



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF JUNE 5, 2018

"White Sox take 2B Madrigal with No. 4 pick" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Sox get Davidson back, option Skole, Gonzalez" ... MLB.com

"In My Words: Tilson living out boyhood dream" ... Ed Sherman, MLB.com

"Sunday's top prospect performers" ... Mike Rosenbaum, MLB.com

"Welcome to the rebuild: White Sox add their latest top prospect, spending No. 4 draft pick on Nick Madrigal" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Does size matter? White Sox draft pick Nick Madrigal: 'I think baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all' ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox Talk Podcast: Nick Madrigal's college coach says 'this guy is going to be a superstar'" ... NBC Sports Chicago

"Nick Madrigal will help White Sox, lineup projectors with willingness to play anywhere" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox use second-round draft pick on Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"This is a pure all-around baseball player:' White Sox take infielder Nick Madrigal at No. 4" ... Paul Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"Young White Sox will be challenged by stretch of 21 games in 20 days" ... Phil Rogers, Chicago Tribune

"Series preview: White Sox at Twins" ... Chicago Tribune Staff

"Mount Carmel's Josh Stowers and Alek Thomas taken in second round of MLB draft" ... Chicago Tribune Staff

"Baseball by the numbers: White Sox are both sorry, starry" ... John Grochowski, Sun-Times

"White Sox select Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker in second round" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"White Sox select second baseman Nick Madrigal with fourth pick in draft" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"2018 MLB Draft: Complete results for the first round" ... Satchel Price, Sun-Times

"How to watch Round 1 of the 2018 MLB Draft live online" ... Satchel Price, Sun-Times

"White Sox prospect Eloy Jimenez named Southern League Player of Month" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"White Sox reinstate Matt Davidson and tease upcoming roster move" ... Madeline Kenney, Sun-Times

"2018 MLB Draft full schedule for all 40 rounds" ... Satchel Price, Sun-Times

"Chicago White Sox draft Nick Madrigal with No. 4 overall pick" ... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"Top Chicago White Sox prospect Eloy Jimenez doing it all at Class AA Birmingham" ... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"Scouting report: Chicago White Sox at Minnesota Twins" ... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"Buy, Sell or Hold? How every MLB team should spend their next two months" ... Jim Bowden, The Athletic

"White Sox come away from Day 1 of draft looking like winners" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"Why Nick Madrigal's pure hitting ability transcends his size" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"White Sox take Nick Madrigal, the draft's best hitter, at No. 4" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"TA30: The MLB power rankings have the Red Sox cruising, the Pirates sinking and the Dodgers reviving" ... Matthew Kory, The Athletic

"Sox is singular: Do the White Sox have some breathing room on draft night?" Jim Margalus, The Athletic

White Sox take 2B Madrigal with No. 4 pick

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / June 4, 2018

CHICAGO -- It's difficult not to like the White Sox middle infielders already in place.

Second baseman Yoan Moncada, 23, was the No. 1 prospect in baseball per MLB Pipeline last season, and shortstop Tim Anderson, 24, was the team's top pick in the 2013 MLB Draft. Both are developing and flashing their five-tool talent on a daily basis in the big leagues.

So why would the White Sox take Oregon State infielder Nick Madrigal with the No. 4 pick overall in the 2018 Draft, as they did Monday night? Without getting too technical, White Sox director of amateur scouting Nick Hostetler spoke of the team targeting the best player available and Madrigal, 21, might be the best hitter or even the best player in this entire class.

"Nick was the guy that we wanted all along," Hostetler said. "I made the comment that I had the guy picked out that I wanted. That was the guy. That's not just lip service either, that's 100 percent the truth. Nick Madrigal is the guy that I've wanted for the last month."

"I can't wait to come out to Chicago," Madrigal said on a Monday conference call. "I've never been there before and I'm excited to see it for myself."

Oklahoma Outfielder Steele Walker became the team's second-round pick, taken 46th overall despite being listed as the No. 30 Draft prospect by MLB Pipeline. Walker's Sooners were eliminated by Mississippi State on Monday, but No. 3 Oregon State easily advanced to the NCAA Super Regionals with a 12-0 victory over LSU Sunday. Madrigal finished 2-for-5 with one run scored and two stolen bases, and was named Most Outstanding Player in the Corvallis Region.

In his "welcome to the White Sox" call, general manager Rick Hahn encouraged Madrigal to finish business and get Oregon State a championship ring before getting things worked out with the White Sox and helping them do the same.

Madrigal is batting .406 with seven doubles, four triples, three home runs, 32 RBIs, 32 runs scored, 11 stolen bases, a .470 on-base percentage, .586 slugging percentage and 1.000 fielding percentage in 32 games this season. He missed a portion of the season due to a left wrist injury but is ranked by MLB Pipeline.com as the No. 3 prospect in the draft, striking out a mere five times in 133 at-bats.

"He's one of the more advanced guys in the draft class just through the fact that his hit tool is so premium," Hostetler said. "His bat-to-ball skills are second to none in this class."

"We got who we felt was the best baseball player in the Draft this year. He is a high-contact, high-on-base guy. He plays with tremendous energy. Makeup is second to none. It's a leadership quality I have not seen in a player in a long time both on the field and off the field the way he goes about his business. His teammates idolize him."

The 5-foot-7, 165-pound Madrigal, who bats right-handed, was named to the Pac-12 All-Conference and All-Defensive teams, and is a Third-Team All-America selection by Baseball America. He is a semifinalist for the USA Baseball Golden Spikes and Dick Howser Awards.

According to Baseball Reference's records dating back to 1965, the dawn of the June amateur Draft, there have been 272 first-rounders drafted as a middle infielder during that time. The only one of them officially listed at 5-foot-8 or shorter is the 5-foot-7 Joey Cora, who was taken 23rd overall by the Padres in 1985.

But size doesn't matter in Madrigal's mind.

"I like to say I'm 5-8, but it's better to say I'm 5-7, right around there," Madrigal said. "Baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all. When I take the field, I never think that at all.

"It never pops in my mind, my height, my game or anything like that. I feel confident in how much work I put in in the offseason, in practice, so when I get in the game, I feel comfortable. I feel like I'm the biggest guy out there, no matter my size. That's something I've always tried to do when I take the field, ever since I was younger."

Madrigal marks the second straight infielder taken by the White Sox with their first pick, with third baseman Jake Burger being selected 11th overall in the 2017 Draft. White Sox scout Mike Gange recommended Madrigal, whose pick has a slot value of \$6,411,400.

"It's definitely a special moment, not only for myself but for my family, my hometown, my teammates," said Madrigal, whose teammate Trevor Larnach was taken by the Twins at No. 26 during his conference call, setting off much celebration in the background. "I can't thank all of them enough."

"I've said a thousand times these guys are years away from being ready at the Major League level so we can't worry about who is there, playing second base and shortstop at this time," Hostetler said. "Hopefully, Rick Hahn and Ricky Renteria have tough decisions to make in three or four years."

Hostetler envisions Madrigal getting to Class A Winston-Salem this season, playing second, shortstop and even a little third base. The left-handed-hitting and left-handed throwing Walker, 21, will be a center fielder after hitting .352 with a 1.047 OPS, 13 homers and 53 RBIs this season.

"Another one, his teammates love him," Hostetler said. "He has a flair about his game that is second to none. It's a fun product to watch. He gets after it, he's very confident, a very composed kid. We felt he was a first-round talent that got down to the second round."

Sox get Davidson back, option Skole, Gonzalez

By MLB.com / June 4, 2018

CHICAGO -- The Chicago White Sox reinstated infielder Matt Davidson from the 10-day disabled list and optioned catcher Alfredo González and infielder Matt Skole to Class AAA Charlotte on Monday.

Davidson, 27, was placed on the disabled list on May 28 (retroactive to May 25) with back spasms. He is hitting .243 (34-140) with six doubles, 11 home runs and 28 RBI over 42 games this season. At the time he was placed on the disabled list, Davidson's 11 homers were tied for 12th in the American League.

González, 25, went 1-9 (.111) with one RBI in three games with the White Sox after his contract was purchased from Charlotte on May 24. He recorded his first major-league hit on Sunday vs. Milwaukee, a game-tying RBI single off Brent Suter in the fifth inning.

Skole, 28, went 3-11 (.273) with one home run, one RBI and two runs scored in four games with the Sox after his contract was purchased from Charlotte on May 28. He made his major-league debut that afternoon at Cleveland, hitting a single in his first at-bat and a solo homer in his second, both off Adam Plutko. Skole became the sixth player in Sox history to homer in his first major-league game.

The White Sox will make additional roster moves prior to tomorrow's doubleheader at Minnesota.

In My Words: Tilson living out boyhood dream

Chance to play for hometown team motivated outfielder through injuries

By Charlie Tilson / MLB.com / June 4, 2018

I have to admit it is a bit surreal to drive to Guaranteed Rate Field these days.

It isn't my first time driving to the stadium. I spent a lot of mornings in the winter in the gym here working out with Allen Thomas, our director of strength and conditioning. Considering all that I've been through with injuries, it was such great motivation to do everything I could to get healthy again.

That's what makes this so special. Now I'm making the same drive, knowing I am going to be in a White Sox uniform for a game in a few hours.

I was a White Sox fan growing up in Wilmette. They had an inspiring group of players. They played the game hard -- especially when you think about 2005, with Ozzie Guillen as manager. Grinder ball is my style of play. I loved Scott Podsednik. He showed that a guy like me who may be a little undersized but with a lot of speed can make a big difference. It was an important year for me in my development.

I always felt like this was possible, but there are so many things you have to accomplish first. Whether it's striving to make the high school team, then college, it's always, "What's the next step?" Now here you are. It's incredible.

I mean, I get the opportunity to work with Aaron Rowand. He's a guy I watched as a kid, and now I'm working with him one on one. There are so many things like that -- I can go on and on.

It's been a long road to get back here. After I got hurt in my first big league game in Detroit in 2016, I basically went 1 1/2 years without playing because of injuries. There were times when you feel like it's a cruel joke to have this great opportunity and then see it slide away from you for an extended period of time.

Anyone who's been injured knows there are some days filled with hope and other days when you're down. Unfortunately, it wasn't the smoothest ride back to full health.

Luckily, I had unwavering support from so many people. That's what allowed me to put in the time and effort to continue to stay the course.

I'll never forget what it was like to play my first game at Guaranteed Rate Field after being called up a couple weeks ago. I hadn't been to the stadium to watch a game in so long. When I went out to get ready, I looked all around. I saw things like the pinwheels in the scoreboard. It definitely brought back so many great memories. It was a pretty surreal moment. I feel so fortunate and just excited to have the opportunity to fight for a team I grew up watching.

That first day, I called my high school coach, Mike Napoleon, to tell him that I was going to be playing. It was 11 in the morning and we were playing at 1:10. He showed up with my hitting coach and pitching coach from New Trier. It was pretty special to have someone who always supported you be there in that moment.

I'm really trying to appreciate everything about being here. At the same time, you have to tell yourself it's just a game. You actually can use that to your advantage. As players, you're always trying to bring yourself back to those times when you were a kid. That's when you're just lost in the competition. Baseball's not necessarily a business. It's about having fun. For me, that's when I'm playing my best, just enjoying the game.

Being able to put on a White Sox uniform takes me back to being a kid and loving the game. I want to embrace those feelings so I can continue to help this team any way I can.

Welcome to the rebuild: White Sox add their latest top prospect, spending No. 4 draft pick on Nick Madrigal

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / June 4, 2018

The rebuild has a new star.

The White Sox added another big name to a highly touted group that includes the likes of Michael Kopech, Eloy Jimenez, Luis Robert, Alec Hansen, Dane Dunning, Dylan Cease and Zack Collins, spending the No. 4 pick in this year's MLB Draft on Nick Madrigal, a second baseman out of Oregon State.

