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San Francisco Chronicle

Giants stick to their plan, make no trades, then beat Padres

Henry Schulman

SAN DIEGO — If you check the archives, the Giants’ front office responded to last year’s 64-98 reckoning by promising to field a competitive team again in 2018. It wanted to win ballgames now while developing young players for sustained success in coming years.

Nothing has changed for executive vice president Brian Sabean and general manager Bobby Evans, who suggested Tuesday that their inaction at the nonwaiver trade deadline was merely them sticking with the blueprint they created last winter.

The Giants fielded a lot of calls for players they had and made a lot of calls for some they wanted. Sabean said they planned to be “strategic buyers” and “strategic sellers,” and they strategically stayed put.

They had no plans to deal big prospects for rental players in a bid to grab a postseason berth. Nor did they consider a big sell-off and rebuild. Thus, for the first time since 2013, they made no significant July deadline deal.

Hours after the deadline, the Giants won their third game in a row, beating the Padres 3-2 in 10 innings. Andrew McCutchen, a subject of trade rumors because he is a potential free agent, homered in the game.

Management hopes its decision to keep the Giants together — for now — will help create a bounce in the clubhouse and on the field.

A three-game win streak is a good way to start.

“We definitely have the tools here on the team we’ve got,” McCutchen said. “We’ve just got to find a way to work together and win ballgames any way we can. We’ve just treaded water. We’ve got to find a second push, man, and finish strong.”

Sabean and Evans satisfied the fans who did not want the club to mortgage the future for more older players, especially potential free agents. The two also disappointed those who favored a stripped-down rebuild that will not happen.

“As Bobby and his staff navigated and fielded the calls, it became apparent, one, we weren’t going to gut the farm system or overpay, and two, in a perfect world, what we were trying to pursue was a controllable situation that would help us present and future,” Sabean said.

“If it didn’t advantage us in that fashion, we backed off.”

The Giants were looking for pitchers who would not become free agents after the 2019 season.

On the “sell” side, Sabean hinted that reports of Jeff Samardzija’s availability were true by saying that some potential moves were thwarted by injuries.

The Giants did not deal any of their back-end relievers, either, although things could change in August, when waiver trades can be made, or even this offseason. Giants officials are not promising to keep the team intact indefinitely. If they fall further out of the race, they still could move players before September.

Now, though, they want to gauge the team they built with as many healthy players as possible on the field at the same time. Johnny Cueto seems headed for Tommy John surgery, but the club is thrilled with how Dereck Rodriguez and Andrew Suarez developed, and how well some of the young position players have performed.

“We went into this year trying to be as competitive as possible and challenge for a playoff spot,” Sabean said. “We still wanted to win and develop. I think we’re even more poised to win and develop. You just look at some of the younger folks who have been introduced and have had their cameos and done extremely well.”

The Giants’ chief competitors in the National League West hardly stood pat.

The Dodgers, already buoyed by the acquisition of big fish Manny Machado, dealt for Minnesota second baseman Brian Dozier and Toronto reliever John Axford on Tuesday. The Diamondbacks bolstered their infield with Minnesota third baseman Eduardo Escobar and bullpen with Brad Ziegler and Jake Diekman.

Sabean has not been one to make moves just to keep up with the Joneses, and he is not conceding the West to anybody based on deadline moves.

“It’s not how good you are. It’s how well you play,” he said. “Whatever team plays the best for the longest is going to win out at the end. I think we’ve got enough talent. We’ve got enough experience. We’ve got some youthful enthusiasm. We’ll take our chances.”

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants' Dereck Rodriguez burnishes Rookie of the Year credentials

Henry Schulman

SAN DIEGO — **Dereck Rodriguez** has become a National League Rookie of the Year contender. He lowered his ERA to 2.59 with seven innings of one-run ball in Tuesday's 3-2, 10-inning victory against the Padres.

"That's the one thing my dad never got, so it would be nice," Rodriguez said with a wry smile.

Rodriguez's chief competition is a player on one of **Pudge Rodriguez's** former teams. Marlins third baseman and outfielder **Brian Anderson** is the front-runner because he has been up all year.

A lot can happen in two months. Rodriguez has been nails. His ERA since June 24 is 1.49. Only Boston's **Chris Sale** (0.23) and Arizona's **Zack Greinke**(1.33) in that time frame have been better.

Rodriguez (5-1) played a big role in the Giants' third straight win. He allowed a first-inning run, then held the Padres scoreless for the rest of his seven innings.

On a day manager **Bruce Bochy** wanted to rest a bunch of relievers, he got a personal-high 112 pitches from his rookie.

"I don't think I've ever thrown that many pitches in my life," Rodriguez said.

He left with a 2-1 lead but got no decision when the game unfolded almost exactly like Monday night's. After the Giants blew multiple chances offensively, the Padres again tied the game with an eighth-inning run. **Reyes Moronta** walked leadoff hitter **Jose Pirela** and, well, the rest hardly matters.

