Are the Cavaliers interested in acquiring high-scoring swingman Corey Maggette from the Clippers? If you believe what HoopsWorld.com has to say, the answer is yes. In Erik Cassano's latest, he addresses the prospects of dealing for Maggette, and also notes that the Cavs may have to do something to keep up with the Pistons and the Bulls, their two main division and Eastern Conference rivals.

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The rumor, which has been repeated in several other media outlets, says Cavs GM Danny Ferry is interested in acquiring a starting-caliber insurance policy for the oft-injured Larry Hughes (which would be a smart move), and the Clippers are actively fielding offers for the 6'-6" swin gman .

The Heat and Spurs are also reportedly interested in Maggette, so the Cavs would have some stiff competition if they were to make a serious overture. But the idea of acquiring Maggette , provided the price isn't too steep, is an intriguing one, especially considering the landscape of the Central Division.

The Pistons just fired the first warning shot over the bows of the Cavs and Bulls by signing Chris Webber for the remainder of the season. Webber is only a fraction of the player he once was, but deteriorating knees aside, he still averaged 20 points and 10 rebounds for the 76 ers a season ago and is one of the best low-post passers in the game. His arrival will only strengthen what is already a deep Pistons team.

The Bulls are armed with tradeable pieces and cap space. Most basketball pundits would rate them as "Most likely to make a major splash before the trade deadline." Does that mean Kevin Garnett? Probably not, especially as the Timberwolves have climbed back into the West playoff race. But the potential is still there.

That leaves the Cavs, who have neither the maneuverability of the Bulls nor the street cred to land a title-searching veteran free agent like the Pistons just did.

That means, if Ferry wants to land someone like Maggette, he's going to have to be creative.

HoopsWorld's article notes that the Clippers want a solid veteran player, a young player with upside and a future first-round pick for Maggette.

Ferry would be wise not to mess too much with Mike Brown's rotation. For the first time since he became coach, the Cavs appear to be settling into a comfort zone with each other and with the playbook. That means, no matter how much some fans might dislike their games, Ferry had better think twice before dealing Donyell Marshall, Damon Jones or Eric Snow, at least during the season. Larry Hughes and Zydrunas Ilgauskas, two other favorite fan targets, are likely making too much money for the Clippers to seriously consider taking in return.

That leaves Drew Gooden, Anderson Varejao, two rookies and the end-of-the-bench guys.

We can assume that, at this point, Varejao is important enough to the team that it would take a lot to convince Ferry to trade him. Probably more than the prospect of landing Maggette.

Gooden's contract is very team-friendly, but he has been playing well of late and trading him might also fall under the heading of "don't mess with Brown's rotation." But if the Clippers were to ask for a major piece in return, Gooden is the most likely candidate.

If Ferry can't bring himself to part with Gooden, then he'll have to MacGyver a trade package together out of small contracts and draft picks. David Wesley and Sasha Pavlovic are the names to watch for, HoopsWorld.com says. I personally find it hard to believe that the Clippers would part ways with their best wing player for a has-been in Wesley and a career underachiever in Pavlovic. But acquiring a couple of short-term deals would give the Clippers some more flexibility down the road as youngsters like Shaun Livingston inch toward free agency.

But there is a caveat in all of this, even if the Cavs and Clips can bridge the gap: The Cavs

have bit of a history in getting hosed by the Clippers in trades. Ron Harper for Ferry is the obvious one. Twelve years later came the unimpressive Andre Miller-for-Darius Miles swap.

But if the Pistons and Bulls continue to move their chess pieces, Ferry might be forced to do something. The Cavs currently own the best record in the East. If they want to keep it, Ferry is going to have to be every bit as shrewd as counterparts Joe Dumars and John
Paxson
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