



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF JANUARY 9, 2019

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"White Sox appear to be building around Machado even before signing Machado" ... Phil Rogers, Forbes

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"White Sox, All-Star Herrera finalize \$18M, 2-year contract" ... Andrew Seligman, Associated Press

White Sox add Herrera as late-inning option

Right-hander signs two-year, \$18M deal with option for third year

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | January 8, 2019

CHICAGO -- An official White Sox closer for the 2019 season might not be named by manager Rick Renteria until near the end of Spring Training.

But with the official addition of free agent Kelvin Herrera, who agreed with the White Sox on a two-year, \$18 million deal including a club option for 2021 as announced Tuesday, the White Sox have another strong late-inning option.

"I'm just ready whenever the manager hands me the ball," said Herrera during a conference call. "Whatever they want me to do, I'll do it."

Under terms of the deal, Herrera will receive \$8.5 million in 2019 and '20, while the White Sox hold a \$10 million option for '21 with a \$1 million buyout. Herrera, 29, combined to go 2-3 with a 2.44 ERA, 17 saves and 38 strikeouts over 48 relief appearances and 44 1/3 innings in '18 with Kansas City and Washington.

Herrera recorded a 1.98 ERA with 14 saves over 38 games in the first half but was limited to 10 games after the All-Star break and didn't pitch after Aug. 26 due to a Lisfranc fracture in his left foot. His recovery seems to be on the right path, as Herrera mentioned he is already throwing and playing catch.

"I feel good. I feel strong enough to start Spring Training," Herrera said. "We're doing what they want me to do, but that's up to them. Right now, I'm very optimistic that I'm going to start Spring Training with no restrictions."

Herrera's top single-season total in saves came in 2017, when he recorded 26, but he also played a major role as a member of the airtight Royals bullpens in '14 and '15, with Kansas City appearing in the World Series in both seasons and winning it all in '15. As part of that Royals organization, Herrera was able to become a key cog in the team's rebuild as well as part of a dominant relief crew.

History could be repeating itself with the White Sox.

"This team is building a strong bullpen," said Herrera, who has a 1.50 ERA in 31 career appearances and 30 innings pitched at Guaranteed Rate Field, including a current streak of 10 2/3 scoreless over 11 outings. "I know how it feels when I was with KC; we had a very, very strong bullpen there. You can feel it. It's just a matter for us to perform and do our best. Just to be ready to do our job and just to have the position to help this team.

"When we started in KC, we were all young players with a lot of talent. I can see that here with the White Sox. This is an organization with a lot of young talent, a lot of guys that want to play good and be good players. I'm going to try just to help as much as possible in the development process for all those young players. That's something like what we accomplished in KC."

The White Sox already added right-hander Alex Colome in a trade with Seattle earlier this offseason and picked up the \$4.65 million option on Nate Jones, the longest-tenured player currently with the organization. This trio joins Jace Fry, Ian Hamilton and Juan Minaya, not to mention the possibility of Zack Burdi mid-season, as part of the late-inning, high-leverage crew, giving Renteria and White Sox pitching coach Don Cooper plenty of choices.

"Things here are going to be good," Herrera said. "I'm excited because I know how things can be good when you do things the right way. I think that's the case here with the White Sox."

Left-handed pitcher Ian Clarkin was designated for assignment to make room for Herrera. With the moves, the White Sox 40-man roster remains at 40.

The White Sox already had a Burr and Hamilton, so they went ahead and added Jon Jay

By Michael Clair / Cut4 MLB.com | January 8, 2019

When the White Sox reportedly signed free agent outfielder Jon Jay on Monday night, it marked an important move far beyond its effect on the depth chart. You see, with relief pitchers Ryan Burr and Ian Hamilton already on the roster, Jay's signing now gives the White Sox three Founding Fathers. That has to count for something!

In case you don't remember your high school history classes, (Aaron) Burr was Thomas Jefferson's vice president, (Alexander) Hamilton was the first Secretary of the Treasury and John Jay was the first Chief Justice for the United States. Now all the White Sox need to do is hire Ron Washington as a coach and acquire Nick Franklin and Matt Adams and they'll have assembled something really special.

Of course, putting together the Founding Fathers wasn't the only reason fans, writers and conspiracy theorists were excited by Jay's signing: The outfielder often spends his offseason training with recent White Sox acquisition Yonder Alonso and, oh yeah, Manny Machado.

White Sox 'monitoring' Mike Moustakas' market

By Dan Santaromita / NBC Sports Chicago | January 8, 2019

Manny Machado is the first choice addition to the White Sox infield, but Mike Moustakas could be a backup option if Machado signs elsewhere.

MLB Network's Jon Morosi reported that the White Sox and Phillies, both teams squarely in the Machado chase, are "monitoring Moustakas' marketplace" while waiting for Machado's decision.

While Moustakas wouldn't excite the fan base in the same way that Machado would, the 30-year-old third baseman would fill an immediate need at third base for the White Sox. Moustakas is a Scott Boras client, same as fellow free agent target Bryce Harper.

