



Padres Press Clips

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

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How many games will Padres win in 2019? Las Vegas has an idea

Jeff Sanders

The Padres have shelled out \$15.5 million for a pitcher who likely won't see a big league mound until *next* spring. They've added a 36-year-old middle infielder coming off his worst season. They've held onto all their extra outfielders instead of trading for a rotation upgrade. The face of their rebuild (if the Padres know what's good for them, long-term) ought to remain at Triple-A El Paso until the Super-2 deadline passes.

Yet the over/under for wins at Caesars Palace is 77¹/₂.

Spring training is still over a month away, but that line in the sand might be a good place to make a little money on your hometown club.

Consider the following:

- The Padres are coming off a 66-win season;
- They've topped out at 77 victories during this string of eight straight losing seasons;
- Their rotation ranked last in ERA in the NL in 2018, their offense has ranked last in on-base percentage the last five years and they haven't added any significant pieces this offseason.

Then again, maybe Vegas is ahead of the curve.

Maybe they think **Bryce Harper** or **Manny Machado** will save the day (we know better, don't we?).

We've got the right to be pessimists in this town, but perhaps it's a bit healthier to dream on realistic ways the Padres could surpass expectations in 2019 – at least until the first Cactus League pitch is thrown.

Every other year

From a WAR standpoint, **Eric Hosmer** has been as reliable as the sun setting in the west each night. He was worth 1 win above a replacement player (fangraphs.com) as a rookie in 2011 and minus-1.4 as a big league sophomore. He'd since alternated good and bad years – 3.1, minus-0.2, 3.5, 0.2 – until cashing in a career-best 2017 campaign (4.1 WAR) with a \$144 million deal in San Diego.

Like clockwork, Hosmer produced minus-0.1 WAR in 2018 as his strikeout and groundball rates ballooned to career-worst marks, 21 and 60.4 percent, respectively.

It's reasonable to expect Hosmer to bounce back in 2019. He can't get much worse than he was in his Padres debut.

Addition by subtraction

Maybe this is the year that a change at hitting coach (buh-bye **Matt Stairs**, good luck **Johnny Washington**) does the trick.

After all, from an on-base percentage, the Padres have nowhere to go but up. The same goes for the rotation, which is replacing a largely ineffective **Clayton Richard** with arms from the best minor league system in baseball. **Joey Lucchesi** and **Eric Lauer** provided some bright spots in a dark 2018 season and even better arms are on the way. Top prospects **Chris Paddack** and **Logan Allen** could debut in 2019 and **Michel Baez** and **Cal Quantrill** could push for starts at some point, giving the Padres hope to build around as they look to make the rotation a strength again.

The youth movement

Fernando Tatis Jr. is coming.

Probably not on opening day. Maybe not before June. But he's on his way.

On the heels of his season-ending thumb injury, the top shortstop prospect has shown to be plenty healthy this winter in the Dominican Republic. A short 2018 might entice the Padres to start Tatis at Triple-A El Paso, but the lineup isn't without upside.

Luis Urias was an exciting addition in September, **Francisco Mejia** provided some big moments after his call-up and the adjustments of **Hunter Renfroe** and **Franmil Reyes** were some of the biggest takeaways from the 2018 season.

Maybe **Franchy Cordero** pushes **Manuel Margot** aside if the latter can't recover from last year's sophomore slump. Maybe **Austin Hedges** continues his ascent at the plate. Maybe **Wil Myers** is healthy enough to stay in the lineup enough to either finally approach his ceiling or find a fit to help the rotation.

Hey, it (all?) *could* happen.

Padres roster review: Chris Paddack

Jeff Sanders

Sizing up the *Padres'* 40-man roster, from A to Z, heading into the 2019 season:

Chris Paddack

- **Position(s):** Right-handed starting pitcher
- **2019 Opening Day age:** 23
- **Bats/throws:** R / R
- **Height/weight:** 6-foot-4 / 186 pounds
- **Acquired:** Via trade with Miami in June 2016
- **Contract status:** Added to the 40-man roster in November 2018
- **Key stats (minors):** 7-3, 2.10 ERA, 120 strikeouts, eight walks, 0.82 WHIP, .204 opponent average (17 starts, 90 innings)

STAT TO NOTE

- **15.0** – Paddack's strikeout-to-walk ratio in 2018, a career-high in his first action since returning from a mid-summer Tommy John surgery in 2016. Paddack struck out an otherworldly 83 batters against four walks in 52 2/3 innings at high Single-A Lake Elsinore and 37 more against four walks in 37 2/3 innings at Double-A San Antonio.

