



MEDIA CLIPS – Nov. 7, 2018

**Bridich praises Black's influence on Rockies
Skipper named finalist for 2018 NL Manager of Year Award
Thomas Harding | MLB.com | Nov. 6th, 2018**

DENVER -- Rockies general manager Jeff Bridich said Tuesday manager Bud Black was the right guy at the right time for a team that had struggled with the pitching puzzle throughout its existence.

Bridich, during the General Managers Meetings in Carlsbad, Calif., praised Black, who was named one of three finalists for the National League Manager of the Year Award after leading the Rockies to an unprecedented second straight postseason appearance in his two years in charge.

The Rockies had devoted many of their Drafts and trades to building young starting-pitching depth. Black, who pitched 15 seasons in the Majors, replaced Walt Weiss after the 2016 season, and has reached the postseason with a mostly young rotation. In 2018, Rockies pitchers -- led by 17-game winner Kyle Freeland -- accomplished the most strikeouts (1,409) and lowest opposing batting average (.250) in club history.

In an era when the first-time manager is en vogue, Black came to the Rockies after managing the Padres from 2007-15.

"He was the right man, well-timed for the job at hand," Bridich said. "Whatever happened in San Diego in all those years there, the experience, perspective and everything that he's about, was exactly what he needed. The timing, what we could potentially do as a team, as an organization at the Major League level, putting him in as the manager, has ended up igniting a positive or codifying a message.

"His personality is able to keep things light, loose, and yet, there is no sense of fear. You know who's in charge. And he can deliver messages in many different ways. He is naturally in tune with pitchers. He sees the game from the pitcher's eyes. That's a different thing from who we had in the past, and he's got an easy way about him."

Where do CarGo and Parra stand?

Despite a dramatic early slump, right fielder Carlos Gonzalez hit .276 with 16 homers and 64 RBIs and at times was a main cog while completing his 10th season with the Rockies. But he is a free agent, as is outfielder Gerardo Parra, who struggled early last season but settled in as a key bat off the bench and late-game defensive replacement.

Bridich spoke fondly of both, but said it's too early to determine if either would receive offers or what role the Rockies would eye for either.

"We're still pretty early," Bridich said. "We've had great experiences with both guys over the years. We're not quite there yet -- in understanding the whole trade-market dynamic and free-agent realities -- to say. I imagine we'll have conversations with their agents.

"We had to decline an option on Parra already, so there has been some contact this offseason. I'm sure it'll be part of our routine, normal free-agent process to reach out to them for extra discussions, to see where they're at as well."

Pitching always on the radar

The Rockies' multi-faceted approach will include trade exploration with other teams, which could fill holes and potentially make other deals or free-agent signings possible. Should the Rockies deal, expect young starting pitching to be a focus -- even though the Rockies have a mostly young Major League rotation with several prospects trying to work their way on to the Major League roster.

Since becoming GM before the 2015 season, Bridich has dealt just one young starter, Eddie Butler; meanwhile, established rotation member German Marquez and two righties trying to break in, Jeff Hoffman (an on-and-off contributor the past two years) and Jesus Tinoco (yet to make the Majors) arrived in trades.

"Our story is not ever going to change," Bridich said. "We're always going to be interested in trying to add as much. We never, ever, ever felt like, 'Oh, we've got a glut of pitching.' No. Stuff happens. Injuries. Trades. Whatever happens, happens. We feel good but there's always that in the back of your mind, 'How are we going to get more?'"

**Marwin's versatility could help Rox fill holes
Colorado facing potential free-agent exits by LeMahieu, CarGo, Parra
Thomas Harding | MLB.com | Nov. 6th, 2018**

DENVER -- The Rockies have an already versatile roster that points toward pursuing one of the Majors' best all-purpose players -- free agent Marwin Gonzalez, a catalyst for winning Astros teams.

Three key Rockies position players became free agents after the 2018 season -- Gold Glove-winning second baseman DJ LeMahieu, right fielder Carlos Gonzalez and key defensive outfielder and part-time starter Gerardo Parra. This means roughly 2 1/2 everyday positions. Marwin Gonzalez, who turns 30 in March, could fill any of those and more -- and would fit even if the Rockies re-sign one or two of the aforementioned free agents.

Marwin Gonzalez has operated as a starter the past two seasons, with at least 15 starts at five positions -- left field, shortstop (his natural spot), second, first and third base.

On the first day of the General Managers Meetings in Carlsbad, Calif., the Rockies' Jeff Bridich played it close when asked about versatile everyday players such as Gonzalez.

"We've got some guys we can move around, so it's nice to have that on the team already," Bridich said. "With the way that we're built in the National League, 13 pitchers, it's always part of our thought process. I'm not sure how much necessarily we will have that lead the day for us with free agency or trades, but it's always part of our thought process."

Gonzalez's switch-hitting bat (104 career weighted runs created-plus, four points above MLB average) can help the Rockies, who set a club record with 44 road wins, won the National League Wild Card Game and appeared in the NL Division Series -- despite franchise-low batting averages of .256 overall and .225 on the road.

Here is a breakdown of how Gonzalez matches up with Colorado:

Production

Gonzalez had a .303/.377/.530 slash line, plus 23 home runs, 34 doubles and 90 RBIs in a breakout 2017 as the Astros won the World Series. His 2018 dipped overall -- .247/.324/.409 -- but Gonzalez scorched balls during the second half.

He hit .230 in the first half of 2018, although according to Statcast™ his 33.9 percent hard-hit rate (at least 95 mph exit velocity) was not off much from his 36.6 percent in 2017 -- essentially MLB average.

But during the '18 second half, when he kept his bat in the zone longer and limited his chasing of breaking pitches, Statcast™ had the hard-hit rate at 52.7 percent -- fourth-highest among 246 MLB players with at least 100 batted balls over that period. Gonzalez was similar left-handed (53.1) and right-handed (52).

Inside Edge numbers suggest he is a tough out if he keeps crushing the inside fastball (MLB-leading .415), and doesn't chase breaking pitches (39.8 swing-and-miss rate on curves and sliders since the start of 2017). Gonzalez saw 10 or more pitches in a plate appearance 11 times to tie for the MLB high, and since the start of 2017, his 4.17 pitches seen per plate appearance is tied for 13th among 121 qualified hitters.

Fit

Gonzalez's addition would make it four everyday players the Rockies could start at multiple positions -- five if they decide to approach center fielder Charlie Blackmon about playing the corners occasionally or full time. Star third baseman Nolan Arenado, shortstop Trevor Story (trained at multiple spots) and the catchers are not expected to start at other positions. Playing all three outfield spots gave David Dahl opportunities to establish himself in 2018, and it could do the same for Raimel Tapia and Noel Cuevas. Ian Desmond, who signed his five-year, \$70 million deal before 2017, has played extensively at first base and left field and is a middle infielder by trade. Ryan McMahon can play three of the four infield spots, Garrett Hampson can handle the middle infield and showed solid center-field work in the Minors in 2018.

Gonzalez can move to accommodate any of those players either as the game starts or midgame. If an injury sidelines Story, Gonzalez is a proven, high-level shortstop.

Dollars

While the multi-position gold standard is the four-year, \$56 million deal the Cubs reached with Ben Zobrist before the 2016 season, former MLB general manager Jim Bowden, now with The Athletic, predicted a three-year, \$39 million contract for Gonzalez.

Reports suggest the Yankees and Cardinals have also approached his agent, Scott Boras.

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Sounds like Marwin Gonzalez, nicknamed "Swiss G", will not have a lack of suitors.

Bridich said last week the Rockies expect "responsible growth" of a payroll that Spotrac placed at nearly \$144 million at the end of 2018. Can the Rockies fit Gonzalez in while dealing with NL MVP finalist Arenado's salary arbitration (likely north of \$21 million) and bidding to re-sign coveted righty setup man Adam Ottavino?

Free-agent alternatives

There is infielder-outfielder Josh Harrison (Pirates), or the Rockies could go with strictly an outfielder -- A.J. Pollock (D-backs) or Michael Brantley (Indians).

Here's what happened in Tuesday's AFL action MLB.com | Nov. 6, 2018

Here's a team-by-team breakdown of how all 30 teams' prospects fared in Arizona Fall League action on Tuesday:

AL East

Blue Jays (Surprise)

MLB Pipeline's No. 1 overall prospect, Vladimir Guerrero Jr., snapped his 0-for-12 skid with a run-scoring single as part of a 1-for-5 performance that lowered his AFL average to .379. After a 1-for-17 start in the Fall League, Cavan Biggio, Toronto's No. 9 prospect, is hitting .371 over his last 10 games after finishing 3-for-4 with an RBI and a walk. Santiago Espinal (No. 22) went 1-for-4 with an RBI out of the leadoff spot, while Jackson McClelland struck out a pair of hitters while tossing a scoreless ninth. [More »](#)

Orioles (Glendale)

Ryan McKenna, the Orioles' No. 12 prospect, went 1-for-3 with a double and scored the Desert Dogs' lone run. The double was his sixth in the AFL, where he sports a .370 average through 14 games. Steve Wilkerson was held hitless in four plate appearances. On the mound, Tyler Erwin was tagged for three earned runs and five hits and recorded just one out. Jay Flaa fared better, notching a strikeout during a scoreless inning.

Rays (Peoria)

Rays No. 9 prospect Lucius Fox singled, scored a run and plated another with a bases-loaded walk, one of two free passes he drew Tuesday. Catcher Ronaldo Hernandez (No. 7) went 0-for-3 with a run scored and two walks.

Red Sox (Mesa)

Esteban Quiroz went 1-for-4 and scored a run.

Yankees (Glendale)

No. 45 overall prospect Estevan Florial (Yankees' No. 2) went 0-for-4 with two strikeouts. Thairo Estrada (No. 16) recorded a single in his first at-bat before finishing 1-for-4. Steve Sensley went 0-for-3. Kyle Zurak tossed a scoreless inning, allowing one hit, out of the bullpen.

