



Padres Press Clips

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Analysis: Assessing progress in Padres' process is difficult at this point

Kevin Acee

Setting aside for a moment faith in the process, even for those with a belief that extended darkness will lead to a brighter tomorrow, there is no getting around the fact the [Padres](#) stink.

Again.

After a 2-1 loss to the Cardinals on Thursday, the Padres have a 14-25 record, the most strikeouts in the majors, the sixth-fewest runs, the third-lowest team batting average, third-lowest on-base percentage and second-lowest slugging percentage. They have been shut out five times, held to four hits or fewer six times, no-hit once.

All that said, having a foothold in reality provides perspective.

There are not excuses for such paltry play. But there are explanations.

For one, [Eric Hosmer](#) was the only position player to start Thursday night's game that is a lock to be on the Padres' roster when the franchise expects to be a contender.

Certainly, more current Padres will be future Padres. But those more are either on the disabled list ([Wil Myers](#)) and/or are being evaluated ([Franchy Cordero](#), Manuel Margot, [Austin Hedges](#) and others) as to their worthiness.

That makes present progress in the process difficult to gauge at the major league level.

That would be the case even if the Padres were playing .500 baseball right now.

At some point, it must be expected that actual wins would outnumber losses, that the standings will matter and every game will carry significance.

Right now, though, assessing this team requires more than a glance at the each day's final score.

So where are they?

First, to be sure, we're talking degrees of bad here. Like, is it worse to endure the stench of running over a skunk or a possum?

The temptation, because of prolonged awfulness seems like worse awfulness, is to believe the Padres have regressed.

Fact is, their record is identical to last season's record after 39 games. (And it has been accomplished against opponents that are a collective 34 games over .500, as opposed to a combined nine games under at the same point in 2017.)

And aside from strikeouts and home runs, the Padres are improved in virtually every offensive statistical category.

Andy Green refers to that improvement as “moving the needle on things that will eventually move the needle” in ways that matter. As in, wins and losses.

The Padres are batting .226/.298/.363 compared to .220/.286/.378 after 39 games last season. (Over the past 16 games, since the start of a series in Colorado on April 23, they are batting .235/.311/.362.)

They are seeing 3.94 pitches per plate appearance this season, which ranks 11th in the majors. Those numbers were 3.73 and 29th at this point last year.

Where they are lacking – in addition to striking out once more per game, on average – is in their paltry power numbers. They have just 35 homers compared to 51 by this time last year. They have already played 15 games without a home run. Their 15th homer-less game last year came on June 20.

The difference?

Myers had 10 homers through 39 games last season and has one this year, having spent 25 games on the disabled list. Hedges, mired in a slump early and now on the DL, had eight homers at this point in '17. Ryan Schimpf, now on the Angels, had nine. [Hunter Renfroe](#), a platoon player this year and also currently on the DL, had five.

Those 2017 home runs made games closer, but they didn't make much difference.

Myers and Renfroe for a few more games and a few more homers might have changed an outcome or two this season.

Even against the better competition, the Padres have been far more competitive this year. Their run differential at this point last year was minus-64, and they had lost 10 games by six runs or more. This year, it is minus-45 and they have lost five games by six or more runs.

But again, considering the reality that this is a roster in radical transition, it hardly registers as meaningful.

If this was 2020, when Luis Urias and Fernando Tatis had been up for a while and arms on the farm had graduated from being prospects and the outfield was made up of players with more than a combined four years of service time, the barometer of success would be vastly different.

At that point, 11 games back may well be cause for a ream of pink slips.

For now, the process is measured by incremental and compartmental progress and regression.

The most important thing this year is discovery – whether Cordero continues to adjust and Christian Villanueva continues to be dismal against right-handed pitching; whether Joey Lucchesi and Eric Lauer are really pieces of a solid starting rotation; that sort of thing.

And for whatever steps forward or back there have been so far, it will yet become clearer how far away they are from being better.

Not only is Urias expected up, the Padres have at least a few more pitching prospects they want to test in the starting rotation at some point this summer.

Will that mean more victories now, or fewer? That's not what really matters.

Talking with ... Wally Joyner, former Padres first baseman

Jeff Sanders

Former [Padres](#) first baseman Wally Joyner teamed with [Kevin Towers](#) at BYU. Then he played for him in San Diego, arriving via the general manager's first trade in the winter of 1995. Then Joyner worked for Towers at Petco Park, which is celebrating both the 1998 NL champions and Towers' induction into the Padres Hall of Fame this weekend.

Union-Tribune: You played for a number of teams in your career. Would the 1998 Padres be as close as they are even without a trip to the [World Series](#)?

Joyner: Yes, absolutely. It was the perfect storm of great talent, great people, great friends. I've stayed in touch with quite a few of my teammates from all the other teams, but I think it helps when you're very successful and everybody achieves the same goals. '98 was really special.

U-T: Not a lot of guys had what you would call "career years" that season. Why did it work so well?

Joyner: I think that "career years" doesn't breed success. I think that when players play up to their ability and everybody shares in the success, I think it breeds unity. It breeds camaraderie. It strengthens the team to a point where, up and down the lineup, on the mound and in the bullpen, everybody knew what their job was. And [Bruce Bochy](#) did a tremendous job feeding that to everybody. It was fabulous.

U-T: What did Kevin Towers mean for the heart and soul of that team?

Joyner: Everything. He was the guy who put it all together. I knew Kevin for years. I was a teammate of his at BYU. What he did the first few years of his career as a general manager, putting that team together and understanding the pieces that were needed, it jelled in 1998. It was fabulous. He was the reason for all of that happening. Absolutely.

U-T: Tell us about the Kevin Towers you knew at BYU.

Joyner: He was there for one year. Tremendous, tremendous ballplayer. Great pitcher. He was the No. 1 pick for the Padres in 1982. He was part of the success at BYU. Where he went, he created success, but he also demanded success from others. It was a complete honor to be part of that 1998 team and be one of Kevin's decisions to come over as an integral piece.

U-T: What's the story behind him trading for you in December 1995?

Joyner: I was his first trade ever. He became a general manager and I was the first trade that he ever made. Again, that was a great honor. He was new on the job and he wants to start being successful and I was the first of many that played into the part of the 1998 team. He called me personally. We had been in touch. We had our friendship from our BYU days. He was always a good friend and kept in touch with me and I did the same. To have the chance to be part of his next career as a general manager, it was an honor.

U-T: Then you worked for Kevin when your playing career ended. Did the dynamic between you two change at all?

Joyner: The one thing was Kevin was Kevin. It didn't matter if he was on the field, the front office, drinking a beer. Kevin was Kevin. We as players appreciated that. His door was always open. We could come in and talk to him about anything. I was his first trade. He also traded me away. I think, to a man, everybody has the same thought. He was very professional with me and everyone else. He didn't pull punches and he was very honest. I think everybody appreciated that.

U-T: Another former Royal became a Padre this offseason. What is your impression of [Eric Hosmer](#)?

Joyner: I love him. People have told me there are some similarities. We both play first base. We both came over from Kansas City in hopes of being an integral piece to a successful team in the future. I love Eric. I think he's a fabulous player. I think he brings a lot, not only to the team and at first base, but in the dugout and in the locker room. I think he's a very emotional guy that I would hope – and always thought – that he would be someone I'd like to have on my team.

U-T: You're part of the Petco Park hitting coaches club. What do you think about when you hear the Padres are again changing hitting coaches as happens every so often?

Joyner: It's part of the game. What you realize as a hitter and as a player and as a coach, is the game is very, very difficult. As a hitter, you appreciate the opportunity of working with coaches that give advice and give their eyes to what they see and their opinion. It doesn't work for everybody. I learned a lot as a player. I learned a lot from Merv Rettenmund, who I thought was a tremendous hitting coach. I also learned a lot about being better coach. The one thing that is for sure in the game of baseball is you're going to end your career – you can't play forever. The one thing that happens when you get hired as a coach is you're going to get fired. Bruce Bochy was a tremendous manager here. He got fired. He got picked up by the [Giants](#) and has done a tremendous job up there. It's a cyclical sport, probably not unlike any other sports. Those are the guarantees.

