



# ***Press Clips***

**(August 6, 2018)**

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**FROM THE OC REGISTER****Injury-depleted Angels fall behind early, can't catch up to Indians**

By Jeff Fletcher

CLEVELAND — With the Angels having a bullpen day on the mound and using a patchwork lineup without their three highest-paid players, you would suspect that they lost to the Cleveland Indians on Sunday.

They did.

The unusual assortment of players nonetheless hung around and made it a game before falling 4-3 to the Indians.

Mike Trout missed his fourth straight game with a sore wrist, while Albert Pujols and Justin Upton got days off. That left the Angels with a lineup that included infielder Kaleb Cowart in left field and catcher Francisco Arcia at first.

Tyler Skaggs, the Angels' best starter this year, was supposed to take the ball on Sunday, but he was placed on the disabled list with a left groin injury.

That left Deck McGuire to come up from Triple-A to start a bullpen game.

McGuire didn't even make it out of the first inning. He gave up a hit, a walk and then a José Ramírez three-run homer, falling behind by three runs three batters in the game.

"I threw a fastball down the middle," McGuire said. "A really good hitter put a good swing on it. Not the way you want to start the game."

McGuire got one out and loaded the bases before Manager Mike Scioscia came to get him. In contrast to games last Sunday and Tuesday, when the starters were allowed to stay in until they'd allowed seven runs, McGuire got a quicker hook because the Angels had an extra reliever on Sunday.

"I don't think I did enough in the first seven hitters to show I deserved to stay (in the game)," McGuire said. "I feel really bad putting the team in that spot to play catch-up all game, but you can't say enough about the guys that came in after me, throwing up a bunch of zeros and the offense scrapping enough to have a chance to win the game in the end."

Taylor Cole entered with the bases loaded and one out in the first, and he didn't allow another run. He then tacked on three more scoreless innings.

In the fifth, the Angels got two runs back, on Kole Calhoun's RBI triple and a broken-bat RBI single Shohei Ohtani, cutting the deficit to 3-2.

The Indians got another run against Cam Bedrosian in the sixth.

The Angels threatened in the seventh, loading the bases with one out, but Cody Allen got Andrelton Simmons on a popup and David Fletcher on a groundout, extinguishing the threat.

Simmons singled off the glove of third baseman Ramirez with two outs in the ninth to drive in a run, pulling the Angels within one. Recently acquired Brad Hand then retired Fletcher to end it.

“You saw there were a lot of guys out (of the lineup), but the guys in there played hard,” Scioscia said. “I thought we hit the ball harder than they did. We just couldn’t get that extra hit with guys in scoring position.”

## Angels cut loose struggling Luis Valbuena

*Mike Trout misses fourth straight game with sore wrist*

By Jeff Fletcher

CLEVELAND — The Angels could not wait for Luis Valbuena any more.

On Sunday morning they designated Valbuena for assignment, ending a mostly disappointing two-season run with the Angels.

Valbuena, 32, hit exactly .199 in each of his two seasons. This year, though, his OPS dropped from .727 to .588, as he wasn’t even mixing in as many homers and walks as he had last year.

Valbuena hit 22 homers last season, boosted by a hot streak just after the All-Star break. This season he hit nine homers, none since June 23.

“Luis worked very hard so did (hitting coaches Eric Hinske and Paul Sorrento) getting him to find that rhythm,” Manager Mike Scioscia said. “Historically he’s a very hot and cold hitter. When he’s hot he gets it going. When he’s cold it’s not happening. They tried to work on some things through spring training and the start of the season to help him with a little more consistency. Unfortunately, it didn’t materialize. Nobody worked harder than Luis. We enjoyed when he was here. He never got into sync like he did the second half of last year.”

Valbuena finally lost his spot when the Angels needed to create a roster spot for Deck McGuire, who was activated to make a spot start on Sunday.

The Angels signed Valbuena to a two-year, \$15 million contract in January 2017. He is owed about \$2.5 million for the rest of this season, which the Angels will eat unless they can find a team willing to take some of the salary as part of a trade. Valbuena has a \$500,000 buyout on a mutual option for next season.

Valbuena had been playing third, but he lost his time at that spot with the emergence of David Fletcher. After Ian Kinsler was traded on July 31, moving Fletcher to second, Valbuena got another brief shot to play, but he continued to struggle.

He ended his Angels career with a 2-for-26 slump. On Wednesday night, he went hitless in three at-bats, with two strikeouts, and he made two errors.

Now, the Angels will “mix and match,” at third base, Scioscia said. Kaleb Cowart and Jefry Marte can both play the position.

### **COACHING SHUFFLE**

The Angels announced that Keith Johnson, who had been managing Triple-A Salt Lake, will join the big league staff, starting Monday. He will supplement the staff, not replace anyone.

“We wanted to have K.J., who has an infield background, join the Major League staff and continue to help with the transition of some of the younger guys that we have added and could potentially be adding,” General Manager Billy Eppler said.

One of those infielders is likely to be Taylor Ward, who moved from catcher to third base this season. Ward is hitting .350 with a .979 OPS between Double-A and Triple-A. Eppler said earlier this week, after the Kinsler trade, that Ward still needed more defensive work at Triple-A. Now that Valbuena is gone, there is a larger void he could help fill.

Meanwhile, Johnson’s void at Triple-A will be filled by Eric Chavez, a special assistant to the general manager. A longtime major league third baseman, Chavez has never been a full-time manager at any level. He has been mentioned as a possible successor to Scioscia, so this certainly adds fuel to that speculation. Eppler said it was the “least invasive” move they could make, because Chavez recently filled in at Salt Lake for a few days when Johnson coached at the Futures Game.

### **TROUT UPDATE**

Mike Trout was out of the lineup for a fourth straight game with a jammed right wrist on Sunday.

## **Angels manager Mike Scioscia calls report that he’ll step down at end of season ‘poppycock’**

By Jeff Fletcher

CLEVELAND — A day after a report that Mike Scioscia is “expected” to step down as Angels manager at the end of the season, and just before another one saying that he’d decided to retire, the longtime manager vehemently denied that he’s made any decisions, going so far as to call the initial report “poppycock.”

On Saturday night, noted baseball writer Ken Rosenthal published a story in The Athletic citing major league sources who indicated that Scioscia was expected to be done as Angels manager at the end of this season, which is the final year of his 10-year contract.

The report said the decision was mutual, and that Scioscia had not been pressured to step down.

On Sunday morning, Scioscia said his status is the same as when he addressed reporters after the end of last season. At that time, he said would not seek an extension before the end of 2018, and he and general manager Billy Eppler and owner Arte Moreno would discuss his status then.

“Nothing has changed since we talked last October,” Scioscia said Sunday morning. “That’s the best way I can put it. There’s always chatter out there. The only word I have is poppycock. That’s all it is.”

There was also no indication that Scioscia had addressed the team or his coaches about his future.

Asked if he had any idea the source of the story, he said: “I think it’s just chatter.”

Scioscia was also asked if he still enjoyed managing, and he said “love it.”

Scioscia seemed frustrated by the report, but still handled it with humor, joking throughout a brief discussion of the topic with reporters. He cut off other questions when pressed for details.

Even after Scioscia’s denial, there was another story in USA Today reporting that he had decided before the season to retire. Upon hearing about that story after Sunday’s game, Scioscia said: “This is insanity.”

Scioscia, 59, is the longest tenured manager in the big leagues, having led the Angels since 2000. He won the manager of the year award twice, including the 2002 season when he led the Angels to a World Series title.

The Angels were fixtures in the postseason for most of his first decade at the helm, but since 2010 they’ve made the playoffs just once, in 2014.

This year the Angels are in jeopardy of finishing below .500 for a third straight season, with a 55-58 record heading after Sunday’s loss at Cleveland.

**FROM LOS ANGELES TIMES**

## **Near-heroic effort by Angels bullpen not enough in 4-3 loss to Indians**

By Mike Digiovanna

A near-heroic effort by the Angels bullpen wasn’t enough to overcome a horrific start by Deck McGuire in a 4-3 loss to the Cleveland Indians on Sunday.

McGuire retired one of seven batters in a three-run first inning before manager Mike Scioscia went to his bullpen. Relievers Taylor Cole, Jose Alvarez, Cam Bedrosian, Blake Parker and Jim Johnson recorded 23 outs, allowing one run and four hits in 7 2/3 innings.

McGuire, starting in place of the injured Tyler Skaggs, gave up a single to Francisco Lindor to open the first. Michael Brantley walked, and Jose Ramirez crushed a three-run homer to right field, his 33rd homer of the season traveling 423 feet for a 3-0 lead.

"I threw a fastball down the middle," McGuire said, "and a really good hitter put a good swing on it."

