



SF Giants Press Clips Monday, July 9, 2018

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants bust out bats to beat Cards on five-RBI day for Sandoval **Henry Schulman**

Some of Steven Duggar's gear did not arrive at AT&T Park on Sunday, including his running shoes, so he borrowed a pair from Pablo Sandoval for batting practice. Duggar wears size 12. Sandoval is an 11½.

"I had to squeeze into them," Duggar said as Sandoval laughed at the next locker.

It was a good day to be in any hitter's shoes against the Cardinals. The Giants scored a season high in runs and won 13-8 to split the four-game series, a big exhale after they totaled 10 runs in their previous six games.

Though most of the spotlight naturally shone on Duggar's 2-for-6 big-league debut, Sandoval, who is approaching the 10th anniversary of his debut next month, had the biggest day.

He hit a three-run homer off reliever John Brebbia in the fifth inning to put the Giants ahead to stay and added a two-run double in a five-run sixth that began with Duggar's first big-league hit, a double off Greg Holland. Sandoval got both big hits with two strikes after he sprained his left thumb while making the second of two nice diving stops at third base.

Although manager Bruce Bochy expressed concern, Sandoval said he was fine.

"It's nothing bad," Sandoval said. "I had to concentrate on not doing too much at the plate, and that helped me."

Duggar's day did not start well. He muffed two bunt attempts in his second at-bat, after Gorkys Hernandez's leadoff double and a walk to Madison Bumgarner, then struck out looking.

“That stuck with me the whole game,” Duggar said. “I tried to flip the page. That’s my job as a leadoff hitter. Bum worked a great at-bat there. First and second, nobody out. I’ll definitely work on that.”

The Giants still scored three in the inning, one on an error by shortstop Paul DeJong on Buster Posey’s hard grounder.

Duggar flipped the page well enough to ignite a five-run rally.

“I’m excited to see Duggar here,” said Bumgarner, who did not have a good game (51/3 innings, four runs). Asked what was working for him, the Big Fella replied, “The offense.”

The Giants led 11-5 in the eighth when Bochy had Ray Black make his big-league debut. Black threw the first 100 mph pitches by a Giant since Hunter Strickland in 2016, but he walked his first two hitters, then allowed a one-out Matt Carpenter homer into the cove on a first-pitch, 99 mph fastball.

“I’m sure he was amped up pretty good,” Bochy said, “but you saw the stuff. It’s going to work.”

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants deal Jackson, Gearrin to Texas, promote Duggar, Black Henry Schulman

In this era of big winners and bigger tankers in major-league baseball, the worst thing a team can be is a wishy-washy .500. As sure as the summer fog will make unsuspecting San Francisco tourists shiver, the Giants were headed there in 2018.

Something had to change, and on Sunday morning, it did.

Before the Giants busted out of their hitting malaise and whomped St. Louis 13-8 to earn a series split, they announced they had traded underperforming outfielder Austin Jackson, reliever Cory Gearrin and Class A pitching prospect Jason Bahr to the Rangers for a player to be named or cash.

That was the groundwork for the moves the Giants really wanted to make, aside from gaining some breathing room under the luxury-tax cap. They promoted their most advanced outfield prospect, center fielder Steven Duggar, and right-handed reliever Ray Black, who can throw 100 mph but nearly retired this winter after years of arm issues.

Duggar was one of the best defensive outfield prospects in Triple-A and had ratcheted up his hitting.

Duggar was put into action immediately, leading off and playing center field for the Giants. He

went 2-for-6, his first big-league hit a double that started a five-run rally against Greg Holland in the sixth inning after Pablo Sandoval's three-run homer in the fifth gave the Giants a 6-4 lead. Sandoval had five RBIs.

Black's debut was rough. Starting the eighth inning with the Giants leading 11-5, he walked his first two hitters and then surrendered a three-run splash homer to pinch-hitter Matt Carpenter on a 99-mph fastball.

On Sunday morning, manager Bruce Bochy said Duggar largely will platoon with Gorkys Hernandez in center, with Hernandez moving to left on days Duggar plays. The Giants will have to adjust for at least one game because Hernandez hobbled off the field with a tight left calf after hitting a two-run single to cap the five-run sixth.

Bochy said the injury does not appear serious. Hernandez wanted to stay in the game and could be available again by Tuesday.

The Rangers bailed out the Giants again. After acquiring Matt Moore and taking on his \$9 million salary over the winter, Texas will assume all of the roughly \$4.4 million left on Jackson's contract for this year and next, and the \$800,000 left on Gearrin's 2018 contract.

That knocks about \$2.1 million off a payroll that the Giants admitted was straddling the \$197 million luxury-tax threshold.

That was the price the Giants sought in order for Texas to acquire Bahr, last year's fifth-round draft pick, who had a 1.69 ERA in three starts for San Jose after his promotion from Low-A Augusta, Ga.

Rangers general manager Jon Daniels told Texas reporters the club asked Jackson not to report, a sign it might release or trade him.

The Giants made the deal and promoted Duggar at a time when the offense was frigid, scoring 10 runs over six games that included five losses. General manager Bobby Evans said the talks began before the slide and had more to do with the club's desire to promote Duggar and Black while shedding payroll.

"It's not about what happened the last four or five days," Bochy said. "That being said, sometimes you've got to shake things up when you're not going well."

Duggar, 24, was hitting .272 with a .775 OPS at Sacramento. He struggled early in the season, then made some slight mechanical changes at the plate and a bigger mental adjustment. He said he stopped over-analyzing and just played.

The Giants originally hoped to promote Duggar in April. He admitted he was disappointed not making the team out of spring.

“Sure, I guess, in a way,” he said. “There obviously were things I needed to work on, that I still need to work on. It was good for me to go to Sacramento because I definitely failed down there.”

Black, 28, walked seven and struck out 38 in 212/3 innings for the River Cats. His story is truly about perseverance.

Starting in high school 10 years ago, Black has had Tommy John surgery, injuries to his knee and hand, a shoulder operation that cost him two years and arthroscopic surgery on his elbow to remove bone chips.

When he felt some post-surgery pain this winter while throwing, he considered retirement and going back to Pennsylvania to work on the family vegetable farm.

“It’s been a crazy road, a lot of ups and downs, a roller-coaster emotionally,” Black said. “I stayed open-minded (about playing in 2018) and the rest took care of itself. I had a pretty good spring and it kept rolling from there.”

Black hit 102 mph in Sacramento this year and 100 twice Sunday.

Garrin had become the eighth man in an eight-man bullpen. He pitched in 166 games during four seasons in San Francisco and had a 4.20 ERA in 35 games this year, pitching better lately as the Giants were trying to move him.

Jackson simply didn’t pan out for the Giants, who signed him as a complement to Duggar, assuming the prospect made the team. Jackson hit .242 with no homers and a .604 OPS in 165 plate appearances for the Giants and became a ghost on the bench.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants’ Brandon Crawford, Buster Posey are NL All-Stars; Belt can be voted in Henry Schulman

In his eight seasons with the Giants, Brandon Crawford has felt a lot of love from the dozens of pitchers who have known that serving up a groundball to shortstop is a good way to go.

This year, fans across the country caught up and elected Crawford in a landslide to his first National League All-Star starting gig.

Joining him at Nationals Park in Washington on July 17 will be catcher Buster Posey, who lost a tight race to the Cubs’ Willson Contreras in fan voting but became a six-time All-Star when he won the player balloting.

A third Giant, first baseman Brandon Belt, could join Posey and Crawford if he wins the last-

chance ballot on MLB.com that also has the Cardinals' Matt Carpenter, Brewers' Jesus Aguilar, Dodgers' Max Muncy and Nationals' Trea Turner.

"Craw just had a terrific first half," manager Bruce Bochy said. "And Buster's numbers ... he's had to deal with a lot of nagging injuries and he's still hovering around .290."

