



# Padres Press Clips

Thursday, February 1, 2018

<u>Article</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Page</u>
ESPN: Solid Jorge Oña sits No. 9 in rich Padres system	SD Union Tribune	Sanders	2
Roots of Trevor Hoffman's 'Hells Bells' link stretch to one man's CD collection	SD Union Tribune	Miller	4
Hoffman 'Hells Bells' victim Alou unaware he helped make Hall of Fame history	SD Union Tribune	Miller	6
Padres' future bright with Margot in center	MLB.com	Cassavell	8
Padres GM legend Towers remembered	Padres.com	Center	10
Bachar, Dale Only Padres Still Playing Off-Season Baseball	Friar Wire	Center	13
Rosenthal: Remembering the beloved Kevin Towers, the life of any party	The Athletic	Rosenthal	15
“Mr. Padre” documentary knocks it out of the park	FSSD.com	Horvath	18
The Most Exciting Player on the Padres	FanGraphs	Sullivan	20
Keith Law’s Complete Guide to NL West Prospects	ESPN.com	Law	22

# ESPN: Solid Jorge Oña sits No. 9 in rich Padres system

Jeff Sanders

The professional debut of **Jorge Oña** didn't make nearly as many waves as those from others in the Padres' 2016-17 international free agent class.

The 21-year-old Cuban's \$7 million signing bonus ranks second in franchise history, behind only **Adrian Morejon**. Yet the .755 OPS that Oña posted in 2017 at low Single-A Fort Wayne slipped largely under the radar.

Blame **Fernando Tatis Jr.** Or **Michel Baez**. Or even Morejon.

All three teamed with **Oña** at one point in the Midwest League.

All three are ranked among the top prospects in the game, let alone the Padres' fertile farm system.

It didn't help that Oña was slowed early with a quad injury and late by a sore shoulder.

Yet Oña's debut, however relatively mundane, was solid enough for [ESPN](#) scouting guru **Keith Law** on Wednesday to list the 6-foot, 220-pound right fielder as the [ninth-best prospect in the Padres system](#).

Oña paired a .277/.351/.405 batting line with 11 homers and 64 RBIs in 107 games. He struck out 115 times, swiped eight bases and was as at his strongest in July (.877 OPS) after representing Fort Wayne in the Midwest League All-Star Game. Oña posted a .646 OPS over his final 24 games.

[Wrote Law](#): "He also seemed to tire out in August, but his swing still looked good and he showed some feel for working the count. There's enough here to be optimistic he'll still end up a regular, maybe an above-average one, in right field."

A subscription is required for [Law's entire assessment of the Padres system](#), which he ranked [third in baseball last week](#). This week's write-up rates left-hander **Eric Lauer**, Oña and right-hander **Anderson Espinoza** right after the seven Padres prospects — Tatis (3), **MacKenzie Gore** (14), **Luis Urias** (38), Baez (51), Morejon (72), **Cal Quantrill** (81) and **Logan Allen** (89) — that [landed in the ESPN top-100](#).

Beyond that trio, Law's extensive assessment includes left-hander **Joey Lucchesi**, outfielder **Tirso Ornelas**, second baseman **Esteury Ruiz**, right-handers **Pedro Avila** and **Chris Paddack** and quite a bit more.

As Law writes, "You might want to fix yourself a snack before you sit down to read this team report. Maybe get a lovely beverage. Hit the bathroom first, just in case. You're going to be here for a while."

# Roots of Trevor Hoffman's 'Hells Bells' link stretch to one man's CD collection

**Bryce Miller**

As soon as the words tumbled out of Trevor Hoffman's mouth like one of those wicked change-ups that shaped his career, Chip Bowers buckled a bit, too.

The [MLB Network](#) interview shined some light into a corner of the closer's baseball road now green-lighted for the Hall of Fame, asking about the origin of his signature "Hells Bells" entrance music.

Hoffman mentioned Bowers, who at a critical moment in one Cooperstown timeline worked as a young guy in the [Padres'](#) corporate sales office — just a couple years removed from an internship with the team.

By the time Hoffman stepped off the mound for good, he owned a then-MLB best 601 career saves. And one song, picked from a pile of 100 or so CDs one late night in the summer of 1998, became the soundtrack behind a man and a magical season.

The two haven't talked since the days when hard rock and flailing hitters merged.

What sprouted, though, harvests smiles still.

"I went back to San Diego a couple years ago and they did the ceremonial ringing of the bell before the game when they were putting Trevor in the Ring of Honor," Bowers said. "So I rang the bell that game at the behest of Mike Dee, who was president of the team at the time. Trevor gave me a nod and pointed at me.

"They made a comment about the fact that I'm now chief marketing officer for the Golden State Warriors. I think he was a little surprised that the guy who came up with the AC/DC song for him actually made a career out of the business. He probably thought I was serving pizzas somewhere.

"It really meant a lot to me (on MLB Network), because he didn't need to do that. That day is meant to be all about Trevor. For him to take the time to mention me is a testament to the man he is and the character he has.

"He's a team player, for sure."

The dominoes that needed to fall for a raging guitar anthem and Hoffman to become intertwined became the thing of back-room baseball legend.

Former Padres outfielder Steve Finley had to play in Baltimore. Tim Young, the guy in charge of running the game-day entertainment at [Qualcomm Stadium](#), needed to be standing on the field during batting practice one day and think of Bowers. A music-listening marathon had to stumble across an album named “Back in Black.”

All those little things, led to one big thing.

On July 25, 1998, Hoffman entered a game against the [Astros](#) with a chance for a save that would tie baseball’s all-time record at the time. Hoffman rode the the bells, that power, those chills to something transformative.

*(Gong ... gong ... gong ... gong ...)*

*(Patient, determined guitar)*

*I’m rolling thunder, pouring rain,*

*I’m coming on like a hurricane ...*

“It was so perfect,” former Padres President and CEO Larry Lucchino said. “When I hear it, I immediately think of Trevor and San Diego, absolutely. It’s Pavlovian to me.”

Conversation sparked between Finley, a former Orioles outfielder who landed and San Diego, and Charles Steinberg — who joined Lucchino as an executive vice president of the Padres.

Baltimore dabbled in the earliest days of walk-up music for hitters, producing a video for every player that was called the “Heroes of Birdland.” Finley recalled the energy those moments produced, particularly when closer Gregg Olson made his march to becoming an All-Star.

A seed was planted. Steinberg said Finley needled him about something to hyper-charge Hoffman.

