Up in the land of beer and cheese, forced to watch last night's Browns debacle in Packer Country, Paulie C checks into his regular weekend spot with another Lazy Sunday. Paul starts out the piece with a disturbing analysis of the at bats being given to players not likely in the long term plans of the Indians in favor of Andy Marte and Matt LaPorta. He then takes a closer look at the contract commitments of Hafner, Westbrook, and Wood ... which figure to comprise more than 50% of next year's payroll.

In the land of beer and cheese (and Milwaukee Irish Fest this weekend...which basically falls lock-step with those first two), it's time to drop a Lazy Sunday from the father-in-law's home office before the next round of drinks starts. I think today is the day for Schlitz (1960's formula, anyone?), so let's just get this going so I can attempt to deflect the embarrassment of being a Browns' fan on a day like today...in Wisconsin, no less.

And with that, we're off:

The frustration in playing time and lineup construction that has plagued the 2009 season continues as the thought that the second half of 2009 should be spent gearing up for 2010 and making clean determinations on certain players while working out the MLB-adjustment periods for others has gone right out of the window.

While it would seem that the Indians should be divvying up plate appearances to

players who naturally figure into 2010 (LaPorta) or those they need to make final decisions on because of a lack of options (Marte, Shoppach), we find these patterns with the appropriate timeframe shown, as well as other pertinent information:

Chris Gimenez - Age 26 - Career MiLB .844 OPS - 2 options remaining after this year

12 games started out of last 17 games

Trevor Crowe - Age 25 - Career MiLB .760 OPS - 2 options remaining after this year

12 games started out of 14 possible since promotion

Wyatt Toregas - Age 26 - Career MiLB .739 OPS - 2 options remaining after this year

5 games started out of 13 possible since promotion

Matt LaPorta - Age 24 - Career MiLB .947 OPS - 2 options remaining after this year

0 games started out of ...oh, wait...that's right.

Andy Marte - Age 25 - Career MiLB .838 OPS - 0 options remaining after this year

10 games started out of 16 games since promotion

Kelly Shoppach - Age 29 - Career MLB .783 OPS - 0 options remaining after this year

7 games started out of 14 possible since trade of Victor Martinez

Tell me again - which players fit obviously into the future and which ones do the Indians need to make decisions as to whether they are part of 2010 plans before the end of the season?

Toregas has played nearly as frequently as Shoppach and both Gimenez and Crowe have played significantly more games than Marte while LaPorta...well, harrumph, harrumph.

Now, there certainly exists the possibility that Tony Lastoria asserted on this weekend's edition of "Smoke Signals" - that the Indians are finding out what they have in Gimenez, Crowe, and Toregas to figure out if they fit into the future of the team on the 40-man roster and not just the 25-man roster going forward. That may be the case, though if it is, you would think that the Indians would STILL be able to find some opportunities for Marte at least, as I think the determination that Show Pack doesn't fit into the long-term plans and Wedge's inconsistency in playing him this season crushed ANY trade value he might have. Playing time seems to be there to make some further evaluations on these players, seeing as how the "no-way-he's-in-the-2010-plans" Jamey Carroll has now started 6 of the last 13 games, including a start in RF last night. If this roster is supposed to be SO versatile, the exclusion of Marte for any given day just looks like some sort of misguided mission on the part of the manager.

A mission that unfortunately has become all too common and all too transparent as the Indians' lineup card has become a rotation full of only misplaced punchlines for too long.

While we're analyzing why the Tribe finds themselves where they do in the standings, how about taking a look at a piece that Joe Posnanski did on the worst contracts in MLB ...you may recognize a couple:

9. Travis Hafner (Cleveland Indians)

He has three years at $13 million per left on his four-year deal ... and a buyout on top. The reason this is not higher on the list is you can certainly understand why the Indians made the deal. Hafner had led the American League in OPS+ twice. He was coming off a year when he hit .308/.439/.649 - tough to argue with those numbers.

BUT ... they gave him the contract in the middle of the 2007 season, when he turned 30, when his numbers had already started to take a precipitous fall, when he had not shown an ability to stay healthy (he had never even played 150 games in a season when they gave him the deal). PLUS, he's a big, slow guy who literally

cannot play a single defensive position ... he has not put on a glove for a big league game since 2007. Hafner has shown a little spark of offensive life this year, but he has so many injury problems, and he's 32 years old, and this contract surely will only look worse as time goes on.

8. Kerry Wood (Cleveland Indians)

He signed before this season for 2 years at $11 million per and there's a reasonable chance it will kick in and become a three-year deal. He has been terrible this year but that's not even the problem ... Why would you spend all that money to sign a 31-turning-32-year-old pitcher with a long line of injury problems who has never pitched in the American League and has had one decent year as a closer? Mark Shapiro seems to me a bright guy who has done some good things ... but this was a head-scratcher to me.

Obviously, there was some logic at the time of these deals - which Pos hits on with Hafner, but doesn't acknowledge that Wood was supposed to settle the bullpen as a quantity that the Indians have lacked since Joe Table as a lock-down closer...and hasn't that worked out great. But does everyone remember the declaration that the Indians moved Lee and Victor because they weren't going to add any payroll this off-season?

