



# ***Press Clips***

**(October 11, 2018)**

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**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## 7 potential candidates for Angels manager

By Maria Guardado

Less than two weeks into their offseason, the Angels remain busy searching for the right candidate to replace Mike Scioscia, whose 19-year tenure as manager of the club **officially came to an end** last month.

They are not alone, as the Rangers, Orioles, Blue Jays, Twins and Reds are also among the clubs hunting for new managers. While Scioscia's departure had been rumored for months, the Angels plan to take their time in finding his successor and have put no timeframe on making a hire.

"You don't want to put limitations on yourself," general manager Billy Eppler said during the club's end-of-season recap at Angel Stadium last week. "We're going to be thorough."

Here are seven names to watch as the Angels' managerial search unfolds:

### **Brad Ausmus**

The Angels hired Ausmus as a special assistant to Eppler following his departure from the Tigers, who opted not to renew his managerial contract last September. Ausmus, 49, posted a .486 winning percentage in his four seasons with Detroit and led the club to the American League Central title in 2014. A Dartmouth graduate, Ausmus spent 18 seasons in the Majors as a catcher for the Padres, Astros, Tigers and Dodgers.

### **Eric Chavez**

Chavez, a six-time Gold Glove-winning third baseman who retired in 2014 following a 17-year career with the A's, Yankees and D-backs, joined the Angels' front office in the fall of 2015 as a special assistant to the GM. His duties have included professional scouting and on-field instruction with the club's Minor League affiliates.

Chavez, 40, developed a relationship with Eppler during his two-year stint with the Yankees in 2011-12. He returned to New York in 2015 and spent the season as a special assignment scout for Yankees GM Brian Cashman, who had Eppler as an assistant GM at the time. In August -- one day after reports surfaced that Scioscia planned to step down at the end of the season -- Chavez was named interim manager of Triple-A Salt Lake. The Bees went 10-16 over 26 games with Chavez at the helm.

### **Dino Ebel**

Ebel joined the Angels organization in 2005 after spending the previous 17 seasons with the Dodgers as a Minor League player, coach and manager. He skippered Triple-A Salt Lake for one season before being elevated to Scioscia's coaching staff, where he spent his first eight seasons as the third-base coach. Ebel, 52, then served as the bench coach for four seasons before returning to coach third base in 2018. His managerial record includes a .517 winning percentage over nine seasons in the Minors.

### **Joe Espada**

The Astros hired Espada as A.J. Hinch's bench coach last fall after Alex Cora departed to manage the Red

Sox. Espada, 43, previously served as the Yankees' third-base coach for three seasons, a tenure that overlapped with Eppler from 2014-15. He held the same position with the Marlins from 2010-13 and has experience managing in the Puerto Rican Winter League. Espada, a native of Santurce, P.R., has also reportedly drawn interest from the Rangers, who are looking to replace Jeff Banister.

### **Joe McEwing**

McEwing has served as the bench coach to White Sox manager Rick Renteria for the last two seasons. Prior to that, he spent five seasons (2012-16) as the club's third-base coach. McEwing, 45, posted a .531 winning percentage over a three-year managerial stint in the White Sox's Minor League system. He managed Class A Advanced Winston-Salem from 2009-10, capturing Carolina League Manager of the Year honors in both seasons, before being promoted to Triple-A Charlotte in 2011. McEwing also managed the Mesa Solar Sox in the 2011 Arizona Fall League. A former utility player, McEwing played for the Cardinals, Mets, Royals and Astros over his nine-year career in the Majors.

### **Josh Paul**

Paul was appointed Scioscia's bench coach last fall after Ebel shifted to third-base coach to replace Ron Roenicke, who left to join Cora's coaching staff in Boston. Paul and Eppler both worked for the Yankees from 2009-15. Paul, 43, served as a Minor League catching coordinator, a professional scout and a manager for Class A Short Season Staten Island during his time with New York. He recorded a .540 winning percentage over his two seasons as Staten Island's manager. Paul played parts of nine seasons in the Majors as a catcher for the White Sox, Cubs, Angels and Rays.

