

Cincinnati Reds Press Clippings January 7, 2019

THIS DAY IN REDS HISTORY

1971-Center fielder, Bobby Tolan, ruptures his Achilles tendon during an offseason Reds basketball game. He misses the entire season, which forces the front office to disband the basketball team

1981 - The Cincinnati Reds are the last major league club to enter the free agency market, signing their first free agent, back-up outfielder Larry Biittner. Biittner will prove a bust and be released after the 1982 season.

MLB.COM

**Greene gives back with free Compton clinic
Reds prospect returns to MLB Youth Academy for Baseball Fest
By Sarah Wexler MLB.com
Jan. 6th, 2019**

COMPTON, Calif. -- Reds prospect Hunter Greene began playing organized baseball at the MLB Youth Academy in Compton when he was 7 years old. He's been giving back to his community for nearly as long.

According to Henry Brandon, who helped coach Greene's youth travel team, it's always been in Greene's nature to help others. For instance, when Greene was 12 years old, he could often be found helping the 10-year-old ballplayers with their drills, offering whatever insight and guidance he could.

That spirit of giving is what inspired the second annual Hunter Greene Baseball Fest. Nearly 150 campers, from 8 to 14 years old, gathered on Sunday afternoon to take part in a free clinic hosted by Greene at the field of his youth. Participants received catching, pitching, hitting and baserunning instruction from an assortment of coaches and players, including several former and current professionals.

In addition to the drills and instruction, the clinic featured throwing and hitting skills competitions, from which five winners were selected to join Greene on a \$500 shopping spree at Adidas. Those winners also received special gloves designed as a collaboration between Greene and Steelo Sports, a company that describes itself as the first and only modern-day, black-owned baseball glove brand.

"I always wanted to give back as soon as I could," Greene said. "Once I got the platform to do that and the experience and the connections with other players and coaches coming out to help me, I jumped on it real fast."

Greene, 19, is ranked as the No. 3 prospect in the Reds' system and the No. 22 prospect in baseball, according to MLB Pipeline.

Darrell Miller, vice president of baseball and softball development for Major League Baseball Youth Programs, was the director of the Compton academy when Greene played there. Miller spoke to the importance of having players like Greene return to the Youth Academy.

"Having Hunter come back and all the other guys that are here instructing with him that have come through the Academy, it means a lot to the kids who'll know and understand that this is the place to be," Miller said. "This is the place where they're going to get great mentorship and great coaching."

Among the Minor Leaguers who showed up to assist Greene was Angels No. 1 prospect Jo Adell, ranked the No. 15 prospect in baseball. Adell, a longtime friend of Greene's, made the trip to Southern California all the way from Louisville just for the clinic. He called the decision to come out "a no-brainer," in part because Greene came out to Louisville last fall to help with Adell's own clinic.

"We come from similar-minded families," Adell said. "They expect the best from us, and they're both big on community. Hunter has always gotten that. He understands that where he came from is the most important thing. He wouldn't be where he was without the people around this area."

Brewers outfield prospect Je'Von Ward and Rays first-base prospect Devin Davis, both of whom got their start playing at the MLB Youth Academy in Compton, were also instructors at the clinic. Ward recognized the significance of their participation.

"You never know when one of these kids will be in the same position as you," said Ward, the No. 25 prospect in Milwaukee's system. "We're closer in age to some of these kids, so they can look ahead, like, 'I could do that in a few years.'"

When addressing the campers, Greene emphasized the importance of listening as a way of learning and growing, both as a person and as a player. He also drove home the equal importance of choices made both on and off the field.

"Yes, you want to be able to perform on the field for the club," Greene said. "But the expectations are just as high off the field. ... You represent the team, and they're building a franchise around you, and they're trying to win a World Series, so they're picking the best players -- but most importantly, the best people out there -- to be Major League citizens."

Sarah Wexler is a reporter for MLB.com based in Southern California.

