



# ***Press Clips***

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**FROM OC REGISTER****Angels Offseason Options: Sonny Gray**

By Jeff Fletcher

*(This is the latest in a series of quick profiles on players who fit for the Angels to add over the winter. They are purely "informed speculation," based on what we know about the Angels' roster needs along with General Manager Billy Eppler's preferences and history. We'll have a new one every weekday, until the GM Meetings, which are the unofficial start of the hot stove season.)*

**SONNY GRAY, RHP New York Yankees**

**The basics:** Gray, who will be 29 next season, was once one of the better young pitchers in the majors. He finished third in the Cy Young voting in 2015. He was traded from the Oakland A's to the Yankees in the middle of 2017, and he's struggled since then.

**2018 season:** Gray had a 4.90 ERA in 30 games, including 23 starts. He pitched 130-1/3 innings.

**Contract status:** Gray has one year left before free agency. He's eligible for arbitration this winter, due to make around \$9 million.

**Why he makes sense:** The Angels need starting pitching, and Gray figures to be available without much outlay in terms of prospects. Yankees GM Brian Cashman essentially announced last week that he'd be shopping Gray over the winter. The Angels, or whatever team ends up with Gray, will be banking on him returning to form out of the crucible of New York, where he's become a lightning rod for criticism. Gray had a 3.17 ERA on the road this season, suggesting a change of scenery could help him. His average fastball velocity this season was 93.93 mph, compared with 94.20 mph in 2015. His other numbers measuring quality of contact are about the same as when he was in Oakland, with one notable difference being he's thrown fewer pitches in the strike zone. He had a career-worst 3.9 walks per nine innings, which might simply suggest that he was pitching too passively in the tough hitters environments of the American League East. Maybe getting him to the more spacious parks of the AL West would restore his confidence.

**Why he doesn't:** There will be plenty of other teams that also see the upside in the Gray, so the Angels wouldn't be able to get him for free. There would be some prospect cost. Also, he's going to make \$9 million, which eats up almost one-third of the Angels estimated space for additional payroll. That's a significant gamble if he doesn't bounce back. The Yankees might eat some of that, but they'd likely require the Angels to part with a better prospect.

**FROM LA TIMES****Reggie Jackson, Queen Elizabeth, Leslie Nielsen: How 'The Naked Gun' filmed the best baseball scene in movie history**

By Ben Bolch

*"In a year that has been so improbable, the impossible has happened."*

**—Vin Scully**

Dodger Stadium had seen its share of oddities, all right.

One umpire ejected two others. A tiger mauled a base runner sliding into second base. An outfielder tried to assassinate Queen Elizabeth.

Only months before Kirk Gibson's home run sailed over the right-field wall and into Dodgers lore in the 1988 World Series, a different kind of bedlam had engulfed Dodger Stadium.

Amazingly, everything went according to script.

Dodger Stadium served as the setting for the climax of "The Naked Gun," a movie that Sports Illustrated described as the "Citizen Kane" of slapstick. The scene featured the Angels versus the Seattle Mariners in a showdown that would decide the lead in the American League West.

Never mind that the game was played inside Dodger Stadium, with a Los Angeles police detective serving as an undercover umpire after having bungled the national anthem while posing as a renowned opera singer.

"For the ramparts we watched ... ah da da da da da da da," Leslie Nielsen, portraying Lt. Frank Drebin, crooned after having karate-chopped tenor Enrico Pallazzo into submission in order to steal his tuxedo. "And the rockets' red glare, bunch of bombs in the air!"

The hijinks have developed more than a cult following in the 30 years since the film was released. In 2003, SI listed the scene as its favorite from a non-sports movie.

"When you talk about 'Animal House,' you talk about 'National Lampoon's Vacation' and 'The Naked Gun,'" said recently departed Angels manager Mike Scioscia, a catcher for the Dodgers the year the film was released, "these slapstick comedies were classics."

The executives behind "The Naked Gun" decided to showcase baseball for the movie's third act because of the sport's universal appeal. Of course, that meant the same creative forces behind the "Airplane!" movies also had free rein to lampoon every aspect of a national pastime with stuffy traditions.

“I think you could take any group of baseball fans,” executive producer Jim Abrahams said, “and in 15 minutes come up with a whole list of things about baseball that we take seriously that we don’t need to take seriously and poke fun at it.”