The first thing anyone will notice about Madrigal is his height — or lack thereof. He's listed at 5-foot-7 and became just the second middle infielder at 5-foot-8 or shorter to be selected in the first round since 1965 (the other, ironically enough, is former White Sox infielder Joey Cora). But with the diminutive Jose Altuve the reigning American League MVP, perhaps the days of size mattering are behind us.

Regardless of whether or not he can reach the cookie jar on the top shelf, Madrigal is a terrific baseball player. He owns a .370/.431/.519 career slash line from his three seasons with the Beavers, including a stellar .406/.470/.586 line in 32 games this season, which was limited due to a wrist injury. He's struck out just five times in 133 at-bats this year.

Madrigal also has been described as a Gold Glove caliber defender at second base, and he played shortstop during his college career, too.

There might be some instant confusion as to why the White Sox would select a middle infielder with this all-important No. 4 pick. After all, Yoan Moncada and Tim Anderson are supposed to be the middle infield of the long-term future for this rebuilding club. But the White Sox saw Madrigal as the best player available, which they described as their strategy leading up to draft night.

The addition of Madrigal provides depth up the middle and a safety net in case Moncada or Anderson don't end up as the players the White Sox envisioned. Plus, it's possible Madrigal — or either Moncada or Anderson — could be moved around the field to a different position should there be too many high-quality middle infielders on the big league roster one day, certainly something Rick Hahn and his front office would describe as a good problem to have.

"You look at it and you say, 'Can he play another position? Can he play third? Can he play short? Can he play center?' Because he can run," White Sox scouting director Nick Hostetler said of Madrigal on a recent White Sox Talk Podcast. "All of those factors are yet to be answered because we don't really know. We haven't seen enough. There isn't a big enough sample size for us to say, 'Yes he can.' We have to look at the tools, the way the body works, the way the feet work in sync. There's a chance. I'd give this kid a chance to play anywhere on the field this year."

For now, the White Sox added the draft's highest-ranked position player, per MLB.com's rankings, and a new star to their rebuilding effort. The drama now becomes where Madrigal will rank among his fellow White Sox prospects as he begins his development in the minor leagues.

Does size matter? White Sox draft pick Nick Madrigal: 'I think baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all'

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / June 4, 2018

Nick Madrigal is getting compared to Dustin Pedroia and Jose Altuve, and it has a lot to do with his height.

Or rather, his lack of height.

Madrigal says he's 5-foot-8, and seeing him listed at 5-foot-7 wasn't uncommon in the run-up to the MLB Draft. But that size didn't matter when it came to the White Sox spending the No. 4 pick on the Oregon State second baseman Monday night.

And it hasn't mattered to Madrigal. Not one bit. The results speak for themselves: The guy was hitting over .400 when commissioner Rob Manfred read his name.

"I like to say I'm 5-8. Some people try to say I'm 5-7. It's right around there," Madrigal said on a Monday-night conference call. "I think baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all. When I take the field, honestly, I don't think that at all, it never crosses my mind, my height or my game, anything like that.

"I feel confident in how much work I put in in the offseason and practice. When I get in the game, I feel comfortable, I feel like I'm the biggest guy out there. It doesn't matter, my size. It's something I try to do when I take the field ever since I was younger."

Madrigal has earned rave reviews for multiple aspects of his game. He's got crazy good offensive numbers during his collegiate career, a .370/.431/.519 career slash line in his three seasons with the Beavers, including a stellar .406/.470/.586 line in 32 games this season, which was limited due to a wrist injury. He's struck out just five times in 133 at-bats this year. And his defense has been described as Gold Glove caliber. He's got some speed, too.

That all sounds great and it sounds like enough to outweigh any concerns about his height. If a player is good enough, it's been shown that size doesn't matter. Pedroia and Altuve have each won an American League MVP award.

All that skill — not to mention some positional versatility — make it sound like Madrigal could have the potential to be that kind of player.

"Those are some great players," Madrigal said when presented with some major league comps who share his stature. "I just enjoy the way they play the game. They play the game the right way. They play hard. I try to not ever take one pitch off, one inning off. It's something I was raised to do. I enjoy the way Mike Trout, (Ian) Kinsler, (Dustin) Pedroia, how hard they play the game."

White Sox Talk Podcast: Nick Madrigal's college coach says 'this guy is going to be a superstar'
By NBC Sports Chicago / June 4, 2018

After the White Sox drafted Oregon State's Nick Madrigal in the first round Monday night, we called up Pat Casey, Madrigal's head coach at Oregon State, who came on the podcast and raved about the newest star of the White Sox rebuild.

Casey spoke about why Madrigal is the only sole captain he's ever had on his team, why his 5-foot-8 frame doesn't matter and where he thinks Madrigal is actually better than Dustin Pedroia. He also talks about Madrigal's hitting, defense and if he can play shortstop in the big leagues. Finally, he told the story of how he offered Madrigal a scholarship to Oregon State when he was in eighth grade.

It's all below — and at this link — on the latest edition of the White Sox Talk Podcast.

Nick Madrigal will help White Sox, lineup projectors with willingness to play anywhere
By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / June 4, 2018

Nick Madrigal is a middle infielder. So too are Yoan Moncada and Tim Anderson.

That's three names for two spots. Quite the conundrum for folks trying to plot out their lineups for the planned days when the White Sox go from rebuilders to contenders.

While having an overabundance of talent would definitely be classified as a good problem to have, Madrigal seems ready and willing to solve the problem himself with a willingness to play any position on the field.

"Whatever the organization needs me to do," Madrigal said after the White Sox used the No. 4 pick in the draft to make him the newest star of the rebuild. "I know they have a plan. I feel like I can play anywhere

on the infield. If they needed me to grab an outfield glove, I feel like I can do that also. It all depends on what they want me to do. I just want to go out and play at this point."

That's a solid company line from a young go-getter with dreams of reaching the big leagues. But the cliché has its backing in that Madrigal is quite the defensive talent. He's been described as a Gold Glove caliber defender at second base, and he's played shortstop at the college level, too. He said he could play third base.

That provides the White Sox with a heck of a safety net in case Moncada or Anderson fail to live up to the expectations the team has for them. But even if those two man the middle infield for years to come, it won't prevent Madrigal from fitting into the long-term plans on the South Side.

The rebuild got better Monday night, and it never hurts to have as much depth as possible. Now Madrigal is a part of this highly touted group featuring Michael Kopech and Eloy Jimenez and Luis Robert and Alec Hansen and Dane Dunning and Dylan Cease and all the others. The focus is on the future, and it's looking real bright.

"It couldn't have worked out any better," Madrigal said of ending up with the White Sox. "That's something I've always focused on, at any level, I want to win. I know the White Sox do also. I'm excited just to come to Chicago, see it for myself and be a part of the organization. It could not have worked out any better.

"Within in the next couple years, hopefully we can change this franchise and get it back to a winning culture. I know they have the right pieces for it. I'm excited to be a part of it."

White Sox use second-round draft pick on Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / June 4, 2018

After taking a Burger in last year's draft, the White Sox have decided to reinforce their farm system with some Steele.

The South Siders followed up their first-round selection of Oregon State second baseman Nick Madrigal by spending their second-round pick on University of Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker.

Walker, a left-handed hitter, slashed .326/.404/.522 during three seasons with the Sooners, including an eye-popping .352/.441/.606 line during the 2018 campaign. He hit 13 home runs and drove in 53 runs in 54 games this season. Twenty eight of his 76 hits this year went for extra bases.

The White Sox see getting Walker, who they project as a center field, with the No. 46 pick as something as a steal (no pun intended), believing he was a first-round talent. MLB.com agreed and had him ranked as the No. 30 prospect in the draft.

"We feel Steele is going to be a center fielder. We've seen him play there a long time," White Sox scouting director Nick Hostetler said on a Monday night conference call. "Steele can play center field. He's a plus runner with plus power, average to above-average hit tool, above-average plus arm, just a pure all-around left-handed bat.

"His teammates love him. He has a flair about his game that is second to none. It's a fun product to watch. He gets after it, he's very confident, a very composed kid. We felt he was a first-round talent that got down to the second round."

Walker has had success playing in wood-bat leagues, which could make his transition to professional baseball from the college ranks an easy one.

"Steele had huge success last year with Team USA with the wood bat, so I don't expect any sort of delay in his development in regards to getting adjusted to the wood," Hostetler said. "I think he's going to be a guy that hits the ground running from the left side. His speed is going to help him as well.

"I think Steele's a guy that's pretty advanced from that standpoint. But he's also got some ceiling to him, there's tools there that still have some refinement left in them. I think there's still some top-shelf ceiling left in him."

Though he's earning rave reviews from the White Sox, Walker has a challenge ahead distinguishing himself in an impressive group of outfield prospects in the White Sox loaded farm system that includes Eloy Jimenez, Luis Robert, Blake Rutherford, Micker Adolfo, Luis Alexander Basabe and Luis Gonzalez.

But it's all about building depth, and certainly the White Sox did that Monday night.

'This is a pure all-around baseball player:' White Sox take infielder Nick Madrigal at No. 4

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / June 4, 2018

Nick Madrigal likes to say he's 5-foot-8 but admits to being closer to 5-7.

But size never has deterred the Oregon State infielder, whom the White Sox selected Monday with the No. 4 pick of the MLB draft.

"I honestly don't think it's too much (to overcome)," Madrigal said after the pick was announced. "I don't think of it like that. Baseball is one of those games where height doesn't really matter at all. When I take the field at Oregon State, I never think that at all. It never crosses my mind.

"I feel confident in how much work I put in in the offseason in practice, so when I get in the game I feel comfortable. I feel like I'm the biggest guy out there, no matter my size."

In Madrigal, the Sox chose a player who perfectly fits the philosophy of manager Rick Renteria's rebuild. He's a grinder, a so-called dirtbag who doesn't mind doing whatever it takes to win.

White Sox scouting director Nick Hostetler said Madrigal will start out at shortstop, probably at Class-A Winston-Salem, but also will play second base and some third. Madrigal, who plays second base for Oregon State, was the Sox's target for the last month, and Hostetler admitted there were some "tense moments" waiting to see if he'd be selected before he got to them.

"This is a pure all-around baseball player, and I think over time you're going to see the power develop," Hostetler said, adding "he's one of the more advanced guys" in the draft.

"I feel confident, I played shortstop my whole life, (that) I can do it," Madrigal said. "I haven't played much third base, but I feel like I can do that also. Whatever the team needs me to do I'll be willing to do it."

Madrigal said he even would grab an outfielder's glove if asked.

The newest member of the Sox core possesses speed, sound defense and great strike-zone discipline. Madrigal is batting .406 with seven doubles, four triples, three home runs, 32 RBIs, 32 runs scored, 11 stolen bases, a .470 on-base percentage and a .586 slugging percentage while playing error-free ball in 32 games for super regional-bound Oregon State.

He's been compared to the Red Sox's 5-foot-9 Dustin Pedroia, also a small second baseman with a solid all-around game and tremendous leadership skills.

"That's been the (comparisons)," Hostetler told the Tribune. "The Pedroias, the (Jose) Altuves, that group of guys. We tend to take all the little guys and throw them into a boat, I guess, the easy comps. But, yeah, that's who you get a lot. And that personality is very similar."

Madrigal missed the first 26 games of the 2018 season with a broken wrist, but it didn't affect his ability to hit or his batting eye. He struck out five times in 119 at-bats before the NCAA tournament and prides himself on his low strikeout ratio.