### **Omar Vizquel**

A three-time All-Star and 11-time Gold Glove-winning shortstop, Vizquel spent this season as manager of the White Sox's Class A Advanced affiliate in Winston-Salem. He was voted the Carolina League Manager of the Year after guiding the Dash to an 84-54 regular-season record. A native of Caracas, Venezuela, Vizquel spent the previous four seasons working with the Tigers as first-base, infield and baserunning coach. The 51-year-old also managed Venezuela during the 2017 World Baseball Classic. Regarded as one of the best defensive shortstops of all time, Vizquel spent the bulk of his 24-year career in the Majors with the Indians.

## **Pipeline names Angels' Prospects of the Year**

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- The Angels' rebuilt farm system is finally starting to bear fruit, as evidenced by the ascendance of third baseman **Taylor Ward** and right-hander Griffin Canning, who have been recognized by MLB Pipeline as the club's Hitting and Pitching Prospects of the Year, respectively.

Each team's Hitting and Pitching Prospects of the Year were chosen by the MLB Pipeline staff. To receive consideration, players must have spent at least half the year in the Minors and appeared on the team's **Top 30 Prospects list**.

Ward, a first-round pick of the Angels in 2015, was originally drafted as a catcher, but he transitioned to third base this year, a move that helped him unlock his offensive potential and accelerate his path to the

Majors. The 24-year-old right-handed hitter enjoyed a breakout season in the Minors, batting .349 with a .977 OPS, 14 home runs and 60 RBIs over 102 games between Double-A Mobile and Triple-A Salt Lake.

Ward was rewarded with his first MLB callup on Aug. 14 and spent the rest of the season as the Angels' starting third baseman. While he batted only .178 with a .578 OPS over 40 games in his first extended look in the Majors, he crushed three of his six home runs in the final week of September, including a walk-off blast in the club's regular-season finale.

The Angels are hoping that Ward will be able to take on a larger role with the club next season, as he is expected to receive a chance to compete for a starting infield job during Spring Training.

"There's a lot of mechanical things that I'm still going to work on to tweak and get better at," Ward said. "And of course, third base, I'll be working extremely hard, like I have been all year, to take hits away over there. I want to be really good over there, just like how I was defensively at catching. I have a lot of work to do. We'll get started here soon at that."

Canning, 22, has emerged as the Angels' top pitching prospect after shooting from Class A Advanced Inland Empire to Triple-A Salt Lake in his first professional season. A second-round Draft pick out of UCLA in 2017, Canning did not pitch in the Angels' organization last year because of concerns about his workload in college, but he quickly impressed after making his pro debut in April, logging a 3.65 ERA over 113 1/3 innings across three Minor League levels. While at Double-A Mobile, Canning was the starting pitcher in two combined no-hitters.

A polished arm with an advanced feel for pitching, Canning mixes a low-90s fastball with an above-average changeup, a curveball and a slider. Canning, who is ranked the Angels' No. 2 prospect by MLB Pipeline, is now on the cusp of the Majors and could be ready to contribute to the rotation at some point next year.

### ***FROM BLEACHER REPORT***

## **Stay Away! 1 Free Agent Each MLB Team Should Avoid This Offseason\***

By Jacob Shafer

The MLB playoffs are in full swing, but the offseason will arrive before we know it.

That means hot-stove speculation is lurking, too.

Let's get a head start and examine one free agent each team should avoid. In making these determinations, we considered each club's status as a buyer or seller, their roster needs and their financial constraints.

Credible rumors and actual offseason action are on the horizon, so this is all based on informed speculation.

Players with an opt-out clause weren't tossed into the mix, since we don't yet know whether they'll be part of the free-agent pool.

### **American League West**

#### **Houston Astros: C Matt Wieters**

The Houston Astros need to acquire a catcher this winter. The troika of Brian McCann (.212 average), Max Stassi (.226 average) and Martin Maldonado (.231 average) didn't cut it.