The Giants won in the 10th against right-hander **Phil Maton** on **Brandon Crawford's** two-out single, which scored **Evan Longoria**. Longoria hit a leadoff triple off the "jury box" that juts into right field that took a fortuitous bounce away from **Travis Jankowski**.

Crawford provided the clutchness the Giants lacked after they loaded the bases with nobody out in the eighth and failed to add to a 2-1 lead.

"That hit could not have been more timely, especially with our bullpen situation," Bochy said.

Moronta threw 27 pitches a day after throwing 30 in Monday night's 12-inning win. **Tony Watson** and **Will Smith** each pitched for the third straight day, Smith for the first time since **Tommy John**. Another long foray into extra innings would have been tough for the Giants, even with an off day Wednesday ahead of four games in Arizona.

"You've heard me say it many times that we need a day off," Bochy said. "But never like right now. These guys need a break, especially the arms."

Briefly: Bochy said **Chris Stratton** almost certainly will rejoin the rotation, in **Johnny Cueto's** spot, in Arizona on Friday night. ... Longoria's triple was his second with the Giants and 21st in 5,730 big-league at-bats.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants stand pat at nonwaiver trade deadline, win third straight

Henry Schulman

SAN DIEGO — "All quiet on the western front," manager Bruce Bochy said.

It was not a book recommendation, but a statement on the trade front as the nonwaiver trade deadline approached. It passed, with the Giants doing nothing.

They did not sell. They did not buy, content for now to see if their .500 team can get on the type of run it has not been able to accomplish and compete for a playoff spot.

To that end, the Giants won their third game in a row Tuesday, 3-2, when Evan Longoria hit a leadoff triple in the 10th inning off San Diego reliever Phil Maton and scored on Brandon Crawford's two-out single.

Will Smith earned the save and sent the Giants to Arizona after they won both games at Petco Park.

Andrew McCutchen, the subject of trade rumors, hit a tie-breaking homer off Clayton Richard in the fifth inning. The Giants loaded the bases with nobody out in the eighth with a chance to expand their 2-1 lead and put away the Padres but could not score.

San Diego then scored the tying run in the eighth for the second straight game, off Reyes Moronta, when the Giants's umpteenth leadoff walk bit them again. Jose Pirela eventually scored on a forceout.

That cost Dereck Rodriguez a victory. He got a no-decision after allowing one run in seven innings.

When the deadline passed, executive vice president Brian Sabean and general manager Bobby Evans revealed their strategy ahead of the deadline, saying they were not in the market for rental players and got no compelling offers to sell.

The Giants preferred instead to wait to see if the team can get as healthy as possible and gauge its progress before deciding whether to make potential waiver trades in August and even how to proceed in the offseason.

Sabean said they were “strategic buyers” first, and then, “strategic sellers” if something piqued their interest. But he acknowledged that some potential trade chips were not healthy, which had an effect. He did not mention Jeff Samardzija by name, but he was said to be available.

“As Bobby and his staff navigated and fielded the calls, it became apparent, one, we weren’t going to gut the farm system or overpay, and two, in a perfect world, what we were trying to pursue was a controllable situation that would help us present and future,” Sabean said.

“If it didn’t advantage us in that fashion, we backed off.”

Evans said the Giants spent a good deal of time examining controllable starting pitchers even before Johnny Cueto returned to the disabled list with an elbow injury that likely will mean Tommy John surgery.

A source said the Giants were in on Cincinnati pitcher Matt Harvey, for instance.

“That will continue,” Evans said. “We’ve gone most of the year without Johnny and we’re going to continue to allow some of the young pitching to show what they’ve got.”

Like most players, the ones on the Giants did not want to be broken apart. For now, they can view the front office’s inaction in part as an endorsement from management.

“That’s what you’re hopeful of,” Bochy said, “that they do take that as how much we believe in these guys, how much confidence we have in them, that we still feel we’re in this and have a chance to go here we want to go.”

There were no hugs in the clubhouse ahead of Tuesday’s day game against the Padres, no signs that someone was about to be moved.

As it said in this space Monday, the front office did not seem to be trending one way or another. If anything, it was tilted slightly toward “buy” mode.

The deadline is not a hard deadline, of course, and with the Giants five games back of the Dodgers, they still can make waiver deals — buying or selling — if the team’s fortunes changes.

San Jose Mercury News

Giants sweep Padres behind Crawford’s go-ahead single, Rodríguez’s gem

Kerry Crowley

SAN DIEGO—Shortly after the Giants began Tuesday’s game in San Diego, vice president of baseball operations Brian Sabean and general manager Bobby Evans spoke with reporters regarding the team’s inactivity at the trade deadline.

Sabean and Evans said the Giants pursued deals for young, controllable pitchers, but weren’t willing to gut their farm system or overpay to complete a transaction.

While the duo from the Giants’ front office balked at high prices on the trade market, a young, controllable pitcher who barely cost the club a dime led San Francisco to a 3-2, 10-inning victory over the Padres.

Rookie Dereck Rodríguez, the son of Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodríguez, signed as a minor league free agent with the Giants this offseason after spending six seasons in the Minnesota Twins organization and has burst onto the scene as a legitimate Rookie of the Year candidate.