"He's unbelievable," Oregon State coach Pat Casey told the Sacramento Bee. "He's going to be a big-leaguer in a short period of time. He's going to play the game for a long time. His instincts are off the charts. I give him a ton of freedom because he's a thoroughbred and you've got to turn him loose."

Madrigal played at Elk Grove High School, south of Sacramento, Calif., the alma mater of former Bulls center Bill Cartwright and Bears linebacker Lance Briggs.

The Sox seem to be set for years in the middle infield with second baseman Yoan Moncada and shortstop Tim Anderson. Madrigal said he was ready to help "get it back to a winning culture," and if he climbs the ladder quickly, the Sox always could move Moncada or Anderson to the outfield.

Madrigal is a semifinalist for the Golden Spikes and Dick Howser awards as national player of the year and was the Pac-12's player of the year. What he lacks in size he makes up for in hustle, and he may remind older Sox fans of 5-foot-10 second baseman Nellie Fox or 5-foot-9 shortstop Luis Aparicio, the stars of the 1950s Go-Go White Sox who are enshrined in Cooperstown.

"One thing about baseball," Hostetler said, "if you're 5-foot-5 or 6-foot-5, if you can play the game, you can play the game."

The three picks before the Sox were Auburn pitcher Casey Mize (Tigers), Georgia Tech catcher Joey Bart (Giants) and Wichita State third baseman Alec Bohm (Phillies). Speculation said the Sox would pick Madrigal or Florida pitcher Brady Singer, who dropped to the Royals at No. 18.

"It couldn't have worked out any better," Madrigal said. "This organization is hungry for championships, and that's something I've always tried to focus on. Any level I'm playing at I want to win, and I know the White Sox do also."

In the second round, the Sox selected Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker. Hostetler called Walker, a projected center fielder who throws and bats left-handed, a "first-round talent" who fell to No. 46.

Young White Sox will be challenged by stretch of 21 games in 20 days

By Phil Rogers / Chicago Tribune / June 4, 2018

Here comes the deep water for the White Sox.

They are on pace to lose 100 games, have a roster loaded with rookies and job-seekers and now must navigate a stretch of schedule that will test their depth as much as the talent of their leading men.

The Sox play 21 games in 20 days, beginning with a doubleheader Tuesday in Minnesota. They'll visit Boston and Cleveland and play home series against the Indians, Tigers and Athletics before their next day off.

"We're going to play a lot of games," manager Rick Renteria said. "Every game's a test. ... It's the test they've been studying for their whole lives. They'll have some good results, some bad results."

Renteria is more confident than he might have been had the White Sox not taken two of three over the weekend against the Brewers. They entered that series having lost six of seven and had posted a 13-35 record since opening with a 3-2 trip to Kansas City and Toronto.

Maybe it will be good for them to be so busy after the frequent days off and painfully cold, wet weather they experienced early in the season.

"We are creatures of habit, for sure," Renteria said. "We've tried to do everything we can to minimize the effects of not being able to get into (a routine) early. The guys continue to work, do everything they can to

keep moving forward. The challenging part in playing three weeks straight will be to keep everybody fresh.”

Because they were off Monday, the Sox aren't expected to add an extra starting pitcher for the series in Minnesota. Lucas Giolito and Reynaldo Lopez will start Tuesday, followed by Hector Santiago and James Shields on Wednesday and Thursday.

The Sox will need to add a sixth starter for this weekend's series in Boston but appear to have Carlos Rodon ready to make his season debut. He's 1-0 with a 1.53 ERA in four rehab starts, using his slider to strike out 28 in 17 2/3 innings, and he looks healthy again after shoulder problems spoiled last season, ending with arthroscopic surgery in September.

It's likely the Sox will go with Dylan Covey, Rodon and Giolito or Lopez at Fenway Park. They'll be challenged by arguably the best lineup in baseball, especially if Mookie Betts comes off the disabled list Friday, when he's first eligible.

Sox shortstop Tim Anderson and his teammates will be tested on the trip by young guns Fernando Romero and Jose Berrios in Minnesota and All-Stars Chris Sale, David Price and Rick Porcello in Boston. Anderson is 10-for-34 with four home runs and 10 RBIs in his last nine games.

“I've been swinging it well,” Anderson said. “I can't quite put a handle on it. I don't really want to. Hopefully I can just keep it going, keep picking my teammates up and having fun.”

Facing two lefties in Sale and Price isn't an ideal return to Fenway Park for second baseman Yoan Moncada, whom the Red Sox traded to the White Sox in the Sale deal before last season. He continues to hit better left-handed (.266, seven homers in 139 at-bats) than right-handed (.180, no homers in 50 at-bats).

“There's still some work to be done,” Renteria said. “He'll continue to adjust. The looks when he comes into the dugout (after facing lefties) are more of a curiosity look, in terms of what he might do the next time. He's a work in progress.”

You could say that of most of his teammates too.

Series preview: White Sox at Twins

By Chicago Tribune Staff / June 4, 2018

All games on WGN-AM 720.

Tuesday: G1, 3:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Reynaldo Lopez (1-4, 3.80) vs. TBA.

Tuesday: G2, 7:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Lucas Giolito (3-6, 7.53) vs. TBA.

Wednesday: 7:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

LH Hector Santiago (1-2, 5.10) vs. RH Jake Odorizzi (3-2, 4.14).

Thursday: 12:10 p.m., WGN-9.

RH James Shields (1-6, 4.48) vs. RH Jose Berrios (6-5, 3.86).

Mount Carmel's Josh Stowers and Alek Thomas taken in second round of MLB draft

By Chicago Tribune Staff / June 4, 2018

Two Mount Carmel outfielders – one former and one current – were taken in the second round of the MLB draft on Monday night.

Josh Stowers, who hit .336 with 36 stolen bases in 43 attempts as a Louisville senior this season, was taken 54th overall by the Mariners.

Alek Thomas, a Mount Carmel senior who hit 40 home runs in high school for the Caravan, was taken 63rd overall by the Diamondbacks.

While Stowers will begin his professional career shortly, Thomas has a decision to make. Thomas, whose father is White Sox strength and conditioning director Allen Thomas, signed with TCU to play baseball and football. He could sign with the Diamondbacks to begin his pro career or head to TCU, where he would have to play at least three seasons before re-entering the draft.

Stowers' slot value is \$1.3 million and Thomas' is \$1 million, according to MLB.com.

Baseball by the numbers: White Sox are both sorry, starry

By John Grochowski / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

The voting for baseball's annual All-Star Game is underway, and casting a ballot presents a challenge to White Sox fans.

At 18-38 and waiting for the young reinforcements to arrive, the Sox are not overburdened by star material.

But there are bright spots, so let's check out numbers for Sox position players at 1.0 WAR or better, as calculated at Baseball-Reference.com.

Jose Abreu: Just by doing what he always does, Abreu ranks among the top American League first basemen. His .300 batting average and .879 OPS are a near match for his career .301 and .883 norms, and with nine home runs and 32 RBI, he's on a pace just below career averages of 31 homers and 103 RBI.

The Red Sox' Mitch Moreland leads AL first basemen with a .305 batting average and 1.001 OPS, with Abreu second in both categories. With park adjustments, Moreland's 164 weighted runs created plus (wRC+) leads runner-up Abreu 164-137.

To include defense, where Abreu struggles at negative-4 runs saved, the bWAR leader is the Blue Jays' Justin Smoak at 1.6, compared to 1.5 for Moreland, 1.3 for the Athletics' Matt Olson and 1.1 for Abreu.

Tim Anderson: The Indians' Francisco Lindor (3.7 bWAR), the Angels' Andrelton Simmons (3.3) and the Orioles' Manny Machado (2.6) top AL shortstops. But it has been a breakthrough age 25 for Anderson with a 1.4 bWAR, even though a .239 batting average is the lowest of his career. That's largely due to a .262 BABiP that is likely to rise.

Nevertheless, Anderson's .751 OPS would be a career high, his 11 home runs are about a 30-home run pace after 17 last year, and his 12 steals have come in 13 attempts.

Anderson has cut strikeouts to 22.5 percent after 27.1 percent in 2015 and 26.7 in 2016 while increasing isolated power — the portion of slugging percentage that comes from extra bases — to .214 after .149 and .145.

Yolmer Sanchez: At age 26, Sanchez is on about the same pace as last year. In 2017, he hit .267 with 12 homers and a .732 OPS. This year, he's at .279 with three homers and a .734 OPS.

Among AL third basemen, Sanchez's 1.4 bWAR ranks fourth behind the Indians' Jose Ramirez (3.3), the A Matt Chapman (2.9) and the Tigers' Jeimer Candelario (2.0).

Sanchez has been a more extreme ground ball hitter this year, with 50 percent of batted balls on the ground (up from 44.4 percent last year), 26.8 percent flyballs (down from 33.9) and 23.2 percent line drives (up from 21.6).

Matt Davidson: Among designated hitters, Davidson ranks third with 1.1 offensive WAR, trailing the Red Sox' J.D. Martinez (2.7) and the Rangers' Shin-Soo Choo (1.4).

Davidson, hitting .243 with 11 homers and an .890 OPS, has cut strikeouts from 37.2 percent of plate appearances to 32.2, while walks have soared from 4.3 percent to 15.8 percent.

The vastly improved walk rate has sent Davidson's on-base percentage from .260 last year to .368 in 2018, making this a strong age 27.

White Sox select Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker in second round

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

The White Sox selected Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker in the second round of the major league draft Monday night.

Walker, selected 46th overall, is a 5-11 junior who bats left and throws left. He batted .352/.441/.606 for the Sooners this season. He has played all outfield positions in college but scouting director Nick Hostetler envisions Walker playing center field.

"We felt he was a first-round pick who got down to the second round," Hostetler said.

"We feel Steele is going to be a center fielder. We've seen him play there a long time."

He moved over from center field to right field due to the fact [No. 9 overall pick, Oakland Athletics] Kyler Murray was playing center field there. Steele can play center field. He's a plus runner with plus power, average to above average hit tool, above average plus arm, just a pure all around left-handed bat.

"Another one, his teammates love him. He has a flair about his game that is second to none. It's a fun product to watch. He gets after it, he's very confident, a very composed kid."

More from Hostetler on Walker:

"Steele had huge success last year with Team USA with the wood bat, so I don't expect any sort of delay in his development in regards to getting adjusted to the wood. I think he's going to be a guy that hits the ground running from the left side. His speed is going to help him as well. It's not positive where we would have him go, obviously. Everyone knows there's a log jam a little bit in the outfield in the minor leagues. [Director of Player Development Chris Getz] Getzy will find him playing time. That's on him now, so I just made his job a little bit harder. That's a good thing. Hopefully we'll continue to give him good players throughout this draft the next two days that he's going to have a hard time getting in lineups. That's our goal is to make it as hard as possible for these guys to find playing time because that means all the players we're bringing in are good.

"But I think Steele's a guy that's pretty advanced from that standpoint. But he's also got some ceiling to him, there's tools there that still have some refinement left in them. I think there's still some top-shelf ceiling left in him."

The Sox selected Oregon State infielder Nick Madrigal with the fourth overall pick.

White Sox select second baseman Nick Madrigal with fourth pick in draft

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

The White Sox selected Oregon State middle infielder Nick Madrigal with the fourth pick in the MLB Draft on Monday.

So why take a 5-7, 165-pounder who doesn't have much power and might have to prove he has the arm to play shortstop when the Sox already have Yoan Moncada and Tim Anderson?

Because Madrigal can hit, that's why. The Sox veered from their pitching leanings in recent drafts by taking skilled hitters with their first three selections last year, and Madrigal emerged as a top prospect because of his exceptional hitting. He has extra-base pop in his bat and a selective batting eye, makes consistent hard contact and is tough to strike out. He was widely regarded as the best hitter in the draft.

