



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF OCTOBER 22, 2018

"Here's what happened in Saturday's AFL action" ... MLB.com

"The latest on Davidson's 2-way dream" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Here's what happened in Friday's AFL action" ... MLB.com

"What White Sox prospects said about Instructs" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Report: People around baseball believe Joe Girardi is waiting for managerial job with Cubs or White Sox" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"With Astros eliminated, let's rank their free agents by possibility of coming to White Sox" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Column: At long last, Chris Sale's dream of pitching in World Series is about to come true" ... Paul Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"New technology only adds to baseball's culture of paranoia" ... Noah Trister, Chicago Tribune

"A rundown of White Sox option decisions and Rule 5 protections" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

Here's what happened in Saturday's AFL action

MLB.com / October 19, 2018

Here's a team-by-team breakdown of how all 30 teams' prospects fared in Arizona Fall League action on Saturday:

• Gameday: Peoria 6, Salt River 5 | Scottsdale 9, Surprise 7 (11) | Mesa 11, Glendale 8

AL East

Blue Jays (Surprise)

Santiago Espinal, Blue Jays No. 22 prospect, hit a triple and scored two runs as part of a 2-for-5 showing for the Saguaros. Jackson McClelland struck out a pair in 1 2/3 hitless frames out of the bullpen. The right-hander has now allowed a hit in 5 2/3 innings (three appearances) this fall.

Orioles (Glendale)

Baltimore's No. 12 prospect, center fielder Ryan McKenna, went 2-for-5 with two triples, two RBIs and two runs scored out of the leadoff spot. He's slashing .318/.423/.638 for a 1.059 OPS in AFL play. Right-hander Tanner Chleborad gave up a run on four hits over two relief innings, striking out one.

Rays (Peoria)

Rays No. 9 prospect Lucius Fox went 1-for-3 with two walks, two runs and an RBI out of the leadoff spot. He also stole a base, his sixth in eight games, during which he's hit .412 with 14 hits and 11 runs scored. Javelinas starter Matt Krook earned the win after allowing one earned run on one hit over three innings. He issued two walks, struck out three and recorded five ground-ball outs.

Red Sox (Mesa)

Second baseman Esteban Quiroz was 0-for-4 with a pair of strikeouts, dropping his AFL average to .188. Left-hander Josh Taylor came out off the bullpen to throw a scoreless seventh inning.

Yankees (Glendale)

Shortstop Thairo Estrada, the Yankees' No. 16 prospect, was 1-for-4 with a single. First baseman Steven Sensley was 2-for-5 with a pair of singles to up his AFL average to .242. On the pitching side of the ledger, right-hander Jordan Foley started and surrendered five runs on four hits over two innings, walking one and getting strikeouts on five of the six outs he recorded. Righty Kyle Zurak was hit hard as well, giving up four runs (two earned) over a third of an inning out of the bullpen, giving up three hits and walking two.

AL Central

Indians (Glendale)

Third baseman Yu Chang, Cleveland's No. 6 prospect, turned in an impressive 3-for-4 performance, with a double, RBI and run scored. Right fielder Connor Marabell was 1-for-5 with a single and an RBI. And left-hander Rob Kaminsky was the final pitcher out of the bullpen for Glendale, tossing a scoreless eighth inning, allowing a hit and fanning two.

Royals (Surprise)

Meibris Vilorio walked and struck out twice as he finished 0-for-3, while speedster Nick Heath tallied a single in four at-bats and was walked. On the mound, Scott Blewett allowed one earned run on three hits in his second AFL start. Tossing 3 1/3 frames, the Royals' No. 26 prospect issued three walks and struck out a pair.

Tigers (Mesa)

Daz Cameron, Detroit's No. 8 prospect, played center field and had a big night at the plate, going 3-for-4 with a double, RBI and three runs scored. No. 12 prospect Jake Rogers went 1-for-3 with a double and two runs scored. Right-hander Sandy Baez, the Tigers' No. 26 prospect, surrendered three runs on three hits in the ninth inning. Right-hander Eduardo Jimenez tossed two scoreless innings of relief, yielding three hits and striking out two. And right-hander John Schreiber came on in relief to pitch a scoreless eighth with a strikeout.

Twins (Salt River)

Twins No. 18 prospect Travis Blankenhorn drove in a pair of runs, doubled and went 1-for-4 out of the leadoff spot for the Rafterers.

White Sox (Glendale)

Chicago's No. 9 prospect, outfielder Luis Alexander Basabe, had two singles and an RBI as part of a 2-for-4 effort, upping his AFL average to .278. No. 28 prospect Lax Rivera started at second base and went 1-for-4 with a single and an RBI. Right-hander Danny Dopico tossed 1 2/3 scoreless frames out off the bullpen, walking one and fanning two.

AL West

A's (Mesa)

Oakland's No. 30 prospect, outfielder Skye Bolt, went 1-for-4 with a triple and a walk and is hitting .333 so far in AFL play.

Angels (Mesa)

After striking out five in three shutout frames in his first Fall League start, 23-year-old right-hander Jesus Castillo got roughed up on Saturday, giving up five runs (all earned) on seven hits and walk over three innings while striking out just one. On the offensive end, however, a trio of Angels contributed to Mesa's 11-8 win. The team's No. 4 prospect, Jahmai Jones, notched his second straight multihit game, and third in seven games, going 2-for-5 with three RBIs out of the DH spot. Infielders David MacKinnon and Roberto Baldoquin each went 1-for-4 with a run scored, with Baldoquin also driving in a run. MacKinnon's hit was his first of the AFL season, after starting 0-for-10. Baldoquin's hit was his second. He entered the game with one hit in 13 at-bats.

Astros (Scottsdale)

Ronnie Dawson was a game-changer on the basepaths as he swiped four bags in as many chances. He also went 2-for-3 with an RBI and two walks, giving the outfielder a .296 average and seven steals in the AFL. Abraham Toro-Hernandez was 2-for-5, and Erasmo Pinales contributed with a scoreless frame out of the bullpen.

Mariners (Peoria)

Mariners No. 9 prospect Wyatt Mills lowered his ERA to 1.59 with a perfect inning out of the bullpen. David McKay added a scoreless frame, pitching around a hit. Ian Miller (No. 20) came up empty in four trips to the plate from the bottom of the lineup.

