



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF NOVEMBER 28, 2018

"Prospect Collins: 'I'm going to try to break camp'"... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"White Sox bring back 1993 draft pick as Triple-A hitting coach" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"A Madison Bumgarner trade makes no sense for White Sox now, but he could be their Jon Lester next winter" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox face a tough decision about whether to tender a contract to Avisail Garcia" ... Mark Gonzales, Chicago Tribune

"Checking in on the White Sox farm system, from Eloy Jiménez to Luis Robert to Casey Gillaspie" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"How sports clubs are leading the cheer for Team Chicago" ... George H. McCaskey, Rocky Wirtz, Michael Reinsdorf, Jerry Reinsdorf, Tom Ricketts, Crain's Chicago Business

Prospect Collins: 'I'm going to try to break camp'

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | November 27, 2018

GLENDALE, Ariz. -- Discussions concerning White Sox catching for the 2019 season understandably center upon incumbents Welington Castillo and Omar Narvaez.

But Zack Collins, the team's top pick in the 2016 Draft and future behind the plate, intends on interjecting his name into the conversation.

"I'm going to try to break camp," Collins told MLB.com during a recent interview in Arizona. "Sometimes you can hit .500 in Spring Training and still not make the team, but I'm going to give it my all.

"Yeah, obviously there's still some development. If they didn't call up Eloy [Jimenez] last year in the last whatever, then I don't really have anything to say. The guy hit [.355] in Triple-A. So trying not to rush the process or think about that, but obviously, I'm going to try to make the team every chance I get."

Collins, 23, most likely won't start the 2019 season with the White Sox, but he made considerable strides last season within and beyond the numbers. He finished with a .234 average and 158 strikeouts over 418 at-bats for Double-A Birmingham, but the organization's No. 8 prospect per MLB Pipeline worked his way back from a season-opening 2-for-37 slump. Collins also posted a Southern League-best 101 walks, and his .382 on-base percentage left him tied for second overall.

The lower average and high strikeout numbers don't worry Collins, who feels confident the in-season changes he made eventually will get him back to where he needs to be offensively. The White Sox echo a similar sentiment.

"Offensively, it's kind of what we knew: He's going to take a bunch of walks, he's going to get on base, he's going to have some power," White Sox director of amateur scouting Nick Hostetler said of Collins, who added 15 home runs and 68 RBIs to his 2018 resume. "He makes contact, good hard contact, and he's a guy that I still believe from a scouting point of view, he's a guy that as he goes to a higher level when the strike zone tightens up, he's going to be better.

"You don't want a guy in the lower level that shows patience and the ability to judge the strike zone well -- you don't want him to compromise that because of umpires or bad calls at the Double-A level. As he goes through the system, I think you are going to see, as he gets to Triple-A and the Major Leagues as the strike zone shrinks, he's going to be better off offensively."

According to Hostetler, 98 percent of the scouting industry polled on Collins would have said he's going to hit. Fifty percent of the same would have said he's going to catch.

That catching part of Collins' repertoire has come a long way during parts of three years in the White Sox system. He has taken to the framing metrics, the advanced analytics and the information provided, doing an exceptional job of knowing the zone, getting pitchers ready for a game and calling the game.

"Understanding the game, learning how to catch," Hostetler said. "Some positioning stuff with his feet has really improved."

Taking nutrition to another level has put Collins in solid physical shape and primed for the next catching challenge, although a 2019 callup to the White Sox figures to feature at-bats at first base and designated hitter as well.

"When you look at it now, in our minds, we feel he's an everyday catcher in the big leagues," Hostetler said. "I think as we continue this, you might see him get some playing time at first base or at-bats at DH. But that's just to get the bat in the lineup."

Added Collins: "Defensively, I made huge strides, especially in the last couple of months when we got a couple of the big prospects up like [Dylan] Cease, [Jimmy] Lambert and [Bernardo] Flores. Working with them was awesome. Learned a lot from [Minor League quality control coach Everett] Teaford, dealing with all the TrackMan stuff and everything calling the games and scouting reports. Definitely made it a lot easier, and I'm looking forward to next year."

White Sox bring back 1993 draft pick as Triple-A hitting coach

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | November 28, 2018

The White Sox have a new hitting coach at Triple-A Charlotte, per a tweet from FanCred's Jon Heyman.

Menechino spent the past five seasons as an assistant hitting coach with the Miami Marlins, joining that organization in 2013, the year after Ozzie Guillen's lone season as the Marlins' skipper.

