



### **WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF JANUARY 16, 2018**

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"Young White Sox hitters gather for mini-camp" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

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### **Kopech close to joining White Sox rotation**

MLB Pipeline's No. 3 RHP prospect could get call midseason

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / Jan. 15, 2018

CHICAGO -- Michael Kopech probably won't break camp as part of the 2018 White Sox starting rotation.

But the No. 3 right-handed pitching prospect in the game, according to a list released Tuesday by MLB Pipeline, certainly will arrive soon.

"I'm anxious for him to get there and stay there," White Sox pitching coach Don Cooper said. "I'm anxious to see the continued work we will put into Spring Training but also the continued work he will get to continue to improve, because for a lot of these guys, not only Kopech, their time is coming.

"So what do they have to do now? They have to work on their craft and work on keeping their strong points strong ... and tighten things up basically."

Top 10 Prospects by Position

RHP - Breakdown | List

LHP - Wednesday

C - Thursday

1B - Friday

2B - Monday, Jan. 22

3B - Tuesday, Jan. 23

SS - Wednesday, Jan. 24

OF - Thursday, Jan. 25

Top 100 - Saturday, Jan. 27

Kopech, 21, posted a 9-8 record with a 2.88 ERA over 25 starts split between Double-A Birmingham and Triple-A Charlotte in 2017. Only his final three starts took place with Charlotte, where Kopech will begin '18.

In 134 1/3 innings, the hard-throwing right-hander fanned 172, walked 65 and yielded a mere 92 hits and six home runs. Hitters finished with a .193 average against him, commensurate with his career .196 mark.

Shohei Ohtani of the Angels ranks No. 1 among right-handed pitchers per MLB Pipeline, followed by the Astros' Forrest Whitley, Kopech, the Rays' Brent Honeywell, the Dodgers' Walker Buehler, the Pirates' Mitch Keller, the Cardinals' Alex Reyes, the Reds' Hunter Greene, the Indians' Triston McKenzie and the Phillies' Sixto Sanchez.

Reynaldo Lopez reached the White Sox in 2017, making 22 starts for Charlotte and an Aug. 11 debut at Guaranteed Rate Field, a path that could be followed by Kopech this year. He will be used as a starter during Cactus League action, according to Cooper.

"I even said this to a couple of people already on the phone: 'I want you to do what I'm doing right now,' meaning I'm welcoming this opportunity," Cooper said. "I'm looking forward to this challenge of going out and being ready."

"Let's work at our craft, and that would be for everybody who comes to Chicago when we leave Spring Training, for everybody in the Minor Leagues that is close to helping us in Chicago. This is kind of how we hope the rebuild goes: Here comes the line."

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### **Young White Sox hitters gather for mini-camp**

No. 23 prospect Robert headlines participants at week-long event

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / Jan. 15, 2018

CHICAGO -- The White Sox present and future offensively have significant representation at their 2018 hitters' mini-camp, a week-long event beginning Monday morning at Camelback Ranch in Glendale, Ariz.

Thirty players in total are scheduled to be in attendance, with 13 of those players coming from the White Sox Top 30 Prospects list per MLB Pipeline.

"I'm looking forward to just seeing all of these young hitters," said White Sox manager Rick Renteria, who is in attendance for the mini-camp. "Obviously ... our whole hitting coordinating staff within the system is going to be there to make sure that we're all working on the same ideas, the same plan."

"How we're attacking at bats, how we're attacking situations and at the same time looking at that skillset that these kids bring to the table, albeit in BP and what have you. You still get a chance to see some of their swings and some of the eye-hand coordination aspects."

Luis Robert's on-field debut in the United States figures to draw a great deal of attention this week. The 20-year-old outfielder, who is the No. 3 White Sox prospect and No. 23 overall in baseball, received a \$26 million signing bonus with the White Sox as a top international free agent from Cuba. He played his first season as part of the organization's Dominican Summer League team and then took part in the Dominican instructional league during November.

