



Padres Press Clips

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Analysis: Tyson Ross is a stock Padres need to maintain high value

Kevin Acee

When assessing [Tyson Ross](#) over his next few or several or dozen starts, there should perhaps be a sort of stock tracker alongside a heat map and pitch graphs and other metrics that measure a pitcher's performance.

With every outing, every strikeout or walk, every slider that spins past a swung bat or hangs in the zone and finds the barrel's sweet spot, Ross becomes more valuable or slightly less so to the [Padres](#).

Because the hope is that Ross will help the Padres win – one way or another, for as long as he is here and then when they send him elsewhere.

With his worst inning of the season, Ross lost a game and lost some value on Monday night.

The 31-year-old right-hander stumbled against the [Nationals](#), getting to the sixth inning having allowed two hits and a run before surrendering four runs on a walk and four hard hits.

He made it through the sixth, the sixth time he has done so in his seven starts. But he fell to 2-3 and saw his ERA rise to 3.89 in 41 2/3 total innings as the Nationals won 8-3.

Ross has been too good this season to be too worried about one inning that ruined one outing.

The Padres, certainly, must hope Monday was a blip in the market and not the beginning of a plummet.

It might be a little early to be talking about shipping off the new ace of the staff who was the old ace of the staff.

Teams that might be contenders *and* need starting pitching have perhaps not fully identified themselves. The season is not even six weeks old.

But Ross has been identified by several people (inside and outside the organization) as a potential trade piece that can bring the Padres prospects.

Padres General Manager A.J. Preller has shown he is not afraid to pull the trigger when presented with a swap he deems sufficiently beneficial.

Preller started off the team's extensive wheeling and dealing in 2016 just a few days into June when he sent James Shields and a brimming Brinks truck to the White Sox for Fernando Tatis Jr., now the Padres' No.1 prospect.

What might it take for the Padres to move Ross?

Think along the lines of [Fernando Rodney](#) for Chris Paddock in '16. A contending team renting a reasonably priced veteran and giving the Padres a high-ceiling prospect. That sort of thing.

Signed to a minor-league deal after struggling in his 2017 comeback from thoracic outlet surgery, Ross had to earn his rotation spot this spring.

He is found money.

The Padres would love to have the chance to spend him wisely. And that likely means moving him.

Ross has given the Padres a chance to win all but two of his seven starts. The Padres had won four of his six starts entering Monday.

But even sustaining that pace the rest of the season – the team winning 13 or 16 of his remaining starts – doesn't make the Padres a contender this year.

He'll turn 32 early next season.

He's primed to help a team win soon.

This is not that team.

The Padres on Monday moved Bryan Mitchell from the rotation to the bullpen, a step that indicated they are not interested in forfeiting games this season. But neither do they have delusions about who they are.

This season is about finding out about their young players – ones currently on the roster who might be championship pieces and others in the minors who will get a chance to show they can help.

It's why Mitchell even got a shot at the rotation. It's why Luis Urias will be here soon. It's why Ross almost certainly won't last too far into summer.

Could Ross be a boon to the building Padres? Absolutely.

He's a gentleman, thoughtful, a hard worker. He spends time with young pitchers. And he's showing them on the mound what that ethic can produce.

He's practically pitching like it's 2015, when he was wrapping up a three-year stretch for the Padres in which he was among the game's 20 most effective starters.

Only he's older and wiser. The velocity is down a tick from then, but the movement on his pitches is back. He's more of a pitcher than a thrower, a sharper mind than powerful arm. He's generally better at managing baserunners than he was.

If he keeps pitching effectively, he is going to cash in during free agency. The Padres have a cadre of young arms they believe are going to be excellent major leaguers. They need to find out whether they are right. They won't be investing big money in a 32-year-old pitcher.

His contract for this year is absolutely nothing to take on. If he was traded tomorrow, Ross' new team would be on the hook for less than \$1.5 million.

The Padres just need him to maintain his value.

Nats' Trea Turner makes himself at home at Petco Park

Jeff Sanders

The Josh Byrnes regime was right to believe in Trea Turner's blossoming power.

Even in the most pitching-friendly of venues.

Nearly four years after the [Padres](#) made him a first-round pick, Turner homered in a long-awaited Petco Park debut.

Problem is, the 24-year-old shortstop is coming of age in a [Nationals](#) uniform, the Padres' chief return from that trade is on the disabled list for the second time this year and San Diego State product [Stephen Strasburg](#) enjoyed yet another downtown visit in Washington's 8-5 win on Monday night.

"I've always heard the ball doesn't fly here," Turner said. "I thought it flew pretty well."

Much better than it did during [Turner's initial visit](#), some three months after the Padres selected him 13th overall in 2014 draft.

He hit one home run while taking batting practice on the field at the culmination of a strong start to his career at Eugene and Fort Wayne.

That may have been about his own improving strength than Petco Park's larger dimensions.

"It was definitely hard," Turner recalled. "At the same time, it was hard for me to hit home runs in general. Wherever I was it was going to be tough. I know the ball to right field is a little bit different, but left field is not, in my mind, too bad."

Clearly.

It was fitting, too, that Turner's first official at-bat at Petco Park produced a home run off [Tyson Ross](#), the older brother of the pitcher ([Joe Ross](#)) sent with Turner to Washington in the three-team deal that A.J. Preller completed just a few months after succeeding Byrnes as the Padres' general manager.

[Wil Myers](#), the Padres' chief target in the trade, watched from the home bench Monday night, an oblique strain restricting him to the disabled list for the second time.

Of course, Myers has been an All-Star in San Diego. He's participated in the [home run derby](#) here. He slugged 58 homers the previous two years combined after wrist injuries sidelined him most of 2015.

Turner's climb to the majors in the Nationals' system has not been without injury setbacks, either.

But he's hit as many as 13 homers in 73 games in 2016, swiped as many as 46 bases in 98 games in 2017 and entered Monday with a .281/.382/.393 batting line in his first official game at Petco Park, nearly four years after Byrnes' front office made him a mid-first-round pick out of North Carolina State.

Turner was traded the following summer, the not-so-secret player to be named later in the Padres-[Rays](#)-Nationals deal.

"Any time I play them it's always a reminder that I was there," Turner said. "... They have a lot of good guys over there. I played with Franchy (Cordero) a little bit. I played with Travis (Jankowski) and (Hunter) Renfroe and a lot of those guys. They are really good people, they had good staff everywhere I played – great staffs that helped me continue to develop.

"I have a lot of respect for them because everyone knew I was already traded. They still helped me out and gave me their attention and effort."

The Nationals' shortstop didn't take long to show the Padres what they gave up for Myers, driving a 1-1 fastball from Tyson Ross in the first inning 396 feet to center for his third homer of the season.

Five innings later, Turner walked on four pitches and scored from first on [Anthony Rendon's](#) double to left to open a 2-1 lead.

"He's a good ballplayer," Ross said of his younger brother's teammate. "He was a high draft pick here. ... He's turned out to be a good ballplayer."

Matt Adams followed with a no-doubt homer to right, his first of two blasts in the game.

Then Howie Kendrick doubled, Matt Wieters singled and Ross was out of the game a half-inning later with five runs allowed in six innings.

That was more than enough cushion for Strasburg, who continued his run of quality starts in his hometown with seven strong innings.

The West Hills High grad struck out five and allowed three runs on six hits and a walk.

