



Press Clips

(October 9, 2018)

CLIPS CONTENT

FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES (PAGE 3)

- **Radio and TV broadcasts take advertiser tie-ins to new heights**

FROM ANGELS.COM (PAGE 5)

- **Inbox: What will Angels' 2019 infield look like?**

FROM MLB.COM (PAGE 6)

- **30 top prospects in the AFL -- 1 from each team**
- **AFL starts today with 15 Top 100 prospects**

FROM BLEACHER REPORT (PAGE 12)

- **Predicting 1 Impact Trade for Each MLB Team 2 Months from Winter Meetings***

FROM BASEBALL AMERICA (PAGE 15)

- **Ringolsby: The Face Of MLB**

FROM THE LA TIMES**Radio and TV broadcasts take advertiser tie-ins to new heights**

By Tom Hoffarth

Angels fans may have been going nuts listening to an inconsequential late-September game in Oakland, one that would end in a 21-3 loss. Right about the eighth inning, an Angels hitter fouled a pitch off, breaking his bat, and there was a long pause as he walked back to the dugout to find a new stick.

Wonderful.

Actually, it was.

Mark Gubicza, the Angels' game analyst on the KLAA-AM (830) radio broadcast, grabbed a sheet and started a live commercial read for Wonderful Pistachios — the company bought sponsorship for any such cracked- or broken-bat occurrence this season. And the ad's tagline: "Let's get crackin'."

"I didn't know there are so many sponsor reads during radio games," said Gubicza, whose normal gig the last dozen years has been in the Fox Sports West TV booth. "After a while it can get kind of hilarious, like that one. You try to incorporate them so they're fun, and you're having a good time with them."

Clever, corny or even a little cockamamie, you find there is an art to what is called the live drop-in. Particularly those predicated on a specific thing happening on the field during live action.

On Angels broadcasts this season, spots were created for a replay challenge (a TV store), a "call to the bullpen" (Farmer John), a lineup change (In-N-Out), a stolen base (a security company) and even during the MLB disclaimer about "accounts of this game cannot be retransmitted without permission" (a local lawyer).

"If you talk to some old-school producers about it, they realize we have so many things sponsored now, and sometimes, you don't always have the right moment happen," said Gubicza. "That's when you really have to spin it and somehow make it work."

The Dodgers' KLAC-AM (570) broadcasts that continue through the playoffs also have about a dozen spots. It starts with a cleaning service when introducing the umpiring crew (and the sound effect of a broom whisking off home plate). There are also ones for a Dodgers home run ("that trip around the diamond" brought to you by a local jeweler), a caught-stealing play (a security alarm system) or someone sliding into a base (the OUE SkySlide in downtown L.A.).

"We've called them 'never-been-dones,'" said Don Martin, the iHeartRadio senior vice president of Los Angeles sports, whose company is the flagship station for the Dodgers, Clippers and UCLA, and recently set up the Kings' audio app.

"It's all about marrying up the partner to the content. The key is to make them short, simple and then get out of the way. They can't impede or infringe on the integrity of the game."

But sometimes they do. Consider the Chicago White Sox have started home games at 7:11 p.m. each weeknight in part so the broadcasters could tell everyone it was the “7-Eleven” first pitch. That deal ran out in 2017.

“I’ve always thought about doing a mock baseball game where every single event in a game is sponsored by someone — ‘That’s ball two, brought to you by ...’ ” said Nick Nickson, the Kings’ Hall of Fame radio play-by-play man.

Nickson actually has few chances in live action to bring in a play-related sponsor read for hockey games, other than the injury reports (a local health provider) or the “keys to the game” spot (a car company). In the postgame show, Nickson retries a call that fits into the “Nestlé’s Crunch Hit of the Game.”

Why not a trip to the penalty box sponsored by a bail bondsman? A slashing penalty endorsement from a Hollywood horror flick?

“You can’t put a sponsor in a negative light,” warns Martin, who has created marketing-meets-programming dialogue for more than 20 years ago. “You can’t be making fun of anything.”

It’s funny enough when the timing of these reads goes sideways.

Lakers radio play-by-play man John Ireland did Clippers games some 20 years ago and will never forget how an adult beverage company known as “the official beer of the time out” had every timeout covered.

