



MEDIA CLIPS – March 10, 2018

Source: Rox, CarGo agree to one-year deal

By Oliver Macklin and Matt Kelly MLB.com @basebollie and @mattkellyMLB

Mar. 9th, 2018

Carlos Gonzalez is on the verge of a return to Colorado.

The Rockies and Gonzalez have an agreement "in principle" on a one-year deal and "are working through final contract language," a source confirmed to MLB.com's Jon Paul Morosi on Friday. The deal has yet to be finalized.

The Rockies have not confirmed the negotiations, which were first reported by MLB Network insider Jon Heyman.

Gonzalez has spent the last nine seasons in a Rockies uniform. The right fielder has hit 215 home runs and earned three All-Star Game selections during his tenure in Denver, though he is coming off one of the toughest seasons of his career in which he .262/.339/.423 with 14 home runs in 136 games. Gonzalez did have a strong final month of the season, slashing .377/.484/.766 with 12 doubles and six homers from Sept. 1 through the end of the regular season. He had been linked to multiple other clubs this offseason, including the Orioles, White Sox, Royals, Astros and Blue Jays.

The Rockies approached Gonzalez last spring about an extension worth as much as \$45 million over three years, but the player opted to play out his deal and test free agency, a source told MLB.com's Mark Feinsand.

Fantasy spin | Fred Zinkie (@FredZinkieMLB)

With a lifetime .999 OPS at Coors Field, Gonzalez definitely found his best fantasy fit by returning to the Rockies. And while the slugger is coming off a disappointing season (.762 OPS), he showed exciting bounceback potential in September, when he logged a stellar 1.250 OPS. As a 32-year-old who posted a triple-digit RBI total two seasons ago and went deep 40 times in 2015, CarGo is one of the more attractive boom-or-bust picks in the late rounds of this year's drafts. Meanwhile, the outfielder's return ends the sleeper status of youngsters **Ryan McMahon** and **Raimel Tapia**, who will be relegated to reserve roles or returned to the Minors later this month.

Parra to make Cactus League debut Sunday

Outfielder has been sidelined with broken hand; Gray struggles Friday; Dahl, McMahon, Rosscup make strong roster cases

By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb

Mar. 9th, 2018

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Rockies outfielder **Gerardo Parra**, who underwent surgery to remove a broken hamate bone from his right hand, will make his 2018 Cactus League debut on Sunday against the Dodgers in Glendale, Ariz.

Parra, who's heading into the final season of a three-year, \$27.5 million contract, hit .309 with 10 home runs and 71 RBIs in 115 games last year. He missed 28 games with a right quadriceps injury. With right fielder **Carlos**

Gonzalez reportedly **rejoining on a one-year contract**, Parra figures to have most of his time in left field -- where he was a Rawlings Gold Glove Award finalist.

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Since Parra, Gonzalez and center fielder **Charlie Blackmon** form an all left-handed-hitting outfield, there is the possibility of right-handed-hitting **Ian Desmond** playing right field on occasion, although first base could end up his primary position. Parra's ability to play all three outfield spots plus come off the bench as a defensive replacement increases his value.

"His persona, how he views the game, how he prepares for the game -- he has those attributes to be ready for that moment, when that moment arises," Rockies manager Bud Black said.

A sunny day turned Gary

Righty **Jon Gray**, fooling with a new changeup grip and trying to add some timing changes in his delivery, disappointed in 3 1/3 innings of Friday's **8-5 loss** to the Indians. Gray gave up a two-run **Yan Gomes** homer in the first and a three-run **Francisco Mejia** shot in the third while being charged with six runs on six hits and two walks.

"Today was the first time I used a new changeup grip," Gray said. "It didn't go very good, but they weren't located, either. They have good location, I can tell, but they weren't in the right spot. Nothing was in the right spot today."

The Rockies haven't announced an Opening Day starter, but many clubs' projected Opening Day starters worked Friday -- 20 days before the regular season begins. The Indians' **Corey Kluber** fanned seven in 3 2/3 innings.

