Ever since LeBron James blessed us with his absence two years ago, The Cleveland Fan has been trying its best to assess the next wave of "Who's Who in Cleveland Sports." The hunt for these new heroes has not always been a fruitful one, of course. And as we'll see in this edition of the Power Rankings, the current Top 25 is perhaps notable more for who *isn't there* any longer, rather than who is. Recently, a sea change for the Cleveland Indians has brought about the mass exodus of some longtime Power Rankings staples, including former Top 5 players Travis Hafner, Grady Sizemore, and Roberto "Fausto" Hernandez. If you believe the rumors, more popular Tribesmen may soon be joining them in the past tense before the hot stove has cooled. So, in all this turnover, who is stepping up to claim the open slots in the rankings? With the Browns and Cavs both among the youngest teams in their respective leagues, which kiddos are earning their keep?

Well, we'll get to that in a minute. First, it's time once again to review how this whole Power Rankings nonsense works. Simply put, every athlete, coach, and front office person in our Top 25 list is ranked on **STAR POWER**-- a metric of success and popularity that breaks down into four subsections: **On-Field Performance (OP), Local Recognition (LR), National Recognition (NR), and Marketability (M)**. For each one of these sub-categories, the player in question gets a 1-10 ranking, and the combination of the four scores is his **STAR POWER RATING** (with 40.0 being the highest possible SPR, reserved for the likes of your iconic Hall of Famer types). For good measure, I also throw in the guy's current Twitter follower count (presuming they have any) for a better sense of his engagement with the ever judgmental online community.

So where is Cleveland's sports attention focused as we approach the end of 2012 (and possibly the world as we know it)? Let's dive in.

Cleveland Sports Star Power Rankings: November 26, 2012

#1 Kyrie Irving 35.5
PG, Cavaliers | OP: 8.5, LR: 9, NR: 9, M: 9 | *Twitter Followers: 294,901* | Previous Rank: #1
Kyrie's hold on the #1 spot remains more than safe for the moment, as he is arguably the only no-doubt, bonified superstar the city currently has to offer. That being said, Irving's continued string of injury problems is causing some whispers as to his long term durability, and how this may impact him reaching his full potential. As we speak, the Cavs' leading scorer is shelved for a month with a broken finger.

#2 Jimmy Haslam 31.0
Owner, Browns | OP: 7, LR: 9, NR: 7, M: 8 | *Twitter:* --- | Previous Rank: --
Oh yeah, the Browns got a new owner since the last time we rattled off the Top 25. And while Randy Lerner never did see his name anywhere near this list, his successor is debuting in a dangerously optimistic spot. Sure, Mr. Flying J is largely benefiting from simply being the "Anti-Lerner" at the moment. But even so, his fiery presence and deep pockets have Browns fans lining up, yet again, with hopes of this next regime being "the one."

#3 Trent Richardson 31.0
RB, Browns | OP: 7.5, LR: 8.5, NR: 8, M: 7 | *Twitter:* -- | Previous Rank: #3
A 1,000 yard season is still a possibility for the 21 year-old, but it's clear we haven't seen T. Rich entirely unleashed just yet. Electric TD runs like his game deciding scamper against the Steelers are sometimes balanced out by a lengthy series of 1-2 yard stumbles. Time will tell how much those nagging injuries have hampered him.

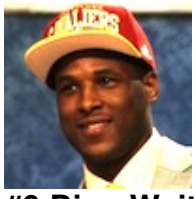
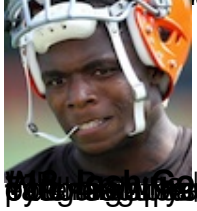
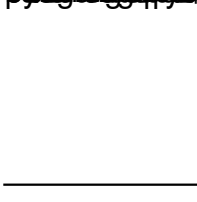
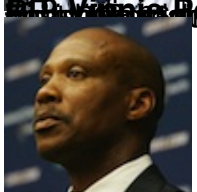
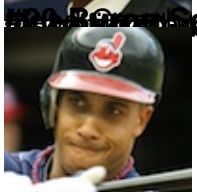
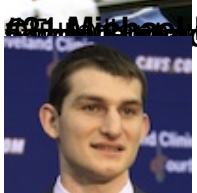
#4 Terry Francona 29.5
Manager, Indians | OP: 5, LR: 7, NR: 8.5, M: 9 | *Twitter:* -- | Previous Rank: --
Oh yeah, the Indians got a new manager since the last time we rattled off the Top 25. And surprise surprise, they nabbed themselves the biggest name on the market. The arrival of the curse-breaking ex-Boston skipper is a double edged sword, however. While Francona may help the Indians entice free agents and develop their young talent quicker, he also has a contract that essentially goes void if ownership parts with his front office buddies Shapiro and Antonetti. So if you haven't liked the way the roster's been handled of late, don't expect that end of things to be changing any time soon.

#5 Anderson Varejao 29.0
C/F, Cavaliers | OP: 8.5, LR: 7, NR: 6, M: 7.5 | *Twitter:* -- | Previous Rank: #11
Andy's league leading rebound pace and eye-popping 14 point / 14 board per game averages have him at a career high rank of #5. Naturally, this only makes him the topic of increasing trade speculation, as the rebuilding Cavaliers would theoretically be looking to sell high on an injury prone veteran such as Varejao. Still, if we presume one more offseason's worth of development and additions could make the Cavs into a decent playoff team, unloading a unique weapon like this sure would seem like a step back in that process.

#6 Joe Thomas 28.5
OT, Browns | OP: 8.5, LR: 8, NR: 7, M: 5 | *Twitter:* -- | Previous Rank: #8
Another Pro Bowl trip likely awaits the Browns' most reliable and respected player. Though it's hard for offensive lineman to rack up "statistics" in the classic sense, it may be enough to say that-- with a rookie QB and rookie RB-- Cleveland has still allowed the 9th fewest sacks in the NFL.

#7 Asdrubal Cabrera 28.0
SS, Indians | OP: 7.5, LR: 8, NR: 7, M: 5.5 | *Twitter:* -- | Previous Rank: #2
2012 wound up being a statistical drop off in nearly every single category for Droobs, including a disappointing showing defensively-- as his limited range has raised some questions. As of now, though, all Cabrera related questions relate to whether he will, in fact, be an Indian come next spring, as shortstop needy teams like the Red Sox and Cardinals have been sniffing around the Tribe's doorstep. The arrival of Mike Aviles via trade could very well be the first sign that Asdrubal's days are numbered.

#8 Joe Haden 28.0
CB, Browns | OP: 6, LR: 8, NR: 6, M: 8 | *Twitter: 104,480* | Previous Rank: #5
Alternately one of the city's most beloved and most frustrating athletes, Haden's value to the Browns defense is undeniable, as his presence is beyond necessary for the team's thin secondary to stand a chance. This makes his 5 missed games (4 to suspension, 1 to a somewhat mysterious injury) all the more difficult to forgive.



#9 Dion Waiters 27.5
G, Cavaliers | OP: 7, LR: 7.5, NR: 6, M: 7 | *Twitter: 53,463* | Previous Rank: #14
Considering some of the outrage following his selection at the #4 spot in last summer's NBA Draft, it's worth noting that Waiters-- at the very least-- has been a pleasant surprise. At 15 ppg, he is the Cavaliers' second leading scorer. At times, he has looked like a star in the making. At others, he has looked clueless and reckless. Dion's unconventional shooting style still leaves room for concern, but 13 games into his pro career, he has at least passed the first test. He appears to belong (which sadly is all it takes to make the Power Rankings Top 10 these days).