

The Boston Red Sox Tuesday, October 17, 2017

*** *The Boston Globe***

Red Sox interview Brad Ausmus for managerial position

Peter Abraham

Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski is not wasting time in his search for a new manager.

Former Detroit Tigers manager Brad Ausmus interviewed with the Sox on Monday, a day after Houston Astros bench coach Alex Cora did. The Sox also plan to meet with Arizona Diamondbacks bench coach Ron Gardenhire about their vacancy.

Ausmus, 48, was 314-332 with the Detroit Tigers, 64-98 this season. The Tigers announced on Sept. 22 that he would not return.

While president of the Tigers, Dombrowski hired Ausmus prior to the 2014 season. Ausmus is a Connecticut native who played parts of 18 seasons in the majors.

Dombrowski confirmed a report in the Boston Herald that he met with Ausmus but offered no details.

Dombrowski said last week he planned to move quickly after firing John Farrell. Based on the expediency he has shown so far, a decision could come soon.

Ausmus would have instant rapport with Dombrowski as well as a New England background that should help his transition.

But Cora, several major league sources said, is the top candidate.

In New York on Monday, Astros manager A.J. Hinch was asked about Cora before Game 3 of the ALCS against the Yankees and championed his qualities.

"He's all about baseball. He's all about the competition and small advantages within the game, one of the brightest baseball intellects that I've been around," Hinch said.

"He challenges people. He challenges me. He's someone who's all about winning. And I think to watch our players respond to him, he's got a lot of respect in that clubhouse because of the work he puts in and the attention to detail that he brings. That's why he's the hottest managerial candidate on the planet and deservedly so."

Cora is scheduled to interview with the Mets in New York Tuesday before Game 4.

Astros outfielder and designated hitter Carlos Beltran also endorsed Cora.

"Alex brings a lot to the table," he said. "He's a guy that always is looking for information that he could use against the opposite team. He provides that information to the player, which is great.

"He's always in the clubhouse getting to know the players, getting to know which buttons he could push on each player to make them go out there and play the game hard, which is great.

“I think I always feel that sometimes managers, they draw a very defined line between players and manager. And sometimes they get caught up not going to the clubhouse because they don’t want to feel like they’re invading their space.

“But as a player I love when managers come to the clubhouse, sit down, talk to us, get to know us, ask about our family, about everything. And that really, for me, means a lot. So Alex does that real well.”

Cora played for the Red Sox from 2005-08. If hired, he would be the first former Sox player to manage the team since Butch Hobson from 1992-94.

What will it mean if Red Sox exceed the luxury tax threshold in 2018?

Alex Speier

In 2017, the Red Sox played payroll yoga, contorting in an effort to create a well-rounded roster that nonetheless allowed them to get below the luxury tax threshold (\$195 million for the 2017 season) after two straight years of exceeding it.

It’s almost impossible to imagine the Red Sox staying below the tax threshold again. To the contrary, if they hope to improve their roster – with president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski already on record saying that he has to add more power to the lineup – then the question will shift from whether they’ll stay below the threshold to just how far beyond it they’ll spend.

Unless the Red Sox either find a taker for one of their biggest contracts (David Price, Hanley Ramirez, Rick Porcello) or decide to trade multiple arbitration-eligible players who represent relative bargains for their production, they seem poised to blow past the luxury tax threshold, which has been set at \$197 million for the 2018 season.

The team has just over \$129 million in guaranteed, multi-year commitments (as measured for luxury tax calculations) to seven players: Price (\$31 million), Ramirez (\$22 million), Rick Porcello (\$20.63 million), Pablo Sandoval (\$19 million – and yes, even though released, he’ll still count as part of the Sox’ payroll in both 2018 and 2019), Dustin Pedroia (\$13.3 million for luxury tax purposes, \$16 million in salary), Craig Kimbrel (\$12 million for luxury tax purposes, \$13 million in salary), and Chris Sale (\$11.15 million for luxury tax purposes in a year where his salary will be \$12.5 million).

Beyond that, with 15 arbitration-eligible players – including Mookie Betts, Xander Bogaerts, Jackie Bradley Jr., Christian Vazquez, Drew Pomeranz, and Eduardo Rodriguez – the Sox could have another \$50 million or so. The team could pass on offering arbitration to players such as Brock Holt, Robbie Ross Jr., and Josh Rutledge, all of whom were limited by injuries this year, but for the most part, this group remains a relative bargain.

