



Padres Press Clips

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Four potential trades the Padres could make to improve at third base

By [Dustin Palmateer](#), The Athletic

Who's going to play third base for the Padres in 2019?

Well, it *could* be Fernando Tatis Jr., that is if San Diego pulls off a [rumored trade with Seattle](#), which would net the Padres shortstop Jean Segura and starting pitcher Mike Leake for Wil Myers (and, you'd assume, more). If the Padres don't complete a trade for an impact player at short, however, Tatis would remain at his home position and third would forge on as a black hole. Where else could the Padres turn for an answer?

With Christian Villanueva sold to the Yomiuri Giants and ties cut with Cory Spangenberg, the in-house options are dwindling. Myers, who [experimented at third](#) late last season, is more likely to move back to the outfield if he sticks around. The recently acquired Greg Garcia or minor leaguer Ty France could fill in, but neither represent anything close to a permanent solution at the hot corner.

If the Padres want to improve at third going into 2019, they're probably going to have to find someone from outside the organization. On the free agent market, intriguing short-term plays like Josh Donaldson (signed with the Braves) and Adrián Beltré (retired) are already out of the picture, leaving less attractive options like Mike Moustakas and position-switch candidates in Marwin González or Jed Lowrie.

While Moustakas could provide a steady stopgap at third for any team in search of such a thing, if the Padres *really* want to make a splash at the position, then there's only one thing left to do.

Let's fire up the Trade Generator 3000.

With the hot stove season underway, what follows are four trade proposals that would net the Padres a third baseman for 2019 and beyond without making the other team's general manager immediately hang up the phone on A.J. Preller — an important side benefit to the Trade Generator's proprietary algorithm.

Trade No. 1

Padres get: 3B Johan Camargo

Braves get: RHPs Kirby Yates and Craig Stammen

When the Braves reached a one-year, \$23 million agreement with Donaldson earlier this week, the first ripple effect of that move — at least internally, for Atlanta — touched the now former third sacker Camargo. Something of an unheralded prospect, Camargo never rated higher than eighth in the Braves' farm system but transformed immediately into an effective player upon reaching the majors in 2017. This year, surrounded by flashier youngsters like Ronald Acuña and Ozzie Albies, Camargo was an overshadowed point of strength for the Braves. He slashed .272/.349/.457 in 524 plate appearances while providing above-average glove work, good for as many as 3.7 wins by Baseball Reference's WAR.

With Donaldson now installed at third, Albies at second and former top prospect Dansby Swanson at short, the Braves don't have anywhere to put Camargo, at least on an everyday basis. They could turn him into a super utility player, jumping him all over the infield (and outfield) Ben Zobrist-style. They could also attempt to stretch his defense over to short, where he could take over full-time for the disappointing Swanson. But perhaps the most enticing option for the Braves would be to trade Camargo, capitalizing on both his breakout season and a sudden excess at one position to improve another. Getting Yates and Stammen would allow the Braves to add two good relievers without entering a perilous big-dollar contract with someone like Craig Kimbrel, thus saving them money to patch other holes.

From the Padres' perspective, netting Camargo fills the hole at third potentially for the next half a decade, since he's just 25 years old (in December) and under team control through 2023. Camargo's not exactly a game changer at third — and his prospect pedigree might portend a comedown in 2019 — but the Padres don't necessarily need a game-changer everywhere. Those duties could be left to Tatis or Luis Urías or Francisco Mejía or any number of intriguing outfielders. Camargo does bring qualities the Padres should value: his switch-hitting bat would help break up a righty-heavy lineup and his plus glove at third would boost the performance of what projects to be a lefty-heavy starting rotation.

There's some adding and subtracting for both teams here, of course. For the Padres, they'd have to fill a big hole left by the departure of Yates and Stammen, their two best relievers. But the Padres have been masters of relief pitcher resurrections and Camargo has more years of control left than both Yates and Stammen combined. Adding Camargo in exchange for a pair of relievers would be something of a long-term play that would also improve the team right away.