TRENDING

- **Up** – Paddack is Exhibit A for anyone making an argument that a rental player is not worth a prospect. Closer **Fernando Rodney** was on his way to the 2016 All-Star Game, the Padres were on their way to a last-place finish in the **NL West** and the Marlins thought they were a pitcher or two short of a postseason push. So they picked up Rodney from the Padres for a 20-year-old pitcher signed to a \$400,000 deal as an eighth-round pick the previous summer. Big mistake. Although Paddack's initial Padres debut was cut short by an elbow reconstruction, he was better than ever when he got back on the mound in late April after a 22-month hiatus. The Padres were simply hoping for a healthy step forward. Instead, Paddack, a tall, lanky Texan with mid-90s velocity and a Bugs Bunny-esque Vulcan change-up, overwhelmed the competition from the jump. He didn't allow a run in his first four starts, earned an all-star game invite despite just 10 appearances in the California League and forced his way to Double-A San Antonio by early July. There, his strikeout-to-walk ratio dipped a bit, but he was just as tough on hitters from a contact standpoint, holding opponents in the Texas League to a .177 batting average after limiting Cal League hitters to a .204 batting average. For Paddack's efforts, among his end-of-year accolades was a nod as Yahoo! Sports' minor league pitcher of the year and an addition to the Padres' 40-man roster over the offseason.

2019 OUTLOOK

- As eye-opening as his 2018 campaign was, Paddack will have to continue to prove he's durable enough to handle a starter's workload. He'd never thrown more than 45 innings as a pro before his elbow reconstruction and last year's total – 90 innings – was his first extended string of starts in the minors. Paddack will headline the prospects invited to big league camp this spring, but he's unlikely to ready to hold down a job from start to finish, especially given his recent rehab schedule. That doesn't mean Paddack won't force the issue and make his major league debut in 2019, either in the rotation or in some kind of hybrid role to help continue to govern his innings. He's got the floor of a No. 3 starter with plenty of room to grow if he can continue to work his curveball into a usable pitch, which is Job No. 1 in 2019.

PADRES POWER RANKINGS

(Currently 40 players on the 40-man roster; the list below reflects only the players reviewed thus far in the series)

1. Wil Myers
2. Eric Hosmer
3. Austin Hedges
4. Manuel Margot
5. Francisco Mejia
6. Franchy Cordero
7. Joey Lucchesi
8. Chris Paddack
9. Ian Kinsler
10. Eric Lauer
11. Dinelson Lamet
12. Jose Castillo
13. Anderson Espinoza
14. Travis Jankowski
15. Robbie Erlin
16. Miguel Diaz
17. Jacob Nix
18. Phil Maton
19. Greg Garcia
20. Austin Allen
21. Pedro Avila
22. Edward Olivares
23. Bryan Mitchell
24. Brett Kennedy
25. Ty France
26. Javy Guerra

Removed from the roster

- [Carlos Asuaje](#) (claimed by the Rangers)

Rankings and predictions for every top remaining free agent

David Schoenfield
ESPN Senior Writer

It's time for a free-agency update! There are still a lot of free agents out there besides Bryce Harper and Manny Machado -- including some quality second basemen, one of the best closers of all time, some past-their-prime outfielders, some lefty starters who don't throw hard and a bunch of replacement-level relievers.

Let's look at the best available at each position and some potential fits for each player, and -- not for betting purposes! -- predict where each player will sign. Each player's 2019-season age is included, along with his projection from FanGraphs.

STARTING PITCHERS

1. Dallas Keuchel (31, 3.69 ERA, 3.2 WAR) -- Keuchel doesn't have the ceiling of [Patrick Corbin](#), which is why he won't approach the \$140 million Corbin received, but he is reportedly seeking a five-year deal, a big ask for a pitcher who missed time in 2016 with a sore shoulder and more time in 2017 with a pinched nerve in his neck.

Best fits: Padres, Rangers, Nationals

Prediction: Padres. The Angels once seemed a possibility, but they instead went for quantity with [Matt Harvey](#) and [Trevor Cahill](#). The Rangers are desperate for starting pitching. The Phillies and Nationals aren't desperate, but have been mentioned in rumors for Keuchel (although balking at the five years). The Padres have been itching to make a big splash this offseason; maybe this will be it.

Expect more Hot Stove action from these teams

By Anthony Castrovince MLB.com [@castrovince](#)

Jan. 8th, 2019

Sure, we know the ol' offseason schedule ain't what she used to be. As [Bryce Harper](#) and [Manny Machado](#) can tell you, things take a lot longer to develop than they did back in the day.

But even if we re-calibrate our brains to this reality, some clubs that aim to be good or great in 2019 have been suspiciously quiet, at least relative to their peers.

Here are five such clubs that we think could or should be busier in the coming weeks than they were the last two months, along with one bonus team that is kind of in a world all its own.