"First and foremost, we got who we felt was the best baseball player in the draft," Sox scouting director Nick Hostetler said. "He is a high-contact, high-on-base guy who plays with tremendous energy. Makeup is second to none.

"This is a pure all-around baseball player and over time you are going to see the power develop."

Madrigal played much of his college career at second base, where he has flashed Gold Glove-caliber defense, but the Sox plan to send him out — starting at High Class A Winston-Salem, Hostetler suggested — as a shortstop, have him play second, too, and perhaps some third base as well.

"I've played shortstop my whole life; I know I can do it," said Madrigal, who is playing second base for Oregon State, which advanced to the Super Regionals over the weekend.

Limited to 32 games because of a wrist injury that sidelined him early on, Madrigal is batting .406/.470/.586 with five strikeouts and 13 walks for the Beavers (47-10). He has three homers and 11 stolen bases in 11 attempts.

The Sox' farm system, which climbed from bottom-feeder status in prospect rankings to the top tier in the last two years because of trades for other organizations' prospects and an expensive international amateur signing (Luis Robert), is thin in middle infielders. Going into the draft, Hostetler said the Sox would take the best player available over a need in their farm system, and this pick probably checked off both for the organization.

"I know they have a plan one way or another," Madrigal said. "I just want to go out and play."

As for his size, look no further than second basemen Jose Altuve (5-6) and Dustin Pedroia (5-9) as reasons not to sell Madrigal short.

"Baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all," said Madrigal, the Pac-12 Freshman of the Year in 2016, the Pac-12 Player of the Year in '17 and a semifinalist for the USA Baseball Golden Spikes Award and the Dick Howser Trophy this year. "When I take the field, honestly, my height never crosses my mind. When I get in the game, I feel comfortable. I feel like I'm the biggest guy out there."

The Sox also took Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker with the 46th overall pick (second round). Hostetler projects Walker, whose best tool is his left-handed bat, as a center fielder.

"He's a plus runner with plus power, average to above-average hit tool," Hostetler said.

Hostetler raved about Walker's makeup as well as Madrigal's. In Walker, he believes the Sox got a first-round player who slipped to the second round.

The draft, which has 40 rounds, continues through Wednesday.

2018 MLB Draft: Complete results for the first round

By Satchel Price / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

The 2018 MLB Draft opened with the first round and more Monday night. The Tigers used the first overall pick on Auburn pitcher Casey Mize, who had spent much of the spring being projected as the draft's top player.

The annual draft is a 40-round event that includes more than 1,000 picks, although less than 100 were announced on the opening evening, which included the first and second rounds, along with a host of compensation and competitive balance picks distributed to different teams.

Top players in this year's class included Mize, Georgia Tech catcher Joey Bart and Oregon State infielder Nick Madrigal. The upper crust of the class leaned a bit toward college players over prep talent this year, although players such as Carter Stewart, Matthew Liberatore and Jarred Kelenic were highly coveted from the high school level.

The White Sox used the No. 4 overall pick on Madrigal, while the Cubs used the No. 24 overall pick on Stanford's Nico Hoerner. A full order for all 40 rounds of the draft can be found [here](#).

Full results for the first round of the 2018 MLB Draft can be found [below](#).

2018 MLB Draft, Round 1 results

Tigers – RHP Casey Mize, Auburn

Giants – C Joey Bart, Georgia Tech

Phillies – 3B Alec Bohm, Wichita State

WHITE SOX – 2B Nick Madrigal, Oregon State

Reds – 3B Jonathan India, Florida

Mets – OF Jarred Kelenic, Waukesha West HS (Wisconsin)

Padres – LHP Ryan Weathers, Loretto HS (Tennessee)

Braves – RHP Carter Stewart, Eau Gallie HS (Florida)

Athletics – OF Kyler Murray, Oklahoma

Pirates – OF Travis Swaggerty, South Alabama

Orioles – RHP Grayson Rodriguez, Central Heights HS (Texas)

Blue Jays – SS Jordan Groshans, Magnolia HS (Texas)

Marlins – OF Connor Scott, Henry B. Plant HS (Florida)

Mariners – RHP Logan Gilbert, Stetson

Rangers – RHP Cole Winn, Orange Lutheran HS (California)

Rays – LHP Matthew Liberatore, Mountain Ridge HS (Arizona)

Angels – OF Jordyn Adams, Green Hope HS (North Carolina)

Royals – RHP Brady Singer, Florida

Cardinals – 3B Nolan Gorman, Sandra Day O'Connor HS (Arizona)

Twins – OF Trevor Larnach, Oregon State

Brewers – SS Brice Turang, Santiago HS (California)

Rockies – LHP Ryan Rolison, Mississippi

Yankees – C Anthony Seigler, Cartersville HS (Georgia)

CUBS – SS Nico Hoerner, Stanford

Diamondbacks – SS Matt McClain, Beckman HS (California)

Red Sox – 3B Triston Casas, American Heritage School (Florida)

Nationals – RHP Mason Denaburg, Merritt Island HS (Florida)

Astros – OF Seth Beer, Clemson

Indians – C Noah Naylor, St. Joan of Arc Catholic SS (Canada)

Dodgers – RHP J.T. Ginn, Brandon HS (Mississippi)
Rays (compensation) – LHP Shane McClanahan, South Florida
Rays (compensation) – OF Nick Schnell, Roncalli HS (Indiana)
Royals (compensation) – RHP Jackson Kowar, Florida
Royals (compensation) – LHP Daniel Lynch, Virginia
Indians (compensation) – RHP Ethan Hankins, Forsythe Central HS (Georgia)

How to watch Round 1 of the 2018 MLB Draft live online

By Satchel Price / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

The 2018 MLB Draft may be a three-day, 40-round extravaganza, but for most fans, the focus will be on the first round. That's where the biggest names go off the board and teams typically find the players who will become franchise cornerstones in the coming years.

The first round of this year's draft starts at 6 p.m. CT Monday night in Secaucus, New Jersey. The night also includes the second round and a series of competitive balance and compensation picks, so there will be 78 selections announced in total.

There will be two ways to watch live coverage of the first day of the draft Monday night.

MLB Network will have television coverage of the first round and Competitive Balance Round A from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Additionally, MLB.com will have coverage of the entire draft, so it'll be live Monday for the same coverage as MLB Network along with Picks 44-78 from Round 2 after that. That means coverage will run a bit later online for Day 1 if you haven't gotten your fix yet.

Here's a breakdown of the viewing options for the opening night of the draft. You can also find a full schedule for all three days and the complete order of picks for all 40 rounds.

2018 MLB Draft, Day 1 live stream and TV coverage
Start time: 6 p.m. CT

Rounds: 1-2 plus competitive balance and compensation picks (No. 1-78)

TV: MLB Network (6-9:30 p.m.)

Live stream: MLB.com

White Sox prospect Eloy Jimenez named Southern League Player of Month

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

A few days after being named White Sox' top offensive prospect of the month, outfielder Eloy Jimenez received another honor: Southern League player of the month for May.

Jimenez, the No. 3 prospect in baseball according to MLB Pipeline, led the Class AA Southern League in OPS (1.082), hits (40), extra-base hits (18), total bases (71), doubles (11), and slugging percentage (.664) for the Barons in May. He was tied for third in homers with six and second with 25 RBI.

Jimenez is currently riding a 13-game hitting streak for the Barons. He owns the longest streak in the league this season, 15, from April 26 to May 11.

His bat certainly looks ready to be tested in the majors. It's only a matter of time when that call comes from the Sox.

"I do believe I'm ready for it," Jimenez, 21, said on a conference call Monday. "But you know what? It's not something for me decide. Whenever they think it's a good time for me to be in the majors, they're going to make it. I'm ready whenever they say I'm ready."

Jimenez, who's playing time was limited somewhat by knee and pectoral injuries sustained in Arizona this spring, is playing regularly now and is batting .331/.374/.614 with 10 homers, 13 doubles and 39 RBI in 41 games.

White Sox reinstate Matt Davidson and tease upcoming roster move

By Madeline Kenney / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

Designated hitter Matt Davidson is back from the 10-day disabled list.

The White Sox reinstated Davidson on Monday and announced they optioned catcher Alfredo González and infielder Matt Skole to Class AAA Charlotte.

The Sox also teased an additional roster move that is expected to take place before Tuesday's doubleheader at Minnesota. It'll most likely be catcher Kevan Smith who will receive the call-up from Charlotte.

Davidson, who along with Tim Anderson lead the White Sox in homers this season (11), was off to the best start of his career this season before back spasms caused him to miss five games. His absence ultimately landed him on the disabled list on May 28 (retroactive to May 25).

Davidson, 27, is hitting .243 (34-140) with six doubles and 28 RBI in 42 games this season.

González and Skole had brief stints with the White Sox. González recorded his first major-league hit on Sunday against Brewers, a game-tying RBI single in the fifth inning. Meanwhile, Skole, who hit .273 (3-for-11) with one home run, one RBI and two runs scored in his four games with the White Sox, hit a single and a solo home run in his major-league debut against the Indians in Cleveland last week.

2018 MLB Draft full schedule for all 40 rounds

By Satchel Price / Sun-Times / June 4, 2018

The 2018 MLB Draft will be held over the next three days at the league's network headquarters in Secaucus, New Jersey. Over 1,000 prospects, including many of the top college players in the country, will hear their names announced throughout 40 rounds of selections.

The draft opens Monday with the first and second rounds, which are padded with compensation and competitive balance picks. As a result, there will be a total of 78 picks to be announced on Day 1, highlighted by the Tigers' first overall selection. The Giants, Phillies, White Sox and Reds round out the top five.

Auburn's Casey Mize, Georgia Tech's Joey Bart, Oregon State's Nick Madrigal and Florida's Brady Singer are among the top prospects in the class. Mize has been considered the likely No. 1 pick, although ESPN recently projected Bart as the Tigers' pick in its draft day mock.

Following the standard first round, there are five compensation picks, then an eight-pick competitive balance round designed to give extra picks to small-market teams. The second round starts with the No. 44 pick, then there's another series of competitive balance and compensation picks following that round.

The complete order for all 40 rounds of the draft can be found [here](#).

Day 2 of the draft starts at noon CT Tuesday and covers Rounds 3-10. Day 3 kicks into overdrive as teams cover Rounds 11-40 in a busy day starting at 11 a.m. CT.

The first round of the draft can be watched live on MLB Network, while coverage of all 40 rounds can be found on [MLB.com](#).

2018 MLB Draft schedule
All times CT

Monday
Rounds: 1-2, competitive balance
Time: 6 p.m.
TV: MLB Network
Live stream: MLB.com

Tuesday
Rounds: 3-10
Time: Noon
Live stream: MLB.com

Wednesday
Rounds: 11-40
Time: 11 a.m.
Live stream: MLB.com

Chicago White Sox draft Nick Madrigal with No. 4 overall pick

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / June 4, 2018

As Nick Madrigal talked on a conference call Monday night, there was frequent frantic cheering coming from his end of the phone.

It was fitting background music.

Not only is the 21-year-old Oregon State infielder excited about helping the Beavers win their third College World Series in the last 13 years, Madrigal is even more pumped about being drafted by the Chicago White Sox with the No. 4 overall pick.

"This is a special moment," Madrigal said. "We still have some postseason games, we're not done yet, but we're definitely going to enjoy the next couple days."

If Madrigal lives up to his potential, Sox fans are going to be enjoying his play a lot longer than that.

"Nick is recognized as one of the best hitters in college baseball, and we're excited to add him to the organization," amateur scouting director Nick Hostetler said. "He possesses tremendous baseball skills, character and makeup, and we look forward to watching him compete for the national championship before joining the White Sox organization and beginning his professional career."

