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Daily Transactions

Ex-catcher Gerald Laird gets managerial start in Tigers' organization

December 14, 2016

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

Gerald Laird will get his managerial career started in the Detroit Tigers' organization.

Laird, who played for the Tigers for three seasons, will manage Class A Connecticut, according to the team.

Laird, 37, played parts of 13 seasons in the majors. He retired after one game with the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2015.

Laird spent 2009-10 with the Tigers and returned in 2012. He will take over for another former Tigers catcher, Mike Rabelo, who was promoted to Class A West Michigan for 2017.

Many of the minor league field staff and roving personnel assignments already had been reported.

At Triple-A Toledo, Mike Rojas rejoins the organization as manager. Brian Harper, who played 16 seasons in the big leagues – including 1986 with the Tigers – will serve as hitting coach.

Rojas and Harper will replace Lloyd McClendon and Leon Durham, respectively. McClendon will serve as the Tigers' hitting coach and Durham assistant hitting coach in 2017.

The rest of the Mud Hens' coaching staff will return.

At Double-A Erie, Lance Parrish returns as manager, Willie Blair as pitching coach and Phil Clark hitting coach.

At Class A Lakeland, Andrew Graham embarks on his first season as manager of the Flying Tigers, promoted from West Michigan. Pitching coach Mark Johnson was promoted with Graham. New to the organization is Ramon Vazquez, who spent nine seasons in the big leagues. Vazquez will serve as Lakeland's hitting coach.

At West Michigan, Rabelo will be flanked by Jorge Cordova, who was the pitching coach at Lakeland in 2016, and longtime Mud Hen and former Tiger Mike Hessman, who was the hitting coach at Connecticut. Hessman is the all-time minor league home run leader.

Ex-Tiger Gerald Laird to manage Single-A Connecticut

December 14, 2016

By Chris McCosky/ The Detroit News

Detroit – The Detroit Tigers have hired former big-league catcher Gerald Laird to manage their Single-A short-season affiliate in Connecticut.

For Laird, whose 12-year career included two stints with the Tigers (2009-2010, 2012), it will be his first professional coaching job. He retired as a player in 2015.

Laird replaces another former Tigers catcher, Mike Rabelo, who takes over managerial duties for Single-A West Michigan. On Rabelo's staff will be pitching coach Jorge Cordova and hitting coach Mike Hessman.

The Tigers also made official the hiring of Mike Rojas as the manager at Triple-A Toledo, replacing Lloyd McClendon, who is now the Tigers' hitting coach. Rojas previously coached in the Tigers' system from 2004-2013, before becoming the Mariners bullpen coach in 2014-2015.

The Mud Hens hired 16-year MLB outfielder Brian Harper as their hitting coach. Harper had been coaching in the Cubs' organization the past six seasons.

The coaching staff at Double-A Erie returns intact – manager Lance Parrish, pitching coach Willie Blair and hitting coach Phil Clark.

There is a new staff at Single-A Lakeland, led by manager Andrew Graham and pitching coach Mark Johnson, who coached at West Michigan last season. Joining their staff is long-time big-league utility man Ramon Vazquez, who will serve as hitting coach.

TOLEDO

Mike Rojas, manager

Jeff Pico, pitching coach

Brian Harper, hitting coach

ERIE

Lance Parrish, manager

Willie Blair, pitching coach

Phil Clark, hitting coach

LAKELAND

Andrew Graham, manager

Mark Johnson, pitching coach

Ramon Vazquez, hitting coach

WEST MICHIGAN

Mike Rabelo, manager

Jorge Cordova, pitching coach

Mike Hessman, hitting coach

CONNECTICUT

Gerald Laird, manager

Ace Adams, pitching coach

Rafael Martinez, hitting coach

GULF COAST LEAGUE WEST

Rafael Gil, manager

Mike Alvarez, pitching coach

Francisco Contreras, hitting coach

GULF COAST LEAGUE EAST

Jesus Garces, manager

Carlos Bohorquez, pitching coach

Ramon Zapata, hitting coach

DOMINICAN SUMMER LEAGUE

Marco Yopez, manager

Jose Parra, pitching coach
Jose Ovalles, hitting coach

Former Tiger Gerald Laird now a manager in team's minor league system

December 14, 2016

By Evan Woodbery/ MLive.com

DETROIT -- Former Detroit Tigers catcher Gerald Laird will start his coaching career as manager of the organization's short-season Class A team in Connecticut.

