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Saturday, March 10, 2018**

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Pop at top: Dozier likely to remain leadoff hitter

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | March 10, 2018

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. -- Second baseman Brian Dozier hasn't hit anywhere but leadoff in the Twins' lineup since July 30, 2016, and it doesn't appear that's going to change to open the 2018 season.

Dozier has hit first in all seven of his games this spring, including in Friday's 4-3 win over the Rays, and Twins manager Paul Molitor said he's not looking to move Dozier in the lineup -- even though he's not a prototypical leadoff hitter with his combined 76 homers over the last two seasons.

"Knowing the person and what he does in that role and how much he enjoys that role and the fact that it's worked makes it hard for me to be overly eager to find something different," Molitor said. "From analytics or anything else that might suggest that you might want to try something different."

Center fielder Byron Buxton, who stole two bases on Friday, served as leadoff hitter early in camp when Dozier wasn't in the lineup, but has mostly been hitting fifth or sixth this spring, including batting sixth on Friday. Molitor said he expects Buxton to move up and down the lineup based on matchups, as he might hit earlier against lefties, but could bat later against tougher right-handers.

"Against left-handed pitching, maybe sometimes [early in the lineup], but I kind of like the fact he stretches it out and rolls that lineup over to some capacity," Molitor said. "He played in the sixth spot a lot last year."

Shortstop Jorge Polanco is another interesting case, as he was the club's No. 3 hitter down the stretch last season when Miguel Sano was out with a stress reaction to his left shin. But with Sano healthy, Polanco is likely to hit in the latter third of the lineup, with the top of the order expected to include Dozier, Joe Mauer, Sano and then either Logan Morrison or Eddie Rosario hitting cleanup.

"He'll see different places, but I think the Morrison addition, in particular, is going to affect where some guys hit," Molitor said. "You just get them to try to see that if they're not hitting in the top third, we're just trying to stretch our lineup as best as we can."

Sano hadn't homered coming into the game, but crushed a pair of solo blasts. His first came off right-hander Andrew Kittredge in the opening frame and traveled to dead center, while the second was against lefty Vidal Nuno in the third and was a towering shot to left.

"I tried to make good contact through the middle," Sano said. "It was an inside pitch and I tried to react on the first one. And the second one I got out front."

Berrios solid

Jose Berrios, who remains lined up to be the Opening Day starter, went four innings, giving up one run on three hits with one strikeout. He threw 56 pitches, with 41 going for strikes. The lone run he allowed came on an RBI double from C.J. Cron in the fourth.

"Between this start and the last one, I worked in the bullpen trying to be in line to home plate and not pull off," Berrios said. "That's what I felt today. I felt better."

Camp battles

- Right-hander Phil Hughes threw a simulated game of three innings and 40 pitches back at the club's Spring Training complex in Fort Myers, Fla. Hughes worked on his changeup and slider without having to worry about the results in a game. Hughes, competing for the final spot in the rotation, will start again Monday night against the Yankees.
- Robbie Grossman, competing for the final bench spot, went 1-for-3 with an RBI single, while first baseman Kennys Vargas went 1-for-2 with a stolen base and a run scored to improve his average to .318. Zack Granite went 0-for-2.
- Right-hander Tyler Duffey, who is competing for a long-relief role, threw two perfect innings with one strikeout to lower his spring ERA to 5.40. Rule 5 Draft right-hander Tyler Kinley threw a scoreless ninth with one hit allowed and two strikeouts. He lowered his ERA to 3.60 and is making a solid case to make the roster.

Injury updates

- First baseman/designated hitter Morrison was held out of the lineup on Friday after suffering a right glute strain while running the bases on Wednesday. Morrison is also expected to miss Saturday's game, but the injury isn't considered serious.

Up next

- Right-hander Kyle Gibson is slated to make his third start of the spring on Saturday against the Red Sox at 12:05 p.m. CT at Hammond Stadium on MLB.TV. Other pitchers scheduled to see action include Zach Duke, Addison Reed, Fernando Romero, Gabriel Moya and Jake Reed.

Twins exploring extensions with pre-arb players **Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | March 10, 2018**

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. -- One of the benefits of the Twins having a young cost-controlled core is they have no players under contract beyond the 2019 season. But that could change, as the Twins are in the exploratory stages of contract extensions with pre-arbitration players.