The movie parodied scoreboard highlight videos (featuring a confrontation between a base runner and a real-life tiger), the chewing-tobacco craze (managers, players and even the players’ wives spit freely) and ball-doctoring antics (a pitcher is allowed to stay in the game after Drebin finds no murder weapon but sandpaper, Vaseline and a power sander).

The scene centers on the earnest but blundering Drebin, who finagles his way onto the field while attempting to foil the assassination of the queen. Tipped off to the scheme before the game, Drebin begins his frisking of players by inspecting leadoff hitter Jay Johnstone’s uniform with a thorough pat-down.

“A little tight in the crotch,” Drebin notes before instructing the teams to play ball.

The first pitch triggers a long, awkward pause, both the batter and catcher staring incredulously at Drebin before he offers his verdict.

“Strike?” he says hesitantly.

The crowd’s rabid response sends Drebin into a strike-calling frenzy in which he rings up Johnstone well before the third pitch crosses home plate. Drebin breaks into a celebratory moonwalk that commences a montage set to Randy Newman’s “I Love L.A.,” which remains part of the daily soundtrack of Dodger games.

“Everything we spoof, we love,” said writer-director-producer David Zucker. “We just went after every baseball cliché.”

The irreverence carried over to the broadcasters’ booth, where the all-star lineup included Curt Gowdy, Jim Palmer, Tim McCarver, Dick Vitale, Mel Allen, Dick Enberg and, just as you might have figured, psychologist Dr. Joyce Brothers. The usually verbose Vitale was among the quietest on the set.

“I was in awe next to all of these Hall of Famers,” Vitale remembered.

Movie creators initially wanted to cast Gibson and the Dodgers playing in their home stadium along to the cadence of broadcaster Vin Scully. But Zucker said executives never heard back from Gibson and the Dodgers permitted only the use of their stadium because of concerns over being associated with an on-field brawl. A Dodgers spokesperson said neither Gibson nor Scully recalled being contacted about potential involvement.

Gowdy tells listeners on the broadcast that the game is being played at the Big A — now Angel Stadium — even though casual baseball fans can tell it was shot inside Dodger Stadium. Angel Stadium is shown only momentarily, in an establishing shot featuring its exterior. Adding to the hilarity, there’s also a shot of the interior of Wrigley Field.

“That was never an intentional joke,” Graham said, “it’s just that’s the way it worked out.”

Drebin eventually discovers that Angels right fielder Reggie Jackson — playing himself — has been programmed to carry out the evil plot.

Jackson, walking robotically as a result of sensory-induced hypnosis, fetches a gun from beneath second base while repeatedly uttering, "I must kill ... the queen." Drebin stops the outfielder only after a dart shot from his cufflinks strikes a woman in the upper deck, forcing her to fall on top of Jackson.

That leads to perhaps the movie's most iconic line, after Drebin removes his umpire's mask to reveal the face the crowd had seen botch the national anthem before the game.

"Hey, it's Enrico Pallazzo!" a fan yells.

The USC Trojan Marching Band makes a cameo shortly thereafter when it stomps on the dead body of evil mastermind Vincent Ludwig, who had been run over by a bus and a steamroller only moments earlier.

"Oh, Frank, that's horrible. That's so horrible," Drebin's sidekick, Det. Capt. Ed Hocken, says while starting to bawl. "My father went the same way."

Thirty years later, the visual and verbal gags still resonate.

"Today's player, they'll see that on a screen and they'll laugh," said Tim Mead, the Angels' vice president of communications. "It transcends generations and it's still funny because of the game."

**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## Castillo fans five in first Fall League start

By Isaac Colindress

**Jesus Castillo** walked out on to the mound at Camelback Ranch like he had pitched there a thousand times, and the Mesa Solar Sox offense was there to match the starter's strong performance.

The Solar Sox convincingly beat the Glendale Desert Dogs 8-0 Monday afternoon behind a great outing from Castillo. The right-hander made his Fall League debut at Camelback Ranch, showing off some of the talent that landed him as the **Angel's No. 12 prospect**.

"My mindset for this game today was like, just try to throw strikes," said Castillo. "It doesn't matter who was hitting or anything, I just was trying to throw my first pitch for a strike."

Castillo accomplished just that, as he racked up five strikeouts, allowed three hits and walked one batter in three scoreless innings. The 22-year-old said that for the past three to four weeks he's been working on his hip and shoulder separation, a process which he said is paying dividends in his performance as of late.