Those scheduled to join Robert from the White Sox 40-man roster are Micker Adolfo, Luis Basabe, Ryan Cordell, Matt Davidson, Nicky Delmonico, Adam Engel, Casey Gillaspie, Eloy Jimenez, Yoan Moncada, Omar Narvaez, Daniel Palka, Kevan Smith and Charlie Tilson. Jimenez ranks as the No. 5 prospect in the game, while Moncada, who rated as the No. 1 prospect in the game for most of the 2017 season before being called up to the White Sox on July 19, continues on as the team's starting second baseman.

Non-40-man roster players scheduled to take part are Joel Booker, Jake Burger, Alex Call, Zack Collins, Luis Curbelo, Jameson Fisher, Ti'Quan Forbes, Luis Gonzalez, Danny Hayes, Patrick Leonard, Tito Polo, Blake Rutherford, Matt Skole, Gavin Sheets, Yeyson Yrizarri and Seby Zavala. Each day features hitters meetings, cage work and batting practice. It was the 2017 mini-camp where Davidson showed off his re-tuned swing, knocking baseballs around the back fields at Camelback Ranch as a prelude to his 26-home run, 68-RBI big league performance.

"You also get a chance to talk to them a little bit and see where they're at," Renteria said. "The truth is until they get to playing games and things of that nature, you can't really evaluate completely until they're actually trying to perform and trying to deal with those things and those situations that we're going to hopefully address in this hitters' camp."

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### **The Birmingham Barons will put 'Letter from a Birmingham Jail' on special jerseys this season**

By Chris Landers / MLB.com / Jan. 15, 2018

Monday is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and every corner of the baseball world has taken time to honor the legacy of the civil rights icon (and one-time slugger). The Birmingham Barons, however, did something unique: The White Sox Double-A affiliate unveiled a special King-themed uniform it'll wear next season, featuring the text of the famous Letter from a Birmingham Jail:

The letter, which King wrote in 1963 after being arrested during a non-violent protest, soon became a foundational text of the civil rights movement. The Barons' uniforms will feature King's own handwriting, a touching tribute to his lasting impact.

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### **Meet the Prospects: Carson Fulmer**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / Jan. 15, 2018

The White Sox rebuild is in full swing. While it might still be a year or two before the big league team is expected to start competing for championships, the minor leagues are stocked with highly touted talent fans will be eagerly following in 2018. With that in mind, it's time to Meet the Prospects and get to know the future of the South Side.

Carson Fulmer

Fulmer, the 24-year-old right-handed hurler, looks to be on the verge of getting his chance to show the White Sox what he can do as a starter at the major league level.

In other words, he won't be a prospect for much longer.

A Florida native, Fulmer was the eighth-overall pick in the 2015 draft. After pitching at Vanderbilt University, he made eight 2015 starts at Class A Winston-Salem, posting a 2.05 ERA in 22 innings. Things didn't go quite as well in his first full professional season in 2016. He made 17 starts at Double-A Birmingham, turning in a 4.76 ERA there. He made four more at Triple-A Charlotte and had a 3.94 ERA in a mere 16 innings. He also got some work out of the big league bullpen that year, struggling to the tune of 11 runs surrendered in 11.2 innings of work.

Fulmer's ERA continued to jump in 2017, all the way up to 5.79 in his 25 starts at Charlotte. He again got some big league time, though, starting in five of his seven appearances with the White Sox. Throw out the first start, an emergency spot start in one half of a doubleheader in which he got shelled, and the late-season results are a lot more promising. In his final four starts of the season, all in September, Fulmer gave up just three runs in 17.1 innings, striking out 16 batters.

Fulmer figures to be given a shot at a spot in the White Sox rotation this spring, as the team is eager to see what they have and see if Fulmer can carve out his own spot in a crowded projected rotation of the future.