He spent his entire career with the Royals before being traded to the Brewers in the middle of the 2018 season. He was an All-Star for the second time in his career in 2017, which was the best offensive year of his career with highs in OPS (.835) and home runs (38). In 2018, Moustakas hit .251/.315/.459 with 28 home runs between the Royals and Brewers. His .774 OPS was his lowest since 2014.

From the sound of it, Moustakas' market will be dictated by Machado. Once Machado signs, teams looking for third basemen can push for Moustakas.

Where Caesars has Cubs, White Sox win totals for 2019

By Dan Santaromita / NBC Sports Chicago | January 8, 2019

The baseball offseason is far from over and the biggest free agents haven't even picked a home yet, but Vegas is already setting lines for how many wins each team will have.

Caesars released its first win totals for the 2019 season and the news is split for the two Chicago teams.

2019 MLB Season Wins now available @CaesarsPalace ... Always fun! Available in NJ and MS in the next hour pic.twitter.com/tnyyhXlhrp

The Cubs are set at 89 wins, which is six wins fewer than the team had in 2018 and would be the team's lowest win total since 2014. Apparently Vegas isn't impressed with the Cubs' lack of activity this offseason. Still, that is the highest total in the NL Central. The Cardinals are projected to be right there with the Cubs, coming in at 88 1/2. The Brewers are expected to have quite a dropoff at 83 1/2.

The White Sox come in at 74.5 wins, which is an upgrade for a team that won 62 games in 2018. The arrival of Eloy Jimenez, another year for the younger players to develop and a beefed up bullpen with Alex Colome and Kelvin Herrera could make the White Sox a better team in 2019. Oh, and the chance they sign a marquee free agent like Manny Machado and/or Bryce Harper.

That would put the White Sox at third in the AL Central, ahead of the Royals (69) and Tigers (67). The Indians (91 1/2) are projected to win the division again with the Twins (84) chasing .

The Astros have the highest projected win total at 97 1/2, just ahead of the Yankees (96 1/2) and Red Sox (95 1/2). The Orioles are last at 59, which would be still a significant improvement on the team's 47 wins in 2018.

Kelvin Herrera signs up to help turn another rebuild into a champion: 'It resembles my time with Kansas City'

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | January 8, 2019

Kelvin Herrera is not a new face to most White Sox fans, who likely remember his long tenure as a part of a fearsome Kansas City Royals bullpen.

That 'pen, with Herrera playing one of the starring roles, was perhaps the strongest part of a Royals roster that reached back-to-back World Series and won the whole thing in 2015. That success, however short lived (the Royals were one of just two teams with a worse record than the White Sox in 2018, just three seasons removed from winning it all), was a rebuilding success story of recent vintage. And while it might not have produced a sustained contender like the Cubs and Houston Astros seemed to have done with their rebuilding projects, it accomplished baseball's ultimate goal.

Well, the White Sox are trying to accomplish the same thing on the South Side, and now Herrera is part of another team looking to make the transition from rebuilding mode to contention mode in the next few years.

"I'm excited the direction this team has taken. It resembles my time with Kansas City when I was starting," Herrera said with the help of a team translator during a conference call Tuesday afternoon. "We were in the rebuilding mode and we were just trying to learn how to play the right way, with intensity and giving 100 percent effort every time. I think that's something you can see in this team, too.

"I'm very excited to be part of another process like I was part of in KC. Things here are going to be good. I'm excited because I know how things can be good when you do the things the right way. I think that's the case here with the White Sox."

Herrera would know. The Royals took their own fleet of highly rated prospects and the fruits of a high-profile trade and turned it into back-to-back pennants and a World Series championship. Eric Hosmer, Mike Moustakas, Alex Gordon, Lorenzo Cain, Alcides Escobar, Salvador Perez, Greg Holland and Herrera were the young core that those teams were built on. The White Sox have similar plans that hope to feature Eloy Jimenez, Michael Kopech, Luis Robert, Dylan Cease, Yoan Moncada, Carlos Rodon, Reynaldo Lopez, Dane Dunning, Nick Madrigal and Zack Collins as the foundation of a future champion. (Manny Machado would fall into that category, too, should the 26-year-old free-agent superstar eventually sign with the White Sox.)

Herrera could be a part of rebuild-to-riches story again, signed to a two-year deal with an option for a third. He's not even 30 years old, and that contract aligns with the planned transition and opening of the contention window.

"When we started in KC, we were all young players with a lot of talent. I can see that here with the White Sox," he said. "I think this is an organization with a lot of young talent, a lot of guys that want to play good and be good players.

"For me, I think I'm going to try just to help as much as possible in the development process for all those young players. That's something like what we accomplished in KC."

That's the dream scenario for the White Sox, of course, and now they have someone in the clubhouse who's been through the process and can speak to the light at the end of the tunnel, a valuable thing considering much of the roster has experienced nothing but losing in their short big league careers.