Castillo will enter into his third season in the Angels' farm system after being traded from the Cubs in 2016. And if Castillo felt any nerves heading into his first start, the Solar Sox offense alleviated it quickly, as Mesa scored two runs in the top of the first inning off of Yankees prospect Jordan Foley.

"Just being here, you feel really confident. You feel like you can do a lot of things," said Castillo. "Just facing these guys and having success ... you feel like confident and you can do everything you want."

Eli White, **the A's No. 18 prospect**, posted impressive numbers in the first week of Fall League (.444, .524, .611), and his hot streak continued against the Desert Dogs, as he went 2-for-4.

White helped Mesa blow the lead open in the top of the fourth inning when he belted a two-run triple down the right-field line. The Solar Sox would go on to score one more run in the fourth for a 5-0 lead.

In total, Mesa scored nine hits, three of those from Nico Hoerner alone.

The Solar Sox were also noticeably aggressive in their baserunning, and it paid off for them. Three times the Sox successfully challenged the arm of catcher Keibert Ruiz, the **Dodgers No. 2 prospect**, and three times they reached second base safely.

With the loss, the Desert Dogs are 0-5. After a silent game in which Estevan Florial, the **Yankees No. 2 prospect**, and Ryan McKenna, the **Orioles No. 12 prospect**, both went hitless, Glendale left 14 runners stranded on base, and was 0-for-9 with runners in scoring position.

**FROM MiLB.COM**

## Castillo, White propel Mesa to AFL win

*Angels No. 12 prospect fans five, A's No. 18 plates two runs*

**Jesus Castillo** made sure his Arizona Fall League debut was one to remember.

The **No. 12 Angels prospect** scattered three hits and a walk while striking out five over three innings to lead Mesa past Glendale, 8-0, on Monday afternoon at Camelback Ranch.

**A's No. 18 prospect Eli White** hit a two-run triple, singled and walked to raise his average to .444 in four AFL games.

Handed a 2-0 lead before he stepped on the mound, Castillo (1-0) worked around a double to Orioles infielder **Steve Wilkerson** and a walk to **second-ranked Yankees prospect Estevan Florial** in the opening frame. The right-hander surrendered a double to Yankees first baseman **Steven Sensley** in the second inning and a single to Indians outfielder **Connor Marabell** in the third. Four of the last six outs Castillo recorded came via the strikeout.

The 23-year-old encountered mixed results with Double-A Mobile this past season. After going 9-6 with a 3.32 ERA and 118 strikeouts in 124 2/3 innings across three levels in 2017, Castillo spent the entire

year in the Southern League and won nine more games despite spending three weeks on the disabled list. He posted a 4.94 ERA in his 21 appearances -- 20 starts -- for the BayBears.

The Venezuela native **tossed seven hitless innings** on April 25 against Mississippi and earned the circuit's **Pitcher of the Week** honors for April 29.

White has carried over the career-best season he enjoyed with Double-A Midland into Fall League play. The 24-year-old walked in the first, singled to center field in the third and stroked a two-run triple to right in the fourth. White scored the final run of the game on a groundout by **Roberto Baldoquin** (Angels) to third.

**Cubs No. 6 prospect Nico Hoerner** went 3-for-4 with a run scored for the Solar Sox and four Oakland prospects -- **Sam Sheehan, Calvin Coker, Angel Duno** and **Jake Bray** -- combined on six scoreless innings for Mesa.

#### **In other AFL action:**

#### **Saguaros 2, Scorpions 0**

**Scott Blewett** combined with three fellow Royals right-handers on a four-hit shutout. **Kansas City's No. 26 prospect** allowed two hits and struck out four in four innings, **Arnaldo Hernandez** gave up two hits in two frames, **Grant Gavin** struck out three in two innings and **Walker Sheller** pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for his second save. No. 1 overall prospect **Vladimir Guerrero Jr.** singled and walked for Surprise, while **Andy Young**(Cardinals) singled twice and drove in a run and **16th-ranked Pirates prospect Will Craig** added two hits. **Rangers' No. 2 prospect** Juan Pablo Martinez doubled and drove in a run on a grounder. **Third-ranked Reds prospect Taylor Trammell** had two of Scottsdale's four hits and stole two bases. **Astros' 24th-ranked prospect Trent Thornton** struck out three in two scoreless innings. Right-hander **Austin Orewiler** (Reds) gave up a run on three hits in two innings to take the loss. **Gameday box score**

#### **Javelinas 13, Rafters 4**

**Joe DeCarlo** (Mariners) doubled, walked twice, scored three times and drove in two more to power Peoria. Top Brewers prospect **Keston Hiura** added three more RBIs to give him an AFL-best 10 through four games while Padres' 23rd-ranked prospect **Hudson Pott** singled twice and plated three. **Ryan Castellani** walked three and struck out two over 3 2/3 hitless innings for Salt River. No. 1 Marlins prospect **Monte Harrison** and 11th-ranked Rockies prospect **Tyler Nevin** contributed two RBIs apiece for the Rafters.



