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**MEDIA CLIPS – July 10th, 2018**

**Inbox: Will Rockies be active at Trade Deadline?**

**Thomas Harding | MLB.com | Jul. 9th, 2018**

DENVER -- By winning eight of their last 10 games, the Rockies erased some of the damage of a difficult June. What's next?

Fans have questions. So, let's get to the Edward Jones Beat Reporter's Inbox.

Thomas Harding

@harding\_at\_mlb

· 9 Jul

#Rockies have a big series coming up with #Dbacks. All-Star selections are in, and the trade deadline is approaching.

Please tweet questions today for an @EdwardJones Beat Reporter's Inbox.

Elliot Goldbaum

@elgoldbaum

What are the odds of the Rockies being buyers at the trade deadline if after this week the standings are pretty close to where there are now (Rockies 3-4 games back)?

The Rockies have nine games until the All-Star break -- six of them (including a three-game set at Coors Field starting Tuesday) against the National League West-leading D-backs. With the Rockies 3 1/2 games back and the Dodgers ahead at just a game back, it's a tight race.

A little over a week ago, general manager Jeff Bridich said he wanted to assess the situation over the coming weeks, and nothing has changed. Preliminary canvassing with Major League sources confirmed that the Rockies are in waiting mode, and can afford to be, because the roster has begun playing as expected, and as it performed for much of April and May. Remember, the Rockies led the division through June 6.

When those decisions come, the Rockies have to be careful in a couple of areas.

Adding an experienced starter is a consideration, but the Rockies will have to seriously consider whether the price is worth the quality of the starters currently on the market. Also, the Rockies seem inclined to back their investments in the bullpen, which means righty Bryan Shaw and lefty Mike Dunn will have to bounce back from performance and injury issues.

If the Rockies stay in the race, I expect them to be a careful buyer.

Thomas Harding

@harding\_at\_mlb

Good one. More questions? <https://twitter.com/elgoldbaum/status/1016359159871070209> ...

John High

@JaltoJohn

Player payroll is open knowledge. Do u know how much \$ the Rockies spend on scouting, player development and analytics? Does anyone rate the organization's commitment to winning in this manner?

Excellent question. The short answer is, I don't know what they spend in comparison to other teams, but I can offer some observations.

The MLB Draft and Latin American scouting are important to the Rockies, and I see the resources in those areas. It's a little easier to rate the Draft, since the system is easier for fans to follow than the international signing period. But the Rockies were ahead of much of the sport when they opened a state-of-the-art complex in the Dominican Republic several years back.

A good move was increasing the investment in advanced scouting, by committing to in-person scouting with Chris Warren and Joe Little. In the past, much of the scouting of upcoming opponents was done by video.

The statistical analysis staff has been growing in recent years. It's an area where the Rockies have had to play catch-up. They have worked on the integration of the analysts with the scouting and field staffs, and manager Bud Black arrived with experience with analytics from his time in the Angels' front office.

Brian Kurtenbach

@BKinRocNY

@harding\_at\_mlb There has been noise linking the Rox to the Mets for pitching help. Why not the Rays re: Blake Snell? Under team control longer, similar stats to other ace pitchers. Seems like Snell is a great option.

Not sure how much noise there actually is. Anything can happen, but not much has. The feeling in the industry is it would take a lot for the Mets to depart with Jacob deGrom or Noah Syndergaard. And the Rockies have little motivation to part with their No. 1, 2 and 3 MLB Pipeline prospects in the organization -- infielder Brendan Rodgers, third baseman Colton Welker and righty pitcher Peter Lambert. It's possible Rodgers, Lambert and infielder-outfielder Garrett Hampson (No. 6) could help the big club this season.

Snell, as you mention, is under club control through 2022. But it would take a major package of prospects to obtain him, also.

**Rockies have been no match for the Diamondbacks this season. Nolan Arenado, Bud Black are embracing their chance to gain ground.**

**Patrick Saunders | DenverPost.com | July 10, 2018**

The Diamondbacks have the Rockies' number. The numbers say so.

The National League West division leaders are 5-1 against the Rockies this season. That, after going 11-8 last season, and then beating Colorado 11-8 in the NL wild-card game.

But the Rockies have a chance to turn the tables over the next two weeks. They host the D-backs for three games beginning Tuesday night, then play three more at Arizona from July 20-22, immediately after the all-star break. Colorado (46-44) enters Tuesday's game in third place in the NL West, 3 ½ games behind Arizona. The Dodgers are in second place, one game behind Arizona, entering their Monday night game at San Diego.

Arizona certainly has the respect and attention of Colorado manager Bud Black.

"They are a really well-balanced team," he said. "They pitch well, they play really good defense, they've got speed, they run the bases well, and they have some power."

The 2018 D-backs are certainly not great offensively, ranking 28th in the majors with a .231 team average, but they've outscored the Rockies 47-26 this season in head-to-head matchups, including a 29-14 edge when they swept three games at Coors Field, June 8-10.

"Offensively, they might not have that (high) team average, but for some reason, they seem to hit against us," Black said.

"We have to turn that around, for sure."

Arizona first baseman Paul Goldschmidt, selected to the All-Star Game for the sixth consecutive year, is a Rockies killer. He's hit .320 against them in his career, with a 1.010 OPS. At Coors Field, he's batted .326 with 14 home runs, 18 doubles and a 1.034 OPS in 221 at-bats.

On May 22, Goldschmidt was hitting just .198, but then he went on a tear in June with a slash line of .364/.460/.738, earning him player-of-the-month honors. During the three-game series at Coors Field, Goldschmidt punished the Rockies, batting 8-for-13 with four home runs, two doubles and nine RBIs.

Outfielders David Peralta (.368 average, .937 OPS) and A.J. Pollock (.344, .983) have also thrived at Coors Field.

But what has the attention of Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado's is Arizona's pitching. Its 3.48 team ERA is the best in the National League.

"I think their starting rotation is really good, really solid, although, unfortunately, they have had to deal with some injuries early," Arenado said. "They have a lot of dudes in that starting rotation — Patrick Corbin, (Shelby) Miller, (Zack) Greinke and (Zack) Godley. And then they have Archie Bradley in the bullpen. We know what he can do."

Corbin, the left-hander who has just selected to his second All-Star Game, is scheduled to start Tuesday's game. He's 6-3 with a 3.05 ERA and 1.01 WHIP over 18 starts this season. Overall, Corbin has done well against Colorado in his career, going 8-3 with a 4.68 ERA. Coors Field, however, is a different story. He's 3-2 with a 7.11 ERA and a 1.624 WHIP in LoDo.

"I like the way we are playing now," Arenado said. "Our pitching has been solid and we've been hitting up and down the order. We just have to keep it going, because we have a chance to do some good things before the break."

### **Rattled by rattlers**

The Rockies' search for their first NL West title has been hampered this season by their inability to best division-leading Arizona in head-to-head games. Here's a look at how Colorado has fared in its six games this season against the Diamondbacks.

Date	Location	Result	WP	LP
March 29	Chase Field	L, 8-2	Corbin	Gray
March 30	Chase Field	L, 9-8	Ray	Senzatela
March 31	Chase Field	W, 2-1	Shaw	Salas

June 8 Coors Field L, 9-4 Greinke Marquez

June 9 Coors Field L, 12-7 Bracho Shaw

June 10 Coors Field L, 8-3 Godley Freeland

### Looking ahead

Colorado Rockies starting pitcher Tyler Anderson ...John Minchillo, The Associated Press Colorado Rockies starting pitcher Tyler Anderson throws in the first inning of a baseball game against the Cincinnati Reds, Thursday, June 7, 2018, in Cincinnati.

Diamondbacks LHP Patrick Corbin (6-3, 3.05 ERA) at Rockies LHP Tyler Anderson (6-3, 3.90), 6:40 p.m., ATTRM

Anderson got shelled in his only other start against the Diamondbacks this year, when he surrendered seven runs in 2.1 innings en route to a 9-8 Rockies' loss at Chase Field. But the southpaw is coming off consecutive eight-inning, no-run outings against the Dodgers and Giants, and looks to continue that momentum to open the pivotal pre-all-star series against Arizona. Meanwhile, Corbin limited the Rockies to two runs in five-plus innings in Arizona's win in the season opener and has turned in three straight quality starts. DJ LeMahieu has his number, though, as the second baseman is batting .375 (15-for-40) with four homers and seven RBIs against the lefty. — Kyle Newman, The Denver Post

Wednesday: Diamondbacks RHP Shelby Miller (0-3, 9.00) at Rockies RHP German Márquez (7-8, 4.92), 6:40 p.m., ATTRM

Thursday: Diamondbacks RHP Zack Godley (10-6, 4.85) at Rockies LHP Kyle Freeland (8-6, 3.18), no T.V.

