



Press Clips

(September 5, 2018)

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FROM THE OC REGISTER**Andrew Heaney takes a loss, but continues as the Angels' most durable starter**

By Jeff Fletcher

ARLINGTON, Texas — In a starting rotation ripped apart by injuries, Andrew Heaney has become the rock.

Heaney made his team-leading 26th start of the season on Tuesday night, continuing a stretch that has seen him take every turn since his season debut on April 13.

Heaney gave up four runs, too much on a night the Angels offense was highlighted by Shohei Ohtani's first homer against a left-handed pitcher, and the Angels lost 4-2 to the Texas Rangers.

Heaney missed his location on a few critical pitches and that cost him. Still, he got through six innings, lifting his season total to 158. He's on pace to reach 175 to 180.

That would be a valuable contribution to a team that has had to scrounge for 14 starters this year.

None has been active every day of the season, but Heaney has come the closest. He began the season on the disabled list with elbow inflammation, but it was so minor he only took a few days off from throwing. Since then, he's been healthy, and he's pitched to a 4.16 ERA.

"For me, there are some things I'd like to do better, but I'm proud of the season I'm having," he said. "I just want to finish strong."

A 27-year-old who is under control to the Angels for three more seasons, Heaney has shown signs that he can be even better, most recently a victory over the Astros and Justin Verlander in Houston.

"Andrew has worked extremely hard to get to this point," Manager Mike Scioscia said before the game. "He feels really good about where his game is. Hopefully, he'll maintain it for many years, because you're seeing a pitcher that is very talented. When he goes out there against some really big lineups and pitches well, he's got a chance to be a front-line starter. Hopefully, he's going to evolve into that."

Also encouraging for Heaney is that he's seemingly gotten stronger late in the season.

On Tuesday night his average fastball was 93.1 mph, which was his second best of the season. His best was his last start, when he averaged 93.2 mph. Included in Tuesday's game was his hardest single pitch of the year, a 95.7 mph heater he used to get Joey Gallo on a called third strike in the second inning.

"I like to think I've put in the work to be prepared every single time and hopefully it's paying off," Heaney said.

Scioscia commented last week that it seemed Heaney had gotten a "second wind" after hitting a rough patch in early August.

On Tuesday night, he was burned by a brief rough stretch in the fourth and fifth innings. He left a fastball over the middle that Elvis Andrus hit out to lead off the fourth. Two batters later, Adrian Beltre homered on a fastball on the inside corner. Nomar Mazara drove in two when he hit a hanging curve for a double in the fifth.

That was all Heaney allowed, but the Angels offense couldn't manage much against Texas lefty Mike Minor.

They scored one in the first and one in the sixth, when Ohtani blasted a hanging slider over the right-field fence, his 16th homer of the season. Ohtani had struck out looking in his first two trips against Minor.

"Minor made some tough pitches to him the first couple at-bats but he left that little slider over the plate and Shohei didn't miss it," Scioscia said.

Ohtani, who is hitting .182 against lefties, had not played much against left-handed pitchers in the first seven weeks after coming off the disabled list. Tuesday marked his second straight start against a lefty, with three games off in between to pitch. With Albert Pujols now out for the season after having surgery, the DH spot is more flexible for Scioscia, so Ohtani has gotten more opportunities.

"Just that one home run I hit, I had a couple other opportunities on base with runners on base and couldn't come through there, so I'm not fully satisfied with today's results," Ohtani said through his interpreter. "But I do feel I'm getting better and better each at-bat I face a lefty."

Angels pitching prospect Griffin Canning made a strong impression at Triple-A

By Jeff Fletcher

ARLINGTON, Texas — Although Griffin Canning didn't reach the majors at the end of his first professional season, one of his admirers did.

Catcher Joe Hudson was among the players the Angels added on Tuesday in the latest round of September roster expansion, and he brought with him glowing reports on the Angels' top pitching prospect.

"He's going to be something special," Hudson said. "He's got plus command with four or five-plus pitches."

Canning, the Angels' second-round pick out of UCLA last year, began the season at Class-A and rose through Double-A and Triple-A. He finished with a 3.65 ERA in 113-1/3 innings. He struck out 125 and allowed 99 hits.

A product of Santa Margarita High, the 22-year-old Canning impressed Hudson, 27, with more than just his stuff.

“What I like about him best is he seems to have it together mentally,” Hudson said. “A young kid that, first full season and in Triple-A, you’d think he’d be overwhelmed and wouldn’t have a routine and wouldn’t know how to prepare for a game, but he does. It seems like he’s been playing for as long as I have.”

Hudson was also impressed by 20-year-old left-hander José Suarez, who also rose through three levels of the Angels’ farm system this year. Suarez had a 3.92 ERA and 142 strikeouts in 117 innings.

“Wise beyond his years as far as how he prepares for a game,” Hudson said. “I’m very impressed with both of those guys. I’m happy for their success. Hopefully, they’ll be here soon.”

For now, Hudson was just thrilled that he made it. A former sixth-round pick of the Cincinnati Reds, Hudson spent nearly six years toiling in the Reds’ system before they released him this summer, and he signed with the Angels.

He realized he might finally get a shot at the big leagues after René Rivera was allowed to go to the Atlanta Braves, moving him up on the organizational catching depth chart. He was set to be the 15th player to make his major league debut with the Angels this season, as they continue to add to the team record that had been 12.

“It still hasn’t hit me yet,” Hudson said before Tuesday’s game. “I’m sure it will once I put the jersey on and hear the national anthem. It’s a long, winding road.”

OHTANI UPDATE

Shohei Ohtani returned to the Angels’ lineup as the designated hitter, a sign that his stiff back and sore finger were no longer issues.

Ohtani is scheduled for a light bullpen session on Wednesday, followed by a more intense one on Friday. If he passes both of those tests, he’ll start on the mound on Sunday in Chicago.

Ohtani threw 49 pitches on Sunday night in Houston, his first outing after missing nearly three months rehabbing a grade 2 sprain of his ulnar collateral ligament. Despite a drop in velocity, Ohtani has said his elbow is healthy.

ALSO

Andrew Heaney was the Angels’ nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award, which is baseball’s highest honor for community service. One major league winner will be announced during the World Series. Heaney has traveled to Honduras four times to help upgrade that country’s infrastructure. He also hosted a fundraiser this summer for Children’s Hospital of Orange County’s therapy dog program. ...

