



MEDIA CLIPS – Jan. 11, 2019

Billy Joel to hit Coors Field in August

**By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb
Jan. 10th, 2019**

DENVER -- Billy Joel will be "movin' in" for one night at Coors Field this summer.

Live Nation Colorado and Coors Field announced Thursday that Joel, a Grammy legend, will perform at Coors Field on Aug. 8, at 8 p.m. MT, with gates opening at 6 p.m. American Express card members will have access to purchase presale tickets Monday at 10 a.m. to Jan. 17, at 10 p.m. Tickets go on sale for everyone on Jan. 18, at 10 a.m., and will be available at livenation.com.

"Three years ago we got in the concert business, and we talked about names that we would want to be associated with and this was the first name that came up," said Greg Feasel, the Rockies' executive vice president/chief operating officer.

Acts such as the Zac Brown Band, The Eagles, Journey, Def Leppard and Jimmy Buffett also have played Coors Field. Last year the park hosted two sold-out, two-act shows -- The Eagles and Jimmy Buffett, and Def Leppard, The Pretenders and Journey -- promoted by Live Nation Colorado, according to the company's president, Eric Pirritt.

"I'm personally a huge fan of ballparks myself, all back to since I was a kid when I used to just stare at them when I was in New York, and I've been in a lot of them across the country and I don't think any of them match Coors Field," Pirritt said.

Joel also is a fan of ballparks and sporting venues. He is set to play six ballparks this year alone.

Billy Joel will make his Coors Field debut this summer
Pop singer-songwriter's concert is part of 2019 baseball stadium tour

By John Wenzel - Jan 10, 2019, 10:04 am | Denver Post

Piano man Billy Joel will make his first live appearance at the home of the Colorado Rockies this summer.

The Aug. 8 concert at downtown Denver's Coors Field, announced this morning by promoter Live Nation, will be one of only a handful of large-scale concerts that have been performed at the more than 50,000-capacity baseball stadium. It follows shows from Def Leppard and Journey (July 21, 2018), the Eagles and Jimmy Buffet (June 28, 2018) and Zac Brown Band, which has played there twice (2015 and 2017).

Coors Field's Billy Joel concert joins other shows at baseball stadiums from the 69-year-old Grammy winner, including Phoenix's Chase Field (March 9), Philadelphia's Citizens Bank Park (May 24) and Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards (July 26). Joel also has a five-date run at New York's Madison Square Garden starting Jan. 24.

"I couldn't be more proud to continue the tradition of unforgettable shows at Coors Field with an icon like Billy Joel," said Eric Pirritt, president of Live Nation Colorado, in a press statement. "Live Nation is excited and honored to bring this one-of-a-kind concert experience to Colorado's famed ballpark."

The concert announcement was accompanied by a Live Nation press conference at 10 a.m. Thursday morning at the Toyota Land Cruiser Club inside the Lower Downtown ballpark. Joel last played Denver at the Pepsi Center on Sept. 16 — a two-and-a-half-hour concert that included nearly 30 songs and saw Joel rocking "as hard at the end as he did at the beginning," according to our reviewer at the time.

"Hosting legendary artist Billy Joel at our ballpark for the first time ever is very exciting for us," added Greg Feasel, executive vice president and COO of the Colorado Rockies, in a press statement.

Presale tickets for the Aug. 8 Coors Field concert are on sale for American Express card members starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 14 and continuing through 10 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 17.

Tickets are on sale for the general public beginning at 10 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 18 through livenation.com.

**Rockies comfortable with youthful options at 2nd
Hampson, McMahon, Rodgers may challenge for starting job
By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb
Jan. 10th, 2019**

DENVER -- The Rockies moved closer to turning second base over to young, homegrown players on Thursday when they backed away from veteran **Brian Dozier** -- whom sources say will sign a one-year, \$9 million contract with the Nationals.

With the Rockies' payroll growing because young players are hitting their arbitration seasons, Colorado may be set to consider letting **Ryan McMahon** (.232, 5 HR, 19 RBIs in 91 games as a rookie in 2018), **Garrett Hampson** (.275 in 40 at-bats of his debut) and Brendan Rodgers (the team's **No. 1 prospect** and the Majors' **No. 9 prospect**, according to MLB Pipeline) compete for playing time at second -- a position manned primarily by **DJ LeMahieu** (now a free agent) since '13.

This past weekend, MLB.com learned that the Rockies were weighing pursuing Dozier on a short-term contract. Before then, the market for Dozier, LeMahieu and several other accomplished second basemen had been slow. In doing its due diligence, Colorado considered Dozier because of his history of power and his right-handed bat. Also, after two straight National League Wild Card Game showings and an appearance in the NL Division Series last season, the idea of going with a proven player appealed to the Rox.

But after the Rockies were revealed as a Dozier suitor, other teams (notably the Nationals and the Mets) were publicly identified in their pursuit of the veteran, a one-time All-Star who struggled to a .215 average last season with the Twins and Dodgers, while playing through a severe bone bruise on his right knee for most of the year.

While many Rockies fans are hoping LeMahieu -- a two-time All-Star and three-time NL Gold Glove Award winner -- can find his way back to Denver, his market is reportedly heating up, too. MLB Network insider Ken Rosenthal reported Thursday that the Giants were a possibility for LeMahieu, although that may be contingent upon San Francisco trading its incumbent at second, **Joe Panik**. An MLB exec told MLB.com's Jon Paul Morosi that the Brewers and Dodgers are best positioned to land LeMahieu now that Dozier has agreed to a deal with the Nationals.

As for the Rockies, their offseason plan has been to avoid lengthy and expensive contracts, and that has colored some of their strategy at second base.

Third baseman **Nolan Arenado** is in his final year of arbitration, and his 2019 salary is projected to eclipse MLB's single-season arbitration record -- \$23 million for **Josh Donaldson** -- set last year. The Rockies also hope to sign Arenado to a

multi-year deal, so they felt they could not get tied up in long-term contracts. Colorado's one big signing -- **Daniel Murphy**, to play first base -- was a \$24 million, two-year contract that includes a buyout with deferred money.

That said, the Rockies like their younger options.

McMahon, 24, was one of the game's top prospects going into 2018. He played mostly first base this past season and excelled in his brief time at second and third when injuries hit LeMahieu and Arenado.

Hampson, 24, was a third-round Draft pick in 2016 and impressed the Rockies in his first big league camp last spring. He burned through Double-A and Triple-A before earning his shot in the Majors in '18.

Both players appeared in the postseason in 2018.

Rodgers, 22, a first-round pick in 2015, made it to Triple-A last season and put himself in Major League consideration before hamstringing and shoulder injuries toward the end of the year pushed him off the field and cost him participation in the Arizona Fall League. But Rodgers is healthy, has been taking batting practice, and will soon be at the Rockies' training center in Scottsdale, Ariz., for workouts.

During this past month's Winter Meetings, general manager Jeff Bridich said the Rockies would miss LeMahieu if he didn't somehow swing their way or if another move isn't made, but Colorado believes the talents of its younger players will be sufficient.

