



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Tuesday, November 6, 2018

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Inbox: How will Twins approach offseason?

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | November 6, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The Twins completed their first major goal of the offseason in hiring Rocco Baldelli as their manager, and now they're working on filling out the coaching staff while also eyeing free agency and trades to improve the club after a disappointing 2018.

The Twins surprisingly have more money coming off the books this offseason than any other club, so they have the flexibility to spend and add to the team heading into Baldelli's first year. There are plenty of questions about this club, so here's this week's Twins Inbox.

Rhett Bollinger



@RhettBollinger

· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

Nathan Olson

@n8olson31

What free agents should they target, and do you think they will sign? Do you think that the team will work to shed its history of low velocity pitchers and contact hitting with a new manager?

11:12 AM - Nov 5, 2018

See Nathan Olson's other Tweets

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It's obvious Minnesota needs pitching help, and the Twins are likely to add at least one starter and several relievers, including a closer. They also are in the market for a middle infielder and potentially a corner infielder/designated hitter if Joe Mauer decides to retire as expected. It's hard to predict who they will sign, but they will have interest in just about any available starter or reliever.

- Submit a question to the Twins Inbox

As for Baldelli's role, I don't think having him as manager changes what kind of players they are targeting in free agency this offseason. But it will be interesting to see what kinds of changes are in store with a new pitching coach and bullpen coach next year. James Rowson is back as hitting coach, so that philosophy isn't expected to change much.

Rhett Bollinger



@RhettBollinger

· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

matt dahl
@docmunson

Question #1: of course they WONT, but SHOULD the Twins make a run at Machado &/or Harper? a 3 year \$120M would get either...or BOTH. and could afford short term deals.

11:20 AM - Nov 5, 2018
See matt dahl's other Tweets
Twitter Ads info and privacy

Minnesota does have the payroll flexibility to sign Bryce Harper or Manny Machado, but it still remains much more likely the club uses that money to add to several holes on the roster rather than making a big splash for either player. Harper wouldn't make as much sense given its crowded outfield, but Machado would certainly be a huge upgrade to the left side of the infield.

The Twins, though, are better off waiting to make that kind of move once they are closer to being a legit contender in the American League. They have top prospects in shortstop Royce Lewis (No. 1 in the organization per MLB Pipeline) and outfielder Alex Kirilloff (No. 2) on the way in the next few years, and Minnesota is more likely to build around those players than sign a star this offseason.

Rhett Bollinger
✓
@RhettBollinger
· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

Nate Gunderson
@ngunder2

Has Mauer given any indication on when he will make a decision? Before winter meetings? Closer to spring training?

12:24 PM - Nov 5, 2018
See Nate Gunderson's other Tweets
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Mauer is expected to make a decision whether or not to retire soon -- and it could come as early as this week -- as he doesn't want to hold up the front office as it looks to improve the club going into 2019. Mauer is still likely to retire, especially after his memorable sendoff in the last game of the season that saw him serve as catcher for one pitch.

If Mauer retires, the Twins will be in the market for a corner infielder/designated hitter they could group with third baseman Miguel Sano and first baseman Tyler Austin. There aren't many free-agent first basemen this offseason, as the top two available are the right-handed-hitting Steve Pearce and the left-handed-hitting Matt Adams.

Rhett Bollinger
✓
@RhettBollinger
· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

Anthony Reynolds
@areynolds0

Thoughts on Mike Moustakas signing and shifting Sano to 1B/DH?

11:54 AM - Nov 5, 2018
1
See Anthony Reynolds's other Tweets
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It could make some sense, given how there isn't much of a first-base market this offseason. Minnesota, though, still believes Sano can play third, so it's not likely he moves full-time to first base just yet. But Moustakas would be an upgrade, add some power to the lineup, and he could rotate with Sano. But roster-wise, the Twins are more likely to look at versatile players such as free agent Marwin Gonzalez, especially after Eduardo Escobar re-signed with the D-backs.

Rhett Bollinger

✓

@RhettBollinger

· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

Jordan

@JordanDeCaro12

When is Brian Dozier coming back?

12:39 PM - Nov 5, 2018

6

See Jordan's other Tweets

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I still don't see a reunion with the Twins, considering they didn't meet with him or his agent about an extension in Spring Training and traded him to the Dodgers at the non-waiver Trade Deadline. It'll be interesting to see what kind of deal Brian Dozier gets after a down year, but he's not expected back in Minnesota.

Rhett Bollinger

✓

@RhettBollinger

· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

matt dahl

@docmunson

Final one... Would the Twins consider bringing back Santana at a smaller, incentive laden deal?

11:52 AM - Nov 5, 2018

See matt dahl's other Tweets

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It's unlikely the Twins bring back Ervin Santana, but it can't be ruled out. He was solid during his time in Minnesota and seemed to enjoy his teammates and his place with the club. He'll pitch in the Dominican Winter League to try to show his velocity is back after last offseason's right middle finger surgery that limited him to just five starts. But it seems more likely he goes elsewhere this offseason.

Rhett Bollinger

✓

@RhettBollinger

· 22h

Looking to do an #MNTwins Inbox this week, so send any questions my way.

