



# Padres Press Clips

Wednesday, May 9, 2018

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# Hellickson flirts with perfecto, Padres fall to Nationals

**Jeff Sanders**

Again, the [Padres](#) flirted with history.

Just not *good* history.

Four days after four Dodgers pitchers combined for a no-hitter, the Padres waited until the seventh inning Tuesday night to collect their first baserunner of any kind. [Travis Jankowski's](#) leadoff single ended [Nationals](#) right-hander [Jeremy Hellickson's](#) bid for a perfect game, but a 4-0 loss – their fifth shutout, tied for the most in the majors – kept the Padres' offensive struggles a focus of yet another frustrating start to a season.

“It's one of those things where when a guy's on, he's not giving you anything to hit,” Jankowski said after collecting the first of three Padres hits. “It's hard enough as it is when you're getting pitches to hit. It's even harder when the guy is spotting up four different pitches. So I think we were pressing. I think obviously coming off that no-hitter, shoot three, maybe four days ago, it could be in the back of guys' minds.”

It could be worse, of course.

Nine days lapsed between two Dodgers no-hit defeats in 2015, a dubious NL record that eclipsed the 1971 [Reds'](#) previous record (20 days). In the [American League](#), the [White Sox](#) were no-hit on consecutive days – May 5 and May 6 – before going on to beat the New York Giants in six games in the 1917 World Series.

These Padres – already 11 games under .500 and in last in the [NL West](#) – are nowhere near that end goal.

They entered Tuesday with an NL-leading 364 strikeouts, ranked 28<sup>th</sup> in the majors in on-base percentage (.301), 27<sup>th</sup> in slugging (.372) and 26<sup>th</sup> in batting average. They're also without Wil Myers and Hunter Renfroe, who combined for 56 homers last year.

“Where the difference lies, last year when we got into this situation, we also hit balls out of the ballpark,” Padres manager Andy Green said after his team was limited to three or fewer hits for the fourth time this season. “Without Wil, without Hunter, there's 56 home runs missing from our lineup. If you have a rough offensive day, power kind of mitigates that a little bit. ...

“There's been definitely a loss of power in our lineup. We feel that right now.”

The closest they'd come to a hit through the first six innings was [Eric Hosmer's](#) diving attempt to collect an infield single in the third inning and back-to-back flyballs to the warning track from [Franchy Cordero](#) and Jose Pirela in the fifth.

But shortstop Trea Turner's running throw just beat Hosmer's head-first lunge toward first base and the two long drives – to left and center field, respectively – settled safely in gloves, allowing Hellickson to move within nine outs of throwing the 24th perfect game in major league history.

This bid wasn't just about the Padres' struggles, either.

“When he's on he has a plus-plus breaking ball,” Green said. “He had that today. ... I've seen him throw some really good baseball games. I thought he threw the ball well today. The breaking ball was real.”

Jankowski scrapped Hellickson's plans quickly in the seventh, redirecting a 1-2 slider through the middle of the infield for the Padres' first hit.

“It was over the middle of the plate,” Jankowski said. “I got enough of it to kind of squirt through there. Thank goodness we got it. Then Franchy hit that ball in the gap. It didn't really take off after that, but we put something on the board.”

Hellickson was out of the game two batters later when Cordero's two-out drive to left field put runners on second and third. [Ryan Madson](#), however, stranded those runners via Pirela's inning-ending grounder to finish off Hellickson's rather pristine line line: 6 2/3 innings, two hits and eight strikeouts.

That was plenty good enough to win – even if Clayton Richard didn't quite deserve to lose.

The Padres' veteran left-hander tossed just his third quality start of the season, limiting the Nationals to three runs over a season-high eight innings, the longest outing for any Padres starter this season.

“Clearly that's something I take pride in,” Richard said after lowering his ERA to 5.72. “I want to do that more often than not. Unfortunately this season, up until now, I had not done as good as I need to do in that area.

Richard struck out a season-high eight batters, didn't walk anyone and scattered seven hits while throwing 72 of his 102 pitches for strikes.

Two runs crossed the plate in the fifth – via Matt Adams' double and Pedro Severino's single – and the other scored in the seventh on Hellickson's double to left, his first hit of the season.

Adam Cimber allowed a run in the ninth inning.

“(Richard) was sharp today,” Green said. “I loved what he did. He attacked early. ... We just didn't anything offensively to support him today.”

# Chase Headley sets aside frustration to work for Padres' bigger good

Kevin Acee

Chase Headley was back on the bench Tuesday night, back to his greatest contribution possibly being a late-inning RBI but probably being him swallowing his pride and being a good teammate and teacher.

“When I’m done, nobody is really going to remember a ton about my career,” Headley said recently. “That doesn’t mean I don’t feel like I’ve had a nice career and I feel like I’ve dedicated myself and put everything I possibly could into it. At the same token, the game is going to keep going. When I’m done playing, people aren’t going to go like, ‘Whoa.’”

“So the impact is with people. It’s with your teammates. It’s in five years when you see somebody you worked with and you hope, in some small part, you made an impact in what they’re doing.”

He isn’t happy about his situation.

“There’s two ways you can go about it,” he said. “You can be upset about it, you can complain and pout, or you can make the best of it. And that’s what I’ve tried to do.”

He works at being content. With intent.

And so in addition to spending an abundance of time in the batting cage, he spends time in all corners of the clubhouse and the flights and the dugout, sharing and encouraging and listening.

Headley is the second-oldest position player on the team, one of just five with at least three years of major league service time.

If there is a team that can use a player with Headley’s experience, it is the [Padres](#). But they are also a team that can’t use him for long.

The 34-year-old Headley knows that any day could be his last with the Padres. If enough players on the disabled list get healthy and enough others stop getting hurt, he could be designated for assignment. Or maybe the Padres can find a team that wants to make some sort of swap. Either way, barring some crazy circumstance, he is almost certainly not around for long.

Headley’s contribution in the clubhouse is valued, absolutely. But at some point, the Padres will need his spot on the roster for a young player.

This isn't how he or they envisioned it. When the Padres acquired Headley and pitcher Bryan Mitchell in a December trade with the Yankees, taking on Headley's \$13 million salary, it was largely due to their intrigue with Mitchell's curveball. Whatever Headley gave them for however long would be a bonus, they thought.