“One day in Baltimore, I said to Gregg Olson, ‘Hey, I have an idea but I don’t want to offend you,’” Steinberg recalled. “You remember that (Charlie Sheen, ‘Major League’ movie) song ‘Wild Thing’? He said, ‘You’d play that for me? That would be awesome.’ He wasn’t offended at all. When we played it, the atmosphere was electric.

“When we reunited in San Diego, Steve Finley comes up to me and said, ‘We need a song for Trevor like the one you had for Ole in 1989.’”

At batting practice one day, Finley again pitched the idea, this time to Young.

“Tim looked at me and said, ‘You’re the music buff. See what you can come up with,’” Bowers said.

That night, Bowers rifled through his CD collection that approaches 2,000, quickly narrowing the search to bands with the right energy and feel.

“I just loved the irony of the song, given that we were playing in Mission Valley at the time and there was a mission directly beyond the outfield walls,” he said. “To hear a mission bell ring

prior to taking the mound, then you've got the Padres while talking about fire and brimstone and Hells Bells, I thought it was a great way to create some energy in the building.

"So, Hells Bells was born."

Bowers soon busted into Young's office and wanted him to listen.

No-brainer.

"I liked to harass Trevor," said Young, a San Diegan who's the president of Southport Marketing. "I'd tell him he owed Chip and I 1 percent of his salary from the day we started playing that song."

When the Hall call came on Jan. 24, Hoffman's wife Tracy stood next to him in a Hells Bells T-shirt. One man and one song, eternally linked.

"The first time I played it," Bowers said, "I set everything else down."

Lucchino said he seems to remember the Padres paying Bowers a \$500 holiday bonus late in 1998.

Talk about a bargain.

# Hoffman 'Hells Bells' victim Alou unaware he helped make Hall of Fame history

**Bryce Miller**

On July 25, 1998, Moises Alou wasn't thinking about [Padres](#) closer Trevor Hoffman walking into [Qualcomm Stadium](#) with a chance to tie baseball's then-record for consecutive saves with 41.

He was thinking about a horse.

Alou had rented a car and strategically parked it for a quick escape. The Astros outfielder and horse racing fan planned to rush to the racetrack at Del Mar to see Silver Charm, the 1997 winner of the Kentucky Derby, run in the San Diego Handicap.

All these years later, Alou had no idea he'd been a part of history.

That was the first time "Hells Bells" was played as entrance music for Hoffman, who faced Alou with two outs and one on in the ninth inning of a 6-5 game. Alou struck out swinging.

"I really wanted to see Silver Charm, that horse trained by Bob Baffert," Alou said by phone Monday from his native Dominican Republic. "I ran all the way, took a tomboy shower, real quick. I sprinted to my car and made it right in time.

"I got to see the horse in the paddock, so I was like a kid in a candy store."

The record-tying moment against Hoffman lingered, though.

"I got a bunch of (crap) from fans at the track," he said. "They knew I struck out."

More Hoffman-Alou history awaited.

The next day, Alou dug in against Hoffman with the Astros trailing 4-3. He hammered the first pitch for a no-doubt homer to left field that ended the streak. The Padres rallied to win the game in the 10<sup>th</sup>.

"I remember saying I wish I could go back to the track that day to see those fans' faces," he joked.

Alou said he had no idea until the phone call this week that he was the first to become a game-sealing victim to the sounds of Hoffman's musical signature.

“I didn’t know that,” said Alou, a six-time All-Star. “You just told me. I’ve been around a lot of history, some good and some bad. A lot of people remember the (Cubs NLCS moment with fan Steve) Bartman play now, not what I did in my career. But I’ve been blessed to play this game for a long time.”

These days, Alou serves as a special assistant for the Padres. Two decades later, Hoffman and he work for the same side.

“I was so happy for Trevor to get in,” Alou said of last week’s Hall of Fame vote. “I texted him. He’s a true Hall of Famer, all around.”

# Padres' future bright with Margot in center

San Diego saw flashes of stardom from 23-year-old

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com @AJCassavell

Jan. 31st, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- In his age-22 rookie season, [Manuel Margot](#) was everything the Padres could have asked for -- and then some -- in 2017.

Specifically, the Padres asked Margot to be a speedster who could be relied upon to wreak havoc at the top of the lineup, while anchoring center field with his excellent defense. Check and check.

"And then some," came at the plate, with Margot's surprising power surge. Having spent his Minor League career spraying line drives, Margot's 13 homers and .409 slugging percentage came as something of a surprise in 2017.

It started early, when Margot became the first Padres rookie in history to homer twice in the club's home opener. At the time, he was the club's top-rated prospect, a label he quickly shed with regular playing time from Day 1. Now, he's got his sights set a little higher.

"When you're able to be an impact, two-way player, that's what makes you into a superstar," Margot said toward the end of the 2017 season. "That's something that I want to be."

A lofty goal, to be sure. But the Padres feel he's capable, and they believe they've found their center fielder of the future. (Coupled with [Austin Hedges](#) behind the plate, San Diego hopes it's found a pair of anchors up the middle for the better part of the next decade.)

Of course, there's still plenty of room to grow. Margot batted .263/.313/.409 with 17 steals -- all numbers he'd like to improve upon.

Defensively, Margot was one of the best in baseball during the second half of the season. But he battled a calf injury in May, and his performance in the first half was middling. He's since proclaimed a desire to win a Gold Glove, a goal that might not be too far off. Only [Billy Hamilton](#) posted a higher [Defensive Runs Saved](#) than Margot's eight last season.

In any case, Margot's spot is clearly secure in center.

"I feel pretty good, first day of the season, saying Manny will be out in center for us," Padres manager Andy Green said.

Behind Margot in the pecking order, things get a bit more interesting.

[Matt Szczur](#), who came over from the Cubs midseason, is out of options and is viewed as a valuable roster piece. He's the early favorite to serve as Margot's backup (while likely backing up in right and left field as well).

But [Travis Jankowski](#) will be given a chance to bounce back from his injury-riddled 2017 campaign. Having established himself as a useful fourth outfielder in 2016, Jankowski sustained



a broken bone in his foot three weeks into the 2017 season. He wouldn't return until September and played only 27 games.

