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FROM OC REGISTER**Angels pick Brad Ausmus to take over as next manager**

By Jeff Fletcher

The Angels have hired Brad Ausmus as their first new manager in 19 years, replacing franchise icon Mike Scioscia, the club announced on Sunday.

Ausmus, who had spent the past year as a special assistant to Angels general manager Billy Eppler, was signed to a three-year deal. He will be introduced as the 17th manager in club history at a press conference on Monday at Angel Stadium.

Scioscia, whose 10-year contract concluded this year, announced he would not return following the end of the regular season.

“Over the past few weeks, our baseball operations personnel sat down with numerous highly-qualified and impressive candidates for our managerial role. We are thankful to all of them for their time and effort throughout the process,” Eppler said in a statement released by the team. “Ultimately, Brad’s balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him. We believe his knowledge, drive and growth-mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization.”

The Angels interviewed 10 candidates for the job, putting each through an eight- or nine-hour process that included a two-hour written test. The five other confirmed candidates were Angels special assistant Eric Chavez, Houston Astros bench coach Joe Espada, Chicago Cubs bench coach Brandon Hyde, Tampa Bay Rays major league field coordinator Rocco Baldelli and longtime major league shortstop Omar Vizquel.

Eppler said before the process that comfort and familiarity with analytics would be among the key components in picking the next manager.

Ausmus, 49, returns for his second stint as a big league manager, after leading the Detroit Tigers from 2014 to 2017.

Ausmus was 314-322 with the Tigers, including a division title in his first season. The Tigers were swept by the Baltimore Orioles in the division series, coincidentally at the time same time the Angels were being swept by the Kansas City Royals in their previous playoff appearance.

A Dartmouth graduate, Ausmus said when he was hired to manage the Tigers that he had embraced the analytical side of the game.

“I always enjoyed the cerebral part,” Ausmus said upon being hired. “It was much more difficult to hit — that was the part of the game I didn’t really enjoy.”

As a player, Ausmus spent 18 years as a big league catcher, starting with the Padres. He won three Gold Gloves during his 10 years with the Houston Astros, in two different stints. He also played for the Tigers, and he finished with the Dodgers in 2010.

His first managing assignment came as the skipper of Team Israel in the World Baseball Classic qualifying round in 2012. They did not qualify for the tournament in 2013. Otherwise, he had been a special assistant in the Padres front office before taking the Tigers' job.

The Tigers announced just before the end of the 2017 season that he wouldn't be back. He finished out the season anyway.

The Angels then hired him as a special assistant to Eppler. Ausmus was in uniform throughout spring training, and he was with the team frequently during the year, even on the road. He regularly sat with Eppler during games at Angel Stadium.

The composition of the rest of the major league coaching staff will be determined over the next few weeks.

Rays' Rocco Baldelli on Angels' managerial list

By Jeff Fletcher

As the Angels close in on a decision on their next manager, Tampa Bay Rays major league field coordinator Rocco Baldelli has joined the list of those confirmed to be among the 10 candidates who have formal interviews for the job.

Baldelli's inclusion was first reported by the Tampa Bay Times.

He joins a group that includes Brad Ausmus and Eric Chavez, both special assistants to Angels general manager Billy Eppler; Houston Astros bench coach Joe Espada, Chicago Cubs bench coach Brandon Hyde and former Gold Glove shortstop Omar Vizquel. Vizquel said he's already out of the running.

Those are the only six confirmed candidates, with the first round of interviews complete. It's unknown how many of them will have second interviews.

The Angels could announce their manager by Monday, a source said this week. The World Series begins on Tuesday, and Major League Baseball discourages teams from making major announcements during its jewel event.

Baldelli, 37, has been a coach on the Rays staff for the past four years. He spent seven years as a big league outfielder, mostly with the Rays.

Baldelli has also reportedly been interviewed for the managerial openings with the Texas Rangers, Toronto Blue Jays, Minnesota Twins and Cincinnati Reds. That accounts for five of the six openings, all except for the Baltimore Orioles.

Anaheim should tell the Angels 'good riddance'

By Jonathan Lansner

I hope Anaheim city leadership treats the Angels just like Walt Disney Co. and tells the baseball team “no more handouts.”

The Angels told the city they want out of their stadium lease after the 2019 season. Supposedly, the city-owned Angel Stadium doesn't meet its fans' needs. Nobody's that dumb. It's clear this is a ploy to make baseball in Anaheim more profitable for billionaire owner Arte Moreno.

If I were, say, the god of Anaheim ... I'd quickly take the Angels up on their lease termination and tell them today, without any negotiations, they should have their bags packed once the baseball season ends in 2019.

I wouldn't see this as Anaheim “losing” the Angels. I'd view it as the city trading an aging veteran for more promising prospects in the real estate game.

Now you might be thinking, “Jon, didn't you recently write that the city was foolish for hardball tactics with Disney?”

Yes, I think Anaheim goofed in essentially rejecting plans for a luxury hotel at Disneyland's gates that would have yielded the city \$100 million-plus in hotel taxes over 20 years. Killing the hotel was a lose-lose for the company and the city from what could have been a mutually beneficial partnership.

But I've long believed professional sports stadiums are almost universally “wins” for rich team owners and “losers” for taxpayers who build, own and maintain such facilities.

And in Southern California, circa 2018, the Angel Stadium site — with a hip urban feel that's close to mass-transit and three freeways — is real estate gold the city can mine in numerous ways far more lucrative than owning a sports stadium.

Plus, the Angels under Moreno's watch have not been a perfect tenant.

Does anybody remember when Moreno in 2005 pulled the Anaheim name off of the Anaheim Angels, something they were dubbed from 1997 through 2004? He used a legal loophole to muscle the city moniker out of the baseball team's marketing. Almost as painful, he insisted “Los Angeles Angels” gave his sports business a more global, glitzier image.

Do not forget the key reason many municipalities would want – or attract – a pro sports franchise: That city-name marketing buzz Moreno took away. So unless the owner wants to go retro and rename them the “Anaheim Angels” there should be no further discussions.

In previous lease negotiations, Moreno wanted development rights to the stadium parking lot for ... \$1 a year in exchange for taking on the stadium's refurbishment costs. Real estate appraisers in 2014 valued the land at as much as \$325 million.

Today, this stadium neighborhood has become a hotbed of real estate development, a building boom that's certainly helped city finances. But the Angels balked when one developer wanted to build the mixed-use LTG Platinum Center at the stadium's parking lot — land owned by the city but controlled by the Angels.

Sure, a settlement was negotiated, but the squabble highlights just how desirable that stadium site's land would be if put out for bidding.

Forget the business back-and-forth, the entire sporting industry is going under some hefty challenges. While spending on sports and entertainment is still on the rise — and let's remember we're living in an extended economic upswing — how that money is spent is evolving.

Legacy sports like baseball are feeling the impact: declining attendance at games as prospects for lower broadcast revenues. Is that a bet Anaheim wants to be part of?

Plus, the Southern California pro sports landscape has intensified. Two pro football teams moved here in last year and a pro soccer team is in its inaugural season. I can see why Moreno would need a better stadium to compete for fans ... but why should a city like Anaheim pay some of that bill?

And the Angels certainly haven't done much on the playing field of late to woo fans.

Moreno became owner shortly after the team won the World Series in 2002. (Note: I attended that title-clinching game!) There was initial success under Moreno but missing Major League Baseball's playoffs the last four years — and no playoff wins since 2009 — is a solid yardstick of the ball team's recent underperformance.

If nothing else, the city should call Moreno's bluff. Anaheim's been good for Moreno. He paid Disney an estimated \$184 million for the team in 2003. Forbes valued the Angels, before the 2018 season, at \$1.8 billion. Has he returned the good fortune?

What would the Angels do if they have no home field for 2020. Where would they play? That would damage fan support and probably further challenge the team's ability to retain the sport's best player — Mike Trout. That means the city has serious leverage.

This is the same Anaheim had the gumption to squeeze Disney — the company with the theme park that gave the city a global image — when the entertainment giant was willing to build a \$500-million-plus resort on its own land in return for a tax break.

That should mean Anaheim has the nerve to tell its baseball team the party's over.

FROM LOS ANGELES TIMES**Angels hire Brad Ausmus as manager**

By Maria Torres

The Angels have found Mike Scioscia's replacement in Brad Ausmus, the team announced Sunday.

Ausmus, the former Detroit Tigers manager and major league catcher, signed a three-year contract to manage the Angels. He won the job over the likes of Houston Astros bench coach Joe Espada, former Oakland Athletics and New York Yankees third baseman Eric Chavez, and 11-time Gold Glove-winning shortstop Omar Vizquel.

"Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision-making, led us to him," Angels general manager Billy Eppler said in a statement. "We believe his knowledge, drive and growth mind-set will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

Ausmus became a special assistant to Eppler in November, shortly after the Tigers declined to renew Ausmus' contract at the end of the 2017 season. Ausmus had taken the helm from longtime skipper Jim Leyland, who retired at the end of the 2013 campaign, and led the Tigers to the American League Central division title in his first season in 2014. But the Tigers, stuck behind the 2015 World Series champion Kansas City Royals and the burgeoning Cleveland Indians, missed the postseason each of the next three years. Ausmus amassed a 314-332 record over four seasons, which included a 64-98 record in 2017.

The Angels were not discouraged by Ausmus' shortcomings in Detroit, where he managed Hall-of-Fame-caliber players such as Miguel Cabrera, Justin Verlander and Max Scherzer.

