



MEDIA CLIPS – January 16, 2017

Rockies announce Winter Caravan events

By Daniel Kramer / MLB.com | Jan. 12, 2018

DENVER -- The Rockies' annual Winter Caravan begins its eight-day weave through the Rocky Mountain Region this Saturday, with events and scheduled appearances of personnel and staff spanning Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. Most events are open to the public and all appearances are scheduled to change. All times are MT. Here's a rundown:

Saturday

Wyoming, Northern Colorado. Scheduled to attend: left-handers **Tyler Anderson** and **Mike Dunn**, catcher **Tom Murphy** and shortstop **Trevor Story**

- 10-11 a.m. -- University of Wyoming Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center: Q&A, photo and autograph session
- 1:15-2 p.m. -- University of Northern Colorado Campus Recreation Center in Greeley: Q&A, meet and greet session
- 2 p.m. -- Bank of Colorado Arena in Greeley: UNC vs. Idaho State men's basketball game
- Colorado State Stadium in Fort Collins: Q&A with Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County (private)

Sunday

Grand Junction, Colo. Scheduled to attend: right-hander **Scott Oberg**, Anderson, Dunn, Murphy and Story

- Suplizio Field: media session
- Q&A and autograph session for Grand Junction Rockies season-ticket holders (private)
- Lincoln Park Barn: youth clinic, kids-only meet-and-greet session (private)

Monday

Denver. Scheduled to attend: first baseman **Ryan McMahon**, outfielder **Mike Tauchman** and alum and current broadcaster Cory Sullivan

- 1 p.m. -- Colorado Avalanche vs. Anaheim Ducks game at the Pepsi Center
- 4-5 p.m. -- Diamond Dry Goods Store at Coors Field: Autograph and photo session

Tuesday

Albuquerque, N.M., Denver. Scheduled to attend (Albuquerque): general manager Jeff Bridich, right-handers **Jon Gray** and **Jeff Hoffman** and infielder **Pat Valaika**; (Denver): manager Bud Black, Rockies alum and special assistant to the GM Vinny Castilla, McMahon, Tauchman and Sullivan

- Albuquerque: Q&A event and autograph session for Albuquerque Isotopes season ticket holders (private)
- Elementary school in Denver: school assembly (private)
- Hospital in Denver: meet and greet with patients and staff (private)
- Coors Field: VIP event for Rockies partners (private)

Wednesday

South Colorado. Scheduled to attend: left-hander **Kyle Freeland**, Gray, Hoffman and Valaika

- Pueblo West High School: Q&A assembly, meet and greet with baseball and softball teams (private)
- Fort Carson: meet and greet with base personnel (private)
- Colorado Springs: meet and greet with hospital patients and staff (private)
- 4-5 p.m. -- Rockies Dugout Store in Colorado Springs: autograph and photo session

Thursday

Denver. Scheduled to attend: Freeland, Gray and Valaika

- Elementary school (private)
- 12-1 p.m. -- Diamond Dry Goods at Coors Field: autograph and photo session

Friday, Jan. 19

Denver. Scheduled to attend: third baseman **Nolan Arenado**, center fielder **Charlie Blackmon**, left-handers **Jake McGee** and **Chris Rusin**, right-hander **Bryan Shaw**, catcher **Tony Wolters**, Black and Bridich

- 7 p.m. -- Denver Nuggets vs. Phoenix Suns game at the Pepsi Center

Saturday, Jan. 20

Denver. Scheduled to attend: Arenado, Black, Blackmon, Bridich, vice president of international scouting and development Rolando Fernandez, pitching coach Steve Foster, McGee, Rusin, Shaw and Wolters

- Coors Field: Season Ticket Hot Stove (private)
- Merchandise and Memorabilia Garage Sale at Coors Field's Diamond Dry Goods Store from noon-2 p.m.

Anderson looks to build on strong finish to '17

By Daniel Kramer / MLB.com | Jan. 12, 2018

DENVER -- If the Rockies hope to return to the postseason after making their first appearance since 2009 last season, they will once again be leaning heavily on a youthful rotation.