There could be room on the roster for both, should the Padres carry five primary outfielders. But No. 12 prospect **Franchy Cordero** could push them. Cordero, a left-handed power hitter, made a midseason cameo for the Padres. His contact rate was disappointing. (Cordero struck out 44 times in 92 at-bats.) But at 23, the club hopes he's young enough to correct that. Cordero's raw tools -- namely his speed, power and defense -- could entice the Padres to take another look at him in San Diego in 2018.

Projected starter: Margot

Potential backups: Szczur, Jankowski, Cordero

**Top-30 prospects:** No. 12 Cordero, No. 17 Jeisson Rosario, No. 21 Michael Gettys, No. 24 Edward Olivares

# Padres GM legend Towers remembered

Architect of 1998 NL champions and four NL West champions

By Bill Center Padres.com

Jan. 30th, 2018

The room fell silent.

It was at the end of the first week of December in 2016, when Major League Baseball and the Hall of Fame convened the New Era Committee in a hotel at Washington, D.C., to discuss additions to the Hall of Fame.

Kevin Towers was supposed to be there. And he wasn't.

Hall of Fame President Jeff Idelson then announced that Towers was home in San Diego and doctors had advised him not to fly.

This was not a meeting that Towers would have missed. Baseball executives, Hall of Famers and a few honored members of the media stared at one another in silence across the table.

Then the phone rang in the middle of the table. "I'm here," said the gravelly voice.

It was Kevin Towers on a conference call from San Diego.

"Sorry I'm not talking better," said Towers. "I've got this throat thing going on."

There was not a word spoken about the Big C, just this "throat thing." Towers participated in the day-long meeting. At the end, he apologized for not being in the room. "I'm sure this will clear up," said Towers as he signed off.

Tuesday morning, at the age of 56, Kevin Towers, the Padres' general manager from 1995-2009 and a member of the Padres' family for a quarter of a century, died of anaplastic thyroid cancer. Wife Kelley was at his side.

Towers, who never publicly acknowledged his fight against cancer, was a beloved figure in baseball. I've met thousands of people around the game over the years, and I've yet to find one who had a bad word to say about Kevin Towers.

Genuine, smart, funny, friendly, gregarious, honest, superstitious are all words that could describe Towers.

He was a giant slice of life.

To know Kevin Towers was to laugh with Kevin Towers. And if you knew him, he was more than happy to spend time with you. Baseball executives don't normally seek out and share stories with baseball writers. Towers did. He loved it.

Well, he loved so many things.

Towers loved being around baseball and baseball players, who respected Towers for always being up front and honest -- to a fault.

Towers once told a player days before a trade "I might have to move you to make us better." And he did. The player later told me Towers was in tears when he officially told him of the yet-to-be-announced trade.

Kevin Towers spent time with the Padres as a Minor League pitcher, a Minor League coach, a scout, the scouting director and, finally, the Padres' seventh general manager.

Born and raised in Medford, Ore., Towers first visited San Diego County in 1979-80 as a pitcher at MiraCosta College. He then transferred to Brigham Young University, where he roomed with Cougars quarterback Jim McMahon and earned All-Western Athletic Conference honors.

In 1982, the Padres drafted Towers in the first round of the secondary phase of the June draft -- a round that no longer exists.

Towers spent seven seasons pitching in the Padres' Minor League system and was a Texas League All-Star in 1984. But his right-arm failed him.

Towers once joked about his playing career: "I went as far as my arm would take me. One day, my arm said, 'Ever think about being a scout?'"

Towers loved scouting. Even as general manager of the Padres, he loved hitting the road to see amateur prospects. "I don't think being on the road as a scout ever leaves you," said the man who loved late-night breakfasts at Waffle Houses across the land.

The Padres have won two National League pennants and five NL West championships since their inception in 1969. They won one pennant and four of those division titles under Towers.

Towers' forte while in charge of the Padres was adding serviceable pitchers whose careers had been sidetracked by injuries or had been released by other teams. The list includes the likes of David Wells, [Randy Wolf](#), Bob Tewksbury, etc.

Personal story:

Late in December of 2003, I was at a restaurant with my wife when I looked across the room and saw Towers in a booth with Wells. Naturally, I called Towers the next day. Were the Padres going to sign Wells, a free agent who had been offered a Minor League contract to remain with the Yankees?

Towers: "Bill, I have to ask you a favor. If this gets out, the Yankees will offer Wells a Major League contract. I have to keep this under wraps until we sign him. I promise, I will call you first."

Knowing Towers, I knew he was a man of his word. I didn't write about the meeting.

A week later, my home phone rang around 7 p.m.

Towers: "We signed Wells. Write it. But don't mention my name. I'm not saying a word until it is official tomorrow. But trust me, it's done."

I wrote it. And just after 9 a.m. the next morning, Towers confirmed the story.

That was Kevin Towers. A man of his word.

Two more quick stories:

-- Towers was superstitious. The best example was his association with Hall of Fame closer Trevor Hoffman. Towers never watched Hoffman pitch the ninth inning in a save situation. He'd go to a back room or ride the elevator to the clubhouse where he waited in a corridor for the game to end. He'd even go sit in his car in the parking lot.

-- He didn't brag about the great trades and acquisitions he made. But he joked about his mistakes. Of the Randy Myers acquisition at the end of the 1998 season, Towers later joked that every general manager "should be allowed a do-over."

# Bachar, Dale Only Padres Still Playing Off-Season Baseball

## Most players home awaiting start of spring training

*By Bill Center*

Then there were two.

Right-handed pitcher **Lake Bachar** and shortstop **Jarryd Dale** are the last members of the Padres system still playing in an off-season league.

The 22-year-old Bachar, the Padres' fifth-round pick in the 2016 draft, is scheduled to start a playoff game for Canberra this weekend in the best two-of-three semifinals round of the Australian Baseball League playoffs.

Bachar finished the regular season at Canberra with a 5–1 record and a 2.91 earned run average and a 1.26 WHIP (walks and hits divided by innings pitched). He allowed 47 hits and 23 walks in 55 2/3 innings.

Bachar tied for the ABL lead in wins, finished second in ERA, fourth in WHIP and ninth in strikeouts with 49. He appeared in 10 games with nine starts.

Dale, a 17-year-old infielder, is playing for Melbourne. He hit .265 during the regular season.

Shortstop **Gabriel Arias** and center fielder **Buddy Reed** already completed their stints with Canberra.

Meanwhile, it appears outfielders **Franchy Cordero** and **Manuel Margot** will not be added to the Dominican Republic roster for the Caribbean Series scheduled to begin Feb. 2.