Edwin Encarnacion was hit by a pitch and Yonder Alonso singled. McGuire struck out Melky Cabrera before hitting Jason Kipnis with a pitch to load the bases.

Cole replaced McGuire and retired Roberto Perez on a fielder's choice grounder, third baseman Jefry Marte throwing home for the out. Leonys Martin popped out to shortstop and Cole blanked the Indians on one hit over the next three innings.

"I don't think I did enough with the first seven hitters to show that I deserved to stay in the game," McGuire said. "It's tough to put the team in that spot, but I can't say enough about the guys who came in after me. They put up a bunch of zeroes and the offense scrapped enough to give us a chance to win in the end."

With Mike Trout unavailable because of a wrist injury and Justin Upton and Albert Pujols out of the lineup, the Angels outhit the Indians 11-7. But they went two for 11 with runners in scoring position.

Francisco Arcia and Kaleb Cowart struck out with runners on second and third to end the fourth. The Angels scored twice in the fifth on Jose Briceno's single, Kole Calhoun's RBI triple and Shohei Ohtani's RBI single.

Kipnis' RBI double off Bedrosian in the sixth pushed Cleveland's lead to 4-2. The Angels loaded the bases with one out in the seventh, but Indians right-hander Cody Allen got Andrelton Simmons to pop out and David Fletcher to ground out.

Simmons' RBI infield single off closer Brad Hand pulled the Angels to within 4-3 in the ninth, but Hand struck out Fletcher, ending the Angels' 1-5 trip to Tampa Bay and Cleveland.

"I thought we hit the ball harder than they did," Scioscia said, "but we couldn't get that extra hit with guys in scoring position."

### **No bueno for Valbuena**

Struggling corner infielder Luis Valbuena was designated for assignment Sunday, ending to his two-year stint with the Angels.

The left-handed-hitting Valbuena, known for his periodic power and amusing bat flips, signed a two-year, \$15-million deal in 2017 after Houston let him go.

He hit .199 with a .727 on-base-plus-slugging percentage, 22 homers and 65 RBIs in 117 games last season but slipped to .199 with a .588 OPS, nine homers, 33 RBIs, 100 strikeouts and 19 walks in 96 games this season.

"Historically, he's a very hot and cold hitter," Scioscia said. "When he's hot, he gets it going, when he's cold, it's not happening."

Hitting coaches Eric Hinske and Paul Sorrento “tried to work on some swing things through spring training and the start of the season to help him get more consistency,” Scioscia added. “Unfortunately, that didn’t materialize.”

### **Short hops**

Trout sat out his fourth straight game because of a right wrist injury. He is able to throw but has been unable to swing a bat with enough strength to play in a game.

“Same as yesterday,” Trout said Sunday. “We’ll see how it feels in the morning.” ... Cabrera, the Indians’ right fielder, made superb diving catches of Marte’s flare to shallow right and Calhoun’s drive to the gap in the third inning, and leaped at the wall to catch Ohtani’s deep drive in the fourth. He was removed for defensive purposes in the sixth.

## **Mike Scioscia says a report that he'll step down at end of Angels' season is 'poppycock'**

By Mike Digiovanna

Mike Scioscia began his pregame media session on Sunday with a phrase he has uttered hundreds of times in his 19 years as Angels manager, one that elicits chuckles no matter how often he repeats it.

“What could possibly have happened in the last 24 hours?” Scioscia asked.

In this case, plenty. Or, possibly, nothing, depending on who you believe.

Scioscia forcefully denied a late-Saturday night report in the Athletic that he is expected to step down at the end of this season, when his 10-year, \$50-million contract expires.

“Nothing has changed since we talked last October,” Scioscia said before Sunday’s 4-3 loss to the Cleveland Indians in Progressive Field. “There’s always chatter out there, but the only word I have for it is ‘poppycock.’ That’s all I’m gonna say about it.”

Then during the game, USA Today, citing three persons “directly involved with his decision,” reported that Scioscia, baseball’s longest-tenured manager, made up his mind before spring training that this would be his final season.

“This is insanity,” Scioscia said after the game, his patience with the subject obviously wearing thin. “That’s it.”

Scioscia referred reporters to a meeting he held immediately after the 2017 season in which he and general manager Billy Eppler agreed to table any discussions about Scioscia’s future until after the season so they could focus on 2018.

“I have not made a decision,” Scioscia insisted. “Nothing has changed since last October.”



Does Scioscia, who turns 60 in November, still like managing?

“I love it,” he said.

The plot thickened when the team announced Sunday afternoon that former big-league third baseman Eric Chavez, a special assistant to the GM who has been prominently mentioned as an Angels managerial candidate, would replace Keith Johnson as triple-A Salt Lake’s manager for the rest of the season.

The move sparked immediate speculation that the Angels are grooming Chavez, who has not managed at any level, as a replacement for Scioscia. Eppler tried to douse that conjecture.

“Chavez covered for K.J. when K.J. was selected as a coach for the Futures Game,” Eppler said. “He already has a working knowledge of the operation in Salt Lake and is familiar with the staff and front office, so it was the least invasive option for us.”

Johnson, who has an infield background, will supplement the big-league staff, not replace anyone on it.

“We have a lot of young players who have touched down in the major leagues who K.J. has coached this year,” Eppler said. “His support is important to us.”

Scioscia has said little publicly about his contract status all year. He said Sunday that he has not had any formal discussions with Eppler, owner Arte Moreno or team president John Carpino about his future in recent weeks. The Athletic indicated that Scioscia is not being pressured to step down.

Mike Trout, Kole Calhoun and Albert Pujols declined to discuss Scioscia’s situation, with Calhoun saying that Saturday night’s story about his expected resignation “was the first I heard of it.” If Scioscia has made a decision, he apparently hasn’t shared it with his players.

“I’ve been known to miss some little team meetings, but I haven’t heard anything,” shortstop Andrelton Simmons said. “I don’t know much about it.”

Josh Paul, the former big-league catcher in his first season as the team’s bench coach, and Brad Ausmus, the former Detroit Tigers manager who is a special assistant to the GM, would be candidates to replace Scioscia if he steps down.

“I don’t really want to talk about,” Paul said Sunday. “All in good time.”

Scioscia has built a Hall-of-Fame worthy resume, leading the Angels to the 2002 World Series title, six division titles and the AL Championship Series in 2005 and 2009. He ranks 18th on the all-time managerial win list with 1,625 victories.

But the Angels have reached the postseason only once in eight years, they haven’t won a playoff game since 2009, and they are nearing the end of another disappointing, injury-plagued season, falling to 55-58 and at least 11 games back in the AL wild-card race after Sunday’s loss.

"It's a little weird to think about him not managing this team," Simmons said. "I like him as a manager. He communicates well with me. He knows as much about the game as anybody. I have nothing bad to say about him."

## Angels designate Luis Valbuena for assignment

By Mike Digiovanna

Struggling corner infielder Luis Valbuena was designated for assignment by the Angels on Sunday morning, most likely ending his two-year stint with the team.

The left-handed-hitting Valbuena, known for his periodic power and amusing bat flips, was signed as a free agent after the Houston Astros let him go in 2016. He hit .199 with a .294 on-base percentage, .432 slugging percentage, 22 homers and 65 RBIs in 117 games last season.

But he hit only .199 with a .253 OBP, .335 slugging percentage, nine homers and 33 RBIs in 96 games this season, striking out 100 times and walking 19 times in 288 plate appearances. He had two hits in his last 26 at-bats. He also made eight errors in the field, two of them in Wednesday night's loss in Tampa Bay.

"Luis worked very hard, and so did Eric and Pauley just trying to get him to find that rhythm," manager Mike Scioscia said, referencing hitting coaches Eric Hinske and Paul Sorrento. "Historically, he's a very hot-and-cold hitter. When he's hot, he gets it going, when he's cold, it's not happening.

"They tried to work on some swing things through spring training and the start of the season to help him get more consistency. Unfortunately, that didn't materialize. But nobody worked harder than Luis. We enjoyed when he was here. He just never got into sync like he did in the second half last year."

**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## After McGuire's exit, Halos unable to catch up

By Casey Harrison

CLEVELAND -- **Deck McGuire's** outing on Sunday afternoon wasn't quite what manager Mike Scioscia had in mind.

Scioscia said before the game that he had seen good things from McGuire, the former first-round Draft pick who was **recalled from Triple-A Salt Lake** Sunday morning to start after **Tyler Skaggs** was placed on the 10-day disabled list with a left adductor strain.

McGuire, however, was unable to find his command or escape the first inning, while the American League Central-leading Indians (61-49) scored three runs off him and beat the Angels (55-58) in a rubber match, 4-3, at Progressive Field.