Near the top of that unit will be left-hander **Tyler Anderson**, who in his sophomore season underwent arthroscopic surgery on his left knee that sidelined him for 11 weeks and has him eager to pitch a full, healthy 2018 -- particularly following a topsy-turvy '17 that ended on a high note. Anderson rebounded to go 3-1 with a 1.19 ERA, 18 strikeouts and just three walks in four September outings, pitching in critical moments as the Rockies maintained their grip on the second National League Wild Card spot. However, he recalls the 7.71 ERA he posted in six April outings.

"They always say, 'It's not how you start; it's how you finish,'" Anderson said on Monday. "Last year, I feel like I didn't do much for the team early on, but at the end, I felt like I was able to do my part more. That's when it really mattered. Hopefully helping us down the stretch there was the No. 1 goal. Fortunately, I was able to go that way."

Anderson, 28, took part in the Rockies' Winter Caravan over the weekend and will soon report to the club's Spring Training facility in Scottsdale, Ariz., ahead of the club's official report date.

Anderson would like to expand on his promising yet limited repertoire that he's built on a fastball-changeup combination. He's consulted Rockies manager Bud Black, pitching coach Steve Foster and bullpen coach Darren Holmes about more often utilizing his developing curveball and cutter-slider.

"I just don't use them as frequently as I probably should, and that's something that Buddy and I have talked about -- and Foster and Holmie -- is adding pitches to the repertoire and using them more frequently," Anderson said. "I have a curveball, I just don't use it very often. We've just talked about using that more. Really, if you throw a fastball, a cutter-slider and changeup, that's four pitches right there. It's hard to have more than that."

For a philosophically fastball-first club, Anderson admittedly isn't a power pitcher like **Jon Gray** or **German Marquez**.

Anderson showed a marginal increase in velocity in '17, but he's aware his changeup has elite potential. Over his first two seasons, Anderson generated a 35.5 percent whiff rate on the pitch, above league average.

"It's not a pitch that relies so much on spin," Anderson said of his changeup. "It's arm speed and arm action and a delivery that tries to make it look the same. For hitters, that's really hard to pick up. If you talk to a lot of hitters, too, they'll say it's easier to see spin on a slider. You can see its shape. Sometimes guys get away with changeups that aren't very good just because of the speed difference and you can sell it with arm action."

Anderson has been a specialist at eliciting weak contact and limiting hard hits. Among starters from 2016 and '17, Anderson's 84.1 mph average exit velocity against is tied for tops in the Majors (min. 500 batted balls), and his hard-hit rate -- classified by **Statcast™** as anything with an exit velocity of 95 mph or higher -- was 28.1 percent, the sixth-lowest rate among 142 qualifying starters.

Those are promising figures, given Anderson's home confines at Coors Field are the game's most hitter-friendly.

Team-first Dunn enjoys place in talented 'pen

While hoping to close, veteran lefty more concerned with getting to World Series

By Daniel Kramer / MLB.com | Jan. 13, 2018

GREELEY, Colo. -- When **Mike Dunn** signed a three-year contract with the Rockies last offseason, he wanted to be the closer. That goal remains the left-hander's long-term aspiration, but he's lent himself to the notion of being a focal figure in part of something more congruent.

"Over the term of your career, you want to become whatever you can. For me, in my situation, at some point I want to close," Dunn said. "But it's ultimately winning baseball games, and as a team, doing well and getting as far as we can -- ultimately, the World Series."

Dunn never quite regained the promising, elite form he showed when he began 2017 with nine straight scoreless outings. Back spasms flared during a bullpen session in late April that eventually sent him to the 10-day disabled list, and over his 58 outings after the DL, Dunn struggled through a 5.06 ERA. In those 42 2/3 innings, Dunn walked an average of 5.8 batters per nine innings and slowly lost his grip on pitching in high-leverage situations. By mid-August, the lefty mostly emerged from the bullpen when the game was already decided.

Toward the end of the season, he worked his way back into more high-leverage situations, though he was not among the eight Rockies pitchers used in the National League Wild Card Game.