“That would be one thing my dad never got, so that would be nice,” Rodríguez said of the award. “He got everything else at some point.”

For the second straight day, though, the Giants needed extra innings to down the Padres as Brandon Crawford brought in Evan Longoria with a two-out single in the top of the 10th to give San Francisco the lead. After Longoria led off the inning with a triple, the Giants avoided a

catastrophic failure at the plate thanks to Crawford's first pitch laser into right field off of Padres reliever Phil Maton.

"We've been looking for that big hit in a lot of these games," Longoria said. "We've played a lot of close games in the last week."

While Rodríguez was brilliant, the Giants' offense didn't provide much run support Tuesday, as the club failed to convert with the bases loaded and no one out in a disastrous eighth inning. After Crawford struck out, Joe Panik hit into a fielder's choice and Gorkys Hernández flew out to end the threat.

Armed with a 2-1 lead, manager Bruce Bochy turned to rookie reliever Reyes Moronta in the bottom of the inning, but Moronta walked the leadoff man and allowed a game-tying fielder's choice. Despite throwing 30 pitches over two innings in Monday's game, Moronta entered with the game on the line as the Giants were short on options in their bullpen.

A day after the Giants taxed their pitching staff in a 12-inning win over the Padres, Rodríguez set a new career-high with 112 pitches in another dominant performance. The converted outfielder hasn't allowed more than two earned runs in a start since June 19 and lowered his ERA to 2.59, which is the best mark among any National League rookie with at least 60 innings pitched.

Rodríguez picked up seven strikeouts and allowed just three hits against San Diego and left the game in line for the win, but the Giants couldn't reward him for his efforts.

"Seven solid innings," Bochy said. "He gave up a run in the first inning and then he just pitched outstanding. We got him pretty far up there in the pitch count, he hasn't been up there, but he's done such a great job and gave us what we needed."

The Giants scored their first run on a sacrifice fly from the hero of Monday's game, Hernández, who powered the team to a victory with a 12th inning home run into the second deck of the

left field bleachers.

On Tuesday, it was the Giants' right fielder who hit a tie-breaking home run, as Andrew McCutchen launched a solo shot to right field in the top of the fifth. The Giants' failure to add on was once again an issue, though, leading to another tense late-inning situation.

With six straight quality starts, Rodríguez has compiled a 1.49 ERA since June 24, which ranks as the third-best mark in baseball behind Chris Sale of the Red Sox and Zack Greinke of the D'backs.

"That's a good group of guys, I guess," Rodríguez said. "I don't think about that stuff. I just go out there and try to put on a good performance for my team and try to give our guys a chance to win and try to get back into this race."

The only run Rodríguez allowed came in the bottom of the first after Wil Myers extended the inning with a two-out infield single. Padres first baseman Eric Hosmer followed with an RBI double, bringing Myers home and pushing San Diego ahead 1-0.

The right-hander recovered nicely, allowing just one hit over his next four innings of work as a third inning double down the left field line by Travis Jankowski was all the Padres mustered.

San Jose Mercury News

Bobby Evans, Brian Sabean discuss deadline strategy, opportunities in August

Kerry Crowley

SAN DIEGO—The phone lines were busy leading into Tuesday's non-waiver trade deadline, but after fielding offers and making calls, the Giants hung up and stayed silent.

With a 54-54 record and a 5.5 game deficit to overcome in the division, the Giants said they

were open to buying or selling if the right opportunity presented itself. At the 1 p.m. deadline, that opportunity was nowhere to be found.

“We had a strategy of being strategic buyers and if so inclined and compelling enough, strategic sellers,” vice president of baseball operations Brian Sabean said. “But in that context, we wanted to stay clear of free agents-to-be and preferred people that were controllable.”

Though Sabean and general manager Bobby Evans will continue to search for younger players with team-friendly, controllable contracts through the month of August and into the offseason, the Giants’ front office was cautious to protect a farm system that lacks depth.

As veteran starters Johnny Cueto (right elbow sprain) and Jeff Samardzija (shoulder inflammation) deal with injuries, the Giants indicated they’ll continue to scour the market for pitching talent after pursuing opportunities ahead of the non-waiver deadline.

“One, we weren’t going to gut the farm system or overpay and two, in a perfect world, which we were trying to pursue, was a controllable situation that would help us in the present and the future,” Sabean said. “If it didn’t advantage us in that fashion, we backed off.”

The Giants likely gauged interest from other clubs on right fielder Andrew McCutchen, a free agent-to-be, as well as several relief pitchers, but Sabean and Evans didn’t want to move assets unless the Giants received meaningful pieces in return. If San Francisco falls completely out of the race in August, that could change, especially because Sabean says the club is motivated to evaluate younger prospects approaching the major league level.

Though the Giants didn’t complete any deals Tuesday, Evans said the flurry of activity in the hours leading up to the non-waiver deadline may indicate teams will remain motivated to pursue trades in August.