Now, the volatility of relief pitching, a multi-time talking point for general manager Rick Hahn during the Winter Meetings, could make for a lot of different outcomes for Herrera and his place in the White Sox long-term future. He showed some relatively worrisome signs last season, his velocity down and his season over in August with a foot injury that he says will be a thing of the past come spring training. Perhaps he isn't the same pitcher that helped fuel late-game dominance for the 2014 and 2015 AL champs. Or perhaps he is,

so successful in a White Sox uniform that he generates midseason trade buzz. Few things are more desirable for contenders at the deadline than an All-Star type reliever, and a vintage performance could net Hahn some more young pieces to further the rebuild.

But whether he's around for the planned glory days or not, someone who's been through this whole rebuilding thing before — and got to the mountaintop — likes what he sees with his new club. Is the White Sox rebuild moving in the right direction? A veteran of this kind of thing and now a member of one again says yes.

White Sox Team of the Future: Center field

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago | January 8, 2019

What will the next championship-contending White Sox team look like?

That's what we're setting out to determine (or at least make a guess at) over the next few weeks. Ten members of our White Sox content team here at NBC Sports Chicago put our heads together to try to project what each position on the diamond would look like in one, two, three years. Basically, we posed the question: What will the White Sox starting lineup be the next time they're capable of playing in the World Series?

That question can have a bunch of different answers, too. We didn't limit ourselves to players currently a part of the organization. Think the White Sox are gonna make a big free-agent addition? Vote for that player. Think the White Sox are gonna pull off a huge trade? Vote for that player. We wanted to see some creativity.

While one voter got a little creative in center field, it was again a pretty easy choice: With nine of 10 votes, Luis Robert is our center fielder of the future.

Robert has been wowing folks with his athleticism and his ability on the baseball field since well before the White Sox signed him as a 19-year-old international free agent in 2017. The ball exploded off his bat during must-see batting-practice sessions with Eloy Jimenez and Micker Adolfo last spring. A little more than a year ago, Rick Renteria gave a nice summary of Robert's abilities — and got a lot of White Sox fans excited in the process.

"I saw Robert," Renteria said at the 2017 Winter Meetings, "he's a pretty impressive specimen. Listen, this kid can fly. I saw him run down to first I think it was like 3.56 after a full swing on a ground ball. He ran down a ball in center, right-center field effortlessly. He hit a ball against the wind and a gust into center, left-center field that I thought had no chance and it ended up going over the trees."

And that was before Robert ever played a minor league game in the United States.

Last year, he finally did that, though he didn't play in as many as he would have liked, bothered by thumb injuries that delayed the start of his season until June and briefly put him on the shelf for almost the entire month of July. And the effects of those injuries were present in his end-of-season numbers: a .269/.333/.360 slash line with no homers and only 17 RBIs in just 50 games.

But Robert's promise popped up again this fall when he wowed during the Arizona Fall League, posting a .324/.367/.432 slash line with two homers, 10 RBIs and five stolen bases in 18 games.

Oh yeah, and he did this:

...advances to third on a sac fly by Yu Chang, and then breaks for home with the Scottsdale taking too long to get the throw in. Great hustle and heads up play Robert, all the way around the bases

"I hear them in the dugout. They're all at the top of the dugout when he comes up to hit, so that just tells you how they feel about him as well," Class A Winston-Salem's hitting coach, Charlie Poe, told our Chuck

Garfien in November. "I see them, I hear them in the dugout. 'He's up! He's up! What's he going to do? How far is he going to hit it?'"

That's an accurate assessment of White Sox fans' excitement level, too. And given the ability with the glove, with the bat, on the base paths, Robert seems like a lock to be the center fielder of the future.

Other vote-getters

Tim Anderson (1). Yes, someone on our crew envisions the White Sox current starting shortstop finding his way to the outfield one day. Be that because of a free-agent arrival who pushes him to a new position (cough, cough, Manny Machado, cough, cough) or the ascent of last year's first-round pick, Nick Madrigal, Anderson might have to end up switching to a different spot. Being the team player he is, he likely wouldn't mind it. But his improvement at shortstop was one of the high points of the developmental 2018 season. He's an athletic guy, perhaps giving one of our voters reason to believe Anderson can pull off being a major league center fielder.

Failing to land Manny Machado – or Bryce Harper – would be a double doink for the White Sox

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune | January 8, 2019

If the idea is to make Manny Machado's comfort zone so big he won't think twice about choosing the 100-loss White Sox over the 100-win Yankees, the Sox may as well go for broke.

After acquiring Machado's brother-in-law, Yonder Alonso, and signing one of his best friends, Jon Jay, the next logical move for general manager Rick Hahn is calling the Cubs' Theo Epstein about the availability of Machado's cousin, Albert Almora Jr. And when he runs out of family and friends, perhaps Machado's personal trainer could use a job on the South Side.

The recruitment of Machado has been the most interesting saga of the White Sox's offseason, one that could end up with the biggest free-agent splash in franchise history or with a major thud if neither Machado nor Bryce Harper signs on the dotted line.

Coming this far, there's no turning back for the Sox, who've raised expectations so high that entering spring training empty-handed will be a double doink no one wants to see. Alonso and Jay are the lettuce and tomato in the BLT, but Machado is the bacon.

Can the Sox bring home the bacon?