He'd get on base like he always has, play some solid third base, and eventually a team would offer an acceptable trade. And if not, the Padres gladly would take the combination of his play and presence.

The latter has been all they expected, maybe more. But entering Tuesday's game against the [Washington Nationals](#), Headley was hitting .136 in 44 at-bats with just a .269 on-base percentage.

The team decided shortly before the season started that it needed to evaluate Christian Villanueva every day. The rookie responded by being named [National League](#) Rookie of the Month for April.

Headley on Monday made his first start at third base since April 9 and just his fourth start there all season. He has started four games at first base.

For whatever reason, he has looked discombobulated at the plate, though he has hit a number of balls hard recently.

He attests that his issue is mechanical, not physiological. He will be honest with himself, he said, when it is Father Time striking him out.

"As soon as you don't believe you can do it anymore, then it's probably time to go home," he said. "I know I can still play."

Headley had a .300/.366/.455 line in 266 plate appearances for the Yankees after the All-Star break last season.

A man doesn't play 10 seasons in the majors without believing in himself.

"It's been challenging," Headley said. "I still feel like I can succeed in an everyday role."

Often, such a conviction can get in the way. To Headley's credit and the Padres' benefit, it hasn't here.

"There's days you feel sorry for yourself, and you've got to snap yourself out of it," he said.

His is a higher purpose — to have an impact.

"Really, it's the most important thing we do," he said. "... I hope that at some point, somebody can say, 'I took something from him,' whether it was what I said or the way I did it."

# TinCaps' MacKenzie Gore hit hard in return from DL

**Jeff Sanders**

**MacKenzie Gore's** return from the disabled list was brief.

And rocky.

But, reportedly, pain-free.

And that's what matters most.

The **Padres'** top pitching prospect allowed four runs in two innings Tuesday in low Single-A Fort Wayne's **9-0 loss at Quad Cities**, Gore's first start since a blister sent him to the disabled list after his Midwest League debut.

Gore – who is ranked No. 20 among all prospects, according to MLB.com – struck out three, walked one and surrendered four hits, including two doubles.

He was slated for 50 pitches in his return.

“He's coming off almost a month break ... and he's facing professional hitters who do damage when you leave the ball over the plate,” TinCaps manager **Anthony Contreras** told **The Sports Rush with Brett Rump** on ESPN Radio 1390/100.9 FM in Fort Wayne. “That's pretty much what happened today. He looked good. It's big picture. The finger was healthy when he got off the mound today. That's kind of what we take from this outing. Obviously from his standpoint and his competitiveness, he'd love to pitch better.

“For him, it's making slight adjustments and getting going on a regular schedule now.”

Gore's afternoon started smoothly enough.

He struck out the first two batters swinging and fetched a flyball in foul territory to end the first inning. Gore even struck out the first batter he faced in the second – looking – before the next five batters reached: Single, single, walk, double, double.

He was saved further damage when **Tirso Ornelas**, after hauling in a ball in right field, threw out a runner at the plate.

Gore exited the game after the second inning.

Through two starts in the Midwest League, Gore is 0-1 with six runs allowed through his five innings (10.80 ERA). He has struck out seven and walked two.

Lef-thander **Tom Cosgrove** (5.47) allowed five runs – four earned – on six hits and two walks in four innings after Gore's exit.

Right-hander **Caleb Boushley** (2.87) struck out three over two perfect innings.

#### TRIPLE-A EL PASO (18-15)

- **Tacoma 10, Chihuahuas 6:** DH **Franmil Reyes** (.353) extended his hitting streak to nine games – and his multi-hit-game streak to eight – with a 2-for-3 effort that included a double, an RBI and a run scored. C **Brett Nicholas** (.313) hit his ninth homer and drove in two runs on two hits. LF **Shane Peterson** (.207) also drove in two runs on two hits. RHP **Brett Kennedy** (3.16) allowed four runs on four hits and two walks in four innings in the start and RHP **Kazuhisa Makita** (0.00) debuted in the Pacific Coast League with two strikeouts and a walk in two hitless innings. RHP **Colten Brewer** (0-2, 5.54) allowed four runs in the ninth.

#### DOUBLE-A SAN ANTONIO (22-10)

- **Missions 4, Corpus Christi 0:** RF **Michael Gettys** (.220) went 2-for-4 with his fifth homer, a double and two runs scored and LF **Josh Naylor** (.370) went 2-for-3 with a double, three RBIs and a walk. CF **Rod Boykin** (.267) also had two hits, including a triple. RHP **Miguel Diaz** (2.66) started the game with 2 2/3 shutout innings. He walked three and struck out three in the start. Four relievers combined for 6 1/3 scoreless innings. The win was the eighth in a row for the Missions.

#### HIGH SINGLE-A LAKE ELSINORE (12-20)

- **Rancho Cucamonga 6, Storm 1:** RHP **Reggie Lawson** (2-1, 2.10) struck out seven and allowed three runs on six hits and a walk in five innings. RHP **Pedro Avila** (4.11) allowed three runs – two earned – over the final four innings. 1B **Brad Zunica** (.213) doubled, tripled and scored the Storm's only run.

#### Transactions

- RHP **Kyle Lloyd** was placed on El Paso's seven-day disabled list and INF **Matt Batten** was transferred to Lake Elsinore as Makita and INF **Javy Guerra** joined the Chihuahuas.
- At Lake Elsinore, INF/OF **Nate Easley** was placed on the seven-day disabled list.
- To make room for Gore's activation, Fort Wayne sent LHP **Oswaldo Hernandez** to the seven-day disabled list.

# Bryan Mitchell owns demotion to Padres bullpen, shows some fire

Kevin Acee

Bryan Mitchell is owning it.

“I don’t really have a choice,” he said. “I kind of have to. I just wasn’t getting it done. At the end of the day it’s a results-based game. I had six starts. Bottom line, I wasn’t getting it done.”

Mitchell spoke Tuesday, a day after being relegated to the bullpen, having posted a 6.47 ERA in seven starts.

Knowing what he did and didn’t do – and acknowledging it – is perhaps the first step in the 27-year-old right-hander making a successful return to the starting rotation. Many in the [Padres](#) organization still believe that is a realistic possibility if he can pitch with more aggression and throw more strikes.