U-T: The Padres, again, are among the worst offenses in the game. As someone who's been through it, any advice for Matt Stairs?

Joyner: Keep working and doing what you think is best. That's all we can do. We do our best in what we think is going to improve the team. It's early in the season. It's a long season. There's going to be ups and downs. The [Reds](#) have already replaced a manager this year. All teams go through it. I think the Yankees were struggling early in the season. Now they have the best record in baseball. Hang in there.

Padres lose to Cardinals as Green's long leash backfires

Kevin Acee

The Padres couldn't have asked for much more from Jordan Lyles in his first start of the season.

Manager Andy Green, though, may have asked for too much from the right-hander in what ended up being a 2-1 loss to the Cardinals in Thursday's start to a four-game series.

"I was thrilled with Jordan," Green said. "... I had no anticipation of letting him go to the fifth inning today. I thought he was really good. Evidently, I let him go one batter too long, but he earned that right. He looked good."

Lyles gave up a run in the first inning and another in the fifth. The Padres' only run came on Raffy Lopez's solo homer in the seventh.

With a fresh bullpen ready to back up Lyles, who hadn't thrown more than 45 pitches in any of his 13 relief appearances this season, Green said before the game he would be content if Lyles gave him three solid innings.

Yet, there was Lyles in the fifth, arguably still going strong but also having thrown far more pitches than he had in 7½ months and having escaped a high-stress fourth inning.

After Tommy Pham led off the game with a single and went around the bases on a passed ball, wild pitch and sacrifice fly in the first inning, Lyles was indeed as solid as the Padres could have hoped. He pitched a perfect second and third, then got in some trouble in the fourth but escaped unscathed.

To that point, he had thrown 62 pitches.

Green told Lyles in the dugout the fifth was his if he wanted it.

"I felt fine," Lyles said. "... Being a bullpen guy earlier this year, I know how much that meant to pick up another inning here or there. That was (not a) question. If it was left up to me I was going back out there."

No one was getting loose in the Padres bullpen until Phil Maton began throwing at the start of the fifth.

"One batter got on and he would have been out," Green said. "He was aware of that when he went back out. I was going to give him a short leash. I wasn't going to let him get in a situation where multiple runs could score on him."

All looked fine through two batters and two outs in the fifth.

Then Pham launched a 3-2 curve (Lyles' 76th offering of the game) several rows into the left field seats.

"He had 8-9-1 (in the Cardinals lineup) right there," Green said. "He got eight and nine, and we had Maton up and ready to go. Pham had had good swings off him, and what you're hoping and expecting is he keeps him in the ballpark. It didn't happen. ... That's a rough way to end a very good day. There's a lot of positives to take out of the way he threw the baseball today."

Said Lyles: "He made me pay on a mistake. That's what good hitters do."

Lyles struck out [Matt Carpenter](#) to end the fifth and left having allowed the two runs (one earned) and five hits, walked one and struck out six.

Cardinals starter Miles Mikolas, a seventh-round draft pick by the Padres in 2009 and a reliever here in 2012 and '13, was pulled after Lopez's two-out homer in the seventh.

All five of the Padres' hits – three of them by [Franchy Cordero](#) – came off Mikolas (5-0, 2.51).

Cordero's second single, in the fourth, came after Jose Pirela was thrown out trying to stretch a one-out single into a double. Cordero's third single preceded a double play grounder by [Chase Headley](#) one batter before Lopez's homer.

Hedley, who turned 34 on Wednesday, now has a .120/.241/.140 batting line in 58 plate appearances. He was 0-for-4 Thursday starting in place of Christian Villanueva for the second time in four games, as Green was trying to give the struggling rookie third baseman a breather against tough right-handed pitching.

Whether that can continue and, moreover, how much longer the Padres can justify a roster spot for Headley is something that must be addressed.

Asked that very thing regarding Headley, Green appeared to indicate a finite timeline.

"I think Villa gets days off when it's best for him at this point in time," Green said. "I think that's the mentality, and it gives Chase an opportunity to stay in rhythm and get at-bats off the bench and in pinch-hit situations. We said before the game that Villa will be our third baseman on a very consistent basis. We'll probably look to use Chase off the bench the next number of days and see if he finds his rhythm in that role. He's gotten some big hits in some pinch-hit situations. Today wasn't a great offensive day and he knows that."

Lyles almost certainly earned himself another start, as he did precisely what the Padres asked of him – not just going as long as he did but in how he executed.

In fact, Bryan Mitchell, the man Lyles was replacing in the rotation, would do well to follow the example.

"I was attacking guys more so than last year when I was starting," Lyles said.

Lyles has started 108 games in his career. He went 1-3 with a 9.39 ERA in five starts for the Padres at the end of last season after being signed following his release by the Rockies. He was

put in the bullpen at the start of this season and told to just throw hard and attack the strike zone for as long as he could in his outings.

Doing that, he pitched mostly effectively in every role from protecting a slim lead for a couple innings mid-game to eating innings at the end of a lopsided loss.

His instructions going into Thursday were to treat his start the same way. They would worry about stretching him out later.

“I was trying to go as deep as I can,” Lyles said. “At the same time, I wanted to keep with that mentality of attacking guys form the get-go, not holding anything back. I didn’t have a number (of innings) set in mind. But if I would have had a number set in mind, it wouldn’t have been five. So that’s a very positive note.”

MLB gets it right with hire of ex-Padres pitcher Chris Young

Tom Krasovic

Whenever [Major League Baseball](#) shows an interest that may go beyond printing more money, it's an encouraging development.

The hire of [Chris Young](#), for example.

Well done, MLB.

The San Diegan and former Padres pitcher will start Monday in his new gig — Vice President, On-Field Operations, Initiatives & Strategy — and that means the corridors of MLB power just gained someone I'd guess can do good to not only the industry's profits but also the baseball product. I'm not sure the two are as intertwined as one might think.

Though Young didn't exactly say he is done with pitching, it appears we've seen the last of him trying to throw the "invisi-balls" that allowed him to dominate with the 2007 Padres and earned him a World Series ring with the [Kansas City Royals](#).

"I'm looking forward to this next chapter in my career," he said, via e-mail, after his hire was announced.

It's useful to his new role that Young is current with today's players, having been one himself just a few months ago when he trained with the Padres in Arizona.

He knows baseball people, everywhere, including team owners and executives with several teams. A career that began in 2001 placed him with seven franchises. He got to know fans and MLB personnel in small, medium and large markets.

What will he be doing now?

"The job is broad and encompasses a wide range of issues from umpires, replay, pace of play, official scoring, discipline, technology and other aspects of on-field operations," he said. "My hope is that I can provide a unique perspective and help advance the game in many of these areas."

My hunch is that Young will be keen to sound out the many smart and informed people he knows.

I'd be surprised if he's not intent on exploring ways to make today's baseball a less clunky game to watch.

MLB revenues continue to rise, largely because live sports content is king in the TV universe, but it would be arrogant of MLB to pretend the baseball it is generally serving up is a scintillating product.

Strikeouts continue to soar. The ball is put in play far fewer times than several years ago.

From longtime baseball writer Jayson Stark come industry numbers that correspond to the Zzzs today's baseball is inducing.

“This is baseball in 2018,” [Stark wrote for The Athletic](#). “More strikeouts than hits. The fewest hits per game since 1972. A pace that is leading this sport toward 10,000 fewer balls in play this year than in 2009.”

The TV money is still pouring in. But baseball becoming K-ball and eight guys loitering wasn't what MLB leaders saw coming down the pike.