The White Sox used a 45th-round pick on Menechino back in 1993 — the same draft in which they selected Greg Norton and Mike Sirotko — and he later reached the majors, playing seven seasons with the Oakland Athletics and Toronto Blue Jays.

He played in 20 games against the White Sox as a big leaguer and posted an impressive .429 on-base percentage against them.

The White Sox fleet of highly touted prospects are starting to reach the upper levels of the farm system, and Menechino will soon have the opportunity to coach hitters like Luis Robert, Nick Madrigal, Blake Rutherford, Zack Collins, Luis Basabe, Micker Adolfo and Steele Walker.

Headlines like this one from 2017 should give White Sox fans some confidence in Menechino's abilities: "Frank Menechino behind Giancarlo Stanton's HR success." Oh?

A Madison Bumgarner trade makes no sense for White Sox now, but he could be their Jon Lester next winter

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | November 27, 2018

Madison Bumgarner is one of baseball's most accomplished starting pitchers, an area of need for the 2019 White Sox. And his San Francisco Giants are reportedly open to trade offers, per MLB Network's Jon Morosi.

But if you've been paying attention, you don't need me to tell you that a Bumgarner trade doesn't make a lot of sense for the rebuilding South Siders. The White Sox would have to give up valued prospects for a guy with just one year remaining on his current contract in a season where they're not expected to contend for a playoff spot. Connected to some of baseball's biggest free agents, the White Sox appear to be taking a more aggressive approach to this offseason, something you might not expect for a team coming off a 100-loss campaign, but trading for Bumgarner doesn't seem to fit with their long-term plans.

Signing him next winter, though, very much fits with their long-term plans.

Wondering who could be the White Sox version of Jon Lester? A guy who buys into a rebuild, arrives with a championship resume, helps change the culture for the better and leads an otherwise young team into contention mode, perhaps a year earlier than anticipated? Look no further than Bumgarner. He's the kind of "finishing piece" Rick Hahn keeps talking about.

While Bumgarner's been a household name for years, he won't turn 30 until the middle of the 2019 season. Lester was 30 when he signed with the Cubs following the 2014 season. Bumgarner is one of the postseason's all-time great pitchers, the owner of three World Series rings and a jaw-dropping 2.11 career ERA in 102.1 postseason innings. Lester came to the Cubs a two-time world champion with a 2.57 career postseason ERA (it was 2.11, identical to Bumgarner's current number, prior to a six-run outing in the 2014 AL wild card game) and has lowered it to 2.51 after 70 more postseason innings with the Cubs.

Bumgarner has thrown 1,638.1 innings in 10 years as a Giant (and figures to add a large number of those to his arm in 2019), with injuries limiting his last two seasons. After as good a four-year stretch as you'll find for a modern-day pitcher — four top-10 finishes in NL Cy Young voting four All-Star appearances thanks to a combined 2.86 ERA and 903 strikeouts during that span — he made just 38 total starts in 2017 and 2018. For comparison, Lester threw 1,596 innings in nine seasons with the Boston Red Sox and Oakland Athletics, though he was coming off seven straight seasons with at least 31 starts when he joined Theo Epstein's rebuilding effort on the North Side.

So is Bumgarner cruising for a Lester-esque deal? It would seem to make sense, given the similarities between the two, and considering that big-money contracts continue to get bigger, not smaller, Bumgarner could receive a gigantic payday next winter. Lester got a six-year contract worth \$155 million from the Cubs, still one of the richest deals ever given to a pitcher.

Would the White Sox be willing to pay it? They're ongoing rebuilding effort has created a ton of financial flexibility, with hardly any long-term commitments to speak of. They have reported interest in some of the most expensive free agents on the market, including Bryce Harper and Manny Machado, and there'd be little point in a pursuit of either of those guys if they weren't willing to hand out a monster contract. And Hahn has made a habit of discussing the team's recent track record of breaking long-held preconceived notions, for example that they wouldn't launch a full-scale rebuild or make a big trade with the Cubs. There's another preconceived notion about the White Sox, that they don't like long-term deals for pitchers, but Hahn's been consistent about pointing out the other examples of their zigging when everyone expected them to zag.

All that — plus Hahn's continued discussion of the expected need to add "finishing pieces" from outside the organization — would seem to indicate that they would be willing to make a big, Bumgarner-sized splash.