Though Harper is the preferred choice of most Sox fans, Machado has grabbed much of the attention since news of the Sox's offer to the star infielder.

With a little more than a month before spring training, their slow-motion pursuit of Machado appears to be gaining steam with the signing of Jay, a journeyman outfielder who wouldn't seem to be a big deal in the Sox rebuild unless he was brought in as an enticement to Machado. Jay agreed to a one-year, \$4 million deal, in line for a veteran outfielder about to turn 34 with no power whatsoever.

Jay is a good guy in the clubhouse and a decent leadoff option, but he's not exactly an upgrade from Avisail Garcia, who was non-tendered after another injury-marred season. Assuming Eloy Jimenez is called up by May, Jay likely will wind up platooning and serving as a late-game defensive replacement in the corner spots. But if he and Alonso can convince Machado to take the Sox's offer and reunite the "Miami crew" in Chicago, he'll be worth the relatively small investment.

The Sox have made incremental moves this winter, waiting on the big boys to make a potentially franchise-altering decision. Machado can be the face of the franchise in Chicago or Philadelphia, or just another superstar in the Yankees clubhouse. Harper can be the straw that stirs the drink in Chicago or Philly, or just

another superstar in the Dodgers clubhouse. Or the proverbial “mystery” team can swoop in and make one of them an offer that blows the others away.

On Tuesday the Sox made official the signing of late-inning reliever Kelvin Herrera to a two-year, \$18 million deal after acquiring Alex Colome from the Mariners. Herrera, who can close or serve as setup man, will receive \$8.5 million in 2019 and 2020, while the Sox have a \$10 million option for 2021 with a \$1 million buyout.

Herrera said the Sox remind him of the rebuilding Royals team he began his career with in 2011, the one that grew together and won a World Series in 2015. The Sox are a long way from making that assessment a reality, but he should help fix what has been a deficiency since David Robertson was dealt back to the Yankees in 2017.

But Herrera, Colome, Alonso, Jay and starter Ivan Nova aren't enough to make the Sox a contender, even in a subpar division like the AL Central. Even the addition of either Machado or Bryce Harper might not do that in 2019. They'll need significant improvements from Yoan Moncada and Lucas Giolito, two prospects from the first big deals of the rebuild. They'll need fewer strikeouts from the lineup as a whole, and more consistency from Carlos Rodon and Reynaldo Lopez, both of whom were dominant in stretches.

And finally they'll need strong rookie seasons from top prospect Jimenez and starter Dylan Cease, who should be up by midsummer. They seem like the real deal, but you never know until they're in the majors.

But for now the real focus is Machado, and whether the friends and family plan will work.

The White Sox keep hiring Manny Machado's friends and relatives. Weird coincidence?

By Tim Bannon / Chicago Tribune | January 8, 2019

The White Sox's links to Manny Machado are either a calculated attempt to lure the free agent to the South Side or just a wacky coincidence. Either way, there are simply too many to ignore.

1. “We'll pick each other up at the airport!”

Let's start with the fresh connections: Jon Jay, the former Cub and veteran outfielder who on Monday agreed to a one-year, \$4 million contract with the Sox, and Yonder Alonso, Machado's brother-in-law whom the Sox acquired in a December trade with the Indians.

In a 2017 story for The Players' Tribune titled “The Miami Baseball Brotherhood,” Jay, Alonso and Machado discussed their friendship, baseball and hometown. “I think one of the things that brings us together is the fact that we all grew up in this unique Latin culture where everyone kind of takes care of one another,” Jay said. “Yonder was born in Cuba. Both my parents were born in Cuba. And Manny's parents are from the Dominican Republic. For us, Miami is like our own little country where these cultures come together.”

Added Alonso: “We have a special bond. When one of these guys comes to town, my teammates will be like, ‘Look out ... the Miami crew is here.’ We'll pick each other up at the airport!”

2. Orioles of a feather.

Sox catcher Welington Castillo and Machado played together in Baltimore in 2017. “He's my friend. We are tight,” Castillo told NBCSportsChicago.com. “I called him a few weeks ago. ... I said, ‘I hear that you're going to go to Chicago.’ He said, ‘That's what I hear too. That's a rumor.’ I said, ‘Hey, I want you to be in Chicago too.’” The two also played together for the Dominican Republic in the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

3. Would follow in Wally Rosa's footsteps.

Machado would be the second Sox player to come out of Brito Miami Private School, a baseball powerhouse in Florida. The first was Rosa, selected in the 28th round of the 1999 draft. A catcher and outfielder, Rosa played seven years in the minors but never reached the big leagues.

4. Sharing White Sox history.

On Aug. 7, 2016, at U.S. Cellular Field, Machado became the second player in major-league history to hit a home run in each of the first three innings of a game, blasting two off starter James Shields and a third off Matt Albers. The only other player to do so was Carl Reynolds of the Sox, who did it in 1930 against the Yankees in Yankee Stadium.

5. Two degrees of separation to Michael Jordan.

Kobe, in a Manny Machado jersey, announces the Game 4 lineup.