Rangers (Surprise)

Yanio Perez plated a run with a sacrifice fly but went 0-for-3 as the Saguaros' designated hitter. Demarcus Evans was sharp out of the bullpen as he recorded four of his five outs via strikeout while tossing 1 2/3 hitless innings. Rangers No. 15 prospect C.D. Pelham was tagged for two earned runs on three hits in 1 1/3 frames.

NL East

Braves (Peoria)

After entering in relief in the fifth inning, Braves No. 12 prospect Kyle Muller delivered two one-hit frames with three strikeouts and two walks. At the plate, Braxton Davidson went 0-for-2 but walked three times.

Marlins (Salt River)

Marlins No. 11 prospect Brian Miller scored two runs, going 1-for-3, and reached with a walk. He also swiped a bag, his second in 10 games after racking up 40 steals across two levels during the regular season. Kyle Keller, Tommy Eveld and Chad Smith combined for four scoreless frames out of the Rafters 'pen.

Mets (Scottsdale)

Mets No. 2 prospect Peter Alonso (No. 58 overall) connected on his third AFL home run, as his tape-measure two-run shot in the ninth helped the Scorpions force extra innings. The homer was Alonso's lone hit in six at-bats. Mets No. 1 prospect Andres Gimenez (No. 55 overall) went 0-for-4 with a walk from the bottom of the lineup.

Nationals (Salt River)

Nationals No. 2 prospect Carter Kieboom (No. 37 overall) went 1-for-4 with a walk, his first Fall League RBI and stolen base. Daniel Johnson (No. 7) doubled and scored a run as part of a 1-for-3 showing, while Jake Noll struck out twice in four trips to the plate.

Phillies (Scottsdale)

Darick Hall put the Scorpions on the board against Surprise with a solo shot to lead off the fourth inning. It was the second AFL homer for Hall, who went deep 26 times across two levels during the regular season. Outfielder Austin Listi went 3-for-6 with an RBI and two runs scored. On the mound, Luke Leftwich (BB) and Jonathan Hennigan (2 K) each posted a scoreless frame, with the latter earning the save.

NL Central

Brewers (Peoria)

Brewers top prospect Keston Hiura (No. 30 overall) has multiple hits in four of eight games in the AFL after his second two-hit showing in as many days. He finished 2-for-4 with an RBI double that pushed his AFL-leading RBI total to 17. Trent Grisham (Brewers' No. 19) and Weston Wilson both had RBI singles.

Cardinals (Surprise)

Saguaros leadoff man Tommy Edman went 1-for-4 with his first AFL double and also picked up his fourth steal. Second baseman Andy Young delivered a solo shot in the sixth inning for his first Fall League homer.

and finished 1-for-3 with two walks. The Cardinals middle-infield tandem is hitting .333 and .381, respectively, this fall. Lane Thomas drove in a run with a sacrifice fly but was 0-for-4.

Cubs (Mesa)

Chicago's No. 6 prospect, second baseman Nico Hoerner, bounced back from an 0-for-4 line on Friday by going 2-for-3 with a triple, homer and three RBIs. Left fielder D.J. Wilson, the Cubs' No. 16 prospect, went 1-for-4 with a single and two runs scored. And right-hander Bailey Clark pitched a scoreless sixth inning, giving up one hit.

Pirates (Surprise)

Pirates No. 5 prospect Cole Tucker started the scoring for Surprise with a two-out, two-run double in the first inning, and then helped force extra innings with a single in the bottom of the ninth. He finished the game 2-for-5 with three RBIs. Will Craig (No. 16) was 0-for-5 with three strikeouts. Relievers Matt Eckelman (IP, 4 H, 3 R, 2 ER) and Geoff Hartlieb (2 IP, 4 H, 3 R, 1 ER) both scuffled.

Reds (Scottsdale)

Reds No. 3 prospect Taylor Trammell (No. 17 overall) drove home the game-winning run in the 11th inning to cap a 4-for-6, two-RBI performance. Shed Long (No. 8) walked twice and scored two runs out of the leadoff spot.

NL West

D-backs (Salt River)

D-backs No. 5 prospect Daulton Varsho upped his Fall League average to .353 with a 2-for-4 performance. Drew Ellis (No. 9) plated two runs with a double in the fourth inning. Bo Takahashi struck out two of the three batters he faced during a perfect inning in relief.

Dodgers (Glendale)

Dodgers No. 2 prospect (No. 39 prospect overall) Keibert Ruiz went 1-for-4 with a single, walk and two runs scored. Cody Thomas was Glendale's designated hitter, going 1-for-5 with a single, RBI and run scored. And right-hander Andre Scrubb pitched a scoreless fifth inning to lower his AFL ERA to 4.15.

Giants (Scottsdale)

Matt Winn reached base twice via a walk and scored a run before finishing 0-for-3. Chase Johnson struck out a pair during a scoreless inning in relief, while Giants No. 19 prospect Melvin Adon bumped triple digits during his appearance later in the game. Sam Wolff earned the win despite permitting an unearned run in the 10th inning.

Padres (Peoria)

Padres No. 25 prospect Austin Allen produced exit velocities of 106.9 mph (double to right field) and 112.5 mph (lineout to center). Hudson Potts (No. 23) also hit a double, as both players finished 2-for-4. Buddy Reed (No. 13) reached on a walk, stole a base and scored a run. Relievers Travis Radke and Dauris Valdez each allowed two earned runs in one inning.

Rockies (Salt River)

Rockies No. 11 prospect Tyler Nevin went 1-for-4, while Sam Hilliard (No. 9) finished 0-for-5. Starter Ryan Castellani (No. 10) could not complete two innings, as he was chased after he allowed five earned runs on four hits and four walks in 1 2/3 frames. Jesus Tincoco (No. 20) allowed a run on three hits with three strikeouts over 1 1/3 innings, and Justin Lawrence (No. 17) added a scoreless frame later in the game.

The latest on Davidson's 2-way dream

White Sox infielder working on pitching this offseason

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / October 19, 2018

CHICAGO -- Matt Davidson has had a passion for pitching since he was a young player who loved watching Randy Johnson in action.

Davidson came up through the Minors with the D-backs and White Sox as a hitter, and made all of his appearances in the field at the corner infield spots over the first three seasons of his career. But after throwing three scoreless innings in three appearances in 2018, Davidson is working toward adding pitching to his offseason preparation.

