



# Padres Press Clips

Tuesday, October 2, 2018

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# NL wild-card game at a glance: Rockies at Cubs

Jeff Sanders

## COLORADO ROCKIES at CHICAGO CUBS

- TV: [ESPN](#)

## SCHEDULE

- **Tuesday:** [Rockies](#) LHP **Kyle Freeland** (17-7, 2.85) vs. [Cubs](#) LHP **Jon Lester** (18-6, 3.32), 5 p.m.

## WHAT TO KNOW

- **Records:** Rockies 91-72 (2<sup>nd</sup> in [NL West](#)); Cubs 95-68 (2<sup>nd</sup> in [NL Central](#))
- **Head-to-head:** The two teams split six games in 2018.
- **Recent playoff history:** The Cubs advanced to the [NLCS](#) the last three seasons, reaching (and winning) the [World Series](#) in 2016; the Rockies lost last year's wild-card game to the Diamondbacks.
- **Matchup to watch:** Rockies 3B **Nolan Arenado** is 3-for-10 with a double, a homer and three RBIs in 12 career plate appearances against the left-handed Lester, who allowed two unearned runs in 5 2/3 innings in his lone start this year against Colorado. Against lefties this season, Arenado hit .368/.451/.747 with 15 homers and 37 RBIs.
- **Health check:** Cubs RHPs **Yu Darvish** (elbow) and RHP **Brandow Morrow**(arm) are out for the year, while RHP **Pedro Strop** (hamstring) is day-to-day. The Rockies enter the postseason without any significant injuries.

## SAN DIEGO CONNECTIONS

- The Rockies are in back-to-back postseasons for the first time ever under **Bud Black**, who managed parts of nine seasons with the **Padres** and played collegiately at San Diego State. One of his catchers, **Tony Wolters**, played high school ball at Rancho Buena Vista High. In Chicago, USD's **Kris Bryant** has emerged as a star in the league, although a shoulder injury has limited the former **NL MVP** this season (13 HRs). Cubs 1B **Anthony Rizzo** was a top prospect in the Padres organization and briefly teamed there with first base coach **Will Venable**. LHP **Cole Hamels** started his career at Rancho Bernardo High School. **Theo Epstein**, president of baseball operations, and General Manager **Jed Hoyer** both stopped in San Diego before building a World Series winner in Chicago.

# Column | Worst to first? Possibilities on display in MLB playoff field

**Jeff Sanders**

At some point Wednesday, as Andy Green transitions from his third season as [Padres](#) manager into everyday dad mode, he'll look up from a reintroduction to sixth-grade math — maybe factoring equations — as the upstart [Oakland Athletics](#) look to slay the [New York Yankees](#) in the Bronx.

He could easily be tempted into believing the rebuilding project he's overseeing is capable of matching Oakland's leap from last place into a wild-card game in a single year. More than likely, Green will remember where his Padres and Bob Melvin's Athletics stood at the start of play June 19 before [Stephen Piscotty](#)'s ninth-inning homer snatched a victory out of [Brad Hand](#)'s grip.

The Padres had won five of their last six series.

The Athletics had as many wins as losses.

“That's how much a season flipped on two teams at that point in time,” Green recalled. “You have a couple breaks here and there and you look up and you get some momentum going and things can be drastically different. They got that momentum, they capitalized on it and had a really special year.”

Oakland, in rising from 75 wins last year to 97 with the lowest opening day payroll in baseball, is not alone in penning special stories as the calendar flips to October.

The [Braves](#) leaped from 72 wins last year to 90 as the surprise winner over the talent-rich Nationals in the [NL East](#).

The [Brewers](#), on the back of Christian Yelich, closed the season on an eight-game winning streak that included Monday's tie-breaker to banish the Cubs to Tuesday's do-or-die wild-card game.

Dave Roberts' Dodgers did the same Monday to [Bud Black's Rockies](#) on the 11th anniversary of Black's first Game 163 defeat, although the former Padres manager leading Colorado to its first-ever back-to-back playoff berths is still worth celebrating.

The AL field, too, isn't without storylines of note beyond Oakland, although that field will have to manufacture the sense of urgency that's clouded the [National League](#) all summer.

Eleven NL teams had realistic playoff chances as August opened.

In the AL, the playoff field has largely been set for weeks — or longer — as the [Red Sox](#) raced toward a franchise-record 108 wins, the defending world champion [Astros](#) cruised toward their best season (103 wins) and the Yankees returned to the Century Club — as a wild-card winner — for the first time since winning the 2009 World Series.

