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### **'Trust the process': Sox reflect on Draft choices**

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / May 14, 2018

CHICAGO -- The most memorable moments of Courtney Hawkins' White Sox tenure might be his eight home runs, 33 RBIs and 11 stolen bases produced over three levels during his first Minor League season in 2012.

It might be the four home runs Hawkins hit during Spring Training in 2015. Then again, it could be the back flip Hawkins did in a full suit after being selected out of high school as the 13th overall pick in the '12 MLB Draft.

Hawkins ultimately did not pan out as the projected middle-of-the-order power source the White Sox envisioned, and he was released from the organization on April 18. His struggles to succeed certainly weren't from lack of hard work by the now 24-year-old, as he is considered a high-character young man by everyone who knows him.

But as the White Sox comprehensively prepare to pick fourth overall in the 2018 Draft, they understand even a pick such as Hawkins doesn't necessarily guarantee Major League production.

"When you are talking about player personnel, we've got to sign off on any of the choices. And we were happy to sign off on Courtney," said White Sox executive vice president Ken Williams, who was Chicago's general manager in 2012. "If you are in the game long enough, you will see players who are picked lower that turn out to achieve things that you never imagine and vice versa."

"There are going to be guys that never make it and don't get out of Double-A, but the process in taking that player made him the right player," said White Sox director of amateur scouting Nick Hostetler, who watched Hawkins a plethora of times in Hostetler's role as East Coast crosschecker. "As long as you are sticking to what you believe is the right way to evaluate these players from an objective and subjective point of view with your scouts and analytics department, that's what over time we believe will equal itself out."

White Sox Draft selections now focus more upon baseball players with athleticism as opposed to high-end athletes whose baseball skills might be a bit secondary. Even with that change, there's no way to predict how a player will project five or six years down the line.

"I've said it 1,000 times, [when] we scout these guys, they are using aluminum bats, pitching to aluminum bats," Hostetler said. "They come into pro ball and you change their equipment on them. The NFL doesn't go to a bigger size football, the NBA doesn't [change its ball]. Hockey doesn't use a different stick.

"In baseball, they come in and they get the wood put in their hands. There is so much volatility in the Draft. So much unpredictability. You have to rely on the past comparisons and try to make sure to put your best stamp on what you think is going to work for your organization."

Hindsight becomes 20-20, with every team having multiple regretful Draft moments after the fact. Hawkins serves as just one example, beset by injuries during his time in the White Sox organization. But at 24, he still possesses a chance to succeed in another organization.

Some players far outperform their selection slot, such as Mark Buehrle, the White Sox 38th-round pick in the 1998 Draft who turned out to be one of the franchise's greatest pitchers. Others don't live up to their lofty status, and others simply need time to develop.

"Every player we sign, we scout, we develop, I can't tell you how much we live and die with every at-bat," Hostetler said. "He isn't performing the way you thought and you are wondering why. Where did we go wrong and what do we need to do differently? All of a sudden it clicks and he takes off. You have to just trust the process."

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### **MLB Pipeline's Prospect Team of the Week**

By Mike Rosenbaum / MLB.com / May 14, 2018

MLB Pipeline's Prospect Team of the Week honors the best performances from the previous seven days. Any Minor Leaguer currently on an organization Top 30 Prospects list on our Prospect Watch is eligible.

Now well into the second month of the Minor League season, phenom Vladimir Guerrero Jr. is showing no signs of slowing down at the plate.

Guerrero, MLB Pipeline's No. 2 overall prospect, batted .393 with a .714 slugging percentage and a 1.128 OPS last week for Double-A New Hampshire to garner Prospect Team of the Week honors for the second time in three weeks. The 19-year-old third baseman kicked off his week with his second career multihomer game and collected hits in six of seven games, including four multihit performances, for the Fisher Cats.

Also earning PTOW honors for a second time this season is International League home run leader Christin Stewart, and the Pirates are well represented with a pair of up-the-middle prospects in Kevin Newman and Jason Martin.

Here's the complete Prospect Team of the Week for games of May 7-13:

C: Patrick Mazeika, Binghamton Rumble Ponies (Double-A)  
(Mets' No. 25 prospect)

5 G, .368/.455/.842, 4 R, 3 HR, 7 RBI, 2 BB, 1 K

After an 0-for-4 performance to begin his week, Mazeika, 24, delivered at least one hit and one RBI in each of his next four games, highlighted by a pair of multihit performances. He homered in three of those contests, including in back-to-back games on May 8 and May 10, as he upped his season total to six home runs over 26 games in the Eastern League. Among Top 30 catching prospects, Mazeika finished second in all three triple-slash categories, as well as in total bases (16) and RBIs.

1B: Daniel Vogelbach, Tacoma Rainiers (Triple-A)  
(Mariners' No. 11 prospect)

8 G, .429/.543/1.107, 9 R, 4 2B, 5 HR, 8 RBI, 7 BB, 1 IBB, 1 K

The left-handed-hitting Vogelbach put up monstrous numbers last week with Tacoma as he led all qualified Top 30 prospects in runs scored, slugging and total bases (31) while also tying for first in home runs. The 25-year-old slugger's power was on full display over the weekend when he connected on a solo homer Saturday before adding three more homers in a Sunday doubleheader, hitting a solo homer in the opener and then going deep twice in the nightcap. Altogether, Vogelbach has hit eight home runs in 64 at-bats with Tacoma, with a .328/.457/.781 batting line in 18 games.

2B: Kevin Newman, Indianapolis Indians (Triple-A)  
(Pirates' No. 7 prospect)

7 G, .519/.552/.778, 7 R, 4 2B, 1 HR, 2 RBI, 2 BB, 1 IBB, 2 K, 2 SB

Newman's batting average jumped from .250 to .309 last week thanks to his four consecutive multihit games, which included a 4-for-4 performance (matching his career high) as well as two three-hit games. As a result, the 2015 first-rounder finished the week with a Top 30-leading 14 hits and led all Top 30 second basemen in both average and OPS (1.330).

3B: Vladimir Guerrero Jr., New Hampshire Fisher Cats (Double-A)  
(Blue Jays' No. 1 prospect/No. 2 overall)

7 G, .393/.414/.714, 7 R, 3 2B, 2 HR, 6 RBI, 1 BB, 1 IBB, 0 K

As previously mentioned, the 19-year-old Guerrero continued his assault on Minor League pitching last week, posting a .393 average that was tops among Top 30 third basemen and ended the week hitting .397, the best mark in the Eastern League as well as among all Top 30 prospects with at least 140 plate appearances. Five of his 11 hits went for extra bases, as Guerrero went 29 plate appearances without a strikeout.