It is hoped there is even a correlation between Mitchell’s ownership and being successful on the mound. (He is available to pitch Tuesday.)

It had been troublesome to many for some time that Mitchell didn’t seize with more assurance the opportunity he was given to be in their rotation. The mental approach has been and will continue to be a focus of their work with him.

In fact, the most fervor Mitchell showed in his time with the Padres was following his being pulled with one out and two runners on in the third inning Saturday against the Dodgers – having already allowed three runs on five hits and three walks . In the tunnel adjacent to the dugout at Estadio de Beisbol Monterrey, Mitchell loudly expressed his displeasure with manager Andy Green’s decision.

“Any time you get pulled with half your pitch count, you’re going to be kind of pissed off,” Mitchell said Tuesday. “Especially at that stage of the game, I want to do good. In that initial five minutes, you’re going to be pissed off. That’s just being a competitor. Then you move on.”

By the end of the game, Mitchell had calmed down. He said then [he was surprised to be pulled so quickly](#) but also that “I’ve also never managed a game in the big leagues.”

On Tuesday, he said, “I get it. I wasn’t getting it done. It kind of looked like another one of the same as far as the previous start. His thinking was, ‘We’re going to have a better chance to win the game with someone else.’ Look what happened. ... It worked out.”



Robbie Erlin came in, got out of the third inning on one pitch (a fly ball double play) and cruised through the next two innings in 23 pitches. Four more relievers finished off the game as the Padres came back for a 7-4 victory.

“As a competitor, you’re not ever going to say I agree about it,” Mitchell said. “But I see the reasoning, and I see the reasoning for what they’re doing now.”

Mitchell, acquired from the Yankees in December and immediately handed a spot in the rotation, had allowed four runs on five hits and four walks in 4 2/3 innings in the start before Saturday and made it through six innings just once this season.

The problem essentially comes down to an inability to throw strikes, especially early in at-bats.

Mitchell has gotten to an 0-1 count just 28 times and a 1-0 count 77 times. He has made almost twice as many pitches when behind in counts versus ahead.

That hole has resulted not only in him walking 26 (to 16 strikeouts) but allowing 38 hit in 32 innings. Opponents are batting .304 against him – .353 when he is behind in a count and .189 when he is ahead.

“It got to the point where they were just sitting there waiting for a strike,” he said. “It’s all about getting ahead. I just needed to do better. ... Like Andy told me, dominate one inning, dominate two innings, regardless of the situation go out there and attack guys. I’m trying to keep it as simple as possible.”

# First pitch: Austin Hedges (elbow) starts throwing

**Jeff Sanders**

On Monday, [Austin Hedges](#), on the disabled list since May 1 with a right elbow tendinitis, visited with team doctors. Today, the 25-year-old catcher began throwing for the first time since landing on the disabled list May 1.

It's a start.

Which is wait he was hoping for.

"I also ran, did block and receiving drills," Hedges said. "I'll play catch tomorrow and as long as that goes well I'll probably get cleared to hit soon."

He added: "It felt good today."

Hedges' elbow was "really tight" when he exited in the second inning April 30. The initial prognosis called for seven to 10 days of rest. Hedges said he did not have an MRI before resuming activity Tuesday.

Hedges is hitting .173/.235/.293 with two homers, 10 RBIs and 30 strikeouts through his first 24 games. He hit 18 homers last year, but inconsistencies at the plate saddled him with a .214/.262/.398 batting line over his first full year in the majors.

Notable

- **Jose Pirela** is starting at second base a third straight game against a right-handed starting pitcher. Pirela is hitting .264/.321/.340 with 33 strikeouts in 36 games. **Carlos Asuaje**, who has started one game this month at second base, is hitting .194/.263/.291 with 20 strikeouts in 35 games.
- RHP **Colin Rea** (shoulder) is expected to begin starting games soon in extended [spring training](#).

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PITCHING MATCHUP | [Nationals](#) at [Padres](#)

**Game 2:** 7:10 p.m. Tuesday

**Nationals RHP [Jeremy Hellickson](#) (0-0, 3.00 ERA)**

- The 31-year-old is coming off 5 2/3 shutout innings against the [Pirates](#), but has not pitched deeper than that in a game through his four starts. Hellickson is 1-3 with a 5.84 ERA in four career starts (24 2/3 IP) at Petco Park.

**Padres LHP Clayton Richard (1-4, 6.21 ERA)**

- The Padres are 2-5 in Richard's starts. He allowed a season-high seven runs last week in San Francisco and has walked at least three in his last six starts. Richard allowed three runs in six innings in a loss last year to Washington.

Up next

- **Wednesday:** Nationals LHP **Gio Gonzalez** (4-2, 2.33) vs. Padres LHP **Joey Lucchesi** (3-2, 3.13), 6:10 p.m.

# Padres' Kirby Yates aiding flood relief efforts in hometown Koloa

**Jeff Sanders**

Kirby Yates, a Hawaii native, learned to play baseball in Koloa, on the south side of Kauai. His family still lives on a hill above an old sugar mill town that the Padres' reliever visits each offseason. News that historic flooding – via rainfall rates up to 6 inches per hour, [according to this Washington Post story](#) – upended several neighbors' lives compelled Yates to use his platform in San Diego for good.

Yates is matching donations up to \$5,000 via a Youcaring.com fund-raising site (Click [here](#)). The money will go to the Hawaii Community Foundation and Poipu Beach Foundation, which are coordinating the relief efforts in the Koloa area.

“The hard part is I know a couple families affected by it,” Yates said. “I have a couple friends who came home to their house and their house was under five feet of water – all the way through the house and into the bedrooms and kitchen. It’s going to take some work to get them back on their feet and I’m just trying to do something to help out.”

Yates was in San Diego rehabbing an ankle injury when the storm hit Kauai, the fourth-largest Hawaiian island and one of the wettest spots in the world. The rain gauge in Hanalei, about a 40-mile drive to the north side of the island, collected 27.52 inches of rain in a 24-hour period, topping the previous one- and two-day records for that location, according to the [National Weather Service](#) in Honolulu. Hanalei averages 78 inches of rain per year.

