The Jason Davis Era ended earlier this week, as the Indians designated the frustrating fireballer for assignment, and will likely trade him elsewhere in the next week. Paul Cousineau applauds this move. Not because he disliked Davis. Paul says the move shows a commitment to winning now, regardless of the

The Indians decision to designate Jason Davis for assignment yesterday came as a bit of a surprise, but it represents a larger change in philosophy by the Indians in that it shows a commitment to winning now, regardless of the "potential" of players they may lose in the process. The flexibility gained in having his roster spot occupied by a pitcher with options remaining was eventually deemed more important than hanging onto Jason Dangerously, hoping for him to put all of the pieces together in a Tribe uniform.

The impetus for the decision was likely the game in which Jake Westbrook left in the 2nd inning with an abdominal strain in a 2-1 game. The situation seemed tailor-made for Davis to serve as the team's long man and eat up some innings to save the rest of the bullpen. However, the Atomic Wedgie showed that he had no faith in putting JD in a game that wasn't already decided (that is, a blowout - regardless of whether the Indians were winning or losing), and put Cabrera into the game in the 2nd inning. When Davis finally did come in to relieve Cabrera (again, only to start an inning as Wedge had lost any confidence in bringing Davis in with runners on…and justifiably so), Davis promptly responded by walking in 2 runs.

The writing was on the wall at that point that the Indians had a need for flexibility in the bullpen in case of a short outing for a starter (Tom Mastny was the only reliever with an option), and they had an obvious need for a pitcher that could throw 2-3 innings, then get sent back to

Buffalo. With Mastny (and the rest of the bullpen) pitching very well, JD became the odd man out and a move had to be made.

But don't think that it was a snap decision. There's no question that the Indians entered 2007 with their long-standing hope that Fernando Cabrera and Jason Davis would develop into the late-inning relievers. While Cabrera has pitched himself into the late-inning mix, Davis continued to struggle and became a non-entity in the bullpen. His “electric, filthy stuff” never translated into consistent effectiveness and the Indians could no longer afford to trot JD out of the bullpen, unsure if they were going to have to immediately have another reliever up to bail Dangerously out and save the inning.

Before the “Danys Baez Syndrome” is mentioned (that is, the Indians screwed him up by bouncing him back and forth between the rotation and the bullpen), remember that Davis has pitched exclusively out of the bullpen for all of last year and thus far this year. While he finished the 2006 season strongly to end his 2006 with a 3.74 ERA, the beginning of 2007 looked more like the JD we all grew to know for most of his career. That is the JD that, in 2006, allowed 15 of 21 inherited runners to score as opponents hit .406 with RISP & 2 outs and 6 for 10 off of him with the bases loaded and 2007 looked like more of the same.

The difficulty in the decision came from those rare outings when he would spot his 90+ MPH fastball and throw the nasty splitter that had us all thinking, “this guy could be Joe Nathan”. Well, Joe Nathan he is not. Maybe someday he will be…but today is not that day. Neither is tomorrow.

Cushioning the loss of JD (if you really think it is that great of a loss, you must be a close friend) is the fact that the Indians are sitting on some very capable relievers in AAA (Mujica, Perez, etc.) who can now be moved back and forth from Buffalo to keep the flexibility that will become necessary (particularly when these Seattle make-ups become a factor) later in the season.

Perhaps some pitching coach can fix whatever ails Jason Davis, or can build his confidence to

the point of him becoming an effective MLB pitcher. But that will not happen in Cleveland, as they now have 10 days to trade him. Given the dearth of MLB pitching league-wide, it's likely that a trade partner will be found, but don't expect much more than a Single-A player.

I'd like to say, “Jason Dangerously, we hardly knew you.”

But, I can't. We knew him all too well.

What's bigger than the whole “JD development” situation, is that the decision shows is that the Indians are not content to allow a player, whether homegrown or not, to work out the kinks on a contending team. If Trot Nixon's signing (relegating the BLC to Buffalo) or Andy Marte's extended “rehab” in AAA weren't proof enough, this is the definitive stroke that the Indians are going to field their best MLB team every day without regard for the possibility of making the old “hindsight is 20-20” move.

The “win now” attitude that this move trumpets should be music to the ears of any Indians' fan.