By the time Ausmus' stint with them came to an end, the Tigers had jettisoned Verlander to the Astros and slugger J.D. Martinez to the Arizona Diamondbacks and committed to an organizational rebuild.

"Our priorities are the same since Arte [Moreno] bought the team in 2003," Angels President and co-owner John Carpino said in a text message. "We are here to win. That goal was made clear to all of the candidates."

Ausmus, 49, spent 18 seasons in the majors as a catcher from 1993 to 2010 for the San Diego Padres, Astros, Tigers and Dodgers. He transitioned to the front office as a special assistant with the Padres from 2010-13.

Ausmus' hiring follows a recent industry trend in which front-office stints that require an immersion in advanced metrics have led to managerial roles.

- Former Padres skipper Bud Black in 2016 was an Angels special assistant to analytics proponent Eppler before taking over as Colorado Rockies manager the next season. This year, the Rockies lost a division tiebreaker with the Dodgers before entering the playoffs as the National League wild-card team.

- Astros manager A.J. Hinch, another former player, spent time in the Padres' front office after a failed first stint as skipper for the Diamondbacks during 2009 and 2010. The Astros participated in three of the past four playoffs and won the 2017 World Series during Hinch's tenure.

The formula for success is there. It's now up to Ausmus, a Dartmouth graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in government, to follow it.

"He is a great fit," Carpino said.

Ausmus will be introduced at a news conference at Angel Stadium on Monday. He becomes the 17th manager in Angels history — and just their second since the start of the century. Scioscia, who led the Angels to their only World Series title in 2002 and later signed a 10-year contract that expired at the end of the 2018 season, stepped down following a season-ending victory on Sept. 30.

Now that a manager has been named, the Angels will fill out Ausmus' coaching staff and turn their attention to the roster. Eppler plans to dive into the pitching market to bolster a starting rotation that in 2018 was decimated by injuries.

For now, Ausmus knows he'll manage one of baseball's best all-around players in outfielder Mike Trout, two-way star and AL rookie-of-the-year candidate Shohei Ohtani and aging veteran Albert Pujols. Trout, a two-time MVP award winner, has only played in one postseason series since his debut in 2011 and has two seasons remaining on the \$145.5 million contract he signed in 2014. Ohtani will not pitch next season as he recovers from ulnar collateral ligament surgery, but he is expected to feature in the middle of the Angels' batting order as the team attempts to reach the playoffs for the first time since 2014. The Angels were swept by the Royals in a best-of-five American League Division Series that year.

Overseeing the team's use of Pujols might present a challenge for Ausmus, but the task won't be foreign. Victor Martinez was 38 years old and produced a declined .697 on-base-plus-slugging percentage during Ausmus' final year in Detroit.

The Angels this year finished 80-82, a record that marked a third straight losing season.

FROM ANGELS.COM

Brad Ausmus named Angels manager

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- The Angels completed their first managerial search in nearly two decades on Sunday, announcing that Brad Ausmus has been hired to replace Mike Scioscia.

Ausmus, 49, will be formally introduced during a 1 p.m. PT press conference at Angel Stadium today after signing a three-year contract with the club.

Ausmus, who managed the Tigers from 2014-17, spent this past season as a special assistant to general manager Billy Eppler. The former big league catcher beat out nine other candidates for the position, including fellow special assistant Eric Chavez, Astros bench coach Joe Espada, Cubs bench coach Brandon Hyde, Rays field coordinator Rocco Baldelli and longtime MLB infielder Omar Vizquel.

"Over the past few weeks, our baseball operations personnel sat down with numerous highly qualified and impressive candidates for our managerial role. We are thankful to all of them for their time and effort throughout the process," Eppler said in a statement. "Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills, as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision-making, led us to him. We believe his knowledge, drive and growth mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

Scioscia announced that he would step down at the end of the season following the expiration of his 10-year contract, ending his 19-year run at the helm of the Angels.

A Dartmouth graduate, Ausmus spent 18 seasons in the Majors with the Padres, Astros, Tigers and Dodgers. He earned his first opportunity to manage with the Tigers, who hired him to replace Jim Leyland in Nov. 2013. Ausmus posted a .486 winning percentage (314-332) over his four years in Detroit, steering the club to the American League Central title in his first season.

After the Tigers announced that they would not renew his contract last fall, Ausmus joined the Angels' front office to assist with scouting and evaluations. He frequently traveled with the team on the road and was often spotted in the Angels' clubhouse after home games.

Ausmus will become the 17th manager in Angels history.

Angels' Jones focused on fielding in AFL after move

By Jonathan Mayo

Jahmai Jones played the infield in high school, but for the first two-plus years of his pro career since being a second-round pick in the 2015 Draft, he'd roamed the outfield. Then general manager Billy Eppler surveyed the player personnel landscape and, realizing there was outfield depth up and down the system, asked Jones to move back to the dirt at second base.

The **Angels' No. 4 prospect** didn't hesitate to say yes and he spent the 2018 season re-learning how to play the right side of the infield at the professional level. As a result, it took him just as long to answer the question about what he's working on the most during his time in the **Arizona Fall League**.

"Definitely fielding," the 21-year-old said. "Making the transition to second base is something I thought would happen either a little earlier in my career or a little later. Never did I think it was going to happen right now."

"It's for the better. I definitely trust in Billy's plan. Billy's got a great idea of where he wants his players to be and where he wants the organization to be in the next three, four, five years and I'm all for it. I'm all

in on his plan and he told me he wanted me to play second, so I'm looking forward to the opportunity, just looking to get some little things right, make sure my first step quickness, my setup when I'm playing the infield is right so I can continue to play the way I am."

That plan also includes improving his overall offensive game. Jones was coming off of a very solid 2017 that saw him play across two levels of A ball and finish with a .282/.348/.446 line to go along with 14 homers and 27 steals. While he did reach double-digits in home runs and swiped 20 or more bags for the third year in a row, his .239/.337/.380 combined line is not up to the standard he holds for himself.

"Don't get me wrong, the numbers of average, the numbers that show up on the scoreboard, you want to have high numbers, everybody does," Jones said. "I just try not to look up there, try to just focus on every single day at hand and make sure that if I'm not swinging it, I'm playing defense. If I'm not playing defense well, I'm making up for the errors I had in the field. Knowing that, I tried to take it in very small increments, tried not to look at the big picture, tried to look at every single day, 'Can I get a little bit better?' It was a learning year.

"Maybe statistically, it wasn't a great year on paper. It doesn't matter at that point. It was a year full of changes and a year full of new opportunities. I'm happy with the year that I had and definitely looking to build on it. Everything I learned this year, I'm going to use next year and see where it takes me."

It did take him to Double-A for the first time, arriving in Mobile a month ahead of his 21st birthday. He held his own, though those scoreboard stats were still a bit down, and he learned a lot.

"It was a lot of fun," Jones said. "I was facing guys a step away from the big leagues, guys that, day in and day out, they know what they want to do, they execute a plan and they do it better than the guys in high A do. I knew that it was probably going to be the biggest jump in my Minor League career, going from high A to Double-A, so I just tried to prepare for it, go out there and not take every day so hard."

That lesson is something Jones hopes to keep with him every step of the way. Literally.

"On the insoles of my cleats right now, it's 'Just breathe and have fun,'" Jones said. "If I can keep doing that, we'll see where it goes."

Angels hitters in the Fall League

Roberto Baldoquin, SS: The Angels made a big splash when they signed the Cuban infielder for \$8 million in 2014, but things haven't exactly gone according to plan as he struggled to hit and stay healthy in two levels of A ball over his first three seasons. The 24-year-old did put up career-best numbers (.278/.334/.379) while playing three infield positions and reaching Double-A for the first time.

David MacKinnon, 1B: A soccer goalie as well as a first baseman at Hartford, MacKinnon has shown a knack for getting on base (career .437 OBP) since being a 32nd-round pick in the 2017 Draft. He's looking to take his hot second half (.316/.443/.455) and keep it going in Arizona to ready him for the upper levels of the system.

Angels pitchers in the Fall League

Jesus Castillo, RHP: A huge 2017 season that saw him pitch across three levels earned Castillo a spot on the 40-man roster. His first full season in Double-A, however, didn't go as well (4.94 ERA, 1.30 WHIP, .264 BAA), so the right-hander is trying to right the ship, along with making up for innings lost due to a three-week stint on the disabled list, with Mesa this fall.

Ryan Clark, RHP: The Braves released Clark, a fifth-round pick out of UNC-Greensboro in 2015, prior to the start of the 2017 season and the Angels signed him in April of last year. He pitched sparingly that season, but a move to the bullpen has paid dividends and he's continuing to work on that transition.

Brett Hanewich, RHP: A 2017 ninth-round pick out of Stanford, Hanewich missed plenty of bats in his first full season across two levels of A ball (9.7 K/9) and was even more unhittable up a level (.179 BAA in the California League), but he needs to work on his command (6.0 BB/9 for the year) in order to step up successfully to Double-A.

Daniel Procopio, RHP: Another 2017 college draftee (10th round), Procopio quickly pitched his way from the California League up to Double-A, where he struggled. He missed a ton of bats (11.9 K/9 in 2018), but will also be working on his command this fall (6.1 BB/9 during the regular season).

FROM MLB.COM

Here's what happened in Saturday's AFL action

Here's a team-by-team breakdown of how all 30 teams' prospects fared in Arizona Fall League action on Saturday:

AL East

Blue Jays (Surprise)

Santiago Espinal, Blue Jays No. 22 prospect, hit a triple and scored two runs as part of a 2-for-5 showing for the Saguaros. Jackson McClelland struck out a pair in 1 2/3 hitless frames out of the bullpen. The right-hander has now allowed a hit in 5 2/3 innings (three appearances) this fall.