“At the end of games, sometimes there are six timeouts in the final two minutes,” Ireland said. “But every time, we had to drop it in. After we had so many timeouts once, our engineer said, ‘I could have drunk a six-pack of Corona just waiting for this game to end.’ ”

Spero Dedes, Ireland’s predecessor with the Lakers, will never forget the last Lakers contest of the 2010-11 season. They were losing by about 40 points, getting swept out of the playoffs in Dallas, and Phil Jackson was likely ending his coaching career.

“Here we are, truly the end of an era,” Dedes said. “As the final horn sounds, I’m doing the best I can to capture the gravity of the moment. But right before we signed off, I realized I’d missed a promo read. There was no way I could blow it off.

“So those final seconds went something like this: ‘There goes Phil Jackson, walking off the floor ...’ in my best dramatic-sounding voice I could muster. I then paused. And mortified, read a promo for In-N-Out Burger: ‘And that’s what a hamburger’s aaaaaaaaall about!’

“It was pretty awful.”

FROM ANGELS.COM**Inbox: What will Angels' 2019 infield look like?**

Beat reporter Maria Guardado answers questions from Angels fans

By Maria Guardado

Mike Scioscia received a lot of flak for being seen as "old school" whether that was true or not - any idea on what qualities the Angels front office is looking for in the next skipper?

General manager Billy Eppler laid out what he's looking for in the next Angels manager during his end of season press conference at Angel Stadium last week.

"What we're looking for in that next manager is connectivity with the players," Eppler said. "We're looking for somebody who can think with a probability-based mindset. We're going to look for someone who is eager to grow and evolve. Someone that can develop a culture that will put the welfare of the team above any singular person."

Prior managerial experience will not be required, so I think the Angels could lean toward younger candidates who are well-versed in analytics.

Eppler says he's looking for durable arms. Any discussion of changing medical staff, trainers or pitching coaches to avoid the huge number of injuries to pitchers' arms we've seen?

Eppler said there will be some changes made regarding the Angels' approach to injury prevention next season, but I don't think he was referring specifically to personnel changes.

"We are going to utilize newer technology to supplement what we have been doing," Eppler said. "There have been new measures introduced in the last few months that we are going to explore."

One Angels pitcher told me he feels like the club's medical staff is actually very proactive when it comes to treating injuries, so I don't think it's fair to blame the trainers for all of the health issues that have befallen the team recently.

What do you think the opening day infield will look like for the Angels?

It's tough to project what the infield will look like right now because there are a lot of question marks at various positions. **Andrelton Simmons** will undoubtedly be at shortstop. **Zack Cozart** will flank him at either second or third base, depending on which young player wins a starting job during Spring Training. Third baseman **Taylor Ward**, second baseman **Luis Rengifo** and **David Fletcher**, who can play second or third, will be among the contenders for that spot. If **Shohei Ohtani** is available to hit by Opening Day, I would expect **Albert Pujols** to be at first base. If not, Pujols will likely serve as the designated hitter, leaving a potential opening for **Jose Fernandez**, Matt Thaiss or Jared Walsh at first.

Will Ohtani get 500+ ABs in 2019?

That number seems a little high, especially since Ohtani's availability for Opening Day has been put in question by Tommy John surgery. The Angels will also have to occasionally start Pujols at DH to give him a break from playing first base, so that could also infringe on Ohtani's at-bats next year. I think his total at-bats will end up being somewhere in the 400 range.

Which pitching prospects should fans look forward to reading about for spring training?

I suspect you'll hear a lot about left-hander Jose Suarez and right-hander Griffin Canning, both of whom shot from Class A Advanced Inland Empire to Triple-A Salt Lake this season. Suarez, 20, logged a 3.92 ERA in 26 starts with 44 walks and 142 strikeouts over 117 innings. Canning, 22, posted a 3.65 ERA in 25 starts with 44 walks and 125 strikeouts over 113 1/3 innings in his first professional season.

Did the Angels reach 3 million in attendance this year?

Yes. They drew 3,022,216 fans this year, marking the 16th consecutive season in which they've reached 3 million in attendance.

FROM MLB.COM

30 top prospects in the AFL -- 1 from each team

By Jonathan Mayo and Jim Callis and Mike Rosenbaum

The **Arizona Fall League** has long been a haven for the best prospects in all of baseball to come together and put the finishing touches on their development on the way to the big leagues. This year is no different, with 15 players from MLB Pipeline's **Top 100 prospects list** slated to play starting on Tuesday.

