Michael Brantley is the newest Indian, and the player to be named later in the C.C. Sabathia trade. Brantley projects as a leadoff hitting center fielder, and while he lacks power, he brings three intangibles to the system the Indians really like: plate discipline, speed and athleticism. Tony has been talking with his agent, and has been burning up the phone lines obtaining information about him. And gives our readers his thoughts on Brantley in his latest column.

Due to a family funeral taking up a lot of my time both Friday and today, I will not be able to get into Michael Brantley very much until Monday or Tuesday when I hope to post a more lengthy article possibly including quotes from Brantley, scouts, and others. I am in the midst of burning up the phone lines and e-mails getting info on him, and hope to have a much deeper report on him by then.

That said, here are some quick random thoughts on Brantley:

- First off, I am much happier about getting Brantley than I would have been about getting Taylor Green. I've been saying that all along in our message board forums here on this site and on TheClevelandFan.com. Brantley is the superior prospect, at least in my eyes, and offers up something this organization is severely lacking which is a bona fide top of the order threat with plus speed and elite-level plate discipline.

This guy is a tough out and a royal pain in the you know what for pitchers.

- He brings three intangibles to the system the Indians really like: plate discipline, speed and athleticism.

- I know a lot of people get hung up on power and all that, but we need some table-setters and guys who consistently put the bat on the ball too. He already is a gap hitter and his

power is always going to be below average, but he'll run into some more home runs down the road as he matures and could be a 40-50 extra-base hit guy.

- The Indians feel he is a good center fielder and is a middle-of-the-diamond player as well as a top of order option they have lacked. Brantley is expected to play either left field or center field at the big league level, and at this time will settle in at center field where the Indians like him. Going forward, the Indians want to see him solidify his development and improve defensively with his routes to the ball in the outfield.

- What kind of player is Brantley? At worst, he is a good fourth outfielder for a major league team. As far as every day player ability goes, he certainly has it. His floor looks like that of a Randy Wynn, a middle of Juan Pierre (little less speed, but much better plate approach), and a ceiling of Kenny Lofton (his career to this point is virtually a mirror image to Lofton's, and at three years younger).

- One person I was able to talk to about the Sabathia trade said he likes both LaPorta and Brantley a lot. When considering their ceiling potential, they mentioned that the Indians quite possibly may have very well got their 2000's version of Belle/Lofton in the trade.

- Amazingly, Brantley is on the same timetable as Matt LaPorta, the other big name player received in the C.C. Sabathia trade. He is already at an advanced level for his age, and is on a quick path to the big leagues. Both Brantley and LaPorta will open next year in big league camp in spring training and along with Trevor Crowe will be your starting outfield in Triple-A Columbus (wow, that team is going to be LOADED).

- Brantley only played in four games in July because of an injury to his right ankle, so the Indians did not get to see a lot of him in the early going. The Indians were impressed by what they saw of him when he returned from the injury and did their medical due diligence before announcing the trade to be sure he checked out okay physically.

In the end, the Indians had multiple looks of both Brantley and Green and had multiple scouts check them both out many times, and they chose Brantley.

- The rumor about the player to be named portion of the deal hinging on whether the Brewers made the playoffs or not ended up being true. Props to the Plain Dealer's Paul Hoynes for that one, and it appears that with the Brewers getting into the playoffs it allowed the Indians to make the choice and get the guy they wanted all along.

And, this is why it took so long for the player to be named.

The list had just two players as originally speculated, with the other player indeed being Taylor Green.

- Brantley was originally announced as one of the Brewers' players who was to attend the Arizona Fall League (AFL), but was pulled back and it should be decided in the next day or so if he will still go. At the moment all of the Indians spots in the AFL are committed already and they will not pull anyone. They would have to pull Wes Hodges or Beau Mills to get him on the roster since replacement is position for position, which they are not doing, so they may very well look to get some sort of exception due to the rare nature of this deal.

- For those upset about the loss of the two first round draft picks we will not get for losing Sabathia in free agency, to me this is absolutely a non-issue. I take LaPorta straight up for those two picks. In a second.

Heck, I even take the combination of Brantley and Bryson (pre-injury) over those two picks.

- Oh, and for those wondering, Brantley does not need to be rostered this offseason.

Right now, this does not look like a great trade at the moment, but it certainly is not a horrible trade by any means. In the interim, I'd give it a solid B or a B- because we could of have maybe had a little more. Time will truly tell how great or bad this trade was.

Photo courtesy of Tony Farlow, MiLB.com