## FROM MLB TRADE RUMORS

### The Angels' Managerial Search

By Jeff Todd

We're tracking all of the managerial hiring situations around the league with team-specific posts, and it's time to introduce one for the Angels. Mike Scioscia just wrapped up a 19-year tenure with the organization that included a whopping ten-year, \$50MM contract — a managerial pact that's still without compare.

As of late last week, the Halos were wrapping up their first round of chats with potential candidates, as Jeff Fletcher of the Southern California News Group reported. At least ten candidates were slated for an early look, with the remainder of the process — and the identities of most names under consideration — largely unknown.

There still aren't a ton of names available, but we learned more about the club's approach today from MLB.com's Jon Morosi (Twitter link). Beyond reviewing resumes and speaking with candidates, the Angels front office is said to be "administering [a] 2-hour written test to managerial candidates" that poses "questions spanning analytical, interpersonal and game-management aspects of the job." Needless to say, that's an interesting process.

Here's the latest on individual candidates:

#### Have Interviewed/Will Interview

- **Astros** bench coach **Joe Espada** is among the initial candidates, as ESPN.com's Marly Rivera reports. He'll get an interview, if he hasn't already, per Fletcher, who notes that the timing was not yet clear given the Houston ballclub's ongoing postseason commitments. Espada, who is in his first year in his role, is also drawing interest from multiple other teams.
- **Cubs** bench coach **Brandon Hyde** received an interview from the Halos, according to MLB.com's Jon Morosi (via Twitter). He has ample experience in the Chicago dugout, including a pair of campaigns as bench coach and three prior years as first base coach. Hyde also spent five years as a minor-league manager within the Marlins organization. Like Espada, he's chatting with other clubs as well.

#### Potential Candidates

- It isn't yet certain who else the Halos have sat down with, but it seems there are some strong hunches. Fletcher tabs four internal possibilities: special assistants **Brad Ausmus** and **Eric Chavez** along with field personnel **Dino Ebel** (third-base coach) and **Josh Paul** (bench coach). Those looking for more reading on the topic may also want to check out this recent post from MLB.com's Maria Guardado. She recently ran through some possible names to contemplate, included many of those covered above. While it's not clear whether or not they're considered candidates by the L.A. organization, **Omar Vizquel** (White Sox minor-league manager) and **Joe McEwing** (White Sox bench coach) are tabbed by Guardado as conceivable possibilities.

**FROM CBS SPORTS****Angels are reportedly handing out a two-hour written test to managerial candidates**

*The Angels are reportedly taking an unconventional approach to finding Mike Scioscia's replacement*

By Dayn Perry

The Angels are presently conducting a managerial search for the first time in almost two decades -- a reflection of the fact that outgoing skipper Mike Scioscia managed the club for more than 3,000 games.

As you would expect, the means for vetting candidates have changed quite a bit since the Halos hired Scioscia, and that's acutely reflected by this nugget from Jon Morosi:

#Angels administering 2-hour written test to managerial candidates, sources say, with questions spanning analytical, interpersonal and game-management aspects of the job. Sign of the rigor involved in the position across @MLB, with 6 teams looking for a new manager. @MLBNetwork

Yep, those interested in the job need to bring a No. 2 pencil to this roundup. Two hours! Obviously, GM Billy Eppler wants a candidate who's functionally conversant in advanced metrics, able to make decisions that flow from that understanding, and able to communicate the reasons for his tactical decisions to players who may not necessarily like them. Presumably, the Angels' decision-makers have determined that a written test is the best way to evaluate such skills. This may not go over well with some candidates accustomed to more informal means, but they'll need to get over that.

From the outset, Eric Chavez has been tabbed as a potential front-runner for the job, but he's not the only one who makes sense. Whoever gets the gig will be tasked with leading a roster fronted by Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtaniback to the postseason for the first time since 2014.