“It's kind of like you're sitting at a stop light, and you're rear-ended,” [Braves Vice Chairman John Schuerholz](#), a longtime member of baseball's competition committee, told Stark. “You might not have expected that to happen ... but your awakening has occurred because it did. And I think that's where we are. This thing has hit all of us in the bumper.”

Several chats with Young dating to 2007 convinced me he cares about baseball, the actual game, and saw it as more than a vehicle to provide for his family.

In one moment, Young would provide dense detail relating to Jackie Robinson breaking the color line, a topic of his senior thesis at Princeton. In the next moment, he would explain why he, a former Ivy League basketball center, believes camaraderie and chemistry among teammates matters more in baseball than in several other sports.

Young could have pursued an [NBA](#) career nearly two decades ago. The Sacramento Kings invited him to participate in their training camp. There were other overtures to return to the hardwood. Young, a minor leaguer then, opted to stick with baseball.

Now, he's doubling down once again. Good for him, but also good for baseball.

Franchy Cordero continues to show he's best thing going for Padres

Kevin Acee

As third baseman [Christian Villanueva](#), April's [National League](#) Rookie of the Month, extended his hitless streak to 29 at-bats on Thursday, the [Padres'](#) most exciting rookie/most exciting player continued to show signs he is the real find of 2018.

With three hits (of the Padres' five) in a 2-1 loss to the [Cardinals](#), outfielder [Franchy Cordero](#) upped his hitting line over the past 18 games to .323/.405/.554, all three team highs during that span.

He has to some extent seemed to have sacrificed power of late. While still making plenty of hard contact, it isn't the frequent rockets he was launching last month. He has not hit a home run since April 28 and has just one extra-base hit (a double) this month.

Still, Cordero leads the team with four stolen bases, and there is a sense of impending awesomeness every time he steps on the field.

The greatest indication his production has staying power is that Cordero has over the past month gone from swinging at virtually everything – and swinging the same throughout an at-bat – to a hitter with a purpose that matches the situation.

In those 18 games, he has struck out once every 3.4 at-bats. That's still too high, but it is an improvement over the once every 2.7 at-bats in his first eight games after being activated off the disabled list (groin) on April 11.

The percentage of bad pitches (outside the zone) he chases is down 10 percent from last year to 27.6 percent, [according to FanGraphs](#).

“The real upside to Franchy is it's a quality at-bat every single time,” manager Andy Green said Thursday, which is not something he would have said three weeks ago. “They are real good at-bats. ... He's really taking steps forward. Almost every single day you can see it.

“He's shown a ton of aptitude. He's grown. The chase rate is way down. Just the contact in general, even the softer contact. Putting the balls in play. That plays when a guy runs like he does and is as strong as he is. His strikeout rate is down from where it was last year. He's still going to strike out at times, but that's a very good pitcher (Miles Mikolas) on the mound today with really good stuff, and we watched Franchy hang in against a guy who is throwing the ball like a top-of-the-rotation starter. I think there's growth in every single aspect, mainly swinging at pitches he can do damage on and handle and he's done that very, very well.”

Through an interpreter, Cordero said he learned in his limited time in the majors last season (99 plate appearances), his winter ball campaign in his native Dominican Republic, where he was [Rookie of the Year](#) and MVP, and in [spring training](#).

“It’s experience,” Cordero said through an interpreter. “It’s learning something every game. ... It’s seeing more guys. I am seeing (the ball) better. It’s hard hard work. It’s the preparation. It’s using the information I’m getting from the coaches before the game, understanding how guys are going to attack me, where it’s going to be pitched and putting all those things together.”

Cordero hit a high fly ball to left field in Thursday’s final at-bat, in the ninth inning, seemingly barely missing his seventh home run of the season.

“It was close,” he said. “The pitch beat me a little bit. If I got it a little more out front, I think we’d still be playing.”

Luis Perdomo quality again for El Paso

Jeff Sanders

Luis Perdomo has won two straight starts. It had been nearly a year.

The 25-year-old right-hander continued a revitalizing stay at Triple-A El Paso with six strikeouts over six strong innings in an 11-3 win over visiting Tacoma on Thursday night.

Perdomo (3-1, 3.10) scattered five hits and a walk. His two runs allowed came on a pair of solo homers, giving him eight allowed through his first 29 innings in the hitter-friendly Pacific Coast League.

Really his first 29 innings in the high minors.

Perdomo had jumped from A-ball to the majors as a Rule-5 pick and had stuck until posting an 8.36 ERA through his first four starts.

The back-to-back wins for the Chihuahuas (19-16) was Perdomo's first personal winning streak since winning three straight starts last summer (June 23-July 5).

Relegated to the minors this year, Perdomo is holding hitters to a .188 average and has struck out 26 against seven walks.

Also demoted, third baseman **Cory Spangenberg** (.302) hit his second homer and drove in five runs in a three-hit game.

Brett Nicholas (.303) drove in three runs on his 10th homer.

Right-hander **Kazuhisa Makita** (0.00) struck out a batter but also hit a batter in a scoreless ninth.

DOUBLE-A SAN ANTONIO (23-10)

- **Missions 3, Frisco 1**: LHP **Logan Allen** (5-1, 2.55) struck out nine and allowed only one run on four hits and three walks in 6 2/3 innings. LHP **Jose Castillo** (3.21) saved his fourth game with two strikeouts in the ninth. SS **Fernando Tatis Jr.** (.224) went 2-for-4 with a double, an RBI and his second steal. The Missions won their ninth game in a row.

HIGH SINGLE-A LAKE ELSINORE (13-21)

- **Rancho Cucamonga 6, Storm 2**: RHP **Ronald Bolanos** (0-3, 9.58) allowed five runs in 2 2/3 innings in the loss. He struck out three, walked two and hit a batter. 1B **Brad**

Zunica (.219) drove in two runs on his third homer and 3B **Hudson Potts** (.264) went 2-for-3 with a walk and a run scored.

LOW SINGLE-A FORT WAYNE (14-20)

- **Kane County 3, TinCaps 1:** LHP **Ben Sheckler** (0-1, 5.32) allowed two runs in 4 1/3 innings in the loss. Three Tincaps – 2B **Esteury Ruiz** (.261), 1B **Carlos Belen** (.257) and CF **Tre Carter** (.188) – struck out twice.

Transactions

- RHP **Jesse Scholtens** was transferred to El Paso from San Antonio.
- RHP **Lake Bachar** was transferred to San Antonio from Lake Elsinore.
- INF **Luis Almanzar** was transferred from extended [spring training](#) to Fort Wayne, switching spots with INF **Reinaldo Ibarra**.
- RHP **Diomar Lopez** was transferred from extended spring training to Lake Elsinore.

Padres notes: Manny again being Manny; 3B platoon, sort of; Hedges MRI; lack of SB success

Kevin Acee

[Manuel Margot](#) has been a mess.

Mentally, physically. All of it.

You could see it in his face, his entire being. The kid who smiles and blows bubbles and glides through the outfield was a frowning ball of tension as he struggled through the season's first five weeks, which included 10 days on the disabled list with bruised ribs.

As of April 22, Margot was batting .135 with a .211 on-base percentage and just two extra-base hits in 56 plate appearances.

After going 3-for-4 Wednesday night, the [Padres](#) center fielder and erstwhile leadoff hitter has his average up to .202 and his OBP at .252. He has four doubles and two triples in his past 43 plate appearances.

"It feels good to see that work I've been putting in is starting to show itself," he said. "I think all I can do is keep working, keep staying with the same approach and same process to make sure the results keep showing up."

The thing is, his work has been a part of the problem. And while it continues, modified, basically the Padres are letting Manny be Manny. Just relaxing, maybe lunging a bit at the plate but feeling good and not overloaded with information.

"Before, there were a lot of times I was going up to the plate with things in my head, thinking about things," Margot said. "If you're doing that that, it doesn't let you be where you need to be. I know that was happening. But I feel like I'm getting back to myself."

