



Padres Press Clips

Tuesday, November 27, 2018

Article	Source	Author	Pg.
Padres release Spangenberg, Rea	MLB.com	Cassavell	2
Analysis: Padres earnestly, not wantonly seek top starting pitcher	SD Union Tribune	Acee	3
Offseason leagues: Fernando Tatis Jr. returns to action	SD Union Tribune	Sanders	6
Padres release Colin Rea, outright Allen Cordoba to AAA	SD Union Tribune	Sanders	9
Transaction tracker: Todd Van Steensel joins Padres	SD Union Tribune	Sanders	10
Austin Hedges, Francisco Mejía Top Long List of Catchers in Padres Pipeline	FriarWire	Lafferty	12
Let's Make a Trade for Noah Syndergaard!	Sports Illustrated	Staff	16

Padres release Spangenberg, Rea

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

SAN DIEGO -- [Cory Spangenberg](#) and [Colin Rea](#), a pair of 2011 Padres Draft picks once considered integral pieces in the team's future, have been officially released by the club.

The announcement comes after they were among four players designated for assignment last Tuesday, [moves made to clear space for a handful of prospects](#) to be added to the 40-man roster.

As expected, [Christian Villanueva](#) was released, too. [He's headed to Japan](#), where his contract rights were sold to the Yomiuri Giants. [Allen Cordoba](#) was also designated last week, but the 22-year-old infielder was the only one of the four to remain in the organization. He was outrighted to Triple-A El Paso.

Spangenberg was the Padres' top pick in the 2011 Draft, selected No. 10 overall between the Cubs' [Javier Baez](#) and the Astros' [George Springer](#). In parts of five seasons with San Diego, Spangenberg batted .258/.318/.391 with 27 homers while splitting time between second and third base.

But Spangenberg's production dropped sharply in 2018, and his playing time diminished. The Padres' decision to release Spangenberg is a clear sign they're moving toward their infield of the future, with top prospects [Fernando Tatis Jr.](#) and [Luis Urias](#) slated to take over soon.

As for Rea, he posted a 4.69 ERA over two big league seasons but was derailed by 2016 Tommy John surgery. The 28-year-old right-hander missed the entire '17 campaign, then he struggled with a shoulder ailment early in '18. After his return, Rea posted a 5.73 ERA in 75 1/3 innings between Double-A and Triple-A but never cracked the big league club.

Analysis: Padres earnestly, not wantonly seek top starting pitcher

[Kevin Acee](#)

The [Padres](#) have made it a priority to improve their starting pitching. There can be no doubt it is immensely important to them.

Just not that important. Yet.

The Padres want to be better in 2019. But not at the expense of 2020, '21, '22, '23 and ... you get the idea.

In the team's brief pursuit of James Paxton, who ended up being traded by the [Mariners](#) to the Yankees, there was an indication the Padres have a limit as to how much they will give up in order to add.

They are firmly in play for Mets right-hander Noah Syndergaard, who several people in baseball are convinced will be traded before the start of the '19 season. But the Padres' blunted Paxton pursuit shows they are opposed to overpaying at this point.

For Paxton, a 30-year-old left-hander who has a 3.42 ERA and has allowed a mere 1.19 walks and hits per innings pitched over 102 major league starts, the Mariners got lefty Justus Sheffield, a 22-year-old who is [ranked by MLB.com as the 31st-best prospect](#) in baseball.

Padres General Manager A.J. Preller was not interested in discussing who the Padres were or were not willing to give up for Paxton.

A league source, speaking on the condition of anonymity about the talks between the teams, expressed surprise the Mariners went with the Yankees over what the Padres had to offer. But two sources explained that among the multiple scenarios discussed

between the Padres and Seattle, the Padres were unwilling to include any of their top half-dozen or so prospects. The Mariners were not after Fernando Tatis Jr., but the Padres were also opposed to letting go of Chris Paddack, Adrian Morejon or Michel Baez.

That helps explain why Preller has said: “Prospect pitching is probably the smart way to go,” and multiple people familiar with the Padres’ short- and long-term plans have predicted it is far more likely they don’t add a top-of-the-rotation piece this offseason.

They would love to acquire Syndergaard, or one of maybe a dozen other quality starting pitchers they are talking about that we don’t know about.

