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Press Clips

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FROM THE LA TIMES

Letters: Fans say goodbye to Mike Scioscia in their own way

Thank you, Mike Scioscia, for 19 years of class, intelligence, patience and goodness. I was hoping that you would change your mind and stay at the helm of the Angels. My only regret for you is that you weren't given the players to succeed. It's like asking someone to build a house but not furnishing the necessary tools to complete the job.

Bob Sands
La Habra
::
Mike Scioscia took the Angels from pretenders to contenders and Arte Moreno took them from contenders back to pretenders.
Eddie Dawes
Hacienda Heights
::
What a disappointing Angels season. A team with a lame-duck manager, a few superb players, a gaggle of mostly minor leaguers, a \$33-million aging anchor, and an owner nobody can figure out.
Joe Bonino
Glendale
::
Really? The Angels are considering the likes of Eric Chavez, Dino Ebel, various bench coaches and special assistants, Brad Ausmus, Joe Espada, Josh Paul who have been groomed and brainwashed by Mike Scioscia and Billy Eppler. Not a single word about Dusty Baker, Joe Girardi, or even Buck Showalter.
If this happens, it's going to be a very long time before another postseason comes along at Angel Stadium.
Steven DeMont
Orange
::

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In last Friday night's game, the Angels' starting pitcher, Jaime Barria, had a five-run lead in the top of the fifth inning, pitching a no-hitter and had walked two men after two outs and what did Mike Scioscia do? He pulls Barria before he could qualify for the victory.

Don't let the door hit you on the way out, Mike.

Ken Blake

Brea

FROM THE ATHLETIC

Gammons: For some of the best players in the game, insecurity is a powerful tool

By Peter Gammons

One afternoon this week, some of his Red Sox teammates and coaches were making light of Mookie Betts, their likely MVP and most unassuming friend. "Mookie needs to be reminded that he's as good as he is," said one coach. "It's refreshing. It's motivating. But he doesn't think of himself as a star. Just the opposite."

"I don't think he thinks he's very good," said Betts' science-of-hitting companion J.D. Martinez.

So I asked Betts: "Do you realize what you've become?"

He laughed, put his head down, then shook it. "I'm not someone who talks about myself." He laughed a little more. I told a couple of teammates that he has no idea that in 2016 and '18, Betts and Mike Trout will have finished 2-1 and 1-2 in the MVP voting and Wins Above Replacement science. The conversation turned to the insecurity that envelops most people that play major league baseball.

I offered Mookie a story: "A couple of the great Orioles pitchers who played with Cal Ripken when he came up, and were around when he became one of the most respected faces of the game in the nineties, used to say, 'The most insecure person on earth is Cal Ripken.""

The story continued: How the pitchers believed that insecurity motivated Ripken to show up, hurt, sick, whatever, to play every day for years, begin the post-strike rehabilitation of the game in 1995, sign autographs for hours after games. When he broke Lou Gehrig's record on national television with Bill Clinton in the booth with Chris Berman, he was still was willing to get to Camden Yards at eight the next morning — a scheduled day off — to sit down and do a "Sunday Night Baseball" interview ... and thanked us as he left the room. Before the Joe Torre Yankees, and before McGwire and Sosa, Cal Ripken's insecurities helped baseball crawl from the wreckage of the winter of 1994-95.

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Look, baseball *is* inherently insecure. Leading the league in hitting at .346 also means failure at a .654 rate. Slug .691 with a 1.139 OPS and 23 homers before the All-Star Break, and then go .571/995/9 in the same categories after the break (in 20 fewer games) and there are questions demanding answers.

Martinez, who has crafted two straight mind-boggling seasons, came up with the Astros and was once benched for swinging at a first pitch, knows all too well the role insecurities play with baseball players, and probably most athletes. Martinez, who as rookie encountered a veteran star in the clubhouse who refused to give him even a second of time or help, is considered by his peers as the model teammate. He, Betts and Mitch Moreland will take *any*player and include them in their long hours of video, batting cage and on-field preparation; ask Rafael Devers.

He and Betts have video guru Billy Broadbent take a small camera to the cage during batting practice and tape their swings. "Sometimes I get back inside, look at the video and tell myself, 'those swings were terrible, this could be a tough night,' then often go back in the cage indoors and try to fix it," Martinez says.