The Sox will also feature about a half-dozen players on their roster who aren’t yet eligible for arbitration and who thus will make something close to the big league minimum. Andrew Benintendi, Rafael Devers, and bullpen options like Matt Barnes and Heath Hembree will make relative peanuts even as they assume valuable roles. Such players will cost about \$4 million.

Off the bat, in terms of returning players, the Sox will be on the hook for about \$180 million to \$185 million – a number that assumes that none of their players signs long-term extensions that would achieve long-term savings but would increase the payroll this year.

On top of that, they’ll pay an estimated \$14 million in benefits, another \$1 million to \$2 million for minor league salaries of players on their 40-man roster, and about \$8 million to \$10 million for in-season call-ups and salaries absorbed in trades.

That ball of wax already crosses the \$200 million barrier – without beginning to address the team’s offseason needs: The addition of power, a first baseman/DH to pair with Ramirez (assuming that Sam

Travis is deemed unready for such a role), a fourth outfielder, and quite possibly a second base alternative to Pedroia depending on whether the second baseman elects to have a major surgery on his knee that could cost him a sizable chunk of the season.

So what does that mean? What are the consequences of spending beyond the luxury tax threshold?

A primer:

WHAT IS THE 2018 LUXURY TAX THRESHOLD? \$197 million, up roughly 1 percent from the \$195 million line of demarcation in 2017.

WHAT IS THE PENALTY? The Red Sox, after resetting their tax by staying below the threshold in 2017, will get hit with a 20 percent tax on any spending beyond \$197 million.

IS IT JUST A STRAIGHT 20 PERCENT TAX BEYOND \$197 MILLION? Nope, and here's where it gets interesting.

The Red Sox will be taxed at 20 percent for anything they spend beyond \$197 million – with additional penalties for spending that's more than \$20 million and then \$40 million above the threshold. For all spending beyond \$217 million next year, the Sox will be taxed at a 32 percent rate. For all spending beyond \$237 million next year, they'd be taxed at a 62.5 percent rate. Here's how that would play out for three scenarios:

If the Red Sox have a \$215 million payroll next year, they'd be on the hook for a \$3.6 million luxury tax bill (20 percent of their \$18 million overage).

If the Sox have a \$235 million payroll next year, they'd be on the hook for a \$9.76 million luxury tax bill (\$4 million for the spending between \$197 million and \$217 million, plus \$5.76 million for the \$18 million subject to the second penalty threshold between \$217 million and \$235 million).

If the Sox have a \$255 million payroll next year, they'd be on the hook for an additional \$21.65 million – the \$4 million (20 percent tax) for spending up to the \$217 million mark, \$6.4 million (32 percent tax) for spending between \$217 and \$237 million, and another \$11.25 million (62.5 percent tax) for spending between \$237 million and \$255 million.

ANYTHING ELSE? Yup. Once a team spends beyond the \$237 million threshold on its 2018 payroll, its 2019 draft pick gets bumped down 10 spots, and its available signing bonus pool likewise takes a hit. The new Collective Bargaining Agreement thus bakes in significant disincentives – beyond just a tax bill – for teams to go more than \$40 million above the threshold.

Moreover, any team that goes beyond \$197 million (the initial luxury tax threshold) in 2018 would suffer both draft pick (loss of a team's second and fifth pick) and international signing bonus (a budget clipped by \$1 million) penalties if signing a free agent in the 2018-19 offseason who had received a qualifying offer to a contract of more than \$50 million. Given that the 2018-19 free-agent class has a chance to be one of the best in free agent history, that has a good chance to be relevant, but it's a virtually unavoidable issue for the Sox given that there's almost no way they can get beneath \$197 million this coming year.

SO ... WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS MEAN? The Sox need middle-of-the-order power. As noted in last week's roster analysis, J.D. Martinez and Eric Hosmer are the two most obvious solutions. Yet both are likely to command upwards of \$20 million a year – which would push the Red Sox past the \$217 million mark and into a higher tier of penalties.

Given where Sox payroll now sits, if the Sox do pursue either player, it wouldn't be shocking if the team considered dealing an arbitration-eligible player (or players) to clear some payroll while addressing other needs. Or, put another way: The Red Sox probably won't address all of their winter needs in free agency without also offsetting salary by trading some controllable players.