Position competition

- **David Dahl** -- competing for a reserve outfield spot -- launched a two-run shot off **Neil Ramirez**. It was his third spring homer. Dahl added an RBI single.
- **Ryan McMahon**, trying to show he can handle regular duty at first base, delivered one of the two hits off Kluber -- a solid single to center. He also doubled in the ninth.
- Lefty reliever **Zac Rosscup** entered with one out in the fourth after lefty **Harrison Musgrave** exited after being hit in the midsection by an **Erik Gonzalez** liner. Rosscup threw 1 2/3 scoreless innings, with two hits and two strikeouts. Rosscup is out of Minor League options and would have to be exposed to other clubs via waivers if the Rockies attempt to send him down.
- Righty **Jairo Diaz** had one strikeout against one walk and one hit in a scoreless inning.

Exploring the possibilities

Gonzalez's arrival means that unless there is an injury, several prized young outfielders are no longer competing for starting jobs. That means the Rockies must decide whether some of them are better off playing regularly at Triple-A Albuquerque. And it could mean some players who didn't figure into the starting conversation are more attractive as fifth outfielders.

The Major League roster spot could go to Dahl, **Raimel Tapia** or **Mike Tauchman**. But two others are having solid springs: left-handed hitting **Jordan Patterson**, hitting .265 with three doubles but 14 strikeouts; and right-handed hitting **Noel Cuevas**, who is 8-for-18 with two doubles and three RBIs.

Patterson and Cuevas offer flexibility: Patterson is a corner outfielder who can play first base, while Cuevas can play all three outfield positions and would add a right-handed reserve bat.

Also being looked at seriously for a roster spot is right-handed-hitting infielder **Daniel Castro**, with righty-hitting **Pat Valaika** uncertain for Opening Day because of a left oblique injury and switch-hitting **Shawn O'Malley** expected to miss the start of the year with a fractured left hand.

Injury update

Righty **Jeff Hoffman** reported no news on the sore right shoulder that has kept him out since Feb. 27.

"I'm moving as slow as possible so that I get all the way back before I start throwing again," he said.

Signed up

The Rockies **announced** that they have reached one-year contracts for all 27 of their pre-arbitration players.

Up next

Lefty **Tyler Anderson** will start against the Brewers at Maryvale at 1:05 p.m. MT. The game will be broadcast **live on MLB.TV.**

CarGo deal would have domino effect on Rox

Blackmon could move back to leadoff spot; outfield more crowded

By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb

Mar. 9th, 2018

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- The **pending return** of **Carlos Gonzalez** likely means **Charlie Blackmon** will return to the leadoff spot in the Rockies' regular order.

Rockies manager Bud Black, who declined to discuss the Gonzalez agreement because it had not been announced by the club, has batted Blackmon third this spring. The team experimented at leadoff with **Ian Desmond** and several prospects hoping to break through -- **Raimel Tapia** and **Mike Tauchman**, primarily.

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But with nearly the same lineup as last season, Blackmon is expected to return to leadoff, where he led the National League with a .331 batting average and set a Major League record with all but one of his 104 RBIs from the leadoff spot.

Dropping Blackmon, who homered 37 times, was designed to give the Rockies a needed power bat in the middle of the order. Not only was Gonzalez -- who struggled last year but has been a power producer his whole career -- not in camp, but Colorado also saw **Mark Reynolds** and his 30 home runs last season test the free-agent market. Reynolds remains unsigned.

"We've thought all along -- Charlie is comfortable anywhere he hits," Black said Friday morning. "We thought based on how our roster could potentially shake out by Opening Day, it might be a spot for Charlie to hit third with the makeup of our roster. And it might work that Charlie hits leadoff with the makeup of our roster."

Gonzalez is a makeup change.

Gonzalez slumped to .262 with 14 home runs and 57 RBIs last season. But in the final two months, after determining that he had fallen into bad habits with the way he was gripping the bat and correcting a sleep issue, Gonzalez hit .325 with eight homers and 31 RBIs. Should Gonzalez return to that type of production, he could hit third or fourth and share the power spots with **Nolan Arenado**, who hit 37 homers last year and has had at least 130 RBIs each of the past three seasons.

Additionally, the Rockies are expecting a step forward from **Trevor Story**, who set an NL rookie shortstop record with 27 home runs in 2016 despite being limited to just 97 games before suffering a season-ending left thumb injury. Last year, however, Story led the NL with 191 strikeouts (but still managed 24 homers).

Returning Gonzalez to right field makes the outfield picture either deep (the way the Rockies prefer to see it) or crowded (for those who expected prospects to receive their chances). But there is plenty of flexibility, which may mean Colorado will change course in another area by going back to the plan of using Desmond at first base.