The White Sox certainly don't want to squelch Davidson's dream, but there's no guarantee he will be part of the 2019 pitching staff, even in the smallest of roles. A Friday report from 670 The Score stated the White Sox have given Davidson the freedom to pursue a pitching addition and will assess the situation through the offseason with Davidson living close to the team's Camelback Ranch complex. But according to an e-mail from general manager Rick Hahn, there's nothing new on Davidson's pitching pursuit to report.

Davidson, 27, hit .228 with 20 home runs and 62 RBIs during the 2018 campaign, but earned recognition for scoreless innings thrown at Texas on June 29, against the Blue Jays on July 27 and against the Yankees on Aug. 6. Davidson fanned two, walked one and allowed one hit.

Davidson pitched in three mop-up situations and was not used during the final two months in any remotely close game. But he certainly showed more ability than the usual position player eating up innings.

After his third outing, Davidson admitted to MLB.com his arm was "pretty sore." So, the offseason work would be a necessity, even if Davidson were only going to be used a few times in the upcoming season.

"It's pretty intense," Davidson told MLB.com in early September of pitching. "But yeah, definitely, I would love to explore that."

Here's what happened in Friday's AFL action

MLB.com / October 19, 2018

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• Gameday: Glendale 1, Salt River 0 | Peoria 3, Scottsdale 1 | Surprise 3, Mesa 1

AL East

Blue Jays (Surprise)

Vladimir Guerrero Jr., baseball's No. 1 prospect, went 1-for-3 with a single and a walk, batting .517 so far in AFL play. Meanwhile, Blue Jays No. 9 prospect Cavan Biggio went 2-for-3 with a pair of singles and an RBI. Shortstop Santiago Espinal, Toronto's No. 23 prospect, went 1-for-4 with a single, his first AFL hit for the season. Left-hander Shawn Morimando started and tossed 2 2/3 innings, giving up a run on two hits, walking two and striking out three. And right-hander Zach Jackson added two scoreless innings in relief, striking out two.

Orioles (Glendale)

Ryan McKenna, Baltimore's No. 12 prospect, was 2-for-3 and is now hitting .313. Second baseman Steve Wilkerson struck out twice, as did catcher Martin Cervenko.

Rays (Peoria)

Lucius Fox (Rays No. 9 prospect) boosted his average to .419 with a couple of hits, finishing 2-for-4 with a run scored. Joe McCarthy (No. 17) drove in a pair of runs, bringing his Fall League total to four. Ryan Boldt (No. 25) went 1-for-4. Phoenix Sanders gave up just one hit in two innings, but it was enough to bring home a run.

2018 Arizona Fall League rosters

Click on the AFL team name to see complete roster.

AFL club MLB clubs

Glendale BAL, CLE, CWS, LA, NYY
Peoria ATL, MIL, SD, SEA, TB
Salt River ARI, COL, MIA, MIN, WSH
Surprise KC, PIT, STL, TEX, TOR
Scottsdale CIN, HOU, NYM, PHI, SF
Mesa BOS, CHC, DET, LAA, OAK

Red Sox (Mesa)

Bobby Dalbec, Boston's No. 6 prospect, played first base and went 0-for-4 with three strikeouts, and DH Josh Ockimey -- the Red Sox No. 10 prospect -- didn't fare better, also going 0-for-4 with a strikeout in the contest.

Yankees (Glendale)

First baseman Steven Sensely provided most of the excitement in the game that gave the Glendale Desert Dogs their first win of this Fall League season. He doubled on a sharp ground ball to center fielder Brian Miller, going 1-for-3 with one RBI and hitting .214. Estevan Florial, the No. 45 overall prospect and New York's No. 2 prospect, struck out twice and walked.

AL Central

Indians (Glendale)

Yu Chang, Cleveland's No. 6 prospect, accounted for the game's only run with a single in the bottom of the fifth inning. Chang went 2-for-3 and is hitting .261.

Royals (Surprise)

Kansas City's No. 2 prospect, center fielder Khalil Lee, went 0-for-4 but did drive in an insurance run in the ninth inning with an RBI groundout. And right fielder Nick Heath went 0-for-3 with a walk and a run scored out of the leadoff spot.

Tigers (Mesa)

Daz Cameron, Detroit's No. 8 prospect, played right field and had a quiet game at the plate, going 0-for-3 with a pair of strikeouts. Third baseman Daniel Pinero was 0-for-4.

Twins (Salt River)

Twins No. 18 prospect Travis Blankenhorn went 1-for-3. Left fielder Jaylin Davis went 0-for-3 with two strikeouts. Griffin Jax allowed a run and three hits.

White Sox (Glendale)

White Sox No. 28 prospect Laz Rivera helped the Desert Dogs get their first win of the season, going 1-for-3. Rivera is hitting .222. Left-hander Tanner Banks pitched four innings and allowed only three hits.

AL West

A's (Mesa)

Left fielder Luis Barrera went 1-for-3 with a walk, and a trio of right-handers combined for three innings out of the bullpen. Sam Sheehan pitched in the fourth and gave up a run on two walks. Angel Duno walked one and gave up a run in the eighth, and Calvin Coker gave up an unearned run in the ninth, allowing a hit while walking one and striking out one.

Angels (Mesa)

A pair of right-handers in the Angels system pitched out of the bullpen, with Daniel Procopio tossing a scoreless fifth and sixth innings (one hit, one strikeout), and Brett Hanewich adding a scoreless seventh (one hit).

Astros (Scottsdale)

Drew Ferguson went 1-for-3.

Mariners (Peoria)

Anthony Misiewicz (Mariners No. 27 prospect) bounced back from a rough Fall League debut with a scoreless start for the Javelinas. The lefty cruised through four innings, yielding just one hit. Evan White (No. 2) went 0-for-4. Joe DeCarlo was 2-for-4 with an RBI to bring his average up to .308. Chris Mariscal went 1-for-3.

Rangers (Surprise)

Texas' No. 2 prospect and the No. 56 prospect overall, Juan Pablo Martinez served as the designated hitter and went 0-for-4 with a pair of strikeouts. First baseman Yanio Perez was 0-for-4, but did score a run.

NL East

Braves (Peoria)

Thomas Burrows, Braves No. 19 prospect, fired two scoreless frames in relief, lowering his Fall League ERA to 3.38. Adam McCreery picked up the save as he retired the side in order in the ninth. Izzy Wilson went 0-for-3 and drew a walk.