SS: Carter Kieboom, Potomac Nationals (Class A Advanced)  
(Nationals' No. 3 prospect/No. 85 overall)

7 G, .556/.657/.815, 8 R, 4 2B, 1 HR, 6 RBI, 7 BB, 2 K, 3 SB

Kieboom, 20, hit safely in all seven games for Potomac last week as he raised his season batting average from .205 to .268, while also extending his hitting streak to nine games. He paced all Top 30 prospects on the week in average and hits (15), while also walking seven times to finish the week with a .657 OBP, the best mark at his position. After a rocky first month of the season, Kieboom has opened May by slashing .417/.525/.646 in 12 games.

OF: Christin Stewart, Toledo Mud Hens (Triple-A)  
(Tigers' No. 10 prospect)

7 G, .333/.379/.963, 6 R, 2 2B, 5 HR, 8 RBI, 2 BB, 3 K

Stewart's 26 total bases last week trailed only Vogelbach, whom he also tied in the homer department. He connected on three of those home runs in two games over the weekend, hitting a solo shot on Saturday and then delivering two more solo blasts Sunday in his first multihomer game of 2018. Stewart is hitting .304/.378/.648 on the season through 34 games and leads the International League with 11 home runs.

OF: Jason Martin, Altoona Curve (Double-A)  
(Pirates' No. 21 prospect)  
6 G, .522/.577/.826, 7 R, 1 2B, 2 HR, 8 RBI, 2 BB, 1 IBB, 7 K, 1 SB

Martin posted five straight multihit games for the Curve, including back-to-back three-hit games to cap his week. The 22-year-old outfielder boosted his average from .286 to .346 in the process, and he's now recorded multiple hits in seven of 11 games in May.

OF: Vince Fernandez, Lancaster JetHawks (Class A Advanced)  
(Rockies' No. 29 prospect)  
5 G, .471/.526/1.000, 2 R, 1 2B, 1 3B, 2 HR, 10 RBI, 2 BB

Speaking of multihit games, Fernandez, 22, recorded exactly two hits in four straight games for Lancaster. His 10 RBIs in that span tied for first among all Top 30 prospects, giving him 21 RBIs so far in a season that's seen him slash .312/.433/.523 over 33 games in the California League.

LHP: Cole Irvin, Lehigh Valley IronPigs (Triple-A)  
(Phillies' No. 23 prospect)  
2-0, 0.64 ERA, 2 GS, 14 IP, 7 H, 1 R, 1 ER, 3 BB, 13 K, 0.71 WHIP

Irvin earns his first PTOW nod after making a pair of impressive seven-inning starts last week for Lehigh Valley. The 24-year-old southpaw was particularly sharp Saturday, allowing just two hits and three walks while striking out eight batters. He threw a season-high 115 pitches in the outing, 71 for strikes. Irvin has completed seven innings in three straight starts and is tied for second among International League hurlers with 42 innings, during which he's pitched to a 3.21 ERA with a 1.07 WHIP.

RHP: David Hess, Norfolk Tides/Baltimore Orioles (Triple-A/MLB)  
(Orioles' No. 16 prospect)  
2-0, 2.08 ERA, 2 GS, 13 IP, 7 H, 3 R, 3 ER, 1 BB, 13 K, 0.62 WHIP

Hess began his week with Norfolk, where the 24-year-old right-hander fired seven scoreless innings of one-hit ball with 10 strikeouts in a victory over Durham. The performance earned him his first big league promotion later in the week, as Hess, starting in place of an injured Chris Tillman on Saturday, turned in a quality start to win his Major League debut. Tossing six innings, he allowed three earned runs on six hits, striking out three.

RP: Thyago Vieira, Charlotte Knights (Triple-A)  
(White Sox No. 27 prospect)  
0-0, 0.00 ERA, 3 G, 4 IP, 0 H, 0 ER, 0 BB, 1 HBP, 7 K, 0.00 WHIP

The flame-throwing Vieira did not allow a hit and recorded seven of his 12 outs via the strikeout last week over three relief appearances for Charlotte. While his overall ERA sits at 5.29 through 14 games, Vieira continues to show plenty of bat-missing ability -- a notion underscored by his 29 strikeouts in 17 innings in 2018.

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### **Column: Pitcher Reynaldo Lopez is the early bright spot of White Sox rebuild**

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / May 14, 2018

When lamenting the White Sox's historically bad start in Year 2 of the rebuild, it's probably best to repeat one word over and over again.

Reynaldo. Reynaldo. Reynaldo.

Starting pitcher Reynaldo Lopez wasn't the most hyped player in general manager Rick Hahn's envied collection of young talent, but he certainly has been the most advanced prospect in the early going.

Still seeking his first win of 2018 as he takes the mound Tuesday night in Pittsburgh, Lopez has quietly done the job without being rewarded.

He carries a 2.44 ERA into the start, which ranks 14th in the majors and not far behind aces Chris Sale (11th at 2.17) and Corey Kluber (13th at 2.34). Opponents were hitting only .196 against Lopez, ninth-lowest among American League starters.

At this rate he could be on his way to an All-Star appearance in his first full season, perhaps as the team's only representative. It's early, of course, but which Sox player has been more deserving?

"I have had that thought since I was a child, to be in an All-Star Game," Lopez said through an interpreter. "That's always been with me and one of my motivations. That's one reason I'm always trying to get better. It's not really on my mind right now, but it has been on my mind since I was growing up."

Lopez came to the Sox with Lucas Giolito and Dane Dunning in the Adam Eaton deal with the Nationals, which looks to be in the Sox's favor, even as Giolito has struggled this season.

Dunning has a 2.74 ERA in 42 minor-league starts and is 2-0 this year at Double-A Birmingham with a 2.78 ERA. Giolito had a strong ending to the 2017 season but needs to deal with control issues before reaching his potential.

Meanwhile, Eaton tore the ACL in his left knee in late April of 2017 and was out the rest of the year after surgery. He played in only eight games this season before injuring his left ankle on a slide, and his return date is up in the air after undergoing arthroscopic surgery last week.

The Sox got three top pitching prospects for a talented but injury-prone outfielder, and if two of them pan out, they should be happy.

Lopez has been plagued by poor run support, an occupational hazard for Sox starters. He had the 14th-lowest support (3.14 runs per start) among major-league starters through Sunday, slightly above Giolito's 3.13, which was seventh-lowest.

It's almost a carbon copy of the problems Jose Quintana had for years on the South Side. Lopez pitches well and has nothing to show for it. On April 8 against the Rays, he allowed one unearned run on two hits but became the first Sox pitcher since at least 1908 to lose a game in which he threw seven or more innings with two or fewer hits and one run allowed.

Quintana, who knew Lopez from spring training of 2017 when Quintana was still with the Sox, said Lopez shouldn't worry about offensive support.

