



Padres Press Clips

Thursday, February 7, 2019

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Padres spring training primer: Outfielders

Jeff Sanders

The Padres can begin answering questions about their rotation and bullpen when pitchers and catchers report Wednesday. As many as there are about those facets of the roster, there are so many more about their outfielders. Today, our pre-spring training roster review will take a look at everything the Padres will have to figure out before camp breaks.

2018 recap

Only the Dodgers (3,223), Brewers (2,732), Rangers (2,727) and Red Sox (2,704) saw their outfielders accumulate more plate appearances than the Padres (2,686), who were mixing and matching from the get-go. First, a groin injury sidelined **Franchy Cordero** at the start of the season and then right arm nerve irritation knocked **Wil Myers** out of the lineup before the end of the first week. A strained oblique and left foot contusion also sent Myers to the DL at different points in the season, limiting the Padres' 2016 All-Star to 83 games, 11 homers and 39 RBIs.

One benefactor: **Franmil Reyes**, who slugged his way out of the Pacific Coast League, mashed 16 homers in 87 games and led all Padres hitters in batting average (.280) and OPS (.838).

Hunter Renfroe also emerged as a bright spot in a forgettable season, recovering from his own DL stint (elbow) to lead the Padres with 26 homers, including nine in August, when he had a .935 OPS.

Two glaring disappointments were Cordero requiring season-ending elbow surgery after an intriguing April (.858 OPS) and **Manuel Margot** — who also spent time on the DL (ribs) — slipping from a .721 OPS to .675 in his second full season as the starting center fielder.

Current picture

Of the eight outfielders on the Padres' 40-man roster, **Travis Jankowski** — unique as a left-handed bat who excels defensively at all three positions and can swipe a base — seems the safest bet to make the Padres' opening day roster in a bench role.

Renfroe, Reyes and Myers — who will return to a corner spot in the outfield after a brief experiment at third base — have all been mentioned in trade rumors and at least one of the three will presumably have to be moved before opening day, perhaps in a deal for a starting pitching upgrade.

The Padres have also recently met with free agent **Bryce Harper**, who would require the richest contract in franchise history if San Diego somehow emerged as an unlikely winner in those sweepstakes.

Margot is the favorite to begin the season as the starting center fielder but his leash will be much shorter if Cordero produces as he did last year before his injury.

On the farm

The farm system has delivered Margot, Renfroe, Reyes, Jankowski and Cordero to the majors and could have more options knocking on the door soon. Switch-hitting center fielder **Buddy Reed** appeared in the All-Star Futures Game alongside **Fernando Tatis Jr.** and **Luis Urias** after he hit 13 homers with 51 RBIs in rising from the California League to the Double-A Texas League.

Edward Olivares, the chief return in the **Yangervis Solarte** trade, was added to the 40-man roster after posting a .750 OPS in the Cal League.

Also of note: slugger **Josh Naylor** actually played more left field in Double-A than first base in an attempt to find him a home following **Eric Hosmer's** signing. Then again, Naylor's role, as well as that of any of the players mentioned above, could be affected if the NL adopts the designated hitter.

Padres' Green opines on MLB's prospective rule changes; favors HR Derby

[Kevin Acee](#)

Andy Green is passionate about managing in the [National League](#), having to think several innings ahead and manipulate his pitching staff and bench up to several times a game based largely on the fact he might have to pinch hit for a pitcher.

“There is more strategy from the manager’s chair,” Green said Wednesday, as he has many times. “There is more opportunity to impact by how you double switch.”

But in light of the fact major-league pitchers have hit .125 and struck out in 44 percent of their at-bats over the past five seasons, he sees the potential for greater excitement, which could come from a proposed rule change that would bring the designated hitter to the NL full-time.

“I’ve always enjoyed the NL game,” he said. “If that makes me a purist or makes me selfish, so be it. I’d hate to see it go from a selfish standpoint. But I can completely understand how everybody would rather see the David Ortizes of the world hit rather than Joey Lucchesi.”

Green also knows the [Padres](#) could benefit from an extra spot in the lineup.

For instance, right fielder Franmil Reyes was removed early for a pitcher and/or defensive replacement in 23 of his 45 starts over the final two months of the season, a stretch in which he hit .318/.385/.548 with 10 home runs. Additionally, Reyes is one of six Padres outfielders competing for three starting spots this spring.