“We’re always looking at opportunities after the deadline and we try to stay available and transparent with clubs in terms of opportunities,” Evans said. “I think there’s been a whole lot

more activity around the trade deadline this year than we've seen in years past."

Several Giants players are expected to be placed on waivers in August, at which point other teams can submit a waiver claim. The Giants can then negotiate a trade with the team that placed the claim, or pull a player back from the waiver wire. If a player goes unclaimed for two days, the Giants would be free to work out trades with any club.

If the Giants stay in the hunt in the National League West and or the wildcard race, Evans and Sabeen may also look to add to the existing roster. San Francisco was linked to Reds starter Matt Harvey before the deadline, but Cincinnati elected not to trade him. Harvey will likely end up on waivers in August, so if the Giants feel compelled to add a pitcher, there should be more chances to do so.

Fewer than 90 minutes before the deadline, Giants manager Bruce Bochy said he's hopeful Giants players take a quiet deadline as a vote of confidence in the current roster and the team's abilities to make a late push.

"That's what you're hoping, we still feel that we're in this and we have a chance to get to where we want to go," Bochy said.

Because the franchise is determined to remain under the competitive balance tax threshold of \$197 million this season, the Giants are unlikely to pursue deals for any two-month rentals or players earning significant salaries in August.

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Giants rotation undetermined

Bochy said the Giants could have a decision regarding how they'll treat Cueto's right elbow sprain within the next day.

The Giants manager said Monday Tommy John surgery is a 'strong possibility' after Cueto revealed he's experiencing pain in his elbow after every pitch.

With Cueto on the 10-day disabled list and expected to miss an extended period of time, the Giants have listed Madison Bumgarner as their starter for Thursday's game in Arizona and have left the rest of their weekend rotation as "to be announced."

If the Giants avoid using right-hander Chris Stratton out of the bullpen Tuesday, Bochy said Stratton will likely start Friday's game against the D'backs.

MLB.com

Crawford's clutch single lifts Giants in 10th

Chris Haft

SAN DIEGO -- The biggest acquisition the Giants made at the non-waiver Trade Deadline was confidence.

On the fringes of the race for a postseason spot, the Giants felt grateful that club management resisted breaking up the team, deciding it was worth keeping them together for a late-season surge.

View Full Game Coverage

The Giants furthered their cause Tuesday with their third consecutive victory, a 3-2, 10-inning decision over the Padres at Petco Park. **Evan Longoria** tripled off reliever **Phil Maton** to open the 10th and scored on **Brandon Crawford's** single to break a 2-2 tie.

"We have the guys to win," Longoria said. "We need a hot streak to be right back in this thing."

Giants director of baseball operations Brian Sabean appreciated the players' belief in

themselves and what they can accomplish with management's support. "We hope we get a bounce," Sabean said.

The Giants are only one game over .500 (55-54), but such records matter little as long as a team remains mathematically in contention.

"Without sounding flip," Sabean said, "it's not how good you are, it's how well you play."

Few Giants have performed as well as **Dereck Rodriguez**. The rookie right-hander wasn't involved in the decision, but again paved the way for a victory, matching a personal best by working seven innings. He allowed one run and three hits while walking three and striking out seven. His 2.59 ERA tops all NL rookie starters.

Rodriguez has solidified the starting rotation while establishing himself as a legitimate NL Rookie of the Year Award candidate. He noted with some amusement that the Rookie of the Year Award is among the few baseball honors that his father, Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez, never claimed.

Against San Diego, Rodriguez took a fresh step by throwing a career-high 112 pitches. "It's going to be fun to see how my body reacts," he said.

The Giants might have been reluctant to discover how their top relievers would react physically after working overtime during the club's winning streak. **Reyes Moronta** threw the eighth inning after pitching two frames on Monday. **Tony Watson** has appeared in three consecutive games. So has closer **Will Smith**.

Fortunately for the Giants, Wednesday is a scheduled off-day.

"You've heard me say many times that we need a day off," manager Bruce Bochy said. "But never like we do right now."

SOUND SMART

The Giants recorded their fourth series sweep of the year and the first since taking three in a row from Arizona at Chase Field -- their next stop -- from June 29 to July 1.

HE SAID IT

"I don't think I've thrown that many pitches in my life. That was a good one." -- *Rodriguez, after flinging a personal-high 112 pitches against San Diego*

UP NEXT

Following Wednesday's scheduled off-day, the Giants will visit the D-backs for a key four-game series beginning Thursday at Chase Field. It'll be a challenge for San Francisco, which is separated from the first-place Dodgers in the NL West by both Arizona and Colorado. Left-hander **Madison Bumgarner**, who will start the series opener for the Giants, is winless in his last four outings against the Rockies despite a 2.67 ERA in that span. First pitch is scheduled for 6:40 p.m. PT. No starter has been announced for the D-backs.

MLB.com

Giants stand pat as Deadline passes

Chris Haft

SAN DIEGO -- Though the Giants claimed to have taken an open-minded approach as they neared Tuesday's non-waiver Trade Deadline, they found no partners for a deal that would bolster the roster short or long term.