"I'll see something," says Betts, "and try to fix it even if it's right before the game."

When infielders come out for early work with infield coach Carlos Febles, Betts will often come out and work at his original middle-infield position. "I think getting rid of the ball as an infielder helps in charging and quickly releasing throws from the outfield, especially from angles," says Betts. "And you never know when we're in an extra-inning game and they need me to come in to play the infield." Indeed, it happened this season. Six innings, two chances, two assists at second base.

Red Sox coaches and teammates talk about the consistent daily preparation of Betts and Martinez, much like the Yankees would talk about how Derek Jeter used to say, "I take BP the same way every day," and how the Angels marvel at Trout's unswerving game and work ethic ("If his heartbeat could be charted, it would be a straight line, without any lines going up or down," said one of his former coaches). Same for Joey Votto, of whom his former teammate and constant admirer Bronson Arroyo says, "He's so devoted to concentrating on his preparation, he has something like 10 names on his phone's contacts list so he can't be interrupted."

Asked if insecurity can result in daily preparation that, in turn, creates consistency, Red Sox hitting coach Tim Hyers replied, "No question. Maintaining consistency over the season, through the schedule, through slumps, through injuries, is a huge part of the game. Believing that you have to maintain that preparation. Going to the park thinking you can succeed on talent alone is dangerous. It happens to some players. It may be why some fail."

"I'm not good enough to show up at the park and just go out there and play," Betts says.

"I know what it's like to not be very good," says Martinez.

Betts is the best defensive right fielder in baseball, and he still keeps his defensive cards in his back pocket every inning of every game.

After Albert Pujols' great rookie season, the next spring training he worked even harder. "If I can go from A ball to the big leagues, there's someone else who believes he can do the same thing and take my

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job," said the future Hall of Famer. Pujols still remembers the names of those who doubted him as a kid growing up in Kansas City, driving his incredible work ethic and preparation. Dustin Pedroia is the same way. And even though Justin Verlander walks to the mound like he's on the red carpet, one of his former managers says, "He's actually really insecure. There's nothing he hates more than not being great, and the video and work he puts in is to get to the mound and prove he is great. He is driven."

Alex Rodriguez was one of the most insecure players I ever met, but it fueled his commitment to the work and willingness to help young players. Self-doubts drove Dennis Eckersley to greatness, visible in his exuberance when he struck out opposing batters.

And on and on. One Monday this summer, after Betts had a huge weekend on the road, the opposing manager told me, "I can't believe Red Sox coaches are telling me that Mookie Betts really doubts how good he is. He may be the greatest all-around player in the game."

Mookie Betts had a 10.9 WAR this season; when Ted Williams hit .406 in 1941, his WAR was 10.6. While Williams may have been the greatest hitter who ever lived, he admitted he was so worried about slumps that when he had a couple of off days, he would take extra BP and keep hitting until he hit the screen in front of the pitcher 25 straight times. "If I got to 21 and hit a pop fly," he said, "I started over again at zero."

Mookie had 84 extra-base hits in 136 games. The last player to have as many as 84 extra-base hits in fewer than 140 games was Joe DiMaggio in 1941 (56-game hit streak, MVP).

Boston teammates say Betts gets more excited when a teammate does something dramatic or extraordinary than when he does it himself. "It's part of the fun of the game," Betts says. "It's about winning as a bunch of friends."

But, as clubhouse attendants and folks at The Commonwealth Hotel will tell you, the one thing outside of preparing and playing that occupies his time is the dedication to something bluesman Buddy Guy long ago preached.

"I was raised to believe that one thing that counts most in life," says Betts, "is to treat everybody the way you want them to treat you."

FROM MILB.COM

Toolshed: Prospect projections gone wrong

Steamer underestimated Soto, Acuña, overestimated Brinson

By Sam Dykstra

Part of the beauty of baseball is its unpredictability, and even when it comes to projection systems, that means sometimes you're right and sometimes you're very wrong.