“We have outfielders we really like and not enough positions to put them in,” Green said. “So in one sense that solves an issue for us — guys being on the field more consistently. But it also solves that issue for every team.”

A part of Green's assertion was that baseball will adapt to whatever changes are made, even if they come this season, as is possible according to multiple reports about discussions between [Major League Baseball](#) and the MLB Players Association.

Word of the relatively radical proposals came Tuesday night. But managers and executives were made aware of the possibility at the winter meetings in early December.

In addition to the institution of the universal DH, possible changes include requiring a pitcher to face at least three batters, a 20-second pitch clock, decreasing allowable mound visits from six to five per game, limiting teams to a maximum of 12 pitchers and increasing rosters from 25 to 26 players.

There is also the possibility the July 31 trade deadline and Aug. 31 waiver-trade deadlines will be replaced by one trade deadline before the All-Star break, which is at least partially aimed at increasing offseason dealing.

A proposal introduced by the union would penalize teams that perennially lose and reward winning teams by tweaking the draft order. The MLBPA holds that the current system rewards "tanking" in order to gain higher draft picks.

The proposals are negotiating points. While many of the changes are seen as inevitable, they could be phased in over multiple years.

A good number of the proposed changes are centered around pace of play. Quickening and shortening games has long been a priority of Commissioner Rob Manfred, as the average length of a game has been at least three hours in seven straight seasons. The average of 3:04 in that span is up nearly 10 minutes over the average of the previous seven seasons, and it is nearly 20 minutes longer than the average game took in the 1980s.

Eliminating the chance for managers to use a relief pitcher for just one batter, which has become increasingly regular, probably has the greatest potential to both increase the pace and decrease the length of games.

“You look up and there’s a mound visit every other second to change pitchers,” Green said. “Eliminating multiple pitching changes from the sixth through the eighth inning, the fifth through the eighth inning, sometimes the third through the eighth inning now ... those things take as much time as anything. That’s four minutes (per) change, so if you can cut down the pitcher changes about a couple a game each side, you’re shaving some substantial time off the game.”

The dozen-pitcher limit is concerning to Green.

While cutting down on the number of specialist pitchers via a three-batter minimum would conceivably negate the need for extra arms, Green’s issue is that the limit could be hazardous.

“That one scares me,” Green said. “At times you go to 13 — and when you’re desperate, sometimes to 14 — out of a desire to protect people. When you slap a maximum number of pitchers on and you play 18 innings the night before and you can only get one new body in, that makes me very nervous that you’re putting people in harm’s way that have to pitch today because I can’t throw anybody else.”

Also unappealing to Green is the proposal to place a runner on second base at the start of each half-inning in extra innings, a change that was instituted in the minor leagues last year and will reportedly be tested in major-league [spring training](#) and the All-Star game this year.

He proposes keeping extra innings as they are — at least for three innings.

“I feel very strongly that after 12 innings we should have a [home run derby](#),” he said. “I think that would be the best baseball in the world. It’s an entertainment game and if you’re going to skew the game by putting a guy on second base. ...

“You have shootout in hockey, you have a shootout in soccer. Those things end games. ... You’re telling me as a fan you’re not sitting there praying in the 12th inning it goes to a home run derby and we get 15 swings taken from each team and whoever hits the most home runs wins? That’s entertainment.”

Here's your guide to Padres Spring Trainin

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

SAN DIEGO -- It's now only a matter of days before the Padres begin reporting to Arizona for their 26th Cactus League season at the Peoria Sports Complex.

Here's a breakdown of all the relevant information for those travelling, watching or following along with Padres Spring Training.

Pitchers and catchers report date

Feb. 13

First pitchers and catchers workout

Feb. 14

Full squad report date

Feb. 18

First full-squad workout

Feb. 19

New faces to know

2B [Ian Kinsler](#), IF [Esteban Quiroz](#)

Top prospects to know

SS [Fernando Tatis Jr.](#) (No. 1 Padres prospect, per MLB Pipeline), C [Francisco Mejia](#) (No. 3) 2B [Luis Urias](#) (No. 4), RHP [Chris Paddack](#) (No. 5), LHP [Logan Allen](#) (No. 8), RHP Cal Quantrill (No. 11), RHP [Jacob Nix](#) (No. 14), 1B/OF [Josh Naylor](#) (No. 15), 3B Hudson Potts (No. 23), C [Austin Allen](#) (No. 25)

Where is the facility?