When Machado went from the Orioles to the Dodgers, he changed his number from 13 to 8 to honor his favorite basketball player, Kobe Bryant. Machado even has a dog, an Alaskan Klee Kai named Kobe. Bryant, in turn, is a big Machado fan. And who was Bryant's idol growing up? Michael Jordan. And for whom did Jordan play baseball in 1994? The Sox. And — get this — Machado often wears Air Jordan cleats.

6. It's business.

OK, this isn't the strongest link, but conspiracy theorists might appreciate it. Moncada's agent is Dan Lozano, who once represented Nick Swisher, who hit .219 for the Sox in 2008. Machado's former agent is Scott Boras, who represents the other huge free agent this offseason, Bryce Harper, whom the Sox also are pursuing.

7. The last out.

Machado made the last out of the 2018 World Series. He struck out against Red Sox pitcher Chris Sale, whom the White Sox traded to Boston in 2016 for Yoan Moncada, Michael Kopech, Luis Alexander Basabe and Victor Diaz. Machado and Sale reportedly don't like each other, in part because Sale has thrown at and even behind Machado. But that's more of a Red Sox-Orioles-Dodgers feud. With Sale no longer in Chicago, the path is clear for Machado.

Kelvin Herrera says White Sox remind him of the rebuilding Royals who won the 2015 World Series

By Phil Thompson / Chicago Tribune | January 8, 2019

Kelvin Herrera played an integral role on the Royals team that won the 2015 World Series, and the White Sox's newest reliever said he sees some of the same signs as the team's front office pursues free agents in its ongoing rebuild.

"I've been excited (by) the direction this team has taken," Herrera said during a conference call on Tuesday, when the team announced his signing to a two-year, \$18 million deal with a third-year option. "It resembles my time with Kansas City, when I was starting. We were in rebuilding mode and we were just trying to learn to play the right way, with intensity and giving 100 percent effort every time. I think it's something that you can see in this team too."

Herrera said he wants to play a role in helping develop the Sox's young players, but with the acquisition of Alex Colome in November and relievers Nate Jones and Jace Fry returning from last season, he already sees the makings of a formidable bullpen.

"This team is building a very strong bullpen," Herrera said through an interpreter. "I know how it feels when I was with Kansas City, we had a very, very strong bullpen there. You can feel it."

Herrera said he's not concerned about whether he or Colome takes the closer role, or whether being the setup man is in his future.

"I'm just ready when they need me, whenever it is. ... Don't have to be nine, don't have to be eight."

For now he's focused on his health. Herrera's 2018 season with the Nationals was cut short by a torn Lisfranc ligament, which came on the heels of his recovery from a shoulder injury.

But the 29-year-old said he expects to be ready for spring training with no restrictions.

"I feel good. I feel strong enough to start spring training," he said. "We are doing what the team wants me to do, but that's up to them. I'm going to follow all of the recommendations that the team tells me."

Herrera also said he isn't concerned about losing velocity on his fastball, which clocked in at 96.5 mph last season, according to Statcast, down from around 99 mph during his Royals days.

"I started last season pretty good, I felt," he said. "The velocity change is something normal. That's something that happens throughout the whole season to every pitcher.

"But I felt pretty good last year with my velocity. For me, what matters most is just to execute my pitches and to throw quality pitches, more than velocity."

White Sox announce signing of reliever Kelvin Herrera

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun-Times | January 8, 2019

While still in pursuit of Manny Machado, the White Sox are slowly but surely adding less spectacular but useful pieces that should help them rise above the depths of a 100-loss season whether they land Machado or not.

The club announced the signing of right-hander Kelvin Herrera on Tuesday, five weeks after they traded for righty Alex Colome, creating a tandem at the back end of the bullpen that should have some grit. They also had picked up the option on veteran Nate Jones, another late-inning power arm who will help complement an assortment of young arms with varying degrees of promise.

And if they do pull off a Machado signing and plug him into a lineup that will add first baseman/designated hitter Yonder Alonso — acquired in a trade last month — as well as prized prospect Eloy Jimenez, it might be enough to generate some noise in a thin American League Central.

The Sox also agreed Monday to terms on a one-year, \$4 million contract with Jon Jay, 33, a friend of Machado who improves a weak outfield. And if Machado joins the group, Herrera would be thrilled.

"His stats speak for themselves," Herrera said on a conference call. "I would like to have him on my team."

Herrera, 29, will receive \$8.5 million in 2019 and in 2020, while the Sox hold a \$10 million option for 2021 with a \$1 million buyout. The Sox' willingness to also pay Colome, 30, who figures to earn around \$7 million in arbitration in 2019 and is under club control in 2020, shows their tanking days are over.

Colome was the first pitcher in Rays history to lead the league in saves with 47 in 2017, a year after making the AL All-Star team, and Herrera "adds another veteran pitcher to our bullpen who has outstanding credentials and the proven ability to close games," general manager Rick Hahn said. "He provides [manager] Rick Renteria with another quality option in the late innings."

"This team is building a very strong bullpen," said Herrera, who thrived in one of baseball's best with Greg Holland and Wade Davis with the Royals in 2014. "I'm excited about the direction this team has taken."

