



### **WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF OCTOBER 29, 2018**

"Chris Sale closes out World Series victory for Red Sox" ... Tim Stebbins, NBC Sports Chicago

"Kevan Smith heads to Angels on waiver claim, clarifying White Sox catching situation" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Happy Birthday, Daniel Palka" ... Chris Kamka, NBC Sports Chicago

"Matt Davidson envisions specific situations where he can pitch out of bullpen in 2019" ... Tim Stebbins, NBC Sports Chicago

"Remember That Guy?: Willie Harris" ... Chris Kamka, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox outright 3 players, including pitcher Danny Farquhar" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"Angels claim Smith; White Sox outright Farquhar, Scahill, LaMarre" ... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"A roster crunch ends Kevan Smith's run on the South Side, but the door is still open for a Danny Farquhar comeback" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

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### **Chris Sale closes out World Series victory for Red Sox**

By Tim Stebbins / NBC Sports Chicago / October 26, 2018

Chris Sale never tasted the postseason during his seven seasons with the White Sox. Sunday, he closed out the World Series for the Red Sox, winning his first championship.

The Red Sox called on Sale to pitch the 9th inning of Game 5 of the Fall Classic on Sunday, and the lean left-hander did not disappoint. Sale struck out Justin Turner, Kike Hernández and Manny Machado in-order, clinching the Red Sox fourth championship in 15 seasons.

While White Sox fans surely wish Sale helped bring another championship to the South Side, congratulations are in order for the former White Sox ace. And, who knows? A few years down the line, maybe Michael Kopech, who the White Sox acquired from Boston in the Sale trade, will be on the mound in a World Series' clincher for the White Sox.

FOX Sports



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THE BOSTON RED SOX ARE WORLD CHAMPIONS!!!

Chris Sale strikes out Manny Machado to close out the World Series!

10:20 PM - Oct 28, 2018

5,625

2,797 people are talking about this

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### **Kevan Smith heads to Angels on waiver claim, clarifying White Sox catching situation**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / October 27, 2018

A crowded White Sox catching situation got slightly less so Friday.

Kevan Smith is heading to the Los Angeles Angels, who claimed the 30-year-old catcher off waivers.

Angels PR

@LAAngelsPR

The #Angels have claimed C Kevan Smith off waivers from the Chicago White Sox.

To make room on the 40-man roster, C Joe Hudson has been designated for assignment.

1:25 PM - Oct 26, 2018

93

46 people are talking about this

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Smith was one of three catchers the White Sox had at the end of the 2018 season, along with Omar Narvaez and Welington Castillo. Smith didn't make the Opening Day roster but ended up playing in 52 games, getting far more action than expected thanks to Castillo's 80-game drug suspension.

The White Sox were likely going to face a decision on which of those three catchers to jettison come the spring, with Smith out of options and it being very unlikely they would carry three catchers on the major league roster in 2019. That decision was going to get trickier with catching prospect Seby Zavala needing to be added to the 40-man roster to protect him from the Rule 5 Draft in December.

And all of this is without mentioning 2016 first-round pick Zack Collins, one of the White Sox 10 highest-ranked prospects, who is perhaps still the favorite to be the team's catcher of the future. He and Zavala will both likely start 2019 at Triple-A Charlotte, and strong showings there could mean one or both of them finding their way to the big leagues before season's end.

So to put it simply, there wasn't room left for Smith.

Quietly, though, Smith was one of the team's better offensive players in 2018, a reflection on the White Sox less-than-ideal team-wide offensive production rather than Smith's statistical excellent. He finished with a .292/.348/.380 slash line in 187 plate appearances, ranking second on the team to Narvaez in batting average and on-base percentage.

Narvaez led the team in those two categories and ranked second to Jose Abreu in OPS, perhaps making him the best choice for the starting job next season. That being said, Castillo is under a multi-million-dollar contract for one more season (with a team option for 2020) and without a suspension taking away half his season, he could finally emerge as the veteran presence the White Sox were hoping he'd be in 2018, helping the young pitching staff evolve into the staff of the future.