The Peoria Sports Complex is located in Peoria, Ariz., just off highway 101 at the Bell Road exit.

Can fans attend workouts?

Yes, certain areas of the team's workouts will be open to the public, as they have been in the past. Generally speaking, workouts begin around 9 a.m. and end approximately one hour before the first pitch of that afternoon's Cactus League game (sometimes earlier if the game is on the road).

First game

Feb. 23 at Seattle, 12:10 p.m. PT (1:10 p.m. MT).

First TV game

Feb. 23 at Seattle, 12:10 p.m. PT, Fox Sports San Diego.

One other notable game

March 14 marks the NL West champion Dodgers' only trip to the Peoria Sports Complex this spring.

Last game in Arizona

March 24 vs. Chicago Cubs.

Any additional exhibitions before the regular season?

The Padres will travel to T-Mobile Park for a two-game exhibition set against the Mariners on March 25 and 26.

Opening Day

March 28 vs. San Francisco at Petco Park, 1:10 p.m. PT.

10 players you forgot were Padres

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

SAN DIEGO -- Baseball legacies are a strange thing.

So many players are inextricably linked with one specific team, yet their career paths tell another story. Tony Gwynn may have been a lifelong Padre. But Trevor Hoffman was once a Marlin and a Brewer. Randy Jones was a Met.

That isn't how those San Diego legends are remembered, of course. And to that end, the Padres have seen their share of famous players who only made pit stops in San Diego. Here's a look at 10 big-name stars that you may have forgotten played for the Friars.

Greg Maddux, 2007-08

Maddux is, without question, one of the greatest pitchers to ever play the sport. But the fact is: In 60 starts for the Padres at the end of his career, he was pretty ordinary. Maddux posted a 4.07 ERA for San Diego with a 20-20 record. He did, however, reach a rather significant milestone in San Diego. On May 10, 2008, Maddux became the ninth pitcher in history to reach 350 wins. He was traded to the Dodgers that August and would retire after the season.

Mike Piazza, 2006

Piazza is famously a "remember when" guy for the Florida Marlins, with whom he spent eight days before being dealt to the Mets. His stint with the Padres lasted a full season, but it's mostly been forgotten nationally. Piazza, playing as an everyday catcher at 37 years old, put forth a pretty impressive season for the 2006 National League West champs. He batted .283/.342/.501 with 22 homers -- still a franchise record for a catcher. In Piazza's final taste of October baseball, he went 1-for-10.

Miguel Tejada, 2010

The 2010 Padres spent most of the season atop the NL West. In an attempt to solidify their position, they landed Tejada at the Trade Deadline for Minor Leaguer Wynn Pelzer. Tejada was solid, though unspectacular, in San Diego. He joined the 300 home run club with a two-run blast off Ted Lilly on Sept. 22. But the Padres would let a late division lead slip away, and nearly a decade later, that Trade Deadline is remembered for a different move: The Padres sent pitching prospect [Corey Kluber](#) to Cleveland in a three-team deal that netted them Ryan Ludwick.

Vinny Castilla, 2006

As a Mexican baseball icon, Castilla is revered in Baja California and into San Diego. He's best known for his time with the Rockies, but the Oaxaca native spent 72 games with the Padres in 2006. A 38-year-old third baseman at the time, Castilla struggled with the Friars, hitting .232/.260/.319 before he was released in mid-July. Castilla would sign with Colorado in August, and he played 15 games there, fittingly finishing his career with the Rockies.

[Anthony Rizzo](#), 2011

Padres fans are well aware that Rizzo was once the first baseman of the future in San Diego. That's a lesser-known fact nationally. As a 21-year-old, Rizzo played 49 games for the Friars in

2011. He launched his first career home run in his third game -- a towering drive off Washington's [John Lannan](#) in early June. That was the only home run he'd ever hit for the Friars. After batting .141 for the season, Rizzo was dealt to the Cubs for right-hander [Andrew Cashner](#) in one of the more lopsided deals in recent memory.

Bret Boone, 2000

Boone is best remembered for his monster 2001 season on a Mariners team that won 116 games. He batted .331, drove in 141 runs and finished third in MVP voting. Few remember where he spent the previous year. A somewhat light-hitting second baseman, Boone arrived in San Diego from Atlanta in a trade, along with Ryan Klesko. After posting a .747 OPS for a Padres team that finished 12 games below .500, he became a free agent and signed with Seattle.