Posey, who's hitting .285, lost to Contreras in the closest NL race, with about 250,000 votes separating them.

Crawford, who went to the 2015 All-Star Game as a reserve, beat the Cubs' Addison Russell by more than 1.4 million votes, the fourth-largest margin of victory in either league, behind AL second baseman Jose Altuve, NL first baseman Freddie Freeman and AL designated hitter J.D. Martinez.

"When you get that much fan support, it's definitely special," Crawford said. "I'm excited. I appreciate the votes from all fans, whether they were Giants fans or fans around the country. It's going to be fun."

Many Giants fans would prefer Posey to stay in San Francisco and rest, but he inevitably says he loves to go to the All-Star Game.

Posey was especially happy for Crawford, saying, "He's been fun to watch. Obviously, the glove has been huge. The way he's swinging the bat, he definitely deserves it."

Crawford leads all NL shortstops with a .300 average. His .844 OPS ranks second to the Rockies' Trevor Story.

Contreras and Miami's J.T. Realmuto, who was placed on the NL team by manager Dave Roberts and the league, both are hitting better than Posey, who surely got a lot of player votes based on his catching.

Posey will go as a reserve for the third time. He also went as a starter three times, in 2012, 2016 and 2017.

The final-vote balloting that includes Belt will be open online until 1 p.m. Wednesday.

MLB.com
Belt could return to All-Star Game via Final Vote
Chris Haft

SAN FRANCISCO -- You might say that by being named a candidate in the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, Giants first baseman Brandon Belt received a pardon for the interruption in his season.

Belt's Final Vote rivals to reach the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard include Dodgers infielder Max Muncy, Brewers first baseman Jesus Aguilar, Nationals shortstop Trea Turner and Cardinals infielder Matt Carpenter.

Belt had just finished riding a nine-game hitting streak when he was stricken by appendicitis on June 1. He regained his stroke shortly after rejoining the lineup, but it's anybody's guess how handsome his statistics would look had he avoided being sidelined.

Belt owns a .300/.393/.509 slash line, garnished by 13 homers and 42 RBIs. Two years ago, when he won the National League's Final Vote competition to make his first All-Star team, his corresponding numbers were .302/.407/.521 with 10 home runs and 47 RBIs.

"It's a shame," said Giants manager Bruce Bochy, referring to Belt's appendicitis-induced 13-game absence. "He's had, I think, his best first half."

A spirited, social media-based effort by the Giants propelled him into the 2016 Midsummer Classic, as he won the voting ahead of Pittsburgh's Starling Marte, Colorado's Trevor Story, Arizona's Mike Lamb and Milwaukee's Ryan Braun.

Belt is the lone winner among the Giants' previous Final Vote candidates, who include Benito Santiago (2003), Aaron Rowand (2008), Pablo Sandoval (2009) and Hunter Pence (2013).

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 1 p.m. PT.

Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans can submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 All-Star Game MLB.com MVP Vote.

The 89th Midsummer Classic, at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., will be televised nationally by FOX Sports; in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and RDS; and worldwide by partners in more than 180 countries. FOX Deportes will provide Spanish-language coverage in the United States, while ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide exclusive national radio coverage of the All-Star Game. MLB Network, MLB.com and SiriusXM also will provide comprehensive All-Star Week coverage.

MLB.com

Posey joins starter Crawford as Giants All-Stars

Chris Haft

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Giants' delegation bound for Washington to participate in the July 17 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard comes from different constituencies, so to speak.

Brandon Crawford was a landslide winner in fan voting for the National League shortstop spot. It'll be his second All-Star selection and his first start, having been chosen as a reserve in 2015.

"I went before as a reserve and that was awesome, but to make the starting lineup will be more special," said Crawford, who received 3,212,103 votes to 1,805,856 for second-place finisher Addison Russell of the Cubs. "Whenever you get that much fan support, it's definitely special."

Chased down by Chicago's Willson Contreras in the fan balloting, catcher Buster Posey nevertheless earned his sixth All-Star selection by winning the players' vote at his position.

"I didn't know which way it was going to go," said Posey, who finished with 1,918,966 votes to 2,172,682 for Contreras. Posey called his selection by the players a "huge honor."

Moreover, Crawford and Posey could be joined by another teammate: first baseman Brandon Belt, who was named a Final Vote candidate. This is familiar territory for Belt, who made his lone All-Star appearance as the winner of the Final Vote process in 2016.

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 1 p.m. PT.

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Crawford, 31, was a hands-down choice for the Midsummer Classic. He compiled a 1.064 OPS in May and a 1.009 OPS in June, making him the first Giant to record a 1.000-plus OPS in back-to-back months since Posey did so in July-August 2012.

Though this hasn't been Posey's most prolific offensive season, he entered Sunday batting a healthy .327 (17-for-52) with runners in scoring position. According to Baseball Info Solutions, Posey led the Giants with six defensive runs saved in June, reflecting his constant focus upon mastering his position.

MLB.com

Panda sprains thumb, then drives in five runs

Martin Oppegaard

SAN FRANCISCO - With highly touted 24-year-old Steven Duggar making his Major League debut Sunday, hitting leadoff and playing center field, it was veteran Pablo Sandoval's huge game that helped them avoid dropping their first series at AT&T Park since the first homestand this season.

Backed by Sandoval's five-RBI day, including a three-run, go-ahead homer in the fifth inning, the Giants took the fourth game of the series against the Cardinals, 13-8.

The Giants' offense woke up from a six-game slumber in which it had posted a team average of .167 and scored a total of 10 runs. Sandoval was 1-for-17 in those six games, but his home run swing on a 96 mph fastball on the inner half of the plate, and the way he feathered a slider down the left-field line for a two-run single, suggests a hitter that is absolutely locked in.

"What I liked about him today is how he really battled with two strikes," manager Bruce Bochy said. "Those hits, he had two strikes on him and just really fought and found a way to put it in play. Of course, one left the ballpark."

Diving to his right to make a forceout at second in the fourth inning, Sandoval sprained his left thumb but remained in the game.

"The thumb is good," Sandoval said. After that, I just concentrated not to do too much at home plate and it helped me a little bit more."

On Sunday, Sandoval was one of three Giants with three hits. Every starter reached base at least twice.

"As a team, we did great," Sandoval said. "Seventeen hits, it's exciting. That's the offense we know. Duggar, [Brandon] Belt, all those guys. It's exciting for [Duggar]. He got his first hit and first win."

Duggar led off the sixth with his first career hit, a line-drive double to center field that showcased the youngster's speed and sparked a five-run inning. He collected a second hit in the ninth.

"I think the biggest thing for me offensively was just get on base," Duggar said. "Find a way to simplify it. If I can get on base, [I can] create some havoc on the basepaths and provide an opportunity to put up some runs. That's my goal, to try to get on base and make things happen."

It all amounted to more than enough support for Madison Bumgarner (2-3). The lefty said "nothing" was working for him but battled through 5 1/3 innings, allowing four runs. He struck out six and walked two, effectively keeping the Giants in the game. Bumgarner also helped his own cause with a single and a run.

"I wasn't making pitches," Bumgarner said. "Physically I felt good, felt like the stuff was the same. Just wasn't making pitches, that's really it. Fortunately, our offense did a tremendous job getting us back in the game and giving a big enough lead they couldn't come back from."

"It's good to get [Bumgarner] some runs," Bochy added. "He's a guy that's had a lot of trouble getting run support, so it's good that we picked him up today."

Making his MLB debut along with Duggar was 28-year-old Ray Black. The right-hander topped out at 99.6 mph but was chased after one-third of an inning by Matt Carpenter's three-run shot.

"Couple walks hurt [Black] there, then you give up the home run," Bochy said. "But you saw the stuff, it's going to work. He'll get settled in and get more comfortable out there."