Orioles (Glendale)

Baltimore's No. 12 prospect, center fielder Ryan McKenna, went 2-for-5 with two triples, two RBIs and two runs scored out of the leadoff spot. He's slashing .318/.423/.638 for a 1.059 OPS in AFL play. Right-hander Tanner Chleborad gave up a run on four hits over two relief innings, striking out one.

Rays (Peoria)

Rays No. 9 prospect Lucius Fox went 1-for-3 with two walks, two runs and an RBI out of the leadoff spot. He also stole a base, his sixth in eight games, during which he's hit .412 with 14 hits and 11 runs scored. Javelinas starter **Matt Krook** earned the win after allowing one earned run on one hit over three innings. He issued two walks, struck out three and recorded five ground-ball outs.

Red Sox (Mesa)

Second baseman Esteban Quiroz was 0-for-4 with a pair of strikeouts, dropping his AFL average to .188. Left-hander **Josh Taylor** came out off the bullpen to throw a scoreless seventh inning.

Yankees (Glendale)

Shortstop **Thairo Estrada**, the **Yankees' No. 16 prospect**, was 1-for-4 with a single. First baseman Steven Sensley was 2-for-5 with a pair of singles to up his AFL average to .242. On the pitching side of the ledger, right-hander Jordan Foley started and surrendered five runs on four hits over two innings, walking one and getting strikeouts on five of the six outs he recorded. Righty Kyle Zurak was hit hard as well, giving up four runs (two earned) over a third of an inning out of the bullpen, giving up three hits and walking two.

AL Central**Indians (Glendale)**

Third baseman **Yu Chang**, **Cleveland's No. 6 prospect**, turned in an impressive 3-for-4 performance, with a double, RBI and run scored. Right fielder Connor Marabell was 1-for-5 with a single and an RBI. And left-hander **Rob Kaminsky** was the final pitcher out of the bullpen for Glendale, tossing a scoreless eighth inning, allowing a hit and fanning two.

Royals (Surprise)

Meibris Vilorio walked and struck out twice as he finished 0-for-3, while speedster Nick Heath tallied a single in four at-bats and was walked. On the mound, Scott Blewett allowed one earned run on three hits in his second AFL start. Tossing 3 1/3 frames, the **Royals' No. 26 prospect** issued three walks and struck out a pair.

Tigers (Mesa)

Daz Cameron, **Detroit's No. 8 prospect**, played center field and had a big night at the plate, going 3-for-4 with a double, RBI and three runs scored. No. 12 prospect **Jake Rogers** went 1-for-3 with a double and two runs scored. Right-hander **Sandy Baez**, the Tigers' No. 26 prospect, surrendered three runs on three hits in the ninth inning. Right-hander **Eduardo Jimenez** tossed two scoreless innings of relief, yielding three hits and striking out two. And right-hander John Schreiber came on in relief to pitch a scoreless eighth with a strikeout.

Twins (Salt River)

Twins No. 18 prospect Travis Blankenhorn drove in a pair of runs, doubled and went 1-for-4 out of the leadoff spot for the Rafters.

White Sox (Glendale)

Chicago's No. 9 prospect, outfielder **Luis Alexander Basabe**, had two singles and an RBI as part of a 2-for-4 effort, upping his AFL average to .278. No. 28 prospect Lax Rivera started at second base and went 1-for-4 with a single and an RBI. Right-hander Danny Dopico tossed 1 2/3 scoreless frames out off the bullpen, walking one and fanning two.

AL West

A's (Mesa)

Oakland's No. 30 prospect, outfielder Skye Bolt, went 1-for-4 with a triple and a walk and is hitting .333 so far in AFL play.

Angels (Mesa)

After striking out five in three shutout frames in his first Fall League start, 23-year-old right-hander **Jesus Castillo** got roughed up on Saturday, giving up five runs (all earned) on seven hits and walk over three innings while striking out just one. On the offensive end, however, a trio of Angels contributed to Mesa's 11-8 win. **The team's No. 4 prospect**, Jahmai Jones, notched his second straight multihit game, and third in seven games, going 2-for-5 with three RBIs out of the DH spot. Infielders David MacKinnon and Roberto Baldoquin each went 1-for-4 with a run scored, with Baldoquin also driving in a run. MacKinnon's hit was his first of the AFL season, after starting 0-for-10. Baldoquin's hit was his second. He entered the game with one hit in 13 at-bats.

Astros (Scottsdale)

Ronnie Dawson was a game-changer on the basepaths as he swiped four bags in as many chances. He also went 2-for-3 with an RBI and two walks, giving the outfielder a .296 average and seven steals in the AFL. Abraham Toro-Hernandez was 2-for-5, and Erasmo Pinales contributed with a scoreless frame out of the bullpen.

Mariners (Peoria)

Mariners No. 9 prospect Wyatt Mills lowered his ERA to 1.59 with a perfect inning out of the bullpen. David McKay added a scoreless frame, pitching around a hit. Ian Miller (No. 20) came up empty in four trips to the plate from the bottom of the lineup.

Rangers (Surprise)

Yanio Perez plated a run with a sacrifice fly but went 0-for-3 as the Sagueros' designated hitter. Demarcus Evans was sharp out of the bullpen as he recorded four of his five outs via strikeout while tossing 1 2/3 hitless innings. **Rangers No. 15 prospect C.D. Pelham** was tagged for two earned runs on three hits in 1 1/3 frames.

NL East**Braves (Peoria)**

After entering in relief in the fifth inning, **Braves No. 12 prospect** Kyle Muller delivered two one-hit frames with three strikeouts and two walks. At the plate, Braxton Davidson went 0-for-2 but walked three times.

Marlins (Salt River)

Marlins No. 11 prospect Brian Miller scored two runs, going 1-for-3, and reached with a walk. He also swiped a bag, his second in 10 games after racking up 40 steals across two levels during the regular season. Kyle Keller, **Tommy Eveld** and **Chad Smith** combined for four scoreless frames out of the Rafter's 'pen.

Mets (Scottsdale)

Mets No. 2 prospect Peter Alonso (**No. 58 overall**) connected on his third AFL home run, as his tape-measure two-run shot in the ninth helped the Scorpions force extra innings. The homer was Alonso's

lone hit in six at-bats. Mets No. 1 prospect Andres Gimenez (No. 55 overall) went 0-for-4 with a walk from the bottom of the lineup.

Nationals (Salt River)

Nationals No. 2 prospect Carter Kieboom (No. 37 overall) went 1-for-4 with a walk, his first Fall League RBI and stolen base. Daniel Johnson (No. 7) doubled and scored a run as part of a 1-for-3 showing, while Jake Noll struck out twice in four trips to the plate.

Phillies (Scottsdale)

Darick Hall put the Scorpions on the board against Surprise with a solo shot to lead off the fourth inning. It was the second AFL homer for Hall, who went deep 26 times across two levels during the regular season. Outfielder Austin Listi went 3-for-6 with an RBI and two runs scored. On the mound, Luke Leftwich (BB) and Jonathan Hennigan (2 K) each posted a scoreless frame, with the latter earning the save.

NL Central

Brewers (Peoria)

Brewers top prospect Keston Hiura (No. 30 overall) has multiple hits in four of eight games in the AFL after his second two-hit showing in as many days. He finished 2-for-4 with an RBI double that pushed his AFL-leading RBI total to 17. Trent Grisham (Brewers' No. 19) and Weston Wilson both had RBI singles.

Cardinals (Surprise)

Saguaros leadoff man Tommy Edman went 1-for-4 with his first AFL double and also picked up his fourth steal. Second baseman Andy Young delivered a solo shot in the sixth inning for his first Fall League homer and finished 1-for-3 with two walks. The Cardinals middle-infield tandem is hitting .333 and .381, respectively, this fall. **Lane Thomas** drove in a run with a sacrifice fly but was 0-for-4.

Cubs (Mesa)

Chicago's No. 6 prospect, second baseman Nico Hoerner, bounced back from an 0-for-4 line on Friday by going 2-for-3 with a triple, homer and three RBIs. Left fielder D.J. Wilson, the Cubs' No. 16 prospect, went 1-for-4 with a single and two runs scored. And right-hander Bailey Clark pitched a scoreless sixth inning, giving up one hit.

Pirates (Surprise)

Pirates No. 5 prospect Cole Tucker started the scoring for Surprise with a two-out, two-run double in the first inning, and then helped force extra innings with a single in the bottom of the ninth. He finished the game 2-for-5 with three RBIs. Will Craig (No. 16) was 0-for-5 with three strikeouts. Relievers Matt Eckelman (IP, 4 H, 3 R, 2 ER) and Geoff Hartlieb (2 IP, 4 H, 3 R, 1 ER) both scuffled.

Reds (Scottsdale)

Reds No. 3 prospect Taylor Trammell (No. 17 overall) drove home the game-winning run in the 11th inning to cap a 4-for-6, two-RBI performance. **Shed Long** (No. 8) walked twice and scored two runs out of the leadoff spot.

NL West

D-backs (Salt River)

D-backs No. 5 prospect Daulton Varsho upped his Fall League average to .353 with a 2-for-4 performance. Drew Ellis (No. 9) plated two runs with a double in the fourth inning. Bo Takahashi struck out two of the three batters he faced during a perfect inning in relief.