[Fernando Rodney, 2016](#)

Among the 10 teams Rodney has played for, his most dominant stint -- at least by the numbers - - came during his brief time in San Diego. Rodney was downright unhittable for three months, posting a 0.31 ERA in 28 appearances. He allowed just 13 hits in 28 2/3 innings, and his only earned run came courtesy of a fluke hop off the first-base bag. (Otherwise, [he'd have broken a 41-year franchise record](#).) On June 30, Rodney was dealt to the Marlins for righty prospect [Chris Paddack](#). But he'd make his return to Petco Park a week and a half later -- as an All-Star.

Derek Bell, 1993-94

Bell is best known for his time in Houston as a member of the "Killer B's" alongside Jeff Bagwell and Craig Biggio. But he arrived in San Diego before the 1993 season in a trade with Toronto, then posted some excellent numbers in two seasons for the Padres. Bell hit .284 with 35 homers in his 258 games there. Following the strike-shortened '94 campaign, Bell was sent to Houston in a blockbuster 12-player trade that ultimately helped spring both clubs to success. The Padres got the better of it though, landing Ken Caminiti and Steve Finley, who would play pivotal roles on two NL West champion teams over the next four years.

Cliff Floyd, 2009

Floyd played an important role on the 2008 Rays, who made a surprise run to the World Series. The following offseason, he signed a one-year deal with San Diego. His move to the National League seemed odd from the start, given that Floyd's defensive abilities had steeply declined. Injuries only made matters worse. Floyd missed the first two months with shoulder and knee ailments. Then, after hitting .125 without an extra-base hit in June, he landed back on the DL with a torn labrum. Floyd was released that offseason, and he wouldn't play again.

Fred Lynn, 1990

Everyone remembers Lynn's record-breaking rookie season with Boston in 1975. Few remember the final season of his career in San Diego. Coming off two poor years in Detroit, Lynn signed with the Padres on a one-year deal. In an outfield with Tony Gwynn, Joe Carter and Bip Roberts (who batted .309 that year), playing time was scarce for Lynn. In parts of 90 games, the 38-year-old Lynn posted a somewhat respectable .240/.315/.357 slash line in his final season.

Fifteen position players poised to break out in 2019

Still just 22, Rafael Devers has focused on getting in better shape and could be poised for a big year in 2019. Elsa/Getty Images

Jeff Sullivan/Special to ESPN.com

A year ago, when writing this kind of article, one might have been able to identify [Mitch Haniger](#) as an up-and-coming young player. One might have been able to identify [Alex Bregman](#), [Brandon Nimmo](#), [Whit Merrifield](#), [Javier Baez](#) and even -- taking into account his nontraditional path -- [Max Muncy](#). All of those players are now coming off breakout seasons. There were reasons to believe in the upside of each of them. It was just a matter of spotting the right indicators.

We're forever enchanted by the breakout concept. Not that there's anything wrong with a debut such as [Ronald Acuna's](#), but relatively speaking, that was easy to see ahead of time. A breakout doesn't usually apply to a rookie. It's more about players who already have made a first impression. Thinking about breakouts feeds two desires of human nature: the desire to experience new things and the desire to see into the future.

I've come up with 15 young position players who are breakout candidates for 2019. (We'll look at pitchers in a future column.) Whether you think of them as breakout candidates or up-and-comers, I'm not sure there's a meaningful difference. These are players who should play more significant roles than they have so far and, in certain cases, draw far greater national recognition. Some are names you already know, while others are likely unfamiliar. All of them, listed in alphabetical order, should have what it takes to have a big year ahead.

David Dahl, OF, Colorado Rockies

Injuries have tipped a crate full of ball bearings in front of Dahl's career. A stress reaction in his rib cage cost him most of 2017. Then he missed a chunk of time in 2018 with a fractured foot suffered on a foul ball. There's a sense that Dahl remains almost a complete unknown. But you also could say this: He has had 508 major league plate appearances. He has been 11 percent better than an average bat, and he has been worth 2.3 wins above replacement. Dahl already has proven himself to be pretty good, and now the Colorado outfield picture has cleared up in front of him. Dahl will turn 25 on April 1, and this past season he hit 16 home runs and only two popups. With health, he'll be one of the most important players in the Rockies' plan to stay in contention.