Friday: Mariners LHP James Paxton (8-3, 3.49) at Rockies RHP Antonio Senzatela (3-2, 5.34), 6:40 p.m., ATTRM

## **Why exactly was Jon Gray sent to Triple-A? The answer is simple, but the fix is complicated**

**Nick Groke | TheAthletic.com | July 9, 2018**

SEATTLE — The puzzling descent of Jon Gray into minor-league purgatory reset the Rockies rotation like a hard reboot. Suddenly, a four-man rotation is pitching like a second coming of the '90s-era Braves.

Over the Rockies' 10 games through a 5-1 victory over the Mariners on Saturday, their pitching rotation had a 1.71 ERA. Remove the start that sent Gray to Triple-A and an injury-shortened Chad Bettis outing, and that ERA was 0.80 over eight games.

Gray, meanwhile, is lumbering through Albuquerque with the Triple-A Isotopes. His demotion is the strangest swerve in a yo-yo season for the suddenly streaking Rockies, a sharp right turn in the wrong direction by the flame-throwing torch-bearer of Rockies pitching.

He is a No. 3 overall pick, a strikeout machine, the right arm entrusted with the future of a franchise. And Gray is nowhere in sight.

"Talking to Jon, there are times he feels uncomfortable when he's out there," Colorado manager Bud Black said.

The exact problem with Gray goes beyond the black-and-white. The reason for his disappearance, to get him out of the spotlight, as the Rockies put it, is a case of a talented pitcher loaded with "stuff" but nowhere to put it. He can blow by the best hitters in the game with a 98 mph fastball and a slider that drops off the table, but at times, Gray cannot get out of his own way.

His problem is simple in concept, but it is not easy to figure out.

"I need to throw every ball with intent," Gray said. But what does that mean, really? And does he know?

As The Ringer pointed out in a recent statistical breakdown of Gray's 2018 season, no other pitcher in baseball history has as wide a disparity between his traditional numbers and his advanced metrics.

Take, for instance, Gray's ERA vs. his park-adjusted Fielding Independent Pitching. As a measure, xFIP strips away all the junk that a pitcher is not responsible for (how well the defense plays behind him, etc.) and measures everything he can control (strikeouts, walks, home runs, etc.).

Here were the top 10 pitchers in baseball through Sunday, sorted by xFIP, according to Fangraphs (minimum 90 innings pitched):

Pitcher	xFIP	ERA
Chris Sale, BOS	2.50	2.36
Patrick Corbin, ARI	2.65	3.05
Jacob deGrom, NYM	2.67	1.79
Jon Gray, COL	2.81	5.77
Corey Kluber, CLE	2.87	2.45
Luis Severino, NYY	2.99	2.12
Max Scherzer, WAS	2.99	2.33
James Paxton, SEA	3.00	3.49
Trevor Bauer, CLE	3.02	2.45
Charlie Morton, HOU	3.05	2.83

The two pitchers who will likely start the All-Star Game next week for the National and American Leagues, Max Scherzer and Luis Severino, both look up at Gray's xFIP. But only one of those three is in Triple-A right now. That's Gray.

His numbers are boosted by a high strikeout total and a low walk rate, both positive attributes. And he often falls victim to bad luck, with a league-high .386 BABIP (batting average on balls in play), meaning Coors Field can wreck him with lazy bloop singles and doubles.

But his bad luck can be self-induced. Gray falls apart at times when games get tight.

“You can look at Jon’s strikeout totals, they’re top 10 in the league,” Black said. “But there have been some frustrating moments for him. Some of the other markers are not what we need right now in a big-league game.”

Here is Gray’s strikeout-to-walk ratio at different degrees of difficulty during a game, according to Baseball Reference:

Gray situation K/BB

Low leverage 6.38

Medium leverage 4.75

High leverage 1.22

Gray is great at whipping through the early parts of games, when he can pitch out of his windup without the stress of runners on base. But pull a thread, and he unravels.

“Your approach with runners on base should be a little different than when you face the leadoff hitter,” said Mark Wiley, the Rockies’ director of pitching.

Over four seasons, Gray has flashed the brilliance of a fastball-slider combination that runs among the elite offerings in baseball, a one-two punch that can confound hitters like a card trick. His career-best game, a nine-inning shutout of the Padres at Coors Field in 2016, saw him strike out 16 batters with no walks and just four hits.

His final two strikeouts were grade-A Gray, with a 96-mph fastball that whiffed Adam Rosales and a 91-mph slider that shut down Ryan Schimpf.

His stuff — that vague baseball-specific term that lifers use to mean raw ability — can be overpowering. But his acumen at times can wander off track.

On Sunday in his second game at Triple-A, Gray threw 102 pitches over just 4 2/3 innings against the Tacoma Rainiers, and just 56 for strikes. He struck out seven, sure, but eight runners reached base.

To state it simply, it seems at times that Gray can control his pitches, but not command them.

“Sometimes, with a lot of guys in the minor leagues, we identify pitchers who have a big strikeout and they don’t walk anybody, but they’ll give up a big inning,” Wiley said. “It’s like they can’t stop the bleeding because they haven’t figured out that part of it yet.”

For years, since his standout time at the University of Oklahoma, Gray got by on stuff, overwhelming batters who could not keep up with his fastball or identify his slider. It often did not matter where in the strike zone he threw a pitch. They were strikes and that worked on its own.

At the big leagues, where experienced hitters have separated themselves on an ability to distinguish pitches a half-inch inside the black of home plate and those a half-inch out, Gray at times has not pitched to specific zones within the strike zone.

“Jon throws strikes. But he doesn’t command the zone with his fastball like Tyler Anderson does, or Chad Bettis,” Black said. “Quality strikes. That’s what Jon needs. He has stuff, with his velocity and a powerful slider. He can make a guy look foolish on three pitches and then fall behind 3-1 and throw a fastball over the middle of the plate that gets hit.”

In the game that led to Gray’s demotion, a 9-8 Rockies victory at San Francisco on June 28, he lasted just four innings. He struck out seven, but gave up five runs.

He also threw with a noticeable dip in velocity, his fastball running 3-4 mph slower than his 97 mph average. That was the beginning of his attempts at a correction. He was trying to find command at the expense of letting his fastball rip.

“It’s down a little bit,” Gray said that day. “But then again, a good pitch is a good pitch. I’m just focused on getting to the bottom of the zone.”

Gray’s backslide to the minors found some complications. How can he learn without a challenge? If he was getting by on raw talent in college, wouldn’t facing minor-leaguers put him in the same situation?

The Rockies were content to wait — to a point. But by the end of June, after falling eight game back in the NL West, they could not afford any more leeway for Gray to find his groove.

“We felt that this was the right time to get Jon to Triple-A to work on some things,” Black said. “Not so much mechanically, but mentally, and for him to realize some inconsistencies that have happened. We have to get that straightened out.”

Unfortunately, the best examples for Gray’s way back are in Colorado. Kyle Freeland and Tyler Anderson, the Rockies’ two best pitchers this season, do not possess the flaming fastball that Gray does. But they direct pitches to all parts of the strike zone and manage an inning, even late into games.

Freeland twice in the past week matched against an opposing team’s ace, leading the Rockies to victories over Madison Bumgarner and the Giants and James Paxton and the Mariners. Anderson’s past two outings each went eight innings, with no runs allowed. In and out of Coors Field.

“Keep the ball down when you go away. Keep the ball in when you go up,” Black said, explaining the power of precision.

Compare Gray’s heatmap this season, where his pitches landed, to Freeland’s, who attacks hitters outside the middle of the zone, depending on a batter’s tendency. Freeland lives on the black border around the white of home plate (from Fangraphs):

With Gray in Triple-A, the Rockies are putting a critical eye on his pitches, ignoring basic results for the quality of the offering. The differences are minute, fractions of the 17 inch-wide home plate. They want to see him controlling the strike zone and throwing a correct pitch, by type or location, at the true moment.

He is learning, again, to be a pitcher.

“Jon has stuff that not a lot of people have,” Colorado catcher Tony Wolters said. “He just needs to believe it. Baseball is hard. You get beat up. And it can spiral real quick and for a long time.

“This is a good chance for Jon to really feel it, so he can stop thinking about mechanics and just go pitch. He’s our guy. He has to know that,” Wolters added. “This time is for him to take a deep breath and work and get back to the feeling of, ‘Hey, I can dominate every hitter.’ ”

## **Eliminate the fan vote and let players determine All-Star rosters**

**Justin Michael | MileHighSports.com | July 9, 2018**

The 2018 MLB All-Star Game rosters were announced Sunday evening, and among the notable snubs were Rockies pitchers Kyle Freeland and Adam Ottavino.