Dodgers (Glendale)

Dodgers No. 2 prospect (No. 39 prospect overall) Keibert Ruiz went 1-for-4 with a single, walk and two runs scored. Cody Thomas was Glendale's designated hitter, going 1-for-5 with a single, RBI and run scored. And right-hander Andre Scrubb pitched a scoreless fifth inning to lower his AFL ERA to 4.15.

Giants (Scottsdale)

Matt Winn reached base twice via a walk and scored a run before finishing 0-for-3. **Chase Johnson** struck out a pair during a scoreless inning in relief, while **Giants No. 19** prospect Melvin Adon bumped triple digits during his appearance later in the game. **Sam Wolff** earned the win despite permitting an unearned run in the 10th inning.

Padres (Peoria)

Padres No. 25 prospect Austin Allen produced exit velocities of 106.9 mph (double to right field) and 112.5 mph (lineout to center). Hudson Potts (No. 23) also hit a double, as both players finished 2-for-4. Buddy Reed (No. 13) reached on a walk, stole a base and scored a run. Relievers Travis Radke and Dauris Valdez each allowed two earned runs in one inning.

Rockies (Salt River)

Rockies No. 11 prospect Tyler Nevin went 1-for-4, while Sam Hilliard (No. 9) finished 0-for-5. Starter Ryan Castellani (No. 10) could not complete two innings, as he was chased after he allowed five earned runs on four hits and four walks in 1 2/3 frames. Jesus Tincoco (No. 20) allowed a run on three hits with three strikeouts over 1 1/3 innings, and Justin Lawrence (No. 17) added a scoreless frame later in the game.

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**Brad Ausmus named manager of Los Angeles Angels**

By Greg Beacham

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Brad Ausmus was named the Los Angeles Angels' manager on Sunday, moving from the front office to the dugout to replace longtime skipper Mike Scioscia.

General manager Billy Eppler announced the hiring of Ausmus, who served as Eppler's special assistant last season after four years as the Detroit Tigers' manager.

Ausmus got a three-year contract with the Angels. He will be introduced at Angel Stadium on Monday.

Scioscia had held the job since the 2000 season, winning the Angels' only World Series title and becoming the winningest manager in franchise history. He left the club earlier this month after 19 seasons and 1,650 victories.

But after finishing 80-82 for the second consecutive year, the Angels are coming off three straight losing seasons overall for the first time since 1992-94. Los Angeles has played only three postseason games in the past nine seasons, losing them all in 2014 after winning the AL West.

While both men had lengthy careers as big league catchers, the 49-year-old Ausmus likely represents a philosophical shift from Scioscia, who was widely perceived as an old-school manager despite his public embrace of new baseball mentalities.

After Scioscia's departure three weeks ago, Eppler said he wanted the Angels' 17th manager to be well-versed in analytics and probability-based decision-making. Ausmus was not known to be thoroughly reliant on data during his up-and-down tenure in Detroit, but he clearly sold Eppler and owner Arte Moreno on his willingness to evolve into the modern manager that the Angels want.

"Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision-making led us to him," Eppler said in a statement. "We believe his knowledge, drive and growth-mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

Before joining the Angels' front office, Ausmus managed the Tigers from 2014-17. Detroit won 90 games and the AL Central during his first season, but went just 314-332 in his tenure.

His contract wasn't renewed after the Tigers went 64-98 in 2017, embarking on a franchise rebuild during the season. Ausmus was praised for his personnel management, but was not considered an analytics-first decision-maker — and the Dartmouth graduate was criticized for faults often attributed to old-school skippers, including overuse of starting pitchers and an adherence to rigid roles for his relievers.

Both Ausmus and the Angels haven't been in the playoffs since 2014, but they'll try to get back together.

Ausmus joined the Angels' front office last November, filling the same role held in 2016 by Bud Black, who had been hired to manage the Colorado Rockies.

Earlier in the day, the Cincinnati Reds hired David Bell as their new manager. The Baltimore Orioles, Minnesota Twins, Texas Rangers and Toronto Blue Jays still have managerial openings.

Ausmus played 18 major league seasons with four franchises as a catcher, including 10 years with the Houston Astros before his final two seasons with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2009-10. He is 11th in baseball history with 1,766 games started as a catcher, and he is third in baseball history among catchers with 12,839 putouts.

Ausmus takes charge at a key point for the big-budget Angels, who have missed the playoffs in four consecutive seasons and haven't won a postseason game since 2009.

Mike Trout has two seasons remaining on his current contract, and the Angels likely need to build a playoff contender in 2019 to keep their franchise player happy. Ausmus also must lead the Angels' efforts to maximize the success of Shohei Ohtani, who won't pitch next season after undergoing Tommy John surgery.

And Ausmus must work with Eppler to figure out the role of slugger Albert Pujols, who will be 39 years old when he returns next year for the eighth season of his massive 10-year contract.

Ausmus' Angels will have the benefit of a farm system that has improved markedly during Eppler's three seasons in charge. Eppler also plans to be active in the free-agent market for pitchers after the Angels had massive injury problems on the mound last season.

The Angels hadn't hired a new manager since November 1999, when Scioscia took over a franchise that had made only three playoff appearances in 39 seasons of existence. Scioscia ushered in the Angels' golden age in 2002 when he led a wild card playoff team to the title, beating the San Francisco Giants in a seven-game World Series.

The Angels made six playoff appearances in an eight-year stretch, winning five AL West titles. But after reaching the ALCS in 2009, the Angels have had just one 90-win campaign and one playoff appearance in the ensuing nine years.

FROM NBC SPORTS

Angels name Brad Ausmus new manager

By Ashley Varela

Former MLB player and manager Brad Ausmus will manage the Angels in 2019, the team announced Sunday. His contract will extend through the 2021 season, though it's not clear whether a club option exists for 2022. A formal press conference will be held on Monday at 1:00 PM PDT to introduce the new skipper.

Angels general manager Billy Eppler gave a statement following Ausmus' hiring:

“Over the past few weeks, our baseball operations personnel sat down with numerous highly-qualified and impressive candidates for our managerial role. We are thankful to all of them for their time and effort throughout the process,” Angels General Manager Billy Eppler said. “Ultimately, Brad’s balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him. We believe his knowledge, drive and growth-mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization.”

Ausmus, 49, was also considered for a managerial role with the Reds prior to their hiring of David Bell on Sunday. He’ll replace longtime manager Mike Scioscia, who finished his 19th and final campaign with the club on the last day of the 2018 season.

A former catcher and three-time Gold Glove Award winner, Ausmus capped his 18-year MLB playing career in 2010. He managed the Tigers from 2014 to 2017, during which he guided the club to a 314-332 record and a postseason berth in 2014. After the Tigers declined to offer the skipper an extension in 2018, he was hired as a special assistant to the Angels’ general manager, and remained in that role for the duration of the regular season.

FROM CBS SPORTS

Angels name former Tigers skipper Brad Ausmus as new manager to replace Mike Scioscia

The Angels have identified the successor to Mike Scioscia

By Dayn Perry

The Los Angeles Angels announced on Sunday that Brad Ausmus has been named the team's new manager.

Ausmus, who managed the Detroit Tigers for four seasons, replaces Mike Scioscia, who recently stepped down after 19 years as Angels manager. With the Tigers, Ausmus guided the team to an overall record of 314-332 (.486) with one division title and two winning seasons. He was let go following a 98-loss campaign in 2017.

"Over the past few weeks, our baseball operations personnel sat down with numerous highly qualified and impressive candidates for our managerial role. We are thankful to all of them for their time and effort throughout the process," general manager Billy Eppler said in a statement. "Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him. We believe his knowledge, drive and growth mind-set will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

Ausmus, now 49, spent parts of 18 seasons as a major-league catcher, most of them with the Astros. With the Angels, Ausmus inherits a roster that includes Mike Trout, Shohei Ohtani, Andrelton Simmons, and Justin Upton. At the same time, he inherits a team that's endured three straight losing seasons and hasn't won a playoff game since 2009.

Ausmus becomes the 21st manager in Angels franchise history.

FROM YAHOO! SPORTS

Angels name former Tigers skipper Brad Ausmus as new manager

By Liz Roscher

It's apparently new manager day in Major League Baseball. The Los Angeles Angels announced on Sunday that Brad Ausmus will be their new manager, hours after the Cincinnati Reds named David Bell as their team's new manager.

Ausmus, 49, was a catcher in the majors for 18 seasons, retiring in 2010 after spending most of his career with the Houston Astros. He spent 2018 in the Angels front office, serving as a special assistant to Eppler. Before that, he managed the Detroit Tigers from 2014-2017. The Tigers went 64-98 in 2017, and Ausmus' four-year contract was not extended at the end of that season. The Angels had a long list of initial candidates for their first round of interviews. Along with Ausmus, Angels special assistant Eric Chavez, Chicago Cubs bench coach Brandon Hyde, Astros bench coach Joe Espada, former gold glove shortstop Omar Vizquel, and Tampa Bay Rays field coordinator Rocco Baldelli were also interviewed. In addition to lengthy in-person interviews, the Angels gave their managerial candidates a two-hour written exam.

A written exam may seem extreme, but Mike Scioscia leaves big shoes to fill. Scioscia managed the Angels for 19 seasons, starting all the way back in 2000. Scioscia's contract was not renewed at the end of the 2018 season, which saw the Angels go 80-82 and deal with injuries to a number of key players.

New baseball managers set: Ausmus to Angels, Bell to Reds

Los Angeles (AFP) - Two Major League Baseball clubs that struggled to losing seasons named new managers Sunday, with Brad Ausmus taking charge of the Los Angeles Angels and David Bell signing with the Cincinnati Reds.