"I think it was just more so going out and performing," Dunn said. "I had the injury, and then when I came back, I struggled. You can only be put in that situation so many times and not get the job done. I had to earn the trust of my teammates. I had to earn the trust of the coaching staff again, and I think I did that towards the end of the year."

Dunn said his inflated walk rate was the most alarming woe from '17 that he plans to address in Spring Training. His slider, which evoked the most pain relating to his back injury, showed promise over the final month of the season, with a 22.2 percent whiff rate, per **Statcast™**.

Heading into '18, Dunn is part of a crowded and balanced throng of talented relievers, a group he believes has the potential to be among the Majors' best bullpens. After improving from an MLB-worst 5.13 bullpen ERA in '16, the Rockies' relief corps was a significant catalyst in their first postseason run since 2009, aided by blossoming left-hander **Chris Rusin** and closer **Greg Holland**, who led the NL with 41 saves and is now a free agent.

This offseason, Dunn believes the Rockies have bolstered an already strong unit -- and they've backed that bunch financially, with \$106 million in commitments this winter alone to free agents **Wade Davis** (three years, \$52 million), who closed for the Cubs in 2017; **Bryan Shaw** (three years, \$27 million), who pitched in prominent roles with the Indians since

2013; and **Jake McGee** (three years, \$27 million), who last year with the Rockies rebounded to go scoreless in 49 of his 62 outings.

They are also complemented by the versatile Rusin, who posted a career-best 2.65 ERA as arguably the most consistent Colorado reliever; righty **Adam Ottavino**, who regressed in '17 after a registering a club-record run of 37 scoreless appearances; righty **Scott Oberg**, who the club is very high on; and right-handed flamethrower **Carlos Estevez**, who offers closer potential with triple-digit velocity.

"Look at the guys that there are," Dunn said. "Every guy, right-handed or left-handed, we talked about it last year in a sense, but probably a little bit more this year. ... I think this bullpen has a chance to be one of the best in the league."

Rockies avoid arbitration with 4 players

Blackmon, Bettis, LeMahieu, Rusin agree to 1-year deals

By Daniel Kramer / MLB.com | Jan. 12, 2018

DENVER -- The Rockies signed each of their four **arbitration-eligible** players to one-year contracts for 2018 -- center fielder **Charlie Blackmon**, second baseman **DJ LeMahieu**, starting pitcher **Chad Bettis** and reliever **Chris Rusin** -- ahead of Friday's deadline to exchange proposed salary figures.

According to MLB Network insider Jon Heyman, Blackmon's deal is worth \$14 million and LeMahieu's is for \$8.5 million. Rusin's is for \$1.2875 million, per USA Today, and Bettis signed for \$2 million, per the Denver Post.

This is the final year of arbitration eligibility for Blackmon and LeMahieu, each of the last two National League batting champions, as both will become free agents after next season along with Bettis.

Blackmon's salary increase is almost double the \$7.3 million he earned in '17 following a historic year in which he hit .331 with 37 homers and 104 RBIs, setting the record for RBIs from the leadoff position, with 213 hits and 137 runs, both MLB highs. The bearded wonder, who turns 32 in July, finished fifth in the NL MVP race, won his second straight Silver Slugger Award and started for the NL at leadoff and in center field in his second All-Star Game.

LeMahieu, who will turn 30 in July, is receiving a salary increase from \$4.8 million in '17 and \$3 million in '16. An All-Star for the second time, LeMahieu won his second Gold Glove Award and slashed .310/.374/.409 with eight homers, 64 RBIs and 95 runs scored, fourth-most among second basemen. He led all National League second basemen with a 1.2 defensive WAR and led all MLB second basemen with eight defensive runs saved, appearing in a career-high 155 games.

Bettis, 28, will earn a raise from \$545,000 last year. The club's second-round pick in the 2010 Draft, Bettis overcame a bout with testicular cancer last offseason and again during Spring Training, and he returned for the final two months while sparking national inspiration. Over nine starts, he went 2-4 with a 5.05 ERA, 30 strikeouts and 11 walks, including a critical performance against the Dodgers on the final weekend that helped the Rockies stave off the Brewers for the second NL Wild Card. Bettis, who had been speculated to possibly pitch in relief upon his return, will enter spring slated in the back of the rotation, likely complementing right-handers **Jon Gray** and **German Marquez**, and lefties **Tyler Anderson** and **Kyle Freeland**.

