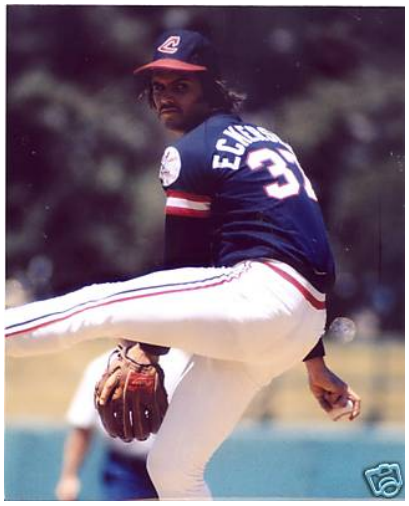


A few weeks ago, while at the Indians game with some of our fellow writers at The Cleveland Fan, there was a point in the game where we looked around and seemingly everyone in our group was busy looking down and tapping away on some kind of device.

Being the only person in the group without a smart phone made us realize how much technology and social media has changed the way we watch and interact during sports events. We can be at home on the couch, at the stadium or the arena, and still interact with a community of Indians, Browns and Cavs fans across the country and around the world through Twitter, Facebook and e-mail. (And that doesn't even take into account the numerous high-quality fans sites devoted to Cleveland sports).

That got us thinking about some of the biggest Cleveland sports moments in our lifetime in the pre-blog and social media era, which we are defining as anything before 2004. Because while Syknet may have become self-aware in 1999, sports blogs didn't become prevalent in town until 2004, the same year Facebook was created, and Twitter did not launch until 2006.

So we came up with the 20 biggest sports stories that would have made the Internet blow up in Cleveland had these various social media platforms existed at the time. We're starting today with Part One, highlighting No. 20 to No. 16.

## 20. Joe Carter traded to San Diego

[redacted]

## 19. Paul Warfield traded to Miami

Heading into the 1970 season, the Cleveland Browns needed a quarterback. (Where have we heard that one before?) Bill Nelsen was nearing the end of his career and the team – dominant during the 1950s and 1960s – needed someone who could keep the team in playoff contention for the next decade. They decided that man was Mike Phipps.

The Miami Dolphins held the No. 3 pick in the 1970 NFL Draft but already had a quarterback in Bob Griese – who ironically had preceded Phipps at Purdue. So the Browns sent Warfield, who had been with the team since 1964, was a three-time Pro Bowl selection who had averaged 20.5 yards per reception and almost nine touchdowns a year, to Miami for the right to draft Phipps.

“I know the Browns didn’t want to trade me,” Warfield said in Terry Pluto’s 1997 book, *When all the World was Browns Town*

. “But they felt they had to get a young quarterback because of Bill Nelsen’s knees. The Dolphins knew the Browns were in love with Mike Phipps and they said they’d draft Phipps and then demand even more than me in a trade later, so the Browns gave me.”

Warfield went on to play in three Super Bowls (winning two) with the Dolphins, making the Pro Bowl each of his five years in Miami, before closing out his Hall of Fame career with a two-season cameo back in Orange and Brown (1976 and 1977).

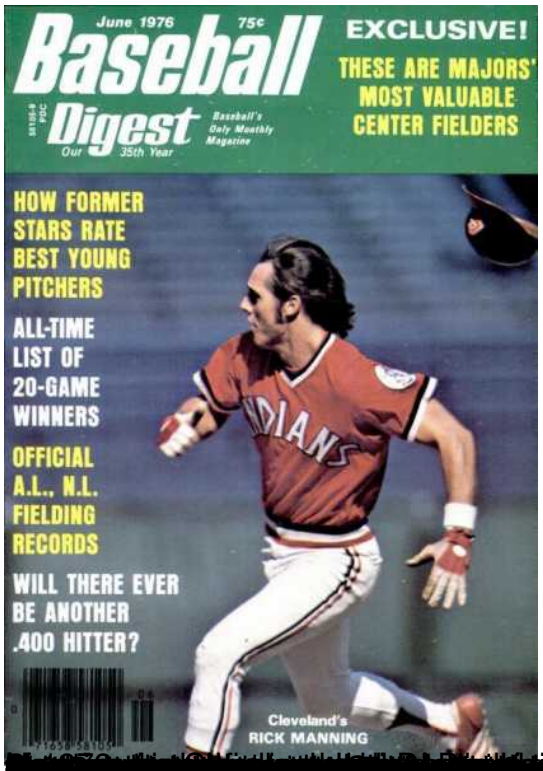
To make matter worse, with Warfield in Miami the Browns found themselves in need of a wide receiver. So they traded defensive lineman Jim Kanicki, running back Ron Johnson and linebacker Wayne Meylan to the New York Giants for receiver Homer Jones, who lasted one year with the Browns, catching 10 passes for 141 yards.

As for Phipps .. well ... he wasn’t the answer at quarterback. In seven years with the Browns, he made 52 starts, throwing 40 touchdown passes against 81 interceptions. He did lead the Browns to the playoffs in 1972 with a 10-4 record, but the team quickly went downhill after that, finishing 7-5-2 in 1973, 4-10 in 1974 and 3-11 in 1975. Phipps gave way to Brian Sipe in 1976 and was traded to Chicago before the following season.

Phipps played what was perhaps his best game on Nov. 23, 1975, against Cincinnati, one of the 50 greatest games in team history according to Jonathan Knight’s 2008 book *Classic Browns*. Phipps threw for 298 yards and two touchdowns to rally the Browns to 23 consecutive points in a 35-23 win.

The victory broke a nine-game losing streak (at the time the longest in franchise history) and for one day Phipps made fans forget about the lopsided trade.

## 18. Indians trade Dennis Eckersley




[redacted]

## 17. Len Barker's perfect game

It was a typical early season game for the Indians on May 15, 1981. Cold and wet, with only 7,290 fans in the seats at Municipal Stadium as the Tribe took on Toronto. The game was televised, though, something that didn't always happen in those days.

Len Barker was coming off a season where he won 19 games and led the American League in

strikeouts with 187. He was talented but often had trouble harnessing that talent.

“Lenny went into that night as a guy who was known as a great seven-inning pitcher,” broadcaster Nev Chandler said in *The Curse of Rocky Colavito*. “Then he’d get tired and they’d have to get him out of there. Herb (Score) and I had talked about Lenny throwing a no-hitter one day. It was not uncommon for him to go into the firth or sixth inning without allowing a hit, but then something would always happen to him.”

Barker used a sharp curveball that night against the Blue Jays, throwing it 70 percent of the time. He stuck out 11 of the last 17 batters of the game and the game ended on a fly out to none other than center fielder Rick Manning.

“That was one of the most unreal days of my life,” Barker said in *The Curse of Rocky Colavito*. “I knew that I had good stuff, maybe even awesome stuff, when I began the game. But as the game went on, I had total command. I could throw anything, anywhere I wanted.”

Barker’s perfect game was the 10th in Major League Baseball history and the second in the Tribe’s history, along with Addie Joss’ perfect game on Oct. 2, 1908 vs. the White Sox. In addition, it was the third no-hitter (and currently the last one in franchise history) that a Tribe pitcher had thrown in just a seven-year period – all at home. Prior to Barker, Dick Bosman threw a no-hitter against Oakland on July 19, 1974, and Dennis Eckersley no-hit the Angels on May 30, 1977.

So while the Indians did not give fans much to cheer about during the 1970s, on occasion they did give fans a special night at the ballpark.

## 16. Albert Belle corks his bat

[redacted]