

# Cincinnati Reds Press Clippings March 13, 2018

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## THIS DAY IN REDS HISTORY

1943-A new official ball, with insides of reclaimed cork and balata, materials not needed in the war effort, is approved

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### MLB.COM

**Reds in position to handle rotation injuries  
Club has Bailey, stash of young arms to rely on  
By Anthony Castrovince MLB.com @castrovince  
Mar. 12th, 2018**

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Were there some thought that the Reds were "due" to get through a Spring Training camp unscathed on the starting-pitching injury front, well, a hard lesson to the contrary has arrived this week.

Anthony DeSclafani's ongoing, uphill climb to get back to the big league rotation through much injury adversity has hit another snag with the left oblique injury that will cost him an Opening Day roster spot. And while Brandon Finnegan's biceps strain appears to be a matter that will cost him days, as opposed to weeks, it was, at the least, another unnerving development for a team and a fan base that has been frustrated by the pitching attrition rate in recent years.

But while the Reds don't want to dip too deep into their backup plans in 2018, they do feel far better-positioned to handle disappointment like the latest "Disco" development this year than they did last, and they do not appear inclined to pluck a starter from the pool of still-available free-agent arms.

For one, the Reds are holding out hope that the longest-tenured Red and veteran of three elbow surgeries, Homer Bailey, has a bounceback season in him after a spring set in preparation mode, rather than rehab mode. Bailey's preparation continued with his start in Monday's 4-3 loss to the Angels at Tempe Diablo Stadium.

Just as importantly, the Reds have a stash of young arms with past Major League experience to draw from.

"Last year, we were using guys who not only hadn't been in the big league environment, they really hadn't been in the Triple-A environment, either," general manager Dick Williams said. "I looked it up the other day, and there were six of them and they had 200 innings combined at Triple-A when they debuted. So we were really accelerating their development."

The Reds used 16 starters in 2017 -- a National League-high and second only to the Mariners (17) in the Majors. Their starters accounted for just 57.3 percent of their total innings pitched -- a Major League-low that was definitely not by design, even in this increasingly bullpen-oriented age. As a matter of fact, the 2,582 2/3 innings the Reds have received from their starters over the last three seasons is also a Major League-low, and it is a reflection of the run of injuries that have knocked Bailey's career off course and slowed the development of DeSclafani, Finnegan and others.

"There's nothing more important than getting starting innings," Williams said. "You can carve it up any different way you want, but the last few years we've been really challenged to get quality innings out of our starting pitching. I just really want these guys to be healthy and have the opportunity to show us what we can do and take some of the pressure off the bullpen."

Bailey's 6.43 ERA in 18 starts last season -- after making a combined eight starts over 2015-16 -- is evidence that he's still working to put himself back together, as is a spring ERA that stands at 9.00 after Monday's uneven outing (four runs on six hits with a walk and two strikeouts in four innings).

But if Bailey can sharpen his command, get more of the swing-and-miss he got with his splitter last season and, yes, stay healthy, perhaps this will be the year he finally gets back toward 200-inning territory.

"To see certain guys go down is not something you want to see," Bailey said. "Fortunately we do have depth, even though that depth is a lot of inexperience. You just have to see how it plays out. Hopefully we don't have any more injuries and we can start the season on a healthy note."

DeSclafani's absence, which does not yet include a timetable for his return, will leave Bailey and Finnegan as the only guaranteed Opening Day rotation members with so much as 100 innings pitched at the big league level -- assuming, of course, that Finnegan's biceps issue doesn't become more serious. The Reds, though, are confident enough in the potential of Luis Castillo based off his stuff and 2017 sample (3.12 ERA, 141 ERA+ in 89 1/3 innings) to assure him a spot.

That leaves Michael Lorenzen, Robert Stephenson, Sal Romano, Tyler Mahle and Amir Garrett competing for two spots.

Lorenzen has emerged as an interesting candidate in getting stretched out after two seasons in the big league bullpen. His sharp three innings against the Mariners on Sunday paired with "B" game outing vs. the Rangers have the Reds thinking hard about his role.

