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Detroit Free Press

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Daily Transactions

Tigers' off-season of change leads to upcoming winter meetings

December 4, 2016

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

It all leads to the winter meetings.

From Detroit Tigers general manager Al Avila's comments at the outset of the off-season — when he said “changes are coming” — to a more detailed explanation of those changes a couple of weeks later to the trade rumors that surrounded his best players: It all leads to this week in Washington, where the Tigers will be one of the most talked-about teams — even if their activity doesn't match up.

The Tigers' situation is as simple as it is complex: They need to reduce payroll, perhaps by as much as \$20 million, to avoid exceeding Major League Baseball's luxury-tax limit for a second consecutive year. That seems to be the main directive, perhaps from ownership, for an organization that has failed to make the postseason in two consecutive seasons.

And it means that franchise players like first baseman Miguel Cabrera and starting pitcher Justin Verlander and other veterans like second baseman Ian Kinsler and rightfielder J.D. Martinez will be hot topics of conversation. A number of others with big salaries — leftfielder Justin Upton, designated hitter Victor Martinez and right-hander Jordan Zimmermann — also will be mentioned.

But Avila has cautioned in the month and a half since meeting with reporters at Comerica Park that the process will be lengthy — the winter meetings potentially only serving as a starting point — and might not produce the headline-grabbing blockbuster trades many have been plotting. But it seems a near-certainty that one of the key players — with most signs pointing toward J.D. Martinez — will be dealt as soon as this week.

A number of teams already have expressed interest in a number of Tigers, including right-handers Anibal Sanchez and Mike Pelfrey. Chiefly among them Martinez, a legitimate middle-of-the-order bat with an affordable contract (\$11.75 million) expiring after the season. Teams that have been in contact in recent weeks: San Francisco, Philadelphia and the Mets.

Martinez is the best bet to get traded because of his production and price. Kinsler, who has limited no-trade protection, will request a contract extension to lift it. Additionally, there is not as much of a second-base market. Cabrera and Verlander — longshots to get moved because of their stature and lucrative, long-term contracts — join Victor Martinez in having 5-and-10 full-trade rights.

In addition to reducing payroll, Avila would like a younger and more dynamic team, which fell 21/2 games short of an American League wild-card spot this past season and has aging star players.

The Tigers say they will aim to remain competitive, but by paring payroll, it seems those chances will grow slimmer. In reality, Avila is trying to first and foremost evade the luxury-tax limit, which would produce a 30% penalty, and do the bare minimum of subtraction in doing so.

Because of how strong the rotation looks — headed by Verlander, followed by AL rookie of the year Michael Fulmer, counting on a Zimmermann bounce-back and the continued improvement of Matt Boyd and Daniel Norris — and with a better bullpen, the Tigers could absorb the blow of dealing J.D. Martinez. They have a lot of right-handed power hitting and seemingly could move Upton or Nick Castellanos up a slot in the order. They also could acquire a player who can contribute in the short term, or one that feeds a farm system in desperate need.

They likely couldn't absorb the blow of dealing Kinsler, Cabrera or Verlander, crucial core players, and stay competitive. For all the talk there will be about the Tigers and their coveted players, finally, there might be a move or two.

Tigers third baseman Casey McGehee heading back to Japan for 2017

December 4, 2016

By George Sipple/ Detroit Free Press

Veteran infielder Casey McGehee, who played 30 games last season for the Detroit Tigers, is returning to Japan to play for the Yomiuri Giants.

Fox Sports' Ken Rosenthal tweeted the agreement is a one-year deal with a club option.

McGehee, who turned 34 on Oct. 12, filed for free agency in November, along with catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia and infielder Erick Aybar.

This will be his second stint in Japan. He played for the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles in 2013. He signed with the Marlins in 2014 and was named National League comeback player of the year after batting .287 with 29 doubles and 76 RBIs in 160 games.

McGehee signed a minor-league deal with the Tigers before spring training and filled in for the injured third baseman Nick Castellanos late in the season.