Strasburg, the No. 1 overall pick in 2009, is 3-1 with a 3.12 ERA and 24 strikeouts in 26 career innings at Petco Park.

"D.C. is home now," Strasburg said, "but it's good to come back and see a lot of family and friends."

The Padres scratched across their only runs off Strasburg in the fourth on Cordero's run-scoring groundout, in the sixth via Carlos Asuaje's sacrifice fly and in the seventh on Jose Pirela's two-out single.

[Freddy Galvis](#)' run-scoring groundout off Nationals reliever Carlos Torres and Manuel Margot's ensuing, two-out single closed the Padres' deficit to 8-5 in the ninth.

Adams' second homer marred left-hander Matt Strahm's Padres debut.

Activated from the disabled list Monday, Strahm walked allowed three runs on two hits and three walks in two innings.

Homer streak ends but Franmil Reyes still hot for El Paso

Jeff Sanders

Franmil Reyes' homer streak came to an end. He is still as hot as anyone in minor league baseball.

The 22-year-old outfielder's homer streak was snapped at five games, but he collected two more hits in [Triple-A El Paso's 11-7](#) loss at Albuquerque on Monday. The effort lifted Reyes' batting line to .345/.425/.741 and continued an eight-game hitting streak that had a lot to do with him being named the Pacific Coast League's hitter of the week.

Reyes had homered in five straight games and, at one point, logged two-homer games in three straight. He has had two or more hits in seven straight games after singling twice Monday.

His 13 homers and 35 RBIs are both tops in the Padres' system.

Shortstop **Luis Urias** (.313) and center fielder **Dusty Coleman** (.207) also had two hits, which included Coleman's seventh homer. Coleman drove in three runs.

Right-hander **Michael Mariot** (0-1, 12.15) allowed eight runs on six hits and two walks in 1 2/3 innings in the start for El Paso (18-14).

Right-hander **Robert Stock** (0.00) turned in a perfect eighth inning in the loss. He has struck out three, walked one and hit a batter over three hitless innings since his promotion from Double-A El Paso, where he struck out 15 over his first nine innings (2.00 ERA).

DOUBLE-A SAN ANTONIO (21-10)

- [Missions 5, Corpus Christi 4](#): 3B **Ty France** (.258) hit a walk-off grand slam to extend the Missions' winning streak to seven games. C **Austin Allen** (.333) went 2-for-4 with a run scored and SS **Fernando Tatis Jr.** (.219) went 1-for-4 with a walk and a run scored. RHP **Cal Quantrill** (3.52) struck out five but allowed four runs on eight hits and three walks in 5 2/3 innings in the start. RHP **Rowan Wick** (2-1, .

LOW SINGLE-A FORT WAYNE (14-17)

- [TinCaps 6, Quad Cities 3](#): RHP **Mason Thompson** (3-3, 7.30) struck out five and allowed two runs on four hits and a walk in five innings. SS **Gabriel Arias** (.210) went 2-for-5 with four RBIs and CF **Jeison Rosario** (.318), 3B **Justin Lopez** (.235) and LF

Jack Suwinski (.247) each had two hits. C **Juan Fernandez** (.257) went 0-for-3 with a walk and a run scored to extend his on-base streak to 19 games.

Transactions

- Click [here](#) for the latest on RHP **Kazuhisa Makita's** demotion to El Paso, LHP **Matt Strahm's** activation after a month at San Antonio and RHP **Emmanuel Clase** moving to the Rangers.

Bryan Mitchell headed to bullpen

Kevin Acee

The [Padres](#) have not given up on Bryan Mitchell, but the endeavor to make him a starter has taken a detour.

Mitchell was informed he is, for the time being, a member of the bullpen.

“Probably the best path to him being great as a starter with the Padres,” manager Andy Green said, “is to take a step back, go to the bullpen and dominate a different role.”

[Jordan Lyles](#) will start Thursday in Mitchell’s normal turn in the rotation.

Lyles has a 5.32 ERA in 107 career starts with Houston, Colorado and the Padres. He was 1-3 with a 9.39 ERA in five starts for the Padres last season. How long Lyles remains in that role is dependent on his performance and that of some minor league pitchers the Padres anticipate calling up before too long in order to gauge their readiness.

The Padres remain confident in Mitchell’s mix of pitches, but he has not been able to consistently throw strikes or maintain an attacking mindset.

It’s been a problem in all but one of his starts. And on Saturday, he was pulled with one out in the third inning, having allowed three runs on five hits and three walks.

He has a 6.47 ERA in seven starts and has gone six innings just once.

The Padres acquired Mitchell from the [Yankees](#) along with [Chase Headley](#) in December. They were willing to take on Headley’s \$13 million contract, in part, because they believed all Mitchell needed was an opportunity to start.

The 26-year-old was a reliever and fill-in starter over the past four seasons in New York, shuttling between the Yankees and Triple-A.

“The message to him was, ‘Earn it back,’ ” Green said. “It wasn’t, ‘You’re in the bullpen for the rest of your career with the San Diego Padres.’ It was, ‘Go out there and throw one good inning and go dominate that inning. Then after you dominate that inning, go dominate two innings. Go after this progressively and then you’ll feel like you have earned the right to be in this rotation.’ That was the encouragement and he took it, hopefully, with some motivation.

“We still believe very much in his stuff.”

First pitch: Makita optioned as Strahm joins Padres' bullpen

Jeff Sanders

Kazuhisa Makita will have to continue ironing out the kinks in his game in the minors.

The [Padres](#) on Monday optioned the 33-year-old reliever to Triple-A El Paso and reinstated left-hander Matt Strahm from the disabled list. Shortstop [Javier Guerra](#) –

The Makita move is not out of left field.

He walked more batters in 16 innings in the majors (seven) than he did in 62 2/3 innings last year in Japan (five). He's also sporting a 6.75 ERA and was allowing left-handed hitters pummel him to the tune of a .346/.469/.654 batting line even after striking out three over two scoreless innings in the Mexico Series.

“When you look at his splits,” Padres manager Andy Green said, “he's dominating right-handed hitters (.171/.216/.286), which isn't surprising at all. Lefties, he's had trouble with. That was something when we brought him in that we still thought he could have success against lefties — and still think he can — and for us we've asked him to work on his sequences to left-handers to find something that plays and plays consistently.”

Strahm's expiring month-long rehab assignment necessitated the move.

Still recovering from last year's knee surgery, the 26-year-old Strahm struck out 22 and posted a 2.51 ERA and a 1.26 WHIP in 14 1/3 innings at Double-A San Antonio. He started the rehab assignment pitching every fifth day before the Padres opted to limit Strahm to relief duty in his first year off the surgery. While pitching back-to-back games last week was a big box to check off before returning to a big league bullpen, the Padres aren't ruling out looking at Strahm as a starter next season.

“We think it's a starter's pitch mix,” Green said. “I do. I've always felt that when I watch him. It's just a lot to ask this year with what he's been through. It's about getting him back on a big league mound, competing against big league hitters and getting them out. Then we can reassess in the future.”

Said Strahm: “I'm just excited to be here. It doesn't matter which one I do. Whatever they want me to do, I'll do. If they come to me and ask me to be ready to start come [spring training](#), I'll do that.”

