

Tribe will rock the red after new uniform unveil

By Anthony Castrovine MLB.com @castrovine

CLEVELAND -- With the Indians hosting the 2019 All-Star Game and the Chief Wahoo logo officially retired, a refreshed uniform look was in order for the coming season. And so, on Monday, the club unveiled its 2019 uniform options, which include a bold new red home alternate jersey, a change to the navy alternate and the official All-Star logo replacing Wahoo on the jersey sleeves.

Here's everything you need to know about the Tribe's uniform scheme:

For just the second time in franchise history -- and the first since the 1975-77 seasons -- the team will wear a red jersey as part of its official uniform scheme. The red tops, which feature the script Indians logo across the chest in navy blue with white piping, replace the navy blue tops as the home alternate. Both the red jersey and the traditional home white jersey will be topped off with a navy cap with the Block C logo and a red brim.

"And no, we will not be wearing red pants with the red jersey tops," said Indians senior vice president of public affairs Bob DiBiasio, referring to the fire engine ensemble worn in 1975 and '76.

Previously, the Indians had three uniform tops, with the navy blue alternate eligible for use at home and on the road. So the red top replaces the blue top at home. Because the blue top will now only be used on the road, the script Indians logo across the chest has been replaced by block letters spelling "Cleveland," similar to the regular road grays.

The Block C logo is now on all caps, with a red brim at home and a blue brim on the road. The Chief Wahoo patch on uniform sleeves has been replaced by the 2019 All-Star Game logo that features a guitar design.

- It's uncertain whether the Wahoo logo will be permanently replaced

For now, the Indians are down to two logos -- the Block C and the script Indians lettering. The All-Star Game logo buys the club another year to decide whether to replace the Wahoo logo with something new.

"That's still in process," DiBiasio said. "I'm not even sure where we are along that path yet. With the All-Star Game patch, it gives us more time to work through those issues. Do we move to a third [logo]? That's still up for debate."

The new jerseys and caps with the All-Star logos are available for sale at indians.com and the Indians Team Shop at Progressive Field.

Tribe builds community with Thanksgiving event

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- A small boy walked through the Terrace Club at Progressive Field on Sunday afternoon, tightly hugging a box that was about as long as he was tall. Inside was a construction set. Soon enough, he would have a toy crane in front of him and his imagination would be running wild.

Over the years, the Indians have built relationships throughout the Cleveland community, and the team's annual Thanksgiving event at Progressive Field puts that on full display. Holiday music filled the room, as did the clamor of kids, families and volunteers, who came together for a feast of turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes with a view of the Indians' dormant baseball diamond.

"There are some familiar faces that you see from year to year," said Chris Antonetti, the Indians' president of baseball operations. "And just having a chance to see the smiles on a lot of faces and the gratitude and the appreciation, it's a great way to start the holiday season. And an important thing for us within our role in the community is to give back."

In all, there were an estimated 375 guests for Sunday's event, which hosted groups from Our Lady of the Wayside, Shoes and Clothes for Kids, Boys & Girls Clubs, OhioGuidestone and The City Mission. There were also 75 volunteers, Marines on hand to help hand out gifts and the Indians' mascots -- Slider and the hot dogs -- making sure to jump into photos, dish out high fives and cause friendly mischief everywhere they went.

As the Boys & Girls Clubs band put on a show, other kids formed a line at the back of the dining hall. Santa was there to hear their holiday wishes before the boys and girls headed up to a table to pick out a gift. That new aspect of the event was courtesy of Toys for Tots. There were also helpers making the rounds with baskets filled with books -- free for anyone who spotted a title they liked. The Cleveland Kids' Book Bank was to thank for those.

"That was so great," said Valencia Kimbrough, the Indians' manager of community impact. "The Toys for Tots, Marines, we were actually just at a meeting and I told them about this event, and they jumped right on it. It was really, really great. I'm getting chills even thinking about it. And the Cleveland Book Bank is a small partner of ours that we do small things with -- we donate books to. And we told them about this event and they were like, 'Can we just pass out books to everybody?'"

"I want other organizations that have something to offer the community, that want to be a part of the community, to really embrace this event, join us and be a part of it."

The Indians' Thanksgiving event has been going on for nearly two decades, and it has grown both in terms of the number of attendees and helping hands. Antonetti was joined by general manager Mike Chernoff, plus their families, along with other members of the team's front office and ownership group.

Kimbrough wants nothing more than to see the event continue to grow.

"This is actually one of our favorite events every year," Kimbrough said. "It's actually not only building a community outside the organization, but also building a community inside the organization. We see the same volunteers want to do this event every year, which is great. And then we see some of the same people come back and we get to see the kids grow up and really embrace us as family, which Cleveland is a big family anyway."

1 non-tender candidate for all 30 teams

By Mark Feinsand MLB.com @feinsand

With more than 200 players eligible for salary arbitration this offseason, the Nov. 30 deadline to tender contracts figures to present myriad decisions to club executives around the Majors.

For players tendered contracts, they will have more than a month to work out new deals with their teams before exchanging arbitration figures on Jan. 11, after which they can still hammer out a deal or go to a hearing.

So which players may be in danger of being non-tendered and added to the free-agent market? Here's a team-by-team look with the most likely candidate from all 30 clubs.

American League East

Orioles: Tim Beckham

Beckham had the worst season of his career in 2018, slashing .230/.287/.374 in 402 plate appearances. He earned \$3.35 million last season, and given the Orioles' rebuilding movement, it seems likely they would move on rather than paying him more in '19.

Red Sox: Tyler Thornburg

Thornburg missed all of 2017 and half of '18 following surgery for thoracic outlet syndrome, appearing in only 25 games since being acquired from the Brewers two years ago for Travis Shaw. Thornburg earned \$2.05 million and is a year away from free agency.

Yankees: Didi Gregorius

Sonny Gray could have been the pick here, though he may be traded before the non-tender deadline. Gregorius earned \$8.5 million last season and is likely in line for a raise, but he'll probably miss at least the first half of the season following Tommy John surgery and will be a free agent next winter. Will the Yankees want to pay him that much for 2-3 months of work? The guess here is that he is tendered, but never say never.

Rays: Chaz Roe

C.J. Cron was the obvious non-tender candidate only a few days ago, but the Rays designated him for assignment, despite the fact he led the team with 30 home runs last season. With only four players eligible for arbitration -- Mike Zunino, Tommy Pham, Matt Duffy and Roe -- it's a near-certainty that Tampa Bay will tender contracts to all of them, though if any of them were to be non-tendered, Roe would be the most likely.

Blue Jays: Yangervis Solarte

Barring an unforeseen trade, Solarte appears destined for a non-tender. The infielder's slash line plummeted for a second straight season as he hit .226/.277/.378 in 122 games in 2018. Solarte made \$4.125 million last season, adding \$750,000 on a buyout when the Jays declined his \$5.5 million option for '19, though he's still a year of service time shy of being a free agent.

American League Central

White Sox: Avisail Garcia

The White Sox have been aggressively shopping Garcia, leading some to believe they'll non-tender him if they're unable to trade him. Garcia couldn't follow up his strong 2017 campaign with another good season, posting a .719 OPS -- a 166-point drop from the previous year. Garcia earned \$6.7 million last year and is in line for a raise in his final year of arbitration eligibility.

Indians: Danny Salazar

Cleveland has six arbitration-eligible players and is likely to tender contracts to all of them, but given that Salazar earned \$5 million last season and missed the entire season with a shoulder injury that required surgery, it's a decision the Indians might at least have to discuss.

Tigers: James McCann

McCann's numbers declined significantly in 2018, when he slashed .200/.267/.314 in 457 plate appearances. Though given the free-agent catching market, Detroit might give McCann one more shot. He earned \$2.375 million last season and is arbitration-eligible for the next two years.

Royals: Cheslor Cuthbert

The Royals are likely to tender all three of their arbitration-eligible players -- Cuthbert, Jesse Hahn and Brian Flynn -- as none of the three are likely to earn much as \$2 million in their first year of arbitration. Cuthbert gets the nod here after playing only 88 games over the past two seasons, posting a .591 OPS during that time.

Twins: Robbie Grossman

Grossman has posted a .741 and .751 OPS the past two seasons, unable to get back to his .828 mark from 2016. Having made \$2 million last season, he could be in danger of a non-tender after the Twins claimed Michael Reed -- who had a .972 OPS at Double-A and Triple-A last year -- off waivers from the Braves.

American League West

Astros: Jake Marisnick

Marisnick's 2017 season (.815 OPS, 119 OPS+) is looking more like an outlier after he reverted closer to his career averages in '18. Marisnick posted a .674 OPS and 85 OPS+, earning \$1.9 million in the process. He has two years of arbitration eligibility remaining.

Angels: Matt Shoemaker

A right forearm strain limited Shoemaker to seven starts in 2018, when he earned \$4.125 million. He's made only 21 starts since the start of '17 and has topped 136 innings in a season only once, when he threw 160 in 2016. He's two years away from free agency.

A's: Mike Fiers

Fiers pitched well for both the Tigers and Athletics last season, posting a 3.56 ERA in 172 innings. The right-hander earned \$6 million on a one-year deal in 2018, though he's still a year of service time away from being a free agent. With 12 players eligible for arbitration, Oakland could decide to non-tender one of the higher-paid players -- and it won't be Khris Davis.

Mariners: Roenis Elias

Seattle has two arbitration-eligible players -- Alex Colome is the other -- and both are expected to be tendered contracts. Elias showed promise as a starter in 2014 and '15, but he threw only eight big league innings while spending most of 2016 and '17 in Boston's Minor League system. He was traded back to Seattle this past April, pitching well in 23 appearances (four starts).

Rangers: Delino DeShields

DeShields is arbitration-eligible for the first time this offseason, but after posting a sub-.600 OPS for the second time in three seasons, it remains to be seen whether Texas still believes in him long term.

National League East

Braves: Adam Duvall

Duvall displayed great power in 2016 and '17, slamming 64 home runs over two seasons for the Reds. But after hitting 15 in 105 games with Cincinnati this past season, he was a bust in 33 games with the Braves, going 7-for-53 (.132) with no homers or RBIs and a woeful .344 OPS. He earned \$645,000 last season, and even a modest raise would seem to be against Atlanta's best interests given its roster.

Marlins: Dan Straily

Derek Dietrich was the top candidate to be non-tendered, but the Marlins designated him for assignment on Tuesday. Straily earned \$3.37 million last season and will be due a raise in his second year of arbitration. But after posting a 4.12 ERA and 5.11 FIP in 23 starts (122 1/3 innings) in 2018, the Marlins could let the soon-to-be 30-year-old walk and look elsewhere.

Mets: Travis d'Arnaud

The Mets are seeking catching help on the market, which could be bad news for d'Arnaud, who was limited to four games in 2018 while recovering from Tommy John surgery. d'Arnaud, who had a sub-.300 on-base percentage in '17, made \$3.475 million last season.

Phillies: Luis Garcia

After a solid 2017, the right-hander was a mess last season, posting a 6.07 ERA and 1.46 WHIP in 46 innings over 59 appearances. He made \$1.2 million in '18, and although he isn't likely to get a huge raise in his second year of arbitration, Philadelphia should have better (and less expensive) options for the bullpen.

Nationals: Sammy Solis

Solis has had back-to-back subpar seasons, posting ERAs of 5.88 and 6.41 over 86 appearances in those two years. Solis earned about \$560,000 last year and is entering his first arbitration year, but his performance might be enough for Washington to say goodbye.