Before last season, the Rockies signed Desmond for five years and \$70 million with the idea of converting him to first base after a career at shortstop and in the outfield. But a broken left hand Desmond suffered in Spring Training, coupled with Reynolds' strong start, dictated that Desmond play primarily left field.

Desmond went to the disabled list twice during the second half last season with right calf strains. The way things worked out, **Gerardo Parra** was able to play regularly in the outfield between Desmond's injuries. Now, Blackmon, Gonzalez, Desmond and Parra -- who will return from right hand hamate surgery on Sunday -- are projected to head into the regular season healthy.

Desmond could toggle between left field and first base, or he could become the main person at first should the Rockies decide to ease in their **No. 2 prospect**, left-handed-hitting **Ryan McMahon**, according to matchups, or allow him to get regular at-bats at Triple-A Albuquerque.

The outfield situation also means the best option for **David Dahl**, Tapia and Tauchman to make the Opening Day roster would be as the fifth outfielder. The decision would have to be balanced with the thought that such prized players -- all were big league contributors last season -- would benefit from regular Triple-A at-bats that would keep them ready just in case the Rockies need them for the starting lineup.

Black profiled the fifth outfielder as someone who can offer consistent performance despite irregular playing time.

"You feel good about their production in that moment -- whether it's an at-bat, whether it's a pinch-run, whether it's a double-switch and they go in on defense," Black said.

Tauchman, 27, has had the strongest spring with a .333/.417/.633 slash line, one home run, two doubles and two triples in 13 games heading into Friday's action against the Indians at Salt River Fields at Talking Stick. Tapia, 24, entered the day

at .265/.306/.412, but with better production recently. Both served bench roles last season and were on the roster for the Rockies' 11-8 loss to the D-backs in the NL Wild Card Game.

The interesting study is Dahl, a former top Draft pick who hit .315 with seven homers in 63 games of regular playing time when he was called up in 2016, but who didn't appear in the Majors last season because of a rib injury. Dahl, 23, was cleared to swing a bat in January and has been healthy, but he entered Friday with a .152 average and two homers in 12 Cactus League games. This week, Dahl used a "B" game to get some at-bats in the hopes of speeding his anticipation and pitch recognition.

Teammates celebrate CarGo's return to Rockies
By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb
Mar. 9th, 2018

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. - Rockies third baseman **Nolan Arenado** doesn't hesitate.

"I love CarGo," he said. "He's been an older brother to me my whole career."

With outfielder **Carlos Gonzalez** and the Rockies trying to **finalize a one-year contract** agreement Friday morning, Arenado apparently will get his brother back -- and the team will have a veteran power bat back in its lineup.

In nine seasons with the club, Gonzalez, 32, hit .292 with 211 home runs and 685 RBIs, and in good years and bad was one of the team's most magnetic personalities - in public and among his teammates. Friday morning at the Rockies' Salt River Fields at Talking Stick training center, players were hoping the deal would be finalized soon.

"He's always smiling, in a good mood, nice guy," center fielder **Charlie Blackmon** said. "Also pretty good at hitting balls over the fence."

Gonzalez reportedly turned down a multi-year contract offer before last season. He finished a mostly rough season at .262 with 14 homers and 57 RBIs, but in August and September he hit .325 with eight homers and 31 RBIs while helping the Rockies to their first postseason appearance in eight years. After the season, Gonzalez became one of several big-name free agents left waiting for offers. Arenado talked to Gonzalez during that period.

"I didn't advise him, but I said, 'Stay patient. Don't worry. You're going to be all right. You're too good,'" Arenado said. "I don't know if he was getting down, but he was weirded out that he wasn't in Spring Training yet. But it was all part of the process, and he learned something different this year.

"But CarGo, he keeps things light. He knows how to enjoy his life. He keeps things in perspective. That's why he's always been good. That's probably what he did this offseason."

The Rockies have been testing several young players, including outfielders **David Dahl**, **Raimel Tapia** and **Mike Tauchman**, to see if they could move ahead. All contributed at the Major League level last season and could blossom, and as of late Thursday afternoon club sources were saying they were merely monitoring Gonzalez and the free-agent market. But a deal apparently quickly began coming together.