Cordero, who was the Most Valuable Player and Rookie of the Year in the Dominican Republic, will definitely not play in the Caribbean Series. Cordero played in 67 games in the Dominican Republic regular season and playoffs and a total of 193 games since the start of the 2017 season.

Cordero hit .323 in the Dominican Republic with a .393 on-base percentage and a .495 slugging percentage for a .888 OPS. He had seven doubles, five triples and five homers for 25 RBIs and 30 runs scored.

Cordero, 23, led the Dominican Republic in hits (60), total bases (92) and runs scored; tied for first in triples; placed second in OPS and slugging percentage; tied for second in homers; finished third in batting average; tied for third in walks (22); finished fourth in on-base percentage, and tied for fourth in RBIs.

Other top performances by Padres and Padres prospects in winter ball:

— Outfielder **Aldemar Burgos** won the Puerto Rico batting title with a .403 average. He also led the abbreviated, 18-game schedule with 25 hits, ranked third in total bases (30) and on-base percentage (.431) and was fourth in OPS (.915).

— Reed hit .326 with 10 homers and 21 RBIs in 31 games in Australia. Arias, 17, hit .271.

— Infielder **Luis Urías** hit .315 in the Arizona Fall League where first baseman **Josh Naylor** batted .304. Both are 20 years old.

— Catcher **Luis Torrens** batted .275 in 38 games in the Venezuelan Winter League.

— Second baseman **Fernando Perez** hit .297 with 11 homers and 46 RBIs for Hermosillo in the Mexican Pacific League.

— Submarining right-hander **Eric Yardley** had a 0.48 earned run average in 18 appearances for the Gigantes in the Dominican Republic.

— Right-hander **Kyle Lloyd** had a 1.96 ERA over 23 innings in five starts for Jalisco in the Mexican Pacific League.

— Right-handed reliever **Gerardo Reyes** had a 2.21 ERA in 21 appearances for Obregon in Mexico.

— Right-handed reliever **Trevor Frank** had a 3.00 ERA in 24 appearances with Zulia in Venezuela.

— Right-handed relievers **Andres Munoz** (1.04), **David Bednar** (1.13) and **T.J. Weir** (1.59) had three of the lowest bullpen ERAs in the Arizona Fall League.

# Rosenthal: Remembering the beloved Kevin Towers, the life of any party

By Ken Rosenthal Jan 31, 2018

It was a Super Bowl party none of the attendees will ever forget.

Padres assistant general manager Fred Uhlman Jr. picked up Theo Epstein at the San Diego airport, then he got Brian Cashman at his hotel. The three stopped at a liquor store to buy some alcohol before heading to Encinitas, Ca., to join their ailing friend, Kevin Towers, at the home of his longtime agent, Barry Axelrod.

Kirk Gibson, Towers' former manager in Arizona, was in the area and planning to attend. Bud Black, Towers' former manager in San Diego, was coming from his nearby home in Rancho Santa Fe. Bruce Bochy, another of Towers' former managers, would have made it too, but got stuck in Florida and could not leave.

"What an array of different friends," Gibson said on Tuesday night as he mourned the loss of Towers, 56, to thyroid cancer. "But that was who he was. He could communicate with everybody. And he became everybody's best friend."

Few people in baseball, or any walk of life, were as beloved as Towers, the former GM of the Padres and D-Backs. Epstein, the Cubs' president of baseball operations, came up with the idea for last year's Super Bowl party, then flew in from Chicago to see his former mentor. Cashman, the Yankees' general manager, flew in from New York. "We could have invited 500 people and 500 probably would have showed up," said Uhlman, Towers' longtime assistant with the Padres. But Uhlman, Epstein and Axelrod decided to keep the group small and limit it only to close friends.

"It was just an outpouring of love," Axelrod said. "At that time, I think it was probably in some of our minds that we might not get to do this with Kevin again."

Towers had a rare, aggressive form of cancer; the doctors who diagnosed him in November 2016 gave him only months to live. He was in "pretty rough shape" at the time of the Super Bowl, Axelrod said. Cashman, recalling that Towers was struggling with his breathing, initially suggested with Epstein that the group abstain from alcohol. Towers, wanting to keep things normal, would have none of it. The afternoon began with a tequila toast, and proceeded from there.

Towers' wife, Kelley, and Gibson's wife, JoAnn, made a quick exit—"it was just Kevin and the boys," Cashman said. Towers, though notably thinner than when he was healthy, immediately resumed his familiar role as the life of the party, the wisecracking, competitive KT. "He was locked in," Black said. "I didn't ask him if he had money on anybody, but I'm sure he did."

The Atlanta Falcons raced to a 21-0 lead, only to lose to the New England Patriots in overtime, 34-28. Throughout the day, the partygoers watched football and talked baseball. Told jokes and shared stories. And, as always with Towers, laughed and laughed and laughed.

"He was really in his element," Epstein said. "Nobody was talking about the illness or anything like that. He had a good time all the time. But all he needed to have a good time was one friend, or more, and one cold beverage, or more—and an opportunity to sit and talk and share and laugh at life. That's what

happened that day. Despite being in the midst of multiple treatments, he found a way to have a tequila shot and a beer. He carried the conversations. He was really joyful and optimistic and, as always, wringing every last bit of fun out of every minute in the day.

“That’s the thing that set KT apart in this game, and in life. There are so many instances in this game where people look to squeeze every last bit of value out of a transaction, or every last bit of self-interest out of an interaction. KT was the opposite. He was never that way.

“Whether it was how he treated people, people he just met, friends or how he approached his job, he wanted other people to be happy, too. He wanted things to be fair. He didn’t look to extract every last ounce of self-interest. That’s how he approached his job. That’s how he approached life. It’s what made him so universally loved. Who wouldn’t want to be around someone like that?”

===

The Padres won four division titles in 14 seasons under Towers and appeared in the 1998 World Series, losing to the Yankees in Cashman’s first year as GM. After getting fired in 2009, Towers spent one season as a special assignment scout for Cashman’s Yankees, then moved on to the D-Backs, winning a division title in his first year as GM. Four years later, after getting fired by the D-Backs, he joined another of his friends, Walt Jocketty, as a special assistant with the Cincinnati Reds.

Those are the bare essentials of Towers’ career. To his friends, they tell far too little about the essence of the man.

Towers had a perpetual glint in his eye, or as Epstein put it, a strut and a smile no matter what the situation. Forever short on funds with the Padres, he would call Cashman with outlandish trade proposals that always included money coming back to San Diego, reasoning, “Cash has Cash.”