There are multiple options on the trade and free-agent fronts. One to avoid: Matt Wieters.

Yes, the 32-year-old is a four-time All-Star and two-time Gold Glove winner. But he also hit .238 in a scant 76 games for the Washington Nationals in between extended disabled-list stints.

Wieters' days as an elite backstop are behind him, so the Astros should shop elsewhere.

#### **Los Angeles Angels: RHP Garrett Richards**

Garrett Richards hasn't pitched more than 76.1 innings (his 2018 total) since 2015. He's been beset by an array of injuries and underwent Tommy John surgery in July.

So, why would the Los Angeles Angels bring him back?

Richards was once an emerging star for the Halos. They know his potential.

With that said, the Angels already have a Tommy John recovery project in two-way Japanese star Shohei Ohtani. It's time to move on from Richards and let him become someone else's buy-low gamble.

#### **Oakland Athletics: C Jonathan Lucroy**

The Oakland Athletics were the surprise team of 2018. They tallied 97 wins and grabbed an AL wild-card slot.

They should be buyers this winter despite their usual payroll constraints. At the same time, they should let veteran catcher Jonathan Lucroy walk.

Say what you will about Lucroy's two-time All-Star pedigree or his handling of Oakland's young pitchers. The guy is entering his age-33 season and posted a .241/.291/.325 slash line.

Even on a short-term contract, he isn't worth the Athletics' limited dollars.

#### **Seattle Mariners: DH Nelson Cruz**

The Seattle Mariners boast the longest active playoff drought in the majors at 17 years and counting. It's time for a new direction in the Pacific Northwest.

Designated hitter Nelson Cruz wasn't part of the problem. He hit 37 home runs and made his sixth All-Star appearance.

Then again, Cruz turned 38 in July. The Mariners' best move is to extend him the qualifying offer and, assuming he doesn't accept it, reap the compensatory draft pick and seek power elsewhere.

### **Texas Rangers: 3B Adrian Beltre**

Adrian Beltre hit a respectable .273 with 15 home runs in 119 games for the Texas Rangers last season. It's possible he's still got some gas left in his tank.

Assuming he doesn't retire, Beltre will catch on somewhere with his veteran leadership and possible Hall of Fame credentials. It shouldn't be with the Rangers, though.

Texas is a bottom-feeder in need of a rebuild. Youth and draft picks should be the priority, not a fading veteran in the twilight of his brilliant career.

*\*Article cut to only include AL West-related material.*

## **FROM THE SPORTSTER**

### **10 MLB Players Of The 90s And 10 Of The 2000s Who Were Merely One-Season Wonders**

By c Hinbest

In Major League Baseball, players seemingly break out of nowhere. Every team is hopeful of having one or two players have a career year that will help propel them to a postseason berth. In 2018 alone, Christian Yelich has had by far his best season to date and has truly broken out as an elite baseball player. Ronald Acuna Jr., Juan Soto, and Gleyber Torres are all examples of young players who have had breakout seasons this year. Each of those players and their respective teams are hopeful they can continue to remain productive for years to come. Unfortunately, there are countless players through baseball's history who have never been able to continue their success for more than one season.

In music, artists who experience a major hit with only one song are often referred to as "one-hit wonders". The same sort of thing exists in baseball. Players who have one really great standout season, but are unable to replicate anything close to that success are also referred to as "one-hit wonders". Fans and teams alike are often left wondering what happened to those players and why they were unable to continue that success for more than one season.

For this article, we will be taking a look at ten notable players who were one-hit wonders in the 1990s as well as ten players who were one-hit wonders during the 2000s.

#### **20 90s: Justin Thompson**

Back in 1997, Justin Thompson emerged as one of the bright young starting pitchers for the Detroit Tigers. He was a hard-throwing lefty who quickly shot through the Tiger's farm system.

***At 24 years old, Thompson was named to the 1997 All-Star Game for the first (and only) time in his career.***

Thompson ended up finishing the season with a solid 3.02 ERA across 32 starts and 223 innings. Unfortunately, his career went downhill from that season on. Although he pitched over 200 innings in each of the next two seasons, Thompson was out of baseball altogether by 2000.

