

The Boston Red Sox Friday, October 27, 2017

*** *The Boston Globe***

Four Red Sox among finalists for Gold Gloves

Peter Abraham

Four Red Sox players were finalists at their respective position for American League Gold Gloves: right fielder Mookie Betts, first baseman Mitch Moreland, second baseman Dustin Pedroia, and pitcher Chris Sale.

Betts and Moreland won last season. Pedroia is a four-time winner, the last time in 2014. Sale is a first-time finalist.

The winners will be announced on Nov. 7 at 9 p.m. on ESPN.

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Kole Calhoun (Angels) and Aaron Judge (Yankees) are the other finalists in right field. Alex Cobb (Rays) and Marcus Stroman (Blue Jays) were the other pitcher finalists.

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That Jackie Bradley Jr. was not a finalist is curious. Byron Buxton of the Twins and Kevin Pillar of the Blue Jays were selected, but Bradley was snubbed in favor of Kansas City's Lorenzo Cain.

In both conventional and advanced statistics, Bradley graded out a better fielder than Cain. Bradley was finalist in 2014 and '16.

How will the Red Sox cover for Dustin Pedroia's absence?

Alex Speier

Will the Red Sox handle uncertainty differently this time?

Last winter, the Red Sox made a bold leap of faith, trading Travis Shaw and entrusting third base to Pablo Sandoval. Though Sandoval barely played in 2016 before undergoing season-ending surgery to repair a torn labrum, the Sox believed that a) the veteran could return to something approximating his career norms and b) internal depth options like Brock Holt, Marco Hernandez, Josh Rutledge, and Deven Marrero could cover the team at the position.

That bet flopped. Surgery and a significant improvement to his overall conditioning failed to restore Sandoval's skills. He was released and the Sox were burdened with horrendous production at third for much of the year, until Rafael Devers made his remarkable and unexpected jump into the Red Sox lineup as a 20-year-old.

That history looms as a warning over the news that Dustin Pedroia underwent left knee cartilage restoration surgery on Wednesday, a procedure that the team announced is expected to keep him out of games for seven months. Peter Abraham talked to Pedroia's teammate, knuckleballer Steven Wright who underwent the same procedure last season; Wright offered optimism for the Sox veteran, suggesting that the rest and rehab could leave Pedroia healthier than he's been in some time.

Within that same article, president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski said that the Sox believe that they have "enough infield depth" to weather Pedroia's absence. Evan Drellich of NBC Sports Boston adds that the team expects Pedroia to return to pre-injury levels.

But does it make sense for the Sox to proceed with such an expectation? A healthy — or even unhealthy — Pedroia can remain a considerable asset for the Red Sox. He was fantastic in 2016 (.318/.376/.449) and, while his overall numbers dipped in 2017 (.293/.369/.392), he was the team's best hitter in July (.337/.393/.510) until his knee injury sidelined him at the end of the month.

Pedroia can remain a very valuable contributor, but the Sox probably can't afford to take such a development for granted, nor can they simply assume that he'll be an everyday lineup fixture going forward while trying to maximize his productivity.

Through July, outside of a brief disabled list stint for a wrist injury incurred in a collision with White Sox first baseman Jose Abreu, the Sox had Pedroia in the lineup roughly seven out of every eight games (88 percent of the time). As the team tries to maximize the health and production of the 34-year-old, it may want to scale back that number. Moreover, taking Pedroia's health as a given upon his return in 2018 represents a somewhat dangerous proposition for a player who has averaged 122 games a year over the last four seasons and 117 over the last three.

Do the Red Sox have the internal alternatives necessary to make Pedroia's absence — and his days off upon his return — palatable? That is an interesting eye-of-the-beholder question, given that the internal options are largely the same cast of characters (Holt, Rutledge, Marrero, Hernandez, Tzu-Wei Lin) that the Sox deployed in place of Sandoval.

That's a high-risk group. Holt has struggled for two years while dealing with the aftermath of concussions. Hernandez, an unrefined hitter, will be returning from a 2017 season lost to shoulder surgery. Marrero showed surprising production against lefties (.291/.344/.600) but performed poorly against righties (.172/.218/.207). Rutledge hasn't been able to remain healthy and even when on the field, he's viewed chiefly as an option against lefties. Lin showed surprising promise in flashes but remains unproven. There is no second base equivalent of Devers in the system.

Can the Sox deem their second base depth adequate? It is worth noting that the team had a nearly identical winning percentage when Pedroia started (.577) compared to when he didn't (.569) in 2017 — though if one removed free-agent Eduardo Nunez's starts from that equation, the Sox' winning percentage with non-Pedroia starters dropped to .525. There are numerous factors for that gap — but for a team whose offensive limitations afforded little margin for error in 2017, it seems dangerous to view depth as a luxury rather than a necessity.