1. Dodgers

"Quiet" is a relative term here, because the Dodgers did sign [Joe Kelly](#) to a three-year deal and they did execute that [seven-player blockbuster trade](#) with the Reds last month. They also reconfigured [Clayton Kershaw](#)'s deal and retained [Hyun-Jin Ryu](#) and [David Freese](#).

For most clubs, that would qualify as a pretty busy winter.

The Reds trade, though, was all about eliminating some redundancies on the roster and clearing more luxury-tax-threshold space for 2019. And though Kelly is a good get for the 'pen, the Dodgers this winter have invested less in external free agents than, for example, the rebuilding Rangers have. There's more to come from the two-time-defending NL champs.

The Dodgers need a catcher, a game-changing bat and a right-handed presence in the lineup. They could fill all three needs by trading for [J.T. Realmuto](#). They don't have as glaring a need in their rotation, but they are one of the few clubs that legitimately have the pieces (fronted by [Cody Bellinger](#) or [Alex Verdugo](#)) to entice the Indians into trading [Corey Kluber](#) or [Trevor Bauer](#).

And though I don't think this has been mentioned anywhere else, boy, wouldn't Los Angeles be a great landing spot for Harper? A truly original suggestion, I know.

2. Red Sox

Boston's been quiet by design. The Red Sox are north of the luxury-tax threshold, have the bulk of a great ballclub coming back and have been primarily focused on keeping the band together. Though they did lose Kelly and could still lose [Craig Kimbrel](#), they've retained October hero [Nathan Eovaldi](#) and World Series MVP [Steve Pearce](#).

But the bullpen is the one area on this club that is screaming for help and will probably get it between now and Opening Day. On paper, it pales in comparison to what the Yankees will have at their disposal. And while the Red Sox do still have the superior starting cast, the bullpen differential could matter most in the AL East race, and possibly in October.

So far, president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski appears wise to have let the Kimbrel market run its course, because Kimbrel's attempts to land a record closing contract haven't worked out and it appears he'll have difficulty coming close to the free-agent deal [Aroldis Chapman](#) signed with the Yankees two years ago (five years, \$86 million). The situation could be ripe for a return to the Red Sox.

3. Cubs

They signed veteran utility man [Daniel Descalso](#), so those of us who take a particular and peculiar interest in transactions involving Italian-American ballplayers would call their winter a resounding success.

But with the payroll north of \$200 million after the signings of [Yu Darvish](#) and [Tyler Chatwood](#) in 2018, the Cubs haven't exactly set free agency aflame this winter. The biggest bit of Hot Stove hubbub related to the Cubs was a Chicago Sun-Times report that Theo Epstein had a lengthy meeting with Scott Boras about Harper at the Winter Meetings and "urged them to wait" and check in with the Cubs before signing with another club. Whether that's typical due diligence or an actual earnest attempt by the Cubs to pare payroll elsewhere so that they can sign Harper remains to be seen. The Cubs' lineup, which withered down the stretch in '18, could definitely use the help.

Harper or no Harper, the Cubs, who might be without [Brandon Morrow](#) at the start of the season, have a clear need for bullpen help in a market that has thinned.

4. Brewers

Staying in the deep and interesting NL Central, you could list both the Pirates and the Brewers here. Because the Buccos are usually on the quieter side when it comes to offseason activity anyway, I'll prioritize a Brewers team coming off a trip to the NLCS.

The Brewers need help at second base and possibly on the pitching staff. They added free-agent second baseman [Cory Spangenberg](#) in recent days but are still projected by FanGraphs to have the second-least-valuable second-base group in baseball (0.8 [Wins Above Replacement](#)), ahead of only the Orioles. They could always re-sign [Mike Moustakas](#) and put [Travis Shaw](#) back at second base, but the market remains deep at second.

The pitching conversation is more complicated. As a wider audience learned last October, the Brewers don't rely on the traditional pitching model because of their progressive use of the bullpen. A staff fronted by [Jhoulys Chacin](#), [Chase Anderson](#) and [Zach Davies](#) has major question marks, but [Jimmy Nelson](#) could make a strong recovery from shoulder surgery and [Brandon Woodruff](#) could emerge as a dependable starter after making an impact in the bullpen last season. So we'll see.

But would you feel better about the Brewers' chances of repeating in the Central if they acquired another proven arm (they've been rumored to be in the [Madison Bumgarner](#) market)? Or at least another [Wade Miley](#) type (maybe Miley himself)? Yes.

5. Padres

USA Today's Ted Berg had [a tweet](#) that got to the heart of the Padres' pursuits this winter. Though this club has been rumored to be interested in, well, just about every prominent player available in this Hot Stove season not named Machado or Harper, to date it has added [Garrett Richards](#) (who might not pitch at all in '19), [Ian Kinsler](#) and [Greg Garcia](#). That might be about the level of action many of you expect from a 96-loss team that nobody's really counting as a contender this year, but GM A.J. Preller has been known to dream a bit bigger and the Padres have been known to pull off some surprises (like the [Eric Hosmer](#) blockbuster last winter).