"Simply put, we had a strategy of being strategic buyers and, if so inclined and compelling enough, strategic sellers," said director of baseball operations Brian Sabean after the Deadline passed.

View Full Game Coverage

The Giants stuck to their unofficial yet deliberate avoidance of pursuing impending free agents.

They also gleaned ideas for potential deals in August and thereafter. In previous years, San Francisco has succeeded in obtaining key stretch-drive or postseason performers such as outfielder Cody Ross and right-hander Brad Penny in the season's final two months.

"We're always looking at opportunities after the Deadline," general manager Bobby Evans said.

Evans said that the Giants particularly studied "controllable" pitching -- that is, pitchers who won't become eligible for free agency for several years. San Francisco itself has benefited hugely from controllable pitching this year, namely rookies **Dereck Rodriguez** and **Andrew Suarez**.

"They're growing before our eyes," Sabeen said.

This was an unusual July 31 for the Giants, who typically make some news at or around the Deadline. However, except for the trade which sent **Austin Jackson** to Texas for **Cory Gearrin** on July 8, and some warmed-over rumors involving the Yankees' interest in outfielder **Andrew McCutchen**, San Francisco apparently did not come close to making a deal. That's largely due to the Giants' uncertainty regarding who they are. Due to a plethora of injuries, they've rarely employed anything that could be considered a semblance of a "regular" lineup.

The ballclub, Sabeen said, "needs to be further evaluated going into the offseason."

That unfamiliarity didn't stop other teams from coveting certain members of the Giants.

"We had a fair amount of interest in our roster at multiple levels, multiple roles and multiple guys," Evans said.

The Athletic

Giants' Brian Sabean after a quiet trade deadline: 'we hope we get a bounce'

Andrew Baggarly

SAN DIEGO — The July 31 trade deadline has its purpose. For certain teams targeting certain players, it is the last opportunity to strike a deal and make a major addition to a contending roster for the pennant race and beyond.

But not all teams are the Dodgers and not all players are Manny Machado.

Another swath of teams, usually the ones sandwiched somewhere in the middle of the standings or lower, view the non-waiver deadline in another respect. It is an action date. Hands are shown, bluffs are called, true interest is made known, postures are abandoned. There are but a few of these action dates on the baseball calendar, which is why they are so highly anticipated. The executives who have navigated their boat through these locks enough times understand it well: July 31 is a day when you might not gather up a new player, but you might gather meaningful intelligence that can advance the next move that could make all the difference next season. Sometimes you go browsing and end up shopping.

The Giants were one of those sandwiched teams on Tuesday, although they didn't have enough bread to do anything meaningful. They weren't going to sell for the sake of selling. They weren't going to buy if it meant crossing the \$197 million tax projection. And they weren't going to strip anything useful from their minor league system for a rental player when their postseason odds stood somewhere between 5 and 7 percent. They sought controllable starting pitching, and Johnny Cueto's ailing elbow compelled them to intensify that search.

But on an action date, the Giants consummated nothing.

They'll probably be graded harshly for this by those who write the obligatory "winners and losers" columns. But truth be told, the goal of any organization is to acquire talented players who can help you win games, and July 31 is just a more visible, more frenzied, more clickable day on the calendar to acquire talent.

Sometimes the most important acquisitions happen in the deadest time of the year and are so low-key that they do not merit a single tweet.

Sometimes they happen a week before Thanksgiving. Sometimes you sign a minor league free agent named Dereck Rodríguez.

That signing on Nov. 17 was so minor that Rodríguez was the one who scooped the world on it. He posted to his Instagram. It's up to 938 likes.

The Giants are in love with the results.

Rodríguez, 26, matched a career high with seven innings and set a new high with 112 pitches Tuesday at Petco Park — the kind of deep and durable start that was badly needed with the needle on red for nearly all of Bruce Bochy's relievers.

Rodríguez has been a godsend. The Giants are 8-2 in his starts. He has a 2.59 ERA that leads all NL rookie pitchers. If the season ended today, he might not win the NL Rookie of the Year award — Washington's Juan Soto has been pretty good — but he'd appear on most ballots.

"That would be one thing that my dad never got," said Pudge's son. "So that would be nice. He got everything except that."

And if Rodríguez can spin starts like this for six years? There's no calculating the kind of value the Giants would have acquired with one minor league signing that nobody noticed.

The Giants spoiled Rodríguez's decision in the eighth when Reyes Moronta — pitching after tossing two innings the previous night — issued a leadoff walk that scored. (The Giants also could have secured Rodríguez's win in the top half of the eighth, but they failed to score after loading the bases with no outs.)

But they wended their way to a 3-2 victory in 10 innings. Evan Longoria received a racquetball bounce on a leadoff triple into the right field corner and Brandon Crawford whistled a two-out single to send him home to complete a two-game sweep over a last-place team that took 22 innings to achieve.