"It's difficult to say right now because none of those guys have a ton of experience at the Major League level, [but] they're athletically all able to do it, and do it well," Bridich said. "They're all different than the incumbent [LeMahieu], and the incumbent is different than most typical second basemen. He does things that fit him because of his big body and his natural instincts.

"Maybe we have to position differently or we're going to have to figure out what these guys are going to do well defensively if they are the people that are going to be manning the position. We'll have to learn how to best do that."

Oberg, Rockies reportedly reach 1-year deal
Reliever avoids arbitration, will earn \$1.3 million in 2019
By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb
Jan. 10th, 2019

DENVER -- Right-handed relief pitcher **Scott Oberg** and the Rockies avoided arbitration by agreeing to a one-year, \$1.3 million contract on Thursday.

The deal was first reported by USA Today.

Oberg, 28, went 8-1 with a 2.45 ERA in 56 appearances in 2018 -- his best Major League season. The right-hander struggled early and was optioned to Triple-A Albuquerque, but after his return worked himself into a key role in the Rockies' bullpen.

The Rockies have agreed to terms with two of their seven arbitration-eligible players. Lefty **Chris Rusin**, in his second year of arbitration eligibility, agreed to a deal worth \$1.68 million.

Rockies' Nolan Arenado poised to make history as arbitration deadline looms

Right-hander reliever Scott Oberg signs one-year deal for \$1.3 million

By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

PUBLISHED: January 10, 2019 at 1:53 pm | UPDATED: January 10, 2019 at 7:06 pm

The Rockies' offseason has been a quiet one, save for the signing of first baseman Daniel Murphy to a two-year, \$24 million contract.

But news involving all-star third baseman Nolan Arenado, as well as all-star shortstop Trevor Story and starting pitcher Jon Gray, is likely to spice things up beginning Friday, when the deadline to exchange salary figures with arbitration-eligible players arrives at 11 a.m.

Right-hander reliever Scott Oberg, the Rockies' most consistent reliever last season when he went 8-1 with a 2.45 ERA and a 0.989 WHIP, came to terms with the Rockies on Thursday, signing a one-year deal for \$1.3 million.

For most teams, including the Rockies, Friday marks an unofficial deadline for negotiating one-year contracts to avoid arbitration. Teams and players can still work out a contract after Friday's deadline, but not reaching an agreement beforehand could indicate some contention.

Arenado is entering the final year of his contract and he's projected to make at least \$25 million, which would be the most for any player in an arbitration year. Josh Donaldson currently holds the record, set last year when he avoided arbitration by signing a one-year, \$23 million contract with Toronto.

Arenado earned \$17.75 million in 2018 and backed it up with another terrific season. He led the National League with 38 home runs while batting .297 and knocking in 110 runs. He won his sixth consecutive Gold Glove, was an all-star for the fourth time and finished third in the MVP voting.

Story, who's entering arbitration for the first time, will likely land a contract worth more than \$6 million. Gray, also arbitration-eligible for the first time, is in line to make about \$3 million. The other Rockies who are arbitration eligible are right-hander Chad Bettis, left-hander Tyler Anderson and catcher Tony Wolters. In November, left-handed reliever Chris Rusin avoided arbitration by signing a one-year contract worth \$1,687,500 — a \$400,000 raise from his 2018 contract.

For teams that do not reach an agreement with their players by Friday, a number of scenarios are possible. The team and player will each submit a figure they believe is appropriate for the player's 2019 salary and have the opportunity to reach agreement based on those numbers. If the two sides can't agree by the time of a hearing in February, they will meet before an arbitrator, who will choose either the player's or team's salary submission.

Last January, outfielder Charlie Blackmon signed a one-year, \$14 million contract to avoid arbitration, but then signed a six-year, \$108 million contract extension deal in April, replacing the deal he signed in January.

Larry Walker's Hall of Fame vote surge leaves Rockies outfielder encouraged

If Walker isn't elected this year, he has one more chance in 2020

By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

PUBLISHED: January 10, 2019 at 6:00 am | UPDATED: January 10, 2019 at 7:59 am

Larry Walker is riding a wave of momentum that could land him in Cooperstown, if not in 2019, then quite possibly in 2020. If it happens, he would become the first Rockies player inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

As of Wednesday, Walker had received votes on 66 percent of the ballots that had been made public (162 of 412, or 39.3 percent), according to tabulations by Hall of Fame tracker Ryan Thibodaux. The tide has turned quickly for Walker, who played for the Rockies from 1995 through part of 2004 before he was traded to St. Louis.

During his first year of eligibility in 2011, the right fielder received 20.3 percent of the vote. That total dipped to 10.2 percent in 2014. Then the surge began. Walker's vote total jumped from 15.5 percent in 2016 to 21.9 percent in 2017 and up to 34.1 percent last year.

"I've seen the numbers and it's quite a big difference, for sure," Walker said from his home in Palm Beach, Fla. "I've got to say that it's encouraging. People tell me I might have a chance, and it's a great feeling to be recognized that way.

"But really, it's a great feeling just to be on the ballot for nine years, to be honest with you. That, in and of itself, is a great thrill and an honor for me."

Players need a vote on 75 percent of the ballots to be enshrined in Cooperstown. The class of 2019 will be announced on Jan. 22. If Walker is not elected this year, he'll have one more chance next year. Candidates can be on the ballot for 10 years.

Walker remains cautiously optimistic.

"I'm thinking I'll end up with 53 or 58 percent this year," Walker said. "So, we'll see what happens next year. If I make it, obviously, it would be 'Holy cow, I made it!'

"If I don't make it, that's OK, I can say I was on the ballot for 10 years. I don't want to downplay it, but I don't want to overexcite myself and then get shot in the foot and be upset."

Over his 17-year career (1989-2005), Walker slashed .313/.400/.565 with 383 home runs. Walker was also regarded as an excellent defender with very good speed and terrific baserunning skills.

Walker won three batting titles, three Silver Sluggers and seven Gold Gloves while making five all-star teams. He was named the 1997 National League MVP when he slashed .366/.452/.720 with a 1.172 OPS, 130 RBIs and 49 home runs.

Still, Coors Field's reputation as a hitter's paradise has always counted against Walker, as did his numerous injuries. At Coors, Walker put up astronomical numbers: .381/.462/.710 with 154 homers in 2,501 plate appearances. In other ballparks, his line was a solid .282/.372/.501.

Walker's Path to Cooperstown

Larry Walker's year-by-year vote totals in Hall of Fame balloting:

Year	Percentage
2011	20.3
2012	22.9
2013	21.6
2014	10.2
2015	11.8
2016	15.5
2017	21.9
2018	34.1
2019	66.0

Note: 2019 vote percentage based on tabulations by Hall of Fame tracker Ryan Thibodaux. Through Wednesday, Walker had received votes on 66 percent of the ballots that had been made public (162 of 412, or 39.3 percent).

Rockies Mailbag: Nolan Arenado must want to stay in Colorado rather than test free agency
By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post
PUBLISHED: January 8, 2019 at 5:59 pm | UPDATED: January 9, 2019 at 9:35 am

Denver Post sports writer Patrick Saunders posts his Rockies Mailbag every other week on Tuesdays during the season and once per month during the offseason.

Pose a Rockies — or MLB — related question for the Rockies Mailbag.