The 13 runs were the most the Giants have scored all season and the first time they've scored double-digit runs since June 4.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Sandoval's home run wasn't his only big hit of the game. With the bases loaded in the sixth inning, he fell behind, 1-2, in the count against Greg Holland. On the next pitch, he flipped a slider to left field to score two and put the Giants up 8-4. Alen Hanson and Gorkys Hernandez followed with consecutive singles, effectively putting the game out of reach.

HERNANDEZ DAY TO DAY

After his two-run single broke the game open, Hernandez exited in the seventh inning with a tight left calf.

"We think it's just a day," Bochy said after the game. "He's probably going to miss tomorrow's game but my guess is he should be fine to go in the next game."

SOUND SMART

After retiring the last two batters of the eighth inning, Tony Watson extended his scoreless-innings streak to 18. It is now the second-longest streak in MLB, trailing only Drew Steckenrider (19 2/3).

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Sandoval did more than stuff the box score offensively. He also flashed the leather at third, diving to his left to snare Paul DeJong's liner in the second inning. Just two innings later he managed to get the lead runner at second after spraining his thumb diving to his right.

HE SAID IT

"It stuck with me for the whole game. I tried to flip the page but especially my job as a leadoff hitter is to get the job done, especially in that situation. Bum works a great at-base, gets on base. Guy on first and second nobody out, that's automatic. So I'll definitely be working on that." -- Duggar, who failed to get down a sacrifice bunt with Hernandez and Bumgarner on base in the third, then struck out looking

UP NEXT

The Giants will hand the ball to rookie Andrew Suarez (3-5, 3.92) in the series opener Monday at 7:15 p.m. PT at AT&T Park. After posting a 2.62 ERA across six starts in June, Suarez dazzled in his first outing of July. The left-hander threw seven innings of one-run ball in Colorado, striking out six and walking none. Suarez has been effective by throwing strikes; he's yet to walk more than two batters in a game. The Cubs will open with right-hander Kyle Hendricks (5-8, 4.27).

MLB.com

SF calls up Black, Duggar after deal with Texas

Chris Haft

SAN FRANCISCO -- In a convenient sequence of transactions Sunday, the Giants trimmed payroll by trading two expendable veterans, whose departures create playing opportunities for a pair of prospects.

San Francisco swapped outfielder Austin Jackson and right-hander Cory Gearrin, along with Minor League right-hander Jason Bahr, to the Texas Rangers for a player to be named or cash considerations.

That freed the Giants to raid the cupboard at Triple-A Sacramento by purchasing the contracts of outfielder Steven Duggar, widely considered the organization's leadoff batter and center fielder of the future, and right-hander Ray Black, the triple-digit-fastball-throwing reliever who's finally healthy.

"For us, it cleared up a couple spots there for these two kids," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "In fairness, Austin's playing time was cut back. He wasn't getting a lot of starts recently. I can't say enough about him and Cory, what great teammates they were. Even times they weren't getting the playing time that they were probably hoping, they were great. They were pulling for the guys. They were awesome in the clubhouse. Two class guys that we're going to miss."

But, Bochy added, "We were hoping to find a way to get Duggar up here along with Black."

By jettisoning Jackson, who signed a two-year, \$6 million deal as a free agent last offseason, and Gearrin, who has a \$1.675 million salary, the Giants gave themselves a better chance to operate under the \$197 million threshold of the Competitive Balance Tax. Each team's figure won't be determined until the end of the season.

By comparison, Duggar and Black will be paid the pro-rated portion of the \$545,000 minimum salary.

"What this does is it does create some additional buffer and flexibility below [the CBT] that we can use as a way to improve the club if the opportunity comes at the [non-waiver Trade] Deadline or along the way," Giants general manager Bobby Evans said.

Bochy wasted no time in giving Duggar a chance to prove himself, installing the 24-year-old in center field and atop the batting order Sunday. Bochy indicated the left-handed-batting Duggar and the right-handed-swinging Gorkys Hernandez, whose emergence limited Jackson's playing time, will platoon at times but not daily. Bochy added that Hernandez will remain a regular, occupying left field when Duggar's in center.

Sacramento manager Dave Brundage interrupted Duggar's dinner Saturday to give him the big news.

As Duggar related, Brundage said, "You can go to the Triple-A All-Star Game or you can go to the big leagues.' It was exciting, to say the least."

Duggar, rated the organization's No. 3 prospect by MLB Pipeline, was batting .272 with 27 doubles, four triples, four homers and 21 RBIs in 78 games at Sacramento.

Black, the Giants' 29th-rated prospect according to MLB Pipeline, was 2-0 with a 2.27 ERA in 22 games with Sacramento and 10 with Double-A Richmond. He had 58 strikeouts in 31 2/3 innings at the two classifications, bringing his career Minor League totals to 240 strikeouts in 125 2/3 innings.

Drafted in the seventh round out of the University of Pittsburgh in 2011, Black has endured multiple injuries and mishaps since high school, beginning with Tommy John elbow surgery in 2009, knee and hand surgeries, labrum surgery and the removal of a bone spur from his elbow. Before this season began, he seriously considered retiring from baseball to work at the family farm in Hanover, Pa.

"It's been a crazy road," said Black, 28. "There have been a lot of ups and downs. Roller coaster of emotions. A few months ago I didn't know if I was going to be playing any more to get to this point right now. It's incredible. I'm just grateful for the opportunity to be here."

Jackson, who batted .242 with 13 RBIs in 59 games, received significantly less playing time as Hernandez established himself as a reliable performer. More recently, outfielder Austin Slater's arrival from Sacramento limited Jackson's activity primarily to pinch-hitting. Jackson started one game since June 16.

Gearrin, 1-1 with a 4.20 ERA in 35 games, was an integral part of the bullpen but was used less frequently in high-leverage situations that were entrusted more often to the likes of Sam Dyson, Reyes Moronta, Tony Watson and Will Smith.

Evans noted that Bahr, 23, was not just a throw-in. He owned an 8-4 record and a 2.55 ERA in 16 starts at San Francisco's pair of Class A affiliates, San Jose and Augusta.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Brandon Crawford to start 2018 All-Star Game, Buster Posey named as a reserve Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO -- At the end of April, Brandon Crawford was batting .189. Now he's an All-Star starter.

The hottest stretch of Crawford's career earned him an easy win in the fan vote, and the second All-Star appearance of his career. Crawford will head to Washington D.C. alongside Buster Posey, who lost the fan vote to Chicago's Willson Contreras but was selected by his fellow players. Posey is an All-Star for the sixth time.

Crawford made mechanical adjustments after his rough start and took off, batting .412 with four homers and 21 RBI in May, and .326 with four homers and 14 RBI in June. With a week until the end of the first half, he leads National League shortstops with a .300 average and ranks second in OPS (.844) and RBI (39). Crawford is playing his usual Gold Glove defense, and with 2.5 Wins Above Replacement, he ranks second among NL shortstops and 19th among all position players in the league.

Crawford, 30, was also an All-Star in 2015, which prior to this season ranked as his best offensive year. He got into that game in the bottom of the fifth. This time around, he'll take the field at Nationals Park for the first pitch.

Posey is hitting .285/367/.412 with 18 doubles, five home runs and 27 RBI.

The Giants have hung around .500 throughout the season and the organization did not make a particularly strong push for fan votes, leaving Posey just short of another starting nod. Brandon Belt looked like a lock to make the team at one point, but he missed 13 games after having his appendix removed and others in the league -- most notably Paul Goldschmidt -- caught fire over the past month. Tony Watson took a 1.56 ERA into the day All-Stars were announced, but it is generally very difficult for relievers to make the team when they're not closing games.