One might assume that a national narrative that has punished Colorado players for years by diminishing their accomplishments at the plate, would mean that Rockies pitchers would receive extra credit for their successes. But that simply is not the case, as we have seen Rockies pitchers get overlooked time and time again by baseball writers and fans around the country.

Charlie Blackmon, Nolan Arenado and Trevor Story all will be representing the NL in Washington D.C. on July 17, so there is reason for Rockies fans to be excited for the annual mid-summer classic but it is truly a shame that Freeland and Ottavino will not be making the trip.

Admittedly, I was prepared for the possibility of Blackmon or Story potentially being snubbed, but I certainly did not anticipate the most dominant reliever in all of baseball (Ottavino) being left off the NL roster and feel there is an equally strong case that Freeland should be an all-star as well.

What I foolishly failed to consider was the selection process and how the fan vote does not give a damn about who most deserves to represent each league. As we see in February each year with the NBA All-Star Game and every July in Major League Baseball, when you let the fans determine the majority of the rosters, the outcome is going to be a popularity contest.

If the rosters were determined solely by the players, there is no way that Ottavino would have been left off the roster by his peers.

Through the first half of the 2018 season, Ottavino has been virtually unhittable and the proof is in the numbers. In 37 relief appearances, Ottavino has logged 40 innings, struck out 63 and only given up 21 hits and eight runs. Those are all-

star numbers and if you have any qualms about the validity of that statement, just ask any of Ottavino's strikeout victims whether Adam should be representing the NL or not.

I understand the intended purpose of the fan vote. It makes the public feel special by allowing their voices be heard. When it means some of the most deserving players do not get to participate in the All-Star Game though, as a baseball fan, I do not have much interest in that game.

Ultimately the only thing that is actually lost is pride, considering the game no longer determines which league gets home field advantage in the World Series, but if we are still going to have the event every year, we should at least let players determine who is most deserving. It only seems fair, considering it is the players' livelihoods on the line.

## **Buy, Mortimer! Buy**

**Doug Ottewill | MileHighSports.com | July 9, 2018**

So what. The Rockies were Sweepless in Seattle. But they did swipe two-of-three.

They did sweep the Giants. And they did swipe two-of-three from the Dodgers.

All told, the Rockies – who were practically written off for dead about two weeks ago – have won eight of their last 10. There's not a hole in a lineup that features three All-Stars (Nolan Arenado, who will start at third base, center fielder Charlie Blackmon and shortstop Trevor Story). Heck, since June, even the oft-criticized Ian Desmond is hitting .247 with eight home runs (sounds like a first baseman, doesn't it?).

The starting pitching suddenly looks like the salty staff of a year ago; before Sunday's loss in Seattle, the Rockies starting pitchers posted a 1.10 ERA. During that eight-game stretch, the starters totalled 51 innings pitched and gave up only seven runs. And the bullpen has pulled its weight of late, too. Wade Davis has picked up four saves in his last four chances, and was flawless Saturday night while protecting the Rockies' 5-1 lead in the ninth.

Doesn't this sound a lot like the team we all thought the Rockies had back in March?

Good hitting, a respectable one-through-five pitching staff, and a bolstered bullpen with a should-be dominant closer.

That's exactly what we thought then – and that's exactly what the Rockies have been of late.

The Rox currently sit in third place in the NL West, but the race is far from over. Arizona possesses a four-game lead over Colorado, but the make-or-break point of the season could be on the horizon, though, as Arizona will play Colorado in six of its next nine games. If anything, the impending stretch could keep things interesting.

Why not buy?

In the Rockies' 26-year existence, the playoffs aren't exactly the norm. Four times. That's it. That's all Rockies fans can boast for the past quarter century.

This team, despite its ups-and-downs this season, is what we thought they were (\*Dennis Green voice): Pretty damn good. Playoff good. Why not embrace that?

If the Rockies don't go too nuts in terms of acquisitions prior to the July 31 trade deadline, that's okay. We can hope they try to improve, because well, they're a team capable of making the playoffs. They're also not a team that looks like a world champion. They're not the 2017 Dodgers, so it's key for GM Jeff Bridich not to veer too far off the course in search of a championship. Bridich has built an excellent farm system and it should remain intact; only a once in a lifetime trade opportunity (like Jacob deGrom, who appears to be staying with the Mets, or possibly Jose Abreu) should merit consideration of moving someone like farm system star shortstop Brendan Rodgers (and even that's debatable without a long-term plan in place for the new acquisition).

There are other names – not blockbuster names – that could suffice without having to undo some of Bridich's handwork on the farm: Maybe add a lefty like J.A. Happ. At first base, the urgency of late May has subsided greatly; Desmond is playing as well or better than plenty of the first basemen whose names are tied to the deadline. Adding someone like Abreu would be nice, no doubt, but bringing in another option could be handled more cautiously.

Being buyers as August looms not only means the Rockies are betting on themselves, it's a move that may or may not be meaningful to Nolan Arenado, who openly expressed his frustration with losing prior to the Rockies most recent hot streak. If there's a shot in hell at signing Arenado, it will be because he believes the organization both can win, and is willing to gamble on winning. Signing Arenado to a monster contract may not be in the cards, but if Bridich wants to at least keep that a possibility, going all in this summer wouldn't be the worst move, even it results in missing the playoffs. Does Arenado care if Brendan Rodgers is a Rockie in 2020? Perhaps, but probably not; Trevor Story is playing better than the NL's All-Star starting shortstop Brandon Crawford (and it's not really even close).

Baseball is a fickle game. And the Rockies are a fickle team. As followers of the local nine, all we can ask – generally – is for meaningful baseball in August.

Thus, buy, Mortimer. Buy.

## **ROCKIES A Road Paved In Perseverance: The story of Rockies rising star Josh Fuentes**

**Patrick Lyons | BSNDenver.com | July 9, 2018**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM – The Colorado Rockies began their 2018 season without making a single 25-man roster transaction until April 22nd, when they demoted Mike Tauchman and promoted outfielders David Dahl and Noel Cuevas to replace the injured Carlos Gonzalez and suspended Gerardo Parra.

Since that day, many corresponding promotion/demotion transactions transpired, shuffling players along the Interstate-25 corridor between Denver and the Rockies Triple-A affiliate in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Sixteen such players have been shuttled between those two rosters, leaving only three players on the 40-man yet to receive the call to Colorado. Some names of these former Isotopes are more familiar than others, but all have featured in a Rockies box score.

Cuevas, Dahl, Tauchman, Harrison Musgrave, Brooks Pounders, Scott Oberg, Daniel Castro, Jeff Hoffman, Ryan McMahon, Antonio Senzatela, Pat Valaika, Sam Howard, Jerry Vasto, Tom Murphy, Yency Almonte, and now Jon Gray.

And yet, perhaps the best player to appear in an Albuquerque Isotopes uniform this season has rarely been mentioned in regards to a call-up by the Rockies.

A scan of the organization's Top 30 prospect lists will not display his name. Nor will a thorough review of their draft picks or trade acquisitions.

He is often overlooked and underrated.

Even in his own family, he's not usually the first player mentioned.

His name is Josh Fuentes.

His story is one of dedication and perseverance.

## **STARTING OUT**

Raised in Southern California by a baseball-loving family, Fuentes played at Rancho Santa Margarita Little League as a youngster. His aspirations of playing in the majors were merely a dream as he was never deemed a supremely talented amateur like others from his area.

“I made one (All-Star team). I wasn’t very good,” he told BSN Denver. “I knew I could play, but it didn’t pan out like that.”

He stayed with baseball as a teenager at Trabuco Hills High School, who helped develop former Mustangs and future major leaguers Nick Punto and Andrew Romine on their way towards being drafted by the Phillies and Angels, respectively.

Fuentes wanted to continue playing baseball, but options were limited. He wasn’t afforded the option to play at a major Division I school like Arizona State University, where Romine attended, but he was able to continue playing baseball at nearby Saddleback College like fellow infielder Punto.

“I was never on anyone’s radar or anything like that,” says Fuentes. “I think it helped me.”

Fuentes was going to forge his own path on the belief that his abilities were good enough with or without mention of his family.

“I want to give my testimony to kids that you don’t have to do all this stuff and spend all this money,” he said. “If you can play and if you play in front of the right people, you have a shot.”

His opportunity at Saddleback College came in the form of 41 games in 2013. He led the team in games played, at-bats, hits, runs and runs batted in. His aspirations were turning into hope.

While Gauchos teammates had opportunities to transfer to Division I schools like UC Irvine, Hawaii and Indiana State, Fuentes went to the small NAIA school Missouri Baptist University located in St. Louis.

It would be one of many make-or-break moments for Fuentes in his baseball career.