As of their most recent rankings, MLB Pipeline had Fulmer rated as the No. 9 prospect in the White Sox organization.

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### **How Baseball America envisions the White Sox starting lineup of the future**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / Jan. 16, 2018

The White Sox rebuild is going just swimmingly, according to the fine folks at Baseball America.

The publication does its own rankings of each organization's top prospects every offseason, and their top 10 rankings of the players in the White Sox farm system is unexpectedly impressive, what with how general manager Rick Hahn has acquired so much minor league talent over the past year-plus.

But one of the fun things Baseball America also does is project a starting lineup for a few years down the road. That's been a favorite pastime of South Side baseball fans ever since Hahn kicked off the rebuild with those trades of Chris Sale and Adam Eaton more than a year ago. Now you can see how your fantasy future White Sox lineup matches up with Baseball America's.

They flash forward all the way to 2021, a year past when most White Sox fans have been dreaming about as the apex of the rebuild and when the South Siders start becoming perennial contenders. Notably, Baseball America also expects the White Sox to give long-term deals to Jose Abreu and Avisail Garcia — not bad moves by any stretch — who are both currently under team control only through the end of the 2019 season.

Of course, Baseball America goes a little more in depth than that, ranking the top 10 prospects in each farm system and laying out their picks for which players have the best tools in each organization.

Get ready, White Sox fans. The future's coming.

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### **Rozner: Thome, Jones, Guerrero are Hall of Fame shoo-ins**

By Barry Rozner / Daily Herald / Jan. 15, 2018

There are still those who believe the first time on the Baseball Hall of Fame ballot carries greater significance than the second.

So they don't vote for players the first time around.

This remains one of life's great mysteries.

As Andre Dawson said after jumping 10 percentage points during his fifth year on the ballot, "I guess I must have put up good numbers last year. Strange because I've been retired for 10 years."

You're either pregnant or you're not. You're either a Hall of Famer or you're not.

In any case, Chipper Jones and Jim Thome should crash the 90 percent mark and cruise into Cooperstown when next week's election results are announced -- but they won't approach 100.

The players with the highest percentages ever are Junior Griffey (99.3), Tom Seaver (98.8), Nolan Ryan (98.7), Cal Ripken (98.5), Ty Cobb (98.2), George Brett (98.1), Hank Aaron (97.8), Tony Gwynn (97.6), Randy Johnson (97.2) and Greg Maddux (97.2).

Aaron missed a perfect election by 9 votes in 1982. And the argument against Aaron would be what, exactly? Maddux missed by 15, Johnson by 15, Seaver by 5 and Babe Ruth (95.1 percent) missed by 11 votes.

Yes, 11 people didn't vote for the Babe Ruth of Babe Ruths.

Anyway, and for what it's worth, here's one writer's ballot for this year:

Chipper Jones

Lands at No. 51 all-time in WAR, 32nd in WAR position players and 25th offensive WAR. Those are monster numbers.

Jim Thome

Hit 612 home runs, eighth all-time.

Barry Bonds

Bonds had a Hall of Fame career (400-400) before his hat size exploded.

If his career had ended after 14 years, before he grew exponentially, his 103.4 WAR would have been good for 27th all-time. His 445 home runs would still be good for 42nd all-time. He already had three MVP awards and eight Gold Gloves.

Bonds collected 334 HR and 380 stolen bases through 1996, in his first 11 seasons. That was half of his career. No other player in baseball history has reached both numbers in an entire career.

Roger Clemens

It's not as obvious when Clemens began to enhance himself, but with Bud Selig's election to the HOF, it doesn't matter anymore. Selig was the steroids commissioner. He promoted it more, and profited from it more, than anyone in baseball during the steroids era. If Selig is in, Clemens is in.

Mike Mussina

One of the most underrated pitchers of all time, Mussina is finally gaining some notice and it's absurd that it's taken this long. He got only 20 percent of the votes in his first year and got to 51 percent last year on his fourth ballot.