The versatile Rusin is earning more than double from last year after proving to be arguably the Rockies' most consistent reliever. The 31-year-old former starter went 5-1 with a 2.65 ERA in 85 innings, filling roles from long relief to low- and high-leverage situations, and he eventually became the club's primary setup man during its pennant chase in September.

Have the Rockies already found their first baseman? Rookie keeping Colorado off the hot stove – for now.
Ryan McMahon is the only true first baseman on the Rockies' roster

By Nick Groke / The Denver Post | Jan. 16, 2018

DENVER -- Ryan McMahon carried more bags than he swung bats in a brief major-league stint late last season. As a Rockies' rookie call-up, his job was to follow veterans, in part as ritual introduction and in part as apprenticeship. But the Rockies' rookie slugger, their No. 2 prospect according to Baseball America, seems headed for a spiked increase in responsibility next month. As baseball's hot stove season continues to look for flint, Colorado's lack of action at first base is coolly speaking volumes.

"I honestly don't think it would affect how I go about my business," McMahon said Monday. "I'm just going to play hard. That's kind of a cliché answer, I know, but it's honestly the truth. I don't control that. The front office, they'll do what they have to do to get the team ready. And we'll go from there."

McMahon is the only true first baseman on the Rockies' roster, a 23-year-old left-handed hitter who jettisoned through Double-A Hartford and Triple-A Albuquerque last season before landing with the Rockies in late August. He was 3-for-19 in 24 plate appearances, as the Rockies' drive toward a wild card postseason spot left him lacking for playing time. But veteran first baseman Mark Reynolds, Colorado's starting first baseman the past two seasons, remains a free agent. And Ian Desmond, whom the Rockies intended to use at first base before he broke his hand in spring training a year ago, seems headed toward a more pronounced outfield role.

That leaves McMahon. Rockies general manager Jeff Bridich has not bit on a free-agent first baseman in the offseason. Carlos Santana, a longtime Cleveland mainstay, signed a three-year, \$60 million deal with the Phillies in December. And the two other most-sought after first baseman, Eric Hosmer and Logan Morrison, remain unsigned.

The chilly market for free-agent first basemen has failed to unfold, much like the offseason hot stove in general, with very few major moves. The Rockies remain the offseason's biggest spenders, doling out \$106 million to three relief pitchers in December alone, led by new closer Wade Davis.

So with spring training set to start in mid-February, the Rockies are inching closer to making a decision on McMahon's future by not deciding against him.

"You want to show you're mature, you want to show you can play defense well, you can control the strike zone," McMahon said. "One thing I'd like to show them is my maturity level and how I approach the game."

McMahon, who lives near the Rockies' spring headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz., started his offseason routine in early October, about a week after a postseason loss to the Diamondbacks. In 17 games with the Rockies in limited time, he

played first base, second base and third, his natural spot. That leaves Colorado manager Bud Black some flexibility in working him into more major league time.

“In my mind, the one I need the most work on is second base,” McMahon said. “I feel like going over to third base helps me at the other positions. It gets me athletically going like I need to, then I’ll go to the other spots to work.

“It’s helping me get there. I’m starting to realize the intricacies of each of the positions. It’s helping me understand the game overall.”

Rockies catcher Chris Iannetta has turned Jack Winery into label of love

For Iannetta, making celebrated wine has become much more than a hobby, it's become a passion

By Patrick Saunders / The Denver Post | Jan. 13, 2018

DENVER -- From the start of spring training in mid-February, through the dog days of summer, and into the cool nights of autumn, Rockies' veteran catcher Chris Iannetta blocks pitches in the dirt, winces as foul tips sting his fingertips and works in a uniform soaked in sweat.

But there is another man behind the mask.

Iannetta is also a maker of fine wines.