Mitchell out, Lyles in

The Union-Tribune's Kevin Acee has the latest on Bryan Mitchell moving to the bullpen. Jordan Lyles will start Thursday in his place. Read that story [here](#).

Completing the Nicholas trade

The Padres have sent right-hander **Emmanuel Clase** to Texas to complete last month's acquisition of Triple-A catcher **Brett Nicholas**.

The 20-year-old Clase has yet to pitch above short-season Tri-City. He was 2-5 with a 6.00 ERA, 46 strikeouts and a 1.82 WHIP in 39 innings across two low-level stops in 2017.

Clase has been assigned to the Rangers' extended spring training facilities.

Nicholas, meanwhile, is hitting .308/.385/.607 with eight homers and 26 RBIs in 29 games at Triple-A El Paso.

Extra bases

- C **Austin Hedges** (elbow tendinitis) caught a live batting practice over the weekend in Peoria, returned to San Diego and was expecting to be given clearance to begin further ramping up activity after a Monday afternoon visit with team doctors. "I'm hoping they'll say go for it," Hedges said. "I'm pretty confident. I feel good about everything."
- 3B **Christian Villanueva**, who'd started nine straight games, was given a routine day off as the Padres returned from his native Mexico. Said Green: "Before we left for Mexico I thought I needed to get Christian a day off and there was a lefty throwing our last day in San Francisco. I'm a fool if I take him out of the lineup against a lefty and I'm also a fool if I take him out of the lineup in Mexico. This day has been earmarked for some time to get him out of the lineup."
- OF **Hunter Renfro** (elbow inflammation) remained in Arizona to continue to get at-bats, while OF **Wil Myers** (oblique) was continuing his rehab in San Diego.
- Even with a right-hander on the mound, **Jose Pirela** (.638 OPS) started at second base over the left-handed-hitting Carlos Asuaje (.557 OPS). Said Green: "I think we've been there for a while. Carlos has been doing a nice job defending the field and getting in almost every game and opportunity is probably going to spin back around to him in time, but I just think our lineup is a little more complete with Jose Pirela in it."

TODAY'S LINEUPS

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PITCHING MATCHUP | [Nationals](#) at Padres

Game 1: 7:10 p.m. Monday

Nationals RHP [Stephen Strasburg](#) (3-3, 3.47 ERA)

- The San Diego State product is 2-1 with a 2.84 ERA, 19 strikeouts and an 0.895 WHIP in three career starts (19 IP) at Petco Park. Strasburg is coming off a season-high 11 strikeouts over seven innings (2 ER) last week against the [Pirates](#).

Padres RHP [Tyson Ross](#) (2-2, 3.28 ERA)

- Ross put his shakiest outing behind him with six innings of one-run ball last week in San Francisco. He struck out nine, walked three and allowed four hits in a no-decision. The Padres are 4-2 in Ross' six starts.

Up next

- **Tuesday:** Nationals RHP [Jeremy Hellickson](#) (0-0, 3.00) vs. Padres LHP **Clayton Richard** (1-4, 6.21), 7:10 p.m.
- **Wednesday:** Nationals LHP [Gio Gonzalez](#) (4-2, 2.33) vs. Padres LHP **Joey Lucchesi** (3-2, 3.13), 6:10 p.m.

Jankowski steps up, but Padres fall to Nats

By Jay Paris Special to MLB.com
12:09 AM ET

SAN DIEGO -- The momentum the Padres seized in the Mexico Series didn't cross the border, as they fell to the Washington Nationals, 8-5, on Monday night.

The Padres, fresh from taking two of three from the Dodgers in Monterrey, were kept in check by **Stephen Strasburg** (4-3). The San Diego native and former San Diego State star beat the Padres for the seventh time in nine career decisions.

Tyson Ross (2-3) was locked in a 1-1 duel with Strasburg through the first five innings, but the Nationals scored four times vs. Ross in the sixth, highlighted by the first of two **Matt Adams** home runs.

Ross, who last faced the Nationals in 2015, lost for the first time in three starts at Petco Park this season. It was the fourth straight outing for Ross without a win.

"I was just kind of grinding through it early on," Ross said. "I threw a lot of pitches in the first two innings and I was just trying to find ways to get some outs."

The high point for the Padres? The play of the gritty right fielder **Travis Jankowski**.

"He was really good," Padres manager Andy Green said. "He will be right back in the leadoff spot tomorrow and right back in the outfield."

Jankowski is trying to compensate for lost time. After playing in 131 games for the Padres last year, he didn't make the Opening Day roster. He was the odd man out in an outfield that got crowded with the infusion of youngsters and **Wil Myers** moving from first base to right field. When the demotion came, Jankowski admitted it was tough to digest.

"That's not news anyone wants to hear in any occupation -- that you are not at the top of your game and you can't compete at the highest level, which is Major League Baseball," he said. "To be straight up, man, it sucked."

But Jankowski was here, there and everywhere in trying to take the wind out of the Nationals' sails. He had two hits, scored a run and made two sensational catches in the right field.

On one, he made a leaping grab of a **Bryce Harper** drive while crashing into the right-center-field fence. His second snag came when racing in from right to collect a short fly ball that it originally looked like second baseman **Jose Pirela** would corral.

"It was one of those in-betweeners," Jankowski said. "He looked at me and I looked at him, and thank God I caught it."

But not before Jankowski displayed the speed that makes him among the fastest Padres.

"His outfield play was impressive, and probably the most impressive one was that sliding catch he had coming in," Green said. "When you check your infielder and realize he's not going to catch the ball and you have one more gear to find ... he did some really good things out there."

That he's doing it in San Diego and not Triple-A El Paso is big. Jankowski said the attitude he eventually displayed in El Paso helped him return to the Majors.

"It took me a few days to get over it, but once I got to El Paso the coach said, 'Listen man, go out and play your game, play like you know you can, and you will be back in no time.'

"Unfortunately some injuries happened up here. But you got to make the most of the opportunities you get because they are few and far between. So I'm just trying to hit the ground running and make the most out of this opportunity I have."

The left-handed-hitting Jankowski has done that since being called up on April 29. He's hit safely in six of his eight games, batting .348 (8-for-23) over that span.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Ross gives up rare homer: After not allowing a home run in five of his six previous starts this season, Ross surrendered one to the game's second batter, **Trea Turner**. Turner, who was the Padres' No. 1 pick in the 2014 Draft, put the Nationals ahead, 1-0, with his third homer of the season in his first career at-bat at Petco Park. The shortstop was sent to Washington in the three-team trade that brought Myers to San Diego in '14.

"He's a good ballplayer," said Ross, who went on to allow a season-high five runs. "He put a good swing on a bad pitch."

Pirela, please: Harper hit a rocket to short right field, where Pirela was stationed in the fifth inning. Pirela dove to his left to snag the shot and then from his knees got enough on his one-hop throw to first baseman **Eric Hosmer** to retire Harper and end the inning.

HE SAID IT

"There were some better swings against a top-of-the-rotation guy than we have in the past. We'll take those positives." -- **Green, on the Padres' attack against Strasburg**

UP NEXT

The Padres are hoping the Nationals are the tonic for what ails **Clayton Richard**. The left-hander will start the middle contest of this three-game set, with Tuesday's first pitch at 7:10 p.m. PT. Richard (1-4, 6.21 ERA) allowed a season-high seven runs (six earned) against the Giants on Wednesday. But against the Nationals, Richard owes a 3.67 ERA, his lowest mark against any National League opponent (min. 8 starts), although he's 1-4 against them.