Rafael Devers, 3B, Boston Red Sox

It's easy to forget that Devers, a two-time top-20 overall prospect, is still only 22. A career 97 wRC+ at that age ordinarily would suggest better things ahead. The problem for Devers is that his sophomore season was worse than his freshman campaign, but it was also a season in which Devers was held back by his own weight and health. No, he doesn't get a pass for that, but he has slimmed down considerably this winter. The natural bat speed is real. According to Statcast, very few players hit a ball harder than Devers' hardest hits in 2018. Eventually, he's going to be a good hitter. He might as well get started now.

Elias Diaz, C, Pittsburgh Pirates

Two things I have to note right away. First, Diaz is 28, so he isn't young in a baseball sense. Second, for now, he's the backup catcher behind [Francisco Cervelli](#). There isn't presently a clear path to regular playing time for him. But Cervelli is a trade candidate, and Diaz is ready for a bigger role. Last year's league-average wRC+ for a catcher was 84; Diaz finished at 114. Compared to the previous season, he improved his ability to lift the ball, and he makes a better-than-average rate of contact. Diaz isn't a premium defender, but his bat is more than good enough for him to play, and if Cervelli is moved, the Pirates shouldn't be worse off for it.

[Max Kepler, OF, Minnesota Twins](#)

Kepler is developing a habit of showing up in these lists. It isn't just us writers who like what we see; according to reports, Kepler is a constant subject of trade requests. The Twins haven't gone for it because they see what the others do. Kepler improved his walk rate from 8 percent to 12 percent, and he improved his strikeout rate from 20 percent to 16 percent. Out of 355 players with at least 200 plate appearances, he wound up 26th in K-BB ratio. Plus, his exit velocity topped out at 113 mph. All that's missing is consistent quality of contact. That sounds like a big deal, and it is a big deal, but with Kepler's discipline, he deserves the benefit of the doubt. This year ought to be his best one yet.

[Ramon Laureano, OF, Oakland A's](#)

The A's tried Boog Powell. They tried [Jake Smolinski](#). They tried [Trayce Thompson](#). They tried [Mark Canha](#). They tried [Chad Pinder](#). They tried [Dustin Fowler](#). They tried [Nick Martini](#). Finally, in August, they settled in center field on Ramon Laureano, who was quietly brought over from the Astros last offseason. Laureano went on to excel in Triple-A and didn't slow down at all in the bigs, notching a 129 wRC+ while playing above-average defense. Laureano is also a speedy threat on the bases, so he's a positive contributor across the board. By the end of the year, he was maybe the most underrated player on a Cinderella team. If he plays 140 games, he won't be underrated anymore.

30 for 30

[Brandon Lowe, IF-OF, Tampa Bay Rays](#)

When Lowe made his professional debut in 2016, he finished with a .700 OPS and five home runs. The next year in the minors, he finished with an .867 OPS and 11 home runs. This past year in the minors, he finished with a .949 OPS and 22 home runs. He destroyed the ball in Double-A, he destroyed the ball in Triple-A, and he made a good first impression in the majors. After going hitless in his first 19 at-bats, he closed by slugging .527. Swing changes have unlocked the potential in Lowe's bat, and now the only real question is where he'll get his reps on a crowded Tampa Bay depth chart. His versatility will keep his powerful bat in the lineup. He's one of the reasons the Rays should make a strong push for the playoffs.

[Ketel Marte, OF-IF, Arizona Diamondbacks](#)

Let me tell you exactly what I love about Marte. Of 355 players with at least 200 plate appearances, Marte ranked 29th in K-BB ratio. He ranked 25th in maximum exit velocity. Of the 28 players who hit the ball at least 115 mph, Marte finished second in K-BB ratio, behind only [Mike Trout](#). Good eye? Check. Good power potential? Check. Marte also just happens to be a heckuva sprinter -- fast enough that the Diamondbacks are moving him to center field. In 2018, Marte took a step forward. In 2019, he should push to make the All-Star Game.