Mussina is 24th in WAR for pitchers, 33rd in wins (270), 33rd in games started, 20th in strikeouts and 22nd in adjusted-pitching wins.

He's 23rd in strikeout-to-walk ratio and 12 times finished top 10 in WHIP, 10 times top five.

He's 11th all-time in base-out wins saved, 10th in win probability added and second to Curt Schilling since 1900 in strikeout-to-walk ratio among pitchers with at least 3,000 innings.

Curt Schilling

Some voters have openly admitted that they won't vote for Schilling because they don't like his post-career politics and often bizarre comments, but many of those same people will vote for PEDs users because they don't care about issues of character, integrity or sportsmanship, even though it's a stated rule for voting on a player's career.

Whatever. Schilling is a no-brainer.

No. 26 all-time in WAR for pitchers, second in Cy Young voting three times, top 15 MVP voting four times, top eight WAR for pitchers 11 times (top four eight times), top 10 ERA nine times, top six in WHIP 11 times, top 10 in strikeouts-per-9-innings 10 times, top 10 strikeouts-to-walks ratio 11 times (first five times), and is one of four pitchers with 3,000 strikeouts and fewer than 1,000 walks (Greg Maddux, Fergie Jenkins, Pedro Martinez).

His postseason record is ridiculous, going 11-2 with a 2.23 ERA in 19 starts and 133 innings. He was 4-1 in the World Series, won three rings and his "bloody sock" start in Game 6 of the 2004 ALCS was no myth.

He also won Game 4 of the '04 World Series with a temporarily-stapled ankle tendon, allowing him to pitch and leading to a medical technique known as the "Schilling Tendon Procedure." Boston won its first World Series in 86 years in 2004.

Schilling was also co-MVP of the 2001 World Series, pitching in three games as Arizona beat the Yankees in seven games.

Vlad Guerrero

This ballot did not have room for him a year ago, but he gets in this year on his second try.

Trevor Hoffman

He missed by 5 votes last year and it will be very close again this year. Retired as the all-time saves leader. There's an award named after him. Surprised there's any discussion here.

Jeff Kent

Disliked equally by teammates and writers, Kent is nonetheless deserving.

All-time home run leader at second base (351), second at the position in RBI to Rogers Hornsby (1,518, 54th all-time), 47th all-time extra-base hits (984), 27th all-time doubles (560) and 68th all-time total bases (4,246). Top 100 all-time offensive WAR (97th).

Defense will probably keep him from ever getting in. Suddenly, people like defense again.

So look for Jones, Thome and Guerrero to get in easily and for Hoffman to make it or miss by a hair again. Looks like a very nice summer for Cooperstown.

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### **Fantasy baseball preview: White Sox have Jose Abreu and a ton of prospects**

By Steve Gardner / USA Today Sports / Jan. 15, 2018

As the 2018 fantasy baseball season approaches, we take a look at the biggest news and story lines from each club. We'll feature one team each weekday ... and we'll finish up on Feb. 16, the first day all teams will have their pitchers and catchers on the field for workouts.

Series index: [Schedule for all 2018 team previews](#)

The White Sox began their full-scale rebuilding project last offseason, when they traded ace Chris Sale and outfielder Adam Eaton. Now some of the players acquired in those deals are ready to start contributing at the major league level.

Although they made a few additions to the pitching staff this offseason, the South Siders are still a few impact players away from challenging for a playoff spot.

2017 at a glance

Record: 67-95 (4th in AL Central)  
Hitting: 23rd (4.36 R/G)  
Pitching: 25th (4.78 ERA)  
Park Factor, scoring: 15th (1.003)  
Park factor, HR: 7th (1.162)

Arrivals

C Wellington Castillo  
SP Miguel Gonzalez  
RP Joakim Soria

Castillo parlayed a career-high 20 homers and a .282 average into a two-year deal with the White Sox. His presence will give prospect Zack Collins, 22, more time to develop in the minors.