AL Central

Indians (Glendale)

Outfielder Connor Marabell doubled as part of a 2-for-4 performance as he accounted for a third of the Desert Dogs' six hits. Catcher Li-Jen Chu went 0-for-3 with a strikeout, though he did throw out an attempted basestealer. Starting pitcher Justin Garza suffered his first AFL loss after allowing five earned runs on six hits and three walks in 3 1/3 innings, while Jared Robinson was charged with one earned run on two hits in one inning out of the bullpen.

Royals (Surprise)

Royals No. 26 prospect Scott Blewett allowed a first-inning run but settled in and completed four innings of four-hit ball as he improved to 4-0 with a 2.21 ERA in the AFL. He struck out one batter and induced eight ground-ball outs in the performance, throwing 34 of 51 pitches for strikes. Khalil Lee (No. 2) went 0-for-3 but reached twice via walks and scored a run from the bottom of the lineup.

Tigers (Mesa)

Daniel Woodrow, hitting atop the Solar Sox lineup, reached base four times. The 23-year-old went 3-for-4, drew a walk, scored a run and also collected an RBI.

MLB Pipeline

@MLBPipeline

Daniel Woodrow, the #Tigers' 2016 12th-round #MLBDraft pick out of @gocreighton, continues his 

@MLBazFallLeague campaign -- 3-for-3, 2 R, RBI, BB, 2 SB today. Now batting .347. Gameday:

<https://atmlb.com/2F6niSx>

Twins (Salt River)

Twins No. 18 prospect Travis Blankenhorn went 0-for-3 and is hitting .214.

White Sox (Glendale)

White Sox No. 4 prospect Luis Robert (No. 44 overall) went 2-for-4 for Glendale to increase his AFL hitting streak to 12 games and his batting average to .367. Laz Rivera went 0-for-3 as the Desert Dogs' nine-hole hitter. Reliever Danny Dopico issued three walks and allowed a run while handling the ninth inning in the loss.

AL West

A's (Mesa)

Athletics' No. 18 prospect Eli White picked up an RBI as part of his 1-for-4 effort and is now hitting .351 in the AFL. Luis Barrera, who drove in a pair of runs, also finished 1-for-4. Angel Duno took the mound in relief and spun a scoreless inning. After getting hit hard earlier in the Fall, Duno has put together back-to-back scoreless appearances.

MLB Pipeline

@MLBPipeline

#Athletics OF prospect Luis Barrera is now 7-for-12 with 9 RBIs in the past 4 games after this 2-run single in the 1st inning of @MLBazFallLeague action today. Follow live: <https://atmlb.com/2QmH5yr>

Angels (Mesa)

Jahmai Jones, the Angels' No. 4 prospect, was hitless (0-for-2), but did draw a pair of walks and score a run. Roberto Baldoquin and David MacKinnon hit back-to-back in the Solar Sox order, with each picking up a hit. Combined, they finished 2-for-7. Daniel Procopio, Brett Hanewich and Ryan Clark threw the final three frames, but only Clark fared well. Procopio and Hanewich each gave up two earned runs, while Clark fired 1 1/3 scoreless frames.

Astros (Scottsdale)

Ronnie Dawson went 1-for-4 and is hitting .297 in the AFL. Trent Thornton, the Astros' No. 24 prospect, gave up one run on one hit in 1 1/3 innings. Erasmo Pinales was stuck with the loss as he gave up one run on one hit in the ninth.

Mariners (Peoria)

Third baseman Chris Mariscal clubbed a two-run single in the seventh inning and also drew a walk.

Rangers (Surprise)

Joe Barlow posted a strikeout and walk while tossing a scoreless inning in relief.

NL East

Braves (Peoria)

The Braves' No. 19 prospect, left-hander Thomas Burrows, pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings in relief, holding Mesa to one hit and striking out two batters. Second baseman Ray-Patrick Didder went 1-for-4 with two strikeouts. Center fielder Cristian Pache (Braves No. 6) added a single and an outfield assist.

Marlins (Salt River)

Marlins No. 12 prospect Brian Miller drew a walk and went 0-for-2.

Phillies (Scottsdale)

Darick Hall's lone hit was a double as he finished 1-for-3. Tyler Viza got the start and gave up one run on three hits in 4 2/3 innings. He walked two and also struck out four. Seth McGarry pitched two-thirds of an inning in relief, walking one and striking out another.

Nationals (Salt River)

Nationals No. 2 prospect Carter Kieboom and Daniel Johnson (No. 7) were each held hitless (0-for-3). Taylor Guilbeau came in after Duplantier and struck out one in 1 1/3 scoreless innings. Jordan Mills also threw well out of the bullpen, spinning a scoreless frame of his own.

Mets (Scottsdale)

Mets No. 2 prospect Peter Alonso went 0-for-3 with a trio of strikeouts. Ali Sanchez (No. 25) was 0-for-4 offensively.

NL Central

Brewers (Peoria)

First baseman Weston Wilson had a pair of extra-base hits for Peoria, hitting his first triple of the fall and slugging a solo homer in the eighth inning. Milwaukee's No. 19 prospect, left fielder Trent Grisham, went 0-for-3 but drew two walks and a

run scored. Right-hander Jon Olczak pitched a perfect seventh inning with one strikeout, and southpaw Daniel Brown gave up two runs on three hits and a walk in the sixth. Aaron Wilkerson, pitching for Mesa, walked one, struck out one and gave up a hit in one scoreless inning.

Cardinals (Surprise)

Andy Young boosted his AFL average to .309 with a 2-for-4 day at the plate. The 24-year-old, who doubled in the contest, also drove in and scored a pair of runs.

Cubs (Mesa)

Erick Leal continues to carve up Fall League hitters. The right-hander struck out five as he cruised through four innings of one-hit ball and has yet to allow a run through five AFL starts. Cubs No. 16 prospect D.J. Wilson went 1-for-3 and scored a pair of runs, while Jhonny Pereda went 1-for-4. More »

Pirates (Surprise)

Pirates No. 5 prospect Cole Tucker, Bryan Reynolds (No. 8) and Will Craig (No. 16) all recorded at least one hit and run scored. Tucker went 2-for-3 and scored twice, while Reynolds collected a trio of hits (3-for-5) and scored a run. Craig finished 1-for-4 and scored twice. On the mound, Matt Eckelman, Blake Weiman and Geoff Hartlieb each threw a scoreless inning in relief.

Mike Rosenbaum

@GoldenSombbrero

Another knock for Cole Tucker #Pirates @MLBPipeline

Reds (Scottsdale)

Reds No. 2 prospect Taylor Trammell scorched a pair of doubles in his first two at-bats on his way to a 2-for-4 night at the plate. Shed Long (No. 8) came through with a two-out, two-run single in the fourth, that had an exit velocity of 106.8 mph, according to Statcast™. Long later picked up another hit and finished 2-for-3. Alfredo Rodriguez (No. 23) went 0-for-2 with a walk.

NL West

D-backs (Salt River)

D-backs No. 1 prospect Jon Duplantier bounced back from a pair of rough outings with a strong start for the Rafters. The right-hander yielded two runs and struck out nine over 4 2/3 innings. Daulton Varsho (No. 5) and Drew Ellis (No. 9) combined to go 0-for-5 at the plate. Varsho, however, did draw a pair of walks. Martinez, playing for Surprise, went 1-for-5, but that one hit was a three-run homer in the fifth inning. [More »](#)

Dodgers (Glendale)

Nolan Long spun a clean frame, retiring the side in order in his lone inning on the mound.

Giants (Scottsdale)

Giants No. 10 prospect Heath Quinn drew a walk and finished 1-for-3 with a run scored. C.J. Hinojosa (No. 28) went 0-for-3 with a pair of strikeouts. Chase Johnson walked one, but gave up nothing else in his one-third of an inning.

Padres (Peoria)

Right-hander Miguel Diaz started for Peoria and was tagged for five runs on six hits and three walks in 3 1/3 innings. He struck out five Mesa batters. Padres No. 13 prospect Buddy Reed and No. 24 prospect Austin Allen each went 1-for-4 with a walk. Left-hander Travis Radke struck out a batter in a perfect eighth inning.

Rockies (Salt River)

Rockies No. 9 prospect Sam Hilliard hit his second homer of the Fall League, a 414-foot blast that had a 114.8 mph exit velocity, according to Statcast™. Tyler Nevin (No. 11) went 1-for-4, but hit all four balls with exit velocities over 100 mph. Josh Fuentes boosted his AFL batting average to .299 as he went 2-for-4, including a double, and scored a pair of runs. Mitch Horacek and Justin Lawrence (No. 17) picked up the win and the save as the duo pitched the eighth and the ninth innings for the Rafters.

**Nolan finalist for MVP, Black for top manager
Arenado is a finalist for NL MVP
Thomas Harding | MLB.com | Nov. 5th, 2018**

DENVER -- Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado is a first-time finalist for National League Most Valuable Player, and Bud Black is a finalist for the NL Manager of the Year Award for the third time -- including the last two years while leading the Rockies.

The Baseball Writers' Association of America awards were announced Monday on MLB Network.

Arenado, 27, led the NL with 38 home runs -- the third time he has led or tied for the league lead -- and joined Albert Belle (1993-96) as the second player in MLB history to knock at least 35 homers and 35 doubles in four straight seasons. On Sunday, Arenado earned his sixth consecutive Rawlings Gold Glove Award.

Arenado led the NL in multi-hit games and finished fifth among NL position players in wins above replacement (WAR) at 5.6, according to Baseball Reference.

However, the favorite for the award is the Brewers' Christian Yelich. The Cubs' Javier Baez is the other NL MVP finalist. The winner, which will be determined in balloting by the BBWAA, will be announced Nov. 15.

Black, 61, who won the award in 2010 with the Padres, led the Rockies to the postseason for the second straight year. The club had never been to the postseason in consecutive years in its previous 25 seasons. The Rockies, who have never won the NL West, finished the regular season with 91 wins and were tied with the Dodgers, who won a tie-breaking game.