[Nomar Mazara, OF, Texas Rangers](#)

Just as it's a surprise that Devers is just 22, it's a surprise that Mazara is just 23. He's going into his fourth full major league season. With a career wRC+ of just 92, Mazara has hardly set the world on

fire, and last season he saw a spike in his ground ball rate. But what I like is that, for one thing, he makes about an average rate of contact. Mazara's exit velocity topped out at 117 mph, which is exceptional. In 2018, Mazara had the same peak exit velocity as [Nelson Cruz](#) and [Kyle Schwarber](#). I have faith in his blend of power and bat control. I expect more power to show up, and Mazara's stock subsequently will skyrocket.

[Yoan Moncada](#), SS, [Chicago White Sox](#)

It might feel a little like Moncada's progress has stagnated. His 2018 numbers look an awful lot like his 2017 numbers. But there's still plenty of intrigue in his skill set. Here's an issue: In 2018, Moncada ranked in the fourth percentile in strikeout rate and in the 10th percentile in contact rate. A big problem is that he was too patient. Overall, Moncada was good about laying off pitches out of the zone. But when he saw a pitch *in* the zone with two strikes, he swung just 77 percent of the time, ranking 349th out of 353. Moncada will learn to be more selectively aggressive. He'll stop striking out looking to such an extent. Then he'll be able to make more of his tools. He's still very much a key component of the White Sox's short-term and long-term future.

[Adalberto Mondesi](#), SS, [Kansas City Royals](#)

I typically like to look for players who have a good understanding of the strike zone. Mondesi isn't that guy: He struck out 77 times while drawing 11 walks last season. But he's one of the fastest players in baseball, and he plays a capable shortstop. He finished eighth in the league in stolen bases even though he played in just 75 games. And Mondesi slugged .498, equaling -- I'm serious -- [Joey Gallo](#). He's an aggressive hitter, but he's both a fast runner and a powerful hitter who plays every day in the middle infield. I don't think Mondesi is going to blow anyone away with his on-base percentage, but he's going to be the face of the Royals as they look to create chaos. There aren't many ballplayers more exciting than Mondesi.

[Chad Pinder](#), OF-IF, [Oakland A's](#)

You could argue that Pinder is almost the opposite of Mondesi. He isn't going to be the face of his team. He isn't an elite-level sprinter. He isn't even projected as an everyday player for the moment. Pinder is not one of the most exciting ballplayers in either league. But last year, Pinder finished with a Statcast expected wOBA of .365, which put him in the 89th percentile. He was basically tied with [Juan Soto](#) and [Jose Ramirez](#). Pinder quietly is a quality bat just looking for a path to the Oakland lineup. Nick Martini won't be that high of an obstacle.

[Jurickson Profar](#), SS, [Oakland A's](#)

I didn't realize until now that my list of 15 players includes three A's. Anyhow, Profar sort of had a breakout season last year with the Rangers. It was his triumphant return to the radar. What I see is the potential for him to do even more damage. Like Ketel Marte, Profar finished with a strong K-BB ratio and achieved pretty good peak exit velocity. Profar also went from a 99 first-half wRC+ to a 122 second-half wRC+. The second half saw him tap into more of his power without making a meaningful sacrifice in his discipline. This past season was a good one, but there's nothing saying a player can't break out two years in a row. Well, maybe there is, but you know what I'm getting at.

[Franmil Reyes](#), OF, [San Diego Padres](#)

In Triple-A last year, Reyes slugged .614. Then he went up to the majors and slugged .498 while ranking in the 95th percentile in average exit velocity. He also ranked in the 94th percentile in maximum exit velocity. Reyes hit the ball harder than Bryce Harper did, and maybe that isn't surprising for someone who checks in at 6-foot-5, 275 pounds. Also encouraging is that during Reyes' time in the majors, his walk rate improved, and his strikeout rate dropped. Reyes probably won't ever win a Gold Glove in a corner outfield spot, but he's looking like one of the more intimidating offensive threats in his division -- and maybe beyond. He isn't someone the Padres will want to displace.

Daniel Robertson, IF, Tampa Bay Rays

Sometimes these assignments are easy. As a rookie in 2017, Robertson finished with a 76 wRC+. Then, as a sophomore, he was running a 127 wRC+. That is, until his season ended early because he injured his thumb. I'm not looking for Robertson to become a different player, per se. Even as the same player he was in 2018, he deserves more recognition. Robertson was in the midst of his breakout when he landed on the disabled list. He's one of several versatile players looking for regular time in the Rays' lineup, but if Robertson comes back with the same skills, he'll get the acknowledgment he was on track to get last summer.

