



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF JANUARY 8, 2019

"White Sox reportedly agree to deal with Jay" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"White Sox add Herrera as late-inning option" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Is White Sox adding Jon Jay a precursor to Manny Machado signing?" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox reportedly agree to terms with Jon Jay, a friend of Manny Machado" ... Tim Stebbins, NBC Sports Chicago

"Sox Drawer Q&A: When will Bryce Harper and Manny Machado sign? Can anyone on the White Sox kick field goals?" ... Chuck Garfien, NBC Sports Chicago

"Could Alex Colome and Kelvin Herrera give White Sox the best bullpen in AL Central?" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Five things about new White Sox reliever Kelvin Herrera" ... Chris Kamka, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox reportedly make another big bullpen upgrade with free-agent hurler Kelvin Herrera" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"What's up with the Yankees? And how could it affect White Sox pursuit of Manny Machado?" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox sign outfielder Jon Jay, friend of Manny Machado" ... Staff, Chicago Tribune

"White Sox solidify bullpen by reaching terms with Kelvin Herrera on a 2-year, \$18 million deal" ... Paul Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"White Sox reach 1-year agreement with outfielder Jon Jay" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Chicago Sun-Times

"White Sox to sign reliever Kelvin Herrera, outfielder Jon Jay" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Chicago Sun-Times

"White Sox reportedly sign Jay, Herrera" ... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"White Sox add Manny Machado's close friend Jon Jay, who conveniently also plays baseball" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"If you can't hit 'em, sign 'em: Kelvin Herrera won't be shutting down White Sox hitters anymore" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"White Sox to sign John Jay to one-year, \$4 million contract" ... Jeff Passan, ESPN.com

"Kelvin Herrera, White Sox agree to 2-year, \$18 million deal" ... Jeff Passan, ESPN.com

White Sox reportedly agree to deal with Jay

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | January 8, 2019

CHICAGO -- Since mid-December, the White Sox have added Manny Machado's brother-in-law and Machado's good friend to their 2019 lineup. Could Machado himself soon be next to join the South Siders?

Outfielder Jon Jay, the friend portion of the Machado equation, agreed to a one-year, \$4 million deal pending a physical, according to numerous reports Monday night. The club has not confirmed the deal.

Jay joins first baseman/designated hitter Yonder Alonso, Machado's brother-in-law, who was acquired in a trade from the Cleveland Indians.

Each of the three players wrote about training together in Miami during the offseason in a 2017 piece for the Players' Tribune.

"The three of us all come from the similar backgrounds. I've known Yonder since he was 10," Jay wrote at the time. "And we've both known Manny since he was a young kid coming up. We're from the same neighborhoods, the same culture, so it's just natural for us to stick together."

Both Jay and Alonso fit the rebuilding White Sox regardless of their connection to the premium-talent free agent. The left-handed-hitting Jay, who turns 34 in March, hit .268 with a .330 on-base percentage and 74 runs scored between stops with Kansas City and Arizona last season. He is a capable leadoff hitter who can handle an outfield spot as young prospects such as Eloy Jimenez, Luis Robert, Blake Rutherford, Luis Alexander Basabe and Micker Adolfo work their way to the Majors.

Alonso, 31, will share time at first base and DH with Jose Abreu after Alonso drove in 83 runs with a .738 OPS for the Indians last season. White Sox general manager Rick Hahn said the team had interest in the left-handed hitter since the 2008 Draft.

While Jay is only with the White Sox for one year and Alonso potentially two years with a 2020 option, the additions could make things more comfortable for Machado to agree to a long-term deal with the White Sox. Machado is reported to have an offer in the seven-year range from the White Sox, with the Yankees and Phillies also interested.

White Sox add Herrera as late-inning option

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | January 7, 2019

CHICAGO -- An official White Sox closer for the 2019 season might not be named by manager Rick Renteria until near the end of Spring Training.

But with the addition of free agent Kelvin Herrera, who is expected to pass his physical on Monday, sources tell MLB.com's Scott Merkin and Mark Feinsand, the White Sox have another strong late-inning option. The team has not yet announced the deal.

Sources told MLB Network insider Ken Rosenthal that Herrera, who turned 29 on Dec. 31, agreed to a 2-year deal worth \$18 million and a club option for a third year that could bring the final total to \$27 million. Herrera posted a 2.44 ERA with 17 saves over 48 games last season between stops with the Royals and Nationals.

The hard-throwing right-hander didn't pitch after Aug. 26 after suffering a torn Lisfranc ligament in his left foot, but he still managed to strike out 38 against 10 walks over 44 1/3 innings. His top single-season total in saves came in 2017 with 26, but he also played a major role in the air-tight Royals' bullpens on World Series teams in '14 and '15.

Chicago already added right-hander Alex Colome in a trade with Seattle earlier this offseason and brought back Nate Jones, the longest-tenured player currently with the organization. This trio joins Jace Fry, Ian Hamilton and Juan Minaya as part of the late-game, high-leverage crew, giving Renteria and White Sox pitching coach Don Cooper plenty of choices.

Is White Sox adding Jon Jay a precursor to Manny Machado signing?

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | January 8, 2019

Are the White Sox really going to sign Manny Machado?

The 26-year-old superstar free agent still hasn't announced that he's made up his mind between the White Sox, Philadelphia Phillies and New York Yankees. And if he still hasn't actually reached a decision, he's now got something else to think about. The White Sox are reportedly adding Jon Jay to their outfield, a solid move under non-Machado circumstances but a really intriguing one given the ongoing Machado sweepstakes.

Jay, Machado and Yonder Alonso — the White Sox recently acquired first baseman/designated hitter and also Machado's brother-in-law — have known each other forever. They're all great friends and train together every winter in Miami. And you don't have to look too hard to find evidence of how tight a group this is.

"As a kid coming up, I'd see Jon and Yonder out there making their mark, and it gave me something to shoot for. They set the example. I looked up to those guys."

That's Machado from a February 2017 piece for the Players' Tribune titled "The Miami Baseball Brotherhood."

"The three of us all come from the similar backgrounds," Jay said in the same piece. "I've known Yonder since he was 10. And we've both known Manny since he was a young kid coming up. We're from the same neighborhoods, the same culture, so it's just natural for us to stick together."

"We all play on different teams now, but everyone knows we have a special bond," Alonso said. "When one of these guys comes to town, my teammates will be like, 'Look out ... the Miami crew is here.' We'll pick each other up at the airport! Everybody just knows how it is. Miami guys stick together."