"He's just one of the more talented players in the game, with the potential to be one of the best players," second baseman **DJ LeMahieu** said. "We've seen him do some incredible things on the field. I hope he's in the middle of our lineup. That would be awesome."

Rockies manager Bud Black has experimented with dropping Blackmon from leadoff to third this spring. It's not clear if the plan will continue, but Blackmon doesn't mind whatever Gonzalez's presence brings.

"It gives us more flexibility," Blackmon said. "There are options out there, and more options usually means you will be a little bit better."

Gonzalez spent 23 games at the No. 3 hole and 36 in cleanup -- his main spots in recent years. But he also spent 40 at No. 6 in a year when Black moved him around in an attempt to ignite his hitting.

What isn't clear is whether the difficulties Gonzalez and other free agents have had this offseason will be factors in the future, as Blackmon and LeMahieu are eligible for free agency after this season and Arenado becomes eligible after 2019. Should the Gonzalez contract become complete there would still be two key Rockies from last season, closer **Greg Holland** and catcher **Jonathan Lucroy**, awaiting contracts despite excellent track records and playoff contributions last season.

"I don't know; it seems like kind of a weird year for free agents," LeMahieu said. "It's disappointing for a lot of guys. A guy like Lucroy is a heck of a player. It stinks for him. Talking about CarGo, I'm really glad he's got the possibility of coming back to us. Really happy for him, personally."

In the Rockies' 11-8 National League Wild Card loss to the D-backs at Chase Field, Gonzalez delivered an RBI single to center field off D-backs closer **Fernando Rodney** in the top of the ninth and was on base when Arenado's groundout ended the game.

Arenado was ready to say goodbye.

"I thought that was his last hit, for sure," Arenado said. "I thought it was over. I thought what a great way to end his Rockies career, with a hit. But hopefully he has more to come."

Carlos Gonzalez nearing a deal with the Rockies as Colorado's clubhouse delights in the slugger's return
"I would love to have CarGo back," Rockies center fielder Charlie Blackmon said.

By NICK GROKE | ngroke@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

PUBLISHED: March 9, 2018 at 10:32 am | UPDATED: March 9, 2018 at 6:39 pm

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Carlos Gonzalez, the Rockies' star outfielder for nine seasons who nearly slipped away into free agency, on Friday appeared close to signing a contract for a return to Colorado, according to multiple reports.

Rockies general manager Jeff Bridich said "no comment" in regard to his pursuit of Gonzalez and Colorado manager Bud Black would not address Gonzalez's situation. Any deal would require Gonzalez to take a physical before it can be finalized. But talk of Gonzalez's pending return was greeted with enthusiasm in the Rockies' clubhouse.

"I would love to have CarGo back," Rockies center fielder Charlie Blackmon said.

Gonzalez and the Rockies are nearing a one-year deal, as Jon Heyman of FanRag Sports first reported — a short-term solution to a free-agency environment that was not kind to the right fielder. He struggled to one of his worst professional seasons in 2017. The Rockies had let Gonzalez, 32, walk into free agency after his contract ended last season. But teammates have been lobbying this spring for his return, including all-star third baseman Nolan Arenado.

"I think it would be safe to say that everyone here misses him, really badly," Arenado told The Denver Post.

Gonzalez is a three-time all-star and has 215 career home runs. But if he was hoping for a multi-year deal this offseason, he found instead a brick wall. He joined a group of free agents who remained unsigned well into spring training, a list that includes former Rockies Greg Holland, a closer, and Jonathan Lucroy, a catcher.

The Rockies, though, discovered how much they miss Gonzalez. In an attempt to move Charlie Blackmon to the middle of their order this spring from the leadoff spot, they are struggling to find his replacement, cycling through several options, including outfielders Raimel Tapia, David Dahl and veteran Ian Desmond, who has just one hit in 16 at-bats.

Blackmon's move to the third spot in the batting order was a contingency plan, in case the Rockies did not add Gonzalez, Mark Reynolds, Logan Morrison or Lucas Duda in free agency.

But more than his statistics, the Rockies learned they missed Gonzalez's presence.

"He's a good player with a lot of ability. But also, I really enjoy off-the-field CarGo," Blackmon said. "He keeps things light, he keeps things in perspective. He lets you remember that we're playing a game and that it's supposed to be fun. Especially when you're down the stretch and trying to make a playoff run, you need to remember that occasionally."