Titles are being won with depth and versatility. Ben Zobrist was a key addition to both the 2015 Royals and 2016 Cubs. The 2017 Dodgers have featured a World Series lineup in which half of the position players weren't Opening Day starters; Chris Taylor delivered star-caliber production while playing five positions, Cody Bellinger contributed in four spots, and platoonist extraordinaire Kike Hernandez played seven positions. The Astros relied on do-everything utility man Marwin Gonzalez to help them navigate the season.

Do the Sox believe that any of their infield depth options is capable of moving all over the field while delivering above-average offensive production? And if they do, are they willing to accept the risk of being wrong?

As much as the Red Sox need to upgrade their offensive upside, they face a simultaneous need to reinforce its floor. Someone like Nunez represented a perfect fit to do just that in 2017, but at a time when the Sox are likely to spend heavily to add a middle-of-the-order slugger, it remains to be seen if they'd feel comfortable paying market value for a player who is on several teams' radars as a potential regular.

The team could seek a trade for someone like Tigers second baseman Ian Kinsler (whom the Sox pursued as an option at the trade deadline at both second and third base), or another versatile player like Jed Lowrie of the A's. There are other veteran options (Asdrubal Cabrera, Neil Walker, and more) who could fit the profile.

In the face of uncertainty, there are options. It remains to be seen whether the Red Sox seek a different solution to depth management this winter than they did last.

Three Red Sox coaches leave for new jobs

Peter Abraham

Three key members of the Red Sox coaching staff — third base coach Brian Butterfield, hitting coach Chili Davis, and pitching coach Carl Willis — left the organization on Thursday.

The Chicago Cubs hired Butterfield and Davis in the same roles they had in Boston. The Cleveland Indians hired Willis as their pitching coach.

When the Sox fired manager John Farrell on Oct. 11, president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski told the coaching staff they were free to seek other opportunities.

New manager Alex Cora was given the freedom to hire his own staff with the approval of Dombrowski.

Butterfield had been with the Sox since 2013. The Maine native is considered one of the best infield instructors on the game. He also helped the Sox design many of their defensive shifts.

Davis became hitting coach in 2015. In his tenure, the Sox led the majors in runs and on-base percentage.

“Chili has the ability to really be heard,” Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. “I like his methods I like how he does it, how he says it. I like his technicality during the games. He has a great message and he's great at sending that message.”

Willis took over as pitching coach on May 9, 2015, after the Sox fired Juan Nieves. The Sox have had a 3.94 earned run average since, second in the American League behind the Indians.

Willis interviewed with the Minnesota Twins and spoke to two other teams. But when the Mets named Indians pitching coach Mickey Callaway as their manager on Monday, his decision became easier.

The Indians then moved swiftly to hire Willis, who worked in the organization from 1997-2009 as pitching coach, the last seven with the major league team.

Willis was Cleveland's Triple A pitching coach in 2015 before the Sox hired him.

“While you look at the number of jobs that are open, there are a tremendous of amount of qualified individuals out there who are available. So, you want to go somewhere where you know you're wanted,” Willis told reporters.

The only coaches remaining on the staff are first base coach Ruben Amaro Jr., bench coach Gary DiSarcina, bullpen coach Dana LeVangie, and assistant hitting coach Victor Rodriguez.

LeVangie has been in the organization 27 seasons as a player and coach and is likely to be retained on the major league staff. LeVangie has been a valuable asset to the pitchers and in 2015 filled in as bench coach when Torey Lovullo managed the team.

Rodriguez, who has been with the Red Sox for 23 years as a player and coach, interviewed with the San Francisco Giants according to WEEI.com. The Giants are seeking a hitting coach after promoting Hensley Meulens to bench coach.

Assistant pitching coach Brian Bannister, who doubles as vice president of pitching development, was not given permission to interview and will have a role with the major league team.

Gold Glove finalists

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*** *The Boston Herald***

Brian Butterfield, Chili Davis and Carl Willis leave Red Sox coaching staff for other jobs in MLB

Jason Mastrodonato

HOUSTON — If the Red Sox were looking for their experienced coaches to help the inexperienced Alex Cora, who is about to enter his first year as manager after serving for only one year as the bench coach for the Houston Astros, they'll have to look elsewhere.

The 2017 coaching staff, full of experienced voices, has disbanded.

Brian Butterfield, the Sox' infield instructor and third base coach who just completed his 38th year of professional baseball, has joined the Chicago Cubs coaching staff where he'll handle third base coaching duties under Joe Maddon.

Chili Davis, the hitting coach the last three years who has been coaching since 2011, is also joining the Cubs in the same role.

And Carl Willis, the pitching coach for the last 2 1/2 seasons, has joined the Cleveland Indians where he'll be Terry Francona's pitching coach.

After president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski fired John Farrell earlier this month, he told the coaches they were free to look for jobs with other clubs while the Sox found a new manager. Ultimately the new manager would get to choose his own staff.

