The Tribe gets it rolling on their initial 2012 west coast swing, the Browns make final preparations for their most important draft in years, the Cavs lose not only games but also some ping pong balls and a potential shooting guard and the Buckeyes Scarlet & Gray game draws over 80,000 hard core fans who can't wait to see Urban Meyer's creation.

It's The Weekend Wrap.

Beat the Bums

There are a lot of bad teams in MLB.

Three of the very worst may be Kansas City, Seattle and Oakland. But the fact that the Indians wrapped up a 7-2 road trip to those three venues doesn't make their trip any less commendable, important or impressive.

The Tribe got their offense going in Kansas City, continued hitting and finding ways to win against Seattle (and Felix Hernandez) and then didn't take the foot off the gas pedal against an A's team that makes me wonder just how long it'll be before Billy Beane is the subject of "MoneyBall 2: What Did We Really Accomplish Here?"

The three teams the Indians faced on this west coast trip are a combined 17-29 on the young season. That's a winning percentage of .369 which is the equivalent of a 59-win team if you

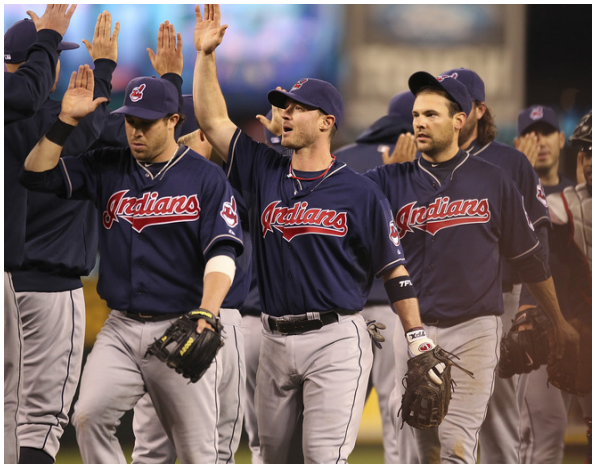
extrapolate it out over a full 162 game season.

That's shitty.

So what does it mean in terms of the Tribe? It means they're not that shitty. It means they had a good trip, got their offensive together and beat the bad teams they should beat. And there's something to be said for that but it's not much of a revelation and it's nothing we didn't come into 2012 already saying: the Indians are a decent team that needs some breaks and some big seasons from guys to exceed expectations.

What should be encouraging is that the Tribe is winning right now without some key guys contributing much at all. Shin-Soo Choo hasn't hit, Asdrubal Cabrera has been absent, Michael Brantley has done next to nothing, Jason Kipnis has had a tough start and Carlos Santana has scuffled along without really being either good or bad.

Thus far the Indians have largely survived due to the offensive contributions of Shelley Duncan and Jack Hannahan. Hannahan has hit everything thrown at him and Duncan has come up with some really big hits in the season's first couple weeks.



That's great. Any offense you get from Hannahan is a bonus and Duncan is really a pinch hitter/platoon OF who's 32 years old and not likely to transform himself into an everyday, productive player at this point. Take what you get and run with it as far as offense goes from those two guys and pray the other hitters come around. Because with Hannahan and Duncan it's not going to last.

That's not a knock against either. It's just that on a good team those guys are role players. Hannahan is a late inning defensive replacement or a guy who would spell your starting 3B or 1B when they need a day off. Duncan is a 4th or 5th OF and a valuable PH in the National League. They each have value but they are both miscast as starters and everyday players.

Sorry. They just are.

No one roots for the underdogs harder than I do. My appreciation of guys like Jamey Carroll and Jack Hannahan is well known. I love guys that put team before self and play the game every single night. But I love them more when they are role players and utility guys as opposed to everyday starters I'm counting on to produce on a daily basis.

Jamey Carroll as the utility infielder for the Tribe is a good thing for many reasons. Jamey Carroll as the starting, ever day SS for the Minnesota Twins is a very bad thing if you're a Minnesota Twins fan (or their manager).

See the difference?

Jack Hannahan as your late inning defensive replacement and occasional corner IF starter is a good thing. So is Shelley Duncan as a 4th or 5th OF and right hand bat off the bench. Those guys in your every day lineup are not a good thing. Especially when Duncan is hitting 4th, 5th or 6th.

Let's be clear: I'm not disparaging either of those guys personally. I like them both and they both belong in the league. But they are miscast as starters on a team with playoff aspirations. I'm bemoaning the fact there's nothing better for the Indians to put out there more so than criticizing Hannahan and Duncan.

Let's also be clear that we tend to get attached to some of these guys simply because they're here and not somewhere else. Both of them are eminently replaceable. The league is overflowing with guys like Hannahan and Duncan. If you went through the entire American League and offered Hannahan for the other club's starting 3B you'd be turned down 90% of the time. That's not a knock on Hannahan either. There are just guys who are either better (like in the entire AL East) or younger and with an upside.

