With the World Series (finally) underway and with the magnifying glass being focused on comments made by CP Lee's wife (and really, how the whole Lee-Yankees fans thing shakes out in terms of it affecting him going there is nailed by Craig Calcaterra at HBT, in which he says that the manner in which her words are dissected depends on how you view the situation going into it), there is baseball to be played and, seeing as how this Fall Classic between the team from the 5th largest TV market against the 6th largest TV market is somehow is being touted as a couple of the "little guys", let's take a quick look at how these two teams were built and how it relates to the "Rebuild/Reload/Whatever" currently underway on the North Coast.

Much of the build-up to the World Series has focused on the efforts of baseball's new wunderkind, Texas GM Jon Daniels, and how the Rangers were built with good drafting and development. You'll, of course, remember the Jerry Crasnick piece that trumpeted how the Rangers were built from within and while most (ahem...me) took that as fact, how about this breakdown of the Rangers' roster, with the significant players with OPS+ or ERA+ over 100 listed...right next to how each was acquired:
Josh Hamilton – 175 OPS+ (via Trade)
Nelson Cruz – 150 OPS+ (via Trade)
Vlad Guerrero – 122 OPS+ (via FA)
David Murphy – 115 OPS+ (via Trade)
Ian Kinsler – 113 OPS+ (via Amateur Draft)
Mike Young – 105 OPS+ (via Trade)

Darren O'Day – 213 ERA+ (via Waiver Claim)
Darren Oliver – 175 ERA+ (via FA)
Neftali Feliz – 159 ERA+ (via Trade)
CJ Wilson – 129 ERA+ (via Amateur Draft)
Colby Lewis – 116 ERA+ (via FA)
Tommy Hunter – 116 ERA+ (via Amateur Draft)
Frank Francisco – 115 ERA+ (via Trade)
Cliff Lee – 109 ERA+ (via Trade)
Derek Holland – 106 ERA+ (via Amateur Draft)
Dustin Nippert – 101 ERA+ (via Trade)

If you're counting at home, that would be four players out of seventeen that were the product of the Rangers' drafting. Perhaps you want to include Colby Lewis, who was originally drafted by Texas, which played a role as to which team he would sign with after spending the last two years in Japan, but for the purposes of this, the Rangers that figured significantly into their 2010 season that were drafted by the club and have stayed with the club are Kinsler, Wilson (who converted from relieving), Hunter, and Holland.

Not exactly the backbone of the Rangers' team there, though there are some nice players. However, this idea that they built the team from within isn't really all that true. That's not to say that the Rangers haven't benefited from some strong scouting and decent drafting (and there is purported to be more in the pipeline…and stop me if you've heard that before) that allowed the Rangers to go out and pry a Cliff Lee out of Mariners.

That all being said, the assertions coming forth that are ready to canonize Daniels seem to simply give him credit for everything, sometimes going a little overboard :
They've used the draft as well as any team in the majors. They've built one of the strongest Latin American programs in the game. There are plenty of teams that have done good jobs in one or the other and a few that have done a good job at both.

If you were wondering about that "Latin American program", you'll notice that there are no players on the list above that were signed as Amateur Free Agents…so you won't find the equivalent of a Victor Martinez, Jhonny Peralta, Fausto Carmona, or Rafael Perez, the way that you could on the 2007 Tribe.

So, are the Rangers (as they're currently constructed) a team that should be emulated in terms of how much they have benefited from smart drafting and Latin American development?

Um...not really, particularly when you consider the rotation that they'll be facing this post-season includes four pitchers all drafted and developed by San Francisco. Prepare to be impressed here:
Matt Cain (1st Round, 2002)
Jonathan Sanchez (27th Round, 2004)
Timmy Lincecum (1st Round, 2006)
Madison Bumgardner (1st Round, 2007)
Now, each of those four pitchers is under control for at least the next two seasons and if you were wondering how the Giants are in the World Series despite their moribund offense and after making some HORRIBLE recent moves in FA (Zito and Rowand) as well as some dreadful trades (AJ Pierzynski for Liriano/Nathan), you start to realize how truly amazing it is, in terms of what young, top-end starting pitching can hide in terms of other organizational warts.

Drafting and development is why the Giants find themselves in the Fall Classic as Brian Wilson (24th Round, 2003…and who is under club control through the 2013 season, just like Lincecum) and Buster Posey (1st Round, 2008) combine with that pitching staff to essentially constitute the six bullets in the Giants' chamber.

Sure, they have their bit players that have played well…actually Aubrey Huff (FA), Pat Burrell

(FA), and Andres Torres (FA) are the only offensive players outside of Posey to have an OPS+ over 100 and relievers Santiago Casilla (FA) and Sergio Romo (Draft) are the only pitchers outside of their playoff rotation and Brian Wilson to post an ERA+ over 100 this year, but the Giants' success is keyed and maintained by those six drafted players.

And if you're wondering after looking at those years of the draft – yes, they went Lincecum, Baumgardner, Posey in three consecutive years in the Amateur Draft.

Of course, every team would love to simply draft arms in the 1st Round year after year and assume that those pitchers will one day constitute a playoff rotation for them, but if you want a road map of how successful drafting can lead you to your destination, the Giants (even with their terrible lineup, full of has-beens and never-weres) actually provide a better example between the two, in terms of how teams can use the draft to a postseason berth and a successful October.

To bring it back to the North Coast, after following the REAL story of how Texas was built and how it falls closer in line with "acquire guys via trade and add them to in-house talent while getting lucky on some lottery tickets" blueprint that the Rangers are reading off of, perhaps the new incarnation of the Indians is a combination between the two. Which is to say, the Indians have made the trades in the past three years that they hope will yield the same success that the Rangers are enjoying; however, the blueprint of picking arms at the top of the draft in the hopes that they can one day become that great equalizer – strong starting pitching – the way that it has in San Francisco.

Certainly, it feels pie-eyed to dream today that some amalgamation of Santana, Carrasco, LaPorta, Masterson, and Brantley (all acquired via trade, among many others) combining with Kipnis, The Chiz, Weglarz, and most importantly (here's where those high pitching draft picks come in) Alex White and Drew Pomeranz are going to mature and develop into some combination of acquired players and drafted players that allows them to achieve contention and sustained contention.

However, as we've seen, there are many ways in which a team can outplay the heavyweights of MLB any given year (and does anyone else find it odd that competitive balance is touted simply because the Yankees fall two games short of winning it all) and the Indians seem to be following some well-worn paths. Whether or not those players acquired and drafted can blend the same way that they have in Texas and San Francisco this year (or the way they did in Cleveland three years ago) is the ebb and flow that figures to be on tap for the next few years.