"You don't need to look at that," he said. "Just go to the mound thinking about giving your team the best chance, and if you don't get any support, that happens."

"He knows he's a big-league starter now, and that's what matters. He's not paying attention to anything else but throwing the ball well. That's all you can do."

The downside for Lopez is being one of the only bright spots on a team that's struggling to win daily. The Sox are 10-27 and have lost 20 of their last 26. It's not easy to be happy for yourself when the team is losing that much.

"It's a little bit difficult, but as a starter you just keep your mind on what's next, go start by start," he said. "I'm just trying to keep grinding and find ways to learn, to keep improving. It's not easy in the situation we're in, but we have to keep our focus."

Lopez said he knows he has a ways to go before reaching the next level. But after walking 13 in a three-game stretch in April, he has walked only four over his last three starts.

While Sox fans eagerly await top pitching prospect Michael Kopech, they should take a moment to appreciate the prospect who already is here and proving he belongs with every start.

"I've learned when you set a goal and work hard for that goal, you can accomplish it," Lopez said.

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**Series preview: White Sox at Pirates**

By Teddy Greenstein / Chicago Tribune / May 14, 2018

Both games on WGN-AM 720.

Tuesday: 6:05 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Reynaldo Lopez (0-2, 2.44) vs. RH Trevor Williams (4-2, 3.13).

Wednesday: 11:35 a.m., NBCSCH.

RH Carson Fulmer (2-3, 6.23) vs. RH Jameson Taillon (2-3, 4.08).

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**Cubs-White Sox series shows which dates really matter**

By Steve Rosenblom / Chicago Tribune / May 14, 2018

The first inning was pretty much the City Series. That's all you needed to see. That's where wins were made or blown.

The Cubs ruined the White Sox in the first inning on Friday and Saturday and then piled on. That's what you do against bad teams.

Then the Cubs ruined themselves in the first inning Sunday when they seemingly had a chance to score two touchdowns before the Sox managed three outs, but no, it didn't happen, and the Cubs instead scored pretty much the fewest runs imaginable under the circumstances, and it cost them against the only major-league team that hadn't won 10 games.

In other words, the championship-caliber Cubs and rebuilding Sox both regret Sunday.

Truth is, though, whatever way these first three dates of the City Series were going to go, it remains true that the only dates that matter to the Sox are the draft and whenever Eloy Jimenez and Michael Kopech get called up and the only dates that matter to the Cubs are October.

And the dates Yu Darvish pitches.

The dates Darvish pitches at home, specifically.

Walks, hit-by-pitches and wild pitches are more likely to get a guy a trip to the minors than a win in the majors, but maybe Lucas Giolito decided has decided to channel his inner Tyler Chatwood.

I know that wins have become a denigrated statistic these days, but it's a hoot to note that the two pitchers who separated themselves from the pack to tie for the major-league lead in walks each picked up victories in the City Series.

Chatwood walked five and threw one wild pitch in five innings Friday, but still won his third game. On Sunday, Giolito walked seven, threw three wild pitches and hit one batter, but still beat the Cubs.

Remarkably for a guy with 32 walks, Chatwood's ERA is a respectable 3.35, below his career average somehow. As expected for a guy with 32 walks, Giolito's ERA stands at six-point-mommy-make-it-stop. And both guys picked up a win. And baseball makes no sense.

The Cubs had two runners thrown out at home in Sunday's two-run loss to the Sox, and Maddon called Addison Russell's out a "gaffe," but is there really anything wrong with daring a team with lousy fundamentals to execute?

Tom Brady is only the 19th highest-paid quarterback in the NFL, according to Spotrac. He has won five Super Bowls. The 18 quarterbacks ahead of him have won eight combined — none among the top five money-earners. No wonder Brady reportedly is cranky with the Patriots.

After spanking the Lightning in Tampa for the second straight game to take a two-games-to-none lead in the Eastern Conference Final, the Capitals are a stunning 7-1 on the road, but only 3-3 at home. So, if the underachieving Capitals can at least split on their own ice — few things define Alex Ovechkin's star-crossed postseason Capitals more than hoping for a split at home — and eventually move on the Stanley Cup Final, they would be fortunate not to have what for them is home-ice disadvantage.

Game-tying goal for the Capitals by Devante Smith-Pelly. We're big Smith-Pelly fans around here, you might recall.

What's up, Dick Ruthven?

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### **So far, so good: It's early, but White Sox trades remain promising**

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / May 14, 2018

One day, when the White Sox celebrate a run of extended postseason success, the bold and aggressive trades of Chris Sale to the Red Sox, Jose Quintana to the Cubs and Adam Eaton to the Nationals — and to a lesser degree the package of David Robertson, Todd Frazier and Tommy Kahnle to the Yankees — will be remembered as the moves that started it all.

Or they will be looked at like a fine idea at the time, but another failed attempt by general manager Rick Hahn and vice president Ken Williams to replicate the championship season of 2005.

Only a year and half after Hahn started shipping out his stars for minor-league talent, it's much too soon to stamp each trade with a grade. But it's safe to say Hahn and Williams are experiencing little if any buyer's remorse related to those four deals which returned 14 prospects. There were more veterans-for-prospects deals, but let's take a capsule look at how the four big trades are shaping up for the rebuilding Sox.

Dec. 6, 2016

Chris Sale for second baseman Yoan Moncada, right-hander Michael Kopech, outfielder Luis Basabe and right-hander Victor Diaz.

Sale (2.17 ERA in his first nine starts in 2018 after finishing second in Cy Young voting in 2017) might be better than ever as he continues to dominate, but Moncada (.243/345/.447, 14 homers, 37 RBI, seven stolen bases in 83 games with the White Sox) has lived up to the No. 1 prospect billing he arrived with, and if Kopech (44 strikeouts, 17 walks, 4.86 ERA in four Class AAA starts) adds better command to his extraordinary stuff, he and Moncada could arguably make the deal a win by themselves. What's more, the arrow is pointing up on the fleet Basabe (.277/.386/.529, five homers, 20 RBI at high Class A Winston-Salem). Sale will enter free agency after next season.

Dec. 7, 2016

Adam Eaton for right-handers Lucas Giolito, Reynaldo Lopez and Dane Dunning.

Eaton's affordable contract with team control through 2021 notwithstanding, Nationals GM Mike Rizzo was criticized for giving up too much in this one, and Eaton's struggle to stay healthy (he has played in 31 games for Washington and had ankle surgery) hasn't helped Rizzo's cause.

Giolito got top billing in the Sox haul but his command problems are cause for concern while Lopez (2.44 ERA in seven 2018 starts), viewed as the sleeper in the deal, has looked like top-of-the-rotation material. And keep an eye on Dunning (2.59 ERA in four starts at Class A Winston-Salem), a strike thrower who responded to his fast promotion to Class AA Birmingham with a 2.78 ERA over four starts.