The concern among White Sox fans might be that if the South Siders end up giving big money to Bumgarner next winter, it means they probably didn't win any of the major free-agent sweepstakes this winter. That's not exactly the case because of the team's current financial flexibility. But if there's no long-term addition made this winter — no Harper, no Machado, etc. — it makes a potential Bumgarner signing all the more important, not to mention all the more Lester-like. Lester was the guy to buy in and push the Cubs from rebuilding to contending. Bumgarner could fit that role for the White Sox at a similar point in their rebuilding timeline.

It's all speculation, of course, with Morosi linking only the Milwaukee Brewers and Philadelphia Phillies to a potential Bumgarner trade and Bumgarner still a year away from free agency. There are health issues to watch, too, as the last two years did not match up with the four that came before it, statistically, for Bumgarner. After that sterling four-year stretch, his ERA jumped up (though was still quite good) to 3.29 over the injury-shortened 2017 and 2018 seasons.

But Bumgarner's track record in the regular season and postseason, his experience as a proven winner and his ability to bring legitimacy to a to-this-point losing team could make the perfect, Lester-style fit for the young White Sox. You're just going to have to wait for it.

White Sox face a tough decision about whether to tender a contract to Avisail Garcia

By Mark Gonzales / Chicago Tribune / November 28, 2018

The White Sox's rich farm system is extremely deep with outfielders, and it doesn't appear that Avisail Garcia is part of the team's long-term plans.

They could turn the page as soon as Friday's 7 p.m. deadline to tender contracts to arbitration-eligible players. If they decline to do so, they would lose Garcia with no compensation.

At first glance, it's a tempting thought. The 6-foot-4, 240-pound Garcia coped with knee and hamstring injuries in 2018 and played in only 93 games, batting .236 with an OBP of .281, both career lows. Injuries and ineffectiveness have plagued him for most of his six seasons with the Sox.

The Sox also will need to create a spot for top prospect Eloy Jimenez when they are ready to promote the outfielder from the minor leagues.

Third, Garcia, 27, is projected to earn \$8 million in his final year as an arbitration-eligible player, according to MLBtraderumors.com.

The Sox could tender a contract to Garcia with the hope he can rekindle his production from 2017, when he made the AL All-Star team and batted .330 with 18 home runs, 90 RBIs and a stunning .392 batting average on balls in play.

But 2017 represents the lone standout season for Garcia, who was acquired with high expectations from the Tigers in 2013 as part of the three-team trade that sent pitcher Jake Peavy to the Red Sox.

The Sox could try to trade Garcia before the deadline, but interested teams may wait to see if they can get him as a free agent if the Sox don't tender him a contract.

If Garcia departs via trade before Friday's deadline or after as a free agent, the Sox could insert Daniel Palka in right field, where he started 40 games as a rookie in 2018. Palka could handle some of those duties when he's not serving as the designated hitter.

Last winter, the Sox pursued All-Star Manny Machado before maintaining their rebuilding course. The names of free agents Bryce Harper and Nelson Cruz persist, but the Sox likely won't contend for the playoffs until 2020, and they have the likes of outfielders Luis Alexander Basabe, Luis Robert, Blake Rutherford, Micker Adolfo and Luis Gonzalez developing in the farm system.

Re-signing Garcia would give the Sox some insurance in the event they want Jimenez to spend more time in the minors until he can't qualify for a full season of service time.

But given that the Sox aren't expected to contend for an American League Central title in 2019, Garcia could be viewed as more a luxury than a necessity.

The Sox's other arbitration-eligible players — first baseman Jose Abreu, left-hander Carlos Rodon, infielders Yolmer Sanchez and Matt Davidson and infielder-outfielder Leury Garcia — are too serviceable to non-tender.

Checking in on the White Sox farm system, from Eloy Jiménez to Luis Robert to Casey Gillaspie

By James Fegan / The Athletic | November 28, 2018

Maybe one day this won't be an interesting read anymore, and everyone will care more about which relievers can cover the sixth and seventh innings than what's going on at Great Falls. Until then, any accounting for White Sox prospects seeks to answer the question of whether they have enough, which inspires so many "Ooh, maybe this guy" tangents that I wind up with 96 names and worry more about whom I forgot than about baking everyone's brain with a 3,800-word article.

The more scouts I speak to every time I do this, the more things start winding closer to a boring consensus, but though I am not an evaluator, I did try to keep some of my voice and interpretation in here. It's much more talking to people and weighing their praise and criticisms rather than handing them a survey to fill out. Besides, rankings are meant to be an entertaining source of debate and there are some good arguments to be had, and there's even a nuclear hot take or two slid in for fun. Because the quality differences between the middle-tier guys gets so minute pretty early on, rankings are less important than arranging by type.