The basement cellar of his home outside of his native Providence, R.I., is stocked with about 600 bottles; the wines of choice being well-aged and complex Cabernet Sauvignons. Within his collection are bottles from Jack Winery, his small, high-end label out of Napa, Calif. The wine has drawn rave reviews since production began in 2012.

Robert Parker of "Wine Advocate," writing about Jack's 2013 vintage, gave the wine 94 points, saying: "I don't know this producer, but certainly they have delivered a stunning bottle of Napa Cabernet Sauvignon. The color is a healthy dark ruby/purple, the wine is approachable now and should continue to drink well for at least a decade or more."

For Iannetta, making celebrated wine has become much more than a hobby, it's become a passion.

"This is something that is growing into something special," said Iannetta, who this winter signed a two-year, \$8.5 million contract to return to Colorado as the Rockies' primary catcher. "Maybe this is something that I do after baseball, who knows? I love wine, I love the process and I like the business aspect of it."

Iannetta's partner is former big-league outfielder Vernon Wells. In 2012, the two were teammates with the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim, and both players were recovering from injuries. Iannetta had sustained a wrist injury that required surgery, and Wells underwent surgery for a broken thumb. While rehabbing together, the teammates talked about their affinity for Napa Valley wines. That shared interest grew into the wines that are now crafted near St. Helena, in the heart of California wine country.

"Rehab gets really boring, and Vernon and I started talking about wines," Iannetta recalled. "As a baseball player, you're traveling all the time, but we both loved Napa and the laid-back atmosphere there. We talked about the beauty of the place, and, of course, the wine. We started talking about starting a small winery; something that would make special wines that we would love to drink ourselves."

The name, Jack, is taken from the first initials of their respective children: Jayce, Ashlyn, Christian and Kylie. Ashlyn, 7, and Kylie, 4, are Iannetta's children.

“Vernon and I think of our wines as special wines, for family occasions such as holidays and birthdays,” Iannetta said. “We wanted the name to reflect that.”

Iannetta’s dad, Domenic, and his mom, Maria (Dilorenzo) Iannetta, emigrated to America from Italy when they were young children. Domenic’s side of the family came from Scapoli, a town in southern Italy. Maria’s family has roots outside of Naples. Wine, at lunch and dinner, was always on the table. The families brought that tradition with them to Providence. “Both of my grandparents made what we called ‘garage wine’,” Iannetta recalled. “I can remember, as a kid, going to the market to pick out the grapes. Then I got to see the whole process of watching them crush the grapes and then ferment them and put them in barrels or those big jugs. That’s always stuck with me.”

The neighbors loved the family wine, too.

“It was just garage wine, I guess you could say, but I always remember everyone asking my grandfathers for a bottle,” Iannetta said. “Everyone always told them how good the wine was. And my grandmothers had their own homemade tomato preserves. They grow the tomatoes from their own gardens they had in the back of the yard.

“I mean, you had sausages hanging from the ceiling. It was all very ‘old world,’ just something I grew up with. They brought their traditions with them. They are very prideful of what they did.”

When he was a kid, Iannetta sampled the family wine, but, like most kids, he didn’t get it. He didn’t become a “wine guy” until his rookie year with the Rockies in 2007. Iannetta started pairing fine wine with foods whenever he went out to dinner at steak houses with teammates. In 2008, he found a wine mentor in Rockies pitcher Glendon Rusch.

“Glendon was great, we had so much fun on those long flights between cities,” Iannetta said. “On every plane flight, he would bring three or four bottles of great wine. He taught me a lot and helped me appreciate wine.”

The catcher’s proud Italian heritage also steered him toward the beauty and bounty of Napa. Then, in 2007, his mother’s father, Armando, died of cancer. His dad’s father, Virgilio, died the next year. Wine became more important than ever.

“Wine is something that lets me reconnect with them, even now,” Iannetta said.

Jack is not a big label, but it’s sold out every vintage it’s produced since it corked its first bottle in 2012. Currently, Jack offers three wines: a 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$125), a 2015 red blend (\$75) and a 2015 Sauvignon Blanc (\$35.00). Production is limited to 100-250 cases a year, depending on the wine.