July 13, 2017

Jose Quintana for outfielder Eloy Jimenez, right-hander Dylan Cease, corner infielder Matt Rose and infielder Bryant Flete.

This trade was widely viewed as a good one for both teams, but Jimenez' can't-miss expectations alone as potentially the biggest star of the entire bunch could win the deal by himself. Cease (4-2, 3.67 ERA, 42 strikeouts in 32, innings at Winston-Salem) has an upper 90s fastball and a plus curveball and profiles as a future rotation piece or perhaps a closer. Quintana, under affordable club control through 2020, solidified the Cubs rotation in their 2017 run to the NLCS but has pitched to a 5.23 ERA in 2018.

July 18, 2017

Todd Frazier, David Robertson and Tommy Kahnle for outfielder Blake Rutherford, left-hander Ian Clarkin, outfielder Tito Polo and veteran right-hander Tyler Clippard.

The return on this one made the least splash of the four deals, although Rutherford (.315/.341/.500, three homers, 30 RBI, six stolen bases in 30 games at Winston-Salem) was MLB Pipeline's No. 30 prospect at the time. Clarkin, taken a pick behind Aaron Judge in the first round of the 2013 draft, is 3-4 with a 6.75 ERA in seven starts at Birmingham. Polo, a center fielder, is batting .239/.305/.333 at Birmingham.

All in all, it's a so far, so good report card.

Stay tuned.

Top 10 Sox prospects, per MLB Pipeline

Eloy Jimenez, 21, OF, AA Birmingham  
Michael Kopech, 22, RHP, AAA Charlotte  
Luis Robert, 20, OF, Disabled  
Alec Hansen, 23, RHP, Disabled  
Dylan Cease, 22, RHP, High A Winston-Salem  
Dane Dunning, 23, RHP, AA Birmingham  
Blake Rutherford, 21, OF, High A Winston-Salem  
Jake Burger, 22, 3B, Disabled  
Zack Collins, 23, C, Birmingham  
Micker Adolfo, 21, OF, Winston-Salem

On deck

SOX AT PIRATES



Tuesday: Reynaldo Lopez (0-2, 2.44) vs. Trevor Williams (4-2, 3.13), 6:05 p.m., NBCSCH, 720-AM

Wednesday: Carson Fulmer (2-3, 6.23) vs. Jameson Taiton (2-3, 4.08), 11:35 p.m., NBCSCH, 720-AM

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### **While the Cubs had Kerry Wood, the Sox' best-pitched game was by Gary Peters**

By John Grochowski / Sun-Times / May 14, 2018

The most dominant pitching performance in Cubs history is easy to identify. Last week, Kerry Wood was at Wrigley Field to celebrate the 20th anniversary of his 20-strikeout one-hitter against the Astros on May 6, 1998.

Now that a week has passed, let's look at the White Sox. What was the most dominant pitching performance in Sox history, according to the game-score metric?

If you keep the discussion to nine-inning games, the answer is Gary Peters, who had a 13-strikeout one-hitter with no walks to beat the Orioles 4-0 on July 5, 1963. The outing earned a 98 game score.

Wood's 105 game score was the highest in major-league history for a nine-inning game. There have been higher scores in extra-inning games because points for outs recorded and innings completed are part of the metric.

That includes the top 14 White Sox game scores, topped by Ed Walsh's 117 as he scattered six hits with 10 strikeouts and three walks over 16 innings in a 0-0 tie with the Philadelphia Athletics in 1910.

Peters allowed fewer hits and struck out more batters, important parts of the game score metric.

Here's how his 98 score breaks down:

— Every starting pitcher begins with a base of 50 points. After that, scores rise and fall with the events of the game.

— Add one point for each out recorded. For a nine-inning complete game, Peters picked up 27 points.

— Add two points for each inning completed after the fourth. Those last five innings give Peters 10 points.

— Add one point for each strikeout. Peters had 13.

— Deduct two points for each hit allowed. The lone hit, a third-inning single by opposing pitcher Robin Roberts, cost Peters two points.

— Deduct four points for each earned run, two points for each unearned run, and one point for each walk. Peters lost zero points in those categories.

The starting point, outs, innings and strikeouts total 100 points, and the two-point deduction for the hit leave the total game score at 98.

Using strikeouts as a measure of dominance gives low-hit games pitched by Peters and Wood a chance to outscore no-hitters.

The highest-scoring Sox no-hitter was Philip Humber's 96 in the 4-0 victory against the Mariners on April 21, 2012. Humber walked no one and struck out nine — the difference between Peters' 13 strikeouts and Humber's nine gave Peters the game-score edge.

Peters was no one-hit wonder. He was a solid 14-year pitcher with a 124-103 record and 3.25 ERA, including a 91-78 mark (2.92 ERA) with the White Sox.

He also was a good-hitting pitcher with a .222 batting average, 19 home runs and 102 RBI in 875 plate appearances. In 75 career pinch-hitting appearances, Peters hit .235 with a .764 OPS, four homers and 13 RBI.

In the game against the Orioles, Peters had a single and a double in four at-bats, though they did not figure in the scoring. In the most dominant nine-inning pitching performance in Sox history, the pitcher had more hits than the opposing team.

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### **White Sox to honor 25 years of 'The Sandlot' with special screening next month**

By Madeline Kenney / Sun-Times / May 14, 2018

Mark your calendars: "The Sandlot" is coming to the South Side next month.

In honor of the baseball classic's 25th anniversary, the White Sox will join a league-wide celebration of "The Sandlot" with a special screening at Guaranteed Rate Field. The White Sox will play "The Sandlot" on the centerfield video board after their home game against the Athletics on June 23. The screening will begin approximately 10 minutes after the last out of the Saturday afternoon game.

Fans who have tickets to the June 23 game also have the chance to win "Sandlot" collectables:

"As part of the celebration, fans will have the opportunity to win copies of "The Sandlot – 25th Anniversary Collector's Edition" Blue-ray™ during the White Sox game. The collectible edition from Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment features a set of 10 custom Topps® baseball cards of the iconic characters as well as an all-new, full-color poster and booklet filled with behind-the-scenes photos from Director David Mickey Evans' personal archive."

Last month, the cast of the classic film 'The Sandlot' reunited for an appearance on NBC and the Today Show. With the exception of Mike Vitar, who played "Benny 'The Jet' Rodriguez," the cast played a game of baseball to prove they still got it.

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### **Renteria's positive outlook helping keep White Sox afloat**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / May 14, 2018

Plenty has been offered, but Rick Renteria doesn't want any pity.

The Chicago White Sox's manager seemed to become an even more sympathetic figure over the weekend at Wrigley Field, which is understandable.