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### **Happy Birthday, Daniel Palka**

Chris Kamka / NBC Sports Chicago / October 27, 2018

Daniel Palka turns 27 today; his age now matches his rookie home run total for the White Sox.

Drafted by the Diamondbacks in the 3rd round in 2013, traded to the Twins in November 2015 and selected off waivers by the White Sox in November 2017, Palka's sudden breakout caught a lot of people by surprise.

Minor league success was nothing new to Palka – he hit 34 home runs over two levels in the Twins system as recently as 2016. But as a 26-year-old heading into the 2018 season, he had yet to have a taste of the Majors.

Palka was 3-for-25 (.120) with one home run during spring training, then hit .286 with 3 home runs in 17 games with Charlotte (AAA) before being called up in late April when Avisail García went on the DL with a strained right hamstring.

He had a rough go of it — 0 for 8 with an RBI (a groundout) — in his first two MLB games before breaking out in game one of an April 28 doubleheader at Kansas City. The lefty slugger went 4-for-5 with a home run, the first White Sox player with a four-hit game within his first three career MLB games since Jim Busby on May 4, 1950.

Through his first 20 games, he was hitting .284/.304/.567 with three home runs, but what was more surprising was that he also had three triples. Palka was the first White Sox player with three triples in his first 20 career MLB games since Frank Thomas (who didn't hit his first home run until his 25th career game).

Palka had a knack for the dramatic. On Aug. 10, he struck out three times and then hit a walkoff home run to win the game 1-0, the first time the White Sox ever won 1-0 on a walkoff home run. He finished with four pinch hit home runs, a White Sox record as well as an American League rookie record. Palka also tied Jason Kipnis, Justin Smoak and Giancarlo Stanton for the Major League lead with six 9th inning home runs for the season.

Arguably his best month was September, where he led the team in home runs (8) and RBIs (14). He even tied Yoán Moncada for the team lead in walks (10), adding an element in his offensive repertoire which hadn't really been present to that point.

By the end of 2018, Palka was a White Sox fan favorite with 27 home runs – a new team rookie record for a left-handed hitter. The South Side is excited to see what he can do in a full season in 2019.

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### **Matt Davidson envisions specific situations where he can pitch out of bullpen in 2019**

By Tim Stebbins / NBC Sports Chicago / October 27, 2018

Could Matt Davidson actually pitch on a more regular basis in 2019? The White Sox slugger envisions a way to make it happen.

In an interview Saturday on 670 The Score, Davidson discussed specific situations where he could pitch, allowing the White Sox to save regular relievers for tighter situations.

670 The Score



@670TheScore

White Sox infielder Matt Davidson is on a quest to be a relief pitcher too. He envisions perhaps pitching in games, for example, with a 5-run lead or 5-run deficit and leave high-leverage spots to the regulars.

"It's using my arm to save bullpen arms," Davidson says.

10:39 AM - Oct 27, 2018

25

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Davidson's interest in pitching on a more frequent basis is no secret. In fact, he expressed his desire to explore the idea following the White Sox 10-5 loss to the Blue Jays on July 27.

"To be honest, I would love to maybe explore that idea," Davidson said. "Pitching was a dream. As a young kid, everybody wants to hit that walk off homer, right? I was the guy striking that guy out. That's how I first loved the game. My favorite player was Randy Johnson and doing that.

"So, it's something I would be interested in. I don't know if the game would necessarily allow that or something like that. It's something that is really close to my heart is pitching."

A position player pitching on a semi-frequent basis may seem odd, but Davidson fared quite well when he was on the mound in 2018. In three games, he allowed no runs on one hit and a walk in three innings. He struck out two batters, including Yankees slugger Giancarlo Stanton on a nasty 71 mph curveball.