“We are definitely on the boutique side, on the luxury side,” Iannetta said. “We are not looking to create a \$10-15 bottle of wine that can be mass produced and found in every store. We are making bottles that people can share at their own dinner table with their closest family and friends. We want people to appreciate a really fine bottle of wine.

“We’ve had some wine critics and sommeliers tell us that we could easily sell our wine for over \$200 a bottle, but we want to try and keep it reasonably affordable.”

Iannetta, clearly, has found a passion beyond the baseball diamond.

“If you ever sat down with Chris at dinner and shared a nice bottle of wine, you’d find he has an incredibly sophisticated palate,” said Brandon Davis, the managing partner for Jack wines.

Iannetta can talk about wine with the same expertise that he discusses sliders, cut fastballs and two-seam fastballs. He can talk at length about Jack’s 2015 Cabernet, with its rich aroma of black cherry, blueberry, fresh violets and mocha. He can pick up on the plum, vanilla and nutmeg on his palate.

The hardscrabble catcher has become — he admits with a chuckle — something of a wine snob.

“You know it’s funny. Now when I go back to the wines I started with, I realize they are very one-dimensional,” he said.

Rockies winter caravan – with stops in Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico – begins Saturday

Bud Black, Nolan Arenado, Charlie Blackmon and Jeff Bridich scheduled to participate

By Patrick Saunders / The Denver Post | Jan. 13, 2018

DENVER -- Rockies fans can get a jump start on the 2018 season when the team rolls out its annual winter caravan, running from Saturday through Jan. 20. The caravan, featuring manager Bud Black, as well as select players and Rockies alumni, will visit cities in Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming.

The Rockies are rolling out quite a lineup for fans to meet and interact with, including all-stars Charlie Blackmon and Nolan Arenado. Other players scheduled to participate include: Tyler Anderson, Mike Dunn, Kyle Freeland, Jon Gray, Jeff Hoffman, Jake McGee, Ryan McMahon, Tom Murphy, Scott Oberg, Chris Rusin, Bryan Shaw, Trevor Story, Mike Tauchman, Pat Valaika and Tony Wolters.

General Manager Jeff Bridich, former Rockies players Vinny Castilla and Cory Sullivan will also appear at some events.

Following are dates, times and places for events:

Saturday, Jan. 13 — Laramie, Wyo., Greeley, Fort Collins

Players scheduled to attend: Anderson, Dunn, Murphy and Story.

- 10-11 a.m. — Laramie, Wyo., University of Wyoming Marian H. Rochelle Gateway Center: Q&A, photo and autograph session
- 1:15-2 p.m. — Greeley, University of Northern Colorado Campus Recreation Center: Q&A, meet-and-greet session
- 2 p.m. — Greeley, Bank of Colorado Arena: UNC vs. Idaho State men's basketball game
- 4:30 p.m. — Fort Collins, Colorado State Stadium: Q&A with Boys & Girls Club of Larimer County (private)

Sunday, Jan. 14 — Grand Junction

Players scheduled to attend: Anderson, Dunn, Murphy, Oberg, Story

- 11 a.m. — Grand Junction, Suplizio Field: Media session
- 11:30 a.m. — Grand Junction, Doubletree Hospitality Suite at Suplizio Field: Q&A and autograph session for Grand Junction Rockies season ticket holders (private)
- 1 p.m. — Grand Junction, Lincoln Park Barn: Youth clinic, kids-only meet-and-greet session (private)

Monday, Jan. 15 — Denver

Players scheduled to attend: McMahon, Rockies alum Sullivan, Tauchman

- 1 p.m. — Denver, Pepsi Center: Colorado Avalanche vs. Anaheim Ducks game

- 4-5 p.m. — Denver, Diamond Dry Goods, Coors Field: Autograph and photo session

Tuesday, Jan. 16 — Albuquerque, N.M., Denver

Players/staff scheduled to attend: Bridich, Gray, Hoffman and Valaika (Albuquerque); Black, Rockies alum Castilla, McMahon, Tauchman and Rockies alum Sullivan (Denver)

