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White Sox announce player development staff

Vizquel to skipper Winston-Salem; Dotson is Double-A pitching coach
By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / Jan. 16, 2018

CHICAGO -- The hiring of Omar Vizquel to be the manager for Class A Advanced Winston-Salem in 2018 was announced by the White Sox on Dec. 4, 2017, prior to the release of their full player development staff on Tuesday.

But there were a few other significant changes and additions to the organization's overall staff.

Kirk Champion begins his 30th season with the White Sox via a move to the director of Minor League pitching instruction, after serving as director of Minor League instruction in '17 and as field coordinator from 2012-16. Champion served as the Minor League pitching coordinator from 2003-11.

Richard Dotson, who was the pitching coordinator in '17 and the Triple-A Charlotte pitching coach the previous nine seasons, moves to Double-A Birmingham as the Barons' pitching coach.

"He's a tremendous teacher," White Sox director of player development Chris Getz said of Dotson. "With the players we are going to have at the Birmingham level and his skillset, I just felt that it was a perfect fit to have Dotson go there and continue to teach these guys, and continue their development toward Chicago.

"Then with Champ, assuming a lot of those responsibilities of the coordinator, he's a natural in that position. He communicates well, very organized. He's ahead of things. He's got a passion for pitching. He knows the ins and outs, and obviously he's fluent in the pitching language. He knows what's expected of the players in Chicago.

"I felt that having him in that type of role was just going to make us strong as an organization," Getz said. "Those guys have taken the positions by the horns and are excited for the 2018 season."

Previous pitching coaches Brian Drahman (rehab pitching coach) and J.R. Perdew (pitching assistant) will continue to work in the White Sox system. Other new organizational staffers include Doug Sisson as field coordinator, Ben Broussard as leadership development coordinator, Everett Teaford as a quality control coach and Erin Santana as education coordinator. Santana's role, coupled with Broussard's job, indicates the club's rebuild is more about establishing an overall culture of success, both on and off the field, as opposed to simply assembling a plethora of high-end talent.

Getz pointed out Santana's job represents an area where the organization wanted to improve.

"We want our Latin American players to have a good education system in place. She has a lot of experience in building up curriculum in education systems," Getz said of Santana, whose primary focus will be at the White Sox Dominican Academy, but she will be more of a roving instructor. "We want to put these players in the best position possible to perform on the field, feel comfortable with the culture and communicate efficiently. Hopefully that will make them more comfortable as players.

"There are natural attributes when it comes to leadership, but we want to fully develop those skills so those are our guys that came through our system," Getz added, referring to Broussard. "They are using those skills to make us better as a

whole. You are trying to create a culture for these guys to flourish. The more people you have that have the skills to do that, I want to bring in here."

Moncada guiding Robert during mini-camp

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com Jan. 17, 2018

GLENDALE, Ariz. -- Luis Robert's training begins once he steps into Yoan Moncada's rental car each morning.

The 10-minute drive from the nearby hotel to Camelback Ranch, home of the White Sox Spring Training facility and the site of this week's hitters mini-camp, is short but helpful. Robert peppers Moncada with questions about baseball and life in the United States after living in Cuba. The second baseman does his best to answer them while he maneuvers a white sedan to the complex.

"Growing up, I don't think we ever imagined we would be here," said Robert, 20, who first met Moncada as a young teen on the baseball fields in Cuba. "It's really good to have someone from Cuba to be a guide and speed up the adjustment."

Together, Moncada and Robert represent part of the future for the franchise. Separately, the young Cubans are working to solidify their place in the organization. Robert, who defected from Cuba in late 2016 and signed with the White Sox last May for a \$26 million bonus, is entering his first full Minor League season in the United States. Moncada, who signed a \$31.5 million deal with the Red Sox out of Cuba in 2015, will enter his first full big league season as the White Sox starting second baseman.

Robert and Moncada were teammates on Cuba's U-18 team in 2013.

Robert, who is ranked as the No. 23 prospect in baseball by MLB Pipeline, admits it will take time to adjust to life in the United States. He doesn't speak English and understands there are cultural differences he will face. That's where Moncada will step in to help Robert, just like White Sox first baseman Jose Abreu, who is also from Cuba, helped him. Robert said an uncle from Cuba who lives in California will also help in the transition to the United States.