Brandon Belt is one of five players on the NL Final Vote ballot. He will be competing against Dodgers INF/OF Max Muncy, Brewers 1B Jesus Aguilar, Cardinals INF Matt Carpenter and Nationals SS Trea Turner.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Giants trade Jackson, Gearrin and prospect to Rangers; promote Duggar and Black Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Giants shook up their roster in a massive way Sunday morning, trading two veterans to the Texas Rangers and promoting two of their most exciting prospects.

Right-hander Cory Gearrin and outfielder Austin Jackson were shipped to Texas, along with a

prospect, and the club added right-hander Ray Black and outfielder Steven Duggar to the active roster.

The trade essentially boils down to a salary dump, with a nice prospect attached to facilitate the Rangers, who helpfully took on Matt Moore's contract back in the offseason. The Giants sent right-hander Jason Bahr to Texas in exchange for accepting Gearrin and Jackson, neither of whom had a role in San Francisco anymore.

Bahr, 23, was the organization's fifth-round pick in last year's draft and had a 2.55 ERA at two levels this season. He had allowed just three runs in three starts since a promotion to San Jose, and the Giants were excited about his potential, but this is the cost of trying to get under the CBT line. The Giants attached Bahr so the Rangers would take on the remainder of the contracts. Gearrin is owed about \$800,000 and Jackson is only a quarter of the way through a two-year, \$6 million deal.

The trade should allow the Giants to easily stay under the CBT number, and could provide some financial wiggle room as they look to add to the roster before the July 31 deadline. In exchange, the Rangers gave up a player to be named later or cash.

The in-house additions might be more exciting than anything that comes via trade.

Duggar, 24, is the organization's best defensive outfielder and was batting .272 at Triple-A. He should see plenty of time in an outfield that has been without an everyday left fielder. The Giants could move Gorkys Hernandez over and allow Duggar to roam massive AT&T Park.

Black, 28, has a fastball that has touched 104 mph and has been dominant this season since returning from injury. He has 38 strikeouts in 21 2/3 innings for Triple-A Sacramento.

The Athletic

Down on the farm: Giants pay a steep price to clear salary space

Melissa Lockard

The Giants freed up some salary room for potential July trades on Sunday when they dumped the contracts of outfielder Austin Jackson and reliever Cory Gearrin on the Texas Rangers. The cost of opening that space below the luxury tax threshold was high, however, as they had to give the Rangers rising right-handed pitching prospect Jason Bahr along with Jackson and Gearrin.

Bahr, a fifth-round pick in 2017, was one of the Giants' biggest breakout prospects this season. The Central Florida alum had a 2.75 ERA and an 88:21 K:BB in 68 2/3 innings with Low-A Augusta before earning a promotion to High-A San Jose. In his first three starts in the California League, Bahr allowed three runs in 16 innings (1.69 ERA) and posted a 15:3 K:BB.

While the Giants have every reason to point their assets towards getting the big league club to

the postseason, they are losing a significant part of their starting pitching depth with this trade. Bahr didn't yet have the national prospect profile of a Shaun Anderson or Tyler Beede, but scouts have raved about the life on his fastball, which sits at 91-94 mph and can touch 96. His slider and changeup have taken significant steps forward this year, as well.

At 6-foot-6, Bahr has the frame to handle a heavy starter's workload and he gets enough extension and deception on his delivery to make his fastball appear harder than it is coming out of his hand. He is likely to start next season in Double-A and could reach the big leagues by the end of the 2019 campaign. Starting pitching wasn't an area of depth for the Giants before the draft in June, but they loaded up on college pitchers in the top-10 rounds, which likely made it easier for the Giants front office to part with Bahr.

While the trade chipped away at the Giants' future potential, it opened an avenue for the Giants to get younger at the big league level at the same time. They promoted rookies Steven Duggar and Ray Black to the big leagues to replace Jackson and Gearrin on the 25-man roster.

Duggar will give the Giants better defense in center field than Jackson provided and a potentially potent left-handed bat that can work the alleys and stretch defenses with his speed. Duggar was leading the Pacific Coast League in doubles at the time of his promotion and he doubled for his first big league hit on Sunday. He should be able to take advantage of the spacious alleys of AT&T Park as a hitter, while stealing hits away from opposing batters in those same alleys as a defender.

Black brings a true strikeout arm to the Giants' bullpen. Although he had a rough big league debut on Sunday, Black has been spectacular this season in the minor leagues, striking out 58 in 31 2/3 innings. Black has a well-documented injury history and below-average command, but his fastball rates near the top of the scouting scale and he could be a real weapon for the Giants when they need a strikeout in the middle innings once he settles into his big league role.

Joey Bart's blasts highlight a notable week for top Giants picks with the Volcanoes. Giants 2018 top pick Joey Bart lit some fireworks on the Fourth of July in his debut with short-season Salem-Keizer. Bart homered twice and went 3 for 5 on Wednesday, driving in four runs. After going 0 for 9 the next two days, he got Saturday off before going 3 for 5 on Sunday with yet another home run and three RBIs. Bart had six hits in 23 at-bats in the Arizona Rookie League before joining the Volcanoes' roster.

Bart wasn't alone in making his Salem-Keizer debut on the 4th. Third-round pick Joey Wong made his professional debut that night with the Volcanoes. He allowed a run but didn't allow a hit in two innings of work. Wong struck out two and walked one.

Second-rounder Sean Hjelle is also in action for the Volcanoes. The 6-11 right-hander made his pro debut with Salem-Keizer on June 30, tossing an inning. On Thursday, he made his second one-inning start. Over the two innings, he's allowed a run on four hits and no walks.

Fourth-round pick Blake Rivera was added to the Salem-Keizer roster on Saturday. He has yet to make his professional debut.

Extra Innings

— Triple-A Sacramento outfielder Chris Shaw homered three times this week, bringing his season total up to 18. He's sixth in the PCL in home runs.

— Since being sent down to Sacramento, outfielder Mac Williamson has struggled at the plate, going 5 for 40 with seven walks and two home runs.

— The Giants released two minor league pitchers this week: right-handers Roberto Gómez and Jeff Burke. Gómez pitched for the Giants in April, allowing 11 runs (8 ER) in 9 1/3 innings. He made only four appearances for Sacramento before being placed on the disabled list on May 5. He was released on July 5. Burke made 16 appearances for San Jose this season, posting an 8.16 ERA in 28 2/3 innings. He was a 32nd-round pick in 2015 of the Giants out of Boston College.

— Chase d'Arnaud won't be representing the River Cats in the Triple-A All-Star Game after all. The Giants purchased d'Arnaud's contract after Joe Panik injured his groin on Friday. D'Arnaud appeared in 35 games in the big leagues last season for the Braves, Padres and Red Sox.

— With Double-A Richmond right-hander Shaun Anderson slated for the Futures Game, Richmond reliever Dan Slania has been added to the Eastern League All-Star Game roster in Anderson's place. Slania has a 2.61 ERA in 44 IP with a 40:8 K:BB. Anderson, meanwhile, threw three shutout innings in relief of Chase Johnson on Sunday for the Flying Squirrels in what is likely his final tuneup before the Futures Game.

— The Giants could be down a trade chip before the July waiver deadline. Hard-throwing right-hander Melvin Adon was scratched just before first pitch in his Friday start for San Jose. He was placed on the DL on Saturday with an undisclosed injury.

— San Jose right-hander Logan Webb threw four hitless innings in his Fourth of July start. He walked two and struck out five. Webb has a 1.80 ERA and a 54:26 K:BB in 55 innings for the Giants this season.

— Reliever Franklin Van Gorp earned a promotion from Low-A Augusta to San Jose this week. The right-hander made two appearances for the Giants, throwing four shutout innings over those two frames. He did walk five, but he struck out four and allowed just two hits. Van Gorp, a 25th-round pick in 2017, had a 1.77 ERA and a 48:16 K:BB in 40 2/3 innings for the GreenJackets before the promotion. He also made one appearance for Richmond earlier in the year.