The Indians needed fewer wins (91) to claim the [AL Central](#) title than their previous two division-winners — 102 last year and 94 in 2016 — but were never threatened. They are positioned well for a pennant push after adding Hand to their bullpen and scooping up [Josh Donaldson](#) at a discount.

Of course, it was Donaldson's exit from Oakland — in a package for prospects from Toronto — that appeared to signal the start of another long downturn for the Athletics in the winter of 2014.

Three straight postseason berths gave way to a 68-win campaign the following year. They won one more game in 2016, 75 in 2017 and the over/under for 2018 was set by Bovada at 74½.

Made sense.

Oakland opened the season with a \$62 million payroll — about \$40 million less than the Padres team they swept in a pair of two-game series while winning 17 games apiece in June and July.

What ought to resonate in San Diego is Oakland largely pecked its way to more wins than any NL team with the sort of blueprint laid out in San Diego ... with one exception:

Oakland's big gun (Khris Davis) arrived via trade ahead of back-to-back-to-back 40-plus homer seasons; the Padres' major acquisition ([Eric Hosmer](#)), at least on the field, provided little help at all in his first season.

That said, Oakland hunted for bargain bin arms the way Padres General Manager A.J. Preller has (Trevor Cahill and Edwin Jackson made stops in San Diego before settling into the middle of Oakland's rotation). Both teams "bullpened" their way to the top third of their league in relief ERA. The Athletics' homegrown assets matured into everyday producers the way the Padres dream on Fernando Tatis Jr.

Most notably, the young third baseman (Matt Chapman) drafted six months before the Donaldson trade finished second on the team to Davis in OPS in his first full season.

"We've been writing this story all year," Athletics GM David Forst told the San Francisco Chronicle after clinching a return to the postseason. "There are 25-plus incredible stories of guys who contributed and weren't expected to, guys who came back from injuries, guys who just got here a month ago and played a part. Anytime things like this come together, it's really special for everyone involved."

Indeed, it's a shiny example that's easy to hold up as the Padres pack for a 12th straight offseason without a postseason berth.

A five-win July snuffed out any hope of San Diego crawling out the last-place finish endured in Oakland last year, by Atlanta in 2016 and by Boston in 2015 ahead of three straight [AL East](#) titles.

Even the Brewers, Rockies and Yankees all finished fourth or lower inside the last four seasons.

Yet hope is always around the corner.

Just look at the playoff field.

“I think teams are turning it around really quickly now,” Padres closer Kirby Yates said. “You just need a few pieces that can help and a couple of things to go in the right direction and all of the sudden you’re in the playoff hunt.”

## **MLB Postseason**

### **NL wild-card game**

Colorado at Chicago, 5:09 p.m. Tuesday, ESPN

### **NL Division Series**

Wild-card winner at Milwaukee; Atlanta at Los Angeles (starting Thursday)

### **AL wild-card game**

Oakland at New York, 5:09 p.m. Wednesday, TBS

### **AL Division Series**

Wild-card winner at Boston; Cleveland at Houston (starting Friday)

# Hosmer looks to push reset button after subpar first season with Padres

**Kevin Acee**

Time after time, month after month, in ballparks across the country, [Eric Hosmer](#) answered questions about his substantially subpar 2018 season.

Amidst the swing thoughts and talk about discipline and mechanics, as he worked toward what he believed would be the next hot streak, never did he acknowledge the effect of change or the burden of being “the man.”

Right through the final day of the season, he was resolute.

“I know I’m going to go back and be the player I know I can be,” Hosmer said before the final game of one of his worst major league seasons. “This isn’t the impression I wanted to make the first year, but there’s nothing I can say to make it any better. Just, I’ll be ready to go next year.”

It’s what he has been thinking about for a while — getting back to South Florida and clearing his mind, pressing reset, getting to work.

But in one brief moment Sunday, before catching himself, he allowed just a hint that last offseason not being normal might have had a little to do with his not achieving at his usual level this season.

“I don’t have to be a lawyer this year or an agent,” Hosmer said. “I can be a baseball player. Not to make any excuse on anything, but I’m excited to go home and really do nothing for about a week and get right back to work. Just have a clear mind this offseason, knowing where I’m going to be next year, knowing where I’m going to be for a while.”



After seven seasons with Kansas City, Hosmer signed an eight-year, \$144 million contract, the richest in [Padres](#) history, the day before the full squad was due to report to [spring training](#).

Immediately, he became his new franchise's face and the beacon of experience in a young clubhouse.

How young? Of the 12 Padres who had more than 200 plate appearances in '18, Hosmer was the oldest. He will turn 29 later this month.