### **19 2000s: Dontrelle Willis**

Dontrelle Willis had a pretty good start to his major league career, even winning the NL Rookie of the Year Award in 2003. However his 2005 season seemingly came out of nowhere and had Marlins' fans and front office convinced that Willis could become a big part of their future.

In 2005, Willis was one of the best pitchers and was named to the All-Star Game (though he did not pitch). He posted a very impressive 2.63 ERA across 223.1 innings and even notched 170 strikeouts. Those were all career highs for Willis. While it would have been unreasonable to expect he replicate that success year after year, it was a shocker to see Willis suddenly have significant difficulty finding the strike zone and battling the injury bug.

### **18 90s: Tuffy Rhodes**

Tuffy Rhodes actually managed to carve out a fairly successful career playing baseball in Japan, but he was unfortunately unable to experience much success in the MLB. He spent a few seasons with the Chicago Cubs mostly as a utility player, but he was able to put together a memorable year during the strike-shortened 1994 season.

He played in a career-high 95 games that year, and hit 8 home runs with a .705 OPS. Unfortunately for Rhodes, he only had eight more hits over the next few seasons in limited playing time. He was out of the majors by the time he was 26, before heading overseas to play in Japan.

### **17 2000s: Marcus Giles**

In the early-2000s, the Atlanta Braves were hopeful that they had the makings of another great dynasty. There was a great deal of optimism surrounding the arrival of Marcus Giles, Rafael Furcal and Andruw Jones in the major leagues to complement veteran sluggers Chipper Jones and Gary Sheffield. In 2003, Giles certainly looked as if he would be a perennial All-Star.

***He posted a .316/.390/.526 batting line, to go with 21 home runs and 14 stolen bases.***

Unfortunately for Giles and the Braves, injuries forced him to miss most of the 2004 season. From there on out, Giles seemed to have lost his ability to hit and his power was zapped.

### **16 90s: Brady Anderson**



Brady Anderson ended up being a three-time All-Star as an outfielder for the Baltimore Orioles during the 1990s. He was generally regarded as a pretty good middle of the order type of bat who could provide the Orioles with some decent power and hit for a decent average. However, Anderson completely exploded for one remarkable 1996 season.

During that year, Anderson hit an impressive 50 home runs, 110 RBI, and posted a career-high .297 batting average! The following season, Anderson dropped back down to his league average statistics. At least Anderson will be able to say that he was a member of the 50-home run club!

### **15 2000s: Mark Prior**

Mark Prior was drafted 2nd overall by the Chicago Cubs in the 2001 draft, and rose quickly through the farm system. He made his debut in May 2002 and had a pretty respectable rookie year. However, 2003 was the season when Prior really seemed to turn a corner and break out. That season, Prior finished with an 18-6 record, a 2.43 ERA and a whopping 245 strikeouts!

His impressive stats earned him an All-Star Game appearance and earned him some serious Cy Young consideration (he finished 3rd). Unfortunately, Prior's career ended up going downhill after that. A series of injuries - a broken ankle, broken elbow, torn rotator cuff, and a torn labrum - ended up forcing Prior to retire at just 25 years old.

### **14 90s: Bob Hamelin**

Bob Hamelin had the unenviable job of having to replace George Brett, after he retired following the 1993 season. Much to the surprise of the Kansas City Royals and their fans, Hamelin actually came pretty close to replicating Brett's numbers. During the 1994 season, Hamelin hit a solid .282 and hit 24 home runs in 101 games.

***Those strong numbers led to him winning the A.L. Rookie of the Year Award over Manny Ramirez.***

However, Hamelin proved to be nothing more than a one-hit wonder. He spent the next few seasons bouncing back and forth between Triple-A and the major leagues. Hamelin was out of baseball by 1998.