In theory, the team could also see if a taker for Ramirez exists, but given that they'd have to absorb most of his salary in order to facilitate a deal, and that they'd then be thrown back into the free agent market to replace him with another first baseman/DH, any move involving the mercurial slugger would carry little payroll benefit. Similar considerations likely exist with Porcello, while Price's combination of the largest salary of any pitcher and an opt-out make him virtually untradeable – even with his brilliant playoff performance. (Disclaimer: Dombrowski did once trade a player considered completely untradeable, swapping Prince Fielder for Ian Kinsler.)

One additional consideration: It's hard to imagine the team considering Rusney Castillo as a fourth-outfield option, given that he would carry a payroll hit (as calculated for the luxury tax) of more than \$10 million. Since that the Sox would have to pay millions of dollars in taxes on a salary that already significantly exceeds what a team wants to pay an outfield reserve, it's doubtful he'll ever again play for the Red Sox in the big leagues.

Unless the Sox decide that, with Chris Young off the roster, they're going to consider Bryce Brentz for the fourth outfielder role, they'll probably have to conjure a righthanded-hitting outfielder in free agency, unless Martinez is acquired for the role.

Correction: Because of a reporter's error, an earlier version of this story incorrectly stated the level at which a team's top draft pick would be moved back by 10 selections. That penalty is only triggered if a team exceeds a \$237 million payroll in 2018."

*** *The Boston Herald***

It's obvious Dombrowski wants next Red Sox manager to be someone who better relates to players

Chad Jennings

NEW YORK — It's been a week, and Dave Dombrowski's been busy.

One manager fired. Two replacement candidates interviewed. And the World Series hasn't even started yet.

It's almost as if firing John Farrell wasn't some snap decision based on a lost Division Series. This feels more like a calculated, strategic attempt to modify the Red Sox clubhouse, change the culture and put a different kind of voice in charge.

Yesterday, Dombrowski met with the most obvious candidate for the job, former Tigers manager Brad Ausmus, whose connection to Red Sox president of baseball operations dates back to their time together in Detroit.

Dombrowski hired Ausmus with the Tigers, and he confirmed yesterday's interview in an email to the Herald.

That interview came just one day after the Red Sox traveled to the site of last night's Game 3 of the American League Championship Series to interview Astros bench coach Alex Cora. Dombrowski would not comment on a report from MLB analyst Ken Rosenthal that the team also asked permission to interview Diamondbacks bench coach Ron Gardenhire.

This much is clear: The Sox are wasting no time figuring out who they want to lead this team, and the names on the docket suggest a strong preference for a manager who can better relate to his players.

Gardenhire was popular during his 13 years as the manager in Minnesota, where Eduardo Nunez gave him credit in their one season together for creating an atmosphere that helped Nunez emerge from a Yankees utility man to eventually a Twins All-Star.

Ausmus, too, proved to be a player's manager during his four years in Detroit. He finished with a losing record, but he cultivated a reputation for building relationships in the clubhouse.

"Ausmus was well-liked by Tigers players," the Detroit Free Press wrote last month, when the Tigers announced they would not bring their manager back. "But perhaps that was part of the problem. Oftentimes he blended in as one of the guys, a former player recently removed from his playing days who routinely would field ground balls during pregame workouts."

For better and for worse, that certainly wasn't Farrell's style.

In interviewing an untested candidate like Cora, the Red Sox clearly are digging into reputation and philosophy instead of track record and results. Cora's never managed, but the Astros have given him credit for digging into scouting reports and statistics, and for creating a winning atmosphere in his first season on the bench.

"He's always in the clubhouse getting to know the players, getting to know which buttons he could push on each player to make them go out there and play the game hard, which is great," Astros veteran Carlos Beltran said. "I always feel that sometimes managers, they draw a very defined line between players and manager. And sometimes they get caught up not going to the clubhouse because they don't want to feel like they're invading their space. But as a player I love when managers come to the clubhouse, sit down, talk to us, get to know us, ask about our family, about everything. And that really, for me, means a lot. So, Alex does that real well."

There are managerial jobs open in New York, Philadelphia and Detroit, and Cora's become one of the most discussed candidates in the game. The market seems ripe for him to get a chance, either in Boston or somewhere else.