Ausmus was named by Angels general manager Billy Eppler to replace the retiring Mike Scioscia, who held the position since 2000 and directed the club's 2002 World Series title.

"Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him," Eppler said.

"His knowledge, drive and growth mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

Ausmus, 49, was an assistant to Eppler this season, when the Angels went 80-82 and missed the playoffs for the fourth year in a row and eighth time in nine seasons.

Ausmus was manager of the Detroit Tigers from 2014-2017 and went 314-332 after spending four years in the San Diego Padres front office.

As a catcher, Ausmus spent time with the Padres, Tigers, Houston Astros and the Angels. He was a league leader in fielding five times in his career and helped Houston to the 2005 World Series.

The Reds inked Bell, the son and grandson of former Cincinnati stars, to a three-year managerial deal with a club option for 2022.

Bell, 46, was the San Francisco Giants' vice president of player development this past season and becomes a major league manager for the first time.

The Reds were 67-95 this past season, their fifth consecutive losing campaign, and finished last in the National League Central division. Cincinnati last reached the playoffs in 2013 but haven't won a playoff series since 1995 and haven't captured the World Series crown since 1990.

In April, the Reds fired manager Bryan Price, who had been in the position for five seasons and left with a 279-387 record. After a 3-15 start, the Reds named bench coach Jim Riggleman as interim manager.

Bell's father Buddy rejoined the Reds last year as an adviser and Gus Bell, David's grandfather, was a four-time All-Star outfielder for Cincinnati in the 1950s.

Bell played 12 major league seasons as a second and third baseman from 1995 to 2006 for Cleveland, St. Louis, Seattle, San Francisco, Milwaukee and Philadelphia. He reached his only World Series with San Francisco in 2002.

FROM BLEACHER REPORT**Brad Ausmus Named Angels Manager to Replace Mike Scioscia**

By Tim Daniels

The Las Angeles Angels hired longtime MLB catcher Brad Ausmus as their new manager on Sunday, the team announced.

Ausmus spent 18 years in the major leagues during a nomadic career that featured stops with the San Diego Padres and Los Angeles Dodgers as well as two stints apiece with the Detroit Tigers and Houston Astros. He won three Gold Glove Awards and earned an All-Star Game appearance in 1999.

The 49-year-old Connecticut native was named the Tigers' manager in November 2013 following the retirement of Jim Leyland.

Ausmus led Detroit to a 90-72 record and a playoff appearance during his first season at the helm. They were swept by the Baltimore Orioles in the Divisional Series, however, and failed to make it back to the postseason across his final three years in charge.

The Tigers finished Ausmus' tenure with a 314-332 record in four years.

"Yeah, I would like to manage again. It's something I enjoy doing," he told reporters in September 2017 about his exit. "It wasn't for lack of effort, we just didn't perform on the field. And the fact that we didn't win, I'll shoulder that. I'm the manager, I'm the leader. I'll take the blame."

He proceeded to join the Angels as a special assistant to general manager Billy Eppler for 2018.

Ultimately, Ausmus is getting the second opportunity to manage he wanted with the Angels, but he'll need to produce more consistent results than he did in Detroit to keep the position for the long haul.

He'll inherit a L.A. roster led by MLB gold standard Mike Trout as well as Justin Upton and Shohei Ohtani—and likely be expected to deliver a postseason berth in 2019.

How Do You Win a World Series? It Helps If the Pitcher Tells You What's Coming

By Danny Knobler

For all the fuss this month about sign stealing, the key matchup in the World Series may have nothing to do with which team has the other team's signs.

Sometimes, you don't need the signs. Sometimes, the pitcher tells you what's coming.

He may do it with his hands. He may do it with his glove. He may speed up on one pitch and slow down on another. But just as every poker player is looking for a "tell" from his opponent, every hitter should be alert for a "tell" from the opposing pitcher.

More often than you think, there's one there.

"I think 90 percent of left-handers do something," said Eduardo Perez, who played and coached in the major leagues and now works for ESPN. "I'd say it's probably 50-50 with right-handers."

Perez, an acknowledged master at the art of finding the pitcher's tip, said left-handers tip more often because they tend to be more reliant on changeups, which are harder to disguise because of the grip they require. But all pitchers are susceptible. In fact, Perez said he has already noticed a few in this year's postseason who are tipping.

"I see it, and I wish I could grab a bat right now," he said.

He won't grab a bat, and he won't tell us who or what he's seen. He says it's not his place to alert the pitcher to what he's doing or to tell the opponent what to key on.

Besides, as a hitter, Perez knows that sometimes the suspicion of tipping can be just as bad for the pitcher as the tip itself. It's one more thing to worry about on the mound, one more way to take the pitcher's focus away from executing his best pitches.

And as with everything else in this ultra-paranoid era of baseball, there's plenty of suspicion.

Rich Hill and Ross Stripling of the Los Angeles Dodgers believed they were tipping before fixing the problem, per Bill Plunkett of the *Orange County Register*. The Boston Red Sox were convinced closer Craig Kimbrel was tipping, leading to a 7.11 postseason ERA, manager Alex Cora told reporters (including Tyler Kepner of the *New York Times*) after the American League Championship Series.

Kimbrel told Chris Cotillo of MassLive.com that former Red Sox pitcher Eric Gagne had seen something in his delivery while watching on television that was tipping his pitches. Gagne texted Cora to tell him and then exchanged texts with Kimbrel to help explain what he saw.

"It was good to throw some pitches and have them not know what was coming," Kimbrel told Cotillo, convinced that fixing the problem had helped him throw a hitless inning in the Red Sox's clinching Game 5 win over the Houston Astros.

Then there was Danny Duffy of the Kansas City Royals, who told Rustin Dodd of The Athletic that he abandoned pitching out of the stretch with no men on base, even though he found it more comfortable, because he thought he was tipping his pitches. And Luis Severino of the New York Yankees, who may have been tipping his pitches during his Game 3 loss to the Red Sox in the division series.

Hill, Stripling, Kimbrel, Duffy, Severino—and that's just this year. They are just the instances found in a quick internet search, not all the other times a pitcher got hit hard and decided it must be because the hitters knew what was coming.

"You hear that from pitchers all the time," said Lloyd McClendon, a former major league player and manager who is now the hitting coach of the Detroit Tigers. "One of the things I always told guys was go back and look at the film. They didn't need to have your pitches. You just threw bad pitches."

Sometimes, though, they really do have your pitches.

Two of the best-known instances of pitch tipping helped decide World Series.

In 2001, the Yankees led the Arizona Diamondbacks three games to two going back to Phoenix for Game 6. They needed one win from two games to wrap up what would have been a fourth straight World Series title.

Then the Diamondbacks scored six runs in two-plus innings against Andy Pettitte, sending him to the showers in the shortest of his 44 career postseason starts and setting up a Game 7 the D-Backs would win dramatically on Luis Gonzalez's single off Mariano Rivera.

It could have been just a bad game. But on MLB's international TV broadcast that night, former big league pitcher Rick Sutcliffe said Pettitte was signaling what pitch he would throw. Sutcliffe went on to call the next few pitches before Pettitte delivered them. And the next morning in the *New York Post*, George A. King III reported that Diamondbacks first baseman Mark Grace had noticed Pettitte was taking longer in the stretch before throwing a fastball than he was when he threw a curveball.

Then there was the 2017 World Series, which the Houston Astros won in seven games over the Los Angeles Dodgers. Yu Darvish started for the Dodgers in Game 7, and when he gave up two runs in the first inning and three more in the second, the game and the World Series were basically over. The Astros went on to win 5-1, and when they did, some of them gave credit to Carlos Beltran, who didn't even play in the game.

As detailed later by Ben Reiter in his book, *Astroball*, Beltran was watching video of Darvish when he noticed that the Dodgers pitcher wiggled his right hand and wrist before he threw a fastball. When there was no wiggle, Darvish would throw a breaking ball.

Watching Game 7, Perez noticed the same thing. In an appearance the next morning on ESPN's *Mike and Mike* radio show, he explained how the Astros could tell which pitch Darvish would throw next.

"Of course," said one American League scout when asked if Darvish tipped his pitches in Game 7. "Everybody has always had Darvish's pitches. But when he was really good, you couldn't hit him, anyway,"

And that's the other thing to remember about pitch tipping—or even about sign stealing, for that matter. Knowing what's coming might give the hitters an edge, but it doesn't guarantee success.

Far from it, in some cases.

McClendon remembers a game in 2006 when the Tigers were facing Johan Santana. That was a good hitting Tigers team, one that would end up in the World Series.

"We had Santana's pitches," McClendon said. "Every pitch he threw. And we only got two hits off him."

Santana was well-known in the game for tipping his famous changeup. But it was such a good pitch that it often didn't matter if hitters knew it was coming. They couldn't hit it, and Santana won two Cy Young Awards.

Hall of Famer Randy Johnson was another famous tipper. Hitters often could tell what was coming.

It didn't help.

"I beg to differ," Perez said.

Sure enough, he had a 1.051 OPS in 39 career plate appearances against Johnson, with four home runs.

Perez is hardly alone in his pitcher-reading skills, but the story of how he learned to do it is worth retelling.

It goes back to 1983, the one season his Hall of Fame father, Tony Perez, spent with the Philadelphia Phillies. Eduardo was 13 years old, and for the first time his father would allow him to sit in the dugout during games.

"My dad was playing, and I was flipping seeds with John Denny," Perez said. "One of the seeds hit Pete [Rose]. Pete was like a father figure to me. He yelled with some profanity, but then he told me to come sit next to him. He told me to watch every pitch and tell him what's coming. I had no idea, but he showed me during the course of the season.