But Preller is performing a balancing act making sure he does not throw away the future while attempting to make it arrive quicker.

The Padres have seven minor league starting pitchers ranked among the top 92 prospects in baseball. Their projected arrivals range from Paddack (35) and Logan Allen (76), who are expected to pitch in the majors in 2019, to MacKenzie Gore (13), Luis Patino (83) and Ryan Weathers (92), who are projected to arrive by 2021 if not 2020. In between are Morejon (46) and Baez (57), possible 2019 or ’20 promotions.

And that doesn’t even include Anderson Espinoza, formerly the Padres’ top prospect, who hasn’t pitched the past two seasons and underwent Tommy John surgery in the summer of 2017.

If even two or three of those eight turn out to be starters who can pitch near the top of the rotation, it could be considered a successful group. The Padres, of course, expect at least that to happen, though they certainly know it might not.

That is one reason they seek an immediate anchor to the rotation who can also be around when they expect to contend in 2020 or ‘21.

Moreover, the Padres want a pitcher who is already what they expect those prospects to eventually be so that pitcher can lend expertise to the youngsters’ development while also providing a bridge until one or more of those prospects is able to assume the mantle of ace. Such an ascension is rarely instantaneous.

While the Padres believe they have the understanding (and thus, the patience) of a great deal of their fans, they also believe tangible improvement in 2019 is imperative to their process. That improvement, they know, is largely dependent on improved starting pitching.

However, the supplement they seek must meet certain criteria in terms of age and contractual control.

Paxton was right at the edge in terms of both.

He is eligible for free agency in 2021, and with Scott Boras as his agent it is a virtual guarantee he won't be settling for anything less than the top of what his market demands and could begin seeking it from his current team after this coming season.

There are strong indications the Padres value the 26-year-old Syndergaard, who is almost four years younger and would come with one more year of club control, more highly than they did Paxton.

Given Syndergaard's youth and success (2.93 ERA, 1.13 WHIP in 86 starts), reports suggesting the Mets will be looking for a haul in return, including major league talent, seem reasonable. The Padres have some of that to offer, though their real riches are in the minors.

Their willingness to part with more might be enhanced if they didn't still have several holes to plug in order to be a consistent championship contender.

But the fact is, the Padres are still building. The reality of that could require them parting ways with a top prospect in order to get a third baseman.

So the next step could well be taken with Joey Lucchesi, Eric Lauer and Jacob Nix all still in the rotation. It could mean reliever Matt Strahm is the lone veteran infusion along with the anticipated midsummer return of Dinelson Lamet from Tommy John surgery.

And it could mean Paddack and/or Allen are allowed to grow into what the Padres hope they are while the organization waits for more and better players to arrive.

Offseason leagues: Fernando Tatis Jr. returns to action

Jeff Sanders

Fernando Tatis Jr., the [Padres](#)' top prospect and No. 2 in all of baseball according to MLB.com, returned to the lineup Monday, a day after taking a hard tag to his shoulder while diving back to a base in the Dominican winter league.

Tatis was started Monday's game 1-for-4 while starting as the designated hitter for Estrellas Orientales. .

The 19-year-old prospect initially stayed in Sunday's game but was later replaced in the field, a move described by a Padres official as "very precautionary."

Tatis had already doubled in the game, lifting his batting line to .290/.405/.645 in his first nine games since returning from July's season-ending thumb injury. Tatis has three homers, two doubles, seven RBIs and nine strikeouts against three walks in 31 at-bats with Estrellas Orientales.

In his second full year in the organization, Tatis hit .286/.355/.507 with 16 homers and 43 RBIs, 16 steals in 88 games at Double-A San Antonio.

ROUNDUP

Dominican winter league

- Last year's league MVP, 24-year-old OF [Franchy Cordero](#) (San Diego) is hitting .286/.286/.429 with a homer, three RBIs and 13 strikeouts against no walks in 10 games for Escogido. Cordero is coming off season-ending elbow surgery after seven homers in 30 games last year with the Padres.

- C **Francisco Mejia** (San Diego) is hitting .257/.243/.286 with seven strikeouts, no walks and one extra-base hit through his first nine games with Estrellas.
- CF **Manuel Margot** (San Diego) is 2-for-8 in his first two games with Este.
- C **Webster Rivas** (San Antonio) is 1-for-8 with three strikeouts in nine games with Cibao.

