

Trading deadline, schmading deadline. The Cavs got their post All-Star break lift last night, as Delonte "Brother Red" West returned from his wrist injury to score 20 first half points to lead the team in their good 'ole country whoopin' of the quickly fading Detroit Pistons. In the Weekend Wrap, Peeks hits on the win, the return of Delonte, the people chiding Ferry for not making a move ... and also Fausto Carmona getting pregnant this off-season.



## **Tempest in a Teapot**

The NBA's trading deadline came and went this past Thursday at 3pm. As with the MLB trading deadline the NBA version has become an event all its own. It's the perfect time for writers and bloggers to fire up the ESPN Trade Machine and get to work on rumors and prospective deals and this year was no different.

Amare Stoudemire, Shaquille O'Neal, Richard Jefferson and Antawn Jamison were all reported to potentially be headed to Cleveland in exchange for Wally Szczerbiak's expiring \$14million contract and potentially a couple of players too.

But when all was said and done the Cavaliers stood pat and made no deals.

Why? Because of the money involved and the current economy. And because Cavs GM Danny Ferry was in the enviable position of not having to make a bad deal in order for his team to challenge for a championship.

And Ferry was correct to proceed with caution.

Cavs owner Dan Gilbert has survived the mortgage meltdown. Some report that he's even strengthened his business positions and is reaping profits from an industry in flux. But that doesn't mean that Gilbert and Ferry shouldn't have one eye on the future even while they contend for an NBA title this season.

Many Cavs fans were disappointed that there wasn't a huge, shiny new toy under their deadline tree. That's a direct result of the expectations that the media promotes and drives. And it's understandable given the buildup that these deadlines get. I'd love to see Stoudemire, Jefferson or Jamison getting minutes come playoff time. But not at the cost of fiscal responsibility and cap flexibility going forward.

It's not sexy but Szczerbiak's expiring \$14 million contract comes right off the bottom line at the end of the season. Not only that, but Wally is contributing to a 42-11 championship-caliber club on a nightly basis and his outside shooting is needed, especially when you consider the

struggles thus far of Daniel Gibson.

Furthermore, the Cavs will still have the Ben Wallace expiring monster of a contract to throw on the table after this season if they're still looking to add to the payroll.

Lastly, there's not a person among us who knows exactly what was being proposed during those trade conversations. Neither you nor I know just how ridiculous the demands of the Suns, Wizards or Bucks may have been. And the bottom line is that Ferry, while putting together a terrific basketball team, has shown through previous deals that he's neither afraid to pull the trigger on a deal that benefits this Cavs team nor that he's unwilling to go out and find them. In short, he's earned our trust.

## **Etcetera**

- *&quot;The more I see of Luis Valbuena, the more I like. He looks quite polished in the field, and he has a smooth swing. One line on Valbuena when the Indians acquired him this winter was that he's a bit on the stocky side, but he looks to be in pretty good shape to me.*

*Fausto Carmona, on the other hand, must be a regular at the Andy Marte Buffet.&quot;*

-Anthony Castrovince, MLB.com



I don't run that blurb from Castrovince to talk about Valbuena. His time will come. I'm more concerned with the inference that Fausto is a bit of a fatso as spring training gets started.

This mystifies me. How does a 25 year-old professional athlete just handed a multi-year, multi-million dollar extension and who is coming off a disappointing, injury-marred season not show up to spring training in good shape?

I'm not saying that Carmona is suddenly looking more like David Wells than Cliff Lee or that carrying a few extra pounds is

going to affect him in the least when all is said and done in 2009. But why take that chance? You're earning millions this season and will earn millions more in the two guaranteed contract years that follow this one. Your team's success is dependent to a large extent on your performance. You have nothing but time and resources at your disposal from October through January. And you show up carrying extra weight on your balky hips? Enough of a gut that a credible writer makes mention of it in an entry?

Come on. Whether it ultimately affects Carmona and his team or not, it's inexcusable. Carmona has access to money, equipment and an organization that would surely provide nutrition and training advice, if not send someone directly to him wherever he spends the winter, to ensure that he's in optimal shape heading into an important season for Fausto and the club. And weight is an issue.

Pathetic.

- Does it get any better than kicking the living crap out of the Pistons? The Cavs ran out to a 34 point halftime lead on Sunday night and coasted to their 43<sup>rd</sup> win of the season. They're 25-1 at home, Delonte is back (and had 20 in the first half Sunday night) and some momentum is being built.

Call Delonte the deadline acquisition and let's move on. With Kevin Garnett down for a couple weeks in Boston it's time to make a move toward securing that first seed.

Take a look in the rearview mirror and get a final glimpse of the corpse in the road wearing the Detroit uniform.

There's still a ton of work to do but I like the crew doing the heavy lifting.