

A Sad Day – By David Raglin

While it might have been the right thing for the Tigers to do given their situation, it is still a sad day. When I went to bed Thursday night, August 31, I wasn't even thinking of a Verlander trade; it seemed from the rumor mill that a trade was very unlikely. On one hand that was good -- I could not stand the thought of Justin Verlander wearing another uniform -- but on the other hand, that meant we would have an offseason filled with Verlander rumors until the inevitable happened.

Well, it happened. I woke on Friday morning to WTOP radio in Washington giving the sports report. As it went on, talking about the closing of the soccer transfer window, I thought, "Well, at least we're past this deadline." Then at the end, there was a snippet about Justin Verlander now being an Astro. My heart sank, and I immediately grabbed my phone to get the scoop. It turned out that had I been awake at midnight, I would have seen a back and forth on whether the trade happened or not that would have driven me crazy, so I'm glad I slept through it.

I was worried the Tigers would trade Verlander strictly for salary relief, and the good news is that they did not. They got three good prospects. All I know about them is what I have read on the web, so instead of me writing about them, here are a couple of good links to check out. Basically, what they will tell you is that the Tigers acquired the kinds of players you want to acquire if you have to make a deal like this:

<http://www.baseballamerica.com/majors/last-minute-bombshell-as-justin-verlander-goes-to-astros/>

<http://www.fangraphs.com/blogs/scouting-the-tigers-return-for-justin-verlander/>

It's funny, we did this issue of *Tigers Stripes* before the end of the trading deadline because I was going out of town right after it and I really felt they would not make any big moves anyway. That is why we are doing our first *E-Mayo Flash* in a few years so you can get our thoughts on the deal before the next issue comes out. We will have much more on it at that time, but for now, here are some things that come to mind:

1. It's good that they are getting all of these prospects, because, frankly, they have done a poor job of finding their own prospects. The Tigers have developed very few players over the era of this front office (going back to the Dave Dombrowski era). If they could have developed their own prospects, maybe Justin Verlander could have been a Tiger for life.
2. Dave Dombrowski was very good at holding his cards close to his vest. You rarely heard about trade rumors during his time in Detroit. Al Avila's administration is more open with the press. On one hand, that is good for us, because we fans certainly sop up those rumors. (Analyst Joe Sheehan called it "the longest courtship since Sam and Diane didn't work out.") But, we been living with this since the end of last season, and it was like water torture, drip, drip, drip.
3. The Justin Upton trade, which started the day of deals, has sort of gotten lost in the shuffle. It was increasingly clear that Upton was probably going to opt out of his deal at the end of the season, so that effectively meant the Tigers were trading a month of Upton. Given that, getting a pitcher who might be a decent reliever and could be a bottom-of-the-rotation starter for Upton was a pretty good return.
4. Verlander had made it clear he was not up for a rebuild. Even though he really wanted to go to the Cubs, he certainly has a chance to win with the Astros, and given what has happened in Houston, he has a chance to do the most good there than anywhere else.

The Tigers are now unfortunately Justin-free with Verlander, Wilson, and Upton gone (and Upton-free too, for that matter), but the hope is that the guys they got in the deals this season, along with better drafting, will get the Tigers moving in the right direction. Maybe Justin Verlander will return someday to a young Tiger team on the way up. We can only hope.