"We're in a unique situation with Rodríguez and (Andrew) Suárez, who have grown before our

eyes,” Giants executive vice president Brian Sabean said. “We went into this year trying to be as competitive as possible to challenge for a playoff spot. We still wanted to win and develop. And I think we’re even more poised to want to develop, if you look at some of the younger folks that have been introduced and had their cameos and have done extremely well.”

One bad week could shift them more fully into development mode, and the players know it. So the urgency doesn’t end on the backside of the trade deadline.

The Giants stood five games back and in fourth place in the NL West after the final out was recorded in San Diego. They head to Arizona’s Chase Field for four critical games that could sound their death knell. But for now, they are still together. They are still chasing this thing.

Most teams in their circumstance would be crestfallen to stand pat on July 31 while the Dodgers traded for Machado, second baseman Brian Dozier and reliever John Axford, and while the Diamondbacks added to their bullpen with Jake Diekman and Brad Ziegler in addition to acquiring infielder Eduardo Escobar (who leads the major leagues in doubles, a fact that might have slipped past you).

That was not the sense in the Giants clubhouse Tuesday afternoon. They are just happy that they weren’t broken apart.

“Well, we hope we get a bounce,” Sabean said. “We invested a lot in this group, we believe in this group. The messaging in the offseason was that our core players are our present and our future. So maybe we do get a bounce from this. I hope the last couple wins, and also with this day passing, will take some of the pressure off.”

Maybe management didn’t shout full-throated belief in them by acquiring help. But management didn’t ring the gong, either. They’ll let this group perform a bit longer.

“I think we have the group to win,” Longoria said. “It’s a matter of if we believe it. We’re on the road to doing that. I mean, two tough wins (here). We just need to get on a little run. We’re one hot streak from being back in this thing.”

The pressure might be greater on some than others. Longoria is signed for four more years and isn’t going anywhere. But Andrew McCutchen, who will be a free agent in a couple months,

definitely came up in trade talks. He also could be moved in a waiver deal in August. So the Giants' fate and fortune from series to series most definitely will determine what happens with him.

McCutchen followed Monday's three-hit game by hitting a home run Tuesday. He laughed when asked if the Giants had given him any assurances while his name came up in trade rumors.

"No, they don't talk to me about that stuff," he said, clearly amused by the question. "I'm not concerned about it. It's out of my control. I've kind of been in this situation before. A lot of stuff can circulate but until I get a phone call and they say, 'Hey, this is happening,' I don't pay it much mind.

"I love it here and I'd love to win here. It's been a good couple games for us. We've got some ground to cover and we just need to keep going and have a strong 50-odd games."

Sabean indicated the Giants might have been more active at the deadline if some players who had garnered interest hadn't underperformed or ended up on the disabled list, possibly referencing Jeff Samardzija or even Joe Panik. If they had been able to move money beyond what they moved in the Austin Jackson deal, they might have had more scratch to pursue a rental without giving up much in return.

As it stands, the Giants will reassemble in Arizona on Thursday. They will line up behind Madison Bumgarner. They'll look forward to getting Brandon Belt back in a week. They'll hope not to lose anyone else in the meantime. They will look to find inner strength while facing opponents whose rosters have been reinforced.

"Well, not being flip, but the more you've been around the game, it's not how good you are, it's how well you play," Sabean said. "So whatever team plays the best for the longest is going to win out. We've got enough talent, we've got enough experience.

"We'll take our chances. You've still got to compete and win it on the field."

NBCsportsbayarea.com

Giants starter Dereck Rodriguez emerging in Rookie of the Year race

Alex Pavlovic

SAN DIEGO — Dereck Rodriguez has shrugged just about everything off in his first season in the big leagues. When asked about his mounting workload after Tuesday's win, he smiled and said it'll be a lot of fun to see how his body reacts. When told that he has been keeping company with the likes of Chris Sale and Zack Greinke the last six weeks, he paused and noted, "those are some good guys, I guess."

But there was one question Tuesday that got Rodriguez flowing. He has put himself in the Rookie of the Year conversation, perhaps right at the top of it, and when the topic came up Tuesday, he perked up.

"That's the one thing my dad never got," he said. "That'd be nice. He got everything else except that."

Ivan Rodriguez, the Hall of Famer, finished fourth in the American League Rookie of the Year balloting in 1991. 27 years later, his son might be the front-runner to win it in the National League. Dereck allowed one run over seven innings Tuesday in a 3-2 Giants win, lowering his ERA to 2.59. Since June 24, the MLB ERA chart goes like this: Sale (0.23), Greinke (1.33), Rodriguez (1.49).

"I don't think about that stuff," Rodriguez said of his hot streak. "I go out there and try to put on a good performance."

They're piling up at this point, and Rodriguez is pulling away from other first-year NL pitchers. The greatest competition will come from the National League East, where three young hitters are breaking out. Miami's Brian Anderson has been a starter all year and has nine homers, 51 RBI, a .784 OPS and 2.6 Wins Above Replacement. Washington's Juan Soto, a 19-year-old budding superstar, has a .984 OPS and 13 homers, and has been one of the better stories in

baseball this season. Ronald Acuna Jr. of the Braves gets plenty of attention, too, and one of the game's best prospects has 10 homers already. He certainly is talented enough to run away from the field down the stretch.

