



Padres Press Clips

Friday, November 30, 2018

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Padres getting Garrett Richards — with 2020 vision

Kevin Acee

The Padres have agreed to a two-year contract with free agent starting pitcher Garrett Richards.

The 30-year-old right-hander underwent Tommy John surgery in July and is not expected to pitch this season, so he is certainly not the veteran who will fill the need the team has identified in its rotation.

Richards has started just 28 games (138 2/3 innings) in the past three seasons due to various arm ailments.

When healthy, he has been effective.

Richards has a 3.15 ERA with 1.17 walks and hits per innings pitched over his past 86 starts, dating to the beginning of the 2014 season. That includes a 3.66 ERA and 1.34 WHIP in 16 starts in 2018.

Terms of the deal are not known, but the Padres are obviously banking on Richards to be part of their 2020 campaign.

[Jon Heyman reported](#) an agreement has been reached. [Jeff Passan reported](#) the two-year deal is worth about \$15 million in guaranteed money with a maximum value of about \$18 million.

Sources: Richards agrees to deal with Friars

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

Nov. 29th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- The Padres entered the offseason in search of pitching help beyond the 2019 season and into the future.

They've agreed to a deal with former Angels right-hander **Garrett Richards**, sources said. And they did so for precisely that reason.

MLB Network Insider Jon Heyman was the first to report the Padres' agreement with Richards, who is recovering from Tommy John surgery performed in July. He is expected to receive a two-year deal from San Diego worth \$15 million, according to Yahoo Sports' Jeff Passan. The Padres have not yet confirmed the signing.

It's unclear whether Richards, 30, will be healthy enough to return from surgery during the 2019 season. But the deal was clearly made with '20 in mind. The Padres have a glut of young pitching prospects, but their rotation remains wide open for the future, and they believe their window for contention in the National League West might open in the '20 season.

Richards has a 45-38 record and a 3.54 ERA in eight MLB seasons, all spent with the Angels. He posted a 3.66 mark in 16 starts this year -- before he was shut down in July.

Richards has only made 28 starts over the past three seasons combined, mostly due to his arm troubles. In 2016, he opted for rehab and stem cell injections over Tommy John surgery, and he missed most of the season. He then missed most of the '17 campaign with a biceps injury.

When healthy, however, Richards clearly brings a lot to the table. He's made 86 starts in the past five seasons. Among the 105 pitchers to start as many games in that span, Richards' 3.15 ERA ranks 13th. His fastball routinely hits the upper-90s, and his curveball is one of the highest-spin pitches in the sport.

The Padres' thinking is pretty clear here: They're banking on Richards returning and becoming that kind of top-tier starting pitcher for the 2020 season. If he does, they're hopeful he's an important piece in a playoff-caliber rotation.

The Padres' 2018 starting staff featured a trio of rookies in **Joey Lucchesi**, **Eric Lauer** and **Jacob Nix**, who will factor into the club's plans moving forward. **Chris Paddack** and **Logan Allen**, both ranked among MLB Pipeline's **Top 100 Prospects**, are expected to debut this year. Fellow Top 100 pitchers MacKenzie Gore, Adrian Morejon, Michel Baez, Luis Patino and Ryan Weathers are also waiting in the wings.

It's an incredibly deep system, and there's a clear plan for those youngsters to ultimately take over the rotation. But the Padres would like to complement them with experienced big league arms, too.

They've done exactly that by signing Richards, and they probably aren't be done on the pitching front this offseason either.

These top prospects could draw trade interest

By Mike Rosenbaum, Jim Callis and Jonathan Mayo MLB.com

Nov. 29th, 2018

A pair of American League teams got together last week to make the first major trade of the offseason, as the Mariners dealt ace **James Paxton** to the Yankees in exchange for a three-prospect package headlined by left-hander **Justus Sheffield**, the former New York top prospect who now ranks **No. 1 on the Mariners' Top 30**.

And with rumors now circulating about the Mets' possible willingness to part with some of their top prospects, it seems increasingly likely that there will be even more young talent dealt as the offseason unfolds -- especially with the Winter Meetings on the horizon and a blockbuster class of free agents yet to sign.

Of course, trades involving highly touted prospects for big leaguers such as the recent Yankees-Mariners deal usually happen between a competitive, win-now team and one that's rebuilding.

So which prospects are realistic candidates to be traded this offseason? Here is a look at one player from each organization.