Black led a club that posted the lowest team batting average in its history at .256, but the pitching staff rolled up 1,409 strikeouts -- most in franchise history -- and held opponents to a .250 average, which was a club-record low.

The Brewers' Craig Counsell and the Braves' Brian Snitker are the other NL Manager of the Year finalists. The winner will be announced Nov. 13.

Two Rockies who weren't nominated for awards were left-handed pitcher Kyle Freeland, who recorded a 2.40 ERA at Coors Field and went 17-7 with a 2.85 ERA overall, but didn't crack the Cy Young finalist list (the Mets' Jacob deGrom, Nationals' Max Scherzer and Phillies' Aaron Nola are up for the award). Shortstop Trevor Story, who finished second to Arenado in NL homers, didn't make the MVP final three.

**Rockies' Nolan Arenado named MVP finalist; Bud Black up for manager of year
Arenado's 38 home runs were the most in the National League
Patrick Saunders | DenverPost.com | Nov. 5, 2018**

Nolan Arenado's star just keeps shining brighter, while Bud Black's reputation as one of baseball's best managers got another boost.

Arenado, the Rockies' all-star third baseman, who just pocketed his sixth consecutive Gold Glove, on Monday was named a finalist for National League MVP as voted on by the Baseball Writers Association of America. Chicago Cubs infielder Javier Baez and Milwaukee outfielder Christian Yelich are the other finalists.

Yelich, who had a monster September as the Brewers won the NL Central title, is considered the heavy favorite. The winner will be announced Nov. 15.

Joining Black as finalists for NL manager of the year are Milwaukee's Craig Counsell and Atlanta's Brian Snitker. The winner will be announced Nov. 13.

National recognition for Arenado's skills continues to rise each season. He finished eighth in the voting in 2015, fifth in 2016 and fourth last season. Larry Walker, in 1997, is the only Rockies player to be named MVP.

Arenado's 38 home runs were the most in the National League. He also led the NL with 57 multihit games, was third in slugging percentage (.561), tied for third in extra-base hits (78) and finished with a .297 batting average (10th). According to Baseball Reference, he ranked fifth among NL position players with a 5.6 WAR. (wins above replacement).

Black won manager of the year with San Diego in 2010 and was a finalist last year in his first season with the Rockies. He is the first manager in franchise history to lead the Rockies to the postseason in back-to-back years.

Black is headed into the final year of his three-year contract, which has a mutual option for 2020. While there have not been any negotiations about a contract extension, general manager Jeff Bridich indicated last week that Black could be Colorado's manager well beyond 2019.

“There’s a great appreciation for who Buddy is and what he’s done with us here, and that’s not lost on us at all,” Bridich said. “In due time, there will be conversations to see what’s best for us and for him in the future, he and his family. But all that being said, there are a lot of positive vibes all the way around.”

Left-hander Kyle Freeland, who had one of the best pitching seasons in franchise history, was not a finalist for the NL Cy Young Award. That honor was bestowed on the Met’s Jacob deGrom, Philadelphia’s Aaron Nola and Washington’s Max Scherzer, all of whom had very strong seasons.

Freeland finished 17-7 with a 2.85 ERA and went 10-2 with a 2.40 ERA at hitter-friendly Coors Field. The Cy Young Award will be announced Nov. 14.

Rosenthal: Nolan Arenado's future in Colorado; the Mariners' path forward; change is in the air; more notes
Ken Rosenthal | TheAthletic.com | Nov. 7, 2018

Once Bryce Harper and Manny Machado sign their massive free-agent contracts, the Rockies will be left with the daunting task of trying to reach agreement with third baseman Nolan Arenado on a long-term extension.

"These sort of 'problems' aren't really problems. They're just part of the business," Rockies general manager Jeff Bridich said on Tuesday. "It's our job to navigate the situation and hopefully do it with a professional and mutual respect."

By all accounts, the Rockies maintain an excellent relationship with Arenado and his agents at the Wasserman Media Group. But in the end, the National League MVP finalist's future in Colorado will be determined by dollars — hundreds of millions of dollars.

Harper and Machado, entering their age 26 seasons, likely will establish new financial standards in free agency. Arenado, if he becomes a free agent a year from now, would be entering his age 29 season. His age alone probably would prevent him from getting as much as Harper and Machado, particularly if he does not hit the open market. But to stay with the Rockies, he surely would want a monster deal.

Over the past four seasons, Arenado has averaged 40 homers and 126 RBIs. His park- and league-adjusted OPS is the same as Machado's during that span, while considerably lower than Harper's. But Arenado, a winner of six straight Gold Gloves, is probably the best defender of the three — Machado is his near-equal when playing third base — and almost certainly the best leader.

A trade of Arenado is not currently under consideration; the Rockies are expected to make a legitimate attempt to keep him, even after their dubious experiences with previous long-term deals for pitcher Mike Hampton (eight years, \$121 million), first baseman Todd Helton (nine years, \$141.5 million) and shortstop Troy Tulowitzki (10 years, \$157.75 million).

The first benchmark for the two sides will be Arenado's arbitration number, which is virtually certain to exceed third baseman Josh Donaldson's \$23 million last season, an arbitration record. MLBTradeRumors.com projects Arenado to receive \$26.1 million, and it's possible he might ask for even more.

Players with five-plus years of service can compare themselves to free agents in arbitration, and by the time the Rockies and Arenado exchange numbers on Jan. 11, Machado's deal likely will be known. As part of the extension talks, the Rockies probably would seek to negotiate a lower salary for Arenado in 2019 and fold it into his new contract.

It seems inconceivable the Rockies would trade Arenado when they are trying to reach the postseason for the third straight year. If they fail to reach an agreement with him before the season starts, they can simply keep him and try again after the season is over.

Only one thing seems certain: The two sides get along too well for matters to turn ugly.

"That (relationship) has been cultured over the years. We expect that to continue as we enter this phase of Nolan's career," Bridich said. "There is no perfect road map to any of this. There hasn't been an expectation of a perfect road map. The biggest expectation is a continued quality of communication among everybody involved."

Mariners "re-imagining" their roster

Mariners general manager Jerry Dipoto had a one-word description for reports that said he was considering tearing down his roster and starting over:

"Dramatized."

Dipoto, like most GMs, will listen to any proposal from a prospective trade partner, but it is doubtful ownership would want him to completely shift course four months after he signed a contract extension.

The Mariners' preference, Dipoto said, is to improve their odds of long-term success without greatly compromising their short-term ability to compete. One way to do that is by flipping veteran assets for younger impact talent, acquiring the next Mitch Haniger rather than trading the current one.

“For the last three years, we’ve been somewhere between, let’s say, the fifth- and seventh-best team in the American League and we have not been able to get over that hump,” Dipoto said. “We’re viewing this as an opportunity to re-imagine what our roster looks like. We have no intention of tearing down to the studs and building from the ground up.

“I said at the start of the off-season we have too many strong assets to do that. We’ve got a lot of good players. We do have talent on the roster. Our goal here is to be open-minded and wide-eyed and go into this off-season considering the different ways we can get better, not just for now but for the future.”

Catcher Mike Zunino, under control for two more seasons, is among the players the Mariners are discussing in trades, and the Rays are among the clubs pursuing him, according to sources. A trade of Zunino would leave the team almost barren at catcher; the Astros recently claimed Chris Herrmann from the Mariners on waivers, and David Freitas — a waiver claim from the Braves in October 2017 — is the only other catcher on Seattle’s 40-man roster.

Dipoto, however, did not sound particularly worried about how he might replace Zunino.

“We’ll address whatever the short-term needs are when we get to that point,” he said. “We’re not committed to moving any one player specifically. We’re open to listening on anything. And we’ve discussed a number of players already with a variety of teams.”

Changes everywhere, and more still coming

Over the past four days, Dodgers third-base coach Chris Woodward became the Rangers’ manager, while hitting coach Turner Ward left for the same position with the Reds and general manager Farhan Zaidi agreed to become the Giants’ president of baseball operations.

Those jobs all must be filled, and even at this relatively late date a number of other teams are scrambling in similar fashion, granting permission for field and front-office staff to interview with other teams, requesting permission to interview other clubs’ employees for their own vacancies.

Staffing issues do not prevent clubs from conducting their normal off-season business, but they do create additional work for those doing the hiring. Executives describe the process as exhausting, with one going so far on Tuesday to say it might be the one aspect of the job that ultimately forces him to retire.

The increased movement in the industry reflects the expansions of both field staffs and front offices in recent years. The Dodgers, for example, listed nine coaches last season, though only seven are permitted in uniform during games. Meanwhile, the increased availability of data makes it necessary for teams to hire more analysts, and clubs are seeking new edges by adding other staff.

This year, hiring season might even stretch into December. The Orioles have yet to fill their openings for a president of baseball operations, general manager and manager, and they also must name a new coaching staff and replace a number of employees who are no longer with the club.

Here's Farhan... Now what about Bum?

The future of left-hander Madison Bumgarner is one of the first questions Zaidi will face on Wednesday when he is introduced as the Giants' president of baseball operations. But a trade of Bumgarner still seems unlikely, at least in the short-term — and not simply because of the pitcher's declining velocity and strikeout rate.

The free-agent market is flooded with left-handed starting pitchers, from Patrick Corbin to Dallas Keuchel to J.A. Happ; Hyun-Jin Ryu to Yusei Kikuchi to Wade Miley. The demand for Bumgarner almost certainly would be greater at the non-waiver deadline, and he presumably will be healthier than he was in the past two seasons, increasing his chances of success leading to July 31.

One rival executive questions whether the Giants possess the "intestinal fortitude" to rebuild the way they should. The awarding of a five-year contract to Zaidi — while perhaps necessary to pry him away from the Dodgers — would seem to indicate ownership's willingness to be patient. But however the team proceeds, it's probably too soon to trade Bumgarner.

Around the horn

*Here's an intriguing thought, courtesy of an industry source: Astros bench coach Joe Espada, who interviewed for managing positions with the Twins, Blue Jays, Angels and Rangers over the past month, ultimately might replace Don Mattingly, whose contract with the Marlins expires after the 2019 season.