Well, now two of the three are on the same team, and the White Sox would very much like to complete the set. The White Sox aren't going to come out and say they spent millions on two veteran players to take up two roster spots and not project to be a part of the oft-discussed long-term plan just to lure Machado to the South Side. But that sure as heck seems to be what they're doing. And if Machado does choose the White Sox over the "spend stupid" Phillies and the Yankees, his supposed preference, it will have been worth it because Machado is that potentially transformational for this team.

The White Sox have reportedly made their offer to Machado, and connecting some dots — off Bruce Levine's report that they're not willing to go past seven years for either Machado or the other mega free agent, Bryce Harper, and off Bruce Nightengale's report that it's closer to \$200 million than \$300 million — it could be in the ballpark of seven years and \$210 million, perhaps higher. Maybe it won't be the biggest contract offer, but only the White Sox can offer Machado the opportunity to play with his brother-in-law and his good friend.

But Jay's value to the White Sox is of course about more than just his relationship with Machado, perhaps even more so than Alonso's.

Jay fills a definite offseason need for the White Sox, who opened up a big hole in their outfield when they non-tendered Avisail Garcia. While Eloy Jimenez is expected to take over daily left-field duties beginning at some point in April and Adam Engel is still incredibly gifted with the glove in center field, the prospect of choosing from Daniel Palka, Nicky Delmonico and Leury Garcia in right field didn't look quite as appealing. Jay is an upgrade, offensively and defensively.

He owns a .352 career on-base percentage, an area where the White Sox needed to improve, and was excellent with the Kansas City Royals last season, a .307 batting average and a .363 on-base percentage in 59 games before getting dealt to the Arizona Diamondbacks. He didn't fare so well in Phoenix, with a .235/.304/.325 slash line in 84 games there. But the track record is there, and he swings a better bat than Delmonico, Leury Garcia, Engel and Palka (save the home-run aspect) did in 2018.

Jay is an obvious upgrade defensively, should the idea be to play him mostly in right. If that ends up being the case, the White Sox will have two 2018 Gold Glove finalists in their outfield. Of course, Jay brings versatility in the outfield, playing all three positions every season since 2014. So Rick Renteria could easily opt to mix and match Jay, Engel and Leury Garcia in center and right.

And Jay has a stellar reputation in the clubhouse. The White Sox needed an influx of veteran clubhouse presences, positive ones, of course, that could help mentor an otherwise young-and-getting-younger roster and the prospects that have already begun making their way to the South Side. Jay will help with that, and

while his reported deal will only last one season, he can have a long-term impact in the short term, even if he's not the kind of guy anyone's going to pencil into a lineup of the future.

But Machado is that kind of guy.

Jay brings plenty of positives to this White Sox team, but until the Machado sweepstakes has a winner, his connection to the guy who would be the biggest free-agent splash in White Sox history is going to be a focal point.

Hey, what better way to make a long-term impact than help convince Machado to sign up for the better part of the next decade?

White Sox reportedly agree to terms with Jon Jay, a friend of Manny Machado

By Tim Stebbins / NBC Sports Chicago | January 7, 2019

The White Sox appear to be going all-out in their pursuit of superstar free agent Manny Machado.

According to Bob Nightengale of USA Today, the White Sox and free agent outfielder Jon Jay have agreed to a contract. The deal is reportedly for one-year and \$4 million.

The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal first reported that the White Sox were in serious discussions with Jay.

The #Whitesox have agreement with free agent outfielder Jon Jay. He must complete physical for it to become official. So the Sox now have Manny Machado's brother in law, Yonder Alonso, and close friend, Jay, on the team as they have offer on table for Machado.

Jon Jay will receive \$4 million on his one year deal with the #Whitesox once he passes his physical

#WhiteSox in serious discussions with free-agent outfielder Jon Jay, sources tell me and @ByRobertMurray.

At first glance, adding Jay appears as a move to bolster the White Sox outfield with a solid veteran. Jay, 33, was a National League Gold Glove Award finalist in 2018 with the Diamondbacks. He started the season with the Royals after a one-year stint with the Cubs in 2017.

In 143 combined games with the Royals and Diamondbacks, Jay posted a .268/.330/.347 slash line. However, his .307/.363/.374 slash line in 59 games with the Royals is closer to his career averages of .285/.352/.378. He struggled in 84 games with the Diamondbacks, posting a .235/.304/.325 slash line.

Maybe a return to the AL Central is what Jay needs.

For the White Sox, adding Jay would represent a tremendous boost to an outfield currently anchored by Nicky Delmonico, Adam Engel and Daniel Palka. However, the move could also represent a chance to entice Machado to join the White Sox, similar to the acquisition of Yonder Alonso.

Jay was born in Miami and attended the University of Miami. He has known Alonso since the latter was 10 years old; Jay has known Machado since the latter was a younger kid. The three players actually train together during the winter in Miami, as detailed in a piece written by Alonso, Jay and Machado for The Players' Tribune.

This does not mean Machado to the White Sox is a done deal, but adding Jay (which also is not a done deal) can't hurt. At the very least, the White Sox are doing all they can to make Chicago seem more like home for Machado, acquiring some players closest to him in MLB ahead of potentially signing the infielder himself.

Sox Drawer Q&A: When will Bryce Harper and Manny Machado sign? Can anyone on the White Sox kick field goals?

By Chuck Garfien / NBC Sports Chicago | January 7, 2019

We're one week into 2019 and we have one devastating Bears playoff loss, one surprising White Sox signing and one million White Sox fans asking, "Do you have any idea when we will know about Harper and Machado?" Here we go. Questions from White Sox fans in the latest edition of the Sox Drawer:

Q: Do you have any idea when we will know about Harper and Machado? -- @twinsw86p

CG: I wish I did. It's been an agonizing two months waiting for either of them to sign. Remember when we talked about Harper possibly announcing his decision in early December during the winter meetings under the bright lights of Las Vegas, his offseason home? Yeah, that was a fun idea. And totally wrong.

The White Sox, Yankees and Phillies were reportedly told in late December that Machado's decision will come after the new year. Most people assumed that meant SOON after the new year — like hopefully Jan. 2?? But here we are, entering the second week of 2019, and there's no clear sign that Machado is close to inking a deal with anyone. Same with Harper. Good times, huh?

Q: Do u think Machado makes a decision soon, like this week to sign with a club? --- @baranda61

CG: Hopefully, because the speculation game is getting out of control. Sunday during the Bears-Eagles game, you might have heard a report that Jerry Reinsdorf was at the game — watching it in a suite with Manny Machado. As exciting and preposterous as that might sound, it turned out to be false. Personally, I would love to see the White Sox get revenge on the city of Philadelphia by signing Machado (or Harper), leaving the Phillies completely in the dust. Is that wrong? Didn't think so. Yeah, I'm still getting over the loss.