I have a question stated through the eye of metrics and I hope ownership sees it, as I hope to hear your opinion/response: Why is there a question regarding Nolan Arenado and his future in Colorado? Use a weighted metric that incorporates true value based on trackable stats (even while allowing for a variation due to Coors Field) and Nolan still comes up ahead of both Bryce Harper and Manny Machado.

Now a statement more than a question: why hasn't this deal been done — especially when the average fan is smart enough to see the value of profit-based revenue, also and just wants to be rewarded for being a fan. He deserves the money and his character (especially when viewed against the other two) implies that the Rockies will only get even more from a strong showing of faith and loyalty! Pay Nolan!

— JT Hall, Denver

JT, if it were only that simple!

First, let me say that I love your passion for the Rockies and Arenado. But there are a lot of elements at play here. I'm just going to list them and let you ponder.

1. Arenado must want to stay in Colorado rather than test free agency. Thus far, his message has been mixed. He says he loves playing for the Rockies, and I believe him. But he's also indicated numerous times that his ultimate baseball goal is to play for a perennial contender.

This is what Arenado told me last winter:

"There is something to be said for being with an organization for your whole career, I definitely believe in that. I admired Todd (Helton) and I admired (Yankees icon) Derek Jeter; guys who stick with one team their whole career. So I have a lot of respect for what Todd did. But at the end of the day, I don't want to be in Todd's shoes where I only go to the playoffs twice in my career."

2. Arenado is well aware that a huge contract – let's say eight years at \$30 million per year for \$240 million — could very much limit what else the Rockies might be able to do financially. The Rockies are weighing this reality, too.

3. Arenado, who turns 28 on April 16, is older than either Harper or Machado, and that could be a factor in negotiations. Listen, I'm a huge Arenado fan, both as a player and as a person, and I would love to see him become a Rockie for life. But the reality is that Arenado could be gone and playing in a major market in 2020 (or even 2019).

One more thing: Arenado is usually very open and available during the offseason. Not so this winter. He's keeping a very low profile and has been reluctant to talk. I'm not sure what that means, other than the fact that he hates talking about contracts and money. However, it could also be an indication that negotiations between Arenado and the Rockies are heating up.

Greetings Patrick, as we look forward towards the inevitable payroll dynamics that will play a part in Nolan Arenado's future with the Rox, I have a two-part question: Do you believe the team will take an aggressive approach towards the season to show commitment to winning, or will they be conservative in order to preserve the resources necessary to retain him (asked with the assumption he is as valuable to the future of the franchise as many believe he is?)

— *J. Thomas, Englewood*

J. Thomas, I believe I answered much of your question with my previous answer. But I'll add this: I don't think the Rockies will be especially aggressive during what's left of the offseason, in part because of the possibility of signing Arenado and in part because they believe in the young players in the system.

Hey Patrick, I noticed in the past mailbags fans are upset with Rockies ownership and Jeff Bridich for not signing Arenado to a long-term deal. Do you think fans forget it is on the players as well? They do have the right to become free agents and listen to offers and play where they want as well. Would love your thoughts.

— *Jeff, Wellington*

Jeff, see my comments above.

I saw a story about the Rockies maybe adding a player for this coming season, but there were some budget concerns. Where did the Rox wind up last year on salaries compared to other clubs? Where did they rank on attendance?

— *Kent Fonda, Denver*

Kent, the Rockies are spending money more freely than they have in the past. Earlier in the offseason general manager Jeff Bridich said the club would follow a “responsible growth” plan. Exactly what that means remains to be seen.

Also, keep in mind that the Rockies’ payroll for 2019 could very well depend on the club’s plans to work out a lucrative, long-term deal with Arenado. Whether or not they are able to work out a deal now could well determine how much money the club is willing to spend.

As for your basic questions:

- Colorado’ 2018 opening-day payroll was \$136.9 million, a franchise high. Their payroll for their 40-man roster at the end of the season was \$151.2 million, also a franchise high and ranking 15th in the majors.
- The Rockies drew 3,015,880 fans to Coors Field in 2018, ranking seventh in the majors in home attendance with an average of 37,233 fans per game. It was the first time since 2001 that the Rockies drew more than 3 million fans.

We have two questions from Dave from Fort Collins

Question 1. I asked this during the season when Jon Gray was pitching well, but then he went downhill and the question didn’t get answered. Simply, would you include Gray in a deal for a top-of-the-rotation starter (think Noah Syndergaard or Corey Kluber). I realize there are other parts to such a deal, but the basic question is does a No. 1 starter give the Rockies enough of an upgrade to punt on Gray’s potential?

That is a really great question. Teams have asked about Gray in the past, in combination with some Colorado prospects. The deal was never good enough for the Rockies to pull off the trade.

As for your question about landing a pitcher like Snydergaard or Kluber, I would make that trade, because I think adding another really good pitcher could help the Rockies’ quest for a World Series. But, again, it would take more than Gray to land a high-profile pitcher.

And let me add that I think it’s way too early to give up on Gray. He still has an excellent chance to become a solid, dependable major-league pitcher.

Question 2. I am baffled as to why so many so-called baseball experts seem to think just about any player can make the switch to first base and perform in a competent manner. And this isn’t a slam at Bridich for the Ian Desmond and Daniel Murphy signings. Early on there was speculation the Yankees would sign Harper to play first base. Yankees GM Brian Cashman shot that down. Last year it was Jay Bruce playing first base. What’s

behind the idea that it's such an easy transition?

— *Dave, Fort Collins*

Another good question. I think it's fair to say that playing first base doesn't require the overall athleticism of other positions, but it does take special skills that some players just don't have. I think the Rockies have overlooked that.

Desmond, for instance, was good at moving forward on bunts, but I think he's well below average around the bag. Given the greatness of Arenado and Trevor Story on the left side of the infield, you want a first baseman who can scoop tough throws – thus allowing Arenado and Story to make aggressive plays and throws. I don't think Desmond is that guy. Will Murphy be better? I think so. But he's no Todd Helton.

How has no one picked up DJ LeMahieu? He is a lunch pail guy who just comes to work every day and wins not to mention a Gold Glover who is a career .298 hitter.

— *Jack, Canon City*

Jack, you would be hard pressed to find a bigger fan of LeMahieu than me. He's a winning player, on the field and in the clubhouse. I think with just a slight adjustment in his swing, he's capable of hitting 20-25 home runs in a season.

Anyway, I'm confident LeMahieu is going to land a good deal. I'm guessing it will be for three years. I hope he gets a big payday.

As to why he hasn't been signed yet, I think it's mostly a matter of the slow market. I think once Manny Machado and Bryce Harper finally land somewhere, the free-agent signings will heat up. I don't think the fact that LeMahieu hasn't signed yet is a reflection on his skills and reputation as much as it is a reflection of the current economic state of the game.

There hasn't been much talk of Bud Black this offseason. Do you think the Rockies will extend his contract this spring before the season starts?

— *Alex, Littleton*

Alex, I wish I had a definitive answer for you, but I don't. I've asked both Black and Bridich about the contract and received warm and fuzzy answers, but nothing concrete. In November, Bridich told me: "There's a great appreciation for who Buddy is and what he's done with us here... There are a lot of positive vibes all the way around."

