Tony wrote earlier in the week about the Indians decision to not roster Triple-A Columbus outfielder/first baseman Jordan Brown. The piece was more focused on providing the Indians point of view and some of the reasoning behind the callup, and he purposely left my opinion and some of my rationalization on the decision out in order not to take away from the information presented. Now we get Tony's opinion and thoughts on the matter ...

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The non-callup certainly set off a firestorm among Indians fans, especially the diehards who follow the minor leagues. It became a full blown red alert when Triple-A Columbus infielder Niuman Romero was not only added to the roster, but he was playing first base two days later in a Wednesday afternoon game against Texas.

Having had time to properly think about the decision to not roster Brown, consider all the viewpoints from the organization and Brown, and also discuss it with many other fans, here are some of my random thoughts on the decision and some additional information I have learned since writing that piece:

- Personally, I don't agree with the decision. If it were me, I would have

rostered Brown and had him get the token at bats and reward him for a great season. It rewards him and makes him feel wanted, and at the same time sends a message to every guy in the entire farm system that if they produce and continue to develop that they will get a shot someday as well. Instead, by not calling up a guy who is deemed pretty much major league ready and after such a good season leaves many players questioning what is truly valued or what they have to do to reach their ultimate goal of making it to the big leagues. A callup of Brown spreads goodwill to the rest of the organization, whereas not calling up Brown and instead making it look like Romero was called up in his place leads to a lot of confusion and even some anger.

- Let's just cease all Rule 5 and roster talk here now. Brown is going to be rostered by the Indians this offseason. If he is not rostered by the Indians, it will be because he was traded to another team this offseason, of which his new team would in turn roster him. He will be rostered. After talking to many scouts from various organizations in Columbus this year, it was unanimous that if Brown was available he would be one of the first players taken. His situation is much different this year than last when he was passed up in Rule 5 because he is healthy and he has shown that his dip in performance last season is an outlier. The Indians understand this, and value him anyway, so when the rosters are frozen in November, you will see Brown as one of the names added. He will not see Rule 5. So everyone can relax.

- Also, even if we did not know Brown was being rostered this offseason, just because he was not rostered now does not mean he will not be rostered and is destined to be exposed for the Rule 5 Draft. For example, last year the Indians did not roster the likes of right-handed reliever Jeff Stevens, left-handed starter David Huff, catcher Chris Gimenez, and outfielder Trevor Crowe in September. Almost every one of those guys deserved a callup last September for a quick look or "cup of coffee", yet the Indians did not call any of them up for various reasons. Yet, they were all rostered in November just hours before the mid-November roster deadline. Again, it just goes to show the Indians will not roster a player just to do it and that they will only roster the player when they have to.

- The Indians made it clear the reason Brown was not called up was due to a lack of plate appearances. That was the main focus and reasoning, but there were

several other factors that went into the decision. Things like his defensive issues, not wanting to start his service clock, and the financial ramifications of another player on the big league roster (they will lose millions this year). But no matter what, had there been plate appearances available to play everyday he would be here.

- Remember too that Brown has a minor shoulder injury that sidelined him in August for over two weeks and still is causing him pain. While he has shown he can play with it, it may also be another tally mark in the "don't call him up" side of the ledger where they weighed the pros and cons of his call up.

- Brown is playing winter ball. Baseball being a business, why roster him now and run the risk that he goes out and gets seriously hurt this offseason and then you are stuck with him on the 40-man or you have to then remove him from it and then run the risk of losing him? Again, the chance of a serious injury is slim, but it has to be something considered when making roster decisions, especially when you are just giving a guy a token call up.

- The key word there is "everyday". Sure, he could be up here now and get a token 20-25 at bats this final month of the season. But they see no value in that, and with everyday at bats lacking, he was not called up.

- Also, the Indians have clearly said that they have zero problem with Jordan's bat. They love it. They believe it is major league ready and can help this team. The problem is he lacks a position and fit with this team at the moment, so they are trying to be creative to find a way to get his bat into the lineup. He is shaky defensively - by major league standards - as a first baseman, but they do think he could be a league average outfielder. When he gets to the big leagues with Indians, look for him to primarily or exclusively play left field.

- It is important to note that Double-A Akron catcher Carlos Santana, the MVP of the Eastern League, and also Triple-A Columbus right-handed starter Hector Rondon will not play in Cleveland this year. The reasoning for them is the same as with Brown, and that is there were no innings in the rotation available for Rondon to pitch considering how they already are going with a six man rotation, and there are no at bats for Santana since they already have four catchers on the roster.

The same goes for Brown since you have Andy Marte and Matt LaPorta playing first base, and LaPorta, Trevor Crowe, and Michael Brantley rotating in left field and center field. With no everyday at bats or innings available, they did not want to bring them up. Rondon and Santana are viewed as bigger impact prospects and just as major league ready, if not more, but no one is tearing the team apart for not bringing them up.

