The economy may be the reason that all those jobs are being shed in northeast Ohio, but it's not the reason for all the job insecurity with Cleveland's three major sports teams. In just this last year, the Browns dumped a head coach that never deserved the job anyway. The Cavs' Mike Brown was rumored to be in trouble because he couldn't get his team past Orlando in this year's Eastern Conference finals and now the Indians' Eric Wedge's head is on the chopping block and the Dolans are sharpening the axe. Yes, kids, it's been that kind of year on the lakefront.

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It must be absolutely killing Indians' general manager Mark Shapiro to see that the man he groomed, the man to whom he basically tied his own fate, presiding over a season so wrapped in awfulness that the stench is likely to linger long past season's end, which, by the way, was officially declared Sunday with the third straight loss to the Cubs.

With Wedge literally dangling by the short hairs, everyone's got an opinion. Let's dispense with the easiest and work our way down.

The argument that merely changing managers isn't going to change the fortunes of this team is true, at least for this season. The Indians right now more resemble the Columbus Clippers than any semblance of a comprehensive big-league team.

It's due to a combination of injuries, poor decisions by Shapiro and another season when hope once again was the company's strategic plan.

No better example of these latter two attributes exists than in the body of Ben Francisco. He's the kind of player that gets a spot on the roster by virtue of his youth and the theory that the hint of promise he's shown previously magically translates to consistent, high-level performance by virtue of the old "another year of experience." Right now, Francisco isn't even a legitimate major league player.

In the 9th inning of Sunday's game, Francisco let three straight fastballs blow right past him and never ever bothered to swing. Having a bat in your hand in a major league game doesn't make you a major leaguer.

Doing something with it does.

Francisco couldn't be more out of his element if he was a piano player in a marching band.

Using Francisco as the prototype and extrapolating from there, it's easy to see why changing the manager doesn't change the fortunes of the team. A roster of Franciscos would challenge Whitey Herzog. But that's only part of the story.

The more difficult opinion to deflect is the one where it's asked, if not Wedge then who? The point, I think, is that the season already is lost and there's not much an interim manager can do except put the team further behind the development curve. The odds are that the Indians won't find the right next manager until this season ends so they're better off waiting anyway.

That's probably true. But the flipside of all that is what good does it do to keep a lame duck in office? It's been said that the players haven't yet quit on Wedge but that's just a final hurdle to navigate. Once it becomes clear that his future is behind him, the players won't so much quit as tune him out.

Indeed, a compelling case can already be made that Wedge is an analog broadcast in a digital world and there aren't any more conversion boxes available.

Some (many?) still see great value in Wedge and thus argue that dumping him now scratches an immediate itch but ultimately will leave a rash. That's probably the most difficult argument to confront because it's not factually based. It's opinion with a healthy dose of baggage and without any right answer to boot.

No one has a corner on the rightness of their views. But some, by virtue of the job they hold have more weight attached to them.

In this case, Shapiro still appears to be a Wedge fan so that goes a wee bit further than the rest of the unwashed.

Moreover, as a general manager, Shapiro is paid to have a long-term approach and not operate through just a series of resolutions to short-term crises.

Shapiro absolutely has to think in terms of the team's overall best interests not just today, but tomorrow and the thousands of other tomorrows.

That being the case, Shapiro owes it to the fans to explain exactly what continuing value he sees in Wedge long-term. That's the case he'll be making to the Dolans anyway if he wants to save him from so why not make it to the public as well?

All Shapiro has done thus far is fall on his own sword while absolving Wedge of any crimes.

From where most fans sit, the most distinguishing thing about Wedge is his lack of distinction. You can't really say objectively that he's bad at anything just as you can't really say objectively that he's great at anything. He kind of hovers around the surface maintaining an even keel. Every once in awhile he let's his facial hair grow out.

In a vacuum, those don't exactly constitute dischargeable offenses. In context, they are but a few of the many symptoms of a far larger problem.

If Shapiro is being honest with himself, the case against Wedge is far

more compelling than the transient concerns of another lost season. Simply put, it comes down to this: seven years into his career Wedge hasn't grown much as a manager.

The same annoying habits then are the same annoying habits now.

He rarely keeps a set lineup and that was in the good times, not just now. For a man who counsels patience in others he's an inveterate tinkerer himself. He also has a tendency to favor the many mediocre veteran roster-fillers that Shapiro shoves his way each season. You almost get the sense that Shapiro had to pry David Dellucci from Wedge's cold, dead hand.

The more damning evidence though is in the form of players like Jhonny Peralta and Grady Sizemore. While Wedge is busy neither succeeding wildly nor cratering magnificently, players like Peralta and Sizemore find themselves on the precipice of failing major league careers.

Peralta may very well be a head case, but the job of a manager is to find a way to reach him. Wedge has tried a number of different approaches but nothing has resonated yet. That may be as much on Peralta as it is on Wedge, but as the leader it's more Wedge's failure than anyone's.

The ability to resonate with your players is at the very top of the long list of qualifications for any manager.

The same story is unfolding with Sizemore. At this point is there anyone out there that still believes that Sizemore is even close to delivering on the promise of his talent?

Sizemore's lack of development really mirrors that of Wedge and the picture isn't pretty.

Sizemore is a pretty decent defensive centerfielder and is developing decent power at the plate.

But he hasn't found a way to consistently make contact at the plate and, as a result, strikes out far too often for a player that's supposed to be a table setter.

Wedge has had conversation after conversation with him. It hasn't worked. Siz
emore is still a young player but the fear is that his development is being, at the very least, stunted under the direction of Wedge.

At most, it's being ruined.

That's a circumstance that Shapiro simply cannot allow to linger.

It may be a mystery as to why Wedge consistently fails to develop the talent he's given, but that doesn't make it any less real. Who knows what he's lost Fausto Carmona?

But how many more prospects have to have their careers stuck in permanent neutral before Shapiro sees the trend?

That's the reality that Shapiro must confront more so than the current

losing streak.

For Shapiro to be true to his own calling and job description he's going to have to let go of his emotional attachment to Wedge and put him under the same exacting microscope he uses for the hundreds of players he looks at each season. Wedge can't stand up to that scrutiny and Shapiro will realize it sooner rather than later.

For his sake, not to mention his own job security, it probably better be before his bosses are forced to intervene.