At the winter meetings, Black told me: “Well, I’m concerned about what’s going on at the present, right? I think that where we are as a team takes precedent over anything that might be happening with me. So that’s where my focus is. But I’m happy to hear that Jeff thinks there’s a good vibe. That’s a good thing.”

Bottom line: There is a mutual option for 2020 between the Rockies and Black, and I do think Black gets a contract extension, and I’m betting it will be announced during spring training. That’s my “educated guess.”

Hello Patrick, I’m thinking A.J. Pollack would look good in Denver? Late signings, Patrick you have ears, tell us!

— *Daniel, Juneau*

Daniel, I do have ears... and a slightly large nose!

Anyway, Pollock is looking for a deal somewhere near the five years and \$80 million Lorenzo Cain got from the Brewers last winter. So I don’t see Pollock playing for the Rockies. Plus, his injury history is a red flag for Colorado, especially given the wear and tear of playing home games at Coors Field. I don’t think it’s going to happen. I would rather see them make a play for a catcher.

I won’t soon forget Tony Wolters’ game-winning hit in the wild card game. And I seem to remember that Chris Iannetta had a few big hits for us too. The growth of our starting pitching indicates they are owed some credit for their defense and game-calling as well. But with the availability of Yasmani Grandal, why haven’t the Rockies made more of an effort to sign him? He would be an immediate upgrade over our current options on offense, and even on a bad offensive day, he’d be an asset behind the plate. Plus, we wouldn’t have to give up any prospects to get him. Adding a solid offensive and defensive catcher would seem to be a move that could help us finally win the division. So what are the Rockies waiting for?

— *Adam, Westminster*

Adam, I’m not knocking you, but I don’t think a lot of fans understand the dynamics at play during the offseason. There is a domino effect at play here, and it begins with some of the top players setting the market. Movement, however, is slow this winter, as it was last year. No other team has signed Grandal yet, either.

I think the Rockies are a long shot to land the former Dodgers catcher, but I’m not closing the door completely.

Following is a good synopsis of the Grandal situation from MLB.com:

Yasmani Grandal is “staying patient, believing a catcher with his skills and performance will draw requisite interest,” as ESPN’s Jeff Passan wrote recently. But clubs keep addressing their backstop needs, and Grandal remains unsigned. What if the offer the 30-year-old is seeking doesn’t materialize?

Among the many teams to bring in a catcher of late, the Indians are the most recent, having acquired Kevin Plawecki from the Mets on Sunday. In addition, the Angels signed Jonathan Lucroy, and the Mets inked Wilson Ramos after reported talks with Grandal on a possible four-year, \$60 million offer didn’t work out. Put simply, there just aren’t that many catcher-needy teams left to drive up the bidding for the All-Star, especially for a long-term contract.

“The Dodgers, the Rockies, the Astros ... and the Phillies ... there are not a lot of [empty] chairs,” MLB Network analyst and former general manager Dan O’Dowd pointed out on MLB Now in a discussion about where Grandal could wind up. “I think he’s going to get his money, but I’m just not sure about the length of the deal.”

As a result, MLB.com’s Mark Feinsand speculates that Grandal could wind up having to accept a one-year deal to return to the Dodgers before testing the market again next offseason. He won’t be eligible to receive another qualifying offer at that point, which means teams won’t need to forfeit a Draft pick to sign him, something that might be hindering his market this year.

FYI, last season, Grandal hit .241 with 24 home runs and 68 RBIs, but he struggled mightily in the offseason, at the plate and behind the dish.

I sincerely appreciate your coverage of the Rockies... you’ve made your father proud!

Everyone seems concerned about our free-agent losses (LeMahieu, Carlos Gonzalez, Adam

Ottavino and Gerardo Parra) but at least we have reasonable options to replace them. My concern is our

catching. Iannetta is the best backup catcher in MLB and while Wolters may be a good pitch-framer, his offense is

well below MLB standards. With this glaring need, the Rockies front office continues to be the most passive in baseball. Please help me understand their rationale for continuing to ignore this vital position. Thanks.

— *Mark, Centennial*

Mark, thanks for the compliment. I do think my dad (longtime Denver journalist Walter “Dusty” Saunders) is proud.

Having said that, I'm not sure it's fair to characterize the Rockies front office as "the most passive" in baseball. Are Bridich and Co. cautious and conservative in their approach? I think so, but they do have a blueprint that they follow and I do think the plan is yielding results.

Do I wish they were more aggressive? Yes, because I think the Rockies' window to win is open now. That's said, I don't have access to the information and all of the parameters of what's discussed in Colorado's front office.

As for the catching situation, I do think it's needs an upgrade, but the only huge upgrade, in my mind, would be to trade for J.T. Realmuto and I don't see that happening.

Finally, I think fans need to realize that the wear and tear of playing at altitude means the Rockies are going to have to use some sort of platoon at catcher – say a 110-52 game split.

Hi Patrick, hope your offseason is treating you well. Have you enjoyed your time off and gone on any trips this winter? Also, what are you most looking forward to this spring? Thanks again for the Rox coverage.

— *Garry, Aurora*

Thanks, Garry. No major trips, but I had a great time over the holidays while staying at Grand Lake (skiing, snowshoeing, eating!).

As for spring training, which is just five weeks away, I'm really looking forward to see how Jon Gray has changed his body and his approach; I'm eager to see how top prospect Brendan Rodgers responds to his chance to make the major-league club; I want to see a healthy David Dahl for a full spring; and I look forward to late-night swims in the pool at my condo complex.

JAWS and the 2019 Hall of Fame Ballot: Big Jumps Redux

by Jay Jaffe - January 10, 2019 | Fangraphs

The following article is part of Jay Jaffe's ongoing look at the candidates on the BBWAA 2019 Hall of Fame ballot. For a detailed introduction to this year's ballot, and other candidates in the series, use the tool above; an introduction to JAWS can be found [here](#). For a tentative schedule and a chance to fill out a Hall of Fame ballot for our crowdsourcing project, see [here](#). All WAR figures refer to the Baseball-Reference version unless otherwise indicated.

It would be inaccurate to say that in the months from November through January, I spend hours a day simply refreshing and reloading **the Hall of Fame Ballot Tracker**. On the advice of my doctor, I've cut down to an hour a day, tops, and besides, I've got spreadsheets of my own that get jealous of how I spend my time. My voting results sheet, which has every candidate's year-by-year progress since 1966, is a particular favorite. With my profiles of all 35 candidates on this year's ballot complete, it's time to think about what these two particular spreadsheets are telling us right now, particularly with regards to two candidates: **Larry Walker** and **Mike Mussina**.

First, let's look at the Tracker, where a total of 162 ballots — an estimated 39.3% of the electorate — had been published as of the wee hours of Thursday morning.