Note: Players who still have rookie status even if they might not feel like rookies (Michael Kopech) appear on the list. Players who have lost their rookie status even though it feels like they're still breaking in (Aaron Bummer), do not.

An elite, MLB-ready prospect

Eloy Jiménez, LF: There are defensive concerns and it'd be nice if he avoided nagging injuries better, but he's going to compete with Vladdy Jr. for the Rookie of the Year Award and command a middle-of-the-order spot in the lineup for the next six to seven years in Chicago, which is the mark of a decently good prospect, in one man's opinion.

An elite, MLB-ready prospect who is currently injured

Michael Kopech, RHP: Some enthusiasts might place Kopech in Jiménez's tier if he were healthy. He mostly looked the part during his big-league debut, even if hindsight exposes some red flags that his elbow was wearing down the whole time. The token amount of uncertainty that comes with a Tommy John rehab takes him down a peg, but his major league readiness puts him a cut above the other stars of this system.

Cornerstones if things go right

Nick Madrigal, IF; Dylan Cease, RHP; Luis Robert, CF: This is the fun debate of this list, rather than the maddening ones, or the pointless ones and all the other ones. Each member of this trio has the potential to surpass/torch the other two.

Robert is the most electrifying athlete of the group, but since Madrigal enthusiasts will put 70 grades on his hit tool and his defense at second base in addition to above-average running, it's not like he lacks for "tools" in comparison. Cease has proven himself at higher levels, and could easily be in the majors by late August, but still has plenty of scouts who are slow to be convinced by his delivery and changeup progress. I cannot

say there were any scouts I talked to that were bailing on Robert during his difficult, injury-ridden season, but I wanted to wait until after the AFL to take the temperature on him, and he did enough to comfortably put himself in this group.

A legit future starter

Dane Dunning, RHP: If you believe Dunning is a No. 4 starter without the potential for more — not a rare opinion — and his elbow sprain scared off the idea that he's one of the safest starting pitching prospects in the game, then it's easy to understand him slipping to seventh in this system behind whichever outfield prospect is most alluring. The latter is easier for me to understand than the former at this point, but the progress with his curve, the command and the makeup keep him in his own class.

Surely one of these guys is a future outfield regular

Luis Basabe, CF; Blake Rutherford, OF; Luis González, CF: Can he play center field? Can he provide real power production? Of these two separating questions for this group, Basabe answers the first one most assuredly and his growing strength and leveraged swing provide the most hope for the latter down the road, so he heads up this group despite having the most contact issues. González, the oldest of the trio, put up big numbers while detonating on Single-A teams across the East Coast in 2018, but will be challenged to repeat that at the upper levels where he's not significantly more polished than his competition. Everyone is very confident that Rutherford is going to be a big-league regular, and just that, so sticking him in the middle feels right.

Potential big bats in uncertain places

Micker Adolfo, RF; Zack Collins, C: If this were a list about which White Sox prospect wins a steel cage match, then put Adolfo at the very top and stay the hell out of his way. His massive strength power and organization-best throwing arm gives him a ceiling to jump toward Baseball America's evaluation (they have him ranked sixth in the organization) if you believe in his ability to access it. The plate approach has been trending very positively for two years now, but Double-A will challenge whether he can maintain that progress while covering elite-velocity fastballs.

Collins remained an on-base machine against right-handers while reverting to his college swing, and there's no hint of surrender in the White Sox's efforts to develop him into a major league-caliber defensive catcher. If he can mix in behind the plate even three times per week while providing the strong side of a platoon, he's a valuable part of the puzzle. That's good because the whiffs remain on the high end and outside scouts remain skeptical of his defensive progress.

Could be in that first group of outfielders by end of next year

Steele Walker, CF: The group title is pretty self-explanatory here, but Walker hit consistently his last two years of college and projects to have average offensive tools with maybe better power, which will do great if he sticks in center. He does not have the foot speed of Basabe and González, so that's not the safest bet, but most of all he needs to start looking like himself after an oblique injury, a long layoff and a wacky transition to pro ball that hampered his debut.