Espada, a native of Puerto Rico, is not only bi-lingual, but also has ties to both the Marlins and their two top team executives — CEO Derek Jeter and vice-president of scouting and player development Gary Denbo, who previously worked for the Yankees.

Espada, 43, was a minor-league coach with the Marlins from 2006 to '09 and the major-league club's third-base coach from '10 to '13. He joined the Yankees as a special assistant in '14 and became third-base coach in '15.

*As the Orioles continue to operate without a lead executive, farm director Brian Graham and director of baseball operations Tripp Norton are representing the team at the GM Meetings. According to a source, executive VP John Angelos, the son of owner Peter Angelos, decided vice-president of baseball operations Brady Anderson would not be part of the Orioles' contingent. Anderson's role in the next front office remains a major question going forward.

Graham and Norton are trying to conduct business as usual, meeting with clubs, seeking a shortstop in both free agency and trade. Unlike in recent years, the Orioles offered new contracts to employees they wanted to retain before their old deals expired on Oct. 31. The one notable exception was amateur scouting director Gary Rajsich, whose fate likely will be determined by the new lead executive.

*The Rays are a team to watch, in more ways than one.

While some both inside and outside the organization believe the team over-achieved by finishing 90-72, one rival GM says the Rays' depth of young talent in the majors and minors bodes well for their future.

The Rays, according to sources, also possess more payroll flexibility than in years past, making them a possible landing spot for a significant right-handed hitting free agent such as designated hitter Nelson Cruz or third baseman Josh Donaldson.

*Free-agent right-hander Edwin Jackson has played for 13 teams, but is it possible he finally might find some stability in Oakland?

The Athletics are interested in re-signing Jackson, according to sources. Jackson, who joined the A's in June after exercising an opt-out clause with the Nationals, had a 3.33 ERA for Oakland in 17 starts.

Bowden: The Marlins need to trade J.T. Realmuto. Here are five potential deals that make sense
Jim Bowden | TheAthletic.com | Nov. 7, 2018

The Marlins value their catcher J.T. Realmuto and would love to sign him to a long-term contract. But they also know that those feelings are not mutual and that Realmuto would prefer a trade. They found that out directly from Jeff Berry, his lead agent from Creative Arts Agency (CAA), during a meeting with Marlins President of Baseball Operations Mike Hill this past month. Realmuto is just two years from free agency, and his trade value will never be higher. For that reason, the Marlins can't wait until the July trade deadline or next off-season to move him. They can't risk an injury or a sub-par performance by him next season.

A number of teams with strong farm systems need a frontline catcher, including the Astros, Braves, Dodgers, Rockies and Nationals. Those are probably the five that the Marlins match up best with.

Realmuto, 27, has quietly become one of the best all-around catchers in baseball. He has above-average defensive skills in terms of calling a game, blocking balls (92 percent success rate), throwing out runners trying to steal (38 percent) and defending bunts. However, pitch framing has been an issue for him, as he rates in the bottom third of the league in that category. On the positive side he has the fastest sprint speed of any MLB catcher at 28.6 feet per second.

Offensively, he had the best OPS+ and wRC+ of any backstop in baseball and also led in hits, OPS, runs and doubles. He has strong leadership skills, intelligence and passion for the game. Here is a quick comparison between Realmuto and some of the other top catchers in the sport:

COMPARING TOP MLB CATCHERS

Player	WAR	OPS+	CS%
J.T. Realmuto, Marlins	4.8	131	38%
Yasmani Grandal, Dodgers	3.6	121	28%
Francisco Cervelli, Pirates	3.3	123	39%
Wilson Contreras, Cubs	2.6	92	34%
Wilson Ramos, Phillies	2.4	130	29%
Yadier Molina, Cardinals	2.2	103	31%

Yan Gomes, Indians	2.2	103	29%
Buster Posey, Giants	2	106	29%
Salvador Pérez, Royals	1.7	92	48%
Gary Sánchez, Yankees	1.4	86	30%

The Marlins have traded away a lot of All-Star and MVP-caliber players over the last year and a half, including Giancarlo Stanton, the 2017 NL MVP, to the Yankees; Christian Yelich, the expected 2018 NL MVP, to the Brewers; Marcel Ozuna to the Cardinals; and Dee Gordon, a former NL hits and stolen base leader, to the Mariners. Although the Marlins did receive an impressive quantity of solid prospects in return, it doesn't look like they got a single player back that we'll be watching in future major league All-Star games or on award shows.

They must improve their track record of trade returns — starting with Realmuto — if they really expect to contend by 2021 or 2022. Therefore, let's look at five possible trade scenarios for Realmuto that are realistic and would offer fair value in return.

1. Astros – RHP Josh James and OF Tony Kemp

The Marlins would first ask the Astros for right-handed pitcher Forrest Whitley, who is clearly the number one pitching prospect in all of baseball. I would expect they would get a quick no, or maybe even a dial tone, depending on the mood of Astros GM Jeff Luhnow at the time. They'll probably follow-up with an inquiry on Kyle Tucker and although that would probably also be a no, I think a deal for him straight-up is probably a fair offer.

However, the deal that makes sense for both teams for me would be right-handed pitcher Josh James, who by the way is from South Florida and presently lives in Miami, and outfielder Tony Kemp. James throws a 100 mph fastball and has an above average changeup. If his slider ever becomes a consistent pitch, he could end up as a No. 2-type starter in the big leagues. If it doesn't, he profiles out to an impact closer or set-up reliever. Kemp, 27, might be an older prospect, but the 5-6, 165-pound second baseman and outfielder showed serious flashes this past season that he is ready to be an everyday player. He got on base at a .351 clip and stole nine bases in 87 games. He grinds out at-bats like Brett Gardner of the Yankees and has the speed of former major leaguer Michael Bourn. As it happens, he told me both were childhood heroes of his.

2. Braves –Two of the following pitchers: Ian Anderson, Touki Toussaint, Bryse Wilson, Luiz Gohara

Miami's first inquiries with the Braves would probably start with their top pitching prospects, Mike Soroka and Kyle Wright, and then move on to their top position prospects, third baseman Austin Riley and outfielder Cristian Pache. After the Marlins were told "no," like every other team at last year's trade deadline, they could then focus their attention on the next group of prospects. The Marlins really need to focus their rebuild on starting pitching, and no one in baseball has a deeper group of pitching prospects than the Braves. Perhaps a deal that included two arms from the group of Anderson, Toussaint, Wilson and Gohara could work.

3. Dodgers – OF Alex Verdugo and RHP Dustin May

The Dodgers are so loaded with outfielders that they haven't found a way to incorporate their top outfield prospect, Alex Verdugo, into an everyday role. With so many outfielders available via trade and free agency, and given the Dodgers' large wallets, they could certainly consider trading Verdugo for an impact everyday catcher. The Dodgers could decide to resign their free agent catcher Yasmani Grandal. But if they don't, trading for Realmuto is a logical move. The Marlins would want a second prospect back, and right-handed pitcher Dustin May would make it a huge return for the Fish. May, 21, was the Dodgers' third-round pick in the 2015 draft. He went 7-3 this year with a 3.29 ERA and a 1.98 WHIP in 17 starts at Rancho Cucamonga in the California League, and was solid in AA when he was promoted to Tulsa, where he went 2-2 with a 3.67 ERA and 1.136 WHIP in six starts.

4. Rockies – 2B Garrett Hampson and RHP Peter Lambert

The Rockies will probably lose gold glove second baseman D.J. LeMahieu in free agency, which makes trading Hampson difficult. However, they also have top prospect Brendan Rodgers (who is off limits in a trade like this) penciled in as their long-term answer at second base. Hampson, 24, can really hit, as shown by his career minor-league slash line of .315/.389/.457 in three seasons. The right-handed hitter is a top-of-the-lineup table setter who can steal bases; he has 123 stolen bags in 146 attempts in his minor-league career. Lambert, 21, was the Rockies second-round pick in the 2015 draft out of San Dimas High School in San Diego, CA. He's coming off of a breakout season, which spiked his trade value, after going 8-2 with an impressive 2.23 ERA in 15 starts at Hartford in the Eastern League. A Hampson and Lambert deal for Realmuto makes sense for both sides.

5. Nationals – OF Victor Robles

I was hesitant to include this trade idea because, if I were with the Nationals, I would not even consider trading Robles in a trade for Realmuto. Robles, 21, has been injured each of the last two seasons, but still has the potential to be one of the best leadoff hitters in baseball for a long time. Robles could develop into a .380 on-base percentage player, good for 20 home runs and 35 stolen bases, in a fairly short period of time. Considering that Robles has six years of team control left, compared to Realmuto's two years, the move doesn't make sense to me. However, because there were rumors (albeit still officially unsubstantiated) that the Nationals offered Robles at the trade deadline straight up for Realmuto, I felt obligated to include it.

Whatever happens, two things are for sure: The Marlins need to trade Realmuto this offseason. And they have to get a better value on the return than they did in their previous trades of star players.

Meet Adam Ottavino, perhaps the best reliever on MLB's free-agent market
Nick Groke | TheAthletic.com | Nov 7, 2018

Pitchers and hitters often interact like Tom and Jerry, even on the same team, as if their DNAs were wired to kick each other in the shins. They are forever on polar sides of baseball's spectrum.

After Adam Ottavino last winter took advantage of a flood of new pitching technologies and analytics to remake himself into one of the best relievers in the game, he noticed those same advantages are not exactly available to hitters. It left him with a wink of sympathy for the other side.

"Yeah, they do get screwed," Ottavino said. Then he remembered what side he's on.

"But the zone is pretty small right now and the balls are juiced and they have their own analytics to help," he said. "And hitters are a lot better than they used to be. They see 98 every day. It's not weird to them anymore. It's not that nasty. You still have to execute."

Ottavino, the hulking 6-foot-5, 220-pound right-hander with a chessboard full of pitches and a wipeout slider, last week entered free agency for the first time and with very little lingering sympathy for hitters. He struck out 22 of the first 34 batters he faced last season. He racked up 43 strikeouts in his first 24 innings. He stepped from dominant to overwhelming over the course of a contract year.