Trade No. 2

Padres get: 3B Rafael Devers

Red Sox get: C Francisco Mejía

Outside of the positions they play, Devers and Mejía are eerily similar players. They were both signed as international free agents out of the Dominican Republic. In the prospect world, they followed the same path: Devers started on the fringe of the top 100 and peaked at No. 13 (per Baseball Prospectus); Mejía, by that same outlet, started at No. 84 and reached the heights of the top five. They even have similar offensive and defensive profiles as free swingers with a good mix of contact and power and questions surrounding their abilities at their respective positions.

Take a look at their career minor-league numbers:

Player	Slash Line	BB%	K%	ISO
Devers	.297/.354/.484	7.7	17.1	.187
Mejía	.293/.347/.452	6.5	16.1	.159

Swapping the two would effectively allow each team to better optimize its roster. The Red Sox still have Eduardo Núñez at third, and they leaned on him more often in their recent World Series run, as Devers was mired in a sophomore slump for much of the season. At catcher, however, they're bereft of offense. Christian Vázquez, Sandy León and Blake Swihart combined to post an [almost unthinkably low 44 wRC+](#) in 2018, worst in the league by 13 points. That 44 mark is tied for the second-worst wRC+ at catcher since 2000, behind only the Seattle's hacktastic catching duo of Mike Zunino and Jesús Sucre in 2015. Adding Mejía would give the Red Sox a needed jolt at the position, and they'd still be able to rely on the steady defense provided by either Vázquez or León.

On the other side, Austin Hedges gives the Padres depth to trade from at catcher. While [combining the talents](#) of Hedges and Mejía gives the Padres an excellent one-two punch at the position, there's an argument that dealing from a position of strength could make them better on the whole. Mejía was acquired from Cleveland at this past season's trade deadline for Brad Hand and Adam Cimber, so he might be easier to part with. Devers already has more than a full season's worth of experience in the majors but is still just 22 and, like Camargo, under control through 2023. An addition of his ilk would give the Padres one of the youngest (and most exciting) infielders in the game.

The one downfall to this proposed deal is perhaps that it makes *too* much sense. These types of one-for-one challenge trades are so rare and exciting that [one that flopped](#) for *both* teams and happened almost seven years ago is *still* talked about today. Further, the Red Sox and Padres aren't exactly on good terms after a 2016 exchange of damaged goods that sent Drew Pomeranz to Boston and Anderson Espinoza to San Diego and prompted an investigation into San Diego's medical procedures. The two teams agreed to a [minor move last week](#), but Colten Brewer for Esteban Quiroz does not exactly signal a truce.

Trade No. 3

Padres get: 3B Eugenio Suárez

Reds get: OF Hunter Renfroe, LHP MacKenzie Gore and RHP Cal Quantrill

The Reds have found an unheralded star in Suárez, who toiled in relative anonymity as a prospect and then struggled to find a foothold early in his big-league career. Now, in his mid-20s, Suárez has hit his stride: After breaking out in 2017, he found another level this year, placing inside the top 10 among third basemen in both [wRC+ and FanGraphs' WAR](#). Signed to a team-friendly seven-year, \$66 million extension back in March, Suárez might hold more trade value than any player mentioned in this article.

The Reds have a good problem on their hands, however. Their best prospect — and a consensus top 10 one at that — Nick Senzel also plays third, and Senzel could be ready for a call-up in early 2019. A trade doesn't *have* to be made, of course, as either one could slide over to shortstop. Suárez was a regular at that position back in 2015 and the Reds have flirted with converting Senzel to the more demanding spot.

On the other hand, Cincinnati's still more than one player away from contending. Dealing Suárez for the trio of players mentioned above would give them an MLB-ready outfielder, a potential ace in Gore, and a plug-and-play mid-rotation project. Since 2014, the Reds have received a league-worst 18.3 wins ([per FanGraphs](#)) out of their starting pitchers, 8.7 wins behind the 29th-place Marlins. In 2018, the Reds got 20 or more starts from six different hurlers but none of them recorded an ERA+ better than 100.