McGehee batted .228 with one double and one RBI for the Tigers. He also batted .317 with 37 doubles, six home runs and 50 RBIs in 116 games at Triple-A Toledo last season.

He has a career average of .258 with 67 home runs and 380 RBIs in 850 Major League games with the Cubs, Brewers, Pirates, Yankees, Marlins, Giants and Tigers.

When the Tigers brought McGehee back up after Toledo's season ended in September, Tigers manager Brad Ausmus told reporters: "I like the way he plays the game, quite frankly. He plays the game the right way. Cares about the right things."

Ausmus also complimented McGehee by saying he was a "roll-in-the-dirt baseball player.

"Never complains," Ausmus added. "Does what he's asked. He was unlucky at times with the bat, where he'd hit the ball hard and it didn't find a hole....Played tremendous third base."

Detroit Tigers tender offers to all arbitration-eligible names Friday

December 4, 2016

By Anthony Fenech/ Detroit Free Press

There were no surprises on Friday night.

The Detroit Tigers tendered contracts to all six of their arbitration-eligible players: third baseman Nick Castellanos, shortstop Jose Iglesias, utilityman Andrew Romine, right-handed relievers Alex Wilson and Bruce Rondon and lefty Justin Wilson.

All six figure to play roles on next year's team.

In total, the Tigers will tab roughly \$12 million in salary to securing their services in arbitration. According to MLBTradeRumors.com, the industry's authoritative voice on the topic, Castellanos is projected to earn \$2.8 million, Iglesias \$3.1 million, Romine \$1.2 million, Alex Wilson \$1.2 million, Rondon \$900,000 and Justin Wilson \$2.7 million.

The Tigers and those players' agents will have until early February to sign a contract for 2017, before potentially going to an arbitration hearing. The team has not gone to an arbitration hearing with a player for over 14 years.

One notable non-tender: The Nationals non-tendered centerfielder Ben Revere. Revere, 28, hit .217 with 14 stolen bases in 103 games this past season. With an opening in centerfield, it wouldn't be a surprise to see the Tigers give Revere – a veteran left-handed hitter with speed – a look.

Miguel Cabrera on possible trade: 'I love Detroit, but the doors are open'

December 4, 2016

By Evan Woodbery/ MLive.com

DETROIT -- Detroit Tigers star first baseman Miguel Cabrera, who has been the center of trade speculation this winter, said he would prefer to stay in Detroit but wouldn't necessarily use his contractual rights to block a trade.

"I love playing in Detroit, I love the city. But the doors are open," he said in Spanish to Venezuelan media in a press conference Saturday.

Cabrera was asked about the possibility of a trade while discussing his role in mediating a leadership dispute involving Venezuela's World Baseball Classic team.

A future Hall-of-Famer, Cabrera has at least seven years and \$212 million remaining on his contract, meaning only a few teams could afford him. He also can veto any deal.

He told Venezuelan reporters that he hopes it doesn't happen. If it does, he hopes it's a trade to a good team.

Cabrera could help arrange that, of course, by approving a prospective deal. He said he wouldn't stand in the way of a trade that helped the Tigers.

"If it's a good deal, I'll accept the trade," he said. "If the team does not benefit, I prefer to stay in Detroit."

Tigers general manager Al Avila said earlier this winter that he had warned the team's veteran players that their names might come up in trade chatter. But he told them not to worry until he advised them that the discussions had become serious.

Cabrera seemed to allude to Avila's comments while talking to reporters in Venezuela.

"The first call has already happened," he said. "Hopefully the second won't happen."

Miggy open to trade but wants to be in Detroit

December 4, 2016

By Jason Beck/ MLB.com

DETROIT -- Tigers slugger Miguel Cabrera told Venezuelan reporters on Saturday that he would like to remain with the club, but he would not stand in the way of a trade if it benefits both sides.