Center fielder Byron Buxton has already been approached about a possible extension, while the Twins could look to do the same with third baseman Miguel Sano, right fielder Max Kepler, right-hander Jose Berrios, left fielder Eddie Rosario or shortstop Jorge Polanco. Buxton, Sano and Rosario are eligible for arbitration next year but aren't eligible to be free agents until 2022, while Kepler, Polanco and Berrios are arbitration-eligible in '20 and will be free agents in '23.

The Twins, of course, could simply go year to year with each player in arbitration, but an extension can be attractive for both sides. It gives the player a guaranteed long-term contract and gives the club a fixed salary without worrying about arbitration raises, as Josh Donaldson set the record this year at \$23 million in his final year of eligibility. Teams also often sign players to long-term extensions that push back free agency by a few years in exchange for the financial security the deal brings.

"This is the time we're thinking about it and when we explore those kinds of conversation," Twins chief baseball officer Derek Falvey said. "This is when a lot of agents come through camps. But nothing is imminent."

Here's a deeper look at all six candidates and how much an extension would make sense for each player and the Twins:

Byron Buxton

2017 stats: .253/.314/.413, 16 homers, 14 doubles, six triples, 51 RBIs, 69 runs, 29 stolen bases in 140 games.

The skinny: Buxton remains the most likely of this group to sign an extension, as the Twins would love to lock up the 24-year-old given his almost unlimited potential, and he has mutual interest. Buxton had his breakout season last year, emerging as baseball's top defensive player and the fastest in the game, per Statcast™. He's yet to put it together over a full season offensively, which the Twins could use as leverage, but if he

continues to hit like he did in the second half of last season, he's an MVP candidate.

Miguel Sano

2017 stats: .264/.352/.507, 28 homers, 15 doubles, two triples, 77 RBIs, 75 runs in 114 games.

The skinny: Sano has immense power and moves surprisingly well for his size at third base. But he's been injury prone, never playing more than 116 games, and weight has been an issue, which could eventually move him to first base. The 24-year-old also needs to cut down on his strikeouts, but when he's healthy he's among the game's biggest power threats. It could make sense to sign him to an extension now, as if he stays healthy and has a breakout season, it will only cost the club more.

Eddie Rosario

2017 stats: .290/.328/.507, 27 homers, 33 doubles, two triples, 78 RBIs, 79 runs, nine stolen bases in 151 games.

The skinny: Rosario, 26, is coming off his best season, as he became more selective at the plate, leading to a better on-base percentage, a lower strikeout percentage and better pitches to hit. His defense wasn't rated as strong by advanced metrics, but he moves well and has a plus arm. He doesn't have the upside of Sano or Buxton, so the Twins could be better suited to go year to year with Rosario.

Max Kepler

2017 stats: .243/.312/.425, 19 homers, 32 doubles, two triples, 69 RBIs, 67 runs and six stolen bases in 147 games.

The skinny: Kepler, 25, has yet to have that breakout season offensively, as his numbers have been roughly league average the last two years. But he has the track record and the frame to put up better numbers. If the Twins believe there's more in his bat and is on the verge of figuring it out offensively, it could also make sense to extend him now before he gets more expensive.

Jorge Polanco

2017 stats: .256/.313/.410, 13 homers, 30 doubles, three triples, 74 RBIs, 60 runs and 13 stolen bases in 133 games.

The skinny: Polanco is coming off an interesting season that saw him get benched in July because of his struggles, only to finish on a tear while batting third in place of Sano. Polanco proved he can stick at short defensively, although he's not a plus-defender there. The 24-year-old still has enough to prove that going to year to year makes sense. The Twins also have several highly regarded shortstops in their system such as Nick Gordon, Wander Javier and Royce Lewis.

Jose Berrios

2017 stats: 14-8, 3.89 ERA, 139 strikeouts, 48 walks, 15 homers allowed in 145 2/3 innings.

The skinny: Berrios bounced back from his rough rookie season to show why he was such a highly regarded pitching prospect. He has the work ethic, mentality and stuff to be a frontline starter, although he lacks prototypical size. His career trajectory seems to be on the upswing, so exploring an extension could be a wise move.