Seven clubs are sending their No. 1 prospect to the AFL, and each team is sending an impressive array of up-and-coming talent. Here is a list of the top prospect from each organization that fans can check out in AFL action next week.

AL East

Blue Jays: Vladimir Guerrero Jr., 3B (TOR No. 1; MLB No. 1)

Guerrero, the top prospect in this year's Fall League, batted .381 with 20 homers, 78 RBIs and more walks (42) than strikeouts (38) at 19 this season while ascending to Triple-A. He'll need to improve his defense at the hot corner to avoid a move down the positional spectrum, but it's a generational-type bat capable of shattering records this fall en route to a 2019 big league debut.

Orioles: Ryan McKenna, CF (BAL No. 12)

McKenna, 21, led all Orioles farmhands in average (.315), OBP (.410), hits (148) and runs scored (95) while splitting his season between Class A Advanced Frederick and Double-A Bowie. The 2015 fourth-rounder swung the bat particularly well in the Florida State League, hitting .377/.467/.556 with 97 hits over 67 games, and impressed with his center-field defense at both stops.

Rays: Lucius Fox, SS (TB No. 9)

The speedster Fox performed well in the Florida State League but scuffled during the final month of the season in Double-A after celebrating his 21st birthday. He ultimately posted a .692 OPS with 29 stolen bases across the two levels. In 2017, Fox finished with a .691 OPS and 30 steals.

Red Sox: Michael Chavis, 3B/1B (BOS No. 1; MLB No. 69)

After Chavis ranked third in the Minors with 68 extra-base hits and fifth with 31 homers last year, he missed the first 80 games of 2018 with a suspension for testing positive for a performance-enhancing substance during the offseason. When he returned, he batted .298/.391/.538 (mostly in Double-A) to continue to establish himself as one of the best power-hitting prospects in the game. His strong arm is an asset at third base.

Yankees: Estevan Florial, OF (NYY No. 2; MLB No. 45)

Florial played in Fall League a year ago, batting .286/.383/.414 for the Scottsdale Scorpions, and returns after losing half of the 2018 season to a right hamate injury. He has one of the highest ceilings in the league as a potential 30-30 player who can handle center field. Florial has well above-average raw power, speed and arm strength, though he'll have to prove he can make consistent contact at the plate.

AL Central**Indians: Yu Chang, SS (CLE No. 6)**

Spending his age-22 season with Triple-A Columbus, Chang produced a .256/.330/.411 line with 13 home runs while playing the bulk of his 127 games as a shortstop. He's improved defensively in every season and committed just nine errors in 94 games at short with Columbus. Now 23, Chang is back in Fall League this year after hitting .304 over 15 games with Mesa in 2017.

Royals: Khalil Lee, OF (KC No. 2)

Though Lee intrigued clubs as a high school left-hander with a low-90s fastball and a promising slider, the Royals preferred him as an outfielder and made him a full-time position player after taking him in 2016's third round. He has a chance to have solid or better tools across the board -- his arm strength is his best attribute -- and displays some of the best patience in Kansas City's system as well as the ability to fit anywhere in the outfield.

Tigers: Daz Cameron, OF (DET No. 8)

When the Tigers got Cameron from the Astros as part of the **Justin Verlander** trade late last season, he had turned in what looked like a breakout season. He kept it going in his first year with Detroit, playing across three levels and reaching Triple-A at age 21. Cameron was particularly strong during his Double-A stint with a .285/.367/.470 line to go along with 12 steals in 53 games.

Twins: Brent Rooker, OF (MIN No. 7)

After a stunning first summer of pro ball that saw Rooker reach the Florida State League and hit 18 homers in 62 games, any encore was bound to seem like a disappointment. Yes, the strikeout rate (26.4 pct) was a bit high, but he spent his first full season in Double-A and led the system in homers (22) and finished third in RBIs (79).

White Sox: Luis Robert, OF (CWS No. 4; MLB No. 44)

Shortly before international signing rules drastically changed, the White Sox spent \$52 million (\$26

million bonus, matching amount as a penalty for exceeding their bonus pool) in May 2017 to land Robert. Damaged ligaments in his left thumb limited him to 50 games this summer, but Robert's five-tool potential was obvious. He has electric bat speed, well above-average foot speed and the range and arm strength to play anywhere in the outfield.

