

## Indians Name Koby Perez New Latin American Director

January 23, 2016 by Ben Badler/ Baseball America

The Indians have a new top scout in Latin America. Koby Perez, who had been an international crosschecker for the team the last two years, was promoted to director of Latin American scouting, filling the vacancy from the departure of Ramon Pena earlier this month.

Perez has been with the Indians since November 2013, joining the team after spending the previous five years with the Phillies, where he was primarily responsible for scouting in the Dominican Republic. Perez had been an integral part of Philadelphia's strong run of Dominican signings during that stretch. He was involved in the signings of third baseman Maikel Franco, outfielder Domingo Santana and righthanders Hector Neris and Lisalverto Bonilla, all of whom have reached the major leagues. He was also a signing scout for righthanders Franklyn Kilome and Adonis Medina, who both rank among the Phillies' Top 10 prospects.

"I know I have big shoes to fill replacing Ramon, who I consider one of the best evaluators in the game and a mentor to me, but I'm also appreciative of the opportunity we have to try to replicate as a group some of the success Ramon has had in the past," Perez said.

Prior to working for the Phillies, Perez was a northeast area scout for the Cardinals from 2006-08. During that time, he was the signing scout for big league righthanders Adam Ottavino and Mitch Harris.

### Tribe curator focuses on future, not just past

#### Feador always looking to unearth, and spotlight, team artifacts

By Jordan Bastian / MLB.com | @MLBastian | January 22nd, 2016 + 37 COMMENTS

CLEVELAND -- There had to be a reason someone saved the bat. The black barrel was intact, but the handle was gone, probably splintered away by an inside heater. A unrecognizable signature was carved into the wood, which was found in a pile of other old items in a room inside Progressive Field.

Jeremy Feador, the Indians' team curator, brought the bat down to the archives in the lower level of the stadium and placed it in a storage bin filled with other historic sticks from Cleveland's past. Many of those bats have been identified, tagged and cataloged. This one remains a mystery.

• Part 1: Tribe curator's labor of love | Part 2: Feller still a star -- in exhibit

"I brought it in here and I was just staring at it," Feador said. "You try to figure out, why would it make sense for someone to save this? Why is this here? It could be junk, or it could be something meaningful."

Part of Feador's job is being a kind of history investigator. Think of him like the Indiana Jones of the Indians' growing collection of artifacts. Since joining the organization two years ago, he has found an assortment of items throughout the ballpark in offices, closets and storage rooms. He has fielded countless calls from fans claiming to have collectibles. He has searched auctions for clues as to where missing pieces of history have gone.

As he continues to gather items and information, Feador keeps a long-term vision in mind.

The Indians already have started to introduce more historic elements to the ballpark as part of the renovations it has undergone in each of the past two winters. Heritage Park, which features plaques of Indians Hall of Famers, is in center field. Feador also played a key role in the creation of the Bob Feller exhibit in the Terrace Club at the stadium.

Maybe a small museum will be in the plans someday for the ballpark.

"I don't know what the future holds," Feador said. "My ultimate goal is, I'd love to have something, but whether or not it happens, I don't know. But that's my goal. I'm going to keep working like I'm working towards that and build an awesome collection and get this stuff out so fans can see it."

The Indians are at least keeping an open mind.

"Enhancing our efforts to celebrate our rich history is an ongoing discussion in our offices," said Bob DiBiasio, the Indians' senior vice president of public affairs.

Feador proudly shows off some of the items already in hand.

Inside a plastic bag found at the ballpark was red, white and blue bunting, and a note that indicated it was from the Kingdome the day the Indians clinched the American League pennant in 1995. There is a home plate, with a large wooden base, that was used for the final game at Municipal Stadium and the first game at Progressive Field (Jacobs Field at the time). There is a commemorative base from the 1997 All-Star Game in Cleveland, plus seats from League Park, Municipal Stadium and Progressive Field.

There are jerseys, bats, helmets and promotional items from different eras, and a large collection of baseballs. One is signed by Feller, Rogers Hornsby, Lou Boudreau and other greats from yesteryear. Another has "1,000" written on it in dark ink with a red zig-zagged bubble circling the number. That was from the 1,000th run scored by the potent 1999 Indians squad.