For the Padres, Suárez — like Camargo and Devers — would give them a young, cost-controlled solution at third. Suárez's track record could indicate that 2018's performance was more of a peak than a sustainable level, but he did rank 21st in the league by [Statcast's Expected wOBA](#), ahead of the likes of Manny Machado and Alex Bregman. Even if Suárez doesn't provide middle-of-the-order offense every season, his combination of solid defense and age should keep him valuable throughout his contract.

Trade No. 4

Padres get: 3B Kyle Seager (and money)

Mariners get: OF Michael Gettys

The Mariners have already dealt away James Paxton and are entering rebuild mode. Seager, once a key contributor, is now 31, coming off his worst season to date and is still owed at least \$57.5 million over the next three years. Seattle has been rumored to trade just about anybody they owe significant money to, including Robinson Canó, Dee Gordon, Segura and Leake. The Mariners might even include some dough in a deal in order to unload Seager.

Why would the Padres be interested? Seager's been a quiet star as recently as two years ago. According to Baseball Prospectus, he notched seven-win seasons in both 2014 and 2016, buoyed by strong defense and a well-rounded offensive game. Even this year — his worst season to date — he was worth two wins by BP's calculations.

Just about everything did go wrong in 2018, though: Seager's walk and strikeout rates went in the wrong direction and conspired to sink his offensive production to worse than average for the first time in his career. According to the *Bill James Baseball Handbook*, Seager faced a shift in a league-high 490 plate appearances, losing 19 hits to the shift in 2018 after losing just 23

combined from 2010-2017. Even his fieldwork, at least according to Defensive Runs Saved, fell to five runs below average.

Seager's surface-level struggles are what make him available, and the Padres could be rewarded for betting on a bounce back. Seager's Expected wOBA outdid his actual one by 21 points, the 39th biggest positive gap in the league among 313 regular hitters. His 89.7-mph exit velocity was down just a fraction from his 2016 number. Further, his defense still rated well clear of average by both UZR and BP's FRAA, indicating there's more left in the glove. Due to his age, Seager's probably riskier than Camargo, Devers or Suárez, but he also wouldn't cost the Padres much outside of money — Gettys' progress has stalled in the minors and he's eligible to be taken in the upcoming Rule 5 draft, anyway. Seager offers turnaround potential and could benefit from either a change of scenery or offensive approach.

The scattershot progression of the offseason tends to take the best-laid plans of the Trade Generator 3000 and shred them into little pieces. The Padres are still apparently chatting about a trade with the Mets for Noah Syndergaard, and it's possible they strike that other deal with the Mariners for Segura and Leake. Moustakas is always available. In other words, filling the void at third base could be accomplished in countless different ways. What we've provided here, hopefully, are a few reasonable ideas for hot stove enthusiasts to chew on.

Franmil Reyes diagnosed with torn meniscus

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

SAN DIEGO -- [Franmil Reyes](#) burst onto the scene in 2018, turning himself into a formidable big league slugger and a key piece in the middle of the Padres' lineup. His brilliant rookie year won't have such a charmed ending.

On Wednesday, Reyes was diagnosed with a torn meniscus in his right knee, which he sustained while playing for Escogido in the Dominican Winter League. The 23-year-old right fielder will undergo surgery on Thursday, and he's expected to be sidelined for 4-8 weeks, per a team official.

Reyes is expected to be healthy in time for the start of Spring Training in February, but don't be surprised if the Padres play it safe when camp opens. In any case, the injury shouldn't affect his prospects for Opening Day.

In 87 games last season, Reyes batted .280/.340/.498 with 16 homers. He was San Diego's nominee for the Hank Aaron Award, given to the best offensive player on each team.

The Padres expressed optimism that the injury won't slow Reyes' rapid ascent. A year ago, he was left unprotected during the Rule 5 Draft, but the other 29 clubs passed on him. (Of course, Reyes was coming off an injury then, too -- a broken hamate bone in his left hand.)

Reyes debuted in May, but didn't hit his stride until the second half of the season, when he anchored himself in a crowded outfield. He batted .315/.383/.537 with 10 dingers in the second half.