All three departing coaches had experienced success in Boston.

Since Willis took over for the fired Juan Nieves on May 11, 2015, the Red Sox posted a seventh-ranked 3.94 ERA and eighth-ranked 1.28 WHIP. Before Willis arrived, the Sox had a 4.97 ERA and 1.42 WHIP.

Davis, who hit 350 homers in his playing days, helped the offense score 4.96 runs per game (tops in the majors) while hitting .268 (second) during his tenure. They scored just 3.91 runs per game under Greg Colbrunn in 2014.

As an infield instructor, Butterfield worked closely to develop the gloves and arms of Xander Bogaerts and Rafael Devers, among others. But his work at third base had come under some fire late in the year, particularly given the Red Sox' wild baserunning habits. The Sox made a major league worst 81 outs on the bases during the regular season.

Bench coach Gary DiSarcina, first base coach Ruben Amaro Jr., assistant hitting coach Victor Rodriguez, bullpen coach Dana LeVangie and assistant pitching coach/vice president of pitching development Brian Bannister still are listed as active coaches on the Red Sox' official website.

Girardi out in NY

The New York Yankees are also shaking up their coaching staff, announcing that manager Joe Girardi would not return in 2018. His contract was set to expire on Tuesday.

Under Girardi, the Yanks made the playoffs six times, winning three AL East titles (2009, 2011-12) and one World Series (2009).

Astros manager A.J. Hinch could feel for Girardi.

"I don't think anybody can relate to what a manager does other than one of the other 29 managers or if you've done it before," Hinch said. "It's a shame to see so much turnover because of the work, the blood, sweat, tears poured into these job. And I don't think anybody goes through more than what Joe does in New York."

Gold snub for JBJ

When the Rawlings Gold Glove finalists were announced yesterday, Jackie Bradley Jr.'s name was not among the top three center fielders.

The Red Sox ended up with four finalists, including the heavy favorite in right field, Mookie Betts, a strong candidate from the pitcher's mound in Chris Sale, second baseman Dustin Pedroia and first baseman Mitch Moreland.

Sale has never won a Gold Glove, but was a force both on the mound and around it this season. Betts (once), Moreland (once) and Pedroia (four times) are previous winners.

The omission of Bradley from the list of finalists, which included Toronto's Kevin Pillar, Minnesota's Byron Buxton and Kansas City's Lorenzo Cain, was considered a big surprise.

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Borges: Good luck, Alex Cora; you'll need it

TOPS IN THEIR FIELD: Giancarlo Stanton (left) of the Marlins and Jose Altuve (right) of the Astros pose yesterday after receiving the Hank Aaron Award. Joining them are MLB commissioner Rob Manfred and Aaron.

Silverman: Red Sox need power, but not at Giancarlo Stanton's price

Thrown a curve

The Astros will send Lance McCullers to the mound tonight for Game 3 of the World Series. The right-hander is one of just two pitchers (minimum 100 innings) this season to throw a higher percentage of curveballs (47 percent) than Red Sox starter Drew Pomeranz (37). Dodgers lefty Rich Hill (37.5) is the other.

"I think Rich obviously is a very talented pitcher," McCullers said. "His story is awesome, especially what he's overcome and how he came back. . . . You look at a lot of guys who have success throwing the breaking balls and all those guys are pulling for each other."

Alex Cora's Red Sox coaches knew he was manager material

Jason Mastrodonato

HOUSTON — There won't be much to learn about new Red Sox manager Alex Cora by watching his mannerisms in the Houston Astros dugout during Game 3 of the World Series tonight.

But looking back to 2005-08, when he was a utility player with the Red Sox and won a World Series ring in '07, it's easy to see the image of a player who was destined to become a manager.

"I wasn't surprised at all," said Dave Magadan, the Arizona Diamondbacks hitting coach who served the same role for the Red Sox from 2007-12. "Not surprised at all."

"Once I heard of that hire, I thought, 'What a great move,'" said Dale Sveum, the Kansas City Royals bench coach who spent two seasons in Boston from 2004-05 as third base coach.

When they were coaching Cora in Boston, Sveum and Magadan saw a player unlike most others.

"You knew right away, because when he wasn't playing, he was locked into the game," Sveum said. "And had all the attributes of being a coach and a manager in the big leagues because he was well-versed. Very professional. Just an incredible baseball mind."

Said Magadan: "He was always great about picking up pitchers' tendencies or a pickoff move to first. If a guy was falling into patterns, tipping his pitches, Alex was always on top of stuff like that, so you knew he was real cerebral."

Of course, a great mind means little if Cora can't use it to connect with guys on the current Red Sox roster.

It's a diverse group, like most baseball clubhouses. Due to language barriers and cultural similarities/differences, certain players stick together. Cliques are naturally formed.