“It was different. In Orange County, you get 75 degrees all year round. Going (to St. Louis) in the winter, it’s like 10 degrees. You’re freezing. I’ve got no locker room. There’s hardly anyone at the game. There are no scouts there. I think it was good for me at the time. I was miserable. Looking back, it showed, ‘Hey, do I want to play this game? This is a factor. If you can make it through this and you can grind your way through this, you can make it through the minor leagues and hopefully the major leagues.’ That helped me grow up and really appreciate the game.”

At Missouri Baptist University, Fuentes led the team in games played, at-bats, and runs, but his 60-1 at-bats-to-homer ratio was worst among Spartans’ starters. This lack of power for the 20-year-old corner infielder was a concern for scouts and major league teams.

Though eligible for the 2014 MLB Draft, Josh Fuentes never heard his name called after 1,215 selections were made over 40 rounds.

## **THE NEXT MOVES**

Fuentes packed up his things and traveled east to ply his trade in a summer collegiate league in North Carolina for the Edenton Steamers of the Coastal Plains League.

“I was going to NC for the summer to make the best of it. I was there for like a week. I was doing terrible. And I got a call (from the Rockies) saying, ‘Hey, we’re thinking about signing you as a free agent, so just wait around.’ I went 0-for-20 up to that point and that game, I had like four hits. That night, after the game, (the scout) called and said, ‘We’re going to sign you.’ It was awesome. Not as great as hearing my name called on (Draft day), but it was one of the best moments of my life.”

Fuentes signed that June in 2014 and started his professional career with the Tri-City Dust Devils, then the Rockies Low-A affiliate. Located 200 miles southeast of Seattle, Washington, Fuentes played 41 games, often in front of small crowds at Gesa Stadium with a capacity of fewer than 4,000 seats, far from the glamour of the major leagues.

After his first season as a professional, Fuentes had just one home run to his name in 150 at-bats. Though his OPS of .662 didn't jump off the page, it was only slightly below the team average and established him as a player with abilities.

In 2015, Fuentes was given the opportunity to play ball for a full season in Low-A Asheville. The results of his first full-season were relatively good, yet similar to his previous year as Fuentes struggled to hit for extra bases. His slugging percentage improved from .327 to .383, yet he was still below the team average in on-base plus slugging.

Fuentes saw a lot of positives in his first full-season, but the Rockies felt he needed to show more in order to deserve a promotion to High-A Modesto. It would be a make or break moment for Fuentes, one of several he'd work his way through.

"My first year in Asheville, I did ok," he remembers. "I thought I was going to be moved up. I was kind of an older guy. So, to be back there and being older than everyone else, it kind of hurt a little bit. It showed. My first month I was batting something like .067. At some point, I either adjust or I'm done playing. I found it within myself. I talked with some coaches. I talked with my family and they said, 'Hey if this is what you want to do, you got to make an adjustment and work.' And that's what I did. I got an opportunity. Someone got hurt. I had an unbelievable week. I got moved up (to Modesto). It just went from there. It's just a testament of what I've been through and what I continue to go through. It's definitely made me a better ballplayer and a better person."

Fuentes would continue to play well in 2016 during his time in the California League with the Modesto Nuts, putting together a slash line of career highs: .278/.342/.450. For the season, he'd collect 46 extra base hits and drive in 64 runs during 384 at-bats.

He was proving doubters wrong at the plate and starting to gain some notoriety for his stellar defense.

## **DEFENDING HIS POSITION**

Those analyzing Fuentes' statistics during his early seasons as a professional may not be overwhelmed by his offensive output. For Fuentes, even when he wasn't producing gaudy numbers at the plate, he was focused on contributing to his club's wins on the defensive side.

“That’s what I try to do: help my pitcher’s out. And give the fans something to cheer about. Hitting, I want to work on hitting, but you can’t really control it. You line out and you’re out. Hit a dribbler and you get on base. For me, defense is something I can control on a pitch-by-pitch basis. That’s what I try to do.”

Defensive metrics in the minor leagues are hard to come by but watch any Isotopes game on MiLB.tv and you’re certain to see him make a dazzling defensive play on any day of the week.

Teammates of Fuentes have noticed his prowess in the field, too. In one particular game in early May, shortstop Shawn O’Malley got to witness just how skilled Fuentes can be defensively.

“My jaw dropped like, ‘Oh my gosh, is this guy serious right now?’ I was speechless,” O’Malley said. “You know, it was exciting. He makes those plays look easy.”

This is where the most comparisons are made between Josh and his cousins.

“I take pride in my defense. A little bit has to do with how I was raised. The family thing, everyone knows about that.”

To many Colorado Rockies fans, Fuentes is the younger cousin of superstar Nolan Arenado.

Though they emanate from the same family, their journeys have been nothing alike.

“Some of my antics may be the same, but I got to be Josh Fuentes, not Nolan’s cousin.”

## **IN THE SHADOW**

The biggest misconception about Fuentes is that his path has been the same as Arenado, yet with lesser success. Nolan is 27-years-old, entering his 6th season in the majors, while Josh is just 25 and has yet to make his major league debut.

“I never played travel ball. It was always just Little League. Not doing Perfect Game.”

Nolan was highly recruited out of high school and was selected 59th overall in the 2009 draft. Josh went to a local community college and went undrafted in 2014.

“I was thinking that coming in as a free agent, not getting at-bats and games. But when I did, I took advantage and worked hard. I was there taking ground balls, every day, even when I was playing, hitting after, doing all that stuff. I knew I could play. I just needed an opportunity and I got a few and made the most of them.”

Even his cousin Jonah Arenado, San Francisco Giants prospect, has witnessed the differences between Josh and Nolan.

“He’s definitely had a tough road,” says Arenado. “It’s the business part of baseball. When you’re not a top rounder or signed, it’s kind of a shorter leash, but you definitely have to prove yourself right away. And he definitely did that.”

As difficult as the comparisons with Nolan can be for Josh, he’s got one thing going for him: his own name. Nolan’s brother, Jonah of the Richmond Flying Squirrels, cannot escape the wake of his All-Star sibling.

“For (Jonah), he gets a lot of comparisons. Sometimes, he falls in that trap of ‘Hey, you’re Nolan’s brother. You’ve got to do everything Nolan does.’ I was doing that my first year, trying to be like him and hit like him. I think it took me to High-A, late in the season, when I said, ‘I’ve got to be myself and I gotta do what I’ve gotta do.’ Jonah, he’s in Double-A, he’s had a couple good years. He’ll be alright, but it’s definitely tough to be in that shadow, especially because we’re so close and we’re always together. He’ll figure it out. You’ve just got to be yourself and whatever happens, happens.”

After that late-season promotion to Modesto in 2016, Fuentes’ fate finally began to change. And he was making a name for himself, one that did not include the words “Nolan’s cousin.”

## **PUSHING FORWARD**

Fuentes began the 2017 season with a promotion to Double-A Hartford. As the Yard Goats starting third baseman, Fuentes hit .307 and improved his home run totals again (15) as well as his runs batted in (72). He was a key member of a club that opened the brand new \$71 million Dunkin Donuts Park in downtown Hartford.

At the end of the season, he was named the top third baseman for the Eastern League All-Star Team, ahead of such highly-touted prospects as Miguel Andujar, Rafael Devers and Michael Chavis.

“I was never even close to being an All-Star in any of the other years,” he says. “To beat a guy like (Devers) was awesome and that solidified to me that I can play in the big leagues and I can play with these guys.”

If the praise of such an award might go to his head, Fuentes had a good perspective to deal with level of success.

“You gotta keep it rolling and that’s what I’ve been doing. Some guys, they either make the All-Star Team or have a good year and they slow it down and think, ‘I’ve got this.’ In baseball, you have a good year; and the next year, you can have a bad year. I know from Nolan telling me, ‘Hey, every year you gotta get better and find something to get better at.’ And that’s what I’ve been trying to do.”

The dedication to his craft went past the end of the regular season. Even after a career year, Fuentes continued to focus on his development by traveling south of the border to play in the Mexican Pacific Winter League. When his 2017 calendar completed Fuentes had played in 168 regular season games, a statistic that doesn’t even include many more games in Spring Training.

“It’s different (in Mexico). The only way I can think of it: it’s a party. The most serious party you’ve ever been to. But, it’s all about winning. And it kind of gives you a big league feel. In the minor leagues, you obviously want to win here and it’s important, but the most important thing is developing your players. In Mexico, you’ve got to win now. I know a lot of guys on my team, American players, if they didn’t do good the first month, they sent them home. There was pressure. I kind of felt it was getting me ready for higher levels.”

## **PERSISTING TO PLAY**

In good times and in bad, Fuentes has battled and pushed through to get to the next level. Complacency is not a word in his vocabulary. But there is one word that’s frequently used around Fuentes household.