National League Central

Cubs: Addison Russell

Russell earned \$3.2 million in his first year of arbitration eligibility, then posted the worst season of his four-year career. Russell had career lows with five home runs, 38 RBIs, a .657 OPS and a 74 OPS+. It's possible the Cubs decide to move on from the 24-year-old.

Reds: Curt Casali

The Reds appear unlikely to non-tender any of their arbitration-eligible players, but Casali would be one to watch. He earned the minimum last season and is entering his first year of arbitration, but Cincinnati could work out a deal with him ahead of the non-tender date.

Brewers: Jonathan Schoop

Schoop made \$8.5 million in 2018, posting mediocre numbers in Baltimore before being traded to Milwaukee on July 31. The infielder struggled with the Brewers (.577 OPS in 46 games), and with a deep free-agent market at second base, Milwaukee could non-tender him and look elsewhere.

Pirates: Michael Feliz

Pittsburgh seems likely to tender all three of its arbitration-eligible players -- Corey Dickerson, Keone Kela and Feliz -- but Feliz struggled again in 2018, posting a 5.66 ERA and 1.51 WHIP. Feliz -- who was part of the return in the Gerrit Cole trade -- is in his first year of arbitration, however, so the salary raise shouldn't be steep.

Cardinals: Chasen Shreve

Shreve earned \$825,000 in 2018, his first year of arbitration eligibility. He pitched well at times after being traded to the Cardinals, but lefties had a .911 OPS against the southpaw, leaving him susceptible to a non-tender.

National League West

D-backs: Shelby Miller

Injuries have limited Miller to nine starts and 38 innings over the past two seasons, and his performance when he's actually been on the mound has been underwhelming over the past three years. His 2015 All-Star campaign feels like an eternity ago, and having made \$4.9 million in 2018, Arizona could decide whatever raise he'd get in a fourth year of arbitration isn't worth it.

Rockies: Tony Wolters

In all likelihood, the Rockies won't non-tender any of their eight arbitration-eligible players. But Wolters, who hit .170/.292/.286 in 74 games last season, would be the most susceptible. Wolters, who had the game-winning hit in the 13th inning of the National League Wild Card Game, earned \$550,000 in 2018 and is in the first of his four arbitration-eligible years.

Dodgers: Yimi Garcia

Tom Koehler, Erik Goedel and Zac Rosscup were all prime non-tender candidates, but the Dodgers released Koehler and designated the other two for assignment on Tuesday. Garcia, who earned \$630,000 in 2018, missed all but nine games in '16 and all of '17 following knee surgery and Tommy John surgery. He made 25 appearances last season, posting a 5.64 ERA and 1.48 WHIP in 22 1/3 innings.

Padres: Bryan Mitchell

Mitchell earned about \$550,000 last season, and although he's only entering his first year of arbitration eligibility, he's coming off a subpar season in which he had a 5.42 ERA and 1.75 WHIP in 73 innings. Of San Diego's seven arbitration-eligible players, he appears most in danger of being non-tendered.

Giants: Joe Panik

Panik made \$3.45 million in 2018, his first year of arbitration eligibility, but injuries continue to hamper the second baseman. Panik's .639 OPS, four home runs and 24 RBIs were all career lows, so if new president of baseball operations Farhan Zaidi wants to shake up the roster, second base might be the logical place to start.

Tribe makes flurry of moves to fill 40-man roster

By Anthony Castrovince MLB.com @castrovince

CLEVELAND -- With some 40-man roster wiggle room to work with in advance of the Rule 5 Draft deadline, the Indians had a busy day Tuesday. They protected three of their Rule 5-eligible prospects, made a minor trade with the Padres and even inked a non-roster invitee to Spring Training camp, just for good measure.

First baseman Bobby Bradley (No. 7 on the Indians' Top 30 prospects list per MLB Pipeline), left-hander Sam Hentges (No. 8) and right-hander Jean Carlos Mejia (unranked) were added to the 40-man and are therefore ineligible for selection by other clubs in the Dec. 13 Rule 5 Draft at the Winter Meetings in Las Vegas.

The Indians filled their final roster spot with the swap with San Diego that netted right-hander Walker Lockett in exchange for right-hander Ignacio Feliz. The Tribe also signed utilityman Mike Freeman to a Minor League deal that includes an invite to big league Spring Training camp.

Bradley, 22, has the raw power to perhaps become a part of the Indians' 2019 plans, but high strikeout totals could limit his ceiling. In '18, he slashed a combined .224/.308/.466 with 27 homers and 26 doubles between Double-A Akron and Triple-A Columbus. He was the Indians' third-round pick in the '14 Draft.

Hentges, 22, is rising up prospect rankings after a 2018 season during which he came back from Tommy John surgery to post the second-lowest ERA (3.27) and third-most strikeouts (122) in the Class A Advanced Carolina League. The 6-foot-6 lefty is a former fourth-round Draft pick ('14).

Mejia, 22, was signed out of the Dominican Republic in late 2013 and is seeing his stock rise. He spent most of the year at Class A Lake County, where he posted a 3.13 ERA in 17 games (15 starts). Notably, Mejia had a 4.76 strikeout-to-walk ratio for the season.

While those three are protected from the Rule 5 Draft, outfielder Oscar Gonzalez, who ranks 22nd on the club's top prospects list, was among those left unprotected. Gonzalez has not played above A-ball. Players selected in the Major League portion of the Rule 5 Draft must stay on the big league roster or disabled list the entirety of the following season or be offered back to the original team.

As for the trade, the Indians added Lockett and the Padres freed up a 40-man spot. Lockett, 24, spent most of 2018 with Triple-A El Paso. He had a 4.73 ERA with 118 strikeouts against 33 walks in 133 1/3 innings. He made three spot starts in San Diego, posting a 9.60 ERA. He was the Padres' Minor League Pitcher of the Year in '16 and a fourth-round Draft pick in 2012. The Indians gave up Feliz, a 19-year-old native of the Dominican Republic who posted a 3.00 ERA in 10 starts in the Rookie-level Arizona League this year.

Freeman, who can play all over the infield, rounded out Tuesday's Tribe activity. The 31-year-old spent 2018 in the Cubs' system, batting .274 with 15 doubles, six homers and 38 RBIs in 78 games for Triple-A Iowa. He appeared in one game for the Cubs in September and has 57 total games of Major League experience, including stops with the D-backs, Mariners and Dodgers. He has a career Minor League on-base percentage of .360.

30 intriguing Rule 5 prospects -- 1 for each team

By Jim Callis, Jonathan Mayo and Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com
AL CENTRAL

Spencer Adams, RHP, White Sox No. 26

Adams looked like a potential steal when Chicago grabbed him in the second round of the 2014 Draft, making an immediate impression with his athleticism and advanced pitchability. But his projectability never translated into frontline stuff, so he doesn't miss many bats and has been easy prey for left-handers.

Oscar Gonzalez, OF, Indians No. 22

Gonzalez is a bit of a long shot to be selected in the Rule 5 Draft, considering he's a 20-year-old with only one full season of Class A experience, but he has the type of robust right-handed power and enough feel to hit (as well as a 70-grade arm in right field) to possibly check the right boxes for some teams. He led the Rookie-level Arizona League in both home runs (eight) and slugging percentage (.566) en route to the MVP honors in 2016, and he clubbed 13 homers with 25 doubles this past season in the Midwest League.

Tyler Alexander, LHP, Tigers No. 24

On the plus side, Alexander spent most of the 2018 season in Triple-A. On the negative side, his performance was uneven (4.79 ERA). He never hurts himself with walks (1.4 BB/9 in his career), but he has to learn how to throw more quality strikes (10 H/9) in order to get big league hitters out.

Foster Griffin, LHP, Royals No. 29

Kansas City hasn't had much success developing highly drafted high school arms in recent years, with Griffin (first round, No. 28 overall in 2014) one such example. His stuff hasn't improved as hoped, leaving his changeup as his lone above-average pitch, and he's simply a strike-thrower who gets hit hard.

Tyler Jay, LHP, Twins No. 22

The No. 6 overall pick in the 2015 Draft, Jay was a closer at Illinois who began his pro career as a starter. While he did reach Double-A, injuries were a problem, and he's been back in the bullpen since '17. He had an up-and-down '18 in Double-A, but he is a lefty with a chance to be more than a two-pitch reliever.

Martin cleared to resume baseball activities

By Anthony Castrovince MLB.com @castrovince

CLEVELAND -- Having fought off a serious bacterial infection that affected his vital organs, Indians outfielder Leonys Martin can finally focus on baseball.

Doctors at the Cleveland Clinic gave Martin full clearance to resume all baseball activity Tuesday. He will begin an unrestricted offseason strength and conditioning program in preparation for Spring Training, and the Indians anticipate him being ready for the start of the 2019 season.

The Indians acquired Martin from the division-rival Tigers in advance of the July non-waiver Trade Deadline. But he played just six games for the team before succumbing to nausea and stomach discomfort that rapidly worsened before doctors were able to treat the infection. He spent roughly one week in an intensive care unit at the Clinic and missed the remainder of the season.

One reason the Indians were attracted to Martin on the trade market was that he was attached to club control through 2019. He is currently penciled in as a regular in center field for a Tribe team trying to situate the rest of its outfield complexion.

Last month, the 30-year-old Martin and the Indians avoided salary arbitration by agreeing to a one-year, \$3 million contract. In 84 games for the Tigers and Indians in 2018, Martin, who has also played for the Cubs, Mariners and Rangers, hit .255 with a .747 OPS, 11 homers and 15 doubles and was worth three defensive runs saved in center field.

Here's a player to be thankful for on each team

By Richard Justice MLB.com @RichardJustice

AL CENTRAL

Indians: Francisco Lindor has been everything the Indians hoped he'd be -- not just in production at the plate and slick work on defense, but also in a resplendent smile that has made him one of the faces of an entire sport.

Royals: Salvador Perez led the wave of touted prospects that arrived in 2011 and eventually helped the Royals to reach the World Series in consecutive seasons (2014-15). He's still around, beloved by fans and teammates alike, hopeful of leading the Royals back into contention.

Tigers: Christin Stewart, the Tigers No. 1 prospect, made his debut in September and held his own with a .792 OPS in 17 games. A first-round pick in 2015, he represents the makeup of the team going into 2019 and beyond.

Twins: Byron Buxton's skillset is off the charts, and that's why, even after a difficult 2018 season, he'll have every opportunity to get back on track. Once baseball's No. 1 prospect, he could still help transform the Twins, and quickly.

White Sox: Eloy Jimenez's time has arrived. Despite being limited by injuries to 108 Minor League games in 2018, the slugging outfield prospect still showed the White Sox that their belief in his being a franchise cornerstone is justified.

Pronk among first-timers on Hall of Fame ballot

By Matt Kelly MLB.com @mattkellyMLB

Is the Hall of Fame ballot "logjam" almost at an end?

With the Baseball Writers' Association of America electing a record 16 candidates over the past five years, including at least two per year, Cooperstown has been plenty busy in recent summers. While plenty of holdovers remain on the ballot, the clock continues to tick on their candidacies, and this year's voting figures to say a lot about their ultimate chances of being elected.

In the meantime, a host of name-brand stars have entered the fray, headlined by one legend who figures to get Yankees fans flocking upstate in July. Below is a look at the players on the 2019 BBWAA ballot, announced Monday by the National Baseball Hall of Fame, with an early guess on their Cooperstown fates. The election results will be announced on Jan. 22, live on MLB Network.