Said Arenado: "Don't get me wrong, I think we have a strong group of guys, but we miss CarGo's energy and laughter. I know a lot of guys miss him — even if they won't voice it — because we have talked about it since we all got here."

In nine seasons with Colorado Gonzalez hit .292 with an .873 OPS. His smooth left-handed swing netted him six seasons of 20-plus home runs, including 40 in 2015. He is a three-time Gold Glove winner and a two-time Silver Slugger. But questions of age and decline dogged him last season as his batting average dipped to .215 in the middle of June.

If Gonzalez signs, it likely means the Rockies will revert to a familiar lineup. Blackmon, whom the Rockies experimented with hitting third this spring, may move back to leadoff, allowing Gonzalez a spot in the middle of the order. In September and October last season, Gonzalez streaked, hitting .377 with a 1.250 OPS.

"He just looked like the CarGo of old," Blackmon said. "And he's not that old. He got it back. He was swinging at better pitches, he was on time, hitting the ball hard. Doing all the things he knows how to do."

Jon Gray is experimenting from the mound but his Rockies manager wants something more simple

Colorado manager Bud Black would like Gray to focus on the basics

By NICK GROKE | ngroke@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

PUBLISHED: March 9, 2018 at 7:42 pm | UPDATED: March 9, 2018 at 7:43 pm

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Jon Gray split his fore and middle fingers and aligned them with the seams of a baseball. That is the look of his newfound changeup, a pitch he saw move in exciting fashion Friday at Salt River Field. It just didn't produce the results he wanted.

The Rockies' No. 1 starting pitcher has experimented with various windups and pitches this spring, looking to add something to his arsenal. He is gaining evidence of what works and what doesn't.

"It didn't go very well. But they have good action," Gray said of his new two-seam changeup, the fourth pitch in his repertoire. He is a fastball-slider pitcher, with a curveball for separation in velocity. A changeup would be the cherry on top. "But they're not in the right spot. Nothing was in the right spot. I was disappointed."

Gray was scheduled to pitch four innings against Cleveland, but he lasted just 3 1/3 after giving up six runs on six hits, with two walks and two strikeouts. Colorado manager Bud Black would like him to focus on the basics.

"There are some things in spring training you're really trying to accomplish," Black said. "A starting pitcher wants to feel good about his fastball command. And Jon isn't there yet."

Friday's Cactus League game landed 20 days away from opening day and if the Rockies remain on a standard schedule of rest days for pitchers, Gray would pitch when the Rockies face the Diamondbacks in Arizona to start the regular season. Cleveland's ace and likely opening day starter, Corey Kluber, pitched Friday opposite Gray.

But Gray is not yet ready to feel the excitement of the season.

"No, not at all. I'm just going with the flow," he said.

Opening absence. Jeff Hoffman, a right-hander who started spring training in competition for a rotation spot with Gray, remains out of action with a shoulder injury. His health is improving, he said, but he will not be available by March 29.

"We're just taking it really slow," he said. Hoffman finished with a 6-5 record and a 5.89 ERA last year, in his rookie season. And the player who arrived in Colorado in the Troy Tulowitzki trade remains among their top pitching prospects.

But he will wait to make an impact.

"I'd rather be healthy down the stretch than push it too hard right now," he said.

Footnotes. The Rockies will add an outfielder to their mix Sunday. Gerardo Parra is scheduled for his first Cactus League game after recovering from left hand surgery. Parra will be in the starting lineup against the Dodgers at Salt River Fields...The Rockies have ended any interest in bringing back first baseman Mark Reynolds, a source said, at least as their roster is currently constructed.

Let's Get Physical: Cargo Finalizing Details for Rockies Return
By Tracy Ringolsby, March 10, 2018 | InsidetheSeams.com

SCOTTSDALE – While waiting for Carlos Gonzalez to pass his physical and officially sign the contract that will bring him back to the Rockies for another year, the Rockies began the roster housecleaning of spring on Saturday, sending seven players to their minor-league camp.

The move leaves 50 players on the spring roster – including 14 non-roster player but not including Gonzalez, who is expected to officially sign the one-year, \$8 million contract that he agreed to in the midst of what has been a slow-moving off-season for free agents.

The Rockies and Gonzalez have declined comment pending the finalization of the contract.

