



Padres Press Clips

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Hosmer's place in order not as important as place on base

Kevin Acee , SD Union Tribune, 2/22/18

General Manager A.J. Preller knew in the afterglow of Eric Hosmer signing with the Padres there was someone else giddy at the gift he was given.

“I think probably the only person more excited than me today is Andy,” Preller said in reference to manager Andy Green. “He gets to write his name in the lineup for the next eight years.”

As for what he will do to start off this first season with Hosmer, Green believes Hosmer’s purpose in the lineup is more important than his place.

“I haven’t spent time running through lineup construction,” Green said. “I think that’s one thing people get real excited about, and it has a minuscule difference. You see how guys perform in the middle of the order, how comfortable they are. We’ll expect to be a much better offensive ballclub with Eric Hosmer in there. That I’m confident about.”

Hosmer spent the vast majority of his time batting fourth over the past three seasons in Kansas City, though he also hit third a fair amount and second on occasion.

Regardless, Hosmer’s ability to get on base (.385 OBP in 2017) is a boon whether he is behind or in front of Wil Myers.

“The .385 on-base last year very clearly leads our team by a long shot,” Green said. “You create the culture where guys get on base, get on base consistently. He doesn’t strike out a lot, puts the ball in play. He hits in the middle of the order, stabilizes, takes pressure off of certain guys who may have had to carry a load otherwise. He does a lot.”

Hosmer and new third baseman Chase Headley(.352) would have ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in OBP had they been Padres starters last year. (Jose Pirela was the top Padre at .347.)

The average 2017 OBP of the other six projected starters this season was .305. The overall team OBP in '17 was an MLB-worst .299.

At a function Tuesday afternoon, Green spent time talking with Chicago Cubs GM Jed Hoyer.

“He talked about the concept in Chicago,” Green said. “You exchange one guy with a .260 on-base for a guy with a .385 on-base, you exchange another guy with a .280 on-base for a .350 on base. There are only eight guys you really need to get on base. That starts to radically alter the lineup and the way it functions. You don’t do it eight at a time. You do it piece by piece and by raising awareness during camp and preaching that message to them. They see we value that by who we’ve gone after.”

Padres believe Eric Hosmer's arrival will be big for Wil Myers

Kevin Acee, SD Union Tribune, 2/21/18

Wil Myers readily embraced the role of team leader last season. It was something he didn't seek but was thrust upon him by virtue of a big contract signed in January and his relative seniority among a young team's position players.

No one can truly know the effects of shouldering the expectations Myers so badly wanted to fulfill and also the extra work he put in trying to mentor and lead by example.

But the results on the field were not up to what Myers or the Padres anticipated.

Myers led the team with 30 home runs and 20 stolen bases. But his .243 average and .328 on-base percentage were his lowest in three seasons with the Padres, and those numbers were .200 and .311 over a 99-game stretch from May 5 through Sept. 1.

"I don't feel like I felt any pressure," Myers said. "I just did not have a very good year last year."

Still, he appreciates what the arrival of Hosmer will do. And others around the organization and inside the clubhouse, while impressed by Myers' willingness to take on whatever the team asks of him, believe Myers is due for a big year playing within the new dynamic.

Certainly, protection in the lineup should help. But also, Hosmer's experience in two World Series (one ring) and embracing of the leadership role will allow Myers to take a step back, leading by example while being more attuned to his own game.

"There's something to that," Myers said. "I feel like as a competitor and a professional athlete you still want as much pressure or as much on the line as possible. But any time someone else can help you out with that is a bonus. ... Anytime you can have a little less pressure on you, it's nice.

"The other thing is, I can learn a lot from him. He's a guy who's played in a lot of very big games, he's played deep into the postseason. I think everybody in here can learn from him."

Matt Strahm has Padres intrigued, wondering where he fits

Kevin Acee , SD Union Tribune, 2/21/18

Matt Strahm is 6-foot-3 and about as thick as a flagpole.

His arm works like a slingshot and his left leg whips around at the end of his delivery. His fastball gets up in the zone quick, and his slider darts like it has been yanked by a magnet.

Padres manager Andy Green has been measured in his assessment of pitchers early in spring training, but he wasn't so reserved when talking about Strahm.

"I've thought he looks great," Green said. "He's throwing the ball really well. It's coming out hot. ... I'm very excited about him. He could pitch in the rotation or could be very formidable out of the bullpen."

And that was before the left-hander dazzled in a live batting practice session here Wednesday.

Strahm was acquired last July in a trade that sent Trevor Cahill, Ryan Buchter and Brandon Maurer to Kansas City and also rid the Royals of Travis Wood. The Padres only had to consume a portion of the approximately \$8 million left on Wood's deal, with the Royals covering the bulk.

And found among the money was Strahm, who was actually on crutches following knee surgery when he arrived in San Diego. He has been throwing all camp and was cleared Tuesday for full activity.

The Padres will stretch him out the next few weeks and continue the internal debate over where he fits.

"That's been the thing for me for three spring trainings, coming in not knowing my role," Strahm said. "It's OK. I make the most of it. ... I can do either. I love the adrenaline rush of the bullpen phone ringing. But I like the routine of starting."