Australian winter league

- OF **Michael Gettys** (San Antonio) homered three times Sunday, powering Adelaide to a 7-5 win. Gettys drove in five of the runs on his blasts, giving him four in his first eight games this winter. He is batting .321/.333/.786 with 10 RBIs, five strikeouts and no walks.
- SS **Jarryd Dale** (AZL) is hitting .158/.292/.211 through his first eight games with Melbourne.

Venezuelan winter league

- Added to the 40-man roster last week, OF **Edward Olivares** (Lake Elsinore) is hitting .340/.404/.479 with two homers, five steals and 14 RBIs in 26 games for Aragua.
- C **Luis Torrens** (Lake Elsinore) is hitting .350/.350/.450 with two doubles and two RBIs through seven games with Magallanes.

Mexican winter league

- Added to the 40-man roster last week, RHP **Gerardo Reyes** (San Antonio) is up to 16 scoreless innings for Obregon. He has struck out 17, walked six and scattered eight hits over 17 relief appearances.
- RHP **Chris Huffman** (El Paso) has allowed 11 earned runs over his last 12 1/3 innings, raising his ERA to 5.03 in 34 innings this winter with Los Mochis. He has struck out 20 and walked 21.

Puerto Rican winter league

- OF **Aldemar Burgos** (Fort Wayne) collected three hits in a doubleheader Sunday, pushing his batting line to .357/.419/.536. He has homered and driven in five runs in his eight games with Carolina.
- RHP **Colby Blueberg** (El Paso) has allowed two runs in 5 1/3 innings with Mayquez, striking out four and allowing two runs on three hits and three walks this winter.

Padres release Colin Rea, outright Allen Cordoba to AAA

[Jeff Sanders](#)

[Colin Rea](#) will have to continue his comeback in another organization.

The Padres on Monday released the 28-year-old Tommy John patient after he cleared waivers. Rea missed all of 2017 following a November 2016 elbow reconstruction and posted a 5.73 ERA in 75 1/3 innings spread between Double-A San Antonio and Triple-A El Paso in his first post-surgery mound work.

Rea was designated for assignment last week.

Three years earlier, Rea was turned himself into one of the organization's best pitching prospects, fashioning a 1.95 ERA in 101 2/3 innings in the high minors to earn his first big league call-up.

Rea had a 4.98 ERA in the majors the following year when he was included in the Andrew Cashner/Josh Naylor trade. The Marlins, however, immediately returned Rea to the Padres when he left his first start with Miami with an elbow injury. He had Tommy John surgery a few months later, missed all of 2017 and was not among the Padres' September call-ups this season.

Minor league infielder [Allen Cordoba](#) also cleared waivers and was outrighted to Triple-A El Paso.

The 22-year-old Cordoba, a Rule 5 pick in 2017, spent all of 2018 at high Single-A Lake Elsinore after starting the year on the disabled list due to a concussion. He fashioned a .543 OPS in 45 games in the California League.

Transaction tracker: Todd Van Steensel joins Padres

Jeff Sanders

The [Padres](#) have started reloading their pitching pipeline.

Right-hander **Todd Van Steensel** has joined the organization, the 27-year-old Australian announced on Twitter on Monday.

A non-drafted free agent of the [Twins](#) in 2010, Van Steensel represented native Australia in the 2017 [World Baseball Classic](#) and has pitched exclusively out of the bullpen the last five years in Minnesota's farm system.

Last year, Van Steensel repeated the Double-A Southern League, going 5-1 with a 3.07 ERA, 49 strikeouts and a 1.11 WHIP.

His opponents' .169 batting average was a career-low.

Van Steensel has a 3.06 ERA, 404 strikeouts and a 1.25 WHIP across 376 minor league innings.