AL West

A's: Eli White, INF (OAK No. 18)

White is coming off the season of his career as he hit .308/.388/.450 over 130 games with Double-A Midland. The 24-year-old, an 11th-round pick from the 2016 Draft, came up as a shortstop but added second and third base to his resume this season. In addition to the defensive versatility, White also showed some increased power this season as he hit nine homers, more than double his previous career high of four.

Angels: Jahmai Jones, OF (LAA No. 4)

Things didn't exactly go according to plan for Jones in his third full season of pro ball, as he saw his batting average and OPS drop considerably from 2017. On the plus side, his walk rate did go up, and he reached double digits in home runs (10) and steals (24) while reaching Double-A before his 21st birthday. Jones did all that while making the transition from the outfield to second base.

Astros: Forrest Whitley, RHP (HOU No. 2; MLB No. 8)

MLBPipeline's highest-rated pitching prospect, Whitley worked just 26 1/3 innings this season because of a 50-game suspension for violating the Minor League drug program and oblique and lat injuries. When he did take the mound, Whitley continued to show the ability to miss bats with four pitches: a lively mid-90s fastball, a 12-to-6 curveball, a power slider and a fading changeup.

Mariners: Evan White, 1B (SEA No. 2)

The Mariners' 2017 first-rounder was a force during the second half as he slashed .320/.400/.512 with eight home runs, 16 doubles and 40 RBIs over his final 64 games in the California League. He's yet to hit for much power, but there's a lot to like in White's ability to hit for average and get on base in addition to his near-elite defense at first base.

Rangers: Julio Pablo Martinez, OF (TEX No. 2; MLB No. 56)

When the Rangers failed to sign **Shohei Ohtani**, they used their surplus international bonus pool money to sign Martinez for \$2.8 million in March. He's a well above-average runner who plays a fine center field, and he has more power than a typical 174-pounder thanks to his bat speed and strong hands and wrists. Unlike most Fall League players, Martinez has yet to play in a full-season league after spending most of his pro debut at short-season Spokane.

NL East

Braves: Cristian Pache, OF (ATL No. 6; MLB No. 68)

After taking a big step forward offensively in the Florida State League (.285/.311/.431), Pache earned a promotion to Double-A at age 19 in August. He held his own, especially at the outset, but finished the season 1-for-22. One of the best defensive outfield prospects in the game, a stint in Fall League will help Pache hit the ground running back in Double-A in 2018.

Marlins: Monte Harrison, OF (MIA No. 1)

The tooled-up Harrison improved his stock as much as any player in last year's Fall League, showing a power-speed combo that ultimately led to him being acquired from the Brewers in the offseason **Christian Yelich** trade. It was on display again in the 22-year-old's first Double-A campaign, as Harrison totaled 19 homers and 28 steals but also struck out in 36.9 percent of his plate appearances.

Mets: Andres Gimenez, SS (NYM No. 1; MLB No. 55)

The Mets don't shy away from pushing their young players aggressively, and Gimenez has responded, reaching Double-A before he turned 20 and putting up his best offensive numbers (.281/.347/.409) stateside. The 2018 Futures Gamer is a tremendous defender at a premium position, and while he likely will never have a ton of pop, he's starting to grow into more extra-base thump at the plate.

Nationals: Carter Kieboom, SS (WAS No. 2; MLB No. 39)

Keiboom was plagued by injuries during his first full season but put it all together this year to reach the Double-A level at age 20. Playing in 123 games across two levels, the 2016 first-round pick hit .280/.357/.444 with 16 home runs and 31 doubles.

Phillies: Sixto Sanchez, RHP (PHI No. 1; MLB No. 21)

Sanchez has one of the most electric arms of any pitching prospect in baseball, with the chance to have three above-average to plus pitches when all is said and done. His climb to the top of the pitching prospect rankings was slowed by elbow inflammation in 2018, limiting him to just 46 2/3 innings. Sanchez hasn't pitched since June 3, so the innings in Arizona could help him make the jump to Double-A next year.