Padres move Mitchell to 'pen, Lyles to rotation

By Jay Paris Special to MLB.com
May 7th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- The Padres' patience with **Bryan Mitchell** has reached its end -- for now.

The right-handed Mitchell was removed from the rotation on Monday. Mitchell, who was acquired with **Chase Headley** from the Yankees in the offseason, was scheduled to start on Thursday. **Jordan Lyles** will move from the bullpen to fill Mitchell's spot.

"The message to him was to earn it back," manager Andy Green said. "It wasn't, 'Hey you're going to the bullpen for the rest of your career with the San Diego Padres.' It was, 'Go down there and throw one good inning and dominate that inning and then dominate two innings, and go at this aggressively and then you will feel like you have right to be in this rotation.'"

Mitchell (0-3) was winless in seven starts with a 6.47 ERA. In Saturday's outing against the Dodgers, Mitchell surrendered four runs on five hits and four walks.

"We still believe very much in his stuff," Green said.

Mitchell showed why when **Cody Bellinger** was one of his five strikeout victims in the Mexico Series opener.

"[Bellinger] only chased one curveball in dirt last year, and Bryan punches him out with one," Green said. "So we see flashes of brilliance.

"But probably the best way for him to be a starter with the Padres is to take a step back, go to the bullpen and dominate in a different role for a while."

Green said Mitchell's use will be dictated by game situations.

"He handled it a professional manner," Green said of Mitchell's reaction. "He took ownership that he can do better."

Injury updates

Southpaw **Matt Strahm** (knee) was reinstated from the disabled list on Monday. He'll replace righty **Kazuhisa Makita**, who was optioned to Triple-A El Paso.

Strahm pitched an inning of relief for the Padres in Spring Training. He's been working his way back from July knee surgery after he came over from the Royals last summer. This season, he had nine rehab appearances (two starts) for Double-A San Antonio and went 1-0 with a 2.51 ERA.

"He has a live lefty arm, which we really haven't had because we are saving Brad [Hand]," Green said, referring to his left-handed closer. "This gives us some matchup possibilities that we haven't had before."

Padres to celebrate banner '98 season

Club won NL title behind Gwynn, Hoffman, Vaughn, Caminiti

By Bill Center San Diego Padres

May 7th, 2018

It was arguably the greatest season in Padres history.

1998.

The Padres set a franchise record with 98 wins to win their third National League West title then defeated two 100-win teams -- Houston and Atlanta -- to claim their second NL pennant.

Alas, the fairytale didn't end as hoped. The Yankees, considered by many to be one of the top three teams in Major League history, swept the Padres in the World Series.

But that didn't dull the celebration or dim the accomplishments of the 1998 Padres -- whose success led to the passage of the bond issues for the construction of Petco Park.

"In 1998, we were good," the late Tony Gwynn said several years later when looking back on the Padres' record run. "And we knew we were good. We had a chip that we carried. We wanted to show everyone how good we were. We could win with offense. We could win with pitching. We won because we were determined to win."

Twenty years later, the Padres will take time this week to celebrate and remember their 1998 championship team during the four-game series against the St. Louis Cardinals at Petco Park.

Fans attending the four games will receive a commemorative bobblehead representing four key players from the 1998 team -- Gwynn, (May 10), Ken Caminiti (May 11), Trevor Hoffman (May 12) and Greg Vaughn (May 13). Sycuan Casino will be the Padres' presenting sponsor for the bobbleheads, which will have connecting bases.

Additionally, Hoffman is sharing his bobblehead day with Kevin Towers, the general manager of the 1998 Padres who died this past Jan. 30. Towers will be inducted into the Padres Hall of Fame on May 12, becoming the 15th member of the Padres' shrine.

"This has to be one of the greatest seasons in San Diego sports history," then Padres president Larry Lucchino said after the 1998 National League champions were saluted with a downtown parade following the World Series.

And he was right. The 1998 campaign was just as special as the Padres' first pennant in '84.

Gwynn, as the only player who played on both those teams, knew it. So did 1998 manager Bruce Bochy, who was a player on the 1984 National League champions.

Gwynn and Hoffman went to the Hall of Fame off that 1998 team.

"In 1998, it was someone different stepping up almost every day," said Bochy. "That's the kind of season it was."

Several Padres did have career years.

Hoffman converted 53 saves in 54 chances -- then a Major League record for conversions. Included was a then-record run of 41 straight saves set on July 25 -- the same day that AC/DC's Hells Bells became Hoffman's entry song. His earned run average for the season -- a career-best 1.48.

Vaughn set a Padres' record with 50 home runs. The slugging left fielder also led the Padres with 119 RBIs, 112 runs scored, 156 hits and 82 extra-base hits.

Gwynn hit .321.

Kevin Brown won 18 games and Andy Ashby won 17 -- respectively, the fifth- and seventh-highest single-season win totals in Padres history.

Four of the top 16 players in the voting for the NL Most Valuable Player Award were Padres -- Vaughn (fourth), Hoffman (seventh), Gwynn (15th) and Brown (16th).

Hoffman finished second in the voting for the NL Cy Young Award. Brown finished third.

Bochy finished second in the NL Manager of the Year Award voting.

The foundation for the 1998 run was set in '96, when the Padres won 91 games and their second NL West title. But injuries kept the Padres from repeating in '97.

"I always thought we should have been better in 1997 and we weren't," said Gwynn. "I think that got to a lot of guys who thought the same thing. That fired us up for 1998 and carried through the National League playoffs."

Few players had career years for the 1998 Padres. As a team, the Padres hit only .253. But Padres pitchers turned in a division-leading 3.63 ERA. Seventy-three of the Padres 98 wins were either complete games or saves.

"The bullpen was the secret weapon of 1998," Towers said years later. "We were in a lot of close games late and that didn't really concern us because the bullpen was that good."

Padres relievers not only saved 59 games, they recorded 30 wins.

The Padres were underdogs going into both rounds of the NL playoffs. And they went 7-3, including a 4-1 mark on the road, to eliminate first the Astros (three games to one) then the Braves (4-2). The MVP of the playoffs was left-handed pitcher Sterling Hitchcock, who was 3-0 in three starts with a 1.13 ERA -- allowing eight hits and a walk with 25 strikeouts in 16 innings.

Again, it was someone new stepping up -- although the cast remained much the same from Opening Day to the end of the World Series.

The Padres' Opening Day lineup was: 1. Quilvio Veras, 2B; 2. Steve Finley, CF; 3. Tony Gwynn, RF; 4. Ken Caminiti, 3B; 5. Greg Vaughn, LF; 6. Wally Joyner, 1B; 7. Carlos Hernandez, C; 8. Chris Gomez, SS; 9. Kevin Brown, P.

When the playoffs began, there was only one change. Jim Leyritz started at first rather than Joyner, because famed left-hander Randy Johnson was starting for the Astros. Leyritz drove in Gwynn with the first run and Vaughn homered in a 2-1 Padres win in one of the greatest games in Padres history. Brown allowed only two hits with 16 strikeouts over eight scoreless innings.

That's the kind of season it was in 1998.

It deserves being remembered.