And with his anchor off, after the Rockies declined to issue him a qualifying offer last week, Ottavino likely will be among the most sought-after relievers in baseball this winter.

"He turned himself into one of the best relievers in the game," Rockies all-star Charlie Blackmon said.

The free-agent market for relievers includes flashy names and quiet soldiers, but as the bullpen-forward strategy of recent postseasons has spilled into the regular season, the price for relievers shows no signs of leveling off.

After the Rockies spent \$106 million on three relievers last winter, with \$52 million going to closer Wade Davis and \$27 million contracts handed to Jake McGee and Bryan Shaw, they probably spent themselves out of the chase for Ottavino.

That leaves him open to cash in elsewhere and his WAR, according to Fangraphs, suggests he is among the best relievers in baseball, with the seventh-best mark in the game and the best among free agents:

Pitcher	IP	K%	BB%	GB%	ERA	fWAR	
Adam Ottavino	77.2	36%	12%	43%	2.43	2.0	
Jeurys Familia	72.0	22%	9%	46%	3.13	1.8	
Joakim Soria	60.2	29%	6%	36%	3.12	1.8	
David Robertson		69.2	32%	9%	45%	3.23	1.5
Craig Kimbrel	62.1	39%	13%	28%	2.74	1.5	
Jesse Chavez	95.1	24%	5%	44%	2.55	1.2	
Oliver Perez	32.1	36%	6%	41%	1.39	1.1	
Tony Sipp	38.2	28%	9%	42%	1.86	0.9	
Zach Duke	52.0	21%	9%	59%	4.15	0.9	
Brad Brach	62.2	21%	10%	46%	3.59	0.7	
Joe Kelly	65.2	24%	11%	47%	4.39	0.7	
Andrew Miller	34.0	29%	10%	48%	4.24	0.4	
Greg Holland	46.1	22%	15%	40%	4.66	0.3	
Zach Britton	40.2	20%	12%	73%	3.10	0.1	

“I’ve never been in this spot,” Ottavino said of his first turn at free agency, after the Rockies were swept from the playoffs by a Brewers team riding their version of a super-pen. “I don’t know what to expect. I haven’t talked to anybody. Time will tell. I don’t really have that much control over it at the moment, so I’ll wait and see.”

What he can control, to a degree, and what he spent months perfecting in an unmarked and empty commercial space in Harlem last winter, is the movement of his pitches.

Rob Friedman

@PitchingNinja

Adam Ottavino, Two Seamer and Slider (overlay/home plate view)

Ottavino needed a rebuild. The Tommy John surgery that scuttled his 2015 season set him back, but Ottavino had never dealt with difficulty like he did in 2017, when his ERA doubled to 5.06 and he was left off Colorado's playoff roster. He lost control of his slider and hitters, realizing they could not hit the pitch, instead waited patiently for it to sail out of the zone. His walk rate more than doubled year-over-year from 2016.

"Even if a pitch is aesthetically pleasing, it looks good, it's not always effective," Ottavino said. "Sometimes a pitch can look nasty, but it isn't."

So he spent time at Driveline in Seattle and tracked his pitches with a high-speed HD Edgertronic camera. He taught himself to tunnel pitches, masking his slider behind the appearance of a fastball.

"I worked really hard last offseason to flip the script," Ottavino said. "People were burying me and I felt it was premature."

Those offseason insights propelled him. Hitters had a .284 OPS against him into May and he was striking out nearly 17 batters per nine innings. His first four months were among the best in baseball and even after he cooled some late in the season, Ottavino's 12.9 K/9 rate ranked third-best in the NL, behind only Josh Hader and Corey Knebel.

Hader might be Ottavino's most apt comparison, a pitcher built for high-leverage innings but not necessarily the ninth. Craig Kimbrel, for instance, Boston's closer last season, is perhaps the biggest name among free-agent relievers and teams remain focused on paying for that ability.

Ottavino, though, was called on by Colorado manager Bud Black to snuff out fires. In the Rockies' critical four-game sweep of the Braves in Atlanta in August, Ottavino stormed through the ninth inning with the score tied by testing the agility of his catcher and sending Dansby Swanson to his knees with a runner on third:

Rob Friedman

@PitchingNinja

Adam Ottavino, 93mph Fastball and Slider, Overlay/Slow.

"I thought that he was All-Star worthy," Black said. "The way he pitched in this first half was All-Star caliber."

Before the break, Ottavino's traditional metrics (at that point he had a 1.79 ERA over 40 1/3 innings) and the advanced numbers (a 2.27 xFIP into July) were both among the best in the game.

Guesstimates have Ottavino commanding a contract for two or three years and \$20 million-\$30 million. The priciest salary ever given to a reliever, by annual average value, went to Davis last season, a deal that parsed out to \$17.3 million per year, if split evenly over three years.

Because he's not a closer, and because his name might not carry above any marqueees, Ottavino is unlikely to near that kind of salary. But it would be fair for him to ask. The frustration he imparts on hitters is valuable.

And at 32, the former first-round pick of the Cardinals has learned to focus his faculties. He has perfected a slider that held hitters to a .149 batting average last year, even when they knew it was coming.

"At this point, that will be the reality for me forever, until I'm done playing," Ottavino said of his offseason rebuilding. "I saw how I can improve myself through hard work and intelligence. I'll take the same approach and clean up some of the areas that can be cleaned up and put myself in the best spot I can."

ROCKIES Rockies Gold Glove wins an important reminder for roster moving forward
Drew Creasman
Drew Creasman | BSNDenver.com | Nov. 6, 2018

DENVER – To the surprise of absolutely nobody who is paying attention, the Colorado Rockies were awarded with two Gold Gloves on Sunday at third and second base.

Nolan Arenado took home his historic sixth in a row, passing Larry Walker (5) for the most in franchise history. DJ LeMahieu received the honor for the third time, tying him with franchise legend Todd Helton.

The future of both players is of the utmost intrigue to Rockies fans and it looks likely that the very near future will see a Colorado club that takes the field without at least one of them.

But the recognition of their defensive prowess is yet another reminder that, despite the universally recognized fact that the Rockies must improve their offense, this is a team with a clearly defined identity that would do well to make sure that they stay true to the formula that brought them their first-ever back-to-back postseason appearances.

It's all about run prevention.

If the (again likely) search to replace LeMahieu, either at second base or through an amalgamation of players at various positions, Jeff Bridich and his team are going to place a high value on defense.

This could mean that it ends up being a deciding factor between Garrett Hampson and Brendan Rodgers in a hotly anticipated spring training battle. Or it could mean looking into a glove-first bargain option with a light bat, like Freddy Galvis.

The latter move would be unlikely to please fans but might be wise as an insurance policy for the young and still unproven prospects.

But in the pursuit of a better offense, can the Rockies really afford to sacrifice on the other side of the ball? This franchise has boasted some fantastic lineups throughout their history but that has never been enough to get them to the dance.

This same principle cross applies to any potential area of improvement. As much as it may frustrate some, Colorado will not move on from their defensive-minded catchers for a big bat unless they believe that big bat can also be a plus value behind the dish.

With pitchers like Kyle Freeland readily admitting to pitching to their exceptional defense, it would seem wise not to gamble on players like Brian Dozier or Daniel Murphy, as enticing as their bats at Coors Field might be.

Building a team identity can be difficult in any professional sport. And then, once you have, it can be even more complicated to find the balance between addressing your weaknesses and maintaining your strengths.

The key to Colorado taking the next step, and making themselves legitimate contenders for the World Series, is to find that balance whereby they can fortify the run-prevention game while finding ways for the offense to take absolutely necessary steps forward.

In my estimation, if it comes down to one or the other, the former ought to take precedence.

If nothing else, the Rockies have just proven that they can win 91 games without much of an offense and making marginal gains there should at least keep them in the hunt.

Meanwhile, any move to upgrade the lineup that also detracts from the defense would end up a lateral move at best unless the hitter acquired was truly of the superstar level. Those are few and far between, tend to be remarkably expensive, and are always one injury away from being a sunk cost.

The most intriguing free agent in that grouping would be a converted-to-first Josh Donaldson.

But barring an unforeseen dramatic increase in the budget (expect a mild one) the Rockies are likely to stick to the ideology that brought them to this moment in time.

With the possible exception of getting a big deal done for Arenado (at some point... maybe) expect them to spread out the value and prioritize defense and versatility this offseason.

Could Rockies lose DJ LeMahieu to a division rival?
Rich Kurtzman | MileHighSports.com | November 7, 2018

Welcome to the offseason, Rockies fans, where your team needs to make upgrades, but will likely lose some of their talent as well.

DJ LeMahieu is one of the free agents the Rockies could end up seeing leave, and our own Luke Zahlmann believes they should part ways with him for a younger, cheaper option. With Garret Hampson and Brendan Rodgers knocking down the door to play at the MLB level, it could make sense to move on.

But, what if the Rockies lose LeMahieu to a division rival like the Los Angeles Dodgers?

Jon Morosi

@jonmorosi

#Dodgers showing early interest in free agent 2B DJ LeMahieu, sources say. @MLBNetwork @MLB

That's the rumor from Tuesday afternoon, and that would hurt Colorado because he would have 19 games per season to beat up on his former team, the Rockies.

After playing 37 games for the Chicago Cubs in 2011, LeMahieu has spent the rest of his eight-year career in Colorado, where he blossomed. He's been the full-time second baseman for the Rox the last five years, winning three Gold Gloves during that time along with making two All-Star Games during that time alone.

Last season, he slumped in terms of batting average, down to .276 on the season. But, his 15 homeruns were a career-high. In the field, his .993 fielding average was the best of his career, too, helping to earn him that third Gold Glove trophy.

According to Patrick Saunders, the Rockies aren't looking to re-sign LeMahieu:

Patrick Saunders

@psaundersdp

For those wondering as the #hotstove season heats up, I've been told there have been no talks -- so far -- about #Rockies trying to re-sign DJ LeMahieu.