On Saturday, the Sox's losing streak reached 7 games after they dropped an 8-4 decision to the Cubs. Even worse, the loss lowered the White Sox's record to 9-27 -- the worst start to a season in franchise history.

Sunday morning, Renteria met with general manager Rick Hahn in the cramped manager's office at Wrigley.

Was the 56-year-old manager pleading with Hahn to bolster an undermanned roster? Was he tendering his resignation? Was he going to be fired?

None of the above.

If anything, Renteria was probably giving his GM a pep talk. That's how positive the Sox's second-year manager is, even when the negatives are reaching record highs.

"The one thing I can't lose sight of, or our staff can't lose sight of, it's where we're going, the direction that we want to go," Renteria said.

The White Sox are going nowhere this year, which is a continuation of last year's direction.

Renteria prefers to look further down the road, where the Sox are hoping many of the promising prospects working their way through the minor league system join current holdovers like second baseman Yoan Moncada and starting pitcher Reynaldo Lopez.

And don't forget -- the Sox are going to have plenty of money to spend on veterans to fill other holes -- so a bright future helps Renteria keep moving through these dimmer days.

"Obviously, logically speaking, situations haven't gone as well as we've wanted on both sides, the hitting or the pitching," Renteria said. "I think that ultimately as we continue to move forward, one thing these guys have to take from every experience that they have is to gain some knowledge from it. The growth will continue to occur.

"As frustrating as it might be right now, it is going to happen. I think that patience in this particular instance is a really important part of being where we're at right now. That may bring no solace to the fan at this particular time, but I can't lose focus on what we're trying to do in terms of developing guys to become the players that we want them to be and the team that we want them to be.

"I've got to remain positive. I've got to keep moving forward because if you allow it to take control of you, you can bury yourself in it and it can be pretty tough to work through it."

These are decidedly tough times for the White Sox, but they are convinced they have the right manager at the right time.

Instead of wondering why he took the job right after the 2016 season knowing how tough the next few years were likely to be, Renteria has embraced the challenge.

While he'll pull a player he doesn't think is giving maximum effort, and Leury Garcia is the latest example, Renteria's attitude is appreciated in the clubhouse.

"He gives you the confidence to play and doesn't put pressure on you," infielder Yolmer Sanchez said. "He's the guy we need here."

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### **Rozner: Can Illinois get sports gambling right?**

By Barry Rozner / Daily Herald / May 14, 2018

There is much to ponder now that the Supreme Court has struck down a federal law prohibiting gambling on sports in most states, a decision that's been expected since December.

To borrow from Hedley Lamarr, my mind is aglow with whirling, transient nodes of thought, careening through a cosmic vapor of invention.

Illinois

The State Where Nothing Works will almost certainly butcher the opportunity to create instant revenue.

Never mind all the gambling bills in the past that could have saved Illinois racetracks, the ones that either didn't pass or were vetoed by the previous governor.

Illinois should have had a bill ready Monday that allowed for casinos at race tracks with a full sports betting parlor.

New Jersey has its bill and Monmouth Park -- a New Jersey racetrack -- plans to have sports betting within two weeks. It will probably be two decades before Illinois takes advantage of the revenue opportunity.

Even then, will Arlington Park have the opportunity to put in a Caesars Palace-style sports book? The local oval has the space, the perfect facility and has had regulated gambling since 1927.

Can Illinois finally get this right?

#### Revenue

Hundreds of billions are bet offshore and with the local bookie every year in America, money that could have been providing bankrupt states with much-needed revenue.

Gamblers are accustomed to the 10 percent "juice" -- bet \$11 to try to win \$10 -- but if states gouge them with extra taxes, they will continue to bet illegally and the revenue opportunity will be lost.

#### Hypocrisy

All of the professional sports leagues have railed against gambling forever, which is particularly hysterical for the NFL, which would not exist without gambling.

But wait for it. Now that states have the opportunity to add sports gambling, the leagues are asking for their portion and intend to promote wagering as they have fantasy gambling for years.

They will ask for a percent of the take -- a laughable "integrity tax" -- and that could boost the tax on a wager to near 20 percent.

Again, if that happens the wagers will revert to the guy on the corner or to offshore sites where the "vig" is the traditional 10 percent.

According to CNBC, this has already happened with marijuana in some states, where the taxes are so high that some who partake are back to buying from the corner dealer.

#### The irony

New Jersey spent nearly \$9 million in legal fees as it tried to get the law overturned, and those battling the state included all the sports leagues that will now try to extract money from the states.

"The same leagues that forced New Jersey to spend millions to overcome their opposition to sports betting are going to get millions from the New Jersey treasury when we beat them in court?" asked former New Jersey state Sen. Ray Lesniak, when speaking recently to the New York Post. "I'm from New Jersey and I have a problem with that."

Seriously.

#### Nonsense

Don't believe any league commissioner who pretends he doesn't want this to happen. They want this to happen.

Gambling creates more interest in their games and drives ratings and revenue.

They are also desperate to get a piece of the action, which will take money out of your pocket.

Go figure.

#### Convenience

If it's done right, you'll be able to place bets on your phone or online from anywhere, including in the stadium in which you're watching a game.

It's actually perfect for creating more interest at a baseball or football game, where there is plenty of time between plays to get in on the action.

Simple

There are many countries around the world where fans can walk down to the local equivalent of their Walgreens or CVS and place wagers easily.

As usual, regulation has us far behind the times here in the States.

The fear

The league commissioners will undoubtedly talk from both sides of their mouth on this, trying to pick your pocket to get their share of the profits while at the same time crying about corruption and danger.

Very wealthy professional athletes are very unlikely to throw games. It's not 1919. But if they do they will be caught and banned for life.

So any amount worth betting for them would require risk in the tens of millions, which would obviously move a line and get them caught.

The fear that college athletes will be tempted is legitimate, but that has always been there online and in Vegas, and doesn't escalate because of this. Besides, the NCAA can solve that by making certain players don't have to live like paupers while in college.

As for catching them, scandals have been exposed in the past because regulators in Nevada have noticed unusual activity and bizarre line movements.

The claim is that legalized gambling creates more opportunity for cheating. It's the opposite. Legalized gambling itself offers the perfect opportunity to monitor wagering better than ever.

If something is askew, systems are in place to recognize them immediately.

Hold your breath

Anyone skeptical that your elected officials will get this right is probably taking the correct approach.

What's next?

Based on reporting from the last several months, approximately 20 states will be ready to go in short order, and 32 states in total may be up and running within five years.

If you live in Illinois, the question you should be asking is, why isn't Illinois ready to go right now, when we've known for five months that this would happen, and for years that it might happen?

The answer, of course, is this is Illinois, The State Where Nothing Works.