MINOR LEAGUE ADDITIONS

- **RHP:** Todd Van Steensel ([Twins](#))

DEPARTING MINOR LEAGUE FREE AGENTS

- **C:** Brett Nichols ([Rockies](#))
- **2B:** River Stevens
- **3B:** Diego Goris
- **SS:** Dusty Coleman
- **OF:** Alex Dickerson, Matt Szczur, Forrestt Allday, [Allen Craig](#), Shane Peterson

- **RHP:** Carter Capps, Jonathan Aro, Erik Johnson, Seth Simmons, Elias [Torres](#)
- **LHP:** Jose Torres

PREVIOUS ENTRIES

Brett Nichols signs with Rockies (Nov. 12)

Either **Austin Hedges** or **Francisco Mejia** – or perhaps both – will handle the catching duties at the big league level in San Diego. **Austin Allen** is in line for most of the plate time at Triple-A El Paso and **Luis Torrens** will likely open 2019 as Double-A Amarillo.

That left little room for someone like **Brett Nicholas** to fit into long-term plans behind the plate.

So the 30-year-old Nicholas found a fit elsewhere over the weekend, signing a minor league deal with the Colorado Rockies.

Acquired last April future considerations, Nicholas paired a career-best .839 OPS with 16 homers and 83 RBIs in 117 games at Triple-A El Paso.

He hit .291/.353/.485, doubled 30 times and scored 65 runs.

In Colorado, Nicholas will have to win a job as a non-roster invitee against incumbents [Chris Iannetta](#), **Tony Wolters** and **Tom Murphy**.

Austin Hedges, Francisco Mejía Top Long List of Catchers in Padres Pipeline

By Bill Center

The Padres appear set at catcher for 2019 with **Austin Hedges** and **Francisco Mejía** . . . with the biggest question appearing to be how they split up the season's 162 games.

Beyond the Major League tandem, however, catching seems to have become the Padres' deepest position.

Austin Allen, who was added to the Padres' 40-man roster last week, figures to be the catcher at Triple-A El Paso with 2017 Rule 5 draft addition **Luis Torrens** being at Double-A Amarillo and **Luis Campusano**, the Padres second-round pick in the 2017 Draft, possibly starting the season at Advanced Single-A Lake Elsinore.

Mejía, Allen and Campusano are all ranked among the [Padres' Top-30 prospects](#) and Torrens might also be on that list had he not spent the entire season on the Padres' bench. And the Padres have five interesting catchers beyond the top five.

A look at catchers in the Padres system starting from the top:

— Austin Hedges is still only 26 despite playing in the Major Leagues for all or parts of four seasons. Hedges was the Padres' second-round pick in the 2011 out of San Juan Capistrano. The 6-foot-1, 205-pound Hedges signed with the Padres despite a strong commitment to UCLA.

Despite missing seven weeks early in the season due to elbow tendinitis, Hedges started a team-leading 80 games behind the plate for the Padres in 2018 and hit a career-high .231 with 14 doubles, two triples, 14 homers (fourth among National League catchers) and 37 RBIs. He had a .282 on-base percentage and a .429 slugging percentage for a .711 OPS—although he had 90 strikeouts against 21 walks in 303 at-bats.

Hedges is also considered among the National League's premier defensive catchers and has received high marks for his handling of pitchers and pitch framing.

— Francisco Mejía was acquired by the Padres last July 19 from Cleveland in the trade that sent relief pitchers **Brad Hand** and **Adam Cimber** to the Indians. Mejía, who just turned 23, is a switch-hitting, 5-foot-10, 180-pound native of the Dominican Republic.

As soon as he joined the Padres, Mejía became the team's [No. 3 prospect](#) by MLB Pipeline rankings. He finished the season with the Padres and hit .185 in 20 games with two doubles, three home runs and eight RBIs in just 54 at-bats. In 188 games between the Padres and Indians' Triple-A affiliates, Mejía hit .290 with a .332 on-base percentage and a .459 slugging percentage for a .791 OPS. He had 31 doubles, two triples and 14 homers for 72 RBIs in 458 at-bats.

Although Mejía has made it clear he wants to catch, he can play third and the outfield.

However, having two full-time catchers on the roster is becoming more frequent in the Major Leagues as the demands of the position grow. The days of a catcher working more than 120 games seem to be ending.

The Padres released catcher **Raffy Lopez** from their Triple-A roster at the end of the 2018 season and veteran backup catcher **A.J. Ellis** is not expected to return.

— Austin Allen, 24, has been an offensive standout at every level he's played. A fourth-round pick in the 2015 Draft out of Florida Tech, the 6-foot-2, 220-pound Allen is a left-handed hitter with power and an excellent eye.