As a free agent, LeMahieu could earn in the \$12-14 million range per year, and with two younger and much cheaper options, the Rockies will seemingly turn to either Hampson or Rodgers. In 24 games last season with the Rockies, Hampson hit at a .275 clip, with 11 hits and 12 strikeouts. In the field, he split time between shortstop (when Trevor Story was injured) and his native second base, showing a bit of inexperience with three errors in that limited game time.

Still, Colorado could decide it's time to promote Hampson — or Rodgers — or they could go after someone in the free agent market. Our free agent primer breaks down three players who could fit at second base for the Rox.

Now, in early November, rumors are just heating up in terms of the MLB offseason. The Rockies could lose LeMahieu, Adam Ottavino, and fellow reliever Seunghwan Oh, who wants to finish his career in his native South Korea. Colorado also declined the option on Gerardo Parra and Carlos Gonzalez could be “CarGone” as well.

Simply, this is a huge offseason for the Rockies, who just made the postseason in back-to-back years for the first time in their 25-year history. If Colorado wants to sustain that success, general manager Jeff Bridich has a lot of work to do.

Free agent targets for Colorado Rockies' 2018-19 offseason
Luke Zahlmann | MileHighSports.com | November 6, 2018

Last offseason, the Colorado Rockies committed over \$100 million in free agent contracts, pushing their chips in for a stretch run that resulted in another postseason appearance.

This year, the Rockies have D.J. LeMahieu and Adam Ottavino as their top homegrown free agents, with most of their other core pieces coming back. In their last season with franchise cornerstone Nolan Arenado currently under contract, the Rockies should look to these free agents this offseason:

Daniel Murphy – 1B/2B

A key contributor to the Chicago Cubs late-season revival last year, Daniel Murphy should be at the top of the Rockies' list. With a glaring hole at first base, the former second baseman would slide in perfectly, with the versatility to move to second when needed.

On the year, Murphy slashed .299/.336/.454 in an injury-shortened 351 plate appearances split between the Washington Nationals and the aforementioned Cubs. The campaign comes just a year after a pair of consecutive All-Star appearances. In 2016, Murphy also earned runner-up in the MVP race.

The line produced by Rockies first baseman Ian Desmond pales in comparison at a mere .236/.307/.422. As a whole, the position produced a wins above replacement mark of 0.5, a tally that ranked 26th in the league.

In a lineup that was largely homerun or bust last year, Murphy would add an on-base presence, carrying a strikeout percentage of less than 15 percent each of the last 10 seasons. For comparison, Desmond registered a rate of 23.6 last year.

Going into his 11th season, Murphy would add a veteran presence to the clubhouse as well, with the experience of multiple playoff runs to boot.

Likely one of the most expensive additions on this list, Murphy would force the Rockies to decide on a win-or-bust mindset in Arenado's possible swan song season with the franchise.

Yasmani Grandal – C/1B

Another option at the corner, Yasmani Grandal can fill multiple needs for the Rockies batting order. Transitioning between being behind the plate and at first, Grandal would bring a switch-hitting, versatile bat to the clubhouse.

Grandal, formerly of the Los Angeles Dodgers, slashed .241/.349/.466 last year in 518 plate appearances. 135 of his games were started at catcher, with a mere two at first. The games behind the plate were the highest total of Grandal's career.

Chris Iannetta, a late-offseason addition by the Rockies registered a team-high 110 games behind the plate last year. In those games, Iannetta tallied a .224/.345/.385 batting line.

With a boost of nearly 81 percentage points in slugging, Grandal would give the Rockies added power towards the latter end of their lineup. He also allowed a mere nine passed balls on the year, good for the second-lowest mark in the league.

Going into his eighth season, celebrating his 30th birthday before next season, Grandal figures to be the top catcher on the market this offseason. Though they have been rumored as interested in Miami Marlins' catcher J.T. Realmuto, Grandal would give the team an option that allows their prospect crop to stay intact.

Kurt Suzuki – C

A cheaper alternative, Kurt Suzuki, formerly of the Atlanta Braves, would boost the team's production behind the plate as well.

A 12-year veteran, Suzuki has seen his numbers rise in the last two years, batting a combined .276/.341/.485 in his pair of campaigns with the Braves. The catcher has also hit 31 homers in his latest stint, the most in a two-year stretch of his career.

Though he would improve their play at the position, Suzuki does not provide the same positional flexibility that Grandal does. Also, the catcher recently turned 35, signaling the end of his long-term contract prospects.

The Rockies may be better served to let their own prospects in Tony Wolters and Tom Murphy develop, but if they choose to push their chips in this year, Suzuki could pay dividends.

Marwin Gonzalez – UTIL

Though he would not solve their problem behind the plate, Marwin Gonzalez could help the Rockies at every other offensive position in the field.

In his career, Gonzalez has logged at least three games at every position in the field, with 191 games at first, 157 in left field and 110 at second. The three positions are all a possible weak point of the Rockies' lineup next year.

More importantly, Gonzales has seen significant time at first, a gap on the Rockies' depth chart.

In recent seasons, the utility player has enjoyed a career resurgence, with his career-best year coming in 2017 when he slashed .303/.377/.530 with 23 homers and 90 RBI. The breakout earned Gonzalez a 19th place finish in the American League MVP voting.

At 30 years old, Gonzales will likely be one of the most sought-after players in free agency, with the Rockies already said to have interest.

Patrick Saunders

@psaundersdp

Early scuttlebutt -- nothing more than speculation -- has the #Rockies interested in versatile free agent IF/OF Marwin Gonzalez.

Though thought to be merely speculation, the Rockies' interest would make sense. Gonzalez will come with a hefty price tag given the desire for his bat and above-average glove at nearly every position, but the former World Series champion could make an impact in a young clubhouse.

Josh Harrison – UTIL

Keeping the trend of an inexpensive alternative, Josh Harrison, formerly of the Pittsburgh Pirates is available this offseason as well. His entry into the pool of free agents comes by way of a declined option by the Pirates.

Unlike Gonzalez, Harrison has yet to appear at first base, an area of need for the Rockies. However, he does give them an option to replace LeMahieu at second, with the versatility to make his way to the outfield if needed.

The former second baseman also brings an element of speed to the table, with double-digit steals in four of the last five seasons. A team flush with speed, the Rockies could use the threat of a runner towards the top of their lineup.

In the past, the Rockies have shown interest in Harrison, attempting to strike a deal to acquire him last season according to Jon Heyman. Now, they have the chance to acquire him without giving up any of their own pieces.

Though Garrett Hampson is set to take the role of the likely-departed LeMahieu, Harrison would give the Rockies another option. The former Pirate could also provide wisdom to the Rockies' youngster.

Tony Sipp – RP

Last year, the Rockies' best reliever and one of the top relief arms in the NL was Adam Ottavino. Now a free agent, the team's bullpen is going to take a hit.

The departure comes after the Rockies once again found their place at the bottom of the MLB in terms of bullpen production. Ranking 26th in the league in ERA, the team's plans for a super bullpen with Wade Davis, Bryan Shaw and Jake Magee being added did not pan out.

Tony Sipp would come in as a 10-year veteran, coming off of his best season, in terms of ERA, in his career (1.86). With Mike Dunn also failing to pan out, the lone reliable Rockies' left-handed option out of the pen is Chris Rusin. Even Rusin struggled last season though after his return from injury, pitching to a 6.09 ERA across 54.2 innings.

The former Houston Astros reliever would be able to come in and give the Rockies a consistent arm from the pen, without the price tag of an Andrew Miller. At a \$6 million dollar clip for the past three seasons, Sipp would likely demand a rate of around \$8 million per year. At 35 years old, the Rockies could likely afford to give him a shorter deal, with a higher rate if required.

Though older, Sipp also brings durability to the pen, with an average of 68 games a year in his decade-long stint in the majors.

Joe Kelly – RP

A former starter for the St. Louis Cardinals, Joe Kelly has seen his role shift to the bullpen in the last two years with the World Series champion Boston Red Sox. Coming off a year with the most appearances in his career, Kelly would be a welcomed addition to the Rockies' roster.

Kelly's acquisition would be due to the departure of Seunghwan Oh, who has voiced his desire to return to South Korea to conclude his career. The report comes by way of an interview with Oh by reporters in South Korea in mid-October.

The possibility, though not certain, serves as a catalyst for the Rockies to once again add to their bullpen. Enter Kelly.

During the Red Sox recent title run, Kelly pitched in five games, totaling six innings without allowing an earned run. The flamethrower also struck out 10 and allowed only four hits. In the regular season, Kelly registered a 4.39 ERA, lower than the bullpen average of the Rockies' relief unit.

Regularly touching triple digits, Kelly would bring an element of velocity to a bullpen that has relied on Davis and Shaw, both unable to hit those numbers.

Given the market of relievers in recent years, more specifically high-velocity relievers, Kelly figures to fetch a contract along the lines of a 4-year \$10-11 million dollar per year. With the recent deep playoff run, Kelly also possesses big game abilities that could help a Rockies' pen that struggled at times in big moments.

In a best-case scenario, the Rockies could add Kelly to a highly incentivized one-year deal to set his up further for next year's market. The short-term deal would allow the Rockies flexibility for the future with large contract decisions looming.

Colorado Rockies: Ian Desmond might not play first base in 2019
Luke Mullins | RoxPile.com | Nov. 7, 2018

The Colorado Rockies have a lot of decisions to make this offseason. In a recent conference call with reporters, General Manager Jeff Bridich hinted at some of those decisions.

Among other comments, Bridich left room for the possibility that someone other than current first baseman Ian Desmond could man the position. This kind of move could have multiple motivators. Obviously, the Colorado Rockies would like to get a lot more production from first base than Desmond's 83 OPS+ in 2018, but they also know that, at times, Desmond has shown he can be a contributor if he stays consistent.

Another factor in a potential position change is Desmond's versatility. The Rockies could easily slide him into, say, left field, and make room for a bigger impact bat at first base. But a decision is far from made and Bridich seems to be keeping his options open.