Inbox: Where will Puig play in the field?
Beat reporter Mark Sheldon fields questions from fans
By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m_sheldon
Jan. 4th, 2019

Where will Yasiel Puig play?
-- @rich_trogden on Twitter

Puig played right field for the large majority of his tenure with the Dodgers, and I'm betting that he will man that spot for the Reds as well.

However, 67 of his 680 career games were spent in center field. The front office hasn't ruled out using Puig there since there's currently not a natural center fielder on the roster. This brings us to a related next question.

Who is best suited on the active roster to handle center field duties?
-- @mkghstry on Twitter

The Reds are still looking outside the organization for a true center fielder to replace Billy Hamilton. If they are unsuccessful, they will have to look within.

Corner outfielder Scott Schebler made 16 starts in center field last season, and he has 44 over his career. Phillip Ervin has played some in center field, although his skills would really have to improve. We've already discussed the Puig option.

The X-factor is Nick Senzel, MLB Pipeline's No. 1 prospect in the organization. A natural infielder, Senzel got some reps in center field and left field in the fall instructional league, and the team believes he has the instincts and athleticism to handle the spot. If Senzel could handle the job, it would certainly solve the problem of finding him a place to play regularly in the big leagues.

Because of the cozy setup at Great American Ball Park, the Reds do not need a superlative defender of Hamilton's caliber in center field (although it wouldn't hurt). They want more offense and are willing to take lesser skill on defense in that tradeoff. Remember, in 2013 they used Shin-Soo Choo as their center fielder and leadoff hitter. Choo lacked range and fell short in many defensive metrics, but he was competent there. Only Joey Votto got on base more than him that season, so I think that worked well.

Will Reds sign another new starting pitcher, or just let Tyler Mahle or Sal Romano fill in the last position?
-- @SakerfKarlYeh on Twitter

I think they will try to add one more starter that could fit at or near the top of the rotation. Like I noted before the holidays, Dallas Keuchel is on their board. But the club would be supremely careful about spending that kind of money to get the best starting pitcher left on the open market.

There are a lot of other starters still out there that could be had, and many of them would likely improve the Reds' rotation. Otherwise, I could see the likes of Mahle, Romano and several others vying for the fifth spot.

More and more, we're seeing teams experiment with their bullpens by starting a reliever for an inning or doing "bullpen games" to avoid using a starter. With guys like Michael Lorenzen and Amir Garrett, who can pitch multiple innings out of the bullpen, do you see the Reds trying an approach like this?
-- Matthew T., Lexington, Ky.

With new leadership in manager David Bell and pitching coach Derek Johnson, I wouldn't rule anything out in how pitchers are used in Cincinnati.

In Milwaukee last season, Johnson often colored outside the lines. The Brewers used an "opener" in some games, and they employed a bullpen day in Game 1 of the National League Division Series vs. the Rockies. Johnson and Brewers manager Craig Counsell also sprung a surprise by having Wade Miley start and face one batter in Game 5 of the NL Championship Series vs. the Dodgers.

The Reds have a lot of pitchers who could function as starters or relievers, so Bell and Johnson appear to have flexible pieces in place to experiment and get outs.

Why not invest in a stadium roof? That way people from far away can come and be sure to see a game or two, plus spend money in Cincinnati. Then the Reds would have money to spend on players.

-- Bob C., The Villages, Fla.

Fun question, and a roof would have been great if it was included when Great American Ball Park was originally built. But realistically, it would cost in the neighborhood of \$150 million for a retractable roof. And, of course, there needs to be space to hold it up when it's open. The ballpark footprint is already small as it is, so there really isn't a place for a roof.

Mark Sheldon has covered the Reds for MLB.com since 2006, and previously covered the Twins from 2001-05. Follow him on Twitter @m_sheldon and Facebook and listen to his podcast.

MLB's 30 fastest prospects -- one from each team

By Jim Callis, Jonathan Mayo and Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com

Jan. 3rd, 2019

When MLB Pipeline identified each farm system's top power-hitting prospect in November, 28 of the 30 sluggers were featured on our organization Top 30 Prospects lists. That came as no surprise, as power is a highly valued commodity.