— Augusta left-hander John Gavin threw a seven-inning shutout in the second game of a doubleheader on Sunday. He allowed just two hits and a walk and he struck out six. The complete game was Gavin's first of his career. He lowered his ERA to 1.82. Opposing batters are

hitting .156 against him this season.

— It was a tale of two extremes this week for Augusta right-hander Garrett Cave. The Giants 2017 fourth-round pick was lit up on Monday, allowing nine runs in 3 1/3 innings. Then on Sunday, he recovered to fire five one-hit innings, allowing a run on that hit and four walks. He struck out five. Cave has 75 strikeouts in 68 1/3 innings this season, but his 45 walks and 11 hit batters have led to a 4.87 ERA.

— Salem-Keizer right-hander Gregory Santos — who was acquired along with Anderson in the Eduardo Núñez trade with the Red Sox — has been impressive in the early going this season. Despite allowing three runs in three innings on Friday, Santos has a 3.60 ERA and a solid 21:5 K:BB in 25 innings for the Volcanoes. The 6-2 native of the Dominican Republic won't turn 19 until late August. This is his first season pitching in the US.

— Frankie Tostado, a 2017 19th-round pick out of Oxnard Community College, has hit safely in all 13 games he has played this season for the AZL Giants Black. Tostado has a .373/.400/.510 line in 51 at-bats. The left-handed hitting outfielder didn't appear in a game after signing last season, so he is making his professional debut.

— Outfielder Alexander Canario opened eyes last season when he hit .294 with an .854 OPS for the DSL Giants. He got off to a slow start this season with the AZL Giants Black, but he has four multi-hit games in his last six games played. Canario turned 18 in May.

— Outfielder George Bell has hit safely in all but two games he has appeared in so far this season for the AZL Giants Orange. The 2018 13th-round pick is batting .370/.404/.426 in 54 at-bats.

The Athletic

Giants Analytics: Their biggest need, Stratton's problem, and a lopsided week Owen Poindexter

Here's how not to distribute 23 runs over seven games: 2, 1, 0, 2, 3, 2, 13.

Prior to Sunday's explosion, Brandon Belt and Buster Posey were having great weeks and Alen Hanson was holding his own, but the other regulars would have liked a do-over. Gorkys Hernández, Andrew McCutchen, Austin Slater, Joe Panik, Brandon Crawford and Pablo Sandoval hit a collective .112/.147/.184 from Monday to Saturday.

On Sunday, that group (minus Panik and Slater) went .474/.500/.650. It still wasn't a good offensive week for the Giants, but taken as a whole, it's very easy for an average offensive (the Giants are right in the middle at the moment) team to have a blah week. Combine a blah week with an unfortunate run distribution, and two wins, five losses is what you can expect.

If the Giants could improve one position, which should it be?

On Sunday, the Giants traded Austin Jackson, Cory Gearrin and pitching prospect Jason Bahr to the Rangers for “cash considerations or a player to be named later,” which is the baseball equivalent of “just buy me a beer the next time we hang out.” The move saves the Giants a little over \$2 million this season (and Jackson’s \$3 million next year) and provides a little breathing room below the luxury tax threshold to make additions without crossing that line.

So, what sort of player should the Giants add? The infield is set at catcher, first and shortstop, and second and third will be occupied with a more permanent fixture when Panik and Evan Longoria return from injury. Not that the duo of Hanson and Sandoval can’t be improved, but the team wouldn’t want to spend much on a player who would take a utility role by sometime in early August. Both Hanson or Sandoval have watched their BABIPs tumble in the first part of July, but both were more than serviceable in June, posting wRC+ figures of 103 (Hanson) and 101 (Sandoval), meaning each was slightly better than a league average hitter. A utility infielder would provide a very marginal improvement and a star infielder is not likely to be acquired due to payroll reasons, as long as the Giants are intent on staying below the luxury tax threshold.

As for the outfield, the Giants have a lot of warm bodies and inconsistent production, especially from left field. Given the presence of Hernández, Slater, Hunter Pence, Steven Duggar and Mac Williamson (in the minors), the Giants have the depth to find something like average production from those two spots. Giants center fielders have collectively hit for a 91 wRC+ (middle of the pack), but their left fielders have managed only a 72 wRC+ (second to last). They have almost a month to see if Slater and Duggar can change that trend, but if they can’t, that’s a clear position to upgrade.

On to pitching, the rotation is set for now with Madison Bumgarner, Johnny Cueto, Jeff Samardzija, Andrew Suárez and Dereck Rodríguez, with Derek Holland and Chris Stratton providing some depth. The first, second and fourth names on that list are all excellent, but Samardzija and Rodríguez are both wild cards.

A trade for a solid starter provides some insurance against injury and inconsistency, and if everyone is healthy and performing, the extra starter can supplant or add to Ty Blach and Holland as relievers who can go a few innings. Speaking of which, the Giants ought to consider using their pitching depth creatively, for example, letting Samardzija face 18 batters, then switching to Holland or Blach for the next nine (it doesn’t have to be the same tandem every time). Blach has given up an excellent .273 wOBA the first time through the order for his career, and then gets much worse — .372 the second time, then .350 the third time.

The bullpen is a strength from both the left and right sides, but there’s always room to add to the bullpen. A strong righty who could push Sam Dyson — whose .261 BABIP is likely to rise about 40 points going forward — down the depth chart would be a worthy addition.

That leaves us with a solid arm, an outfielder or maybe a utility infielder. Assuming payroll constraints, it’s likely the Giants will have to pick one, or one plus some filler. If everything holds as is, left field is the obvious place to focus their energies, but I’m cautiously optimistic that

Slater or Duggar can change that equation, and pitchers are mercurial beasts. By July 31, the team may need an arm more than a bat.

Where did Stratton's strikeouts go?

In Chris Stratton's last six starts he recorded exactly three strikeouts in each one. In that stretch, his K-rate was 12.6 percent, which, for a pitcher without exceptional contact management skills, is a hard place to start from. While he managed to contain the damage for three of those starts, two rough starts against the Rockies (one in Colorado — it can't be fun to pitch for your job there) and one against the Diamondbacks gave him an ERA of 5.79 from June 6 to last Tuesday.

Stratton was a bit unfortunate in allowing 40.2 percent of baserunners to score, (his career rate prior to that was a more normal 28.1 percent), but even with normal luck, his ERA would only have made it down to the mid-4s.

The interesting thing here is that Stratton was actually a lot better on walks and home run rate over his last six starts. His HR/FB% went down by a third from 12.5 percent to 8.3 percent, and his walk rate cut nearly in half from 10.3 percent to 5.6 percent. As you might expect, given the drop in walk rate, he's been throwing in the zone much more lately, and inducing more swings by doing so. His swinging strike rate has actually been fairly constant over the season, lingering around 8 percent regardless of where he's throwing the ball.

Perhaps Stratton is experimenting with different approaches to try and solve his biggest issue: hitters have been sending his pitches back at an average of 90.3 mph, which is in the worst 2 percent of the league. Opposing teams have connected for a solid .273 average and .489 slugging percentage against Stratton, and Statcast thinks he's been fortunate to have those numbers instead of essentially turning the average hitter into this year's version of Belt.

Stratton's biggest issue, one that makes sense to work out in Triple-A, is that he hasn't found an offspeed pitch he can trust. While his fastball has held batters to a .365 slugging percentage, his curve (.517), slider (.605), change (.636) and sinker (.640) are getting clobbered. Without something to keep hitters off balance, he'll continue to mire in mediocrity, or see how his stuff plays in the bullpen.

The Athletic

Growing season: Giants trade two little-used veterans and turn to the future with Ray Black and Steven Duggar
Andrew Baggarly

Herold's Farm Market fronts a divided parkway in Hanover Township, Northeast Pennsylvania, tucked between the Sunoco station and the Susquehanna River. This is its busiest time of year.

