

# Cincinnati Reds Press Clippings February 2, 2019

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## THIS DAY IN REDS HISTORY

1876-The National League is formed in New York City, with Cincinnati as a charter member

1925-The National League inaugurates its Golden Jubilee Year by holding its spring meetings in the same room of New York's Broadway Central Hotel, where the league was founded in 1876

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## MLB.COM

**Inbox: Why do Reds want true center fielder?  
Beat reporter Mark Sheldon answers fans' questions  
By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m\_sheldon  
Feb. 1, 2019**

Not too sure I understand the "potential" for acquiring a pure center fielder. Why even entertain the thought ... while players are all around already on the Reds? Scott Schebler comes immediately to mind and Phillip Ervin, and the Nick Senzel experience looms. Even Yasiel Puig could do the job. Why all the hubbub about reaching out for a pure center fielder? Not too sure I get it. Help me understand.

-- Neb, Pasadena, Calif.

I get your question, completely. Having a corner outfielder playing center field for the Reds, or an infielder like Senzel try it, isn't a terrible solution. Especially at Great American Ball Park where the dimensions are tight, a superstar defender isn't necessarily required. The Reds had Shin-Soo Choo play center field in 2013 and he was competent enough while providing superb offense.

But then I think, "What about the other 81 games?" There is vast outfield terrain at many other ballparks -- with Colorado, San Francisco and Arizona immediately coming to mind. Having a true center fielder, even for a year, could be a good safety net.

Did the Reds' brain trust commit brain rust by too quickly releasing the defensive center fielder in Billy Hamilton? They now are looking to replace him for 2019. Why did they react so fast to release him without a replacement in mind?

-- Keith G., Piqua, Ohio

They did not react too fast. Hamilton's escalating salary via arbitration and diminishing offensive returns prompted the Reds to go in a different direction. They are willing to give up some defense for better offense in the lineup. And they did have replacements in mind, as they have kept an eye on the free-agent and trade markets. They also have three in-house candidates they feel good enough about in Schebler, Puig and Senzel. Down the road, prospects like Jose Siri and perhaps eventually Taylor Trammell could be the long-term solutions. Siri is ready for the big leagues defensively, but still has some work to do with his hitting.

Who is the next projected starter we could expect to see out of the Minors? Somebody we have not seen yet. Not Robert Stephenson, Tyler Mahle, Amir Garrett etc.

-- Bill P., Cincinnati

Take a look at power right-hander Tony Santillan, who was the Reds' Minor League pitcher of the year in 2018 and the No. 5 ranked prospect in the organization by MLB Pipeline. Santillan reached Double-A last season and has the potential to be a frontline starter. He possesses a well-above-average fastball that stays consistently at 93-97 mph with good movement. His secondary pitches are coming around, and he made big improvements with his command and control the past couple of seasons.

Mark, do you know what the process will look like for the voice to follow Marty Brennaman? Are there any frontrunners?

-- @gregfish\_fish on Twitter

Although the Reds employ a cavalcade of broadcasters for television and radio, there are no immediately known frontrunners to replace a legend like Marty. Jim Day spent last season trying radio play-by-play, but will return full time to TV this season. Marty's son, Thom Brennaman, expressed no interest in doing radio when he spoke to the Enquirer's John Fay. One name I'd keep an eye on is Tommy Thrall, who came up from Double-A Pensacola last season and called three games. Thrall did a pretty nice job and he will be back to call more games this season. If that goes well, I could see him getting a shot. I could also see the club doing a nationwide search.

With the big 150th anniversary celebration in 2019, why is there no mention of anything related to Pete Rose? You can't celebrate the Reds without Pete.

-- Phil W., Washington Court House, Ohio

To the best of my knowledge, not one player from the Reds' storied history has been singled out for special attention during this anniversary season. Rose has been included in big events like his own number retirement and statue dedication and Reds Hall of Fame inductions in recent years. Especially when the throwback jerseys from the 1960s and '70s are worn during 2019, I'm sure there will be highlighted moments from Rose, Johnny Bench and the rest of the Big Red Machine.