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### **Slow start won't prompt Chicago White Sox to rush prospects**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / May 14, 2018

Until top prospects such as Michael Kopech and Eloy Jimenez are ready for the major leagues, the Chicago White Sox are going to keep selling hope.

Tied for the worst start (10-27) in the 118-year history of the franchise, adding Kopech and Jimenez could only improve the Sox's difficult situation.

The duo is likely to be on the roster before season's end, but manager Rick Renteria said the time has to be right.

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"You can't cross that line," he said. "I think that you have to allow those guys that are in the system to continue to work through the things that they're working through. I don't think it would make sense, honestly, to push something because of what's occurring here at the particular moment."

General manager Rick Hahn said much the same when asked about a potential arrival date for Kopech.

"When they're getting close to getting here, I think it will be pretty obvious to everybody based on their performance," Hahn said. "And one day we'll have an announcement that he'll be activated tomorrow. (Kopech) continues to progress, and important elements of his development are happening down there at Charlotte."

"Not just the number of changeups he's throwing or the effectiveness of the changeup, but the stuff you can't really see in terms of his preparation and his reaction to adversity and how he responds to that in between starts."

"It's a process. Not all of it's obvious to the eyes, not all of it can be picked up from a stat line. We're definitely pleased with the progress, but there's work to be done."

Kopech's last outing for Class AAA Charlotte was easily his worst of the season. The 22-year-old righty lasted just 3⅓ innings in Friday's start against Durham, allowing 8 earned runs on 5 hits and 4 walks.

Kopech is 0-2 with a 4.86 ERA in 7 starts with Charlotte. He is tied for second in the International League with 44 strikeouts (in 33⅓ innings).

Staying put:

After allowing 5 runs on 3 hits and 4 walks in 1⅓ innings during Friday's start against the Cubs, Carson Fulmer's future in the rotation was up for discussion.

Manager Rick Renteria met with pitching coach Don Cooper and bullpen coach Curt Hasler to talk it over, and Fulmer is going to make his next scheduled start, Wednesday at Pittsburgh.

"We're still on tap," Renteria said. "Coop and Has have been working with him. He'll do a side, continue to work, try to get back on track, continue to put himself in line. He had made some improvements."

"I think Coop and Has have looked over the video; he was kind of sitting back a little bit in some of his delivery action. They'll continue to try to work on it and get him back on track."

Moncada watch:

On the 10-day disabled list with a strained left hamstring, second baseman Yoan Moncada was running on the field before Sunday's game at Wrigley Field. He's on track to be activated Tuesday when the Sox play at Pittsburgh.

"He's doing very, very well," manager Rick Renteria said.

After Sunday's win over the Cubs, the White Sox optioned infielder Jose Rondon to Class AAA Charlotte, which clears a roster spot for Moncada's return.

Moving up:

Jordan Stephens was promoted Sunday from Class AA Birmingham to Triple-A Charlotte.

Rated as the White Sox's No. 16 prospect by Baseball America, Stephens was 4-3 with a 2.95 ERA in 7 starts. In his last 4 outings for Birmingham, the 25-year-old righty was 4-0 with a 1.31 ERA.

The Sox drafted Stephens on the 15th round in 2015 out of Rice University.

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### **Lamantha, The Big Baby or Da Besss: the many identities of Eloy Jiménez**

By James Fegan / The Athletic / May 14, 2018

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Eloy Jiménez is the type of player everyone feels inspired to give a nickname. He says his Twitter handle @Lamantha21 comes from the Spanish word for manta ray, which he says was just something that started getting yelled at him at age 13.

“One of my teammates was like ‘Hey La Manta,’” Jiménez said to me. “And I was like ‘Me?’ and they said ‘Yeah, you, La Manta,’ and I said ‘OK, I’ll take it.’”

Birmingham Barons play-by-play man Curt Bloom has taken recently to calling Jiménez “The Big Equalizer.” The name takes a cue from his first name starting with an “E,” and gives him a moniker to reflect, as Bloom says, “How he can equal or put us ahead with one swing.”

But the most optimistic comparison and accompanying nickname came from his own uncle, and also Rick Hahn, and is the inspiration for his Instagram handle @the\_bigbaby74.

“My uncle, when Rick Hahn was talking about how I look like Big Papi on the field, my uncle said, ‘Oh now Big Papi left, and now Big Baby gets into the game,’” said Jiménez, before ending this nickname story like he ends most of his stories.

“And I was like ‘OK.’”

It’s possible that all of these nicknames fall by the wayside in favor of “Da Bessss,” in tribute to his video with Barons left-hander Ian Clarkin, from when they were both in Winston-Salem last August. Jiménez is gregarious in interviews with a real skill for one-liners and is an absolute marvel to watch play in person. But probably the most memorable moment he’s provided is still a six-second peek behind the curtain of the braggadocio and confidence he plays with, made his own just because his first language doesn’t feature a lot of hard “T” sounds.

“He’s my guy, he’s always my guy,” Clarkin said of Jiménez. “He brings an unbelievable approach and he keeps it loose and I like that. If guys are struggling, he’ll pick them up. He’s a leader by example and that’s good to see. He has fun out here. It’s good to have Eloy on the team and I look forward to playing with Eloy until I’m 40-something years old. He’s a good guy, man, I like that guy. He’s a stud too. He can hit anywhere at any time.”

Probably the best thing to spice up the White Sox clubhouse is winning, since Tim Anderson, Nicky Delmonico, Matt Davidson and even José Abreu all like to joke around when the moment arises. But it’s hard to see something like Yolmer Sánchez bouncing around the Sox clubhouse in a shiny gold USF football helmet he nabbed from clubhouse manager Rob Warren, and not imagine how well Jiménez would fit in. When Jiménez talks about being eager to join the majors, he mostly focuses on personalities.

“On the field he’s pretty funny,” Jiménez said of Sánchez. “When you see Yolmer splash himself in the walk-off and all they’re doing right now, it’s special.”

Like Yoán Moncada, Jiménez uses The Rosetta Stone app on his phone to work on his English regularly. It’s obviously already very sufficient for one-on-one interviews. A transcript of him in English is a list of complete sentences, a fourth of them showing great comedic timing, but it doesn’t allow him yet to expound at length, and on the spot, the way athletes are expected to on a daily basis, though he can go

longer when he's telling a story. He thinks after another year he'll have the confidence to face larger scrums of reporters and parry in English, but his confidence is brimming everywhere else.

On hitting homers in a pitcher's park like Regions Field, in which the Barons are managing to lead the Southern League in home runs:

"It's OK," Jiménez said. "Sometimes the wind blows in, but most of the time the wind is blowing out. It's sometimes easy, sometimes it's hard. It's harder than Winston-Salem the ball flies. You just need to hit a fly ball and that is gone."