Betting odds say Twins are favorites to land Lance Lynn, Alex Cobb

Michael Rand | Star Tribune | March 10, 2018

It's hard to know what to make of betting markets — particularly when it comes to “prop bets” that involve outcomes not directly tied to the field of play.

But I did find some odds released by Bovada to be interesting, at least, when it comes to the Twins and their possible continued pursuit of more starting pitching.

The site offers a few prop bets on which teams the top remaining free agent pitchers are most likely to wind up signing with this season.

The Twins are given the best odds of signing both Lance Lynn and Alex Cobb.

They're listed as 5 to 4 favorites to get Cobb, while the next closest teams are all listed at 4 to 1. That's a pretty significant tilt toward the Twins when it comes to landing Cobb — who like new Twins starter Jake Odorizzi and first baseman/DH Logan Morrison played for Tampa Bay last

season. Cobb, who had Tommy John surgery in 2015, went 12-10 with the Rays with a 3.66 ERA last season.

As for Lynn, who missed all of 2016 after having Tommy John surgery, the Twins are listed as 9 to 5 favorites. The Phillies are next at 10 to 3. Lynn's peripheral numbers were down last season from where they were pre-surgery, but he still posted a 3.43 ERA in 33 starts for the Cardinals last year and could be even better in year two post-surgery.

Those odds guarantee nothing, of course, but they are at least reflective of how Bovada quantifies the various reports out there. Maybe they even know something the rest of us don't know?

You can still bet on the Twins to sign Jake Arrieta, by the way, but they're 8 to 1 long shots behind four other teams.

One thing is for sure: All three of those pitchers are probably itching to lock down deals soon with the regular season just a few weeks away.

Brian Dozier appears likely to lead off for Twins

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | March 10, 2018

PORT CHARLOTTE, FLA. – Brian Dozier made his eighth start of the Grapefruit League season on Friday, and all eight have come as the leadoff hitter. Is that an indication that Paul Molitor has already decided to stick with his power-hitting second baseman at the top?

Probably so, the manager said. He's aware of "analytics and anything else that might suggest that you might want to try something different," Molitor said, and he's open to considering moving Dozier down in the order. Then again, he's been pretty successful in that slot.

"Knowing the person and what he does in that role and how he enjoys that role, and the fact that it's worked, makes it a little hard for me to be eager to try to find something different," Molitor said.

The rest of the lineup is a lot more up in the air, he said. Jorge Polanco, for instance, hit eight homers and drove in 22 runs as the third-place hitter during Miguel Sano's absence last September. Molitor has batted him second much of the time this spring. And Byron Buxton, who batted ninth more than anyplace else last season, has been in the sixth slot for the past week or so.

"Those conversations haven't been finalized," Molitor said, and one reason for that is the unexpected free-agent signing of Logan Morrison.

"With the Morrison addition in particular, it's going to affect some guys and where they hit, for sure," Molitor said. "You just try to get them to see that, if you're not in the top third, we're trying to stretch our lineup the best we can, and that's going to have value."

Vargas small ball?

The Twins have a special "steal" sign for Kennys Vargas, Molitor joked after Friday's game. "It's the bill of the cap, and cross your fingers," he said with a smile.

Whatever the signal, it worked. Vargas, who has never attempted to steal a base in his 236-game major league career, took off for second base on a 3-2 count to Chris Heisey — and made it easily. "I took a little chance, putting him in motion knowing that the guy [Rays pitcher Sergio Romo] was particularly slow to home plate," Molitor explained. "I figured [Heisey] was going to get a breaking ball. I was hoping for contact, but we got the base."

Actually, the 300-pound Vargas had a Byron Buxton kind of day. In addition to his first stolen base since a 2016 swipe in Class AAA, he went from first to third on a single, beat out an infield hit and scored on a wild pitch.

"Speed is not a requirement to be a good baserunner," Molitor said.

Etc.

- Phil Hughes and Stephen Gonsalves both threw roughly 40 pitches in simulated games at Twins camp. Hughes will return to the rotation Monday in Tampa, Molitor said.

- Once Friday's game ended, wives of the Twins and Rays players took the field for a charity softball game. The Twins' wives won 9-4 but, more important, they raised \$19,500 for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas victim's fund.

On deck

All three free-agent bullpen additions — Zach Duke, Addison Reed and Fernando Rodney — will pitch Saturday when the Twins try to extend their Grapefruit League winning streak to four against the Red Sox.