Marlins (Salt River)

Monte Harrison, MLB's No. 76 overall prospect and Marlins No. 1 prospect, went 1-for-3, striking out twice. Marlins No. 11 prospect Brian Miller went 0-for-4 and is hitting .182. Bryson Brigman, the Marlins' No. 26 prospect, went 0-for-3.

Mets (Scottsdale)

Mets No. 2 prospect Peter Alonso saw his Fall League average drop to .333 as he went 0-for-4, his second straight hitless game. Andres Gimenez (No. 1) also had a rough go of it and continues to struggle in Arizona. After going 0-for-4, he's hitting just .154. Desmond Lindsay (No. 11) was also 0-for-3 at the plate. Gerson Bautista pitched 1 2/3 innings and gave up one run on two hits. However, Joe Zanghi didn't have the same success on the mound as he gave up two runs on three hits. Matt Blackham finished the game and gave up a hit in a scoreless ninth.

Nationals (Salt River)

Washington No. 15 prospect Tres Barrera was 0-for-3.

Phillies (Scottsdale)

Tyler Viza put together his second strong start of the AFL. After throwing three scoreless in his first outing, Viza upped the ante with four innings of one-hit ball this time around. Seth McGarry followed Viza on the mound and was equally effective. The right-hander did give up three hits, but he also struck out three in 1 1/3 innings. Arquimedes Gamboa (No. 11) extended his hitting streak to five games with a 1-for-2 game. Taylor Listi came into the game as a defensive replacement but didn't get an at-bat.

NL Central

Brewers (Peoria)

Brewers top prospect Keston Hiura put together his third multihit game of the Fall League and is hitting .333 after the 2-for-4 performance. Trent Grisham (No. 19) went 0-for-2 but reached base via a walk.

Cardinals (Surprise)

Right-hander Connor Greene, the Cardinals' No. 27 prospect, pitched 2 1/3 scoreless frames of relief, yielding one hit while walking two and fanning three. Left fielder Lane Thomas turned in a 1-for-2 performance with a single, walk and RBI. Catcher Jeremy Martinez also singled and walked while going 1-for-3.

Cubs (Mesa)

Chicago's No. 6 prospect, second baseman Nico Hoerner, had a rough game at the plate, going 0-for-4 with two strikeouts. Center field D.J. Wilson, the Cubs' No. 16 prospect, led off and went 1-for-3 with a single and a walk. No. 29 prospect Trent Giambrone started at shortstop and homered as part of a 2-for-3 performance. Catcher Johnny Pereda was 0-for-2 with a walk, and right-hander Erick Leal started and turned in three scoreless innings, allowing two hits and fanning two.

Pirates (Surprise)

Left-hander Blake Weiman picked up a six-out save for Surprise, entering in the eighth inning and yielding one hit while striking out two over two scoreless frames.

Reds (Scottsdale)

Reds No. 3 prospect Taylor Trammell tripled and scored, but that was it as he finished 1-for-4. Alfredo Rodriguez (No. 23) went 0-for-4 and Mark Kolozsvary went 1-for-3.

NL West

D-backs (Salt River)

Pavin Smith, the No. 6 overall first base and Diamondbacks No. 4 prospect, went 1-for-4. Arizona's No. 9 prospect Drew Ellis went 1-for-3 and is hitting .250.

Dodgers (Glendale)

Keibert Ruiz, the Dodgers' No. 2 prospect and No. 39 overall, went 0-for-3. Left fielder Cody Thomas was 0-for-3.

Giants (Scottsdale)

C.J. Hinojosa, the Giants No. 28 prospect, went 0-for-3 and is hitting .111 through four games.

Rockies (Salt River)

First baseman Josh Fuentes, the 2018 Triple-A All-Star Game MVP, made several nice defensive plays and went 1-for-4.

What White Sox prospects said about Instructs

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / October 19, 2018

GLENDALE, Ariz. -- White Sox Instructional League action ended on Wednesday, a stretch beginning on Sept. 20 and featuring a four-day mini-camp at Camelback Ranch that included some of the system's top prospects.

Here are some of the key sentiments from players, coaches and front-office personnel involved as told to MLB.com.

"In Spring Training, he noticed I wasn't throwing my curveball consistently. One of the big things he said was, 'Land before you throw it,' and that's one of the cues I've stuck with now. So he definitely helped me." -- Dylan Cease, MLB Pipeline's Minor League Pitcher of the Year and the No. 3 White Sox prospect per MLB Pipeline, on help from James Shields

"We've had some really tough conversations. He's been frustrated. But he's in a really good place right now. He's walking around without a boot. We are slowly working into baseball activity, and with it starting to get a little bit more smiles out of Jake. He kind of sees the light at the end of the tunnel, which at the end of the day makes us all happy."

-- White Sox director of player development Chris Getz on third baseman Jake Burger, the No. 13 White Sox prospect who is working his way back from two ruptured Achilles

"None, no pressure. Kind of old hat now. I'm hoping this is the last time I have to talk about that and worry about picking that high."

-- White Sox director of amateur scouting Nick Hostetler on picking third overall in the 2019 Draft

"Come Spring Training '19, I'm going to put myself in position where I feel confident and comfortable and can have fun and compete for a job."

-- Right-hander Zack Burdi, who is working his way back from Tommy John surgery as part of Glendale's roster in the Arizona Fall League

"We've got players who haven't played with each other, with different backgrounds and cultures. The more times we get these guys together, the more comfortable they will be playing together in the future, but certainly come Spring Training."

-- Getz on the idea behind the four-day mini-camp

"[Cease] was lights-out any time I saw him. He was always throwing well, has a good clean delivery, the ball comes out of his hand really well. He's very talented. Like I said, the ball jumps out of his hand real quick, and he's got off-speed and command. People with those kinds of tools and stuff like that are definitely people who stay in the big leagues."

-- Right-hander Dane Dunning, the No. 6 White Sox prospect, on Cease

"A lot of us didn't get the chance to spend a lot of time together during the season. I've even got to know some of these guys better the last couple days than I have in the two years I've known them since we've been drafted, because we were at different levels. It's definitely beneficial for sure."

-- Right-hander Jimmy Lambert, the No. 21 White Sox prospect

"He's got a drive to be good in all facets of the game. Obviously in the box it comes very natural to him. He's a good-sized kid, which obviously benefits him very well in the box. It's something he needs to stay on top of defensively. He can be a solid outfielder, he can be a good baserunner, but it comes with the daily discipline of doing the things you need to do to become those things. He made great strides toward the end of this season."