And don't read too much into the fact that all four of Garrett's appearances -- including his two scoreless innings of work against the Angels on Monday -- have come in relief. His nine mostly sharp innings of work keep him in the rotation conversation, despite his struggles in the bigs last year (7.39 ERA in 70 2/3 innings).

"He's certainly made a statement and nobody's discounted his opportunity to pitch in the rotation or the bullpen," Williams said. "There are some things that are in flux and will continue to be in flux in the next two weeks. I'm just glad he's pitching well, he's confident and he looks great right now. It's just about giving ourselves as many options as we can."

Romano and Stephenson seemed to turn a corner at the big league level in the second half of last season, giving them a potential leg up in this rotation competition, and Romano, especially, has built off that base with a solid spring performance. But no matter which direction the Reds go with this crop, they'll have the opportunity to go with guys who have already gotten their feet wet in the Majors, and that alone is a stark contrast to last year's outlook.

"Instead of it being really kind of an open question mark," said manager Bryan Price, "I think there's a better understanding and more optimism that if we fall back on a younger rotation this time through, that they'll be able to endure the rigors and the challenges of Major League pitching."

**Finnegan has biceps strain, feels 'good to go'  
Bailey working on pitch execution; Senzel 'spectacular'  
By Anthony Castrovince MLB.com @castrovince  
Mar. 12th, 2018**

TEMPE, Ariz. -- As bad as the optics were when Brandon Finnegan left his start on the same day the Reds announced the oblique injury that will prevent Anthony DeSclafani from joining the Opening Day roster, Finnegan's injury situation is not yet considered that serious.

The Reds are calling the issue that prompted Finnegan's exit from the first inning of Sunday's start against the Mariners a biceps strain, and Finnegan stressed that it was addressed effectively with treatment.

"I was feeling fine [Sunday], had no pain," Finnegan said Monday. "Just a knot ... and it wasn't allowing me to grip the ball. Just not ideal to continue pitching."

Finnegan said he felt tightness all week.

"They just decided it was a good idea to come out and not risk anything getting worse. So I came back and got it worked on. The knot's gone, and I feel fine."

Manager Bryan Price said Finnegan will get more treatment over the next couple days, and then the Reds will decide when the left-hander will be ready to resume throwing. But Finnegan said he does not anticipate the issue drastically impacting his spring schedule and, ergo, his readiness for the regular season.

"It better not, because I won't be happy," Finnegan said. "But that's not my call. They just want to be cautious, but I feel fine. It's easy to work on a knot. It's not hard to do, and they already did it. In my eyes, I'm good to go. I don't think there are any red flags anywhere, they just want to be cautious and get me ready for my next start."

Finnegan was limited to just four starts at the big league level in 2017 because of injuries to both of his shoulders (a strain in his throwing shoulder and a torn labrum in his non-throwing shoulder that was suffered in a boating accident).

#### Bailey searching for sharpness

The first and most important thing to know about Homer Bailey is that he came through another spring tune-up feeling great. Bailey was sure to find a piece of wood to strike with his knuckles when making that proclamation to reporters, because three elbow surgeries have a way of teaching you to appreciate good health.

As for Monday's outing against the Angels itself, Bailey was charged with four runs on six hits with a walk and two strikeouts over four innings in the 4-3 loss and said he's still working on pitch execution.

"Right now because it's still kinda early, you are going to have those misses, you are going to catch more plate," said Bailey, who has a 9.00 ERA through 12 innings over four starts. "Right now I'd rather that [catching the plate] than maybe walking three guys a game. As you sharpen up, those ground balls are going to get hit a little softer or they swing and miss, and you start to have a little better idea of where your stuff is and how to go about it."

Bailey had been looking forward to facing Japanese phenom Shohei Ohtani, who started the game at DH for the Angels. He got Ohtani to ground out twice.

"He just missed a curveball that I threw him," Bailey said. "I was really glad he did. Had it caught more of the plate, it might not have landed."