The top of 2017 draft

Jake Burger, 3B; Gavin Sheets, 1B: Burger can really hit, a fact that was on display in spring training but has been obscured by questions about his build, his third-base defense and how much tearing his achilles twice will impede his attempts to out-work every doubt in his profile. Sheets can also really hit, which was on display throughout 2018, but was obscured by concerns about a first-base prospect who struggles to provide extra-base power. Things get pretty for each of them quickly if they tackle their main issues, but the fallback options are sparse if they do not.

Guys I like too much

Seby Zavala, C; Bryce Bush, 3B: Zavala is a former third-day draft pick, has been older than his competition for most of his two-year offensive rampage across the lower minors, and his defensive strengths lie more in qualities like game calling and receiving than throwing and blocking. So it's understandable that he's buried in the 20s of many Sox prospect lists, but if he can be a steady defender who can whack mistake pitches out to left, that seems valuable for this team.

Bush can really hit and he's only 18, which makes his ceiling fairly exciting. It's also unclear where he's going to play on defense, and his already thick and muscular build only figures to fill out from here, which makes his floor fairly troublesome. Many of the arms below have strong cases to be in front of him, but a league scout told me "you are allowed to like guys too," so here he is.

A wide collection of promising arms with uncertain destinies

Jimmy Lambert, RHP: Scouts have been understandably slow to warm to him and questioned the athleticism, but he made the kind of leap forward in arsenal in 2018 that flips the conception of what he can be.

Ian Hamilton, RHP: Jumped up to the 96-99 mph range last season and all his teammates thought he was the nastiest guy they saw all year, but does the heater have the life and carry to allow him to dominate the later innings in the same way in the majors?

Konnor Pilkington, LHP: He was sitting high-80s when I saw him at instructs, but he was also waylaying hapless low-minors hitters. He'll continue to dominate the low minors with location and the maturity of his approach, and hope that will carry him to a back-end starting future.

Zack Burdi, RHP: He's already this far back here because he's a pure reliever coming off a major injury. No need to ding him any further because he's weathering the bumps in the road of a long rehab.

Bernardo Flores, LHP: His peripherals don't support him being able to repeat the feat of 156 innings of 2.65 ERA at higher levels, but scouts like his ingredients (height, projectability, fastball movement) more than a low-90s lefty changeup specialist would suggest. He's hard to pin down.

Tyler Johnson, RHP: A crossfiring righty relief prospect who is still searching for a consistent slider and has yet to even reach Double-A. But for all those qualifiers, he's really fun to watch and could be the Ian Hamilton of the system in 2019.

Kodi Medeiros, LHP: Everyone seems to have written the 22-year-old off as a reliever, save for the White Sox of course, but his first-round pedigree and low arm slot provide some assurance that he'll be very nasty if/when he goes that route.

Jordan Stephens, RHP: Finally on the 40-man, Stephens is going to get a chance to put in his bid to hang at the back end of a starting rotation in the majors. Depending on how that goes, we either will or won't see if moving to the bullpen would give a few extra ticks to his four-seamer/curveball combination.

Alec Hansen, RHP: A massive man with massive stuff, and massive control problems. This is probably the absolute lowest he should be on any list, but he was only holding skeptical scouts at bay with his performance, and that eroded last year.

Spencer Adams, RHP: Fluid, projectable high school draftees who pour in strikes should get every opportunity to develop an out pitch, but his standout control eroded last year and the White Sox seemed to have clearly lost some optimism in him recovering it.

MLB-ready middle relievers

José Ruiz, RHP: Top-scale velocity with the rawness in command that would be expected with a new convert to pitching. The White Sox needed to test if he had enough potential to justify a 40-man spot and got mixed results.

Ryan Burr, RHP: Prototypical big mid-90s fastball/slider righty whose good but not great velocity and carry has been undercut by a struggle to get a feel for his slider with the major league ball.

Caleb Frare, LHP: As Frare would readily admit, command will not be his calling card, but he reaches mid-90s with a deceptively short arm action.

How do these outfielders get themselves back in the mix?

Alex Call, OF: Distinguishes himself by being able to mix in at center, and had a hot start at Double-A in the second half. But thanks to a 2017 lost to injury, Call is 24 now with more of an all-around game than standout tools and more of a track record of holding his own than dominating.

Joel Booker, CF: One of the best underdog stories in the system and the reigning Carolina League All-Star Game MVP. But another slow acclimation to a new level puts Booker behind the eight ball to break out of Double-A before he gets squeezed out of playing time at age 25.

Ryan Cordell, CF: Finally made his major-league debut at 26 after having most of two seasons marred by injuries, but struggled to make contact and prop open his narrowing window of opportunity.