The Tigers released their 2017 minor league staff assignments on Tuesday, which confirmed the previously reported hiring of former Major League catcher/outfielder Brian Harper as hitting coach at Triple-A Toledo. Another new addition to the organization, former Major League utility infielder Ramon Vazquez, will join the team as hitting coach in Lakeland (Advanced Class A).

Laird was with the Tigers in 2009, 2010 and 2012. He played for five teams in 13 seasons in the major leagues. Most minor league staffs are unchanged for 2017. The full listing of assignments is below.

K-Rod likely to stay put despite closer market

December 14, 2016

By Jason Beck/ MLB.com

DETROIT -- If there's a trade market for Francisco Rodriguez this offseason after the Tigers picked up his contract option, now might be the time. But it still looks like a long shot he will be dealt.

The top three free-agent closers are now off the board with Kenley Jansen headed back to the Dodgers, Aroldis Chapman to the Yankees and Mark Melancon to the Giants. Teams looking to shore up their bullpens now turn to other teams' closers, with White Sox fireman David Robertson atop the list and Tampa Bay's Alex Colome also reportedly drawing interest.

Robertson and Colome sit at opposite ends of baseball's financial spectrum -- Robertson with two years and \$25 million left on the free-agent contract he signed with the White Sox two years ago, and Colome not yet eligible for arbitration after a 37-save season for the Rays.

In the middle sits Rodriguez, set to make \$6 million in the final season of his contract. By the new industry standards, he's a bargain; even as the Tigers aim to push their payroll under the \$195 million luxury tax threshold next year, losing his salary isn't the preferred method to do it.

"Quite frankly, we have not made him available for trade," general manager Al Avila said during last week's Winter Meetings. "We picked up his option for numerous reasons. One is we want to be competitive. We want to still try to win, knowing we were not going to be in the market for [big-name free-agent closers], not even close. So he brought us the most affordable guy that saved a lot of games last year, a lot of games. He was one of the best."

Rodriguez will turn 35 next month. In most years, he would not be old by closer standards, not when many greats closed well through their 30s. By the standards of the available closers this offseason, however, he's above the norm.

More to the point, Rodriguez's velocity looms more than his age. No longer an overpowering pitcher, he thrives on his changeup, unlike many of the closers who were available this offseason. That said, Rodriguez's track record provides a consistency that requires less projection than, say, Colome, who had a dominant 37-save season in 2016 but virtually no closing experience before that.

Just as valuable, Rodriguez readily passes down that experience to younger pitchers. It's not a coincidence that Bruce Rondon rebounded from a turbulent 2015 to post a solid second half with Rodriguez in the same bullpen. Other Tigers relievers cited Rodriguez's advice as helping them through their first full campaign.

"He did a tremendous job with our young players," Avila said. "And we have another young player in [Joe] Jimenez coming, and [Adam] Ravenelle, not to mention the guys that are already on the team.

"Sometimes a lot of that stuff is baloney, but this was not baloney. This was real. This guy actually took his time to do this with these guys. And we got that info when he was with Milwaukee, and it's been true with us." For that reason, the Tigers would have no problem keeping Rodriguez into next year.

That begs the question: If the Tigers don't make other deals, save for possibly J.D. Martinez, and head into 2017 with most of the core intact from a team that took its postseason hopes to the final day of the '16 regular season, what would it take for them to trade Rodriguez and use an untested closer?

If the right situation came together, the Tigers would have to consider it, but not for a salary dump. More likely, that situation would be next summer, if at all.

Gerald Laird rejoins Tigers as minor-league manager

December 14, 2016

By Associated Press Staff/ Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) -- Former major-league catcher Gerald Laird is now a minor-league manager.

The Detroit Tigers announced Tuesday that Laird will manage at Class A Connecticut this coming season. The 37-year-old Laird last played in the major leagues in 2015, when he appeared in one game for the Arizona Diamondbacks. He played for the Tigers from 2009-10 and again in 2012.

Mike Rojas will manage at Triple-A Toledo for the Tigers, and Lance Parrish will again manage Double-A Erie.

Tigers, Cubs Talking Justin Wilson Trade?

December 14, 2016

By CBSDetroit.com Staff/ CBSDetroit.com

ANAHEIM, CA - MAY 31: Justin Wilson #38 of the Detroit Tigers pitches during a baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim at Angel Stadium of Anaheim on May 31, 2016 in Anaheim, California.

(Photo by Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images)

DETROIT (CBS Detroit) — Things have settled down lately as far as the MLB hot stove goes.

The Detroit Tigers didn't make any moves last week during the winter meetings after rumors of a fire sale swirled since the season's end. General manager Al Avila has since backed off the idea that there was a mandate for the team to shed payroll.