However, some things will remain the same. Robert's days in the Dominican Republic, where he lives, are spent working out, and he hopes to create a similar routine in the United States. He's looking forward to learning new training techniques.

Robert's contract gives him the type of financial freedom he could have never imagined, but he said he's still the same homebody he was before he signed the multimillion dollar deal. And yes, Robert likes video games and having fun with social media, like other people his age, but he said he left everything behind in Cuba to become a Major League player, so that's what he is focusing on.

"My life has changed in many ways, but maybe the biggest change since I signed is that I don't worry about what's next," Robert said in Spanish. "My life is tranquil. I can just concentrate on the game and my family, and not where I am going to sign."

The most significant change in Robert's life has been a personal one. His parents and sisters recently joined him in Santo Domingo.

"It's important to keep in mind this year that so much of what is going to happen with him from a developmental standpoint is going to happen off the field," White Sox general manager Rick Hahn said. "It's a thrill watching him in BP and make these fields look small, and it's going to be fun to watch him in Spring Training, and ultimately, whatever affiliate he gets assigned to for the 2018 season. But no matter how he performs, a lot of what he's going to get used to is life in the States, different culture and a different type of baseball, different expectations, and different schedule and different diets."

Since joining the White Sox, Robert has played in the Dominican Summer League and participated in the White Sox instructional league at the club's Dominican Academy. He will be in big league camp for Spring Training next month. There's a chance he will be assigned to one of the club's Class A affiliates at Kannapolis or Winston-Salem (Advanced) for the regular season.

"I'd like to be in the big leagues like everyone else, but I don't know the plan for me right now," Robert said. "I'm just going to focus on doing my work and getting better."

As for Moncada, he finished the 2017 season with a .231 batting average, eight home runs, 22 RBIs, 31 runs scored and three stolen bases. He hit .211 in 20 plate appearances with the Red Sox in 2016, and he later was acquired by Chicago from Boston as part of the package for pitcher Chris Sale during the offseason.

Like many young players with his experience level, Moncada is a work in progress.

"[Yoan] is extremely young with half of a year of big league play under his belt," Hahn said. "I think he is going to be a lot more comfortable and know more about how the pitchers are trying to get him out, and how he needs to adjust, and he knows he's going to be out there in the lineup every day."

The immediate future for Moncada and Robert includes a trip to a Cuban restaurant near the hotel for a taste of the island. It's another chance for them to catch up on the past and dream about the future.

"Yoan is still very young and still establishing himself as a big leaguer," Hahn said. "The fact that he is taking such care and consideration for one of his younger teammates going through something he went through himself speaks highly about his character."

Meet the Prospects: Thyago Vieira

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / Jan. 16, 2018

The White Sox rebuild is in full swing. While it might still be a year or two before the big league team is expected to start competing for championships, the minor leagues are stocked with highly touted talent fans will be eagerly following in 2018. With that in mind, it's time to Meet the Prospects and get to know the future of the South Side.

Thyago Vieira

Vieira, the 24-year-old right-handed hurler, has just one inning of big league ball under his belt.

A native of Brazil, Vieira made his major league debut last season for the Seattle Mariners, pitching one scoreless inning — and striking out one batter — in an Aug. 14 loss to the Baltimore Orioles. He's since joined the White Sox rebuild, acquired in a November trade that sent international bonus slot money back to the Pacific Northwest.

In the minors last season, Vieira split time between Double-A Arkansas and Triple-A Tacoma, combining for a 4.00 ERA in 54 innings of 41 appearances. He struck out 46 hitters and walked 22. In previous minor league seasons, he showed a good ability to strike out opposing hitters, posting a 10.8 K/9 with Class A Bakersfield in 2016.

As of their most recent rankings, MLB Pipeline had Vieira rated as the No. 20 prospect in the White Sox organization.

Luis Robert, Eloy Jimenez impress at White Sox hitters camp

By Chris Kuc / Chicago Tribune / Jan. 16, 2018

Baseballs are flying in Arizona.