-- Getz on Eloy Jimenez, who was not in Arizona but ranks as the No. 1 White Sox prospect

"He never could quite kick it in to two or three outings in a row. Even in his really rough ones, there were flashes of his old self. I don't want to use the term mulligan. He lost a year, but I also think he's talented enough that if he gets it going at the beginning again next year, I certainly anticipate he'll get back to where he was a year ago."

-- White Sox Minor League pitching coordinator Kirk Champion on Alec Hansen's rough 2018 season

"I've played shortstop my whole life. I feel comfortable at the position. Even last year, during the offseason before I went to a college season when I was going to play second base, I've always worked shortstop. Throughout the season, I bounced back and forth to shortstop and second base during BP. I've always continued to get my reps at shortstop."

-- Nick Madrigal, the White Sox top pick in the 2018 Draft, on working at shortstop during Instructs after playing second in-season.

"The learning never stops. The coaching staff, the guys who are heading these things, are spot on with what they say. Spot on with their vision for this core group of guys, so it's been really good."

-- Steele Walker, the White Sox second round pick in the 2018 Draft

Report: People around baseball believe Joe Girardi is waiting for managerial job with Cubs or White Sox

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / October 21, 2018

Joe Girardi won't be the manager of the Cincinnati Reds in 2019, perhaps because he has hopes of landing a gig in Chicago.

According to Fancred's Jon Heyman, Girardi was in the running for the Reds' managerial job (which went to former Cubs third-base coach David Bell this weekend) but pulled himself out, this after interviewing for but not getting the same position with the Texas Rangers. Heyman cites "industry speculation" that Girardi might want to remain a free agent so he can land the job of skipper in Chicago.

Jon Heyman

✓

@JonHeyman

Girardi surprised reds by pulling out Friday. He had a chance to win job at that point but they never got to point of talking money with him. He also pulled out of rangers derby. Industry speculation: he's waiting a year on Chicago

9:45 AM - Oct 21, 2018

1,271

492 people are talking about this

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Jon Heyman

✓

@JonHeyman

To clarify the rangers told Girardi they were going in another direction (tho JG did pull himself out of reds derby)

12:47 PM - Oct 21, 2018

166

54 people are talking about this

Twitter Ads info and privacy

Heyman is of course not specific, listing a city with two major league teams, leaving this open for interpretation as either the Cubs or the White Sox.

Obviously Girardi has a history on the North Side. He had two stints there as a player, from 1989 to 1992 and again from 2000 to 2002. Joe Maddon has one year remaining on his contract, and Cubs president Theo Epstein said during his end-of-season press conference that the team has not had discussions with Maddon about an extension. After managing the New York Yankees to their most recent World Series championship in 2009, Girardi might again want a crack at managing a big-market contender.

But if Girardi is simply itching to get back to his home state — he was born in Peoria and graduated from Northwestern — perhaps he has the White Sox on his wish list, too. Rick Renteria has one year remaining on his current contract, as well, and should the rebuilding White Sox see all their young talent turn into the contender they've planned, the manager of such a team would be an attractive position to hold.

But just because folks believe Girardi wants to manage in Chicago doesn't mean there'd be mutual interest. Despite Epstein's comments that there have been no extension talks with Maddon, the president of baseball operations also backed his manager in that same press conference, refusing to blame Maddon for the team's "broken" offense down the stretch last month. And Rick Hahn and the rest of White Sox brass heap frequent praise on the job Renteria has done in his two years, describing him as an important part of player development and of establishing a culture hoped to spread throughout the organization.

Plus, it's worth mentioning that Girardi's decade-long tenure in the Bronx came to an end amid suggestion that he was unable to connect with his young players. It's unknown how much of a realistic concern that would be for any team thinking about hiring him. But the recently fired Chili Davis believed that very issue was part of the reason his time as the Cubs' hitting coach came to an end. And there are few teams out there younger than the White Sox.

Again, it's just speculation for now. But if for some reason one or both Chicago teams don't hand out new contracts to their current managers, perhaps Girardi would be interested in an opening on either side of town.

With Astros eliminated, let's rank their free agents by possibility of coming to White Sox

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / October 19, 2018

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Which free-agent Astros could end up on Sox?

The Houston Astros will not win back-to-back world championships this October.

Eliminated by the Boston Red Sox in Game 5 of the recently concluded ALCS, the rebuilt Astros still remain the model for rebuilding teams like the White Sox. But with their first post-championship season ending without another ring on the fingers of homegrown stars like Jose Altuve, George Springer, Alex Bregman and Carlos Correa, among others, the most pertinent topic involving the Astros when it comes to the White Sox is Astros players now hitting the free-agent market.

There's a number of them, and some are very, very good. The White Sox figure to be more active this winter than they were last offseason, with Rick Hahn already saying the team will be making pitching additions, a no-brainer with Michael Kopech slated to miss the entire 2019 season while recovering from Tommy John surgery. And Hahn has said the White Sox will be "opportunistic" when it comes to other types of additions, as well.

So could any of these soon-to-be former Astros land on the South Side? Maybe. Here they are, ranked by such a possibility.

1. Charlie Morton

The White Sox need starting pitchers. Kopech's out until 2020, and James Shields, should the team opt not to bring him back on a new contract, will be a free-agent departure. That's two holes that need filling, and Morton could fill one of them. I know what you're thinking, "Dallas Keuchel is also a free agent, why isn't he No. 1 on this list, you fool?" More on him in a bit. Right now, we're talking about Charlie Morton.

Morton is hardly the most rebuild-friendly pitching option out there at 35 years old. But Morton's been very good for the Astros over the past two seasons, making 55 starts, striking out 364 guys and posting a 3.36 ERA. His fastball velocity is as high as it's been in his 11-year big league career and he's coming off two straight playoff runs, so maybe he could teach these young White Sox a thing or two about playing winning baseball — he did close out Game 7 of the World Series last fall.

The biggest problem might be that he's not too far removed from different results when he played with the Pittsburgh Pirates, when his numbers weren't nearly as good as they got when he went to Houston. Would another change of scenery mean a different kind of performance?