"He had a little bit of a problem finding his release point and making some pitches," Scioscia said of McGuire. "He was behind guys and had a rough first inning."

McGuire's command issues also led to easy contact for the Tribe, who sent nine men to the plate in the first. The right-hander allowed the first six batters to reach, including a **Francisco Lindor** single and a **Michael Brantley** double, which set the table for a three-run homer for **Jose Ramirez**. The Indians third baseman has 33 on the year, which ties Boston's **J.D. Martinez** for the Major League lead.

"I threw a fastball down the middle," McGuire said. "A really good hitter put a really good swing on it. It's not the way you want to start a game."

After the Ramirez long ball, McGuire hit **Edwin Encarnacion** and surrendered a single to **Yonder Alonso** before striking out **Melky Cabrera**. McGuire also hit **Jason Kipnis** before being pulled for **Taylor Cole**.

All three runs allowed by McGuire were earned. He threw only 25 pitches -- 13 called for strikes, and he lasted one-third of an inning, marking his shortest start in professional baseball since May 11, 2011, when he gave up five runs in one-third of an inning with the Blue Jays' Double-A affiliate.

"I just wasn't in the zone early enough in counts," McGuire said. "I felt like I made a few good pitches to get back into counts but couldn't finish anybody off. I made one really bad pitch and got beat by it."

Trailing 3-0, Scioscia pulled the plug on McGuire to give way to Cole and **Jose Alvarez**, who combined for five scoreless innings to keep the game within reach until the seventh. Cole, who was recalled from Salt Lake on Friday, finished the first and totaled 3 2/3 frames, allowing a hit, a walk and recording three strikeouts. Alvarez collected a strikeout and a walk over 1 1/3 innings, and he faced the minimum after inducing a double play.

"That's what these guys have been doing all year," McGuire said of the bullpen. "I can't say enough about Taylor Cole, who got thrown into that spot in the first inning and what he did after that, too. He's a really good pitcher and a really good arm, and all the guys who threw after me did a really exciting job."

The Angels scored two runs in the fifth off Indians rookie **Shane Bieber** (6-2), who spread seven hits over 5 2/3 innings and struck out seven. **Jose Briceno** singled with one out and scored one batter later on a **Kole Calhoun** triple hit off the top of the left-center-field wall. The left-handed-hitting **Shohei Ohtani** brought in Calhoun with a sharp opposite-field single to cap a 2-for-4 showing.

"I don't think I did enough with the first seven hitters to show that I deserved to stay out there," McGuire said. "Obviously, I felt really bad putting the team in that spot from the first inning to play catch-up all game. But I can't say enough about the guys who came up after me who put up a bunch of zeros."

### MOMENT THAT MATTERED

**Cutting it close:** The Halos tacked on another run in the ninth off closer **Brad Hand**. **Justin Upton** pinch-hit for **Eric Young Jr.** and reached on a fielder's choice. Upton advanced to second on a wild pitch and made it to third on a groundout before scoring on an infield single by **Andrelton Simmons**.

"You saw there were a lot of guys out, but ... the guys that were in there played hard, and I thought we hit the ball harder than they did," Scioscia said. "I just thought we couldn't get that extra hit with guys in scoring position.

"The fact that we got that many guys and put that much pressure on them was good. There was especially a lot of younger guys in there who we just had some opportunities to get back early in the game and couldn't do it."

### MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

Following the Indians' three-run first inning, the Tribe scratched across another run in the second, but it was later taken off the board after a review. Lindor, who led off the frame with a double, advanced to third one batter later on a groundout from Brantley. Cole then walked Ramirez, who was doubled up by Young, after trying to retreat back to first on an Encarnacion flyout.

The initial ruling on the field was that Lindor scored before Ramirez was called out. The Angels challenged, however, and the call was overturned in between innings.

### UP NEXT

Right-hander **Nick Tropeano** (4-6, 4.94 ERA) will get the nod as the Halos welcome in the Tigers for a three-game series. Tropeano picked up the win in the Angels' 9-2 win over Detroit on May 29 at Comerica Park after going 5 1/3 innings, allowing seven hits and two runs while striking out five. Left-hander **Matthew Boyd** will start for the Tigers. First pitch is scheduled for 7:07 p.m. PT.

## Scioscia denies report he plans to step down

By Casey Harrison

CLEVELAND -- There was an undeniable tension when Angels manager Mike Scioscia entered the visiting dugout Sunday morning at Progressive Field. About 12 hours earlier, **a report from The Athletic** (subscription required) from MLB Network insider Ken Rosenthal indicated that Scioscia was expected to step down at the end of the season, ending the skipper's 19-year tenure in Anaheim.

Scioscia joked with reporters as he walked in from the clubhouse to lighten the mood, sarcastically asking what news could have possibly surfaced since meeting with media following the team's loss to the Indians on Saturday.

Scioscia's 10-year, \$50 million contract expires at the end of the season, but he was quick to dismiss the report. He further emphasized that nothing has changed since the end of last season.

"Nothing has changed since we talked in October -- that's how I can put it," Scioscia, 59, said. "Nothing has changed. Sometimes there's always chatter out there, and the only word I have for it is 'poppycock.' That's what it is, poppycock."

Scioscia has been manager since 2000, and he has led the Halos to their only World Series championship in 2002 and six American League West Division titles. The two-time manager of the year said that after 19 seasons, he still loves his job and wouldn't address the issue further.

Scioscia also said he has no idea where the rumor came from.

"I think it's just chatter," Scioscia said. "That's all I'm gonna say about it. You can ask whatever you want., but I think I've said nothing has changed since last October."

Tribe manager Terry Francona -- who's managed 18 seasons and has been with Cleveland since 2013 -- said pregame he also talked to Scioscia and said he believed the report was nonsense. Francona also offered that what Scioscia has been able to accomplish in Anaheim has been impressive to watch, and that he holds nothing but respect for Scioscia.

"Unbelievable," Francona said of Scioscia's tenure. "That is quite an accomplishment."

Francona also said that he was worried about the timing of the report and how it could affect the morale of an Angels team that entered Sunday 55-57.

"I just wanted to let him know that I was thinking about him, because he's going to have to deal with that now," Francona said. "It is really amazing. From my own personal experience, I worry about shelf life. Not worried because you're losing your job -- I don't think I've ever worried about that. I worry because you want your message to be [fresh]. If your message stops getting listened to, that's not good. And you can't change who you are. So that's something that I think about a lot."

## Trout still out of lineup; Halos recall McGuire

*Pujols resting; Valbuena designated for assignment*

By Casey Harrison

CLEVELAND -- Superstar outfielder **Mike Trout** remained out of the starting lineup for the fourth straight game in Sunday afternoon's **4-3 loss** to the Indians as he works his way back from a right wrist contusion sustained on Wednesday against the Rays.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia said Trout is still day to day, and that he has been able to field and throw without many issues but is still struggling to fully extend through his swing without feeling the injury.

"Were monitoring and getting treatment -- [Trout's] not quite ready today," Scioscia said. "We'll continue to see what happens in the next day and see how Mike's feeling. Hopefully, it'll be soon."

First baseman **Albert Pujols** and outfielder **Justin Upton** were also out of the starting lineup for the series finale, though Upton pinch-hit for **Eric Young Jr.** in the ninth inning and reached on a fielder's choice. He came around to score on **Andrelton Simmons'** single.

### **McGuire recalled, Valbuena DFA'd**

The Angels announced Sunday morning that **Deck McGuire** was recalled from Triple-A Salt Lake to start the series finale at Progressive Field. He yielded three runs on three hits in one-third of an inning on Sunday afternoon, striking out one, walking two and hitting two batters before being pulled.

Left-hander **Tyler Skaggs** was initially scheduled to get the nod, but he was placed on the 10-day disabled list on Saturday with a left adductor strain. McGuire is 0-2 with a 7.11 ERA in 12 games at the Major League level this season, including eight with Los Angeles since it acquired him from Toronto on June 19. The former Blue Jays first-round Draft pick is 4-3 in 11 games with a 4.74 ERA in the Minors in 2018.

To make room for McGuire on the 25-man roster, the club designated 11-year veteran **Luis Valbuena** for assignment.

"Luis worked very hard ... just trying to find that rhythm," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "Historically, he's a very hot-cold hitter. When he's hot, he gets it going. When he's cold, it's not happening. They tried to work on certain things in Spring Training and through the start of the season to help him find a little more consistency. Unfortunately, it didn't materialize."

In two seasons with the Halos, Valbuena slashed .199/.277/.390 with 31 home runs and 98 RBIs in 213 games. Valbuena has played 96 games this season, mostly at third base, and he has hit .199 with nine homers, 33 RBIs and 100 strikeouts.