#### Senzel showing skills

So much attention has been paid to the time Nick Senzel, the Reds' top prospect per MLB Pipeline, has spent at shortstop this spring in his bid to have a role with the big league club in 2018. But don't forget he's pretty darn good at the hot corner, even if he's blocked at that position by Eugenio Suarez.

Senzel showed his strength at his primary position in Monday's game against the Angels. In the first inning, he did a nice job knocking down a sharp Justin Upton ground ball and gathering himself to make a laser throw to first in time for the out. Later, he back-handed a Mike Trout grounder and got the out on a nice one-hop throw to Joey Votto.

"He was spectacular," Price said. "Some really tough plays ... He just looked really comfortable, with an accurate and strong arm."

#### Old friend, new position

There was familiarity to seeing Zack Cozart wearing red, but everything else -- right down to the position he played -- was unfamiliar Monday.

For the first time since signing a three-year free-agent contract with the Angels over the winter, Cozart faced the club that drafted him and groomed him into an All-Star shortstop. And Cozart's splendid 2017 season earned him a \$38 million commitment in Anaheim, albeit with a shift to third base -- a position change that he hopes goes as well for him as it's gone for Suarez.

"I'm trying to be a stud like him," Cozart said.

Cozart has kept in regular contact with his old mates and said he'll always cherish his time in Cincinnati, but the writing was on the wall for him to leave this past winter.

"Everybody kind of knew the direction they wanted to go," Cozart said. "It was no secret about the rebuild and trying to give the young guys more opportunities. Mr. C [Reds CEO Bob Castellini] and Dick [Williams], they know how much I want to be with the Reds. I hope the fans know that. I know the guys I played with know that. Probably every day I get a text from somebody over there."

#### Up next

The Reds have Tuesday off before resuming their Cactus League schedule with a visit to Scottsdale to play the D-backs on Wednesday at 4:05 p.m. ET. Right-hander Robert Stephenson will continue his bid to make the Reds rotation, opposing D-backs starter Zack Greinke. Reds right-handers Kevin Quackenbush, Kevin Shackelford, Zack Weiss, Vance Worley, Tanner Rainey and Jimmy Herget are also scheduled to throw. The game can be seen on MLB Network and heard on Gameday Audio.

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## CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

### **Spring Training: Homer Bailey struggles again; Reds fall to Angels, 4-3**

**John Fay, [jfay@enquirer.com](mailto:jfay@enquirer.com)**

**Published 7:04 p.m. ET March 12, 2018 | Updated 7:16 p.m. ET March 12, 2018**

TEMPE, Ariz. – The Reds fell to the Los Angeles Angels 4-3 Monday before a crowd of 6,376 at Diablo Stadium in Tempe. The Reds are 6-12-1 on the spring.

The game in three paragraphs:

Right-hander Homer Bailey had his second straight rough outing. He gave up four runs on six hits in four innings. He walked one and struck out two. In fairness to him, the Reds' defense, or lack thereof, aided the Angels' cause in the two-run third. "Because it's still early, you're going to have those misses where you catch too much of the plate," Bailey said. "Right now, I'd rather catch more plate than walk three guys. Overall, I'm trying to keep it in the zone. As you sharpen up, those ground balls are hit a little bit softer." Amir Garrett followed with two shutout innings. Cody Reed pitched two scoreless inning, striking out three. "Two lefties attacking the zone," Reds manager Bryan Price said. "That was good to see."

Adam Duvall extended his hitting streak to four games with a single in the second. He also drove in a run with a sac fly. He's hit safely of seven of his last nine games.

Top prospect Nick Senzel made – count them – four nice plays at third. "He was spectacular," Price said. "He made some real tough plays – having to knock the ball down and come up and throw an absolute laser to (Justin) Upton, terrific play at third base on that tweener to his backhand side, the long hop. He really looked comfortable and with an accurate, strong arm."

Up next

The Reds are off today. They have two off days this spring. The second one in on March 21.

### **Cincinnati Reds right-hander Anthony DeSclafani calls his injury luck 'comical,' but he's not laughing**

**John Fay, [jfay@enquirer.com](mailto:jfay@enquirer.com)**

**Published 4:33 p.m. ET March 12, 2018**

GOODYEAR, Ariz. – Reds right-hander Anthony DeSclafani wasn't smiling when he said it, much less laughing.