Hosmer poured himself into the role of leader, mentor and friend. Coaches who have been around the majors for years remarked at various times this season they had rarely (if ever) seen anything like the positivity and passion Hosmer brought to the park each day and the effect it had on teammates.

There were times Hosmer was everything the Padres hoped he would be on the field as well.

Even enduring some profound slumps in the season's first couple months, on June 13 he was hitting .290/.370/.480. Those were all top-20 numbers in the [National League](#) at the time. His 19 doubles ranked third in the NL, his nine home runs ranked second on the team behind Christian Villanueva's 15, and he ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the league in total bases.

He had six game-winning RBIs and 10 go-ahead RBIs for a team that wasn't scoring a lot of runs those first 70 games. At that point, in fact, the Padres were 17-9 when Hosmer had multiple hits in a game and 16-28 when he didn't. Between May 15 and June 4, they went 9-0 when Hosmer had multiple hits and 3-7 when he had one or no hits in a game.

"The first two months — that was the player we feel like we signed," Padres General Manager A.J. Preller said Sunday. "That was the player we feel like he's going to be."

Hosmer ended up leading the Padres in runs (72), hits (155) and RBI (69). He tied [Freddy Galvis](#) for the team lead with 31 doubles and was third with 18 homers. By

reaching base nine times in his final 15 plate appearances, Hosmer also finished with a .253 average and .322 on-base percentage.

The average was his lowest since 2012 and 39 points below his average over the five seasons from '13-17. His on-base percentage and slugging percentage (.398) were his lowest since 2014. The OBP was 20 points below his average over his first seven major-league seasons, and the slugging percentage was 41 points lower than his average in Kansas City. (His OPS, which was .850 on June 13, was .628 after that date.)

Perhaps the greatest thing Hosmer demonstrated for his young teammates this season was how to handle failure.

Even in his worst stretches, the only thing Hosmer did more than work was smile. Teammates marveled and coaches raved about his ability to remain upbeat and attend to the team's needs no matter what was happening personally.

“It has (been disappointing),” Hosmer said. “But a lot of these guys, it helps them. Because these guys are going through their first- or second-year struggles and they see that's how real this league is. It doesn't matter if you're in your first year, your eighth year, your 15<sup>th</sup> year. You've got to be ready to go. You've got to learn each day is each day. You learn that through experience.”

Hosmer spent the season tinkering and will continue in the offseason to work on, in particular, getting the ball in the air after leading the majors with 245 groundouts and ranking second with a 61 percent ground ball rate.

“I realize now, especially the older I get, I think I have the power that if I get the ball in the air to the opposite field consistently, the way this ballpark plays, I feel like I can put up some good power numbers,” he said. “I think that's what I really want to focus on.”

He knows, too, he has to get back to being more disciplined — not chasing as much but also swinging at the right pitches. He struck out a career high 142 times and was bogged down by an inability to lay off many inside pitches.

His 33.1 percent chase rate on pitches outside the zone was just the fourth-highest of his career, but his percentage of swings put in play (37.9) was the lowest in his career, and his percentage of swings that missed (27.6) was the highest. His percentage of pitches taken (51.5) was virtually tied for the lowest in his career.

Hitting coach Matt Stairs, manager Andy Green and others have repeatedly proffered that Hosmer was pressing at times.

Said Preller: “The biggest thing with Eric, which our group expected a little bit, first year here in San Diego, a big change, signing the big contact — as much as you tell him, ‘Be yourself, relax,’ I think it’s pretty natural a guy is going to want to come out and impress. I think that played a little bit into the whole year with him. The biggest thing we got out of the year is the player we signed who wants to work ... We have a lot of faith we’re going to look up next year and it’s going to be an All-Star caliber season for him. Just because of the type of person he is. That’s what gave us the comfort in signing him and a lot of comfort going forward he’s going to be that guy.”

Hosmer agrees with the last part.

“That’s who I am,” he said. “... I don’t (have concern about that). That’s who I will be.”

Getting back there, he said, is on him and what he’ll set out to rectify.

“Whatever that is, that’s something I have to figure out this offseason — whether it’s a mental approach or it’s a physical drill to help me hit the ball the way I want to hit the ball,” he said. “Whatever that is, I’ve got to figure it out.”

# Padres find new home for Double-A affiliate, extend deal with Storm

**Jeff Sanders**

The [Padres](#) have found a new home for their Double-A affiliate: Amarillo, Texas.

Amarillo Professional Baseball and the Padres on Monday announced they have agreed to a player development contract that runs through the 2020 season.

High Single-A Lake Elsinore and short-season Tri-City also announced two-year deals with the Padres. Player development contracts with Triple-A El Paso and low Single-A Fort Wayne were announced earlier in the year.