The aisles are bursting with summer produce, vegetable seedlings and tomato starts. Annuals in a riot of color compete for attention. It won't be long before they put down straw and haul out

the pumpkins.

Ray Black thought he might help with the hauling. His other seasonal job appeared to be a dead end.

Black is a right-handed pitcher with a mythical fastball that has been clocked at 104 mph. He has held minor league batters to a .146 average in the seven years since the Giants took him in the fifth round of the 2011 MLB Draft.

But he could not stay on the mound. Even before signing his first pro contract, he bore scars from Tommy John elbow reconstruction (in high school) and knee and hand surgeries (at the University of Pittsburgh). Then came a shoulder procedure to repair a torn labrum that cost him the entirety of two professional seasons. A strained lat muscle sent him back to the hellscape of extended spring training in 2015. He underwent an arthroscopic elbow cleanout last year that limited him to three end-of-season appearances in the Rookie-level Arizona League.

He had just spent another summer in rehab purgatory, all for the reward of being a 27-year-old throwing to teenagers in three games, and he still didn't feel right. Along the way, the Giants had taken him off the 40-man roster, released him and re-signed him.

"I struggled with pain," Black said. "The stuff wasn't quite there. The velocity had a drop as well. That was the concern: not having the right stuff and having pain associated with it. Heading into the offseason, my mind was, 'Do I really want to try going through this again?' And that was the first time I really thought of it."

It was the first time Black thought of choosing the growing season over the baseball season. His late grandfather, Ray, bought what was essentially a roadside stand and began to turn it into a seasonal market along with the 30-acre farm that supplies it. His father, also named Ray, inherited the business and continued its expansion. They are up to 11 greenhouses now with another under construction. There is always work to be done. Someday, in all likelihood, a third Ray Black will oversee it.

"I'd probably be working on the family farm right now," Black said.

You are reading this story, of course, because it doesn't end with vegetable starts. Black told his personal history to reporters on Sunday while he stood in the Giants clubhouse, in front of a major league locker that he occupied for the first time.

The Giants shook up their roster and Black's ambitions bore fruit. The club purchased Black's contract and also promoted center fielder Steven Duggar, and both made their major league debuts in the Giants' 13-8 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals at AT&T Park.

The Giants created roster room, and shaved some payroll for luxury tax purposes, by trading veteran outfielder Austin Jackson and right-hander Cory Gearrin to the Texas Rangers along

with Single-A pitching prospect Jason Bahr for future considerations.

Bahr was the carrot in the deal. The Rangers agreed to take on roughly \$5.2 million in salary obligations to Gearrin and Jackson, including a bit more than \$2.1 million this year – a price they deemed fair for a pitching prospect they liked.

The upshot for the Giants: They moved enough salary to reasonably project that they will remain below the \$197 million competitive balance tax threshold, a goal that would reduce their penalties for spending in future seasons. They even might have cleared enough room to add a small amount of salary as they seek to improve their roster prior to the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline.

And the trade allowed the Giants to get immediately younger and almost certainly better, as they replaced two older players who no longer fit their needs for a defensive asset in center field and a reliever whose Pratt & Whitney fastball is so deafening it should have a curfew.

Duggar grinned and admitted it: Yes, while stationed in center field and watching Black strike out batters in Sacramento, he would turn around frequently and check the radar reading on the scoreboard.

“Because it’s so loud,” Duggar said. “He’s a lot of fun to play behind. I don’t have to move a lot.”

Black will settle alongside another hard-throwing right-hander, Reyes Moronta, in a setup role, although his medical file will ensure that the Giants monitor his workload carefully.

It’s Duggar whose presence will make a more immediate impact on the club and turn their outfield defense from a shaky proposition into a definite asset. Manager Bruce Bochy said he planned to start the left-handed hitting rookie against right-handed pitchers, with Gorkys Hernández forming the other side of the platoon. Hernández also would get frequent starts in left field, more or less keeping him in an everyday role.

Duggar made his debut as the leadoff batter and displayed his athleticism in his fourth big league at-bat, when he whistled a line drive up the middle for his first major league hit. It would’ve been a long single for some players. Duggar wheeled around second base and briefly thought three.

Prior to the game, Giants general manager Bobby Evans revealed that the front office entered the spring expecting Duggar either to make the Opening Day roster or be in the big leagues by the end of April. It was Hernández’s strong and surprising play that delayed those plans.

But with Hernández perhaps showing the strain of an everyday role in recent days, and Jackson never establishing himself as a fit, the club quietly opened talks with Texas about a trade one week ago.

The Giants might have closed the deal just in time. Hernández exited Sunday's game with a tight left calf after hitting a two-run single, with the initial expectation that he would miss only Monday's series opener against the Chicago Cubs.

Before bringing up Duggar, the Giants didn't have another true center fielder to weather the loss of Hernández even for a day or two.

"These are guys who can alleviate some of that wear and tear," Evans said of Duggar and Black.

Black only arrived here through so much of his own wear and tear because he decided to take one last chance on himself. And he only arrived at that decision because of a youth camp and a turf mound.

He was teaching kids at a baseball facility in Pennsylvania over the winter and playing catch with them when he noticed that his elbow wasn't aching as before.

"So I started working on my throwing progression a little bit, and that's when I hopped on the mound for the first time," he said. "It was a turf mound at a kids' camp, pretty much. I had a high school kid catching me. The ball felt pretty lively out of my hand and someone snuck a gun on me and I hit 98. So it's, 'We'll give this a shot.'"

He changed his workouts and his diet (vegetables do more than pay the bills, you know) and arrived at spring training without a roster spot or a big league invitation, simply hoping to be healthy enough to be placed with a full-season affiliate. Teams have a name a player like this: a lottery ticket.

How about these winning numbers: 31 2/3 innings, 14 hits, 11 walks, 58 strikeouts, a .128 opponent's average and 0.79 baserunners per inning. That is what Black did in 10 games for Double-A Richmond and 22 games for Sacramento.

Black worked on using his lower body more in order to take stress off his shoulder and elbow. He worked on his direction to home plate and resisted the urge to over-rotate. He understood the goal wasn't to throw as hard as he could with every pitch, but to record outs.

"That's what I intend to do," said Black, who uses a slider off his fastball and spins a slower curve to lefties. "That's what I've been working on. I don't necessarily need to throw at maximum effort every pitch to every batter. Take a little stress off the arm and try to locate a pitch a little better, spin an offspeed in there. Mix up the arsenal."

That is a hard lesson to learn when everyone always wants to talk about how hard you throw.

"I'd get a little bit carried away with the radar gun," he said, smiling.

The buzz on Black's fastball would echo in the stands. When he appeared in the Arizona Fall

League a few years ago, the section behind home plate was crowded with scouts pointing a phalanx of radar guns in his direction. They excitedly jotted down the results. Some live-tweeted it. 102 mph. 103 mph.

Black had to laugh on Sunday when a reporter mentioned that just one day earlier, Cardinals reliever Jordan Hicks threw a 102.7 mph sinker that Brandon Belt fouled off.

“The gun keeps getting hotter and hotter, I think,” he said.

The Giants battered the Cardinals and created a perfect nest for Black to make his major league debut. He took the mound with a six-run lead in the eighth and his first pitch glowed at 99 mph on the board.

“Throw 100,” shouted one kid in the stands.

On Black’s ninth pitch, he did. But he struggled to locate while issuing a pair of walks, and after collecting his lone out on a pop-up, Black served up a three-run pinch homer to Matt Carpenter.

“You saw the stuff,” Bochy said. “It’s gonna work. He’ll get more confident. The first time, the butterflies are going, the nerves. He’ll be just fine.”

It was not the debut that Black envisioned. But it was a start.

And it was far from the farmstand on Sans Souci Parkway, which is French for “carefree.”

“One of the things I’ve tried to work on is getting my mind set on things,” Black said.