Q: Can anyone on the White Sox kick field goals? -- @WillWeyant

CG: Guessing you haven't recovered either. But as absurd as that question might sound, there is one White Sox player who comes to mind: Yolmer Sanchez. He loves soccer. He has some impressive foot skills.

Put him on a football field, ask him to kick a 43-yard-field goal with 10 seconds left, and I'm slightly confident he'd make it. Knowing Yolmer, he would have found the closest Gatorade bucket Sunday night and dumped it on himself — or maybe Khalil Mack, just because.

Q: Serious question - what percentage of contracts like the ones it will take to sign Manny and Bryce actually work out for the team involved? --- @TasuArvanitis

CG: MLB is littered with some really disastrous free agent contracts (I've got a bunch of them lined up. Be ready). But what makes the Harper and Machado situation so different is their age. They're only 26 years old. Almost every other player who has signed a six-figure contract did so in their late 20s or older.

The only exceptions are Giancarlo Stanton and Alex Rodriguez, who were both 25 when they signed their first mammoth deals. Oh, and Jason Heyward, who signed that \$184 million contract with the Cubs when he was 26. Whoops. Stanton inked his big contract in 2015. He still has nine more seasons to go (10 with a team option), so it's incomplete at this point.

A-Rod is the real litmus test. He signed a 10-year, \$252 million contract with the Texas Rangers in 2000. He was later traded to the Yankees in 2004 and signed another big extension with them in 2008 when he was 32. That one didn't work out so well. The first contract was a grand slam.

If you break down the 10 seasons that followed his \$252 million contract, Rodriguez put up these gigantic numbers: 280 doubles, 424 HRs, 1236 RBIs, .299/.394/.577. The Rangers and Yankees definitely got their money worth, thanks in large part to his age. They paid for A-Rod's future performance, not his past.

I looked up the top 50 most lucrative contracts in baseball history by total value, and determined that 23 of them were smart, seven were bad mistakes and 20 were complete and utter disasters. Here are 10 of the worst (in terms of dollars and performance) with their ages when they signed:

Player	Contract + when signed	Age
Miguel Cabrera	8 years, \$248 million in 2016	33
Prince Fielder	9 years, \$214 million in 2012	28
Jason Heyward	8 years, \$184 million in 2016	26
Chris Davis	7 years, \$161 million in 2016	30
Jacoby Ellsbury	7 years, \$153 million in 2014	30
Carl Crawford	7 years, \$142 million in 2011	29
David Wright	8 years, \$138 million in 2013	30
Matt Cain	6 years, \$127.5 million in 2012	27
Barry Zito	7 years, \$126 million in 2007	29
Vernon Wells	7 years, \$126 million in 2008	29

Whoever signs Harper and Machado is hoping that the extra years of youth included in the contract will reduce some of the risk when they reach their 30s and could see a reduction in their numbers. Let's check back on this column in about 10 years and see how Harper and Machado did.

Q: Are the Sox focusing on any other free agents right now, in case they do not land Harper or Machado? If they do not land one, are there any trades that you could see happening, hoping to bring a big name over? --- @Dlins06

CG: The White Sox made a move on Monday, reportedly signing reliever Kelvin Herrera. The former Royals closer has been one of the best relievers in the game since 2014. He's coming off an injury-plagued season in 2018 that ended with foot surgery. You put him in a set-up role in front of Alex Colome, and I really like the back end of the White Sox bullpen. Vinnie Duber has more on Herrera and asks the question, "Do the White Sox have the best bullpen in the AL Central?"

Q: Could there be more White Sox shows with the new cable deal? -- @KenSothman

CG: Will there be more White Sox shows? I'm not sure about that.

But when the new TV deal takes affect after the 2019 season, you can definitely expect more White Sox programming, specifically more games!

We'll carry every local game during the regular season. Yep, we're going to be busy around here!

Thanks everyone for all of your questions. See ya next time!

Could Alex Colome and Kelvin Herrera give White Sox the best bullpen in AL Central?

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | January 7, 2019

There's a long way to go this offseason, if the lengthy list of unsigned free agents is any indication. But the White Sox have made some significant improvements in one area: the bullpen.

Monday's reported signing of free-agent reliever Kelvin Herrera, paired with the trade for Alex Colome earlier in the winter, gives the White Sox two late-inning arms that they desperately needed, otherwise heading into the 2019 season with Nate Jones and/or Jace Fry as the closer.

Instead, Colome becomes the likely new closer, Herrera, a two-time All Star, can slide into the eighth-inning spot, and Jones, Fry and the host of other young hurlers in that 'pen take over lower-leverage spots that can help them grow into the potential bullpen of the future. That's great news for the White Sox, who of course can also use great half seasons from Colome or Herrera to get better in the long term with a deadline deal should the opportunity present itself.

And while the South Siders are constantly looking toward the future, here's a thought, one I must credit to a commenter on NBC Sports Chicago's Facebook page (thanks, Julian Rosales): Do these two additions give the White Sox the best bullpen in the AL Central right now?

That might seem a bit of a stretch at first blush considering the White Sox had a bullpen ERA that ranked 23rd in baseball last season. But the rest of the division was just as bad and in most cases worse. Only the Minnesota Twins ranked higher than the White Sox, one spot better at 22. The Detroit Tigers and Cleveland Indians stacked up right behind the White Sox at 24 and 25. The Kansas City Royals were where they were in the standings: second worst in baseball, one of just two teams with a relief ERA over 5.00.

Going from that starting point, there's a fine case to be made that the White Sox — who for the second straight season shed a good chunk of their positive bullpen production in midyear trades — didn't have long to go to be the best in the Central. But they went an awfully long way with just two moves, bringing in two All-Star type relievers. Meanwhile, the Indians lost two longtime pieces of what used to be a dominant 'pen to free agency this winter: Andrew Miller, now a St. Louis Cardinal, and Cody Allen, still on the market.

The Indians still have an All-Star reliever in Brad Hand. The Twins have a couple guys who had tremendous second halves in Taylor Rogers and Trevor May. But beyond that, Colome and Herrera can claim to being two of the division's best relievers. Stack that on top of what the White Sox already had, mostly a collection of young guys who first dipped their toes into major league waters at the end of last season, and it's a unit with far more promise than originally anticipated.

And it's a unit that could be better than any other in the division.

Obviously there's plenty of time and plenty of free agents left for upgrades to be made by any number of these five teams. But as things stand right now, Rick Hahn has delivered on his goal to improve the White Sox bullpen. And he's done it to the point that could give his team the most reliable relief corps in the Central.