"When the Hit King speaks, it's like E.F. Hutton. You listen."

As he got older and played in college and then professionally, Perez put what he learned to work.

"I didn't know that what I learned at 13 was going to get me to the big leagues and keep me there for 13 years," he said.

It was as if he spoke a foreign language that most of his teammates didn't know. He studied pitchers, and things that no one else noticed seemed blatantly obvious to him. Maybe it was how the pitcher held his glove on a certain pitch. Maybe it was taking more time. Maybe it was a slight wiggle or hands held closer to the body or farther away as the pitcher went to the stretch.

"A lot of guys don't see what I see," Perez said.

Some do. When he was with the then-California Angels, Perez taught Jim Edmonds. Other players developed similar reputations for seeing what others didn't, including Cito Gaston, Roberto Alomar, Chase Utley, Carlos Beltran and Alex Cora, who now manages the Red Sox.

When Perez played for Tony La Russa with the St. Louis Cardinals, La Russa would choose games for him to play based in part on what pitchers he could read for a "tell." One day in 2003 when regular Cardinals

third baseman Scott Rolen came down with a bad back, Perez got the start on just such a day, against Mark Prior of the Chicago Cubs.

Prior was one of the best pitchers in baseball that season, an All-Star with a 2.43 ERA who two starts before had struck out 16 Milwaukee Brewers. But he was also a guy who would come to a set with his hands close to the body when he was going to throw a curve and away from the body before throwing a fastball.

Sure enough, Perez came to the plate in the second inning with runners on first and second, guaranteeing Prior would be working from the stretch.

"I was like, 'Here we go,'" Perez said.

On the first pitch, Prior came set away from the body. Perez read fastball, but fouled it back. But on the 2-2 pitch, Perez read correctly again and this time didn't miss it.

"I hit that ball so hard and so far," he said.

It was a three-run home run in a game the Cardinals won 4-1. Perez had one more at-bat against Prior that day, but after correctly reading fastball and thinking he'd hit another home run, he popped it up.

So why do pitchers tip, and why don't they fix it?

Sometimes they do fix it. Often they try to fix it. But it's not as easy as it sounds.

For one thing, each pitch requires a different grip. Many "tells" are a result of a pitcher adjusting that grip. Most pitchers start with the most difficult grip, often for a changeup or breaking ball.

To throw a fastball, they need to adjust. That can take longer. It also requires movement in the hands and wrist. One pitcher said he always pitched with long sleeves, so hitters couldn't see his arm muscles flinch as he felt for the grip.

To keep hitters from seeing when they change a grip, pitchers will try to fake changing the grip even when they don't (i.e. when they start with a changeup grip and want to throw a changeup).

Because the so-called circle change grip requires the pitcher to wrap his hand around the ball, a pitcher's glove often flares out a bit when he holds it with the changeup grip. That can be another tell.

"We tell them to flare their glove on every pitch," said Doug Brocail, the Texas Rangers pitching coach.

Some pitchers stand taller on the fastball. One hitter said with one pitcher he was told if you see daylight above the pitcher's hat, it's a breaking ball.

Sometimes the tip isn't even physical. Some pitchers get into such patterns that they always throw the same pitch on the same count. One time when Phil Garner's Brewers were facing Roger Clemens, they realized that Clemens almost always threw a breaking ball at 1-1, and that he almost always threw it for a ball.

Pitchers try to avoid patterns and they try to make every pitch look the same, but they fall into habits. Maybe they've been having trouble getting the right angle on a breaking ball and they work on it over and over in the bullpen. Then the pitch breaks the way they want, but in the process they pick up a movement that could tip off a hitter.

Then the pitching coach or a teammate notices, so the pitcher tries to change. And he does change, except that when the game gets close and he's a little tired and focused on making a perfect pitch, the movement comes back.

"It's extremely tough to fix," Brocail said. "I argue there's such a thing as muscle memory."

Brocail speaks from experience. In September 1992, the San Diego Padres called him up from Triple-A. His first start would be against the San Francisco Giants at Candlestick Park, and before the game he saw Giants first baseman Will Clark in a tunnel outside the clubhouse.

"You the kid pitching tonight?" Clark asked.

"Yes, I am," Brocail said.

"Hey, just so you know, you tip all your pitches," Clark told him.

"I thought he was messing with me," Brocail said. But he wasn't. The Giants knocked Brocail out in the fourth inning. Clark walked and doubled.

"We got looking at the video," Brocail said. "Sure enough, I was coming to a set by my chest when I threw a fastball and by the waist when I threw the curve. I'd been doing it all year in Triple-A and no one picked up on it."

When a pitcher is tipping in the major leagues, word tends to get around. When a team or player has success against a certain pitcher, friends around the league will ask if they picked up on something. Sometimes a hitter will even mention it to a pitcher after a series is over, perhaps in hopes the pitcher will fix it before facing a rival.

Sometimes a pitcher finds out much later. When Edwin Jackson was traded to the Chicago White Sox in 2010, White Sox pitching coach Don Cooper told him the Sox had all his pitches when he faced them as a Detroit Tiger the year before. A similar thing happened to John Axford when he was traded from the Brewers to the Cardinals in 2013.

In today's world, even a hint that a pitcher is tipping will send internet sleuths to the video to find evidence. After the Yankees said they suspected Severino was tipping in his Oct. 8 start against the Red Sox, Ben Harris of The Athletic wrote a story that included video attempting to prove they were right.

Harris shows Severino checking a runner at second base and then hesitating while he looks toward third before turning to deliver the pitch. When he hesitated, Harris said, Severino threw a fastball. When he didn't, he threw a changeup.

At a press conference during the ALCS, Cora said the Red Sox didn't notice the hesitation.

"I was upset because we didn't see that one," he said, leaving open the possibility they saw something else with Severino.

Perez doubts the hesitation was the key, because only one of the Red Sox's seven hits off Severino came with a runner on second base.

"Was he doing something else? Perhaps," Perez said cryptically. "I don't think it's my job to tell the Yankees and tell Severino what he's doing."

Harris also believes he identified Kimbrel's tip, which he detailed with photos in another story in The Athletic. While it's possible the tip was the issue, as Kimbrel and the Red Sox seem to believe, Perez cited another non-tipping cause for Kimbrel's poor postseason.

"Kimbrel is struggling because the strikes he's throwing are down," Perez said before Kimbrel's hitless inning in Game 5. "He has to hit the upper quadrants of the strike zone. Once he has to pitch down in the zone, he's done."

Kimbrel will need to fix that before the World Series begins Tuesday. He believes he has already resolved the tipping issue, thanks to Gagne's helpful hints.

If Severino is lucky, someone will tell him what he was doing in the division series. If the Yankees had Utley on their team, perhaps he already would have. Dodgers teammates Stripling and Hill credited Utley for tipping them off on their own tipping, and Dodgers pitching coach Rick Honeycutt said Utley has helped others, too.

"He's been extremely helpful to the guys," Honeycutt said. "He'll pick up just the smallest thing ... whatever it may be. He's always searching. He's kind of like The Informant on that." There's always more to do, because there are always pitchers who are tipping. And there are always hitters who want to know what's coming.

What's more surprising is there are also hitters who don't want to know. Frank Thomas was a good enough hitter that he ended up in the Hall of Fame, but when he was with the White Sox he had a reputation for never wanting advance notice of a pitch.

Some players, it seems, feel more comfortable just seeing the pitch and reacting.

"That really boggles my mind," said McClendon, the Tigers hitting coach. "If a guy's throwing a slider, I want to know."

Most hitters want to know.

Some pitchers will tell them.

FROM MLB TRADE RUMORS**Angels Hire Brad Ausmus As Manager**

By Connor Byrne

12:29pm: Ausmus received a three-year contract, according to Maria Guardado of MLB.com.

12:02pm: The Angels announced that they've named Brad Ausmus their new manager. Ausmus spent the 2018 season working as a special assistant to Angels general manager Billy Eppler.

"Over the past few weeks, our baseball operations personnel sat down with numerous highly-qualified and impressive candidates for our managerial role. We are thankful to all of them for their time and effort throughout the process," Eppler stated. "Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him. We believe his knowledge, drive and growth-mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

The 49-year-old Ausmus – a former major league catcher – is taking over for another ex-MLB backstop, Mike Scioscia. Now an Angels icon, Scioscia took the helm in 2000 and finally ended his reign when he stepped down less than a month ago.

In the wake of Scioscia's exit, the Angels reportedly interviewed 10 managerial candidates; at one point in the process, it appeared the job would go to their Triple-A skipper, Eric Chavez. In the end, though, the Angels opted for someone with major league managerial experience in Ausmus, who oversaw Detroit's dugout from 2014-17. The Tigers went 314-332 with one playoff berth and two seasons of at least 86 wins during that period.

In shifting from the Angels' front office to their dugout, Ausmus will hope to turn around a disappointing situation in Anaheim. Even though the Angels have the game's best player, center fielder **Mike Trout**, they've finished under .500 three years in a row and haven't gone to the playoffs since 2014. The club hasn't even won a postseason game since Trout's remarkable career began in 2011. A rash of injuries helped undermine the Angels' efforts in 2018, of course, though it still would've been a tall task for a healthy LA team to make the postseason in the AL West – a division which included two playoff teams (the Astros and the Athletics) and the 89-win Mariners.