The Angels also recalled outfielders Michael Hermosillo and Jabari Blash on Tuesday. Along with Hudson, that increased the active roster to 32. They also had set up a locker for Deck McGuire, indicating he’s expected to be recalled on Wednesday. ...

Infielder Nolan Fontana was released on Tuesday, clearing a spot on the 40-man roster for Hudson. ...

Jaime Barría, 22, will pitch against Bartolo Colon, 45, on Wednesday, the second time this season the two have faced each other. They set the Angels record for the largest age gap between two opposing starters, at 23 years, 55 days.

UP NEXT

Angels (RHP Jaime Barría, 9-8, 3.46) at Rangers (RHP Bartolo Colon, 7-11, 5.45), Wednesday, 5 p.m., Fox Sports West, KLAA (830 AM)

FROM ANGELS.COM

Ohtani clubs 1st HR in Majors off lefty in loss

Slugger takes step toward rectifying woes vs. left-handed pitching

By Maria Guardado

ARLINGTON -- For all the success **Shohei Ohtani** has enjoyed during his historic rookie season with the Angels, there remains one area that he's so far struggled to conquer: left-handed pitching.

But Ohtani took an encouraging step toward rectifying that weakness on Tuesday night, launching his first Major League home run off a left-hander in the Angels' 4-2 loss to the Rangers at Globe Life Park.

After striking out twice in his first two at-bats against **Mike Minor**, Ohtani blasted a solo shot to bring the Angels within two runs in the sixth inning. Ohtani hammered a 2-1 slider from Minor out to right-center field for his 16th home run of the season.

"I had a couple other opportunities with runners on base and couldn't come through there, so I'm not fully satisfied with today's results," Ohtani said through interpreter Ippei Mizuhara. "But I do feel like I'm getting better and better at each at-bat when I face a lefty."

Added Minor: "Obviously, he made an adjustment. He's a good player, good hitter."

Ohtani entered Tuesday batting just .177 with a .524 OPS and no home runs against left-handers this season, compared with .311 with a 1.028 OPS and 15 home runs against righties. Since coming off the disabled list on July 3, Ohtani had been starting almost exclusively against right-handers, partly because of his underwhelming numbers against lefties, but also because the Angels needed to give **Albert Pujols** occasional starts at designated hitter to give him a break from playing first base.

Now that Pujols is out with season-ending knee surgery, Ohtani is expected to get more opportunities to prove himself against lefties.

"We have confidence with Shohei," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said before the game. "The only way you're really going to hit lefties is you've got to go out there and experience it. You can practice all you want. You've got to go experience it. Now I think there's opportunity for him to get some more at-bats

against left-handed pitching with Albert being out. We'll see when he's available if he can swing it and maybe get a little bit of experience to understand what lefties in our league are doing."

Ohtani's homer wasn't enough to back left-hander **Andrew Heaney**, who gave up four runs on seven hits over six innings.

The Angels got on the board in the first inning after **David Fletcher** doubled, stole third and scored on a groundout by **Andrelton Simmons**, but **Elvis Andrus** and **Adrian Beltre** crushed a pair of solo home runs off Heaney to give the Rangers a 2-1 lead in the fourth.

"The first-pitch fastball to Andrus that he ambushed, he hit it good," Heaney said. "Beltre's given me trouble for a long time. Every time I face him. He knows what I like to do. I try mixing it up on him sometimes, and that time he got me. He ambushed the fastball in and he got every bit of it. He put a good swing on it."

Texas added another pair of runs in the fifth on **Nomar Mazara's** two-out, two-run double. Heaney retired the first two batters he faced to start the inning before yielding a single to **Rougned Odor** and walking Andrus. Mazara then drove a first-pitch curveball to the warning track in center field to clear the bases and extend the Rangers' lead to 4-2.

"It wasn't that bad of a pitch," Scioscia said. "Good piece of hitting there. All in all, I thought [Heaney] had good stuff."

SOUND SMART

Ohtani's 16 home runs are tied with Hideki Matsui for the second-most by a Japanese rookie in a single season. Kenji Johjima holds the record after crushing 18 homers for the Mariners in 2006.

HE SAID IT

"I want to go out there and keep trying to compile numbers. Maybe the results haven't been as great as I'd like, but I feel like the ability to go out there and make that many starts in a row, you're able to make adjustments, you're able to see what you can do in certain situations and what you can and can't get away with. Sometimes when you're off for a long time it's hard to get back into that rhythm. There's some things I'd like to be doing better, but I am proud of the season I'm having, and I just want to finish strong." -- *Heaney, on not missing a start in his first season back from Tommy John surgery*

UP NEXT

Rookie **Jaime Barria** (9-8, 3.46 ERA) will duel veteran **Bartolo Colon** (7-11, 5.45 ERA) in Wednesday's series finale between the Angels and Rangers at 5:05 p.m. PT at Globe Life Park. In his last seven starts, Barria is 4-1 with a 2.78 ERA. He has enjoyed success against the Rangers this season, going 2-0 with a 1.13 ERA in three outings.

Heaney gets nomination for Clemente award

By Maria Guardado

ARLINGTON -- Left-hander **Andrew Heaney** was named the Angels' nominee for the **2018 Roberto Clemente Award**, the annual recognition of a player who best represents the game through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions on and off the field.

Heaney, who started Tuesday against the Rangers, is actively involved in several charitable endeavors. Since 2014, he has taken part in an annual mission trip to Honduras to help build a learning center for impoverished children and improve accessibility to education in rural areas. Heaney also regularly takes part in the Angels' visits to the Children's Hospital of Orange County and organized the Pup Cup, a 5K race, in July to raise funds for CHOC's therapy-dog program.

"Obviously, it's an extreme honor," Heaney said. "The Angels do a great job of putting us in a position to have an impact on the community. They allow us to do a lot of things, they present a lot of opportunities and help us out with our endeavors. We have a lot of guys on this team that do a lot in the community and are extremely good people on and off the field. Just to be nominated within this team, within this unit, is humbling for me."

"That's a great honor," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "I think those of us that grew up watching what Roberto Clemente was about and especially the way he passed, it's an inspiration. We don't have a better representative on our team than Andrew Heaney. I don't know if you know all the things that he does, but he's spending time in the offseason going down [to Honduras] and building houses. It's inspiring."