“Perseverance. My mom would always say that every time I had a bad game or bad week. I’d get upset. You have a bad at-bat, but you have to get out there and keep going. I think that’s huge for me. If I have a bad at-bat – my first, second, or third – then the fourth one, this is it. This is the only at-bat that matters.”

Confidant and cousin Jonah Arenado has seen the same thing.

“He’s got a really good mindset and I think that’s why he’s so good. He’s got the mindset where he doesn’t look too far into things, which, obviously, in baseball, you can start digging in and starting getting too mental about things and he does a good job of going out there and being happy he’s out there and that’s what’s helped him. That’s why he’s having such success. I admire that.”

With this sense of perseverance, Fuentes has come a long way from that kid in Rancho Santa Margarita Little League who was used to seeing his older cousin garner all the accolades.

“I never got too many opportunities, but when I did I took advantage of them. And to be able to kind of learn. A lot of guys, especially guys in my draft class; it may not have panned out for them, maybe they thought they were going to coast it. For me that edge of always trying to prove someone wrong and always trying to work and get better and think it’s helped me.”

The growth is not lost on coaches and managers within the Rockies system.

Warren Schaeffer, who currently manages the Double-A affiliate Hartford Yard Goats, has seen Fuentes at different levels along the way and can’t stop singing his praises.

“I saw him (at Tri-City). He got a shot. He played well. I managed him at Asheville. The next year, he had to work his way in. He finally got a shot. Hit in the middle of the lineup. Played well. The next year, came back to me at Asheville. Got a shot. Didn’t make the next level. Came back. And guys take that a little bit hard. He raked. Worked his way to the next level. He was the player of the month here in August in Double-A. He raked. Now he’s in Triple-A doing really good. Hitting 3-hole, 4-hole every night. I mean, the kid is a great story. He’s a great story. He plays so hard and works so hard and wants nothing but the ultimate goal.”

Isotopes manager Glenallen Hill is another in the organization that values Fuentes' abilities.

"He's not underrated to us. He brings a style that's unique to himself. He's a very loose guy. He plays with a lot of rhythm in his head and his preparation. And so far, he's taken advantage of the opportunities at a higher level. The key is for him to be consistent. He's showing good signs of that early. He's very good with runners in scoring position."

## **ONE STEP AWAY**

The 2018 season for Josh Fuentes has been incredibly successful. He's among the Pacific Coast League leaders in hits, triples, and runs batted in. Not bad for your first go-round at Triple-A.

At the time of posting, Fuentes is tied for the most triples (10) and hits (109) in all of the minors. He is also the only player in the minor leagues with nine or more doubles, triples and home runs.

He's on pace for career highs in every conceivable category and was even named as a reserve to the Pacific Coast League All-Star Team alongside several top 100 prospects.

"To be in Triple-A? If you asked me in college, 'Hey you're going to be in Triple-A in four or five years', I would have thought you were crazy. At one point, I was like, 'Man, I gotta start looking for a job.' To be here is truly humbling. But it makes me work even more because I'm so close."

Even now, on the doorstep of the majors, Fuentes doesn't have a clear path ahead. With the Colorado Rockies 40-man roster packed with 37 players with MLB service time and his own relative blocking him at third base, Fuentes will need to persevere even more to break through and earn a roster spot in the majors.

But Fuentes remains undeterred and is willing to play anywhere in the infield if it means a chance at making it to the big show.

“I played shortstop in high school and college. Shortstop and second base. I know I can play there. I just need an opportunity. First is great, I like first. I like third because you can make more plays. I like to make plays. At first, you just stand there and catch it. I’m comfortable at first, third, or second or short.”

With unmatched perseverance and on the verge of the big leagues, he’s knocking on the door of opportunity. And the Rockies may need to let him in.

## **Rockies Film Room: The breeding of an All-Star shortstop**

**Rich Allen | BSNDenver.com | July 10, 2018**

It's a simple, if not overplayed, Hollywood trope.

It may be a couple years overdue, but Trevor Story is an All-Star.

A story of promise, then adversity and, finally, vindication. For Story, his plotline went from rookie sensation and snubbing to sophomore bust and now he is on his way to Washington, D.C. as one of three Rockies representing the game's best. In 2016, Story was a notable exemption from the All-Star Game, falling in the Final Vote balloting despite his record-setting rookie campaign, OPS'ing above .900. Then a torn ligament in his thumb on July 30 ended his season altogether. When he returned the next year, he wasn't the same player. His OBP dropped to nearly .300 and he led baseball with 191 strikeouts.

Now, his batting average is just 20 points short of that OBP mark from last season, and his hard-hit rate is more than 7 percent higher than the rest of the MLB. So, what facilitated this change and made Story a player recognizable among his peers as one of the best in the league.

### **THE DISCIPLINE ADJUSTMENT**

The biggest change for Story thus far has been a reduced strikeout rate. While he's still walking back to the bench every 3.99 plate appearances, well below the MLB rate of 4.47 PA's per K, it's more than a full point higher than his 2.91 mark from 2017.

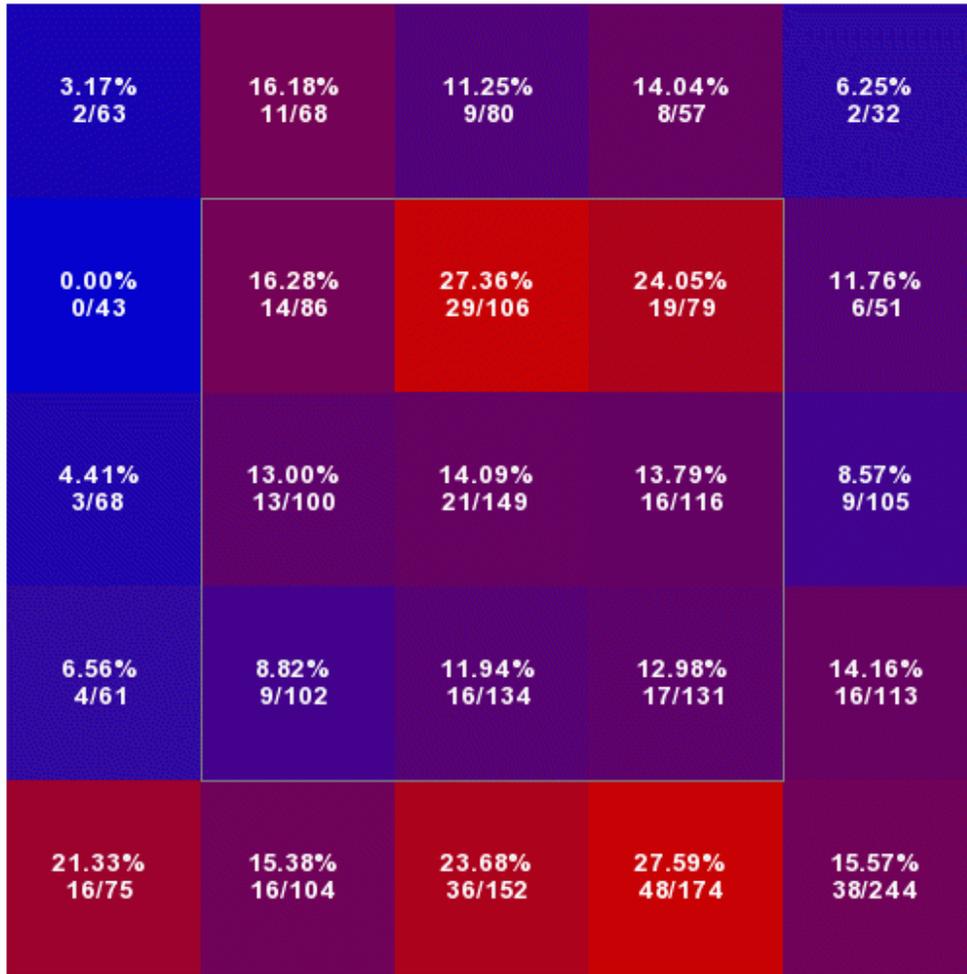
As the adage goes, put the ball in play and good things will happen.

But for Story, the issue was a massive hole in his swing on the low and away part of the plate, particularly chasing pitches offspeed out of the zone:

## Trevor Story: Percentage Whiffs

From 01/01/2017 to 01/01/2018 | All Competition Levels

From the Catcher's POV: Against RHP & LHP



BrooksBaseball.net

Credit: brooksbaseball.net

While Story punished pitches that found the strike zone, hitting those pitches to the tune of a meteoric .474 average, the ground ball percentage on those he put in play were 52 percent, suggesting some luck finding the hole in between first and second or down the line, or pulling them.