"It's kind of comical," DeSclafani said.

He was referring to his luck with injuries. DeSclafani is dealing with a strained left oblique after missing all of last year with a sprained ulnar collateral ligament after missing a third of 2016 with a strained left oblique.

DeSclafani knew no more Monday than was announced Sunday.

"I've got nothing for you," he said, "I don't know what to say anymore at this point."

Reds manager Bryan Price also had no more information Monday. Obliques typically take six weeks or so to rehab.

The injury occurred during DeSclafani's start on Friday. He went three innings and allowed only one hit.

"I felt it during the game," he said "I was able to pitch with it. Later that night, it got stiff. I got it checked out the next day and the MRI showed what it was."

Cozart's previous oblique injury taught him that for can't hurry the healing process.

"I know not to push it too early and set myself back," he said. "I want to get back and fast as I can, but obliques are tricky in general. I've got to make sure it's fully healed before I getting going."

### **Cincinnati Reds lefty Brandon Finnegan has biceps strain, thinks he'll be good to go shortly**

**John Fay, [jfay@enquirer.com](mailto:jfay@enquirer.com)**

**Published 1:01 p.m. ET March 12, 2018**

GOODYEAR, Ariz. - Brandon Finnegan is convinced that what caused him to leave Sunday's game was a small bump in the road and that he'll be back pitching shortly.

"I'm fine," he said. "I was feeling fine (Sunday). No pain. I had zero pain the whole time. I just had a knot on my triceps. It wouldn't allow me to grip the ball. It was not ideal to continue pitching."

Reds Manager Bryan Price said Finnegan was diagnosed with a biceps strain.

"It's under the biceps area, closer to the bone," Price said. "Just general inflammation. Doesn't seem to a huge concern. He'll get a couple of days of treatment, then we'll see if he can reinitiate his throwing. It will be a couple of days without any throwing."

Again, Finnegan, the 24-year-old left-hander, is not overly concerned.

"I had tightness all week," he said. "It was nothing serious. I couldn't get a grip on the ball. I couldn't get anything going. We decided it was a good idea to come out and not risk anything. I came back and got it worked on. Now I feel fine."

He does not see this as a major setback.

"It better not be," he said. "That's not my call. I know they just want to be cautious. I feel fine. It's easy to work out. I did it. In my eyes, I'm good to go. They know that. They weren't concerned (Sunday), so I don't think there are any red flags anywhere. Just get it worked out and get ready for my next start."

Finnegan missed all but four starts last year with a left shoulder strain. He was about a week behind because of that.

With Anthony DeSclafani's left oblique strain, the Reds are going to need to test their starting pitching depth — even if Finnegan can get ready by Opening Day.

Right-handers Sal Romano, Robert Stephenson, Tyler Mahle and Michael Lorenzen and left-hander Amir Garrett are competing for the rotation.

"We were counting on Disco to be ready for Opening Day and be in the rotation," Price said. "That's not going to happen. We had prior to these two recent injuries fully intended to keep this competition open because we have so many guys throwing well."

"Lorenzen threw well (Sunday), following a really nice B game against the Rangers. Mahle's been terrific. Stephenson's coming off a good game. Garrett thrown the ball really well out of the bullpen, and he's gotten stretched out."

"Romano's been good just about every time he's takes the ball. It's just guy after guy has thrown well."

Romano, Stephenson and Mahle got major league experience last year because of the injuries to Honer Bailey, DeSclafani and Finnegan.

"There are guys that have some major-league experience and some that have had some success at the major-league level instead of being an open question mark," Price said. "I think there's a better understanding and optimism that if we fall back on a younger rotation this time through that this time they'll be able to endure the rigors and challenges of Major League Baseball."

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## THE ATHLETIC

### Who has the nastiest pitch in Reds' camp? The catchers have spoken

By C. Trent Rosecrans Mar 12, 2018 12

GOODYEAR, Ariz. – In spring training, catchers get a chance to compare the stuff of pitchers, often back-to-back in bullpen sessions or throughout workouts.