Villa sits again

After starting all but the three games he was down with a hamstring strain over a 30-game stretch, rookie third baseman Christian Villanueva was not in Thursday's lineup for the second time in four games.

[Chase Headley](#) started in his place again, this time against [Cardinals](#) right-hander Miles Mikolas.

“Christian's our guy,” manager Andy Green said. “He'll get some days off against tough right-handers. ... We'll keep Chase in rhythm a little bit that way. Christian is going to continue to play a lot. I'm going to pick some days based on how he's played and what he's (working) through.”

Villanueva was named [National League](#) Rookie of the Month for April and homered in his first at-bat in May. He is hitless in 29 at-bats since then.

Villanueva leads the Padres with nine home runs, 20 RBI and OPS (.867), but his hitting line has dropped from .321/.411/.692 at the end of April to .243/.325/.542 entering Thursday's game.

He is batting .368/.415/.1441 against left-handers and .174/.278/.275 against righties.

[Hedges](#) imaging

Catcher Austin Hedges underwent an MRI on his right (throwing) elbow on Thursday, something that had been planned for at least a couple days.

Hedges has been on the disabled list since May 1 with what has been termed elbow tendinitis.

Hedges, who began light throwing two days ago, said he doesn't know what caused the issue. However, two sources said the belief is Hedges was swinging too much in extra batting practice and in the cage in an attempt to pull out of his funk at the plate (.173/.235/.293).

Tough time stealing

The Padres have not been very successful at stealing bases, which might seem particularly strange for a team considered among the major leagues' fastest.

They have been caught stealing 11 times in 31 attempts entering Thursday.

It's not that they got slow.

A good portion of the blame can be placed on circumstances – primarily that they are often playing from behind and are having trouble getting on base.

Eric Hosmer and [Freddy Galvis](#), neither being very fast, getting thrown out trying to steal to end innings on Monday were prime examples of the Padres' calculated aggressiveness against long odds just to try to make something happen.

Hosmer went on a full count pitch to [Franchy Cordero](#), which resulted in a strikeout-throw out. Galvis went on a 1-2 to pitch to Margot.

“We've been caught stealing quite a bit this year,” Green said. “Most of the times we've been caught, there's two outs. It's bad counts. It's a risk that if you're just looking at base-running metrics and run matrixes telling you who is going to score how many runs in this situation, they've all been calculated risks based on the fact that we're probably not going to score in that scenario if we don't take a risk. When you run when they expect you to run, you get thrown out more often. When you run because [Stephen Strasburg](#) is on the mound and you haven't put up runs against top-of-the-rotation pitchers, they become cognizant that you're being aggressive and you get thrown out more often.”

The Padres are 8-for-16 in stolen base attempts with two outs, 4-for-8 with two strikes and 9-for-17 in losses.

Adding to the poor start is that Margot hasn't been reaching base frequently. His four steals (in six attempts) are tied with Franchy Cordero for the team lead. Margot stole 17 bases (24 attempts) last season, and the plan was for him to run even more this season.

Also, Wil Myers has played just 10 games. He led the team with 20 stolen bases last season.

Travis Jankowski, called up on May 1 and batting leadoff for the fifth time in six games Thursday, has two steals.

"We haven't exactly had fleet-footed guys on the bases wreaking havoc," Green said. "Most of the guys who have been on ... they are not base stealers. We start seeing Manny get on base, Travis get on base, Wil comes back, Wil gets on base, Franchy continues to grow as a base stealer, then we can do a lot of things on the bases. But what we've chosen to do ... it's a risk. You're going to get out a lot of times. We take those kinds of chances."

'98 Padres getting 'band back together' this weekend

Jeff Sanders

Not a day goes by that someone from the [Padres'](#) 1998 [World Series](#) team doesn't buzz Mark Sweeney's cell phone.

The neverending text chain includes between a dozen to two dozen former teammates. The banter is spirited. The topics are unrestricted. The king ought to ring a bell around these parts.

"I'd say the Hall-of-Famer, Trevor Hoffman, gets pretty vocal when he gets involved," said Sweeney, a role player on that team and now an analyst for Fox Sports San Diego. "I'd say Andy Ashby is one of those kind of guys, too, but when it comes down to it we all just fall in place.

"We know we have to play our part."

Of course.

That's how the '98 Padres ended up on baseball's biggest stage to begin with.

This weekend, they're together again as the organization celebrates the 20th anniversary of its 1998 [National League](#) championship team, a squad that won a franchise-record 98 games because of – not in spite of – all the personalities in its clubhouse.

Because Greg Vaughn hit 50 homers. Because Kevin Brown won 18 games and Ashby another 17. Because Hoffman saved 53 games. Because Tony Gwynn slugged .501 in his Age 38 season.

Because of Ken Caminiti and Wally Joyner and Steve Finley and Quilvio Veras and so many others who fit so well together.

A lot of them still do.

The '98 season is a life-long bond.

"Any time you get the band back together to a degree, the stories get grander and more elongated," Hoffman said. "But it's great to rekindle the friendships that 20 years ago were the main part of your life."

Some still are.

Some are not.

The architect of the '98 team, [Kevin Towers](#), and a coach on that team, Rob Picciolo, both died in January. Gwynn passed in the summer of 2014 and Caminiti 10 years before that.

The weekend will be as much about celebrating that foursome (Towers will be inducted into the Padres Hall of Fame on Saturday) as it will be the NL pennant.

“It's really something that I think is going to be gratifying for a lot of us in the sense that we're doing it together and being able to grieve together,” Sweeney said. “We've lost four outstanding humans and obviously teammates with us. But I think that's going to be uplifting.”

Which means there will be plenty of laughs among the tears.

There will be plenty of stories.

There will be trash-talking, too, which started in-person with Thursday's softball game against the Marine Corps All-Stars at the Miramar Sports Complex.

It was expected to spill over into a Friday morning golf outing.

They are prepared.

Always are.

“On the '98 team, if you couldn't dish it, you weren't with us very long,” Joyner said. “You have to be thick-skinned because everybody dishes it.”

Especially their closer, apparently.

“I try to keep it loose; I pick my spots,” Hoffman said with a laugh before Thursday's softball game. “Sometimes if you get a lay-up, you get a lay-up.”

Padres notes: Lucchesi's move; offensive catchers; watch out for Gyorko

Kevin Acee

Joey Lucchesi practically froze in the middle of the windup, his right leg perpendicular to his body.

“I just said, ‘Go slow, see if this guy goes,’ ” Lucchesi said later. “I was pretty sure he was going to go. He went. I flicked it and got him.”

Yes, just like that. That easy.

[Howie Kendrick](#) took off for second base. Lucchesi threw to first baseman [Eric Hosmer](#), who threw to [Freddy Galvis](#), who applied the tag.

The thing is, as explained by Hosmer, “It looks like he’s coming over every time.”

Lucchesi’s move to first base is as deceptive as his delivery home. Maybe more so. The rookie left-hander has picked off three runners, most in the majors. His two Wednesday night were most in a game by a single pitcher since last May, when Padres lefty Clayton Richard picked off two [Nationals](#).

Lucchesi, who was not good holding runners in the minors, has actually developed a collection of moves.

“I have a bad move; I have multiple moves now,” he said. “... They set up the good one. I’m just becoming smarter, learning the game better. I’m a student of the game, man.”

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The weapon his move has become was glaring Wednesday. In addition to getting Kendrick in the fourth, he caught Wilmer Difo in the fifth. Both had singled, but Lucchesi faced just six batters between the two innings.

“I’m trying to work on my craft,” said Lucchesi, who allowed six hits and one run in five innings Wednesday and leads all rookies with a 2.98 ERA. “Little things like that can get you out of the inning quicker. I felt pumped. Honestly, when I got him, I was like, ‘Yeah!’ ”

Catchers are hitters, too

Perhaps as big an example as any of how detrimental it is to essentially give up an out almost every time one spot in the batting order comes up is the production out of the Padres' catcher platoon the past five games.