Jesse Winker, OF, Cincinnati Reds

There's nothing exciting about a young hitter coming off shoulder labrum surgery. Even though Winker is young and young people tend to recover well from operations, it remains to be seen if he will come back at full strength. But here's the list of last year's top players in K-BB ratio: Jose Ramirez, [Carlos Santana](#), Alex Bregman, [Joey Votto](#), Jesse Winker and Mike Trout. Winker was one of just five hitters to finish with more walks than strikeouts, and when a player can do that while flashing legitimate power, you have little choice but to believe in the upside. Winker knows everything there is to know about his strike zone. From that foundation, outstanding careers can be built.

Padres' Fernando Rodriguez: Gets minors deal from San Diego

by **RotoWire Staff**

[Rodriguez](#) signed a minor-league contract with the [Padres](#), Matt Eddy of Baseball America reports.

Rodriguez has 216 career relief appearances to his name at the [MLB](#) level but hasn't surfaced in the big leagues since 2016. He required shoulder surgery that same season and was sidelined for most of 2017 before pitching exclusively for the Red Sox's Triple-A affiliate in 2018, delivering a 3.20 ERA and 1.18 WHIP across 64.2 innings. The 34-year-old is expected to open the upcoming campaign in the minors but could get a look in the San Diego bullpen at some point.

#PadresOnDeck: Suwinski, Zunica, Luis are Three Left-handed Hitters who Intrigue the Padres

[FriarWire](#) Feb 6

By Bill Center

We return to a repeating theme today as we look at three more left-handed hitters who the Padres regard as intriguing prospects.

Jack Suwinski, **Brad Zunica** and **Carlos Luis** are young and still developing. But each has potential and a ceiling higher than their results thus far. Taller left-handed hitters sometimes make giant leaps that put them on the radar. Each of these three qualify.

We take a closer in order of their age and position in the Padres' system:

Brad Zunica, who turned 23 last October, was the Padres 15th-round pick in the 2015 Draft out of State College of Florida/Manatee-Sarasota.

The 6-foot-6, 254-pound first baseman has power. He has 56 homers in 352 minor league games.

After spending two seasons at Single-A Fort Wayne, Zunica was the starting first baseman for Advanced Single-A Lake Elsinore last season. He hit .251 with a .340 on-base percentage and a .429 slugging percentage for a .769 OPS. He had 20 homers, three triples and 17 homers for 60 RBIs. He drew 53 walks, but struck out 148 times — or once every 2.9 at-bats in 431 at-bats over 123 games.

Over his two previous seasons at Fort Wayne, Zunica hit .255 with 38 doubles and 32 homers for 112 RBIs in 677 at-bats for a .327 on-base

percentage and a .443 slugging percentage for a .770 OPS. Contact is a future consideration for Zunica, who has struck out once every 2.8 at-bats in his professional career.

Jack Suwinski went in the same round as Zunica the following draft of 2016. Suwinski was 17 years old when he was drafted out of high school in Chicago, Ill. And like Zunica, Suwinski in 2018 spent a second season at Fort Wayne.

The 6-foot-2, 206-pound Suwinski doesn't turn 21 until next July 29.

Suwinski hit .255 with a .324 on-base percentage and a .408 slugging percentage for a .732 OPS with the TinCaps in 2018. He also had 16 doubles, seven triples and 10 home runs with 57 RBIs in 111 games. He cut his strikeouts from 139 in 462 at-bats (one strikeout per 3.3 at-bats) in 2017 to 89 in 392 at-bats (one per every 4.4 at-bats) in his injury-interrupted 2018 season.

It two seasons at Fort Wayne, Suwinski had a slash line of .240/.321/.385/.707. He had 37 doubles, 11 triples and 20 homers with 98 RBIs in 854 at-bats. He also drew 92 walks.

Suwinski was 2 1/2 years younger than the average player in the Midwest League last season.

Carlos Luis is a 6-foot-2, 160-pound, first baseman from the Dominican Republic. He made his professional debut in the Dominican Republic Summer League in 2017 as a 17-year-old. He came to the United States last summer where he played 45 games in the Arizona Rookie League and hit .238 with a .307 on-base percentage with four doubles and a triple.