However, the Tigers may still be looking to send some players away this winter.

One player whose name has repeatedly popped up on the rumor mill is left-handed reliever Justin Wilson. MLB insider Jon Morosi tweeted Monday that the Tigers and the World Series Champion Chicago Cubs may be talking about a trade involving the 29-year-old pitcher.

The Tigers acquired Wilson last offseason from the New York Yankees in exchange for minor leaguers Luis Cessa and Chad Green. Wilson made 66 appearances out of the Tigers bullpen in 2016, recording a 4.14 ERA, 65 strikeouts and a 1.33 WHIP.

Wilson made just over \$1.5 million in 2016 and is now eligible for arbitration.

Tigers Announce Minor League Assignments For 2017

December 14, 2016

By CBSDetroit.com Staff/ CBSDetroit.com

DETROIT – The Detroit Tigers today announced the minor league field staff and roving personnel assignments for the 2017 season.

Dave Owen (Director, Player Development), Bill Dancy (Minor League Field Coordinator), Manny Crespo (Director, Latin American Player Development), Scott Fletcher (Infield Coordinator), Joe DePastino (Catching Coordinator), Bruce Fields (Hitting Coordinator), A.J. Sager (Pitching Coordinator), Jaime Garcia (Assistant Pitching Coordinator), Gene Roof (Outfield and Baserunning Coordinator), Brian Peterson (Performance Enhancement Instructor), Dr. George Carlo (Performance Coach), Sharon Lockwood (Coordinator of International Player Programs), Corey Tremble (Medical Coordinator), Steve Melendez (Minor League International Medical Coordinator) and Steve Chase (Strength and Conditioning Coordinator) will all return in their respective positions for the 2017 season. Josman Robles, who was the hitting coach for the GCL Tigers West last season, will be the Latin American Performance Coach in 2017.

For Triple A Toledo, Mike Rojas returns to the Tigers organization as the Mud Hens manager. Rojas, who was previously in the Tigers organization from 2004-13, served as Toledo's manager in 2007, leading the Mud Hens to an International League title. Rojas most recently worked as the Seattle Mariners bullpen coach in 2014-15. Brian Harper will be Toledo's hitting coach in 2017. Harper played 16 seasons in the majors, including one season with Detroit. Harper joins the Tigers organization after spending the previous six seasons in the Chicago Cubs organization, including the last four as hitting coach at Triple A Iowa. Pitching coach Jeff Pico, third base coach Basilio Cabrera, athletic trainer Chris McDonald and strength and conditioning coach Fred Murphy return to the Mud Hens staff in 2017.

At Double A Erie, Lance Parrish returns as the SeaWolves manager, while Willie Blair is back at the team's pitching coach and Phil Clark will again serve as Erie's hitting coach. Jeff Mathers, who was the strength and conditioning coach at Single A Lakeland in 2016, will be Erie's strength and conditioning coach in 2017, while T.J. Obergefell, who was the athletic trainer at Single A West Michigan last season, will be the athletic trainer for the SeaWolves this season.

Andrew Graham and Mark Johnson, who were the manager and pitching coach, respectively, at Single A West Michigan last season, will serve in those same roles for Single A Lakeland in 2017. Ramon Vazquez joins the Tigers organization in 2017 and will be the hitting coach for the Flying Tigers. Vazquez most recently worked in the Houston Astros organization since 2014 and spent the 2016 season as the manager at Single A Lancaster. Allan Williamson will serve as Lakeland's strength and conditioning coach and Chris Vick, who was the trainer at Single A Connecticut last season, will be the Flying Tigers' athletic trainer.

For Single A West Michigan, Mike Rabelo, who was the manager of Single A Connecticut in 2016, will be the Whitecaps manager in 2017. Jorge Cordova, who was the pitching coach at Single A Lakeland last season, and Mike Hessman, who was the hitting coach at Single A Connecticut in 2016, will also join Rabelo's staff at West Michigan. Matt Rosenhamer will serve as the strength and conditioning coach for West Michigan and Jason Schwartzman, who was the athletic trainer at Single A Lakeland last season, will be the Whitecaps athletic trainer in 2017.

Gerald Laird, who had a 12-year major league career, including three seasons with the Tigers, begins his professional coaching career as the manager at Single A Connecticut. Ace Adams returns to Connecticut's coaching staff in 2017 as the team's pitching coach, while Rafael Martinez, who was the manager for the GCL Tigers West in 2016, will be Connecticut's hitting coach. Edwin Ortiz will serve as Connecticut's strength and conditioning coach and Jarad Branski, who was the athletic trainer for the GCL Tigers West last season, will be the athletic trainer for Connecticut in 2017.