The Double-A affiliate's move to Amarillo — marking a return of professional affiliated baseball to the Texas Panhandle for the first time in 37 years — includes moving into a new \$45.5 million ballpark.

The finalists for a name-the-team contest are the Boot Scooters, Bronc Busters, Jerky, Long Haulers and Sod Poodles.

Amarillo Professional Baseball is owned by the Elmore Sports Group, which operated the affiliation with the San Antonio Missions, who had been with the Padres since 2007. The Missions will play Triple-A ball in 2019 as a Brewers affiliate.

“The San Diego Padres are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Elmore Sports Group as Double-A Baseball returns to Amarillo,” Padres farm director Sam Geaney said in a statement. “We’re excited to watch our talented farm system develop in a brand new ballpark and bring a Texas League championship back to Amarillo.”

# Amarillo joins Padres as Double-A affiliate

Advanced Single-A Lake Elsinore, Short-Season Single-A Tri-City extend affiliation

By Bill Center San Diego Padres

Oct. 1st, 2018

*Bill Center, longtime sportswriter for U-T San Diego, is an employee of the Padres.*

Amarillo will be rejoining the Padres family of Minor League affiliates in 2019 as the home of San Diego's Double-A Texas League team.

The announcement was made Monday morning as the Padres were also announcing player-development extensions with Advanced Single-A Lake Elsinore of the California League and Short-Season Single-A Tri-City of the Northwest League.

All three contracts run through the end of the 2020 season.

Amarillo will replace San Antonio as the Padres' Double-A affiliate in the Texas League. But the Padres association with the Elmore Sports Group continues. Elmore owns both the San Antonio and Amarillo franchises, and is taking the San Antonio Missions into the Triple-A Pacific Coast League next season.

The Padres' 35-season association began in Amarillo in 1976. For the past 12 seasons, the Padres were in San Antonio, during which the Missions won three Texas League titles (2007, 2011 and 2013).

Amarillo's first run as the Padres' Double-A affiliate ended after seven seasons in 1982. Among the future Padres who developed in Amarillo were outfielders Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn (.462 batting average in 23 games in 1981) and Kevin McReynolds; infielder Tim Flannery, and pitchers Eric Show, Andy Hawkins and Mark Thurmond.

"The Padres are thrilled to continue our partnership with the Elmore Sports Group as Double-A baseball returns to Amarillo," said Padres' Director of Player Development Sam Geaney.

The Elmore Group is looking to build a new ballpark in Amarillo. At 3,502 feet, Amarillo will have the second-highest elevation of any Padres affiliate to Triple-A El Paso.

Meanwhile, Lake Elsinore will complete 20 seasons as the Padres' California League affiliate when this extension expires in 2020. Only Fort Wayne -- the Padres' Midwest League affiliate since 1999 -- has been with the club longer.

While with the Padres, Lake Elsinore has been to the playoffs 12 times and won California League titles in 2001 and 2011. This season's Storm roster included California League postseason All-Stars third baseman Hudson Potts and outfielder Buddy Reed. Eighteen of the 40 players on the Padres' current 40-man roster played at Lake Elsinore.

Tri-City has been with the Padres since 2015 in the area's third tour as the Padres' Northwest League affiliate. The Padres were previously at Tri-City from 1970-72 and Walla Walla from 1973-82.

# 2019 Draft order set: Padres have No. 6 pick

By Jim Callis MLB.com [@JimCallisMLB](#)

Oct. 1st, 2018

Unlike in 2017, when the race for the No. 1 overall pick in the next year's Draft came down to a walk-off homer on the final day of the season, there was no such drama this summer. The Orioles, whose 115 losses were the fourth-most in modern big league history, clinched the top choice in 2019 with nine games remaining.

Baltimore owned the first selection only once in the previous 54 Drafts, choosing Ben McDonald in 1989. The Orioles haven't had a top-five pick since having six straight from 2007-12, when they grabbed [Matt Wieters](#) (fifth in 2007), [Brian Matusz](#) (fourth in 2008), Matt Hobgood (fifth in 2009), [Manny Machado](#) (third in 2010), [Dylan Bundy](#) (fourth in 2011) and [Kevin Gausman](#) (fourth in 2012).

Assigned pick values rise each year based on MLB's revenue growth, so Baltimore will be allocated more than the \$8,096,300 assigned to the No. 1 pick in 2018. The Tigers, who gained that choice when [Pablo Sandoval](#)'s ninth-inning homer in the Giants' last game of 2017 dropped San Francisco to the No. 2 slot, signed Casey Mize for \$7.5 million, setting a record for the Draft's bonus-pool era. Mize's bonus tied those of [Bubba Starling](#) and [Stephen Strasburg](#) for the second-highest in Draft history, trailing only [Gerrit Cole](#)'s \$8 million.