Chicago White Sox

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@whitesox

.@statcast tracks @matt\_davidson24's velocity and spin rates he strikes out Giancarlo Stanton:

2:13 PM - Aug 7, 2018

357

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Of course, nothing is set in stone regarding Davidson's expanded pitching career. If he were to pitch in the aforementioned situations, though, the White Sox surely could do worse than Davidson, his 91 mph fastball and solid breaking ball.

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### **Remember That Guy?: Willie Harris**

By Chris Kamka / NBC Sports Chicago / October 26, 2018

13 years ago today, Willie Harris scored the lone run of the White Sox Game 4 win over the Astros to complete the World Series Sweep.

He's one of six players in MLB history to score a run in a 1-0 series-clinching World Series game. The others: Dave Bancroft (1921 Giants), Moose Skowron (1962 Yankees), Frank Robinson (1966 Orioles), Dan Gladden (1991 Twins) and David Justice (1995 Braves). Harris is the only one of this group who came off the bench.

Willie Harris was born June 22, 1978, in Cairo, Ga. He's one of three players in MLB history born in Cairo, Ga. The other two are Ernie Riles (Willie's uncle) and Jackie Robinson.

Harris was originally drafted by the Orioles in 1999 and was acquired by the White Sox for Chris Singleton in January 2002. In his four seasons on the South Side (2002-05) he went back and forth between second base and centerfield. He played for the Red Sox in 2006, Braves in 2007, Nationals 2008-10, Mets in 2011 and the Reds in 2012.

He's one of only two players in Braves history since 1900 to collect six hits in a game (7/21/2007), joining Felix Millan in 1970.

In addition to scoring the only run of the game to clinch the 2005 Fall Classic, Willie Harris finished 2-for-2 at the plate in his postseason career. He's one of 10 players in MLB history with at least two hits and a career postseason batting average of 1.000. The others: Christian Colón, José Constanza, Jesús Montero, Dontrelle Willis (only one of this group with 3 hits), Ken Forsch, Clay Dalrymple, Rip Russell, Spud Davis, and Pol Perritt.

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### **White Sox outright 3 players, including pitcher Danny Farquhar**

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / October 26, 2017

The White Sox cleared room on the 40-man roster Friday by outrighting right-handers Danny Farquhar and Rob Scahill and outfielder Ryan LaMarre, all three of whom cleared waivers, and parting ways with catcher Kevan Smith, who was claimed by the Angels.

Farquhar, who suffered a life-threatening brain hemorrhage during a game April 20 at Guaranteed Rate Field, hopes to pitch again and might get an opportunity to work his way back with the Sox.

"Today's transactions provide us with roster flexibility as we head into this offseason," general manager Rick Hahn said. "We do plan to continue to stay in touch with these players and their representatives over the coming months to see if it makes sense for any of them to remain with our organization as we head into the 2019 season."

Farquhar, Scahill and LaMarre will be minor-league free agents after the World Series.

Smith, 30, who shared catching duties with left-handed hitting Omar Narvaez during Wellington Castillo's 80-game suspension for violating baseball's drug policy, batted .292/.348/.380 with three homers in 52 games but has thrown out only 14 percent of base stealers over the last three seasons.

The Sox figure to go with Castillo and Narvaez and will likely add Class AAA Charlotte catcher Seby Zavala to the 40-man roster.

LaMarre, 29, batted with two homers in 33 games after he was claimed off waivers from the Twins. Scahill, 31, allowed three earned runs over five innings of relief.

Farquhar, 31, owns a 3.93 career ERA over seven seasons and 253 relief appearances with four teams. He has pitched in 23 games with the Sox, including eight in 2018 with a 5.63 ERA.

The 40-man roster is at 36.

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### **Angels claim Smith; White Sox outright Farquhar, Scahill, LaMarre**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / October 26, 2018

The White Sox have Wellington Castillo and Omar Narvaez in place at catcher, and prospects Zack Collins and Seby Zavala could both be ready for the major leagues next season.