But it came down to being too aggressive on those pitches, chasing any pitch below the zone more than half of the time:

## Trevor Story: Percentage Swings/Pitch

From 01/01/2017 to 01/01/2018 | All Competition Levels

From the Catcher's POV: Against RHP & LHP

6.35% 4/63	27.94% 19/68	22.50% 18/80	21.05% 12/57	9.38% 3/32
25.58% 11/43	63.95% 55/86	73.58% 78/106	69.62% 55/79	21.57% 11/51
36.76% 25/68	67.00% 67/100	82.55% 123/149	65.52% 76/116	33.33% 35/105
52.46% 32/61	60.78% 62/102	65.67% 88/134	57.25% 75/131	32.74% 37/113
28.00% 21/75	48.08% 50/104	59.21% 90/152	50.00% 87/174	22.54% 55/244

BrooksBaseball.net

Credit: brooksbaseball.net

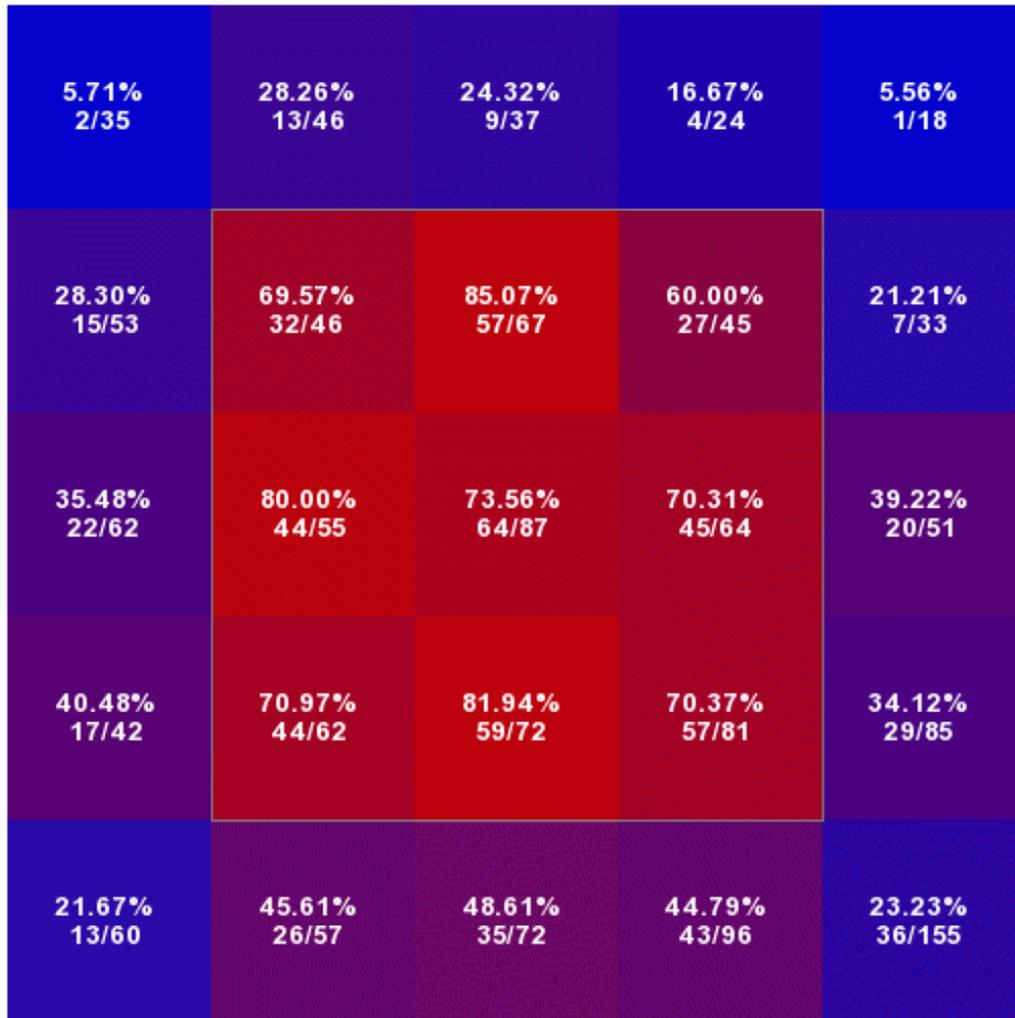
Not only would he swing, but often he'd miss, as breaking pitches low and away are the hardest to put a bat upon:

But this year, he's tightened up his approach to an extent:

## Trevor Story: Percentage Swings/Pitch

From 01/01/2018 to 01/01/2019 | All Competition Levels

From the Catcher's POV: Against RHP & LHP



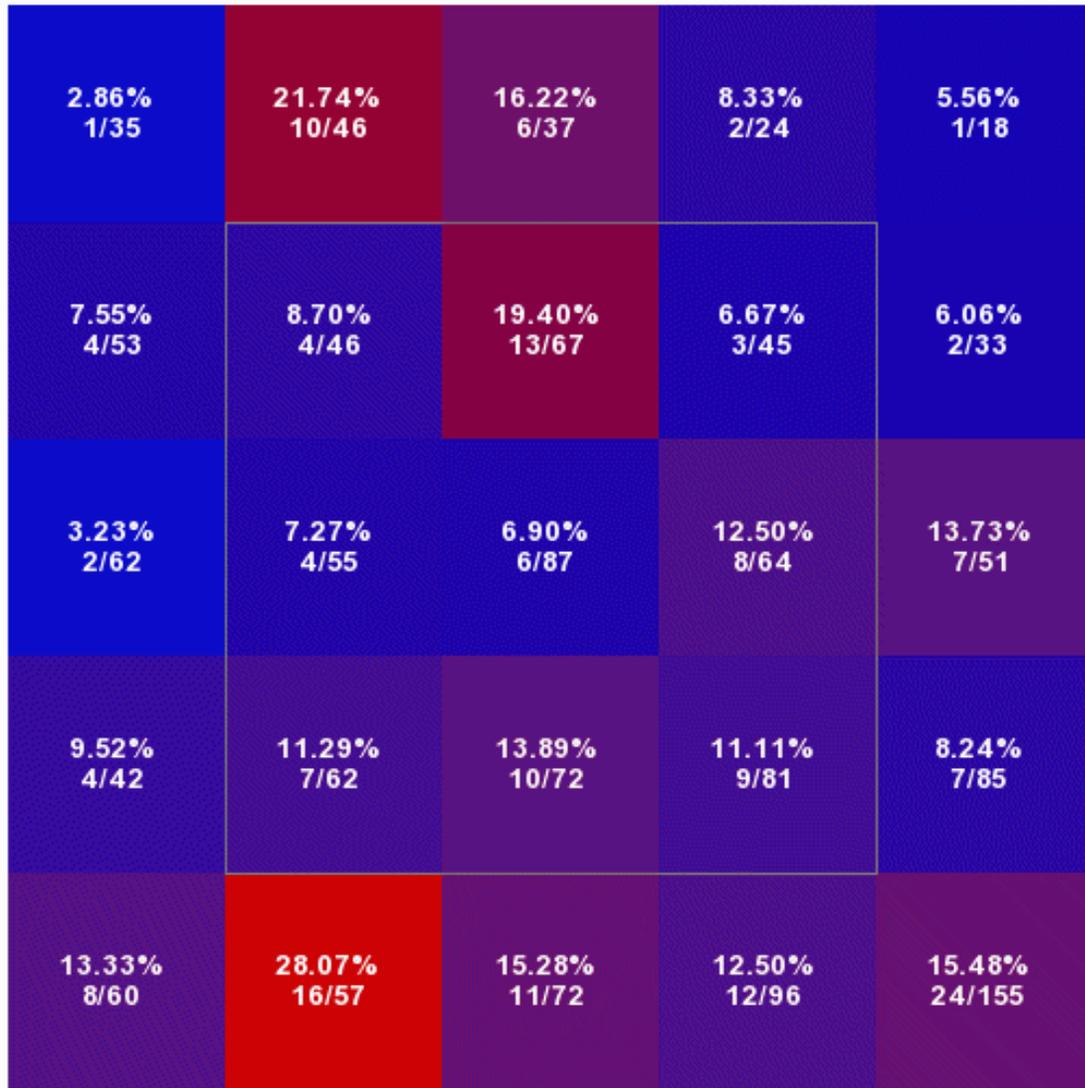
BrooksBaseball.net

Notice how all of his swing percentages outside the strike zone have dropped except for off the outside edge. None are huge decreases and are still elevated from other MLB players, but the difference is he's now putting the bat on those more, and the rest of the zone overall:

## Trevor Story: Percentage Whiffs

From 01/01/2018 to 01/01/2019 | All Competition Levels

From the Catcher's POV: Against RHP & LHP



BrooksBaseball.net

Credit: brooksbaseball.net

### IT COMES WITH TIME

My conclusion is that Story is simply becoming better at pitch recognition and knowing what to do with each one. As he closes in on his 1,500th MLB plate appearance perhaps this season, it's natural to become more comfortable and see what exactly is coming out of the pitcher's hand.