2019 vs. 2018 Ballot Tracker Comparison

Player	2019 Pre	2018 Pre	Dif	2018 Final	Dif
Mariano Rivera	100.0%	—	—	—	—
Roy Halladay	94.4%	—	—	—	—
Edgar Martinez	90.7%	77.3%	13.4%	70.4%	20.3%
Mike Mussina	82.1%	70.0%	12.1%	63.5%	18.6%
Roger Clemens	74.1%	64.4%	9.7%	57.3%	16.8%
Curt Schilling	73.5%	60.3%	13.2%	51.2%	22.3%
Barry Bonds	73.5%	64.4%	9.1%	56.4%	17.1%
Larry Walker	66.0%	38.5%	27.5%	34.1%	31.9%
Fred McGriff	35.8%	20.2%	15.6%	23.2%	12.6%
Omar Vizquel	35.2%	33.6%	1.6%	37.0%	-1.8%
Manny Ramirez	25.9%	22.3%	3.6%	22.0%	3.9%
Scott Rolen	21.0%	11.7%	9.3%	10.2%	10.8%
Todd Helton	19.8%	—	—	—	—
Billy Wagner	15.4%	10.5%	4.9%	11.1%	4.3%
Gary Sheffield	13.6%	10.9%	2.7%	11.1%	2.5%
Sammy Sosa	13.6%	10.5%	3.1%	7.8%	5.8%
Jeff Kent	11.7%	13.4%	-1.7%	14.5%	-2.8%

Andrew Jones	8.0%	5.3%	2.7%	7.3%	0.7%
Andy Pettitte	7.4%	—	—	—	—
Michael Young	1.9%	1.9%	—	—	—
Lance Berkman	1.2%	1.2%	—	—	—
Roy Oswalt	1.2%	1.2%			
Miguel Tejada	0.6%	0.6%	—	—	—

SOURCE: <http://bit.ly/hall19>

2019 Pre-election results based upon 162 published ballots. 2018 Pre-election results based upon 247 published ballots. 2018 final results based upon 422 total ballots.

That's everybody who's received a vote this year. For the purposes of comparison, I've included their 2018 pre-election published results (which included 247 ballots, meaning that we can probably expect a whole lot more to pour in before this year's results are announced on January 22) and the year-to-year difference to this point. I've also included their 2018 actual vote shares as well as the difference between those numbers and the current Tracker results.

Right now, it appears that we'll have either a three- or four-man class, with the suspense centering around whether Mussina can stay above 75%. There's suspense as to whether Rivera can stay at 100%, too, but it seems quite probable that as with **Ken Griffey Jr.** in 2016, any dissenting ballots will be anonymous. One need only look at the baseball world's over-the-top reaction to Worcester Telegram writer Bill Ballou's **non-vote** to understand why. His comparison of Rivera to NFL placekicker Adam Vinateri may have caused some eye rolling, but it's hardly a surprise to find somebody within the BBWAA electorate who is philosophically opposed to including any relievers, even great ones.

Right now, five candidates have public vote shares at least 10 points higher than last year's public final, with Walker leading the way by a country mile. Indeed, his share raises the question not only of the largest year-to-year jumps we've seen but whether **the 2014 rule change** truncating candidacies from 15 years to 10 has increased the frequency of such jumps.

It certainly *feels* that way. I explored the topic of big jumps **three years ago at SI.com**, but we now have four years worth of results in the era of 10-year candidacies. We also know that voters have set and broken modern records for names per ballot; last year's average of 8.46 was the post-1966 high-water mark, eclipsing 2014 (8.39) and 2015 (8.42). That's led to the elections of 16 players by the writers over the past five years, also a record.

So between that changing landscape and Walker's big number above, the subject is worth another look. First off, here are the top 20 year-to-year gains since the voters returned to annual balloting in 1966:

Largest 1-Year Gains on BBWAA Ballot Since 1967

Rk	Player	Yr0	Pct0	Yr1	Pct1	Gain
1	Luis Aparicio+	1982	41.9%	1983	67.4%	25.5%
2	Barry Larkin+	2011	62.1%	2012	86.4%	24.3%
3	Gil Hodges	1969	24.1%	1970	48.3%	24.2%
4	Nellie Fox+	1975	21.0%	1976	44.8%	23.8%
5	Hal Newhouser+	1974	20.0%	1975	42.8%	22.8%
6	Jim Rice+	1999	29.4%	2000	51.5%	22.1%
7	Don Drysdale+	1976	29.4%	1977	51.4%	22.0%
8	Vladimir Guerrero+	2017	71.7%	2018	92.9%	21.2%
9	Johnny Sain	1974	14.0%	1975	34.0%	20.0%
10	Early Wynn+	1970	46.7%	1971	66.7%	20.0%
11	Minnie Minoso	1985	1.8%	1986	20.9%	19.1%
12	Phil Cavarretta	1974	16.7%	1975	35.6%	18.9%
13	Early Wynn+	1969	27.9%	1970	46.7%	18.8%
14	Yogi Berra+	1971	67.2%	1972	85.6%	18.4%
15	Ralph Kiner+	1966	24.5%	1967	42.5%	18.0%
16	Billy Williams+	1982	23.4%	1983	40.9%	17.5%
17	Luis Aparicio+	1983	67.4%	1984	84.6%	17.2%
18	Bob Lemon+	1972	29.5%	1973	46.6%	17.1%
19	Eddie Mathews+	1977	62.4%	1978	79.4%	17.0%
20	Lew Burdette	1976	5.4%	1977	22.2%	16.8%

+ = Hall of Famer

Guerrero is the only newcomer to that table since the change in ballot tenures, but elsewhere within the top 40 are **Tim Raines** (25th with 16.2% gained from 2016 to 2017), **Martinez** (34th with 15.2% gained from 2016 to 2017), and **Jeff Bagwell** (38th with 14.6% gained from 2016 to 2017). Also above the 10-point threshold from recent years are the gains from 2017 to 2018 for both **Walker** (12.2%) and **Martinez** (11.8%), not to mention **Curt Schilling** (10.0% from 2014 to 2015). Note that the vast majority, but not all, of these guys — everybody with a starting point above 20% except **Hodges** — eventually wound up getting elected.

Let's break this down:

Frequency of Big Gains on BBWAA Ballot

Gain	1967-2014	Per Yr	2015-2018	Per Yr
10%+	96	2.00	7	1.75
15%+	33	0.69	3	0.75
20%+	9	0.19	1	0.25

25%+	1	0.02	0	0.00
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Admittedly, we're dealing with small sample sizes for the post-2014 period, but it doesn't look like big gains have become significantly more common. Gains of at least 10 points have actually become slightly less common, though it's worth noting that the difference comes down to Barry Bonds' 9.5-point gain from 2016 to 2017 just missing my cutoff. If Walker gains 15 or 20 points, and if all five of the candidates who are up at least 10 points relative to last year hold onto their gains, those increased frequencies would start to stand out, but I don't think we can make any strong assertions about this yet.

So let's table that theory and focus on Walker, who in his ninth year on the ballot has already picked up 34 votes from people who did not include him last year, and has gone 5-for-7 among first-time voters. For starters, his current year-to-year gain on the public ballots would displace Aparicio atop the one-year table, which is pretty cool; if his final share is 59.7% or higher — and yes, that number is nearly unfathomable given where his candidacy has been — he's the champion in this category. Checking in very quickly on a couple of close-at-hand projections, the model of Nathaniel Rakich (@baseballot), which is based upon multi-year public-versus-private voting splits, had Walker at 63% **as of Tuesday**, while the probabilistic model of Jason Sardell (@sarsdell) had him with a median of 57% as of **the wee hours of Thursday morning**.