The Padres are currently mulling what to do with their glut of corner outfielders -- including Reyes, [Hunter Renfroe](#), [Wil Myers](#) and [Franchy Cordero](#). It seems likely one of them is dealt this offseason, and Reyes was a candidate. It's unclear how the injury might affect his prospects of being traded.

Jankowski among 6 arbitration-eligible Padres

Club likely to offer contracts to all as non-tender deadline approaches

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com [@AJCassavell](#)

SAN DIEGO -- The Padres have already spent the first month of the offseason trimming their roster.

The club unloaded [Alex Dickerson](#) and outrighted [Kazuhisa Makita](#) when it needed to reinstate players from the disabled list. San Diego cut ties with [Cory Spangenberg](#), [Colin Rea](#) and [Christian Villanueva](#) on Nov. 20, [clearing space to add prospects](#) to the 40-man roster. The Padres traded [Rowan Wick](#), [Colten Brewer](#) and [Walker Lockett](#) for [three players who didn't need to be rostered](#).

Those moves serve to make Friday's non-tender deadline somewhat less interesting than it's been in previous years. By 5 p.m. PT, the Padres need to decide which arbitration-eligible players will receive a contract for 2019.

Six players are eligible:

- Righty [Kirby Yates](#) and lefty [Robbie Erlin](#) are in their second arbitration year.
- Righty [Bryan Mitchell](#) and infielder [Greg Garcia](#) are in their first arbitration year.
- Catcher [Austin Hedges](#) and outfielder [Travis Jankowski](#) are in their first arbitration year, but they have the [Super Two](#) designation, meaning they'll have four seasons of arbitration-eligibility, instead of the usual three.

It's very likely the Padres tender a contract to all six. That means the club and the player would submit a proposed salary, and the two sides would negotiate from there. If no agreement is reached, an independent arbiter would pick between the two proposals.

Any player who isn't tendered a contract will instantly become a free agent. But the Padres probably aren't willing to lose a worthwhile contributor for nothing.

Of the group, Mitchell is the only question mark. But he almost certainly did enough during the final month of the 2018 season to earn a chance to compete for a rotation spot in Spring Training. (Mitchell made the league minimum last season, and he logged a 5.42 ERA and a 6.11 FIP in 2018. Whatever raise he gets in arbitration, it isn't going to break the bank.)

The Padres have already cut ties with Dickerson and Spangenberg -- their two real non-tender candidates entering the offseason. Any further movement on Friday would qualify as a surprise.

But there's one worthwhile note from the non-tender deadline: The Padres don't have a single player entering his final year of arbitration-eligibility. Among their players under contract, only [Clayton Richard](#) and [Craig Stammen](#) are up after 2019.

In short: There are a huge contingent of in-house pieces slated to be in San Diego for a long time. Those pieces are about to be complemented with prospects from the deepest farm system in baseball.

The Padres are almost certainly going to have some tricky roster decisions in 2019. And that's just fine -- they're the types of decisions good teams have to make.

Knee surgery to sideline Padres' Franmil Reyes 4 to 8 weeks

[Jeff Sanders](#)

Franmil Reyes will have surgery Thursday morning to repair a torn meniscus in his right knee, the [Padres](#) announced Wednesday night. His four- to eight-week recovery window is expected to have him ready for the start of [spring training](#).

The 23-year-old Reyes was riding an 11-game hitting streak in the Dominican Republic's winter league when right knee discomfort popped up after rounding first and stopping abruptly on a throw from the outfield. After about a week off, Reyes returned to San Diego this week for further evaluation.

Reyes had paired a .444/.510/.689 batting line with three homers and six RBIs in 13 games for Escogido.

He finished a breakout rookie campaign with the Padres with 16 homers, 52 RBIs and a .280/.340/.498 batting line in 87 games in the majors.

His emergence, along with [Hunter Renfroe](#)'s, is one reason the Padres are said to be shopping their outfielders – including [Wil Myers](#) – this offseason, although it may prove more difficult to move a hobbled Reyes.

Manuel Margot is the favorite to start in center field, although he could draw fierce competition from Franchy Cordero as he returns from his elbow injury.