"He challenges people. He challenges me," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said. "He's someone who's all about winning. And I think to watch our players respond to him, he's got a lot of respect in that clubhouse because of the work he puts in and the attention to detail that he brings. That's why he's the hottest managerial candidate on the planet and deservedly so."

Despite his stated preference for a manager with experience, Dombrowski has shown a willingness to hire a first-year manager in the past. He did it the last time he hired one, which was Ausmus in 2013.

Because of his familiarity with Dombrowski, and because of his background in New England — he grew up in Connecticut, went to Dartmouth College, interviewed for the Red Sox job in 2012 — Ausmus was immediately linked to the Red Sox job the moment Farrell was fired.

Jon Heyman of FanRag Sports reported yesterday that Ausmus was offered an interview for the Mets job but took his name out of consideration.

Perhaps Dombrowski isn't the only one with a clear idea of what he wants. Ausmus might know what he wants as well.

*** *The Springfield Republican***

Boston Red Sox interview former Detroit Tigers manager Brad Ausmus for managerial opening

Jen McCaffrey

The Red Sox have reportedly interviewed a second candidate for their managerial opening.

The Boston Herald's Chad Jennings reports that former Tigers manager Brad Ausmus interviewed with the Red Sox on Monday in New York.

Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski hired Ausmus as Detroit's manager in 2012 after Ausmus interviewed for the manager job in Boston following the firing of Bobby Valentine.

The 48-year-old former major leaguer spent four seasons managing in Detroit, but did not have his contract renewed after this season.

Boston already interviewed Houston Astros bench coach Alex Cora on Sunday during the off day for the American League Championship Series.

Ken Rosenthal reported over the weekend that Dombrowski also had plans to interview former Twins manager and current Diamondbacks bench coach Ron Gardenhire.

Boston Red Sox managerial search: Alex Cora should be at the top of Dave Dombrowski's short list

Christopher Smith

Astros bench coach Alex Cora is the top candidate for the Red Sox managerial opening, Ken Rosenthal reported. This comes after the ex-Red Sox utility infielder interviewed for the position with president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski in New York City on Sunday.

Cora should be at the top of Dombrowski's short list of candidates.

Brad Ausmus had seemed like the logical frontrunner for the opening upon first glance. But it quickly became clear he probably isn't the right fit -- and Dombrowski likely knew it before most of us did.

Sure, Dombrowski might still interview Ausmus. But Dombrowski said last Wednesday, "I think your ability to deal with the media probably weighs more than I would say in Detroit."

One Tigers reporter told MassLive.com that Ausmus "could be very prickly when faced with criticism."

Some have made the case hiring a manager who has failed somewhere else during his first try as a manager isn't a bad idea. After all, the manager will have learned from all the mistakes he made the first time and be ready to correct them.

But Ausmus still made major mistakes as Tigers manager last month. He went on a tirade Sept. 18 about the Detroit media being negative after being asked a reasonable question that he didn't like.

Why should we expect Ausmus to be any different if his second chance comes immediately after his first?

If the 41-year-old Cora is hired, this will be his first major league managerial position. He'll make mistakes with in-game decisions. It's to be expected. (It would be best for him to hire an experienced bench coach.)

But he has the intangibles to succeed immediately. He's known as a strong communicator and showed those skills in Houston during 2017. He works well with young players. He has been a Winter Ball manager in Puerto Rico. He has personality. He knows exactly what the media is like in Boston after playing here from 2005-08.

Cora visited the Red Sox clubhouse before a game last year when he still worked for ESPN. It was clear from his communication with Boston reporters he had a strong relationship with the media when he played here.

Cora's experience in the postseason is another important factor that shouldn't go unrecognized. He won a World Series in 2007 with Boston. His Astros are ahead 2-0 in the ALCS over the Yankees right now.

He has been there. The Red Sox roster hasn't been there.

He understands what it takes for players to relax and enjoy success during the playoffs. The Red Sox have gone 1-6 the past two postseasons. They haven't shown they know how to win in October.

Adding a couple veteran players to the 2018 roster with experience winning in the postseason certainly would help. Cora himself also has the ability to teach this young core of players how to approach October.

Dombrowski also asked permission from the Diamondbacks to interview bench coach Ron Gardenhire.

Gardenhire led the Twins to the AL Central title six times in his first nine years there, then the club went into rebuilding mode.

The 59-year-old seems like a decent candidate but someone who already has experienced Boston seems like a better candidate. Gardenhire also has gone just 6-21 in the postseason.