Eric Hasart

@hasart10

The Twins need bullpen help, so what free agent relievers are on the Twins' radar?

11:08 AM - Nov 5, 2018

1

See Eric Hasart's other Tweets
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Minnesota's biggest need this offseason is bullpen help, and fortunately there are plenty of solid free-agent relievers to choose from this winter. Craig Kimbrel is the top closer on the market, but the Twins are more likely to look at relievers such as David Robertson, Jeurys Familia, Andrew Miller, Joe Kelly, Zach Britton or Joakim Soria. They could also look to buy low on former closers they know from the division as former Indians closer Cody Allen and former Royals closer Kelvin Herrera are also free agents.

Trevor May has the stuff to be a closer, but look for Minnesota to sign a veteran to take that role, much like it did last offseason when the club inked Fernando Rodney to a one-year deal with an option.

Here's what happened in Monday's AFL action **MLB.com | MLB.com | November 6, 2018**

Twins (Salt River)

Jaylin Davis went 2-for-4 with a double and two RBIs for the Rafters. Right-handed pitcher Adam Bray struckout one in his one inning on the mound. Right-handed pitcher Hector Lujan walked two batters, but secured the win in his lone inning pitched.

Who is available in free agency to help Twins? **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | November 6, 2018**

Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey and General Manager Thad Levine have made sweeping changes since joining the organization following the 2016 season.

They have replaced scouting and player development personnel; overhauled strength and conditioning staffs; revamped strategies from the majors through the minors; built up a research and development department; and have shaken up the major league coaching staff — with their most notable move coming in October, when they replaced manager Paul Molitor with newbie Rocco Baldelli.

However, there's one area the dynamic duo have not revised with the same vigor — the major league roster. So, as the pair enter their third offseason in charge, is it the right time to make significant roster moves?

The Twins are several players away from catching Cleveland in the AL Central and have payroll flexibility — they have \$24.5 million committed to their own players next season, plus \$5.95 million they owe from the Phil Hughes trade to San Diego — to add talent.

Or will the priority be to let Baldelli work his magic with the players who already are here?

The Twins still believe there's a developing young core, but they will look to strengthen the areas around that core as the hot stove league heats up. The general manager's meetings take place next week in Carlsbad, Calif., where the groundwork for trades and free-agent signings is often laid. Then the winter meetings take place Dec. 9-12 in Las Vegas, where deals could be culminated.

"I always view free agency as a supplement to the core of your team," Falvey said. "If you look at the playoff teams and the teams that have won, they have built around a key core. We've talked a lot about our group, and some of the setbacks that we've experienced with that collection of players. We still believe that group has a chance to impact us the way it did down the stretch in 2017."

Still, when a team has around \$30 million in commitments one year after making a run at starting pitcher Yu Darvish — they offered a five-year deal of at least \$100 million — it would appear the Twins could take another big swing at free agency.

"We know that free agency can be a risky place to spend a lot of time," Falvey cautioned. "We just want to make sure we are thoughtful about finding a right fit for our roster."

Baldelli has focused on contacting players and learning about the farm system while allowing the front office to do its thing.

"I'm using this period of time to learn as much as I can about all aspects," Baldelli said during a radio interview on KFAN on Wednesday. "The more I learn about the roster and players and the more we talk within the organization about them as opposed to looking outside the organization, I think the best thing to do is to look at the good, young, talented players we have and ask questions about what are the best things we can do to help these guys."

Once he completes his research, he will find the club has a potential hole at first base if Joe Mauer retires, no second baseman (perhaps free agent Jed Lowrie?) and an offense in need of a bat (Michael Brantley?). Falvey looks at the infield and see flexibility with moves.

“We’re going to remain open-minded to that,” Falvey said. “If we were to find a perfect fit at third base, would that open up a different place where Miguel [Sano] could play?”

“I would anticipate position players being probably more of the focus in the early going, I would say.”

Sano and Byron Buxton, who underperformed and spent time on the disabled list last season, are major unanswered questions. In fact, some in the organization feel it can’t make significant additions this offseason because they need to figure out if the former top prospects can produce the goods in 2019. If they don’t, they might have to re-examine their long-term plan.

“That’s a fair way of looking at it for a question,” Falvey said. “As we look at this group, we certainly expect a lot of [them] and Eddie [Rosario] and Max [Kepler] and Jorge [Polanco]. We need that group to collectively take steps forward. It doesn’t mean we can’t invest now and betting on these guys for the future.

“We want to set it up to be in a good position. That may mean setting ourselves up for a good position on Opening Day. That may mean setting up to leave us some flexibility at the deadline and see where we could be. All of those will factor in.”

The Twins also could swing a deal to fill holes. Since Falvey and Levine arrived, they have added minor league talent through trades. The organization has an above-average minor league system now, and the club could package anyone not named outfielder Alex Kirilloff, shortstop Royce Lewis or righthander Brusdar Graterol in a deal.

“I believe we are set up pretty well for that, in the event we do have those conversations,” Falvey said. “At this stage, most people are focused on the external free agents’ acquisitions more than trades. That will pick up as you get closer, some at the GM meetings, but certainly at the winter meetings.”