It has been a tumultuous last couple of months for Cleveland Indians catcher Wyatt Toregas. Since learning at the end of spring training that he did not win a spot on the Indians opening day roster as the regular catcher his career has seemed to be on a downward spiral ever since.

When catcher Lou Marson was named the catcher who would hold the fort down in Cleveland in the short-term until Carlos Santana arrived, Toregas has since gone through the roster rollercoaster of ups and downs of what it is like to be a fringe player on a Major League roster. While he had an option left and could have just simply been sent to Triple-A Columbus to start the season, the Indians needed to clear some roster space at the end of spring training to add the likes of outfielder Austin Kearns, infielder Mark Grudzielanek, and right-handed reliever Jamey Wright. As a result, the Indians designated him for assignment which gave the Indians ten days to trade, release or outright him to the minors.

The Indians were up front with Toregas about removing him from the roster and told him they were going to actively try to trade him to another team, so much so that before an official roster move was made he was talking to others reporters at the end of spring training about it. He ultimately cleared waivers, as so many players often do at the end of spring training since every other team's rosters are virtually locked in, but no trade was completed.

“Spring training left me as the odd man out with Santana in Triple-A and Lou in the big leagues and with them signing Mike Redmond," said Toregas in a phone conversation last evening. "From what they were telling me they were going to actively try and trade me, but it got to the point where I could tell that they weren’t. They are trying to keep me as an insurance policy for injuries and things like that, so I know how the game works. Somebody has to be the starter and somebody has to be the backup and somebody has to be out of luck. That’s just the way the game is because there are just too many people who play it. But the thing is I feel like my abilities are still really good and I can help a team somewhere."

Toregas is getting a crash course on how some of the player control and roster management rules for young players in professional baseball can be very unfair. To the Indians credit, there was no reason for them to trade him earlier in the season because they still considered him a valuable player where in the event Marson or Redmond went down with an injury they would have just summoned Toregas right away to Cleveland. He is valuable in the sense that he has caught in the Major Leagues for them and is familiar with most of the guys on the staff. However, things have changed now that Santana is on active duty, which means two catchers would now need to get hurt for Toregas to see time in Cleveland, so he is not as important from a depth perspective.

Since this was the first time Toregas was removed from a 40-man roster he had no say on where he would go nor was he a free agent. Once he cleared waivers and was not traded the Indians were free to outright him to the minors and there was nothing he could do about it. Since Santana was in Columbus and was to get everyday at bats, the Indians did not want to limit Toregas to playing one day a week, so they sent him to Double-A Akron so he could play everyday and be ready to go should a need arise if Marson or Mike Redmond were injured. The situation was not out of the ordinary, and he opened the season in Akron as planned.

But shortly into the season things began to unravel quickly between Toregas and the Indians, and the once strong and positive relationship between him and the organization came apart at the seams. Obviously he was not excited to be playing in Double-A Akron. What player would be after having played in the big leagues at the end of last season and having a good spring training this year? At the same time he also understood why he was there and not Columbus or even Cleveland, and on the personal side being in Akron allowed him an opportunity to spend more time with his newborn son and wife since he lives there.

But while Toregas understood the circumstances involved with him being in Akron, he was unsure of the plan the organization had for him and why the promises made to him were not being lived up to.

"I was trying to talk to them and figure out what exactly their plan for me was, and it kind of turned into a situation where I just wanted to go somewhere else," said Toregas. “It just ended up with them saying ‘you are going to Arizona’. They just kind of threw me out there [in Arizona] and they said I needed to work out and get in better shape. I got the feeling I was really just being put there so I was out of the way.”

The issue between Toregas and the Indians with regard to his roster status is nothing new really. While Toregas has no history of being a problem child and is actually very far from it, when a player's future is on the line it can often lead to some intense run ins with decision makers in the front office for Major League teams. It's the nature of the beast.