“He called me, ‘Sugar Daddy,’” Cashman said. “He would make some proposal and I’d say, ‘I’m not doing that.’ He would say, ‘C’mon, Sugar Daddy, I know you got that money. C’mon, man.’”

Towers would grow close with his players, sometimes too close. His assistants with the Padres made sure someone always was watching him on the back of the team plane, fearing he would award a player a three-year contract while playing cards with him and drinking beer. At one point, Towers actually made such a deal with a Padres pitcher. A few weeks later, he sat in his private box, cursing and stewing as the pitcher got shelled, saying, “This guy is terrible. I can’t believe he’s in our rotation.” His assistants, sitting in the back of the box, could only shake their heads.

Few could match Towers’ energy. He would outlast younger GMs at the winter meetings, staying up all night talking trade, then strolling through the lobby grinning at 8 a.m. Once during his tenure in Arizona, Towers invited Gibson and his coaches for a get-together in his suite after a game in Kansas City. Eventually, Towers fell asleep, with only Gibson and pitching coach Charles Nagy remaining. Gibson said to Nagy, “My room is right across the hall. Let’s just go over there and let KT sleep.” The two had barely reached the door when Towers called out, “Oh no you don’t!”

Even while ill, Towers never lost his spirit. About a month ago, right before Christmas, Towers was retaining fluid and had to be taken to the hospital. He called Axelrod after he returned and said, “This is the best I’ve felt in a year.” Axelrod, who lived about three blocks away, said, “Great, I’ll come by later.” Towers called him back and said he wanted to go out instead, and was heading to the Encinitas Ale House with Kelley for a beer.

“By the time it all unfolded, it was Kelley, Kevin, myself, Phil Nevin, Bruce Bochy and Trevor Hoffman,” Axelrod said. “This was a month ago. And Kevin was Kevin, telling stories. He and Trevor were getting on each other about Trevor leaving and going to Milwaukee. And Boch was saying, ‘You



fired me.’ (Towers was the Padres’ GM when new CEO Sandy Alderson allowed Bochy to leave for the San Francisco Giants after the 2006 season rather than sign him to an extension).

“Kevin always used to joke with me, ‘You never give me any shots at your free agents,’” Axelrod continued. “And I would say, ‘Kevin, every time you have one of my players, you trade him. Wally Joyner, Jake Peavy, Phil Nevin, Rich Aurilia. You get rid of every one of my guys.’ That was the kind of byplay you had with him.”

The kind of byplay his friends thought would never end.

===

Gibson recalls Towers talking about a doctor who asked him at the outset of his illness, “Do you want me to tell you the truth?”

Towers replied yes—he wanted to know exactly what he was up against so he could attack it.

“You need a miracle,” the doctor said.

“Well, I’m your miracle,” Towers shot back.

Axelrod shares a similar story, about a time in Chicago a year ago when he and Towers were together and a doctor told Towers he probably had only two months to live.

Towers recently had recalled that conversation, Axelrod said, asking, “Remember that? Well, here I am.”

“We got an extra year out of him,” Axelrod said. “He was a fighter and a battler. A lot of people got to see him, spend time with him, express their affection for him.”

Epstein was one. He first met Towers in the mid-1990s while working under him in the Padres’ front office. During that time, Epstein also attended the University of San Diego Law School and earned a law degree, with the idea of taking on an expanded role with the club. Upon graduating, a law firm offered Epstein a \$140,000 salary; he had been earning \$35,000 with the Padres. Towers helped Epstein get a raise to \$70,000. “No way I’d still be working in baseball without him,” Epstein said. “He made my path for me, took care of me, was always looking out for me.”

Knowing Towers as he did, Epstein had difficulty processing the loss of his former mentor, could not believe he was gone.

“It doesn’t seem real because it’s him,” Epstein said. “He would always, no matter what spot he was in, through his personality, how he treated people, how he looked at life, he would always find a way through it and come out on the other side, smiling and strutting across the room, moving on and making everyone around him happy.”

“No matter what the odds were, you expected him to do the same this time because of who he was. Even though he had the worst thing you can have, it’s just unreal for the first time he can’t do that. But I guess in a way he did. He did for a year. And he’s probably in a better place.”

Only two days ago, Axelrod had spoken with Towers’ wife, Kelley, about holding another Super Bowl party. Black had mentioned such a possibility to Axelrod last week, saying, “Let’s do that again.” Axelrod said he had not spoken with Epstein or Cashman about flying to San Diego and had no expectation that either would. But after news of Towers’ death broke on Tuesday, someone mentioned to Axelrod, “You guys get together and do it anyway. Have a Kevin party for the Super Bowl.”

“We just might do it,” Axelrod said.

KT wouldn’t want it any other way.

# “Mr. Padre” documentary knocks it out of the park

John Horvath

FOX Sports San Diego

Jan 31, 2018 at 7:24p ET

3,141 hits.

A lifetime batting average of .338.

A 15-time all star and five-time gold glove award winner.

A seven-time Silver Slugger Award winner.

A Hall of Fame career.

*MLB Network Presents: Mr. Padre* debuted to the public on Tuesday night and was an instant hit among Padres fans. The documentary highlights Tony Gwynn’s entire life, beginning from his youth with brothers Chris and Charles, to his time as a dual-sport star at SDSU, to his illustrious big league career, to his battle with cancer, and everything in between. There are interviews with plenty of Gwynn’s family members and colleagues scattered throughout the special, as well as video from Gwynn’s life that even Tony Gwynn Jr. had never seen before. In an interview with MLB.com, Gwynn Jr. had this to say regarding the documentary:

“There was some video on there that I had never seen, some of it even with me being in it., I was locked into a lot of it. Ultimately, I thought that was the best documentary to date that kind of pulled the curtain back in terms of how he interacted with people — not just with his teammates, but with people in general.”

Throughout the special, Tony’s love for the city of San Diego (and San Diego’s love for him) is well-documented. Especially in today’s era, it is rare for players to remain with one team throughout the entirety of their careers. Gwynn’s love for San Diego as well as his determination to win a title with the Padres led him to do just that. He was rare in another regard, too: he was a humble superstar that just about anyone could relate to.

Gwynn worked incredibly hard at his craft, not just in the cage but in the video room as well. Gwynn’s near obsession of watching video of his own at bats is highlighted, and he was one of the first players to do so. Former Padres GM Jack McKeon called him a “trailblazer” in that regard. It was that obsession which aided Gwynn’s .394 batting average in the strike-shortened 1994 season, where he was three hits shy of reaching the magical (and unheard of) .400 batting average.