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Back in January and February, MiLB.com used FanGraphs' Steamer600 projections to look at how some of the game's most prominent prospects were expected to perform over a full season. For this exercise, a full season was defined as 600 plate appearances for a position player, 450 plate appearances for a catcher, 200 innings for a starting pitcher and 65 innings for a reliever. Of course, few players who are considered prospects in the spring reach those marks in the Majors -- **Brian Anderson** and **Miguel Andújar** were the only rookie position players to eclipse the 600 plate appearance mark in 2018 -- but it makes it easier for comparison to put everyone on the same plane.

Eight months later, it's time to revisit those predictions with the Major League regular season coming to a close. On Tuesday, Toolshed turned to **what Steamer600** got right back in the spring. In this edition, we'll look back at what the projections got wrong.

Juan Soto -- The 19-year-old Nationals outfielder entered 2018 with only 23 games of experience with a full-season affiliate. He was scheduled to begin at Class A Hagerstown. This has been oft-repeated since he first moved to the Majors in late May, and yet it can't be repeated enough, it seems. His ascension was that astounding. Steamer certainly can't be blamed for not expecting much of the left-handed slugger, projecting him to hit just .225/.270/.337 with 14 homers and a 57 wRC+ over 600 plate appearances. At the time, that would have made Soto a well-below-replacement-level player, which made sense given that's what teenagers with limited Minor League experience are nearly all the time. Soto's season, in which he actually hit .292/.406/.517 with 22 homers and a 145 wRC+ in the Majors, was truly special, even historic.

Ronald Acuña Jr. -- Few people were down on Acuña's rookie potential back in the spring. Coming off his breakout 2017 campaign across three levels, MLB.com's No. 2 overall prospect was being heralded as The Next Big Thing. However Steamer, which takes into account a player's whole career, wasn't about to add fuel to the fire and had the 20-year-old outfielder down for just a 1.0 WAR, a .273/.324/.439 line, 19 homers, 29 steals and a 99 wRC+ over 600 plate appearances. Now, there are times for prudence, but projecting Acuña ending up not being one of those times. The Venezuela native's skills translated quite well to the game's biggest stage, and he even improved steadily, tearing up the league in the second half and finishing with a .293/.366/.552 line, 26 homers, 16 steals and a 143 wRC+ over 487 plate appearances. Because of his strong finish, he'll likely just sneak past Soto in NL Rookie of the Year voting. Of note, Steamer thought Acuña's speed would have an impact more than his power would, but the opposite ended up being true. Acuña ended up leading Atlanta in home runs and slugging percentage, despite having hit only 29 homers in his first three Minor League campaigns (21 of which came in 2017 alone).

Shohei Ohtani, the hitter -- Ohtani the pitcher was the lead in Tuesday's Toolshed, but when it comes to one of the game's most unique players in generations, let's say Steamer hit .500. In fairness, Ohtani's bat was considered behind his pitching arm coming out of Japan. The left-handed slugger showed mammoth power in the Pacific League but was thought to possess just an average overall hit tool. That's just the scouting report. Looking at the numbers, Steamer believed Ohtani's pop would play (24 homers) but projected him for a .257 average, .334 OBP and 113 wRC+ -- solid numbers, to be sure, but not necessarily ground-shaking. As it turned out, the 24-year-old may have been a better hitter than pitcher out of the gate. (An elbow injury that required Tommy John surgery certainly limited his looks on the mound, however.) Playing at DH, Ohtani hit .285/.361/.564 with 22 homers over 367 plate appearances. His 152 wRC+ ranked eighth among Major Leaguers with at least 350 plate appearances, beating out noted sluggers like Aaron Judge (149), Paul Goldschmidt (144), Manny Machado (140), Matt Carpeneter (138) and Bryce Harper (135). The likely AL Rookie of the Year definitely won't pitch in 2019 coming off

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the elbow procedure, and it's still up in the air if he'll be able to hit too. But with the way Ohtani beat expectations with the bat, his return can't come soon enough.

