

## Passing the Buck: The Indians Attendance Problem Part 1

Written by {ga=noahpoinar}

Monday, July 02 2012 6:00 PM - Last Updated Monday, July 02 2012 8:18 PM

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By now, you've heard that the Cleveland Indians have a bit of an attendance problem. They're drawing an average of 18.4K per game, which is dead last in the majors.

Believe it or not, Indians fans actually give a damn about their professional baseball team. We love our team, we really do, it's just that when it comes to our attendance and proactive support, we have more built-in-excuses than an *Intervention* subject on A&E. These excuses are not created equal, for there is a degree of weight attached. I'm here to specifically dole all of that weight out as I blame the lack of attendance on everything and everyone but myself. In other words, I'm going to pass the buck. Here's part one of two part installment.

### **Depreciation of Progressive Field: (10% Responsible)**

*When will the crowds actually pick up?* That's what we've been asking ourselves all year. My primary response: If the Indians remain in contention, the crowds will pick up in late August. My secondary response: They'll start to pick up some time around the year 2230, when

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Sherwin Williams Field is built directly on top of Lake Erie.

Right now, the Indians are a baseball franchise in limbo. When Jacobs Field opened in 1994, it was a magnificent, state of the art ball park—like something out of the future that none of us had seen before. But since the park opened its gates some 20 years ago, 19 new ballparks have been built across Major League Baseball. All 19 of these parks used the stadiums before them to create a better, more unique park than that of any before. They had to.

Of the 10 franchises with stadiums outdating Progressive Field, three of those franchises (Red Sox, Cubs, and Dodgers) have historic parks in which the tradition aspect alone makes up for the lack of a VIP dance club, 1000 foot jumbo-tron, a swimming pool, a small shopping mall, a escort service, and any other obnoxious augmentation teams have plugged into their stadiums in a attempt to outdo the other. That leaves us with 7 teams: the Jays, White Sox, Orioles, Rays, Royals, Rockies and the A's. As we speak, six of these seven teams rank in the bottom third of the league in attendance. Furthermore, whether a result of this or not, over the last decade or so, they've all operated on a small budget—with exception to the White Sox who are conveniently located in the mega market of Chicago.

A year ago, the Florida Marlins would have been included in that grouping. For the greater part of their franchise existence, the Marlins have spent so little cash on pay roll that they actually made a net profit before the season even began. (That's all in thanks to the way baseballs system of revenue sharing works.) Now, those Marlins are the Miami Marlins and after the completion of their stadium this past year, they were able to spend a glaring amount of cash and went into opening day payroll of \$118 million.

After threatening contraction in the early part of the 00's, the Twins used the same model when they moved into Target Field in 2010. They signed Joe Mauer to a giant—and I mean giant—8 year \$184 million extension solely because of the extra cash their new stadium was projected to generate.

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