The special concludes with Gwynn's post-career coaching at San Diego State University as well as his battle with salivary gland cancer.

Rather than ending with the news of his death, however, the documentary ends with something unforgettable about Mr. Padre: his infectious laugh.

If you missed it, the documentary will air again at 1 p.m. on Saturday, 7 p.m. on February 6, and 11 a.m./11 p.m. on February 11.

## The Most Exciting Player on the Padres

---

by Jeff Sullivan - January 31, 2018

To be completely honest with you, I've been kind of bored. Bored and feeling uninspired. Maybe it's just a winter funk, but there's also the reality of the slow-motion baseball offseason. I know I'm not the only writer whose topic well has begun to run dry. It's not a big deal; everything's cyclical, and writing has its ups and downs. I'm just trying to explain to you how I got here.

When I'm feeling stuck, I frequently just play around on various leaderboards, searching for inspiration. I'll run through leaderboards here, I'll run through leaderboards on Baseball Reference, and I'll run through leaderboards on Baseball Savant. Most recently I was bit by the Statcast bug, so I found myself on Baseball Savant's familiar pages. I was looking at the **exit velocity page**. I was looking at the **sprint speed page**. Suddenly, a name jumped out I didn't expect. And the more I thought about it, the more I realized I couldn't ignore this.

I considered all the current Padres position players for whom there's a decent sample of 2017 Statcast information available. The player with the fastest average sprint speed? It's not **Manuel Margot**. It's **Franchy Cordero**. And, the player with the fastest average exit velocity? It's not **Wil Myers**. It's Franchy Cordero. A few days ago, I knew next to nothing about Cordero's skillset. I knew only of his existence. Now I realize he's one of the more exciting young players around.

Last season, there were 450 players with reliable recorded sprint speeds, and at least 30 batted balls. By speed, Cordero finished in seventh place, and I mean seventh place overall, in baseball, sandwiched between **Delino DeShields** and **Keon Broxton**. And then, by exit velocity, Cordero finished in 35th place, sandwiched between Greg Bird and **Yulieski Gurriel**. This is how I originally came across him — I noticed his name high on both lists, which I certainly didn't expect. And in order to give you a frame of reference, here are all of those 450 players, with Cordero highlighted in yellow, over toward the upper right.

Cordero didn't play a whole lot in the major leagues. He was 22 years old, and he batted in the majors just 99 times, and he struck out a whole bunch. I'm going to come back to that later on. But even in a small window of exposure, Cordero demonstrated elite-level skills. This is a young player with high-level speed and high-level pop. That's a tantalizing combination, and Statcast makes it virtually impossible to argue.

Let's say you're not completely sold. How might we otherwise support the Statcast sprint-speed reading? Between Triple-A and the majors, Cordero stole 16 bases. That's fine, but, far more impressively, Cordero also registered 21 triples. That was three more than anyone else in professional baseball, and seven more than the guy in third place. Cordero, in 2017, was a triples machine. Also, the season before, he smacked 16 triples, so this is obviously a strength of his.

And now we can turn to the exit velocity. Generally speaking, people look at the average exit velocities, but it's also useful to look at *peak* exit velocities, for a further understanding of a skill. I don't have minor-league data, of course, but with the Padres, during his small sample, Cordero topped out just above 113 miles per hour, with this double.

It wasn't just a one-off fluke. Next-best, Cordero got to just under 113 miles per hour, with this similar-looking homer.

Statcast tracked 49 Cordero batted balls in the majors, and he hit ten of them at least 105 miles per hour, for a rate of 20.4%. There were more than 400 players with at least 50 tracked batted balls, and here's the entire list of batters with a higher such rate than Cordero had in his cup of coffee.

The proper interpretation is *not* that Franchy Cordero has Stanton-level pop. It's just that he does hit the ball hard — very hard — and you don't often observe that skill among burners. You'd think that Cordero's tools could cause a scout's jaw to drop, yet he doesn't show up in the **Baseball America organizational top-10. MLB.com ranks him 12th** in the Padres system. **John Sickels ranks him 11th.** Cordero is flying under the radar, and while his aggressive and swing-and-miss approach certainly has something to do with that, one wonders if he's paying the price for the Padres' organizational depth. In a system so strong, with so many quality prospects, it's easier for Cordero to get lost. In a shallower farm, he'd probably generate more buzz.

It's possible I've gotten off track. What we know is that, in the majors, Cordero showed impressive speed and impressive pop. **He also flashed impressive center-field defense**, which might simply follow from how quickly he moves around. Observers have pointed out that Cordero's outfield defense can still look a little raw and unpolished, but it's important to consider that he entered the Padres' system as an infielder, and he only started playing in the outfield in 2015, and in center field in 2016. Cordero is a positional convert. Having long been a shortstop before, we can tell he has the arm and the footspeed to make it all work. The early big-league results were encouraging.

The issue is that 44% major-league strikeout rate. Or, if you don't care about that so much, the 28% Triple-A strikeout rate. Cordero swings and misses pretty often, and he doesn't compensate by drawing many walks. If Cordero had a more polished or contact-heavy approach, he'd be one of the best prospects in the world. Right now, he's a risk, in the same way a pitching prospect with great stuff but bad command is a risk. This is why I'm calling Cordero the most exciting player on the Padres, instead of the best one. The skills are obviously enough to excite. It remains to be seen how much comes together.

But to Cordero's credit, even with the Triple-A aggressiveness, he put up a 146 wRC+. And, two season ago, Cordero hit nearly 60% of his batted balls on the ground. Last year, he dropped that rate into the mid-40s, showing off an awareness of the importance of lift. Cordero puts the ball in the air, hard, and the fact that he could make that adjustment suggests there might be more adjustments to come. The approach is too aggressive right now, almost certainly, but Cordero doesn't turn 24 until early September. It shouldn't take much more in order for Cordero to take off.

Franchy Cordero: a young center fielder with tremendous speed, A-grade strength, and a developing tendency to hit the ball in the air or on a line. Given a full season, right now, Cordero might strike out 200 times, but his approach could also take a step forward, and the suite of skills establishes a fairly high floor. When you can homer and play center field, you don't need to do much else to be good. I don't know why it feels like Cordero has mostly been ignored to this point, but of everybody in the Padres' system at this writing, there's no other player I'm more amped to watch.