As folks continue to look toward the Indians as a team with a rapidly closing contention window, this could be an interesting factor in how soon the White Sox are ready to contend. Should all go to plan, with Eloy Jimenez and Dylan Cease reaching the majors in 2019 and Michael Kopech returning from Tommy John recovery in 2020 and a big free-agent or trade addition on the way as a "finishing piece," it's possible that the White Sox own window could creep open as soon as 2020. And having a bullpen featuring Colome and Herrera, one strong enough to overpower hitters in the late innings of battles for the division crown, could make a big difference.

Five things about new White Sox reliever Kelvin Herrera

By Chris Kamka / NBC Sports Chicago | January 7, 2019

The White Sox reportedly added an arm to the bullpen with the signing of Kelvin Herrera. The Royals dealt the 29-year-old (he turned 29 on New Year's Eve) to the Nationals in June. His season ended prematurely after tearing the Lisfranc ligament in his left foot while fielding a ground ball on Aug. 26 in the ninth inning of a 15-0 blowout win against the Mets.

Herrera will get a fresh start with the White Sox in 2019. Here are five interesting things about the right-hander:

Herrera tossed 70 innings in 2014 without allowing a home run.

He's one of only 7 pitchers from 1990 to present with 60+ innings in a season without coughing up a longball. Here's that list:

		IP
Kelvin Herrera	2014	70.0
Wade Davis	2014	72.0
Brandon League	2014	63.0
Peter Moylan	2009	73.0
Jim Johnson	2008	68 2/3
Jason Isringhausen	2002	65 1/3
Heathcliff Slocumb	1994	72 1/3

After that, Herrera came back down to earth with a reasonable 11 HR in 141.2 IP in 2015-16. That was followed a 2017-18 stretch where he struggled keeping the ball in the yard (15 HR in 103 2/3 IP). Herrera will at least need to get back to his 2015-16 levels in order to be successful.

Herrera has a 1.26 career ERA in 28 2/3 career postseason innings.

That's eighth all-time among pitchers with at least 20 career postseason appearances. Here's that list (also, Mariano Rivera was pretty good, wasn't he?):

Career postseason ERA – minimum 20 appearances

	G	IP	ERA
John Rocker	20	20 2/3	0.00
Chad Bradford	24	23 1/3	0.39
Trevor Rosenthal	23	26.0	0.69
Mariano Rivera	96	141.0	0.70
Jeremy Affeldt	33	31 1/3	0.86
Santiago Casilla	25	19 2/3	0.92
Andrew Miller	22	33.0	1.09
Kelvin Herrera	22	28 2/3	1.26

The first pitch Herrera threw in his MLB career hit Ryan Raburn (Sept. 21, 2011)

That guy always killed the White Sox. Raburn had 82 career RBIs vs. White Sox...and had no more than 25 against any other team.

Ryan Raburn MLB Career

Career vs. White Sox 122 games .296/.354/.518

Career vs. everyone else 824 games .246/.310/.422

Jason Giambi (2000 AL), Alex Rodriguez (2003, 2005, 2007 AL), Jimmy Rollins (2007 NL), Dustin Pedroia (2008 AL), Joey Votto (2010 NL), Buster Posey (2012 NL), Josh Donaldson (2015 AL) and Giancarlo Stanton (2017 NL) are all former MVP winners. They combined for 10 MVP awards won and they also combined to go 0-for-26 career vs Kelvin Herrera (including postseason).

Over the last five seasons, Herrera has the fourth most pitches thrown of at least 100 MPH.

This is according to the data available at baseballsavant.com. Here's that list:

Most pitches of at least 100 MPH (2014-18) according to baseballsavant.com

Aroldis Chapman	2,047
Jordan Hicks	659
Mauricio Cabrera	342

Kelvin Herrera 311
Arquimedes Caminero 253
Unfortunately though, none of those 311 pitches came in 2018.

Herrera 100+ MPH pitches from 2014-18 by season (baseballsavant.com):

2018	0
2017	10
2016	9
2015	158
2014	134

Herrera's average fastball velocity has dipped from 98.1 as recently as 2015 to 96.5 in 2018. Was that partially as a result of injury? Tough to say; he did experience some shoulder tightness in August 2018.

If he remains healthy, doesn't experience any further velocity loss, and brings his ground ball rate back up (35.6% in 2018 – it's 47.0% for his career) he should still be effective for the White Sox in the coming seasons.

White Sox reportedly make another big bullpen upgrade with free-agent hurler Kelvin Herrera

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | January 7, 2019

The White Sox bullpen is getting another big upgrade.

According to ESPN's Jeff Passan, the South Siders are in agreement with free-agent relief pitcher Kelvin Herrera on a two-year contract with an option for a third.

Reliever Kelvin Herrera and the Chicago White Sox are in agreement on a two-year, \$18 million deal with a vesting third-year option, sources tell ESPN.

Herrera was a longtime White Sox nemesis with the Kansas City Royals, where he spent the entirety of his eight-year big league career prior to a midseason trade last year that sent him to the Washington Nationals. He's dominated the White Sox in his career to the tune of a 2.56 ERA and 52 strikeouts in 59.2 innings against them.

Herrera was stellar with the Royals, where he posted a 2.75 ERA in his time there. That includes a pencil-thin 1.05 mark in 27 games prior to last summer's trade. After the trade, his numbers exploded, with a 4.34 ERA in 21 games. He was injured twice in August, first going on the disabled list for a couple weeks with a shoulder injury and then seeing his season come to an early end with a foot injury upon his return.

But for those concerned, he's working his way back.

If there are some additional red flags, Herrera's velocity dipped during the 2018 season, as did his K/9, and he saw a rise in his contact rate.

But Herrera has a heck of a track record from his days in Kansas City. In a three-season stretch from 2014 to 2016 — which included back-to-back World Series trips — he had a 2.30 ERA with 209 strikeouts in 211.2 innings of work.

Herrera, who just turned 29, figures to be a solid addition as the White Sox plan to make the transition from rebuilding mode to contending mode. He's the second name addition to the relief corps this winter after Alex Colome, who will likely be the new closer just two seasons removed from leading the majors in saves. Herrera, though, did his best work in a stacked Royals 'pen during their World Series days, so a setup or seventh-inning role could suit the two-time All Star well.

Like Colome, the White Sox will have Herrera for at least the next two seasons. But given the volatility of relievers that Hahn has talked about on multiple occasions this offseason, it's hard to say Herrera is guaranteed to be a part of the bullpen of the future. His age helps that case, but the team will have the option of dealing him at a future deadline should the opportunity arise. That said, under team control potentially through 2021 could make him a factor on a White Sox contender, should the rest of the rebuild go according to plan.