Manning the hot corner Sunday was **Jefry Marte**, who is hitting .203 in 59 games this season. Scioscia said that a platoon of guys could be holding down the position until a definite decision is made.

"We're going to mix and match right now," Scioscia said.

## ***FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS***

### **Ramirez homers, Bieber wins again as Indians top Angels 4-3**

By Steve Herrick

CLEVELAND (AP) — Jose Ramirez finished third in the AL Most Valuable Player race last season.

Cleveland's All-Star third baseman is making another run to finish high in the voting again.

Ramirez moved into a tie for the major league lead with his 33rd home run — a three-run shot in the first inning — and the Cleveland Indians defeated the Los Angeles Angels 4-3 on Sunday.

Ramirez is batting .300 and is third in the AL with 82 RBIs. He's also near the top of the league in slugging percentage, on-base percentage and total bases.

"He's a special hitter," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Some guys kind of warm into the game. He's dangerous right from the very first pitch."

Ramirez homer traveled an estimated 423 feet and barely missed landing in the upper deck in right field. He also walked twice and has three homers and eight RBIs in his last six games.

Ramirez's home run came against Deck McGuire, called up from Triple-A Salt Lake to start in place of the injured Tyler Skaggs.

McGuire (0-2) retired only one batter, allowed three runs and was pulled with the bases loaded in the first. While McGuire had never any of Cleveland's hitters, he knew what he was getting into with Ramirez at the plate.

"I threw a fastball down the middle, and a really good hitter put a really good swing on it," he said.

Rookie Shane Bieber (6-2) allowed two runs in 5 2/3 innings. Brad Hand — the Indians fourth reliever — allowed a run in the ninth but got his third save with Cleveland and 27th of the season.

Before the game Angels manager Mike Scioscia dismissed a report that he's stepping down after this season. Scioscia, who has managed the Angels since 2000, said before Sunday's game that he won't talk about his future with the club until the season ends.

The Angels were missing outfielder Mike Trout for the fourth straight game with a lingering right wrist injury. He hasn't played since injuring his wrist while sliding on a steal attempt Wednesday in Tampa.

Trout is still having issues swinging the bat and is considered day to day. Albert Pujols was also out of the lineup for a planned day off.

The Angels scored twice in the fifth on Kole Calhoun's RBI double and Shohei Ohtani's run-scoring single.

Calhoun started the ninth with a single. Pinch-hitter Justin Upton hit into a force play and Ohtani grounded out, but Andrelton Simmons' infield hit made it a one-run game. Hand struck out David Fletcher to end the game.

Skaggs was scheduled to start Sunday, but went on the 10-day disabled list with a left adductor strain. McGuire joined the team Saturday and was activated before the game. He allowed a home run, two singles, hit two batters, walked one and threw a wild pitch.

McGuire loaded the bases on two hit batters and a single, but Taylor Cole retired the next two hitters and pitched 3 2/3 scoreless innings.

Jason Kipnis had an RBI double in the sixth.

Right fielder Melky Cabrera helped Bieber with three outstanding defensive plays. He made a head-first diving catch of balls hit by Jefry Marte and Calhoun in the third. Cabrera hung on to Ohtani's drive to right field after crashing into the wall in the fourth.

"He was all over the place," Francona said. "That was kind of cool to hear the way the fans responded to it too. He did a good job."

#### MAKESHIFT LINEUP

Trout and Pujols were out of the lineup and Upton wasn't used until the ninth. Eric Young Jr. started in center again while Simmons batted cleanup and Francisco Arcia played first base.

"We had a lot of guys out but the guys that were in there played hard and we hit the ball harder than they did, we just couldn't get that extra hit with guys in scoring position," Scioscia said.

#### MILLER'S OUTING

Andrew Miller made his second appearance since spending two months on the DL with right knee inflammation, entering in the seventh with a runner on first. He retired Calhoun on a lineout to center, but allowed Young's single and hit Ohtani with a pitch.

Miller was relieved by Cody Allen, who threw 1 2/3 scoreless innings.

"It wasn't exactly like we drew it up, but with the way their lineup shook out it fit kind of perfectly to go in that order," Allen said.

#### ROSTER NEWS

Infielder Luis Valbuena was designated for assignment to make room for McGuire. Valbuena batted .199 with nine home runs and 33 RBIs in 96 games.

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians: C Yan Gomes (right hamstring tendinitis) missed his second straight game.

#### UP NEXT

Angels: Los Angeles returns home to open a three-game series Monday against Detroit. RHP Nick Tropeano (4-6, 4.94 ERA) will start for the Angels.

Indians: Cleveland begins a three-game series Monday against Minnesota at Progressive Field. RHP Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34) will start for the Indians.



## Angels' Scioscia nixes report he'll step down as 'poppycock'

By Tom Withers

CLEVELAND (AP) — Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia reached deep into his vocabulary to describe a report saying he'll step down after this season.

"Poppycock," Scioscia said Sunday, using a dated term for "nonsense."

A day after The Athletic reported that Scioscia is expected to end his 19-year run with the Angels in October, the manager strongly dismissed the report and insisted that he still loves what he's doing.

Shortly after the Angels were beaten 3-0 by the Indians on Saturday night, longtime baseball writer Ken Rosenthal, citing unnamed major league sources, reported that Scioscia — the longest-tenured manager in the majors — and the Angels had reached a mutual decision to part ways after this season.

Scioscia said that's not true, and he has "no idea" where the report originated.

"Nothing has changed since we talked in October," he said, referring to what he told reporters at the end of last season about his status. "There's always chatter out there. That's it. Nothing's changed. The only word I have is poppycock. That's all it is."

Following last season, Scioscia, Angels general manager Billy Eppler and owner Arte Moreno jointly said they would put off any talks about the 59-year-old manager's future — or a possible contract extension — until the 2018 season was over.

Scioscia is in the final year of a 10-year deal he signed in 2008.

One of the game's most likable managers, the former major league catcher was in a playful mood and joked with reporters while sitting in the dugout before Sunday's game. Once he denied the report, Scioscia was eager to change the subject.

Scioscia said he did not speak with the team and doesn't believe his situation will distract the Angels, who have little chance of making the playoffs. They entered Sunday's game in fourth place in the AL West, 16 games behind division leaders Houston and well back in the wild-card race.

The Angels haven't made the postseason since 2014, and they could potentially finish under .500 for the third straight year under Scioscia.

They were a playoff fixture from 2002 through 2009, making the postseason six times with Scioscia at the helm and winning a World Series title in '02.

Indians manager Terry Francona said he spoke with Scioscia after seeing the report.

"I just wanted to let him know that I was thinking about him," Francona said. "Because he's going to have to deal with that now."

Scioscia has twice been named AL Manager of the Year. He has managed the Angels in 3,028 games since taking over in 2000 after one season at Albuquerque in the Pacific Coast League.

Only four managers — Connie Mack (50), Walter Alston (23), Bobby Cox (21) and Tommy Lasorda (21) — have managed one team for more consecutive seasons than Scioscia. All four are in the Hall of Fame.

Francona said Scioscia's steadiness is remarkable in a game where change is inevitable. Also, Francona marvels at Scioscia's ability to keep his players motivated throughout the years.

"It is really amazing," Francona said. "From my own personal experience, I worry about shelf life. Not worried because you're losing your job. I don't think I've ever worried about that. I worry that, because if your message stops getting listened to, that's not good. And you can't change who you are."

## **Angels star Trout out 4th straight game with sore wrist**

By Tom Withers

CLEVELAND (AP) — Los Angeles Angels All-Star outfielder Mike Trout is missing his fourth straight game with a nagging right wrist injury.

Trout hasn't played since injuring his wrist while sliding on a steal attempt Wednesday in Tampa. The 26-year-old said Saturday night that he still has soreness in his wrist when he swings and throws.

After he was evaluated Sunday, manager Mike Scioscia chose to keep him out of the series finale against the Indians.

The Angels open a three-game series Monday in Detroit.

Trout had expected to be back earlier, but his wrist has not responded to treatment as hoped. X-rays and an MRI revealed inflammation. Trout said following Saturday's game that it's been "frustrating. You don't want to be sitting on the bench watching your team out there."

Eric Young Jr. again replaced Trout in center field for Sunday's game.

Trout is batting .309 with 30 home runs in 109 games.