Oregon State catcher Adley Rutschman, [the Most Outstanding Player at the 2018 College World Series](#), and Colleyville (Texas) Heritage High shortstop Bobby Witt Jr., the son of the 16-year big leaguer and No. 3 overall selection in the 1985 Draft, are the leading candidates to go No. 1 overall at this point.

Like the Orioles, the Royals locked up the second choice well before season's end, securing it when they suffered their 102nd loss last Saturday. Kansas City has picked that high three times before, taking [Alex Gordon](#) at No. 2 in 2005, [Luke Hochevar](#) at No. 1 in 2006 and [Mike Moustakas](#) at No. 2 in 2007.

The White Sox (No. 3 overall), Marlins (No. 4) and Tigers (No. 5) round out the first five selections. Detroit, which took Mize at No. 1, and Chicago, which popped Nick Madrigal at No. 4, had top-five choices this year. Miami hasn't picked that early since 2014, when it used the No. 2 choice on Tyler Kolek.

Three teams have multiple first-round selections because they received compensation choices when they couldn't sign 2018 first-rounders. The Braves pick ninth and 21st, the D-backs 16th and 26th, and the Dodgers either 23rd or 25th along with 31st.

Because each team's highest first-round pick is exempt from forfeiture, the only way the first-round order could change would be if a team that doesn't receive revenue sharing and exceeded the luxury tax this season has two first-round picks and signs a free agent who rejects a qualifying offer, in which case it would lose its second-highest first-rounder.

## 2019 First-Round Draft Order

Draft order is based on the reverse order of 2018 regular-season standings, with 2017 records used to break ties.

1. Orioles (47-115)
2. Royals (58-104)
3. White Sox (62-100)
4. Marlins (63-98)
5. Tigers (64-98)
6. Padres (66-96)
7. Reds (67-95)
8. Rangers (67-95)
9. Braves (compensation for unsigned 2018 first-rounder Carter Stewart)
10. Giants (73-89)
11. Blue Jays (73-89)
12. Mets (77-85)
13. Twins (78-84)
14. Phillies (80-82)
15. Angels (80-82)
16. D-backs (82-80)
17. Nationals (82-80)
18. Pirates (82-79)
19. Cardinals (88-74)
20. Mariners (89-73)
21. Braves (90-72)
22. Rays (90-72)
23. Rockies (91-72)
24. Indians (91-71)
25. Dodgers (92-71)
26. D-backs (compensation for unsigned 2018 first-rounder Matt McLain)
27. Cubs (95-68)
28. Brewers (96-67)
29. Athletics (97-65)
30. Yankees (100-62)
31. Dodgers (compensation for unsigned 2018 first-rounder J.T. Ginn)
32. Astros (103-59)
33. Red Sox (108-54)



# Top 10 high school 2019 Draft prospects

By Jonathan Mayo MLB.com [@JonathanMayo](#)

Aug. 28th, 2018

With the action-packed high school summer showcase circuit now over, with the new "[States Play](#)" event in Texas completed last weekend, it's time to look at what the 2019 Draft class has to offer in terms of high school talent.

The following top 10, compiled based on the feedback of several scouting directors and national crosscheckers, serves as a nice pairing with last week's [top 10 college prospects](#) list. It's a group with a blend of up-the-middle talent and some intriguing arms, though most feel it's not quite as good as the 2018 crop appeared to be at this time.

"The class as a whole is solid, but lacking the depth that we saw a year ago," an American League scouting director said.

A scouting director in the National League agreed that, especially at the top, it's not as deep high school-wise as the 2018 class was. But he felt there's still plenty of talent to keep an eye on.

"There are few legitimate first-round talent arms with a good group that could put themselves into that consideration," one NL scouting director said. "There are some quality upside bats, but the amount of very athletic players that play up the middle is higher than it has been in the past few Drafts."

"I think the overall class features a nice mix of position players and pitching to go see in the spring," a different AL scouting director offered. "There is more depth in the position player group than the pitching group. I really like the athleticism of the top group of position players; many of these prospects are easy to envision staying in the middle of the diamond at premium positions.

"Over the summer I would say that Bobby Witt Jr. has started to separate himself from the rest of the high school hitter group. He has a shot to be a five-tool player in the middle of the diamond who can impact the game on both sides of the ball."