With so many bullpens fresh on their mind, The Athletic polled the Reds' six catchers about the best pitches in camp and then asked the pitchers about that pitch.

Here are their responses. Luis Castillo made the list twice, including his two-seam fastball, a pitch that was profiled earlier this spring.

Luis Castillo's two-seam fastball (sinker)

Devin Mesoraco: “I would say Luis' sinker for sure. (Thursday) he struck a guy out on a front-hip sinker to a lefty in the fourth inning, it was either the first or second out. Take a look at that one – there shouldn't be much debate. We were throwing it to a lefty, two strikes. I think if we see that one, that'll narrow some (things down). It was one of the top-10 nastiest pitches I've seen in my life. I know what big-leaguers look like. This was unbelievable, if you take a peek at it, you'll see.”

Stuart Turner: “It's 95-98 with movement. He can throw his four-seam and his two-seam and they're pretty similar in speed and one just takes off. It's got both (lateral and vertical movement). It's got some sink on it, it's not just east-west across the zone, it's definitely going to go under and miss some bats.

“It's just, for as much as it moves and as firm as it is... Jared Hughes throws a great two-seamer, sinker as well, you know that's what's coming and with Castillo, it's upper 90s. It seems like it shouldn't be fair. I'm glad he's on my team.

“I think if you take his changeup and say it's his best pitch and why it's the best, I think it's because he throws the sinker with it. If you take the sinker, why's it so much better? Because he can throw it hard off the changeup. Some pitchers throw 100 and have to throw the changeup as their pitch to miss bats. He can do that with his fastball and that's what I think makes it so good.”

#### Luis Castillo's changeup

Chadwick Tromp: “It's just 90-something miles per hour, it's not easy to hit and it looks like a fastball. (When I put it down), I know they're not going to hit it. If it's executed the way he can execute it – no chance.”

Castillo (via translator Julio Morillo): “I started using the changeup when I was in San Francisco in Single-A. When I was there, I didn't have a changeup. The middle of the season, I started using it and practicing it in the bullpen – since then it's been my favorite pitch to throw.

“If you keep the same arm speed, everything's going to look like a fastball until the end.”

#### Brandon Finnegan's changeup

Tucker Barnhart: “When he throws it, it looks like a snake.”

Finnegan: “In '16 it was really good to start out with, but I hit a wall where I guess I was short-arming it or doing something wrong to where I was cutting it a lot, so I kind of had to ax it. I had to try a different grip or find out what I was doing.

“(Dan) Straily taught me his grip, which is still a two-seam changeup, which is what I threw, but it's just a different grip. I've had that ever since. I've worked on it. That's the main thing I work on in my 'pens because I want it to be as good as my two-seam and slider and I think it's come a long way. I think it's definitely one of my best pitches. I just feel like the changeup is one of the best pitches in baseball. Everyone throws 100 mph now, you throw something 83-86 mph, it catches them off-guard.

(On the “snake” phenomenon): “There are games where it's just real messed up. I can think of in June last year, my start against St. Louis, I came back and got hurt. There was a changeup, I can't remember who I threw it to, but (Devin Mesoraco) was catching and if you watch the replay, you can see the ball go that way and then come back this way and go right underneath Mes' glove.”

#### Tanner Rainey's slider

Joe Hudson: “It's so hard, the spin is unrecognizable to a hitter. Obviously, hitting is about recognizing pitches and a lot of that is based off the spin. You can't pick up the spin on that thing – it's so hard and tight, it's unrecognizable. It's hard and nasty.”

Rainey: “I don't really think about trying to spin it. When I try to spin and get around is when it just kind of spins and sits there and doesn't get much action. The more I think 'on top, out front,' the more I get the depth of the pitch.

“Basically, cut the ball in half (with the grip). That's how I think. How it comes out, it could be a completely different story. Ever since I can remember throwing a slider, that's how I've done it.