The idea of Gonzalez's return has been a highlight for the veteran players, who look at Gonzalez as a central figure in the clubhouse as well as an impact player on the field.

And while Gonzalez hit .262 with 14 home runs and 57 RBI for the least productive of the seven seasons in which he has played at least 100 big-league games, he did provide a major offensive boost during a September in which the Rockies were battling to claim the second wild-card spot.

He led the team that month with a .377 average, 12 doubles, a .760 slugging percentage and .484 on-base percentage, and tied with Charlie Blackmon for the team lead in runs produced with 32. Nolan Arenado and Trevor Story both had 30 runs produced.

A tribute to Gonzalez is that despite his own struggles in light of the fact he turned down a four-year extension last spring and was struggling in the season, he remained a positive and strong clubhouse influence, not only for the young players from Latin America but all of his teammates.

While waiting on Gonzalez becoming a participant in the spring drills, seven players who had been in camp made the move to the minor-league clubhouse so they can start to get into routine with the minor league affiliates they will play for to open the season.

Manager Bud Black said he was impressed with all seven, but they aren't in serious consideration for the big-league roster so they are better off being in the minor league camp, which will allow them more playing time.

The moves

Right-hander pitchers (3): Zach Jemioła*, Peter Lambert, Jesus Tinoco*

Catchers (2): Dom Nuñez, Chris Rabago*

Outfielders (2): Yonathan Daza*, Sam Hilliard

* 40-man roster player optioned

Rockies reliever Jake McGee: There isn't one 'mop-up' guy in our 'pen
By **Afternoon Drive with Goodman & Shapiro** - March 9, 2018

Just how strong is the Colorado Rockies bullpen heading into the 2018 season? According to reliever Jake McGee, there's not a single weak link.

McGee joined Eric Goodman and Les Shapiro live at Talking Stick Resort near the Rockies' Spring Training facility on Wednesday and spoke to the quality of Colorado's bullpen.

The 31-year-old lefty, who spent the last two seasons in Colorado, was one of three high-profile signings this offseason, along with Bryan Shaw and Wade Davis. The addition of those pitchers, coupled with the maturation of several homegrown talents, puts Colorado in an enviable position entering the 2018 season.

"We guys with so much closing experience, they're going to throw in the fifth inning. Maybe even in the fourth inning. There isn't one 'mop-up' guy in our 'pen," McGee told Goodman and Shapiro.

Colorado has a three-time All-Star closing for them in Davis, the MLB innings leader over the past five years in Shaw and a former closer in McGee. That trio is expected to pitch the 7th, 8th and 9th innings when the Rockies have the lead; however, the bullpen is full of other plus-side pitchers.

Chris Rusin performed yeoman's work in 2017, logging an NL-best 85.0 innings pitched and compiling a 5-1 record with two saves, 13 holds and 2.65 ERA. Mike Dunn was also 5-1 out of the 'pen with a team-leading 68 appearances, earning 18 holds.

Scott Oberg took a big leap forward in third MLB season, earning 14 holds and posting his first sub-5.00 ERA season.

Adam Ottavino had a solid start to the season, posting 15 holds through May, but faded a bit down the stretch. With more depth behind him, Ottavino should benefit from more selective use by manager Bud Black.

Carlos Estevez projects to be the No. 8 man in the Rockies bullpen. He posted a 5-0 record in 2017 as a middle-innings pitcher, coming off a rookie season in which he was 11-of-18 in save opportunities for Walt Weiss. He is a power arm that could evolve into a plus-side pitcher with time, and can now grow into that role with so many effective arms ahead of him.

Gone are warm bodies like Jordan Lyles and Chad Qualls, who often failed to keep games close when the Rockies fell behind early.

“Years past when a mop-up guy would go in — saw it in Colorado a few times — they'd give up 5, 6 runs and we'd lose the game,” McGee continued. “So, I think their philosophy is you put lockdown guys every inning in the bullpen [then] that's not going to happen.”

Rockies excited about opportunity to reunite with Carlos Gonzalez

By [Aniello Piro](#) - March 9, 2018 | Mile High Sports

It appears the Colorado Rockies and longtime franchise cornerstone Carlos Gonzalez will reunite. The two sides have reportedly agreed in principle to a one-year contract, according to MLB.com. That news has players inside the Rockies clubhouse brimming with excitement.