“I knew the north shore got punished and they got hit hard with rain,” Yates said. “A couple of my friends posted videos. You could tell there was a lot of water going around. It's not uncommon for it to rain down there and get flash floods every once in a while.

“This one was a little different. This one was pretty severe.”

Outside of a flooded yard, Yates' family home was largely unaffected by a storm that upended a tight-knit community.

“The people are awesome,” Yates said. “Everybody knows everybody. It's got that small-town feel. It's close to my heart.”

# Padres to honor Kevin Towers, Rob Picciolo with patches

**Kevin Acee**

The Padres will honor longtime General Manager [Kevin Towers](#) and coach Rob Picciolo by wearing patches on their orange, blue and white late 1990s uniforms, the team will announce later today.

Both men passed away in January.

The Padres will have the blue patches with an orange “KT” and “RP” affixed to the late-90s uniforms they will wear Saturday as part of a four-day celebration of the franchise’s 1998 [World Series](#) team. They will wear the patches for five more Wednesday home games between June 6 and August 29.

Towers, who served as Padres G.M from 1995 to 2009, lost his battle with thyroid cancer on Jan. 30 at the age of 56. No one has served as Padres General Manager as long as Towers did. Towers also pitched in the Padres minor league system for seven years.

Picciolo, who was 64, died of a heart attack on Jan. 3. He was a coach on the major league staff from 1990 to 2015, serving as first base coach, bench coach and third base coach in that time. He also was a coach in the Padres minor league system from 1986 until he joined [Bruce Bochy](#)’s staff during the 1990 season. Picciolo was until this season, when pitching coach [Darren Balsley](#) accrued more time with the organization, the longest-tenured coach in Padres history.

The celebration of the 1998 team runs Thursday through Sunday when the Padres host the Cardinals. Bobbleheads will be given away at each game, beginning with a Tony Gwynn bobblehead on Thursday (Ken Caminiti, Trevor Hoffman and Greg Vaughn bobbleheads will follow).

# Padres avoid another no-no, but fall to Nats

By Jay Paris Special to MLB.com  
May 8th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- **Clayton Richard** struck out eight in eight solid innings, but the Padres couldn't provide any support as they came within nine outs of being no-hit for a second time in five days in their 4-0 loss to the Nationals on Tuesday night at Petco Park.

**Jeremy Hellickson** had a perfect game going until **Travis Jankowski** shot a single up the middle to lead off the seventh. Two batters later, **Franchy Cordero**'s two-out single chased the Nationals right-hander, but the Padres didn't fare any better against Washington's bullpen as they were shut out for the fifth time and lost for the fourth time in their last six games.

"That's not the type of offensive performance we want," manager Andy Green said after the Padres produced three singles and a walk, with 10 strikeouts.

This performance came on the heels of the Dodgers' combined no-hitter vs. the Padres in Friday's Mexico Series opener.

Richard (1-5) held the Nationals to three runs on seven hits while setting season highs for innings and strikeouts.

"It's disappointing," Richard said. "It's tough to lose, and losing stinks."

Richard, who allowed a season-high seven runs in his most recent outing, held Washington hitless through the first four innings. It was quite a contrast from his last go-around,

"It was nothing huge," Richard said. "I was just able to get in a rhythm and attack the strike zone. There wasn't anything special about it. I was just making pitches down in the zone, for the most part, and pitching ahead."

The Nationals strung together three straight hits against him in the fifth, with **Matt Adams** (double) and **Pedro Severino** (single) driving in runs for a 2-0 lead.

The Padres fell behind 3-0 when Hellickson added to his big night with an RBI double in the seventh. Richard was hoping the bats would come to life as he kept the Padres within striking distance.

"Realizing that if I'm able to keep the game close, that is a big deal," Richard said. "It's not giving in when you give up one run and let it snowball out of control. If you can keep the score to the minimum, it changes the morale, it changes the momentum, it gives you a chance."

The Padres flirted with a rally in the eighth when **Raffy Lopez** opened with a single. **Freddy Galvis** then lined a smash through the box, but the ball ricocheted off **Brandon Kintzler**'s glove to shortstop **Trea Turner** for the start of a 1-6-3 double play. That had Galvis banging his helmet

on the ground after crossing first, an illustration of yet another frustrating night for the last-place Padres.

"When [Hellickson] is on, he's got a plus-plus breaking ball," Green said. "He had that today. There are days when he doesn't have that breaking ball and he gets funneled to the middle of the plate and gets squared up from time to time. But I've seen him throw some really good ballgames."

The Padres will try to avoid a sweep on Wednesday, hoping their lineup can be productive while sluggers **Wil Myers** (oblique) and **Hunter Renfroe** (elbow) are sidelined.

"Probably where the difference lies is last year when we got in this situation we also hit balls out of the ballpark," Green said. "Without Wil, without Hunter, 56 of our home runs are missing from our lineup right now. So if you have a rough offensive day, power kind of mitigates that a little bit and you end up with a run or two."

#### **YOU GOTTA SEE THIS**

**Knocked down, but not out:** **Chase Headley** hit a rocket right back to reliever **Wander Suero** to lead off the ninth. Suero somehow got his glove up to record an out and preserve his smile, as the ball was headed for his face. In making the catch, Suero got knocked on his backside but quickly sprung to his feet.

#### **HE SAID IT**

"He was sharp today. Loved what he did. Attacked early. We just didn't do anything offensively to support him." -- **Green, on Richard's performance**

#### **UP NEXT**

**Joey Lucchesi** (3-2) will face the Nationals for the first time in his career in Wednesday's 6:10 p.m. PT series finale at Petco Park. The rookie southpaw has lasted at least five innings in six of his seven starts. He was on the wrong end of the Dodgers' combined no-hitter on Friday in Mexico. Washington will counter with lefty **Gio Gonzalez**.

# Mitchell embraces challenge of bullpen role

By Jay Paris Special to MLB.com  
May 8th, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- To return as a starter, **Bryan Mitchell** must excel as a reliever.

"It's pretty simple. I wasn't getting it done, so they made a change," Mitchell said.

The Padres were hoping a change of scenery would suit Mitchell. They acquired the hard-throwing 27-year-old right-hander from the Yankees, along with third baseman **Chase Headley**, as the prized part of the package.