FIRST-BALLOT LOCK

Mariano Rivera

Closers typically face a divisive electorate when it comes to the Hall, but with a record 652 saves and an incredible 0.70 postseason ERA, Rivera is really in a class of his own. Rivera's induction could challenge the record crowd of 82,000 that saw Tony Gwynn and Cal Ripken Jr. receive their plaques in 2007, with Derek Jeter's certain election in 2020 figuring to do the same.

FIRST-BALLOT INTRIGUE

Roy Halladay

A pair of Cy Youngs and a pair of no-hitters (including one in the postseason) would figure to get the late Halladay over the hump. But his 203 wins may seem paltry to more traditional voters, and we just saw another ace from Halladay's era, Johan Santana, go one-and-done with just 2.4 percent of the vote. The guess here is that Halladay gets in, however, and perhaps even squeaks through on his first ballot.

Todd Helton

Only 19 players since 1900 have accrued 5,000 plate appearances and put up a .300/.400/.500 slash line, and Helton is one of them. But so is Helton's former teammate Larry Walker, who's entering his ninth year on the ballot as a longshot. Voters are still wrapping their heads around the Coors Field factor, so Helton's candidacy could be debated for a while.

Andy Pettitte

Postseason moments are strong boosters for election, and no pitcher has more wins in October than Pettitte. But the lefty's 3.85 career ERA and his admission to using human growth hormone might ultimately leave him just shy of the Plaque Gallery.

Edgar Martinez

Martinez's candidacy has a full head of steam, jumping from 58.6 percent to 70.4 percent last year. Will 2019 finally be Edgar's time? Last year, the Tacoma News Tribune pointed out that each of the past 10 players who received between 70-74 percent of the BBWAA vote gained election the very next year, and every candidate who's crossed the 70-percent threshold has eventually gotten into Cooperstown via either the BBWAA or a Veterans Committee.

With Rivera being the only first-ballot lock, the guess here is that a little more room on the ballot, coupled with the urgency of Martinez's final-year push, convinces a final few voters to check off the Seattle slugger's name.

Fred McGriff

McGriff's Cooperstown case, which includes a 134 adjusted OPS+ and 493 home runs, might be better than you think. But the Crime Dog would need a miraculous jump after his name appeared on only 23.2 percent of ballots last year.

NOTABLE RETURNEES

Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens

More voters are beginning to look past performance-enhancing drug allegations and choosing to view Bonds and Clemens as indispensable legends of the game. But there's still a large block of voters that will never vote for this pair, and they still have about 20 percent more ground to make up in next four years.

Mike Mussina and Curt Schilling

Their career lines are similar, but Mussina has jumped ahead, arguably due to Schilling's off-field transgressions. After languishing below 25 percent as recently as 2015, Mussina's 63.5-percent total last year has him on the doorstep with five years to go.

Manny Ramirez and Sammy Sosa

Ramirez's multiple suspensions for PEDs has left him with a long uphill climb to election. Sosa debuted alongside Bonds on the ballot with 609 home runs, but his relatively low average and on-base percentage -- plus PED suspicions -- have kept him from getting sufficient support.

Larry Walker

As mentioned, the Coors factor has held back Walker -- though he was a better road hitter than you might remember. He'll likely run out of time on the BBWAA ballot, but could be viewed more favorably by a Veterans Committee down the road.

Omar Vizquel

Vizquel made a solid start at 37 percent in his ballot debut last winter. He compares well to defense-first Hall of Fame shortstops Luis Aparicio and Ozzie Smith, but his career 82 OPS+ will keep many voters away.

Andruw Jones and Scott Rolen

These two defined their positions defensively and brought plenty of power in their primes. Their candidacies stayed alive in Year 1, but each player needs momentum in the voting.

Jeff Kent, Gary Sheffield and Billy Wagner

All three of these players have their mainstay voters, but have had trouble building momentum. Their best-case scenarios are to get somewhere within 20 percent before their 10th year on the ballot and hope for a massive final-year push.

FIRST-TIMERS WHO COULD GET A SECOND CHANCE

Lance Berkman

Berkman's career line has some gaudy numbers, including a 144 OPS+ that ranks among the top 30 in history. But longevity will be an issue -- Berkman logged only eight seasons in which he played in at least 140 games.

Roy Oswalt

The former Astros ace posted two 20-win seasons and placed within the top five in Cy Young Award voting five times. But Oswalt's 163 wins and 2,245 1/3 innings will have trouble convincing even new-school voters to write down his name.

LIKELY ONE AND DONE (less than 5 percent of vote)

Rick Ankiel (13 wins and 51 appearances as a pitcher, 462 hits as an outfielder)

Jason Bay (2004 NL Rookie of the Year, 121 OPS+)

Freddy Garcia (156 wins, 2001 AL ERA title)

Jon Garland (136 wins, 2005 World Series champion)

Travis Hafner (213 HR, tied MLB record with six grand slams in 2006)

Ted Lilly (130 wins, 1,681 SO)

Derek Lowe (176 wins and 86 saves)

Darren Oliver (766 appearances)

Juan Pierre (2,217 hits, 614 SB)

Placido Polanco (.297 BA, 2006 ALCS MVP)

Miguel Tejada (816 XBH, 2002 AL MVP)

Vernon Wells (270 HR, 2003 AL hit crown)

Kevin Youkilis (.382 OBP, 123 OPS+)

Michael Young (.300 BA, 2,375 hits)

Indians add right-hander Hu in deal with Rays

By Anthony Castrovince MLB.com @castrovince

With the Rule 5 Draft deadline approaching Tuesday, and some teams in need of making room on their 40-man rosters, the Indians and Rays completed a minor trade Monday. Tampa Bay sent right-hander Chih-Wei Hu to Cleveland in exchange for infielder Gionti Turner.

Hu, 25, made five relief appearances with the Rays in 2018, but he spent the majority of the season at Triple-A Durham. With Durham, he posted a 4.66 ERA in 24 games, including 19 starts, striking out 92 and walking 28 in 102 1/3 innings. With the Rays, he had a 4.15 ERA in 13 innings, striking out 12 and allowing just a .149 average against.

A native of Taiwan, Hu was initially acquired by the Rays in the 2015 deal that sent Kevin Jepsen to the Twins at the non-waiver Trade Deadline. He was a Sirius/XM All-Star Futures Game participant in 2016.

Hu goes from the Rays' 40-man roster, which now stands at 39 players, to the Indians' 40-man, which now stands at 36 players.

Turner, 18, does not need to be added to a 40-man roster. He was the Indians' 27-round draft pick this year and hit .296 (50-for-169) in the rookie-level Arizona League.

Black Friday wish list ... Indians red jersey? Freshened look fits

By T.J. Zuppe Nov 20, 2018 18

CLEVELAND — The Indians certainly didn't want to oversell their first uniform changes since Chief Wahoo's departure this offseason, that much they made clear.

It was apparent in their announcement last week that their impending jersey alterations wouldn't be of the monumental variety. They opted to use the word "enhancements" to explain the subtle differences, but they also promised a new uniform "option" to add to their wardrobe.

Perhaps they learned a lesson by watching the Browns reveal their "new" logo in 2015.

Orange you glad they didn't get your hopes up?

(Ugh, you're right. That's awful. Sorry.)

Following a path of manageable expectations, they didn't trot out any current players to model the enhanced threads — and no, it's not because they didn't have enough outfielders and bullpen arms to fill the catwalk.

But even without the thrill of a walk-off on the runway, their low-key reveal eventually led to a pleasant surprise — the addition of a wow-people-don't-absolutely-hate-these-on-the-internet style red top to complement the three existing (and tweaked) uniforms, forming a collection that now features four distinct colors and helps to freshen up a look that had grown a little stale in recent years.

A closer look at the newest addition to the Indians' uniform collection. (T.J. Zuppe / The Athletic)

The new option adds red to the official uniform grouping for the first time since the 1970s and enters the rotation in place of the script "Indians" midnight navy top the club had worn at home and on the road. Their navy jersey will now feature "Cleveland" in red block lettering across the chest, outlined in white.

Dropping the script Indians top, a jersey that really popped when paired with their home white pants and red socks and undershirts, was a bit disappointing (the updated navy focuses more on a classic look), but the red top should help fill the void by expanding the color palette (and it looks even better in person).

"We just thought the red uniform would be a fun addition," Indians executive Bob DiBasio said after the reveal. "We go back to four uniforms — two defined at home and two defined on the road — instead of just the three total."

Each of the jerseys will also feature the 2019 All-Star guitar logo on the left sleeve. The return of the All-Star Game to Cleveland next year will also be reflected on the right side of their two hats. The solid midnight navy cap will be worn on the road, while the navy hat with the red brim will be worn at home.

As of now, the white and red tops will be worn specifically at home, and the navy and gray jerseys will only be worn on the road. Unlike the cream uniforms that were used specifically during home weekend games a few years ago, there is no set schedule for the red uniform.

"Starting pitcher (will determine)," DiBasio said, "or if we've won five in a row with a certain uni, those kind of things take over."

Why now?

It's the holidays, duh.

Well, perhaps that's only true of why they've been revealed now, just before the Black Friday deals begin.

Outside of the chance for a timely cash-in on some new merchandise, it came down to a few factors. Most important, the organization wanted to get back to four uniforms, two that could be home specific and two that could be featured during away games.

"It kind of lined up with the All-Star Game coming," said Curtis Danburg, the team's senior director of communications. "We're going to have the All-Star patch, Wahoo is going away, it's a good time to have a subtle change to the mix."

How long have the updates been in the works?

Danburg estimated that legitimate discussions about the state of the Indians' uniforms began about three year ago.

Any sort of change or update of the jersey takes time — teams must submit new designs at least one year in advance for Major League Baseball's approval — and it's a process that requires a lot of thought and meaningful input before any major changes take place.

What happened to the script Indians midnight navy uniform?

Gone. But they'll live on forever through the number of jersey giveaways that have taken place over the years. Those Justin Masterson and Carlos Santana uniforms at the back of your closet are safe.

Will we see the red cap again?

Nope. That is also gone. Danny Salazar was seemingly the only Tribe pitcher that ever enjoyed wearing it. He's likely devastated.

Will we be seeing the return of the red pants?

Unfortunately, no. They'll stick with white pants that feature a navy accent down the legs.

Are they considering adding a logo to replace Chief Wahoo?

Maybe. But not this season.

The All-Star Game patch on the sleeve bought them a year to consider adding a third logo to the mix, one to permanently replace Wahoo. For now, the block "C" will remain their primary, and the script "Indians" is their secondary. Creating a new logo in the future to add to the sleeve is still "up for debate," DiBasio said.

What color socks will they wear with the red uniforms?

As of this week, the color of the socks and undershirts that will accompany their newest uniform were not immediately known. The design rolled out Monday, however, featured a navy belt and shoes, so perhaps that offers some indication.

Did they have any other design ideas?

A few.

The process began after the organization considered adding a fourth jersey option. From there, they began to banter about the primary color before ultimately opting to select red. Other considerations included the number of hats they'd wear or whether they'd add piping to the midnight navy or red jerseys.

It was determined that the red would feature navy piping around the collar and sleeves; however, the midnight navy top was left, DiBiasio said, "simple, clean and bold." The team also considered different lettering on the red jersey.

Who was behind the design?

