While we all wait to hear an official diagnosis for Nick Hagadone's one-round fight with something hard in the Indians clubhouse, the dominoes have already begun to fall. Hagadone was sent to the minors and placed on the "Disqualification List", a list that keeps the Indians from having to pay Hagadone while he sits with his hand wrapped up due to a self-inflicted injury. The problem for the Indians isn't that Hagadone is unavailable, since he wasn't pitching all that well to begin with. The problem is that what Hagadone has done may handcuff (no pun intended) what the Indians do at the trade deadline.

When the Indians made a conscious effort to compete last season at the expense of their top two pitching prospects, it was under the assumption that Ubaldo Jimenez would be the right move. To date, he really has not been and the Indians farm system was left in shambles as a result. With both Drew Pomeranz and Alex White off to Colorado, the farm system cupboard was left bare. Now, with a few gaping holes staring the Indians in the face, they lack the "currency" it takes to get a deal done and acquire a player to fill one of those holes.

Considering that Francisco Lindor, the hotshot 18-year-old shortshop in Lake County, is probably untouchable, and really wouldn't hold a ton of value as a player who is projected to be another three-to-five years away from being a big leaguer and 2012 first-round draft pick Tyler Naquin can't be traded until next season, the Indians have next to no highly-touted prospects to dangle to other organizations in trades. Lindor also cannot be traded until August 15, one year after he was signed, which was the same deal with Drew Pomeranz when he was the player to be named later in the Ubaldo trade.

In baseball, there are very few trades that consist of Major Leaguers for Major Leaguers. It's almost always a Major Leaguer for a prospect or two, sometimes even more. Teams are unwilling to sacrifice strengths on their Major League team to fill one hole and create a new one.

That's why prospects get passed around year after year. Baseball is a "What have you done for me lately?" business and front offices are pressured to make something happen in the present rather than wait a couple years for a prospect to maybe make an impact.

That's where Nick Hagadone would have come in handy. Hagadone is a big, strong lefty whose fastball can reach 97 or 98 mph and has a wipeout slider. His command is still a work in progress, but a lot of situational lefties struggle early in their careers. The Indians are anticipating Rafael Perez's return sometime over the next month and Tony Sipp is starting to pitch better. That would make Hagadone the most attractive trade piece the Indians have. Furthermore, Hagadone is essentially ready to be in the Majors. He's a work in progress at that level, but teams selling off pieces prior to the trade deadline are willing to be patient.

With most MLB transactions, the two most important parts of the deal are financial flexibility and available talent. The Indians reportedly have the financial flexibility, according to GM Chris Antonetti who said "I have not limited our focus on potential acquisitions by their contract status." How much money the Indians have to play with is unknown, but at least that statement from Antonetti says that they won't have to beg, borrow, and steal for enough money to add a player with some salary left to be paid.

What they don't have is the talent necessary to facilitate a deal. There are decent prospects down on the farm, guys like Jesus Aguilar, Chun Chen, Geovanni Soto, and assorted others, but none of those guys are going to get you an impact player. They'll get a marginal upgrade at best, and probably at a position that isn't of dire need – right handed reliever, fourth outfielder, etc.

In a division that could come down to the wire where a trade deadline acquisition could be the deciding factor, the Indians are going to come up short in trade negotiations. They can't get a Matt Garza, Ryan Dempster, Carlos Quentin type player because it's a buyers' market and there will be bidding wars. That's not to say that Hagadone in a deal would have gotten any of those players, but he would have been more desirable than the collection of farmhands the Indians have. There's a chance that Hagadone plus a couple prospects could have netted the Indians a second-tier guy to help, but that got infinitely more difficult this past week.

It's probably hyperbole to say that Hagadone's momentary lack of judgment will be the deciding factor in the AL Central race, but, we just don't know. Without being a fly on the wall or

wiretapping Antonetti's phone, we simply don't know what other GMs thought about Hagadone and if the Indians were even dangling him. What we do know is that any long-term injury to Hagadone makes him untradeable and unable to help the Indians in any way, shape, or form for the 2012 playoff chase. We don't know what trade negotiations had to be shelved because of Hagadone's injury.

The fact is that Hagadone wasn't pitching well and that he certainly wasn't increasing his trade value. The potential is there, however, and guys with big arms and Hagadone's size are always sought after commodities. Not only does this affect Hagadone's value in the short-term, it affects his value in the long-term as well. He's just 26 years old and there are some maturity issues he should grow out of, but he now has the label of a ticking time bomb and a player who struggles with his emotions on the mound. Any team acquiring him now has to ask themselves if they want to put up with that side of Hagadone's personality and if they think he'll grow out of it. Though, obviously, the hope would be that he has learned his lesson, especially when he stops getting paid.

No matter what impact the Hagadone injury has, Antonetti is in a familiar spot of having to be extremely creative to upgrade the ballclub. None of the 25-man roster players are going to be traded or have much value, the minors aren't full of blue chip prospects, and the Indians, despite having money available, surely don't have enough money for a straight salary dump player like Alfonso Soriano.

Instead of being proactive and shopping Hagadone around and seeing what the Indians could get for him, they will now have to be reactive and hope that somebody comes available on a bargain bin price or a team gets desperate enough to dump somebody off. We all hoped Hagadone would have a hand in this season, but this isn't the way we anticipated it.