What's up with the Yankees? And how could it affect White Sox pursuit of Manny Machado?

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | January 7, 2019

The most pressing question in the White Sox pursuit of Manny Machado isn't whether he was at Sunday's Bears game. He wasn't.

It's what the heck the New York Yankees are doing. Because there's a legitimate case to be made that they're moving on from Machado with some of the other moves they've made of late. And if that is the case, it will dramatically change everything, as it's been reported plenty of times that he supposedly prefers to land in The Bronx and play for the team he grew up rooting for.

But there are so many things going on with the Yankees that a union between them and Machado seems, let's just say more complicated than it does with the White Sox — who have reportedly already made an offer, one characterized last week by USA Today's Bob Nightengale as "serious" and "closer to \$200 million than \$300 million" — or the "spend stupid" Philadelphia Phillies.

Let's start with the Troy Tulowitzki signing, which didn't and still doesn't seem like something that would greatly impact a pursuit of Machado. Tulowitzki is a five-time All Star and two-time Gold Glove winner, sure, but he's also 34 years old and coming off a lost season in which surgery on both heels kept him out completely. He's played in 66 games since the start of the 2017 season. The Toronto Blue Jays paid the nearly \$40 million left on his old contract to get rid of him, yet there's plenty of speculation the Yankees might have signed him (to a league-minimum deal, remember) with thoughts of him starting. That thinking would likely bring an end to their pursuit of Machado, as he would be the likely candidate to start at shortstop, at the very least until Didi Gregorius (slated to become a free agent after next season) returns several months in after recovering from Tommy John surgery. But Tulowitzki seems more like a zero-risk move that could also act as a type of insurance policy should the Yankees miss out on Machado.

Simply put, Troy Tulowitzki wants a ring and knows that Manny Machado greatly enhances the #Yankees' chances.

Current NYY SS Troy Tulowitzki, w/ Machado still looming in free agency: 'I signed up to be a Yankee because I want to play w/ the best players, so if Manny's one of those guys, I think that would be awesome...so whatever happens happens & I'll be ready to play' when camp begins.

As is often the case when discussing free agents, money could end up the biggest issue. And whether the Yankees merely want to remain relatively flexible as their fleet of young stars inches toward big raises or are using Machado's supposed preference as a bargaining tool, they reportedly aren't willing to offer the kind of long-term, record-breaking contract it was assumed Machado would command when the offseason started. The Yankees don't need Machado, the winners of 100 games last season and the potential preseason World Series favorites without him. And so they don't need to win him over with a massive contract offer. The Los Angeles Dodgers are reportedly in a similar spot in the Bryce Harper derby, unwilling to make a gargantuan contract offer and in a fine position without his services, the winners of the last two NL pennants.

But the Yankees are the Yankees, of course, and they've never let dollars get in the way of improving their team. So look what they've done in recent days, bringing back Zach Britton on an expensive free-agent contract that keeps him in their bullpen for the next three seasons at \$39 million. Britton's got a great track record, sure, and the Yankees are facing the possible defection of Dellin Betances to free agency following

the 2019 season, but that's an awful lot of cash. They could have saved if they gave David Robertson the same deal he got from the Phillies, but maybe they just wanted Britton. And they might not be done splurging on relievers, either, as Adam Ottavino reportedly has their interest, too. After his 2.43-ERA, 112-strikeout season in 2018, he's expected to cash in on a multi-year contract. That means even more dollars spent on the relief corps — and more of that offseason budget not spent on Machado.

But what if the Yankees don't care about dollars? What if they don't care about shortstop, either? What if this whole thing hinges on clearing room at third base, the position where Machado's won a couple Gold Gloves?

There have been multiple offseason rumors about them potentially trying to trade Miguel Andujar, the guy with just 154 major league games under his belt who almost won AL Rookie of the Year honors last season. Keeping that 23-year-old in the lineup for years to come — and at a much cheaper price than Machado — would seem like a no-brainer, but Machado, as White Sox fans know, is a heck of a player. There's been suggestion, too, that the Yankees could try to move Andujar to first base, where their current starter is Luke Voit.

Machado's supposed preference for the Yankees and their hole at shortstop made them the most sensible option when it came to Machado's landing place. But they are doing things the other suitors in this derby aren't doing, which at this point in the process effectively means they're going on with their offseason rather than sitting patiently while Machado deliberates. The White Sox have added in small ways, as expected, considering where they are in their rebuild. There might not be no stereotypical Plan B in the form of a significant consolation-prize signing should they miss out. The Phillies have added a couple big names in Robertson and Andrew McCutchen, but remember they have "stupid" money they've vowed to spend and they view themselves as far closer to contention, whether or not that's actually a reality in the increasingly competitive NL East.

In the end, the size of the contract offer could wind up the difference maker (big shock, right?) and the White Sox have already made an offer, per Nightengale, one that could, if we're connecting some various dots, be in the ballpark of seven years and \$210 million. Certainly the possibility for those numbers to be larger exists. If the Yankees don't want to go that high, or come anywhere near that high, then that's a sizable gap that could cause Machado to abandon his preference. The Phillies, of course, are in a similar position to the White Sox when it comes to offering a big contract, and according to Nightengale's latest update — which also focuses on the unknowns surrounding the Yankees — they remain the two most aggressive pursuers.

The #Yankees are either playing it coy, trying to gauge the Andujar trade market, or simply have no intention of offering Manny Machado a \$200 million-plus contract. The Chicago #WhiteSox and Philadelphia #Phillies remain the most aggressive teams for the prized infielder.

In other words, stay tuned. But if the Yankees aren't quite as "in" on this whole thing than it initially seemed, perhaps "stay tuned" changes to "buckle up."

White Sox sign outfielder Jon Jay, friend of Manny Machado

By Staff / Chicago Tribune | January 8, 2019

The White Sox and free-agent outfielder Jon Jay agreed to terms on a one-year, \$4 million contract Monday night.

Jay, 33, hit a combined .268 with the Royals and Diamondbacks in 2018. But the intrigue here is Jay's friendship with free-agent target Manny Machado.

The Sox already signed Machado's brother-in-law, Yonder Alonso. Machado, Alonso and Jay train together in Miami in the offseason, and they wrote about the city and their friendship in *The Players' Tribune*.

In that story, titled “The Miami Baseball Brotherhood,” Alonso said: “We have a special bond. When one of these guys comes to town, my teammates will be like, “Look out ... the Miami crew is here.” We’ll pick each other up at the airport! Everybody just knows how it is. Miami guys stick together.”

Jay returns to Chicago after a one-year absence. He hit .296 with a .374 on-base percentage for the Cubs in 2017, helping them to the National League Championship Series.