What kind of contract Morton will get on the market remains to be seen, obviously, but it's kind of a mystery at this point, as he's coming off a couple great years but is getting up there in age when it comes to multi-year deals. He could be a fit for the White Sox should they want just a one- or two-year option while they wait for Kopech to return to full strength and for Dylan Cease to make his way to the major leagues. But should this recent success continue, he could be a valuable option on a White Sox team making the transition from rebuilding to contending, too.

2. Marwin Gonzalez

The White Sox have a bit of a quandary in that they are still waiting to find out what they've got in a lot of their young players. With so many prospects and even young players at the major league level yet to fully finish their development, it's tough to say where the holes on future White Sox teams will be. And that's made all the more difficult by the rash of injuries sustained by White Sox prospects in 2018.

A good way to plan for future unknowns is to have a guy you can plug in just about anywhere, and that's what Gonzalez is. During the 2018 regular season, Gonzalez played everywhere on the field besides pitcher and catcher: 73 games in left field, 39 games at shortstop, 32 games at second base, 24 games at first base, three games at third base, two games in center field and one game in right field. He played one game at designated hitter, too, in case you were wondering. He appeared at six different positions in 2017, when he finished in the top 20 in AL MVP voting. That versatility should make him a hot commodity this offseason.

The question marks come from Gonzalez's bat, which was excellent in 2017 but not nearly as good in 2018. After slashing .303/.377/.530 with 23 homers and 90 RBIs for the world-champion Astros in 2017, he got more playing time in 2018 and his numbers dropped to a .247/.324/.409 slash line, 16 homers and 68 RBIs for the AL runners up. So which batch of results would you get if you signed Gonzalez? That's the question facing teams this offseason. (To help assuage fears, however, Gonzalez just wrapped a solid postseason in which he batted .333 with a pair of homers, a pair of doubles and nine RBIs, not to mention a .389 on-base percentage.)

But for a team with as much unwritten future as the White Sox have, wouldn't it be nice to have a plan for every eventuality — and to have it all in the form of one guy? While Manny Machado and Bryce Harper grab all the free-agent headlines this winter, perhaps the White Sox could slip in and convince Gonzalez to help another transition from rebuilding to contending. He was a part of two 100-loss teams in 2012 and 2013 and along for the ride to the top of baseball's mountain. That's some good experience to have.

3. Dallas Keuchel

Now we arrive at Keuchel. Would the soon-to-be 31-year-old former Cy Young winner be a good fit for the rebuilding White Sox? Absolutely he would. Signing him to a long-term deal would not only solve a pitching problem in 2019 but it would provide a safety net should Kopech, Cease or whoever go through the to-be-expected growing pains that young players go through in their first tastes of the major leagues. He would be an anchor of future rotations with plenty of young arms around him.

Signing Keuchel — who has a combined 3.39 ERA and 278 strikeouts over the last two seasons — would be similar to the Cubs' signing of Jon Lester, a proven veteran climbing aboard a team heading toward a bright future, and his experience and talent could help them reach that future faster. Like Gonzalez, he experienced back-to-back 100-loss seasons in 2012 and 2013 and also got a World Series ring as the Astros completed their journey from the bottom to the top.

But being a good fit is only half the battle for the White Sox. A lot of other teams, including good ones capable of pitching a win-now roster, are going to be vying for Keuchel's services this winter. And while he might not be the No. 1 starting pitcher on the free-agent market — that's expected to be Clayton Kershaw, if he opts out of his current contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers — he's going to be no lower than the No. 3 starting pitcher on the free-agent market. Most of the contending clubs in the game are likely to have starting pitching on their shopping list, teams that can pitch present-day success and the ability to win a championship in 2019 against the White Sox promise of planned success down the road. And then there's the financials on top of that. Hahn has said the White Sox will have the financial flexibility to do what they need to do, but will it be enough to outbid baseball's biggest spenders?

Keuchel would obviously be a good fit for the White Sox. But the competition is going to be really stiff.

4. Tony Sipp

Sipp, a 35-year-old reliever who White Sox fans might remember from his days as a Cleveland Indian, was excellent for the Astros this season, posting a 1.86 ERA and striking out 42 guys in 38.2 innings during the regular season.

But while the White Sox could use bullpen help — their 4.49 relief ERA ranked 23rd out of 30 major league teams — that performance kind of elevates Sipp from the level of sign-and-flip guys they've acquired in recent seasons. Sipp might not be under the radar enough for the White Sox to take a flier, get a good few months and trade him away for a prospect.

Spending the kind of money Sipp might command on a 35-year-old reliever in a season where you're not expected to compete might not make for a good match.

5. Brian McCann

Yeah, the White Sox don't need Brian McCann.

Column: At long last, Chris Sale's dream of pitching in World Series is about to come true

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / October 20, 2018

While discussing a 107-year-old White Sox strikeout record he was closing in on back in September 2015, Chris Sale was staring at the lanyard holding my press credential.

It was near the end of another dominant season gone to waste, and Sale clearly was tired of the losing.

"It's cool to talk about, to talk to your buddies and your family about stuff like this (record)," Sale told reporters. "But I see a (reporter) wearing a postseason lanyard right there. You don't get to the postseason with strikeouts. You don't get to the playoffs with fancy numbers and stuff like that.

"You get there by wins, and I think everybody in this clubhouse and everybody around major-league baseball can tell you that there's one thing that's important, and that's winning."

A little more than three years later, Sale finally is where he always wanted to be: starting Game 1 of the World Series, which begins Tuesday night at Fenway Park.

It has been a long and adventurous journey for the Red Sox ace, who started out in the White Sox bullpen in the summer of 2010 and quickly developed into one of the game's elite starters.

Sale was supposed to be leading the White Sox into the World Series, having signed a five-year, \$32.5 million deal with two team-option years during 2013 spring training that made him one of the game's biggest bargains. The White Sox annually tried to surround him with enough talent to get to the postseason, but they finally gave up after 2016 and dealt him to the Red Sox in the trade that kick-started the rebuild.

Most lauded the deal that brought top prospects Yoan Moncada and Michael Kopech to the White Sox. But Moncada's first full major-league season this year was a disappointment, and Tommy John elbow surgery in September ended the promising beginning of Kopech's major-league career.

Sale, meanwhile, has started the last two All-Star Games wearing a Red Sox uniform and has gone 29-12 with a 2.56 ERA and 545 strikeouts in 372 1/3 innings. At one point this season he went 6-0 with an 0.20 ERA over seven starts, the best seven-start span since Bob Gibson posted an 0.14 ERA in 1968.