NL Central**Brewers: Keston Hiura, 2B (MIL No. 1; MLB No. 30)**

The best pure hitter in the 2017 Draft lived up to his reputation in his first full season by hitting .291 with 13 homers and 33 doubles while reaching Double-A in his first full season. The Brewers already have the 22-year-old second baseman on the fast track to the Major Leagues, and the hope is that he'll get a jumpstart on the 2019 season with a productive campaign in Fall League. Hiura also stands to benefit from additional work at second base after lingering issues with his throwing elbow limited him to DH duties for the first month-plus this season.

Cardinals: Conner Greene, RHP (STL No. 27)

In his first season with the Cardinals after coming over from the Blue Jays in the **Randal Grichuk** trade, Greene was so-so as a starter in Double-A. He improved somewhat with a move to the bullpen and a bump up to Triple-A and has the power repertoire to excel in that role. Greene'll continue to work on the transition to relief in Fall League while hoping to improve his command (6.4 BB/9 in 2018).

Cubs: Nico Hoerner, SS (CHC No. 6)

The Cubs' first-round pick (24th overall) in June, Hoerner is the top 2018 Draft pick playing in Arizona. Though he played just 14 games in his pro debut before straining ligaments in his left elbow while diving for a ball, that was long enough to show why scouts considered him one of the best offensive-minded middle infielders available. Hoerner has exceptional hand-eye coordination, an advanced approach and developing power.

Pirates: Cole Tucker, SS (PIT No. 5)

A broken thumb kept Tucker, an Arizona native, from attending Fall League a year ago, but now he's ready to go. The tall and athletic shortstop tied for the system lead in stolen bases with 35, his third year of 25 or more steals. Tucker was swinging a hot bat at the end of the season, including hitting a pair of playoff homers for Double-A Altoona.

Reds: Taylor Trammell, OF (CIN No. 3; MLB No. 17)

The Futures Game MVP has all the tools needed to be an elite-level player and finished third in the organization with 25 steals despite missing some time with a concussion in August. Trammell has an advanced approach at the plate (career .372 OBP) and is still learning to tap into his power. The 21-year-old could see time in all three outfield spots this fall.

NL West**D-backs: Jon Duplantier, RHP (ARI No. 1; MLB No. 80)**

Durability concerns coming out of Rice forced Duplantier down to the third round of the 2016 Draft, but he answered those questions with a huge first full season across two levels and a trip to the Futures Game. While he pitched well in 2018, biceps tendinitis forced him out for nearly two months, so the right-hander is making up for lost innings in Fall League.

Dodgers: Keibert Ruiz, C (LAD No. 2; MLB No. 39)

One of the game's best catching prospects, Ruiz held his own offensively this year as the second-youngest regular (age 19 for most of the season) in the Double-A Texas League. He's a switch-hitter with advanced feel for the barrel and developing power, with most of his home runs coming as a left-hander. Ruiz is improving defensively and could become a solid receiver with arm strength to match.

Giants: Heath Quinn, OF (SF No. 10)

The second-highest pick (third round) in Samford history behind only Phil Ervin, Quinn has a similar offensive profile but has had difficulty staying healthy in pro ball. Hamate and shoulder injuries affected his first full pro season, while a hamstring strain sidelined him for a month in 2018. He drives the ball to all fields and has deceptive athleticism for a 6-foot-3, 220-pounder, showing solid speed once he gets going.

Padres: Buddy Reed, OF (SD No. 13)

The 2016 second-rounder struggled in his first pro season but rebounded in 2018 to hit .271 with 48 extra-base hits and 51 steals in 122 games between two levels including Double-A. The 6-foot-4, 210-pounder boasts some of the best tools in this year's Fall League, though questions remain about his hitting ability.

Rockies: Sam Hilliard, OF (COL No. 9)

First drafted by the Twins as a left-handed pitcher out of Crowder (Mo.) JC in 2014, Hilliard signed as an outfielder after a year at Wichita State in 2015. He's still somewhat raw at the plate, but Rockies officials once likened him to Larry Walker because he's a tooled-up right fielder who bats from the left side. Hilliard has plus raw power, speed and arm strength, giving him 20-20 potential and the ability to play anywhere in the outfield.

AFL starts today with 15 Top 100 prospects

Vlad Jr., Whitley among up-and-coming stars on Fall League rosters

By Jim Callis

Baseball's finishing school opens again on Tuesday, when **the Arizona Fall League** will begin its 27th season. Designed to enhance the development of advanced prospects while also serving as a testing ground for potential rule changes, the AFL has sent more than 2,700 players to the big leagues.