**FROM MiLB.COM**

## Prospect Roundup: Games of Aug. 5\*

*Kopech keeps on trucking for Charlotte; Bart triples twice*

By Sam Dykstra

### Theme of the day

**Hits and no hits at Class A:** It was a day of extremes in Class A. Marlins prospects **Taylor Braley**, **Jeremy Ovalle** and **Michael Mertz** combined to throw a **seven-inning no-hitter** for Greensboro -- the Grasshoppers' first no-no since 2012 when Jose Fernandez was on the mound. At the other end of the spectrum, Red Sox outfielder **Jarren Duran** and Angels third baseman **Tim Millard** collected five hits each for **Greenville** and **Burlington**, respectively. Kannapolis -- the club Greensboro no-hit -- probably wishes those two hitters could have spread some of the knocks around.

### Who needed this one

**Angels SS Kevin Maitan, Rookie-level Orem: 3-for-5, HR, RBI, 2 R, K** -- The Angels' No. 7 prospect has dropped out of MLB.com's top 100, due to body concerns and poor performance. However, the 18-year-old shortstop was still named a Pioneer League All-Star despite posting an OPS below .700 for most of the circuit's short season. Before the Northwest/Pioneer League All-Star Game on Tuesday, Maitan helped justify his selection by matching his season high with three hits. Following a 2-for-6 showing Saturday, this weekend marked just the second time this season that Maitan has collected multiple hits in back-to-back games. The switch-hitting shortstop has produced a .252/.319/.371 line with four homers, six doubles and a 77 wRC+ this season.

*\*Article cut to only include Angels-related material.*

## BayBears' Jones plates career-high five

*Angels No. 4 prospect homers, doubles, extends hit streak*

By Josh Horton

**Jahmai Jones** is a people pleaser, so much so that the perpetual failure rooted in the game wears on him, according to Mobile manager Lou Marson.

Lately, he's been more relaxed, and it's paying dividends at the plate.

The **Angels' fourth-ranked prospect** demonstrated that Sunday, collecting a career-high five RBIs while homering and doubling in Double-A Mobile's 10-1 romp over Birmingham at Regions Field. Jones is

riding a seven-game hitting streak and has collected multiple hits in four of his last five games for the BayBears.

"I think he's just finally just relaxing and going out and just playing the game," Marson said. "You know, he's really hard on himself. He wants to do so well ... and he's always trying to make everybody happy. And in this game, you can't do that. We've been having conversations with him about going out and having an edge and continuing to have good at-bats, make good decisions."

The 21-year-old second baseman clubbed a two-run homer to left-center field in the second inning off **Kodi Medeiros**, then roped a double to right on the first pitch from the **19th-ranked White Sox prospect** to plate two more runs in the fourth. Jones capped his career day with an RBI groundout in the sixth.

As in 2017 -- when Jones posted a .167/.211/.292 in his first 18 games with Class A Burlington, Jones started slow this year, posting a .235/.338/.383 slash line in 75 games with Class A Advanced Inland Empire. He's been more productive at the dish since being promoted to Mobile on July 10, hitting .257 with a .759 OPS in 26 contests.

The 2015 second-round pick batted .235/.338/.383 in 75 games with Class A Advanced Inland Empire before being promoted to Mobile on July 10. He's been more productive since moving up to the Southern League, hitting .257 with a .759 OPS in 26 contests.

The season has tested Jones more on the defensive side, with the 6-foot infielder **switching to second base** from the outfield in the offseason. While the adjustment period is still ongoing, Marson likes what he sees with Jones' development in the infield.

"He'll still have some nights where he'll mess a ball up, but he has a great attitude about it," Marson said. "He's going to do that, he's going to make mistakes. That's part of his development. The organization knows that, I know that, he knows that. Just trying to keep him positive and athletic out there. He's a good athlete and we try and talk to him about being a good athlete out there."

The extra repetitions required to learn a new position make Jones' recent hot stretch even more impressive.

"He's working on some swing mechanics stuff with our hitting coach (Lee Tinsley) and our hitting coordinator (Jeremy Reed), and it's good to see and especially pretty surprising to see given the position change," Marson said. "He's had a lot of work over there at second base. It's good to see him have some success."

The Georgia native is 11-for-30 (.367) with seven RBIs and seven runs scored during his hitting streak.

**Jose Rojas** and **Zach Gibbons** also homered for the BayBears. **Alex Klonowski** (8-2) spun seven scoreless innings to win his third straight start, allowing three hits and striking out six.

Top Angels prospect **Jo Adell** has been out of the BayBears lineup for the past three games for general maintenance, according to Marson. His return date isn't definite, but the skipper said probably will be after Mobile returns home Tuesday.

"Nothing that concerning, just giving him a couple days," he said. "He's young and it's a long season -- just giving him some time off. We'll get him back in there when we go home."

## Millard collects five hits in Bees' romp

*Angels' 35th-rounder hits first Class A homer, scores three runs*

By Gerard Gilberto

Based on what he's done at the professional level, **Tim Millard** doesn't seem like the type of player who likes to waste much time. He went from the 35th round of the First-Year Player Draft to Class A Burlington in six weeks and he's already giving opposing pitchers fits in the Midwest League.

The Angels infield prospect went 5-for-5 with his first Midwest League homer as the Bees pounded the Cougars, 16-4, on Sunday afternoon at Community Field. He scored three times, drove in a pair and raised his average to .400 in five games at the level.

"This league seems pretty solid," Millard said. "There's some good pitching and some really good defense I've already noticed so far. People out here really love baseball, it's been a fun three or four days."

The five hits eclipsed the 23-year-old's previous best of three, which he accomplished three times with Rookie-level Orem. Millard moved up to Burlington on Wednesday after batting .299/.391/.500 with seven homers and 29 RBIs in 41 Pioneer League games.

"It was awesome," he recalled. "It was a big moment and I was really excited to get up here."

Millard had a slow start upon arriving at full-season ball, going 1-for-8 in his first three games, but he's registered seven hits in his last nine at-bats.

"I think the guys up here, they know what they're doing a little bit more, they're a little more experienced and confident," the 6-foot, 200-pounder said. "Pitching-wise, they trust their stuff and they're definitely able to locate a little better."

Millard's first extra-base hit for the Bees, a double in Saturday's 8-6 loss to Kane County, arrived in similar fashion to his first roundtripper. With those, as well as two of his four singles Sunday, the third baseman attacked the first pitch. Millard said he came into the contest looking to focus on hitting the right pitch when it comes, even if it's early in the count.

"I've been falling behind with two strikes a lot and trying to hit from behind in the count, which isn't always good," he said. "Just kind of something I noticed myself over the past couple of weeks. I was getting down in a lot of counts and wanted to be more aggressive."

Following **Keinner Pina**'s double to start the second inning, Millard stroked the next offering from starter **Mack Lemieux** into center field. He came home on **Julio Garcia**'s two-RBI knock to left that

opened the scoring in Burlington's 10-run frame. Millard took a strike in his second at-bat of the inning before pulling another base hit to left and scoring on **Kiki Menendez's** three-run homer to right.

"It's definitely something that we appreciate because we've played a lot of close games lately," Millard said. "For the offense to kind of click today and just be rolling all nine innings was pretty special. It was good to just keep it rolling."

A Dallas Baptist University product, Millard went to the opposite field for his solo homer in the fourth. The Carrollton, Texas, native went first-pitch hunting again with the bases loaded in the sixth, pushing each runner up a base with an RBI blooper to second. He capped his day by pushing his fifth base hit to right with one out in the eighth.

Garcia and Menendez both drove in three runs for Burlington, which got two hits apiece from **Kevin Williams** and **Spencer Griffin**.

### FROM CBS SPORTS

## Tigers look to get best of struggling Angels

*The Detroit Tigers haven't won a road series against the Los Angeles Angels in nearly nine years. They'll try to end that streak beginning Monday night in the opener of a three-game series at Angel Stadium.*

By STATS

The Detroit Tigers haven't won a road series against the Los Angeles Angels in nearly nine years. They'll try to end that streak beginning Monday night in the opener of a three-game series at Angel Stadium.

Detroit's offense will need to be a lot more productive than it was against the Oakland A's during the weekend. The Tigers combined for one run in 31 innings while getting swept in the three-game series.

The Tigers (47-65) will catch a Los Angeles team that's also spiraling after a record-breaking 13-3 start to the season.

The Angels (55-58) have lost six of their past seven games to drop three games below .500 for the first time this season, have been without two-time American League Most Valuable Player Mike Trout for the past four games because of a sore wrist, and a weekend report surfaced that manager Mike Scioscia will not seek to renew his contract after this season, his 19th with the club.

Scioscia vehemently denied the report before and after the Angels lost 4-3 at the Cleveland Indians on Sunday.

"Nothing has changed since we talked last October," Scioscia told the Orange County Register. "That's the best way I can put it. There's always chatter out there. The only word I have is poppycock. That's all it is."

The Tigers won three of four against the visiting Angels from May 28 to May 31. The last time they won a series at Angel Stadium was when they took two of three on Aug. 24-26, 2009.