But Mitchell struggled, going 0-3 with a 6.47 ERA in seven starts. After Mitchell recorded only seven outs in the Mexico Series against the Dodgers on Saturday, manager Andy Green pointed him toward the bullpen.

"I just have to go out there and dominate in whatever situation I get put in," Mitchell said. "That is the plan."

The blueprint out of Spring Training was Mitchell being a steady starter. But he allowed 38 hits and 26 walks in 32 innings, leaving Green little choice.

"I wouldn't say I was surprised," Mitchell said. "At the end of the day, it's a results-based game, and I wasn't getting it done. So we had to make a change."

Green said Mitchell will return to the rotation if his production out of the bullpen warrants it.

"That's kind of the message that I received," said Mitchell, who made 19 relief appearances for the Yankees last season. "I've been in this game for a long time, and nothing is guaranteed. Ultimately, if that is what I want -- to start -- I have to earn that. It's not like it is just sitting there waiting. I've got to prove that I deserve it."

## Lyles starting Thursday

While the bullpen gate swings open for Mitchell, **Jordan Lyles** exits it in the opposite direction. Lyles will start Thursday's series opener against the visiting Cardinals in a spot once reserved for Mitchell.

"I think [Lyles] has worked much more aggressively," Green said. "The way he has attacked hitters, the aggressiveness of the fastball and just the energy he has on the mound. He is going at guys."

Green said Lyles "found his curveball" during his stint in the bullpen. The right-hander pitched to a 3.66 ERA in 13 games, although he didn't receive a decision in his 13 innings.

"I think the mentality of going to the bullpen has been constructive for him," Green said. "Instead of pacing himself for five or six innings, he is going right at hitters. We want him to take that same mindset when he pitches for us as a starter. Don't hold anything back."



Lyles started five games for the Padres last season, going 1-3 with a 9.39 ERA.

# Jankowski making impact in leadoff spot

Padres improving at Petco Park; Hosmer on offensive tear

By Bill Center San Diego Padres

May 8th, 2018

**Travis Jankowski** could be the answer to one of the Padres' biggest problems.

Since returning from Triple-A El Paso on April 29, the swift outfielder has made four starts as the Padres leadoff hitter and is 6-for-15 with two walks, two triples and five runs scored.

Yes, that is a very small sample size. But the 26-year-old Jankowski is hitting .400 with a .471 on-base percentage, a .667 slugging percentage and a 1.137 OPS as the sixth player the Padres have deployed in the leadoff position.

The Padres' other five leadoff hitters are hitting a combined .157 with a .210 on-base percentage. The on-base percentage at the leadoff spot is the lowest of the first eight spots in San Diego's batting order. **Manuel Margot** (14 games), **Jose Pirela** (10), **Franchy Cordero** (four), **Wil Myers** (two) and **Carlos Asuaje** (two) are a combined 21-for-134 with nine walks in the leadoff slot.

At the moment, Jankowski might be deployed as the Padres leadoff hitter only against right-handed pitchers. But he is doing the things the Padres wanted to see when they optioned him to El Paso to start the season -- slashing the ball to all fields, working the count and letting his considerable speed play.

## Notes:

- **The Padres are 5-13** at Petco Park this season. They were 43-38 at home last season.

"We've played well on the road this season (8-10, including the three games in Mexico City), but we haven't played well at home," manager Andy Green said Monday.

- **On Monday night, Green packed his lineup with left-handed bats** against **Stephen Strasburg**. But he elected to start Pirela at second over the left-handed hitting Asuaje. Pirela went 3-for-4 Monday, and he is now 4-for-6 lifetime against Strasburg. Pirela has started six of the past seven games at second. Asuaje, who hit a sacrifice fly as a pinch-hitter on Monday night, is 1-for-18 with one walk since April 24.

- **Despite the 0-for-4s** on Friday (when the Padres were no-hit) and Monday night, first baseman **Eric Hosmer** is 13-for-34 (.382) over his past nine games with four doubles, a triple, three homers, six walks, eight RBIs and six runs scored for a .475 on-base percentage, a .824 slugging percentage and a 1.299 OPS. He has raised his batting average from .250 to .287.

- **Cordero is hitting .343 (12-for-35)** since April 27 with two doubles, two homers, six RBIs, seven runs scored and seven walks for a .442 on-base percentage.

- **Margot is 10-for-40** with three doubles and two triples since April 24. While that is only a .250 batting average, the run has boosted Margot's overall batting average from .135 to .185.

# Sarris: Franchy Cordero's first big adjustment is a promising sign

By Eno Sarris May 9, 2018

Franchy Cordero's short but loud legacy so far has been to combine equal parts aggressive physical tools and poor plate discipline. Despite all those athletic aspects — he hits the ball [among the hardest](#) of anyone in baseball, and is [among the fastest](#) — there is that 'but' threatening on the horizon. He swings at everything, it seems, and misses even more, if that were possible.

Cordero is 23, though, and only spent a year and a half in the high minors, so the rebuilding Padres stuck him out in the field and hoped he wouldn't strike out half the time. He's rewarded them with a step forward in plate discipline so radical that it offers hope for more in the future.

You can see some of the change in Cordero's swing rates, which become meaningful early. It's good that he's reaching ten percentage points less on pitches outside the zone, and that he's still swinging at strikes more than the average hitter. It's good that his zone swings minus outside-of-zone swings have gone from below average (33.7 percent) to above average (39.1 percent) in one season.

All of that's good. But it doesn't tell the story of how he's managed this, and the *how* is a promising sign for future improvements.

Cordero loves fastballs, as do most sluggers. He's gotten better at hunting them. Let's combine sinkers, four-seamers, and cutters in a fastball grouping and compare his swing rates last year against this year.

So, relative to the breaking ball at least, Cordero is doing a much better job hunting fastballs. He cut more breaking balls out of his swings than he did fastballs.

It's one thing to hunt fastballs because they are straighter and you can launch 'em. It's another thing to hunt the right kind of fastball. It's not just looking for pitches right down the middle — Cordero could actually be better at swinging at pitches down the heart, where he ranks 273rd out of 331 hitters so far — it's about *not* swinging at fastballs that produce poor outcomes.

In the National League, the Diamondbacks last year had the best batting average against, on both two-seamers and four-seamers, when facing lefties last year. Here's how batters did against their four-seamers by batting average.