Many of those soaring balls came off the bats of two of the White Sox's top prospects, Eloy Jimenez and Luis Robert, as the team held its annual hitters minicamp in Glendale.

"They both looked great," Sox director of player development Chris Getz said Tuesday via a conference call. "People are at different phases of their offseason. Some guys like to hit early and some a little bit closer to spring training. It looked like those guys haven't stopped hitting. Physically they're in great shape. They stand out just based purely on their size and physique."

Jimenez and Robert are among the 30 players participating in the camp in front of the Sox hierarchy, including general manager Rick Hahn and manager Rick Renteria.

"(Jimenez and Robert) used the middle of the field just taking a professional batting practice," Getz said. "There are a lot of people out here (watching) and a lot of people are excited witnessing what they have the last couple of days."

The Sox's top prospects scheduled to attend the minicamp are Jimenez, Robert, Micker Adolfo, Luis Alexander Basabe, Jake Burger, Alex Call, Zack Collins, Ryan Cordell, Jameson Fisher, Casey Gillaspie, Blake Rutherford, Gavin Sheets and Charlie Tilson.

Several players already in the majors are also at the camp, including Matt Davidson, Nicky Delmonico, Adam Engel, Yoan Moncada, Yolmer Sanchez and Kevan Smith.

The White Sox begin spring training Feb. 14. Their Cactus League season starts Feb. 23.

White Sox announce player development staff for 2018 season

By Chris Kuc / Chicago Tribune / Jan. 16, 2018

With spring training set to kick off next month, the White Sox announced their player development staff and minor-league assignments for the 2018 season.

The staff will be under the guidance of Chris Getz, who is entering his second year as the Sox's director of player development.

Omar Vizquel is the only new manager in the system as it was announced in December that the former Sox infielder would be at the helm of Class-A Winston-Salem.

Joining Vizquel at Winston-Salem as a coach will be former major-league catcher Guillermo Quiroz.

After serving as the organization's pitching coordinator in 2017, Richard Dotson will return to the coaching ranks with Double-A Birmingham.

Other new organizational staffers include Doug Sisson as field coordinator, Ben Broussard as leadership development coordinator and Everett Teaford as a quality control coach. Sisson returns to the Sox organization after serving as the outfield and baserunning instructor from 2013-15.

Here are the Sox's player development assignments for 2018:

Instructors

Director of Player Development: Chris Getz

Field Coordinator: Doug Sisson

Director of Minor League Pitching Instruction: Kirk Champion

Hitting Coordinator: Mike Gellinger

Infield Coordinator: Vance Law

Catching Coordinator: John Orton

Outfield/Baserunning Coordinator: Aaron Rowand

Camp Coordinator: Tommy Thompson

Quality Control Coach: Everett Teaford

Leadership Development Coordinator: Ben Broussard

Assistant, Player Development: Rafael Santana

Pitching Assistant: J.R. Perdew

Rehab Pitching Coach: Brian Drahrman

Education Coordinator: Erin Santana

Conditioning Coordinator: Dale Torborg

Minor League Medical/Rehabilitation Coordinator: Scott Takao

Physical Therapist: Derrick Garris

Latin/Cultural Development Coordinator: Anthony Santiago

Triple-A Charlotte

Manager: Mark Grudzielanek

Pitching Coach: Steve McCatty

Hitting Coach: Andy Tomberlin

Coach: Garey Ingram

Trainer: James Kruk

Conditioning: Shawn Powell

Double-A Birmingham

Manager: Julio Viñas

Pitching Coach: Richard Dotson

Hitting Coach: Cole Armstrong

Trainer: Corey Barton

Conditioning: Tim Rodmaker

Class-A Winston-Salem

Manager: Omar Vizquel

Pitching Coach: Matt Zaleski

Hitting Coach: Charlie Poe

Coach: Guillermo Quiroz

Trainer: Josh Fallin

Conditioning: George Timke

Class-A Kannapolis

Manager: Justin Jirschele

Pitching Coach: José Bautista

Hitting Coach: Jamie Dismuke

Trainer: Joe Geck

Conditioning: Goldy Simmons

Advance Rookie Great Falls

Manager: Tim Esmay

Pitching Coach: John Ely

Hitting Coach: Eric Richardson

Trainer: Hyeon Kim

Conditioning: Tyler Gniadek

Arizona Rookie League

Manager: Ryan Newman

Pitching Coach: Felipe Lira

Hitting Coach: Gary Ward

Trainer: Scott Johnson

Conditioning: Daniel Cobian

Dominican Republic Academy

Academy Supervisor: Ever Magallanes

Complex Operations Coordinator: Manuel Santana

Field Coordinator: Guillermo Reyes

Manager: Julio Valdez

Pitching Coach: Leo Hernández

Hitting Coach: Ángel González

Assistant Pitching Coach: José Brito

Catching Coach: Ángel Rosario

Outfield Coach: Julio Ramírez

Trainer: TBD

Conditioning Coach: Pedro Gómez

White Sox announce player development staff

By Madeline Kenney / Sun-Times / Jan. 16, 2018

During the White Sox' rebuild, it's crucial that the team puts the right people in charge of developing their prospects.

The White Sox announced Tuesday their player development staff and assignments for the 2018 season. These managers and staffs will work under Chris Getz, who is entering his second year as the Sox's director of player development.

Five managers will return to their minor-league positions, while the Sox welcome one new skipper.

The newest addition to the organization's managerial staff is Omar Vizquel, who was announced as the manager at Class A Winston-Salem last month. Vizquel will be joined by former catcher Guillermo Quiroz, who appeared in 148 games over his 10 major-league seasons with seven different teams.

Mark Grudzielanek of Class AAA Charlotte, Julio Viñas of Class AA Birmingham, Justin Jirschele of Class A Kannapolis, Tim Lincecum of Advanced Rookie Great Falls and Ryan Newman of Arizona Rookie League will maintain their managerial positions from last season. Both Jirschele and Lincecum reached the playoffs last year in their first season with their respective clubs.

The team's pitching staff remains relatively the same. Steve McCatty (Charlotte), Matt Zaleski (Winston-Salem), José Bautista (Kannapolis), John Ely (Great Falls) and Felipe Lira (Arizona Rookie) will all return to their respective clubs.

Here's the full staffing lineup:

Director of Player Development: Chris Getz

Field Coordinator: Doug Sisson

Director of Minor League Pitching Instruction: Kirk Champion

Hitting Coordinator: Mike Gellinger

Infield Coordinator: Vance Law

Catching Coordinator: John Orton

Outfield/Baserunning Coordinator: Aaron Rowand

Camp Coordinator: Tommy Thompson

Quality Control Coach: Everett Teaford

Leadership Development Coordinator: Ben Broussard

Assistant, Player Development: Rafael Santana

Pitching Assistant: J.R. Perdew

Rehab Pitching Coach: Brian Drahrman

Education Coordinator: Erin Santana

Conditioning Coordinator: Dale Torborg

Minor League Medical/Rehabilitation Coordinator: Scott Takao

Physical Therapist: Derrik Garris

Latin/Cultural Development Coordinator: Anthony Santiago

Rozner: Thome, Jones, Guerrero are Hall of Fame shoo-ins

By Barry Rozner / Daily Herald / Jan. 16, 2018

There are still those who believe the first time on the Baseball Hall of Fame ballot carries greater significance than the second.

So they don't vote for players the first time around.

This remains one of life's great mysteries.

As Andre Dawson said after jumping 10 percentage points during his fifth year on the ballot, "I guess I must have put up good numbers last year. Strange because I've been retired for 10 years."

You're either pregnant or you're not. You're either a Hall of Famer or you're not.

In any case, Chipper Jones and Jim Thome should crash the 90 percent mark and cruise into Cooperstown when next week's election results are announced -- but they won't approach 100.

The players with the highest percentages ever are Junior Griffey (99.3), Tom Seaver (98.8), Nolan Ryan (98.7), Cal Ripken (98.5), Ty Cobb (98.2), George Brett (98.1), Hank Aaron (97.8), Tony Gwynn (97.6), Randy Johnson (97.2) and Greg Maddux (97.2).