Gonzalez was a member of the White Sox before being traded to Texas in August. He returns to help fill out the Chicago rotation, but should be avoided in most all fantasy formats.

On a team with no established closer, Soria, 33, brings experience to the role -- even if he only has two saves since the 2015 season.

#### Players to watch

1B Jose Abreu  
OF Avisail Garcia  
SP Carlos Rodon

Abreu is the most potent bat in an otherwise non-threatening lineup. No matter what the supporting cast looks like, Abreu has been incredibly consistent throughout his four seasons with the Sox. Just put down a .300 average, 30 homers and 100 RBI in ink.

Garcia had a breakout year in 2017, hitting .330/.380/.506 with 18 homers. He's been maddeningly inconsistent throughout his career, but something just clicked at age 26. A .392 BABIP may have had something to do with it.

Rodon had shoulder surgery last September and probably isn't going to be ready for opening day. He has that great combination of strikeouts and ground balls that fantasy owners covet. If he could just stay healthy ...

#### Sleepers

2B Yoan Moncada  
SP Lucas Giolito

The former top overall prospect in the minors, Moncada, 22, got his first chance to play regularly in the second half of last year. He just started scratching the surface of his potential in September, hitting .276/.349/.469 with five homers in 98 at-bats. While he still strikes out a lot (32%), he hasn't even begun to steal bases in the majors -- after swiping 49 and 45 in the minors in 2015 and 2016.

Giolito struggled in his first taste of the majors with the Washington Nationals, but the White Sox had the luxury of giving him time to develop in the minors. He made 24 starts at Class AAA last season before getting called up in August for seven solid starts (2.38 ERA) with the Sox. The former first-round pick may be ready to assume his spot at the top of a major-league rotation.

#### Bullpen

Closer: Joakim Soria  
Next: Juan Minaya

Despite a 3.70 ERA last season, Soria's FIP was just 2.27. He'll be a very low-cost closer if he carries the job into the regular season.

After David Robertson (and others in the bullpen) were traded, Minaya converted nine of 10 save chances down the stretch. He struck out 51 batters in 43 2/3 innings (10.5 K/9), but had never been a strikeout pitcher before.

#### Position battles

There's a three-way battle for two spots at third base and designated hitter. Matt Davidson was second on the team to Abreu in homers with 26, but hit only .220. Delmonico showed better plate patience (.373 OBP in 166 plate appearances). And Switch-hitter Yolmer Sanchez played mostly second base last season, but finished third on the team in WAR behind Abreu and Garcia.

The fourth and fifth spots in the rotation are also up for grabs this spring. With up-and-coming righty Reynaldo Lopez a solid favorite at No. 4. Carson Fulmer, 23, and Dylan Covey, 25, are also in the mix.

#### Prospects

OF Eloy Jimenez  
SP Michael Kopech

While Moncada and Giolito have probably seen their last days in the minors, there's more talent in the pipeline. Jimenez, 21, was the Chicago Cubs' top prospect when he was acquired for left-hander Jose Quintana. He just reached the Class AA level last season.

Kopech, 21, can touch 100 mph on his fastball; he just needs to control where it's going just a little bit better. He averaged 11.2 K/9 at Class AA and AAA, but also walked 4.4 per nine. Another blue-chipper who should be in the 2019 rotation.

#### Projected batting order

1. CF Charlie Tilson
2. 2B Yoan Moncada
3. 1B Jose Abreu
4. RF Avisail Garcia
5. C Wellington Castillo
6. DH Nicky Delmonico/Matt Davidson
7. SS Tim Anderson
8. LF Leury Garcia
9. 3B Yolmer Sanchez

#### Projected rotation

1. RHP James Shields
  2. RHP Lucas Giolito
  3. RHP Miguel Gonzalez
  4. RHP Reynaldo Lopez
  5. RHP Carson Fulmer
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