Lewis Brinson -- This column isn't only about overachievers, however. There was a lot of hope for Brinson following his trade from the Brewers to the Marlins in January as the headlining prospect in the Christian Yelich deal. The 24-year-old toolsy center fielder was coming back to his native southern Florida and was seen as the face of Miami's attempted rebuild. He was coming off his strongest Triple-A campaign yet and already had Major League experience. Outside those narratives, Steamer dove into the hard numbers and came away optimistic; in fact, before the trade, it looked like he had a case to be Milwaukee's best active outfielder with a .257/.318/.444 line, 22 homers and 94 wRC+. Those may not be stellar, but Brinson's fielding numbers based off his previous Major League time had Steamer peg him to be worth 1.7 WAR over a full season. Instead, he struggled mightily in his first year with the Fish, hitting just .199 with a 29.6 percent strikeout rate. Evaluations of his defense in center field varied by the metric (3 Defensive Runs Saved, -5.7 UZR/150, nine errors), and taken as a whole, he ended up being -1.0 WAR. With his power and speed potential, Miami should still be patient with Brinson, especially after a bruised right hip limited him in the middle of the season, the club can't bank on him being its poster boy as quickly as it may have hoped eight months ago.

Miguel Andújar -- We didn't put doubles into our initial Steamer600 writeups, but after Andújar's rookie season in pinstripes, maybe we should going forward. The Yankees third baseman tied an AL rookie record with 47 doubles and finished with a .297/.328/.527 line, 27 homers and a 128 wRC+ over 606 plate appearances. Back in January, the first Prospect Projections piece on AL East rookies made the case that the 23-year-old should have been New York's starting third baseman from day one, and while that was close to being right -- he made his first start in the fourth game of the season -- he still managed to beat the expectations of a .266/.311/.425 line, 19 homers, 93 wRC+ and 1.8 WAR. His actual 2.7 WAR could have been even higher had he not struggled defensively at the hot corner, though Steamer couldn't have seen that coming with his small sample of nine defensive Major League innings entering 2018. There are questions now about whether the Yanks should just slide Andújar across the diamond to first base and call it a day. But no one worries about his ability to make a major impact with the bat anymore.

Jack Flaherty -- This is annually one of the more disappointing parts about Steamer. Promising starting pitching prospects, like Flaherty, sometimes receive reliever projections, making it difficult to judge all these months later when they've spent an entire season working out of the rotation. In any event, even Flaherty's relief projections didn't live up to just how good he was as a St. Louis starter in 2018. The 22-year-old right-hander finished with a 3.34 ERA, 3.86 FIP and 10.9 K/9 over 151 innings -- much better than the 4.18, 4.25 and 8.3 marks Steamer had him down for over 65 frames. Only Giants left-hander Andrew Suarez (160 1/3) threw more innings as a rookie this season, and no one came within 30 of his league-best 182 strikeouts in the same group. Rate stats typically improve in projections for relievers versus starters, but with a solid four-pitch mix, Flaherty showed why he'll be part of the Cardinals' long-term starting plans.

Chance Sisco -- Not much went right in Baltimore this season, and that goes double for the development of Sisco, who was meant to be the club's catcher of the present and future entering the season. After showing a consistently above-average bat in the Minors, the 2013 second-rounder was pegged to be worth 1.9 WAR with a .259/.325/.392 line, 11 homers and 91 wRC+ over 450 plate appearances. He ended up being exactly replacement-level. Like Brinson, Sisco struggled to make contact, striking out in 35.9 percent of his times at the plate, and struggled with a .181/.288/.269 line and only two homers in

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63 games as a result. Only **Caleb Joseph** (54) and **Chris Davis** (46) had lower wRC+'s than Sisco's 59. As such, Sisco shuffled between Charm City and Triple-A Norfolk multiple times over the summer, and by the end of September, the O's were using **Austin Wynns** to split time with Joseph behind the plate.

FROM NESN

Mike Trout Praises Mookie Betts, 'Guys In Boston' Regarding AL MVP Race

By Lauren Campbell

It's no secret the American League has three viable candidates to win the Major League Baseball MVP award this season. Mike Trout is a two-time MVP winner and certainly will be in the conversation again this year after the Los Angeles Angels outfielder completed the 2018 campaign batting .312 with 39 home runs, 79 RBIs and 29 stolen bases. As impressive as his numbers are, there are two other players who will give the 27-year-old a good race for the award, and Trout knows it.

Mike Trout today on the MVP race: "You gotta look at the guys in Boston. With Mookie, (he's) just an unbelievable player putting up unbelievable numbers."