A two-time All-Star, Herrera had a combined 2.44 ERA with 17 saves and 38 strikeouts in 48 relief appearances in 2018 with the Royals and Nationals. He had a 1.98 ERA with 14 saves in 38 games in the first half before a Lisfranc fracture in his left foot requiring surgery ended his season and probably cost him a bigger payday in free agency.

Herrera said he is playing catch, "feeling good, just following the doctors' recommendations" and is "very optimistic" about being ready to start spring training Feb. 13 without restrictions.

To make room on the 40-man roster, the Sox designated left-hander Ian Clarkin for assignment.

Clarkin, 23, went 4-5 with a 4.76 ERA in 25 games (12 starts) for three teams, including Class A Winston-Salem and Class AA Birmingham in 2018.

NOTE: In lieu of the January "minicamp" usually held at their spring-training facility, the Sox are bringing many of their top prospects to their Dominican Republic facility next week for a "cultural exchange" opportunity for U.S. prospects.

Among those expected to attend: Dylan Cease, Zack Burdi, Seby Zavala, Zack Collins, Luis Gonzalez, Blake Rutherford, Nick Madrigal, Gavin Sheets, Tyler Johnson, Bernardo Flores, Jimmy Lambert, Dane Dunning, Alec Hansen, Steele Walke and Laz Rivera.

Herrera excited to join Sox ... and possibly Machado

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald | January 8, 2019

In a normal off-season, trading for a player like Yonder Alonso and signing players like Jon Jay and Kelvin Herrera wouldn't move the needle much for the White Sox.

This off-season is far from normal.

Having shed payroll the last two years while building up a barren minor-league system, the Sox now have plenty of money to spend and they have reportedly made an offer to star free agent Manny Machado.

That's where Alonso, Jay and Herrera come in.

Alonso's sister is married to Machado, and the two are off-season neighbors in Miami.

"I think it would be very, very nice to also be neighbors on the South Side," Alonso said after being acquired in a Dec. 15 trade from the Indians. "We're definitely very close. I know he's very excited for me, his whole family is very excited for me.

"He's going to do his thing. He's going to obviously do what's best for his family. But we all understand, we're a very tight family and we definitely would like to, obviously myself ... maybe in the future play alongside each other."

Jay also lives in Miami and works out with Machado and Alonso in the off-season.

The 33-year-old outfielder reportedly agreed to a one-year contract Monday night with the White Sox, but the deal won't be officially announced until Jay passes a physical.

As for Herrera, who officially joined the White Sox on Tuesday after agreeing to a two-year, \$18 million contract with a \$10 million club option for 2021, the 29-year-old relief pitcher has faced Machado since 2012 and is very familiar with the four-time all star.

"I've known Manny since a long time ago and he is a very good baseball player," Herrera said through a translator. "I think his stats speak for themselves. He is a very, very good player. I would like to have him on my team.

"I know there are a lot of rumors around him, and I'm pretty sure he's going to help any team that he decides to sign with."

As for Herrera, he has been a very good reliever for seven straight seasons, going 24-29 with a 2.82 ERA, 113 holds, 60 saves and 454 strikeouts in 460 innings.

Traded from the Royals to Nationals last June, Herrera was limited to 10 games after the all-star break due to a Lisfranc fracture in his left foot.

The right-hander is healthy and "very optimistic" about being ready to go when spring training opens next month.

Herrera is excited about pitching for the Sox, and he's already experienced being a part of a successful rebuild with Kansas City, which made back-to-back World Series appearances in 2014-15, winning the championship on its second try.

"I'm excited for the direction this team has taken," Herrera said. "It resembles my time with Kansas City when I was starting. We were in the rebuilding mode and we were just trying to learn how to play the right way, with intensity and giving it a 100 percent effort every time. I think that's something that you can see in this team, too."

To clear a spot for Herrera on the 40-man roster, the White Sox designated left-handed pitcher Ian Clarkin for assignment.

White Sox reportedly sign Manny Machado's long-time friend after trading for his brother-in-law earlier in the offseason

Brother in law Yonder Alonso and now close friend Jon Jay are on the White Sox

By Matt Snyder / CBS Sports | January 8, 2019

The White Sox have agreed to sign free-agent outfielder Jon Jay to a one-year, \$4 million deal, pending a physical, reports Jon Heyman.

Jay is a career .285 hitter with a .352 on-base percentage and a veteran who has been on six different playoff teams. To open the season, Jay is likely a starter alongside Adam Engel and Daniel Palka in the outfield, though something will need to give after a few weeks when Eloy Jimenez's service time has been sufficiently manipulated, er, I mean, once Jimenez has worked enough on his defense in Triple-A.

This is all kind of beside the point, though. As a tweet from Ken Rosenthal of The Athletic pointed out Monday night:

If #WhiteSox complete deal for Jon Jay, it might be another step in their recruitment of Manny Machado. Jay, Machado and Machado's brother-in-law Yonder Alonso train together in Miami in the off-season. Each wrote about it for The Players' Tribune in 2017: [https://www.theplayerstribune.com/en-us/articles/the-miami-baseball-brotherhood ...](https://www.theplayerstribune.com/en-us/articles/the-miami-baseball-brotherhood...)