Padres catchers had a .178/.265/.262 batting line entering Saturday's game.

Since then, A.J. Ellis and Raffy Lopez have gone a combined 7-for-18 with Lopez hitting a home run and Ellis hitting two doubles. With that, Padres catchers are now at .208/.286/.320.

In the past five games, the Padres are 3-2. It's a small but encouraging sample size for a team that was 11-32 before that.

It certainly reinforces the need for starter [Austin Hedges](#), currently on the disabled list, to do much better than his .173/.235/.293 line.

Frenemies

Uh-oh. Here comes [Jedd Gyorko](#).

The Cardinals third baseman, who missed a couple weeks with a hamstring injury last month, is hitting .324/.447/.622 with three home runs in 47 plate appearances this season. But that's not the scary part.

It's that Gyorko used to play for the Padres.

The four prominent former Padres the team has faced this year — Adrian Gonzalez, Yasmani Grandal, [Nick Hundley](#) and Matt Kemp — are hitting a combined .412/.430/.779 against the Padres this year.

Then again, those numbers are nothing to Gyorko, who in 36 at-bats against his former team has 18 hits, including seven home runs and 16 RBI. His batting line is an absurd .500/.550/1.167.

Less for more?

Multiple Padres hitters have been taking early batting practice, spending an abundance of time in the cage and generally working most spare moments on their performance at the plate.

"They're working, they care," Green said. "They want to be great."

In fact, the elbow injuries that have Hedges and Hunter Renfroe on the DL are attributable to overwork swinging in an effort to get out of slumps.

Green's response has been the opposite of pressing.

He made batting practice optional during the current nine-game homestand and even canceled it Wednesday.

Cordero has three hits, but Padres fall to Cards

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com @AJCassavell

May 10th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- With every trip to the plate, **Franchy Cordero** looks more and more like a big league hitter and an integral piece in the Padres' future outfield.

On Thursday night, Cordero was just about the only hitter who could solve the Cardinals' pitching, pounding out three of his team's five hits. **Raffy Lopez** launched a solo homer, too, but the rest of the offense fell flat in a 2-1 loss to St. Louis at Petco Park.

Cordero -- who has earned **Statcast™** fame for his mammoth home runs and laser line drives -- nearly made it a 4-for-4 night, sending a towering fly ball to the left-field warning track in the ninth, but **Marcell Ozuna** chased it down.

"The pitch beat me just a little bit," Cordero said through a team interpreter. "If I'd got it a little more out in front, we'd probably still be playing."

Still, Cordero's progress at the plate is undeniable. He arrived in the Majors last May with the same raw power and bat speed. But he was far too swing-happy. This year, Cordero is chasing 27 percent of pitches outside the zone -- a decrease of 11 percent from last season.

He's forcing pitchers to throw strikes, and he's making them pay when they do. That was the case again Thursday when Cordero singled in the second, fourth and seventh innings to bring his slash line to .281/.349/.500.

"They're really good at-bats," manager Andy Green said. "He's really taken steps forward almost every single day."

"It's experience," Cordero said. "I'm learning something every game."

On the mound, the Padres asked for at least three frames from **Jordan Lyles**, who had spent the season in the bullpen before he was called upon to take the rotation place of **Bryan Mitchell**. He gave them five innings.

With Lyles in cruise control in the fifth, Green allowed him face a red-hot **Tommy Pham** in his third trip through the order. The decision backfired when Pham rocked a solo homer into the left-field seats, putting the Cardinals ahead, 2-0.

"I had no anticipation of letting him go into the fifth inning today," Green said. "I thought he was really good. Evidently, I let him go one batter too long, but I thought he earned that right, couldn't have asked for anything more."

Lyles bounced right back by punching out **Matt Carpenter** for his sixth and final strikeout. He allowed two runs (one earned) on five hits and one walk.

"I was trying to go as deep as I could," Lyles said. "But on the other hand, I wanted to keep that mentality of attacking guys and not holding anything back. ... I was attacking guys more so than maybe last year, when I was starting."

Lyles' five-inning effort came as a pleasant surprise for the Padres, but he was out-done by **Miles Mikolas** who worked 6 2/3 innings of one-run ball in his return to the Petco Park mound. Mikolas couldn't cut it as a reliever in San Diego in 2012-13. He spent three seasons as a starter in Japan before signing with St. Louis in the offseason -- a sound investment for the Cardinals, as Mikolas lowered his ERA to 2.51 on Thursday night.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Early offense: Pham created his own run in the top of the first, with a bit of help from the Padres' battery. He opened the game with a single, then advanced to second on Lyles' wild pitch and third on Lopez's passed ball. Pham scored the game's first run when **Jose Martinez** lifted a sacrifice fly to center field.

Double trouble: Cordero opened the seventh with a single off Mikolas, before he was promptly erased on **Chase Headley**'s double-play grounder. That twin-killing proved costly, as Lopez followed with a booming home run to straight-away center field, his second of the season. Instead of a tie game, the Padres trailed, 2-1, and didn't threaten after that.

SOUND SMART

D-backs right-hander **Zack Godley** has become a quality starting pitcher, largely because of his hard curveball. Godley, like Lyles, is a South Carolina native, and the two worked together during the offseason with Lyles picking Godley's brain about the high-octane breaking pitch.

This season, Lyles also has upped the velocity on his curve. He tightened his grip on the pitch, and it's averaging 84 mph. If that number holds steady for Lyles in the rotation, it would be the hardest curveball among all Major League starting pitchers. He threw 23 curves Thursday (averaging 83.6 mph) and recorded five swinging strikes and five strikes looking.

HE SAID IT

"I had a battle with Pham, fell behind 3-2. I wanted to throw a better curveball, but he's seeing the ball really well. He's a really good hitter. He made me pay on a mistake, and that's what good hitters do." -- **Lyles**

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

Jose Pirela is still searching for his first home run of the season. He came about a foot shy in the bottom of the fourth inning. Pirela launched a 106 mph rocket off the very top of the left-field wall. Cardinals left fielder Marcell Ozuna played the carom perfectly and threw to second base ahead of Pirela's slide. The Padres challenged the ruling, but the call stood, and Pirela was out. Cordero followed with a single that could've tied the game, but it went for naught.

UP NEXT

Eric Lauer has already made three big league starts, but Friday night he will finally take the ball in front of his home fans; the left-hander is scheduled to start the second game of the series,

with first pitch at 7:10 p.m. PT. The Cardinals counter with right-hander **Luke Weaver**. The 22-year-old Lauer is coming off six scoreless against the Dodgers.

Hedges to have MRI on right elbow

Yates sets club mark; Young joins league office

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com @AJCassavell

May 10th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- Padres catcher **Austin Hedges** was sent to Los Angeles on Thursday to receive tests on his ailing right elbow, including an MRI. Results weren't available as of first pitch Thursday night.

Hedges has been out of the lineup since April 30 with right elbow tendinitis. He resumed throwing on Tuesday, partaking in what the club termed as "light catch."

"He hasn't had a setback," manager Andy Green said Thursday. "He threw yesterday, felt good, we just felt it was the right time to get some tests done."

Hedges was hitting .173/.235/.293 when he was placed on the disabled list on May 1. Still, his absence has been felt behind the plate, where he's one of the sport's best defensive backstops.

The Padres remain optimistic that Hedges' absence won't be an extended one. They've used a platoon of **A.J. Ellis** and **Raffy Lopez** in his place.

Yates hits the century mark

Right-hander **Kirby Yates** became the fastest to reach 100 strikeouts for the Padres when he punched out Nationals shortstop **Trea Turner** in the eighth inning Wednesday night. (For good measure, he followed that by whiffing **Anthony Rendon**.) It took Yates only 66 2/3 innings to hit the century mark -- 12 1/3 frames faster than closer **Brad Hand**, who held the club record previously.