Miguel Sano hits two homers, Jose Berrios strong as Twins beat Tampa Bay 4-3

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | March 10, 2018

PORT CHARLOTTE, FLA. — Jose Berrios displayed a variety of pitches on Friday, and Miguel Sano displayed a variety of home runs. Together, they powered the Twins to a third consecutive Grapefruit League victory, 4-2 over the Rays at Charlotte Sports Park.

Berrios allowed his first run of the spring, but surrendered only three hits over four innings, while Sano smashed his first two home runs of the spring. Sano, just 2-for-13 coming into the game, blasted a line drive homer off Tampa Bay righthander Andrew Kittredge into the tiki bar beyond the center field fence, then hit a sky-high fly ball off left-handed reliever Vidal Nuno that drifted into the left-field bullpen.

“Two balls hit over the wall, that’s what we want,” Berrios said.

What the Twins want from Berrios is first-pitch strikes, and that’s what they got on Friday. By continually getting ahead in the count, Berrios used four pitches, he said, to get soft contact all day. Only C.J. Cron, with a fourth-inning double off the center-field wall that scored Kevin Kiermaier, could connect solidly.

“To get ahead, that’s an advantage [that helps] me to do my best work,” Berrios said. “We worked on it between my last start to this one, in the bullpen. I’m trying to be better aligned to home plate.”

The Twins scored two other runs off Kittredge, with Robbie Grossman driving one in with a line single to right, and Kennys Vargas scoring on a wild pitch.

Twins’ Miguel Sano, Ryan LaMarre have titanium rods in common

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | March 10, 2018

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — Miguel Sano isn’t the only player in Twins camp with a titanium rod supporting his left tibia.

Non-roster outfielder Ryan LaMarre, 29, underwent the same procedure after the 2014 season in Phoenix and made his big-league debut with the Cincinnati Reds in 2015. Dr. Gustavo Armendariz Jr. performed the surgery.

“I had the surgery in September and I was basically ready to go for spring training,” LaMarre said. “They were pretty conservative because I was also coming off hernia surgery. I could have played (by Opening Day).”

LaMarre stayed back in extended spring training before heading off to the Reds’ Triple-A affiliate by the second or third week of April. Sano, who had his surgery on Nov. 13 with Drs. William Ricci and Martin O’Malley in New York City, is hoping to be ready by Opening Day, which seems likely from a health perspective.

“We’ve talked about it,” LaMarre said. “I told him I haven’t had any problems since. Everything’s perfect. It’s a pretty easy surgery. If anything, I think it gives you the peace of mind that you’re not going to break your leg. It’s going to be pretty solid. I just try to encourage him he’s going to be fine and have a long, healthy career.”

Sano is 24, a year younger than LaMarre was at the time of his surgery. While speed isn’t as important to Sano’s game as it is to LaMarre’s, the outfielder was pleased with how quickly he was able to reclaim that part of his skill set.

As with Sano, the rod in LaMarre’s lower leg runs the length of his tibia, from just below his knee down to his ankle.

“I thought I had shin splints for a while so I kept playing on them,” said LaMarre, a 2010 second-round draft pick out of the University of Michigan. “You’re not going to miss time with shin splints. Eventually it got to be too late, and I guess it had caused a stress fracture. They gave it a couple weeks to try to heal and it wasn’t showing signs of healing so we just went ahead with the surgery.”

In Sano’s case, he fouled a ball off his left shin on Aug. 18 during his only two-homer game of the season, came back to play the next night and was shut down for six weeks with a stress reaction in his left shin. A last-ditch effort to qualify for the wild-card roster saw him take eight plate appearances on the final weekend of the regular season, but the pain persisted.

This spring Sano was ready to go by the report date for position players. He homered in his first two plate appearances Friday, snapping a 2-for-13

start at the plate, and appears to be suffering no carryover effects from the surgery.

“I’m almost to the point where I’m not really worried about his recovery from his injury or how he’s doing,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “I think he’s running well. Front to back he’s (moving) really well. We always try to improve the lateral (movement), but I think that’s just more mechanics and learning how to use his body a little better.”

Twins’ Jose Berrios, pleased with delivery, has yet to walk a batter this spring

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | March 10, 2018

PORT CHARLOTTE, Fla. — Three starts in, Jose Berrios has yet to walk a batter this spring.