As the Tigers listen to trade interest in all of their veteran players heading into the Winter Meetings starting on Monday just outside Washington, D.C., Cabrera's comments are his first on the possibility of being traded since general manager Al Avila said the club will look to pare down payroll this offseason and would entertain trade offers to get there.

Speaking in Spanish at his Miggyball charity event in his native Maracay, Cabrera told reporters, including Andriw Sanchez Ruiz of the Venezuelan newspaper El Nacional, that Avila called him about the possibility of a trade. Avila said at last month's General Managers Meetings that he called all of the Tigers' star players about their offseason change and the possibility of a deal.

Cabrera has full no-trade rights as a 10-and-5 player -- 10 or more seasons in the Major Leagues, the last five seasons with the same team. Any trade involving Cabrera would require his approval.

Cabrera said he felt sick over the news, that he likes to play in Detroit and likes the city. He said he hasn't received any calls about specific deals and hopes he doesn't, but if it happens, he hopes to be traded to a good team.

If it's a good deal and a good negotiation, Cabrera said he'll accept a trade. If the trade doesn't benefit both teams, he said, he would prefer to stay in Detroit.

Cabrera became a Tiger through a trade at the Winter Meetings nine years ago, acquired from the Marlins along with Dontrelle Willis for a package of prospects that included current Major Leaguers Andrew Miller and Cameron Maybin.

Cabrera was a budding young star at the time, but he eventually refined his game to become one of the greatest hitters of his or any generation. He won baseball's offensive Triple Crown -- leading the league in batting average, home runs and RBIs -- in 2012. He won four batting titles in a five-year span, something accomplished by just eight other players in modern Major League history, and he won back-to-back American League Most Valuable Player Award honors in 2012 and '13.

The 33-year-old Cabrera enjoyed a bounceback season in 2016, batting .316 with 38 homers and 108 RBIs. His .956 OPS ranked third among AL hitters. His .321 career batting average leads all active Major Leaguers, and he's on a path to climb MLB's all-time list in several offensive categories on his way to the Hall of Fame.

The impetus for the Tigers to entertain a deal isn't performance, but finances and roster makeup. Avila has made it clear the club is looking to get leaner in payroll and younger in roster makeup as it looks to dig out of luxury-tax territory.

Cabrera is under contract for \$212 million over the next seven seasons. He also has club options for \$30 million in 2024 and '25. If he wanted, Cabrera could ask a team to pick up the options as a condition of approving a trade, which would bring his contract to \$272 million over the next nine years.

Cabrera also confirmed to reporters that he intervened during this week's controversy over the Venezuelan team in the upcoming World Baseball Classic amid rumors Omar Vizquel had been dismissed as manager. Players went to the media saying they would only play if Vizquel, who works with Cabrera as the Tigers' first-base coach, is the manager. After three days of conflicting reports, the Venezuelan baseball federation issued a press release saying Vizquel remains the manager after meeting with GM Carlos Guillen, a former teammate of Cabrera in Detroit.

LAST UPDATED: SUN, DECEMBER 4, 2016, 02:19 EST

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2016

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
Atlanta Braves	Lane Adams	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Detroit Tigers	Casey McGehee	Signed to Play in Japan, (Yomiuri Giants)
San Diego Padres	Carlos Fisher	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Seattle Mariners	Zach Lee	Designated for Assignment
Seattle Mariners	Marc Rzepczynski	Signed as Free Agent, (2017-2018)(two-year contract)
Seattle Mariners	Casey Fien	Signed as Free Agent, (2017)(one-year contract)
Seattle Mariners	Dean Kiekhefer	Designated for Assignment

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
Arizona Diamondbacks	Rubby De La Rosa	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Arizona Diamondbacks	Wellington Castillo	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Atlanta Braves	Paco Rodriguez	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Atlanta Braves	Anthony Recker	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)