Even before Yates arrived in San Diego via an April 2017 waiver claim, he was a strikeout-heavy reliever. But his ERA has plummeted -- from 5.38 with his first three teams to 3.22 in 74 appearances with the Padres.

That's largely a product of the splitter Yates developed early in 2017. It's become his go-to out pitch and a perfect complement to his fastball.

"He's made some really good hitters look really bad with it," said bullpen coach Doug Bochtler.

"It just looks like his fastball for a long time, and then it isn't," said Ellis.

With 101 strikeouts in 67 innings, Yates is the only pitcher in Padres history to average more than a strikeout and a half per inning.

"When I throw a good one, it's a swing-and-miss pitch," Yates said. "When I throw my best [splitter], they shouldn't make any contact."

Young takes job with MLB

Former Padres right-hander **Chris Young** has been named vice president of on-field operations, initiatives and strategy for Major League Baseball, the league announced Thursday.

Per MLB's release, Young will collaborate to address "issues that affect play on the field, including the application of playing rules and regulations, on-field discipline, pace of play and other special projects."

"We're happy to have him in that position -- a former player that played the game the right way," said **Chase Headley**, Young's longtime teammate. "He has the best intentions for where baseball's headed. To have him in a position like that, it's another mind to preserve what the game should be played like."

Young, a Princeton grad, pitched for San Diego from 2006-10, where he posted a 3.60 ERA over 97 starts. He was a non-roster invite to the Padres' Spring Training camp this year, but missed out on a rotation spot in the final week of camp.

Lucchesi an unsung hero for Padres

By Matthew Leach MLB.com [@matthewleach](#)

May 10th, 2018

There's an old baseball adage that it takes 25 players to win a pennant, but that's not really true. It nearly always takes a lot more than that.

And frankly, it takes more than 25 just to get through a season. It's not only the winning teams that require contributions from all over the roster. Every team does.

So this week we're tipping our caps to the unsung heroes of the National League West, the guys who have stepped up for their teams but haven't gotten the recognition of the stars or the regulars.

Padres LHP **Joey Lucchesi**

Why you should know about him: This may be a familiar story by now: A team in dire need of rotation help has gotten it from an unlikely source. Lucchesi was dominant in Spring Training, but it took an injury to **Dinelson Lamet** to get him into the mix in the Majors. It's worth noting he's not the Friars' only unsung hero. **Christian Villanueva** has started to be sung a little bit, though, and **Statcast™** darling **Franchy Cordero** has his own cheering section, as well.

Why you might not: Lucchesi came from out of nowhere. He turns 25 soon and spent most of last year with Class A Advanced Lake Elsinore. Lucchesi was drafted from a small college program (Southeast Missouri State). This is not the kind of guy who's ever made prospect hounds drool. But he's always gotten outs, lots of them, at every level. And he's still doing that in the big leagues.

What they're saying: "Our Minor League [staff] knew he was going to come quick. They knew he was going to come probably quicker than the rest. He's proving why right now. He throws strikes. He's got offspeed when he needs it. He can punch guys out. That's a great recipe." -- **Padres manager Andy Green** said

Friars prepare to honor 1998 championship team

Gwynn, Caminiti, Hoffman, Vaughn bobblehead giveaways, throwback uniforms give nod to Padres' pennant
By Bill Center San Diego Padres
May 10th, 2018

Members of the Padres' 1998 National League Champion team will be in San Diego during the four-game weekend series against the Cardinals to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the second pennant in franchise history.

But four key members of that record-setting team will sadly be missing. Third baseman Ken Caminiti died on Oct. 10, 2004. Hall of Famer Tony Gwynn passed away on June 16, 2014, after a long battle with parotid cancer. Bench coach Rob Picciolo passed away suddenly this past Jan. 3. And 27 days after Picciolo passed away, general manager Kevin Towers died after a 14-month fight against anaplastic thyroid cancer.

All four will be remembered during the four-day remembrance of the special 1998 season.

On Thursday, fans in attendance at Petco Park will receive a bobblehead of Gwynn that mimics the follow-through swing of his historic homer in the Game 1 of the 1998 World Series at Yankee Stadium -- an at-bat that Gwynn said was the "best moment" of my career.

On Friday, fans will receive a bobblehead capturing Caminiti diving to his left to snare a line drive. And on Sunday, fans will receive a bobblehead of Greg Vaughn peering toward the left-field stands as he completes the follow-through on one of the club-record 50 homers he hit in 1998.

Saturday marks the marquee event of the weekend.

The current Padres will be wearing 1998 throwback uniforms with blue patches with the letters "KT" and "RP" in orange to honor the passing of Towers and Picciolo. The patches will be worn five more times during the season, on Wednesdays between June 6 and Aug. 29.

Towers, who spent half of his 56 years in the Padres' organization as a Minor Leaguer, a scout, the scouting director and the longest-tenured general manager (1995-2009), will posthumously become the 15th member of the Padres' Hall of Fame during a pregame induction ceremony. Towers was the architect behind the 1998 Padres.

Saturday's bobblehead giveaway is of Trevor Hoffman delivering a pitch with his signature high leg kick during his franchise-record, 53-save season in 1998. It marks the first commemorative giveaway offered by the Padres to celebrate Hoffman's July 29 induction into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

Hoffman chose to share Saturday night with Towers' induction into the Padres' Hall of Fame.

Fans are asked to be in their seats by 5:10 p.m. PT to enjoy the pregame ceremonies that will include a celebration of the 1998 team and Towers' induction.

The 1998 Padres won 98 games during the regular season to claim their third National League West title (and second in three seasons). The Padres defeated the Astros and Braves in the playoffs to win their second National League championship.

Tickets to this weekend's celebration are still available and can be purchased on [padres.com](https://www.padres.com).

Minor League Matters: 10 players who could make big-league debuts this year

By Emily Waldon and Melissa Lockard May 10, 2018

There are few things better in sports than a major-league debut. To see the culmination of years of work in the minors come to fruition in a first at-bat or a first pitch thrown is a special sight. That moment is even more special when the player debuting carries with him expectations for greatness—it's what made Kris Bryant's first at-bat and Stephen Strasburg's first start must-see TV.

There were 262 major-league debuts in 2017, and we'll see a similar number this year. With players such as Ronald Acuña already splashing on the scene, we thought it would be a good time to see what other intriguing prospects might be on the cusp of a big league call-up. Below are breakdowns of 10 such players.

All stats good through May 9.

OF Franmil Reyes

Parent Club: San Diego Padres

Current Assignment: Class AAA El Paso Chihuahuas

Ht/Wt: 6-5/240 lbs. **B/T:** R/R **DOB:** July 7, 1995

Season Stats: 122 AB, .344/.430/.730, 42 H, 31 R, 6 2B, 13 HR, 36 RBI

(Report by Melissa Lockard)

The Arizona Fall League often helps prospects raise their profiles, but Reyes' stint in the prospect showcase league last fall did little to help his cause. The slugging outfielder broke his hamate bone after appearing in just eight AFL games. The Padres took a calculated risk that teams wouldn't select Reyes in the Rule 5 draft while he was recuperating from the hamate surgery, and won that gamble, as he went unclaimed in December.

Reyes recovered by spring training and appeared in six games in big league camp. He homered twice in 11 at-bats, a premonition of what was coming for Reyes during the regular season. Since May 1, he has appeared in nine games and has homered eight times. He had a five-game homer streak from May 2-May 6, and three of those games were multi-homer efforts.

Although he is homering at a career-best rate, Reyes has always been a big power prospect. He hit 25 home runs last season in the Class AA Texas League and has reached double-digits in home runs four of the past five seasons. What's different this year is that he is walking significantly more than he has in the past. He already has 17 walks in 122 at-bats and a .430 OBP. His previous career-best OBP was .360 back in his debut season in the Rookie-level Dominican Summer League.

Reyes, 22, is limited defensively, which may make him a poor fit with the Padres longterm. However, as San Diego continues to rack up losses at the big league level, they will have little to lose in bringing Reyes up to showcase him for the other teams that might be interested in him as a designated hitter or left fielder.