On how much he relies on watching video, if ever:

"Just watching pitchers more," Jiménez said. "I'm not watching too much video. When I feel pretty good, I'm not watching video. When I watch more pitchers, when I face more pitchers, when I see better competition, you start learning more."

On if he's ready for a promotion, or perhaps overdue for one:

"I feel ready," Jiménez said. "I cannot say 'Oh, this league is not for me,' because if you got trouble, if you get in a super slump, what are you going to say after that? If you say, 'Oh, this league is too easy for me,' and you get into a slump, what are you going to say? You going to say, 'Oh no, now it's challenging?' That's why I say it's more in the middle. Not too easy but not too challenging."

Though 25 games in Double-A Birmingham this season, the 21-year-old Jiménez is hitting a cool .320/.345/.612 with the lowest strikeout rate he's posted at any level of his still young professional career, and his hitting coach Cole Armstrong thinks he might be the most advanced prospect he's ever had. So when Jiménez ended his interview, he gave an appropriate parting note.

"See you soon in Chicago."

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### **Sox is singular: White Sox win a game, but (spoiler alert) they're still very bad**

By Jim Margalus / The Athletic / May 14, 2018

The White Sox's 5-3 victory over the Cubs on Sunday accomplished a few things. By winning their 10th game of the season, they're no longer the only team with a single-digit win total. By winning on Mother's Day, they sidestepped the easy swipe calling these White Sox a team even a mother can't love. By taking one of three at Wrigley, they deprived the Cubs of clinching that Mario Kart-assed Crosstown Cup on their home turf.

Other wounds remain alive and festering. Lucas Giolito's walk-to-strikeout ratio went the wrong way after missing early and often, making it the rare win that offers zero confidence boost. Also, by losing two out of three at Wrigley after dropping both games at home to the Pirates, the Sox have still lost all 11 series to teams that aren't the Kansas City Royals the season.

The victory also doesn't dig the 2018 White Sox out of the franchise's Worst Start Ever. They secured that sad status by going 9-27 through 36 games, and even though they're now 10-27, they still own a share of the title with the 1948 White Sox one game later.

Nobody with a vested interest in the White Sox thought it'd come to this, and there's nothing enjoyable about it. Yet it's also the slightest bit satisfying, in the sense that it ties up a loose end the way "Somebody stole it" answers the question "Why can't I find my wallet?"

Sometimes pulling up a little short of an absolute is more frustrating. For instance, when Adam Dunn hit .159 for the White Sox in 2011, we couldn't say he officially had the lowest batting average in history, because he ended up finishing six plate appearances short of qualifying for the batting title. Major League Baseball doesn't add hitless plate appearances to settle pathetic efforts the way it helps determine batting



crowns, so we had to say that Dunn had the lowest average for anybody who played as much as he did in order to be entirely accurate.

Or take 2013, when the White Sox withstood a late Kansas City rally during the season's penultimate game to lock in their 63rd victory, avoiding what would've been the fourth 100-loss season in franchise history. A 99-loss season was the Sox's fourth-losingest season just the same, but a triple-digit total in the "L" column would've better reflected the entirety of the Jeff Keppinger Era.

Seeing that 10-27 record brought to mind the 2016 White Sox, who were so ruthlessly efficient in negating a 23-10 start by immediately going 10-23. The Sox then lost three more in a row to cap off the unraveling that officially closed the door on the first rebuild. Those six weeks are probably the most infuriating prolonged stretch for the White Sox in recent memory ...

... and the 2018 White Sox are a half-game worse than that.

As somebody who writes about the White Sox, perhaps I place a disproportionate amount of value on word economy and symbolism. Or maybe these are words from somebody who spent the weekend in North Carolina watching White Sox prospects instead of a crosstown series that looked like no fun. Regardless, I prefer to think hitting rock bottom adds honesty to fandom. If you're watching the 2018 White Sox and think it's the worst baseball you've ever seen, you may not be entirely right, but there's no way you're all wrong.

Unless you're interested in seeing the White Sox carry their Royals-only strategy all the way to the end, though, this misery has outlived its usefulness, and Ricky's Boys can quit it any day now.

I'd say that Yoan Moncada's return might be what leads to a long-sought series split this week, but the White Sox are somehow 10-27 during a season in which Matt Davidson is a candidate for the All-Star Game. It's the pitching that makes Rick Renteria age a year between every White Sox postgame Periscope, and there's no help on the horizon.

Two days before Giolito threw just half of his 100 pitches for strikes, Carson Fulmer went just 30-for-59 in that department, forcing the Sox to issue the second recall of his mechanics in a three-week period. And just when I thought I was watching Michael Kopech make his case for the rotation at BB&T Ballpark in Charlotte later that night, he unraveled during an eight-run fourth, giving him consecutive starts with scattershot control.

There are no easy answers, unless the question is something like "What was the worst White Sox pitching staff in franchise history?" You can look up the worst team ERAs by searching Baseball-Reference.com, and it turns out the 1934 White Sox have held that distinction for 83 years at 5.41.

But wait — before the White Sox defense and stout bullpen work bailed out Giolito on Sunday, the 2018 White Sox had a team ERA of 5.42. Who knows? By the end of this season, this could be another record we'd rather have the White Sox set just to make it easier to describe the carnage we witnessed.

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### **Gammons: Rebuilding can be a painful process, something the White Sox and other teams know too well**

By Peter Gammons / The Athletic / May 14, 2018

What made it worse was that it unraveled in the brand-new Wrigley Field, in the posh Wrigleyville neighborhood with the hotel and restaurants and bars and a players' downstairs playroom lined with video games and Eddie Vedder guitars.

When the 2016 World Champion Cubs batted for the first time on Friday night against the White Sox, they scored five runs. On Saturday, the Cubs scored four times in the first inning, and, when Mother's Day mercifully arrived, the team that generations ago inspired the poetic line "there's nothing lonelier than

being a South Sider in a city of North Siders” were in last place in a division that did not have a team over .500, with nine wins and the worst record in major league baseball.

“The reality is that this is the second full year in a rebuild,” says White Sox GM Rick Hahn. “But the process can be hard. Difficult. I understand why fans get frustrated. It wasn’t an easy process for the Cubs or Astros or the Royals. We’re not trying to lose; the difference between the second and third draft choice, whatever, is not something teams tank for. There are benefits to picking high. But no one’s trying to lose, because losing wears on everyone.”

Says Miami Marlins manager Don Mattingly, “I don’t buy the concept of tanking because trying to lose sends the opposite message to the culture a team like the Marlins is trying to develop.”

What is striking is that in the week before they went to Wrigley, two American League general managers opined that the White Sox were on the verge of beginning the road to recovery, and that as their young pitchers learned and adjusted, they could be in 2019 what the Twins became in 2017. “Rick Hahn has quietly and modestly done very well managing in what is a dirty job,” says one GM. “People throw this ‘rebuild’ term around too casually. It requires smart talent assessment in trades, good drafts, hard work in the international market and a lot of patience.”