Mookie Betts certainly put up unbelievable numbers for the Red Sox in 2018. The right fielder won the batting title with an impressive .346 average and also added 32 home runs, 80 RBIs and 30 stolen bases to cap off an MVP-like season for Boston. And while Betts was having a season to remember, his teammate also was making an impression on the team. J.D. Martinez's (presumably the other guy in Boston Trout refers to) first year with the Sox couldn't have gone much better. The designated hitter hit .330 with 43 home runs and 130 RBIs. He provided a threat in the Boston lineup, broke years-long records and was a model teammate in the clubhouse. The Red Sox have a good chance at having one of their players take home some hardware come season's end. And while we won't know the results until after the World Series, both Martinez and Betts easily can look back on the 2018 season and reflect on all they accomplished.

FROM THE BOSTON GLOBE

In baseball, the message is clear: Win now or else

By Nick Cafardo

Are baseball franchises so valuable now that patience is wearing thin with the people who run them?

We get that some of this past week's firings of managers and general managers seemed unfair, but when have they not been? It just appears that five-year plans are a thing of the past. Either turn things around soon or you're gone. Or get us deep into the playoffs or you're out of here. You could see this coming when the Red Sox fired manager **John Farrell** after two division titles were followed by early

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exits in the playoffs. You could see it when manager **Joe Girardi** took a young Yankees team to Game 7 of the ALCS last season and he was fired, or when **Dusty Baker**, like Farrell, won division titles in Washington but couldn't get the Nationals deep into the postseason.

In Minnesota, we ask, "How can anyone fire **Paul Molitor**?" He was the American League Manager of the Year in 2017, leading the Twins to the playoffs as the front office was trading away veterans. Molitor still won under those circumstances. In 2018, the Twins were one of the worst teams in baseball, so Molitor, a Twin Cities native, was jettisoned in what had to be a tremendously difficult decision for chief of baseball **Derek Falvey**, who hails from Lynn.

Falvey comes from an Indians background, while general manager **Thad Levine** comes from the Rangers. It'll be interesting to see who emerges as "their guy." You can bet it will be someone who embraces analytics because these days that's all anyone in front offices and ownership cares about.

You would think Indians bench coach **Brad Mills** would be in Falvey's sights. He's been **Terry Francona's** top lieutenant and once managed the Astros.

And then you have the Orioles. My goodness. We outlined back in May that the Orioles have the most dysfunctional ownership situation in baseball. Why isn't Major League Baseball encouraging the Angelos family to sell this franchise? We're sorry that **Peter Angelos** is in failing health, and his sons, **Lou** and **John**, are running the team . . . into the ground.

They fired GM **Dan Duquette** after they mandated him to sell off more than \$60 million of assets, including **Manny Machado**, **Jonathan Schoop**, **Kevin Gausman**, and **Zach Britton**. After building a 69-win team into a 93-win team in one season, Duquette had an opportunity to be president of the Blue Jays, a job that ultimately went to **Mark Shapiro** after Duquette was denied the chance to leave by the Angelos family.

So given the results, why was the Angelos family discussing an extension with Duquette while intending to fire him? Baltimore had the smallest analytics staff (one full-timer, one part-timer); the smallest scouting staff (the Orioles barely had enough scouts to evaluate the players they were acquiring in deals); no money allotted for international scouting until this season; and generally the smallest administrative and baseball operations departments in baseball.

"We certainly did our best to put a competitive team out on the field and I thought we did a good job with that," said Duquette, who will seek other opportunities in baseball and hopes to be considered for openings with the Mets and Giants. "The only way I can look at it is that one door has closed and hopefully another opens."

Evans was dismissed. Evans had been with the organization for 25 years in various roles. He was a big part of **Brian Sabean's** front office for the three World Series championship teams. When Sabean stepped aside to concentrate more on scouting after the Giants won the Series in 2014, Evans took over the job at the start of the 2015 season. Three years in, team president **Larry Baer** decided to remove Evans. It took Evans, a Framingham native, by surprise.

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"All I can say is, the Giants were fantastic to me for 25 years," Evans said. "I think you're always surprised when something like this happens because we've all worked so closely together for so long and we had three World Series championships together. I don't think the Giants are that far away from the next three championships."