Rafael Gil will be the manager for the GCL (Gulf Coast League) Tigers West this season after spending one season as the GCL Tigers East manager. Mike Alvarez, who spent the previous 19 seasons in the Atlanta Braves organization, has been named pitching coach, while Francisco Contreras, who was a minor league player in the

Tigers organization from 2010-15, will be the team's hitting coach. Marcos Sierra-Solar has been tabbed as the GCL Tigers West strength coach and Manny Peña will be the team's athletic trainer.

Jesus Garces, who was the manager for the DSL (Dominican Summer League) Tigers last season, will be the manager of the GCL Tigers East team in 2017. Carlos Bohorquez, Ramon Zapata and Carmelo Jaime return as the team's pitching coach, hitting coach and infield coach, respectively. Luis Rodriguez, who was the athletic trainer for the GCL Tigers East in 2016, will serve as the GCL Tigers East strength and conditioning coach this season.

Marco Yopez has been tabbed as the manager for the DSL Tigers. Yopez previously served as the manager for Leones del Caracas in the Venezuelan Winter League. Pitching coach Jose Parra, hitting coach Jose Ovalles, infield coach Carlos Quintero, outfield coach Sandy Acevedo, coach Soilo Perdomo, athletic trainer Luis Reyes and strength and conditioning coaches Rafael Suero and Thomas Muñoz all return to the DSL Tigers coaching staff in 2017.

Former major league catcher Gerald Laird named Connecticut Tigers manager

December 14, 2016

By Norwich Bulletin Staff/ Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH - Catchers make good managers.

That's the baseball adage, and one the Detroit Tigers apparently believe is true.

Recently-retired MLB veteran Gerald Laird will take the helm of the Connecticut Tigers Class A short-season squad for the 2017 season, the franchise announced on Tuesday.

Laird becomes the third manager in Connecticut Tigers history and all have been former catchers.

Laird replaces Mike Rabelo, who managed Connecticut for the last three seasons and compiled a 118-107 record.

"He was great with us, both on and off the field," Tigers general manager Dave Schermerhorn said of Rabelo.

"He was here for five years (Rabelo served as hitting coach for two years with the Tigers) and that kind of stability is unheard of at this level."

Rabelo replaces Andrew Graham at Western Michigan. Graham spent three seasons as Connecticut manager and also was a former major league catcher. Graham was promoted to pilot Detroit's Single-A advanced squad in Lakeland, Fla.

Mike Hessman, who spent one year as hitting coach at Dodd Stadium, will follow Rabelo to Western Michigan.

"It was nice to see (Graham and Rabelo) promoted and have Laird come here. He brings 13 years of big league experience, a World Series ring and won an American League championship. We're looking forward to another great year," Schermerhorn said.

Laird was a second-round pick of the Oakland A's in 1998.

He made his major league debut in 2003 with Texas and stayed with the Rangers for six seasons before he was traded to Detroit following the 2008 season.

He stayed with the Tigers for two seasons before signing as a free agent with St. Louis in 2011. Laird backed up Yadier Molina during the Cardinals' run to a World Series crown.

He went on another World Series run with Detroit in 2012, but the Tigers were swept by the San Francisco Giants.

Laird finished off his playing career with two seasons in Atlanta and a brief appearance in Arizona in 2015.

He'll make his professional coaching debut in Norwich next season.

Veteran pitching coach Ace Adams will return to the Tigers with Rafael Martinez serving as the new hitting coach.

Martinez was the manager of the Dominican Summer League Tigers from 2011-2015 and the Gulf Coast League Tigers last season.

The Dominican Republic native is entering his 12th season as a coach in the Detroit Tigers organization.

Historic Negro League baseball field in Hamtramck to get new life

December 14, 2016

By Michael Betzold/ Motor City Muckraker

The Navin Field Grounds Crew is set to help save another historic local ball field – storied Hamtramck Stadium, where 17 Hall of Famers appeared in Negro League games in the 1930s.

“You can just feel the history at this place,” said Tom Derry, founder of the volunteer group that preserved the field at Michigan and Trumbull for six summers, gesturing to the wooden grandstand and grown-over diamond on the south side of Hamtramck.

Derry’s group plans to start next spring mowing and cleaning up the field where the Detroit Stars and Detroit Wolves once played, including home run legend Turkey Stearns.

This time around, city government will be working with him instead of trying to chase him away.