Myers, Renfroe and Reyes are the leading candidates for the corner outfield spots and Travis Jankowski will enter camp as a bench option.

A seventh outfielder, Edward Olivares, was added to the 40-man roster last week but has not played above A-ball.

Iffy future, but San Diego Fleet draws from alienated Chargers fans, has Padres beat on uniform front

Tom Krasovic

Soon after the helmets and uniforms are unpacked, pro football leagues other than the [NFL](#) have tended to crash and burn, or at least fade.

So the [San Diego Fleet](#) may be, uh, fleeting.

Crowds for Fleet games could look puny. Home will be the massive former [Chargers](#) stadium, where the team will play five games starting Feb. 17

The football may be NFL Lite, at best.

Son of a gun, though, if the folks running the fledgling [Alliance of American Football](#) haven't split the uprights with several of the launch's details.

The Fleet name and battleship logo honors the U.S. Navy and its longtime relationship with San Diego.

Smart move.

As San Diego's largest economic engine, the Navy can provide a large pool of potential customers.

The Alliance sought a unique color scheme for the Fleet, said team president Jeff Garner, and while that made sense, "unique" often veers into "garish" and "bush league."

Did the Fleet succeed with the football duds and helmet of two shades of gray and yellow that it rolled out Monday?

Your call, but I doubt Ralph Lauren would've stormed out of the Gas Lamp sports bar when Fleet pass rusher Jonathan Petersen played the role of fashion model.

"The uniform is awesome," Petersen said.

Garner, who favors a light gray Fleet pullover, claimed the Fleet leads the eight-team Alliance in general merchandise sales.

Local flavor

A quarterback draft was part of Monday's event. The Fleet had the first pick due to a random drawing.

The choice was to retain former University of San Diego and NFL quarterback Josh Johnson, 32.

Walking onto a stage at a Las Vegas hotel, Johnson donned a gray-and-gold Fleet jacket provided by Fleet coach and Madison High alum Mike Martz.

Some 40 folks at the San Diego event cheered.

Johnson was accompanied by [Marshawn Lynch](#), the former NFL running back and a cousin. The quarterback's new teammates include a fellow USD alum in Petersen, who was a first-team All-American in all four seasons. Last spring, Johnson trained briefly with the Oakland Raiders, while Petersen, 23, took part in the [Carolina Panthers'](#) rookie mini-camp.

Switching allegiances

Attendees at the Fleet event included several former Chargers supporters.

Wearing Fleet caps and clapping when Johnson's selection was announced during the CBS Sports Network telecast were Brian "Smiffy" Smith and Joe Van Dalsen, who noted his name rhymes with "Van Awesome."

The two men said they've started a Fleet podcast, "The Shipyard."

Both Smith, 47, and Van Dalsen, 37, said they still cheer for Chargers players, but aren't pulling for Team Spanos to win the upcoming Super Bowl tournament.

"I just don't want to see the Spanoses walk away with the Super Bowl trophy," said Smith, eliciting a high five from Van Dalsen.

Wearing a Fleet golf shirt that he bought for \$40, former Chargers season ticket-holder Loren Casuto said he'll attend Fleet games. "It's a team from San Diego; I'll back them happily," he said.

Petersen said he'll have to earn a roster spot to secure a first-year salary of \$70,000. For second- and third-year players, the salaries go up to \$80,000 and \$100,000. Salaries for all Alliance players this season are the same, said Petersen, who earned an accounting degree at USD.

"Having this in San Diego," he said, "is ideal."

Season tickets will cost \$75 to \$250. A crowd of some 15,000 would exceed the norm for Chargers partisans at the NFL team's home games in Carson.

#PadresOnDeck: Transitioning Pitchers Miguel Diaz, Carlos Belen, Hansel Rodriguez on Padres' Radar

By Bill Center

The #PadresOnDeck prospect focus today features three right-handed pitchers in transition — **Carlos Belen, Hansel Rodriguez** and **Miguel Diaz**.

Belen was transformed from a middle infielder to a pitcher last season.

Rodriguez went from being a starter to a reliever.