Today we look at the fastest players in each system, and only 16 of them currently reside on our various team Top 30s. Why? That's because pure speedsters can be lacking in offensive upside because they don't have much power or consistency with their hitting ability.

There are exceptions, of course. Blazing-fast outfielders Victor Robles (Nationals), Luis Robert (White Sox) and Cristian Pache (Braves) all made MLB Pipeline's Top 100 Prospects list because of their ability to impact a game in a variety of ways.

Even if they don't possess all-around talent, the players below still could make their presence felt at the big league level. Dave Roberts helped end an 86-year World Series championship drought in Boston with a timely stolen base, and Terrance Gore scored the winning run in the 2015 Fall Classic.

Reds: Jose Siri, OF, (CIN No. 15)

The ultra-toolsy Siri still needs to prove he can hit at the higher levels of the Reds system, but there's no question he can flat out fly. The outfielder stole 46 bases in 2017, then stole 23 a year ago, his third straight season of 20 or more steals.

Likely 2019 level: Double-A Chattanooga

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CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

Reds Xtra: Which players could the Cincinnati Reds target next?

Bobby Nightengale, Cincinnati Enquirer Published 5:22 p.m. ET Jan. 5, 2019 |

Updated 8:45 p.m. ET Jan. 5, 2019

Immediately after the Reds announced they completed a seven-player trade with the Los Angeles Dodgers, the club's president of baseball operations, Dick Williams, said they weren't finished making moves this offseason.

The Reds are looking at adding another starting pitcher and a center fielder. They could try to bolster their bullpen or find a versatile position player. They still have top prospects that could help them complete trades for Major League talent.

With more than a month until the start of Spring Training, the Reds have many avenues they could choose to improve the team. According to a projection model used by FanGraphs.com, the Reds are expected to win 79 games next season, which is well behind the Cubs and Cardinals (87 wins), but in the same neighborhood as the Pirates (81) and Brewers (77).

“I think we can just add value wherever we can. Dick said it the whole time, ‘We’re definitely not done,’” Reds assistant general manager Sam Grossman said on MLB Network. “We still have some ways that we’re looking to improve the team. It could be in any direction. I think we feel good about our lineup now, but in terms of all aspects of continuing to make our run prevention better, whether it’s starting pitching, defense, we’re being open-minded about how we can get that done.”

Here’s a look at some of the top remaining options on the free agent and trade markets:

STARTING PITCHERS

Dallas Keuchel – The top pitcher available on the free agent market is reportedly seeking a five-year contract. He’s one of the best in baseball at inducing groundballs, which means his pitching style would fit extremely well at Great American Ball Park. It’s unclear if there are any teams willing to give him a fifth year in contract talks, but the Reds likely want his price tag to drop a bit.

Wade Miley – After signing a minor league contract last year, Miley enjoyed a breakout season with the Brewers and Reds pitching coach Derek Johnson. He had a 2.57 ERA in 16 starts and was dominant in the postseason.

Gio Gonzalez – Like his former teammate Tanner Roark, Gonzalez is known for his durability. He’s pitched at least 170 innings in each of the last four years, though his velocity has started to dip. He finished sixth in the National League Cy Young vote in 2017.

Dick Williams talks about adding Yasiel Puig, Matt Kemp, Alex Wood and Kyle Farmer in a trade and what impact they can make with the Reds. Bobby Nightengale, Cincinnati Enquirer

Derek Holland – In an interview on MLB Network Radio, Holland said he had discussions with the Reds. Holland, a Newark, Ohio native, had a 3.57 ERA in 30 starts with the Giants last year, throwing more than 135 innings for the first time since 2013.

Sonny Gray (Yankees) – Once considered a sure bet to be traded during the offseason, Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said this week that Gray could open the season in New York. According to the New York Post, the Yankees asked for Reds’ star prospect Taylor Trammell, which was much more than the Reds wanted to give up. Gray was coached by Reds pitching coach Derek Johnson in college.