Mikolas improves to 5-0, Pham homers as Cards top Padres 2-1

11:56 PM PT
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO -- After three seasons in Japan, pitcher [Miles Mikolas](#) is making a strong first impression with the [St. Louis Cardinals](#).

"He's performing at an All-Star-caliber level right now," teammate [Tommy Pham](#) said. Mikolas won his fifth straight decision to begin the season and Pham homered in his return from a groin injury, sending the Cardinals past the [San Diego Padres](#) 2-1 on Thursday night.

Mikolas (5-0) allowed one run in 6 2/3 innings against his former team, lowering his ERA to 2.51. The right-hander had never faced the Padres, who drafted him in 2009 and used him as a reliever from 2012-13.

And though Mikolas issued his first walk in three games, he allowed fewer than three runs for the fourth consecutive start.

"He did exactly what we needed him to do," Cardinals manager Mike Matheny said.

[Bud Norris](#) earned his eighth save, and the NL Central leaders opened a six-game trip with their sixth victory in eight games.

Padres cleanup man [Franchy Cordero](#) had three of the five hits against Mikolas. A home run by [Raffy Lopez](#) chased Mikolas in the seventh and was the only extra-base hit against him.

"It was just another very good game from Miles," Matheny said.

In 27 outings with San Diego, all in relief, Mikolas had a 3.44 ERA.

He was better known then for having eaten a live lizard, on a dare, as a Padres minor leaguer. The moment, which was posted on YouTube, earned Mikolas the nickname Lizard King.

After he was traded twice, the [Texas Rangers](#) tried him as a starter. He had a 6.44 ERA in 10 outings. Mikolas decided he needed to go where he could pitch with a longer leash. He joined the [Yomiuri Giants](#) and reported improved command after returning to the United States and signing with the Cardinals to partner with former Rangers pitching coach Mike Maddux.

Against the Padres, the right-hander's repertoire included a mid-90s (mph) fastball, a changeup, a split-finger changeup, a hard curveball, a rare slow curve and one quick-pitch delivery.

"I tried to sneak some things in there," Mikolas said.

He said the curveballs lacked the "snap" he wanted, but he "kind of made up for it by locating my fastball."

Mikolas said much of his success was owed to the team's defense.

Pham, who had missed four games, singled and scored in the first inning on [Jose Martinez](#)'s sacrifice fly and homered in the fifth for the Cardinals' only extra-base hit. Both hits came against [Jordan Lyles](#) (0-1).

"I'm still working on getting to where I was," the center fielder and leadoff man said.

[Jordan Hicks](#) got the final out of the seventh and [Greg Holland](#) worked a scoreless eighth. Cardinals left fielder [Marcell Ozuna](#) aided Mikolas in the fourth by throwing out [Jose Pirela](#) trying to stretch a single off the left-field wall.

After each of Cordero's singles, Mikolas retired [Chase Headley](#), once on a double-play grounder. The Padres took on Headley and his \$13 million salary last offseason so they could get pitching prospect [Bryan Mitchell](#) in the same trade with the [New York Yankees](#). Mitchell was recently demoted to the bullpen after compiling a 6.47 ERA in seven starts.

Lyles, swapping roles with Mitchell, got the start Thursday and worked five innings. He allowed five hits.

"I was thrilled with Jordan," Padres manager Andy Green said.

Pham's sixth home run, off a hanging breaking ball in the fifth, was a 371-foot line drive over the left-field wall.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Cardinals: Placed ace [Carlos Martinez](#) on the 10-day disabled list because of a strained lat. The right-hander leads the National League with a 1.62 ERA. RHP Mike Mayers was recalled from Triple-A Memphis.

Padres: San Diego catcher [Austin Hedges](#) was sent to Los Angeles for tests on his throwing elbow.

UP NEXT

Cardinals: RHP [Luke Weaver](#) (2-2, 5.50 ERA) has given up at least four runs in each of his last four starts.

Padres: LHP [Eric Lauer](#) (1-1, 5.79) will make his fourth career start. Last time out, he earned his first win with six scoreless innings against the Dodgers in Mexico.

Andy's Address, 5/10

Andy Addresses Lyles, bullpen, Margot, Cardinals

By Bill Center

The Padres opened their four-day, 20th anniversary celebration of their 1998 National League championship season Thursday night with the first of four games against the Cardinals at Petco Park.

Jordan Lyles came out of the bullpen to make his first start and Padres manager **Andy Green** discussed what he expected of Lyles during his daily pre-game media session.

“I want Lyles to attack like he’s in the bullpen,” said Green. “And if he runs out of gas after three innings, I’m completely fine with that. I don’t want any kind of different mentality on the mound. I want him aggressively going after hitters the same way he’s pitched in the bullpen. We think there’s a lot to build on if he does that.”

“And the next time, I’ll look for four innings from him. I love what’s he’s done since he’s been in the bullpen. I love the pitch mix. I think this is a good step for him to get back in the rotation and run with it.”

“It’s been the same type of conversation with **Bryan Mitchell** (who lost his rotation spot to Lyles). Just go aggressively after hitters when you get in the game. With Bryan, it was I don’t know when your first outing is coming out of the bullpen, but when it comes attack and expect good things to happen. If you go aggressively after guys and it’s one inning, that’s great.”

“It’s not a problem right now. We want all those guys coming out of the bullpen to do that. I think it is a great chemistry down there. You get around guys like **Craig Stammen** and **Brad Hand** and **Kirby Yates** and you pick up some things and you learn some things. It’s a great dynamic down there that guys can progress back to the rotation from.”

With Lyles expected to go three innings Thursday, Green said his bullpen is set to pick up the extra innings.

“We’re pretty fresh in the bullpen,” said Green. “You try to do the best you can to design it that way. **Robbie Erlin** is clearly fresh. Bryan Mitchell is good to go as well. So you’ve got some length out of those guys. **Adam Cimber** has had a couple days off. All our leverage guys can hop on the mound and give us one if they need to as well. We have a full complement today and that’s one of the reasons why we won’t push Jordan too hard.”

Manuel Margot had his first three-hit game of the season Wednesday night and was 5-for-10 in the three-game series against the Nationals to raise his batting average to .202. Green talked about Margot coming out of his early-season slump.

“Manny’s been back on the fastball,” said Green. “I think he’s turned some fastballs around and I think that’s really been good to see. We know what he can do. He’s starting to trust himself again and that’s probably the biggest part of it.”

“He’s battled hard the entire year. He’s had a great attitude. He’s put in great work. He’s just starting to feel it a little bit more right now. I think it’s fun when you start to see that average climb a bit on the board. You start feeling a little bit better about yourself in the batter’s box and start to shake your head and nod your head and say, ‘Hey, here I go, it’s time.’ I think he’s shown that in the last couple of games.”

“He’s on the right path. Anybody who takes a sting on the disabled list and comes back really quickly will tell you that sometimes it just throws you off a little bit. It wasn’t a clean first month for him, it wasn’t even a full first month because of that. He’s played through some things and been out there and hasn’t shied away from the battle and he’s going to continue to overcome.”

With **Christian Villanueva** hitless in his last 28 at-bats, **Chase Headley** started at third base Thursday.

“Christian is our guy at third,” said Green. “He’ll get some days off against tough right-handers. That suits Chase (Headley) probably a little bit and keeps Chase in the rhythm that way. Christian’s going to continue to play a lot. And I’m going to pick some days where I feel it is the right time based on how he’s played and what he’s going through to get Chase out there and keep him in rhythm as well.”

Green talked about choosing between **Jose Pirela** and **Franchy Cordero** in the Nos. 3 and 4 spots in the Padres’ batting order.

“We went back and fourth if it was Franchy in the three and Pirela in the four and came to the conclusion that it probably didn’t matter that much right now,” said Green. “That’s one of those things that is a toss up and you don’t know which one might be hot in a leverage situation as the game unfolds.”