Roughly 60 percent of all AFL participants have reached the Majors, including Hall of Famer Mike Piazza and future Cooperstown inductees Derek Jeter and **Albert Pujols**. The league has produced 278 All-Stars, 17 Most Valuable Players, six Cy Young Award winners and 29 Rookies of the Year. That list of award winners could go grow this fall as MVP front-runners **Mookie Betts** and **Christian Yelich**, as well as leading Rookie of the Year candidates **Ronald Acuna Jr. (the 2017 AFL MVP)** and **Gleyber Torres (the 2016 AFL MVP)**, all polished their skills in Arizona.

Each MLB organization sends six or more prospects to the Fall League, where they'll play a 30-game regular season from Oct. 9 through Nov. 15 at six Cactus League stadiums in Glendale, Mesa, Peoria, Salt River, Scottsdale and Surprise. The two division winners will stage a one-game playoff for the championship, which will be broadcast live on MLB Network on Nov. 17. MLB Network also will televise the Fall Stars Game on Nov. 3 and the Military Appreciation Game on Nov. 10.

Fifteen of **MLBPipeline.com's Top 100 Prospects** will play in Arizona this fall, highlighted by the game's best prospect (Blue Jays third baseman Vladimir Guerrero Jr. of the Surprise Saguaros) and top pitching prospect (Astros right-hander Forrest Whitley of the Scottsdale Scorpions). Scottsdale has five Top 100 Prospects, with Reds outfielder Taylor Trammell, Phillies righty Sixto Sanchez, Mets shortstop Andres Gimenez and Mets first baseman Peter Alonso joining Whitley.

The complete list of Top 100 Prospects in the AFL:

Vladimir Guerrero Jr., 3B, Surprise/Blue Jays (No. 1 on Top 100)
Forrest Whitley, RHP, Scottsdale/Astros (No. 8)
Taylor Trammell, OF, Scottsdale/Reds (No. 17)
Sixto Sanchez, RHP, Scottsdale/Phillies (No. 21)
Keston Hiura, 2B, Peoria/Brewers (No. 30)
Carter Kieboom, SS, Salt River/Nationals (No. 37)
Keibert Ruiz, C, Glendale/Dodgers (No. 39)
Luis Robert, OF, Glendale/White Sox (No. 44)
Esterwan Florial, OF, Glendale/Yankees (No. 45)
Andres Gimenez, SS, Scottsdale/Mets (No. 55)
Julio Pablo Martinez, OF, Surprise/Rangers (No. 56)
Peter Alonso, 1B, Scottsdale/Mets (No. 58)
Cristian Pache, OF, Peoria/Braves (No. 68)
Michael Chavis, 3B, Mesa/Red Sox (No. 69)
Jon Duplantier, RHP, Salt River/Diamondbacks (No. 80)

Once again, the Fall League will use a clock to regulate the time between pitches (15 seconds), between hitters (30 seconds), mound visits (30 seconds) and between innings (two minutes, 15 seconds). Additionally, all extra innings will begin with the player who made the final out the previous inning on second base, though games will continue to end if tied after 11 innings. Past AFL experiments have included instant replay, foul poles of different heights and colors, further pace-of-game initiatives and balls that don't require being rubbed down with mud.

Probables

Tuesday

Glendale (RHP Jordan Foley) at Peoria (RHP **Bubba Derby**), 3:35 p.m. ET

Salt River (RHP Ryan Castellani) at Surprise (RHP **Dario Agrazal**), 3:35 p.m. ET

Mesa (LHP **Gregory Soto**) at Scottsdale (RHP Forrest Whitley), 9:35 p.m. ET

Wednesday

Peoria (RHP **Miguel Diaz**) at Glendale (LHP Ben Holmes), 3:35 p.m. ET

Scottsdale (LHP Garrett Williams) at Mesa (RHP Teddy Stankiewicz), 9:35 p.m. ET

Surprise (LHP Evan Kruczynski) at Salt River (RHP Luis Reyes), 9:35 p.m. ET

Thursday

Peoria (RHP Jeremy Walker) at Mesa (LPH Justin Steele), 3:35 p.m. ET

Surprise (RHP Tai Tiedemann) at Glendale (LHP **Chris Lee**), 3:35 p.m. ET

Scottsdale (RHP J.B. Bukauskas) at Salt River (RHOP **Jordan Yamamoto**), 9:35 p.m. ET