The league-wide winner of the Clemente Award will be selected by a blue-ribbon panel that includes Commissioner Rob Manfred, Clemente's late wife and current MLB goodwill ambassador, Vera Clemente, as well as representatives from MLB-affiliated networks and MLB.com. Fans can also vote for the winner at mlb.com/clemente21, with the winner of that tally counting as one vote among those cast by the blue-ribbon panel. The overall winner of the 2018 Roberto Clemente Award will be announced during the World Series.

Here is a **list of previous winners** of the esteemed honor.

Ohtani returns

Shohei Ohtani returned to the Angels' lineup on Tuesday, batting second and serving as the designated hitter against Rangers left-hander **Mike Minor**. Ohtani had not hit since Friday while recovering from his pitching appearance against the Astros on Sunday.

Ohtani, a left-handed bat, has received more opportunities to start against lefties now that **Albert Pujols** is out with season-ending knee surgery. He is batting only .177 with a .524 OPS and no home runs against left-handed pitchers, compared with .311 with a 1.028 OPS and 15 home runs against righties.

"We have confidence with Shohei," Scioscia said. "The only way you're really going to hit lefties is you've got to go out there and experience it. You can practice all you want. You've got to go experience it. Now I think there's opportunity for him to get some more at-bats against left-handed pitching with Albert being out. We'll see when he's available if he can swing it and maybe get a little bit of experience to understand what lefties in our league are doing."

Ohtani is scheduled to throw a light bullpen session on Wednesday and a more intense one on Friday before the Angels clear him to make his next pitching appearance against the White Sox on Sunday. Ohtani experienced a drop in velocity in his last start against the Astros, but he said the issue was unrelated to the sprained elbow ligament that kept him off the mound for three months.

Second round of callups

Outfielders **Jabari Blash** and **Michael Hermosillo** and catcher **Joe Hudson** comprised the second round of September callups for the Angels on Tuesday. Blash and Hermosillo started in left field and right field, respectively, as **Justin Upton** remains out with a concussion and **Kole Calhoun** received a normal day off.

It marked the first big league callup for Hudson, who the Angels acquired from the Reds in exchange for cash considerations in June. Hudson, 27, ended the Minor League season batting .293 with an .806 OPS with four home runs and 22 RBIs over 49 games. He is the third rookie catcher on the Angels' roster, joining **Jose Briceno** and **Francisco Arcia**.

"It still hasn't hit me yet, to be honest," said Hudson, a sixth-round Draft pick of the Reds in 2012. "I'm sure it will once I put the jersey on and hear the national anthem. It's been a long road, for sure. I think I'm going on year six in the Minor Leagues. It's nothing compared to Frankie, but it's still a long, winding road."

To clear a spot for Hudson on the 40-man roster, the Angels released infielder **Nolan Fontana**.

30 prospects who had big years -- 1 for each team*

By Jonathan Mayo and Jim Callis and Mike Rosenbaum

Playing in the Minor Leagues is about development, first and foremost. But that doesn't mean a prospect can't put up huge numbers along the way, right?

Across all 30 organizations, scores of prospects had very successful 2018 campaigns. MLB Pipeline will be choosing a Hitter and Pitcher of the Year for each MLB team in the coming weeks, but in the meantime, here's a quick look at one prospect from each organization's Top 30 list who had a big season:

AL West

Angels: Taylor Ward, 3B

The move to third definitely helped Ward's bat, as did overall health and an increased ability to drive the ball. Ward hit his way from Double-A up to the big leagues in 2018 and led the system with his .349 average while also posting a robust .446 on-base percentage and hitting 14 homers.

Astros: Josh James, RHP

A 34th-round pick out of Western Oklahoma State Junior College in 2014, James did little in his first four pro seasons before exploding in his fifth. He easily topped the Minors in strikeout rate (13.5 per nine innings) and finished fourth in whiffs (171) and sixth in opponent average (.191) while going 6-4, with a 3.23 ERA between Double-A and Triple-A. In his big league debut on Saturday, he fanned nine over five innings.

Athletics: Richie Martin, SS

While A's top pitching prospect Jesus Luzardo had one of best seasons in the Minors on the mound, Martin had a big breakout at the plate. After hitting just .235 during his first three seasons after being selected by the A's in the first round of the 2015 Draft, the 23-year-old shortstop slashed .300/.368/.439 at Double-A Midland, where he also totaled 43 extra-base hits and 25 steals. As a result, Martin garnered MLB Pipeline Prospect Team of the Week honors on three separate occasions, including in the season's final two weeks.

Mariners: Evan White, 1B

White went off at the plate during the second half of the season, hitting .320/.400/.512 with eight home runs, 16 doubles and 40 RBIs over his final 64 games with Class A Advanced Modesto. The 2017 first-rounder was particularly hot once the calendar flipped to August, too, as he slashed .379/.467/.689 with 19 extra-base hits and 27 RBIs over his final 27 contests to finish his first full season with a .300/.371/.453 line.

Rangers: Tyler Phillips, RHP

Despite his 4.92 ERA in his first three pro seasons, the Rangers believed Phillips was a breakout candidate for 2018 -- and they were correct. He led the Class A South Atlantic League with 11 wins and added another in his lone Class A Advanced start, posting a combined 2.67 ERA with a 127/16 K/BB ratio in 133 innings. His walk rate (1.1 per nine innings) ranked fourth in the Minors.

**Article cut to only include AL West-related material.*

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beltre, Andrus back Minor in Rangers' 4-2 win over Angels

By Stephen Hawkins

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — It was another Minor victory for the Texas Rangers, after they went ahead on solo homers by Adrian Beltre and Elvis Andrus.

Mike Minor, a full-time reliever for the Royals last season after missing 2 1/2 years because of surgery for a torn labrum, won for the fifth time in his last six starts as the Rangers beat the Los Angeles Angels 4-2 on Tuesday night.

“I think people at the beginning didn’t expect me to have a good season. I think they thought I should go to the bullpen, wasn’t cut out to be a starter anymore in my career,” the 30-year-old left-hander said. “It does feel good to end like this. A couple of more starts to go.”

Andrus hit the first pitch of the fourth inning against Andrew Heaney (8-9) to tie the game at 1. Two batters later, Beltre went deep for the ninth time this season and 471st time in his career to put Texas ahead to stay. He has 3,147 career hits, the most among active players, after that homer and a single in the eighth.