A lineup board from Municipal Stadium still has the final starting lineups written on it in chalk. Before Municipal Stadium was torn down, a staffer also had the foresight to save boxes of old contracts, including the one Larry Doby signed in 1947, making him the first African-American player in the American League.

"You can look at Gettysburg or the Mona Lisa online," Feador said, "but there's nothing like actually standing there with it in front of you."

The 29-year-old Feador -- who plays for the Forrest City's vintage Base Ball Club in his spare time -- grew up in North Olmsted in Cleveland's west suburbs and was raised on the '90s Tribe. He spent his undergraduate years at Baldwin Wallace University and received a masters degree at Wright State University in its archive and museum administration program. Before working for the Indians, he did similar work as an intern with the NFL's Cleveland Browns.

Indians are prioritizing history

Indians are prioritizing history

Indians curator Jeremy Feador discusses the importance of preserving present-day items for future generations

His path toward being the curator for the Major League team he grew up watching was actually paved in a cemetery.

"I thought I wanted to be like a Ph.D. history professor," Feador said. "And then when I was in B.W., we did a big cemetery project. It was mostly me. We identified where people were buried. We had a ground-penetrating radar come through. We had 100 unmarked burials and we were sort of dispelling urban legends and stuff. It was fun."

Feador spends countless hours researching and reading up on baseball history, and now is on the hunt for items that could boost Cleveland's collection.

There are some notable artifacts, for instance, that have gone missing since having a home in the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame (no longer in existence) and Indians Hall of Fame (once located near Section 11 in Municipal Stadium). There was a baseball from Feller's no-hitter in 1951, a baseball from the playoff game against the Red Sox in 1948 and the ball used to turn an unassisted triple play in the 1920 World Series. Sometimes, artifacts on Feador's radar turn up in an auction, but the Indians are not in the business of buying pieces for their collection. Donations are welcomed, and Feador said he has reached out to the owners of many artifacts to see if they would have interest in loaning items if the Indians had a place to put them on display.

When people call and say they have certain items, Feador turns to photographs, video footage and other means to try to help verify the authenticity.

"Bob Feller often said young people believe history began the day they were born," DiBiasio said. "The merits of that statement can be debated, but when you come across a young person like Jeremy who has a true passion and dedication for researching, collecting and documenting our rich history, you know we are in good hands. And, that the process will be done right. His energy and enthusiasm will be impactful as we continue to bring more historic elements to Progressive Field."

And what about that shattered bat Feador found?

As he stared at it, a spark went off, and the curator wondered if it could possibly be the bat used by Jolbert Cabrera to record the game-winning single in Cleveland's historic comeback win over Seattle on Aug. 5, 2001. Feador looked up the video highlights and studied the manner in which Cabrera's bat shattered. Then, he compared the footage to the cracked bat in his hands.

It was not a match.

"I got pretty excited," Feador said. "But, it's not the same bat. I'll keep looking."

### **For this year only, Trade Deadline to be Aug. 1**

#### **Adjustment made because July 31 falls on a Sunday**

By Tom Singer / MLB.com | January 21st, 2016

This is a leap year, and for Major League Baseball, it will mean a one-day leap in the annual non-waiver Trade Deadline.

The non-waiver Trade Deadline this season will be moved to Aug. 1 from the traditional July 31 -- which in 2016 falls on a Sunday. The deadline is 4 p.m. ET, and on July 31, there are seven games scheduled to begin between 1-1:30, five between 2-3:30 and three at 4. There are only eight games on Aug. 1, all of which are night games.

Speaking to the media at the Owners' Meetings in Coral Gables, Fla., Commissioner Rob Manfred announced the change and stressed that it will only be a one-year adjustment.