Gonzalez, 32, experienced one of the worst statistical seasons of his career last year. The three-time All-Star hit just .262 with 14 home runs and 57 RBI. The down year, mixed with the awkward offseason in which a number of high-profile players struggled to obtain long-term contracts, hurt Gonzalez on the open market but ultimately appears to have him on track to return to Mile High City. Gonzalez has spent nine of his 10 MLB seasons in Denver, earning three All-Star Game appearances, three Gold Glove awards, two Silver Slugger awards and winning the 2010 NL batting title.

The contract's value is unknown at this point, with MLB.com reporting that the two sides "are working through the final contract language."

Mike Moustakas, a player represented by Scott Boras like Gonzalez, just signed a one-year, \$6.5-million contract to return to the Kansas City Royals. Moustakas has the potential to earn as much as \$22.5 million after incentives. (This contract comes after Moustakas declined a \$17.4 million qualifying offer from KC at the start of free agency). A similar, incentive-laden deal could be in the fold for Gonzalez.

There was a noticeable buzz around the Rockies clubhouse this morning with many players excited about the potential of bringing back Gonzalez for another run at the postseason.

"The guy is a freaking beast," Ian Desmond said. "Adding CarGo puts us a lot closer to where we were last year. I know he's chomping at the bit to get out and prove everybody wrong.

"I'm sure he's going to make some people pay this year. I would hate to be on the other side of the ball."

Gonzalez is a clubhouse favorite and has served as a leader and mentor for the club throughout the course of his career.

The Rockies returned to the postseason for the first time in nearly a decade as the second National League Wild Card last season. Gonzalez was the only player on the Rockies roster in both 2009 and 2017, their last two playoff appearances.

Colorado is in win-now mode, and Gonzalez will only help the Rockies on their pursuit for the first World Series title in franchise history.

"It's exciting," Starting pitcher and Colorado native Kyle Freeland said. "I know he wants to win, and we saw that last year out of him. He's been in the highs and the lows with the Rockies. I think he wants to stick with the high."

Colorado Rockies: Antonio Senzatela could get a rotation spot

by Olivia Greene 1 day ago | RoxPile

As we get further into Spring Training, we really start to see the battles progress. One, in particular, to watch is the pitching duel for the rotation spots. One man that has been making a name for himself at Spring Training is Antonio Senzatela. As he gains experience and working with pitching coach Steve Foster, bullpen coach Darren Holmes, and director of pitching operations Mark Wiley to build up his repertoire he just may have a spot in the rotation.

Spring Training is the time to make a name for yourself and try to get a spot on the roster. **Antonio Senzatela** is doing just that. The **Denver Post reported** on how Senzatela was expanding his pitch types. Senzatela added two deadly pitches to his arsenal: a curveball and change-up. He used his bullpen sessions wisely as he retaught himself both pitches.

Doing so has done him well this spring. He's given up 8 hits and 3 runs (all earned) with 7 strikeouts in 9 innings pitched. He currently has an ERA of 3.00 with a 2-1 win-loss record. Most people would say what happens at Spring Training never equates over to the regular season, but I'd beg to differ with Senzatela.

Senzatela in 2017

In 2017, Antonio Senzatela put up some great numbers for it being his first year. Only 22 in 2017, he had a record of 10-5 with a higher ERA of 4.68 along with a WHIP of 1.300. He also had 102 strikeouts and only 47 walks. At the end of the season, he played in a total of 36 games, 20 of those he was the starter.

Now I'd say these are pretty good stats for a guy this age surrounded by guys the same age. Being bunched in with the rest of the young starters is hard. So, being that Senzatela was able to come out with a season like this should get him a pat on the back. That's when the question of if Senzatela should be a starter or a reliever starts to pop up.

Rox Pile's own Brady Vernon pondered that same question in his article [here](#).

Leading off of that I even had trouble deciding where to put him. In my **Opening Day roster** article, it took me a while to figure out where to put him. With thatm it may also give us insight into how **Bud Black** or the pitching coaches also feel about on where Senzatela should be. Either way he'd be a vital asset to the bullpen and most definitely the rotation.

Final Thoughts

With the way Antonio Senzatela is working on his stuff he's got a chance at getting a rotation spot. The Colorado Rockies have a good potential starter on their hands and all they have to do is pull the trigger on it and give him a shot. Having Senzatela in the rotation the Rockies will have stability and a balancing weight once everyone falls into place.