The Padres need to solidify the left side of their infield, even it's just somebody to keep shortstop warm for [top prospect Fernando Tatis Jr.](#) They've tried to find trade fits for [Wil Myers](#) and their glut of outfielders. They've inquired about many of the top pitchers available in trade, including Kluber and [Sonny Gray](#).

Maybe the Padres' winter continues to be more smoke than fire. But with two retooling clubs in the division, there's opportunity to advance, and Preller is likely unsatisfied with this club's completed deals.

Bonus: Indians

The Indians don't qualify as quiet. They have been the source of a lot of action this season.

Improvement, though? Not so much. And that's why the three-time-defending AL Central champs merit a mention here.

Even if you [find the value](#) in the cost-saving trades that shipped out [Yan Gomes](#), [Yonder Alonso](#) and [Edwin Encarnacion](#), when taken in conjunction with the free-agent losses of [Michael Brantley](#), [Josh Donaldson](#) and [Andrew Miller](#), this is a much, much weaker club than the one that got swept out of the Division Series to end a disappointing 2018.

So the Indians can't possibly be done. It's hard to pick what is the bigger need for the Tribe -- the outfield or the bullpen, which, beyond 2018 trade acquisition [Brad Hand](#), registers as pretty thin. But at least the bullpen has Hand. Thanks to the departure of Brantley from what was already an iffy unit, the Indians' starting outfield at the moment consists of [Jordan Luplow](#), [Tyler Naquin](#) and [Leonys Martin](#). In other words, the most experienced and dependable member of the outfield is the same guy who battled a life-threatening bacterial infection just a few months ago (that's Martin).

Given what's realistically available to the Indians in free agency with their budget, trading a Kluber or Bauer is the best way to add real impact to the outfield. But to date, no one's met their high price.

Winter Report: Tatis Jr., Cordero, Torrens, Quiroz All Have Shot at Playing in Caribbean Series

[FriarWire](#)

Jan 8

By Bill Center

There is a strong chance that the Padres will have at least one player participating in the Caribbean Series early next month. And three is not out of the question.

Four Padres prospects—shortstop **Fernando Tatis Jr.**, outfielder **Franchy Cordero**, catcher-first baseman **Luis Torrens** and second baseman **Esteban Quiroz**—are with teams off to strong starts in their respective leagues' playoffs.

Estrellas (Tatis) and Escogido (Cordero) are in a three-way tie (7–5) for first entering the final six games of the four-team round-robin portion of the Dominican Republic Winter League playoffs. The top two teams from the round-robin meet in the championship series.

Torrens is starting for regular-season champion Magallanes in the Venezuela playoffs. Magallanes is currently tied with Caribes at 2–2 in the best-of-seven semifinals series.

Quiroz is playing for Los Mochis, which has a 3–2 games lead in its best-of-seven playoff series against Hermosillo in the Mexican Pacific League.

Tatis is 0-for-7 in his past two starts for Estrellas since his 10-game hitting streak to open the playoffs ended. During the playoffs, the [Padres' top prospect](#), who celebrated his 20th birthday Jan. 2, is hitting .273 (12-for-44 with a double, two triples, two homers, two stolen bases, six walks, 10 runs scored and six RBIs. He has a .360 on-base percentage and a .523 slugging percentage for a .883 OPS.

Cordero, 24, is hitting .200 (9-for-45) for Escogido with two doubles, two triples, five walks, four runs scored and four RBIs. He has a .280 on-base percentage and a .333 slugging percentage for a .613 OPS.

Torrens, 22, who has been playing first base for Magallanes in the playoffs, is 4-for-13 (.308) in the post-season with a homer, four walks, six runs scored and a RBI. He has a .471 on-base percentage and a .538 slugging percentage for a 1.009 OPS.

Quiroz is 3-for-15 (.200) after four games with three walks, two runs scored and two RBIs.

The Padres have two other players still active in winter leagues.

Center fielder **Aldemar Burgos**, 21, is 1-for-7 with a double, a walk and a run scored in two games for Carolina in the Puerto Rican playoffs.

Right fielder **Michael Gettys**, 23, has two more weekends of action in the Australian Baseball League, where he ranks among the league leaders in nine offensive categories.

Gettys is hitting .310 (tied for 10 in the league) with a .406 on-base percentage (ninth) and a .621 slugging percentage (fifth) for a 1.026 OPS (seventh). He has nine doubles (tied for ninth), three triples (second) and seven homers (tied for fourth) with 32 RBIs (second) in as many games.