It seemed as if Evans never got to implement his full remake of the Giants. As he pointed out when asked about regrets, "You always have some regrets if the player or players you acquire don't work out or become injured." The Giants have a rabid fan base and completely rebuilding is not something that is in anyone's DNA in San Francisco.

Evans has 15 months remaining on his contract and said he'll await what the new GM will ask him to do. If it means a specific project, he'll do it. If it means he should leave completely, so be it. Evans also would like to be considered for the available GM jobs. Baer has publicly stated that he wants a more analytics-based organization to keep up with the top teams in terms of analytics — including the Red Sox, Astros, Yankees, Dodgers, and Cardinals — even though the Giants have done their winning the old-fashioned way, with great scouting.

Evans, however, said the Giants were already transitioning to more analytics, while trying to strike a healthy balance between the numbers and the scouts. Evans has one of the biggest scouting staffs in baseball, which has led to the perception that the Giants are still a scouting-based organization.

"Larry and Brian know exactly where we are with analytics," Evans said. "I think it differs greatly from the public perception of our organization."

You hear names such as Royals assistant GM **Scott Sharp** and Brewers assistant GM **Matt Arnold** associated with the Giants' GM job. Another name that could be interesting is Athletics assistant GM **David Forst**, who has been **Billy Beane's** top man for many years.

Another change was **John Gibbons** being removed from his second managerial stint in Toronto by Shapiro, who will likely replace him with someone with an Indians background. The Jays employ former Indians and Mariners manager **Eric Wedge**, who may get the call to return to managing. Shapiro also has two very good in-house candidates in major league coaches **Luis Rivera** and **DeMarlo Hale**.

In Cincinnati, there's growing energy toward Farrell replacing **Jim Riggleman** as manager. Farrell worked for the Reds this season as a pitching adviser and it appears he has won over the brass. Farrell's pedigree of a World Series championship and three division titles is obviously impressive and would be an easy sell to the fan base.

The Rangers fired manager Jeff Banister. The Angels are moving on from iconic manager Mike Scioscia.

It's really a crazy time. Whoever shouts "analytics!" the loudest will get the job.

It truly is a copycat league. Teams have the same information. They might be utilizing it differently, but good old-fashioned baseball seems to be gone for good. Scouts are getting fired constantly, their services no longer needed, replaced by Ivy League brains. Managers rely more on the numbers than the instincts they used so well for so long.

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The pressure is on. Win or else.

Apropos of nothing

1. The Orioles' newfound international money will likely make them the front-runners for Cuban outfielder **Victor Victor Mesa** (yes, two first names), who tried out for teams Friday at Marlins Park in Miami. Once **Dan Duquette** got the word from ownership he could get back into the international market, he started squirreling international monies in the deals he was making for veterans, sometimes accepting a diminished package of prospects so he could save up to bid for Mesa. The Orioles have \$2 million more than the Marlins and Rays, and normally Cuban players go to the highest bidder.

- 2. The Cubs have to improve their offense, so you wonder if **Manny Machado** will be in the picture in free agency with **Addison Russell** suspended for 40 games because of his domestic abuse violation.
- 3. **Steven Wright** said he's preparing this offseason to be a starting pitcher again. Wright has no idea what the Red Sox have in mind for him next season, but he figures he'll prepare as a starter and then make adjustments to the bullpen if he has to. The Red Sox will lose **Drew Pomeranz** and possibly **Nathan Eovaldi** in free agency. Wright hopes to have a normal offseason where he doesn't have to worry about his surgically repaired knee. He said the day when he no longer thinks about the knee will be huge.
- 4. The qualifying offer is now set at \$17.9 million. Nice change on a one-year deal.
- 5. The people I'd love to see get managerial jobs because of the time and work they've put into the game over the years: **DeMarlo Hale**, **Ron Wotus**, **Brian Butterfield**, **Luis Rivera**, **Tim Wallach**, **Sandy Alomar Jr.**, **Perry Hill**, **Glenn Hoffman**, and **Gene Glynn**.
- 6. Remember the name **Stubby Clapp**. He's the Cardinals' Triple A manager who's been getting rave reviews and is starting to appear on the radar of teams looking for a big league manager.