# Keith Law's Complete Guide to NL West Prospects

## San Diego Padres

You might want to fix yourself a snack before you sit down to read this team report. Maybe get a lovely beverage. Hit the bathroom first, just in case. You're going to be here for a while.

1. Fernando Tatis Jr., SS (ranked No. 3)
2. MacKenzie Gore, LHP (ranked No. 14)
3. Luis Urias, SS/2B (ranked No. 38)
4. Michel Baez, RHP (ranked No. 51)
5. Adrian Morejon, LHP (ranked No. 72)
6. Cal Quantrill, RHP (ranked No. 81)
7. Logan Allen, LHP (ranked No. 89)
8. Eric Lauer, LHP
9. Jorge Oña, OF
10. Anderson Espinoza, RHP

### Non-top 100 prospects

**Eric Lauer** is a four-pitch lefty with above-average control and average command, killing left-handed batters last year at two levels, becoming a bit vulnerable to right-handed power after he got to Double-A. All 10 homers he allowed last year were to right-handers, six of those coming after his promotion at the end of June. He comes a little across his body, which makes him deceptive against left-handed batters but might be part of the issue he had last year with righties, and cross-body guys do have some added injury concerns. He looks like a likely fourth starter who could see the majors as soon as this summer.

**Jorge Oña** signed as a free agent for \$7 million in 2016, then made his debut last year at age 20 in low-A Fort Wayne, hitting .277/.351/.405 but playing the field less as the season went on due to a sore shoulder. He also seemed to tire out in August, but his swing still looked good and he showed some feel for working the count. There's enough here to be optimistic he'll still end up a regular, maybe an above-average one, in right field.

**Anderson Espinoza** was a high top 100 prospect but missed all of last year with an elbow injury that eventually required Tommy John surgery; he probably won't be back until instructional league. Even in spring training last year, Espinoza was 94-98 with good life down in the zone and a pretty easy delivery, showing a curveball and changeup, with just a little cutoff in his landing to concern you. He has, or at least has showed, No. 1 starter potential, but we might not know until 2019 if that has changed.

Right-hander **Joey Lucchesi (11)** gets guys out with a funky delivery and crazy extension out front, letting his average stuff really play up. He'll sit 91-92 with a good changeup, curve and slider, throwing strike after strike because he repeats his delivery immaculately. There's still reliever risk, in part because he doesn't have a truly above-average pitch, and in part because it's weird, but he wrecked high-A hitters and held his own in Double-A last year. You have to at least let him continue to start.

**Tirso Ornelas (12)** has been a favorite of mine since he signed because I loved his swing, and he has already started filling out his 6-4 frame well and showing big-league-caliber power. He's more than average in right field, and showed a great approach as a 17-year-old in the AZL, finishing second in the league in walks (behind a 21-year-old) and 10th in OBP.

**Esteury Ruiz (13)** was the critical piece in the midseason trade that sent [Trevor Cahill](#), [Brandon Maurer](#) and [Ryan Buchter](#) to Kansas City. He's an offensive second baseman, shredded physically with serious juice when the ball leaves his bat, too aggressive at the plate and far from a finished product on defense. He's still got clear room for improvement, but massive upside, and will go to low-A this year at age 19.

**Pedro Avila (14)**, acquired from the Nationals for Derek Norris, is a 6-foot right-hander who struck out 170 men in 129 innings last year, a bright kid with good feel for pitching and some stuff to back it up. He'll pitch up to 94 with a slider, curve and changeup; can sink the fastball a little; and pounds the strike zone with everything. He started the year in high-A, had four bad starts (15 R allowed in 15 IP), then was better for a month, but the Padres sent him back to low-A anyway because they had too many starters. He posted four double-digit strikeout games for Fort Wayne in 14 starts, including a 17K performance against Great Lakes on Aug. 8 when he faced just 27 batters in eight innings. He just turned 21 in mid-January and could still gain a little velo, with league-average starter a reasonable ceiling right now.

**Chris Paddack (15)** should be back and 100 percent by spring training after he missed half of 2016 and all of 2017 while recovering from Tommy John surgery. The Padres acquired Paddack for [Fernando Rodney](#) but he blew out three starts after the trade -- and bear in mind, the Padres were forced to give back [Luis Castillo](#) in a later trade with the Marlins over [Colin Rea](#)'s elbow, but no one forced the Marlins to make good on this deal. Paddack was up to 95 with a grade-65 changeup and no average third pitch before the injury, someone who could be a No. 2 or 3 if he finds a usable breaking ball and a 4 or 5 without it.

**Jacob Nix's (16)** season started late due to a groin injury, but he was excellent in high-A Lake Elsinore and earned an August promotion to Double-A, where he was fine outside of one disaster start where he gave up eight runs in 0.2 innings. Nix will work in the 93-95 range with an improved breaking ball and above-average changeup, throwing strikes but not missing as many bats as his stuff should. He can stay too upright in his delivery, but if he can finish out over his front side more -- closer to the plate -- he'll get a little more zip on his fastball.

**Luis Campusano (17)** was their second-round pick in 2017, a Georgia high school catcher who has some real juice in the bat, an average to above-average arm, and good blocking skills behind the plate. He might be a level-a-year guy as he works on receiving, game-calling and developing his approach as a hitter, but has above-average regular upside because of the power potential.

**Reggie Lawson (18)** has more upside than Avila but is further away, still working at 91-94 with a better curveball than he had his senior year in high school. He has trouble working deeper into games and facing hitters multiple times, which could be the lack of stamina of a 19-year-old pitcher or a sign that hitters see the ball too well from him. He's very athletic and his stuff still misses so many bats (28 percent in 2017) I think this is more about durability than stuff or deception.

**Hudson Potts (19)** went to Fort Wayne as an 18-year-old and was awful early, but made more contact as the season went on and finished with 23 doubles and 20 homers, with 18 of those bombs coming from June 1 onward as he cut his strikeout rate. His range at third will probably always be his weak spot, but his hands are good and he has the arm to stay there. He didn't walk much, and has to continue to refine his eye and swing decisions.

San Diego added **Edward Olivares (20)** in the trade that sent [Yangervis Solarte](#) to Toronto after Olivares had a breakout year as a 21-year-old in low-A. A speed/power guy who should stay in center field, Olivares was behind most players his age because injuries limited him to 15 games in 2016, all in the Appy League, which was his only experience above the complex league coming into last year. This will be an important year for him, with everyday upside based on his tools and position as well as a solid fourth-outfielder floor.