“That's my go-to pitch besides the fastball. I've always been a two-pitch guy, so I never did focus on having a feel for this one or that one – it's always been fastball/slider.”

#### Jesus Reyes' sinker

Tony Cruz: “Reyes' sinker is really good. It's more like down, it's not a runner, it's a true sinker. You get some that are more of a run, more lateral. You get some that are lateral with more downward movement, his is more straight down.”

Reyes (via Morillo): “This is my go-to pitch when I have two strikes. It’s like a changeup but with more velocity. It’s to finish the at-bat.”

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## **Transactions**

03/13/18

San Francisco Giants optioned 2B Miguel Gomez to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned C Aramis Garcia to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned LHP D.J. Snelten to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned LHP Steven Okert to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned RHP Reyes Moronta to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned RHP Chase Johnson to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned RHP Pierce Johnson to Sacramento River Cats.  
San Francisco Giants optioned RHP Tyler Herb to Sacramento River Cats.

03/12/18

New York Yankees signed free agent 2B Neil Walker.  
3B Alex Liddi assigned to Kansas City Royals.  
RF Preston Scott assigned to Texas Rangers.  
LHP C.D. Pelham assigned to Texas Rangers.  
Los Angeles Dodgers released RHP Mark Lowe.  
2B Bryant Flete assigned to Chicago White Sox.  
2B D.J. Burt assigned to Kansas City Royals.  
Colorado Rockies placed RHP Rayan Gonzalez on the 60-day disabled list. Recovery from Tommy John surgery.  
Colorado Rockies signed free agent RF Carlos Gonzalez.  
New York Yankees released SS Danny Espinosa.  
LF Marten Gasparini assigned to Kansas City Royals.  
Philadelphia Phillies designated 1B Tommy Joseph for assignment.  
Philadelphia Phillies signed free agent RHP Jake Arrieta.  
Los Angeles Dodgers optioned LHP Edward Paredes to Oklahoma City Dodgers.  
Los Angeles Dodgers optioned RHP Walker Buehler to Oklahoma City Dodgers.  
Los Angeles Dodgers optioned 3B Rob Segedin to Oklahoma City Dodgers.  
Toronto Blue Jays optioned C Reese McGuire to Buffalo Bisons.  
Baltimore Orioles optioned RHP Alec Asher to Norfolk Tides.  
SS Jose Gomez assigned to Philadelphia Phillies.  
New York Yankees designated CF Jake Cave for assignment.  
RHP Harold Arauz assigned to Philadelphia Phillies.  
RF Rudy Martin assigned to Kansas City Royals.  
C Ben Rortvedt assigned to Minnesota Twins.  
RHP Jay Flaa assigned to Baltimore Orioles.  
RHP Jake McCasland assigned to San Francisco Giants.  
Minnesota Twins signed free agent RHP Lance Lynn.  
SS Sharlon Schoop assigned to Baltimore Orioles.  
LF Stephen Cardullo assigned to Colorado Rockies.  
1B Chris DeVito assigned to Kansas City Royals.  
OF Nick Schulz assigned to San Diego Padres.  
Cleveland Indians optioned RHP Adam Plutko to Columbus Clippers.  
Cleveland Indians optioned LHP Shawn Morimando to Columbus Clippers.  
Cleveland Indians optioned RHP Julian Merryweather to Columbus Clippers.  
Cleveland Indians optioned C Francisco Mejia to Columbus Clippers.  
Cleveland Indians optioned RF Abraham Almonte to Columbus Clippers.  
RHP Julio Eusebio assigned to Pittsburgh Pirates.  
LHP Ben Braymer assigned to Washington Nationals.  
Oakland Athletics designated LHP Jairo Labourt for assignment.  
Oakland Athletics signed free agent C Jonathan Lucroy.  
C Garrett Boulware assigned to Cincinnati Reds.  
Pittsburgh Pirates optioned CF Austin Meadows to Indianapolis Indians.  
Pittsburgh Pirates optioned LHP Jack Leathersich to Indianapolis Indians.  
Pittsburgh Pirates optioned RHP Clay Holmes to Indianapolis Indians.