Mark Sheldon has covered the Reds for MLB.com since 2006, and previously covered the Twins from 2001-05. Follow him on Twitter @m\_sheldon and Facebook and listen to his podcast.

**Source: Duke agrees to deal with Reds**  
**By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m\_sheldon**  
**Feb. 1, 2019**

CINCINNATI -- The Reds are bringing in free-agent lefty situational reliever Zach Duke after he agreed to a contract Friday, according to MLB Network insider Jon Heyman.

A source told MLB.com that a deal was close but not done yet. It's likely that Duke still needs to take a physical before the signing is completed. Terms were not immediately known, and the Reds have yet to formally announce a signing.

Duke, who will turn 36 in April, is a 14-year veteran of the Major Leagues and has a 4.30 ERA in 540 games that include 169 starts early in his career.

In 72 games combined for the Twins and Mariners last season, he was 5-5 with a 4.15 ERA and 1.50 WHIP. Over 52 innings, he allowed 57 hits including one home run with 21 walks and 51 strikeouts. Left-handed hitters batted .220 against him compared to .311 by right-handed hitters.

The Reds have made multiple trades this offseason to improve starting pitching and their outfield. But Duke would be the first free-agent addition, and he would join a bullpen that includes veterans like Raisel Iglesias, Jared Hughes and David Hernandez. Cincinnati also has three other lefties in the mix for bullpen spots in Wandy Peralta, Amir Garrett and Cody Reed -- if he's not used as a starter.

It was with the Reds organization where Duke turned his career around in 2013. The Nationals released him in June of that season after he had an 8.71 ERA in 12 games. After being picked up by the Reds, he had a 1.30 ERA in 26 games for Triple-A Louisville and then a 0.84 ERA over 14 games when brought back to the big leagues. Cincinnati did not include Duke on its National League Wild Card Game roster, however.

After he departed the Reds as a free agent, Duke pitched for the Brewers, White Sox and Cardinals. He's also previously pitched for the Pirates and D-backs.

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## **CINCINNATI ENQUIRER**

**The Cincinnati Reds hope Nick Senzel is the answer to the center field question**

**John Fay, Cincinnati Enquirer**

**Published 4:39 p.m. ET Feb. 1, 2019**

As spring training approaches – pitchers and catchers report Feb. 12 – we’re looking at 10 questions the Reds face heading into the 2019 season. Today’s question:

Who plays center field?

The Cincinnati Reds are set at the other seven positions. The Reds, in fact, have a surplus of outfielders. But none of them is a true center fielder.

There are 50-some shopping days until Opening Day, so there’s a possibility the Reds add a center fielder.

If they don’t add, what’s the plan?

The hope is that top prospect Nick Senzel develops into a serviceable center fielder during spring training. That’s not a lock, of course. Senzel was drafted and played as an infielder. Baseball America lists him as the second-best third base prospect in baseball. But he’s athletic enough to play center (his speed is similar to Chris Heisey’s), and the reports have been good on work he’s done in Goodyear.

“We have Nick coming in as a bit of a wild card,” Reds President of Baseball Operations Dick Williams said. “But he will be given every opportunity to focus on center field, play center field, learn center field, improve in center field to see where he stacks up against our other options.

Get the latest Reds news. Download our app on both the Apple App Store and Google Play for Android users. The other in-house options are Scott Schebler and Yasiel Puig.

“We know Schebler can play center field,” Williams said. “We know Puig can play it, but it’s been a little while. We want to see where those guys are as well.

“Those are the three primary guys I see in the mix. Phillip Ervin we see as an outfielder with the ability to play multiple positions.”

Schebler and Puig aren’t good choices defensively. Puig was the 89th-rated outfielder in Ultimate Zone Rating (UZR), according to fangraphs.com; Schebler was the 93rd rated.

Great American Ball Park has one of the smaller center fields in the Major Leagues, so that mitigates the lack of range somewhat.