White Sox solidify bullpen by reaching terms with Kelvin Herrera on a 2-year, \$18 million deal

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune | January 7, 2019

The White Sox added another potential closer to their bullpen by agreeing to terms with former Royals reliever Kelvin Herrera on a two-year, \$18 million deal.

Herrera has a 2.82 career ERA, including a 2.75 ERA with the Royals from 2011 to '18. He posted a 1.05 ERA in 27 outings in 2018 before being dealt to the Nationals in June. He struggled in 21 outings for the Nats and was lost for the final month after suffering a torn Lisfranc ligament in his left foot while fielding a grounder.

Before the foot injury Herrera was disabled by a shoulder injury, but the Sox consider the right-hander a low-risk signing.

Despite a difficult end to 2018, Herrera, 29, is a power pitcher with a long history of effectiveness and joins Alex Colome in solidifying the back end of the Sox's young bullpen. He was a premier setup man during the Royals' back-to-back World Series appearances in 2014-15 and eventually became their closer.

Herrera has a vesting option for 2021 based on appearances over the next two seasons, according to ESPN, which first reported the deal Monday.

The Sox acquired Colome, a former closer for the Rays, in a trade with the Mariners on Nov. 30 for catcher Omar Narvaez.

White Sox reach 1-year agreement with outfielder Jon Jay

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun-Times | January 8, 2019

The White Sox are doing everything they can to entice free agent Manny Machado.

Three weeks after trading for Machado's brother-in-law, the Sox reached a one-year, \$4 million agreement with former Cubs outfielder Jon Jay on Monday night, a source confirmed. Jay and Machado are good friends who work out together in Miami. First baseman Yonder Alonso, whose sister is Machado's wife, is also part of the tight circle.

In the end, dollars, years and other factors will be the most important things that determine where Machado signs a long-term deal, but the Sox are leaving no stone unturned in their pursuit. While Machado has expressed a preference for the Yankees, and the Phillies are another known suitor, the rebuilding Sox are staying in the hunt and have made the only known offer, believed to be in the \$200 million range.

Jay, 33, is a good clubhouse guy and a .285/.352/.378 career hitter. He has a good glove and can cover center field. Whether he starts or is used as a fourth outfielder is to be determined.

Earlier Monday, in another move demonstrating a desire to turn a corner in the third year of their rebuild — are you paying attention, Manny? — the Sox agreed to terms with right-handed reliever Kelvin Herrera on a two-year, \$18 million deal. The contract, which also hasn't been announced, includes a vesting option for a third season, a source confirmed.

A two-time All-Star, Herrera posted a 2.44 ERA in 44 games between the Royals and Nationals last season. He closed for the Royals, was traded in June and was used mostly as a setup man for the Nats before his season was halted by a Lisfranc ligament tear in his left foot Aug. 26. He also dealt with a rotator cuff impingement last season and forearm issues in 2017.

Herrera, who turned 29 on Dec. 31, saw his velocity, strikeout and ground-ball rates drop last season while recording 17 saves, but the Sox are confident he will be healthy. Herrera owns a 2.82 ERA with 60 saves in eight seasons.

The Sox' bullpen is shaping up. They traded for right-hander Alex Colome, a 2016 All-Star who notched 47 saves in 2017 with the Rays, and picked up Nate Jones' \$4.65 million option for 2019.

Other bullpen possibilities among the Sox' young contingent of arms include lefties Jace Fry, Aaron Bummer and Caleb Frare and righties Ian Hamilton, Ryan Burr, Juan Minaya and Zack Burdi, a 2016 first-round pick ready to return from Tommy John surgery.

An improved bullpen should help the Sox avoid another 100-loss season, especially in the American League Central, which looks like one of the weaker divisions in baseball.

While still focusing on a long-term plan, the Sox expect to improve with top prospect Eloy Jimenez on the roster, as well as recent acquisitions Herrera, Colome, right-handed starter Ivan Nova, Alonso, Jay and second catcher James McCann.

The Jay agreement was first reported by USA Today; the Herrera deal by ESPN.

White Sox to sign reliever Kelvin Herrera, outfielder Jon Jay

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun-Times | January 7, 2019

The White Sox added proven relief help to the back end of their bullpen Monday, agreeing to terms with right-hander Kelvin Herrera on a two-year, \$18 million deal, with a vesting option for a third season, a source confirmed.

A two-time All-Star, Herrera posted a 2.44 ERA in 44 games between the Royals and Nationals last season. He closed for the Royals, was traded for three minor leaguers including the Nationals' 11th- and 12th-ranked prospects, and was used mostly as a set-up man for the Nats before his season was halted by a Lisfranc ligament tear in his left foot on Aug. 26. He also dealt with a rotator cuff impingement last season and forearm issues in 2017.

Herrera, who turned 29 on New Year's Eve, saw his velocity, strikeout and ground ball rates drop last season while he recorded 17 saves, but the Sox are confident he will be healthy. Herrera owns a 2.82 ERA with 60 saves in eight seasons.

The Sox also reached an agreement with outfielder Jon Jay, according to reports. Jay, 33, is a good friend of free agent Manny Machado, a much bigger free agent prize being pursued by the Sox, who traded for Machado's brother in law, Yonder Alonso, last month.

The Sox bullpen is shaping up. They traded catcher Omar Narvaez to the Mariners last month for right-hander Alex Colome, a 2016 All-Star who notched 47 saves in 2017 with the Rays, and also picked up Nate Jones' \$4.65 million option for 2019. Colome, Herrera and Jones are all capable of handling the eighth and ninth innings.

Other bullpen possibilities exist in the Sox' young contingent of arms including lefties Jace Fry, Aaron Bummer and Caleb Frare and righties Ian Hamilton, Ryan Burr, Juan Minaya and Zack Burdi, a 2016 first-round draft pick ready to return from Tommy John Surgery.

Even if they don't sign a top free agent such as Machado or Bryce Harper, an improved bullpen should help the Sox avoid another 100-loss season, especially in a AL Central that looks like one of the weaker divisions in baseball. If the Sox are out of contention near the trade deadline, they'll have the flexibility to trade Herrera to a contender for more prospects.

In any event, while still focusing on a long-term plan in the third year of their rebuild, the Sox have had their fill of tanking and potentially could turn a corner by adding prized prospect Eloy Jimenez to the roster as well as off-season acquisitions Herrera, Colome, right-handed starter Ivan Nova, first baseman Alonso and catcher James McCann.

Meanwhile, the Sox remain in the hunt for Machado and Harper with their chances for the former seemingly better than the latter in a free agent derby that might not reach a conclusion for weeks.