On the second round (No. 46 overall), the Sox drafted Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker. He was rated the No. 32 best prospect in the draft by Baseball America.

Getting back to Madrigal, don't be fooled by his lack of size. At 5-feet-8, 165 pounds, Madrigal has been compared to 5-6, 165-pound Houston Astros second baseman Jose Altuve, the defending American League MVP. The Boston Red Sox's Dustin Pedroia is another comp.

"I like to say I'm 5-8, but it's better to say I'm 5-7, right around there," said Madrigal, an Elk Grove, California, native. "I think baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all. When I take the field, I never think that at all."

"I feel confident in how much work I put in during the off-season, in practice, so when I get in the game, I feel comfortable. I feel like I'm the biggest guy out there, no matter my size."

Considering he has a .406/.470/.586 hitting line and only 5 strikeouts in 133 at-bats heading into the Beavers' NCAA Super Regional game against Minnesota, it's easy to project Madrigal as the White Sox's leadoff hitter of the future.

"I've always hit toward the top of the order at all levels I've been a part of," said Madrigal, who has never been to Chicago. "You're not supposed to strike out if you're hitting toward the top of the order."

"In batting practice, I've always tried to make contact with different pitches, whether it's a strike or a ball. It's something I've worked on and hopefully I continue to do, but I definitely take pride in that."

As for his defensive position in the pro ranks, let's just say Madrigal is flexible.

"Whatever the organization needs me to do," he said. "I know they have a plan. I feel like I can play anywhere on the infield. If they needed me to grab an outfield glove, I feel like I can do that also. It all depends on what they want me to do. I just want to go out and play at this point."

Madrigal is a natural shortstop. He has been playing second base at Oregon State because teammate Cadyn Grenier is widely considered the best defender at short in college baseball.

"I've played shortstop my whole life," Madrigal said. "I know I can do it. I feel like I can play second base. I haven't played much of third base, but I feel like I can do that also. I feel confident at shortstop."

"Whatever the team needs me to do, I'll be willing to do that."

Top Chicago White Sox prospect Eloy Jimenez doing it all at Class AA Birmingham

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / June 4, 2018

Eloy Jimenez is doing it all at Class AA Birmingham.

In addition to ranking first in the Southern League with a .988 OPS, second with 10 home runs and 39 RBI (in 41 games) and fifth with a .331 batting average, Jimenez passed out his own bobblehead to Barons fans Friday night.

"It was something very special, to have the opportunity to have my own bobblehead," Jimenez said through a translator on a conference call Monday. "I thank the team. That's one of the things every player wants to have."

Voted the Chicago White Sox's minor-league player of the month for May after batting .374 with 11 doubles, 1 triple, 6 home runs, 25 RBI and 17 runs scored in 26 games, Jimenez is going to have plenty of more bobblehead days at the rate he's going.

Class AAA Charlotte is the 21-year-old outfielder's next stop, and Jimenez still figures to make it to the White Sox at some point after the all-star break.

As usual, the 6-foot-4, 220-pounder is staying in the now.

"I do believe I'm ready for it," Jimenez said of playing in the majors. "But you know what? It's not something for me decide. Whenever they think it's a good time for me to be in the majors, they're going to make it. I'm ready whenever they say I'm ready."

Roster moves:

The Sox reinstated designated hitter Matt Davidson from the 10-day disabled list Monday.

Catcher Alfredo Gonzalez and infielder Matt Skole were optioned to Class AAA Charlotte, leaving one roster spot open.

Before Tuesday's doubleheader at Minnesota, the White Sox are expected to add catcher Kevan Smith from Charlotte.

The Sox also are allowed to add a 26th player to the roster for the doubleheader. The player is likely to be a minor-league relief pitcher.

In what was likely his final rehab start Sunday, Carlos Rodon (shoulder surgery) pitched 5 innings for Charlotte and allowed 2 runs on 6 hits. The left-hander also had 8 strikeouts and 3 walks.

Rodon is expected to be activated this weekend and pitch against the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park.

Scouting report: Chicago White Sox at Minnesota Twins

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / June 4, 2018

White Sox vs. Minnesota Twins at Target Field
TV

NBC Sports Chicago Tuesday and Wednesday; WGN Thursday

Radio
WGN 720-AM

Pitching matchups

The White Sox's Reynaldo Lopez (1-4) vs. TBA Tuesday in Game 1 at 3:10 p.m.; Lucas Giolito (3-6) vs. TBA in Game 2; Hector Santiago (1-2) vs. Jake Odorizzi (3-2) Wednesday at 7:10 p.m.; James Shields (1-6) vs. Jose Berríos (6-5) Thursday at 12:10 p.m.

At a glance

The White Sox and Twins play a straight doubleheader to open the series. Game 1 is a makeup of an April 13 game that was postponed by snow. Minnesota won the first game of the April series before the next three were postponed by weather. The Sox lost three of four home games to the Twins in early May. The White Sox won two of three home games vs. the Brewers over the weekend. In 6 road starts, Lopez is 0-3 with a 6.00 ERA. Zack Littell is expected to be called up from Class AAA Rochester and start one game of the doubleheader for Minnesota. Twins first baseman Joe Mauer has been on the disabled list since May 19 with a neck strain.

Next

Boston Red Sox, Friday-Sunday at Fenway Park.

Buy, Sell or Hold? How every MLB team should spend their next two months

By Jim Bowden / The Athletic / June 4, 2018

Most major-league general managers tend to break the season down into three parts. The first two months, in April and May, they get to know their team — are they contenders, or do they need to start rebuilding? And what are the organization's precise acquisition needs? The next two months, June and July, are used to prepare, negotiate and try to make any trades necessary either to contend, to improve chances of winning in the postseason, to rebuild for future years, or sometimes just to maintain the status quo. Then in the final two months of August and September, GMs are preparing for final waiver trades, September call-ups, roster tweaks, postseason rosters, or starting to play younger players to benefit them down the road.

So, with two months of the season gone, and the draft over, it's a good time to look at all 30 teams to see how each of them should be spending their next two months.

AL EAST

Baltimore Orioles

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Orioles are in last place in the division, already 23 games out of first place and 18.5 games out of a wild-card berth. They have several key free agents, including Manny Machado, Adam Jones, Zach Britton and Brad Brach. If they can't extend those players' contracts by July 31, they should trade all of them by the deadline. Of course, Machado will be the headliner, with the most likely landing spots being the Phillies, Cubs, Braves or Cardinals.

Boston Red Sox

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The first place Red Sox are in for a tight pennant race all year long with the New York Yankees, and the team that wins at the trade deadline might very well win the division. The Red Sox don't have a lot of holes on their team, but like every other contender, they could benefit from more bullpen depth.

New York Yankees

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Yankees have the most power of any team in baseball, with arguably the best and deepest bullpen in the game. However, their one glaring need is in their starting rotation where they could use a No. 2-type starter after ace Luis Severino at the top of their rotation. Cole Hamels, Michael Fulmer, Brad Hand and Chris Archer are already names being bandied in the industry as possible targets.

Tampa Bay Rays

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Rays have been selling since spring training, including the trades of Stephen Souza Jr. to the Diamondbacks, Corey Dickerson to the Pirates and most recently Alex Colomé to the Mariners. Next on the agenda will probably be catcher Wilson Ramos, who is in his free-agent year. In addition, despite their denials, the Rays will likely have to listen on their top two pitchers, Chris Archer and Blake Snell, just in case someone (like the Yankees) wants to make them an offer so lopsided in their favor that they have to make a deal.

Toronto Blue Jays

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Blue Jays had the starting rotation to legitimately contend for a wild-card berth, but sub-par years by Marcus Stroman, Aaron Sanchez and Marco Estrada have really dimmed their chances. Combine that with the legal problems of their impact closer Roberto Osuna and the Blue Jays should probably go into sell mode. The most likely candidates to be traded by the deadline are third baseman Josh Donaldson and pitchers J.A. Happ and Estrada, who are all eligible for free agency after the season.

AL CENTRAL

Chicago White Sox

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The White Sox are in full sell mode as their rebuilding program is well underway. José Abreu has the most trade value, but it's doubtful the ChiSox will move him unless they are overwhelmed. They really don't have much else to offer contending teams unless someone wants to take a chance on a member of

their bullpen that includes relievers Luis Avilán, Nate Jones, Bruce Rondón and Joakim Soria. They'll try to move starter James Shields, too, but it's doubtful there will be any takers.

Cleveland Indians

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Indians should have already run away with the division, but their bullpen has been a complete disaster outside of closer Cody Allen and set-up reliever Andrew Miller, who is on the disabled list with a knee injury. The rest of their 'pen doesn't have a reliever with an ERA under 5.06. This aspect of the team must be improved by the trade deadline if the Indians have any hopes of getting through the first round of the playoffs. Trade targets could include Raisel Iglesias of the Reds, Nate Jones of the White Sox, Jake Diekman of the Rangers, Shane Greene of the Tigers or Craig Stammen of the Padres.

Detroit Tigers

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Tigers have exceeded expectations a bit, thanks in part to the strong leadership of manager Ron Gardenhire. But that won't stop them from selling at the trade deadline and continuing their rebuilding program in earnest. The Tigers don't want to trade starter Michael Fulmer, preferring to rebuild around him. However, if they get a chance to "win" a trade for him, they'll have to consider it for the long-term benefit of the team. They're expected to move veteran left-handed starter Francisco Liriano and closer Shane Greene by July 31 for the best prospects packages they can get.

Kansas City Royals

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Royals made the mistake of not "selling" at last year's trade deadline, but they can make up for it this year by moving significant pieces, including impact closer Kelvin Herrera, third baseman Mike Moustakas (who continues to rake), and maybe even starter Danny Duffy, who has just started to pitch better. The Royals should be able to garner significant prospects for that trio.

Minnesota Twins

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Twins are good enough to contend with the Indians for the division and also for the second wild-card berth, especially if they can get four of their most important bats going: Byron Buxton, Miguel Sanó, Logan Morrison and Brian Dozier, all of whom have struggled. The Twins need to attempt to improve their catching situation, which is a little short after the season-ending injury to Jason Castro. Perhaps a trade for the Dodgers' Austin Barnes, the Red Sox's Blake Swihart or the Rays' Wilson Ramos might make sense.

AL WEST

Houston Astros

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Astros are the defending World Champions and are the favorites to repeat thanks to the best and deepest starting rotation in baseball. However, that doesn't mean they have a perfect team. They could still use an impact closer and a left-handed specialist. Their top trade targets should include Kelvin Herrera of the Royals, Brad Hand of the Padres and Raisel Iglesias of the Reds.

Los Angeles Angels

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Angels are a top-5 team in terms of runs scored in the AL with the Red Sox, Yankees, Astros and Indians, and are third in the league in team ERA behind only the Astros and Red Sox. If Ian Kinsler can't turn his season around, they could certainly use an upgrade in the leadoff spot and, like everyone else, could use another starter and reliever.

Oakland Athletics

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Athletics' rebuilding program is going well and they're good enough to win more than they lose this year. However, they're still destined to finish behind the Astros, Mariners and Angels in the difficult AL West. Their lineup is good enough to contend, but it's their starting pitching that needs to improve for them to be legitimate contenders in 2019. Jed Lowrie will be their best player to offer in trades at the deadline, with the A's hoping to get good starting pitching prospects back in that type of trade.

Seattle Mariners

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Mariners are "all in" as shown by their aggressive trade last week with the Tampa Bay Rays that landed them reliever Alex Colomé and outfielder Denard Span. The next trade target for GM Jerry Dipoto between now and the July 31 trade deadline will probably be a starting pitcher, although that could depend on where they are in the standings at that time. The Mariners have the longest playoff drought of any team in professional sports, but have a chance this year for at least the second wild-card spot.