Again, the Reds could add a center fielder. The center fielders out there on the free-agent market include Adam Jones, Denard Span and Cameron Maybin. Maybin makes the most sense defensively. Jones and Span were worse than Puig and Schebler in UZR, according to fangraphs.

The Reds could add through a trade. They’ve made three significant trades and no free-agent signings this offseason. But the best thing that could happen is Senzel wins the job. That gets his bat in the lineup, and his youthful enthusiasm would give the club a spark as well.

**Cincinnati Reds nearing deal with lefty reliever Zach Duke**  
**Bobby Nightengale, Cincinnati Enquirer**  
**Published 3:31 p.m. ET Feb. 1, 2019 | Updated 3:35 p.m. ET Feb. 1, 2019**

After successful seasons from veteran relievers Jared Hughes and David Hernandez last year, the Reds are hoping they can find value from another experienced reliever.

The Reds are close to a deal with left-handed reliever Zach Duke, according to a source. After completing three trades to revamp the starting rotation, Duke will likely become the Reds' first free agent signing of the offseason. Duke, who will turn 36 in April, made 72 relief appearances with the Minnesota Twins and Seattle Mariners last year. He had a 4.15 ERA, striking out 51 in 52 innings while allowing only one home run. A groundball pitcher, Duke appears to fit a similar mold as Hughes.

He limited left-handed batters to a .220 batting average last season with a .319 slugging percentage. Right-handed hitters had a .311 batting average and .370 slugging percentage.

The Athletic first reported the Reds were in contract discussions with Duke.

Duke pitched in 14 games with the Reds in 2013, allowing one run in 10 2/3 innings. He did not pitch in the 2013 National League Wild Card game, the last time the Reds advanced to the postseason. He's played in nine organizations throughout his 14-year Major League career.

The Reds had four lefties in their bullpen at various points last season: Amir Garrett, Wandy Peralta, Cody Reed and Kyle Crockett. Garrett was the only one who remained at the big-league level during the entire year, but he had a 6.46 ERA after the All-Star break. Peralta battled control issues, Reed moved into the rotation in September and Crockett was designated for assignment in July.

Before adding Duke, the Reds signed lefties Buddy Boshers and Ian Krol to minor league contracts with non-roster invitations to Spring Training.

Hughes and Hernandez were signed to two-year deals last offseason, both providing stability in the late innings.

Hughes had a career-low 1.94 ERA in 72 appearances. Hernandez recorded a 2.53 ERA in 57 appearances.

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## **WCPO - Channel 9**

**Great deals to Cincinnati Reds Spring Training**  
**But hurry if you want \$99 flights**  
**Posted: 6:14 PM, Feb 01, 2019 Updated: 6:48 PM, Feb 01, 2019**  
**By: John Matarese**

Tired of sliding in the snow? Tired of road salt covering everything?

If so, the Arizona sunshine probably looks pretty darn good right now.

We're just weeks away from Cincinnati Reds Spring Training in Goodyear, Arizona. That means baseball, palm trees, and warmth.

Downtown Cincinnati worker Matt Birch is ready.

"That would be so much better than here. I would love to go there right now," he said.

Interested? You have two ways to get there: On your own, or with a package trip, through the Reds , or AAA/Provident travel.

Travel Agents make it effort-free

Provident, in Hyde Park Plaza, has been organizing spring training trips for 63 years.

Herb Reisenfeld says their packages are a little over \$2,000 a person for 7 days. While that may sound steep, he says they fly you there, bring you to the game every day, and take care of almost everything.

"What's included is your air, hotel, transfers, quite a few of your meals, breakfast every day, and some lunches where Reds players stop by," he said.

Travel agents say to get the best value out of Spring Training, consider visiting other things around the Phoenix and Sedona areas.

"That's an option if you want to go up to Sedona, Reisenfeld said. "Some people say I'm going to the Grand Canyon."

Discount airline options

Are you on a budget? You may want to check out Frontier Airlines. We found some \$99 one way fares from Cincinnati to Phoenix left in March, but they're going fast (and don't forget to include the cost of a rental car).