Dates To Remember

Oct. 9: Opening Day

Oct. 13: Bowman Hitting Challenge, Sloan Park, Mesa, 9:35 pm ET

Nov. 3: Fall Stars Game, Surprise Stadium, Scottsdale, 8 pm ET

Nov. 10: Military Appreciation Game, Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, 8 pm ET

Nov. 17: Championship Game, Scottsdale Stadium, 3 pm ET

FROM BLEACHER REPORT

Predicting 1 Impact Trade for Each MLB Team 2 Months from Winter Meetings*

By Joel Reuter

While the MLB postseason is still in full swing, the offseason will be here before you know it.

The month of November is generally quiet as far as free-agency news and impact trades, but things kick into gear during the winter meetings, which will be held Dec. 10-14 in Las Vegas.

So two months out, let's take a look at trade ideas for all 30 teams—whether it's a trade chip for a contender to cash in or a trade target for a contender to pursue.

In some cases, both sides of a hypothetical swap were explored, as it's never too early for speculation.

AL West**Houston Astros:** Acquire RP Taylor Rogers

The Astros and Twins matched up as trade partners in July when setup reliever Ryan Pressly was acquired for a pair of prospects, and they could be a potential fit once again this offseason. With Tony Sipp headed for free agency, the Astros stand to be without a proven lefty relief option, and the Twins happen to have a great one in Taylor Rogers.

The 27-year-old posted a 2.63 ERA and 0.95 WHIP in 72 appearances, posting the best strikeout (9.9 K/9) and walk (2.1 BB/9) rates of his three-year career and tallying 18 holds and three saves along the way.

He was lethal against lefties (.180 BAA, .428 OPS), but was also plenty effective against righties (.225 BAA, .643 OPS), and he's under team control through the 2022 season.

If the Astros don't like the idea of spending big on someone like Andrew Miller or Zach Britton, another trade with Minnesota could be an excellent alternative to addressing the bullpen.

Los Angeles Angels: Acquire SP Kyle Gibson

The Angels starting staff finished 19th in the majors with a 4.34 ERA this season.

Even more troubling was the fact that only Andrew Heaney (180.0 IP) topped 130 innings on a team where 16 different pitchers started at least one game and only three started more than 20.

In other words, if there's any team that could use a workhorse starter to help bring some stability to the staff, it's the Angels.

Gibson is fresh off a career-high 196.2 innings of 3.62 ERA work, and since he's entering a walk year, it won't take a system-gutting haul of prospects to acquire him.

A high-ceiling, lower-level prospect like right-hander Jose Soriano or middle infielder Leandro Rivas might be enough as a centerpiece to get a deal done.

Oakland Athletics: Acquire C Austin Hedges

Oakland will once again be looking to fill the catcher position after veteran Jonathan Lucroy signed a one-year, \$6.5 million deal late last offseason.

Bringing back Lucroy is certainly a possibility, though his 71 OPS+ and minus-0.7 WAR left a lot to be desired.

Yasmani Grandal, Wilson Ramos, Kurt Suzuki, Devin Mesoraco, Martin Maldonado and Nick Hundley will be among the other free-agent options, but a more long-term solution would be a trade for Austin Hedges.

Hedges, 26, is already a standout defender (12 DRS) with good power (14 HR), and he still has some offensive upside based on his minor league numbers.

After the Padres acquired Francisco Mejia from the Indians in exchange for Brad Hand, they may be willing to entertain offers for Hedges this winter.

Seattle Mariners: Acquire SP Ian Kennedy

The Mariners don't have the prospect talent to swing a blockbuster deal, so they'll have to get creative if they want to make a splash on the trade market.

Targeting a big contract on a rebuilding team like Ian Kennedy could be an option.

The Royals would love to offload some of the \$33 million he's still owed over the next two seasons as they continue to tear things down, and that means the Mariners won't need to part with much if they're willing to take on a good chunk of that salary figure.

Kennedy, 33, has a 5.06 ERA and 1.35 WHIP in 273.2 innings over the past two seasons, but he ended 2018 on a high note. After missing nearly two months with an oblique injury, he returned to go 2-1 with a 2.88 ERA and 1.16 WHIP over 25 innings in four September starts.