At somewhere in the ballpark of 60%, Walker could also place high on the leaderboard for biggest gains over two or three cycles. Here are the top gains over a two-year span:

Largest 2-Year Gains on BBWAA Ballot Since 1968						
RK	Player	Yr0	Pct0	Yr2	Pct2	Gain
1	Luis Aparicio+	1982	41.9%	1984	84.6%	42.7%
2	Early Wynn+	1969	27.9%	1971	66.7%	38.8%
3	Barry Larkin+	2010	51.6%	2012	86.4%	34.8%
4	Gary Carter+	1999	33.8%	2001	64.9%	31.1%
5	Eddie Mathews+	1976	48.7%	1978	79.4%	30.7%
6	Luis Aparicio+	1981	36.9%	1983	67.4%	30.5%
7	Don Drysdale+	1975	21.0%	1977	51.4%	30.4%
8	Nellie Fox+	1982	30.6%	1984	61.0%	30.4%
9	Early Wynn+	1970	46.7%	1972	76.0%	29.3%
10	Jim Rice+	1999	29.4%	2001	57.9%	28.5%
11	Don Drysdale+	1976	29.4%	1978	57.8%	28.4%
12	Nellie Fox+	1983	46.3%	1985	74.7%	28.4%

13	Ryne Sandberg+	2003	49.2%	2005	76.2%	27.0%
14	Edgar Martinez	2016	43.4%	2018	70.4%	27.0%
15	Billy Williams+	1982	23.4%	1984	50.1%	26.7%
16	Bob Lemon+	1974	52.1%	1976	78.6%	26.5%
17	Duke Snider+	1976	41.0%	1978	67.0%	26.0%
18	Gil Hodges	1969	24.1%	1971	50.0%	25.9%
19	Lou Boudreau+	1968	51.6%	1970	77.3%	25.7%
20	Juan Marichal+	1981	58.1%	1983	83.7%	25.6%

+ = Hall of Famer

There's a lot of crossover between that table and the biggest one-year gains, as you might expect. Eleven of the top 12 spots, and 15 of the 20, are names repeated from the previous table, some of them (Aparicio, Fox, Wynn) more than once, though the repeat appearances of Fox and Lemon have no connection to the gains from the first table. Everybody on that second table is in the Hall of Fame save for Martinez, who appears to be headed there, and Hodges, who always seems to wind up as the exception. If Walker were to get 60%, his two-year gain of 38.1% would rank third.

Onto the three-year gains:

Largest 3-Year Gains on BBWAA Ballot Since 1969						
RK	Player	Yr0	Pct0	Yr3	Pct3	Gain
1	Early Wynn	1969	27.9%	1972	76.0%	48.1%
2	Luis Aparicio	1981	36.9%	1984	84.6%	47.7%
3	Nellie Fox	1982	30.6%	1985	74.7%	44.1%
4	Billy Williams	1982	23.4%	1985	63.8%	40.4%
5	Gary Carter	1999	33.8%	2002	72.7%	38.9%
6	Eddie Mathews	1975	40.9%	1978	79.4%	38.5%
7	Don Drysdale	1975	21.0%	1978	57.8%	36.8%
8	Billy Williams	1984	50.1%	1987	85.7%	35.6%
9	Luis Aparicio	1980	32.2%	1983	67.4%	35.2%
10	Bob Lemon	1972	29.5%	1975	64.4%	34.9%
11	Billy Williams	1983	40.9%	1986	74.1%	33.2%
12	Bob Lemon	1973	46.6%	1976	78.6%	32.0%
13	Duke Snider	1975	35.6%	1978	67.0%	31.4%
14	Duke Snider	1977	55.4%	1980	86.5%	31.1%
15	Robin Roberts	1973	56.1%	1976	86.9%	30.8%
16	Rich Gossage	2005	55.2%	2008	85.8%	30.6%
17	Rich Gossage	2004	40.7%	2007	71.2%	30.5%
18	Duke Snider	1976	41.0%	1979	71.3%	30.3%
19	Orlando Cepeda	1991	43.3%	1994	73.5%	30.2%

20	Eddie Mathews	1974	32.3%	1977	62.4%	30.1%
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Everyone's a winner — all of those players are now Hall of Famers, so I excluded the key. Again, many of the same names are repeated from the previous table, some from within the same stretches. Note that the three-year gains aren't that much larger than the two-year ones, because of the upper bound; cross 75% and you're done, as three of the top five guys from the two-year gain table did. Again, taking 60% as a starting point for Walker, a three-year gain of 44.5% would rank third.

Would finishing at 60% give Walker a chance at reaching 75% in his final year? Going back to the modern history of one-year gains, there have been 36 such jumps, 12 of which carried a candidate across the finish line:

Largest One-Year Gains Resulting in Election						
RK	Player	Yr0	Pct0	Yr1	Pct1	Gain
1	Barry Larkin	2011	62.1%	2012	86.4%	24.3%
2	Vladimir Guerrero	2017	71.7%	2018	92.9%	21.2%
3	Yogi Berra	1971	67.2%	1972	85.6%	18.4%
4	Luis Aparicio	1983	67.4%	1984	84.6%	17.2%
5	Eddie Mathews	1977	62.4%	1978	79.4%	17.0%
6	Ralph Kiner	1974	58.9%	1975	75.4%	16.5%
7	Tony Perez	1999	60.8%	2000	77.2%	16.4%
8	Roberto Alomar	2010	73.7%	2011	90.0%	16.3%
9	Tim Lincecum	2016	69.8%	2017	86.0%	16.2%
10	Rollie Fingers	1991	65.7%	1992	81.2%	15.5%
11	Duke Snider	1979	71.3%	1980	86.5%	15.2%
12	Ryne Sandberg	2004	61.1%	2005	76.2%	15.1%

Since 1967.

Of interest there is the fact that four such candidates were within 2.5 points of 60%, suggesting that yes, there's a chance Walker could pull such a climb off, which would be rather miraculous given that we're talking about a player who was at 11.8% in 2015, halfway through his candidacy — or, more importantly, at 11.8% with just five cycles remaining. We haven't seen anything like that, even given the trajectories of Wynn (who with exactly 300 wins was bound to gain entry sooner or later, slow start notwithstanding) and Aparicio.

Circling back to Mussina, who received 63.5% last year, in modern history there have been 82 candidates who gained at least 11.5 points from the previous year, with a total of 23 reaching 75% and thus gaining entry. I'll skip the table for that;

we already know that the Moose has an easier road ahead of him than Walker, particularly given that even if he falls short this year, he's got four election cycles remaining, and virtually everybody above 70% (19 out of 20, as noted **here**) was elected the following year.

There's more to be said about the potential elections of Mussina this year and Walker next, particularly when it comes to the minutiae and patterns within the Tracker. Towards that end, we'll soon have a couple members of the Tracker troupe weighing in on such topics here at FanGraphs, but for now, the take-home message is that the general history of modern BBWAA voting tells us that it's very possible we'll see Mussina elected this year, thus creating the third four-man BBWAA class in five years (2015 and 2018 being the others), and that there really does appear to be a chance Walker is elected next year.