Looks like you'd want to make sure to hit them low-and-in and over the middle of the plate. Don't chase high and away. Got that, Franchy?

Now here's how lefties did against Arizona's two-seamers last year.

Now up and away is good, and low and away is the thing to avoid. Low and in pitches are fine to hunt, as is up over the plate where the batter can get his arms extended.

Now let's see how Cordero has improved his swing rates against each pitch.

First, against four-seamers, here's Cordero's 2017 swing map.

Cordero was good at swinging at middle-middle four-seamers, but also expanded up into some of that high and away zone that makes for pop-ups, weak fly balls, and whiffs. This year? Only middle-middle.

That's a good move. But Cordero prefers to swing at two-seamers — he's swung at them 40 percent more often than four-seamers this year, after swinging at sinkers 9 percent more often than four-seamers last year. So this next improvement might be even more important. Here is his swing map for 2017 against sinkers.

Way too many swings low and away; the Diamondbacks would have been ecstatic with him. This year, though, Cordero has become more disciplined while retaining that aggressiveness in one part of the zone.

Low and in! That's where batters hit .375 against the D-backs last year, and it's absolutely a good place for a lefty to drop his barrel on the pitch and let the ball fly. Cordero has hit more homers off of sinkers this year than any other pitch type.

So when you see a swing like this from Cordero this year, you know that it's the result of a change in approach.

Amazingly, Cordero wasn't even swinging at sinkers in that region at all last year. That might be the most hopeful part of this radical change.

The lefty still swings too often at changeups — 18 times out of the 30 he's seen, with ten whiffs and two singles to show for it — but how many pitchers are throwing changeups low and inside to a lefty? By focusing middle-middle and up for four-seamers, and low and in for two-seamers, Cordero is shifting his attention away from the areas that house his biggest weakness.

Franchy Cordero is still hitting balls super hard and running super fast. He still strikes out too much — top 15 in baseball right now — but he's already made his first huge adjustment. Considering it came after just 99 plate appearances in the big leagues, it's impressive. And it suggests there are more adjustments coming.

# Hellickson throws 6 perfect innings in Nationals' 4-0 win

11:00 PM PT  
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO -- [Jeremy Hellickson](#) didn't give the [San Diego Padres](#) a chance over the first six innings.

It was 18 up and 18 down for the Padres, who only four nights earlier had been no-hit by four [Los Angeles Dodgers](#) pitchers in Monterrey, Mexico. And here they were back home, looking totally lost against Hellickson's curveball and changeup.

"Everybody says they don't think about it, but once you get the fifth, sixth inning, you can't help but think about it," Hellickson said after leading the [Washington Nationals](#) to a 4-0 win Tuesday night by allowing only two hits while striking out eight in 6 2/3 innings. "But once you get on the mound you kind of forget about it and just try to do what you've been doing to get to that point."

Hellickson was perfect until [Travis Jankowski](#) singled up the middle leading off the seventh, on his 83rd pitch. Hellickson, a 31-year-old who joined the Nationals on a minor league deal in mid-March, struck out [Eric Hosmer](#) and retired rookie [Christian Villanueva](#) on a flyball before [Franchy Cordero](#) singled to left. Manager Dave Martinez then pulled the right-hander in favor of [Ryan Madson](#), who retired [Jose Pirela](#) on one pitch.

Hellickson (1-0) knew warming up in the bullpen that he was going to have a good night.

"I felt good," he said. "The ball was going where I wanted it. I think the curveball was probably my best pitch tonight. I was able to get ahead with it and bounce it when I needed to."

Hellickson, who came in with four straight no-decisions, didn't issue a walk while throwing 91 pitches. He also hit an RBI double in the seventh.

"He was throwing strikes," Martinez said. "All of his pitches were working. He was working ahead of the count. That's what you get from Jeremy when he's on. He pitched really well. Today he was outstanding."

Hellickson gave up consecutive flyballs to the warning track in the fifth inning but then struck out [Raffy Lopez](#). In the sixth, he got [Freddy Galvis](#) to ground out before striking out [Manuel Margot](#) and pitcher [Clayton Richard](#).

"When he's on, he's got a plus-plus breaking ball," San Diego manager Andy Green said. "He had that today. Really gets in on hands to speed guys up. There's days when he doesn't have that breaking ball and he gets funneled to the middle of the plate and gets squared up from time to time. I've seen him throw some really good baseball games. I thought he threw the ball well today. The breaking ball was real."

The Padres had only three hits in getting shut out for the fifth time.

Richard (1-5) had a good start, too, by facing only one over the minimum through four, before getting hit hard to open the fifth. [Howie Kendrick](#) hit a leadoff single and scored on [Matt Adams'](#) opposite-field double to left over a shift. [Pedro Severino](#) followed with an RBI single.

Richard allowed three runs and seven hits in eight innings. He also struck out eight without issuing a walk.

The big left-hander said there was "nothing huge, just able to get in a rhythm and attack the strike zone. There wasn't anything special about it. Just keeping the ball down in making pitches down in the zone for the most part and pitching ahead."

Said Green: "He was sharp today. Loved what he did. Attacked early. We just didn't do anything offensively to support him today. He looked good all day."

UP NEXT

Nationals: LHP [Gio Gonzalez](#) (4-2, 2.33) is scheduled to start the series finale Wednesday night. His ERA ranks eighth in the NL.

Padres: Rookie LHP [Joey Lucchesi](#) (3-2, 3.13) faces the Nats for the first time. He took the loss Friday night in the Dodgers' combined no-hitter.

# This Day in Padres History—

## May 9

*By Bill Center*

*May 9, 1960*—**Tony Gwynn** is born in Los Angeles.

*May 9, 1970*—Left-hander **Danny Coombs** throws a complete-game, two-hit shutout and center fielder **Cito Gaston** is 4-for-4 with a triple, a RBI and two runs scored as the Padres score a 6–0 win in Montreal. Coombs walks four and strikes out five.

*May 9, 1971*—Second baseman **Dave Campbell** hits two home runs as the Padres defeat the Reds 7–2 at San Diego Stadium.