- 10:15 a.m. — Albuquerque, SAHQ Academy: School assembly (private)* (Bridich, Gray, Hoffman and Valaika)
- 11:15 a.m. — Albuquerque, Isotopes Park: Media session (Bridich, Gray, Hoffman and Valaika)
- 11:30 a.m. — Albuquerque, Isotopes Park Batting Cage: Q&A with Albuquerque Isotopes season ticket holders (private) (Bridich, Gray, Hoffman and Valaika)
- 12:15-1 p.m. — Albuquerque, Isotopes Park Clubhouse: Autograph session (Bridich, Gray, Hoffman and Valaika)
- 10 a.m. — Denver, Archuleta Elementary School: School assembly (private) (McMahon, Tauchman, Sullivan)
- 12 p.m. — Denver, Children’s Hospital Colorado: Meet-and-greet with patients and staff (private) (Castilla, McMahon, Tauchman, Sullivan)
- 4:30 p.m. — Denver, Coors Field, Right-Field Club Level: VIP reception with meet & greet, featuring both the Albuquerque and Denver player groups with the addition of manager Bud Black (private)
- 5:30 p.m. — Denver, Coors Field: VIP Q&A with Black, Bridich and owner Dick Monfort, hosted by Drew Goodman (private)

Wednesday, Jan. 17 — Pueblo, Fort Carson, Colorado Springs

Players scheduled to attend: Freeland, Gray, Hoffman, Valaika

- 10 a.m. — Pueblo, Pueblo West H.S.: Q&A assembly, meet-and-greet with baseball and softball teams (private)*
- Noon — Fort Carson, HUB Restaurant: Meet-and-greet with base personnel (private)*
- 2:30 p.m. — Colorado Springs, Memorial Hospital: Meet-and-greet with patients and staff (private)
- 4-5 p.m. — Colorado Springs, Rockies Dugout Store: Autograph and photo session

Thursday, Jan. 18 — Denver

Players scheduled to attend: Freeland, Gray, Valaika

- 9:30 a.m. — Denver, Holm Elementary School: Q&A assembly (private)*
- Noon-1 p.m. — Denver, Diamond Dry Goods, Coors Field: Autograph and photo session

Friday, Jan. 19 — Denver

Players/staff scheduled to attend: Arenado, Black, Blackmon, Bridich, McGee, Rusin, Shaw, Wolters

- 7 p.m. — Denver, Pepsi Center: Denver Nuggets vs. Phoenix Suns game

Saturday, Jan. 20 — Denver

Players/staff scheduled to attend: Arenado, Black, Blackmon, Bridich, vice president of international scouting and development Rolando Fernandez, pitching coach Steve Foster, McGee, Rusin, Shaw, Wolters

- 9-9:45 a.m. — Denver, Coors Field Home Clubhouse Interview Room: Media availability for Arenado, Black, Blackmon
- 10 a.m. — Denver, Coors Field: Season Ticket Hot Stove (private)

Rockies shortstop Trevor Story has a big opportunity in 2018

The shortstop might offer the most upside of the team's options in the middle of the lineup.

By Hayden Kane / Purple Row | Jan. 15, 2018

The **Colorado Rockies** need a young hitter or two to break out in 2018. Having committed to spending in free agency on their bullpen, they need to find internal answers for their mediocre offense. It is all but certain that the Rockies will not make a major move to upgrade their offense. Once they signed **Wade Davis**, they closed the door on any free agent moves for their offense. The only way that would happen would be a trade, which feels unlikely but is not impossible. Unless they do actually make a deal, they will turn to internal options to improve their offense. The Rockies have the prospects to reasonably hope for that to happen, even if there is risk involved with that plan.

A lot of that pressure is focused on **David Dahl**, a former top prospect in the organization and league-wide. Dahl made a splashy debut in 2016 but then lost all of 2017 due to injury. The pressure may be in the wrong place though. We don't know if Dahl is up to being a middle-of-the-order bat on a contending team or not. And in fact, we still don't know if he's healthy, even with the welcome news that **he started swinging a bat this week**. There might be another answer to the Rockies offense, however, in a player who is more familiar and has a firmer track record both in his strengths and his flaws: shortstop **Trevor Story**.