Aaron missed a perfect election by 9 votes in 1982. And the argument against Aaron would be what, exactly? Maddux missed by 15, Johnson by 15, Seaver by 5 and Babe Ruth (95.1 percent) missed by 11 votes.

Yes, 11 people didn't vote for the Babe Ruth of Babe Ruths.

Anyway, and for what it's worth, here's one writer's ballot for this year:

Chipper Jones

Lands at No. 51 all-time in WAR, 32nd in WAR position players and 25th offensive WAR. Those are monster numbers.

Jim Thome

Hit 612 home runs, eighth all-time.

Barry Bonds

Bonds had a Hall of Fame career (400-400) before his hat size exploded.

If his career had ended after 14 years, before he grew exponentially, his 103.4 WAR would have been good for 27th all-time. His 445 home runs would still be good for 42nd all-time. He already had three MVP awards and eight Gold Gloves.

Bonds collected 334 HR and 380 stolen bases through 1996, in his first 11 seasons. That was half of his career. No other player in baseball history has reached both numbers in an entire career.

Roger Clemens

It's not as obvious when Clemens began to enhance himself, but with Bud Selig's election to the HOF, it doesn't matter anymore. Selig was the steroids commissioner. He promoted it more, and profited from it more, than anyone in baseball during the steroids era. If Selig is in, Clemens is in.

Mike Mussina

One of the most underrated pitchers of all time, Mussina is finally gaining some notice and it's absurd that it's taken this long. He got only 20 percent of the votes in his first year and got to 51 percent last year on his fourth ballot.

Mussina is 24th in WAR for pitchers, 33rd in wins (270), 33rd in games started, 20th in strikeouts and 22nd in adjusted-pitching wins.

He's 23rd in strikeout-to-walk ratio and 12 times finished top 10 in WHIP, 10 times top five.

He's 11th all-time in base-out wins saved, 10th in win probability added and second to Curt Schilling since 1900 in strikeout-to-walk ratio among pitchers with at least 3,000 innings.

Curt Schilling

Some voters have openly admitted that they won't vote for Schilling because they don't like his post-career politics and often bizarre comments, but many of those same people will vote for PEDs users because they don't care about issues of character, integrity or sportsmanship, even though it's a stated rule for voting on a player's career.

Whatever. Schilling is a no-brainer.

No. 26 all-time in WAR for pitchers, second in Cy Young voting three times, top 15 MVP voting four times, top eight WAR for pitchers 11 times (top four eight times), top 10 ERA nine times, top six in WHIP 11 times, top 10 in strikeouts-per-9-innings 10 times, top 10 strikeouts-to-walks ratio 11 times (first five times), and is one of four pitchers with 3,000 strikeouts and fewer than 1,000 walks (Greg Maddux, Fergie Jenkins, Pedro Martinez).

His postseason record is ridiculous, going 11-2 with a 2.23 ERA in 19 starts and 133 innings. He was 4-1 in the World Series, won three rings and his "bloody sock" start in Game 6 of the 2004 ALCS was no myth.

He also won Game 4 of the '04 World Series with a temporarily-stapled ankle tendon, allowing him to pitch and leading to a medical technique known as the "Schilling Tendon Procedure." Boston won its first World Series in 86 years in 2004.

Schilling was also co-MVP of the 2001 World Series, pitching in three games as Arizona beat the Yankees in seven games.

Vlad Guerrero

This ballot did not have room for him a year ago, but he gets in this year on his second try.

Trevor Hoffman

He missed by 5 votes last year and it will be very close again this year. Retired as the all-time saves leader. There's an award named after him. Surprised there's any discussion here.

Jeff Kent

Disliked equally by teammates and writers, Kent is nonetheless deserving.

All-time home run leader at second base (351), second at the position in RBI to Rogers Hornsby (1,518, 54th all-time), 47th all-time extra-base hits (984), 27th all-time doubles (560) and 68th all-time total bases (4,246). Top 100 all-time offensive WAR (97th).

Defense will probably keep him from ever getting in. Suddenly, people like defense again.

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So look for Jones, Thome and Guerrero to get in easily and for Hoffman to make it or miss by a hair again.
