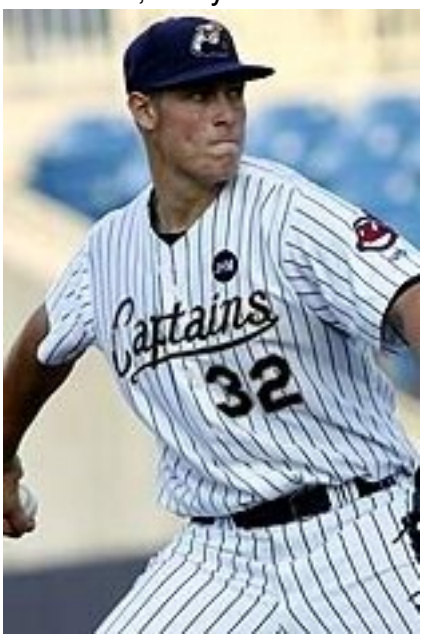
One of the kep pieces in the Cliff Lee trade, right-hander Jason Knapp had to have arthroscopic surgery on his right shoulder a little over a month ago. Then, yesterday, SI.com senior writer Jon Heyman wrote a piece on the C.C. Sabathia and Cliff Lee trades, and during that analysis made a mention that Knapp "needed microfracture shoulder surgery" that would knock him "out of action for a full year". In his latest, Tony tells us what he knows, and also talks about the ongoing manager search.



It has been a little over a month since right-hander Jason Knapp had arthroscopic surgery on his right shoulder. He had the surgery back on September 15th in New York City in a short procedure performed by Dr. David Altchek to clean out some loose bodies in his throwing shoulder. In the six weeks since the surgery, Knapp has been rehabbing and is on schedule for a healthy return by the start of minor league spring training the first week of March.

That said, some of this came under question yesterday when SI.com senior writer Jon Heyman wrote a piece on the C.C. Sabathia and Cliff Lee trades, and during that analysis made a mention that Knapp "needed microfracture shoulder surgery" that would knock him "out of action for a full year".

Obviously, when you read something like that alarm bells go off.

First off, when I was out in Goodyear, Arizona last week covering the Indians Instructional League, Knapp was out there rehabbing and he looked fine and will continue to rehab there throughout the winter. He is not throwing yet, but that is expected to come in due time as he builds up more strength in his shoulder. He has had a lot of down time because of the surgery and rehab, so has put that extra time to good use while out in Arizona as he enrolled in and is taking classes at Glendale Community College.

As for the "microfracture shoulder surgery" that Heyman noted? When asked about this yesterday, sources close to the team said this surgery would be news to them as he had arthroscopic shoulder surgery. They maintain that it was in fact a shoulder scope, and is as head athletic trainer Lonnie Soloff told the media six weeks ago.

Also, doing a little digging myself, I could not find one shred of evidence that such a surgery is currently being performed. Microfracture surgery is common with the knee, but I found no such surgery for the shoulder execept for some exploratory research being conducted by doctors on applying the knee surgery to the shoulder to see if it has the same results. As to why Heyman would call the surgery by that name I do not know. His writing of the injury in that way is what prompted me to check in yesterday on Knapp's status, and everything I learned through sources is it was still an arthroscopic shoulder surgery as originally stated by the team a few weeks back.

So while the alarm bells may have gone off when you read the report from Heyman, I would recommend hitting the snooze button until the spring when we will get a much better read on Knapp's shoulder and if he is ready to go. The Indians still very much expect him to be ready to go come spring, so it is wait and see until then.

Notes

Here are a few quick notes on the Indians continued search for their next manager:

- Triple-A Columbus manager **Torey Lovullo** has been a manager for eight years in the system - the last four with the Indians Triple-A club - and some may think his interview on Friday was just a token gesture by the Indians to give him an interview for the manager's job. That certainly was not the case, however, as the Indians very much consider Lovullo a candidate for the managerial opening with the team. While they have hinted that in the long run they are likely to go outside the organization to fill that opening, even so Lovullo is a very good up-and-coming managing prospect who has been highly regarded inside and outside the organization for years.

- Having had the chance to speak with Lovullo several times the past few years, I expected him to do well in his interview and I think he did not disappoint. I am also

very sure a lot of fans were somewhat surprised that their preconceived notions that he was an Eric Wedge clone were not correct at all as he is different from Wedge in a lot of ways. Lovullo presented himself well, gave a look into his philosophy in how he would run the team, and at worst seems to have set himself up with a job on the coaching staff for whoever is hired in the event he himself does not get the manager's gig.

- There has been a lot of speculation that former Indians manager **Mike Hargrove** could be aligned with Lovullo as a bench coach to give him a veteran presence on the bench. While at first thought this seems like a great idea and perfect match, one has to wonder if it makes sense to tag team a first time manager with a veteran bench coach who is itching to get back into managing. Hargrove in a lot of ways could upstage Lovullo and never really let Lovullo get comfortable and be the manager he truly can be. Plus, the moment things go bad the rumors would start to fly that Hargrove could replace Lovullo as manager. This is just speculation on my part, and just something to think about.

- Of the 38 players currently on the Indians 40-man roster, 26 of them have played under Lovullo at some time or another for an extended period of time at Triple-A the last four years. With several of his players from this year's Columbus team expected to be added to the 40-man roster this offseason, there is no question that he and the players have a familiarity with one another. That familiarity with the players and Indians organization is something that gives him a huge advantage over all the other candidates.

- A lot of questions have been asked in the past few days not only who the manager may end up being, but who some of his staff members will be. I have to believe that no matter who the Indians hire, there will be a strong presence of coaches on the staff who have been a part of the Indians Player Development system the past few years. With such a young team and lots more youth coming up through the pipeline in the next few years, I would think as many as three to four coaches on the staff could come from a list of coordinators and coaches in the system this year such as: Columbus hitting coach Jon Nunnally, Columbus pitching coach Scott Radinsky, Akron manager Mike Sarbaugh, field coordinator Dave Hudgens, hitting coordinator Bruce Fields, special assistant Ellis Burks, and pitching coordinator Dave Miller. In fact, I would be shocked if the pitching coach is not one of Radinsky or Miller.

- It looks like Los Angeles Angels bench coach **Ron Roenicke** is in fact the fifth

confirmed candidate who will be a part of the final interviewing process for the Indians' managerial opening. Both he and Los Angeles Dodgers hitting coach Don Mattingly are expected to be in town sometime next week to interview for the job. Also, Roenicke is said to be one of the other two "unnamed" candidates the Indians were considering interviewing.

- Indians GM Mark Shapiro had said that the two unnamed candidates would not be contacted unless they did not feel strongly about one of the other four candidates. The fact that they sought permission to interview Roenicke AFTER they had just talked to Manny Acta and Bobby Valentine makes me believe they either were not impressed with both or they are unsure they can hire either one of them. It seems they are concerned Acta will pass on the Indians job and instead agree to be the new manager for the Houston Astros, and after Valentine had a ho-hum interview on Thursday they were probably left uneasy with the possibility that it may come down to Lovullo and Mattingly.

- Acta and Valentine were always thought to be the two frontrunners for the job, so it is no coincidence that both were the first two interviewed for the job opening. This was probably so the Indians could get a gauge on the process and see if they had found a good mutual fit with someone who they liked and appeared deadest on taking the job if offered. With the uncertainty of Acta parlayed with Valentine's uneasiness about the Indians job, they apparently put their backup plan into motion.