Adams, Turner, Strasburg lead Nationals over Padres, 8-5

11:38 PM PT
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO -- [Trea Turner](#) and [Stephen Strasburg](#) had done enough to give the [Washington Nationals](#) the lead against the [San Diego Padres](#) when [Matt Adams](#) broke the game open with two majestic home runs.

Adams connected in consecutive innings, Turner went deep in his first at-bat at Petco Park and Strasburg beat his hometown team again, leading the Nationals to an 8-5 victory Monday night.

Adams hit a towering, two-run drive to right field off [Tyson Ross](#) in the four-run sixth and a three-run shot to right-center in the seventh off Matt Strahm for an 8-2 lead. He has 10 homers this year. It was his seventh career multihomer game and second in a week after he went deep twice against Pittsburgh on Tuesday.

"It's huge," Adams said. "We go out there and we play the game hard. For me to be able to contribute the way that I'm doing, it means a lot. I think it also means a lot the way the team has bounced back to a little rocky start. We knew all along what this team was capable of doing. It's been a fun stretch and we plan on keeping it going."

Said Strasburg: "Pretty impressive. He's even showing off the glove, which is not what he's known for. Matt plays hard and is a great guy to have in the clubhouse. It's fun to watch."

Turner, San Diego's first-round pick in the 2014 draft who never played for the Padres, drove a 1-1 pitch from Ross an estimated 396 feet into the home bullpen in center field with one out in the first inning. It was his third on the season.

"Homers are fun in general. It was nice to put a good swing on the ball," Turner said. "It was a good atmosphere, good stadium, good field, it was fun. We got the win, which is the most important thing."

"I think anytime I play them it's always reminding me that I was there," he said about facing the Padres. "Not that it was my decision, but no regrets about anything. Everything's worked out great for me individually and I'm happy to be a part of this team."

San Diego made Turner the 13th pick overall in 2014 and then dealt him to Washington -- along with Ross' younger brother, Joe -- that December in an 11-player, three-team trade that sent [Wil Myers](#) from Tampa Bay to San Diego.

Turner couldn't head to the Nationals until the following June due to a rule at the time that said a player selected in the amateur draft couldn't be traded until one year had passed since he signed his initial professional contract.

Joe Ross had Tommy John surgery in July.

"He's turned out to be a pretty good ballplayer," Tyson Ross said of Turner. "He put a good swing on a bad pitch in the first and gave their team the early lead right there."

Turner walked leading off the four-run sixth and scored the go-ahead run on [Anthony Rendon's](#) double to left. Adams followed with his first homer, [Howie Kendrick](#) doubled and [Matt Wieters](#) hit an RBI single.

"The leadoff walk, that's always trouble for the pitcher and after that it was just poor execution with two strikes," Ross said. "I made two bad pitches to Rendon and Adams and they made me pay, and then they jumped on two first pitches after that. It kind of steamrolled pretty quick right there and I've got to be better with two strikes."

Strasburg (4-3) improved to 7-2 in nine career starts against the Padres. He allowed three runs and six hits in seven innings, struck out five and walked one.

Strasburg went to West Hills High in suburban Santee and then pitched at San Diego State under Tony Gwynn before going to the Nationals as the top pick overall in the 2009 draft.

"We won a nice game tonight," manager Dave Martinez said. "Nice to see Strasburg do what he did. He ran out of gas a little bit at the end but he pitched really well."

Ross (2-3) permitted five runs and six hits in six innings.

[Jose Pirela](#) had three hits and drove in a run for San Diego. Right fielder [Travis Jankowski](#) made a nice play against the wall to rob [Bryce Harper](#) of an extra-base hit to end the eighth.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Nationals: Reinstated RHP [Shawn Kelley](#) from the 10-day disabled list and optioned outfielder [Rafael Bautista](#) to Triple-A Syracuse. Kelley missed 12 games with right elbow irritation.

Padres: Reinstated Strahm from the 10-day disabled list. He was acquired in a six-player trade with Kansas City on July 24, just 2 1/2 weeks after undergoing surgery for a torn patellar tendon in his left knee. He pitched one inning in relief during spring training and made nine rehab appearances, including two starts, with Double-A San Antonio.

UP NEXT

Nationals: RHP [Jeremy Hellickson](#) (0-0, 3.00 ERA) is scheduled to make his fifth start of the season Tuesday night.

Padres: LHP [Clayton Richard](#) (1-4, 6.21) looks to rebound after allowing a season-high seven runs, six earned, in his last start, a 9-4 loss at San Francisco on Wednesday.

Padres hoping Bryan Mitchell can 'erase' soaring walk rate

8:59 PM PT

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO -- The [San Diego Padres](#) moved struggling right-hander [Bryan Mitchell](#) to the bullpen Monday and optioned reliever [Kazuhisa Makita](#) to Triple-A El Paso.

San Diego also reinstated reliever Matt Strahm from the 10-day disabled list before its game against Washington.

Mitchell, 27, is 0-3 with a 6.47 ERA in seven starts this year. He has walked 26 and struck out 16 in 32 innings.

Mitchell lasted only 2½ innings Saturday against the [Los Angeles Dodgers](#) in Monterrey, Mexico, in his shortest start of the season.

[Jordan Lyles](#) is scheduled to start in Mitchell's spot Thursday against St. Louis.

The Padres liked Mitchell so much that when they acquired him from the [New York Yankees](#) in December they were willing to take on third baseman [Chase Headley](#) and his \$13 million salary. But Mitchell has struggled from the start.

"The biggest one to me is the walks," manager Andy Green said. "It's hard to pitch in this league walking batters at the level he was for us. That walk rate hasn't been a major issue throughout his career the way it has this year, so we're hoping we can erase that."

Green said Mitchell will have the chance to regain his spot in the rotation.

"Sure. That's all dictated by how well he throws in the bullpen," Green said. "If he goes out there and attacks it and dominates it, we'll definitely look for an opportunity to get him back into the rotation. But he's going to have to show us something. That's being conveyed to him very clearly, with the hope and expectation that he will rise up and show us something."

Makita signed as a free agent in January after spending seven seasons with the Saitama Seibu Lions in Japan's Pacific League. He was 0-0 with a 6.21 ERA in 14 appearances.

Strahm was acquired in a six-player trade with Kansas City on July 24, 2½ weeks after undergoing surgery for a torn patellar tendon in his left knee. He pitched one inning in relief during spring training and made nine rehab appearances, including two starts, with Double-A San Antonio.

There still is talk, and little else, of MLB expansion in Mexico

9:52 AM PT

Eric Gomez, ESPN.com

MONTERREY, Mexico – Located at the foothills of the Sierra Madre Oriental mountain range, the saddle-shaped peak of Cerro de la Silla sits over the center-field bleachers, framing a direct view from home plate at Estadio de Béisbol Monterrey in Mexico’s third-largest city. The sight of dense, unseasonable gray clouds obscuring the landmark made it hard for even locals to point it out.

“I mean, I know you can’t really see it -- but it’s there,” said Ricardo Alvarado, a 44-year-old insurance agent and Monterrey native, referring to the imposing mountain. “If the clouds don’t clear up, there’s plenty of pictures of it,” said Ricardo’s father, Jose, a 73-year-old retiree.

Steady rain and sharp winds were prevalent in the first two games of a three-game series this past weekend between the San Diego Padres and Los Angeles Dodgers, Major League Baseball’s quintessential Southern California teams, along with the Los Angeles Angels.