While input came from several places, the Indians' merchandise and brand departments, led by Karen Fox and Jason Wiedemann, worked closely with a design team for Major League Baseball throughout the process, using the original ideas for colors and combinations to sort through different looks before ultimately settling on the final product.

Did they consult with any players first?

Actually, yes.

In conversations with a handful of players, a few expressed a desire to see a red top introduced. Others, however, (perhaps a certain long-haired hurler with a fun taste in unique footwear) remain most concerned with their ability to express their own personality on the field through other means.

"You always like to talk to guys, tell them what you're up to so they're not shocked," DiBiasio said. "Some have an opinion. Others, I think the shoes are more important. You saw (Mike) Clevinger's tweets about the freedom to do what you want with your shoes. I think that's more important (to players) today than the jersey tops."

Cleveland Indians' Dan Otero is back from MLB's Japan tour and Chief Wahoo's last stand

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com | Posted November 21, 2018 at 07:01 PM | Updated November 21, 2018 at 08:16 PM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Ten years from now it will make a great sports trivia question.

Who was the last Indians' player to wear Chief Wahoo on his cap and uniform before it was officially retired following an agreement in January between MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred and team owner Paul Dolan?

That would be right-hander Dan Otero, who wore the Chief during MLB's just completed All-Star tour of Japan. Equipment manager Tony Amato let Otero know what he was getting into before he and his wife, Tiffany, left for Japan after a stop in Hawaii for a three-day training camp.

"I know I'm the last guy to wear it," said Otero from his home in Bellevue, Wash. "Tony told me that. I'm keeping the jersey."

Manfred pushed to ban Chief Wahoo because of lawsuits and protests that it was racist toward Native Americans. Otero understands that fans are attached to the Chief, but said, "I know it's a huge symbol for the fan base. So to see it go is somewhat sad. But at the same time, it's something we as players can't be concerned with. As long as I have a jersey and a hat to wear I'll be happy."

"Hopefully the fans will embrace the new jerseys and logos. I saw the new jerseys. The red ones look pretty cool."

The Indians unveiled a new "uniform option" Monday. They will wear a red jersey with white pants as one of their two home uniforms. On the jersey shoulder a logo for the 2019 All-Star Game, which will be played at Progressive Field, has replaced Chief Wahoo. Block C will be worn on the team's home and away caps.

MLB played six games against Samurai Japan, a team of All-Stars from Japan's professional league from Nov. 8-15. Japan went 5-1 against MLB.

"They're pesky hitters," said Otero, who went 0-1 with a 4.50 ERA in three appearances on the tour. "I was really blown away on how well they hit from the top to the bottom of the lineup."

"They have not embraced the launch angle revolution at all. That's for sure. They try not to strike out and they've very good at that."

Trying not to strike out. It must have been culture shock for Otero and his teammates after MLB batters had more strikeouts than hits in 2018 for the first time in history.

"When they get to two strikes, they were putting the ball in play," said Otero. "And it worked. It wasn't that they weren't aggressive either. They swung at the first strike they liked and were driving it. They were making contact."

The Japanese players didn't just hit singles. Yuki Yanagita, center fielder for the Softbank Hawks, beat MLB with a walk-off homer in Game 1. In Game 2, he added a two-run homer and drove in four runs.

"We looked the guy's regular season stats up," said Otero, "and he's a legit hitter. He sprays the ball all over and hits for power."

Yanagita hit .352 (167-for-475) with 29 doubles, 36 homers and 102 RBI in the regular season. It was Otero's first trip to Japan and Hawaii.

"We all met in Hawaii first," said Otero. "We spent three days there for a mini-training camp. Then we took a charter flight to Japan. It was basically a hotel in the sky. It had a lobby area with tables, high top seats and bars. It was pretty luxurious.

"Each seat reclined all the way. We slept and watched movies. It was a first-class experience all the way. MLB and MLBPA did a great job."

The six games were played in Tokyo, Hiroshima and Nagoya. The cleanliness of the cities impressed Otero.

"You'd go into a city and you wouldn't see a speck of trash anywhere," said Otero. "And yet there were no trash cans on the street. They expect you to eat and drink everything that you order in the restaurants.

"One day in Tokyo I left the hotel to get coffee. They wouldn't let me leave the coffee shop until I finished my coffee. You try to respect the customs. It makes a lot of sense though."

MLB arranged sight-seeing tours for the players and their families between the games.

"Just embracing the Japanese culture was very cool," said Otero. "To see how they went about their daily life was interesting.

"On the baseball side, it was cool getting to know the other guys in both leagues. To share stories. That's probably something I'll miss the most when I'm done playing."

Otero said he was star-struck playing for manager Don Mattingly, who was one of his father's favorite players. He also caught up with former teammate Carlos Santana, who was making his second MLB trip to Japan.

The players and their families traveled from Tokyo to Hiroshima and Nagoya by bullet train. On Japan's high-speed rail system, trains can travel between 150 to 200 mph.

"That was unique," said Otero. "We only had 90 seconds to get off the train. We were traveling with over 120 people. Our security team lined us up and pushed us off the train. Some families were traveling with kids. So it was pretty interesting. I wish we had a camera on it."

Japanese fans really (really) like baseball

Baseball is Japan's most popular professional sport and Japanese fans are intense. Otero said it's like playing in front of a ballpark full of Yankee Stadium Bleacher Creatures.

"They're insane," he said. "The crazy thing is how in unison they are. It's not just when they go to the field. It's every time a batter comes up. They have a song (for each batter) and they sing it through the entire at-bat."

Indians GM Mike Chernoff (left), manager Terry Francona and Chris Antonetti, president of baseball operations, plotting for 2019. (Chuck Crow, The Plain Dealer)

Tribe's wheels in motion for spring training

Otero, 33, says he's going to start throwing in about three or four weeks in preparation for spring training. Tribe pitchers and catchers are scheduled to report to Goodyear, Ariz., on Feb. 13. The 2018 Indians, who have 12 free agents on the market and may trade one or key two veterans to control payroll, could look a lot different than the team that reports to Goodyear.

"I'm looking forward to spring training," said Otero. "Personally, I didn't have the kind of season I wanted and team-wise we didn't have the kind of season we wanted. I'm champing at the bit to get back and try to re-prove that I can pitch at this level. I think the team is itching to get back because we didn't like the way that ended last year."

"Spring training is always an exciting time and I think this one could be more so than normal."

Cleveland Indians put Bobby Bradley, Sam Hentges, Jean Carlos Mejia on 40-man; add RHP Lockett in trade with San Diego

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio – The Indians went with power and pitching Tuesday when it came to protecting prospects and filling out their 40-man roster in preparation for the Rule 5 Draft on Dec. 13 at the winter meetings in Las Vegas.

The Indians added power-hitting first baseman Bobby Bradley, left-hander Sam Hentges and right-hander Jean Carlos Mejia to fill 39 of the 40 spots on the big-league roster. Then they traded right-hander Ignacio Felix to the Padres for right-hander Walker Lockett to fill the 40th and final spot on the roster. Teams had to submit their 40-man rosters to the Commissioner's office by 8 p.m. Tuesday.

In a move not related to the 40-man roster, they signed veteran utility infielder Mike Freeman to a minor league deal with an invitation to spring training.

Among the Rule 5 eligible players not protected were right-hander Henry Martinez, outfielder Oscar Gonzalez and infielder Tyler Krieger. A player signed at 18 or younger needs to be added to the 40-man roster within five seasons or he is eligible for the Rule 5 Draft. A player signed at 19 or older must be added to the 40-man roster within four seasons of he becomes eligible for the draft.

Sample HTML block

In the major league portion of the Rule 5 draft, it costs a team \$100,000 to select a player from another team's unprotected list. The drafting team must keep the player in the big leagues all year or offer him back to his old team for half the drafting price.

Bradley, who still has Edwin Encarnacion and Yonder Alonso in front of him, last season hit a combined .224 (108-for-483) with 26 doubles, 27 homers and 83 RBI in 129 games between Class AA Akron and Class AAA Columbus. He led Tribe minor leaguers in homers, RBI and slugging percentage (.466).

The left-handed hitting Bradley, 22, leads Tribe minor leaguers with 79 homers and 274 RBI since 2016. He spent most of last season at Akron where he hit just .214, but added 24 homers and 64 RBI. Over his last 21 games at Columbus, he hit .292 (21-for-72) with three homers and 14 RBI.

Bradley struck out 109 times and made 10 errors at first base with Akron. He hit .254 with 43 strikeouts in 114 at-bats at Columbus. Defensively, he made three errors in 29 games at first base.

The 6-6, 245-pound Hentges went 6-6 with a 3.27 ERA in 23 starts at Class A Lynchburg this season. The fourth round pick out of Mounds View (Minn.) High School in 2014 had reconstructive elbow surgery in July of 2016 and made just 11 starts in 2017.

Scouts liken Hentges, 22, to a young James Paxton, who was just traded from Seattle to the Yankees. He added a slider this year, which helped him strikeout 122 batters, while walking 53 and allowed 114 hits in 118 1/3 innings. He still needs to work on his command.

Mejia, 22, spent three years in the Dominican Summer League before coming to the United States in 2017. The Indians moved the 6-5, 205-pound Mejia to the starting rotation this year at Class A Lake County and he went 4-8 with a 3.13 ERA in 17 games, including 15 starts. He struck out 97, walked 20 and allowed 84 hits in 92 innings.

Lockett, 24, spent most of last season at Class AAA El Paso where he went 5-9 with a 4.73 ERA in 23 starts. He struck out 118 batters and walked 33 in 133 1/3 innings. He made four appearances, including three spot starts, for the Padres and posted a 9.60 ERA (16 earned runs in 15 innings)

In 2016 Lockett was the Padres minor league pitcher of the year. He was a fourth round pick in 2012. The 6-5, 225-pound Lockett has one option left.

The acquisition of Lockett marked the second time in two days the Indians added a pitcher to the 40-man roster with a trade. On Monday, the Indians sent Class A infielder Gionti Turner to Tampa Bay for right-hander Chih-Wei Hu. Lockett is a sinker-slider pitcher and the Indians think there's a chance for him to add more velocity to his pitches.

Feliz, 19, went 5-3 with a 3.00 ERA in 10 starts for the Tribe's Arizona Rookie League team. He struck out 54 and walked 15 in 45 innings. He's the third young pitcher they've traded from the AZL Indians in the last few days. They sent Tahnaj Thomas and Dante Mendoza to Pittsburgh for outfielder Jordan Luplow and infielder Max Moroff. The Indians also shipped infielder Erik Gonzalez to the Pirates in that deal.

Freeman, 31, spent last season at Class AAA Iowa and hit .274 (83-for-303) with 15 doubles, six homers and 38 RBI in 78 games. He joined the Cubs in September and played one game at second base. He has played in the big leagues with Cubs, Arizona, Seattle and the Dodgers. Freeman is a .290 (951-for-3,279) lifetime hitter in the minors.

It's time for Cleveland Indians' catcher Yan Gomes to feel the heat of baseball's Hot Stove season

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.comphoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- This is the time of year when baseball executives spend a lot of hours texting and talking to each other. Sometimes it leads to trades, but almost always it leads to rumors that add heat to the hot stove season.

Chris Antonetti, Mike Chernoff, Carter Hawkins and other members of the Indians' front office have been talking to a lot of teams this winter. They have little, if any, money to spend on the free agent market, but they have a roster full of players that other teams like and holes to fill in the outfield and bullpen.