50 Moments—Santiago’s Record, 34-Game Hitting Streak Capped 1987 Rookie of the Year Season

[FriarWire](#)

Feb 6

By Bill Center

There were no Top-100 prospect lists back in the mid-1980s.

Had there been, **Benito Santiago** would have been high in the rankings.

The Padres signed Santiago as a 17-year-old out of high school in Puerto Rico.

Santiago reached Double-A as a 20-year-old. The following season, the 6-foot-1, 180-pound catcher reached Triple-A Las Vegas, where he hit .286 with 17 homers. By the end of the 1986 season, the 21-year-old Santiago was in the Major Leagues with the Padres.

To no one’s surprise, Benito Santiago was in the Padres’ Opening Day lineup on April 6, 1987.

But no one could have predicted what Santiago did as a rookie—particularly over the final weeks of his first full Major League season.

Santiago first drew national attention with his ability to throw out would-be base stealers at second from his knees. Santiago would five strikes to second without rising from his crouch.

But it was also Santiago's bat that led him to being the unanimous pick as the National League Rookie of the Year—still the only Padre to ever win the BBWAA's National League Rookie of the Year award.

Santiago hit .300 in 1987—a figure he never matched in a full season over a Major League career that spanned two decades. He had 33 doubles, two triples, 18 homers and 79 RBIs. He had a .467 slugging percentage and a .791 OPS. He won the National League Silver Slugger Award at catcher.

But it wasn't until the final months of the season that Santiago set Padres and Major League records . . . that still stand.

From Aug. 25 through Oct. 2, 1987, Santiago hit in 34 straight games. The streak started with a three-run homer against the Montreal Expos at San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium and was halted on Oct. 3 by the Dodgers' **Orel Hershiser**.

That remains the longest hitting streak in Padres history. The second longest is a 27-game hitting streak by catcher **John Flaherty** in 1996. **Tony Gwynn**'s longest hitting streak of 25 games during the 1983 season ranks third on the Padres' all-time list.

Not only does Santiago's 34-game hitting streak remain the Padres record, it is:

- The longest ever by a Major League catcher.
- The longest ever by a Major League rookie.
- Santiago hit .346 (47-for-136) during the 34-game hitting streak with 12 doubles, a triple and five homers for a .551 slugging percentage. He scored 17 runs and had 19 RBIs.

In six-plus seasons with the Padres, Santiago hit .264 in 789 games with a .298 on-base percentage and a .406 slugging percentage for .705 OPS.

He had 124 doubles, five triples and 85 homers for 375 RBIs. He ranks ninth among the Padres all-time career leaders in homers.

Santiago declared free agency in 1992 just after his sixth full season with the Padres and signed with the Marlins. He eventually played with nine teams in his Major League career.

“I should never have left the Padres,” Santiago said in 2003 while with the San Francisco Giants. “San Diego was where I was happiest with the most success.”

Top 50 Moments (in chronological order):

1. National League votes to expand into Montreal and San Diego (May 27, 1968)
2. Padres stocked with players in National League expansion draft (Oct. 14, 1968)
3. Padres win their Major League debut (April 8, 1969)
4. Clay Kirby removed from a no-hitter (July 21, 1970)
5. Nate Colbert’s five-homer, 13-RBI doubleheader in Atlanta (Aug. 1, 1972)
6. 1973, the year San Diego nearly lost the Padres
7. Ray Kroc buys the Padres (Jan. 25, 1974)
8. Ray Kroc grabs the microphone during his first home game as the Padres owner (April 9, 1974)
9. Randy Jones National League Cy Young Award (1976)
10. Shortstop Ozzie Smith’s greatest defensive play in Padres’ history (April 20, 1978)

11. Padres host 1978 All-Star Game (July 11, 1978)
12. Gaylord Perry wins 1978 National League Cy Young Award
13. The “re-hatching” of the San Diego Chicken (June 29, 1979)
14. 1984 Padres-Braves brawl in Atlanta (Aug. 12, 1984)
15. More than 12,000 fans greet Padres as they return home from two losses in Chicago in 1984 National League Championship Series (Oct. 3, 1984)
16. Steve Garvey’s series-tying, walk-off homer in Game 4 of the 1984 National League Championship Series
17. Padres win their first National League title (Oct. 7, 1984). 18. Benito Santiago’s 34-game hitting streak to finish a strong finish to N.L. Rookie of the Year season