Hopefully by the end of Spring Training, we will not only see Antonio Senzatela name on the Opening Day roster, but also the starting rotation.

Gray roughed up, Dahl looks great in 8-5 loss to Cleveland
By Drew Creasman Posted on March 9, 2018 | BSN Denver

On the heels of the Colorado Rockies reportedly signing outfielder Carlos Gonzalez, youngster David Dahl took it upon himself to remind everyone who he is and that no final roster decisions have been made.

Dahl went 2-for-3 with a run scored and three RBI, including a two-run homer, in an 8-5 Rockies loss to the Cleveland Indians. This was a great showing for Dahl who started out slow but now leads the team with three spring training home runs.

He will have to keep up the pace, especially now with CarGo in the picture, to make the team come Opening Day, but he will be a major factor either way.

Speaking of the outfield shuffle, Raimel Tapia went 1-for-2 replacing Ian Desmond who went 0-for-3. As it stands, Tapia could see himself as the one potentially losing a starting spot unless he really rakes and shows solid baserunning acumen for the rest of the spring.

Desmond is batting .053 this spring after changing his swing mechanics a bit to include a lower load position for his hands. He is likely still tinkering with it and as such any statistics must be taken with a grain of salt. But for someone who had such a below average 2017, he hasn't inspired much confidence yet that it will all turn around in 2018.

Trevor Story continues his blistering pace, going 1-for-2 with a walk. He's hitting .471 this spring and looks as locked in as any player on the roster.

Well, maybe other than Ryan McMahon who just can't seem to stop getting on base. He went 2-for-4 in this one and scored a run. He now leads the team in at-bats this spring training while hitting .368.

It was a rough day for Jon Gray on the mound, the roughest yet for a Colorado starting pitcher. He lasted 3.1 IP, giving up six runs on six hits including two home runs. All spring training stat qualifiers apply and this likely means nothing but he was much more hittable than usual.

It's also interesting that the rest of the pitching staff fared relatively well. Zac Rosscup threw 1.2 IP giving up two singles and striking out two while keeping the scoreboard clean. Scott Oberg gave up a run on three hits but otherwise limited the

damage. Jairo Diaz gave up a walk and a hit while striking out one in an inning of work. And Brooks Ponders gave up one run on a late homer.

CarGo return brings frustration for some, elation for others
By Drew Creasman Posted on March 9, 2018 | BSN Denver

Multiple sources are now reporting that the Colorado Rockies and Carlos Gonzalez have agreed to a one-year deal for the 2018 season. The details of that deal are still coming in.

This acquisition raises a ton of questions for a team that already sported five MLB-quality outfielders. One can't help but wonder if this means further blocking an already tough path for highly-talented players like David Dahl and Raimel Tapia, who could both now end up stuck at Triple-A.

Gonzalez is coming off the worst season of his career in which he hit .262/.339/.423 with 14 home runs in 136 games. He finished strong though, slashing .377/.484/.766 with 12 doubles and six homers from the beginning of September through the end of the season.

It remains to be seen if the club expects Gonzalez to step right back into his starting role, but if he does it could create a problem to that of a year ago when his bat struggled mightily but his reputation kept him in the lineup over players who were producing more.

Many of these concerns can be mitigated or altogether avoided if CarGo simply has a renaissance season, something perhaps foretold by his strong finish to 2017. Or, if he just accepts a new role as the first bat off the bench, a backup outfielder, and maybe even some occasional time at first base.

The Rockies desperately need one more bat on the bench. Every team can always use insurance for their young players, and even when he was at his worst last season, Gonzalez still inspired fear in opposing pitchers, drawing an unusual number of four-pitch walks for a guy who spent most of the year hovering around a .230 batting average.

Gonzalez has spent the last nine seasons with the Rockies, hitting 215 home runs and three All-Star appearances.

While analysts and the more hardcore fanbase that follow budgets and think longterm may be a bit confused or even frustrated by this news, there is no way around the fact that the overwhelming majority of fans and the roster are elated to have CarGo back. If his indication to us about how badly he wants to play in Denver are indicative of anything, it seems incredibly likely that he knows things may be a bit different this time around.

But at least he will be in purple again. Nobody ever made it look better.