Texas Rangers

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Texas Rangers have already said publicly they are in "sell" mode and their top assets to trade include starting pitcher Cole Hamels and veteran third baseman Adrián Beltré. However, they'll probably be open to listening to offers on most of their players outside of emerging outfielder Nomar Mazara. This is not a good team overall and a lot of work is needed in all aspects to turn things around. This could include them considering to move some of their solid young core like Joey Gallo, Rougned Odor and Elvis Andrus.

NL EAST

Atlanta Braves

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Braves arrived a year early in the division race. GM Alex Anthopoulos is not afraid to deal, as he proved when he was with the Toronto Blue Jays when he traded for both David Price and Troy Tulowitzki at the July 2015 trade deadline, which helped lead the Jays to the NLCS that season. The Braves have one of the best farm systems in baseball, loaded with starting pitching prospects, and literally will be able to land any big name that is traded if they are set on it. A top-of-the-rotation type starter and a proven closer are the two needs that, if filled, could put this team over the top. I wouldn't rule out a trade for Manny Machado, either, if the prospect price becomes reasonable enough, even though they have top third baseman prospect Austin Riley waiting in the wings at Class AAA.

Miami Marlins

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Miami Marlins refuse to call what they are doing “rebuilding” — which is fine. Who cares about semantics? But they need to continue to trade to supplement their drafting and international signings as they build this team up from where it is now — clearly the bottom. The Marlins can continue to dangle catcher J.T. Realmuto, who they will only trade for a gigantic return, especially after the low returns they got in the Giancarlo Stanton, Marcell Ozuna, Dee Gordon and Christian Yelich trades. However, it’s more likely they find trade partners for starting pitcher Dan Straily or second baseman Starlin Castro.

New York Mets

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Mets are likely a sub-.500 team. Their farm system is barren, and three of the teams in their division — the Nationals, Phillies and Braves — now have better major- and minor-league teams than the Mets. Therefore, they should have no untouchables at the trade deadline, and that includes Jacob deGrom, Noah Syndergaard, Yoenis Céspedes, Jay Bruce, Asdrúbal Cabrera and Todd Frazier. This team needs to sell while they still have trade assets with peak values, or it might end up being a longer rebuilding program than they’re anticipating.

Philadelphia Phillies

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Phillies are for real, and have a legitimate shot at both the division and a wild-card spot. Their pitching staff is third in the NL in ERA, and they’re sixth in the league in runs scored. They could use one more big bat for the middle of their lineup to really put them over the top; targeting Manny Machado of the Orioles would certainly make sense, and would put them in a much stronger position for both the regular and postseason.

Washington Nationals

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Nationals are still the team to beat in the division thanks to their strong starting rotation, led by Max Scherzer, Stephen Strasburg, Gio González and Tanner Roark. They’ve dealt with injuries to Daniel Murphy, Adam Eaton, Ryan Zimmerman, Jeremy Hellickson, Howie Kendrick and Matt Wieters extremely well thanks to the shrewd moves by GM Mike Rizzo, who built a strong bench and pitching depth with the acquisition of players like Mark Reynolds and Matt Adams. The Nationals don’t have a lot of needs, but believe me they’ll be buying whenever they find a way to improve the team, whether it’s by inches, feet or yards. Second base, bullpen depth or a No. 5 starter upgrade is definitely possible here with the Reds’ Raisel Iglesias and Scooter Gennett as possible matches.

NL CENTRAL

Chicago Cubs

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Cubs lead their division in both ERA and runs scored, but find themselves in second place behind the Brewers by 2 games and ahead of the Cardinals by 1.5 games. It looks like this is going to be a tight division. The Cubs need a healthy Yu Darvish, and need him to pitch up to his contract, for them to win the Central. They have enough talent on this team to win with what they have, but that won’t stop the Cubs from buying at the trade deadline. Although the Manny Machado rumors have recently been silenced by the front office, I still expect them to make a run for him at the deadline. The Cubs previous deadline trade for Aroldis Chapman was an important move to help them win a World Series, even at the cost of future superstar Gleyber Torres. Theo Epstein and Jed Hoyer’s long track record of success says they’ll be buying again in July whether it’s for a bat, starter, reliever or bench help.

Cincinnati Reds

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Reds have little choice but to make everyone available at the trade deadline, as they have as much work to do to turn the franchise around as any team in baseball. Their best trade asset is reliever Raisel Iglesias, but they should be able to get strong offers for players like second baseman Scooter Gennett or any one of their outfielders, including Billy Hamilton, Adam Duvall and Scott Schebler. The only players on the major-league roster that they will probably hesitate to move are first baseman Joey Votto (who in any case has no-trade rights and doesn't want to be traded); third baseman Eugenio Suárez (who they just signed long-term); and Gold Glove-catcher Tucker Barnhart (who is important for developing their young pitching staff).

Milwaukee Brewers

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Brewers have a legitimate shot at the division title, even if they don't make any moves between now and the deadline. Their biggest need, like so many teams, is a top-of-the-rotation starter, but it's unlikely they'll trade the prospect package it will take to get it one. Another way to solve it might just be with the return of a healthy Jimmy Nelson from the disabled list. They might even start to think about moving their best pitcher, Josh Hader, to the rotation, where he could develop into a Chris Sale-type of ace. Of course, if they do the latter, they'll have to trade for a couple relievers to replace Hader's present bullpen value.

Pittsburgh Pirates

BUY OR SELL: SELL

Pirates fans probably don't want to hear this, but the team's best move at the deadline is probably going to be to sell, in an effort to continue to stay a contender over the next several years. The Pirates could dangle one of their four outfielders — Gregory Polanco, Starling Marte, Corey Dickerson or Austin Meadows — especially if they can land an upgrade to their starting rotation. They also have several other veteran players who they could dangle, like shortstop Jordy Mercer, who's in his free-agent year; starter Ivan Nova; infielder Sean Rodriguez or third baseman/first baseman David Freese. The Pirates did well in making other unpopular deadline trades, like swapping Mark Melancon to the Nationals a few years back for Felipe Vázquez when they were still contending. It won't surprise me if history repeats itself this July.

St. Louis Cardinals

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The St. Louis Cardinals are capable of getting back to the playoffs, thanks to a tremendous job of rebuilding their starting rotation through their farm system with the development of Alex Reyes, Luke Weaver and Jack Flaherty, along with their shrewd signing of pitcher Miles Mikolas — possibly the game's best offseason free-agent value — who they landed after he had another successful year pitching in Japan. The Cardinals have enough in their farm system, along with outfield depth at the major-league level, to trade for one more infield impact bat that could make a huge difference in their chances of winning the division. Possible trade targets include: Mike Moustakas of the Royals; Josh Donaldson of the Blue Jays; and yes, even Manny Machado of the Orioles.

NL WEST

Arizona Diamondbacks

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Diamondbacks were the best team in the National League in April – then completely fell apart when the calendar hit May, losing more games than anyone in the league. Their offense completely collapsed as Paul Goldschmidt seemingly forgot how to hit; A.J. Pollock went on the disabled list after having an MVP-type April; Stephen Souza Jr. went back on the DL with a pectoral injury after hitting only one home run on the year; Jake Lamb, though back from a shoulder injury, is still hitting only .207; and David Peralta hasn't been much better, now at .209. The Diamondbacks can only hope to stay close in the pennant race until they get Pollock and Souza back from the DL and find a way to get Goldschmidt, Lamb and Peralta hitting the way they're capable of. The D-Backs will be buying at the deadline, but it's too early to predict what their biggest need is going to be.

Colorado Rockies

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Rockies haven't been able to truly take advantage of the poor starts by the Dodgers and Diamondbacks, but have proven early on that they'll once again be able to compete with them. As expected, Nolan Arenado, Charlie Blackmon and Trevor Story have led the way offensively for the Rockies, but the rest of the offense has been disappointing. Both Ian Desmond and Carlos González look like their decline years have arrived. Their starting pitching has been solid and Wade Davis has been lights-out as closer, while Adam Ottavino — until going on the DL — was dominant. However, the rest of the bullpen overall has been a disappointment, and like just about everyone else, they could use more bullpen depth. The Rockies could also certainly use another bat, preferably at first base, where they are last in baseball in offensive production. They'll be buyers at the deadline.

Los Angeles Dodgers

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Dodgers could have easily been buried in the standings by now after they started the year with injuries to Corey Seager, Justin Turner, Logan Forsythe, Rich Hill and Clayton Kershaw, combined with slow starts by Yasiel Puig, Chris Taylor, Cody Bellinger and even Kenley Jansen. However, the rest of the division wasn't able to create real separation in the standings, and now the Dodgers are getting healthier (though Clayton Kershaw is back on the DL) and their veteran players are starting to perform back at their accustomed levels. In addition, the Dodgers' young pitchers, including Walker Buehler, Ross Stripling and Dennis Santana, look ready to make their mark, which helps give the Dodgers a legitimate shot at winning the division yet again — even with Seager out for the year after undergoing Tommy John surgery. They'll be an interesting team to watch at the trade deadline, and although I'm not expecting them to make a big move like they did last year with Darvish, I do think they'll do their usual fine-tuning, with multiple trades, as long as they can hold on to all of their very top prospects. They are committed to staying under the luxury tax threshold because they want to be in a position to bid on free agents in this year's class, which includes Bryce Harper, Charlie Morton, A.J. Pollock and Patrick Corbin.

San Diego Padres

BUY OR SELL: SELL

The Padres will once again be selling over the next couple of months as they continue to rebuild from the bottom up. This year, although they don't want to trade him, they might consider moving Brad Hand if they get overwhelmed by an offer. Left-handed hitters have one hit off him the entire season. A team like the Astros, Red Sox or Braves could really use him, and if the Padres could get a package of top prospects for him, they'd have to consider it. More likely, the players that they trade will include left-handed starting pitcher Clayton Richard and right-hander Tyson Ross, who's having a nice comeback season. They might even consider trading Wil Myers when he comes off the disabled list or one of their bevy of other outfielders.

San Francisco Giants

BUY OR SELL: BUY

The Giants probably should be selling and doing an all-out rebuild, but ownership and the front office are committed to trying to stay in contention this year, and trying to reboot the team without having to trade any of their core players. With Madison Bumgarner coming off the DL and no teams in the West pulling away, it's likely the Giants will give this team a chance to compete all year. The front office track record is as good as any team over the last quarter of a century at trade deadlines, so I'd expect them to make at least one significant addition.

White Sox come away from Day 1 of draft looking like winners

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 4, 2018

White Sox amateur scouting director Nick Hostetler has had a good run of fortune through what is now three drafts running the show. Two years after getting his favorite player on the board at No. 10 in Zack Collins, he did it again at No. 4 with Oregon State star infielder Nick Madrigal.

"Nick Madrigal is the guy that I've wanted for the last month," Hostetler said. "There [were] some tense moments leading up to it where I felt there was an opportunity for him to go in front of us. We heard some rumors that he may. But ultimately it worked out in our favor in that we got the player that we really wanted."

But the customary draft day comment about getting their top guy is a bit easier to believe in a draft pool such as this one; it's not like Hostetler was raving about the 5-foot-7 second baseman he landed after Bryce Harper or Stephen Strasburg. To love Madrigal, as Hostetler and the White Sox clearly do, is to have full faith in his future batting champion-level hit tool, and the version Hostetler describes — where Madrigal has still untapped power and can stick at shortstop or any position in the infield — certainly sounds like a superstar who can transcend the field even more.

"He plays with tremendous energy," Hostetler said. "Makeup is second to none. It's a leadership quality I have not seen in a player in a long time, both on the field and off the field the way he goes about his business. His teammates idolize him."