Royals manager Ned Yost talked this week about the 26-year-old pitcher he believes has upside as a reliever, with a plus breaking ball and a fastball that routinely reaches mid- to upper-90s.

“He’s got tremendous stuff,” Yost said. “... I like him in the pen. They may like him as a starter. He’s got good enough stuff.”

Prospects throw

Two of the Padres’ top three pitching prospects threw their first bullpen of the spring.

Left-handers MacKenzie Gore, the team’s No.2 overall prospect, and Adrian Morejon (No. 5), threw with essentially the entire personnel department and pitching coach Darren Balsley watching. Gore was particularly sharp, hitting virtually every spot.

Veterans all-in as mentors during Padres' youth movement

Jeff Sanders, SD Union Tribune, 2/21/18

A riding lawn mower had already descended upon the outfield grass on Field 3. The coaches had departed for the clubhouse more than a half-hour earlier. If Freddy Galvis noticed the dozen or so autograph-seekers drawn to the chain-link fencing along the third-base line, he didn't let on.

He was entirely engaged.

Pivots. Footwork. Swing paths.

Whatever his audience — young Carlos Asuaje and Luis Urias — wanted was fair game for discussion even on Galvis' second day in Padrescamp.

"It started with one question," Asuaje said, "and one thing led to another and another and another."

It's the sort of investment that the Padres were banking on when they swapped a minor league pitching prospect for the 28-year-old Galvis, the new anchor in the middle of the infield and one of several veterans in camp who are eager to pass on knowledge that could very well extend past their stays in San Diego.

In the last year of his contract, Galvis could become a free agent as soon as November. The same goes for returning third baseman Chase Headley, while catcher A.J. Ellis and pitchers Tyson Ross and Chris Young are in camp on minor league deals. While Job No. 1 for that group is to prepare for 2018, all have a locker in the Padres' spring training complex because of a willingness to share what they've learned throughout their ascents to the majors.

"The No. 1 priority is to make the club," Padres manager Andy Green said. "Play well. Perform. Do what you have to do to get yourself ready. On top of that, let me throw something else on your plate because I think you're this type of individual. Go out there, and when you see stuff, be willing to help those guys.

"All of those guys are wired that way."

Green has been inclined to invite those sorts of veterans since he was hired before the start of the 2016 season.

This year's first base coach, Skip Schumaker, joined the Padres on a minor league deal during Green's first spring, retired early that camp and remained in the organization as a front office assistant available to position players, from Fort Wayne all the way to San Diego. Green had an eye on that sort of impact when Clayton Richard re-joined the Padres later that summer and those type of players have become a point of emphasis when determining which veterans to add to a big league camp that's increasingly youthful with each passing season.

It's not all about the players, either.

Insights from someone as well-traveled as Young — who is 38 and attempting a 14th season in the majors — is as valuable to the coaching staff as it is to nearly a dozen pitching prospects in big league camp this spring for the first time.

"I was talking to Chris Young over the phone this offseason," Green recalled. "... I know every manager tells you the door is open. I'm going to grab you and pull you in to pull out of you what you think we should do different. He's game for those things and appreciative of that level of respect and deference that he's earned for what he's done in his career."

Green added: "We're always of the mindset that what we do (as an organization) could get better. If we don't model that as a coaching staff, how can you ask your players to get 1 percent better every day if you yourself say, 'This is the way we do things. Sorry Chris Young, I'm not going to listen to your input?'"

"Then you don't get better."

With that mindset underlining much of the organization's blueprinting, the front office jumped at the opportunity to send pitching prospects Eric Lauer and Joey Lucchesi to Lafayette, Ind., this offseason when Richard extended an open-ended invitation upon signing his extension last September.

That trip was about two young left-handers seeing how an established veteran prepares for the season. Witnessing the 36-year-old Ellis' first-guy-in, last-guy-out approach to his battle for a

backup job is also as invaluable to the youngsters in camp as anything the veteran catcher might tell a young hurler about the way Clayton Kershaw or Zack Greinke attacked a hitter.

Like Richard, Ellis is all about leading by example, too. The conversations in between the work start by making himself an available persona in a crowded clubhouse.

“Be a sounding board; just partner with them,” Ellis said. “It’s not about anything I know. I don’t have any secret formulas or any secret messages to deliver. It’s kind of being someone they can communicate with them on a daily basis.”

Headley, now 33, was a similar beneficiary while sharing a clubhouse with Adrian Gonzalez, Brian Giles and David Eckstein — “Eckstein, more than anybody else,” he said — early in his first stint in San Diego. After playing in two postseasons over the last four years in New York, Headley’s willingness to pay forward the things he’s learned in 11 big league seasons was a prominent topic during a four-hour dinner with Green this offseason.

As far as a mentor figure, Headley is all in.

“Hopefully, some experiences, some things I’ve learned will be applicable to those guys,” Headley said. “Hopefully I can perform well, but there’s some things I can pass on because I was at their stage not too long ago.

“As you grow, you learn things and hopefully you’re able to pass those along.”

The Padres’ extensive homework tells them to expect the same things from Eric Hosmer, an investment that could cost as much as \$144 million if the 28-year-old first baseman remains in San Diego for the duration of his eight-year contract.