Want to know why any addition of payroll was unlikely?

Committed Payroll for 2010

Hafner - $11.5M
Westbrook - $11M
Wood - $10.5M

That's $33M, which is likely to be about half of the Indians' payroll for 2010 for players that the Indians have no idea as to what to expect from them in 2010.

While those are frightening numbers to "look forward" to, since those players signed those contracts, what do the Indians have to show for them?

Hafner Performance since signing contract on 7/11/07

.250 BA / .348 OBP / .425 SLG / .773 OPS with 26 HR in 651 AB over 185 games

To put that in perspective, the Indians have played in 355 games since Hafner signed this deal...he has played in 52% of those games, with the results in those games not exactly approaching Pronkian levels.

Westbrook Performance since signing contract in April of 2007

7-11, 4.10 ERA, 112 ERA+, and 1.361 WHIP in 186 2/3 IP over 30 starts

Again, just to put that in perspective, the Indians have played in 440 games since Jake signed this deal...he has started 6% of those games.

Wood Performance since signing contract on 12/13/08

15 saves, 4.72 ERA, 96 ERA+, 1.38 WHIP in 40 IP over 43 games

Tied for second in MLB in Blown Saves among closers with 5 (only Brad Lidge has more) to go against his 15 saves, his 4.72 ERA is 104th among 117 MLB relievers with more than 40 IP on the year.

There's the performance of the past year or past few years that the Indians have received from the players that figure to take up ½ of their payroll.

Still wondering why 2008 and 2009 have turned into these unmitigated disasters?

Yes, a dry well in terms of impact players coming through the system and injuries caused a good number of heartache for Indians' fans in the past two years; but when the Indians (or any other team playing in a market similar to Cleveland) takes gambles on deals like these three, missing on one can be debilitating to the health of a franchise...what about three?

Back to the 2010 payroll, the only other players that are will be receiving money above minimum or arbitration-level dollars are Sizemore ($5.767M), Carmona ($4.9M), and Peralta ($4.85M). The total amount guaranteed to those 6 players (adding in Hafner, Jake, and Wood) comes to $48M, and that's assuming that Peralta is sticking around. By the same token, the player that figures to get the biggest raise via arbitration, Kelly Show Pack, certainly seems to be on his way out of the Indians' plans as he's playing LESS with Martinez no longer in front of

him at the catching position.

If Peralta does come back next year and those 6 players make up $48M in what is likely to be a payroll in the low-to-mid-$60M range, how do the Indians fill the other 19 spots on the roster?

MLB minimum is right around $400K, so 19 x $400K = $7.6M.

And that doesn't take into account some of the guys that may be approached about a Sizemore-type deal (Cabrera and Choo), causing their salary to rise slightly with the security of a long-term deal that would buy perhaps out a year of Free Agency. Nor does it take into account some of the players who may be arbitration-eligible (like Marte, Perez, Smith, and Sowers) when the end of the season comes up and service time is tallied.

That brings us back to the farm system, the feeder that was supposed to already be running at full capacity and only now, infused with arms from the deals of the past 6 weeks or so, looks to be rounding into an organization full of promise, and much of it at the upper levels? To that end, Indians' minor-league guru Tony Lastoria took some time to sit down with the guys at Project Prospect to comment on varied topics throughout the Indians' farm system.

Staying with Project Prospect, here are their updated ratings of minor-leaguers from August 1st ...as pointed out by serial poster Trebek That would be 5 Indians' farmhands among the top 25 with Santana (#2), LaPorta (#10), Rondon (#15), Carrasco (#18) and Weglarz (#20) on the list, all of whom figure to be in AAA or higher next year. Actually, that's 5 of the top 20, which is pretty absurd.

Back to the prospect "haul" over the last couple of months, you can now count SI.com's Jon Heymann as someone who has turned the corner on the prospects that the Tribe received :

The more I look, the more I like the Indians' sale. Nine of the 11 prospects they acquired in trades are pitchers, all are under 24, nine were ranked among the trading teams' top-10 prospects, and five are rated in the top-100 prospects in baseball by Baseball America.

Watching the Rangers come to town and seeing a 21-year-old Neftali Feliz

absolutely blow through Indians batters (and I'm not picking on the Indians as he now has 13 K in 6 2/3 IP), does everyone realize that Feliz was the extremely young, high-ceiling arm the Rangers got from the Braves in the Teixeira deal in 2007?

When he joined the Texas organization, he was a 19-year-old playing in Rookie ball with a power arm to dream on
, racking up the K's. Oh, that was in the middle of 2007...and now a little more than two years later, he's hammering his way through the American League?

Jason Knapp , are you paying attention here?

While that is in jest (at least a little), it does call to mind what can happen when a team hits a bulls-eye on a guy like Feliz in terms of adding that impact talent to an organization that can develop quickly and pay dividends in short order, something that Terry Pluto alludes to in a piece touching on the young arms.

Now, if we could only find a way to have that type of talent come up through our own ranks and not rely on trades with other organizations to net such talent...oh, and then actually giving playing time to said talent at the MLB level.