The combination of factors between the towering mountain range and the unseasonable weather highlighted that these games were being played in a different locale than the impossibly sunny confines of Petco Park or Dodger Stadium. The willingness to power through despite the conditions appeared to symbolize the league’s commitment to make baseball work outside the usual settings.

Major League Baseball’s first regular-season games in Mexico since 1999 will live on in the record books. On Friday, the Dodgers threw the first combined no-hitter in franchise history and also completed MLB’s first no-no outside the United States and Canada. The Padres fought back over the weekend, winning the next two and claiming the Mexico Series.

Sold-out crowds noisily rooted throughout, though fans saved their loudest cheers for Mexican-American Alex Verdugo of the Dodgers and Mexican-born Christian Villanueva of the Padres.

“What a great atmosphere. How fun for our club to come down to Monterrey and enjoy the fans, the city and play in such a great venue,” said Padres manager Andy Green after the series wrapped on Sunday.

Over the course of the series, Verdugo went 2-for-11 with an RBI and a spectacular diving catch in foul ground on Saturday, while Villanueva, the NL Rookie of the Month for April, struggled, going 0-for-11 with a walk and a run scored.

“He’s tried to do too much -- he needs the game to come to him and he’ll be fine,” said Green.

The games were also accompanied by the usual talk of whether Mexico, and Monterrey specifically, could one day be the home to an expansion team.

On Friday night, MLB commissioner Rob Manfred acknowledged that the league is looking to expand, telling Fox Sports San Diego he “[would like to get to 32](#)” teams from the existing 30. When asked specifically, Manfred acknowledged Monterrey and Montreal as international options. Though Manfred has [talked about the Mexican market](#) in the past, the possibility received a new wave of support over the weekend.

“Of course,” said Mike Brito, the Dodgers’ longtime scout. “Mexico loves baseball. It is the most beautiful country in Latin America and the world,” he continued, smiling.

Walking through the concourse of the newly renovated Estadio de Béisbol Monterrey, Brito posed for a seemingly endless stream of photos with fans. At his side, Jose Maiz, the president of Monterrey’s Liga Mexicana de Béisbol team, the Sultanes, agreed with Brito’s assessment.

“I’ve always said it: Mexico will have a Major League Baseball team someday. And the city to host that team will be Monterrey,” said Maiz.

Maiz, who in 1994 made his first formal bid for a MLB franchise in Monterrey, cited the excitement displayed from fans in attendance as proof it could work. Throughout the weekend, fans packed the 22,061-seater, having [gobbled up tickets](#) and selling out the series within hours after they went on sale last February.

Throughout the weekend, the accommodations in Monterrey received rave reviews from the visiting brigade.

“I do think it’s a smart idea to expand,” said Eric Hosmer, the Padres first baseman, who hit two home runs in the series. “Facilities-wise, the stadium, it’s definitely good enough to be a major league stadium. It’s good the game recognizes there are fans all over.”

Fernando Valenzuela, who started and won for the Padres in 1996 when Major League Baseball played its first series in Monterrey, stretched his praise for the city as well as the park.

“I consider this stadium, and this city, to be apt for a big league team,” said Valenzuela, the fabled Mexican pitcher who won 173 MLB games from 1980 to 1997 with six MLB franchises, including the Dodgers and Padres. “A lot of things depend on it, sure, but I don’t see any problem.”

However, one of the obstacles to the dream becoming reality could be the stadium itself. Built in 1990 and remodeled this year, the Estadio de Béisbol Monterrey is smaller in capacity than all of MLB’s existing ballparks. Tropicana Field, home to the Tampa Bay Rays, is presently the smallest stadium in the big leagues with 31,042 seats, or nearly 9,000 more than Monterrey.

Rodrigo Fernandez, head of MLB’s offices in Mexico, told ESPN in August that a stadium in the [“40,000 to 45,000 seat”](#) range is what is needed in order to truly compete for a franchise.

The limited seating in Monterrey also caps attendance revenue for a franchise that would need to charge its patrons in weaker Mexican pesos, not U.S. dollars. Ricardo Alvarado and his father, for instance, said they would likely not be inclined to buy season tickets if they were offered at an extrapolation of last weekend's prices. For the three games, the cheapest seat in Monterrey was 385 pesos, or 19.75 U.S. dollars.

When asked about expanding capacity to meet the standards reflected in Fernandez's comments, Maiz was undeterred.

"We've got some space to expand in [the bleachers]," said Maiz. "If not, we could build a new stadium," he continued, admitting that would be a distant probability in the short-term.

Beyond stadium capacity, other problems stand in the way of MLB and Mexico turning their flirtation into something more solid.

"The security issue is the biggest problem," said José Alvarado, a lifelong Monterrey resident who attended the Padres' 3-0 win on Sunday. "The violence and the cartels here affect us every day."

Just a few days before the Padres and Dodgers touched down, Monterrey ended April amid a grim wave of violence, with [56 homicides on record](#) for the month. The metro area of 4.5 million has tallied more than 200 murders in 2018, according to the government of the state of Nuevo León, where Monterrey is located. In 2017, Nuevo León saw a [murder rate of 12.8 per 100,000 inhabitants](#), the third consecutive year in which the number rose.

Despite the socioeconomic and security issues surrounding Mexico and Monterrey specifically, MLB has committed to an extended audition period with the country, awarding yearly [regular-season series to Mexico until 2021](#) as part of the league's international expansion.

Aside from Monterrey, cities like Hermosillo and Culiacán have built modern stadiums that have garnered [praise from MLB's top brass](#). Initially, this year's series was planned for Mexico City, but a new baseball-specific stadium has been [bogged down by delays](#), prompting the locale switch. The dream of Major League Baseball expanding into Monterrey is alive and well, even if there's no timetable for it. However, the hope of more games coming in the near future could allow for plenty of chances to experience the city in its entire splendor, including the usually unobscured panoramic shots of Cerro de la Silla crowning over a ballpark.

This Day in Padres History—

May 8

By Bill Center

May 8, 1975—**Randy Jones** allows four hits and no walks while striking out three in a complete-game shutout as the Padres defeat the Reds 3–0 in Cincinnati in one hour and 39 minutes.

May 8, 1983—Second baseman **Juan Bonilla** is 4-for-4 with a double, two RBIs and a run scored to lead the Padres to a 5–3 win over the Chicago Cubs at San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium.

May 8, 2006—Outfielders **Mike Cameron** and **Brian Giles** each have three hits and three RBIs as the Padres defeat the Chicago Cubs 8–3 at Petco Park to complete a nine-game winning streak. It is the Padres longest winning streak in seven seasons and at the time the fifth-longest in franchise history.

May 8, 2010—Right-handers **Jon Garland**, **Mike Adams** and **Heath Bell** combine on a three-hitter as the Padres defeat the Astros 2–1 in Houston. Garland allows two hits and a walk with two strikeouts in seven innings.

#PadresOnDeck: Franmil Reyes Honored by PCL; France Hits Second Walk-Off HR for AA-San Antonio; Notes on Top-30 Prospects

By Bill Center

There were two major achievements in the Padres minor league system Monday night.

— Right fielder **Franmil Reyes** was named the Triple-A Pacific Coast League Player of the Week for April 30-May 6. Reyes follows **Brett Nicholas** and **Travis Jankowski** as the third straight Chihuahua to win the award, marking the first time since 2009 that players from the same team have been named the PCL Player of the Week in three straight weeks.

