Well, the Indians on Sunday officially announced that Manny Acta has been named as the new manager of the team and has agreed to a three year deal with a club option year for a fourth in 2013. A press conference is scheduled for later this afternoon when Acta will be officially welcomed into the Indians family and don his Wahoo ball cap for the first time. With the hiring now official, Tony weighs in with his thoughts ... and admits, he isn't sure exactly what to think.

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With the hiring now official, my initial reaction is I don't know what to think of this hiring right now.

There are sure to be several detractors because of his poor record with Washington or because they wanted Bobby Valentine or some other name manager. But looking beyond all that, and looking at Manny Acta himself and how I really feel about his being named as manager, I honestly have no idea if I like the hiring or hate it.

Most of this is because I know almost nothing firsthand about him other than that 158-252 win-loss record in Washington. And you know what? About 99.9% of us are probably in the same boat. We just don't know anything about this guy.

That said, I do think out of the final four candidates or all the guys they talked to

throughout the interview process, that Acta was probably the best option available. That is not necessarily a pat on the back to Acta as this is mostly because it overall was a less than appealing crop of managerial options available to the Indians.

I went into this manager search really with as open a mind as I have ever had with anything sports related in Cleveland. With the lack of any favorable candidates or someone exciting once my favorite John Farrell removed his name from consideration, I let the process play itself out and waited to hear how the candidates performed in their private interviews with the Indians as well as their interview sessions with the media.

When Acta conducted his 18-minute presser on Tuesday, having never really listened to the guy nor having an understanding of his philosophy and approach to the game of baseball, I came away highly impressed with him. Apparently the Indians felt the same way as I have heard he really shined in his private interview with the Tribe brass.

Acta has also been the benefactor of some overwhelming support from the baseball community this offseason as many in the game believe he is a lot better than what he showed while with Washington. Terry Pluto mentioned in his Sunday article in the Cleveland Plain Dealer that Bobby Cox was very impressed with Acta and even went as far as to call the Indians and endorse Acta for the Indians job. We have also seen a lot of support in the media for Acta as writers such as Joe Sheehan and Joe Posnanski have had glowing reports on Acta prior to his hiring. I think in the coming days we will see that goodwill continue as national pundits will chime in from all over and consider him as a solid or better hiring for the Indians.

With Acta now in the fold, he and the Indians will work to fill out the rest of his staff in the coming days and weeks. It looks like a veteran coach will join his staff as a bench coach, and it is almost a certainty that Torey Lovullo will be a part of his staff likely as the third base coach. Also, expect the hitting and pitching coach to be filled from within with the likes of Ellis Burks, Bruce Fields, Dave Hudgens, and Jon Nunnally getting strong consideration for the hitting coach job, and Dave Miller or Scott Radinsky almost locks to be the two final candidates for the pitching coach job.

I do find it interesting that Acta's three year guaranteed deal coincides with the number of years left on Indians GM Mark Shapiro's deal. Clearly, Shapiro's fate as

GM of the Indians is now directly tied to the fate of Acta. If Acta fails, not only will Acta be gone but Shapiro will be as well.

Hopefully, the Indians have caught a break with Acta and all the reports that he is an up-and-comer ring true and he is the manager for the Indians for a long time and one of the big reasons this organization gets itself back on its feet and becomes a perennial playoff contender. And who knows, maybe wins a championship along the way.

But for now, I just consider the hiring of Acta a solid move and now am just ready to wait and see what happens from here.

World Series Game 1

Well, it is official.

Game 1 of the 2009 World Series will be a matchup of C.C. Sabathia vs. Cliff Lee.

(Pardon me while I find a tall building to jump off of to put me out of my misery.)

Look, I love baseball. More than any other sport 100-fold. But I hate Major League Baseball, and it is why since about the early part of the 2000s I have spent much more of my time following and loving minor league baseball.

It's a terrible system when fans of nearly half the teams know that they cannot keep their star players. It's not the owners fault, it is the unequal playing field between the have's and have not's that result in half the teams essentially being the farm system to where the star players eventually go to the top ten markets.

In the NBA and NFL they have a system in place where stars are kept, and really can be kept through the prime of their careers until the twilight of their career when a team may let them go. But unless the guy is a malcontent, you'll never see Indianapolis, Green Bay, San Diego, Pittsburgh, and so on worry about losing the Peyton Manning's, Brett Favre's, Adrian Peterson's and so on of the world. They have a system where star players are kept for almost as long as a team wants.

Yet in baseball that is not the case. Players leave in their prime after six good seasons, mostly right around 28-31 years old, and go elsewhere because the owners for the smaller market teams cannot match the jack that the big market

teams offer without serious worry of the consequences to their roster.

A big financial loss from a bad contract is devastating to a team like the Indians. Travis Hafner anyone? We are paying him $13+ million a year for the next several years, and because we are stuck with that contract we are forced to let go of stars like Cliff Lee and Victor Martinez, and also get rid of them sooner than we should have. The big market teams simply just sweep that Hafner contract under the rug and continue to pile on more payroll with little care in the world.

When a player in baseball nears free agency, if he plays for a small market team they often have so consider trading the player and getting something for him before he leaves via free agency. Yet, if a good young player nearing free agency happens to play with the Yankees, Red Sox, Dodgers, etc, those teams never have to worry about trading such a player and instead can willingly back up the brinks truck to keep them. They never have to worry about losing their stars, and for the most part never lose them.

It is sickening how the system is setup. If Major League Baseball were setup like the NFL or NBA, the Indians right now would still have Lee and Sabathia at the top of their rotation and likely have them at the top of their rotation for the next five to seven years at least. If this same system and money disparity between teams were present 50-60 years ago, Bob Feller would have pitched 5-6 seasons with the Indians before leaving via free agency and pitching the rest of his career with the Yankees. Same with the likes of Mel Harder, Early Wynn, and so on.

Some day this setup is going to catch up with Major League Baseball. Yes, it has been proven in the past that the bigger payroll teams don't always win as young talent can often be a great neutralizer. But, the bottom line is, when one set of teams have free reign to pick the best players off another set of teams, in the long run it just is not a very fair system.

(stepping off my soapbox)