Last season at Double-A San Antonio, Allen hit .290 with 31 doubles and 22 homers for 56 RBIs in 119 games and was a Texas League All-Star. In addition to being the Missions' regular catcher, Allen also played some first and designated hitter. Some scouts believe he will reach the Major Leagues as a catcher first baseman.

Allen had a .351 on-base percentage and a .506 slugging percentage last season for a .857 OPS. His offensive numbers have been a model of consistency. He hit 22 homers in each of his past two seasons and his career slash line of .290/.350/.459/.809 almost mirrors his 2018 figures.

Allen, who is ranked the [Padres' N^o25 prospect](#), hit .263 with a .358 on-base percentage and a .421 slugging percentage for a .779 OPS in the recently-concluded Arizona Fall League. He had three doubles and two homers for 13 RBIs in 15 games.

— Luis Torrens, 22, is a 6-foot, 175-pounder from Venezuela who was with the Padres throughout the 2017 season as a Rule 5 draftee. He hit .163 in 56 games with the Padres in 2017 with a .243 on-base percentage and a .446 OPS.

Torrens hit .283 with Lake Elsinore in 2018 with 38 doubles, three triples and six homers for 75 RBIs in 128 games and 495 at-bats. He had a .321 on-base percentage and a .408 slugging percentage for a .730 OPS. Starting for Double-A Amarillo in 2019 would be a natural step forward.

— Luis Campusano, 20, was the Padres second-round pick in the 2017 Draft out of Cross Creek High in Augusta, Fla. Campusano, who is 6-foot and 213 pounds, is ranked the [Padres' N^o24 prospect](#).

Campusano was hitting .288 with a .345 on-base percentage and a .365 slugging percentage for a .710 OPS in 70 games for Single-A Fort Wayne when his first full professional season was cut short after 70 games due to baseball's concussion protocol. Campusano, who had 11 doubles and three homers for 40 RBIs in 263 at-bats at Fort Wayne, recovered in time to play in the Arizona Instructional League.

Other catchers to watch in Padres' system:

— **Blake Hunt:** The 6-foot-3, 185-pound, 20-year-old was the 69th overall pick in the 2017 Draft out of Mater Dei High in Costa Mesa. He played at Short-Season Single-A Tri-City last summer with a .271/.371/.377/.748 slash line with 13 doubles, three homers, 27 walks and 25 RBIs in 56 games.

— **Gilberto Vizcarra,** 19, is a native of Mexicali. The 5-foot-10, 180-pounder's defense is ahead of his offense. He moved from the Dominican Summer League to the Arizona Rookie League last summer, where he drew 21 walks for a .288 on-base percentage.

— **Jonny Homza** is a fifth-round pick in the 2017 Draft who has both caught and played in the infield. The 6-foot, 185-pound, 19-year-old Alaskan hit .226 in Arizona last summer but had a .351 on-base percentage. He had 26 walks, three homers and 21 RBIs in 44 games.

— **Alison Quintero** is an 18-year-old Venezuelan who was a member of the Padres' 2016 international signing class. He divided last season between Arizona and Tri-City with a slash line of .288/.349/.353/.701.

— **Brandon Valenzuela** is a switch-hitter from Hermosillo, Mexico, who didn't turn 18 until last month. He hit .253 in the Dominican Summer League in 2018 with a .379 on-base percentage. He had 39 walks, 34 runs scored and 27 RBIs in 54 games.

Let's Make a Trade for Noah Syndergaard!

By [SI.COM STAFF](#)

While the general public awaits the decisions of free agents Bryce Harper and Manny Machado, Mets starting pitcher Noah Syndergaard is the highest-profile player connected to trade rumors. The 26-year-old flamethrower has battled injuries over the past two seasons, but remains one of the game's most feared arms and is an ace by any reasonable standard. Whether or not the Mets should trade Syndergaard is a robust debate, but the SI.com staff opted for a lighter approach and envisioned trades that could be completed for the burly righty. A note that these trade proposals are not rumored or sourced ... they're simply suggestions of what each writer thinks would be wise for the Mets.