Jameson Fisher, OF: Pushed up to Double-A by the glut of outfield prospects and was worse for the wear, hitting .179/.289/.228 after June 1.

Low minors positional talents to watch

Amado Nuñez, IF: It wasn't that long ago that Fisher was a hitting god at Great Falls himself. But Nuñez's talent did not come out of nowhere, and the big-money Dominican signing had a breakout season in Great Falls and is a guy to watch in Kannapolis in 2019. He will be an awfully big second baseman if he manages to stick there.

Laz Rivera, SS: Has the glove and feel to hit to be a fine utility man, but a free-swinging approach and lack of big-time tools probably keep him in that role.

Luis Curbelo, IF: Sort of an inverse-Rivera, in that he has bigger tools and the frame to expect power production as he ages, but has struggled to put it into play yet as a 21-year-old.

Lenyn Sosa, SS: An 18-year-old shortstop who shows an advanced hit tool and has already held his own in the Pioneer League.

Some starter potential present

A.J. Puckett, RHP: The former second-round pick was/is more athleticism and repeatability than pure stuff, and then he missed all of 2018 with elbow trouble.

Lincoln Henzman, RHP: The sinkerballing strike-thrower will never be overpowering and his old-school approach will be tested at higher levels, but transitioning the college closer back to starting went about as well as could have been hoped in his first full year.

Kade McClure, RHP: The towering right-hander looked ticketed to keep pace with Henzman stride for stride until a season-ending knee injury felled him in mid-May. The way his stuff played in the pros was encouraging, but big men with knee problems are not.

Jordan Guerrero, LHP: Lefty changeup artist who needs pinpoint command to survive, and is still waiting for the vote of confidence to get a crack at the majors.

Jonathan Stiever, RHP: Last June's fifth-round pick missed bats at an eye-opening rate in short, innings-capped outings.

Codi Heuer, RHP: Tall, lanky righty (6-foot-5) is a project but offers good extension in his delivery.

Blake Battenfield, RHP: Sinker-slider college swingman emphasized a four-seamer and changeup and now has some chance of becoming a major-league swingman.

Toolsy teenaged 2018 draftees that are hard to get a firm feel for yet

Lency Delgado, 3B: The typically college-focused White Sox leapt up in the fourth round to grab the Cuban-born Delgado for his standout raw power and throwing arm, and I'm the idiot who listed their 33rd-round pick in the top-20 instead.

Cabera Weaver, CF: He's really tall, thin and reportedly very fast, so he sure seems like a teenaged baseball prospect.

Kelvin Maldonado, IF: The Puerto Rican 18-year-old was the top priority of the White Sox's third-day draft plan, and is too young to understand any of Tim Anderson's "Jordan and Pippen" references.

Hard-throwers/potential relievers

Ian Clarkin, LHP: He can spin a curve from the left side, but scouts say a lack of extension keeps his fastball from playing up and a spate of injuries have stalled his development. There's some hope to be a reliever if the Sox hold onto him after a wacky waiver experience.

Thyago Vieira, RHP: Throws very hard, but did not sit over 100 mph as in the past, and the command outages that hampered him in Triple-A only worsened in the majors.

Zach Thompson, RHP: It's finally clicking for the big man in the bullpen. He has some big-league future ahead of him, even if the Rule 5 draft means it happens elsewhere.

Hunter Schryver, LHP: An odd Single-A reliever acquisition for international bonus room has an odd arsenal (scouts say he throws a knuckleball?) that should be able to get other lefties out, and surely did in Winston-Salem.

Luis Martinez, RHP: The first big international signing of the Marco Paddy era has not collected many stretches of dominance in his six years in the organization, but remains intriguing if only for imagining what his towering frame (6-foot-6) could manage out of the bullpen.

Danny Dopico, RHP: Struggled in the AFL and control problems kept him bouncing around Single-A for three years, but scouts feel he can reach the majors.

Isaiah Carranza, RHP: Big arm and intriguing third-day draftee but sidelined for Tommy John surgery.

Brian Clark, LHP: Finesse lefty reliever was surprisingly shuffled down to Double-A in 2018 and did not respond well.

Jason Bilous, RHP: Big college strikeout numbers, big college walk numbers, big project.

Andrew Perez, LHP: If the next contending White Sox bullpen lacks for lefty specialists, it won't be for lack of effort after grabbing Perez and Bennett Sousa in the eighth and 10th rounds in June.