Since 2010, Detroit is 7-21 in Anaheim.

Detroit left-hander Matthew Boyd will make his first start at Angel Stadium and second against the Angels in his four-year career.

He faced Los Angeles on May 28 in Detroit and blanked the Angels on two hits in five innings, picking up the win in the 9-3 victory. Scioscia was impressed with Boyd's change of speeds and pitch locations.

Boyd (6-9, 4.22 ERA) will be aiming to win a third straight start for the second time in his career. His past two victories came after he went 0-5 in a six-start stretch from June 19 to July 20, raising his ERA from 3.23 to 4.62 in that span.

In his latest appearance, Boyd threw eight shutout innings in a 2-1 win over the visiting Cincinnati Reds on Tuesday, his best outing since losing a no-hitter with one out in the ninth inning against the Chicago White Sox on Sept. 17.

Boyd threw 105 pitches on Tuesday, one short of his season high.

"His pitch count got up there, or we might have sent him back out there (for the ninth inning)," Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire told MLB.com after the game. "I was kidding with him. I told him, 'If you hadn't tipped your hat, I would've left you in.'"

Angels right-hander Nick Tropeano (4-6, 4.94) will make his 14th start of the season and second of his career against the Tigers.

He helped win the only game of the four-game series in Detroit earlier this season, allowing two runs and seven hits in 5 1/3 innings of the 9-2 victory.

Luis Valbuena, Ian Kinsler and Martin Maldonado drove in three runs apiece for the Angels in that game. All three were traded or released by Los Angeles since July 26.

## **Angels manager Mike Scioscia calls report he will step down after season 'poppycock'**

*Scioscia is the longest tenured manager in baseball and one of the longest of all time*

By Matt Snyder & R.J. Anderson

**Sunday:** Scioscia addressed the report on Sunday, calling it "poppycock" and stating he has no plans to step down:

**Jeff Fletcher**

Mike Scioscia said “nothing’s changed since October” regarding his job status. Called reports of him stepping down “poppycock.” (Yes, he said that.) Also said he still “loves” managing. Cut off other questions.

Of course, it's not as though Scioscia was likely to acknowledge such reports as true -- not with two months to go in the season. We'll see how this one plays out between now and November.

**Saturday:** If it seems like you can't remember the Angels before Mike Scioscia was their manager, we'd forgive you. He took the job prior to the 2000 season and has been entrenched in his role since. Now in his 19th year on the job, he's the longest-tenured manager in baseball.

That will likely be coming to an end, per Ken Rosenthal of The Athletic, at season's end:

### **Ken Rosenthal**

#Angels manager Mike Scioscia expected to step down at the end of the season, sources tell The Athletic. Story

Scioscia's current 10-year contract is set to expire at the end of the season and it has been widely assumed the Angels would be re-upping their skipper. But now that doesn't appear to be the case. We'll have to see if the contract had anything to do with Scioscia's pending departure or if the separation is amicable.

Rosenthal reported that Scioscia has not received pressure from the club to leave, and that it was unclear whether Scioscia would want to manage another team immediately.

After consecutive losing seasons the banged-up Angels are again under .500 this season at 55-57.

Scioscia, 59, was at the helm for the Angels' only World Series title in franchise history (2002) and has won the division title six times in his 19 years. He has a 1,625-1,403 record and has won the AL Manager of the Year Award twice (2002, 2009).

Scioscia currently ranks 18th in manager wins in history. Most of the skippers in front of him are in the Hall of Fame (or headed that way, in cases like Giants manager Bruce Bochy) and there are some behind him as well.

We mentioned earlier that Scioscia is currently the longest-tenured manager in baseball, but he's actually one of the longest tenured with the same team of all time.

The managers in history with longer stints than Scioscia:

- Connie Mack, Athletics, 50 years
- John McGraw, Giants, 31 years
- Walter Alston, Dodgers, 23 years
- Bobby Cox, Braves, 21 years
- Tommy Lasorda, Dodgers, 21 years



If Scioscia does step down, Bochy would become the longest-tenured manager in baseball. He's been with the Giants since 2007.

## **Angels manager: If Mike Scioscia steps down at season's end, here are 10 potential candidates to succeed him**

*From Brad Ausmus to Rob Thomson, we survey the field*

By R.J. Anderson

On Saturday, The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal reported that Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia is expected to step down at season's end. Scioscia, the longest-tenured skipper in baseball, has managed the Angels since 2000. If true, this will mark the end of an era.

Who might the Angels target to replace Scioscia? It's a fair question, and one we decided to attempt to answer by providing 10 potential candidates. Remember, this is more guesswork than science. Still, we're not just drawing names from a hat. Each has a reason for being here.

With that in mind, let's get to the list. Note that the candidates are presented alphabetically.

### **Brad Ausmus**

Ausmus joined the Angels front office last November after serving as the Detroit Tigers manager for four seasons. He was often criticized for his tactical decisions during that run, and finished with a sub-.500 record. Still, Ausmus figures to get another chance at some point. It's clear that the Angels value what he offers -- even if it proves to be not enough to name him manager.

### **Eric Chavez**

General manager Billy Eppler likes Chavez so much that he hired him away from the New York Yankees, where the two had worked together. Chavez hasn't worked as a coach, but has stated in the past he feels that's where his future lies.

### **Gary DiSarcina**

Currently the New York Mets bench coach, DiSarcina has a history with the Angels. He spent time as the first- and third-base coaches during a three-year run with the club earlier in the decade. DiSarcina has popped up on candidate lists before, and was seemingly in contention for the Philadelphia Phillies gig before they decided on Gabe Kapler.

### **Dino Ebel**

Like DiSarcina, Ebel has sufficient history as a big-league coach as well as with the Angels franchise. He was the third-base coach from 2006-13 and reclaimed that post this season after three years spent as

Scioscia's bench coach. Beyond that, Ebel has extensive history as a minor-league coach, and has served with the Angels organization since 2005.

### **Joe Espada**

Why might Espada earn consideration for the Angels job? It begins with his nearly decade-long run as a big-league coach and extends to his connection to Eppler, given the two worked together with the Yankees. Another thing working in Espada's favor is that he's spent this season as the bench coach for the Houston Astros, suggesting he's comfortable using advanced metrics on some level. That's pretty much a must in today's game.

### **Darin Erstad**

In the NFL or NBA, Erstad would be a more realistic candidate. He's a well-known former player who has spent years coaching at Nebraska. Baseball, for various reasons, doesn't seem to believe in the college-to-majors leap -- not for managerial types, at least. Maybe that'll change someday down the road, but it won't happen in time for Erstad to replace Scioscia.

### **Joe Girardi**

As with John Farrell, Girardi is going to be connected to most every opening until he's hired elsewhere. Because Girardi is the hot name with regards to the St. Louis Cardinals opening, his connection to Eppler from their shared Yankees days is likely to go unnoticed -- that relationship is why he, not Farrell, gets named here. Of course, the flip side to their history is that Eppler may feel the same way about Girardi that the Yankees did when they dismissed him last fall.

### **Josh Paul**

Expect Paul to get an interview. He joined the Angels staff as bench coach over the winter, having previously worked with Eppler as part of the Yankees organization. Paul played with the Angels and was able to hang around despite a lacking bat due to his staff-handling abilities and smarts. He's considered a future skipper, and it could be a matter of when, not if he gets a shot.

### **Ron Roenicke**

If the Angels want a Scioscia associate -- and it's not clear that they do -- then Roenicke makes plenty of sense. He has had separate stints coaching under Scioscia, from 2000-10 and then again from 16-17, wrapped around his five-year run as the manager of the Milwaukee Brewers. Roenicke now serves as bench coach for the Boston Red Sox.

### **Rob Thomson**

Thomson spent a decade as coach with the Yankees prior to leaving last winter to join the Phillies as bench coach. Philadelphia's success could lead to renewed interest in Thomson as a manager. At minimum, his relationship with Eppler could land him an interview.

**FROM DEADSPIN****Jose Ramirez Is Right On Mike Trout's Heels**

By Avery Yang

Jose Ramirez hit another homer on Sunday, his 33rd of the year and one that gave him a share of the MLB lead. It was a towering three-run shot that helped propel the Indians over the Angels 4-3, padding their nine-game lead over the Twins in the AL Central.

Ramirez is having a ludicrous year, with an fWAR of 7.5—second in MLB, by 0.1, behind only Player of the Generation Mike Trout, who himself is having a career year. Along with his 33 homers, Ramirez has had career-high numbers in almost every notable offensive category, including the all-encompassing ones, like wOBA, wRC+ and OPS—all categories in which he's in the top-four of all of MLB. Ramirez's walk to strikeout ratio also leads MLB, at 1.33, and his overall walk rate is more than six points higher than his previous career-high, attributing to his elite .409 on base percentage.