That leads to rumors such as catcher Yan Gomes being traded the Mets or Dodgers. Not to mention starting pitchers Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco or Trevor Bauer being traded to any number of teams.

"We have a lot of players that other teams value and that leads to a lot of conversations between teams," said Antonetti, Indians president of baseball operations. "That's not any different this offseason than any other off season. ... Teams talk about a wide variety of players."

This week Gomes has been a hot topic. Not only have the Dodgers been mentioned, but also the Mets. Mets manager Callaway, the Tribe's former pitching coach, knows Gomes well.

Gomes, 31, is coming off what manager Terry Francona called his steadiest season. He hit .266 (107-for-403) with 26 doubles, 16 homers and 48 RBI and won the starting job outright from Roberto Perez. Gomes played his most games (112) since 2014 and stayed healthy after missing time in 2015 and 2016 with knee, shoulder and hand injuries.

In 2019 Gomes will make \$7 million. The Indians hold club options worth \$9 million and \$11 million for 2020 and 2021.

There are two questions that the Indians have to answer if they trade Gomes. No. 1, could a one-on-one deal involving Gomes fill one of their needs in the bullpen or outfield? Or would Gomes have to be packaged with another player? No. 2, Can Perez and Eric Haase provide enough offense at catcher or would they need to go out and get more help?

Perez just had his worst season in the big leagues, hitting .168 (30-for-179) with two homers and 19 RBI. Haase hit .236 (102-for-433) with 20 homers and 71 RBI at Class AAA Columbus. He hit .125 (2-for-16) in nine games with the Indians.

If the Indians did trade Gomes, it would give them the ability to dabble in the free agent market. Right now, the chances of that happening are slim.

The catching market is crowded. The top name is Miami's J.T. Realmuto. Then comes Dodgers free agent Yasmani Grandal. In the regular season, Grandal hit .241 (106-for-440) with 24 homers and 68 RBI.

Teams have been trying to trade for Realmuto for more than a year. The Marlins hung on to him during last winter's fire sale and he did nothing to hurt his reputation as one of the best catchers in the game by hitting .277 (132-for-477) with 30 doubles, 21 homers and 74 RBI.

The Dodgers and Houston are said to be interested in Realmuto. So were the Nationals until they signed Kurt Suzuki to a two-year deal on Monday.

Grandal is a free agent, which is one of the reasons the Dodgers are interested in Realmuto and Gomes. The Dodgers also have catching prospects in Keibert Ruiz and Will Smith, who could help make a deal for Gomes more palatable to the Indians should one of them be included. Ruiz and Smith have not played above Class AA.

Houston could use a catcher as well because Martin Maldonado and Brian McCann are free agents this winter.

Just how Gomes fits into that market will become clearer in the days and weeks to come.

Cleveland Indians' outfielder Leonys Martin gets clean bill of health from Cleveland Clinic to start preparing for spring training

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.comphoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Thursday is Thanksgiving and Leonys Martin has good reason to be thankful.

What the Indians have been saying for the last several weeks became a reality Tuesday when Martin was cleared to begin unrestricted preparation for spring training. He was examined at Cleveland Clinic and given a clean bill of health. The Indians expect him to report to spring training in February ready to compete for a job.

Martin, 30, was struck by a bacterial infection that threatened his life after the Indians acquired him from Detroit on July 31. He played just six games for the Indians before falling gravely ill. When Martin recovered, doctors advised him to take the rest of the season off so his internal organs could recover.

The bacterial infection that struck Martin entered his bloodstream and attacked his internal organs, including his heart.

Martin's teammates showed their support for him during the rest of the season by writing his initials or number on their caps. On Oct. 31 Martin avoided arbitration by signing a \$3 million deal with the Indians for 2019. The deal is not guaranteed.

In his brief stay with the Indians, Martin hit .333 (5-for-15) with two homers and four RBI. Martin hit .251 (76-for-303) with nine homers and 29 RBI in 78 games with the Tigers.

If all goes well in spring training, Martin is expected to play center field for the Tribe. There's a good chance he could platoon with Greg Allen.

Class AAA pitching coach Steve Karsay leaves Cleveland Indians to become Milwaukee Brewers' bullpen coach

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.comphoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The Indians caught a break last week when the Texas Rangers didn't hire Ruben Niebla as their big-league pitching coach. They were not so fortunate Monday.

Milwaukee hired Steve Karsay as its big-league bullpen coach. Karsay just finished his third season at the pitching coach at Class AAA Columbus and his seventh as a coach in the organization. Karsay pitched for the Indians from 1998 to 2001 before being traded to Atlanta for John Rucker.

Karsay, before his three-year stay at Columbus, was the pitching coach for Tribe affiliates in the Arizona Rookie League, Class A Lake County and Class A Carolina. He played a role in the development of Mike Clevinger and Shane Bieber, who filled out the backend of the rotation last season.

The Blue Jays selected Karsay out of high school in the first round of the 1990 draft. He played in the big leagues with Oakland, Atlanta, the Indians, Yankees, Texas and Oakland. He went 15-14 with a 3.23 ERA and 22 saves for the Indians from 1998 through 2001. Overall, he pitched for 11 years in the big leagues.

Milwaukee advanced to Game 7 of the NLCS this year before losing to the Dodgers. In announcing the hiring of Karsay, 46, they also announced the promotion of Chris Hook to pitching coach from minor league pitching coordinator.

Niebla, the Indians minor league pitching coordinator, was a finalist for the pitching coach's job in Texas. He was told last week that he didn't get it. In fact, the job went to Julio Rangel, who spent 11 of the last 12 years in the Indians minor league system.

The Cleveland Indians unveiled new alternate home and road uniforms for 2019. (jnoga@cleveland.com)

By Joe Noga, cleveland.comjnoga@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio — With red now part of the Cleveland Indians jersey offerings fans have several options in choosing their favorite gear to wear at the ballpark. But which look will be the crowd favorite in 2019?

The team is sticking with its traditional home white top with "Indians" across the chest, while adding the alternate red jerseys. Both will include the 2019 All-Star Game logo patch on the left sleeve.

On the road, the traditional gray jersey with "Cleveland" in block letters across the chest will be joined by a "Midnight Navy" blue option that also features "Cleveland" in block lettering outlined in white.

None of the jersey options will feature the Chief Wahoo logo moving forward. The club announced previously that it would be moving away from the logo at the conclusion of the 2018 season.

Beyond 2019, team officials have not said whether they will adopt a new logo to replace Wahoo.

Meanwhile, the question remains: Which Indians jersey option for 2019 is your favorite? Vote in the poll below and defend your answer in the comments.

Cleveland Indians trade for Tampa Bay right-hander Chih-Wei Hu

By Joe Noga, cleveland.comjnoga@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio — The Indians completed a trade Monday with Tampa Bay, acquiring right-hander Chih-Wei Hu from the Rays in exchange for minor-league infielder Gionti Turner.

Hu, 25, spent most of the 2018 season with Tampa Bay's Triple-A Durham affiliate, posting a mark of 5-7 with a 4.66 ERA in 24 (19 starts)

Hu appeared in five games in relief across five big-league stints with Tampa Bay, posting a 4.15 ERA in 13 innings while fanning 12 batters and allowing seven hits (.149 avg).

A native of Taichung, Taiwan, Hu was signed as an amateur free agent by the Minnesota Twins in 2012 and was acquired by Tampa Bay at the 2015 trade deadline for righty Kevin Jepsen. In 2016, he recorded the lowest ERA in the Southern League (2.59) for Class-AA Montgomery. Hu was a Baseball America AA All-Star and was a Future's Game participant.

Turner, 18, was Cleveland's 27th-round draft pick in the 2018 draft and hit .296 (50-for-169) for the Indians rookie-level club in the Arizona League.

Hu has been added to the Tribe's 40-man roster, which now stands at 36 players. The team must finalize its 40-man roster by 8 p.m. Tuesday in advance of the Dec. 13 Rule 5 Draft in Las Vegas.

Cleveland Indians will rock red with new alternate home jersey design in 2019

By Joe Noga, cleveland.comjnoga@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio — For the first time since the 1970s the Cleveland Indians will have the option to wear a red home jersey for games at Progressive Field beginning in 2019.

Indians senior vice president Bob DiBasio unveiled the updated designs at the Indians Team Shop on Monday, noting that next season, the team will have four distinct apparel options — two defined home uniforms and two defined road uniforms.

The home jerseys feature a refreshed look with a 2019 All-Star game logo patch on the left sleeve, replacing Chief Wahoo. The traditional home white jersey will have red script "Indians" across the front with "Midnight Navy" piping on the sleeve and collar.

There will be one cap at home, it features a navy base with a red bill and the Block C logo as well as a patch with the 2019 All-Star logo on the side.

The new alternate home uniform features a red jersey with script "Indians" across the chest and the same piping style on the sleeves and collar. It marks just the second time in franchise history that the team will feature red as an official uniform. The last time was from 1975-77. DiBasio stressed that the players would definitely not be wearing red pants as they did on occasion with the uniforms in the 1970s. Both the white and red home uniforms will be worn with white pants.

DiBasio said the team wanted to have four defined uniforms, two at home and two on the road. By limiting the Midnight Navy top to road games only, it gave designers an opportunity to go in a different direction.

"We wanted something that's a little bit different and fresh," DiBasio said. "Red was the obvious choice because it looks rather cool."

Indians Uniform Update: The Cleveland Indians are unveiling an update to their uniforms this morning. Hayden Grove is at the Team Shop where the event is happening.

"Rick Manning, Duane Kuiper and all those guys always thought that the best uniforms they ever wore were the white pants with the red tops," he said. "They thought that was the coolest looking uniform. Then we went away from it in 1978 we brought the navy blue top with the white pants. That was a good looking uni as well. But they loved the red top, white pants look."

For away games, the Indians will have the option of wearing their traditional gray tops or a new alternate road blue colored jersey.

"We'll be saluting the great city of Cleveland on both, featuring 'Cleveland' in block lettering on the gray as well as on the new-look 'Midnight Navy' blue jersey," DiBasio said. "Both feature a clean, bold, fresh, simple look."

The road uniforms will feature one cap. The all-Navy cap with the red Block C will be the only road cap the team will wear. Both jerseys include the 2019 All-Star Game logo on the left sleeve where the Chief Wahoo logo was last season and will be worn with gray pants.

DiBiasio said the team is still working through the process of deciding whether there will be a permanent third logo to replace Chief Wahoo. "I'm not even sure where we are along that path yet," he said.

"With the All-Star game patch, it gives us some more time to work through those issues to see if we do get a third. Obviously, the Block C is the primary logo. Script 'Indians' is our secondary logo. Do we move to a third? That's still up for debate."

Asked whether the team is worried about fans missing the Wahoo logo, DiBiasio said there is an expectation that some fans always will. "We expect that," he said. "It's been part of our history. We've been around a long, long time. This what, coming up, our 119th Opening Day. Sure, some will miss it. And some will applaud that it's not on the uniform."

Meanwhile, the team also eliminated its all-red cap with the Block C worn during home select games since 2011. and DiBiasio said the new red jerseys will not be limited to a particular day of the week or holidays, as in the past with uniform options such as the cream-colored alternate set.

"It's up to the starting pitcher," he said. "Or if we've won five in a row with a certain uni, those kind of things take over."

DiBiasio said players were consulted about the new designs.

"You always like to talk to guys to tell them what you're up to so they're not shocked," he said. "Some have an opinion. And others, I think the shoes are more important. You saw (Mike) Clevinger's tweets about the freedom to do what you want with your shoes. I think that's more important to them today than the jersey tops."