Atlanta Braves	Chris Withrow	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Baltimore Orioles	Vance Worley	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Boston Red Sox	Bryan Holaday	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Chicago Cubs	Brian Duensing	Signed as Free Agent, (2017)(one-year contract)
Chicago Cubs	Zac Rosscup	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Chicago Cubs	Christian Villanueva	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Chicago Cubs	Conor Mullee	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Chicago Cubs	Gerardo Concepción	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Chicago White Sox	Blake Smith	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Chicago White Sox	Avisail Garcia	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Chicago White Sox	Brett Lawrie	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Cincinnati Reds	Ramón Cabrera	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Cincinnati Reds	Keyvius Sampson	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Cincinnati Reds	Gabby Guerrero	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Cleveland Indians	Jeff Manship	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Colorado Rockies	Matt Carasiti	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)

Colorado Rockies	Jake McGee	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Colorado Rockies	Stephen Cardullo	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Los Angeles Angels	Gregorio Petit	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Los Angeles Angels	John Lamb	Signed to a Minor League Contract
Los Angeles Angels	Cody Ege	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Los Angeles Dodgers	Louis Coleman	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Milwaukee Brewers	Kirk Nieuwenhuis	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Milwaukee Brewers	David Goforth	Outrighted to Minors
Milwaukee Brewers	Steven Geltz	Outrighted to Minors
Milwaukee Brewers	Scooter Gennett	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Milwaukee Brewers	Chris Carter	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Minnesota Twins	Eduardo Escobar	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
New York Mets	Rene Rivera	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
New York Yankees	Jacob Lindgren	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Oakland Athletics	Yonder Alonso	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Philadelphia Phillies	David Rollins	Acquired Off Waivers From from Rangers, Texas
Philadelphia Phillies	Cody Asche	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)

Philadelphia Phillies	Cody Asche	Designated for Assignment
Pittsburgh Pirates	Wade LeBlanc	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
San Diego Padres	Tyson Ross	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
San Diego Padres	Jon Edwards	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
San Diego Padres	Dusty Coleman	Signed to a Minor League Contract
San Diego Padres	Erik Johnson	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
San Diego Padres	Jose Pirela	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
San Diego Padres	Hector Sanchez	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
San Diego Padres	Alexi Amarista	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
San Francisco Giants	Ehire Adrianza	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
San Francisco Giants	Cory Gearrin	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
Seattle Mariners	Ryan Weber	Outrighted to Minors
St. Louis Cardinals	Seth Maness	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Tampa Bay Rays	Ryan Brett	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Texas Rangers	Jared Hoying	Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)
Toronto Blue Jays	Chris Colabello	Outrighted to Minors
Toronto Blue Jays	Andy Burns	Outrighted to Minors

[Washington Nationals](#) [Derek Norris](#) Traded From from Padres, San Diego (for RHP Pedro Avila)

[Washington Nationals](#) [Ben Revere](#) Not Offered Contract and Became Free Agent, (non-tendered)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2016

TEAM	PLAYER	TRANSACTION
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Atlanta Braves	Jaime Garcia	Traded From from Cardinals, St. Louis (for RHP John Gant, four-player deal)
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Baltimore Orioles	Logan Schafer	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Cleveland Indians	Michael Martinez	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Cleveland Indians	Erik Kratz	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Los Angeles Angels	Brooks Pounders	Traded From from Royals, Kansas City (for RHP Jared Ruxer)
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Los Angeles Angels	Tony Sánchez	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Los Angeles Angels	Cody Ege	Designated for Assignment
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Los Angeles Dodgers	Scott Van Slyke	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
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Los Angeles Dodgers	Chris Hatcher	Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)
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Miami Marlins	Edinson Volquez	Signed as Free Agent, (2017-2018)(two-year contract)
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Oakland Athletics	Jaff Decker	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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Oakland Athletics	Jermaine Curtis	Signed to a Minor League Contract
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[Seattle Mariners](#)

[Pat Venditte](#)

Outrighted to Minors

[St. Louis Cardinals](#)

[John Gant](#)

Traded From from Braves, Atlanta (for LHP Jaime Garcia, four-player deal)

[Washington Nationals](#)

[Jose Lobaton](#)

Signed, (2017)(avoids arbitration)