### **13 2000s: Carlos Quentin**

Carlos Quentin had a number of pretty solid years as an outfielder for the Chicago White Sox during the 2000s. However, he was frequently injury prone which affected his ability to stay on the field and have productive seasons. Injuries and a lack of consistent production defined Quentin's nine-year MLB career - except for his magical 2008 season.

That season, he managed to post a career best .288 batting average, 36 home runs, and 100 RBI's. For that one season, Quentin was one of the best outfielders in the league and he was a big part of the success the White Sox experienced that season. Unfortunately, Quentin was never able to stay healthy enough to have success for more than one season.

### **12 90s: Shawn Estes**

Shawn Estes was a starting pitcher for the San Francisco Giants when he had his breakout season. During the 1997 season, Estes finished with an impressive 19-5 record and a perfectly solid 3.18 ERA with 181 strikeouts in 201 innings. Estes had finally lived up to the hype associated with having been drafted 11<sup>th</sup> overall in the 1991 draft. While Estes did have some decent seasons, he never really came close to replicating the success he experienced during the 1997 season. Estes served as organizational pitching depth or a long reliever out of the bullpen.

### **11 2000s: Lew Ford**

Lew Ford was drafted in the 12th round by the Boston Red Sox, and making it to the MLB is a feat very few players drafted that late ever achieve. However, he climbed through the farm system fairly quickly. His skills evidently impressed the Twins front office that they traded a quality veteran reliever (Hector Carrasco) to the Red Sox for him in 2000.

***After a solid minor league career, Ford was finally promoted and put up a strong rookie season.***

In 2004, Ford hit .299 with 15 home runs and 20 stolen bases. The Twins were hopeful that Ford could develop into a 20/20 type of player but, alas, it never happened. Ford has now spent most of his playing days in the independent leagues, but has never reached the success he had in 2004.

### **10 90s: Hideki Irabu**

The New York Yankees have not been afraid about spending money to make high quality upgrades to their team. It has historically worked out well for the Yankees, but one of their misses came when they signed Hideki Irabu out of Japan. He joined the Yankees in 1998 and had a fairly respectable first season in the MLB, pitching to a 4.06 ERA across 173 innings. He did not make the playoff roster, but did receive a World Series ring.

While Irabu's first season was respectable enough, his career unfortunately went downhill from that year on. His ERA continued to increase and he only ended up spending parts of five years in the MLB.

### **9 2000s: Darin Erstad**

Darin Erstad had a magical season for the then-Anaheim Angels in 2000. The first baseman, drafted first overall in the 1995 draft, sailed through the minor leagues and made his major league debut in 2000.

***During his magical rookie season in 2000, Erstad hit .355 while hitting 25 home runs and setting an MLB-record with 100 RBIs as a leadoff hitter.***

For his efforts, he was named to that year's All-Star team, and won the Silver Slugger Award at first base. However, Erstad's numbers declined fairly rapidly starting in 2001. Erstad was unable to put up the solid power numbers like he did in rookie year, and his batting average dropped all the way down to around .250.

### **8 90s: Kevin Maas**

Kevin Maas is yet another rookie who came up to the major leagues and set the MLB afire. It seemed as though he was always a threat to do some serious damage practically every time he stepped up to the plate during his rookie season of 1990. The second baseman became the fastest player to hit 10 home runs in his career, requiring just 72 at bats. His power disappeared pretty quickly, although he still finished the season with 21 home runs. The following season, it had become apparent that Maas was struggling to adapt to the way pitchers adjusted to him. He spent the next few seasons in the minor leagues for the Yankees and Twins, before calling it a career in 1995.

#### **7 2000s: Luis Gonzalez**

Luis Gonzalez had established him as a fairly reliable top-of-the-lineup type of hitter in 1999, and Arizona could count on him for at least 150 base hits. However, his 2001 season was one for the history books. That season, Gonzalez hit 57 home runs and 142 RBIs! Those numbers came as quite a shock since Gonzalez's previous career high was just 31 homers.

The Diamondbacks made the most of Gonzalez's breakout 2001 season, as he helped them win the World Series over the New York Yankees. Gonzalez never came close to replicating the power he demonstrated in 2001, leading many to believe that Gonzalez was one of the many to have had his statistics boosted by steroids.