Corey Kluber/Trevor Bauer (Indians) – After shedding some payroll in other trades, the Indians appear to be in a position where they don’t need to move Kluber or Bauer. Kluber, who finished third in the American League Cy Young vote last year, drew interest from many teams. With more flexibility to keep both starters, the Indians have plenty of leverage in possible trade discussions.

Marcus Stroman (Blue Jays) – Blue Jays general manager Ross Atkins said this week that no teams have made a serious push to acquire Stroman. Battling injuries, Stroman struggled last season and had a 5.54 ERA in 19 starts.

CENTER FELDERS

A.J. Pollock – Behind Bryce Harper and Manny Machado, Pollock could be the next highest-paid position player on the free agent market. ESPN reported there haven’t been many suitors to this point, but it could ramp up once Harper signs with a team. He’s dealt with injuries throughout the last three years, but he hits for power and he’s solid defensively.

Ender Inciarte (Braves) – The Reds had trade discussions about Inciarte, according to MLB.com, but that was before they added Yasiel Puig and Matt Kemp. A three-time Gold Glove winner, he’s under contract through the 2022 season.

Before making their next move, it appears the Reds have four pitchers solidified in the rotation: Alex Wood, Roark, Luis Castillo and Anthony DeSclafani. In center field, they have some internal options like Scott Schebler, Puig, Phillip Ervin and Nick Senzel, though none of them have regularly played the position in recent seasons.

Houston Astros traded SS Cody Bohanek and 3B J.D. Davis to New York Mets for SS Luis Santana, OF Ross Adolph and C Scott Manea.

New York Mets traded C Kevin Plawecki to Cleveland Indians for 2B Sam Haggerty and RHP Walker Lockett.

01/05/19

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster 1B Will Craig to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster 3B Ke'Bryan Hayes to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster OF Bryan Reynolds to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster RHP Tyler Eppler to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster LHP Elvis Escobar to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster RHP Geoff Hartlieb to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster RHP Eduardo Vera to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster LHP Brandon Waddell to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster LHP Blake Weiman to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster C Jason Delay to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster C Christian Kelley to spring training.

Pittsburgh Pirates invited non-roster C Arden Pabst to spring training.

Milwaukee Brewers traded CF Keon Broxton to New York Mets for RHP Adam Hill, RHP Bobby Wahl and 2B Felix Valerio.

Baltimore Orioles traded 2B Breyvic Valera to San Francisco Giants for cash.

01/04/19

Texas Rangers claimed RHP Luke Farrell off waivers from Los Angeles Angels.

Texas Rangers signed free agent RHP Adrian Sampson to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

Texas Rangers signed free agent RHP Rafael Montero to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

New York Yankees designated RHP A.J. Cole for assignment.

St. Louis Cardinals sent Ryan Meisinger outright to Memphis Redbirds.

New York Yankees signed free agent SS Troy Tulowitzki.

Baltimore Orioles designated 2B Breyvic Valera for assignment.

Baltimore Orioles claimed RHP Austin Brice off waivers from Los Angeles Angels.

Tampa Bay Rays designated RHP Jaime Schultz for assignment.

Toronto Blue Jays traded RHP Oliver Drake to Tampa Bay Rays for cash.

Milwaukee Brewers signed free agent 3B Cory Spangenberg.

Kansas City Royals designated 3B Cheslor Cuthbert for assignment.

Kansas City Royals signed free agent RHP Kyle Zimmer.

01/03/19

Philadelphia Phillies signed free agent RHP David Robertson.

Cleveland Indians signed free agent RHP Justin Grimm to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

Boston Red Sox invited non-roster C Oscar Hernandez to spring training.

Los Angeles Dodgers signed free agent RHP Markus Solbach to a minor league contract.

Boston Red Sox invited non-roster RHP Josh A. Smith to spring training.

New York Mets signed free agent OF Rymer Liriano to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

New York Mets signed free agent RHP Arquimedes Caminero to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

01/02/19

Minnesota Twins signed free agent DH Nelson Cruz.

Miami Marlins claimed RF Rosell Herrera off waivers from Kansas City Royals.

Seattle Mariners signed free agent LHP Yusei Kikuchi.