### **Do Cleveland Indians feel heat after Detroit signs Justin Upton? Hey, Hoynsie**

[Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com](#)

CLEVELAND, Ohio – Do you have a question that you'd like to have answered in Hey, Hoynsie? [Submit it here](#) or Tweet him at @hoynsie.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** While the Tribe sits and watches, the rest of the AL Central continues to improve this off-season, with Chicago, Detroit, and Kansas City leading the way. Now that [Justin Upton has signed with Detroit](#), do you think there is any extra pressure on the front office to make a late addition to the roster? Any chance they'll step up to the plate and go after Yoenis Cespedes or Dexter Fowler? – *James Estrada, Gainesville, Fla.*

**Hey, James:** You as a fan are probably feeling more pressure than any decision maker in the Indians' front office. They've determined – better yet ownership has determined for them – that they will not be big-time players in free agency. Here's their credo: "We have the same goal as every other team – win the World Series. We just have to do it a different way."

Makes you feel warm and fuzzy all over, doesn't it? There is no way [Cespedes](#) is coming to Cleveland. If Fowler is still unsigned come late February or March, maybe the Indians would give him a look, but they'd have to forfeit their No.1 pick. Meanwhile, they'll try to see if they can sign Juan Uribe or, perhaps, David Freese to a one-year deal.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** With the money from MLB's TV contract helping all teams, attendance doesn't seem that important anymore. Why doesn't Cleveland ownership consider a flat rate \$10 admission and fill Progressive Field every game? I wonder if they filled the stadium at \$10 a seat for 81 games how that would compare to the revenue they had last season? Plus they'd make more money on concessions. What do you think of my plan? – *Bruce Allen, Land O Lakes, Fla.*

**Hey, Bruce:** I'm not sure that would go over well with the Indians season ticket holders. As for attendance not being important, I don't agree. Why do you think the owners of teams that draw well have fought efforts to shorten the season? They know attendance can make a difference in a sport without a salary cap.

In theory, your plan about a \$10 ticket sounds good, but I can guarantee you it wouldn't lead to 81 straight sellouts – even if the Indians went 81-0 at home.

For starters upper bleacher seats for all games, when purchased in advance, have been \$10. While they are popular seats, the bleachers [were not sold out every game last year](#).

As for cashing in on concession sales, if the Indians owned them that might make sense. However, they don't and get only a percent of the revenues.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** Now that Justin Upton signed with the Tigers shouldn't that motivate the Indians to sign Yoenis Cespedes? The Tigers' lineup is scary and the Tribe's is pitiful in comparison. I know pitching and defense wins championships, but scoring runs helps and Upton makes the Tigers lineup that much better. – *Steven Ward, Chardon.*

**Hey, Steven:** Read my lips: "Yoenis Cespedes is not signing with the Indians." They have withdrawn from the business of big-time free agency.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** I think the Indians have the worst outfield – Rajai Davis, Abraham Almonte and Lonnie Chisenhall— from an offensive standpoint in the big leagues? What do you think? – *Joe Eversole, Pelham, Ala.*

**Hey, Joe:** It certainly makes you long for the days of Albert Belle, Kenny Lofton and Manny Ramirez.

The Indians need a lot of help in the outfield and Michael Brantley's shoulder injury made things worse.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** What is the status with Cody Anderson and Josh Tomlin's contracts? Do the Indians have options left on them? And if they both continue to pitch like they have, how do you see the fifth spot in the rotation settling itself? – *Pete Grace, Cleveland.*

**Hey, Pete:** Tomlin recently signed a one-year deal for \$2.25 million to avoid arbitration. If he acquires 42 days of major league service time in 2016, he will be eligible for free agency at the end of the season. Oddly enough, Tomlin still has two minor league options left.

Anderson is unsigned and doesn't have much bargaining power because he isn't eligible for arbitration. He'll probably sign for just above the major league minimum. He has two options left.

I'm not sure who will win the No.5 spot, but I think Tomlin and Anderson are going to pitch a lot for the Tribe this season. They were a combined 14-5 in 25 starts last season.

Teams had until 1 p.m. ET to exchange salary figures with their arbitration-eligible players. The Indians did not exchange figures with any of their players, a source told cleveland.com.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** Next winter's free agent class, especially when it comes to pitchers, is very thin. Did this play into the Indians' front office decision to not make a big move this off-season? It seems as though the Indians have put themselves in a position to have a ton of leverage at the deadline and next year. –*David Bolger, Lakewood.*

**Hey, David:** That's a good point. The Indians, by now, have a good feel for what their pitchers are worth. Depending on where they are at the trading deadline this year and how they're positioning for 2017, that information could help them improve the team.