This can be seen in his batted-ball profile to right field, in which his hard-hit rate has jumped 6 percent from 2017, resulting a batting average leap from .289 to an astounding .412. His hard contact rate up the middle and the other way is 46 percent, 14 higher than the rest of the league. He's learning to take what the pitcher is giving him and hit it hard. Look at this away corner pitch from Jon Lester. It is a fastball, granted, but Story knows that he still needs to wait a little longer and get the barrel behind the ball, instead of pull it:

Aside from driving it up the middle, which is impressive enough, Story gets that pitch in a tough location to travel 380 feet with an exit velocity above 100 mph. It's just an impressive piece of hitting that we didn't see from him in previous years. Here's another example, in which the pitch is very much down the heart of the plate, but Story recognizes early that it's going to be a slider:

Seeing that it's going to break away from him, even down the heart that he could easily extend upon, he anticipates the break and is able to sit back and drive the ball to the wall the other way.

But this is where pitch recognition comes in. It would be one thing if Story was taking a DJ LeMahieu approach and setting up to drive the ball the other way, but that's not the case. Here's his complete batted ball profile from each season, from FanGraphs.com:

Pull%	Cent%	Oppo%
40.0%	33.1%	26.9%
38.3%	37.4%	24.3%
44.3%	35.0%	20.7%

Story, despite having success going the other way, is actually doing so \*less\* than he ever has before. When he pulls the ball, he's hitting .440, with 11 of his 16 home runs this season going to left field, with a hard-hit rate of 44 percent. Simply, his ability to turn on the ball is too valuable to abandon, letting him do things like this:

The pull power has always been there, but he's becoming comfortable enough to still be able to extend the bat head out in front when necessary to turn on it, in addition to optimizing contact deeper into the strike zone when the ball isn't in his wheelhouse over the middle or inside.

### **KNOWING HIS ROLE**

Often placed as the No. 4 hitter in the lineup, Story is getting his fair share of at-bats with runners on, with pitchers not wanting to give Nolan Arenado anything to hit in front of him. Story has taken strongly to this role in 2018, improving his batting average of .245 with runners on in 2017 to .318 this year. Additionally, he elevates his PA's per K to an above-average 4.56, meaning he changes his "swing hard in case you hit it" approach to one with intent to put the ball in play. Here's another pitch over the middle of the plate, with velocity and break that he's pulled before. But, with runners on the corners, he takes a different approach:

Story, rather than using his typical long swing that generates his typical power, just gets the bat into the zone as soon as possible, shooting the ball into right. Shortening up hasn't really been in his arsenal for the majority of his career, and has enabled him to rack up his RBI total to 62, one behind Arenado for the team lead and six behind Cincinnati's Eugenio Suarez for the NL lead.

### **THE REST**

We would be remiss if we didn't note how Story has not just improved his offensive game but has become a complete, five-tool player. Let's start with perhaps his most underrated tool, his speed:

Rk.	Player	Team	Position	Age
1	 Buxton, Byron	 MIN	CF	25
2	 DeShields, Delino	 TEX	CF	26
3	 Turner, Trea	 WSH	SS	25
4	 Hamilton, Billy	 CIN	CF	28
5	 Engel, Adam	 CWS	CF	27
6	 Bader, Harrison	 STL	RF	24
7	 Acuna Jr., Ronald	 ATL	LF	21
8	 Story, Trevor	 COL	SS	26
9	 Smith, Mallex	 TB	CF	25
10	 Shuck, JB	 MIA	RF	31
11	 Zimmer, Bradley	 CLE	CF	26
12	 Hermosillo, Michael	 LAA	RF	23
13	 Swanson, Dansby	 ATL	SS	24
14	 Mondesi, Adalberto	 KC	SS	23
15	 Kingery, Scott	 PHI	SS	24

Credit: baseballsavant.com

Story is a top-10 runner in baseball and No. 2 among infielders. His natural speed helps him on the bases and extending his defensive range.

But look at the company he is with. Aside from Turner, no other player in the top 10 has double-digit home runs. He is also tied with Turner for tops in batting average and is tied for fifth in strikeout percentage. A case could be made that Story is alone in baseball as a power-speed combination. To find a player with more home runs than Story, you need to go all the way down to No. 35 on the sprint speed leaderboard, to some guy named Mike Trout.

It earns him base hits like it does in this clip on a fairly routine ground ball:

But his speed is also a key contributor in his other underrated tool: his defense. This clip exhibits both his range and his arm strength, reminiscent of a certain former Rockies shortstop:

The range, the leap and the arm strength are all excellent, enticing Drew Goodman to say, "He's going to win a Gold Glove... or three or four." He might not be wrong. Story has truly developed into an asset in every facet of the game.

## CONCLUSION

A wiser, more disciplined Trevor Story has earned the Rockies' shortstop his first All-Star Game nod. Story is avoiding strikeouts more than in the past, but is still fairly prone to the K. However, he's learned to recognize pitches early and adjust his swing accordingly, going the other way with authority while still being able to extend on inside pitches for the most damage possible. He's also learned to shorten up for contact when the situation dictates it.

After a disappointing sophomore campaign, Story has grown as a hitter and has developed his defense to an elite level as well. Paired with a top-tier sprint speed, Story has very quietly joined an elite group in baseball that is roughly limited to Mike Trout and Trea Turner, with Ronald Acuna Jr. on the cusp. Now that he's moved his batting average above .280, it can be argued that Story is a premier player in MLB, producing in every facet at a premium defensive position.

Story's redemption comes as the Rockies fight for a playoff berth, giving them a unique bat in the heart of the order and some necessary protection for fellow All-Stars Charlie Blackmon and Arenado.

It's a shame that the MLB doesn't have a complete skills competition like the NHL, because Story could likely compete in every event.

## **How did Kyle Freeland miss getting an All-Star selection?**

*We're not asking in a whiny way - just want to take a closer look!*

**Hayden Kane | PurpleRow.com | Jul 10, 2018**

Kyle Freeland is currently a top-5 player in the National League. That's according to Baseball Reference WAR, which has Freeland behind Aaron Nola and ahead of Lorenzo Cain with 4.0 bWAR. That would seem to make him an obvious All-Star no matter where he played his home games, but especially so given the horror with which national media members discuss Coors Field.

Freeland should be an All-Star but he isn't. Instead of going down the road of listing all the ways he is a snub, let's try to figure out what might have gone against him.

### Lack of a crawler stat

Max Scherzer has 177 strikeouts. Jacob deGrom has a 1.79 ERA. Jon Lester and Aaron Nola have 11 wins. Those are digestible stats that look great on the ESPN crawler as selections are announced and serve as one-line explanations of a pitcher's greatness this season.

Those pitchers are league leaders in a bunch of other categories too, with Freeland joining them in the top 10 on most of those leader boards. The difference is, Freeland doesn't have a thing he's known for outside of Colorado. Maybe someday it will be his hair or his mastery of Coors Field, but for now it appears that things like his bWAR or his ERA+ just aren't catching on.

### Weird perception of the Rockies' strengths

The 2018 Rockies have been a great offensive team for like three weeks. They have been a terrible offensive team for longer stretches than that and a below-average unit for the remaining balance of the season. Meanwhile, the starting rotation has been a strength all year with Freeland as the leader.

We know that's true, but it seems that the "good hitting, bad pitching" assumption about the Rockies persists. Maybe that means the players and MLB official voters find it easier to think the hitters are stars than it is the pitchers, even though they wouldn't have to look that hard to know better.

Still no Coors reward to accompany the Coors punishment

Having consumed minimal All-Star coverage outside of the announcements, I can only assume that the outcry has already started about Trevor Story's home/road splits. That penalty persists in terms of the credit given to Rockies hitters. We all know that. Larry Walker knows it. Matt Holliday knows it. Todd Helton knows it.

It's not unfair to ask why pitchers don't get extra credit for their success in Denver. It's also a dead end, with Freeland's 5-2 record and 2.89 ERA at Coors Field this season serving as the most recent evidence.

There are lots of good pitchers

The National League has a lot of pitchers posting outstanding seasons. The aforementioned National League bWAR leader board has pitchers in the top four spots. The players might have gone with familiar names first for the All-Star pitchers and then moved to the other guys. The team might have just run out of spots before they got to Freeland, knowing that these things change and an odd pitcher out might still end up on the roster later because of availability or injury or other factors.

That said, Freeland definitely should have made it instead of Patrick Corbin.