Considering the command issues he experienced at times during his first two big-league seasons, that’s no small feat.

“I felt great,” Berrios said after working the first four innings of Friday’s 4-3 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays. “All my pitches were doing good. I attacked the hitter. I got ahead in the count early. That’s a lot of advantage for me and the catcher (Jason Castro) to do our best work.”

Berrios, who scattered three hits with just one strikeout, mixed in a few more two-seam fastballs than normal as he induced weak contact and kept his pitch count down. He started 12 of his 15 batters with strikes (80 percent) and threw 73 percent of his 56 pitches for strikes.

Asked if he could carry that into the season, Berrios smiled.

“That would mean a lot,” he said. “That’s what we want. You want a first-pitch strike. That’s what we worked on today. I feel good about that.”

He credited a between-starts bullpen session with new pitching coach Garvin Alston with helping him smooth out his delivery.

“We’re trying to be in line to home plate more and not pull off,” he said. “That’s what I felt today. I feel comfortable. I feel relaxed.”

Alston was pleased as well with the quick results.

“He’s such a quicker learner,” he said. “We did do some tweaks. We talked about staying in your delivery and understanding what your ball does when you do that. He was able to go ahead and pick it up immediately. It made sense to him, so he gravitated toward it and here we go.”

Berrios touched 93 mph but mostly pitched at 90-92 mph as he focused on mastering his altered delivery.

“As far as the velocity is concerned, he’s working his way up,” Alston said. “I gather by the time the season starts, he’ll be back to where he needs to be.”

MORRISON, ROSARIO UPDATES

Twins left fielder Eddie Rosario said his right triceps was “feeling better” on Friday morning and he was cleared to resume full baseball activity after being placed on no-throw status for a few days.

Rosario, who came out of Sunday’s home game after four innings after reporting discomfort in his throwing arm, wasn’t sure when he might return to the lineup, but Twins manager Paul Molitor suggested his absence could stretch into early next week.

Ervin Santana’s slider could be even better post-surgery

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | March 10, 2018

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Ervin Santana touched his right thumb to his index and middle fingers and lightly rubbed them together like a chef delivering a pinch of seasoning to a mixing bowl.

“It feels better,” the Twins’ right-hander said of his surgically repaired knuckle at the base of his middle finger. “Before I couldn’t even do this.”

Stretching the fingers beyond his thumb, he smiled.

“Now I do a little bit of this,” he said.

Gripping a baseball is still days away, if not a week or more, as Twins athletic trainers wait for the swelling to disappear following the Feb. 6 surgery. Santana is doing his best to remain patient.

“Right now the swelling is going down,” he said. “We’re trying to work on the knuckle because that’s where all the swelling is so I can’t really make a fist.”

He said he believes he is still on schedule as he works toward a return to the big-league rotation in late April or early May but isn’t obsessing over the calendar.

“I’m not thinking about the schedule or anything like that, just thinking about my recuperation,” he said. “I don’t worry if I’m on track or not. I’m just worried about my hand right now. One day at a time.”

There will be another follow-up visit in New York with his hand surgeon, Dr. Charles Melone, in a little more than three weeks. Now that the calcium deposit has been removed from Santana’s knuckle, is it possible his signature slider will be even more devastating than before?

“That’s what the doctor said,” Santana said. “He said it’s going to be even better because I’m going to have more flexibility in my hand.”

He’ll take that, won’t he?

“I’ll take it every time,” he said. “Why not?”

BRIEFLY

The topic of Saturday’s morning meeting was “Harassment: What You Need to Know to Protect Yourself.” James F. Olney, senior HR consultant of Associated Benefits and Risk Consulting, led the 40-minute presentation.

Anibal Sanchez will take a 13.50 earned run average over just four innings into Sunday’s start, his first for the Twins. The plan is for Sanchez, battling Phil Hughes, Adalberto Mejia, Aaron Slegers and Tyler Duffey for a rotation spot, to throw four innings or 60 pitches.

With a reloaded farm system, Twins hope to make 'bright future' a reality

Dan Hayes | The Athletic | March 10, 2018

FORT MYERS, Fla. — As if the addition of a No. 1 pick and the accompanying bonus pool weren’t enough to beef up the farm system, the Twins got creative this winter and bulked it up even more.