**Hey, Hoynsie:** You've always seemed to like Trevor Bauer, but I wonder if you've lost your enthusiasm for him. Is he a project who's taking too long? Do you think his stumbles are hurting his own psyche? – *P.J. Bednarski, New York, NY.*

**Hey, P.J.:** Bauer is a unique cat and has definitely been fun to cover. I like guys who are always trying to get better and he definitely puts the work in. He has fewer than two years in the big leagues and if the Indians stay patient with him, I think they'll be rewarded.

He is hard on himself, but that's something athletes learn to deal with over time.

### **Cleveland Indians secured Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco before pitching Tsunami hit**

Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Give the Indians credit. They saw this coming. Maybe they didn't have it measured to the last millisecond, but they had an idea that MLB's pitching Tsunami was on the way.

It's why Carlos Carrasco is signed through 2018 for \$22 million and Corey Kluber is signed for \$38.5 million through 2019. Those extensions were agreed to just before the start of the 2015 season, long before this winter when seemingly every prominent starting pitcher started making \$30 million a year.

Jeff Samardzija led the AL in hits, homers and runs allowed last season for the White Sox. He went 11-13 with a 4.96 ERA. The Giants paid him \$90 million for five years to come and pitch for them. He'll make \$9 million this year and \$18 million a year from 2017 through 2020.

Not to pick on the Giants because they certainly know what they're doing having won three World Series titles in the last six years, but right after they signed Samardzija, they signed Johnny Cueto to a six-year \$130 million contract. He'll make \$15 million this year and \$21 million a year from 2017 through 2021.

Cueto, with the exception of a couple of games in the postseason, was terrible for Kansas City after being acquired from the Reds. If you were ranking candidates to spend a good chunk of the upcoming season on the disabled list, he would have to be near the top.

It's not just the Giants; it's all over baseball. The Tigers gave Jordan Zimmerman \$110 million for the next five years. A nice pitcher to be sure, but with all the firepower the Nationals had last season, he managed to win just 13 games.

The Indians have signed Corey Kluber to a five-year \$38.5 million extension. They have come to terms with Carlos Carrasco on a four-year \$22 million extension, but have not made it official.

Years ago former Indians owner Bill Veeck said there was nothing wrong with paying talented players big money. What concerned him was the high price of mediocrity.

If the market will bear Boston making David Price the richest pitcher ever with a seven-year \$217 million contract, at least he has the resume.

The same goes for Zack Greinke and his six-year \$206.5 million deal with Arizona.

But how does one explain the Tigers giving Mike Pelfrey \$16 million for two years after he allowed 198 hits in 164 2/3 innings last year with the Twins?

Or the Royals signing Ian Kennedy to a five-year \$70 million deal? The Royals certainly needed starting pitching, but did they need to get it from a pitcher who allowed 31 homers last year while calling Petco Park, a pitcher's paradise, home?

The Cubs spirited away John Lackey from the rival Cardinals by dangling a two-year \$32 million deal in front of him. Lackey threw 218 innings last season, but he's 37 and is expected to apply for AARP benefits before the start of spring training.

Carrasco and Kluber did not have the leverage of free agency when they signed their extensions. Carrasco, 28, was eligible for arbitration for the first time after the 2014 season and signed a one-year \$2.4 million deal last January. It later became part of his extension. Kluber, 29, wasn't even eligible for arbitration when he signed his extension.

Still, they each had good reasons to take the cash and security being offered by the Indians instead of casting an eye toward what the future might hold.

Carrasco's career entering the 2014 season dealt mostly in unreached potential, Tommy John surgery and getting suspended for throwing at batters. His future changed that season because he pitched well as a reliever and starter, but at the end of that year he faced another hurdle. Carrasco was suffering from heart palpitations and underwent surgery at Cleveland Clinic.

After so many ups and downs in his professional and personal life, there was no way Carrasco was going to turn down the extension when the Indians offered it to him. The players association advised him not to sign, but he did.