- Considering the organization did not callup Brown, this should in a way be viewed as a positive as it shows they view him as an everyday player. If they did not, then they would be more than happy to get him up here as a bench option and get his token 20-25 at bats, sort of like they are doing with super utility man Chris Gimenez whom they view as a bench player.

- Speaking of Gimenez, there was some backlash with him playing first base on Tuesday night in the second game of the double-header. Look, the guy is on the 40-man roster and they need to play him. He is someone they will need to make a roster decision on this offseason, so in a way playing him is actually of more immediate importance over playing Brown anyway. We know Brown is part of this team going forward, but that may not be the case with Gimenez. Since 40-man roster spots are so important, he needs some playing time these last few weeks to get a final few looks at him. Personally, I believe he sticks with the team through the offseason as even though he has struggled with the bat he is very versatile, and besides if you look at his history in the minors he has often struggled in his first taste at a new level yet played better the following year. If anything happens, I could see him being removed from the 40-man roster, but kept in the organization by getting him to sign as a minor league free agent.

- Also, Rondon has NOT reached his innings pitched threshold as he actually needs to be built up to about 160-170 innings this year. He finished the minor league season at 146.1 innings, just 1.1 innings more than last season. Had there been innings available in Cleveland, he would have been in the rotation in September. If right-hander Carlos Carrasco had not been acquired, Rondon likely would be pitching in his slot right now.

- As for the decision to call up Romero, it is important to note his callup was completely independent of a decision to callup Brown. It was not an either or

thing. In their meetings talking about who to call up in September, it was planned from the start to callup a backup infielder to lessen the load of shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera down the stretch. They wanted someone who could play shortstop, so this eliminated a guy like Josh Barfield from the discussion (speaking of which, this guy is done in this organization). Their initial plan was to callup newly acquired infielder Jason Donald to fill that role, but since he has a back issue they turned to option B which was Romero (they did not have many other options). This wasn't a Romero-Brown thing at all. Had they called up Brown, it would have been in ADDITION to calling up Romero.

- That said, there was certainly some surprise when Romero was put in the lineup Wednesday afternoon as the starting first baseman. It is important to note that the Indians were playing three games in less than 24 hours because of the doubleheader on Tuesday and the afternoon game on Wednesday, so some interesting lineups for the last two games of that series was certainly expected. But, Wedge completely threw the front office under the bus when he inserted Romero into the lineup as the first baseman on Wednesday literally hours after the front office explained Brown was not coming up due to a lack of plate appearances available for him. The decision to put Romero at first was 100% Wedge, and really made the front office look like a bunch of liars in their reasoning for not calling up Brown.

- I agree with many that Romero did not deserve a callup. I also don't believe he will stick on the roster this offseason as he will be removed and then probably resigned as a minor league free agent. In any case, they wanted the extra middle infielder so they would not have to rotate guys like Cabrera, Peralta, and Valbuena at different positions in order to give them a day off. Namely Cabrera, as Valbuena was the only player on the roster who could play shortstop prior to Romero's arrival. Valbuena and others could and probably still will play out of position from time to time, but with Romero here it is not a necessity. They want to give their regular infielders additional time off these last few weeks and try to keep them in their regular positions.

Bottom line, with what has happened to Brown and lots of other players before him and will happen to after him, this is just another reason why when these guys hold out for more money as draft picks or go for the last dollar in free agency, it is

why I have zero problem with it provided their intentions were not stated otherwise and they didn't deceive anyone. Once they sign with a team, they are more or less screwed by teams with horrible pay and are at the mercy of the team with roster decisions for the next several years of their career. For the average player who makes it to the big leagues and reaches free agency, he would likely have played four years in the minors making $1200 a month (only in-season), then when he gets to the big leagues makes $400K for the first three years before finally seeing big money once the arbitration years kick in. In all, it can take a player six to nine years before he is ever really "paid". This is why the decisions made by the front office in how they are moved in the system is so important to them because it is their livelihood and they are living off nothing for many years and just scraping to get by.

In the end, my whole agenda when writing about these guys has always been to keep things in a positive light. If a pitcher or hitter is struggling, instead of berating them I instead try to soften it up a bit and give constructive criticism or explain what they are working on to get better. Just try and find something positive that they are currently doing. Some may view that as being homerish, but considering all the BS these guys go through with the whole lifestyle, crappy pay, and dealing with the organizations themselves, the last thing they need is some guy going tabloid on them digging for dirt and trying to be the National Enquirer.

I understand the Indians reasoning for not calling up Brown, and can live with it. But, I still think he should be in Cleveland and he was more than deserving of the call up.