Theo Epstein and Jeff Luhnow began the rebuilds in Wrigleyville and Houston in the winter of 2011-12. The Cubs won it all in Year Five. The Astros did so in Year Six. The Royals won in Dayton Moore’s ninth full season.

So when the new ownership of the Marlins unloaded whatever talent they could last offseason and predicted a quick turn back to their last championship season in 2003, their assurances may have simply been business necessities. Before he sold the team, Jeffrey Loria realized that he had to do the same thing, but the Marlins are starting over without the market potential of the Astros and Cubs, without the goodwill of the Royals’ market, and without the front office depth of most other teams. The Padres had a head start on building organizational talent and A.J. Preller is a master evaluator. The Tigers and Reds are in conceptual stages. Baltimore is without so much as a concept.

Before winning it all, the Cubs endured seasons in which they lost 101, 96 and 91 games, and while they did get an MVP from the second pick in a draft in Kris Bryant, their reconstruction was complex. As was the rebuilding of the Astros, who, when Luhnow arrived, already had José Altuve, George Springer and Dallas Keuchel in the organization. Having the first pick in the draft did get them a franchise player in Carlos Correa. But, don’t forget, two years in a row the first pick netted them Mark Appel and Brady Aiken, both disappointments; their path to being the best team in the sport was more complicated than simply having the first pick. Epstein and Luhnow were on their third managers when they won.

“Things have to break right sometimes,” says Cubs general manager Jed Hoyer. But it wasn’t a break that when Hoyer and Jason McLeod joined Epstein in Chicago, one of their first moves was to engineer a deal with the Padres for Anthony Rizzo.

“When you go into one of these rebuilds, you cannot be timid,” says Hoyer. “You have to be bold. That may mean trading a popular player. Or trading for players you believe are key building pieces, even if they’re not high on Baseball America or MLB.com prospect lists.”

No team, however, rebuilds without some questionable decisions. The Astros released J.D. Martinez and traded Josh Hader for Carlos Gomez. The Cubs dumped DJ LeMahieu. But the depth of the front offices and planning were so complex, detailed and focused that, while they knew they’d make mistakes, they didn’t concern themselves with criticism.

Hoyer maintains the Cubs actually got ahead of themselves. “We thought 2015 would be a very important year for us,” Hoyer says. “But things began falling in place the second half of 2014 and we moved forward.” Jake Arrieta, stolen from the Orioles, had a monster second half in ‘14. Kyle Hendricks came on. They were 33-35 following the All-Star break. After that season they traded for Dexter Fowler; signed Jon

Lester and John Lackey; brought up Bryant in 2015; saw Kyle Schwarber arrive to hit 16 homers in 69 games; and Arrieta won the Cy Young and beat the Pirates and Cardinals in the playoffs before losing to the Mets in the NLCS, back when Matt Harvey was as good as anyone.

For 2016, they got Ben Zobrist and Jason Heyward and, before the deadline, traded their best prospect, Gleyber Torres, for Aroldis Chapman. The Cubs knew they didn't have the bullpen to make it through three October playoff series without him. They were playing to eradicate 1908.

The Astros' process was similar. Under manager A.J. Hinch, they won the wild card play-in game at Yankee Stadium in 2015. When they finished third in '16, Luhnow knew he had built a very good team that required some veteran presence, so he brought in Brian McCann, Charlie Morton, Yuli Gurriel (who had signed the previous summer), Josh Reddick and Carlos Beltrán.

And while the Cubs had the ghosts of 1908, the Astros dealt with much more concrete threats in 2017: Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Maria. Here, owner Jim Crane rose to the occasion. With several Puerto Ricans on the team, from Correa to Beltrán to Alex Cora to Alex Cintron, Crane flew supplies and aid to the island, and brought families off the island to Houston, which had also been battered by its own storm.

"We knew that we could make a difference in the lives of the people devastated by the floods and tragic conditions in Houston," said Crane. Right down to insisting that the late August waiver deal for Justin Verlander get finished. That, of course, was an instrumental trade for the Astros, who went on to win the World Series. And, with the organizational talent still so deep, they were able to deal prospects over the winter for Gerrit Cole, giving the Astros the best starting pitching in the game.

Now, back to the White Sox, and their rebuild. Hahn traded Chris Sale to Boston for two top-tier prospects, Yoan Moncada and Michael Kopech, and a third, Luis Alexander Basabe, who, when healthy, can be an everyday leadoff-hitting center fielder. He got three pitchers from Washington for Adam Eaton. He traded Todd Frazier, David Robertson, and Tommy Kahnle to the Yankees for two former high picks. He dealt José Quintana, whom he had signed to a reasonable contract that was easy to trade, for a potential star in Eloy Jiménez and another big arm, Dylan Cease, who one scout recently said "was throwing 99 as he got to 100 pitches."

"We know there is a lot of learning going on, especially with some of our young pitchers on the major league level," says Hahn. Reynaldo López, from the Eaton deal, has been very impressive. Lucas Giolito, also acquired in that deal, is learning. So is Carson Fulmer, the eighth pick in the 2015 draft. Carlos Rodón, the third pick in the 2014 draft, should be back soon after undergoing shoulder surgery. Kopech, Cease, Alec Hansen and Dane Dunning are not far away from the big leagues.

Twenty-year-old Cuban outfielder Luis Robert looked like a future star in spring training. Catcher Zack Collins is en route. Outfielder Blake Rutherford, a former Yankee first-rounder, "has made major progress in the Carolina League," according to one veteran scout.

It is, after all, Year Two of the White Sox rebuild. In 2021, Jiménez, Moncada and Robert might be established, top-level players. Five or six of the pitchers could be significant, and maybe a couple of others will be used to acquire veteran position players. Perhaps, after the 2020 season, ownership will jump into the Mookie Betts free agent sweepstakes.

It doesn't make daily 5-0, 4-0, 2-0 first inning deficits on Crosstown Weekend any more palatable, but there's perspective provided by the Cubs, and by the Astros. The White Sox are never going to be the Cubs, and they know it. As they head to Year Four in 2020, they can find an identity, the Clippers to the Lakers, but with reasoned management. While the Marlins that season will be in Year Three of a rebuild that right now has a barebones organization and the lowest average attendance in the majors, the White Sox haven't drawn fewer than 1.6 million fans in this century.

Hahn didn't begin the beguine with a future MVP, future World Series MVP and Cy Young winner in the weeds in Winston-Salem. He didn't start with the base of a Cubs Nation.

They simply have to get past a couple of ugly nationally-televised first innings, start crawlin' from the wreckage and believe every day is a brand new start.

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