**1. [Bobby Witt Jr.](#), SS, Colleyville (Texas) Heritage HS:** The tools were on display, from the All-Star Home Run Derby in Washington, through the States Play event this past weekend. Even when Witt wasn't producing, he still stood out as the best player on the field.

**2. Brennan Malone, RHP, IMG Academy (Bradenton, Fla.):** It was a bit of a split camp between Malone and the next name on this list, with many liking Malone's athletic and repeatable delivery a bit more. He's been up to 97 mph all summer with a solid breaking ball.

**3. Daniel Espino, RHP, Georgia Premier Academy (Statesboro, Ga.):** The right-hander consistently had the top velocity at events all summer, hitting 99 mph routinely to go along with a power breaking ball that allowed him to miss a ton of bats.

**4. Riley Greene, OF, Hagerty HS (Oviedo, Fla.):** The best all-around hitter among the high school crop, he was up-and-down production-wise, but scouts love his approach and smooth left-handed swing, reminding some of Twins 2016 first-rounder Alex Kirilloff.

**5. Rece Hinds, 3B, IMG Academy (Bradenton, Fla.):** With as much raw power as anyone in the class, Hinds showed off consistently in batting practice and home run derbies, but also proved it plays in games at events like USA Baseball's Tournament of Stars.

**6. CJ Abrams, SS, Blessed Trinity Catholic HS (Roswell, Ga.):** Abrams is the best of the up-the-middle athletic players mentioned above. He has a ton of raw tools with the chance to stay at shortstop, though some see a move to center field or a [Dee Gordon](#) -like career path.

**7. Corbin Carroll, OF, Lakeside School (Seattle):** While he doesn't fit the typical top pick profile because of his size (5-foot-11, 165 pounds), his stock rose as he hit pretty much wherever he was, especially during his MVP performance at the Perfect Game All-American Classic.

**8. Matt Thompson, RHP, Cypress Ranch (Texas) HS** Thompson was consistently solid on the mound all summer, then really opened some eyes when he tightened up his breaking ball to more of a mid-80s slider at the PG Game.

**9. Hunter Barco, LHP, The Bolles School (Jacksonville, Fla.):** Barco is starting to look like a bit of a polarizing prospect, as some weren't in love with his arm slot, which seemed to lower as the summer progressed. But he was still up to 93 mph and throwing his breaking ball for strikes at the end of the showcase circuit.

**10. Jerrion Ealy, OF, Jackson Prep (Flowood, Miss.):** One of the top running back recruits in the country, Ealy is committed to Ole Miss for football and baseball and showed off his plus speed and athleticism at a series of events.

# 10 best college players in the 2019 Draft class

By Jonathan Mayo MLB.com [@JonathanMayo](#)

Aug. 20th, 2018

College students are returning to their respective campuses for the start of the academic year. Many of the college game's top players spent the summer showing what they could do against a high level of competition as teams start building follow lists for the 2019 Draft.

The following top 10 names were compiled with the feedback of several scouting directors and national crosscheckers who saw the top collegians playing in the elite Cape Cod League or for USA Baseball's National Collegiate Team. Some played in both places, not everyone excelled and one didn't play at all this summer, but this is the best representation of what the industry feels are the best 10 college players heading into 2019.

"The college left-handed pitching seems to have some strength," one scouting director said about the class as a whole. "There are a few higher college bats then there is a significant drop in my confidence in their ability to hit."

**1. Adley Rutschman, C, Oregon State:** Rutschman, a candidate to go No. 1 overall, raked during Oregon State's run through Omaha in the College World Series and he kept going with Team USA. Despite not joining the national team until late, he still led the squad in batting average (.355), on-base percentage (.432), slugging (.516) and doubles (five).

**2. Andrew Vaughn, 1B, Cal:** After winning the Golden Spikes Award as a sophomore (.402/.531/.819), Vaughn went on to hit .308 with five homers and 14 RBIs in 14 Cape Cod League games. From there, he joined Team USA, where he hit a bit of a wall (.224/.316/.367), though that did little to hurt his stock as one of the best all-around college bats in the class.

**3. Logan Davidson, SS, Clemson:** Davidson has been a bit of an enigma, but one scouts clearly feel will figure it out. He's hit for power over his first two years at Clemson (27 homers), albeit with some swing and miss. He has the tools to stick at short, but he didn't hit well in the Cape for the second straight summer.

**4. Shea Langeliers, C, Baylor:** Langeliers had a down sophomore year at Baylor (.252/.351/.496), but the catcher had a strong showing for Team USA, hitting .346/.393/.500 in eight games of action. There's plenty of power to go along with very good catch-and-throw skills behind the plate.

