

2011 Indians Offseason Preview: Can the Tribe Get Creative Again?

Written by {ga=ninocolla}

Tuesday, November 15 2011 8:00 PM - Last Updated Wednesday, November 16 2011 4:56 PM



Every year I like to establish an offseason guide of possible targets. We don't normally usually see many of the targets actually acquired, but it is a good way to organize the comings and goings of this team during the offseason.

If you visit my blog, you will see a lot of crazy stuff. So I'll just link you directly to [this year's Offseason chart](#), which as always, is a work in progress throughout the entire winter months. We've got the targets, the new names coming in, the old names going out, even coaching moves. Not only that, but keep an eye on the 40-man roster to see who is on the bubble, who needs to get added (before the Rule V Draft in less than a month). Not to mention the Indians are going to be dishing out some money to arbitration eligible players such as Asdrubal Cabrera and Justin Masterson, so you'll need to keep an eye on that this offseason as well.

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Let's break it down, step by step. I don't nearly have the time to go through each position and player like in year's past as in-depth as I tend to do and on top of that, the Indians already made probably their biggest move. So let's take a look at what we're dealing with

TARGETS BY POSITION

First Base

There's a few big names floating out there at the first base position. They go by Prince Fielder and Albert Pujols and where on the chart it has OUT OF PRICE RANGE, if I were to list both of those guys, they wouldn't even fit in that category. Heck **Michael Cuddyer** is a reach, that's for sure, but he would be the ideal fit due to his versatility.

So we're left with some real ehhhh candidates. The one that stands out to me more than anyone is **Carlos Pena**. Does he hit for average? No. Does he strike out a lot? Yes. Perfect, he fits in with the rest of this team. He's hit at least 28 home runs though the past five years. He hit .255 against right-handers with 21 home runs in 2011. He'd be the right-handed bat this team could use and he would bring you some power (and not mention, a decent glove) at first base. Matt LaPorta does not seem to be cutting it for me, so I'm ready to see someone brought in. Pena is a bit of a pipe-dream, but it would be one pipe-dream that I'd love to see come true. He'd fit perfectly as someone that plays every day against the right-handers, while Santana plays first against the left-handers, enabling Lou Marson to slide in and play.

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Pena would come at a cost, that's no doubt, he made \$10 million last year, but it was a one year deal. So it's conceivable to think that Pena would be a one-year stopgap option and looking at the fact that you saved some money in not bringing back Sizemore, there could be wiggle room.

Other options from there are more of the cheap ones. Guys like **Xavier Nady**, Jorge Cantu, Dan Johnson, and

Brad Hawpe

all seem like they'd be guys you'd take a chance on. Nady and Hawpe are even a little more intriguing because of the versatility in playing the outfield as well, which is also one of the Indians other alternative needs. It could potentially save them the roster spot to have someone who can play the outfield as well.

One veteran name that would probably get some love (and would fit the Indians MO given his price) is **Derrek Lee**. He's simply a veteran that would come on the cheap, but his play in Baltimore did nothing to inspire any confidence that he can be even a stop-gap.

Getting Creative: As always, the Indians need to explore the creative options and if they were to go that route, there are some options out there. **Mark Reynolds** could probably play first and he is sort of in the Carlos Pena mold that he will strike out a lot, nor hit for a high average, but he'll bring some big pop and a high on-base percentage. There could be other options out there, but it really isn't for many people to know, especially at this stage of the game.

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Outfield

This may be more of a sleeping giant of a position that the Indians go after than you would think. With no Grady Sizemore, an oft-injured Nick Weglarz in the minors, Choo's disappointing year, Shelley Duncan being your next in-line in most cases, and Zeke Carrera... Well, this team may need another bat out there.

Some good fits would be again, one year type players. A reuniting with **Mark DeRosa**?

Someone like Fred Lewis would be a different fit. We of course cannot rule out a return by **Grady Sizemore**

, but it looks more and more unlikely by the day with other teams pursuing him. The Indians may be looking to just cut ties all together and go for someone more durable. Which also makes it unlikely that they get a Mark DeRosa, or even someone like

Connor Jackson

, who again is someone who can play first base.

That may even mean **Kosuke Fukudome** is the best candidate out there. Fukudome was not only durable and much of a work horse after coming over, he was pretty good. And with a spot realistically open in the outfield, he might be enticed into coming back. We know what a fit he would be for the Indians, we know what he brings. So obviously it would work. It just becomes a matter of money and positioning.

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I'd say though, perhaps the favorite if you would ask the Indians of a dream situation, if they had the money, is **Josh Willingham**, free agent from the Athletics. There were ideas of bringing him in at the deadline, but the Indians went for a cheaper option in Fukudome and it turned out pretty good. But with Willingham, not only do you run into issues with his fee, you run into the fact he's very well going to be a Type A Free Agent, which means it costs you a draft pick.

Getting Creative: There are no shortage of options when it comes to outfielders who you could trade for. You could even go in several different routes. You could try and pry guys like **Seth Smith** o

r

Chris Heisey

away from their respective teams (Colorado and Cincinnati), but they might be looking for a swap that involves more major league talent. Both are younger options that would be more than a one-year type of an acquisition.

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Florida Marlins pitcher Ryan Lundy is expected to be traded to the Cleveland Indians. Lundy is a right-handed pitcher who has been a key contributor for the Marlins in recent years.



Jason Kipnis is a Cleveland Indians pitcher who has been a key contributor for the team in recent years. He is a right-handed pitcher who has been a key contributor for the Indians in recent years.

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