— And San Diego State alum **Ty France** hit a walk-off grand slam to stretch Double-A San Antonio's winning streak to a seventh straight game. Plus, it was the second time in three games that the Missions walked off the field with a grand slam. Catcher-corner infielder **Kyle Overstreet** accomplished the feat Saturday night. France's (.258) homer was his only hit in four at-bats plus a walk.

Reyes, 22, packed a month into last week. He was 17-for-28 (.607) with a double and eight homers. He scored 13 runs and drove in 14. He had a .645 on-base percentage and a 1.00 slugging percentage for a 2.145 OPS.

The 6-foot-5, 240-pound Reyes is hitting .345 on the season. He leads the PCL with 13 homers, 35 RBIs and 30 runs scored. Reyes homered in five straight games last week and had two homers in three straight games. Reyes was 2-for-4 Monday night with a RBI, a run scored and a walk.

Other top performances from Padres Top-30 prospects Monday:

— Second baseman **Luis Urías**, 20, the [Padres' third-ranked prospect](#) by MLB Pipeline, was 2-for-4 with a walk and a run scored to raise his batting average to .310 for El Paso.

— Right-handed starter **Cal Quantrill**, 23, the [Padres' No. 4 prospect](#), allowed four runs on eight hits and three walks with five strikeouts in 5 2/3 innings for San Antonio. He has a 3.52 earned run average.

— Catcher **Austin Allen**, 24, the [Padres' No.28 prospect](#), was 2-for-4 with a double and a run scored for San Antonio to raise his batting average to .333.

— Shortstop **Gabriel Arias**, 18, the Padres' 10th-ranked prospect, was 2-for-5 with four RBIs for Single-A Fort Wayne to raise his batting average to .210.

— Center fielder **Jeisson Rosario**, 18, the Padres' No.18 prospect, was 2-for-3 for the TinCaps with a sacrifice fly, a walk and two RBIs. He is hitting .318.

— Right-handed starter **Mason Thompson**, 20, the Padres' No.24 prospect, allowed two runs on four hits and a walk with five strikeouts in five innings. He is 3-3 with a 7.30 ERA for Fort Wayne.

Around the Farm:

TRIPLE-A EL PASO (18-14): ALBUQUERQUE 11, Chihuahuas 7—RHP **Michael Mariot** (0-1, 12.15 ERA) allowed eight runs on six hits and two walks with two strikeouts in 1 2/3 innings in a spot start. RHP **Jonathan Aro**(5.19) allowed a run on a hit and two walks with a strikeout in 3 1/3 innings. LHP **Tyler Webb** (1.80) allowed two runs (one earned) on two hits with a strikeout in two innings. RHP **Robert Stock** (0.00) struck out one in a perfect inning. CF **Dusty Coleman** (.207) backed Reyes and Urías, going 2-for-4 with a double and his fifth homer for three RBIs. 1B **Allen Craig** hit his fourth homer in four at-bats. 2B **Matthew Batten** (.167) was 1-for-3 with two walks and two runs scored. 3B **Diego Goris** (.357) had a double and run scored in five at-bats LF **Nick Schulz** (.271) was 1-for-4 with a stolen base.

DOUBLE-A SAN ANTONIO (21-10): MISSIONS 5, Corpus Christi 4—LHP **Dillon Overton** (2.84 ERA) followed Quantrill and allowed a hit with two strikeouts in 1 1/3 scoreless innings. RHP **Rowan Wick** (2-1, 3.55) allowed a hit and a walk with three strikeouts in two scoreless innings to get the win on France's walk-off grand slam. SS **Fernando Tatis Jr.** (.219) backed France and **Austin Allen**, going 1-for-4 with a walk and a run scored. LF **Josh Naylor**(.363) was 1-for-3 with a walk and a run scored. 2B **River Stevens** (.295) had a double in three at-bats with a walk. DH **Forrestt Allday** (.253) was 0-for-2 with two walks and a run scored. RF **Michael Gettys** (.210) was 0-for-2 with a walk and a sacrifice fly.

ADVANCED SINGLE-A LAKE ELSINORE (12-19): The Storm was off Monday.

SINGLE-A FORT WAYNE (14-17): TinCaps 6, QUAD CITIES 3—LF **Jack Suwinski** (.247) backed Arias and **Jeisson Rosario**, going 2-for-4 with two runs scored. 3B **Justin Lopez** (.235) was 2-for-4 with a double and a run scored. 2B **Reinaldo Ibarra** (.188) was 1-for-4 with a run scored. LHP **Travis Radke** (2.08 ERA) followed Thompson and had two strikeouts in two perfect innings. RHP **Jared Carkuff** (3.48) pitched a perfect eighth. RHP **Jordan Guerrero** (1.50) allowed a run on a hit and a walk with two strikeouts in an inning.

Andy's Address, 5/7

Andy Addresses activation of LHP Strahm and optioning of RHP Makita; Mitchell's move to bullpen, etc.

By Bill Center

The Padres returned to San Diego from Mexico Sunday night to prepare for nine straight games against the Washington Nationals, St. Louis Cardinals and Colorado Rockies at Petco Park.

But before getting started Monday night against the Nationals and San Diego State product **Stephen Strasburg**, the Padres made a series of roster moves.

Left-handed reliever **Matt Strahm** was activated from the 10-day disabled list after spending a month with Double-A San Antonio rehabbing his post-operative knee. To make room for Strahm on the 25-man roster, the Padres optioned struggling reliever **Kazuhisa Makita** to Triple-A El Paso.

The Padres announced that right-hander **Bryan Mitchell** was being moved from the starting rotation to the bullpen with right-hander **Jordan Lyles** now slotted to make his first start of the season Thursday night against the Cardinals.

And the Padres returned shortstop **Javy Guerra**, the extra 26th man on the roster in Mexico, to El Paso.

Padres manager **Andy Green** discussed the moves during his daily pre-game media session Monday afternoon.

“For us, it’s been a month-long rehab process with Matt Strahm to make sure he’s good to go,” said Green. “The bullpen route for what he’s come through is the best for him right now. It’s not a declaration that he’ll never be in the rotation for us. Coming off that knee surgery, we kind of need to limit his pitches and innings.”

“We felt like this was a good time and we’re excited to have him back. It’s a live-arm lefty that we really haven’t had in the bullpen. Obviously we have **Brad (Hand)** back there, but we hold him for certain situations. This gives us some matchup possibilities that we haven’t had before. There

was a lot of good things in a lot of his rehab outings. His fastball was alive. The secondary at times looked really good. He's bouncing back."

"There are going to be days when the knee is going to be sore. With those types of injuries, probably for the rest of the season he is going to deal with some soreness at times and that's just part of the process. Pretty much everyone on the field feels something at some point in time. The good news is he's ready to go. We gave him three-inning stints and 50 pitches and the opportunity to continue to build strength in his legs between those outings, then we sped him up to get those back-to-backs and he's good to go."

"We sent Makita down. We fully expect to see him again. He threw the ball really well against right-handed hitters. We sent him down to find out the best way to get left-handed hitters out. We think he will accomplish that. We think we'll see him back in short order. I thought he handled it very professionally. He took ownership that he can do better. He went down there with the belief that he will do better. We've asked him to work on his sequencing to left-handed batters."