After all, when you're looking at gray skies and road salt covered cars, it's tough to say no to the beauty of Arizona, and that sweet sound of the crack of a baseball bat.

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## DAYTON DAILY NEWS

Reports: Reds agree to contract with veteran relief pitcher

Zach Duke pitched for Reds in 2013

Jan. 1, 2019

By David Jablonski

CINCINNATI — The Cincinnati Reds agreed to a contract with veteran relief pitcher Zach Duke on Friday, according to multiple reports. Mark Sheldon, of MLB.com, reported Duke has to complete a physical before signing.

This will be the second stint with the Reds for Duke, who had a 0.84 ERA in 14 appearances and 10 2/3 innings in 2013 after being released by the Washington Nationals and signing with the Reds.

Duke made his debut with the Reds that September in a key game against the St. Louis Cardinals. He struck out Matt Adams to get out of a jam in the eighth inning, though the Reds lost the game 5-4 in 16 innings.

"That's what I was hoping to get into when they called me up," Duke said. "I was hoping to get into some situations like that. Everyone's goal is to earn the respect of their teammates and have them believe you can get the job done. Hopefully, I can continue doing that."

Duke began his career as a starter with the Pittsburgh Pirates in 2005. He was 45-70 with a 4.54 ERA in 159 starts. In 2009, when he was 11-16 with a 4.06 ERA, he made the National League All-Star team.

Duke, a Texas native who turns 36 in April, has bounced around the big leagues since last pitching for the Reds, playing for the Milwaukee Brewers, Chicago White Sox, Saint Louis Cardinals, Minnesota Twins and Seattle Mariners. Last season, he split time between Seattle and Minnesota and had a 4.15 ERA in 72 relief appearances.

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## ASSOCIATED PRESS

**AP source: Reds working to complete deal with LHP Zach Duke**

**JOE KAY (AP Sports Writer)**

**The Associated Press Feb 1, 2019 6:10 PM**

CINCINNATI (AP) -- The Cincinnati Reds are working to complete a deal with Zach Duke that would add the left-hander to their bullpen, a person familiar with the discussions told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity Friday because the deal, first reported by The Athletic, was subject to a successful physical and has not been completed. The Reds have not commented.

Cincinnati overhauled its rotation and starting lineup in the offseason, trying to become a contender. The bullpen improved last season with the additions of Jared Hughes and David Hernandez to get to closer Raisel Iglesias, but it could use a left-hander.

Duke turns 36 in April. He pitched in 14 games for the Reds in 2013. Last season, he went 5-5 with a 4.15 ERA in 72 games with Minnesota and Seattle. Duke also has played for the Pirates, Diamondbacks, Nationals, Brewers, White Sox and Cardinals.

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## TRANSACTIONS

**02/01/19**

San Francisco Giants claimed RF John Andreoli off waivers from Texas Rangers.

San Francisco Giants designated RHP Derek Law for assignment.

Houston Astros signed free agent LHP Wade Miley.

New York Yankees invited non-roster LHP Nestor Cortes to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster RHP Cale Coshow to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster RHP Raynel Espinal to spring training.

New York Yankees signed free agent RHP David Hale to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster RHP Michael King to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster RHP Brady Lail to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster C Kellin Deglan to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster C Francisco Diaz to spring training.

New York Yankees signed free agent C Jorge Saez to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster OF Estevan Florial to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster OF Trey Amburgey to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster 1B Mike Ford to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster SS Kyle Holder to spring training.

New York Yankees invited non-roster 3B Gio Urshela to spring training.

Chicago Cubs sent LHP Ian Clarkin outright to Iowa Cubs.

Seattle Mariners sent RHP Max Povse outright to Tacoma Rainiers.

Texas Rangers signed free agent RHP Jason Hammel to a minor league contract and invited him to spring training.

Chicago Cubs signed free agent RHP Tony Barnette.

New York Mets sent 2B Gavin Cecchini outright to Syracuse Mets.