*May 9, 1976*—Left-hander **Brent Strom** allows two hits and a walk with two strikeouts in a complete-game shutout as the Padres defeat the Mets 4–0 and **Tom Seaver** at Shea Stadium.

*May 9, 1982*—Left-hander **Tim Lollar** allows four hits and no walks with nine strikeouts in a complete-game shutout in addition to singling in a run against **Steve Carlton** in a 6–0 Padres win in Philadelphia.

*May 9, 1985*—Left-hander **Mark Thurmond** allows three hits and no walks while striking out three in a complete-game shutout as the Padres defeat the Pirates 1–0 at San Diego Jack Murphy Stadium.

*May 9, 1997*—The Padres retire the No. 35 of left-handed pitcher **Randy Jones**. The sinkerball artist had a 92–105 record for the Padres during their formative years from 1973–80. He had a 3.30 earned run average as a Padre in 264 games (253 starts). Jones was the first Padre to win the National League Cy Young Award in 1976 when he went 22–14 with a 2.74 ERA and led the league in wins, starts (40), complete games (25) and innings pitched (315 1/3). He also allowed only 50 walks and had the lowest WHIP (hits and walks per innings pitched) at 1.027. Jones is the Padres all-time career leader in games started (253), complete games (71), shutouts (18), innings pitched (1,766) and doubleplays induced (176).

# #PadresOnDeck: Naylor, Gettys Lead AA San Antonio to Eighth Straight Win; Gore Returns

*By Bill Center*

Streaking Double-A San Antonio won an eighth straight game Tuesday night behind Top-30 Padres prospects **Josh Naylor** and **Michael Gettys**.

Naylor was 2-for-3 with a double and a walk for three RBIs. Gettys had a double and a homer in four at-bats with a stolen base and two runs scored.

Naylor, 20, who again started in left field Monday, is hitting .370 with eight homers, 32 RBIs and a 1.086 OPS. The [Padres' N<sup>o</sup>15 prospect according to MLB Pipeline](#), leads the Texas League in RBIs and ranks second in batting average, homers and OPS.

Gettys, 22, the [Padres' N<sup>o</sup>29-rated prospect](#), raised his batting average to .220.

Other news involving Top-30 Prospects Tuesday.

— Left-hander **MacKenzie Gore**, 19, the [Padres' N<sup>o</sup>2 prospect](#), made his first start for Single-A Fort Wayne since being sidelined by a blister on April 11, and allowed four runs on four hits and a walk with three strikeouts in two innings. The third overall pick in the 2017 draft is 0–1 with a 10.80 earned run average.

— Right-hander **Reggie Lawson**, 20, the [Padres' N<sup>o</sup>30 prospect](#), allowed three runs on six hits and a walk with seven strikeouts for Advanced Single-A Lake Elsinore. Lawson is 2–1 with a 2.10 ERA.

*Around the Farm:*

TRIPLE-A EL PASO (18–15): Tacoma 10, CHIHUAHUAS 6—C **Brett Nicholas** (.313) was 2-for-5 with his ninth homer and two RBIs. DH **Franmil Reyes** (.353) was 2-for-3 with a double, a walk, a RBI and a run scored. LF **Shane Peterson** (.207) was 2-for-4 with two RBIs and a stolen base. RF **Nick Schulz** (.284) was 2-for-3 with a walk and a run scored. 1B **Diego Goris** (.353) was 1-for-4 with a RBI. Starting RHP **Brett Kennedy**(3.16 ERA) allowed four runs on four hits



and two walks with three strikeouts in four innings. RHP **T.J. Weir** (5.63) allows two unearned runs on a hit and two walks in an inning. RHP **Trey Wingenter** (6.28) allowed a hit and a walk with a strikeout in a scoreless inning. RHP **Kazuhisa Makita** allowed a walk with two strikeouts in two otherwise perfect innings in his debut with the Chihuahuas. RHP **Colten Brewer** (0-1, 5.54) allowed four runs on three hits and a walk with two strikeouts in an inning to take the loss.

DOUBLE-A SAN ANTONIO (22-10): MISSIONS 4, Corpus Christi 0 — Right-handed starter **Miguel Diaz** and four relievers combined on a three-hit shutout. Diaz (2.66 ERA) issued three walks with three strikeouts over 2 2/3 hitless innings. RHP **Jason Jester** (1-0, 1.62) allowed a hit in 1 1/3 innings. RHP **Erik Johnson** (6.23) allowed a hit and two walks with a strikeout in two innings. RHP **Gerardo Reyes** (0.00) allowed a hit with three strikeouts in two scoreless innings. RHP **Eric Yardley** (3.12) struck out two in a perfect inning. CF **Rod Boykin** (.267) backed Naylor and Gettys, going 2-for-4 with a triple and a run scored. SS **Fernando Tatis Jr.** (.215) was 0-for-2 with two walks, a stolen base and a run scored. 3B **Ty France** (.260) was 1-for-3 with a walk.

ADVANCED SINGLE-A LAKE ELSINORE (12-20): Rancho Cucamonga 6, STORM 1 — RHP **Pedro Avila** (4.11 ERA) followed Lawson and allowed three runs (two earned) on six hits and two walks with six strikeouts in four innings. 1B **Brad Zunica** (.213) was 2-for-3 with a double, a triple and a run scored. RF **Taylor Kohlwey** (.190) was 0-for-2 with a sacrifice fly. CF **Edward Olivares** (.277) and C **Luis Torrens** (.283) were each 1-for-4.

SINGLE-A FORT WAYNE (14-18): QUAD CITIES 9, TinCaps 0 — 3B **Gabriel Arias** (.217) was 1-for-1 with a walk. LF **Jack Suwinski** (.250) and CF **Tre Carter** (.198) were each 1-for-3 with a walk. LHP **Tom Cosgrove** (5.47 ERA) followed Gore and allowed five runs (four earned) on six hits and two walks with four strikeouts in four innings. RHP **Caleb Boushley** (2.87) struck out three in two perfect innings.

# Andy's Address, 5/8

## Andy Addresses starters Richard, Lyles, running game, early deficits

*By Bill Center*

As usual, **Andy Green** talked about starting pitcher **Clayton Richard** during Tuesday afternoon's pre-game media session at Petco Park. But he also discussed Thursday's starter as right-handed **Jordan Lyles** gets the call with **Bryan Mitchell** going to the bullpen.