“Huge for those two guys to step up in that situation,” manager Jeff Banister said.

Minor (11-7) pitched into the sixth, striking out seven with one walk and a hit batter while allowing two runs and three hits. He has thrown 140 innings in 25 starts for Texas, which has done its best to manage his time on the mound.

“Probably couldn’t ask for it to work, to this point, any better,” Banister said.

Jose Leclerc struck out two in a perfect ninth for his ninth save — all in nine chances since Aug. 4, after the Rangers traded closer Keone Kela to Pittsburgh.

Minor wasn’t sure he would ever pitch again during the seasons he missed. The former first-round pick for Atlanta, who started 110 games for the Braves from 2010-14, got over that hurdle with 65 relief appearances for Kansas City last year, then turned down a \$10 million option to stay with the Royals for a three-year deal with Texas and the chance to start again.

Shohei Ohtani hit his 16th homer for the Angels leading off the sixth to end Minor’s night. It was Ohtani’s first major league homer off a left-handed pitcher, after striking out in his first two at-bats against Minor.

“Just that one home run I hit. I had a couple other opportunities with runners on base and couldn’t come through there, so I’m not fully satisfied with my results,” Ohtani said through a translator. “But I do think I’m getting better when I’m facing left-handers.”

ADRIAN AGAINST THE ANGELS

Beltre played in his 254th career game against the Angels, second only to Hall of Famer Carl Yastrzemski’s 280. Beltre has 46 homers and 165 RBIs against the Angels, his most against any team — only Alex Rodriguez (70) and Rafael Palmeiro (49) have more homers, and only A-Rod has more RBIs (169). ... Beltre is 8 for 14 with three homers in his career against Heaney.

CLOSING IT DOWN

Leclerc has thrown 15 consecutive scoreless innings, the longest streak by a Texas pitcher this season. Opponents have 25 strikeouts with only two hits in their last 43 at-bats against Leclerc.

OTHER RUNS

Nomar Mazara had a two-run double for the Rangers in the fifth. ... Andrelton Simmons, the Angels shortstop playing on his 29th birthday, had an RBI groundout in the first.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Angels: Ohtani, the two-way rookie who was in the lineup as the DH, will throw a light bullpen Wednesday. He is then scheduled to throw another one Friday that will determine if he will make his next scheduled pitching start Sunday at the Chicago White Sox. ... CF Mike Trout was hit by a pitch on the right knee when batting in the first inning. He remained in the game and iced his knee afterward. The Angels don't consider it serious.

Rangers: Bartolo Colon, the 45-year-old right-hander, will make his first start since Aug. 20. He was on the disabled list from Aug. 24 to Sept. 1 because of a lower back strain.

UP NEXT

The Angels and Rangers wrap up their second series in Arlington in less than three weeks Wednesday. The two teams at the bottom of the AL West standings still play two more series this season, both in California — next Monday through Wednesday, and then Sept. 24-26 during the last week of the regular season.

FROM THE ATHLETIC

Jeremiah Jackson, a 'once in a lifetime' talent, embodies Angels' farm system resurgence

By Fabian Ardaya

As Mike Szymanski walked up the hill towards the baseball complex at St. Luke's Episcopal High School in Mobile, Ala., he heard the familiar crack of the bat. The rest of the students were in class, but there stood Jeremiah Jackson, with wood bat in hand, as scouts with cameras surrounded the batting cage. Multiple major league clubs even brought their own coaches to pitch to him to get an extra look.

The scene should have been bizarre and odd for Szymanski, a high school baseball coach for 35 years. But it almost became routine.

"It was quite different," Szymanski said with a laugh.

Nothing about Jackson's senior season was normal. That said, even in Szymanski's incredibly successful career, he had never had a player drafted straight out of high school, as Jackson was when the Angels made him their second-round selection (55th overall) in this year's MLB draft.

Jackson would wow Szymanski and scouts alike with his batting practice displays. As each of his teammates took turns lining balls into the outfield with aluminum bats, the 6-foot shortstop took his hacks with his favorite wooden bat — which he had been swinging since his grandfather Mike and his uncles, Brett and Kyle introduced him to the game — and launched ball after ball, often clearing the fences with ease. That carried true throughout Jackson's final year at St. Luke's, as he hit .637 with 15 home runs, 49 RBI and 53 walks in 34 games to earn Alabama's "Mr. Baseball" honors.

Jackson was already a hot commodity. He hit .507 over his sophomore and junior seasons with a combined 17 homers, drawing invites to a variety of high school showcases across the country. After a successful summer last year, Jackson brought on Matt Hannaford of MVP Sports Group as an advisor as he prepared for the 2018 draft.

But while Jackson wrapped up his romp of the amateur circuit last year, Hannaford noticed something. Between each pitch, Jackson would constantly blink and squint, such as to refocus his eyes for the next pitch. He had worn glasses for years but never used visual aids on the diamond. Jackson had no real need. He saw the ball well enough and still raked.

As Hannaford pressed him on it, Jackson conceded that he often couldn't read the spin on pitches until they were almost on him. Against high school arms with mediocre velocity, command and movement, he could get away with it. Jackson got his eyes checked and began wearing contact lenses that fall. His stock escalated his senior season.

"The fact that that's something he was able to correct, I think having your vision be top-notch is right up there with everything else that athletes have to do to take care of their bodies," Angels farm director Mike LaCassa said.

Jackson's hitting displays in games became the stuff of legend. In a best-of-three series in the Alabama state quarterfinals, he twice led off blowout victories with home runs, adding a third blast during the two games. The next series in the semifinals, he was intentionally walked 11 times over three games, including the decisive 13-11 loss.

"He was a head above everyone else," Szymanski said. "They did not let him swing. He'd put up some astronomical numbers."

Baseball has always been a part of Jackson's life. Growing up in his grandfather's house with his mother, Monica, and his three siblings — Parker, Aubrey and Ella — he would often find himself taking cuts in the backyard and fielding grounders as if he was Derek Jeter. As Jackson grew older, the comparisons shifted towards another Alabama shortstop, current White Sox shortstop Tim Anderson.

Each day, Mike Jackson worked Jeremiah. If you're going to be an elite player, Mike would say, you're going to have to work for it.