Gabe Kapler, who won a World Series title with Boston in 2004, is another potential candidate similar to Cora who Dombrowski also might want to interview.

But it certainly seems like Cora is his man as of now. If that's the case, go get him.

*** *RedSox.com***

Red Sox meet with Ausmus for manager role

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski interviewed his second managerial candidate in two days, but he didn't need a meet-and-greet for this one.

According to a baseball source, Monday's interview was with Brad Ausmus, who was let go by the Tigers at the end of the regular season.

Dombrowski hired Ausmus as the manager of the Tigers when Jim Leyland retired following the 2013 season.

Ausmus made a strong first impression on Dombrowski in 2014 while guiding the Tigers to the American League Central title. They worked together for most of '15 as well, but Dombrowski left the Tigers in August of that season and wound up with the Red Sox two weeks later.

The Boston Herald was first to report that the Red Sox interviewed Ausmus. He has also drawn interest from the Mets.

The Red Sox, who announced last week that John Farrell would not be returning as manager, have also requested permission to speak with D-backs bench coach Ron Gardenhire.

Astros bench coach Alex Cora, who played for the Red Sox from 2005-08, interviewed with Dombrowski in New York during Sunday's off-day in the American League Championship Series. Though Cora has never managed, he is a hot commodity this offseason -- MLB Network contributor Ken Rosenthal reported that Cora is Boston's top target. The New York Post reported that Cora will meet with the Mets on Monday or Tuesday. He has also been linked with the Tigers' and Phillies' openings.

Given Cora's fondness for the Red Sox organization, the team he won a World Series with in '07, Boston could have the inside track for his services. The former utility infielder was hired last offseason to A.J.

Hinch's staff after a tenure as a television analyst at ESPN. Cora has also been a general manager of a team in his hometown in Puerto Rico, and he was the general manager for the Puerto Rico club that finished runner-up in this year's World Baseball Classic to the United States.

"His first year of coaching has gone well, given his ability to connect with players and given his baseball intellect," Hinch said last week. "He's very sharp, sees the game in an extraordinarily deep way, has really connected well with players in our clubhouse and spent a lot of time developing relationships and being the bench-coach liaison to the clubhouse that I asked him to be."

Gardenhire is the most veteran candidate to emerge so far for the Red Sox. Minnesota's skipper from 2002-14, Gardenhire led the Twins to six American League Central titles.

Red Sox, Mets line up to interview Cora

Daniel Kramer

The managerial interview carousel will reportedly continue for Astros bench coach Alex Cora, who met with the Red Sox on Sunday about their vacancy and will also meet with the Mets about theirs, according to MLB Network's Ken Rosenthal.

Cora, who is in his first season on Astros manager A.J. Hinch's staff, will reportedly interview with the Mets on Monday or Tuesday, according to the New York Post. He is among a throng of candidates who interest the Mets, a group that also reportedly includes former Tigers manager Brad Ausmus, former White Sox manager Robin Ventura, Dodgers bench coach Bob Geren, A's third-base coach Chip Hale, White Sox third-base coach Joe McEwing and Indians first-base coach Sandy Alomar Jr. Rosenthal reported last week that the Mets are expected to show interest in Indians pitching coach Mickey Callaway.

Cora, who played parts of 14 MLB seasons, including two with the Mets, has no big league managerial experience but has managed in winter ball and has been pursued heavily thus far. Cora has also been linked to the Tigers and Phillies openings. He interviewed for the D-backs' position last offseason, but that job went to Torey Lovullo.

Cora was hired to join Hinch's staff after a tenure as an television analyst at ESPN. Cora has also been a general manager of a team in his hometown in Puerto Rico, and he was the general manager for the Puerto Rico club that finished runner-up in this year's World Baseball Classic to the United States.

"His first year of coaching has gone well, given his ability to connect with players and given his baseball intellect," Hinch said last week. "He's very sharp, sees the game in an extraordinarily deep way, has really connected well with players in our clubhouse and spent a lot of time developing relationships and being the bench-coach liaison to the clubhouse that I asked him to be."

"And I think he's grown, and I think that's key because it's not easy to just, no matter how long your career, jump into a coaching role. Trust me, I know how things can go when you jump right into a job; it's not easy. So for him to be able to learn, to grow, to evolve, become a better coach, continue to learn the game. Those are characteristics as to why he is a hot name in every opening that's coming up so far this offseason or this postseason and why one day he's going to manage, whether it's now or later."

