



I've got a tough act to follow with this week's View from the Porch. Last week, I had the privilege of chatting with Vinnie Pestano and getting his thoughts on a myriad of subjects. No such luck this week, so I actually have to come up with original content. Woe is me. But, that's why Rich pays me the big bucks!

Speaking of big bucks, I guess you may have heard by now that the Tigers signed some fat guy named Prince Fielder. Fielder comes with a \$214 million dollar price tag, which would buy him a lot of McDonalds if he hadn't gone to a tofu-based diet a couple years ago. There are a lot of mystery ingredients in McDonalds food, but I don't think tofu is one of them. Anyway, the Tigers infield now weighs close to a metric ton.

In light of the Prince Fielder signing, Tribe fans took to Twitter, and likely local sports talk radio (I wouldn't know because I don't listen to any of it), and collectively formed the choir of cynicism that we all know and love. "The Dolans are cheap!", which TCF writer Thomas Moore covered already in [this piece](#), and a laundry list of complaints, ranging from comparing the Indians minor league depth signings to Prince Fielder to the never-ending self-loathing about how the Tigers have won the Central Division on January 27. Yes, we're all fully aware that Julio Lugo, Ryan Spilborghs, Andy LaRoche, Fred Lewis, Jose Lopez, and Felix Pie will not combine to put up the totals that Prince Fielder will accumulate.

As for me, my initial reaction was disappointment. Like seemingly everyone else, I had (and still have) high hopes for this season and the Prince Fielder signing was like a kick in the nuts. If

you are a woman and reading this, I'm sure there's a similar feeling being kicked somewhere else, but I'll allow you to answer that to yourself.

Once I got over my kneejerk reaction, I began to formulate this week's View from the Porch. The Tigers got dealt a major blow when friend of the feather Victor Martinez tore his ACL. It was a bittersweet announcement for Tribe fans as it appeared, on the surface, to help the Indians' chances this season, but it came at the expense of a guy that all of us have a soft spot in our hearts for. Nobody is a bigger gamer than Victor Martinez. I still miss the guy, and it's been three years AND we got a potential ace out of the trade. Even with his injury, VMart still did his part for the team by opening up a roster spot for the prized cow (literally) of the free agent market.

Enter Prince Fielder. A kid who would never talk about Detroit and often seemed to distance himself from the city for fear of being compared to his degenerate gambler father, with whom he disassociated from a few years ago, after Daddy wanted a cut of his son's contract. There are a lot of things can be bought with 214 million dollars and, apparently, a change of heart is one of them.

It just gives me yet another reason to hate the Tigers. [As if I needed any more](#) .

I used to like, and even root for, Prince Fielder, toting his adorable kid around at the Home Run Derby. He is a passionate guy who was able to escape the shadow of his baseball-playing father. When the first signs of trouble came with their relationship, Prince disassociated himself and his family from Cecil. Without this distraction, Prince blossomed into a premier power hitter, [despite signs of a temper](#)

Now, however, Prince Fielder is an asshole to me. With uber-agent Scott Boras in his ear, and perhaps pulling the puppet strings, Prince Fielder is now everything he didn't want to be. He's a big, fat oaf of a first baseman in a Tigers uniform with the last name Fielder on the back and is reportedly talking to his father again. Next comes the gambling addiction. At least, unlike Daddy, he should have enough money to pay off his debts.

Criticize me for that if you want to. I get the "time heals all wounds" argument, but Prince Fielder

sold himself out for the nine-figure payday. When the Brewers played in Detroit for interleague play, he refused to answer the media's questions about Detroit or his father. I'm not even sure he made himself available to the media. Prince seemed genuinely consumed by creating a legacy for himself that had nothing in common with his father's except the last name that he has little choice over. Then money talked.

I have no respect for people who sell themselves out for money. Whether it's a band who adopts a more mainstream style, a website owner that allows his site to be bought out by a bigger website that will censor the content, or an athlete who lets money turn him into something he never wanted to be. Maybe Prince doesn't become a degenerate gambler who alienates his family and uses his fatherly example to make his son hate him. But, if somebody wants to avoid looking like a person they don't particularly like, they don't follow in their footsteps.

Maybe it's petty of me. Maybe it's my way of dealing with the fact that the Tigers added a significant piece to their puzzle and it directly affects the Indians. Perhaps I'm taking out my frustration with absurd MLB contracts and fractured financial system at the expense of Prince Fielder.

But, this isn't a case of Prince Fielder simply taking a bigger contract to play for a team. This isn't Alex Rodriguez signing with the Yankees. This isn't Albert Pujols leaving his beloved Cardinals to go for more money in Anaheim. This isn't even Manny or Thome leaving Cleveland. This is Prince Fielder putting money above conviction. There's a reason that this shocked everybody in the baseball media and it's not because Prince to the Tigers was some unimaginable situation after the Martinez injury created a hole in the Tigers' lineup. It's because those people had a strong pulse on the Prince and Cecil situation and literally chalked this up as "never going to happen".

Those same reasonable media members continue to caution people about the Tigers because they'll be dead last in the American League in fielding and they still only have two good starting pitchers. Doug Fister is no certainty. Justin Verlander will probably win 25 games this year and win yet another Cy Young. Miguel Cabrera will be the George Carlin of fielding at the hot corner, assuming he actually plays there. This year's Tigers bullpen jacket will be sponsored by [Matthew Lesko](#) (bonus points to you if you knew who he was without clicking the link).

I hate to pose the question in this manner, but, how many World Series did the Indians win in the 1990s with a team that could out-hit everybody, including out-hitting their own mistakes? I don't have to answer that, because we already know, but there's no sense in giving the Tigers a free pass to the playoffs. If division championships and wild cards were won on paper, the Tampa Bay Rays would spend Octobers on the couch at home.

Remember when the White Sox signed Adam Dunn last year? From 2009-2010, as a member of the Washington Nationals, Dunn clubbed 76 home runs and drove in 208 runs. Moving Dunn to the hitter-friendly confines of US Cellular Field seemed like a dream come true for Kenny Williams, the White Sox GM. Dunn signed a four-year \$56M deal prior to the 2011 season. For his \$12M, Dunn hit .159 with 11 home runs and 42 RBI. He also hit an unbelievably embarrassing .064 (6-for-94) off left handed pitching.

Are the Tigers better today than they were on January 24? Yes. Are the Tigers better today than they were before Victor Martinez's injury? Most likely. Are the Tigers the 2012 AL Central Division champs today? Absolutely not. Are they the favorites? Yes, they are, but all of us can rattle off big upsets from past sports seasons or individual games.

There are 162 games to be played, six months of baseball. Do the guys who will be going to Goodyear, Arizona in a couple weeks think that the Tigers have the division won? Of course not. That's all it takes. A common belief that you win can win in spite of long odds.

We all already spew venom towards a King. Now, it's time to do the same towards a Prince.