“That old fella has just pushed [Jeremiah] and worked the daylights out of him,” Szymanski said. “I’ve seen him throw to him just a countless number of times in the batting cage, hitting this kid ground balls, following this kid all over America in the summer time, making sure he got signed up to be in this and that.”

Jeremiah viewed baseball as a goal, as a career, especially after his mother married Christian Beasley, who is currently on a tour of duty with the Navy.

“Being a high school kid, I’ve been taking care of my mom and my family my whole life, but now it’s time for me to step up and be a man and take care of things myself,” Jeremiah said. “I carry that responsibility with me every day, and at first, it’s kind of nerve-wracking.”

But even as things were serious at home, Jeremiah Jackson had fun on the diamond. His elite high school play would begin prematurely, though.

As a seventh grader, Jackson transferred to St. Luke’s simply looking for a chance to play, if not start. He entered the season as a backup at shortstop, only to see the starter break his ankle sliding into home plate. So out ran Jackson to shortstop, much to the surprise of the opposing coach — none other than Mike Szymanski.

“This wormy little kid out there, that was JJ,” recalled Szymanski, then the coach of Satsuma High. Jackson would help turn three quick double plays in a game St. Luke’s eventually won 4-2.

“That was kind of ironic,” Szymanski said, “getting to see him at the beginning of his high school career and getting to coach him for the last of it.”

Jackson was talkative in Szymanski’s statistics class, but not disruptive. He was confident, but not cocky. On the baseball field, he was dominant, but he did not put himself ahead of the accomplishments of the team. Jackson cared as much about being team captain as he did about his own individual accolades.

When Szymanski earned his 600th career victory, Jackson was the first to shake his hand and congratulate him.

“He’s a one of a lifetime for a coach at the high school level,” Szymanski said. “He’s the best player I’ve ever coached.”

Jackson, then a Mississippi State commit, had gone through the travel ball circuit, played in the showcases and starred in the Under Armour All-American game with eventual Angels first-round pick Jordyn Adams. But he hadn’t gone through the everyday rigors of constant and persistent attention from scouts.

So Szymanski devised a plan. Lance Johnson, a 14-year big-league veteran and former All-Star, served as Jackson’s mentor. Pitching coach Jim Bryant, a former pro scout for more than a decade, handled the scouts, sending out a mass text each Sunday night with the team’s practice, hitting and game schedule to give them a chance to see their promising young shortstop.

The attention Jackson drew from scouts was massive. So massive, he said, that he didn't even realize the club that wound up drafting him was among those scouting him.

Area scout J.T. Zink led much of the Angels' scouting efforts in the south. But Jackson didn't realize he was on the club's radar until he had a pre-draft workout and a meeting with general manager Billy Eppler and scouting director Matt Swanson.

"I knew all the scouts who really came [and] had a good idea of what teams were really there, but I never really saw the Angels, which made it surprising when they drafted me," Jackson said. "But it turns out that they had like 12 different scouts come and watch me, and I didn't even recognize them or know they were there. I wouldn't have had it any other way."

Jackson, along with Adams (the 17th overall pick of the June draft), are part of a revamped Angels farm system that has been rejuvenated under Eppler's watch. Once regarded by experts as one of the worst farm systems ever, the Angels ranked 10th in the latest update of Baseball America's team system rankings and 14th in The Athletic MLB's farm system ratings.

Jo Adell shined in Double-A this season. Griffin Canning knocked on the door of the majors just a year removed from being drafted. Luis Rengifo has been a steal. And Taylor Ward made his major-league debut in August.

Adams and Jackson represent the next wave of Angels talent, and they have become quite close both on and off the field, including being roommates in the Arizona rookie league. Now, both are in short-season ball with Orem, with Jackson posting an OPS of .816 across the two levels in 163 pro at-bats.

"For starters, Jeremiah has electric bat speed," LaCassa said. "He's shown us, both in BP and in-game, power to all fields. His opposite-field power is legitimate. ... He's shown us from the beginning he has instinctual barrel control."

Even though Jackson's bat is a known commodity, the Angels have made some minor tweaks. They have taken his typically upright stance and hunched him over the ball to improve his eye on pitches near the zone. And like the club did with Kole Calhoun, the Angels are trying to change Jackson into a stance where he winds up from the start to limit his movement and achieve a consistent swing.

They have gotten his hands more fluid and have added a more exaggerated leg kick to tap more into his power. He hit four homers within his first couple weeks of the change.

"It is going to lead me to have more power and be on-plane with the ball better, which helps me to be able to have power to all fields," Jackson said. "A lot of it is also just talking about the thought process. It's kind of self-diagnosing things. They want to get us to the point where, when we're hitting and there's an at-bat where we miss a pitch we should've hit, we review what caused us to miss it instead of squaring it up.

"It's helped me understand my swing. A lot of things happen in a swing."

Jackson fits the profile of the Swanson-era Angels scouting department, hoping to significantly increase the overall athleticism of the farm system through moldable, high-school position players high up in the draft.

"I feel the need to give our player development guys something they can work with," Swanson said when Adams and Jackson were drafted in June. "Not a finished product, but something they could work with and get them up here as quickly as possible."

Jackson lauded the work of minor league hitting coordinator Jeremy Reed and the rest of the Angels' player development staff, noting his own personal improvements as he adjusts to pro ball. LaCassa lauded Jackson's breadth of knowledge of the game and the intricacies of his own swing, aided by a memory bank that's increased even more during his first taste of professional baseball.

"He's very athletic, and he's quick to make adjustments," LaCassa said. "A lot of that comes from his aptitude, He loves learning about the game, asks a lot of question about the how and the why of a swing, and our processes and the game of baseball itself.

"From the mental side and the athleticism side, he's making adjustments in all aspects of the game. When we give him a little drill to work on, either offensively or defensively, he's been able to incorporate it very quickly into his daily routine."

The bat has remained consistent, and his defense — seen as a long-term concern among scouting experts — has improved. The Angels have remained consistent in their belief that Jackson will stay at shortstop as opposed to shifting him to third base due to his strong arm and limited range. For July, Jackson was named the Angels' minor league defender of the month.

"I've been a shortstop my whole life," Jackson said, "and I want to continue to be a shortstop my whole career."

The organization has remained committed to his fit at the position and has come away impressed. With Jackson's athletic ability, arm strength and aptitude to pick up new concepts and adapt to them quickly, the Angels don't see why he couldn't be a future shortstop.