Cleveland Indians: Inside the deal with the Pittsburgh Pirates -- Terry Pluto

By Terry Pluto, The Plain Dealer pluto@plainind.com

ABOUT ERIK GONZALEZ

Not long after the Indians traded for outfielder Jordan Luplow, I called Neal Huntington.

"This could be a trade where both teams look up in a few years and feel very good about it," he said. Huntington is the general manager of the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Chris Antonetti is the president of the Tribe. The two men have a long history. When Huntington was with the old Montreal Expos, he hired Antonetti as an intern with the team in 1997.

When Huntington moved to the Indians, he pushed general manager Mark Shapiro to hire Antonetti in 1999.

Huntington has been Pittsburgh's general manager since the end of the 2007 season.

The two men had been talking trade on-and-off for months.

Finally, Huntington sent infielder Max Moroff and Luplow to the Tribe for shortstop Erik Gonzalez and young pitchers Tahnaj Thomas and Dante Mendoza.

"We need a shortstop," said Huntington. "Gonzalez is good defensively. He showed last season he could play multiple positions. We like him."

Pittsburgh's starting shortstop Jordy Mercer is heading to free agency. The Pirates had a \$94 million payroll (compared to \$135 million for the Tribe). Neither team is going to be active when it comes to signing significant free agents.

Gonzalez spent the entire season with the Tribe, batting .265 (.676 OPS) with one HR and 10 RBI in 136 at bats.

He is out of minor league options. There is no place for him as a regular with the Tribe, as they have Jose Ramirez at second and Francisco Lindor at shortstop.

Gonzalez is 27. It's time for him to find out if he can be a regular at the big league level. He'll compete with 25-year-old prospect Kevin Newman to start at short for the Pirates.

Newman batted .209 in 91 at bats for the Pirates last season. He did hit .302 with four HR and 35 RBI in Class AAA.

ABOUT JORDAN LUPLOW

The real reason I called Huntington was to find out about Luplow, the 25-year-old outfielder coming to the Tribe.

He was the Pirates' Minor League Player of the Year in 2017.

In parts of two Class AAA seasons (2017-18), Luplow batted .300 (.857 OPS) with 32 doubles, 15 HR, 68 RBI in 539 plate appearances. He was 11-of-14 in stolen bases.

But in two partial years in Pittsburgh covering 190 plate appearances, Luplow batted .194 (.644 OPS) with six HR and 18 RBI.

"He has good raw power," said Huntington. "He can hit a fastball. He can do real damage against left-handed pitching, and I think he'll be competitive against right-handers. We still like him as a player."

So why trade him?

"We have a real need at shortstop," said Huntington.

He explained the Pirates have more depth in the outfield.

Meanwhile, the Indians have several middle infielders and desperately need an outfielder. It why Huntington and the Tribe could find common ground for a deal.

"He's a right-handed hitting outfielder... capable of playing all three outfield spots," said Antonetti. "He's spent most of his time in left and right and we also believe he has the ability to play center field. He fits our team really well."

So what happened to Luplow between Class AAA and the minors?

"A lot of young players have trouble adjusting to the majors when they play only part-time," said Huntington.

Huntington's point was the Pirates never gave Luplow a defined role because of the talent in front of him.

The Pirates' outfield in 2018 was Corey Dickerson (.300, 13 HR, 55 RBI, .804 OPS), Gregory Polanco (.254, 23 HR, 81 RBI, .839 OPS) and Starling Marte (.277, 20 HR, 72 RBI, .787 OPS).

THE SCOUTING REPORT

Huntington called Luplow "a hard-worker, a solid defender with a good arm. He has some power. He just needs a chance to play."

The Indians and Pirates both consider Luplow a much better hitter vs. lefties.

But in Class AAA, he was nearly the same:

.299 vs. lefties.

.301 vs. righties.

My guess is Luplow fits into the Tribe as a right-fielder. The right-handed batter can platoon with Tyler Naquin.

It's Brandon Guyer's old job.

A real problem was Guyer being nearly helpless (.174) vs. righties last season. And he no longer crushed lefties (.233). He is a free agent. Baseball America on Luplow: "He lacks huge tools, but does a lot of little things well. He is a contact hitter with a good feel for the barrel...quick hands and the pitch recognition to get on base. He's not a burner, but is a smart baserunner who takes the extra base with his savvy. Luplow can ably play both corner outfield spots and cover center in a pinch. His plus arm plays anywhere."

ABOUT THE INDIANS

1. Some veteran Tribe fans were wondering if Jordan Luplow is any relation to former Tribe outfielder Al Luplow (1961-65). The answer is...yes. Al Luplow was his great-uncle. He died in 2017. Al Luplow batted .235 (.662 OPS) in parts of seven big league seasons.

2. The Indians also acquired 25-year-old Max Moroff in the deal. He is mostly a second and third baseman. He can play some short. In 84 big league games, Moroff batted .193 (.625 OPS) with six HR and 30 RBI in 209 plate appearances over parts of three seasons.

3. Huntington told me Moroff "has some real power." But he struck out 69 times in those 209 plate appearances. Moroff is out of minor league options. He could make the Tribe as a utility man.

4. Baseball America on Moroff: "He has made cameos in the majors each of the last three seasons, working at second base, shortstop and third base as a Pirates depth infielder. He doesn't offer much with the bat as a career .252 hitter in the minors and .193 hitter in the majors. He can plug in as a switch-hitter with defensive versatility."

5. The Indians were willing to give up Gonzalez because they have Yu Chang in the minors, where he batted .256 (.741 OPS) with 13 HR and 62 RBI. Chang is only 23 years old. The native of Taiwan has been the target of trade talks. He was in the 2016 deal to Milwaukee for Jonathan Lucroy. That trade fell part when Lucroy used his no-trade option.

6. The Yankees also pushed hard for Chang when they made the Andrew Miller deal with the Tribe in 2016. The Indians sent Justus Sheffield, Clint Frazier, J.P. Feyereisen and Ben Heller to New York in that trade.

7. As for the Lucroy deal, the Indians were supposed to send Greg Allen, Francisco Mejia, Shawn Armstrong and Chang to the Brewers. The Indians have since used Mejia to deal for relievers Brad Hand and Adam Cimber. Allen will compete with Leonys Martin to start in center field in 2019.

8. Chang is having a terrific Arizona Fall League, batting .337 (.919 OPS) with four HR and 17 RBI in 86 at bats. He'll probably open 2019 at Class AAA, but the Indians do project him as a starter somewhere in the field in the future.

9. After Gonzalez, the prospect most intriguing to the Pirates is 19-year-old Tahnaj Thomas. The Bahamas native pitched only 20 innings in the Arizona Rookie League. MLB.com ranked him the No. 30 prospect in the Tribe farm system. He was signed as an infielder and converted to a pitcher.

10. The Indians are still looking for outfielders. But they are in better shape now than before the trade. Luplow has been highly regarded and probably can adapt to the big leagues at least as an extra outfielder if given a chance.

What did Seattle's trade of James Paxton reveal about what the Cleveland Indians want for a starting pitcher?

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com | Posted November 25, 2018 at 06:10 AM | Updated November 25, 2018 at 11:56 AM

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The Indians like left-hander Justus Sheffield. They drafted him with the 31st overall pick in the country in 2014 and gave him a \$1.6 million signing bonus.

Two years later they traded him with Clint Frazier and two other players to the Yankees for lefty Andrew Miller. On Monday, the Yankees sent Sheffield, their No. 1 prospect, and minor leaguers Eric Swanson and Don-Thompson Williams to Seattle for left-hander James Paxton.

The Indians almost certainly could have made that trade. They could have brought Sheffield back to Cleveland and given him a shot in the rotation or bullpen. He's made just three appearances in the big leagues with the Yankees, and there's some question as to whether he'll make a better starter or reliever. But they could have made that deal because the Yankees talked to them about their equivalent of Paxton -- Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco or Trevor Bauer.

They didn't do it because while they like Sheffield, they don't like him as much as Seattle apparently does. Plus they needed more from the Yankees than just their No. 1 prospect and Swanson, who pitched at Triple-A last year and Williams, a center fielder who has yet to play above Class A since being drafted in 2014.

Jerry Dipoto, Seattle GM, said the Mariners were "taking a step back" after trading Paxton, a talented starter who has trouble staying healthy. Dipoto doesn't think the Mariners are ready to become a force in the tough AL West.

The Indians are not in that spot, at least not yet. They have won three straight AL Central titles, a division that is the least competitive in the big leagues. Their starting pitching, the core of the team, can stay mostly intact through 2021.

If they trade Kluber, Carrasco or Bauer, it has to be for a package of players that will provide help to the big league club as soon as possible. Think yesterday, not three or four years down the road.

So while the Yankees and Indians couldn't get a deal done, the template for what it will take to extract a starting pitcher from Chris Antonetti and the rest of the Tribe's front office has been set. Then again it's been that way for a while.

Steve Karsay isn't the only Indians' staff member on the move

Last week the Milwaukee Brewers hired Steve Karsay as their bullpen coach. Karsay, who pitched for the Indians from 1998 through 2001, just completed his third year as their pitching coach at Class AAA Columbus. Overall, it was his seventh season coaching in the Tribe's system.

Earlier this month the Red hired Chris Tremie as their minor league field coordinator. Tremie just finished his sixth season as the Tribe's Triple-A manager at Columbus. It was his 12th season overall managing in the organization, starting with the Gulf Coast Indians in 2006.

Mark Budzinski, who just completed his first year on manager Terry Francona's big-league staff, has drawn interest from an unnamed club for a big-league coach job.

Budzinski, who spent seven years as a player in the Tribe's minor league system, managed at Class A Lake County, Class A Lynchburg and Class AA Akron from 2014 through 2017.

Michael Salazar interviewed for the head athletic trainer's job with the Padres. Salazar just finished his seventh season as an assistant trainer for the Indians. Overall he's worked 12 years for the organization.

No word on whether Salazar got the job.

"We've lost a couple of staff members," said Antonetti. "I think it's a good sign of how people view our organization. It's part of our responsibility to help people develop and grown in their careers. In a lot of cases we can provide those opportunities for growth here. And in some cases it leads people to go to other organizations."

Why Indians protected who they they did on 40-man roster?

The Indians added first baseman-DH Bobby Bradley, left-hander Sam Hentges and right-hander Jean Carlos Mejia to the 40-man roster Tuesday to protect them from the Rule 5 Draft on Dec. 13 at the winter meetings in Las Vegas.

The reason for Bradley's promotion was easy -- power. He led Tribe minor league hitters with 27 homers and 83 RBI between Akron and Columbus. He was the Tribe's third round pick in 2014.

The reasons for the additions of Hentges and Mejia were not as clear cut.

Hentges underwent reconstructive surgery on his left elbow in 2016 and didn't pitch much in 2017. This year he went 6-6 with a 3.27 ERA in 23 starts. He struck out 122 and walked 53 in 118 1/3 innings at Class A Lynchburg.

Mejia spent three seasons in the Dominican Summer League, which is usually not a good sign. But the Indians moved him to the starting rotation this year at Lake County where he struck out 97 batters and walked 20 in 92 innings.

"Hentges is a big physical lefty with a good fastball and deception," said Antonetti. "He projects to have a chance to pitch at the major league level."

"Mejia is a little farther away, but has made tremendous progress in the last couple of seasons. He has a good fastball-slider mix and we really like the developmental path he's on."