Galvis’ situation is quite different.

He could bolt as soon as next winter. If he opts to re-sign, he could be moved off shortstop to accommodate any of the young players he’s taken under his wing early in camp.

None of it keeps Galvis from pulling 22-year-old Javier Guerra into the video room hours after arriving in camp last week. Or working overtime with Asuaje and Urias on his second day in Peoria. Or committing his expertise to top prospect Fernando Tatis Jr.’s development this spring

the way Chase Utley, Jimmy Rollins and Ryan Howard helped bring Galvis along in Philadelphia all those years ago.

It's the only way he knows how to be.

“You put your team first,” Galvis said. “As soon as you put your team first, everything comes easier for everybody. You have to know your teammates. You have to work with those guys. You have to try to make it easier and that's what I'm trying to do now, trying to know my teammates and talk to those guys.

Odds-maker still doesn't like Padres in 2018

Jeff Sanders, SD Union Tribune, 2/21/18

Yes, the Padres have Eric Hosmer in the fold. No, oddsmakers don't seem to care too much at all. He is, after all, just one man in a grand scheme that extends well beyond 2018.

Bovada's post-Hosmer-signing odds say the Padres are 28-to-1 longshots to win the NL West, a division that includes three playoff teams from 2017 and a franchise that has won three World Series since 2010. Only the Marlins(50-to-1) and Tigers (28-to-1) have as long or longer odds to win their respective division in 2018.

The Padres' odds to win the NL pennant, most likely as a wild-card entrant into the postseason, are even longer, albeit not as desperate as other teams'.

The Padres and Braves in the National League and White Sox, Royals and Athletics in the American League are all 75-to-1 underdogs to forge a path to the World Series. The odds for the Marlins (250-to-1), Tigers (150-to-1) and Reds (100-to-1) to win a pennant are even longer.

Here's a look at all of Bovada's latest odds:

NL West - Odds to Win

- Los Angeles Dodgers | 1/2
- Arizona Diamondbacks | 5/1
- San Francisco Giants | 11/2
- Colorado Rockies | 6/1
- San Diego Padres | 28/1

NL Central - Odds to Win

- Chicago Cubs | 4/7
- St. Louis Cardinals | 15/4
- Milwaukee Brewers | 4/1
- Pittsburgh Pirates | 16/1

- Cincinnati Reds | 25/1

NL East - Odds to Win

- Washington Nationals | 1/2
- New York Mets | 5/2
- Philadelphia Phillies | 10/1
- Atlanta Braves | 12/1
- Miami Marlins | 50/1

AL East - Odds to Win

- New York Yankees | 1/1
- Boston Red Sox | 7/4
- Toronto Blue Jays | 17/4
- Baltimore Orioles | 12/1
- Tampa Bay Rays | 12/1

AL Central - Odds to Win

- Cleveland Indians | 1/5
- Minnesota Twins | 5/1
- Kansas City Royals | 12/1
- Chicago White Sox | 25/1
- Detroit Tigers | 28/1

AL West - Odds to Win

- Houston Astros | 1/3
- Los Angeles Angels | 19/4
- Seattle Mariners | 7/1
- Texas Rangers | 14/1
- Oakland Athletics | 20/1

2018 NL Pennant - Odds to Win

- Los Angeles Dodgers | 9/4
- Washington Nationals | 7/2
- Chicago Cubs | 15/4
- St. Louis Cardinals | 9/1
- San Francisco Giants | 10/1
- Arizona Diamondbacks | 12/1
- New York Mets | 12/1
- Milwaukee Brewers | 16/1
- Colorado Rockies | 18/1
- Pittsburgh Pirates | 40/1
- Philadelphia Phillies | 50/1
- Atlanta Braves | 75/1
- San Diego Padres | 75/1
- Cincinnati Reds | 100/1
- Miami Marlins | 250/1

2018 AL Pennant - Odds to Win

- Houston Astros | 11/4
- New York Yankees | 11/4
- Cleveland Indians | 13/4
- Boston Red Sox | 6/1
- Los Angeles Angels | 14/1
- Minnesota Twins | 18/1
- Seattle Mariners | 18/1
- Toronto Blue Jays | 20/1
- Baltimore Orioles | 40/1
- Tampa Bay Rays | 40/1
- Texas Rangers | 45/1
- Chicago White Sox | 75/1
- Kansas City Royals | 75/1
- Oakland Athletics | 75/1

- Detroit Tigers | 150/1

Padres roster review: Rowan Wick

Jeff Sanders, SD Union Tribune, 2/22/18

ROWAN WICK

- **Position:** Right-handed pitcher
- **2018 Opening Day age:** 25
- **Bats/throws:** L/R
- **Height/weight:** 6-foot-3 / 220 pounds
- **Acquired:** Off waivers from the Cardinals in February 2018
- **Contract status:** Added to the 40-man roster in February; awaiting MLB debut
- **Key stats (R/AA/AAA):** 2-1, 3.19 ERA, 6 saves, 42 Ks, 19 BBs, 1.20 WHIP, .208 opponent avg., 42 1/3 innings (34 games)

STAT TO NOTE

- **10.2** – Strikeouts per nine innings in 88 2/3 innings since transitioning from a power-hitting outfielder to a power reliever.