Herrera's deal, first reported by ESPN, has not been announced. The Sox' interest in Jay was first reported by Ken Rosenthal of The Athletic.

White Sox reportedly sign Jay, Herrera

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald | January 7, 2019

According to USA Today, the Chicago White Sox signed Jon Jay to a one-year contract Monday night.

They need some outfield help, and Jay is a nine-year veteran with a career .285/.352/.378 slash line for the Cardinals, Cubs, Royals and Diamondbacks.

Is there another reason the Sox are bringing in Jay?

The 33-year-old outfielder is a close friend with prized free agent Manny Machado, whom the White Sox are trying to sign.

The Sox also traded for Yonder Alonso last month. He is Machado's brother-in-law.

Machado, Alonso and Jay all live in Miami during the off-season and train together.

Earlier Monday, the White Sox reportedly signed relief pitcher Kelvin Herrera to a two-year, \$18 million contract with a vesting \$9 million option for 2021.

Like Jay, the deal won't be officially announced until Herrera passes a physical.

In November, the White Sox acquired Alex Colome in a trade from the Mariners. Colome led the American League with 47 saves in 2017, when he was pitching for Tampa Bay.

He is likely going to close for the Sox this season, but Herrera is also capable and he's saved 55 games over the last three seasons, including a combined 17 with the Royals and Nationals in 2018.

The 29-year-old righty was one of the top setup men in the game from 2012-15, when he was with Kansas City.

Traded from the Royals to Washington last June, Herrera was 1-2 with a 4.34 ERA and 3 saves for the Nats while battling shoulder and foot injuries.

A torn ligament in his left foot ended Herrera's season in late August, but he started a throwing program in early December.

White Sox add Manny Machado's close friend Jon Jay, who conveniently also plays baseball

By James Fegan / The Athletic | January 8, 2019

Maybe this is all just a ploy to make Yoán Moncada more comfortable in the clubhouse.

This time last year Moncada was still the presumed future face of the White Sox franchise even more so than Eloy Jiménez — after all, they traded the most talented pitcher in club history for him, and even now his ascension to playing like a former No. 1 prospect is the quickest way for the 2019 team to bring the contention window into view. Surely a robust Cuban corner of the clubhouse, with natives José Abreu, Yonder Alonso and now the son of two Cuban parents in Jon Jay, can only help him swing it like he's wearing a Cienfuegos uniform again.

Or maybe Jay's helpful veteran presence is about making life easier for the biggest international amateur signing in team history, Luis Robert, after a grueling first year playing stateside. The contract The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal reports the Sox have finalized with Jay is just a one-year deal, but hey, spring training is pretty long and dull, with plenty of time for heart-to-heart chats in between relay drills.

Or — and it will surely get described as such anyway — this could just be a “baseball deal.” According to FanGraphs the White Sox had the worst outfield performance in baseball last year, the team as a whole set a new all-time record for strikeouts and only four clubs got on base less often. Jay had an awful second half after being traded to help Arizona's contention plans and will turn 34 before Cactus League play ends, but his career track record (.352 OBP, 16.5 strikeout rate) suggests he could help in those regards.

All those would be sound reasons for adding Jay, outside the element that's more intriguing and compelling but still can't be believed: that the Sox have made significant financial commitments to Manny Machado's brother-in-law and — now with Jay — his close friend and offseason training partner in an effort to lure the superstar infielder.

That's not how major league teams typically operate. Rick Hahn himself said that the \$8 million committed to Alonso is too large for a team to put toward a player who cannot carry the weight with his own performance, and chances are the acceptable amount a team can commit to a signing for the sake of good feelings is a lot closer to the bonus Eloy Jiménez's younger brother got than the reported \$4 million Jay will receive. But the typical manner of course for how major league teams operate has not seen a top-of-the-market free agent come to the South Side, and breaking that cycle might require getting creative.

The White Sox have not made a playoff appearance since Machado was allowed to buy tickets to rated-R movies. They probably can't break that skid in 2019 even with Machado's help, and would very much be challenging him to lead a young team to prominence rather than fade into the background of an already star-studded clubhouse and just do his thing. It would only make sense for a team like the Sox to be coming from every angle to sell their future to Machado, especially if a record-setting offer is not a weapon they intend to wield.

This Jay deal is certainly a lot more likely to be a statement on the pursuit of Machado than it is on Bryce Harper. Jay is a well-liked veteran who seemed to be slap-hitting his way to a late-career renaissance until he slumped to .235/.304/.325 over 84 games in Arizona to close last season. But he's not the sort of guy who alters plans for a player on Harper's level. He's much more worrisome for guys like Charlie Tilson, Ryan Cordell and Nicky Delmonico, and could take some playing time from Leury García, Adam Engel and Daniel Palka. With the 40-man roster already full even without Kelvin Herrera and Jay's additions announced yet, purges are coming soon.

Why go through that trouble for one year of Jay, rebounding off a down year? He likely makes the team better, and will increase the number of professional, grindy at-bats seen at Guaranteed Rate Field this summer. But concerns like those have been pushed aside for the last two years, and the grisly immediate results have been accepted in the name of putting all focus on long-term goals.

So how does Jay contribute to those goals? He can surely share his favorite lines from “The U” 30 for 30 documentary with fellow Miami alum Zack Collins, and the Sox social media team will love to get a shot of him standing next to Ian Hamilton and Ryan Burr. But everyone’s best guess for why this addition makes sense is also the one the Sox will never admit to ... unless it works, of course. If it doesn’t, well, maybe the team will win an extra game or two. It could be worse.

If you can’t hit ‘em, sign ‘em: Kelvin Herrera won’t be shutting down White Sox hitters anymore

By James Fegan / The Athletic | January 7, 2019

It’s still not clear how significant of a chunk the 2019 White Sox will be able to shave off last year’s total of 100 losses, but they seem increasingly intent on not blowing whatever late-game leads they can muster — at least until midseason.

First reported by ESPN’s Jeff Passan and confirmed by The Athletic’s Ken Rosenthal, the White Sox have agreed in principle with 29-year-old right-handed reliever Kelvin Herrera on a two-year deal worth \$18 million, with a vesting option for a third year that would bring the total value to \$27 million. The White Sox have not announced the deal officially and the terms of the option are not yet known.

Along with trading for Alex Colomé in November and picking up Nate Jones’ \$4.65 million option for 2019, the Sox have built themselves a veteran trio of battle-tested late-inning right-handers to ease the high-leverage burdens placed on Juan Minaya and a cadre of rookies like Ian Hamilton, Ryan Burr and José Ruiz down the stretch last season. At the same time, it also provides the Sox a small collection of assets to shop at the deadline this coming July for a team that figures to finish somewhere in the middle.