"We're not sure right now, I mean that's one of the nice things about, ya know, what Desi kinda brings to a team," Bridich said.

Bridich told reporters he'd talk to Desmond about it this offseason. The Rockies' GM said he appreciates the ability having a player like Desmond gives him to try to address this kind of situation while trying to build a roster.

"It's nice to have that ability to be flexible because, especially now, a lot of teams have an open mind and try to be creative on how to best put together a team," Bridich said.

That flexibility could open the Rockies up to markets most people would have excluded them from and could benefit them on offense and defense. While a position change is far from certain, Bridich definitely recognized that it could happen.

"I'd say its at least in the realm of possibility that Desi would play somewhere else other than first base," Bridich said.

Of course, if Desmond does move to the outfield, that raises the question of who the Rockies would put at first base. The most obvious choice is Ryan McMahon, who came up with some big hits last year when given brief a shot at regular playing time.

Arizona Diamondbacks first baseman Paul Goldschmidt's future with his current team is uncertain but it would take a lot for the Rockies to land him and they typically don't make moves that big. Another option would be Daniel Murphy, whose played most of his career at second base but does have 214 career games as a first baseman. Murphy had a dip in production last season but was great in 2016 and 2017.

The only reason I even mention Murphy is because the first base market is so thin. The top free agent at the position is probably Steve Pearce and, despite his World Series heroics, he's no superstar. And it looks like the White Sox are going to ask more for Jose Abreu than he's worth.

Marwin Gonzalez's name has been floated around as an option for the Rockies, but he'd be a gamble. Gonzalez had one great season among a lot of mediocre seasons but he's versatile, brings playoff experience, and has some power. Sound like anyone you know? I'm afraid Gonzalez would be Ian Desmond 2.0.

All eyes will be on the Rockies now to see what Bridich decides to do. All we know at this moment is Desmond might not play first base in 2019, and that could open up several roster possibilities.

Colorado Rockies rumors: No talks about re-signing DJ LeMahieu
Kevin Henry | RoxPile.com | Nov. 7, 2018

According to Patrick Saunders of The Denver Post, the Colorado Rockies have had no discussions with second baseman DJ LeMahieu about returning to the Rockies in 2019 and beyond.

Yesterday, a report surfaced that the Los Angeles Dodgers were interested in signing LeMahieu to fill their need at second base. Shortly thereafter, Saunders tweeted out that the Colorado Rockies had not been in touch with the All-Star free agent about a return to the position he has held since being acquired from the Chicago Cubs prior to the 2012 season.

LeMahieu is a batting champion, two-time All-Star and three-time Gold Glove winner, including the award he just earned on Sunday night. It was expected that LeMahieu would test free agency, even before it was announced by Colorado general manager Jeff Bridich that he would not be extending a qualifying offer on the 30-year-old second baseman.

The Rockies seem intent to let LeMahieu check on what he might get on the open market. With LeMahieu on the disabled list for the first time in his career last season, Garrett Hampson made his Major League debut and hit .275 in 48 plate appearances. If LeMahieu were to leave the Rockies, Hampson would likely fill his spot with competition from top prospect Brendan Rodgers.

LeMahieu helped his own cause last season by blasting a career-high 15 home runs, including 11 away from Coors Field. However, he was also shelved three different times with injuries.

He also enters a market that has plenty of second basemen looking for a new team. Daniel Murphy, Josh Harrison, Ian Kinsler and Brian Dozier are just some of the names who are free agent second basemen this offseason. However, at 30, LeMahieu is the youngest of that group, an advantage that could favor him.

Colorado seems content with the options they have at second base (which could include Ryan McMahon, if needed) so, despite being named one of the Top 25 Rockies in franchise history last season, LeMahieu could be sporting a different uniform in 2019.

Colorado Rockies rumors: Dodgers showing interest in DJ LeMahieu
Kevin Henry | RoxPile.com | Nov. 7, 2018

The Colorado Rockies and Los Angeles Dodgers needed an extra game to settle the National League West last season. Now it appears the division foes may be battling over the services of an All-Star and Gold Glove winner.

According to Jon Morosi's tweet, the Dodgers are showing interest in acquiring DJ LeMahieu in the offseason to play second base. The Colorado Rockies did not extend a qualifying offer to the 30-year-old LeMahieu and it was expected that he would be pursued by several clubs if he hit free agency.

LeMahieu was just named as the National League's Gold Glove winner at second base on Sunday night. It was the third time he has won the award.

In his seven seasons with the Rockies, LeMahieu has logged a .299 average, including posting a .348 average in 2016 when he earned the National League batting title and posted the highest average in Major League Baseball. He has also posted a .756 OPS and 93 OPS+.

Of course, playing in Colorado, many will point to LeMahieu's home and road splits to see what kind of hitter he might be outside of the Mile High City. For his career, he is a .330 hitter at home and a .264 hitter on the road.

Last season, LeMahieu hit just .229 on the road but belted 11 of his career-high 15 home runs away from Coors Field.

While LeMahieu posted career-best power numbers last season, it was also a frustrating campaign for him. He went on the disabled list on three separate occasions, marking the first time in his career he had spent time on the DL.

The Dodgers upgraded at second base last season at the trade deadline by acquiring Brian Dozier from the Minnesota Twins. However, he just .182 in 47 games with the Dodgers. Chase Utley also played second base for the Dodgers but retired after Los Angeles lost to the Boston Red Sox in the World Series.

Will LeMahieu stay in the division and play for the Dodgers? Or will the Rockies try to re-sign one of the players voted as one of the Top 25 to ever wear a Colorado uniform? We will be watching and keeping you up to date with the latest rumors and news.

Fuentes Is Making A Name for Himself -- And Don't Forget it
Tracy Ringolsby | InsidetheSeams.com | Nov. 6, 2018

Nolan Arenado was a second-round draft choice of the Rockies when he came out of El Toro High School in Lake Forest, Cal., in 2009, and after a decade in pro ball he has established himself as one of the game's elite.

He has won a Gold Glove in all six years he's been in the big leagues. He has become an annual part of the discussion among MVP voters. And he long ago gave up that mid-summer break, having established himself as an All-Star regular, including being voted by fans to the starting lineup the last two years.

"It's impressive," said Josh Fuentes.

And rest assured Fuentes is more than aware of what Arenado does. He is, after all, Arenado's cousin. Before long, he could even be Arenado's teammate.

The route to the big leagues has been far from similar, but in the last couple of years, Fuentes has started to force people to recognize that he is more than Arenado's cousin. He's also potentially an impact player in his own right.

The road he has followed in his quest for a big-league opportunity has been far from similar to his cousin. But the destination could be the same.

Arenado was the 59th player selected in the 2009 draft. When Fuentes came out of high school in 2011, there were 1,530 players selected in the first-year player draft. Fuentes wasn't one of them. And despite growing up in Southern California, it wasn't like he was even pursued at the junior college or college level.

Fuentes wound up at Missouri Baptist, an Evangelical Christian school founded in 1957 in suburban St. Louis, with an enrollment of roughly 5,000. And four years later, he signed with the Rockies, an undrafted free agent. Jon Luekens, the Rockies Southern California scout, who recommended Arenado, did the deal with Fuentes.

"Certainly, a lot of people could have drafted him," said Zach Wilson, Rockies senior director, player development.

"Obviously, we had him in there because of Luekens' relationship with the family. He was on our radar because we had

relationships (with the families). We gave him a chance, and he took advantage of every opportunity that was given to him.

“It’s not like he was ever given the benefit of the doubt.”

Fuentes didn’t need the benefit. In 2015, his second full-season in the minor leagues, he started to get attention. Returned to Low-A Asheville to open the season, he hit .398 in 28 games, and spent the rest of the season at High-A Modesto. He hit .307 at Double-A Hartford in 2017, and last year put an exclamation point on his rise on the list of prospects.

Consider he finished the year voted the PCL MVP, Rookie of the Year and All-Star third baseman. His Albuquerque teammates also voted him the Isotopes’ best defensive player. He hit .319 with 15 home runs, 93 RBI, 12 triples, 88 runs scored and a .319 average.

The end result?

The Rockies selected him to be their prime player in the Arizona Fall League. He struggled initially, getting five hits in his first 25 at-bats, but had 15 hits in the next 42 at-bats and went into Wednesday night’s game hitting .299 in the AFL.

His self-confidence, even while others doubted, is paying off.

“I always knew I could play,” said Fuentes. “I didn’t show it my first three years, but I knew I could. There was a point in High-A (at the end of his third season in pro ball) when I went off. I won player of the week two weeks in a row. It made me believe in myself.”

Fuentes began to make a name for himself, even if Arenado still casts a shadow over Fuentes’ career, which Fuentes accepts without hesitation.

“Obviously the Nolan thing is hard to ignore and everyone asks me about it,” said Fuentes. “It’s part of being his cousin and him being so awesome.”

It is something that bothers Arenado more than it does Fuentes. Arenado wants Fuentes to have a chance to be Josh Fuentes, not somebody's relative. Arenado wants Fuentes to get attention for what he does on the field, not who he is related, too.

It's why Arenado is reluctant to be overly public about Fuentes, but away from the limelight, they are close.

"(The media) is going to bring me up, but that's not fair to Josh," Arenado said. "He has to be himself. "

Lately, Fuentes has been himself, for sure. And he's been impressive.

"It's been awesome," said Fuentes. "It's been awesome to show people that I'm not just Nolan's cousin. I have a name. I have a first and last name."

And he now has an approach all his own, something he admits wasn't always the case.

"When I was in (short-season) Tri-City, I tried to hit like Nolan, do everything like him," he said. "I got to Modesto and I was like, 'I can't go on trying to be someone I'm not. I have to be myself.'

"We're very similar, but we also are very different. He's very serious about everything he does, which is what makes him the way he is. I can't do that. If I'm always locked in, always serious, I'd lose my mind, and that's what I tried to do at first. It drove me crazy."

And then, Fuentes allowed himself to emerge.