Despite a talented double-play combo of Tate Blackman and Laz Rivera on a dominant Kannapolis team, Hostetler thinks Madrigal could fly straight to Winston-Salem to learn under Omar Vizquel. Madrigal could wind up playing college ball until the end of the month thanks to Oregon State's dominance, and he'll have to sign a pro contract and get his feet wet in Arizona for a week or two, but it sounds like the eventual roster crunch that had zero impact on the decision to take Madrigal could come relatively soon.

"Hopefully Rick Hahn and Ricky Renteria have tough decisions to make in three or four years," Hostetler said.

Taking someone with the real potential for stardom and a real opportunity to at least become the best player in the draft rather than the divisive Brady Singer — a college pitcher with an atypical delivery and a lack of front-end starter potential — sealed this as a night of rave reviews for Hostetler & Co. Even if he had handed team rep A.J. Pierzynski his grocery list to read off rather than the name of his second-round pick, he could probably patch it over by lauding Madrigal's mature approach and maybe mentioning how hot Collins has been in Double-A recently.

Instead, Oklahoma outfielder Steele Walker gave the Sox some fringe first-round value at 46th overall, in addition to the obviously cool name. Walker hit .352/.441/.606 with 13 home runs in a junior season that saw his left-handed power emerge. While a strikeout rate floating near 19 percent indicates there's some swing-and-miss for someone facing college pitching, scouts think he has the natural pop and feel for the barrel to push one of his offensive tools (hit or power, probably not both) above average.

"We feel Steele is going to be a center fielder," Hostetler said. "We've seen him play there a long time. He moved over from center field to right field due to the fact Kyler Murray [selected ninth overall by the A's] was playing center field there. Steele can play center field. He's a plus runner with plus power, average to above-average hit tool, above-average plus arm, just a pure all-around left-handed bat."

Scouts and Baseball America are less optimistic about Walker staying out of an outfield corner and would put him closer to an average runner, but for both Madrigal and Walker, the pressure to slug like a middle-of-the-order thumper in case of a move to first base isn't present. There will be plenty of scrutiny either way, but if they hit .280 with average walk rates and power, it wouldn't cause nearly as much concern as it would for Collins or Jake Burger.

With a 5-foot-11 frame, and as a sort of outfield 'tweener who projects to be more of an all-around talent than a slugger, Walker could draw comparisons to recent selections like Alex Call or, more aptly, the left-handed-hitting Jameson Fisher, but scouts would project him as a toolsier version. Oklahoma's season is over, so there's not expected to be much of a wait to get Walker in uniform, but with the White Sox's loaded outfield in the low minors, there's no telling where he will start.

"Steele had huge success last year with Team USA with the wood bat, so I don't expect any sort of delay in his development in regards to getting adjusted to the wood," Hostetler said. "I think he's going to be a guy that hits the ground running from the left side. His speed is going to help him as well."

"That's our goal is to make it as hard as possible for these guys to find playing time because that means all the players we're bringing in are good. But I think Steele's a guy that's pretty advanced from that standpoint. But he's also got some ceiling to him, there's tools there that still have some refinement left in them. I think there's still some top-shelf ceiling left in him."

Obviously the White Sox's willingness to explore the wealth of high school pitching has yet to be tested, or their willingness to deviate out of their comfort zone of big statistical performers at major college programs. Even their more interesting and unique trends like their college relief scouting have yet to really be revealed. But on the most important day of their most important draft yet in the rebuild, it was hard to find anyone who thought they made a wrong move.

That's worth remembering when we're doing a real assessment of this day in four years.

"In this draft, this was a matter of just adding the best guy," Hostetler said. "Regardless, we just stack up the board and we go after who we think is the best player, we get aggressive with it and go. Both these players are well rounded, there's no question about that. That's been noted with them both. I think both of them still hold upside. I think you're going to see Nick Madrigal tap into that power more when he gets out in pro ball and starts to swing a little bit better. And I think Steele Walker still has that ability to not only hit home runs but to steal bases and be a true center fielder for us. There's guys that are a little bit more well rounded than guys in the past, but I do like all the skill sets that they bring."

Why Nick Madrigal's pure hitting ability transcends his size

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 4, 2018

While everyone was tweeting about #TankForBeer last season, scouts in the Pacific Northwest were talking about "Nicky Magic," an elite elite hit tool that could only miss being the first overall pick because of the tiny 5-foot-7 package it came in.

"I like to say I'm 5-8, but it's better to say I'm 5-7, right around there," fourth overall pick Nick Madrigal said in his introductory conference call. "I think baseball's one of those games where height really doesn't matter at all. When I take the field, I never think that at all. It never pops in my mind."

By this point, any size-related doubts should be long gone. Batting in the middle of the order for an Oregon State team so dominant that cheers for his teammates getting drafted interrupted his conference call, Madrigal's proven himself on the highest level he can, and hit .400 while doing so (.406/.470/.586 to

be exact). But while size might not matter, wrist injuries for hitters usually do, so when Madrigal fractured a radial bone in his left arm in a late-February slide, he set himself on keeping it from sending his junior season into a tailspin.

“When I was unable to play, I really tried to stay focused on the game, stay locked in pitch-by-pitch, so when I did come back it wasn’t too much of an adjustment,” Madrigal said. “Once I got back to swinging — I hit so many machines, I hit off a tee. I felt comfortable right when I came back, honestly. My first at-bat, my heart was racing a little bit. But once I settled down, it’s the same game, obviously, my whole life.”

Madrigal’s team just got done thrashing LSU on back-to-back nights in NCAA regionals. If things go right for them, he might have another three weeks of college baseball left. But his profile is so safe, the skill set he is promised to bring to professional ball is so clearly on display, the star second baseman is already fielding questions on how he will fit in between Tim Anderson and Yoán Moncada in Chicago, a city he’s never been to, rather than whether he’ll push aside Tate Blackmon or Laz Rivera in Low-A Kannapolis.

“I’ve played shortstop my whole life,” said Madrigal, who scouts say has the athleticism for the position but is limited by his throwing arm. “I know I can do it. I feel like I can play second base. I haven’t played much of third base, I feel like I can do that also.

“Whatever the organization needs me to do. I know they have a plan. I feel like I can play anywhere on the infield. If they needed me to grab an outfield, I feel like I can do that also.”

The easiest answer about the coming crunch is that it simply won’t happen. Anderson has been through plenty in his young career, and even a promising start at the plate in 2018 is no guarantee he’ll be a mainstay in two years. Moncada has always had the throwing arm for third and the massive size to eventually move off his current position.

As safe as Madrigal seems — and as much as he seems like a home run combination of star potential, safety and a scouting consensus that the Sox have not had at top of their draft the last two years — two years ago I was marveling at how smooth and quiet Mickey Moniak’s swing was, quite the contrast from the huge leg kick Madrigal employs from his small frame. There are simply no sure things in this business, and the White Sox can only draft to improve their organization, regardless of position.

But if there’s one source of certainty in a process mostly based in stacking as many talented players as possible and hoping there’s a competitive roster in place after a dispiriting wave of attrition, it’s Madrigal’s ability to put a bat on a ball. His microscopic 3.3 percent strikeout rate will obviously grow when he leaves college, but it provides a new skill to the Sox system, even if it’s at a redundant position for now. Madrigal’s contact is a sort of market inefficiency in a game increasingly built on power and whiffs, a potential salve to a Sox offense with the fifth-highest strikeout rate in the game. And it’s the single-minded focus of a game that has transcended his size since the beginning.

“I’ve always hit toward the top of the order at all levels I’ve been a part of,” Madrigal said. “You’re not supposed to strike out if you’re hitting toward the top of the order. In batting practice I’ve always tried to make contact with different pitches, whether it’s a strike or a ball. It’s something I’ve worked on and hopefully I continue to do. But I definitely take pride in that.”

White Sox take Nick Madrigal, the draft’s best hitter, at No. 4

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 4, 2018

If squaring up big league pitching is the most difficult thing to do in sports, the White Sox just got the most talented guy in the draft.

They had to wait until No. 4 to make their selection, but in taking Oregon State second baseman Nick Madrigal, the Sox have unquestionably snagged the best hit tool, and perhaps the most dynamic tool of all in the draft. Madrigal has a .406/.470/.586 batting line through 32 games in an injury-shortened junior

season and the hands and quickness to be an above-average defender. He went 2-for-5 in the Beavers' regional game Sunday and by doing so, lowered his batting average.

"Nick is recognized as one of the best hitters in college baseball, and we're excited to add him to the organization," White Sox scouting director Nick Hostetler said in a release. "He possesses tremendous baseball skills, character and makeup, and we look forward to watching him compete for the national championship before joining the White Sox organization and beginning his professional career."

A broken left radial bone in his left wrist suffered in late February didn't keep Madrigal from producing at an elite level upon his return, and provides no concern about his future health. The biggest problem the Sox face — besides waiting for Oregon State's season to end so they can sign him — is determining where Madrigal will fit into an established major league infield. But typically, if you're wondering if your prospect will displace your major leaguers, it's not a real problem.

Madrigal hit for gap power in college, and with a spitfire 5-foot-7 frame, he will not produce for power beyond what barreling tons of baseball to the gaps can provide, and his throwing arm has kept him from playing shortstop even at the college level. Those issues limit his ceiling and kept him out of most No. 1 overall discussions, but there's little danger about what he does well and how it projects to professional ball. Besides, of course, the uncertainty that every single prospect faces in a sport in which first overall picks fail to reach the majors all the time.

The White Sox could face a future logjam if Madrigal flies through the system, or they could find themselves with plenty of trade pieces to fill other holes on the roster, or Madrigal could wind up filling holes himself if unforeseen events move or take Tim Anderson or Yoán Moncada out of the picture.

But what they won't face is questions about whether they took the best talent available for them at their slot, at a time when the status of their rebuild compelled them to reach for a star to add to their young core. Scouts who have seen Madrigal up close have been raving about his top-five potential and insane ability to avoid strikeouts since last year (five strikeouts all year), and he gives the Sox a talent who can compete with Luis Robert for the title of third-best prospect in their top-heavy system.

TA30: The MLB power rankings have the Red Sox cruising, the Pirates sinking and the Dodgers reviving

By Matthew Kory / The Athletic / June 4, 2018

Every week, we ask all of our baseball writers — both the local scribes and the national team, more than 30 writers in all — to rank the teams from first to worst. Here are the collective results.

Welcome back to TA30, where we tell you who is good (the Red Sox) and who isn't (the White Sox) so you don't have to pay any attention to baseball. Now you can spend more time with your family! I'm Matt Kory, a writer for The Athletic Boston, and I'll be substituting for Levi Weaver this week. No throwing spitballs while my back is turned, got it? Unless you're the Orioles, in which case, do what you gotta do, you need all the help you can get.

1. Boston Red Sox (last week: 1)

The Red Sox keep on keeping on, or, put another way, winning. They took two of four in Houston and outscored those rascally Astros in the process. That they did it without Dustin Pedroia and Mookie Betts only ups the score on the impressiveness scale to two. (The Impressiveness Scale only goes to two.)

2. Houston Astros (last week: 2)

If I told you Justin Verlander gave up the second most runs he's allowed all season to Boston on Saturday, you'd probably think he got absolutely shelled. He gave up two runs and three hits in six innings. He struck out six and walked two. So by his standards, he did get shelled, but for any other pitcher, it was a pretty good outing.

3. New York Yankees (last week: 3)

The Yankees were rained out again, making them the team with the fewest games played on the year. One of these days the baseball gods will stop crying in joy at the sight of pinstripes. Until then, though, rainouts aplenty!