The Miami Baseball Brotherhood | By Manny Machado, Yonder Alonso and Jon Jay
This city is in our hearts. It's our one true love. And the place we always come back to.

The article Rosenthal mentions is "The Miami Baseball Brotherhood" and it is written by Jay, Yonder Alonso and Manny Machado. Check out the intro from Machado:

There's just something special about Miami.

It's where we all grew up, but it's so much more than that. This city is in our hearts. It's our one true love. And the place we always come back to.

For Jon, Yonder and I, Miami means family, good friends, culture and ... baseball.

Each winter we meet up in our hometown and we go to work. We laugh a lot, too, and have fun together. At the end of the day, though, we're there to put in work and to get better at baseball.

We do it for ourselves, of course, and for the love of the game. But we also do it for the city we call home, this place we each love. We want to be the best. We want to make Miami proud.

The trio works out together in the offseason. They are obviously a very close-knit group of friends. As noted, Jay is now with the White Sox. The White Sox also acquired Alonso earlier this offseason, who also happens to be Machado's brother-in-law now.

The big prize is obviously Machado, a 26-year-old superstar. And it appears the White Sox are putting on the full-court press here in order to land Machado, with getting to play with his baseball brothers as added sweetener to whatever piles of money they are offering him.

Will that tip the scales? Tough to say, though it's worth noting that Machado's wife reportedly prefers the Yankees and surely she'd trump the brothers, right? Happy wife is a happy life and all that.

My biggest takeaway? We're all pretty desperate for Machado (and Bryce Harper) to choose a destination when this kind of dot-connecting is taking place.

White Sox appear to be building around Machado even before signing Machado

By Phil Rogers / Forbes | January 8, 2019

Signing Manny Machado and telling Tim Anderson what position he's going to switch to, center field or second base, seems to be all that's left on the to-do list for the White Sox.

You can't roll out the welcome mat more obviously than the South Siders have done for Machado -- trading for his brother-in-law (Yonder Alonso) and signing one of his long-time friends and mentors (Jon Jay).

The Sox have done that, and if you remember they made it clear how much they coveted Machado by trying to acquire him in a trade with the Orioles before last season. Literally the only thing that's left is signing him.

Well, unless they also wanted to re-hire Ozzie Guillen as manager or one of Rick Renteria's coaches. Guillen's youngest son, Ozney, grew up playing alongside Machado in the years that Guillen split his time between Chicago and Miami.

White Sox fans are picturing Manny Machado making tags for them like this one for the Dodgers in the World Series. The Sox have traded for Machado's brother-in-law, Yonder Alonso, and on Monday signed Jon Jay, one of his close friends from Miami. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola)

There was a report on Sunday that Jerry Reinsdorf had taken Machado to Soldier Field to watch the Bears game. But they weren't holed up in a suite together, as had been reported on the Internet. Reinsdorf was in Phoenix, as he is most of the time in the winter.

Reinsdorf isn't in the habit of doing business so publicly. If he feels the need to meet with Machado again, he will invite him and agent Dan Lozano to Arizona, not frigid Illinois.

The White Sox are one of only three teams known to be seriously in pursuit of Machado, and their level of interest seems to have surpassed that of the Yankees and Phillies.

Speaking of the Phillies, it's sort of silly that sources are making a big deal about a face-to-face meeting they've scheduled with Bryce Harper this weekend. Those are the kind of stories a team allows to make it to the media because they want it known that ownership and the front office are working hard, even if they're not going to land their guy.

That's the take here, anyway.

More often than not, the meetings that produce deals are done out of sight, in airport hotels or elsewhere. Even in their own cities, teams in all sports have established the equivalent of athletic safe houses — offices with nice conference rooms outside the team headquarters, where they can sit across the table with someone recognizable without anyone outside the inner circle knowing something's up.

The White Sox badly need to create a buzz, as they are only one season away from beginning a regional television partnership with NBC Sports Chicago that includes the Bulls and Blackhawks but no longer the Cubs, who had been the ratings leader.

You can quibble about Machado's odd behavior and play in the postseason — stepping on first baseman Jesus Aguilar's foot in the NLCS; telling Ken Rosenthal he's not the kind of player "that's going to be Johnny Hustle" — but he's a four-time All-Star who is hitting free agency at age 26 with an .822 OPS.

When he was with the Orioles, he loved his trips to Chicago, including the experience of hitting at Guaranteed Rate Field. He homered in his first three at-bats there on Aug. 7, 2016, and has delivered a career slash line of .286/.333/.514 in 17 games.

While the White Sox are coming off a 100-loss season, they have an intriguing stable of young talent. General Manager Rick Hahn has been much more active than expected this off-season, seemingly dressing up the roster to help recruit Machado and Harper.

The Sox traded for starter Ivan Nova and closer Alex Colome while agreeing to deals with free agents Kelvin Herrera, James McCann and Jay. It's as if they want to say they can compete for a wild card spot as early as next season if their core guys — Jose Abreu, Yoan Moncada, Carlos Rodon, Reynaldo Lopez, Anderson and rookie Eloy Jimenez— produce.