But we haven't seen the best of Sale in October, and who knows how long he will be allowed to go after being hospitalized with a stomach illness after starting Game 1 of the American League Championship Series.

Sale battled shoulder issues during the second half and probably missed a chance at winning his first Cy Young Award by resting his arm to be strong for the postseason. He pitched only four innings in the ALCS

loss to the Astros, allowing two runs on one hit, four walks and a hit batter. More worrisome was the fact Sale's average fastball velocity dipped from 95 mph to 92 from his division series victory over the Yankees.

But after waiting so long for this opportunity, Sale should be ready to return to his normal self on a prime-time stage with the nation watching.

It will be a bittersweet moment for the White Sox, who knew they were dealing one of the best pitchers in franchise history when they sent Sale to Boston.

He could be difficult to deal with at times, as evidenced by the episode in which he sliced up his teammates' throwback uniforms so he wouldn't have to pitch in one and the day he ripped management over the decision to stop allowing Adam LaRoche's son, Drake, to be with the team. Once he even tried to get into the visitors' clubhouse after an on-field brawl with the Royals, hoping for Round 2.

But the White Sox always chalked it up to Sale's competitive nature, and nothing he could do off the field ever trumped what he did on the mound.

Sale has one more season in Boston before hitting free agency, where he figures to command one of the biggest contracts in the game. He never complained about his team-friendly contract, even after White Sox teammate Jeff Samardzija fled for a \$90 million deal with the Giants after the 2015 season.

"Don't feel bad for me, man," he told me at SoxFest in 2016. "I'm in a good spot, trust me. I've said it a million times: I knew exactly what I was getting into when I got into it. My agent thoroughly traveled down every avenue that could possibly be traveled down. And I'll have my shot again hopefully."

When I asked Sale if he thought the traditionally conservative-spending White Sox would pony up the kind of money needed to keep him on the South Side for years to come, he said it was "too hard to even talk about" playing elsewhere.

"I love Chicago and I'm glad I'm here now," he said. "I appreciate it while I have it."

White Sox fans appreciated Sale while he was here, and no doubt many will be rooting for him when he takes the mound Tuesday to start the World Series. Maybe someday he will come back to the place he loved, helping take the rebuild to the next step, as Jon Lester did in signing with the Cubs in 2014.

You can always dream.

New technology only adds to baseball's culture of paranoia

By Noah Trister / Chicago Tribune / October 19, 2018

It probably felt like a cutting-edge caper at the time: The New York Giants, using an elaborate spyglass-and-buzzer system, would have the opposing team's signs relayed from their center-field clubhouse at the Polo Grounds to the bullpen and then to the batter, passing along valuable information during the team's pursuit of the 1951 pennant.

The question nowadays is whether there's an app for that.

Stealing signs is as much a part of baseball tradition as stealing bases, but the technology available now could open a whole new frontier of competitive sleuthing. The latest flare-up came when a man associated with the Houston Astros was pointing his cellphone into opposing dugouts during playoff games against Cleveland and Boston. The Astros said they were just trying to defend themselves against any suspicious activity from opponents.

There's clearly plenty of paranoia to go around.

"The game is so ultra-competitive and there's so small margins between really good teams and really good players and there's a lot at stake," Houston manager AJ Hinch said before losing to the Red Sox in the AL Championship Series. "So we do have to find a healthy place for everyone to be comfortable moving forward competitively because it's a bigger topic than even one instance."

The art of sign stealing ranges from the mundane — a baserunner trying to decode the catcher's signals and let the batter know what's coming — to more complex spying schemes. Even 19th century technology could apparently be useful.

In his 2007 book "The Cheater's Guide to Baseball," Derek Zumsteg mentions an 1898 incident in Philadelphia when a visiting player found a buried wire in the area around third base.

"The wire ran all the way to the home team's clubhouse in the outfield," Zumsteg wrote, "where a player would sit with binoculars and signal the pitch by setting the ground under the third base coach shaking, and the coach would in turn alert the batter."

The 1951 Giants famously beat out the Dodgers for the National League pennant on Bobby Thomson's playoff-winning homer. A half-century later, New York's sign-stealing system was laid bare in a Wall Street Journal story that quoted members of that team. The bullpen would receive the signs from the clubhouse via a buzzer system. Catcher Sal Yvars said he relayed them to hitters.

Fast forward to the present era, and the possibilities for surreptitious surveillance seem endless.

"If they're in the dugout, and they're in there trying to steal our signs, I think that's part of the game," said Dave Dombrowski, president of baseball operations for the Red Sox. "If you're doing electronic devices, that's against the rules. We were penalized last year."

The Red Sox were indeed fined last year for using an Apple Watch while trying to steal signs from the New York Yankees. Major League Baseball says before this postseason, teams contacted the commissioner's office about sign stealing and "the inappropriate use of video equipment" — and it wasn't just one team that was the target of those concerns.

This week's controversy brought suspicion upon the Astros — and Houston in turn expressed its own suspicions of other teams. MLB essentially agreed with the Astros' explanation, saying an investigation of recent incidents concluded "that an Astros employee was monitoring the field to ensure that the opposing club was not violating any rules."

Houston general manager Jeff Luhnow said his team always has its guard up.

"There's a lot of technology in ballparks these days, video cameras and high-speed cameras and high-magnification cameras," Luhnow said. "When we go into an opposing ballpark, we tend to look around and make sure that we don't see any suspicious activity. We've been doing that as a matter of course for a while."

Watch any game, and you can find evidence of the lengths teams might go if they're worried about who is watching. It's one thing for a catcher to switch to more complex signs to avoid giving away the next pitch to a runner on second — but now a team might do that even if the bases are empty.

"We utilize multiple signs with nobody on base. Other teams do that as well," Hinch said. "We ask a lot out of our catchers. We have 12, 13, sometimes 14 pitchers on a roster that can all have different signs and different sequences."

One way to avoid having signs stolen is for the catcher and pitcher to have a private meeting — but mound visits were slowing the game so much that baseball put a limit on them. There have already been seven passed balls in the postseason this year — there were six in the whole 2017 postseason — so perhaps pitchers and catchers are getting crossed up more often.