Rodriguez was a bit late to the race, but in 12 big-league appearances, he has had the look of an ace. His run of dominance started against the Padres on June 24 and he kept it going Tuesday after allowing a first-inning run. Rodriguez tied his career-high with seven innings and threw a career-high 112 pitches. He saved a team that wiped out the bullpen a night before.

Reyes Moronta, pitching a day after throwing two innings, blew the lead in the eighth and kept Rodriguez from his sixth win. But the team is 8-2 in his starts, thanks in large part to all the heavy lifting the rookie is doing in the early innings.

“We needed it,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “He gives up a run in the first inning and he just piled up outs. We got him pretty far in his pitch count, he hasn’t been there. He’s just so reliable at going out and giving us quality starts.”

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Andrew McCutchen comes through for Giants hours after trade rumors

Alex Pavlovic

The MLB trade deadline passed 10 minutes before the San Francisco Giants saw their first pitch against the San Diego Padres. The Giants **stood pat**, which included hanging on to outfielder Andrew McCutchen.

There was **some interest in the 31-year-old**, including from the New York Yankees, but McCutchen suited up in orange and black on Tuesday. He rewarded his front office's decision in his second at-bat.

McCutchen stepped up to the plate in the fifth inning, with the game tied 1-1, and belted a solo

home run to give San Francisco a 2-1 lead.

The Padres ultimately tied the game, but the Giants emerged victorious in extra innings for a second straight game.

McCutchen, who's slashing .258/.353/.413 with 11 homers and 44 RBI, could still be traded in August if he passes through waivers. He is set to become an unrestricted free agent at the end of the year, and the Giants are 4.5 games back of the second Wild Card spot as of this writing.

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Giants Notes

Alex Pavlovic

SAN DIEGO — There don't appear to be many appealing off-day activities in Phoenix, where it will be 109 degrees when the Giants land. That shouldn't bother them too much. They'll take the day no matter where it is.

With a chance to win a third straight a few hours after ownership and management decided not to sell, Bruce Bochy pushed down on the gas pedal. A few hours after he threw two innings in an extra-innings win, Reyes Moronta pitched the eighth and threw 27 pitches. Moronta couldn't hold the lead, and Tony Watson was soon in for his third consecutive appearance. When Brandon Crawford gave the Giants a 3-2 lead in the 10th, Will Smith came on for his third straight. Watson and Smith were both pitching in three consecutive games for the first time this season.

"You've heard me say it many times -- we need a day off -- but never like right now," manager Bruce Bochy said. "These guys needed a break, especially the arms."

Bochy said it's possible a couple of relievers may be unavailable Thursday, even with the day off built in.

—- Bochy didn't have to use Chris Stratton on Tuesday so the right-hander will likely slide into the rotation on Friday in Phoenix. The plan is for Madison Bumgarner to face Zack Greinke in the opener, followed by Stratton, Andrew Suarez and Derek Holland. Stratton is taking Johnny Cueto's spot.

—- The Giants didn't have anything new on Cueto. He met with team doctors in San Francisco to go over another MRI and the expectation remains that he will need Tommy John surgery. Bochy said a final decision will be made in the next day or two.

—- The Giants didn't make any moves before the deadline, but they still can get players through waivers in August. It would be a boost, then, if Andrew McCutchen were to get hot. McCutchen homered in the fifth inning Tuesday.

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Who might have won the World Series at the deadline -- or lost it?

David Schoenfield

That was a fun deadline, as trades trickled in over two weeks, and then we ended up with a rush of activity in the final 24 hours. What made this trade period especially unique was that most teams in playoff contention made multiple trades. As always, a slew of relievers changed hands, but so did a couple of starting pitchers under team control past 2018. The biggest impact of the trade deadline doesn't necessarily come in the regular season -- even a superstar player is worth only two or three wins over two months. It comes in October.

With October in mind, which seven teams might have seen their fortunes change at this trade deadline?

Teams that might have won a World Series at the trade deadline:

Los Angeles Dodgers

Additions: Manny Machado, Brian Dozier, John Axford Everyone tends to believe you need to add pitching at the deadline, but that's only because everyone dreams on the scenario Justin Verlander provided the Astros last year, when he went 4-1 in the postseason with a 2.21 ERA. The Dodgers traded for the best player -- by far -- to change teams in Machado and doubled down on right-handed, power-hitting infielders with Tuesday's acquisition of Dozier. They did so while giving up only one significant prospect in Yusniel Diaz.

The Dodgers now have incredible lineup depth and versatility, and they have hedged against the return of Justin Turner, who is currently on the DL with a groin strain and hasn't been right all season after fracturing his wrist in spring training. Dozier hasn't had a great season, but he has a history of heating up the final two months (17 home runs in 2017; 23 in 2016).

What can go wrong: The bullpen has been hot in July but is still inexperienced, and Axford isn't really a dependable eighth-inning guy. Clayton Kershaw is healthy ... for now. Matt Kemp and Max Muncy were two of the biggest surprises of the first half and are strong regression candidates.