When Derry started reclaiming the abandoned former home of the Detroit Tigers in May 2010, he was threatened with arrest – and for six summers got no help from the city of Detroit. Earlier this year, the city sold the site to the Police Athletic League to build a youth stadium with artificial turf, while some officials denigrated the grounds crew’s efforts because the Tigers were once owned by notorious racist Walter Briggs. But the city of Hamtramck has an entirely different attitude. Kathy Angerer, city economic development director, was excited when Derry offered his help.

The Friends of Historic Hamtramck Stadium, headed by baseball historian and activist Gary Gillette, has worked on the project for years, getting historic designation for the site. It’s soon going to launch a nationwide fundraising campaign for the restoration.

Angerer envisions the site as a multi-purpose venue for baseball, soccer, and other sports that would include appropriate artistic and educational installations to honor its long history. The project will take time and money to do properly, she says, and in the meantime the city is trying to keep homeless people from camping out on the crumbling remains of the old grandstand.

The field in its heyday had 8,000 seats for fans and major-league playing dimensions. The site also includes a Little League diamond where the world champion Hamtramck team, led by Art “Pinky” Deras, played in 1959. The grounds crew can help in cleaning up brush and garbage and keeping the field mowed. Derry, ever the can-do optimist, is thrilled about the new challenge.

The site is still used for occasional soccer and softball games. In 2012, the city put in a concrete cricket pitch in the middle of the outfield, and the growing local Bangladeshi community uses it regularly to play. Angerer says she’d like to keep the field available for these and other uses, and if necessary the cricket pitch can be moved to a better location on site.

Hamtramck Stadium is a living museum of history – with railroad tracks running along the first-base side and working-class homes beyond the left-field fence. And Hamtramck, one of the most diverse communities in the entire region, understands its significance. It looks like it will be a triumphant return to work for the stalwarts of the Navin Field Grounds Crew.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2016

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
Boston Red Sox	Matt Domínguez	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Chicago White Sox	Caleb Gindl	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Colorado Rockies	Ian Desmond	Signed as Free Agent, (2017-2021; Opt 2022)(five-year contract)
Los Angeles Dodgers	Justin Turner	Signed as Free Agent, (2017-2020)(four-year contract)
Los Angeles Dodgers	Kenley Jansen	Signed as Free Agent, (2017-2021)(five-year contract)
Los Angeles Dodgers	Tyler Holt	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Miami Marlins	Stephen Fife	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Miami Marlins	Tyler Moore	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Milwaukee Brewers	Ryan Webb	Signed to a Minor League Contract
New York Yankees	Dónovan Solano	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Philadelphia Phillies	Michael Mariot	Outrighted to Minors
San Diego Padres	Hector Sanchez	Signed to a Minor League Contract
San Diego Padres	André Rienzo	Signed to a Minor League Contract
San Diego Padres	Jose Pirela	Signed to a Minor League Contract

[San Diego Padres](#) [Rafael Ortega](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

[San Diego Padres](#) [Zach Lee](#) Acquired Off Waivers From from Mariners, Seattle

[Texas Rangers](#) [Carlos Gomez](#) Signed as Free Agent, (2017)(one-year contract)

[Washington Nationals](#) [Jacob Turner](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

[Washington Nationals](#) [Tim Collins](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
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Atlanta Braves	John Danks	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Atlanta Braves	Williams Pérez	Cleared Waivers and Became a Free Agent
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Baltimore Orioles	Logan Ondrusek	Signed as Free Agent, (2017; Opt 2018)(one-year contract)
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Milwaukee Brewers	Iván De Jesús Jr.	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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New York Yankees	Rubén Tejada	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Philadelphia Phillies	Héctor Gómez	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Philadelphia Phillies	Pedro Florimón	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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St. Louis Cardinals	Jordan Schafer	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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St. Louis Cardinals	Eric Fryer	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Tampa Bay Rays	Wilson Ramos	Signed as Free Agent, (2017-2018)(two-year contract)
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[Washington Nationals](#) [Emmanuel Burriss](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

[Washington Nationals](#) [Michael Broadway](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2016

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
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[Houston Astros](#) [Reid Brignac](#) Signed to a Minor League Contract

[Miami Marlins](#) [A.J. Ellis](#) Signed as Free Agent, (2017)(one-year contract)

[Miami Marlins](#) [Jeff Locke](#) Signed as Free Agent, (2017)(one-year contract)

[Miami Marlins](#) [Dustin McGowan](#) Signed as Free Agent, (2017)(one-year contract)