Not only did they add a bunch of high-profile prospects via the June draft in Royce Lewis, Brent Rooker, Landon Leach and Blayne Enlow, the Twins kept adding.

Through a pair July 31 trades, several more deals during the Shohei Ohtani sweepstakes and an international signing, the Twins have created depth for a farm system already on the rise. In total, the team added five players ranked among their top 30 prospects by MLB Pipeline.com after the draft.

Baseball America recently ranked the Twins’ farm system as No. 12 overall, up from 22nd last year. If several of the Twins’ 2017 draftees perform this season, the overall value of the system is expected to increase once again. Not only would that provide the assets to pull off a potential blockbuster if necessary, but if they execute their plan, the Twins should be able to have sustained success for several years behind their current talented, young core.

“In terms of young, unproven, but really exciting talent, they have as much as anybody,” said MLB Pipeline senior writer Jim Callis. “It’s not like everybody will have a good year. But I think a year from now, if a lot of those guys have the year they’re capable of, we’re going to think of the Twins as one of the top five or so farm systems in baseball.”

The Twins have loaded up on assets in the last year since that No. 22 ranking. They had an MLB-high \$14.2 million signing bonus pool to spend on their first 10 draft picks and grabbed Lewis, the 20th-ranked overall prospect in baseball, with the first choice. Beyond Lewis, the Twins injected organizational top-30 MLB Pipeline prospects Rooker (No. 8), Enlow (No. 9), Andrew Bechtold (No. 20) and Leach (No. 28) in June.

But chief baseball officer Derek Falvey and general manager Thad Levine weren’t close to done adding to their depth. The Twins got back No. 22 prospect Tyler Watson from Washington in the Brandon Kintzler trade and added No. 15 prospect Zack Littell in the Jaime Garcia/Yankees deal.

Then they got even more creative and once they found out they wouldn’t acquire him, took advantage of the Ohtani Sweepstakes. They acquired No. 25 prospect Jacob Pearson, whom the Los Angeles Angels took in the third round of the 2017 draft, for international signing bonus money. No. 30 prospect, catcher David Banuelos, whom the Seattle Mariners took in the fifth round, was acquired in a similar deal for bonus money.

And then the Twins signed infielder Yunior Severino, their 29th-ranked prospect, for \$2.5 million after he was made a free agent as part of the penalty phase for the Atlanta Braves international violations.

“We felt like we took advantage ... and (added) asset value,” Falvey said. “A lot of these guys haven’t gone through one year or full season yet. We’re really optimistic about that group. It’s exciting to see where we are from a depth standpoint. We just need to keep these guys on the right track of how they can help us.”

What makes the Twins so intriguing is nobody can quite pinpoint an exact top-10 prospect list. Baseball America editor J.J. Cooper said after Lewis the Twins feature a number of prospects with high ceilings and high risk. He identified the bulk of the team’s prospects ranking between the 75th and 140th best prospects in baseball.

While one prospect might appear on one publication’s top-100 list, he might be completely absent from another. For example, Alex Kirilloff, the team’s 2016 first-rounder, is No. 99 on Fangraphs’ top-100 list but doesn’t appear anywhere else.

“The good thing the Twins have with this is they have a good number of those prospects,” Cooper said. “It’s pretty easy to map out some very plausible scenarios where some of these guys end up being very useful regulars. At the same time, it’s just as easy with any of these guys to say here’s how it could go wrong.

“The thing I like is they were nimble.”

New Twins farm director Jeremy Zoll is excited about the group he is inheriting, noting how it is a balanced group with MLB-ready players as well as prospects headed into their first full professional seasons. Zoll recently spoke with MLB Pipeline’s Jonathan Mayo about the top-30 list and said there was little dropoff — “there’s not a clear cliff,” Zoll said — in prospects No. 22-30.

“We’re really excited about a lot of that,” Zoll said. “We’re pretty fortunate to have talent kind of consistently spread throughout the system.”

The Twins also, of course, feature a nice young core in the majors as Byron Buxton, Jorge Polanco, Jose Berrios, Miguel Sano and Max Kepler are all 25 or younger. Given that core has just now begun to develop at the big-league level, the Twins could have a nice window of sustained success ahead.

“You have some guys that are really young who you can build around,” Callis said. “The Twins have a pretty bright future.”