Among the Indians players left unprotected included reliever Henry Martinez and outfielder Oscar Gonzalez.

Last year the Pirates selected right-hander Jordan Milbrath in the big-league phase of the Rule 5 Draft off the Indians' roster, but later returned him.

"You're always worried about losing someone," said Antonetti. "That's part of it."

What new arms bring to the Indians

The Indians, just before setting the 40-man roster on Tuesday in preparation for the Rule 5 Draft, added two pitchers through trades.

They acquired right-hander Chih-Wei Hu from Tampa Bay and right-hander Walker Lockett from San Diego. They sent infielder Gionti Turner to the Rays and right-hander Ignacio Feliz to the Padres.

Hu and Lockett will both condition as starters in spring training before the Indians decide how to use them. Hu has pitched in parts of two seasons for the Rays, going 1-1 with a 3.52 ERA in 11 relief appearances. He's struck out 23 and walked three in 23 innings.

Lockett, 6-5 and 225 pounds, went 0-3 with a 9.60 ERA (16 earned runs in 15 innings) in four games, including three starts for the Padres this year.

Hu and Lockett have to be considered candidates to help the bullpen at some point this year. They each have a minor league option left.

The bullpen, as it stands now, has Brad Hand at closer and a lot of question marks in front of him.

In closing, some names you may remember

Right-hander Kieran Lovegrove, who spent seven seasons in the Indians minor league system, has signed a minor league deal with the Giants after turning free agent after last season.

The Tribe's third round pick in 2012 made 30 appearances with 38 strikeouts and 27 walks at Akron. He made one appearance at Columbus and pitched in the Futures Game.

*Jim Brower, who pitched for the Tribe from 1999 through 2000, was added as an assistant coach with Seattle.

*Jacob Cruz, who played for the Tribe from 1998 through 2001, is the new assistant hitting coach for the Pirates.

*Outfielder Rob Refsnyder, who was in spring training with the Tribe last year, signed a minor league deal with Arizona.

*Jerry Sands, who played for the Indians briefly in 2015, has re-signed with the Nexen Heroes in Korea. Sands was a midseason pickup for Nexen last year and hit 12 homers in 25 games, while batting .314. He signed a one-year deal worth \$500,000.

*The Pirates have reportedly shown interest in Tribe free agent outfielders Lonnie Chisenhall and Brandon Guyer.

Does Miami's Derek Dietrich make sense for the Cleveland Indians? Hey, Hoynsie

Is there a match between the Tribe and Derek Dietrich?

Hey, Hoynsie: I just saw that Derek Dietrich was released by the Marlins. Do you believe the Tribe will have interest in him? Also, put on your GM cap for a moment. Would you consider trading Corey Kluber for Harrison Bader and Carlos Martinez from the Cardinals? Or Bader and Jordan Hicks?-- Jason Tucher, New Palestine, Ind.

Hey, Jason: Dietrich, a Cleveland native, was designated for assignment by the Marlins on Tuesday, but they have seven days to trade, release or put him on waivers. So he's still their property.

Dietrich, who played high school ball at St. Ignatius, certainly has the versatility that the Indians like, but Max Moroff, the switching-hitting utility man they recently acquired from the Pirates, is a similar player.

As for your suggestion for a Kluber deal, if I'm the Tribe's GM, I'd say that's a good starting point, but I need more.

Will Tribe get an attendance bump because of fewer April games in 2019?

Hey, Hoynsie: Do you see a bump in Indians' attendance for 2019 with fewer home games in chilly April (11 compared to 17 in 2018) and the fact that the Cavs will not be drawing attention and money from Tribe fans in April, May and June like in the previous four seasons? -- David Tucky, Columbus.

Hey, David: Perhaps that could play a role, but I think the biggest reason there could be an uptick in attendance is the fact that the 2019 All-Star Game will be played in Cleveland. I would think that will bolster season ticket sales.

Is catcher Yan Gomes on the move or not?

Hey, Hoynsie: Why would the Indians trade catcher Francisco Mejia in July with Yan Gomes and Roberto Perez cemented with the mother club and then entertain trade talks this offseason regarding both Gomes and Perez? Do they feel Eric Haase is ready for the major leagues? -- Andy Mees, Sandusky.

Hey, Andy: First and foremost, they were filling a need in in the bullpen by acquiring closer Brad Hand and right-hander Adam Cimber for Mejia because they knew closer Cody Allen and set-up man Andrew Miller would be free agents at the end of the year and almost certainly wouldn't return.

Hand is signed through 2020 with a club option for 2021. Cimber is under team control for the next five years.

At the end of the season, it became clear that the Indians didn't have much room to work with regarding increasing the payroll for 2019. They have to explore ways to create money through trades, which is why the rumors of trading Gomes or a starting pitcher began. The Indians feel they have some depth -- although not much at catcher -- with Gomes, Roberto Perez and Eric Haase.

But I agree that if the Indians do trade Gomes/Perez, they must feel Haase is ready for the big leagues. Or they're getting another catcher back in the deal. If the Indians trade Gomes and go with Perez and Haase, that's a dead spot in the lineup.

Is a Michael Brantley return possible?

Hey, Hoynsie: Do you think the Indians have given any thought to trying to trade Corey Kluber or Carlos Carrasco for a quality outfielder and catching or outfield prospect and using the money they saved to retain Michael Brantley? They would have two legitimate outfielders (what a concept) and could let the rest of them battle it out for the third spot. I'll admit that part of this is for sentimental reasons, as it would be nice to see a player actually wear the Tribe uniform for an entire career. -- Tom Munley, Sagamore Hills.

Hey, Tom: I think the concept of creating some capital to try and improve the team is one of the reasons behind the Indians listening to offers on some of their veterans. In regards to Brantley, I think that ship has sailed.

Does Andrew McCutchen make sense for the Indians in 2019?

Hey, Hoynsie: Obviously, adding an outfielder must be a top priority for the Indians. I just read an article suggesting the Tribe make an offer to Andrew McCutchen. He's 32, and unlikely to cost too much or require a deal beyond three years. Could the Indians get behind that? -- George Amer, Gallatin, Tenn.

Hey, George: Don't see that happening. In fact, if any team gives McCutchen a three-year deal, he should take it and run.

If the Indians need outfield help at the trading deadline in July and August, McCutchen sounds like a much better fit.

Who are the Indians' top outfield prospects?

Hey, Hoynsie: Who are the Indians best outfield prospects in the system? -- Dan Schonberg, Lake Odessa, Mich.

Hey, Dan: I'm not sure I should be talking to a Michigan guy this week, but as you can tell by looking at the Tribe's 40-man roster, the outfield is not its strong point.

A lot of the Tribe's outfield prospects over the last several years have graduated to the big leagues -- Bradley Zimmer, Tyler Naquin, Greg Allen -- or been traded like Clint Frazier.

Right now their top outfield prospect is George Valera, a left-handed hitter who moved from New York City to the Dominican when he was 13. MLB.com and Baseball America rank him as the organization's fifth-best prospect. His season this year in the Arizona Rookie League was cut short by a broken hamate bone in his hand.

In MLB.com's top 30 prospects for the Indians, outfielders Oscar Mercado (No. 15), Oscar Gonzalez (No. 22), Jonathan Rodriguez (No. 23), Will Benson (No. 24), Mitch Longo (No. 25) and Quentin Holmes (No.30) are mentioned. Mercado, acquired from the Cardinals last season, is on the 40-man roster and is expected to get a good look in spring training. Gonzalez was left unprotected for the Rule 5 Draft.

What's the Tribe philosophy in making a big trade?

Hey, Hoynsie: Former Tribe GM/President Mark Shapiro said the Robby Alomar trade didn't work because they tried to get both prospects and major leaguers. Any risk of history repeating itself this winter? -- Steve Cornelius.

Hey, Steve: On Dec. 11, 2001 Shapiro sent Alomar, Danny Peoples and Mike Bacsik to the Mets for Alex Escobar, Matt Lawton, Jerrod Riggan, Earl Snyder and Billy Traber. With the hindsight of history, it can be safely said that was a trade that didn't help either team.

Alomar, coming off three great years with the Indians, never again reached those numbers. Escobar, supposedly a key to the deal, broke his leg in spring training. Lawton and Traber had a couple of good moments, but not many.

In 2001 the Indians were at the end of their great run, which started in 1995. This time around the Indians still have the ability to win the AL Central for a couple of more years. So if they do make a trade, it has to be one that leans toward major-league ready players instead of raw prospects.

After the Alomar deal, it should be noted, that Shapiro made sweeping changes to the way the Indians scouted and went about making trades.

Is Shohei Ohtani really the AL Rookie of the Year?

Hey, Hoynsie: I'm not denying Shohei Ohtani is a good ball player and he had a nice season. I don't think it is fair for someone like him, someone who played at least one full season at the highest level in Japan, which is quality baseball, should be eligible for Rookie of the Year. I felt the same way about Ichiro Suzuki winning it over CC Sabathia back in 2001.

It really matters if a player such as Miguel Andujar or Gleyber Torres could have received a bonus for winning the award. I would make any international player signed as a major league free agent ineligible for Rookie of the Year. It may be their first year in MLB but these guys aren't rookies. -- Jack Bacevice.

Hey, Jack: It's not the first time I've heard this argument. And it's not the first time I've answered it this way.

The Rookie of the Year award is named after Jackie Robinson. Before he won the award in 1947 for the Brooklyn Dodgers, he played a year for Kansas City in the Negro League.

From 1949-53, the five rookies who won the NL Rookie of the Year award all played in the Negro League -- Don Newcombe, Sam Jethroe, Willie Mays, Joe Black and Jim Gilliam. Jethroe spent six plus seasons playing for Cleveland Buckeyes.

The big leagues are supposed to represent the best baseball in the world. If you can excel there, it shouldn't matter where you learned how to play the game. Especially, if you can pitch and hit like Ohtani.

Thumbs down to the Rule 5 Draft

Hey, Hoynsie: What is your opinion of the Rule 5 Draft? Do you like it? I don't. I hate to see the Indians lose a talented player. I'm sure minor league players like it. It's a chance to jump to the major leagues in a hurry. How many players stick with their new team after being drafted? -- Stephen Froster, Petersburg, Va.

Hey, Stephen: I like the Rule 5 Draft. It gives players a chance to reach the big leagues if their path is blocked with their current team. Yes, it's a long shot for a team to pick an unprotected player, keep him on the big league roster and have him contribute, but it does happen.

Without the Rule 5 Draft, baseball fans may have never gotten to see players such as Hack Wilson, Roberto Clemente, Cecil Cooper, Bobby Bonilla, Johan Santana, Jose Bautista, Kelly Gruber, George Bell, Shane Victorino and many others.

Remember Hector Rondon? He was a pitcher who had broken his elbow not once, but twice for the Indians. The Indians left him unprotected in 2012 and the Cubs selected him in the Rule 5 Draft. Four years later helped the Cubs win the World Series (against the Indians).

You can't make this stuff up.

Indians unveil alternate red home jerseys for 2019 season

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) -- The Indians will rock red jerseys next season for the first time since the 1970s.

The team unveiled a new alternate home jersey on Monday. It's a red top scripted with "Indians" on the front that Cleveland occasionally will wear for home games in 2019. The Indians last wore red jerseys from 1975-77, when they wore red pants that won't be making a comeback.