At 80-82, the Angels ultimately finished 23 games behind the Astros and 17 back of the A's, giving them plenty of ground to make up during the offseason. With Trout, **Andrelton Simmons**, **Shohei Ohtani** and **Justin Upton** leading their offense, it seems the Angels will mostly focus on improving their pitching staff over the winter. The starting staff is in desperate need of help, especially considering Ohtani underwent Tommy John surgery on Oct. 1 and probably won't pitch next season.

FROM SPORTS ILLUSTRATED**Angels Name Brad Ausmus Manager**

By Kaelen Jones

The Angels have hired Brad Ausmus as their new manager, the team announced Sunday.

Ausmus spent last season with Los Angeles as a special assistant to general manager Billy Eppler. Prior to that, Ausmus had managed the Tigers from 2014-17.

"Over the past few weeks, our baseball operations personnel sat down with numerous highly-qualified and impressive candidates for our managerial role," Eppler said in a statement. "We are thankful to all of them for their time and effort throughout the process. Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him."

Ausmus went 314-332 in four seasons as Detroit's manager. The 49-year-old will be the first manager the Angels have had since Mike Scioscia took over the role in 2000. After 19 seasons, Scioscia stepped down from the position at the end of the regular season after Los Angeles finished below .500 for the third straight campaign at 80-82.

FROM FORBES.COM**Brad Ausmus Replaces Scioscia As Los Angeles Angels Manager**

By Barry Bloom

With the cross-county neighbor Los Angeles Dodgers about to open the World Series on Tuesday night against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park, the Los Angeles Angels took a step toward the future on Sunday.

The American League club announced that Brad Ausmus will replace Mike Scioscia as manager, ending a search that began when Scioscia said he would not return after the last game of the regular season.

It's a great choice for the Angels on a number of different levels. Ausmus, only 49, has tremendous experience as a big-league player, front office component and on-field Major League manager. He was an assistant to Angels general manager Billy Eppler during the 2018 season.

Ausmus will be introduced in his new role, during a media conference at Angel Stadium on Monday.

"Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision making led us to him," Eppler said. "We believe his knowledge, drive and growth-mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly

with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization.”

Ausmus, like Scioscia, a former big league catcher, was manager of the Detroit Tigers until he was fired after the 2017 season. His four seasons in Detroit were preceded by three seasons in the baseball operations department of the San Diego Padres, beginning after his 18-year playing career ended with the Dodgers after the 2010 season.

He was 314-332 in his four years for the Tigers, leading them to a pair of .500 or better seasons, including a 90-72, first-place finish in 2015 in the AL Central.

The announcement came this weekend just after the Cincinnati Reds named David Bell as their new manager, replacing Jim Riggleman, who had the job this season on an interim basis after Bryan Price was fired.

There are four managing jobs still open. The Toronto Blue Jays are looking for a replacement for John Gibbons, the Baltimore Orioles for Buck Showalter, the Minnesota Twins for Paul Molitor, and the Texas Rangers for Jeff Bannister.

All four of them were fired after their teams severely underperformed this season.

Major League Baseball discourages other teams from making major announcements during the World Series, thus the incentive for the Angels and Reds sneaking in their hires during the break between playoff rounds.

The Angels finished 80-82 for the second consecutive season under Scioscia and for the third season in a row their pitching staff was decimated by injuries.

Five of their hurlers underwent Tommy John ligament replacement surgery in their pitching elbows, including Japanese sensation Shohei Ohtani, who made only one start off the mound after June 6 when he was diagnosed with a Grade 2 tear of the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.

The two-way player continued to hit, however, and underwent the surgery a day after the end of the Angels' season. He's expected to miss all of the 2019 season as a pitcher recuperating from the surgery, which has a 12-to-18 month recovery period.

He could return sooner as a hitter, but there's no yardstick for measuring that kind of rehab process and whether he would put his elbow in jeopardy of another injury while batting before pitching again.

In addition, the Angels also suffered through injuries to top players Mike Trout (wrist) and Albert Pujols (knee and elbow), who both missed significant time on the disabled list during the season. Trout missed three weeks in August because of the injury and the suicide of his brother-in-law and close friend, Aaron Cox.

Pujols was on the disabled because of his left knee around the All-Star break and finally went out for the season on Aug. 28 to have surgery on the knee and right elbow.

Scioscia departed at the end of his 10-year, \$50 million contract, which was not renewed, ending 19 seasons as the club's manager. His tenure, beginning in 2000, was the longest current one for a manager with a big-league club.

Unlike the Dodgers, who are back in the World Series for the second consecutive postseason and have won the National League West six years running, the Angels have been to the playoffs only once since 2009 and haven't won a postseason game since then.

They won the World Series in 2002 under Scioscia, coming from behind to defeat the San Francisco Giants in seven games, the only time in the history of an organization that was founded in the original expansion of 1961 they ascended to the Fall Classic.

In Detroit, the Tigers haven't won the World Series since 1984 and failed in two attempts under manager Jim Leyland in 2006 and '12.

Ausmus, who replaced Leyland, said at the time that failing to win it all was one of his major regrets in Detroit.

"I wish, if nothing else, that we could have won a World Series," he said. "Quite frankly, I wish we could have done it before [owner Mitch Illitch] passed away. But sports aren't perfect. And we'll just part ways very amicably, no hard feelings, I wish [general manager Al Avila] the best. I think he's got the organization pointed in the right direction.

"He's beefed up the analytics and scouting and he made some tough calls in trading guys like Ver [Justin Verlander] for prospects and rebuilding the minor league system and it's going to be a little bit of a haul for the next couple of years, but they're moving in the right direction and I wish the Tigers and Al nothing but the best."

The Tigers continued to struggle this past season under veteran manager Ron Gardenhire, finishing 64-98, 27 games behind first-place Cleveland.

In Anaheim, just like his tenure in Detroit, Ausmus will have his work cut out for him.

FROM USA TODAY

Angels hire Brad Ausmus as team's new manager

The Los Angeles Angels announced Brad Ausmus as the club's new manager on Sunday, succeeding Mike Scioscia, who had spent 19 seasons in charge.

Ausmus, 49, spent four seasons as the Detroit Tigers' skipper from 2014-2017. He led the team to the American League Central title in his first year but had an overall record of 314-332.

Scioscia stepped down after a nearly two-decade run with the Angels, which included seven trips to the postseason and a World Series title in 2002.

The Angels have baseball's best player in Mike Trout, but are weighed down by hefty contracts, including the \$87 million owed to 38-year-old old Albert Pujols over the next three seasons. Two-way star Shohei Ohtani underwent Tommy John surgery at the end of the year and likely won't be able to pitch until 2020.

FROM DETROIT FREE PRESS

Brad Ausmus, ex-Detroit Tigers manager, named new Angels manager

Brad Ausmus is getting a second chance to manage a big-league club.

Ausmus, who was not retained after four seasons with the Detroit Tigers in 2017, was announced as the Los Angeles Angels' new manager on Sunday. He succeeds Mike Scioscia, who had spent 19 seasons in charge.

Ausmus, 49, spent four seasons as the Tigers' skipper from 2014-2017. He led them to the American League Central title in his debut season but missed the playoffs the next three years. He had an overall record of 314-332 in Detroit.

Scioscia stepped down after a nearly two-decade run with the Angels, which included seven trips to the postseason and a World Series title in 2002.

The Angels have baseball's best player in Mike Trout, but are weighed down by hefty contracts, including the \$87 million owed to 38-year-old old Albert Pujols over the next three seasons. Two-way star Shohei Ohtani underwent Tommy John surgery at the end of the year and likely won't be able to pitch until 2020.

Ausmus was hired to the Angels' front office in November 2017, about two months after his contract was not renewed with the Tigers. He has served as a special assistant to general manager Billy Eppler in L.A., with is in close proximity to his home in San Diego.

Ausmus was replaced as Tigers manager by Ron Gardenhire, who was signed to a three-year deal in 2017.

Gardenhire just completed his first season in Detroit, finishing 64-98.

FROM MLIVE.COM

Former Tigers manager Brad Ausmus hired to lead Angels

Evan Woodberry

Former Detroit Tigers manager Brad Ausmus is back in the game spending one year away from the dugout.

Ausmus was hired as new manager of the Los Angeles Angels on Sunday.

Ausmus, 49, spent the 2018 season as special assistant to Angels general manager Billy Eppler after the Tigers chose not to renew his contract following the 2017 season.

Ausmus is replacing Mike Scioscia, who managed the Angels from 2000-2018.

"Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills, as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision-making led us to him," Eppler said in a statement.

Ausmus succeeded Jim Leyland as Tigers' manager on Nov. 3, 2013, despite never having coached or managed full-time at any level. He went 314-332 in four seasons with Detroit. The Tigers qualified for the postseason once during his tenure, but were eliminated in the AL Division Series 3-0 by the Baltimore Orioles in 2014.

"It's the end of me being in the dugout here, but it also could be a new beginning for me," Ausmus said after general manager Al Avila announced his contract would not be renewed. "I would like to manage again. It's something I enjoy doing. The fact that we didn't win, I'll shoulder that. The manager's the leader; I'll take the blame. Just like a family, there's good times and bad times, but in the end you're in it together. When people want to point a finger, a lot of times it's at the manager."

He interviewed for the Red Sox managerial vacancy last winter.

Ausmus was also a finalist for the Cincinnati Reds job this month. The Reds announced on Sunday that they had hired David Bell, the son of former Tigers manager Buddy Bell (1996-1998).

Ausmus makes his permanent home in San Diego, about 100 miles south of Anaheim.