Luis Patino, RHP, Padres No. 9 (MLB No. 83)

As the owners of baseball's best farm system, the Padres are in a position to cash in on their wealth of high-end prospects in a blockbuster-type deal, should they choose that route. Patino showed front-of-the-rotation upside and emerged as a top prospect last season as he posted a 2.16 ERA with 98 strikeouts and a .220 BAA over 83 1/3 innings at age 18 in the Class A Midwest League.

Padres aren't inclined to force outfield trade

Preller willing to listen, but likes club's depth at the position

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

Nov. 29th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- By now, you've probably heard: The Padres are looking to trade an outfielder.

They have six of them, after all, and all six have contributed significantly as starters over the past two seasons.

But while it seems extremely likely that one of those six players is dealt this offseason, don't consider it a foregone conclusion, says general manager A.J. Preller.

Recent trade speculation has come down to the club's three right-handed-hitting corner outfielders -- **Wil Myers**, **Franmil Reyes** and **Hunter Renfroe**. There isn't much room for any of those three to serve as a backup, with the left-handed-hitting **Franchy Cordero** set to see time at all three outfield spots, while **Manuel Margot** plays center and **Travis Jankowski** serves as a speed-and-defense option off the bench.

Unless Myers is the solution at third base -- and it seems unlikely the organization feels he is -- that leaves three players for a maximum of two spots. The circumstances are ripe for a trade, and you can bet Preller and the rest of the Major League clubs know it.

"Outfield depth is an area that a lot of teams have hit us on during the course of the last month," Preller said last week. "We've got some guys teams feel are Major League-caliber players, and we'll continue to have discussions. ... You always deal from positions of depth, and our outfield is a position of depth."

But Reyes' recent knee injury brings to light an important question: Just how deep, exactly, is the Padres outfield?

Reyes underwent surgery to repair a torn meniscus in his right knee on Thursday. He's expected to be back by the start of Spring Training, but it's certainly possible the Padres take things slowly with him in camp.

In any case, the club isn't particularly worried about his long-term status. It expects him to be full go by Opening Day, and a team source noted that Reyes' injury doesn't change the Padres' plans this offseason.

But while an outfield trade could take shape by the Winter Meetings -- or sooner -- Preller noted it's not imperative.

"It can be hard to line up for deals, and we think a lot of our [outfield] group," Preller said. "We feel comfortable having quality players in some multiples at those spots. We saw it with some injuries ... you want to make sure you're covered."

Essentially: Yes, the Padres have a glut of outfielders. Yes, they have holes at third, short and in the rotation. That doesn't mean they'll automatically be trading an outfielder to shore up another spot on the diamond.

Even if we assume Reyes is back to full health by Spring Training, this group of outfielders is still riddled with question marks. Margot struggled immensely in his sophomore campaign. Renfroe and Reyes have been feared big league sluggers for only about half a season. Cordero is coming off elbow surgery. And Myers, who seems likeliest to be traded, missed half of last season with injury and is still trying to regain his early-2016 form.

Of the six, Jankowski is the only known commodity. (By now, his role as a bench option is pretty clearly defined.) The other five have higher ceilings, but they've yet to reach those ceilings consistently.

"I don't think it's a situation where you have to move anybody," Preller said. "But you're always going to listen. We'll keep listening. Honestly, we feel it's a good position to be in, to have some quality depth in numbers."

If the Padres were to trade, say, Myers or Renfroe, they'd suddenly have little margin for error. They couldn't afford for Margot's struggles to continue. Or for Cordero's strikeout rate to linger near 40 percent. Or for Reyes to regress from his torrid second half.

In some ways, Preller is probably using his comments as leverage. He doesn't *need* to trade anyone.

But there's some truth to them as well. It's very likely that at least one of those six outfielders is dealt by Opening Day 2019. But it's not a guarantee.

Jankowski among 6 arbitration-eligible Padres

Club likely to offer contracts to all as non-tender deadline approaches

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com @AJCassavell

Nov. 28th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- The Padres have already spent the first month of the offseason trimming their roster.

The club unloaded **Alex Dickerson** and outrighted **Kazuhisa Makita** when it needed to reinstate players from the disabled list. San Diego cut ties with **Cory Spangenberg**, **Colin Rea** and **Christian Villanueva** on Nov. 20, **clearing space to add prospects** to the 40-man roster. The Padres traded **Rowan Wick**, **Colten Brewer** and **Walker Lockett** for **three players who didn't need to be rostered**.