“The conversations we had got pretty heated," said Toregas. "I am not going to say we were yelling and arguing at each other, but what we were saying was getting pretty intense. I think that they thought that I was rubbing off on other players, but the thing is I would never take the things that have happened to me personally and carry them over to the team. I was playing in Akron and doing what I could, and my personal issues I was taking up straight with them. I think that somewhere it got crossed that maybe I had an attitude problem, but it was as far from that as it could be. I was trying to find out what was going on in terms of them maybe letting me go or trading me. I was just trying to stay on top of the ball, and I guess they got tired of it."

Toregas' stay in Akron was short as he was abruptly removed from the roster in early May and sent to extended spring training out in Goodyear, Arizona to as the Indians said at the time "get his body back in shape". The move was somewhat odd at the time, and knowing the circumstances now it looks like it was the result of a fallout between him and the organization. This of course is very surprising as prior to this season Toregas has been nothing short of a team player and never had any makeup or attitude issues. In fact the organization has always raved about how he handles his team and staff, and it was one of the big reasons along with his very good defense why he was rostered in the first place.

Toregas just returned from his five week stay in Arizona on Monday, and the whole time he was out there he kept wondering why he was there in the first place and how things between him and the organization had gotten to where they are now.

“I was sitting there saying 'why am I here?'," said Toregas. "I tried to address some problems I

was having, and they must of took it the wrong way I guess when really I was just trying to look out for my family and my career. They have so many options at catcher and they are solid and good to go, but I am kind of regressing and I guess it came out wrong as I was frustrated at the time, especially after I had such a good spring. They told me I was competing for the job, and at the time it wasn't that big of a deal. But then certain things were happening and I was feeling like I was forgotten about and that's when I addressed it. They almost made me feel like I was lucky to have a job in Akron and I kind of didn't see it that way. We both kind of went back and forth at each other, and before you know it they just sent me to Arizona [as if] to remove me out of the way so they didn't have to deal with me anymore."

Back from Arizona, Toregas is now set to start playing again with the Indians short-season Single-A team in Mahoning Valley when their season kicks off on Friday. Being sent to Mahoning Valley is of course a very peculiar assignment. While the Indians are not wrong for keeping Toregas around as an insurance policy, there has to be some questions in regard to their decision-making with what they are doing with him in the minors. Playing at Triple-A or Double-A would be acceptable, but sending a 27-year old veteran minor league catcher with big league experience to extended spring training and now short-season A-ball makes no sense. Even when asked, the Indians did not explain their reasoning behind the move.

Worst of all, burying Toregas in the system keeps him from being scouted and seen by other organizations so they can consider trading for him or signing him this offseason when he is a minor league free agent.

"That's the thing I am really worried about and if I am going to be able to get a job next year," said Toregas. "I can see the way things are going here and as it is right now I am never going to get an opportunity here. They kind of told me that they were going to add me back into the mix at Double-A and Triple-A. That was a week and a half ago and it just kind of fell through and they said go to Mahoning. That's one of the things I am having trouble with as they keep telling me things and they keep falling through and then they will call me back and say something else. It's almost like they are telling me things just to keep me quiet. I don't know what is going on and I am ready to play. It's frustrating for me."

There are still over three months left in the season, so at some point Toregas may be granted his release or be traded. But the damage has been done. Last year at this time he was on a high as he was a Triple-A All Star and was getting set to make his Major League debut, but just a year later he is at an all time low in his career since he is stuck in roster purgatory with the Indians.

With over two months of the season now gone, Toregas knows he can't make up for the lost time and that he needs to move on. He has no control over what the Indians do with him as they have all the control over where to send him and he has no say in the matter until this offseason when he becomes a free agent. As a highly regarded defensive catcher who is excellent working with a pitching staff, he should have no problem finding a job as a backup or starter with a big league organization at the Triple-A or Major League level next year.

“Hopefully at some point they will say I have had enough and they will either let me go or I just have to wait it out until the end of the year and see what happens in the offseason for me," said Toregas. "I have always put myself second and I have been so much of a team player, and the one time I ask for a favor from the organization I don’t get any help. It is a tough situation for me right now. I don’t know why it got to this point.”

"All I really want is an opportunity. I just want to play baseball, and I want to play at a level I am pretty sure I can play at."