Indians right-hander Carlos Carrasco's season ended in defeat, but overall he had the best year of his career.

Kluber won the AL Cy Young award in 2014. It was a great accomplishment, but he was in a difficult situation with his contract. When Kluber agreed to the extension, he was only a few days away from turning 29, but he had just two years of service time.

The chance of Kluber pitching at such a high level for four more years to get a big free-agent payday was slim. Not only would he have to contend with the risk of injury, but Kluber would be pushing 33 when he entered the open market.

Kluber could have bumped heads with the Indians in arbitration to leverage a better extension, but there were risks in that as well. After going 18-9 to win the Cy Young in 2014, Kluber went 9-16 in 2015, which would have been his first year of arbitration eligibility.

When Kluber signed the extension, he had to know it was his only chance to take a big bite of the free-agent apple.

The Indians officially announced that they have signed Corey Kluber to a five-year \$38.5 million deal. They are expected to announce that Carlos Carrasco has signed a four-year \$22 million extension in the next few days.

This is the same strategy the Indians introduced in the 1990s. They gave players a taste of security, while being able to plot their future payroll without the uncertainties of arbitration and in some cases free agency. The danger is that while the player is initially satisfied with his security, the fact that his peers will be making a lot more money by the end of the contract could cause some hard feelings.

It would be hard for Carrasco or Kluber to be disappointed in their extensions at this point, but they wouldn't be human if they didn't have a touch of buyer's remorse after what has happened this winter.

The Indians, on the other hand, have two of the top starting pitchers in the big leagues signed through 2018 and perhaps longer if club options come into play. It cost them big money, but they got it done before being swept away in the Tsunami.

### **Cleveland Indians promote Koby Perez to director of baseball operations in Latin America**

**Paul Hoyneson January 23, 2016 at 12:38 PM,**

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The Indians have promoted Koby Perez to be their new Director of Latin American Baseball Operations. He replaces Ramon Pena, who recently left the organization after five years.

Pena hired Perez in November of 2013 as an international scout with an emphasis on Venezuela. Before joining the Indians, he scouted for Boston, St. Louis and Philadelphia. He scouted the Dominican Republic for the Phillies from 2009 through 2013 and was in charge of their baseball academy. The experience should serve him well because the Indians are moving into a new academy in the Dominican later this year.

The bilingual Perez scouted the northeastern part of the United States for the Cardinals from 2006 through 2008.

While Perez was born in the Dominican Republic, he grew up in New Jersey. He played baseball, football and wrestled at North Bergen High School. Perez received a football scholarship from Elizabeth City Union College in North Carolina where he also played baseball.

He transferred to Lake Sumter-State College in Florida to concentrate on baseball. Perez played parts of two seasons in the minors with Boston in 2002 and 2003. He also played independent baseball in 2003-05 before joining the Red Sox as a part-time scout.

When Perez worked for the Phillies, he played a role in the scouting and signing of Dominican third baseman Maikel Franco. Last season Franco was a NL Rookie of the Year contender for the Phillies when he hit .280 (85-for-304) with 14 homers and 50 RBI.

The Indians, including Perez, have 11 scouts working in Latin America. The Tribe's 40-man roster includes 12 players born in Latin or South America. Seven were signed or drafted by the Indians.

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### **Cleveland Indians have Terry Talkin' about Detroit Tigers' big payroll push and Carlos Carrasco -- Terry Pluto**

Terry Pluto,

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Last weekend, I wrote about how Fangraphs.com posted its first analytic projections for the 2016 season.

It was good news for Indians fans, as their favorite team was projected to win what is supposed to be a lame American League Central with a record of 85-77. The website has the World Series champion Kansas City Royals and the Detroit Tigers at 79-83.

From their computer straight to the ears of the baseball gods...

Then the Tigers signed Justin Upton. Six years, \$132 million. Just another check written by 86-year-old owner Mike Ilitch. Upton is 28 and right in his prime. He batted .251 (.790 OPS) with 26 HR and 81 RBI for the Padres last season in a tough park for hitters.

Over the last three seasons, Upton is a .262 hitter (.814 OPS) averaging 28 HR and 85 RBI. A good player, yes. But not a great one.