**5. Nick Lodolo, LHP, TCU:** The big left-hander, who was taken No. 41 overall by the Pirates in the 2016 Draft, didn't pitch over the summer. But despite being a bit inconsistent in two years as a part of Texas Christian's rotation, scouts can't look past his size (6-foot-6) and his stuff (a fastball up to 95 mph and a solid breaking ball) when evaluating the college crop.

**6. Josh Jung, 3B, Texas Tech:** After a huge sophomore season (.392/.491/.639 with 12 homers and 80 RBIs) at Texas Tech, Jung served as Team USA's primary third baseman and

acquitted himself well there. He hit .283 with a .377 OBP, albeit without much power, finishing tied for the team lead with 15 hits.

**7. Zack Thompson, LHP, Kentucky:** Thompson may have at least partially answered some questions about his elbow, which forced him out of action for a chunk of his sophomore season, while pitching for Team USA this summer. He tossed 8 2/3 scoreless innings over three appearances and while he did walk five, he only allowed three hits and struck out seven. Yes, he'll have to show he's durable for a full season in the spring, but this was a nice finish to a disappointing season.

**8. Matt Wallner, OF, Southern Miss:** Wallner had a brief stint with Team USA, hitting just .154 over four games. He continued his summer on the Cape and hit four homers while driving in 11 over 23 regular-season games before going 5-for-15 in the playoffs. He didn't pitch this summer, but he closes for Southern Miss with a fastball that touches the upper-90s.

**9. Graeme Stinson, LHP, Duke:** Another big lefty, Stinson pitched in relief for Team USA and was very effective, allowing just a lone unearned run in six innings across three outings. He yielded just two hits, and while he walked five, he struck out 10. He had one appearance in the Cape this summer as well, a dominant five-inning stint in which he gave up just three hits and a walk while striking out 12.

**10. Bryson Stott, SS, UNLV:** Stott played both in the Cape and for Team USA after leading UNLV with a .365 average as a sophomore. The left-handed hitter performed capably but didn't dominate in either spot, although he continued to show his ability to make consistent contact, limiting strikeouts while playing solid up-the-middle defense.

# Padres Switch Minor League Affiliate

New team in Texas will likely have a memorable new name

By [Derek Togerson](#)

The consensus amongst baseball people is the Padres have the best minor league baseball system going right now. They have a boatload of talent en route to the big leagues but now it's going to take a slightly different route to get there.

The Friars have extended their player development contracts with the Tri City Dust Devils, Fort Wayne TinCaps, Lake Elsinore Storm, And El Paso Chihuahuas through the 2020 season. But their Double-A affiliate is moving from San Antonio, Texas to Amarillo, Texas.

It should be in Amarillo by morning.

OK not really, it'll be there by April of 2019 in a brand new, \$45 million facility. Amarillo Professional Baseball wanted to bring affiliated baseball back to the city for the first time in 37 years so they got a new stadium built.

By the way it was designed by Populous, the company that was contracted to design the new NFL stadiums that were never built in San Diego.

Like the San Antonio Missions did this team will play in the highly competitive Texas League. San Antonio is moving up a level to the Triple-A Pacific Coast League as the new home to the Milwaukee Brewers top affiliate.

Minor league ball clubs have a long history of choosing unique names and it looks like the Amarillo franchise will be no different. There is a fan vote going on to pick the name. Here are the five finalists:

Boot Scooters  
Bronc Busters  
Long Haulers

Sod Poodles

Jerky

Boot Scooters is a nod to Texas country music legends Brooks & Dunn. Sod Poodles is a regional term for prairie dogs. Jerky is interesting because then Sasquatch can be the mascot and that would be kind of awesome.

# Don Orsillo thanked Red Sox fans for a ‘great weekend in Boston’

Orsillo was greeted with a standing ovation when the Red Sox welcomed him back on the scoreboard between innings.

## [Calli Remillard](#)

Red Sox fans have been spoiled this week. An impending playoff run as the AL’s top seed and a record-setting 108 wins will do that.

The good vibes continued over the weekend when former play-by-play announcer Don Orsillo returned to Boston to call Saturday and Sunday’s games against the New York Yankees.

Orsillo, currently employed by Fox Sports as an announcer for the San Diego Padres, was the voice of the Red Sox on NESN from 2001 to 2015. Some Red Sox fans openly opposed NESN’s decision to let him go in 2015– over [60,000 fans signed a petition](#) urging owner John Henry to keep Orsillo for the 2016 season.

Returning to Fenway for the first time in three years, Orsillo was greeted with a standing ovation Saturday as the Red Sox organization welcomed him back on the scoreboard between innings.