Herrera does not lack for experience tossing up zeroes in crucial late innings at Guaranteed Rate Field, as he did plenty of that while wearing royal blue for division rival Kansas City. From 2012 through 2016, Herrera recorded a 2.57 ERA over 354 1/3 innings, made two All-Star teams, and touted one of the most powerful fastballs in the game — regularly averaging over 98 mph. It’s the bumps in the road the last couple of years that have put him more in line to prove himself heading up the Sox bullpen. Rather than sifting through mega-offers from contenders, a down 2017 and an injury-riddled 2018 placed Herrera’s market squarely within the bounds of the Sox’s preference not to go beyond two years for a veteran reliever.

After battling forearm issues in 2017, rotator cuff impingement in his throwing shoulder put Herrera on the disabled list last August after he had been shipped to Washington. A tear of the Lisfranc ligament in his left foot ended his season entirely later that month, and at last update from WEEI’s Rob Bradford, Herrera’s availability for Opening Day is somewhat in doubt.

With his physical passed, the hope is that those are mostly resolved issues that can take some of the blame for a 20.7 percent strikeout rate, 36.5 percent ground ball rate and 97.1 mph average fastball (per Brooks Baseball), all of which set or matched Herrera’s full-season career lows in 2018. The alternative is that these troubling trends are the cost of 463 career regular-season appearances and his share of shouldering two deep and bullpen-dependent playoff runs in Kansas City. If Herrera fails to return to his mid-2010s form, there will not be a lack of indicators it was coming to look back upon.

At the same time, Herrera has the advantage of youth over pretty much every other free-agent relief target, 97.1 mph is still a very hard fastball even in 2019, and he’s retained some effectiveness even as the whiffs wavered by improving his control (5.4 percent walk rate last season). While he started his career with just a fastball-changeup attack before adding a slider in his prime, Trackman data indicates Herrera switched to a slower breaking ball early last season. Brooks Baseball categorizes it as an alteration in his slider, but the high spin rate more resembles a curve.

With his strikeout rate diminished of late, league scouts have postulated that a return to his hard, high-80s slider could return him to the form where he struck out 30.4 percent of opposing hitters in 2016. Pitch selection aside, a healthy year is likely all he needs to have a productive year, and 2019 figures to be a

good preview of how healthy the back half of Herrera's career will be. If nothing else, all indications are that he will provide a positive and humorous clubhouse presence.

This signing isn't Manny Machado or Bryce Harper, and as such, Herrera won't vault the White Sox out of another rebuilding year. But like all the Sox's moves over the past couple months, it splits the difference between improving a team expected to take an intermediate step toward contention, while preparing themselves to be at least small-scale deadline sellers again.

It's too soon for the Sox to use payroll room for win-now moves in free agency — unless it's for transcendent, generational talents — but it's their best available resource on the market, and this is what making use of it for a rebuilding team looks like.

In a league full of rebuilders, the Sox will need some of these moves to separate them from the pack. Herrera, along with Colomé and Alonso, will mark the third former All-Star they've added this offseason, and one or more of them returning to that level would probably go down as a victory.

White Sox to sign John Jay to one-year, \$4 million contract

By Jeff Passan / ESPN.com | January 7, 2019

Free-agent outfielder Jon Jay agreed to a one-year, \$4 million deal with the Chicago White Sox, a source confirmed to ESPN, adding another close friend of Manny Machado as the White Sox pursue the star in free agency.

The 33-year-old Jay, who will join his sixth team in the past five seasons, trains with Machado and new White Sox first baseman Yonder Alonso, who is Machado's brother-in-law. The White Sox's attempts to entice Machado have come alongside their interest in outfielder Bryce Harper, the other big-name free agent who remains available.

Jay's deal, which was first reported by USA Today and is pending a physical, gives Chicago depth in an outfield with numerous holes. Jay has carved out a career as a high-on-base, low-slug outfielder who is passable in center field but better suited defensively in a corner. He hit .268/.330/.347 with Kansas City and Arizona last season, struggling after his midseason trade to the Diamondbacks.

Like Alonso, Jay can play an important role in the White Sox's 2019 season even without Machado. Their presence clearly would ease the transition for Machado, though, as Chicago tries to come from an underdog position to convince him to join an up-and-coming franchise.

How much the White Sox are willing to spend -- and how long a deal they're willing to offer -- remains the question that will prove whether they are players in the biggest sweepstakes this winter. While the White Sox have a preference to land one of the stars on a shorter-term deal, league sources reiterated to ESPN that if the market were to bear a deal upward of 10 years at a reasonable average annual value, Chicago would not necessarily extract itself from the bidding.

The threshold of that dollar value remains unclear, though it would be a significant departure from the history of the franchise's spending, in which Jose Abreu's six-year, \$68 million guarantee is the largest ever given a White Sox player.

Chicago has been among the busiest teams this winter, adding Alonso, starter Ivan Nova and reliever Alex Colome via trade and signing catcher James McCann and reliever Kelvin Herrera, with whom they agreed on a two-year, \$18 million deal Monday, sources told ESPN.

Kelvin Herrera, White Sox agree to 2-year, \$18 million deal

By Jeff Passan / ESPN.com | January 7, 2019

Free-agent reliever Kelvin Herrera and the Chicago White Sox agreed on a two-year, \$18 million contract that includes a vesting option for a third season, league sources familiar with the deal told ESPN.

The two-time All-Star, who was part of the dominant Kansas City Royals bullpens that led them to back-to-back World Series, could serve as closer for the White Sox upon his return from surgery to repair a torn Lisfranc ligament in his left foot. The 28-year-old has 60 career saves, including three with the Washington Nationals, to whom he was traded in the middle of last season.

Herrera's deal comes as the White Sox push to be competitive in the American League Central this season. His option for 2021 will vest if he pitches in 110 games over the next two seasons and 55 in 2021, sources told ESPN.

He was 2-3 with 17 saves and 38 strikeouts over 44 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings in 48 relief appearances last season for the Royals and Nationals, who acquired him for three minor leaguers in June. While Washington hoped his addition to a bullpen that included All-Star Sean Doolittle and right-handers Ryan Madson and Brandon Kintzler would bolster their hopes for a playoff spot, the Nationals' season ended in disappointment and Herrera's on the DL.

Herrera, whose 100 mph fastball and high ground ball rates made him among the best setup men in baseball, helped Kansas City win the 2015 World Series -- and was one of the last players left from that title team still in Kansas City. He is 24-29 with 60 saves and a 2.82 ERA across 463 games in relief over eight seasons in the majors.