TRENDING

- **Idle** – A year after the Cardinals selected him in the ninth round of Cypress College (2012), Wick lived up to his billing as a potential power-hitting outfielder by hitting 10 homers in 56 games in rookie ball. He hit 20 homers in 74 games the following season but began his conversion to the mound in 2015 after posting a .559 OPS in 33 games in A-ball. Wick struck out 57 and held opposing hitters to a .186 batting average in his first full year on the mound (2.44 ERA, 44 1/3 IP). The Padres had interest Wick as a Rule 5 pick before the 2017 season and finally claimed him last week after he advanced as high as the Triple-A Pacific Coast League last year. Wick struggled in 16 2/3 innings at Triple-A Memphis, but still intrigues as a power arm out of a bullpen if he realizes his potential.

2018 OUTLOOK

- Third-year manager **Andy Green** offered the following scouting report up Wick joining the organization: “It's a live arm. He can spin a curveball. He's got a tight little slider. It's just a matter of getting this guy innings. ... He was up to 98 on the video I was watching (recently).” Wick is out of options, so he'll have to may some serious hay in a wide-open competition for bullpen spots behind **Brad Hand, Craig Stammen, Kirby Yates** and **Kazuhisa Makita**.

PADRES POWER RANKINGS

(Currently 40 players on 40-man roster)

1. Wil Myers
2. Brad Hand
3. Manuel Margot
4. Austin Hedges
5. Chase Headley
6. Freddy Galvis
7. Jose Pirela
8. Dinelson Lamet
9. Hunter Renfroe
10. Cory Spangenberg
11. Luis Perdomo
12. Clayton Richard
13. Bryan Mitchell
14. Carlos Asuaje
15. Franchy Cordero
16. Kirby Yates
17. Travis Jankowski
18. Alex Dickerson
19. Carter Capps
20. Colin Rea

21. Robbie Erlin
22. Matt Strahm
23. Craig Stammen
24. Matt Szczur
25. Kyle McGrath
26. Walker Lockett
27. Colten Brewer
28. Kazuhisa Makita
29. Christian Villanueva
30. Buddy Baumann
31. Brad Wieck
32. Jose Castillo
33. Phil Maton
34. Jordan Lyles
35. Rowan Wick
36. Javier Guerra
37. Miguel Diaz
38. Luis Torrens
39. Allen Cordoba

Removed from roster: Jabari Blash (trade), Rocky Gale (DFA'd), Jose Torres (restricted list).

Myers, Hosmer reunited in Padres camp

AJ Cassavell, MLB.com, 2/21/18

PEORIA, Ariz. -- For three weeks in the middle of the 2010 season, **Wil Myers** got a brief glimpse into his future. Then a catcher in the Royals' organization, Myers had recently been promoted to Class A Advanced Wilmington. There, he shared the middle of the batting order with a fellow top prospect by the name of **Eric Hosmer**.

At the time, Myers figured he'd one day anchor a lineup with Hosmer in the Majors. The two even posed for a photo shoot that was meant to depict the future of the Royals' offense.

"I definitely envisioned this back then," Myers said. "But I couldn't have envisioned it with San Diego."

Sure enough, they both made their way to the Padres, Myers via trade and Hosmer with an eight-year, \$144 million deal that was finalized Monday. The duo first met during instructional ball in 2009. In the Royals' system, their paths only crossed briefly during the 2010 season in Wilmington, before Myers was shipped to Tampa Bay.

Both Hosmer and Myers were in San Diego for the 2016 All-Star Game, though Myers hasn't managed to regain his All-Star form since. He also hasn't had much protection since the departure of **Matt Kemp** around the same time.

And while Myers doesn't necessarily buy into lineup protection in the traditional sense, he's quick to note that Hosmer's arrival eases the burden on the rest of the offense.

"Any time you add good hitters around you, it's going to make you better, no matter who you are," Myers said. "Whether you're hitting eighth or third or second, having Hosmer is going to help."

Padres manager Andy Green took the same stance.

"Having a guy that's used to hitting in the middle of the order relaxes everybody else," Green said. "We're excited about putting him in there, and were excited about watching everybody else reap the dividend of having him in the lineup." 20th, 2018

On Wednesday, Hosmer took batting practice on two of Peoria's backfields. (He shared the cage with **Chase Headley** and **Freddy Galvis**, forming a trio of starting infielders who enter camp as veteran newcomers on a young Padres roster.)

Myers, meanwhile, is no longer part of that infield group. He has since moved from first base to the outfield to accommodate Hosmer's arrival. In a way, that position switch is symbolic.

Last year, Myers signed a then-franchise-record \$83 million contract, keeping him on board through at least 2022. When Hosmer put pen to paper, he displaced Myers -- both at first base and as the recipient of the largest deal ever for a Padre. (With an opt-out structured into Hosmer's contract, he, too, is in San Diego through at least '22.)

Green has yet to ponder how he'll stack Myers and Hosmer in the batting order. Presumably, they'll form a lefty-righty combo somewhere in the middle.