The switch hitting slugger's value isn't just in his bat, though. His defensive runs saved, according to FanGraphs, is the second-highest among all third basemen in MLB, with eight, only behind the A's Matt Chapman, who is first in all of MLB in dRS. For reference, Ramirez put up 0 defensive runs saved in 2017, and still finished the season with a 6.7 fWAR.

The dude also steals bases, having notched 26—caught stealing just four times, an 86.67 percent success rate, well above the 75 percent or so threshold that makes one a valuable base stealer. This, too, is a career-high, and it, too, is the highest total in the AL.

Mike Trout has and will continue to doom many fantastic baseball players to seasons in which the only prize available to them will be a consolation: Best Player in The Game, Non-Mike Trout Division. It took a lengthy DL stint from Trout last season for Jose Altuve to pip him in the MVP race, and even then Trout still put the heat on him. How many MVP awards will Trout steal from poor Mookie Betts before all is said and done?

So it's heartening to see a guy like Ramirez, who was already firmly ensconced in baseball's non-Trout tier of excellence, making a run at the king so late in the season. It's also kind of disgusting that the exponential improvements in power, plate discipline, defense, and base-running that Ramirez has implemented into his game this year aren't enough to see him coast to an MVP award. Trout's made that mountain harder to climb than any player since Barry Bonds, and even if Ramirez won't ever see the summit, this year's climb has been fun as hell to watch.

**FROM USA TODAY****Mike Scioscia hoped he could quietly step away as Angels manager**

By Bob Nightengale

It was the secret that Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia hoped to keep all season.

He made up his mind before spring training this would be his final season, not only as Angels' manager, but with no intention to manage again.

Scioscia, the longest-tenured manager in the Major Leagues, and third-highest paid manager in baseball, is retiring after this season, three people directly involved with his decision told USA TODAY Sports over the past two weeks.

The people were granted anonymity as they were not authorized to speak publicly on Scioscia's decision.

He told his family and friends that he wanted no publicity. No fanfare. Please, no farewell ceremonies.

Just privacy, hopeful that after the Angels' final game Sept. 30 against the Oakland A's, he could quietly step away after 19 seasons at the helm.

Yet, in this day and age, it's so tough to keep a secret, and when word leaked Saturday night in a report by The Athletic that Scioscia likely would step down, Scioscia was left scrambling, saying he would address his situation after the season.

"Nothing has changed since we talked last October," Scioscia told reporters in his office Sunday morning. "That's the best way I can put it. There's always chatter out there. The only word I have is poppycock. That's all it is."

Too late now. Scioscia will be thrust into the spotlight these last six weeks, subjected to questions wherever he goes, listening uncomfortably to accolades, and will have folks debating on the airwaves whether he'll be in the Hall of Fame, while others predict his successor.

Scioscia, 59, and General Manager Billy Eppler still haven't had a conversation about his future, and it's unknown whether Scioscia would be invited back if he wanted to return. Yet, Scioscia will make the decision easy by stepping down without the need to talk.

There's already a short list of in-house candidates, among them former Detroit Tigers manager Brad Ausmus, bench coach Josh Paul, and special assistant Eric Chavez, but there soon will be hundreds of resumes landing on Eppler's desk. Eppler declined comment last week when USA TODAY Sports asked about Scioscia's retirement plans.

Scioscia, who likely would be on the short list of the St. Louis Cardinals, Cincinnati Reds and other teams seeking a permanent manager this winter, has no interest in managing again. This is it. He also has no

current plans to stay in baseball in any capacity, at least for the next few years, hoping to spend his next few summers traveling.

After 19 years in this game as manager, you get burned out. He has had the longest run of any manager since Hall of Famer Bobby Cox spent 21 years with the Atlanta Braves, and the sixth-longest of all-time. The only active coach in North American sports with a longer tenure is Gregg Popovich of the San Antonio Spurs.

Maybe it would be different if the Angels were winning, but that stopped years ago. They've reached the postseason only once since 2009, and haven't won a postseason game in nine years. There were hopes this season would be different, but after being ravaged with injuries, the Angels' season ended in June, sitting 11 games out of a wild-card spot.

This has nothing to do with owner Arte Moreno, or Eppler, with whom he has enjoyed a strong relationship since Eppler was hired after the 2015 season. The depleted farm system and woefully thin pitching staff over the years made it nearly impossible to compete in the powerful AL West. Still, Scioscia never made excuses, publicly or privately.

Whether Scioscia winds up in the Hall of Fame or not, this has been a glorious run, and his hiring may be the greatest decision the Angels ever made.

He provided instant credibility, stability, leadership and changed the culture of an entire organization, becoming the most powerful manager in the game at one time, with the Angels reaching the playoffs six times in nine years.

Scioscia led the Angels to their lone World Series title in 2002, winning six division titles, a wild-card berth, two Manager of the Year awards, and ranking 18th among managers with 1,625 victories, eclipsing his mentor, Hall of Fame manager Tom Lasorda, in May. He has won the second-most games with one franchise in baseball history, trailing only Walter Alston (2,040) of the Los Angeles Dodgers.

"I think he's a Hall of Famer, just look at the huge difference Mike has made," said Boston Red Sox bench coach Ron Roenicke, who spent 13 years on Scioscia's staff. "If not for Mike managing that team in 2002, we don't win the World Series.

"We had good players when we got there [in 2000], but Mike created a different culture. He came in with an aggressive style. We created runs, we hit home runs, we did all of the little things that today's analytics probably would not agree with, but they were important.

"It was such a different thought-process because Mike let the players know it was OK to make mistakes. They played aggressive, played free, and it worked."

The Angels were a National League-style team playing in the American League, taking the extra-base, stealing bases, and making life uncomfortable on every opposing manager. Yet, despite attracting the biggest free-agent stars in Albert Pujols and Josh Hamilton, and developing the game's greatest player in Mike Trout, the winning stopped. It became a battle for survival rather than contending for World Series titles.

"I've always admired Scioscia from the other side," says San Francisco Giants manager Bruce Bochy, who coached Scioscia for one year in the San Diego Padres' organization. "He's a very aggressive manager, not afraid to take risks, and his teams always play hard. Just a very good fundamental team that played the game right.

"He's had quite the career as manager."

It's doubtful Scioscia will relent and permit the Angels to have a farewell ceremony for him during their final homestand. He may steadfastly refuse to even address his future until the season ends.

No matter.

He'll forever be remembered in Angels' folklore, and once he takes off his uniform, No. 14, it likely will never be worn again, permanently retired.

It has been quite the ride playing in the shadows of Disneyland, but it's finally time, Scioscia says, to turn off the lights.

Just don't tell anybody.

### **FROM YAHOO! SPORTS**

## **Mike Scioscia's time to gracefully leave Angels will come, just not today**

By Tim Brown

Mike Scioscia, if not the last of the old-time managers then in the same carpool, has lost 1,430 games and not a single battle.

He's on his second team owner. His fourth general manager. By appearances, they'll be his last. An entire generation of folks who began sentences with, "Well, I didn't play the game, but ..." or "I've never managed a game, but ...", the problem being the "but" part, came and mostly went. Some hung around. Not as long as Scioscia has. And not with the same purpose. Not with the same certainty.

If you're hoping now to fancy him up for his first managerial decade or, as likely, run him down for the second, you'd be trying too hard. Same guy. Same priorities. (Different bosses, different players.) But for the usual curvatures allowed for age and miles, this is the same man who on the afternoon of April 3, 2000 topped a lineup card with "ERSTAD, LF", the first of a million decisions he'd defend, if required, to the bloody nubs.

There are people who choose their life's companion with less conviction than Scioscia will send a runner on a 3-and-2 count. It's what made him perfect for the Los Angeles Angelsthen, the Angels for their first four decades being one of those occasionally relevant franchises that rather lacked a sustained intention. It is perhaps what exhausts him after 19 years. He is coming up on 60 years old, which isn't so

old unless it happens to you. Also, he's logged about 5,000 baseball games, playing and managing. Those would be the miles, many at a slog's pace.

So the notion Scioscia is managing his final weeks for the Angels is not a revelation as much as it is the long sigh of inevitability. The Athletic on Saturday night reported Scioscia intended to step away at the end of the season, following those 19 seasons and the expiration of his 10-year contract. A man who "steps away" at the end of his contractual commitment may indeed be endeavoring to turn the mob into a parade, but that wouldn't seem to be Scioscia's style. He'd more likely turn and take on the mob. At minimum flash that, "Holy crap, Angel, that's not a strike, Jesus you're killing me" face at it.