Bennett Sousa, LHP: Sousa outperformed Perez at Kannapolis, but as a senior signing, is also two years older.

Matt Foster, RHP: Undersized former 20th-rounder saw his nutty strikeout numbers dip upon arrival in Double-A, but there's still hope.

Will Kincanon, RHP: Hard-throwing local product made his way to Kannapolis last season and showed promise.

Tremendous raw power guys who need to show it across a full season

Corey Zangari, 1B: It's not Zangari's fault that a potential breakout season was stalled by a pitch off his wrist, but he'll be age-appropriate at Kannapolis next season. For a first-base prospect, that means it's time to start producing without exception.

Sam Abbott, 1B: Nick Hostetler said it would take Abbott plenty of time at rookie ball to develop his swing and he meant it.

A guy on the backfields that FanGraphs' Eric Longenhagen said was interesting

Luis Mieses, CF: We'll see if he's still up the middle as he fills out and the production isn't there yet, but if you see him in uniform, it's pretty easy to figure out why he got a professional contract. Betting on athleticism is always the way to go.

Interesting dudes that it's hard to know what to do with

Ti'Quan Forbes, IF: The former second-round pick made huge leaps forward at the plate in his age-21 season, and has plenty of athleticism. So it seems wrong after so much progress to kvetch about whether there's enough offense for him to play in a corner.

Yeyson Yizarri, UTIL: Mixing him all over the diamond is probably great for his career prospects, and he's still 21, but the offensive approach development is slow and a lot of it needs to happen.

Danny Mendick, UTIL: A breakout 2017 in Winston-Salem put him on the map, but another breakthrough is needed to lift him beyond life as a high-minors organizational soldier.

Mitch Roman, IF: Quietly had a solid year slapping singles in Winston-Salem, but will have to fight to rise above toolsier infield options.

Tyler Frost, OF: It's hard to find a scout who doesn't like the pop offered by the former 15th-rounder, but even after 18 homers in Kannapolis, it's still an uphill battle to distinguish himself as a corner outfielder on that quality alone.

Romy Gonzalez, IF/OF: He's versatile and productive but did not dominate in a high-octane offensive environment in Great Falls.

Jhoandro Alfaro, C: Jorge's little brother is lauded for his feel for catching, but will probably need to hit a little bit more for it to matter.

Tate Blackman, 2B: Former Ole Miss standout has real pop (17 homers) but was good, not great playing competition younger than him (now 24) at Low-A Kannapolis.

Carlos Perez, C: Less name value than little Alfaro, but perhaps a more reliable hit tool so far.

Tanner Banks, LHP: A 27-year-old who is very good at throwing strikes and getting minor leaguers out, but would need to beat the odds to get a handful of big-league appearances.

Zach Remillard, IF/OF: Former Coastal Carolina College World Series hero has a big arm and was a fun glue guy for the dominant Winston-Salem Dash but probably not a big-league contributor.

Logan Sowers, OF: Aaron Schnurbusch should have taught us not to get our hopes up for hulking late-round college bats with substantial swing-and-miss, but here we are anyway.

Impossibly far away ... why haven't I stopped yet?

Anderson Comas, OF: The hit tool has shown up as advertised for a member of the same 2016 international class as Sosa and Mieses.

Brayan Herrera, RHP: He has not advanced beyond complex league ball, but he's 20 and he throws strikes.

Hunter Kiel, RHP: Nearly two-thirds of the professional hitters Kiel has faced have either walked or struck out, but it's a fairly even mixture.

Wilber Perez, RHP: The other return in the Joakim Soria trade cannot throw in the 90s and has not pitched stateside yet but is still interesting.

José Colina, C: He's 20, he's played in 100 games they kept statistics for over four years. I don't know how good he is, just try to keep his name in mind.

Kleyder Sanchez, C: Complex-league ball was unkind to the 18-year-old, but the name is undeniably cool.

Need a resurgence to get back on the radar

Casey Gillaspie, 1B: All scouting concerns about his swing have come home to roost over two stagnant years at Triple-A.

Matt Rose, 1B/3B: It's nice to have a third baseman with pop in the system, but rare to see a big leaguer with a minor league season as ugly as what he just endured.

Andre Davis, RHP: Second half of the Melky Cabrera trade missed 2018 with a patella injury.

Alfredo González, C: He can frame, but he cannot hit.

J.B. Olsen, RHP: Righty side-arming reliever missed 2018 with Tommy John surgery.