★ ★ ★

Kyle Freeland should have been selected to the All-Star game on Sunday. That he wasn't speaks to the way in which his well-roundedness lacks flash and the odd combination of factors that goes into these selections. He was snubbed, and that is definitely frustrating. What's more interesting, however, is what it tells us about how Rockies pitchers are perceived and how players earn considerations as All-Stars. It's a reminder that there's much more to it than where a player ranks in key statistical areas and the hearts of his fans.

If the young pitchers driving the current rotation have their way, the Colorado Rockies might chip away at the perception of them as helpless or without All-Stars. Unfortunately it looks like Freeland and company still have a long way to go.

## **Colorado Rockies affiliates: 3 Albuquerque Isotopes on PCL All-Star roster**

**Michael Parnell | RoxPile.com | July 10, 2018**

Three Albuquerque Isotopes players were selected to the Pacific Coast League roster for the annual Triple-A All-Star Game on Wednesday, July 11. Members of the Colorado Rockies affiliate selected are outfielder Mike Tauchman, infielder Josh Fuentes and pitcher D.J. Johnson.

The game is scheduled to be played at Huntington Park in downtown Columbus, Ohio.

Tauchman, 25, who spent time with the parent Colorado Rockies this season, is crushing PCL pitching for the second year in a row. At the break, he has 13 home runs, 52 runs batted in and 10 stolen bases with a .337 batting average and .400 on-base percentage. He is expected to start the All-Star game and has already made a big impact in Columbus by showing off his skills.

Fuentes, 27, will be a reserve infielder. Nolan Arenado's cousin has nine homers, 64 RBI, a .328 BA and .354 OBP this season.

Johnson, 28, has picked up 12 saves in 32 games closing for the Isotopes this year. He has struck out 53 in 36.2 innings and is pitching to a 4.91 earned run average in the hitter-friendly PCL.

The 2018 Eastern League All-Star Game will also take place on Wednesday, July 11 in Trenton, N.J., and it includes six Rockies' prospects on the roster although one of those, pitcher Peter Lambert, has been promoted to Albuquerque. Lambert was 8-2 with a 2.23 ERA in 92.2 innings in Hartford. He struck out 75 and posted a WHIP (walks plus hits per innings pitched) of 0.99 there.

Yard Goat pitchers Mitch Horacek and Matt Pierpont were named to the Eastern League East squad. Horacek has struck out 54 in 43 innings with a 2.51 ERA coming out of the bullpen for the Goats. Pierpont has 24 saves and 53 strikeouts in 38.1 innings with a 1.64 ERA as the Goats' closer.

Infielder Brendan Rodgers, the Rockies' best prospect, has 17 home runs, 58 RBI, 11 stolen bases, a .273 BA and a .336 OBP. He's likely ticketed to Albuquerque in the near future.

Outfielders Sam Hilliard and Yonathan Daza both made the squad. Hilliard has hit seven homers with 29 runs batted in and has 20 stolen bases thus far. He's batting .285. Daza has a .306 BA, four home runs, 25 RBI and four stolen bases.

One of the top Rox prospects, second baseman Garrett Hampson, split his season between Hartford and Albuquerque and thus didn't make either All-Star roster. But Hampson stole 19 bases with a .304 batting average for the Yard Goats and has batted .315 with 12 stolen bases for the Isotopes. So, hitting above .300 with 31 stolen bases in half a season and not an All-Star? That qualifies as an All-Star snub.

## **Colorado Rockies: Recapping the last 10 games before the homestand**

**Aaron Hurt | RoxPile.com | July 10, 2018**

It all started with a 2-run blast by DJ LeMahieu off San Francisco Giants pitcher Sam Dyson and ended with a solid series victory at the AL West leading Seattle Mariners. The last week and a half has been what most people were expecting when the Colorado Rockies began the season. So before the Rockies head home for their final homestand before the All-Star break, let's take a look back at the last 10 games of good baseball.

The recent 8-2 run has obviously cut into the deficit in the standings. On June 27th, the Rockies were four games under .500 and 8 games back of the Diamondbacks in the West and 5.5 games back in the Wildcard. Now, they are sitting in a much more manageable 3.5 games out in the West and 4.5 in the Wildcard.

So how did they get there? Lets start with how good the pitching has been. In the 10 games, the Rockies' starters pitched a total of 62 innings and only gave up a total of 18 earned runs for an outstanding ERA of 2.61. The starting staff also tied a franchise record at 8 consecutive games giving up 2 runs or less.

By going deeper into games, pressure on the bullpen has been cut down immensely. This has led to the bullpen becoming much more effective as they have only given up 7 earned runs in 26 innings for a 2.42 ERA in the last 10 games.

Offensively, the Rockies stayed pretty much on par with what they have done for most of the season. Led by their trio of All-Stars (Arenado, Story, and Blackmon), the Rockies averaged 4.9 runs in the last 10 games which is a tick above their season average of 4.7. The most importantly they haven't had to rely on these three for all of the production. Take Saturday for example.

In Saturday's 5-1 victory over the Mariners, the 1 through 3 hitters for the Rockies were 0 for 14 with 7 strikeouts. What won the game was that the 6 through 9 hitters went 9 for 14 with 4 runs and 5 RBI, including Noel Cuevas' game deciding 3-run bomb in the 7th inning.

Now, the Rockies head back to Coors Field for an all important six-game homestand against the Arizona Diamondbacks and Seattle Mariners before the break. The Diamondbacks are coming off a split in a four game series against the Padres, including a loss a 16 inning marathon on Sunday where the D-Backs had to use Zach Godley who is scheduled to start on Thursday. Hopefully the Rockies can continue their home field advantage and take both series before heading into the break.

## Hot pitchers match up in Rockies-Diamondbacks series opener

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DENVER — Left-handers Tyler Anderson and Patrick Corbin, both of whom have pitched exceedingly well lately, will oppose each other when the Colorado Rockies and the Arizona Diamondbacks begin a three-game series Tuesday.

Anderson (6-3, 3.90 ERA) has pitched eight scoreless innings for the Rockies in each of his past two starts, winning both outings — 3-1 at the Los Angeles Dodgers and 1-0 over the San Francisco Giants — while allowing six hits and three walks with 17 strikeouts in 16 innings.

He's the third pitcher in franchise history with consecutive outings of at least eight scoreless innings, joining Ubaldo Jimenez in 2010 and Jason Marquis in 2009. And Anderson is the first pitcher in Rockies history to accomplish that feat while allowing four or fewer hits in each start and the first in the majors to do it since Jake Arrieta for the Chicago Cubs in 2015.

Anderson has a 2-0 record with a 6.67 ERA in seven games (five starts) against Arizona. His first start this season was March 30 at Chase Field, where he allowed five hits and seven runs in 2 1/3 innings of a no-decision as the Rockies lost 9-8.

Corbin, who was named Sunday to the National League All-Star team, is 0-0 with a 0.95 ERA in his past three starts — two of which the Diamondbacks lost — with three walks and 13 hits allowed and 23 strikeouts in 19 innings during that stretch.

Corbin is 8-3 with a 4.68 ERA in 18 games (17 starts) against the Rockies. He beat them at Chase Field on Opening Day when he gave up two runs in 5 2/3 innings.

Corbin was an All-Star in 2013. But in his final spring tuneup in 2014, he tore the ulnar collateral ligament in his left elbow and underwent Tommy John surgery. It has taken longer than Corbin expected, but he has returned to his pre-surgery All-Star form.

“The first one was exciting because it’s obviously the first one, so I’ll always remember that one,” Corbin told reporters Sunday. “But the journey that I’ve gone through, being out for a year and a half and being able to come back and get back to myself, it’s special. So I’ll remember that. I’m excited.”

The Rockies (46-44), who were off Monday, had their season-high five-game winning streak end Sunday with a 6-4 loss at Seattle, but they have won eight of their past 10 games.

Colorado will finish play before the All-Star break with a six-game homestand, with the Seattle Mariners following the Diamondbacks to Coors Field, where the Rockies have won three straight, improving their home record to 18-22.

“We’ve been playing well for a couple of weeks, so we’ve got to continue,” Rockies manager Bud Black said after Sunday’s loss.

The Diamondbacks (50-41) have won five of six games from the Rockies this season and will reach the All-Star break with a six-game road trip that also will take them to Atlanta.

After going 8-2 on their last road trip, the Diamondbacks stumbled and went 3-7 on a just-concluded homestand. The final game was a bitter defeat as the Diamondbacks fell 4-3 in 16 innings to the San Diego Padres in a game that lasted five hours and 31 minutes.

“It’s a long way to go and not win a game,” Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo told reporters after the loss, “but our guys grinded and fought and did everything they possibly could to make it a totally different outcome.”

After Sunday’s marathon, Lovullo said his team would get “a well-needed day off” Monday.

“We’ve got to regroup the troops and head up to Colorado,” Lovullo added, “and get ready for a tough series up there.”