According to Cot's Contracts, the White Sox payroll only appears to be about \$82 million after the recent wave of activity. There's plenty of room for Machado, whose preference is to play shortstop. Anderson has improved there but might be better at second base, where Moncada made 21 errors last year, resulting in a rating of -5 Defensive Runs Saved from Fangraphs.

Moncada told reporters earlier this winter he's amenable to a position switch. He could be moved to third base, making the light-hitting Yolmer Sanchez a utility man.

We're getting ahead of ourselves a little bit, sure. But so, it seems, are the White Sox.

The White Sox's strategy to win over Manny Machado? Get all his friends

By Mike Oz / Yahoo Sports | January 8, 2019

In an offseason that's all about Manny Machado and Bryce Harper, it's beginning to look like the Chicago White Sox are pulling out all the stops to woo Manny Machado.

That might even include an interesting new one — acquiring some of his best buds.

Veteran outfielder Jon Jay has reportedly agreed to a one-year deal worth \$4 million with the White Sox, according to USA Today's Bob Nightengale. And while Jay remains a relatively productive role player who could help the White Sox in 2019, that's not even close to the most interesting part of this.

Jay is one of Machado's good friends in baseball. On its own, that's not even worth writing this post. But astute fans will remember this is the second such acquisition for the White Sox this offseason.

They already traded for Yonder Alonso, who is Machado's brother-in-law. Alonso's sister Yainee is Machado's wife. Again, Alonso is a useful player who can help the White Sox next season, but he can help him more if he convinces his brother-in-law to join him in Chicago.

Machado, Jay and Alonso — the Miami Boys

This isn't just a matter of three players who know each other well. Machado, Jay and Alonso have gone as far as participating in a Players Tribune feature about their friendship, which is connected by their Miami roots. The "Miami Baseball Brotherhood," it was dubbed.

They train together in the offseason, hang out and, as Jay puts it, it's "natural for them to stick together." Alonso and Jay both played baseball at the University of Miami. Machado, who is younger, didn't, but knows them from the area.

Here's what Jay said about their relationship last year:

"The three of us all come from the similar backgrounds. I've known Yonder since he was 10. And we've both known Manny since he was a young kid coming up. We're from the same neighborhoods, the same culture, so its just natural for us to stick together."

Will this actually lure Machado to Chicago?

Whether this will actually work is the million dollar question, isn't it? Actually, it's the \$13 million question, as that's how much salary the White Sox have taken on to acquire Jay and Alonso.

That seems like a bold move, just to try to lure Machado away from the New York Yankees and Philadelphia Phillies, each of whom would seem to have a competitive advantage over the White Sox. As in, they're more competitive teams right now.

But then again, when you're looking at spending close to \$300 million for Machado, what's another \$13 million?

This bring-your-friends-along idea seems very familiar in other sports — particularly the NBA — where we often hear about players who are friends recruiting each other or building a "Big Three" like we saw when Dwyane Wade brought LeBron James and Chris Bosh to the Miami Heat.

There's a huge difference here: Machado is a star. Jay and Alonso aren't. So it's not quite a "Big Three" as much as it's a Big One with two pals.

The more skeptical among us might even note that both Alonso and Jay have been on the open market in the past few years and they didn't immediately run to Baltimore to play with Machado when he was with the Orioles.

Until Machado makes a decision or rules out the White Sox, we're all just left to wonder.

Well, and make Twitter jokes.

White Sox, All-Star Herrera finalize \$18M, 2-year contract

By Andrew Seligman / Associated Press | January 8, 2019

CHICAGO -- Kelvin Herrera helped the Kansas City Royals build to a World Series championship. He sees similar potential with the Chicago White Sox.

The two-time All-Star reliever and the White Sox finalized an \$18 million, two-year contract on Tuesday.

Herrera will earn \$8.5 million in each of the next two years as part of the deal, and the White Sox have a \$10 million option for 2021 with a \$1 million buyout.

Herrera was part of a dominant bullpen that helped Kansas City win back-to-back pennants and the 2015 World Series. He hopes to help the rebuilding White Sox complete a similar climb.

"I'm excited for the direction this team has taken," he said through an interpreter. "It resembles my time with Kansas City when I was starting. We were in the rebuilding mode, and we were just trying to learn how to play the right way, with intensity and giving it a 100- percent effort every time. I think that's something that you can see in this team, too."

The 29-year-old right-hander has a 2.82 ERA and 60 saves in eight seasons with the Royals and Washington. He had a 2.44 ERA with 17 saves in 48 games last year for Kansas City and the Nationals, who acquired him on June 18.

Herrera did not pitch after Aug. 26 because of a broken left foot. He said he has been throwing and is optimistic he will be ready to start spring training with no restrictions.

Chicago is coming off its sixth straight losing season, finishing fourth in the AL Central at 62-100 last year. The White Sox acquired former Tampa Bay closer Alex Colome in a trade with Seattle in November. They also got first baseman and designated hitter Yonder Alonso from Cleveland last month.