“Franchy has swung real well when we’ve left him alone in the four hole, so that was the overriding factor for leaving him in there. After that, if you’re not moving **(Eric) Hosmer** down in the lineup, you’re searching for someone to put in there.”

Green then discussed the Cardinals and former Padres draftee Miles Mikolas, who took a 4–0 record into Thursday’s start for St. Louis.

The Cardinals are a first-place club,” said Green. “They’re missing the guy (catcher **Yadier Molina**) who has held them together over the last number of years behind the plate, so a lot of the things that you talk about in scouting meetings when you’re facing Yadi, we’re not as concerned about those things right now.”

“That said, they’re getting back to health with (**Tommy**) **Pham** back in the lineup and he’s swung the bat really well this year for them. And they pitch.”

“Mikolas looks really good. When you sit down and watch his outings this year, he’s thrown the ball really well. He throws up to 98 and it’s a real four-pitch mix and a ton of strikes with a low-walk rate. It’s a name that people really don’t know right now because he’s coming back from Japan, but the stuff is real and the challenge will be real facing him today.”

“The deeper you get into the count with guys who have plus stuff to get you out, the more trouble you get yourself into. For us, you have to be able to turn that fastball around when it is there. He throws a lot of curve balls early in counts, too. When he gets ahead of guys, it’s a high percentage of off-speed strikes early and that’s not easily done by a lot of pitchers. So far, he’s very effective with that this year.”

Padres Prospect Cal Quantrill on His Repertoire

by David Laurila - May 11, 2018

Cal Quantrill's potential is considerable. Drafted eighth overall by the Padres in 2016 despite having undergone Tommy John surgery while at Stanford — he missed all of his junior year and much of his sophomore season — the 23-year-old right-hander possesses a combination of plus stuff and pitchability. *Baseball America* and MLB.com rank him as the fourth-best prospect in the San Diego system, while our own list — expect that soon — will have him a bit lower.

Quantrill, who is lauded as having one of the best changeups in the minors, has made seven starts for Double-A San Antonio this season and has a 3.52 ERA, a 3.29 FIP, and is striking out 8.2 batters per nine innings. He discussed his multi-pitch mix, and his take-no-prisoners approach, during spring training.

Cal Quantrill: “I’m a fastball pitcher. Am I a power pitcher? I guess that would depend on how you want to define it. To me, a power pitcher is someone who attacks hitters, regardless of how fast their fastball is. They don’t fool around — they don’t play around with the edges of the strike zone — they go right after them. Getting ahead in the count is something I take great pride in. I try to make hitters get themselves out, and I want that to happen quickly so that I can go deep into games.

“I throw both [two-seamers and four-seamers], probably more four-seamers. When I’m throwing my fastball the best, it’s got good carry — it’s got good life — and I’m locating. It’s all pretty basic stuff. To me, it’s about throwing with conviction and executing my pitches.

“I use both twos and fours down. I’m not exclusively one or the other. I’m also not afraid to go up in the zone. You can execute fastballs in all four quadrants, regardless of what that fastball is. I use all four as opposed to focusing more up-down or in-out. Again, it’s pretty basic stuff. If you execute pitches more often than you don’t, you’re going to be a pretty successful pitcher regardless of what advanced analytics say.

“My spin rate? I know some of the numbers, but I don’t think that’s something you can drastically change. It is something you look into. You see who you are, and you see what you can do with it. That being said, it’s just another tool in the box to analyze and to potentially help you.

“I’m told all the time that my changeup is my best pitch, but if I didn’t have a good fastball, I don’t think any of you guys would say anything about my changeup. All pitches come off the fastball. That said, I didn’t throw a breaking ball early on [growing up], so the changeup is something I’ve worked on for a long time.

“It’s a feel pitch. You throw it as hard as you can and let it come off your fingertips a little differently. It’s something I’ve played around with for years and years now, and I feel very confident in it. It’s a pitch I go to in important counts, which I think is a separator between me and other guys who throw a changeup.

“It’s mostly a four-seam changeup, although I actually throw it with three or four different grips. Different grips get different movement. I try to change planes with my changeup. I want it to

appear as if I'm throwing a fastball, and have it not come out where they expect it to be. Depending on the hitter, and how we've decided he's swinging the bat that day, we're going to go a different type of changeup. I'll throw it a little harder, throw it a little softer, see if I can get it to fade more, or drop more.

“They're not drastically different, but they are slightly different grips... It's not something I want to explain in detail, but I'm holding it different. I'm feeling it off different fingers more, or less. It's something I've gotten to from lots of years of throwing it different ways, and seeing which ones work. The changeup is a great pitch. In my opinion, as long as you have a fastball, you should have a changeup.

“My breaking pitch right now is a slider. Last year I threw a curveball and a slider. It's about what is going to be the best at the highest level, and I think we've come to the agreement that it will be the slider. That's something I'm focusing on this spring. Let's see if we can make that pitch as good as we can before we think about expanding the repertoire.”

Author's note: Padres director of player development Sam Geaney confirmed this week that Quantrill is not currently throwing a curveball, but only fastballs, changeups, and sliders.

Cardinals hoping to keep Padres on the deck

STATS May 11, 2018 at 11:58a ET

SAN DIEGO — The St. Louis Cardinals are at Petco Park this weekend hoping to rain on the [Padres](#) celebration.

This is the 20th anniversary of the Padres' 1998 National League championship season. And they selected the Cardinals as their opponent for the four-day celebration of the event, which features four straight bobblehead nights.

Well, the Cardinals spoiled the first night of the party by defeating San Diego 2-1 behind the pitching of former Padre [Miles Mikolas](#) and [Tommy Pham](#)'s decisive home run. [Bud Norris](#), another former Padre, got the save.

Now it's on to game two of the series with right-hander [Luke Weaver](#) (2-2, 5.60 ERA) taking the mound for the Cardinals in opposition to Padres rookie left-hander [Eric Lauer](#) (1-1, 5.79).

And another former Padre could be part of the Cardinals' plans to spoil the celebration.

Infielder [Jedd Gyorko](#), who spent the first three seasons of his major league career (2013-2015) as a Padre, didn't start for the Cardinals on Thursday night. And some Padres fans found that odd since Gyorko has a .500 batting average against his original team with seven homers and 16 RBIs.

With the lefty Lauer pitching, Gyorko likely will be in the Cardinals lineup Friday night.

Since his only three major league starts have come this season, Lauer will be facing the Cardinals for the first time. His most recent outing against the [Dodgers](#) on Sunday in Monterrey, Mexico, was the 22-year-old's best.

He blanked the Dodgers on seven hits and a walk with five strikeouts in six innings in what would become the Padres' first — and only — shutout win of the season.

Going into that game, Lauer had a 10.13 ERA through his first two major league starts, allowing 10 runs (nine earned) and six walks in eight innings. But the weather at Coors Field in Denver was a major contributor in Lauer's major league debut (seven runs in three innings), and he settled down nicely after a rough first inning against the [Giants](#) in San Francisco.

Going into his fourth start, Lauer is working on a string of 10 straight scoreless innings.

Weaver, the Cardinals' first-round pick in the 2014 draft (27th overall), will be making his eighth start of the season for the Cardinals. He has given up 22 runs on 35 hits and 15 walks against 32 strikeouts in 35 1/3 innings. Weaver has allowed at least four runs in each of his last four starts.

Weaver has faced the Padres once before.

Last Aug. 23, Weaver worked seven shutout innings against the Padres, allowing three hits and a walk while striking out 10 over seven innings to get the win. It was his first scoreless start in the majors.

It was also only the sixth scoreless start of seven innings or more with 10 strikeouts in history by a Cardinals rookie pitcher — and the first since [Shelby Miller](#) did it on May 10, 2013, against the [Rockies](#).

Pham is hitting a team-high .330 and has three of his six home runs in the last six games.