The Angels didn't meet expectations in 2018, going just 80-82 despite having perhaps the game's best player in Mike Trout and Japanese phenom Shohei Ohtani. Ausmus will also be reunited with outfielder Justin Upton, who Detroit traded to the Angels after the 2017 season.

The Angels put several candidates through a rigorous interview process that included a lengthy written test. Eric Chavez, also an Angels special assistant, White Sox minor-league manager Omar Vizquel and Houston Astros bench coach Joe Espada were among those interviewed. Vizquel served as Ausmus' first base coach during his tenure in Detroit.

FROM THE DETROIT NEWS**Ex-Tigers manager Brad Ausmus wins Angels' job**

Brad Ausmus' time out of the dugout was brief.

Ausmus, fired as Tigers manager late in the 2017 season, was named manager of the Los Angeles Angels on Sunday, the team announced.

Ausmus spent the last season in the Angels' front office and was widely considered a manager-in-waiting, especially when word started circulating during the summer that Mike Scioscia wouldn't return.

In an interview with The News' Chris McCosky in August, Ausmus expressed a desire to manage again.

"Yeah, all along I kind of hoped I could get back in the dugout," he said. "I took kind of a soft year, schedule-wise this year, and then I was hoping I could get back in the dugout."

Ausmus, 49, managed the Tigers for four years, from 2014-17, and made the playoffs just once, that first year. Late in his tenure, the ballclub embarked on a deep rebuild. His record was 314-332 during the regular season, and 0-3 in the postseason — a three-game sweep by the Orioles in the 2014 ALDS.

He becomes the first former Tigers manager to get another managerial gig since Phil Garner, Detroit's manager from 2000-02 who managed the Houston Astros from 2004-07.

General manager Billy Eppler announced the hiring of Ausmus, who gets a three-year contract.

"Ultimately, Brad's balance of connectivity, communication and leadership skills as well as his understanding of evolving strategies and probabilistic approach to decision-making led us to him," Eppler said in a statement. "We believe his knowledge, drive and growth-mindset will allow him to integrate seamlessly with our players and staff and will be pivotal in advancing our culture and moving us toward our goals as an organization."

Scioscia had held the job since the 2000 season, winning the Angels' only World Series title and becoming the winningest manager in franchise history. He left the club earlier this month after 19 seasons and 1,650 victories.

The 49-year-old Ausmus likely represents a philosophical shift from Scioscia, who was widely perceived as an old-school manager despite his public embrace of new baseball mentalities. After Scioscia's departure three weeks ago, Eppler said he wanted the Angels' new manager to be well-versed in analytics and probability-based decision-making.

The Dartmouth graduate played 18 big league seasons with four franchises as a catcher, including 10 years with the Houston Astros and three with the Tigers before his final two seasons with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 2009-10. He is 11th in baseball history with 1,766 games started as a catcher, and he is third in baseball history among catchers with 12,839 putouts.

Ausmus takes charge at a key point for the big-budget Angels, who have missed the playoffs in four consecutive seasons and haven't won a postseason game since 2009.

After finishing 80-82 for the second consecutive year, they are coming off three straight losing seasons for the first time since 1992-94. Los Angeles has played only three postseason games in the past nine seasons, losing them all to the Kansas City Royals in 2014 after winning the AL West.

Mike Trout has two seasons remaining on his current contract, and the Angels likely need to build a championship contender to keep their franchise player happy. Ausmus also must lead the Angels' efforts to maximize the success of Shohei Ohtani, who won't pitch next season after undergoing Tommy John surgery.

And Ausmus must maximize the effectiveness of slugger Albert Pujols, who will be 39 years old when he returns next year for the eighth season of his massive 10-year contract.

Ausmus' Angels will have the benefit of a farm system that has improved markedly during Eppler's three seasons in charge.

Ausmus also interviewed for the opening with the Cincinnati Reds, who on Sunday hired David Bell, the son of former Tigers manager Buddy Bell.

Other teams with openings: the Toronto Blue Jays, Minnesota Twins, Texas Rangers and Baltimore Orioles.

FROM SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

Six MLB managerial openings: no experience necessary

By John Shea

Not long ago, experienced big-league managers had their way in the baseball world, floating from team to team with or without distinguished track records. They were safe hires. Easy hires.

For the most part, experienced managers landing jobs have gone the way of the bunt, complete game and pepper. We're seeing more candidates with no managing experience who are open to running a game based on a direction, usually analytics-driven, provided by the front office.

Of the six openings last winter, five were filled by rookies. Now there are six more openings — Angels, Rangers, Twins, Orioles, Blue Jays and Reds — and based on names of the candidates (other than **Joe Girardi** and **Jim Riggleman** and very few others), prepare for more of the same.

Several have Giants links: farm director **David Bell** (Reds, Blue Jays, Rangers), bench coach **Hensley Meulens** (Reds, Twins), former utility man **Mark DeRosa** (Blue Jays) and former shortstop **Omar Vizquel** (Angels). Some are A's-affiliated: former third baseman **Eric Chavez** (Angels), former

shortstop **Mike Bordick** (Orioles), coordinator of instruction **Ed Sprague** (Blue Jays) and former minor-league infielder **Joe Espada** (Angels, Blue Jays, Rangers, Twins).

Joe Espada?

Suddenly, the Astros' bench coach is a hot commodity. The A's selected him in the second round of the 1996 draft, and he played 11 seasons in pro ball without reaching the majors. He worked his way up in the Marlins' system to be third-base coach, a position he also held with the Yankees, and this season replaced **Alex Cora** as **A.J. Hinch's** bench coach in Houston.

In a strange and related twist, Oakland's first three draft picks in '96 were Chavez, Espada and Hinch, the latter two rooming together in the minors and remaining friends over the years. Hinch swears by Espada, who has managed in the Puerto Rico winter league and coached in the World Baseball Classic.

We're rooting for Chavez to become the Angels' manager even though we have no idea how he'd perform. No one could have predicted this opportunity when the former third baseman was winning Gold Gloves with the A's and never giving a vibe that he'd be (or want to be) a future manager.

As a player, Chavez was as laid-back as he was productive, sporting a low-key personality rooted from growing up in North San Diego County, where he attended **Billy Beane's** alma mater, Mount Carmel-San Diego. Chavez evolved into a leader after leaving Oakland and playing for the Yankees and Diamondbacks, and the Angels thought enough of him to let him manage in Triple-A the final weeks of this season.

The Angels' gig, opened when **Mike Scioscia** stepped aside, might be the most desired of the six because of **Mike Trout**, the best overall player in the game, and **Shohei Ohtani**, a two-way star who'll hit next season but won't pitch following Tommy John surgery. The new manager could have an impact on whether Trout, a free agent in two years, will stick around longer term.

Vizquel is out of the running, but Chavez is a strong candidate. He has been a special assistant to Angels general manager **Billy Eppler** and had a similar role with the Yankees when Eppler was an assistant GM in the Bronx.

Chavez has never managed in the big leagues. He has never coached, period. But he's a candidate because he knows the game and is open to applying principles laid out by upper management. That he lacks experience isn't a detriment but a benefit, because that's how the game is trending.

- The Cubs, just two years from winning the World Series, are in an inauspicious spot with the majors' most committed payroll for 2019, \$179 million (including club options), according to spotrac.com — far more than the runner-up Giants (\$142 million). This is not a good category to lead especially for a team that failed to reach the Division Series, and that doesn't include arbitration-eligible players such as **Kris Bryant**, **Javy Baez**, **Kyle Schwarber** and **Kyle Hendricks**. The Cubs have a whopping 14 players under contract for next year, four of whom would make at least \$20 million. The Giants have nine players under contract with **Buster Posey** and **Johnny Cueto** topping \$20 million. Of the four teams to reach an LCS, the Astros (\$98 million committed to 2019 contracts) and Brewers (\$94 million) have the most payroll flexibility. Then there are the more-bang-for-your-buck A's (\$18 million), who have only **Stephen Piscotty**, **Yusmeiro Petit** and **Fernando Rodney** signed, and that's only if they exercise Rodney's option.

•It's tough to be a modern-day hitting coach. A year ago, the Cubs hired **Chili Davis** to make the lineup more well-rounded. Management wanted more line drives and better contact and opposite-field hitting, and Davis largely delivered. But the Cubs' power took a dramatic hit, ranking 22nd in homers (167) after ranking ninth (223) last year. Things worsened as the season went on, and **Theo Epstein** said, "We weren't looking to sacrifice power and walks in exchange for groundballs and opposite-field hits." Davis, who broke into the majors as a Giant and served as an A's hitting coach, gave this intriguing take to the Chicago Sun-Times: "I guess I need to make some adjustments in the way I deliver my message to the millennial players now. I need to make those adjustments for the next job I get, if there is one ... but without losing my identity. Because I know what I know. And I know what I bring is not wrong." Those who monitored Baez's career year, which landed him in the MVP conversation, might agree.

•**Jeff Kent** spent just two seasons with the Astros but won't be forgotten in Houston. Aside from collecting 200 RBIs, he hit three homers in the 2004 NLCS, including one that ended Game 5. In his 17-year career, he never played for a World Series champ — we can't count the 1992 Blue Jays because he was traded away in August — after losing Game 7 of the 2002 World Series as a Giant and Game 7 of the 2004 NLCS as an Astro. "Yes, I'm proud and grateful that I was part of a program making transitions, but I'm jealous as all get out because I'm a competitor and I wanted it to be me and not someone else," Kent said. Thursday at Minute Maid Park, Kent threw out the ceremonial first pitch — airmailed to the backstop, actually — and a few hours later, the Astros were eliminated.