"He's very quick laterally, in both directions," LaCassa said. "When it comes to his arm, he has plus arm strength, an easy, compact strike that allows him to get the ball across the diamond quickly and accurately. ... His reactions off the bat are very quick.

"The questions he asks about learning the angles needed to attack balls are very advanced for an 18-year-old. It's similar to the progress we've seen offensively, the combination of the pure athleticism, the baseball skill and the aptitude to continue learning and grow in both of those areas."

Jackson could figure to move through the system at a rapid pace, even as a high-school bat facing elite college-level pitching for the first time. His ability to find solutions to flaws in his game and adapt are intangibles the organization has found invaluable in his brief time with the Angels.

It's one thing to have the athleticism, LaCassa said, but to be able to actually use it and adapt it into actual baseball skill is when the high-ceiling draft choice truly becomes an interesting prospect.

“Since joining our organization, some of the feedback from our staff who are around him on a daily basis are that he is very humble, yet very confident,” LaCassa said. “The other thing that stands out is how good of a self-evaluator he is. Between at-bats, or after the game, we talk about his process. Whether it’s a great day or an average day, his ability to evaluate and let our staff know what he was feeling is right along the lines of our own evaluation of him. That’s not easy to do for a player as young as he is and with his inexperience.”

“With someone like Jeremiah with all of the tools and developing skills, and the aptitude and the thirst for knowledge and his strive to improve, he’s definitely a guy who we could see moving quickly.”

TA30: The MLB power rankings are solidifying as the playoffs loom*

By Matthew Kory

That’s it, folks. That’s all the trade deadlines. I’m afraid the only thing left now is actually playing baseball games. Oh, and, you know, the playoffs. To that end, we here at *The Athletic* would like to rank some baseball teams for you. We think it’s the sporting thing to do. Don’t worry, we threw in some jokes to help the other stuff go down easier. Let’s TA30.

To the rankings!

T-16. Los Angeles Angels, 67-71 (last week: 18)

There was good news on Sunday when Shohei Ohtani returned to the mound for the first time since June 6. Baseball missed you, Shohei. But, since this is the Angels comment, what goes up must come down, hard: Ohtani only lasted 2.2 innings, during which his velocity went from high-90s to high-80s. Considering he’s coming back from a strained UCL, let’s play some elevator music while we wait for Angels fans to come out from underneath their couches. [elevator music version of Everybody Hurts by R.E.M. plays] What? Who put that on? Come on, guys! That’s just mean. I’m so sorry.

**Article cut to only include Angels-related material.*

FROM CBS SPORTS

Angels, Rangers vie for series win

Andrew Heaney has become one of the stalwarts of the Los Angeles Angels' pitching staff this season, making his team-leading 26th start of the year on Tuesday night in a 4-2 loss to Texas at Globe Life Park that allowed the Rangers to even the three-game series at a game apiece.

By STATS

Andrew Heaney has become one of the stalwarts of the Los Angeles Angels' pitching staff this season, making his team-leading 26th start of the year on Tuesday night in a 4-2 loss to Texas at Globe Life Park that allowed the Rangers to even the three-game series at a game apiece.

The Angels will send right-hander Jaime Barria (9-8, 3.46 ERA) to the mound in the rubber game of the series while the Rangers will counter with ageless right-hander Bartolo Colon (7-11, 5.45).

The Rangers' win did little to salve the wounds of being eliminated from the American League West race, which occurred with Monday night's loss to Los Angeles. Texas' elimination came in game No. 138, its earliest point to be out of the division race since 2014 (game No. 135).

The Rangers' current 25-game deficit to front-running Houston matches their season-high.

Texas general manager Jon Daniels confirmed Monday that the team had a chance to pursue a trade involving third baseman Adrian Beltre last week but did not do so because of Beltre's desire to finish the season and possibly retire as a Ranger at the end of the year.

Friday was the deadline for clubs to acquire players by trade and have them eligible for the postseason.

"The only way it was going to happen -- me going somewhere -- is if it made sense for both parties: me and the team," Beltre told MLB.com. "Obviously, it's always been important for me to have a chance to win the World Series. Obviously, it didn't make sense for both of us. We had a discussion, and that's why I'm here."

Barria will head to the hill for his 22nd start of the season and 11th time on the road on Wednesday. He earned a win in his last outing on Friday at Houston after tossing six scoreless innings and allowing three hits with one walk and four strikeouts.

In his last seven starts, Barria is 4-1 with a 2.78 ERA. He is pitching to a 2.77 ERA on the road this season. In his three starts versus the Rangers this year, Barria has fashioned a 2-0 record with a 1.13 ERA and 14 strikeouts. He made his major league debut on May 3 at Globe Life Park.

The 45-year-old Colon will make his 26th appearance and 24th start of the season on Wednesday night. It will be his first action since he was activated from the disabled list on Saturday. He was placed on the disabled list on Aug. 24, retroactive to Aug. 21, with a lower back strain. Colon took the loss in his last start on Aug. 20 at Oakland.

Colon has gone 12-9 with a 3.88 ERA in 27 games, 26 of them starts, against the Angels in his career. He is 0-1, 10.50 in two games, one of them starts, against Los Angeles this season. The Rangers are 9-12 in his 21 starts.

Heaney's outing on Tuesday continued a stretch that has seen him take every turn in the Angels' beleaguered rotation since his season debut on April 13. He hurled six full innings in the loss, lifting his season total to 158. He's on pace to get to 175 to 180.

FROM NJ.COM

MLB trade rumors: Hall of Famer suggests Angels' Mike Trout-to-Phillies offseason blockbuster

By Joe Giglio

Here we go--again.

With the 2018 Phillies trying to claw into the postseason, there's always an eye on even bigger things for a franchise with upside and a ton of money to spend in future seasons.

When the offseason arrives, expect Manny Machado and Bryce Harper rumors to dominate the conversation.

But now we can circle back to an even bigger name: Mike Trout.

Yes, the best player in baseball that just so happens to be from South Jersey and who grew up a fan of Philadelphia's teams. With the Angels once again ticketed for another year without postseason play, Fox Sports' MLB crew--Ken Rosenthal, Kevin Burkhardt, Frank Thomas and Alex Rodriguez--discussed Trout's future in Los Angeles.