Those moves serve to make Friday's non-tender deadline somewhat less interesting than it's been in previous years. By 5 p.m. PT, the Padres need to decide which arbitration-eligible players will receive a contract for 2019.

Six players are eligible:

- Righty **Kirby Yates** and lefty **Robbie Erlin** are in their second arbitration year.
- Righty **Bryan Mitchell** and infielder **Greg Garcia** are in their first arbitration year.
- Catcher **Austin Hedges** and outfielder **Travis Jankowski** are in their first arbitration year, but they have the **Super Two** designation, meaning they'll have four seasons of arbitration-eligibility, instead of the usual three.

It's very likely the Padres tender a contract to all six. That means the club and the player would submit a proposed salary, and the two sides would negotiate from there. If no agreement is reached, an independent arbiter would pick between the two proposals.

Any player who isn't tendered a contract will instantly become a free agent. But the Padres probably aren't willing to lose a worthwhile contributor for nothing.

Of the group, Mitchell is the only question mark. But he almost certainly did enough during the final month of the 2018 season to earn a chance to compete for a rotation spot in Spring Training. (Mitchell made the league minimum last season, and he logged a 5.42 ERA and a 6.11 FIP in 2018. Whatever raise he gets in arbitration, it isn't going to break the bank.)

The Padres have already cut ties with Dickerson and Spangenberg -- their two real non-tender candidates entering the offseason. Any further movement on Friday would qualify as a surprise.

But there's one worthwhile note from the non-tender deadline: The Padres don't have a single player entering his final year of arbitration-eligibility. Among their players under contract, only **Clayton Richard** and **Craig Stammen** are up after 2019.

In short: There are a huge contingent of in-house pieces slated to be in San Diego for a long time. Those pieces are about to be complemented with prospects from the deepest farm system in baseball.

The Padres are almost certainly going to have some tricky roster decisions in 2019. And that's just fine -- they're the types of decisions good teams have to make.

Padres willing to be patient for payoff from new signee Garrett Richards

By [Dennis Lin](#) Nov 29, 2018

High-risk, high-reward propositions involving pitchers with scarred appendages have taken on a new form in recent years. Front offices with access to increasingly complex data no longer deem the risk quite so high.

The Padres have agreed to a two-year deal with former Angels right-hander Garrett Richards, according to sources. Jon Heyman of Fancred reports that Richards will receive \$15.5 million guaranteed plus \$2.5 million in incentives.

The catch: San Diego's latest addition will spend the first season of the deal making good money while rehabilitating a golden but out-of-commission arm. A 30-year-old with an ace's repertoire and a lengthy injury history, Richards underwent Tommy John surgery near the end of July and is unlikely to return in 2019. The Padres are committing a decent sum for his non-guaranteed ability to help spearhead a 2020 attempt at contention.

Richards' new contract is the most expensive of its kind, though certainly not the first. Before the 2017 season, the Rays signed Nathan Eovaldi to a \$2 million deal knowing he would not pitch for a year; the hard-throwing righty had recently undergone his second Tommy John surgery.

After paying for a year of rehab, Tampa Bay exercised a \$2 million club option, extracted 57 innings from Eovaldi, traded him to Boston and watched him emerge as an October star for the World Series champions. Now, just about every team seeking pitching would love to add Eovaldi and his electric, twice-repaired arm.

The Twins and the Cubs followed similar blueprints last winter, signing talented but rehabbing pitchers Drew Smyly and Michael Pineda. Each was coming off Tommy John surgery. Each received a two-year, \$10 million contract.

Smyly and Pineda have yet to complete their comebacks, but Eovaldi's success evidently was enough to encourage multiple teams in their pursuit of Richards. Despite having logged just 138 2/3 innings over the last three seasons, the right-hander drew serious interest across the league.

Richards' talent, at least comparable to Eovaldi's, also hiked up the price tag. In 16 starts for the Angels this year, he notched a 3.66 ERA and an average fastball velocity of 95.9 mph. His secondary pitches also rate as plus weapons with [elite spin rates](#).

The challenge, of course, has been staying on the mound. Richards underwent knee surgery in 2014, tore his ulnar collateral ligament in 2016 (he opted for stem-cell therapy over Tommy John), dealt with a biceps nerve issue in 2017 and strained a hamstring this past season. The UCL tore again during the summer.