Fans rejoiced at the opportunity to see Orsillo in the press box again, ironically the same box he used as an announcer for NESN earlier in his career.

Orsillo later tweeted out some photos from his weekend back at Fenway, thanking his “Dontourage” for their support before heading back west to San Diego.

## Hosmer, Padres stumble as rebuilding project drags on

SAN DIEGO (AP) — [Eric Hosmer](#), San Diego's \$144 million man, acknowledges he simply wasn't as good as he needed to be in what was supposed to be a steppingstone season for the rebuilding [Padres](#).

The burst of energy provided by Hosmer's signing during spring training didn't last long. The Padres, who have had three waves of young talent come up since beginning their deep rebuild during the 2016 season, staggered through another dismal year, finishing last in the NL West at 66-96, five losses worse than in 2017.

Hosmer's average of .253 was down 65 points and his on-base percentage was his lowest in four seasons. His 18 homers and 65 RBIs were also his lowest in four seasons.

"Not where I want to be," said Hosmer, who was an All-Star and World Series champion while with Kansas City. "It was just a down year, definitely not the way I wanted to perform here the first year. Nothing I can do about it now. All I can do is go put in the work in the offseason and try to be ready to go next spring.

"There's no excuse for it, I just didn't perform the way I wanted to perform. I think if I performed the way I wanted to, it translates into more wins."

It certainly wasn't all Hosmer's fault, considering that the Padres continued to rank at the bottom of the majors in key offensive stats.

Also struggling was [Wil Myers](#), whose \$83 million, six-year extension had been the biggest contract in team history until Hosmer came along. Myers had yet another injury and struggled after being moved from the outfield to third base.

And in an oh-so-Padres moment, Myers was heard criticizing manager Andy Green during a livestream of the video game Fortnite with [Carlos Asuaje](#), who had been optioned to Triple-A late in the season.

"The Padres are doing cutoff and relays tomorrow at 3 o'clock — in September, dude." Myers was heard saying. "Oh my God. It's so miserable, man. It's insane. Andy could not be any worse than he is right now."

Asuaje then said, "Dude, I'm streaming this."

Myers apologized to Green. Around that same time, he also committed three errors in a game.



Other things to know in the wake of the Padres' eighth straight losing season and 12th year out of the playoffs:

## TIMETABLE

Ron Fowler, the executive chairman, had said he expected the Padres to be better this season than last, and to be .500 in 2019.

"I'm not going to throw out record stuff anymore," Fowler said. However, he heard general manager A.J. Preller say during a function for season ticketholders that gradual improvement will lead to a tipping point. "And I leaned over to him and said, 'I'm an old guy. Let's get to the tipping point sooner rather than later.' He laughed. He thinks we're closer than people think. Whether that means next year or sometime in 2020, I think we've got the talent."

## BIG DECISIONS

With so much young talent in the farm system, particularly pitchers, the Padres have to decide who to protect on the 40-man roster before the Rule 5 draft. And with the big league roster, there are decisions to make at several positions. They need to figure out if they'll keep Myers at third, try to get him back into a crowded outfield or try to trade him, although his value is low. Outfielder [Hunter Renfroe](#) solidified his status by hitting 26 homers again and rookie [Franmil Reyes](#) hit 16 homers. [Franchy Cordero](#) is due back from elbow surgery.

## FREDDY GALVIS

The Padres want to keep the shortstop, who is eligible for free agency but might want to move on with top prospect Fernando Tatis Jr. set to come up sometime next season. Galvis was acquired from Philadelphia for prospect Enyel De Los Santos and played in all 162 games, including 157 starts at shortstop and five at second base. Viewed as a placeholder for Tatis, Galvis solidified the position and was a mentor to several young Latino players.

## TATIS JR.

He broke his left thumb sliding headfirst for Double-A San Antonio in July and has been cleared to play winter ball. While the Padres will certainly control his service-time clock, "Everybody in our baseball front office would be shocked if he wasn't up here somewhat early in the season," Fowler said.

## WAVES OF YOUNG TALENT

Left-handed starters [Joey Lucchesi](#) and [Eric Lauer](#), plus right-hander [Jacob Nix](#) made their big league debuts this year. Coming up late in the year were rookie second

baseman [Luis Urias](#), who showed nice flashes in the field and at the plate before injuring a hamstring. Also coming up was catcher [Francisco Mejia](#), obtained from Cleveland for All-Star closer Brad Hand and reliever Adam Cimber. The Padres could try to find room for both Mejia and [Austin Hedges](#), or trade one of them.