The Rockies don't have a catcher problem

The current group is already good at what makes catchers most valuable

By Renee Dechert@307Renee - Jan 9, 2019, 8:00am MST | Purple Row

On Friday, January 4, **MLB.com's Mike Petriello** **tweeted** his hot stove plea to the **Rockies**:

Flogging an extremely dead horse here, but I have no idea why the Rockies aren't all-in on **Grandal**. Elite framing would make those quality young P even better, their lineup still needs lots of help, and they're not as good as the **Dodgers** are right now. Go forth.

Although former **Dodger** and current free agent **Yasmani Grandal** had a less-than-stellar 2018 post-season, Petriello has been his consistent **advocate**. To summarize, **Grandal** is available, comparable to **[JT] Realmuto**, and would not require losing prospects in a trade (although he would cost the signing team a draft choice).

Petriello **has been clear about** how good Realmuto is, too. Although one year remains on his contract, Realmuto **has said** he wants to leave the **Marlins**. **Houston's Martin Maldonado** is another free agent option who's been linked to the Rockies by **MLB Trade Rumors**.

Like Petriello, Rockies fans have been urging the team to do *something* about the catching position, given that primary catchers **Chris Iannetta** and **Tony Wolters** were relatively unproductive in terms of offense. Back-up catchers **Tom Murphy** and **Drew Butera** saw little playing time.

Keep in mind, all indications are that the Rockies like their current catching corps. As **Jeff Bridichtold Thomas Harding** prior to the 2018 non-waiver trade deadline, "We're getting more questions from teams asking if we would trade them catching than us reaching out to anybody." There is no indication his thinking has changed.

With this in mind, I looked at offensive and defensive numbers, possible salaries, and intangibles. In addition to **Iannetta**, **Wolters**, and **Murphy**, I added **Butera** (to provide some contrast) as well as **Grandal**, Realmuto, and **Maldonado**.

The numbers indicated the current Rockies catchers are adequate, as is **Maldonado**, although Grandal or Realmuto would provide an upgrade. It's worth examining the cost and consequences of going after one of those upgrades.

Defense

First, consider the each catcher's defensive abilities. I've relied on CSAA, "**Called Strikes Above Average**," and framing. *Baseball Prospectus* defines CSAA as

a measure of how many called strikes the player in question creates for his team. In the case of catchers, we isolate the effects of the pitcher, umpire, and other situational factors which allows us to identify how many additional called strikes the catcher is generating, above or below average. For catchers, this skill is commonly described as 'framing'

Here's what the defensive metrics show:

Defensive metrics

Player	CSAA	MLB Rank	Framing Chances	MLB Rank	Framing Runs	MLB Rank
Iannetta	0.002	48	5660	15	1.4	34
Wolters	0.019	5	3414	42	10.2	9
Murphy	0.003	62	1203	77	-0.3	67
Former Rockies						
Butera	0.003	110	3193	46	-7.1	106
Possible Options						
Grandal	0.015	14	6851	9	15.07	1
Realmuto	0.002	57	7258	5	-0.4	71
Maldonado	0.005	37	7057	7	5.9	18

In terms of CSAA, Wolters is easily the best of this group (5th) with Grandal ranking second (14th). However, in terms of framing, Grandal is the best in baseball and Wolters comes in second at 9th.

By a number of metrics, Grandal is the best defensive catcher in baseball, and while Wolters' defensive skill is exceptional, it does not rise to the level of Grandal's.

Offense

Given their anemic offense, the Rockies need bats. Catcher was one the team's least productive positions in 2018. Here are the rankings in terms of offense. In addition to slash lines, I wanted to explore how each catcher stands in terms of **bWARP** — Wins Above Replacement Player [WARP] gained as a non-pitcher.

Offensive metrics

Player	Average	OBP	SLG	bWARP
Iannetta	0.224	0.345	0.385	2.2
Wolters	0.17	0.292	0.286	2.1
Murphy	0.226	0.25	0.387	-0.3
Former Rockies				
Butera	0.214	0.313	0.429	-0.1
Catcher Possibilities				
Grandal	0.241	0.349	0.466	5
Realmuto	0.277	0.34	0.484	4.3
Maldonado	0.231	0.257	0.398	0.3

Grandal and Realmuto are clear upgrades. Maldonado brings minimal offense though he's better than Wolters, whose overall value is badly damaged by his poor hitting, despite some key offensive moments in 2018.

The Money

Given that the Rockies are trying to negotiate a contract extension with **Nolan Arenado**, money is a consideration. The Marlins have said they would be open to a deal for Realmuto, though all indications are the **asking price is ridiculously high**. Grandal has a strong sense of his market value given that he declined a \$17.9 million qualifying offer from the **Dodgers** and **is said** to have rejected a four-year \$60 million offer from the **Mets**. (**Ken Rosenthal reports** industry insiders believe his final salary will far below that.) By comparison, **Iannetta** is on a two-year, \$8.2 million dollar contract while Wolters is just now entering his first arbitration year.

MLB Trade Rumors predicted that Maldonado would sign with the Rockies for two years and \$8 million, but signing Maldonado means, essentially, getting a 32-year-old **Iannetta**, who will be 36 in 2019.

So the question becomes how much is a catcher worth in terms of allocating future monies for retaining team cornerstones (e.g., **Arenado** and **Story**) and pitchers (e.g., **Freeland** and **Márquez**)?

Unmeasurables

There are also factors the data misses. For example, what is the value of Iannetta's experience? As he **explains**, "For a catcher, maybe you had a conversation with a pitcher that changed his mentality, and then he pitched a great game. . . .

Or another guy gets a hit in a certain situation, and maybe you helped the pitcher relax in a certain situation. You can't put that on a stat sheet." Iannetta was **Kyle Freeland's** go-to catcher in 2018. To what extent was Iannetta's experience relevant to **Freeland's** success?

The same is true of hitting. Remember Iannetta's **walk-off walk** against the Dodgers on August 12? As **Nick Groke explained**, Black chose to pinch hit Iannetta over **Carlos González** because "Iannetta is a more picky hitter and Gonzalez is better as a starter than off the bench." That's experience.

Similarly, **Tony Wolters** caught German Márquez, who had a stellar year. Here's Groke's **description** of a Rockies game against the **Phillies**:

Their breathing exercises started in the third inning Wednesday, when German Márquez and **Tony Wolters** synchronized their baseball *zazen* and centered a focus back on the steady steamrolling of hitters.

"I wanted to slow the game down a little bit," Wolters said. "His tempo was too snappy. He got a little tired. I kept getting breaths with him. It calms his shoulders. When he relaxes, he's so whippy."

Wolters adds, "I know how he thinks." That's not to say that Grandal and Realmuto couldn't do this — they're professional baseball players, after all — but the relationships between pitchers and catchers should not be undervalued.

And there's manager **Bud Black**, who is demanding of his catchers. To **quote** Groke, "Black, a 15-year pitcher, spends so much of his time instructing his catchers with a firm hand." How would these potential catchers work with Black?