Chicago Cubs

Additions: Cole Hamels, Brandon Kintzler, Jesse Chavez

Hamels is a complete wild card, as he was plagued by the long ball with the Rangers, with whom he posted a 4.72 ERA. The projection systems don't forecast a return to greatness (ZiPS projects him for a 4.25 ERA the rest of season). Still, of all the starting pitchers to change teams, Hamels might be the one you most want out there in a postseason game, a guy who can get hot for three or four starts in October when the pressure is hottest. Kintzler is bullpen depth, especially with Brandon Morrow on the DL with biceps inflammation.

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What can go wrong: Maybe Hamels just isn't that good right now. Jon Lester had a 6.31 ERA in July. Jose Quintana hasn't been super effective. Yu Darvish has one win. Oh, and Kris Bryant's ailing shoulder and DL stint have created a temporary hole in the lineup.

Atlanta Braves

Additions: Kevin Gausman, Adam Duvall, Jonny Venters, Brad Brach

The Braves added some much-needed depth with a starter, a couple bullpen arms and a power bat in Duvall. Gausman's numbers with Baltimore don't jump out (4.43 ERA), but he moves from one of the majors' worst defensive teams to one of the best, and GM Alex Anthopoulos alluded to some possible changes to Gausman that the Braves believe might help him get more out of his talent. It wouldn't be a surprise to see Gausman power through a strong final two months (not to mention, he's under control for two more seasons) and give Atlanta a third hard-throwing weapon behind Mike Foltynewicz and Sean Newcomb.

What can go wrong: Venters has thrown only 15 innings, and Brach hasn't had a good season, so they're depth pieces but not necessarily impact upgrades. The offense has come back to earth a bit in July. How will Foltynewicz and Newcomb hold up as they surpass career highs in innings? Anibal Sanchez (3.00 ERA) can't possibly keep this up.

New York Yankees

Additions: Zach Britton, J.A. Happ, Lance Lynn, Luke Voit

There's a lot of uncertainty here, but the three pitchers could certainly pay huge dividends. Britton and his power sinker could provide a dominant lefty to match up against a Red Sox lineup that has been weaker against southpaws, but he has struggled with walks in his limited action in 2018. Happ and Lynn provide veteran moxie to a rotation that needed some depth at the back end.

What can go wrong: They're five games behind the Red Sox, so these three could pitch great, and the Yankees could still end up in the wild-card game ... and anything can happen there. Luis Severino is suddenly struggling with 20 runs allowed in his past 19⅓ innings over four starts. What if Aaron Judge doesn't come back 100 percent after his wrist fracture?

Teams that might have lost a World Series at the trade deadline:

Washington Nationals

Additions: None (acquired Kelvin Herrera in June)

With Bryce Harper trade rumors hot and heavy by Tuesday, GM Mike Rizzo finally said he

believed in his team and that Harper wasn't going anywhere. But the front office's indecision means the Nats missed a golden opportunity to acquire Gausman or Chris Archer, two non-rental starters who would have helped a rotation that has been awful the past two months.

What can go right: Hey, they beat the Mets 25-4 on Tuesday! The division is still winnable, and there's plenty of talent here to go on a run. The Nats have 16 games against the Braves and Phillies -- plus 16 more against the lowly Mets and Marlins -- so if they beat the playoff rivals and clean up against the weaklings, they could have a nice surge the final two months. Oh, and it was just last season that Harper hit .319/.413/.595, as opposed to his current .223/.371/.479. There's a major hot streak coming soon ... right?

Colorado Rockies

Additions: Seunghwan Oh

Let's see: The Dodgers add Machado and Dozier, and the Rockies add ... a 36-year-old relief pitcher (though a pretty good one). It's a disappointing deadline for a team that started Tuesday just one game out of first place. Do you want to win or not? The Dodgers pushed the pedal to the metal, while the Rockies were content to chase a pennant on their Schwinn.

What can go right: The bullpen -- remember, the Rockies spent \$106 million on it in free agency -- has been so bad that it can only get better. The rotation has been dominant in July, and Jon Gray looks ready for a strong stretch run after a third straight excellent start after his temporary demotion to the minors. Nolan Arenado, MVP candidate. Ian Desmond and Carlos Gonzalez have actually been not awful of late.

Cleveland Indians

Additions: Brad Hand, Adam Cimber, Leonys Martin

Hand and Cimber were much-needed acquisitions for the bullpen, and Martin at least provides a better glove in center field, but did the Indians do enough to do battle with the Red Sox, Yankees and Astros in October? The offense is heavily dependent on the brilliant Francisco Lindor and Jose Ramirez, and there are still holes in right field and second base. Given that Dozier and Jonathan Schoop were traded Tuesday and Eduardo Escobar and Asdrubal Cabrera were moved a few days ago, there were options out there.

What can go right: Corey Kluber. Trevor Bauer. Carlos Carrasco. Mike Clevinger. That's a foursome that can win a World Series.