Tom Verducci: Mets trade SP Noah Syndergaard to Dodgers for SS Corey Seager

The Mets are foolish if they think they can trade Noah Syndergaard and A) contend next season and B) win the trade. He throws strikes, he keeps the ball in the ballpark and he's heading into his prime with almost the same career numbers through 87 games (37–22, 2.93, 116 walks, 573 strikeouts) as did Jacob deGrom (34–24, 2.89, 146, 584) and Stephen Strasburg (33–23, 2.99, 142, 594). But if you want a fantasy trade, the Mets should only move Syndergaard if they get a middle-of-the-order hitter with years of control. My pick would be Corey Seager of the Dodgers, as long as the medicals continue to show he is on track to recover from elbow and hip surgeries. Seager, like Syndergaard, has three years of control. Think of it as an updated version of Pedro Martinez for Delino DeShields 25 years ago.

Stephanie Apstein: Mets trade SP Noah Syndergaard to Padres for OF Franchy Cordero, C Francisco Mejia and pitching prospects

The Padres would be a good fit from a competitive-cycle perspective: They believe they are only a piece or two away from contention, but they are still early enough in their rebuild to be flush with young talent. And GM A.J. Preller, who gave eight years and \$144 million to then-28-year-old first baseman Eric Hosmer, is unafraid of big moves. San Diego has reportedly discussed moving outfielder Manuel Margot, catcher Austin Hedges and pitching prospects; that seems light to me. The Padres have a younger upgrade at each of those positions in Franchy Cordero and Francisco Mejia, respectively—swap one of them in and I could imagine this going through.

Gabriel Baumgaertner: Mets trade SP Noah Syndergaard to Dodgers for OF Yasiel Puig, Util Kiké Hernández, SP Yadier Alvarez and one B/C prospect

Let me echo the sentiments of Tom Verducci: the Mets would be foolish to trade Syndergaard. But if new GM Brodie Van Wagenen is intent on trading the flamethrowing righty and securing MLB talent in return, the Dodgers should be near the top of his list. First? Van Wagenen should call the Yankees and demand Gleyber Torres, Miguel Andujar and two other A-/B+ prospects in return. Once GM Brian Cashman rejects that trade, Van Wagenen should call Los Angeles, where there's a logjam of MLB talent in the infield, outfield and on the bench.

Throughout the 2018 playoffs, the Dodgers only had two regular starters: third baseman Justin Turner and shortstop Manny Machado. Every other player was subject to matchup plays including home run leaders Cody Bellinger and Max Muncy. Playoff teams are likely to coalesce when a championship is the prize, but players like Bellinger, Muncy, Puig, Hernández, Chris Taylor and Joc Pederson want to be playing every day. That means the team president Andrew Friedman is probably inclined at least one of them (excluding Bellinger) to bolster the starting pitching staff. My guess is that Friedman finally moves Puig, who is due to hit free agency in 2020 and is coming off an impressive 2018 campaign. Hernández is the kind of player the Mets need, a versatile defender with a power bat who should be in the lineup every day. Van Wagenen should ask for Muncy, who hit 35 homers in his first year of playing every day, but it's hard to believe the Dodgers would immediately trade one of their best finds in years.

BACCELLIERI: What Each AL West Team Should Do in the Offseason

If the Mets are looking to trade Syndergaard and bolster their win total in 2019, it's hard to find a better crop of big-league talent than there is in L.A.

Emma Baccellieri: Mets trade Noah Syndergaard to Padres for OF Franmil Reyes, C Austin Hedges and P Jacob Nix

The Padres reportedly tried to pick Syndergaard up at the deadline, and I think they're still an intriguing trade partner here. The Mets are supposedly not looking at a window too far out—they want to contend now, or as close to that as possible. That equals an expected return of promising young players already with some experience in the major leagues, and that's an area where San Diego can provide. The Mets could use an upgrade at catcher, for one. The Padres already had heralded young backstop Austin Hedges, and at the deadline, they traded for top catching prospect Francisco Mejia. That means that they should be willing to part with Hedges, who could be paired with an outfielder to meet another need for the Mets. (Franmil Reyes, perhaps, who's coming off a strong rookie year?) Because Syndergaard's asking price is going to be deservedly high—after all, he won't be a free agent until 2022—let's throw in one more piece here. One of San Diego's young pitchers seems like a reasonable add, like Jacob Nix. A package like that should be enough to at least start a conversation for Thor, if not to finish it.