“Obviously, baseball is very important, but that wasn’t my sole focus. Have a balance away from the field I can resort to, my wife and my family, people who will be there for me whether things are good or bad.”

Brandon Crawford will start at shortstop for the National League All-Star team. It’s his second All-Star selection and the first time he has been elected a starter by the fans.

Catcher Buster Posey, who got edged out by the Cubs’ Willson Contreras in fan balloting, was selected to the team via the player vote and will make his sixth NL All-Star appearance.

First baseman Brandon Belt is one of five names on the final fan ballot along with the Dodgers’ Max Muncy, the Cardinals’ Matt Carpenter, the Nationals’ Trea Turner and the Brewers’ Jesus Aguilar. Belt won the final vote when he made his lone All-Star appearance in 2016, but Turner might have an edge since the game is at Nationals Park. The Brewers also are known to launch spirited campaigns and Aguilar, who has 22 home runs and 63 RBIs, was the day’s biggest snub.

The Athletic

Making sense of an unconventional Rangers-Giants trade

Levi Weaver

The knee-jerk reaction is confusion. Why would the Rangers—a team that entered play on Sunday with a 39-51 record—be taking on a 31-year-old outfielder whose contract runs through 2019? Sure, they bucked the trend in 2015, when everyone thought they would be trading Yovani Gallardo, but instead they shoved their chips into the table and brought on Cole Hamels and Jake Diekman on their way to swiping the AL West pennant.

But this isn't 2015. This isn't that AL West. And Austin Jackson isn't Cole Hamels. So what gives?

First of all, we've been focusing on the wrong name, so let's get the details straight first. The Rangers didn't only trade for Austin Jackson. He's just the most recognizable name in the deal. The whole deal is as follows, per the Rangers' press release:

"The Texas Rangers today announced that the club has acquired right-handed pitchers Cory Gearrin and Jason Bahr and outfielder Austin Jackson from the San Francisco Giants for a player to be named later or cash considerations."

And while we're sorting all the facts into their proper place, we should note that the Rangers needed two spots on the 40-man roster to make room for Jackson and Gearrin, so Tony Barnette and Matt Bush have been added to the 60-day DL. Now that we have all that straight, let's try to figure out... why?

The name to pay attention to isn't Jackson, though he's a perfectly serviceable outfielder who could eat up a few innings at any of the three outfield positions if the Rangers needed such a thing. But in a conference call Sunday afternoon, Rangers GM Jon Daniels indicated that there's a chance that Jackson won't even play for the Rangers at all. In fact, Daniels said in the call that he has told Jackson to hold off reporting to the Rangers.

Neither is the big story Cory Gearrin, not really, though he is a perfectly serviceable reliever. That's something the Rangers need right now, with Bush, Barnette, and Chris Martin all on the DL and Matt Moore and Alex Claudio out of commission temporarily, thanks to Cole Hamels' $\frac{2}{3}$ -inning start on Saturday. Furthermore, Jake Diekman and Keone Kela have both been mentioned as possible trade targets, so the depletion could continue in coming weeks.

Gearrin is 1-1 with a 4.20 ERA and a 1.533 WHIP this season, but in 2017, he was a stalwart member of the Giants' bullpen, boasting a 1.99 ERA (1.250 WHIP) and 64 strikeouts in 68 innings.

But the real name to focus on here is Jason Bahr, the starting pitcher who will report to the High-A Down East Wood Ducks. Bahr is 23, which is a little older than most High-A pitchers, but he wasn't drafted from the University of Central Florida until 2017, going to the Giants in the fifth round. More remarkable yet, Bahr had only made one appearance for the Knights before the 2017 season. After being drafted, Bahr struck out 36 hitters in 33 innings in short-season A-

ball in Salem-Keizer, walking eleven.

This season, he has a combined 8-4 record with a 2.55 ERA in 84 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings between A and High-A ball, though his ERA has actually been significantly lower (1.69) in three starts at the higher level than at the lower (2.75). He has struck out 103 hitters in that amount of time, walking 23, and keeping his WHIP at a 1.03. He drew mostly ground balls at the lower level, but he has given up three home runs in his 16 High-A innings. Opposing hitters are batting just .208 against Bahr this season.

Bahr's scouting report says that his fastball sits in the low 90s as a starter, and there are reports that he can reach back for 96 MPH. He also throws a somewhat-slurvy slider and a changeup.

In summation, it's exactly what the tweets at the top of the article indicate, and what Daniels confirmed on the conference call: the Rangers took on Jackson's salary and Gearrin as the price for acquiring Bahr.

Well, part of the price, anyway. As for the rest of the acquisition cost? "A player to be named later or cash considerations" is fairly vague, but this much we know, thanks to MLB's rules for this sort of thing: it can't be anyone who is currently on the 25-man roster, or anyone who is named to the 25-man roster at any point after today. Usually, the teams agree on a pool of players from whom the receiving team can choose. It's not the first time the Rangers and Giants have done this in the last two seasons, actually: Sam Dyson went to San Francisco for a PTBNL in 2017, and the Rangers later selected Hunter Cole.

San Francisco Examiner

Pablo Sandoval knocks in five as San Francisco Giants break out of slump

Ryan Gorcey

AT&T PARK — Before the San Francisco Giants' No. 3 prospect Steven Duggar arrived at his locker on Sunday, his neighbor Pablo Sandoval was already acting like his bouncer.

"He's got to start today, leave him alone," the normally-cuddly Giants third baseman barked, before later playfully inserting himself into a group interview with San Francisco's other call-up, Ray Black, throwing off the hard-throwing right-hander.

On a day when Black and Duggar — the Giants' No. 28 and No. 3 prospects, respectively — each made their big league debuts, though, it was Sandoval who stole the spotlight. Despite a sprained left thumb, he drove in five of San Francisco's season-high 13 runs in a 13-8 win over the St. Louis Cardinals, and made two big plays with his glove.

"What'd I do?" Sandoval asked in the clubhouse after the game.

"He had a heck of a game," said starter Madison Bumgarner.

San Francisco Giants: Brandon Crawford named National League's starting All-Star shortstop

Since replacing Evan Longoria as the everyday third baseman, Sandoval's OPS had slipped from .750 to .705. Over the last six games, San Francisco (47-45) had hit .168 as a team, and scored just eight runs. On Sunday, Sandoval went 3-for-5 as one of six different Giants to tally two or more hits, including the rookie Duggar, who went 2-for-6 with a double and a run.

Sunday was the first time the Giants had scored in the double digits since winning 10-3 against Arizona on June 4. Their 17 hits were the most since May 19 against Colorado.

While Sunday marked Sandoval's third career game with five or more RBIs — and first since Sept. 4, 2013 — he also did some yeoman's work with his glove.

The 31-year old Sandoval, in his 10th year in the big leagues, is considered one of the worst fielding third basemen in baseball by defensive runs saved (-4) and UZR (-2.3). On Sunday, though, Sandoval made a pair of Gold Glove plays in support of Bumgarner, who struggled with command, throwing 101 pitches in 5 1/3 innings and giving up four runs — all earned.

"He wasn't quite on top of his game," Bochy said of his ace. "They did a pretty good job battling against him ... got his pitch count up. It's good to get him some runs. He's a guy who's had trouble getting run support."

Bumgarner said he wasn't able to get into any kind of rhythm — "Nothing was working for me, wasn't making pitches," he said — but he did have Sandoval.

In the second, Sandoval dove to his left to spear a liner for the second out, and then made a diving stop for a fielder's choice groundout in the fourth. The second play saw Sandoval land heavily on his left wrist, spraining his left thumb.

"We were close to taking him out, but he said he was good to go," Bochy said.

Sandoval's defense helped keep the game from getting out of hand as the Cardinals rattled off seven hits against Bumgarner, who gave up his first run in the second on a full-count home run by Yairo Muñoz, his fifth of the year.