Look, Jack Hannahan has a lifetime OPS of .682 and a lifetime fielding percentage of .974

Right now he has an OPS of .922 and a fielding percentage of .867

Do you really think either of those numbers is indicative of who and what Hannahan is? Do you really think either is sustainable over the entire season?

Let's appreciate the fact that a good chunk of Hannahan's offense for the entire season is apparently coming during an April when the Indians really need it. Likewise with Duncan's discipline, BB:K ratio and his production. But let's not assume it's something other than what it is or make it out to be more than it will be.

We'll take it for sure. But counting on it to continue isn't a good percentage play.

It's Almost Over

Thank God.

The NFL Draft is here this Thursday and all the speculation and build up will give way to actual results. Of course, once the selections are made everyone and their brother will have an opinion and then we'll suffer through those insufferable "Grading the Draft" columns (hell yes, I'm writing

one…I could be as right as anyone else).

But at least the end is near.

And the end is really near for the Holmgren and Heckert regime if they're wrong more often than right this next week or so.

Anyway, if you want to celebrate the end with others who take a fervent interest in these trivial things you can meet up with a bunch of Cleveland Fan writers and board members at the Firehouse in Willoughby this Thursday night. A number of us will get together and watch the festivities in Willoughby so that the arguments and hatred that usually are written in board posts and private messages can be stated in person. I know personally I'll probably get there about 6pm or so after the work day ends. The Firehouse is also next door to the Wright Place (and their wings are among the best I've ever eaten) so the party/wake/funeral could spill over to both spots.

Anyway, nothing has changed my mind or my analysis in the past week that the pick right now at #4 is Morris Claiborne, the Jim Thorpe Award-winning CB from LSU. It's a logical selection just as Justin Blackmon or Trent Richardson would be but I simply think Claiborne is one of the few elite players available in the draft and that the positions the other two play have far more depth.

Unless you want character concerns with a guy like Janoris Jenkins, Claiborne is the elite guy at the position lacking other elite guys. Jason Askew and I put a lot of time detailing just how many other play makers there are in the draft at the WR/RB (or at least there is that perception) position. I'd be thrilled if the Browns ended up with a threat like LaMichael James or Isaiah Pead at the RB position and did so by using later picks. Those guys can score from anywhere on the field and can also add immediate impact in

the return game (where Josh Cribbs' effectiveness is waning). No, they're probably not every down backs, but they're not simply gimmicks or 3rd down backs either. Both guys demonstrated the ability to run between the tackles in school.

And for those with their hearts set on the first three picks being offensive 'skill' players, you're likely to be disappointed. The Browns aren't likely to overhaul their entire offense with those first three picks. Aside from Claiborne I think there's a really good chance an OT is among the first 3 selections and that a WR or RB is the other. Does Iowa T Riley Reiff slide? Do the Browns think Georgia's massive OL (6'5", 350lbs) Cordy Glenn is a fit at RT? If so they'll take the offensive lineman and plug in a player for eight years.

How Bad Is It?

You're probably a pretty rotten basketball team when you give a nobody a chance, he has a few big games and then he spurns your attempt to sign him for the rest of the season to go somewhere else.

That's what ex-Cavs guard Lester Hudson did when he signed with Memphis last week. The Cavs signed the guy to a couple ten-day contracts after he played in China, he put p a few big numbers and then he bolted rather than stay in Cleveland and continue to battle for a job.

Maybe Hudson was pissed that the three decent games in his career didn't net him a long term deal with security. Maybe he really wanted to hang out in Memphis. But whatever the reasons it strikes me as funny that he's gone.

Pope Urban

80,000+ in the 'Shoe Saturday for the OSU Scarlet & Gray game.

Holy Crap.

You think Buckeye fans are excited about Meyer's recruits and offense blending together in Columbus on Saturday afternoons in the fall? No chance Meyer's honeymoon period ends any time soon. Not when he's just delivered the past recruiting class and is still bringing Buckeye fans gifts in the form of 2013 recruits too. (Here's a good thread to look at those 2013 recruits and keep track of the next generation of Buckeyes)

Meyer understands the kinds of athletes he wants at each position and he recruits those kids all year round. He's doing it either by formally recruiting them or by valuable word of mouth from current players or committed recruits who are promoting the program. He's re-defining this program and is turning it from the Woody Hayes à Jim Tressel 'Father Knows Best' type of team into a state of the art machine.

Woody was a rotary-dial phone, Tressel was a car phone and Meyer is the iPhone4. They're all phones, yes. But Meyer is sleek and fast and appears to be able to do so much more. Time will tell, obviously, but the anticipation for this season and the next couple of seasons is unlike anything Buckeye fans have ever looked forward to.

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