Shortstop **Gabriel Arias (21)**, born Feb. 27, 2000, finished the year in the low-A, full-season

Midwest League after a solid two months in the Arizona Rookie League, and actually hit an empty .240. To put it another way, Arias is 15 months younger than Austin Beck, the sixth pick in last year's draft out of a North Carolina high school, and ended up in Fort Wayne. He has a good swing that right now just produces contact, with average power to come. At short, he has a hose with good hands and the lateral range to stay at the position and even end up a plus defender. He may be pushed back to Fort Wayne as a result of the Padres' "what if we signed *all* the shortstops?" strategy.

**Josh Naylor (22)**, a former first-round pick of the Marlins acquired in trade, had his best year at the plate but has gotten big enough that he might have to be a DH. He does have power and his plate discipline is fine; he has shown a modest platoon split that might worsen as he advanced but so far doesn't tag him as just a platoon player.

**Justin Lopez (23)** went to the advanced short-season Northwest League as a 17-year-old because the Padres had Too Many Shortstops, and he scuffled at the plate, as you'd expect from a kid that young, from Venezuela, in his first pro experience. He is an excellent defensive shortstop, the best of the group the Padres signed last year, and he does have a good swing for contact, but might find himself pushed past his present ability because they need to find places for all these dudes to play.

**Jeison Rosario (24)** finished ninth in the AZL in OBP, just five points ahead of Ornelas, with less power but better defense. Rosario is a no-doubt center fielder who might end up a 70 there with good OBP skills and some doubles. He didn't turn 18 until after the 2017 season.

[Franchy Cordero \(25\)](#) has been a bit overlooked in the flood of younger prospects coming into the system, but he could be a part of the Padres' outfield this year, a power/speed guy with dubious plate discipline who struggled with fastballs up in the big leagues. He's probably an extra guy in the end, but it's worth giving him some time the next two seasons to see if he can be selective enough to let the plus power play.

Shortstop **Luis Almanzar (26)** got the biggest bonus of their July 2 haul outside of the Cuban defectors, taking \$4.05 million home, but his debut last year for Tri-City was underwhelming, although like many of their other prospects he was just 17 and young for anything but complex-league ball. He does have a beautiful swing with good loft and plenty of hip rotation, so if he doesn't hit and hit for some power, it'd have to be about plate discipline, and Almanzar's wasn't awful enough to write him off. He's probably going to move to third in the near future.



**Andres Munoz (27)** is just 18 but has hit 102 mph and will pitch at 94-98 with a plus curveball. He's a pure reliever with an arm action reminiscent of [Craig Kimbrel](#)'s. His control isn't good enough yet to race him up the system, but if it gets there, the Padres might as well promote him aggressively because the stuff is so good and might not last.

**Trey Wingerter (28)** kept adding velocity the past two years and has hit 100, often sitting 96-99 with a power slider, getting touched up a little by lefties but overpowering most of them. At worst he looks like a good right-on-right guy.

**Brad Wieck (29)** is a 6-9 lefty who dominated Double-A last year with a solid-average fastball and good changeup, with reverse platoon splits the past two years, although he scuffled in a midyear promotion to El Paso and finished up back in the Texas League. The Padres swiped him from the Mets to complete a 2015 trade for Alex Torres, who threw 31 innings for New York that year and was out of baseball before the following season.

**Tucupita Marcano (30)** is a 6-foot, left-handed-hitting shortstop whose father played in the minors for several years, and who, as far as I can tell, was named for the Venezuelan town in which he was born. His swing works, and while he didn't hit for average in the DSL last year at 17, he rarely struck out and worked the count well, just lacking the strength to do enough when he put the ball in play. He's not a shortstop long-term, but should be fine on the dirt and does project to really hit.

But wait, there's more: **Jordy Barley** plays a bit out of control, but the ball absolutely flies off his bat because his hands are so strong. He's not a shortstop -- especially not in this system -- and he needs to walk more than once a week, but there's some explosive ability here if he can get to it. ... **Mason Thompson's** year was a disappointment as he made just seven mediocre starts around shoulder injuries; he'd been 91-94 in the spring when I saw him with a power curveball and too-firm changeup. Thompson only threw one inning his senior year of high school while recovering from Tommy John, so he's missed most of the past three years now with arm problems. ... Right-hander **Michell Miliano** threw just 15 innings in the AZL and gave up 16 runs, but the 17-year-old is 90-92 with a tight 75-77 mph curveball that projects to plus. He's about 6-4, athletic, and super projectable, but obviously a ways off from being a top 20 guy in this system. ... They took a very interesting if long-term prospect in the fifth round in 2017 with Alaska prep infielder **Johnny Homza**, a natural third baseman who they're converting to catcher. The swing is good, but inconsistent, and he's going to need time to learn to be a catcher and to hit pro pitching. He's the highest-drafted player ever to sign out of an Alaska high school. ... I have to mention just one more right-handed reliever, even though he's probably a middle guy at best. He's 92-95 with plus life, has a decent little slider around 79-81, but the delivery is pure relief, with no stride or use of his lower half and gate-swinging motion like Tyson Ross'. I wouldn't even include him, but this 19-year-old, who started for short-season Tri-City last year, is named ... **Henry Henry**. And I very much want him to get to the big leagues.

**2018 impact:** As strange as it might sound for a team with the No. 3 farm system, the Padres probably won't get much production from rookies this year, as they may have only one or two on their entire Opening Day roster. Franchy Cordero could make the club as part of an outfield rotation, since they don't have a true incumbent in left. Maybe Eric Lauer or **Cal Quantrill** gets a call-up late in the season, and I would hope **Luis Urias** would get that chance after he rakes in Triple-A, but for now their roster is set.

**Sleeper:** Do I have to pick just one? I'm a believer in Tirso Ornelas' bat, both the swing and the approach, and he impressed scouts who saw him in the AZL last summer (where the Padres had

to field two teams to get everyone some reps). It will also be interesting to see what Chris Paddock looks like when he returns.

**The fallen:** You take the good, you take the bad, as Mrs. Garrett would say. Their 2016 second-rounder **Buddy Reed** always had a bad swing, and hit just .234/.290/.396 as a 22-year-old in low-A. Their first pick in 2015, second-rounder **Austin Smith**, repeated Fort Wayne, then was demoted to short-season and moved to relief.