With the best player in baseball only under contract for two more seasons, the subject of a possible trade this winter came up. Thomas offered his take, including specifically bringing the Phillies into the conversation.

"Can he go to Philly, where you can rob the cupboard and get four, five great prospects, very talented players for Mike Trout--take him home?"

"I wouldn't trade him," Thomas continued. "But it could happen."

If this was a conversation around possible Trout destinations, it wouldn't be particularly noteworthy. The Phillies have money, a good farm system and a need for high-end talent to add to an already rising team. Any conversation around a Trout trade would include Philadelphia, the Yankees, Cubs, Dodgers, Red Sox and a handful of other teams.

But Thomas went out his way to single out the Phillies, perhaps a signal that the Hall of Famer believes something actually could go down between the teams if Trout is put on the block.

FROM BLEACHER REPORT**Each MLB Team's Biggest Dilemma of the Upcoming Offseason***

By Zachary D. Rymer

The hot-stove season will be here in no time, and with it will come tough decisions for every team in Major League Baseball.

What say we get ahead on breaking them down?

We're going to look at the biggest dilemma that each of MLB's 30 teams will be facing this winter. These run the gamut from how they should spend their money to which players require special attention to larger conceptual decisions about the future.

We'll go in alphabetical order by city.

Los Angeles Angels: What of Albert Pujols?

Technically, Albert Pujols' days with the Los Angeles Angels aren't yet numbered. His 10-year, \$240 million contract runs all the way through 2021.

But that doesn't mean the Angels are obligated to keep employing him.

Alas, the legendary slugger isn't much of a slugger anymore. His offense has been on a steady downward trend for a decade, and he's no longer even an average hitter. He has just a .684 OPS since 2017.

Beyond that, the 38-year-old's body isn't as strong as it used to be. The knee surgery that's sidelined him for the rest of 2018 is only the latest in a long line of serious injuries that have taken their toll.

Mind you, letting Pujols go isn't such a simple move to make. The Angels would still have to pay him, and they would almost certainly have to deal with some public relations backlash. But since releasing him would more than likely be addition by subtraction on the field, they must take the idea seriously.

**Article cut to only include Angels-related material.*

MLB Teams' Huge Risks That Have Blown Up in Their Faces This Year*

By Joel Reuter

No risk, no reward.

It sounds good, but try telling that to the MLB teams who took a huge risk this past offseason and had it blow up in their faces.

Whether it was signing a free agent who hasn't lived up to his contract, failing to embrace a necessary rebuild or squandering an opportunity to trade a player when his value was highest, MLB teams will wind up looking back with regret for a number of reasons.

Below are 10 notable examples of offseason risks that did not pay off.

Los Angeles Angels: Selling Low on 1B C.J. Cron

The logic behind trading C.J. Cron was solid at surface level.

The Los Angeles Angels had won the Shohei Ohtani sweepstakes, and with the Japanese phenom expected to play designated hitter at least part time, Albert Pujols would man first base.

That left Cron without a place to play, and the Angels shipped him to the Tampa Bay Rays in exchange for infield prospect Luis Rengifo.

"With the construction of our roster and the personnel we have in place for this upcoming season, we have to place a premium on flexibility and maneuverability within our position player group," general manager Billy Eppler said, per Jeff Fletcher of the *Orange County Register*.

In three seasons as a semiregular with the Angels, Cron posted a 107 OPS+ and averaged 19 doubles, 16 home runs and 59 RBI in 407 plate appearances.

Weak on-base skills and limited defensive value limited his ceiling, but his right-handed power has always played. This year, it's had a chance to shine via Cron's everyday role with the Rays.

The 28-year-old is hitting .256/.323/.492 with 25 doubles, 26 home runs and 61 RBI in 486 plate appearances, good for a 123 OPS+ and 1.8 WAR.

He's making just \$2.3 million this season and is under team control through the 2020 season.

It's worth noting Rengifo has turned some heads this season as well with a .299/.399/.452 line that includes 49 extra-base hits and 41 steals over three minor league levels.

Still, Cron's bat would have been welcomed by the Angels lineup this season as Los Angeles once again failed to build a contender around Mike Trout.

**Article cut to only include Angels-related material.*

FROM DEADSPIN**Shohei Ohtani Finally Smashed a Dinger off a Lefty**

By Chris Thompson

Mike Scioscia has mostly protected Shohei Ohtani from lefty pitchers during his rookie season. Partly this is because the lefty-lefty matchup is often brutal for hitters; partly it's because Albert Pujols is still kicking around, and is capable of taking those DH plate appearances and doing some damage; and partly it's because Ohtani hasn't done especially well with his limited opportunities, entering September batting below the Mendoza Line in 63 at-bats against lefties on the season.

But Pujols is now out for the season with a knee injury, and Scioscia is ready to let his rookie phenom spread his wings and get some more opportunities, in the junky, otherwise irrelevant games left on the Angels' schedule. Per MLB.com:

"I think that as Shohei starts to get more at-bats against left-handed pitching, you'll be able to evaluate him more," manager Mike Scioscia said recently. "He only has [60] at-bats against left-handed pitching. It's not an excessive amount. But compared to the way he's hit right-handers, obviously, it's like night and day. I think he's going to be a very balanced hitter as he moves forward in his career. But right now, getting acclimated to lefties is one thing that he's working very hard to do."

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Ohtani has now faced a lefty starting pitcher in each of his last two starts at DH. Friday night he went 1-for-3 with a walk against Houston's Framber Valdez; Tuesday night he went 1-for-3 against Texas's Mike Minor. Ohtani struck out in each of his first two at-bats against Minor, but on his third time through, in the top of the sixth inning, Ohtani sent a hanging 2-1 slider to the hell of baseballs:

It was Ohtani's 16th dinger of the season, but just his first off of a lefty pitcher. Ohtani had success hitting lefties in Japan, but that success doesn't necessarily translate, at least according to his manager, who said "you can hit lefties well in Triple-A or in other leagues, but major league left-handed pitching is just different." Know what else is just different? Shohei friggin' Ohtani, who can paint the corners at 100 miles an hour, *and* throw an untouchable splitter, *and* mash taters to the opposite field like it's nothing. The safe money says if he's given the right opportunities, he'll figure it out.