For decades, sign stealing was a mysterious, almost charming addition to baseball's culture, but too much suspicion can certainly hurt the sport.

"I think there is a paranoia about what you're doing competitively to try to be your best," Hinch said. "And when teams are curious about us or we're curious about other teams, it's largely a distraction away from the best part of the game, which is on the field with the players."

A rundown of White Sox option decisions and Rule 5 protections

By James Fegan / The Athletic / October 20, 2018

Reading coverage from around the league on how contenders are either weighing whether they should stop fussing around about financial limitations and just pony up for Bryce Harper and/or Manny Machado already, or perhaps noting how perfectly Marwin González fits on their team, it's easy to wonder whether expectations for how much the White Sox can accomplish this offseason should be tempered.

But then a rundown of projected 2019 opening day payrolls shows the Sox with fewer meaningful commitments than any other team in baseball. Two seasons of stripping away all veterans extraneous to their long-term aims have left them with a roster in which the closest thing to a bad contract is that of Wellington Castillo, who will make \$7.25 million to take around half of the reps at catcher.

That can be a leaping-off point to get very experimental in mapping an offseason plan, which I hope to do more next week, but for now is something to weigh when checking out who is on the margins of the Sox roster going into 2019. Jason Martinez of MLB Depth Charts updated the White Sox count of minor league options and Rule 5 statuses going into the offseason, and the assumption generally holds true that anyone that is out of options or iffy for Rule 5 protection when the roster is in this state would figure to either be on their way out, or about to push someone else out.

Juan Minaya's White Sox future was probably in doubt when he burned his last option in April, but he turned things around to become one of the team's best relievers in the second half. Yolmer Sánchez has been out of options for a couple seasons now, but has staked out a slot for himself, and figures to slide in as a primary utilityman even if the White Sox don't want him to start 139 games at third again. The crunch occurs in the fact that Leury García has also been out of options for a while, and is now joined by José Rondón (newly out of options) and Ryan LaMarre. It's hard to envision the Sox turning the ship to avoid letting the soon-to-be 30-year-old LaMarre hit waivers if he doesn't make the team next spring — it seems more likely that he's outrighted for 40-man space this winter. But even aside from that, literally any offseason addition would likely force them to decide whether they were impressed enough by Rondón's power outburst to move on from hoping that first-half-of-2017 form García showed returns if he's healthy. Normal teams don't have three utilitymen.

The younger option with louder offensive tools seems like the logical path forward for a rebuilding team, which carries over to the catching situation, where the Sox have run out of years they can freely carry Kevan Smith (also out of options now) as a third catcher on standby in the minors. Castillo is on board for 2019, Omar Narváez just had an offensive breakout and Seby Zavala needs to be added to the 40-man roster to be protected from the Rule 5 draft. The latter didn't look ready for the majors by the end of 2018, but "third catcher" is a more palatable spot to have someone grow into the position than "No. 4 starter." The White Sox are the only organization that the 30-year-old Smith has ever known, and he would sure love to stay after putting together a 104 wRC+ season (just as strong as the out-of-options Matt Davidson, who figures to get more plate appearances at DH). But the Sox didn't use his framing as a reason to vault him over the rest of the group last year, and at this point in his career, he probably wouldn't lament it too much if a more sustained opportunity to stick in the majors came along.

Despite three years now of Carson Fulmer bouncing between minor league struggles and fleeting major league optimism, he'll also only be entering his fifth professional season, so he is likely to have a fourth option year. That allowed the Sox to be more decisive in discerning that he was not fit to stay in the major league rotation by mid-May, knowing they were not setting him up in a spot where he would need to be

capable of sticking in the majors — now as a reliever — by opening day 2019 or be subject to waivers. He didn't experience a jump in stuff in a short relief role that would mitigate his command shortcomings, but maybe an offseason of preparation can change that. Lucas Giolito (also one option left) won't be in that situation either thanks to the Sox sticking with him in the majors through a grueling 2018, and is likely a lock to open 2019 in the rotation anyway.

Ironically, both dropped their realistic ceilings significantly enough in 2018 that hoarding their options has decreased in priority. With Dane Dunning, Dylan Cease and Michael Kopech ideally ready for the rotation in 2020 and the White Sox either trying to contend or just dedicating fewer roster spots to guys learning on the job by then, that season acting as a deadline for when Fulmer and Giolito will either be ready to contribute reliably or be at risk of leaving the organization seems fitting.

Because 2019 figures to be another year of worrying more about who can show they are long-term pieces than how functional and effective the roster is, assessing how the Sox replace their outgoing free agents isn't the series of vital questions it is for other teams. James Shields (eating over 200 innings however unglamorously) and Héctor Santiago (eating over 100 with even less glamor) had large impacts in keeping the 2018 team running and operating, but considering that was never the priority, just something that needed to be done, whether they'll be retained to help do it again in 2019 reads as a lower priority than figuring out which young players will get another shot to prove useful at all. Santiago could get brought back and even land a guaranteed deal this time given he's healthy, and Shields could return even after his \$16 million option is inevitably declined, but that figures to wait until after the 40-man roster picture is settled in November.

That none of the trio of Jordan Stephens, Spencer Adams and Jordan Guerrero —all of whom need to be added to the 40-man roster this offseason to be protected from the Rule 5 draft —were given a big-league audition doesn't lend much confidence that the Sox anticipate them shouldering much of the innings load. If a rebuilding club with open rotation slots is iffy about committing to them, and they do no project higher than end-of-rotation starters going forward, perhaps they're not at the imminent risk of leaving in the Rule 5 they've been seen to be in the past.

Last year the Sox added the Rule 5 eligible Micker Adolfo to the 40-man to protect against the growing trend of extreme upside plays by teams like the Padres, who were willing to carry a woefully unprepared prospect plucked straight from the low minors in order to nab a meaningful talent. Cease and the recently acquired Kodi Medeiros are obvious additions to the 40-man, but rather than the trio of Triple-A starters, I wonder increasingly about guys like second baseman Amado Núñez, who torched rookie ball at the age of 20, much like Allen Córdoba did before the Padres plucked him away from the Cardinals in the Rule 5, or even 23-year-old right-hander Luis Martinez, whose 6-foot-6 frame is appealing even if he was still just in Winston-Salem this past season.

Whether it's free agency, managing players out of options or protecting against the Rule 5 draft, hoarding players with the most potential for long-term impact seems like the guiding principle.