"I'm in Modesto, and I was kind of a joker, messing around," said Fuentes. "That's what helps me concentrate. I need to embrace that. The past couple of years I have, and I've had some success."

He is quick to bring up Tim Doherty, his hitting coach the last two years, for allowing that to happen.

“One day, I remember, I’m in the cage and I had my earphones on,” said Fuentes. “I was dancing, all that stuff. One of the coaches was there and said, ‘Hey man, you going to tell Fuentes to take off his stuff and lock in?’ and (Doherty) said, ‘That’s how he locks in.’”

“Him, letting me be myself gave the confidence. He gave me the reigns to do what I needed to do to get ready.”

And there are some who think the Rockies need Fuentes to be ready within the next year. They talk about the possibility it could be Fuentes, who becomes his cousin’s heir at third base in Colorado if Arenado does become a free agent next fall.

“One hundred percent it’s a new pressure,” said Fuentes. “I’m like, ‘Do I want him to stay? Do I want him to leave?’ If I can play in the big leagues for the Rockies, that would be amazing, even more amazing if Nolan is there. “

Amazing, for sure.

But not improbable.

Fuentes has made sure of that with the way he has emerged in the last couple of years in the minors.

Year	Tm	Lg	Lev	G	PA	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO
	Avg	OBP	SLG											
2014	Tri-City	NORW	A-	41	172	150	20	39	7	0	1	16	13	39
	.260	.335	.327											
2015	Asheville		SALL	A	93	385	337	45	85	24	1	6	42	29
	64	.252	.322	.383										
2016	Modesto		CALL	A+	77	325	291	44	81	15	4	9	44	16
	54	.278	.342	.450										
-	Asheville		SALL	A	28	108	93	18	37	14	0	4	20	4
	22	.398	.442	.677										
2017	Hartford		EL	AA	122	450	414	48	127	28	7	15	72	24
	92	.307	.352	.517										

2017-18	Culiacan	MXPW	FgW	46	193	184	24	50	10	1	4	19	
	5	46	.272	.297	.402								
2018	Albuquerque	PCL	AAA	135	586	551	93	180	39	12	14	95	21
	103	.327	.354	.517									
Minors (5 seasons)				Minors	496	2026	1836	268	549	127	24	49	289
	107	374	.299	.348	.474								

Good as Gold at Third Base x Six
Tracy Ringolsby | InsidetheSeams.com | Nov. 6, 2018

Consecutive GG

Rookie Season On	No.	Years
Johnny Bench, c	10	1968-77
Ichiro Suzuki, of	10	2001-10
Nolan Arenado, 3b	6	2013-2018
Charles Johnson, c	4	1995-1998
Frank Malzone, 3b	3	1957-59
Ken Hubbs, 2b	1	1962
Carlton Fisk, c	1	1972
Sandy Alomar, Jr., c	1	1990
*Tommy Agee, of	1	1966

x

*-Also won GG 1970

Nolan Arenado makes playing third base look easy.

It isn't.

On Sunday night, Arenado became only the third player and first infielder in history to win a Gold Glove in his first six big-league seasons, a growing tribute to the determination and focus that allowed Arenado to become one of the game's premiere players.

Arenado was joined among the NL Gold Glove winners by teammate DJ LeMahieu, selected for the award as a second baseman for the third time, and former Rockies teammate Corey Dickerson, who went from a DH in Tampa who was non-tendered last off-season to signing with the Pirates and being voted the best left fielder in the NL by managers and coaches in 2018.

Only Hall of Fame catcher Johnny Bench, a Gold Glove winner his first 10 seasons with the Reds, and outfielder Ichiro Suzuki, who won the award his first 10 seasons after coming to the Mariners from Japan, began a career with more Gold Glove Awards than Arenado.

Like Bench, Arenado was a second-round draft choice, and like Bench, Arenado well could have become a catcher.

Rockies scouting director Bill Schmidt is quick to point out the Rockies did not envision Arenado as an everyday third baseman, much less an annual all-star and Gold Glove winner.

“He was a bit chunky, but he had a strong arm, and (crosschecker) Ty Coslow would talk about never seeing him mis-hit a ball,” Schmidt said. “He didn’t necessarily hit balls over the fence, but he never mis-hit one. We thought he might be a catcher.”

Arenado knew that. However, he also knew the Rockies were going to let him play third base initially. And he knew it was up to him to prove he could play the position.

“I was willing (to convert to catcher), but it wasn’t what my heart wanted to do,” Arenado said. “I was willing to do it because it was going to get me drafted higher and give me a chance to play pro ball.

“I always believed I could play in the infield, but I was a little slow and I could see why teams had questions. I was a little out of shape, too.”

Gabe Bauer, the Rockies’ director of physical performance who was working at the minor league level at the time, was there to provide Arenado guidance.

“He was telling me I was going to get moved (to catcher) if I didn’t get in shape,” Arenado said. “I lost 20 pounds that first offseason. I came back lean and ready to go.”

When Arenado reached high Class A Modesto in 2011, Nuts manager Jerry Weinstein told the Rockies they needed to leave him at third.

“We worked early almost every day,” Arenado said. “It didn’t matter if we had a late bus ride the night before. Every day we had an early workout at 1 p.m. Then we had batting practice, some drills again, then play the game. He gave me the push on those days I didn’t want to work. He wouldn’t let me slack off.”

It is a lesson Arenado learned well. His work ethic today is stronger than ever.

Most Gold Gloves

Third Baseman	No.
Brooks Robinson	16
Mike Schmidt	10
Scott Rolen	8
Nolan Arenado	6
Buddy Bell	6
Robin Ventura	6
Adrian Beltre	5
Ken Boyer	5
Doug Rader	5
Ron Santo	5

Even with six Gold Gloves, three Silver Sluggers and five All-Star Game appearances, Arenado isn’t satisfied.

“It’s never-ending work,” he said. “I don’t want to let up. You could get lazy out here. I think the older you get, the more you have to keep on it. So I always try to do my drills, and do them the same way I did my rookie year.”

And just like his rookie year, when he was called up four weeks into the 2013 season, he is still winning Gold Gloves.

It took Dickerson longer to make the statement with his defense, which only added to his feeling of satisfaction in being honored along with Arenado and LeMahieu, his former teammates, on Sunday night.

Dickerson could always hit, but in the sizable left field at Coors Field, he was challenged, which prompted the Rockies to deal him to Tampa Bay, along with minor league third baseman Kevin Padlo, in January 2016 for right-handed starting pitcher German Marquez, and left-handed reliever Jake McGee. Primarily a DH in Tampa, he came into the 2018 season with a minus eight defensive runs saved rating in left field.

In Pittsburgh, however, his runs saved rating was plus 16.

And the Gold Glove voters agreed.

“My whole career I have been told I only can hit, never play defense,” said Dickerson. “

“This is very satisfying.”

Dickerson said his confidence began to build when he joined the Pirates last spring.

“Neal (Huntington, Pirates general manager) and Clint (Hurdle, manager) told me I was going to play every day, and not be double-switched (out of the game) anymore,” said Dickerson. “I was able to go out and play every day and really gain confidence.”

Dickerson said the ultimate sign of the confidence the Pirates had in him was when he was put into a game defensively as part of a double situation.

“That’s never happened to you before, has it,” Dickerson remembered Hurdle saying to him. “That’s how much confidence I have in you.”

LeMahieu had to answer his skeptics, too. When former general manager Dan O’Dowd decided that LeMahieu should get a shot at playing second base, the doubters said at 6-foot-3 he was too tall.

LeMahieu became only the second player 6-foot-3 or taller to play more than 100 games at second base in Major League history, joining High Pockets Kelly, a Hall of Fame first baseman, who started 107 games at second base in 1925,

when Frankie Frisch, also a Hall of Famer, filled in at third baseman for 43 starts, and shortstop for 36, in addition to 41 starts at second base.

Nobody questions LeMahieu's ability to play second baseman anymore. Same goes for Arenado at third base and Dickerson in left field.

2018 AL Gold Glove Winners

1B Matt Olson, A's (1st)

2B Ian Kinsler, Red Sox (2nd)

3B Matt Chapman, A's (1st)

SS Andrelton Simmons, Angels (4th)

LF Alex Gordon, Royals (6th)

CF Jackie Bradley, Red Sox (1st)

RF Mookie Betts, Red Sox (3rd)

C Salvador Perez, Royals (5)

P Dallas Keukel, Astros (4)

P Zack Greinke, Diamondbacks (5th)

2018 NL Gold Glove Winners

1b (tie) Anthony Rizzo, Cubs (2nd)

Freddie Freeman, Braves (1st)

2B DJ LeMahieu, Rockies (3rd)

3B Nolan Arenado, Rockies (6th)

SS Nick Ahmed, Diamondbacks (1st)

LF Corey Dickson, Pirates (1st)

CF Ender Inciarte, Braves (3rd)

RF Nick Markakis, Braves (1st)

C Yadier Molina, Cardinals (9th)

Rockies Prospects Key Salt River 3-2 victory in AFL
Tracy Ringolsby | InsidetheSeams.com | Nov. 7, 2018

Sam Hilliard, Josh Fuentes and Tyler Nevin were a combined 5-for-12, scoring all three runs, and picking up both RBI in Salt River's 3-2 victory against Scottsdale on Tuesday night. Meanwhile, relievers Mitch Horacek and Justin Lawrence combined for the win and save.

Fuentes (.299), Hilliard (373) and Nevin (.419) had consecutive first-inning singles to put Salt River up 1-0. After Scottsdale took a 2-0 lead, Hilliard hit his second home run in the sixth to tie the score. And in the eighth, Fuentes doubled, eventually scoring the game-winning run on a wild pitch.

Horacek (1-0, 9.31) worked a 1-2-3 eighth, striking out one, to be credited with the victory, and Lawrence (3.12) retired the side in order in the ninth, striking out one, to earn his third save.

Salt River, meanwhile, reduced it's magic number to clinch the East title and play in the AFL Title Game on Nov. 17 to three over Mesa and Scottsdale, which are tied for second place in the division.