Cora, 41, is believed to be one of the first to interview for the Red Sox's vacancy after the departure of John Farrell, who managed Boston the last five seasons. On Wednesday, the club announced Farrell would not return. The Red Sox have also requested permission to interview D-backs bench coach Ron Gardenhire, who was the Twins' skipper from 2002-2014 and led Minnesota to six American League Central division titles.

Under former manager Terry Collins, who will shift to a role in the front office, the Mets went 551-583 over his seven seasons, including a National League pennant win in 2015.

*** *WEEI.com***

Report: '99.9 percent chance' Alex Cora is named manager of Red Sox

Ty Anderson

Alex Cora, who interviewed with Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski in New York on Sunday, is now being considered a lock to become the Red Sox' next manager, according to a report out of Puerto Rico.

"There is a 99.9 percent chance of [Cora] being named Red Sox leader," a source told Puerto Rico's El Nuevo Dia. "They want him for the job. That post is for him. Alex is very beloved there. And he would love to run Boston. They want to make the fast decision."

Cora, currently serving as the bench coach for the Astros, a post he's held for just one season, is more than familiar with the Boston market, as he played for the Red Sox from 2005 through 2008, and won a World Series with the club in 2007.

The 41-year-old Cora is also expected to interview with the Mets, and has garnered some interest from the Tigers, but the report 'joked' that the source indicated that the Red Sox would like to find a way to prevent Cora from interviewing with those teams.

*** *CSNNE.com***

Brad Ausmus interviews with Red Sox, but Alex Cora appears frontrunner

Evan Drellich

BOSTON — Brad Ausmus was the second person to interview to replace John Farrell as Red Sox manager, baseball sources confirmed Monday afternoon. The Sox are expected to interview Ron Gardenhire, the Diamondbacks' bench coach, as well.

But the net might not be cast too wide. More and more, it sounds like the Sox already know who they want.

Astros bench coach Alex Cora, who met with Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski in New York on Sunday, appears the frontrunner to take the reins next year. The Athletic's Ken Rosenthal has reported that to be the case multiple times, and for some inside the Sox organization, that's a growing feeling as well.

"I knew Alex for a couple of years before getting a chance to work with him and had tried to recruit him to work a few years ago and he had other options," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said Monday in New York, before Game 3 of the American League Championship Series against the Yankees. "To watch him develop relationships with the players, he's all about baseball. He's all about the competition and small advantages within the game, one of the brightest baseball intellects that I've been around. And to see him pass some of that on and transition from player to TV personality to coach, he's had a ton of impact.

"He challenges people. He challenges me. He's someone who's all about winning. And I think to watch our players respond to him, he's got a lot of respect in that clubhouse because of the work he puts in and the attention to detail that he brings. That's why he's the hottest managerial candidate on the planet and deservedly so."

Cora joined the Astros before this season.

Ausmus, whom Dombrowski hired in Detroit ahead of the 2014 season, grew up in Connecticut and went to Dartmouth. The 48-year-old spent 18 seasons as a big-league catcher, the last in 2010. He was working for the Padres before Dombrowski gave him his first shot at managing the Tigers.

Ausmus went 314-332 in four years managing the Tigers, a more veteran team than might have been ideal for him as a first-time manager.

Ausmus pulled out of the running to interview with the Mets, per Jon Heyman of Fan Rag while Cora was expected to interview with the Mets on Monday or Tuesday, per the New York Post's Mike Puma.

What could change from here? One baseball source indicated a second interview with Cora was expected. Asked if he plans a second round of interviews generally, Dombrowski did not say.

"We have started the interview process," Dombrowski wrote via email. "I do not have any specific time frames at this point. Will wait and evaluate as we go through the process."

The Boston Herald's Chad Jennings first reported Ausmus' interview.

*** *The Boston Sports Journal***

Brad Ausmus second to interview for Red Sox managerial opening

Sean McAdam

For the second time in as many days, the Red Sox conducted an interview for their vacant managerial position.

After traveling to New York on Sunday to speak with Houston Astros bench coach Alex Cora, the Sox hosted Brad Ausmus on Monday.

Ausmus, of course, needed no formal introduction to Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, who hired him to manage the Detroit Tigers after the 2013 season to replace the retiring Jim Leyland.