Kevan Smith was the obvious man out, and the 30-year-old catcher was claimed off waivers by the Angels Friday.

Bothered by an ankle injury for much of the season that required surgery in early October, Smith batted .292 with 3 home runs and 21 RBI in 52 games with the Sox. He also threw out 3 of 44 base stealers (6.8 percent).

The White Sox also made three roster moves Friday, outrighting relief pitchers Danny Farquhar and Rob Scahill and outfielder Ryan LaMarre to Class AAA Charlotte. All three players become minor-league free agents when the World Series ends.

"Today's transactions provide us with roster flexibility as we head into this off-season," Sox general manager Rick Hahn said. "We do plan to continue to stay in touch with these players and their representatives over the coming months to see if it makes sense for any of them to remain with our organization as we head into the 2019 season."

Farquhar is hoping to pitch again despite suffering a near fatal brain hemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm after pitching against the Astros on April 20 at Guaranteed Rate Field.

In 8 relief appearances for the White Sox, the 31-year-old Farquhar was 1-1 with a 5.63 ERA.

Claimed off waivers from the Twins on July 8, LaMarre played in 33 games with the Sox and batted .303 with 2 home runs and 10 RBI.

Scahill made 6 relief appearances for the White Sox and had a 5.40 ERA.

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### **A roster crunch ends Kevan Smith's run on the South Side, but the door is still open for a Danny Farquhar comeback**

By James Fegan / The Athletic / October 26, 2018

Serviceable but unspectacular major leaguers are victims of end-of-year 40-man-roster crunches all the time. The White Sox know this as well as anyone, since they have been plucking them off the waiver wire for the last two years.

While last year's October waiver claim Daniel Palka peacefully ironed his collection of Khalil Mack jerseys on an overcast Friday, the White Sox announced the removal of three veterans who don't have enough of a place in their plans to hold down a 40-man roster spot, in advance of next month's deadline to protect guys like Dylan Cease and Seby Zavala from the Rule 5 draft. They outrighted Danny Farquhar, Ryan LaMarre and Rob Scahill to Triple-A Charlotte, which is just a formality of a destination as all three will be eligible for minor-league free agency when the World Series ends. The 40-man roster has only 36 dudes on it now, but you can do some mental math to get it down to 33 if and when Jeanmar Gómez and Héctor Santiago hit free agency and James Shields' \$16 million option is declined.

The Sox did not announce a fourth outrighted player, because catcher Kevan Smith was claimed by the Angels after the Sox placed him through waivers, ending an eight-season run in the organization for the former seventh-round pick. Smith began the year as the odd man out after Wellington Castillo was added in free agency and suffered a high right ankle sprain late in spring training to make the White Sox decision for them. When Castillo got suspended for Erythropoietin, Smith singled his way to a sterling .348 OBP (one of the highest on the team) and framed pitches well enough that Baseball Prospectus rated him as the most valuable catcher on the team despite only appearing in 52 games and continuing to struggle throwing out runners.

Still, at the end of the season, Smith found himself in exactly the same place as he was in March. Omar Narváez had a breakout offensive season, and the White Sox have repeatedly treated offense from behind the plate as harder to find and develop than pitch framing during Rick Hahn's tenure. Castillo returned and received the backing of his teammates and his manager upon his arrival, and Smith's pesky right ankle still needed surgery, six months after he heard it pop in Glendale.

"His in-game adjustments are beyond reproach," Rick Renteria said while explaining his faith in Castillo. "And he is a good hitter. Always has been. His game feel, his touch with pitchers, he's very well studied. He understands exactly how to approach a game plan. Ask any of the pitchers, he sits down with them and they go through every possible situation before it happens to get them through those situations. He's also had a lot of impact on the other catchers."

