird, who is now a backup in St. Louis, not needed.

Breakout Year: SP Rick Porcello

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