Ausmus managed Detroit for four seasons – the first two and a half under Dombrowski – and compiled a 314-342 record (.486 winning percentage). His Tigers won 90 games in his first full season before dropping to 74-87 mark in 2015. In 2016, the Tigers rebounded to 86-75 and a second-place finish.

This past season, the Tigers weathered a 64-98 record, tying them with the San Francisco Giants, for the worst record in the game. With a week to go in the season, Ausmus was told by the Tigers he would not be returning for 2018.

This is not the first time that Ausmus has interviewed for the Red Sox managerial post. After the team fired Bobby Valentine the day after the 2012 season, Ausmus was one of several candidates who spoke to then-GM Ben Cherington and others. Ultimately, the Red Sox selected John Farrell, and sometime later, Dombrowski chose Ausmus to manage Detroit.

Ausmus had offered the opportunity to interview with the New York Mets – one of three other major league teams beyond the Sox in search of a manager – but declined the invitation, a source said.

Many in baseball believe that Cora is the favorite for the position, though Ausmus cannot be ruled out given his past history with Dombrowski. Cora is scheduled to interview with the Mets on Tuesday and may also be in the running for the openings in Philadelphia and Detroit.

Ausmus is among three managerial candidates whom the Sox have interviewed or intend to interview. In addition to Cora, the Sox have asked permission from the Arizona Diamondbacks to speak with bench coach Ron Gardenhire, though it's unclear when Gardenhire will interview.

Turnkey Red Sox roster, ready to win, could help team land Cora in crowded managerial field

Sean McAdam

The Red Sox managerial search kicked into high gear over the weekend, with the club interviewing Alex Cora Sunday in New York and making plans to interview Ron Gardenhire at some point this week.

President of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski told the Boston Herald the meeting with Cora, the Houston Astros bench coach, "went fine," without disclosing any other impressions.

That the Sox chose to interview Cora first — and in the middle of the ALCS, in which his Astros are currently involved — could be telling, as it would seem indicate a high level of interest in the former Boston infielder.

Cora could be in the running for any of the other three managerial openings with the Philadelphia Phillies, New York Mets and Detroit Tigers, which could create a competition between the interested clubs.

But the Red Sox could have two distinct advantages if the bidding for Cora heats up:

First, Cora spent nearly four full seasons with the Red Sox, and has a familiarity with both the market and the organization, even if few people remain with the franchise from his playing time here.

Second, while the Phillies, Tigers and Mets are all in various stages of rebuilding, Cora would inherit a roster ready to compete in 2018 and beyond.

Most teams hiring managers do so after a losing season. The Mets lost 92 games last season, while the Phillies lost 96 and the Tigers lost 98, tying them for the worst record in baseball.

It's conceivable the Mets could rebound in 2018 if their injury-depleted starting rotation can regain health and perform to expectations. The Phils and Tigers, meanwhile are, at minimum several seasons away from fielding a playoff-worthy team.

Not so the Red Sox, who are the outlier here and dismissed John Farrell last week largely because Dombrowski wished to have someone of his own choosing in the dugout and believed it was time to make a change.

Boston won 93 games for the second straight season and captured the A.L. East title in each of the last two years. And while the Sox will have their hands full in the division next season with a strong New York Yankee roster, they can reasonably expect to be a playoff contender again.

The team's potential losses in free agency — Mitch Moreland, Addison Reed, Eduardo Nunez — are significant, but not overwhelming.

In short, of the four teams with an interest in hiring Cora, the Red Sox are by far the best positioned to success, now and in the near future.

It was precisely this same scenario that the Red Sox were in following the 2003 season. Boston had lost in crushing fashion to the Yankees in Game 7 of the ALCS and elected to let manager Grady Little go.

A long search process led them to Terry Francona, who inherited a team which had won 95 games and came within a run of winning the American League pennant and advancing to the World Series.

In his first season, Francona directed the Sox to a 98-win season and, ultimately, the organization's first world championship in 86 years.

None of which is to suggest Cora will automatically choose the Sox over other suitors, or that his hiring will result in an immediate return to October glory.

It's also possible that the expectation to win immediately could act as a disincentive for Cora, who may prefer to develop a club at his own pace rather than the pressures that would await him as a first-year manager in Boston

But it does emphasize the important edge the Sox may have in recruiting Cora if the competition for his services escalates.