But what an addition to the Tigers, who are projected to have a payroll above \$190 million.

In 2016, here are some of the biggest contracts:

\$28 million for Justin Verlander and Miquel Cabrera;

\$22 million for Upton;

\$18 million for Victor Martinez;

\$16 million for Jordan Zimmerman and Anibal Sanchez; and

\$14 million for Ian Kinsler.

That's \$144 million for seven players.

Sigh...

There are various websites that cover contracts. I prefer Cots Contracts, under the umbrella of Baseball Prospectus. Here is how they had the 2015 AL Central payrolls. I added the final records next to the payroll:

Tigers, \$173 million (74-87).

White Sox, \$118 million (76-86).

Royals, \$113 million (95-67).

Twins, \$108 million (83-79).

Indians, \$88 million (81-80).

The Royals are expected to make a major jump to the \$140 million range. They re-signed Alex Gordon (\$72 million for four years), signed starter Ian Kennedy (\$70 million for five years) and reliever Joakim Soria (\$25 million for three years).

The cost of free-agent starting pitching is staggering.

Kennedy was 9-15 with a 4.28 ERA in San Diego last season. Over the last three years, he is 29-38 with a 4.25 ERA. That earned him the \$70 million deal from the Royals, primarily because he is durable. He's started at least 30 games in each of the last six seasons.

As for projected 2016 payrolls for the rest of the division, I've seen reports that have the White Sox at \$119 million, Minnesota at \$105 million and the Tribe at \$90 million.

Do I wish the Dolans would at least spend \$100 million? Of course. Am I going to beat this old topic to death? No. It's not about change in the near future.

Something to ponder: The Indians had a losing record against every team in the Central in 2015: White Sox (9-10), Royals (9-10), Tigers (7-11) and Twins (7-12). They were 32-43 in the Central.

The Tribe finished 4 1/2 games behind Houston for the final wild card playoff spot. A 37-38 record in the Central Division would have landed them in the postseason.

#### ESPN LOVES CARRASCO

Since we are in the Age of Analytics, here's something from ESPN's Eno Sarris, who used stats to rank the 25 best pitches from starting pitchers in 2015. How do you pick such a thing? It's by how many of those pitches created a swing-and-miss from the batter.

It turns out that Carlos Carrasco's curve tied with a slider from Clayton Kershaw and a slider from Joe Ross as the hardest pitches to hit. All of those pitches created a swing-and-miss 26 percent of the time. They also created a category called the "Z-score," and Carrasco's curve came out on top of everyone else.

He also made the list with his slider.

Sarris calls Carrasco "a sleeper" for the Cy Young Award.

"He's a pitcher in his prime projected to be among the top 30 pitchers next year, and he recently made some changes to his pitching mix to explain the higher level of performance. Let's add another reason for him possibly bringing home some hardware next year: He has two of the top 10 pitches in baseball among starting pitchers right now in his two breaking balls. His fastball and changeup are above average too."

Carrasco was 14-12 last season with a 3.63 ERA. Over the last two years, he is 22-19 with a 3.17 ERA. The 27-year-old right-hander has 356 strikeouts in 318 innings, compared to only 72 walks. It has taken a while, but the Cliff Lee trade with the Phillies has paid off.

Carrasco has three years worth \$19 million left on his contract. Then the Tribe has options for the 2019 and 2020 seasons at about \$9 million annually. That's why you keep hearing Carrasco's name mentioned in trade talks. Teams keep asking for him.

He's in his prime. He's cheap by the ridiculous standards of what big league starters are paid. And he's a good guy and a hard worker.

Also on the list of the top 25 pitches from starters is Danny Salazar's change-up.

"(It) is excellent," wrote Sarris. "It's basically a split-finger pitch. If he can improve his command at all, he could have a true breakout season and make us appreciate that pitch more."

The Tribe's starting pitching is why Fangraphs and the other analytic sites love the Tribe.

What tends to fool the stats guys is a team with a strong bullpen. They have consistently underestimated Kansas City and Pittsburgh in the last three seasons. The stats guys ranked those teams as having the top two bullpens over the last three years, which can make up for the lack of a dominant starting rotation.

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