With Zavala a safe bet to replicate Smith's framing and pitch-handling with the upside for more, and no real justification for carrying four catchers — the only question is whether teams would need to see Smith healthy in spring training after ankle surgery before they sought to pluck him away for free. Evidently, they did not.

Smith surely didn't cheer leaving the only organization he's ever known, but he proved to himself that he was a capable big-leaguer in 2017 and did not wish to spend another year on the periphery of the majors if other teams were willing to offer him more. With all the space dedicated to explaining why Smith attracted outside interest, and all the times I've quoted him being uniquely insightful and articulate about the development of the young pitching staff, it's probably led readers to wonder why the Sox didn't flip him for some lottery ticket rookie ball arm, despite having no leverage while seeking a return for a 30-year-old third catcher with 146 career games to his name. Any team interested in Smith could see the cliff the Sox were heading to, and their ultimate decision on whom to jettison broke along very clear lines for the "Logan's Run" revival that is any rebuilding team: Everyone the Sox waived will enter next season on the wrong side of 30.

If nothing else, Smith got his moment where everything he's been through on the ball field made sense.

That moment is likely still on the way for Farquhar, who understandably cleared waivers, as a historic and stirring comeback from a ruptured brain aneurysm still has to be completed before any team can assess if his carrying low- to mid-90s fastball and tumbling changeup can consistently get outs in later innings. The White Sox news release made a point of including a statement from Rick Hahn that left the door open for a return for everyone.

It remains to be seen how attached the Sox are to Scahill and LaMarre, but a minor-league deal to bring Farquhar to camp and show he can pitch seems like a distinctly White Sox action. It would be nice to think

that the White Sox's trademark loyalty means they would have retained Farquhar if the issue were only money and supplying a raise on his \$1.05 million 2018 salary, after he essentially suffered through a life-changing medical event while on the job. But with a 40-man spot in question during an offseason when the Sox are trying to retain prospects, that was apparently too much of a logistical complication when Farquhar can be offered a path back to the majors without it.

For his part, Farquhar seemed to be ready for the possibility and eager to prove he was capable of getting back to the majors without the aid of a swell of sentiment. But that's just how ballplayers are.

Probably to the relief of The Athletic editorial staff, I started and stopped myself from reassessing Adam Engel's value and future outlook in light of his being named an American League Gold Glove finalist in center field Thursday. If he was perceived as an ideal defensive fourth outfielder, pushed into a starting role by the lean years of a rebuild Wednesday, he should still be if coaches and managers declare that he's the best defensive center fielder in the American League.

It's also probably not worth stirring up, since Jackie Bradley Jr. seems like a good bet to walk away with this award. Metrics and testimonials back up Engel as one of the best at going and getting it in baseball, brought down only by his throwing and some errors during a first half that truthfully did not match his 2017 defensive standards. But it is cynically amusing that his national profile as an elite defender is clearly launched on his wave of home run robberies making the highlight rounds.

At the end of a full week of hysteria over his three grabs in August, the endlessly prepared Engel went into a short digression about just how little of his exhaustive preparation goes into scaling the wall.

"It's such a low percentage play — I don't know what the stats are on it this year, but if you look at all the home run robberies, it's not a lot compared to how many pitches are thrown each game," Engel said in August. "The wall work I do is typically only during drill work, so pre-BP. During batting practice, honestly, I'm just trying to get reads. I'm not really trying to work the wall unless we're at a new place and I get a feel for it but I don't necessarily try to work it. Just because off the bat if I'm not really familiar with where I'm at, there's injury risk involved that I don't really want to play with during batting practice."

It's amazing he can make these catches, just as it was back in 2017. These plays show off glimpses of his elite speed to get himself in place, his athleticism to leap and remain coordinated enough while doing so to finish catches, and the preparation he's put into familiarizing himself with the walls at Guaranteed Rate Field. But when he's on the road, he rarely practices it, as "Engel to DL after botched attempt to climb Kauffman Stadium wall in practice" is not a headline he'd be willing to tolerate. It's just not worth it.

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