#### **6 90s: Shane Spencer**

Shane Spencer had a six-year career in the major leagues, over which he was generally regarded as a bottom of the order type of hitter or someone who can provide some power off the bench. However, Spencer certainly did his best to change that perception of him in 1998.

***He hit 10 home runs during the month of September, three of which were grand slams.***

Spencer was arguably one of the Yankees' best hitters during the 1998 playoffs, which saw them win the World Series. Unfortunately, Spencer was never able to get beyond being a utility infielder. He retired in 2006 and has served as a hitting coach and manager in the minor leagues for various organizations.

#### **5 2000s: Daisuke Matsuzaka**

Daisuke Matsuzaka was signed to a large (at the time) contract to leave Japan and become a front of the rotation starter for the Boston Red Sox in 2007. While Matsuzaka had a perfectly fine rookie year in 2007, he broke out in a big way in 2008. That year, "Dice-K" went 18-3 and posted a 2.90 ERA and almost certainly would have won the Cy Young Award if it weren't for Cliff Lee's even better season in 2008.

Since then, Matsuzaka has been merely an average pitcher and had to undergo Tommy John surgery. His career in the MLB never really came close to the success he experienced earlier in Japan.

#### **4 90s: Dave Fleming**

After being drafted in the 3rd round in the 1990s draft by the Seattle Mariners, Dave Fleming spent only a couple of days in the minor leagues before being promoted to the major leagues in the summer of

1991. The Mariners did not want to wait around to see Fleming, and took a huge risk in promoting him that quickly. Fleming actually experienced a good amount of success in his first full season in 1992, posting a 3.39 ERA and finishing third in Rookie of the Year voting.

Unfortunately, Fleming showed he could have used further development in the minor leagues as he was unable to have sustained success in the major leagues. He struggled over the next few seasons and ended up retiring from baseball in 1995.

### **3 2000s: Ryan Ludwick**

Ryan Ludwick experienced some success in the Detroit Tigers organization early in his career, but they did not feel he merited a spot as one of their starting outfielders. That led to Ludwick signing with the St. Louis Cardinals in 2007. In his first full season with the Cardinals in 2008, Ludwick was named to his first (and only) All-Star Game.

***During the season, Ludwick hit an impressive 37 home runs, 40 doubles, 113 RBIs, and posted a solid .299 batting average.***

The Cardinals must have felt they won the lottery picking up a quality middle of the order bat for practically nothing. While Ludwick got off to a strong start in 2009, his productivity dropped out of nowhere. Ludwick battled sporadic injuries and struggled to get on base consistently. Ludwick never came close to matching the numbers he put up in 2008.

### **2 90s: Phil Plantier**

In 1993, Phil Plantier had looked as though he was well on his way to becoming another great slugger for the San Diego Padres. The power hitting outfielder hit 34 home runs and 100 RBI, which was good for second behind Barry Bonds. That ended up being as close as Plantier would come to challenging Bonds for the most home runs.

A series of injuries and rapidly increasing strikeouts limited his effectiveness in 1994 and 1995, and Plantier was never the same player as he was in 1993. Plantier ended up calling it a career in 1998, although he did serve as a hitting coach in the minor leagues for the Seattle Mariners and San Diego Padres since retiring.

### **1 2000s: Rick Ankiel**

Many baseball fans will likely recall Rick Ankiel's days as a solid outfielder for the St. Louis Cardinals during the mid-2000s. However, it is lesser known that Ankiel first made it to the major leagues as a starting pitcher towards the end of the 1999 season. His 2000 season was particularly promising as he posted a respectable 3.50 ERA and notched 194 strikeouts in 175 innings during the midst of the home run era. Unfortunately, a lack of pitch command became his undoing. After multiple seasons of struggling with his pitch control, Ankiel had decided to become a hitter to prolong his MLB career. It turned out to be a smart decision on his part, as he had a couple strong years as a left fielder.