San Francisco responded with a three-run third — keyed by a Buster Posey grounder off the heel of shortstop Paul DeJong's mitt — the team's first time scoring three or more in an inning since scoring four in the fifth inning on July 1.

San Francisco Giants trade Cory Gearrin and Austin Jackson, call up Steven Duggar

Bumgarner, though, gave it right back. He allowed two runs on four singles in the top of the fourth, and another pair of broken-bat hits in the fifth to give St. Louis a 4-3 lead.

In the fifth, Brandon Belt — who had three of the Giants' eight hits on Saturday and is up for the Final Vote to make the National League All-Star team — got his third hit of the day by pounding a 107-mph double off the brick wall in right with one out. He was followed by a 94.7-mph single to right by All-Star starting shortstop Brandon Crawford, and then Sandoval — gimpy wrist and all — slugged a three-run homer on a 1-2 fastball up to re-take the lead.

“Pablo, he’s a different guy,” Bochy said. “He can find a way to get out there every day. You look at him and you think he’s going to need his rest, but he brings it every day.”

Sandoval was also right in the middle of a five-run sixth. His protectee Duggar led off the frame with his first big league hit — a 104.7-mph whistling leg double to the right center gap for his first big league hit — and Sandoval followed up with a bases-loaded, two-out, 1-2 two-run single on a slider that he golfed just off the dirt.

“He’s got a little bigger strike zone than most of us,” Bochy said. “He’s got the ability to hit a bad pitch. He’s always had that.”

“I’m just excited that [Duggar] got his first hit,” Sandoval said. “First hit and first win. That’s exciting.”

A fly-ball RBI single from Alen Hanson and a two-run single by Gorkys Hernandez — on which Hanson scored from first — extended the lead to 11-4.

Black, the 28-year old rookie with a 100-mph fastball, came on in the eighth for his big league debut, walking two and then allowing the 121st splash hit home run in AT&T Park history to Matt Carpenter. The Giants got two runs back in the bottom of the inning on a pair of balls off the gloves of reliever Sam Tuivailala and shortstop DeJong.

Notebook:

Gorkys Hernandez left the game in the sixth due to a stiff left calf. Bochy said the Giants think the injury should keep him out for just a day. Hernandez thought he could stay in the game, at first, but he was removed and will likely miss Monday’s game. He will be re-evaluated on Monday.

Sandoval said his thumb felt “good,” but it was heavily wrapped. He said he tried to move it less after that diving play, just so he’d be able to stay in the game.

San Francisco Examiner

San Francisco Giants: Ray Black overcomes litany of injuries to make big league debut

Ryan Gorcey

AT&T PARK — Madison Bumgarner and Ray Black are both 28 years old. Bumgarner has won three World Series and a Cy Young. Black has undergone four surgeries since his junior year of high school, and missed three years of baseball.

After yet another setback in 2017, Black was ready to take his triple-digit fastball and go back to his parents' farm in rural Pennsylvania. Instead, while working at a youth camp near his hometown this offseason, Black hopped on a turf mound, with a high school catcher behind the plate, and started throwing.

"The ball felt pretty lively out of my hand, and somebody snuck a gun on me. I hit 98," Black said. "I said, 'OK, we're going to give this another shot.'"

On Sunday, Black — the San Francisco Giants' No. 28 prospect — made his major league debut in a 13-8 win over the St. Louis Cardinals. Even Bumgarner snuck a peek at the radar gun: His slowest pitch was 97.3 mph. His fastest came in at 100.

"I think he found out last night, probably after midnight, and was on a plane at 4:30 this morning to come here, so he hasn't had the easiest sort of travel to get here," Bumgarner said. "I think he's going to be a big weapon for us. I was excited to get to see him go out there."

Black didn't have the ideal debut — he walked two and allowed an eighth-inning pinch hit home run to Matt Carpenter — but just to be on a major league mound was achievement enough.

"We've had extensive conversations about when would be the right time for Black," said general manager Bobby Evans. "... This is an opportunity for a guy like Black who has had a long journey to get to this point. He's earned this opportunity."

San Francisco Giants trade Cory Gearrin and Austin Jackson, call up Steven Duggar

As a senior at Wilkes-Barre (Penn.) Coughlin, Black underwent Tommy John surgery. In his first year as a reliever at Pittsburgh, he went 0-3 with a 16.74 ERA. He then underwent surgery on his throwing hand, and on his knee, and as a redshirt sophomore, he appeared in 18 games with a 6.30 ERA, and 33 strikeouts in 20 innings. That was enough for the Giants to take him in the seventh round of the 2011 draft.

Then he had surgery on his right shoulder labrum. That cost him two years.

When he finally did get going, Black rapidly advanced through the Giants system, striking out 53 in 31 innings for the Double-A Richmond Flying Squirrels in 2016 and climbing as high as the No. 14 prospect in San Francisco's system. He had one problem: Control. In 94 minor league innings, he issued 76 walks.

In 2017, he had a second elbow surgery, this one a scope to take care of bone spurs and clean up the joint. He threw just 2 1/3 innings for the Giants' rookie league team in Arizona. In his third appearance, he experienced more pain in his twice-operated-on throwing elbow. Of greater concern: He saw his velocity drop for the first time.

"That was the concerning part for me, obviously, was not having the right stuff and having a little bit of pain associated with it," Black said. "That's where, heading into the offseason, my mind was on [retiring]."

Black continued his throwing progression after the season, but was dubious about his ability to return. He contemplated returning to his home, sowing fields and fixing tractors on his family farm, growing bedding plants and vegetables. Then came the camp at Maximum Impact near his home in northeast Pennsylvania. He threw free and easy. He felt good. So, he got his head right and gave baseball another go.

"What I've done emotionally is try to control myself with the ups and the downs, and realizing that things are going to go well, and things are going to go bad," Black said. "I try to stay a little bit more even and have sort of a balance away from the field that I can resort to — my wife and my family, people that are going to be there with me — whether things are good or bad."

With a newfound approach to the mental side of the game, as well as his mechanics — more direct to the plate, and less rotational — he started 2018 at Double-A, and in 10 games over the first month of the season, recorded four saves, striking out 20 while walking four in 10 innings. On May 8, he was moved up to Triple-A Sacramento.

With the River Cats, Black met up with Steven Duggar, the Giants' No. 3 prospect, who would wind up making his big league debut alongside Black on Sunday. Standing in center field, it was tough for Duggar not to sneak a look at the radar gun when Black entered. He hit 102 "a couple times."

"I would turn around all the time," Duggar said. "It's loud, even out there [in center field]. It's a lot of fun to play behind. You don't have to do a lot."

Pablo Sandoval knocks in five as San Francisco Giants break out of slump

In 22 appearances with Sacramento, he held opposing hitters to a .133 average and a .207 on-base percentage, striking out 38 in 21 2/3 innings, while walking just seven.

When the Giants called up Duggar, they called up Black, too, dealing away veteran reliever Cory Gerrin and outfielder Austin Jackson to make room. The Texas Rangers, on the receiving end, will take over Jackson's contract — between \$2.1 and \$2.2 million this year — and Gerrin's.

From a financial standpoint, getting rid of a contract like Jackson's — a two-year, \$6 million deal

— should give the Giants more buffer room under the luxury tax threshold, so that when the trade deadline comes, they could potentially add another piece.

With closer Hunter Strickland placed on the 60-day disabled list on Sunday, and the ninth inning being handled by a committee of four relievers — Mark Melancon, Tony Watson, Will Smith and Sam Dyson — since Strickland punched a door in the clubhouse, Black also gives San Francisco a power arm for the middle innings, and maybe, just maybe, a future closer.

“A few months ago, I didn’t even know if I was going to be playing anymore,” Black said. “To get to this point right now, it’s incredible. I’m just grateful for the opportunity to be here.”