T 4. Atlanta Braves (last week: 5)

Braves pitchers are walking 10.5 percent of the hitters they face, the third most in baseball and the most of any team not based in Chicago. So how are they doing this? The team is hitting well, yes, but also, their pitchers aren't giving up home runs. They've allowed the third-fewest homers of any team in the league, which is why the walks haven't mattered much. Sorry for the lack of a joke here. I'm sure Levi will rectify that next week.

T 4. Chicago Cubs (last week: 8)

The Cubs haven't got much from their rotation this season. This mirrors their tear-down and rebuild of a few years ago, in that they focused on building with hitters first, then added the pitching later. The problem here is they've already added the pitching. Somehow, despite that, they're the highest they've been in our rankings all season.

6. Washington Nationals (last week: 6)

While Max Scherzer wasn't on the mound dominating the Orioles Saturday, he was watching the Capitals play in the Stanley Cup Finals. Go out, crush the Orioles' spirit, then rush back to the dugout and hope you didn't miss any goals? Some people have life pretty well figured out.

7. Milwaukee Brewers (last week: 4)

Are the Brewers the most surprising team in the league? They probably shouldn't be, considering that they may have had the best off-season of any team in baseball. Milwaukee added Lorenzo Cain and Christian Yelich, who are one and three in player WAR on the team, and pretty much the reasons (along with Travis Shaw) that the Brewers' offense is above average.

8. Seattle Mariners (last week: 10)

Don't look now, the Mariners are in first place! Seriously, though, don't look. The Mariners being in first place is about as frequent as a solar eclipse, and just as dangerous to the retinas.

9. Cleveland Indians (last week: 12)

How is it that the Indians have a billion injured outfielders and none of them are Michael Brantley? [Checks disabled list] Nope, still no Michael Brantley. [Checks disabled list] Still no Michael Brantley. [Checks disabled list] This is surprising! Good on you, Michael Brantley!

10. Philadelphia Phillies (last week: 7)

Jake Arrieta called out his coaching staff, a fellow player (Scott Kingery), and kind of the entire organization after a loss to the Giants yesterday. That's a veteran move: Arrieta knows the one thing that will, without fail, turn around a struggling team is internal discord. (He does have a point, though.)

11. Los Angeles Angels (last week: 9)

Garrett Richards has been nails, which is good, considering the alternatives (Garrett Richards steps on nails, or has nails inserted into his joints to hold them together). In other news, Mike Trout is crazy bananas.

12. St. Louis Cardinals (last week: 11)

The Cardinals have been caught stealing 17 times this season, the most in the majors. Did they secretly re-sign Albert Pujols?

13. Arizona Diamondbacks (last week: 15)

In three starts, Clay Buchholz has a 1.50 ERA and 14 strikeouts, with just two walks, in 18 innings. He could change his name to Gold Buchholz... but, given who we're talking about, maybe hold off on filing that paperwork for a few more starts.

14. Los Angeles Dodgers (last week: 17)

The Dodgers have a losing record — and the best run differential in the entire NL West. They have the same record as the Giants, and a run differential 75 runs better than San Francisco's. Last year they amazed you with their skill; this year they'll amaze you with their inability to get their skill to show up in the standings.

15. Oakland Athletics (last week: 16)

The A's went 2-for-2 with a home run and two RBIs on 3-0 counts Sunday against the Royals. Swinging 3-0 is one of those binary things: Either awful or great. Either you're blowing an easy base by hacking, or you're crushing a meatball. The A's did the second, and in the process climbed to their highest ranking of the season.

16. Colorado Rockies (last week: 14)

The Rockies keep waiting for Jon Gray to go off, forgetting that MLB bylaws state they're the Rockies and aren't allowed to have any good pitchers. You might assume Gray's problem is pitching at home in Colorado while he's been fine on the road, but don't be so quick to make assumptions. I mean you're totally right, that's absolutely the problem, but watch out with assumptions anyway.

17. Pittsburgh Pirates (last week: 13)

Things aren't looking good for Pittsburgh, and the worst of it is that moving Phil Kessel to the third line won't solve anything. Probably.

18. Tampa Bay Rays (last week: 19)

Chris Archer is scheduled to undergo an MRI on his injured groin. If he's sidelined for any significant period of time the Rays may need to invent another pitcher role. Maybe a "Set Down Man" to follow the opener? I don't know, I'm just spitballing here.

19. Detroit Tigers (last week: 23)

The Tigers will be picking first in the first round of today's major league draft. Nothing is confirmed but I'm hearing rumors they're thinking about taking a whole bunch of Advil.

20. New York Mets (last week: 18)

They continue to employ José Reyes, they for some reason employ José Bautista, and then they managed to give up the shortest sacrifice fly ball of the season to the Cubs on Sunday. It's hard

sometimes to tell if the Mets are more victims of a cruel fate or of their own self-inflicted bumbling. Either way, it's an entertaining combination, unless you are a Mets fan.

21. San Francisco Giants (last week: 20)

Have you seen a picture of Dereck Rodriguez? If not, [click here](#), but you should know that the image you are about to see is not, I repeat not, Tim Lincecum. In other news, they're still not paying for Pablo Sandoval's contract, so that's good, I guess.

22. Toronto Blue Jays (last week: 21)

How much money would you have won by betting that through May the most valuable Blue Jays hitter by WAR would be Luke Maile? The answer is a lot, but that's not the point. The point is Luke Maile is good now, which means baseball analysis is officially dead.

23. Minnesota Twins (last week: 22)

Eddie Rosario hit three homers to beat the Indians on Sunday, and it didn't look like any of the three pitches he hit out were strikes. So how do you pitch a guy who hits pitches a foot outside, and three inches too high, both for home runs? Do you throw him 80 mph meatballs down the middle? Whatever the trick is, the Indians might want to figure it out.

24. San Diego Padres (last week: 24)

Padres pitchers have picked off 11 hitters, the most in the majors. They also are one of only six teams to not yet be called for a balk. If you don't look any further, the Padres pitchers are fantastic!

25. Texas Rangers (last week: 25)

The Rangers' rotation reads like a who's who of good pitchers from 2012. Or in Bartolo Colon's case, 1912.

26. Cincinnati Reds (last week: 26)

Checking in on Matt Harvey, his ERA in New York was 7.00, but in Cincinnati it's all the way down to 4.44. If he gets cut a few more times, he may win the Cy Young.

27. Kansas City Royals (last week: 28)

The Royals are like a prolonged game of whack-a-mole. Every 30 years they poke their head out of the hole and grab a World Series win, then a huge mallet comes down on their heads and we don't hear from them again for a few decades.

28. Baltimore Orioles (last week: 30)

Rumor has it the Orioles are interested in the recently released Hanley Ramírez, which is surprising considering they would seem to be pretty much set for guys who hit for power, strike out a ton, and can't play defense.

29. Miami Marlins (last week: 27)

The last two drafts have seen the Marlins take two left-handed high school pitchers. One is currently recovering from Tommy John surgery and the other has a 12.00 ERA in Single A. So, given that and that they're the Marlins, there are two ways for them to go this year. Either select another left-handed high school pitcher, or, when their pick comes up, just set it on fire to save some money.

30. Chicago White Sox (last week: 29)

Last week, Levi told White Sox fans to take heart because, although they had the worst record in baseball, they were only second worst in our rankings. This week, well, you can give the heart back.

Sox is singular: Do the White Sox have some breathing room on draft night?

By Jim Margalus / The Athletic / June 4, 2018

If there's any silver lining to the funnel cloud that has enveloped the White Sox over the first two months of the season, their struggles give this draft a greater margin for error.

Granted, any top-five pick is an important one, and more so this year since Jake Burger's total number of Achilles surgeries beat his total number of games played this season by a score of 2-0. Burger's not cooked, but his delayed-at-best timetable puts more pressure on the Sox to generate momentum with this year's first-rounder.

Burger's injury caught the Sox in early spring, though, way back in the distant past when Ricky's Boys still seemed capable of remaining ahead of schedule despite Vegas pegging them with the second-worst record. Smash-cut two months later, and the Sox have only proven the preseason over/unders prescient. If they can't generate a tremendous turnaround with the return of their last top-five pick (Carlos Rodon) and a few top prospects, at least the resulting draft budget will add to the rebuild fuel.

Think of the Astros, who blew two consecutive first-overall picks and still won the World Series on schedule. Houston selected Mark Appel over Kris Bryant in 2013, then failed to come to terms with Brady Aiken in 2014, but ultimately redeemed itself by connecting with Alex Bregman in 2015. It's in the interest of those in the White Sox draft room to convert at a better rate, but if the Astros are any indication, the Sox have at least one more draft before swings and misses really start hurting.

Besides, Rodon shows what happens when a team banks on one top pick to do the heavy lifting in a youth movement. The White Sox lucked out in landing Rodon at No. 3, as he slipped past the Astros (Aiken) and Marlins (Tyler Kolek). The first two picks were both prep pitchers who signed for under slot, and both haven't been able to overcome early-career Tommy John surgery. Rodon's had his share of health problems, but the Sox still should have no regrets about giving him the top bonus in the draft class.

Rodon's career would be considered wildly successful under other circumstances. Only four years removed from his draft, he has 20 MLB wins, an above-average ERA and more strikeouts than innings pitched to his credit. Alas, that resume is less impressive when it's spread out over three seasons.

Now when Rodon returns to the rotation later this week – his wife says he caught his flight to Chicago — he'll be doing so as a Ghost of Rebuild Past. He's not out of the club's future plans, and he'll give the White Sox rotation a much-needed dose of strikeout stuff in the present, but it's safe to say the original mission was never accomplished.

Whether it's Brady Singer or Nick Madrigal or an amateur to be named later, whomever the White Sox select with a top-five pick this time around won't carry so heavy a burden, partially because the farm system is well stocked, and partially because the big club is batting José Rondón in the cleanup spot. There will be another high draft pick on the way, and another chance for the White Sox to really get it right. This year, another partial success will do.

(Or maybe this is just something I'm telling myself the night before the draft while reading about a White Sox war room divided. Disagreement within an organization is healthy, but maybe not so much when third parties are hearing about it.)

With the Brewers visiting Chicago, Bob Uecker made the trip over from Milwaukee's radio booth to sit in with Hawk Harrelson for an inning on Sunday. Uecker is one of the few broadcasters who trumps Hawk in age (83 to 76) and experience (48 to 36 in his current team's booth), and Hawk elaborated on the

superlative by saying that Uecker was willing and able to fight on behalf of African-American teammates when integration was still a novel concept.

Listening to the two talk, I realized they have a lot in common. Like Harrelson, Uecker had to soldier through a rebuild. Uecker had to reduce his schedule. Uecker is no stranger to recycling material. Uecker even has his own alarm clock.

Unlike Harrelson, Uecker has no plans to leave the booth for good, and it's not because he has nowhere else to go. His voice remains vital, even for those who are more than familiar with it. As Jon Greenberg tweeted, "Bob Uecker has like 10 jokes and they're still all funny."

I've often thought that if Harrelson were wired just a little differently, he probably could've kept rolling into his 80s just like Uecker. He can still bring it for the big calls, with Daniel Palka's pinch-hit homer on Sunday the latest proof. Any decrease in reaction time would be difficult to detect because his broadcasting style has never stayed right on top of the action. Were he a little more laid back or a little less invested, he probably could have extended his twilight indefinitely.

But then he wouldn't be Hawk, would he?

As it stands, Hawk's attitude stayed a little more entrenched in its time zone, and he took the bad times a little too personally, and his commute to work was a little too long, and so his limit arrived a little sooner. There's probably some greater lesson in there somewhere, even for those of us whose line of work has never involved describing a baseball game to thousands of people every day over the course of 30 to 50 years.