Green spoke of Monday's starter **Tyson Ross**:

"There seems to be an ease on the mound throughout most of his innings," said Green. "It's obviously a grind when you face a good lineup, so you say there's 'ease on the mound' and then he has to go fight a very good Nationals lineup today . . . so you don't want to get too far ahead of yourself."

"He seems confident in what he's being asked to throw and executing those pitches. For me, there's been a drastic change in the way he controls the running game. That plays a big part in keeping the doubleplay in order. He's always had that wipeout slider he can go to at any time. He still has that and he's using both sides of the plate a little bit more than he used to. He's probably a more rounded pitcher on the mound than he was a few years aback when he was an All-Star."

That led Green to discuss the Nationals:

"It's a very good offense," said the Padres manager. "They have an electric guy at the top of the order in **Bryce Harper**. They have a lot of speed on the basepaths. And three or four different guys in their order who can take a base at any time. For us, it's a matter of getting strike one. You get strike one and you end up keeping guys off the base more frequently. You pitch behind in the count to these guys and they can do damage, take walks get on base and steal bases. For us, getting ahead in the count probably the big thing."

Green discussed Bryan Mitchell going to the bullpen:

"The message to Mitchell was earn it back. It was not, 'Hey, you're going to the bullpen for the rest of your career with the San Diego Padres.' It was go down there and throw one good inning and go dominate that inning and if you throw one good inning, go dominate two innings. Go after this aggressively and then you'll feel like you've earned the right to be in this rotation."

“That was the encouragement to him. He took it hopefully with some motivation. When he pitches will be predicated on game situations. Sometimes he’ll be coming into seven run games and sometimes he’ll be pitching back-to-back and sometimes he won’t be pitching for five days. That’s just the nature of that role at this time. The hope being he handles that all very well and when he steps on the mound he pitches very well because we still believe very much in his stuff.”

“Probably the best path to him being a starter for the Padres is taking a step back, go to the bullpen and dominate that role for a while. We still see flashes of brilliance in Mitchell. When you watch him attack a batter like **Cody Bellinger** and rips off a curve ball that is chased in front of the plate and punches him out. The challenge is the next batter and the four-pitch walk. When you get guys out quickly, how you going to attack the third guy who gets into the batter’s box.”

“There’s questions at this point in time that only he can answer. Hopefully, inside of him he’ll rise up and answer it. You can encourage and coach guys, at some point in time they stand on their own two feet on the mound and they have to execute pitches. The challenge now for him is to execute those pitches and don’t let up at any point in time and fight back for his spot in the rotation.”

Green discussed the Padres’ trip to Mexico and returning to Petco Park where they haven’t had great success this season (5–12).

“It wasn’t a great start in Monterrey,” said Green. “After we got past that, this team, regardless of what anyone sees in the record, has been resilient. There hasn’t been a hangover effect from a bad baseball game. We haven’t strung a lot of good baseball together.”

“But those last two days we played down there were probably our best two days back-to-back that we’ve had all year. We had great pitching and offensively we battled back from a couple deficits in that second game. We came back and won that game and gave us the opportunity to win the series. I feel good about where we are, the way the guys in general are swinging the bat right now.”

“If you’re playing in the Major Leagues and you’re looking for a soft team, you’re going to be looking a long time. The schedule is no excuse for our record. Every team we’ve played to this point with the exception of the Dodgers have had a winning record. So we haven’t been running through the bottom feeders of the National League. But that’s no excuse. If you want to be in the post-season, you have to beat those clubs. You have to beat them consistently.”

“Honestly, we’ve played pretty solid baseball on the road this year. Away from this ballpark, we’ve played pretty well. At this ballpark this year, we haven’t played as well as we did last year. So we have to get back to winning games at home. When you have a first-place team or a very good team coming in here, you still have to find a way to win at home.”

Green discussed closer Hand, who got the saves in each of the last two games in Mexico.

“We’ve said a million times with him, what happens the previous day doesn’t impact him at all,” said Green. “It’s never been a concern of mine at all that if he has a rough outing that the next day is going to be a problem. It’s usually for me how quickly can we get him back out there.”

Green concluded by discussing the three position players on the 10-day disabled list—catcher **Austin Hedges** and outfielders **Wil Myers** and **Hunter Renfroe**.

“Austin and Wil are back in San Diego continuing rehab and not deep into baseball activity at all right now,” said Green. “So they’re not any closer to playing for us right now than they were when we left. The hope is that in the next couple of days we start to check some boxes and more toward that for both of them. Hunter is in Arizona and having at-bats. He’s not playing games, but is getting close.”

Richard hopes to give Padres pitching hope vs. Nationals

STATS May 8, 2018 at 12:03p ET

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Padres' starting pitching has been a mess.

Things have been on a downhill spiral ever since right-hander Dinelson Lamet was lost for the season — due to Tommy John surgery — days before the season opener.

While his replacement, left-handed rookie Joey Lucchesi, has been a bright spot, the rest of the rotation has struggled. Only the Cincinnati Reds have a worse rotation than the Padres' 5.33 earned run average.

On Tuesday, left-hander Clayton Richard goes into his eighth start of the season with a 6.21 ERA. And his spot in the rotation seems safe for the moment, although Padres manager Andy Green announced another change Monday afternoon.

Right-hander Bryan Mitchell, who is 0-3 with a 6.47 ERA in seven starts, has been demoted to the bullpen. His next scheduled start will be made by right-hander Jordan Lyles on Thursday. Lyles, who has a 3.66 ERA in 13 relief appearances, will be the eighth Padre to make a start this season.

Two of the eight — Robbie Erlin and Mitchell — are in the bullpen. Luis Perdomo is at Triple-A El Paso. The Padres have already promoted prized prospects Lucchesi and Eric Lauer — both members of the 2016 draft class — from the minors this season.

But there is no hint of a demotion for the 34-year-old Richard as he prepares to square off against Washington right-hander Jeremy Hellickson (0-0, 3.00 ERA) Tuesday night.

One, aside from Perdomo, no one else in the Padres system seems prepared to step into the rotation. Two, Richard was granted a two-year contract extension last winter.

Richard is 1-4 with three straight losses. And the Padres are 2-5 in his seven starts. Since Opening Day, Richard has not allowed fewer than three earned runs in any of his six starts while going deeper than five innings only once. In his most recent outing May 2 in San Francisco, Richard lasted only four innings at AT&T Park, giving up seven runs (six earned) on eight hits and four walks with six strikeouts.

Richard's ERA since he allowed one run over seven innings on Opening Day is 7.34.

But there is hope. His one quality start since Opening Day was against a team outside the National League West. Green has expressed concern that division rivals might be onto Richard's new arm slot and repertoire. And the Nationals are from outside the National League West.

Richard's career 3.67 ERA against Washington is his lowest against any team he has made at least eight starts against. He is 1-4 against Washington in 11 games (seven starts). The Nationals are hitting .228 against Richards in 49 innings.

Hellickson, meanwhile, has a 6.70 ERA in eight career starts against the Padres, although he didn't face San Diego last year. Hellickson is 2-4 against the Padres and has allowed 34 runs (32 earned) on 50 hits and 13 walks with 41 strikeouts in 43 innings.

Hellickson has no decisions in four starts for the Nationals this season. He has allowed seven runs on 18 hits and four walks with 13 strikeouts in 21 innings with a very respectable 1.05 WHIP.