And Diaz, the most advanced of the trio, has gone back and forth between the rotation and the bullpen in his two-plus seasons in the Padres' system.

A closer look at the trio starting with the biggest transition.

— Carlos Belen, 22, spent five seasons as a first baseman and third baseman in the Padres' lower minor leagues before the decision was made early last season to convert him into a relief pitcher. After all, the 6-foot-1, 215-pound native of the Dominican Republic had a plus-95 fastball.

Belen had played 45 games with Single-A Fort Wayne as a corner infielder last spring when the decision was finalized to convert him into a pitcher. Belen returned to the Padres' extended spring training camp in Peoria, Ariz., before making 19 relief appearances in the Arizona Rookie League and with Short-Season Single-A Tri-City before returning to Fort Wayne for two scoreless appearances as a pitcher.

Overall, Belen was 4–1 with a 3.05 earned run average, a 1.35 WHIP and a .218 opponents' batting average as a pitcher last season with 15 of his 19 appearances with Tri-City. He allowed 10 runs (seven earned) on 17 hits and 11 walks with 23 strikeouts in 20 2/3 innings. Again, it is Belen's velocity that puts him on the Padres' radar.

Before turning to pitching, Belen had a .231/.308/.411/.719 slash line in 420 games as a corner infielder with 86 doubles, 25 triples, 47 homers and 227 RBIs in 1,541 at-bats. He reached Advanced Single-A Lake Elsinore in 2017 where he hit .238 with a .308 on-base percentage and a .426 slugging percentage for a .734 OPS in 89 games. He had 11 homers and 46 RBIs.

Belen will likely start the 2019 season with a third trip to Fort Wayne, although the first Opening Day as a pitcher.

— Hansel Rodriguez was once ranked a [Padres' Top-30 prospect](#) as a starting pitcher before moving to the bullpen during the 2017 season while with Fort Wayne.

The 21-year-old native of the Dominican Republic was acquired by the Padres from Toronto on July 26, 2016, in exchange for outfielder **Melvin Upton Jr.** and cash considerations. At the time, he was ranked among the Padres' top prospects.

Rodriguez had a 6.97 ERA in six starts with Tri-City at the end of the 2016 season and was struggling after 10 starts for Fort Wayne the following season when the decision was made to convert him into a relief pitcher.

In 25 relief appearances for the TinCaps in 2017, the 6-foot-2, 170-pound Rodriguez had a 1.79 ERA with a 0.89 WHIP and a .185 opponents' batting average. He allowed 10 runs (eight earned) on 27 hits and nine walks with 56 strikeouts in 40 1/3 innings — a rate of 12 1/2 strikeouts per nine innings.

Unfortunately, injuries limited Rodriguez to 13 appearances in 2018. He allowed six runs (five earned) on five hits and seven walks with 18 strikeouts in 14 1/3 innings.

— Miguel Diaz, who turned 24 on Nov. 28, joined the Padres in the Rule 5 draft of 2016 and spent the entire 2017 with the Padres — posting a 7.34 ERA in 31 appearances (three starts).

The 6-foot, 214-pound native of the Dominican Republic has been going back and forth between starter and reliever since.

Diaz was 5–2 with a 2.35 ERA and a 1.154 WHIP in 19 appearances (nine starts) with Double-A San Antonio this season and 5–5 overall with a 3.33 ERA and a 1.50 WHIP between San Antonio and Triple-A El Paso before rejoining the Padres at the end of the season for 11 relief appearances (4.82 ERA and 1.50 WHIP with 30 strikeouts in 18 2/3 innings).

Then it was off to the Arizona Fall League where Diaz made six starts (he also started the AFL championship game) with a 4.87 ERA and a 1.426 WHIP — allowing 11 runs on 20 hits and nine walks with 19 strikeouts in 20 1/3 innings.

Between the Padres, the upper two levels of the minor leagues and the AFL, Diaz worked a total of 117 1/3 innings this calendar year in 41 appearances (17 starts) with 130 strikeouts (10.0 per nine innings) with a 4.14 ERA and a 1.38 WHIP.