In theory, Myers' speed makes him a candidate for the No. 2 spot, ahead of Hosmer at No. 3. Then again, the Padres already have a few speed threats for the top of the order, and Myers would probably need to boost his on-base percentage to justify hitting second. Perhaps Hosmer could hit third and Myers fourth -- as they did for that brief stint in Wilmington eight years ago.

In any case, Hosmer and Myers appear destined to anchor the Padres' lineup for the foreseeable future.

"To have another guy who's here for the long haul is exciting," Myers said. "The more we grow together and learn together, I think the better we'll become."

Hand prepared for unconventional closer role

AJ Cassavell, MLB.com, 2/21/18

PEORIA, Ariz. -- Brad Hand is going to be the Padres' closer this season -- except when he isn't.

The All-Star lefty signed a three-year contract extension during the offseason, and, on most nights, it's safe to expect he'll be saved for the ninth inning. But that's not a hard-and-fast rule, in the eyes of manager Andy Green.

"We'll find interesting ways to utilize him that maximize our abilities to win games," Green said. "He'll close some games, for sure. But how that all plays out, I don't have that mapped out right now."

That's just fine with Hand, who was used mostly in a setup capacity last year until the Padres sent Brandon Maurer to Kansas City at the Trade Deadline.

"Sometimes the ninth inning is talked about just because it ends the game," Hand said. "But there might be other situations -- and I think you're starting to see it more in baseball -- where the closer role is interchangeable. Other guys can come in and do the job, if you have to use [the closer] in an earlier situation."

Green hypothesized one of those situations arising in a game against the Dodgers.

"I'd hate to be staring down [left-handed hitters] Cody Bellinger and Corey Seager in the eighth inning and say, 'I'm going to hold onto Brad until the ninth,'" Green said. "It just doesn't make a whole lot of sense. We'll move him around as best fits us, and he doesn't care. He's good with anything."

Over the past two seasons, Hand has cemented himself as one of the game's top relievers. He's posted a 2.56 ERA since joining the Padres in April 2016. During that time, he's posted consecutive 100-strikeout seasons, and he's appeared in more games than anyone, minus Addison Reed. During the offseason, Hand re-upped with the Padres through 2020 for \$19.75 million, with a team option for '21. He enters this season secure financially and secure in his place in the Padres' bullpen -- even if his job as closer isn't entirely traditional.

"It's the same as every year," Hand said. "You get ready for the season, no matter what your role is. You've got to be ready to compete, ready to win ballgames, whether you're pitching the fifth inning or the ninth inning."

Padres finalizing pitching plans for opener

Kyle Lloyd, Brett Kennedy and Miguel Diaz will all pitch in Friday's Cactus League opener against the Mariners at the Peoria Sports Complex, though Green did not confirm a starter.

All three are expected to begin the year in the Minors. Diaz spent last season in the Major League bullpen as a Rule 5 Draft pick, but he'll be a starting pitcher to open this season. In that sense, the

club feels he could use some experience in the Minors, and he likely won't be a part of an already-crowded rotation battle.

Quotable

Green had high praise for Tyson Ross and Chris Young, noting the impact the veteran right-handers can make on a young group of pitchers this spring:

"Both of them are the type of pitchers that we'd love to build in our farm system with the way they're wired, the way they compete," Green said. "They're great examples for our guys. Their workouts are religious to them. They don't miss anything, they take care of their bodies.

"That's how you pitch deep into your 30s. If you don't do those things, your career usually ends around 30 years old. Those guys are great examples to the young guys in camp, and those two guys have legitimate opportunities to be in our rotation. We'll watch that play out."

Padres' financial rebuild 'in good shape' after Eric Hosmer signing

By Dennis Lin *Athletic*, 2/21/18 

PEORIA, Ariz. — Hastiness cost the Padres in 2015, a season that featured several notable acquisitions, 88 losses and, according to Ron Fowler, little in the way of profit. Three years later, the consequences of that hastiness continue to be felt.

Due to various expenses, the Padres failed to break even in each of the last two years, Fowler, the team's executive chairman, told *The Athletic*. To fund their course correction, they required a \$20 million capital call in 2016 and a \$15 million capital call in 2017. That money helped cover the \$78 million dropped on international prospects and overage taxes during the 2016-17 signing period.

"I think '15 was about break-even, maybe 1 percent more than that," Fowler said, adding, "You don't have capital calls when you're making money."

"Our numbers are our numbers. Our numbers are audited by Ernst and Young. I basically learned finance the hard way when I started my businesses. I realized that you can grow too fast, so I really focus on the numbers."

Fowler is hoping to break even in 2018 following a commitment the front office weighed for months. The Padres on Tuesday signed Eric Hosmer to an eight-year, \$144 million contract, nearly doubling their previous record in free agency. Disney's recent purchase of BAMTech, Major League Baseball's video streaming company, arrived at a convenient time; each club received roughly \$50 million as a result of the sale.

"We're going to spend a good portion of that," Fowler said, "because we've got \$20 million in payroll not here and we've got another \$20 million we just added."