No, what made sense at the end of last season, made sense in spring training and made sense in the heart of summer — that Scioscia probably will have had enough, and if not then the Angels might be ready to try something new. Either way, the franchise and its loyal employee seemed to be inching toward a commonly-held, some-time-coming resolution. The Angels are mediocre again. They have burned another season of Mike Trout's prime. The regime of Arte Moreno, once celebrated as the everyman's way of franchise running, slips further into thin-skinned defensiveness and grudge holding. If only anyone cared about that, though.

So why not a new manager too? Why not Josh Paul or Brad Ausmus or someone else, see if that unsticks a team that hardly ever gets it right in the AL West anymore, that since five division titles in six years will have one in nine seasons by the time this one is done. They call it a results business. They say it as if there are businesses that aren't. One might argue that if the last three general managers couldn't get it quite right, maybe it's not the general managers. I wouldn't. But one might.

According to those who should know, Scioscia, Moreno and general manager Billy Eppler have not yet had the conversation that settles the future, the one that continues without Scioscia on their top step. (Eppler is finishing the third year in his four-year contract and while there are signs of growth beneath the major league level, there is still the major league level and a third losing season.)

In Cleveland on Sunday morning, Scioscia was predictably defiant. It's who he is. What he does. He hates to be labeled controlling, but he is. I'd argue that managers have to be. Good ones, anyway. Maybe some are better at disguising it, allowing players and other personnel to believe they're in some way in charge. When they're not.

"Nothing has changed since we talked in October," Scioscia told reporters. "That's how I can put it. Nothing has changed. Sometimes there's always chatter out there, and the only word I have for it is 'poppycock.' That's what it is — 'poppycock.'"

They'll be a time to go gracefully. This is not the time, not with a game to play, a schedule to finish, ballplayers to flesh out. What made Mike Scioscia good at this, and sometimes even great at it, was his attention to the day. To all the battles. But, then, the key to winning those is knowing which ones to pick.

And which ones not to.

**FROM DESERET NEWS****Salt Lake Bees manager Keith Johnson to join Los Angeles Angels organization; former Major Leaguer Eric Chavez to replace him**

By Ryan McDonald

SALT LAKE CITY—As rumors swirl that longtime Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia will step down after this season, there will be a managerial change in their Triple-A organization, the Salt Lake Bees.

The Bees on Sunday announced that veteran skipper Keith Johnson will join the Angels' coaching staff for the rest of the season, and that former Major League Baseball star Eric Chavez will take Johnson's place for the remainder of the campaign.

On Saturday night, The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal reported that Scioscia will step down in the fall after more than 18 years with the Angels. Rosenthal also reported that Chavez, who has been working as a special assistant to Los Angeles general manager Billy Eppler since 2015, is in the mix to replace Scioscia.

Scioscia on Sunday denied Rosenthal's report, telling reporters it was "poppycock."

Chavez has no previous managerial experience, but was a six-time Gold Glove winner with the Oakland Athletics. He spent the final four seasons of his career, which spanned from 1998-2014, with the New York Yankees and Arizona Diamondbacks.

As for Johnson, 2018 marked his seventh year with the Bees. The Los Angeles Times' Mike DiGiovanna reported Sunday that Johnson is expected to work with the Angels' infielders.

Salt Lake currently sits in second in the Pacific Coast League's Pacific Southern Division, 2.5 games back of the El Paso Chihuahuas. The Bees have the fifth-best record overall in the 16-team league at 60-52.

Chavez made his managerial debut on Sunday as Salt Lake played the second of a four-game series on the road against the Omaha Storm Chasers. The Bees will return home for a series against the Tacoma Rainiers which starts Thursday at Smith's Ballpark.

**FROM MLB TRADE RUMORS****Quick Hits: Realmuto, Marlins, Astros, Red Sox, Angels, Eloy**

By Connor Byrne

Along with the previously reported Nationals, the **Astros** had interest in **Marlins** catcher **J.T. Realmuto** prior to the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline, according to Nick Cafardo of the Boston Globe. Both teams' interest in Realmuto dates back to at least last offseason, but neither they nor anyone else



have been able to pry the star backstop out of Miami. Instead of Realmuto, the Astros ended up acquiring the much less exciting **Martin Maldonado** from the Angels before the deadline. He's backing up **Max Stassi**, who has emerged as the Astros' starter since **Brian McCann** underwent knee surgery a month ago. Stassi got off to a great offensive start this year before cooling off significantly over the past couple months, though he is having an elite season behind the plate.

- The **Red Sox** inquired about **Marlins** closer **Kyle Barraclough** before the deadline, but Boston ultimately "backed off," Cafardo writes. Barraclough wound up staying with the Marlins, who placed a high asking price on the flamethrowing right-hander. The 28-year-old hasn't been good of late, as his ERA has skyrocketed from .99 to 3.28 since the beginning of July, but he still comes with a quality track record and affordable team control. As a result, the Marlins elected to keep Barraclough, who will make his first of three possible trips through arbitration during the winter.
- In an interestingly timed move, the **Angels** announced Sunday that special assistant Eric Chavez will manage their Triple-A team in Salt Lake for the rest of the season. Previous manager Keith Johnson will finish the year on the Angels' coaching staff, and GM Billy Eppler said Sunday that the Halos want him to work with their young infielders (Twitter link via Mike DiGiovanna of the Los Angeles Times). The decision to replace Johnson with Chavez raised eyebrows, though, given that the latter has come up as a potential replacement for Angels skipper Mike Scioscia, who's reportedly going to retire at the end of the season. The 40-year-old Chavez, a longtime major league third baseman, had never managed at any level until the Angels handed him the Triple-A reins.
- Standout **White Sox** outfield prospect **Eloy Jimenez** is "getting really close" to earning a major league promotion, director of player development Chris Getz said Sunday (via 670 The Score, on Twitter). The 21-year-old Jimenez, whom Baseball America, MLB.com and FanGraphs all regard as the game's third-best prospect, has hit an astounding .376/.425/.679 with eight home runs and a .303 ISO in 120 plate appearances since the White Sox moved him to Triple-A Charlotte in late June.

## FROM BLEACHER REPORT

### Ranking the Future Star Power of MLB's Loaded 2018 Rookie Class\*

By Jacob Shafer

What makes a future MLB star?

It's a complex question with a lot of factors, but it's one worth considering in light of this season's loaded rookie class.

In both leagues, multiple players have emerged with the right combination of ingredients to become stars. What are those ingredients? Here's what we considered:

- **Performance:** Obviously, stats matter, and every player ranked here has put up eye-opening numbers in 2018.

- **Potential:** Projecting rookies is always a tricky business; even the most promising starts can flame out. But the talent and tools to sustain big league success are a must.
- **Location and position:** This is the least essential but not to be ignored. Fair or not, it's easier to emerge as a star playing a high-profile position (as opposed to, say, middle reliever) for a marquee team than it is toiling for a small-market underdog.

In the end, these rankings are subjective and involve a lot of guesswork and eyeball-test assumptions, though we did limit our potential field to rookies who've compiled at least 1.0 WAR by FanGraphs' measure as of Sunday. What's undeniable is that every player on this list is worth watching closely.

Before we get to the top eight, here's a few rookies who didn't quite make the cut but warrant a mention: Walker Buehler (RHP, Los Angeles Dodgers); Seranthony Dominguez (RHP, Philadelphia Phillies); Joe Jimenez (RHP, Detroit Tigers); Max Stassi (C, Houston Astros); Christian Villanueva (3B, San Diego Padres).

### **No. 1: RHP/DH Shohei Ohtani, Los Angeles Angels**

Ah, Shohei Ohtani. How you confound.

The two-way Japanese star was the most intriguing prize of the offseason before agreeing to a deal with the Los Angeles Angels, a big-market-adjacent squad.

Then he had a rough spring and there was talk of a bust. Then he got off to a strong start on the mound and with the bat in the regular season and the Babe Ruth comparisons returned. Then an elbow issue put him on the shelf for a bit and derailed his pitching until further notice.

Here's what we know: Ohtani posted a 3.10 ERA and averaged 11.1 strikeouts per nine innings in 49.1 frames. He's also posted an .858 OPS and 11 homers in 209 plate appearances.

The 24-year-old has the tools and, now, the early results to be a front-line starting hurler *and* a force with the lumber.

Will he hold up? Will his elbow and other body parts ultimately betray him and either force him to pick a gig (hitter vs. pitcher) or hang it up prematurely? That's possible.

If we're looking at the intersection of ability, early results, location (yeah, it'd be better if he were on the Los Angeles Dodgers, but still) and intangibles, no 2018 rookie has a higher ceiling for stardom than Ohtani, and it's not especially close.

*\*Article cut to only include Angels-related material.*