Next season, for the first time in 70 years, the Indians will not have the contentious Chief Wahoo logo on their uniforms. The club has been phasing out the highly debated caricature for years before striking an agreement with Major League Baseball to discontinue using it on uniforms. The Indians will continue to sell "Wahoo" merchandise at their team shop.

Cleveland's caps as well as its home and road jerseys will feature the guitar-shaped 2019 All-Star Game logo. Cleveland is hosting the 75th event in July.

Nick Cafardo / How Rocco Baldelli plans to manage the Twins

By Nick Cafardo

Rocco Baldelli was a five-tool player whose career was cut short because of mitochondrial disease, where the body fails to produce enough energy to function properly. He was going to be part of a great Rays outfield with Carl Crawford and Josh Hamilton, but Hamilton had drug problems and didn't fulfill his promise in Tampa Bay. Crawford had a good run for the Rays, but Baldelli had only a few good years in the majors.

The Woonsocket, R.I., native spent 2009 with the Red Sox, before ending his career with 10 games back with the Rays in 2010. Baldelli got into the coaching ranks and year by year became more prominent as someone who could use analytics to improve player performance. This offseason, Baldelli, who had been the Rays' major league field coordinator, was interviewed for most of the managerial openings, getting the Twins job after they fired Paul Molitor, the 2017 American League Manager of the Year.

There's no question that Baldelli has his work cut out for him. The Twins were a disappointment this past season after good things were expected following their 85-win season of 2017. But injuries and underperformance resulted in 78 wins in 2018, and president of baseball operations Derek Falvey, a Lynn native, had to

do something to shake up his team. He felt a new approach was needed, and he also felt Baldelli, who at 37 is the youngest manager in baseball, had learned a lot from Rays manager Kevin Cash and was ready to apply some of those methods to the Twins, the Red Sox' spring training neighbors in Fort Myers, Fla.

Baldelli said he interviewed with five teams. While he wouldn't name them, they were obviously the ones with jobs available — the Twins, Rangers, Blue Jays, Angels, and Reds.

"It was the first time I'd interviewed for a manager's job, and the great part was I got a chance to meet a lot of people in the game I normally wouldn't have met, and got to hear and see the things they value most in the game for their organizations," Baldelli said. "They were all different. I really learned a lot as I was going through it." Everything baseball every Monday-Friday during baseball season, and weekly in the offseason.

Why now? Why did Baldelli go from being on nobody's radar to being on everyone's radar?

"I really don't know if I could put my finger on it. It would be true speculation," he said. "There were several jobs available. The Rays had a wonderful season in which we knew what our expectations were. Outside maybe the expectations weren't as strong as ours. It was an awesome year for everyone involved with the organization. A combination of that and general ideas of what teams are looking into these days and what they're trying to promote in their organizations. I felt lucky I fell into that bucket for these teams."

Baldelli was asked whether he will adopt many of the methods he experienced in Tampa.

"I think the goal isn't to replicate what's been done in the past," he said. "The goal is always to bring the best of what you've been a part of and the people you've been a part of and what you've earned. We're trying to build something unique in Minnesota."

The Twins are in reloading mode, and while new players are likely to be brought in between now and spring training, Baldelli said he's focused on the players currently on the roster, players that for the most part, he's already talked to.

"We have a good, young roster of good people with a ton of ability," he said. "How can we help make the clubhouse as good as possible for them? How can we do our job better for them? If we can add to our group, that's wonderful."

Falvey and general manager Thad Levine obviously liked that Baldelli was able to get Rays players to buy into analytics, but Baldelli said that's a tribute to the players, not himself.

"The players' desire to get better is the desire to making adjustments and wanting to improve," he said. "I'm not just saying that. Unless you have a motivated player who wants to improve, it won't happen. Those adjustments are made in a ton of ways. The player has to buy in or it's not going to work. In Tampa Bay, we had guys motivated to do that and open-minded. They still had their own thoughts but it was a first step. These are not overnight type of adjustments. It's a discussion with staff and players that goes on the entire season and offseason."

When Dave Roberts was brought in to manage the Dodgers, one of his main jobs was to get Yasiel Puig to buy into the team concept. Baldelli seems to have the same task with Miguel Sano, who has great power but has not taken getting in shape seriously, which caused the Twins to send him back to Single A last season.

"Talking to Sano, what an incredible athlete that he is," said Baldelli. "I have a lot of faith in him and that he's going to do everything he can to be the best player he can be. Judging by the conversation I had with him, he seems like a great young man. We're going to get to know him first before we start to dive into everything else."

Baldelli won't have many rules for his players. His philosophy is that you should come to the ballpark every day wanting to learn and improve.

"Whether you're a staff member or a player, living by the principles of trying to improve yourself every day are what matter when you're trying to build a good, happy clubhouse," Baldelli said.

Baldelli said he's learned the most about team building from Cash, and he'd love to bring some of Cash's ways into the Twins' clubhouse. But Baldelli said he also learned from his former managers, including Lou Piniella, Joe Maddon, and Terry Francona.

HARD AT WORK

Yankees making some changes

We love following the dealings of the Yankees, especially since they lost the Division Series to the Red Sox. So far, Brian Cashman, who has won four World Series since he became general manager in 1998, has traded top prospect Justus Sheffield and two other minor league pitchers to the Mariners for James Paxton, a talented, veteran lefthander who is relative low-cost (he made \$4.9 million this past season and is eligible for arbitration) and can't become a free agent until after 2021 season.

This gives the Yankees a starting rotation of Luis Severino, Masahiro Tanaka, Paxton, CC Sabathia, and possibly Jordan Montgomery. In four career starts against the Red Sox, Paxton is 2-0 with a 2.49 ERA. While Sheffield is highly regarded, he needs to mature, and you could question whether that maturity could have taken place in one offseason.

Meanwhile, Cashman also has said he's going to trade righthander Sonny Gray. As we reported three weeks ago, the Athletics have shown considerable interest in trying to reacquire him, but many other smaller-market teams, such as the Braves, Padres, Rangers, and Twins, have also expressed interest. So, Cashman will likely be able to get prospects back for Gray, or he could flip him for a good late-inning reliever since David Robertson and Zach Britton are possible free agent defections.

Even with Cashman acquiring Paxton, he's likely to delve into the starter market, including being in on the top pitcher available, Patrick Corbin, a New Jersey guy who would love to pitch for the Yankees, and possibly Nathan Eovaldi, a 28-year-old righthander who impressed the baseball world in the postseason. There's also free agent J.A. Happ, who pitched well for the Yankees after being acquired from the Blue Jays.

Cashman also has enough capital in his farm system to make another Paxton-like move. He could look to the Orioles and pick off Dylan Bundy or Alex Cobb. He could inquire, as he once did, with the Giants on the availability of Madison Bumgarner. He also could see if the Mets would part with Noah Syndergaard.

As far as position players, there's always the possibility the Yankees will make a huge splash by signing Manny Machado, who wants to play shortstop in New York. With Didi Gregorius out until at least July after Tommy John surgery, there is an opening there for Machado. Even if Machado eventually has to move to third base, clearly his best position, the Yankees could shift Miguel Andujar to first base.

There are also long-shot rumblings about the Yankees trying to move Giancarlo Stanton. Obviously it's a massive contract, but if the Dodgers ever felt they needed to do something splashy, Stanton isn't that far-fetched, since that's one team to which he would likely approve a trade. Nor would it be far-fetched if the Giants wanted a big hitter to give their staggering offense a jump start, or if the Phillies decided to include Stanton on their list of superstars to acquire. Stanton has about \$260 million remaining on his contract over the next 10 years. That would be cheaper than acquiring Machado or Bryce Harper. Stanton is 29 years old.

Apropos of nothing

1. The big deal being discussed between the Mariners and Padres that would send Wil Myers to Seattle for Jean Segura and Mike Leake hasn't gone over big with the Mariners' fan base, which views Segura as a favorite. On the surface it's a good deal for San Diego, which needs a shortstop and also depth in their starting rotation. With the Mariners likely losing Nelson Cruz, they need a power hitter, and Myers could fit that role well. Segura, 28, has four years and \$58 million remaining on his contract, and Leake is owed another \$27 million but would have to waive a no-trade clause for any deal to happen. The Mariners are obviously in

salary-dump mode, after having traded James Paxton to the Yankees. They're stuck with Felix Hernandez's \$27.858 million salary for 2019 and are looking to rebuild after falling short of their goals over the last two seasons.

2. Being on the committee to add new candidates to the Hall of Fame ballot every year, the name that caught my eye is obvious, Mariano Rivera. After that, there are guys I will vote for this time or at some point because they're worthy, including Andy Pettitte and the late Roy Halladay. There are bubble guys such as Todd Helton and Lance Berkman. MLB Network's Jon Heyman already has opened my eyes to Berkman, whose numbers are quite similar to those of last-chance candidate Edgar Martinez, who should get in this time after garnering 70.4 percent last season of the 75 percent needed to gain entry. I have not voted for Martinez up to this point but likely will in his final attempt. I'm also a big advocate for Pettitte (256 wins, 19-9 in 44 postseason starts), and I'm certainly considering him this time. Of existing candidates, Omar Vizquel, Jeff Kent, and Gary Sheffield will continue to get my support. I'm giving more consideration to Manny Ramirez, who is maybe the best righthanded hitter I've ever seen. I have not voted for PED users outed after testing was in place, but I may be changing my view on that, though I'm not quite there yet. Ramirez's indiscretions came at the very end of his career, which shouldn't erase a tremendous body of work, though there were strange times along the way. We only have 10 votes each year, and I'll continue to vote for those I've supported in the past.

3. New York-based agent Burton Rocks represents major league players such as Paul DeJong, but he's spent the past few years emphasizing that players should be measured more by character and intangibles than analytics. It certainly goes against the grain of what GMs and owners have bought into, where analytics seem to be the driving force. Rocks was recently interviewed by Steve Overmyer of CBS2 in New York. "All owners want to win, and the only way to win is to understand that baseball has flourished through good and bad economic times because of the qualified intangibles of fans and their microeconomics," said Rocks. "Fans go to the ballpark to see players play because of their charisma, not because of OBP in Sunday afternoon games."

4. The Nationals' signing of Kurt Suzuki doesn't necessarily mean they won't continue to be interested in the Marlins' J.T. Realmuto. But as the Marlins continue to demand the world (as they should) for the coveted backstop, the Nationals didn't want to be left with nothing at a position where they had a need. The Marlins wanted at least outfielder Victor Robles, and the Nationals wouldn't do it. At least for now. So they signed Suzuki, 35, to a modest two-year, \$10 million deal, and he could easily become a backup if such a scenario developed. That scenario would likely have to include re-signing Bryce Harper, who has turned down a 10-year, \$300 million from the Nationals. The Nationals are OK with Scott Boras, Harper's agent, negotiating with other teams, but they won't give up Robles until they're certain, one way or the other, about Harper. Without Harper, the Nationals' outfield would consist of Juan Soto, Adam Eaton, and Robles.

5. Nathan Eovaldi is a hot commodity, and while there is a team or two toying with trying to sign him as a reliever, Eovaldi wants to be a starter. And that's also where the money is. Now, we suppose that if a team offered him Aroldis Chapman money — five years at \$86 million — Eovaldi might consider it.

6. There are more signs that the Indians will be paring payroll, offering up Corey Kluber and Carlos Carrasco, and now their starting catcher, Yan Gomes. Financially, a high payroll probably doesn't make sense in that market, but for a while they were a very entertaining team.

7. The Astros need a big first baseman, and we keep hearing Paul Goldschmidt.