The owner's appraisal differs starkly from numbers circulated in public. *Forbes* estimated the Padres' operating income at \$35 million in 2015, \$32.9 million in 2016 and \$22.8 million in 2017. Fowler said he was not surprised by *Forbes*' latest franchise valuation of \$1.125 billion — Fowler and general partner Peter Seidler were part of a group that purchased the team for approximately \$800 million in 2012 — but he dismissed the notion of recent profitability.

"They're huge disparities," Fowler said. "I have no idea where they're coming from. ... What I think they fail to understand is the amount of money that goes into non-major league activities. That's the only thing I can guess."

Fowler mentioned costs associated with player development as an example. He said the Padres will spend about \$18 million this year on Petco Park, where a new video board is going up in right field. The BAMTech payment will help the club retire some debt.

The situation is far from dire, however.

Hosmer's signing — he will receive \$20 million in 2018, plus a \$5 million signing bonus payable within 30 days — raises the Padres' projected payroll to more than \$90 million, but that still ranks among the bottom third of the league. The total includes \$20 million owed to three players no longer on the team — James Shields, Héctor Olivera and Jedd Gyorko.

After 2020, the Padres will cease carrying dead money. Attendance and sponsorship revenue are expected to increase. The latest collective bargaining agreement caps San Diego's international spending at \$5.25 million or \$5.75 million per signing period.

Hosmer will continue to make \$20 million annually through 2022, after which he can opt out of his contract. If he chooses to stay, his salary for 2023-25 will drop to \$13 million.

"I'm hoping we break even this year," Fowler said. "If we don't, we've still got dry powder and a capital call we can make. So we're in good shape. We looked at this contract in terms of what made sense for us."

After examining the 2017-18 free-agent class and upcoming crops, the Padres believed Hosmer was a worthy investment, factoring in age, talent, leadership ability and cost. They also determined that other fits were not as obvious. That does not preclude another significant free-agent deal before 2019 or 2020.

"We still have some capital calls we can make if we decided somebody was the appropriate person, but we feel like (Hosmer's signing) gives us a jump on where we hope to be next year," Fowler said. "And next year what we really hope to have is some of these younger guys closer, up for a portion of the season."

"I think the thing we need more than anything else is pitching. We're going to have these young pitchers up. We're hoping they're going to do it."

The strength of the Padres' farm system does appear to be in its number and quality of arms. At some point, the organization will begin trading from its prospect depth to acquire proven players. A shrewd exchange or two would help justify the millions of dollars that have been spent below the major league level.

Eric Hosmer ready for leadership role with Padres, will wear No. 30 to honor Yordano Ventura

Jerry Crasnick, ESPN, 2/20/18

Hosmer, 28, landed the biggest guaranteed payout of the MLB offseason when he agreed to an eight-year, \$144 million deal with San Diego on Saturday. The contract, which includes a fifth-year opt-out, easily surpasses the four-year, \$75 million deal for pitcher James Shields that previously set the standard for a Padres free agent.

Hosmer said he is ready to embrace a leadership role for the Padres, who haven't been to the playoffs since 2006 or logged a winning record since 2010 and have lost the only two World Series appearances since their inception in 1969. He hopes to convey some of the winning mindset that he developed as a pivotal member of Kansas City's 2015 championship club.

"Every player's goal is to ultimately win a world championship," Hosmer said. "To be able to do that in Kansas City was amazing. To have that taste and understand what it means to a city and how much joy and excitement it brings to the people out there, it's an experience I can sit here and talk about all day. It's something that drives you as a player -- to try to bring back as many as you can.

"You see how San Diego as a city is begging for a sports team to go in there and bring some excitement and some energy. I saw the direction the organization was going, and I saw the people at the top of the mountain who were leading the organization, and I bought into what they're trying to do here."

Hosmer wore No. 35 in Kansas City, but the Padres retired that jersey number in 1997 in honor of pitcher Randy Jones. He will wear No. 30 in San Diego as a tribute to his former Royals teammate Yordano Ventura, who died in a car crash in the Dominican Republic last year. Third-base coach Glenn Hoffman agreed to relinquish the number so Hosmer could have it.

"I told Glenn it would mean a lot to me if I could wear No. 30 and continue Yordano's legacy," Hosmer said. "Not only Yordano, but all those guys in Kansas City. We all shared good moments with him and obviously shared a really tough moment in his passing. It really meant a lot to me. Hoff was more than open to let me carry on that number. I told him I'll wear it with pride each and every day."

Hosmer described the free-agency process as "grueling." He was briefly linked to the Boston Red Sox in November before they signed first baseman Mitch Moreland to a two-year deal. Amid speculation that the Royals might make a late play to keep him, Hosmer signed with the Padres three days before the team's first full-squad workout.

Hosmer's arrival will prompt first baseman Wil Myers to shift to the outfield, where he played previously in 2015. The Padres signed Myers to a six-year, \$83 million contract extension last January, but co-owner Ron Fowler said Myers never embraced the role of "franchise face" and should be more in his comfort zone with Hosmer in the fold.

"We're hoping Eric is that guy," Fowler said. "Myers has a lot of great qualities, but he frankly does not want to be the leader in the clubhouse. That's just not in his DNA. If there was a player who was more positive about us going after Eric than Myers, I don't know who it would be.