Around those injuries, Richards still compiled a 3.54 ERA in eight seasons with the Angels. His best results came in 2014, when he logged a 2.61 ERA in 26 starts.

If Richards regains his health, the upside is enormous. He could produce like a frontline starter or, if other plans are derailed, a valuable trade asset. Alternatively, he could go down as another sad case in the

Padres' history with Tommy John pitchers; Robbie Erlin's successful 2018 return proved a welcome exception.

But, because of the rehab timetable, the Padres will have to wait to see what Richards becomes. Meanwhile, they remain in desperate need of rotation help for 2019. Noah Syndergaard has been the most prominent target dating to the July trade deadline, but the club is simultaneously exploring various other options.

There is local interest in Eovaldi, but the bidding for the postseason hero figures to be much steeper. The Padres see Richards as a worthwhile risk, the worst-case scenario being a waste of \$15.5 million. In this age of spin rates and medical advancements, there are riskier bets.

Garrett Richards agrees to two-year deal with Padres amid Tommy John recovery

10:35 AM PT
ESPN

Garrett Richards bid the [Los Angeles Angels](#) farewell on social media Thursday night, saying he's starting a new chapter with the [San Diego Padres](#).

Yahoo! Sports reports that Richards will receive a two-year contract that includes \$15 million guaranteed.

Richards, 30, is likely to spend the entire 2019 season recovering from Tommy John surgery, the latest setback in a career littered with them for the right-hander.

He made 16 starts to begin 2018 -- posting a 3.66 ERA, a 1.28 WHIP and a 2.56 strikeout-to-walk ratio -- but damaged his ulnar collateral ligament for a second time in July.

"A lot of guys come back from this surgery and they have long careers," Richards said in July. "Hopefully, this adds a few years on the end of my career. I'll be back. Everything will be fine. I'll get through this."

The Angels had high hopes for Richards when they drafted him with the 42nd overall pick out of Oklahoma in 2009. He finally cashed in on those expectations in 2014, using a lively, high-90s fastball and a devastating slider to post a 2.53 ERA with 164 strikeouts in his first 167 innings.

But Richards tore his left patellar tendon while covering first base at Fenway Park on Aug. 20, prematurely ending an upstart season. He stayed healthy in 2015 -- going 15-12 with a 3.65 ERA in 32 starts -- but compiled only 138 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings in the three seasons that followed.

Early in the 2016 season, Richards was diagnosed with a torn ligament in his pitching elbow and spent the rest of the year rehabbing through stem-cell therapy. He also missed five months in 2017 because of a nerve irritation in his right biceps.

Padres Add Former Angels Pitcher

Garrett Richards to join the Friars on a 2-year deal despite elbow surgery

By [Derek Togerson](#)

Published Nov 29, 2018 at 8:00 PM

The thought around the Padres has been they're aiming to be legitimate post-season contenders by 2020. Perhaps that's why Garrett Richards fits into their plans.

The right-handed starter agreed to a 2-year contract worth a reported \$15 million with San Diego on Thursday. The interesting part is that contract is guaranteed ... and Richards might not be able to pitch at all in 2019.

The right-hander spent the first eight years of his career with the Angels. In 2014 it looked like he was rounding into one of the top young starters in the American League. He won half his 26 starts with a 2.61 ERA and struck out more than three more batters than he walked.

But then the injuries started mounting. Richards suffered a torn tendon in his knee while covering first base at Fenway Park at the end of 2014. He was diagnosed with a torn elbow ligament in May of 2016 but instead of having Tommy John surgery then he tried to treat it with other means, including stem cells.

He started just 28 games between 2016 and 2018 before deciding to have the full elbow reconstruction surgery. He's not expected to be back on a Major League mound until 2020.

Despite the long rehabilitation the move does make sense for the Padres. They can stash him on the 60-day disabled list and not have to make another 40-man roster move. If things go well there is the possibility he could be ready to make a few starts by the end of 2019 and, even when not at 100%, he does have really good stuff.

According to numbers from the statistical website FanGraphs, Richards never saw a dip in his velocity even after the torn ligament. His fastball even ticked up slightly in 2018 to

just over 96 MPH. The Padres are hoping a fully healthy Richards can go back to his 2014 form just in time for a pennant push.