Deal Likely To Trigger Swap With Red Sox And Possibly Other Moves

The Indians reached an agreement with the Phillies Friday to send reliever Arthur Rhodes to Philadelphia in exchange for outfielder Jason Michaels. This is the culmination of a deal that has been rumored for some time now, and will likely be the trigger for a bigger trade with the Red Sox.

Michaels hit .304 platooning in center field with Kenny Lofton in Philly last year, and is expected to compete for a starting job with the Indians. Michaels has a career OBP of about .400, and is likely seen by the team as the replacement for the #2 spot in the lineup should they deal Crisp to Boston.

Reportedly, the Indians will also complete the long talked about deal with the Red Sox ... sending Coco Crisp, David Riske, and Josh Bard to Boston in exchange for prized prospect Andy Marte, reliever Guillermo Mota, and catching prospect Kelly Shoppach.

Rumors are also swirling that talks are heating up between the Reds and the Indians on a deal that would see them send starter Jake Westbrook to Cincinnati for outfielder Austin Kearns. They would then replace Westbrook in the rotation by signing free agent Jeff Weaver to a one year deal similar to the contract Kevin Millwood signed a year ago.

Should this all unravel as rumored ... Kearns, Michaels, and Casey Blake would compete for the starting left and right field jobs, with the loser assuming a utility role. Blake may also be used to spell Ben Broussard at 1st base at times also.

Stay tuned to Swerb's Blurbs for all the latest developments involving this sudden whirlwind of activity from the team.