Updates on nine

- 1. **Buster Posey**, C, Giants While there's some concern that Posey's hip surgery will curtail his catching career, the Giants believe Posey should be able to make it back at his familiar position next season. Posey is 31 and has caught a lot of games, but the expectation is he'll catch many more.
- 2. **Eric Chavez**, special assistant, Angels Chavez remains the top candidate for the Angels' managerial job. His longtime relationship with GM **Billy Eppler** seems to be driving it. Chavez was summoned in August to manage their Triple A team to get some managerial experience. The Angels also could consider special assistant **Brad Ausmus**.
- 3. **Tim Naehring**, assistant GM, Yankees Naehring gave a lot of credit to the Yankees' scouting staff, but also to analytics guru **Mike Fishman**, for coming up with slugger **Luke Voit**, who was acquired from the Cardinals on July 29. Voit is yet another power threat in the Yankees' lineup, and he has opposite-field power. Naehring said that Scranton hitting coach **Phil Plantier**, like Naehring a former Red Sox player, recommended Voit highly for a major league promotion.

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4. Mark DeRosa, analyst, MLB Network — It's no surprise that DeRosa is considered a top candidate to manage the Rangers. DeRosa has been rumored to be a managerial candidate in a few places over the last few years. With managerial experience no longer needed, DeRosa, who played for many teams and understands the baseball culture and its new realities, checks off all the boxes, including the ability to comprehend complex analytics, the communication skills needed to get players to buy into them, and all the things players need nowadays to make them feel wanted and happy. Rangers GM Jon Daniels makes the call and has always admired DeRosa, who would also have some credibility in Toronto. But here's the rub: First-year managers are generally paid less than \$1 million, so a team would have to go significantly over the unofficial pay scale to lure him from a nice job at the MLB Network.

- 5. **John McDonald**, minor league defensive coordinator, Indians Don't be surprised if McDonald, who lives in Scituate, emerges as a candidate for the Toronto managing job. McDonald is highly regarded and has an Indians pedigree, which appeals to Jays president **Mark Shapiro**. Whether McDonald feels he's ready for it is another question, but we're told he'll be highly considered.
- 6. **Ben Cherington**, vice president of baseball operations, Blue Jays Cherington wants to be very selective in getting back into the GM carousel. He certainly wants a supportive ownership situation as a starting point, which the Mets don't necessarily provide. And as we've pointed out, the Orioles are also a volatile situation. But the one thing the Orioles have going for them in Cherington's eyes is that he can build a team from the ground up. It's the same dynamic that led **Theo Epstein** to the Cubs. Cherington would be ideal for the Giants in terms of a supportive ownership and resources, but the Giants don't rebuild. He'd have to add to them.
- 7. **Joe Maddon**, manager, Cubs Was Maddon ever really in jeopardy of not returning to the Cubs? A major league source close to Maddon said no. But the telling part is that there's no contract extension in the works or was ever discussed. What some in the industry are wondering is would the Cubs let him seek another job, say that of the Angels (you could you see owner**Arte Moreno** having interest in a big name)? Maddon spent many years with the Angels on **Mike Scioscia's** staff.
- 8. **Josh Bard**, bench coach, Yankees Bard is being talked about among the next wave of young bench coaches, heavy into analytics of course, who could be considered for future managing jobs. Being **Aaron Boone's** top adviser and helping to mold a 100-win team certainly doesn't hurt.
- 9. **Josh Donaldson**, 3B, Indians The Indians have been happy with the acquisition of Donaldson, whose intensity has seen a rebirth in Cleveland. The only question is, will the Indians try to bring Donaldson back as a free agent? Because of Donaldson's extensive injuries, which kept him out the majority of the season in Toronto, he picked a poor time to be a free agent and won't get nearly what he expected. The Indians are into bargains and Donaldson might be one they might try to take advantage of for 2019 on a one-year deal.

Extra innings

From the **Bill Chuck** files — "The 2016 and 2018 Red Sox each hit 208 home runs AND the 2016 and 2018 Red Sox each allowed 176 home runs." . . . Also, "The Rays have an active streak of 452 starts without a complete game since **Matt Andriese** threw a shutout on May 14, 2016, the only complete game of his career. The all-time record is held by the Marlins, who went 480 games incompletely from 2014-17." . . . Happy birthday, **Mookie Betts** (26), **Milt Cuyler** (50), and **Butch Henry** (50).