"Eric will protect him in the lineup, first of all. And he'll take more of a leadership position, which is more natural for him in the clubhouse than it was for Myers."

Hosmer's eight-year deal was an outlier in a difficult free-agent market. Milwaukee outfielder Lorenzo Cain, Boston slugger J.D. Martinez and Chicago Cubs pitcher Yu Darvish are the only other free agents who have signed contracts of five years or longer this offseason. The Padres are looking to Hosmer to provide guidance for a pending wave of young talent. ESPN's Keith Law recently ranked San Diego's farm system as third-best in the game behind those of the Atlanta Braves and New York Yankees, although the bulk of the organization's talent is at the lower levels of the minors.

"The organization is a volcano of hot talent lava," said Scott Boras, Hosmer's agent. "To turn that lava into major league rock is a hard thing to do. Eric Hosmer went through that in Kansas City. When you can have a young, veteran champion, I think your chances of guiding lava into rocks is pretty good."

Hosmer has generated some debate in the analytics community. His defensive metrics are subpar, even though scouts speak positively about his skills around the first-base bag. He also has less than prototypical home run power at first base, and his 55.6 percent ground-ball rate in 2017 was the fourth highest among MLB hitters.

But the Padres were impressed enough by his range of attributes to commit to him through 2022 - and 2025 if he declines his opt out.

"We're not looking for Eric to come in here and be Knute Rockne and deliver speeches from day one," general manager A.J. Preller said. "It's the things he shows daily: the passion for the game, the love for the game, the competitiveness, the intellect, the curious mind, wanting to get better. Those are the things that kept coming back from guys who played with him or against him. That's why we were so convinced that he was the guy for us at this time."

Hosmer has flourished in his limited exposure to Petco Park, logging a .441/.474/.765 slash line in 38 career at-bats at San Diego's home park. He played at Petco in the 2016 All-Star Game and the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

"I think Petco Park likes me," Hosmer said. "Every time I go there, it seems to work out for me.

"Before day games, you wake up and the weather is gorgeous outside and it makes you want to be out there. The city speaks for itself. The ballpark speaks for itself. I couldn't think of a better place to go out and play baseball every day."

Padres Expect to Contend in 2018

Derek Togerson, NBC7, 2/21/18

The Padres are, on paper, a better team than they were a year ago. But baseball games are not played on paper ... they're played on calculators.

At least that's what a large portion of the Sabermetric community will tell you and the Padres grade out to be a team that sits in the low-to-mid-70 win range. But don't tell that to the guys in the clubhouse.

The 2018 San Diego Padres expect to surprise a whole lot of people.

"We can be one of the best teams in baseball, for sure," said newly-acquired shortstop Freddy Galvis. "That's out mindset. We're going to try to be one of the best teams in baseball."

Keep in mind this is a club that won 71 games last year and still has a boatload of question marks in its starting rotation. The Friars have a farm system that has cultivated some of the best young talent in the game but the first wave of prospects is not supposed to be ready for a year or two so why put the expectations this high?

"I think we carry the same level of expectation we've always carried," said Padres Manager Andy Green. "You go into Spring Training with the expectation you're going to push to be a playoff-contending team. Who cares what anybody else says or what the buzz is?"

Not caring about the buzz is one thing. Being able to overcome the discrepancy in talent level is another. The Padres don't have as many thoroughbreds as the Dodgers or the Nationals or the Cubs do. Point that out and they give a collective "So what?"

"The way that I look at it is we're coming to make the playoffs and if we don't make the playoffs then it's a failure," said 3rd baseman Chase Headley, who is back for his second stint in San Diego after an off-season trade with the Yankees. "I think that's got to be the mentality."

Headley and the Yanks came one win short of a World Series appearance last year. Chase knows the Padres are not on the same level as New York right now but says that's no reason to lower expectations.

“It’s never a prudent attitude to just say we’re happy to be here and we’re trying to get better,” said Headley. “No. We’re trying to compete and win every single day and if we do that we’ll have a chance to be in the playoffs.”

Now this sounds a lot like the wistful hope springs eternal in Spring Training optimism every team has but few teams have the ability to make a reality. But, at least right now, this is the attitude of the San Diego clubhouse, and they’re buying into it.

“Why not?” asks relief pitcher Kirby Yates. “Listen I think we already knew last year we were going in the right direction and I think we’re very comfortable with what’s in this clubhouse. We understand what we need to do and it’s just about going out there and doing it.”

Competing in 2018 would put this talented but young club well ahead of its projected window of contention so if the very likely reality of this season sets in and they don’t leapfrog the three returning playoff teams in the National League West this fast don’t lose faith.

“If we don’t do it this year,” said Galvis, “maybe next year.”

Padres rotation candidates feature a little bit of old & new

John Horvath, Fox Sports San Diego, 2/21/18

From now until Spring Training concludes, Fox Sports San Diego will preview each player at each position that is in big league camp.

The preview began with taking a look at the catchers who are currently at the Peoria Sports Complex in a Padres uniform. It continues on with a look at the starting pitchers.