We know that Story can be a difference maker. One season isn't a long track record, but we saw Story succeed, struggle, and make some adjustments down the stretch. Ultimately he was too inconsistent, and the idea of relying on him in the heart of the order makes most of us queasy enough that we were pining for outside additions once the season concluded. Story is one of a number of internal players who can improve to raise the collective floor of the offense, but unless you are still an **Ian Desmond** truther, it seems pretty clear Story is the guy with the most upside. He's already a stellar defensive shortstop who hit 27 home runs in 2016 and 24 home runs last season.

Unfortunately we know that power came in the midst of an inconsistent season in which the strikeout-happy Story (191 strikeouts) was often part of the problem for a bad lineup. His sub-par 86 OPS+ better illustrates the unsteadiness of his 2017 and highlights the need for him to improve if he's going to be the very good to potentially All-Star player to help push the Rockies over the hump in a playoff race.

Can Story justify the Rockies' inaction on the offensive side of things this offseason? Probably not, and that's probably not fair to ask of any individual player. But he can at least make the team's plan more defensible by improving to the level of a solid, consistent power hitter on par with what they could have added via free agency or trade.

It's a big ask, but we know Story has the talent to do it. That gives him a big opportunity to help drive this team to the playoffs and to take a firmer hold of the shortstop position while many of us are making eyes at new top prospect Brendan Rodgers. He has the talent and the room to improve to be an impact hitter, and if he can it will go a long way for the Rockies as their lineup tries to catch up to their starting rotation and bullpen.

Local Sports: Rockies Caravan visits Grand Junction

KKCO 11 | Jan. 14, 2018

The Colorado Rockies major league club visited the Grand Valley on Sunday afternoon apart of their 2018 Rockies Caravan.

Trevor Story, Scott Oberb, Tom Murphy, and Mike Dunn made the trip to Grand Junction to have lunch and a question and answer session with Grand Junction Rockies season ticket holders. It gave fans the chance to see a different side of the players.

"They remember where they came from even though they are in the big leagues now. I love to see that side of them and think they appreciate us as fans," said longtime fan Dianne Wheeler.

After the lunch concluded the team put on a kids clinic attended by more than 50 youngsters. They had the chance to hit, field, and throw with some of the best players the game has to offer. For the kids it is something that they wont forget.

"It is really amazing because we are allowed to come here and be able to work with the Colorado Rockies,"said kids camp participant Danielle Silva.

The Colorado Rockies 2018 Caravan will continue through the 20th of January in the Denver Metro area.

Rockies' winter caravan to stop in Colorado Springs

Nick Rothschild / KRDO News Channel 13 | Jan. 14, 2018

The Colorado Rockies winter caravan is once again ready to set off for its journey around Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

On Wednesday, January 17th the caravan will make its only stop in Colorado Springs, Pueblo, and Fort Carson.

The only event open to the public will be an autograph and photo session at the Rockies Dugout Store between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. The caravan will also be making private stops at Pueblo West High School, Fort Carson, and Memorial High School.

Pitchers Jon Gray, Kyle Freeland, and Jeff Hoffman will be making the trip to Colorado Springs - along with infielder Pat Valaika.

Rockies make a visit to University of Wyoming

Christy Waite / KGWN Cheyenne | Jan. 13, 2018

Laramie, WY The Colorado Rockies made the trip to the University of Wyoming this morning for the 2018 Rockies Caravan. There were some excited fans in attendance and in case you missed it here is a look at the event.

Dinger is always a crowd favorite at Rockies games, but today was all about Trevor Story, Tom Murphy, and Mike Dunn. The players talked about their season and held a Q&A session for all of the Rockies lovers. After that fans lined up for the chance to meet and greet the players, take pictures, get new Rockies hats, and get some autographs. Tom Murphy says seeing a fan base like this in Laramie is really cool.