Yosmer Solorzano, RHP: Won't turn 22 until February and has a heavy fastball, but not much success in his aggressive assignments.

Craig Dedelow, OF: One below-average season for a college senior-signed corner bat is usually one too many.

Trey Michalczewski, IF: Working at multiple infield positions is interesting, but it's been four years since he slugged .400.

Evan Skoug, C: Power-hitting college catcher has slugged .301 in over 100 games at Kannapolis.

Connor Walsh, RHP: Wiry reliever sits at 96 mph but endured a nightmare year for his control.

Blake Hickman, RHP: ACE graduate's move to the bullpen did not provide the lift hoped for.

Johan Cruz, IF: Is getting farther away from providing credible offense to support his glove.

Alex Destino, OF: A college bat stalling at Great Falls is not encouraging.

Maiker Feliz, 3B: Every international signing who feels like he's hung around forever without clear progress winds up only being 21 anyway, so let's chill out.

Josue Guerrero, OF: He's only 19 so he could figure it out anytime in the next three years and be just fine, but safe to say he's fallen a little behind his cousin's pace.

How sports clubs are leading the cheer for Team Chicago

Rather than simply making a donation, the heads of the Cubs, Sox, Bulls, Blackhawks and Bears want to encourage all Chicagoans to get involved in finding solutions to one of the city's biggest challenges: crime.
By George H. McCaskey, Rocky Wirtz, Michael Reinsdorf, Jerry Reinsdorf, Tom Ricketts / Crain's Chicago Business | November 27, 2018

Sports are part of the communal fabric of cities. They bring together people from diverse walks of life and capture the hearts of their hometowns. This is especially true in our great city of Chicago. Our fans fill our ballparks, arenas and stadiums, proudly wear our gear, and loudly support our teams. Season after season, Chicagoans are there for us. We believe we have a responsibility to return that support.

In 2016, the rate of homicides in Chicago surged — 60 percent from the year prior and today, violence continues to rip through our neighborhoods. It is extraordinary, yet has become so common to Chicago that it seems ordinary. With such staggering statistics, it became clear — we needed to act. Last year, our five teams came together for the first time to form the Chicago Sports Alliance, seeking to leverage our collective platforms to address violence in our city.

Rather than simply making a donation, we wanted our coming together to make a statement and encourage all Chicagoans to become involved in finding solutions. From Wrigley Field to Guaranteed Rate Field, from Soldier Field to the United Center, every person who calls Chicago home has both an opportunity and an obligation to care about the crisis that plagues our city.

When we began, we took a page from our own playbooks with our initial investment. Every team relies on data, statistics and analysis to enhance performance on the field, ice or court. Why not apply that same approach to make smarter, more strategic philanthropic decisions to save lives?

To do this, we teamed up with the University of Chicago Crime Lab. In our first year, we focused on supporting three initiatives proven to reduce violent crime:

The Choose to Change program, a trauma-informed therapy and mentorship program engaging young people at elevated risk for violence involvement. Evaluation indicates a 47 percent reduction in violent arrests among participants in the first two groups after program enrollment.

Analyst training for the Chicago Police Department's district-level, data-driven violence reduction strategy—the Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSCs), which use daily data analysis to focus police resources. This strategy has been successful in driving down violence in Englewood, while increasing positive police-community engagement.

The University of Chicago Crime Lab to support efforts to measure and assess the impact of the teams' initial investments to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable Chicagoans.

These programs have shown progress in just one year, and those are the kinds of results we look for when making investments.

Today, as we look toward the start of a second year of the Chicago Sports Alliance, we are pleased to announce that we will continue to support evidence-informed, data-driven initiatives with financial and in-

kind support. We will continue supporting Choose to Change and are adding another promising model to the Alliance portfolio: the Rapid Employment and Development Initiative (READI Chicago).

READI Chicago uses data analysis to identify men at highest risk for violence involvement and then engages them in an 18-month program featuring transitional jobs and cognitive behavioral therapy, a combination of services proven to reduce violence.

We wear different uniforms, have different names, but Chicago is something we share. We stand united as five championship teams to serve as a champion for our city, and we hope others will join us in this work.

George H. McCaskey is chairman of the Chicago Bears; Rocky Wirtz is chairman of the Chicago Blackhawks; Michael Reinsdorf is president of the Chicago Bulls; Tom Ricketts is chairman of the Chicago Cubs, and Jerry Reinsdorf is chairman of the Chicago White Sox.