Locks for the rotation:

- *Clayton Richard, Bryan Mitchell*

Coming into camp, manager Andy Green stated that there were only two locks for the big league rotation. The first is Clayton Richard, a 34-year-old southpaw who had an effective 2017 in San Diego. So effective, in fact, that the Padres rewarded him with a two-year, \$6 million extension in September. Although his 2017 numbers weren't "eye-popping" per say (8-15 with a 4.79 ERA), the organization values his leadership and ability to eat innings. In what was a tumultuous 2017 for the Padres rotation, Richard was an important stabilizing force; throwing 197 1/3 innings. That was good for 16th in all of baseball. Richard's high ground ball rate helped him produce a 2.3 fWAR, which tied him with Jhoulys Chacin for the best mark on the staff. Richard displayed his leadership qualities most recently this winter; hosting and working out with starting pitching prospects Eric Lauer and Joey Lucchesi in Indiana.

Richard is likely the favorite to start on Opening Day.

Bryan Mitchell was acquired along with Chase Headley for Jabari Blash in December, a move that caused some confusion among Padres fans. Seeking another starting pitching option that was not on the free agent market, Preller contacted Yankees GM Brian Cashman, who was looking to shed payroll to get under the luxury tax. The two settled on Bryan Mitchell, and the Padres, taking on the entirety of Chase Headley's \$13 million contract, only had to give up Blash in return. Once a 16th round pick in the 2009 draft, Mitchell worked his way up the Yankees system but was never given much of a chance at the big league level (98 1/3 IP, 4.94 ERA). The 26-year-old is a ground ball pitcher who throws plenty of strikes. Last year, in AAA Scranton, Mitchell walked only 13 batters in 63 2/3 innings while posting a 3.25 ERA. The Padres were willing to "buy" their chance at Mitchell, and are hoping that purchase will pay off.

Likely, but not guaranteed:

- *Luis Perdomo, Dinelson Lamet*

Luis Perdomo took a step forward in 2017, starting 29 games while going 8-11 with a 4.67 ERA. These are not eye-popping numbers, but for a Rule V pick in his second professional season, they

are more than fine. At 61.8%, his ground ball rate was elite and his 163.2 innings pitched was good for third on the Padres staff. That was the good. The bad? Perdomo allowed a .267 BAA with a .722 OPS his first time through the batting order. His second time through, opponents hit .279 with a .795 OPS. His third time through, they hit .312 with a OPS north of 800 (.834).

Perdomo is a near-lock for the rotation, and this is the season for him the Padres are really looking for improvement. He certainly has the stuff, he just needs to put it all together.

Dinelson Lamet is clearly the most exciting big league rotation piece that the Padres have. Among starting pitchers with 100 or more innings pitched last season, Lamet ranked 13th in all of baseball in K/9 (10.9) and ninth in K% (28.7%). He does lack a consistent third pitch and struggles against lefties, two things that are probably somewhat related. Lefties slugged .502 against Lamet last season with a .364 wOBA (as opposed to .296 SLG with a .239 wOBA against righties). Despite this, his third pitch (changeup) did look effective at different points last year. He is on the radar of many as a breakout performer in 2018, and may very well do so if the stars align.

Competing for a rotation spot

- Tyson Ross

Tyson Ross signed a minor-league deal with the Padres prior to the new year; coming back to an organization in which he had his best run in the majors as a starter. Following a 2015 season in which he struck out more than a batter per inning and put up a 3.26 ERA, Ross has struggled with injuries for the past two years. The Padres are hoping his injury troubles are behind him, and by all reports that are coming from camp, so far so good.

- Chris Young

Chris Young is another former Padre vying for a rotation spot. The 38-year-old has said he would like the pitch for two more years, and his old organization is giving him a chance. Pitching mostly out of the bullpen in 2017, Young posted a 7.50 ERA in 30 innings with Kansas City. He was released by the Royals in June.

- Matt Strahm

Matt Strahm was acquired mid-season last year as part of a deal that sent starter Trevor Cahill and relievers Ryan Buchter and Brandon Maurer to the Royals. The 6'3" southpaw suffered a torn patella tendon that required surgery last July, but he is fully healthy and impressing so far in camp. With a mid-90s fastball and a plus curve, the 26-year-old will likely make the big-league roster, but it is undetermined whether or not he will start or come out of the bullpen.

- Colin Rea

Having been traded to the Marlins and then being traded back following injury, Rea is making his way back from Tommy John surgery.

- Robbie Erlin

Like Rea, Robbie Erlin is also recovering from Tommy John surgery. It has been a long road back for the 27-year-old who has not thrown a pitch in the majors since 2016.

- Jordan Lyles

Looking for affordable rotation candidates, the Padres signed Jordan Lyles to a big-league contract in the offseason. As a Padre in 2017, Lyles went 1-3 with a 9.39 ERA. Despite the underwhelming numbers, he does have some intriguing stuff.

Minor league starters in camp:

- Brett Kennedy
- Eric Lauer
- Joey Lucchesi
- Jacob Nix
- Cal Quantrill (#40 in MLB top 100)
- Kyle Lloyd
- Miguel Diaz
- Walker Lockett

The Padres will kick off their Spring Training slate on Friday against the Mariners. Coverage of the game starts at 12 p.m. on Fox Sports San Diego, with first pitch at 12:10 p.m. PT.