Is that enough for the Mariners to consider buying low?

Texas Rangers: Trade SP Mike Minor

The Rangers signed Mike Minor to a three-year, \$28 million deal last winter, and he returned to the starting rotation for the first time since 2014.

While his 4.18 ERA was nothing special, it came with a strong 1.12 WHIP thanks to a .235 opponents' batting average, and he pitched surprisingly well in hitter-friendly Arlington.

He's the one pitcher locked into a rotation spot for next year as things currently stand, but it's reasonable to think the soon-to-be-rebuilding Rangers will shop him this winter.

We've identified the Rays as a potential landing spot, as they have a deep system filled with talented arms beyond their top-tier guys that should be of interest to the Rangers.

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

FROM BASEBALL AMERICA**Ringolsby: The Face Of MLB**

By Tracy Ringolsby

There's something missing from this picture.

Mike Trout was called out by commissioner Rob Manfred because Trout isn't enough of a self-promoter?

That doesn't compute.

Trout is arguably the best player in the game.

I say arguably because I could easily make the case that Nolan Arenado deserves that distinction in light of the completeness of his game, which even has players from a different generation admitting that Arenado well could be the best third baseman the game has ever seen.

But then Arenado isn't a self-promoter, either. So I guess he wouldn't fit whatever it is Major League Baseball feels is important for its star players to possess.

Just what is it that Trout doesn't do?

He plays the game hard and with a high level of skill.

He has the respect of his teammates for his commitment to the team.

He has a personality.

He isn't necessarily verbose in media sessions, but he is polite, available and willing to answer the questions that are asked.

Biggest knock on him? He hasn't played on a championship team. The Angels won the World Series in 2002, a decade before Trout was American League Rookie of the Year. They haven't been back to the World Series since.

It that his fault?

Baseball, of all sports, is one game that a single player can't control. It is a team game in the absolute sense.

That's not to knock the other sports. It's just what happens when a player gets one turn out of every nine taken by his team to impact the game offensively. It's what happens when a player might be involved in five or six defensive plays on a busy night.

And when it comes to a face of a sport, and recognition for his greatness, put Trout at the top of the list.

Just what has he done on the field?

Well, as a rookie he led the AL in stolen bases. He has led the AL in runs scored four times. He was the AL leader in RBIs in 2014. He led the league in slugging in 2015 and 2017. He led in on-base percentage in 2016 and 2017 and did it again this year.

And he is 27 years old.

Check out Baseball-Reference.com, and the player Trout is most similar to through age 25 is Frank Robinson. The next names on the list are Ken Griffey Jr., Mickey Mantle and Hank Aaron.

Now, the fans obviously know Trout. He is a seven-time all-star and has been voted to the starting lineup by the fans five times.

The players obviously know who he is. He has won the Silver Slugger for offensive excellence by an outfielder the last five years.

And the media haven't ignored him. In six seasons from 2012 to 2017, the writers have voted him the AL MVP twice, the runner-up three times and fourth in the voting once.

He spends his time with fans and puts in hours on charity work.

Oh, and the consumers know him, too. Let's just point out that he is 27 and Nike is already producing the fifth version of the Mike Trout baseball cleat.

What's the knock on him? That he doesn't pander for attention? He doesn't try to set himself apart from his teammates? He doesn't blast the Angels for failing to provide enough talent to make the postseason more than once in his first seven full seasons?

He just goes about his business, enjoys life, and puts together seasons better than any other outfielder in the game.

That is a reason to be admired, not to be expected to apologize.

Tom Brady and Aaron Rodgers are arguably the best players in the NFL. Both are quarterbacks. Both have won Super Bowls. Neither one is going to be praised for the cute one-liners they deliver. Heck, the most recognizable quarterback in the NFL from a public standpoint isn't even in the NFL anymore—Colin Kaepernick.

LeBron James is certainly a regular figure on television, having earned his place as basketball's most recognizable player, but it's not like he is beloved. He gets heat for using free agency to change teams, in search of an NBA title. Damn him for wanting to win.

Truth be told, I'd say Trout is the perfect guy to be the face of the franchise — and of Major League Baseball.

He embodies hard work, a team-first mentality, and is at least the best player in the AL, if not the game.