FROM KYODO NEWS**Baseball: Angels' Ohtani hits 1st homer off lefty, 16th of season**

Shohei Ohtani hit his first Major League Baseball career home run off a left-hander and his 16th of the season, but the Los Angeles Angels lost 4-2 to the Texas Rangers on Tuesday night.

Ohtani, who hit .309 against lefties compared to .279 versus right-handers while playing for the Nippon Ham Fighters in Japan in the 2013-2017 seasons, homered off Rangers starter Mike Minor (11-7).

Ohtani joined Hideki Matsui in a tie for second place in the number of home runs by a Japanese player in his first major league season. Matsui was a rookie for the New York Yankees in 2003.

Kenji Jojima hit 18 in his debut season for the Seattle Mariners in 2006 to top the list.

"I'm glad I hit that fat pitch for a homer," said Ohtani, who bats left-handed and throws right-handed.

"I have so much respect for him (Matsui) and a part of me is excited, but another part tells me to keep working hard from tomorrow onwards to aim higher," he said.

Four other Japanese reached double-digit home runs as a rookie: Tadahito Iguchi hit 15 in 2005 for the Chicago White Sox; Norichika Aoki 10 in 2012 for the Milwaukee Brewers; Kosuke Fukudome 10 in 2008 for the Chicago Cubs; and Tsuyoshi Shinjo 10 in 2001 for the New York Mets.

On Tuesday, Ohtani connected for a solo shot off Minor in the sixth at Globe Life Park in Arlington, carrying a slider to right-center field to cut the Rangers' lead to 4-2. Junichi Tazawa relieved Andrew Heaney (8-9) and worked a scoreless eighth for the Angels.

Ohtani struck out in his first two at-bats against Minor and grounded out in his last at-bat.

The two-way star is scheduled to start in Sunday's game against the White Sox after throwing two bullpen sessions on Wednesday and Friday.

Ohtani, who was on the disabled list with an elbow injury, pitched 2-1/3 innings on Sept. 2 in his first start in nearly three months. He gave up two runs and was tagged with the loss, dropping his record to 4-2.

FROM LARRY BROWN SPORTS

Angels still deciding whether Ohtani will make next start on Sunday

By Larry Brown

The Los Angeles Angels are not 100 percent sure at this point whether Shohei Ohtani will make his next start on Sunday.

Ohtani returned on Sunday to make his first start since June 6. His outing was brief — he threw 49 pitches over 2.1 innings and saw a major drop in velocity midway through his start. The drop led to concerns because of his elbow, but the Angels attributed the significant dip to other issues that were bothering Ohtani.

Ohtani did not undergo any testing, which is a good sign, and the team said the plan was for him to start again the following Sunday.

Now Angels manager Mike Scioscia says Ohtani's next start depends on how his two bullpens go this week, first on Wednesday and then on Friday.

Mike Scioscia said Shohei Ohtani will have a light bullpen session on Weds and a more intense one on Friday. Those will confirm if he can pitch Sunday.

Though the date of his next start is now a little more uncertain, Ohtani was in the Angels' lineup as the DH on Tuesday.

FROM THE DALLAS NEWS

Time running out for one of the longest-running Texas Rangers rivalries?

By Gerry Fraley

ARLINGTON -- If you make it to Globe Life Park on Wednesday night, put partisanship aside for a moment and recognize a superb manager who may never come this way again. Maybe give the No. 1 local heel a true cheer rather than the Bronx variety when he comes out of the dugout.

This could be the final game in the Rangers' park for Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia, a master of the art.

After 19 years on the job, turning a second-rung suburban franchise into a winner, Scioscia is in the final year of his contract. There have been reports Scioscia will not return to the Angels.

Scioscia on Tuesday repeated what he has said since last fall. He and general manager Billy Eppler agreed to table contract talks until after this season. No decisions on the future have been made, Scioscia said.

Scioscia added one other thing with emphasis. At age 59, he still enjoys everything about the job. Scioscia may not return to the Angels, but he does not seem ready to leave the game.

"I love it," Scioscia said. "It's baseball. It's fun. The frustration that comes with some of the bumps in the road, you've got to absorb it all.

"It's still challenging, and I still love it."

The challenges have increased in recent seasons.

The Angels, devastated by injuries to pitchers, stayed on course for a third consecutive losing season with a 4-2 loss to the Rangers. That would be a first in the Scioscia era.

The Halos also will not win a playoff game this year for the ninth consecutive season. They have had center fielder Mike Trout, the best player in the game, for the last seven seasons.

The overall body of work speaks of Scioscia's skills.

With a career record of 1,636-1,416, he ranks 18th all-time for managerial wins. He had more wins and a better winning percentage (.536-.526) than the manager he played for with the Los Angeles Dodgers: Tommy Lasorda.

From 2002-09, the Angels won the American League West six times with teams that won more than 90 games. The 2002 club produced the only World Series championship in franchise history.

Scioscia's Angels have played great defense and forced the issue on offense. They have forced the issue on offense with speed. In Tuesday's game, the Angels pulled off a double steal in the first inning to set up a run.

And they have been a tough team. Anyone who saw Scioscia block the plate during his playing career as a catcher is not surprised by that.

"I appreciate managing against Mike," Rangers manager Jeff Banister said. "He's on top of the game all the time. You have to be on top of your game to manage against him.

"I respect what he's done, how he runs his team. I've learned a lot managing against him."

Scioscia began the day with more games against the Rangers (347) than any other manager. Oakland's Bob Melvin is next with 188, followed by Hall of Famer Sparky Anderson with 175.

The Rangers have run out six managers against Scioscia: Johnny Oates, Jerry Narron, Buck Showalter, Ron Washington, Tim Bogar and Banister. Scioscia began the day at 180-166 against them.

With familiarity comes a level of contempt. Scioscia is the leading villain at the Rangers' park. His every appearance brings boos.

Scioscia did nothing wrong. He just won while in the same division as the Rangers.

"He's one of the guys that I watch," Banister said. "You have to be prepared for just about anything from him. I enjoy the games that we manage against each other."

There may be only a few left.

Facing Scioscia

A look at the leaders in career wins among active managers:

Manager	Team	Career Wins
Bruce Bochy	San Francisco	1,921
Mike Scioscia	Los Angeles Angels	1,636

Terry Francona	Cleveland	1,560
Buck Showalter	Baltimore	1,544
Clint Hurdle	Pittsburghh	1,184

- -- Tuesday's results not included.