Final Thoughts

In a **recent podcast**, Harding discussed the Rockies' needs at catcher, pointing out that while Grandal appears to be a good fit, his salary demands place him out of the Rockies' price range. Instead, Harding recommended the Rockies look "further down the food chain." He suggested that given Iannetta's age, it would make sense to add an additional catcher and allow Iannetta to catch fewer games. But who are those players? After Grandal and with **Wilson Ramos** off the market, options diminish quickly. Just look at Maldonado compared to Wolters and **Murphy**.

Here's my proposal:

Based on current data, Iannetta, Wolters, and Murphy are fine, and they are doing well at their primary job, which is to help the Rockies build excellent pitching. Although a catcher who can hit makes a great addition to a lineup, they're rare and, consequently, well paid. Signing Maldonado would be a way to lessen some of Iannetta's catching load at a reasonable cost, but he would not provide an offensive jolt.

That's why the Rockies should look elsewhere for offense. I'll reiterate something I've already **said**: Sign **AJ Pollock**, get another right-handed bat, and take the pressure off the catchers to provide offense, leaving them to do what they're best at. The Rockies don't have a catcher problem, but they do have an offense problem. There are better ways to address it than looking behind the plate.

Colorado Rockies Quick Hits: Dozier, LeMahieu, Minor League Coaches

by Noah Yingling - 20 hours ago | RoxPile

It seems as if the market is finally heating up since we are past the holidays so we have some updates on the market as well as a minor league update.

Mercifully, there is roughly one month until pitchers and catchers report to spring training but there are still some players on the free agent market. Let's rundown a few updates on them

- The Washington Nationals, according to **Jeff Passan of ESPN**, have signed second baseman **Brian Dozier** to a one-year contract for \$9 million. The Rockies expressed interest in Dozier, as we reported in **this article** earlier this week. Dozier wouldn't have been an exact fit for the Rockies as he would have put **Ryan McMahon**, **Garrett Hampson**, and **Brendan Rodgers** on the bench or in the minor leagues. If they were truly interested in Dozier, you would think that they would have been able to afford the \$9 million that the Nationals gave to him but as our own Kevin Henry said in **this article** from this morning, the Rockies might be maxed out on payroll due to numerous bad contracts being on the books, including **Ian Desmond**, **Jake McGee**, **Bryan Shaw**. One that he didn't mention but I would put into that category to (at least thus far based on last season) is **Charlie Blackmon**.
- Speaking of free agent second basemen, the market looks like it is heating up for former Rockies second baseman **DJ LeMahieu**. Ken Rosenthal of The Athletic **reported this morning on Twitter** that the San Francisco Giants are interested in LeMahieu. If you take a look at the Giants depth chart on **MLB.com**, it is a bit peculiar to see them interested in LeMahieu considering that one of the only established major leaguers that they have is **Joe Panik**, a second baseman. You would think that their primary concern would be their outfield, considering that their current outfield doesn't have a player that played more than a quarter of the season in the outfield for the Giants last year (**Steven Duggar** played 41 games in the outfield). However, Jeff Passan of ESPN **reported on Twitter** that the Giants are speaking with other teams on potential trade deals for Panik.
- In minor league news, **we reported on Tuesday** that the Rockies Triple-A and Double-A affiliates, the Albuquerque Isotopes and Hartford Yard Goats, released their coaching staffs for the 2019 season recently. Since then, the Rockies Single-A affiliate, **the Asheville Tourists**, and the Rockies Rookie affiliate, the Grand Junction Rockies, have since announced their 2019 coaching staffs. In Asheville, they will have a new "development supervisor" since their 2018 development supervisor, **Marv Foley**, after 40+ years in baseball,

including the last 16 in the Rockies organization, retired. Replacing him is South Atlantic League Hall of Famer Randy Ingle, who is new to the Rockies organization. He comes from the Atlanta Braves organization, where he has been since 1978 (as a coach, player, and manager). Ingle has been a manager (between Rookie-ball and Triple-A) in the Braves system in all but 3 seasons since he became a coach in 1988. He was a special assistant in the Braves organization last season. Returning as manager for his second season is former MLB catcher **Robinson Cancel** as well as **Norberto Martin** as hitting coach (for the 3rd straight season). The Tourists will have a new pitching coach in Mark Brewer, who was the pitching coach for Hartford last season. For Grand Junction, they announced their staff in **this tweet** on Wednesday. Their development supervisor will be former MLB player **Andy Gonzalez**, their manager will be Jake Opitz, and their hitting coach will be Zach Osborne. Each of them are returning for their second season in each of those positions. They will have a newcomer at pitching coach and it will be **Blaine Beatty**. He has been a pitching coach in the Orioles organization for the past 12 seasons, with the highest position being at Double-A. He also spent parts of two seasons in the majors. You can read more about their staff **here**.

- The only Rockies minor affiliates who haven't publicly announced their coaching staffs for 2019 are Single-A Advanced Lancaster, Short Season-A Boise, and their two Dominican League teams. The Rockies have also not released their list of minor league coordinators for the 2019 season.

Colorado Rockies Quick Hits: Blackmon on Arenado, Oberg deal and more

by Kevin Henry - 3 hours ago | RoxPile

Hey, we know your time is valuable. With that in mind, here are some quick overviews of the latest news and notes involving the Colorado Rockies.

There is much talk already about **Nolan Arenado** and if the **Colorado Rockies** will be able to keep him past the 2019 season. One of the things we discussed **in an earlier article is what kind of pressure** hearing about Arenado's upcoming free agency day after day may put on the All-Star third baseman and the club as the season goes along.

Well, **Charlie Blackmon** has proclaimed that he doesn't think the rumors and speculation surrounding Arenado will be a distraction for the Rockies this season as they pursue their third consecutive postseason berth. **Check out this clip** of Chuck Nazy talking about it yesterday on MLB Network Radio.

Of course, Arenado will go through his final arbitration talks with the Rockies very soon and he is expected to **break an arbitration record with an estimated haul of more than \$26 million**. One player who won't be making that much this season (or even facing arbitration) is Colorado reliever **Scott Oberg, who avoided arbitration and reportedly signed for \$1.3 million**.

The 28-year-old right-hander went 8-1 with a 2.45 ERA in 56 appearances for the Rockies last season. That includes a 1.72 ERA in 14 September appearances where batters hit just .096 against Oberg and he struck out 22 while walking just two.

Oberg was a success story in the Colorado bullpen last season and it's been a long and winding road for him to reach that success, as our Jake Shapiro wrote **in this article**. He will need to find that same kind of success this season as he likely helps Colorado fill the void that will be left by the departure of **Adam Ottavino**.

Speaking of departures, **DJ LeMahieu** is likely not back with the Rockies in 2019. He has been linked to the San Francisco Giants in **yesterday's news and notes** and now **the talk about the Los Angeles Dodgers and LeMahieu** seems to be heating up. Could LeMahieu stay in the National League West and land with one of Colorado's rivals? It certainly looks possible.

Finally, Coors Field always has great baseball and has also had great concerts in recent years. The Zac Brown Band, Journey and Def Leppard have played at 20th and Blake ... and now Billy Joel will bring his plethora of hits **to Coors Field for an August 8 show**. From what we understand, he still didn't start the fire.