Green started with Richard, who is 1-4 with a 6.21 earned run average heading into Tuesday night's start against the Washington Nationals.

"Clayton's returns against the Mets were solid," Green said. "I thought he made some really good pitches there. The last outing wasn't crisp for him. I still think he has to stay with what's gotten him here in the last couple of years . . . that's the sinker that gets beneath bats and gets ground balls and makes him pitch efficient."

"His strikeouts have been up. His pitch counts have been up, which takes a guy who has gotten deeper into games over the last year plus and made his outings shorter. As much as you don't like contact sometimes, he's always pitched to early, weak contact and he's been very successful at getting that."

"It's always easier out of the division against teams that haven't seen him as much as the National League West has seen him. So I hope these guys don't have that kind of familiarity with his uniqueness. That will give him a better shot against these guys and gives him the opportunity to go very deep in the game."

"We'll still shift **Bryce Harper**. It changes batter to batter in Clayton's case. Most of that is just dictated by the batter and we'll factor in the way he throws. We'll adjust the defense accordingly but a lot of that is built on the batter."

Lyles will be making his first start of the season Thursday after posting a 3.66 ERA in 13 relief appearances.

"I think Jordan has worked much more aggressively this year," said Green. "The way he has attacked hitters, the aggressiveness with the fastball, just the energy he moves down the mound. He's coming at guys much more aggressively. His changeup has played much better. It's a real four-pitch mix. And I think he's found his curveball while he's been in the bullpen."

“I think the mentality going to the bullpen has been constructive for him in the sense that he’s gone to ‘I’m going after this hitter, I’m not going to pace myself for five or six or seven innings.’ And we’ve told him to take the same mindset to the mound when he pitches for us as a starter. Hey, you go out there and if it’s three innings the first time, that’s great, we don’t need more than that. You go out there aggressively for those three innings and don’t hold anything back trying to make sure you pitch into the fifth and the sixth. We’ll extend him as time permits as he gets built up better and better.”

Green discussed how the Padres have fallen behind early as the pitchers have struggled to get out of the first innings while the offense has had problems scoring early.

“From the offensive side, **Travis Jankowski** has done a nice job in that No. 1 spot since he’s been here. Hopefully he stays there, takes hold of it and runs with it and continues to do what he has done.”

“Pitching wise, the change in rotation as this point in time is probably the most aggressive thing you can really do to address early inning outs and not getting them. And then it’s just a matter of executing. Last night, that was the first, first-inning run that **Tyson Ross** has given up all year. He has been very effective in the first inning until yesterday.”

“Getting behind is probably the most impactful thing about if you’re going to win a game or not. It’s a very telling statistic when you look at the team that scores first usually wins the baseball game. How much leeway you give a guy . . . to me, you have to go out there and throw zeroes from the beginning. There was probably a point in time when the philosophy was ‘Hey, I’ll hold my third pitch back or my best secondary pitch back and wait until the second time through the order to show that.’”

“Now, it’s go get outs. It’s treating each out as important as the last out you plan on getting that day. There is no holding stuff back. It’s going aggressively at guys and executing.”

Which brought Green to the next point—the growing trend among managers to get to the bullpen once the starter makes two trips through the order. Ross struggled Monday night when he faced the top of the Nationals batting order for the third time.

“And yesterday was really one of the only times someone has gotten us the third time through,” said Green. “It’s been the struggles the first and second times through that has cost our starters to go short. We’re going to continue to emphasize execution.”

“It’s nice when you have the opportunity to do that and have the depth in the bullpen and a bullpen that’s not taxed. We haven’t been able to function that way. A lot of that has been built on starts that are two to five innings. In that inning range, you have to get length from your bullpen so consistently. Sometimes you can’t do that to win a baseball game. If we think we have a chance to win a game, we’ll be very aggressive in the way we manage a game and how we put guys in position to be successful. If we feel like certain matchups aren’t in our best interests, we’ll make adjustments and go to the bullpen.”

Green then discussed the running game, which also hasn't lived up to pre-season expectations.

"You can split statistics any way that you want to," said Green. "We've been caught stealing quite a bit this year. Most of the times we've been caught it was with two outs and a bad count . . . it's a risk. If you're just looking at baserunning metrics and run metrics and it's telling you, who is going to score how many runs in this situation, it's all be calculated risks based on the fact that we're probably not going to score in that scenario if we don't take a risk."

"When you run when they expect you to run, you get thrown out more often. When you run because **Stephen Strasburg** is on the mound and you haven't put up runs against top of the rotation pitchers, they become cognizant that you are being aggressive and you get thrown out more often."

"Also, what I think has probably hurt us on the basepaths is **Manny (Margot)** hasn't been on there a lot, **Wil's (Myers)** been our best base stealer for the last two years and he's hardly been in the lineup and he definitely hasn't been stealing bases. Now Travis is getting on base for us."

"We haven't exactly had fleet-footed guys on the bases to wreak havoc. Most of the guys who have been getting on are guys like **Christian Villanueva** and **Eric Hosmer** and they're not base stealers. They're not guys who are going to change the game on the basepaths. When we start seeing guys like Manny get on base, Travis get on base when Wil comes back and gets on base, Franchy continues to grow as a basestealer."

"But what we've chose to do, and yesterday is a prime example, we send Eric Hosmer with two strikes . . . if he strikes out he's out, if he puts the ball in play you have a chance to get to Strasburg early in the baseball game. And that's a risk and you're going to get out a lot. A lot of times we take those kinds of chances."

Green offered some injury updates.

"**Austin (Hedges)** had a nice day today, he played catch and felt good . . . Wil had a nice day," said Green. "But it's probably hardly noteworthy at this point in time. (Right-handed pitcher **Colin) Rea** is working his way back right now, it should be around this point in time when he's starting games relatively soon . . . and then I would expect an extended progression for him to get built up as a starter."

Green said Mitchell is ready to pitch out of the bullpen Tuesday. "He said he was ready to go yesterday, but I felt it would be better to five him one more day," said Green.

He concluded the session with a brief comment on **Carter Capps** who hasn't appeared anywhere since spring training. "I know he's working on mechanics, trying to find who he's been in the past," said Green "I haven't had an update in two weeks."