Cora, a native of Puerto Rico who speaks Spanish and English fluently, was once considered a bridge between the groups, capable of bringing 25 guys closer together.

Even some unusual personalities found Cora endearing.

"He was really good with Manny Ramirez," Magadan said. "He had a way with Manny to get him to play hard. That was very helpful with Tito (Francona) and the rest of the coaching staff."

Cora might as well have been listed as a coach on some of those Red Sox teams.

"He really was," Magadan said. "He had a tough role on our team, a utility infielder, didn't get a ton of playing time. What he handled really well was 2007, when Dustin Pedroia was an everyday second baseman and Pevey was struggling bad. And Alex was swinging the bat really good. There was a lot of clamoring to get Alex in the lineup and send Pevey down to Triple A, and Alex had none of that.

"He mentored Dustin," Magadan said. "He didn't take advantage of what was going on. He knew Dustin was the future of the team and did everything he could to help him. I think he was a big reason why Dustin got out of that slump."

Most coaches now tend to be ex-players who didn't make a lot of money in their careers. But Cora, according to Baseball-Reference, made about \$15 million as a player, then moved to a feature role as part of ESPN's "Baseball Tonight" broadcast before eventually taking the job as Astros bench coach.

"There's not that many you come across like him," Sveum said. "Nowadays, they've made a lot of money and they don't need to continue their careers in coaching ranks or managing ranks to make money. But when guys come around like Alex, you know the game is a passion of his."

Nobody is willing to predict a perfectly smooth transition for Cora. There are going to be struggles, both former coaches admitted, particularly since Cora has yet to manage.

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They expect him to find a veteran bench coach to help guide the way for a while.

"I think it just takes a little while to get your feet underneath you," Sveum said. "In the American League it helps a little bit because you don't have a million things going on after the fifth inning. The AL game I think helps people to enter that way.

"The scrutiny that goes on in Boston, we all know about that. But he'll have a lot of good players, veteran guys ... and some of those young guys are getting a little bit older. But Alex will be a great shoulder to lean on. I think he is going to do a great job."

*** *The Providence Journal***

Red Sox lose three from coaching staff

Tim Britton

BOSTON — A coaching exodus hit Boston on Thursday, as Chili Davis, Carl Willis and Brian Butterfield all agreed to jobs elsewhere. Davis and Butterfield were hired by the Cubs while Willis will rejoin the Indians.

After firing John Farrell two weeks ago, the Red Sox permitted members of their coaching staff — who were all under contract for 2018 — to seek opportunities elsewhere. Even with Alex Cora in place as Boston's next manager, what had been a well-regarded staff is finding new work outside Fenway Park.

Butterfield had been with the Red Sox since 2013 as their third-base coach and infield coordinator. While the first of those jobs incurred the most scrutiny, the second of those was where the baseball lifer had the most impact on the club.

Butterfield worked tirelessly with Boston's infielders, helping Xander Bogaerts turn into an everyday shortstop and several other infielders add versatility to their games. Butterfield was the architect of the club's infield shifts, and he promoted aggressiveness on the basepaths. That worked out well in 2013, when the Sox stole bases at a record efficiency; it drew more criticism this past season when the club led baseball in outs made on the bases.

Davis had been with the Sox since 2015, coming over from Oakland. During his three years as the team's hitting coach, the Red Sox led all of baseball in runs and on-base percentage. (The A's had been fifth in baseball in runs during Davis' three years there.) However, the offense regressed in 2017 beyond what the team expected, with nearly every hitter performing worse than he had the previous season.

Butterfield and Davis will serve in the same roles with Chicago.

Willis took over as pitching coach in May 2015, replacing the dismissed Juan Nieves at the time. He brought stability to a changing rotation and oversaw a Cy Young campaign from Rick Porcello in 2016 — his fourth as a pitching coach — and a potential one from Chris Sale in 2017. In Cleveland, he replaces Mickey Callaway, who left to become manager of the Mets.

Boston has some options in terms of replacements. Double-A manager Carlos Febles would make sense as a base coach and infield coordinator; he was instrumental in Rafael Devers' development this past season and spent some of September up with the big club for the first time. A number of esteemed pitching coaches are available on the market, including former Tampa Bay coach Jim Hickey, former Mets coach Dan Warthen and former Nationals coach Mike Maddux.

The New York Post reported that Mets bullpen coach Ricky Bones is a candidate to join Cora's staff in Boston. Bones was the pitching coach for Puerto Rico's World Baseball Classic team, which Cora helmed as the general manager. NBC Sports Boston has reported that Boston bullpen coach Dana LeVangie is expected to remain on staff in some capacity.

Josh Beckett: Alex Cora "is going to do great" as Red Sox manager

Tim Britton

BOSTON — Josh Beckett has known for more than a decade that this is where Alex Cora would end up.

“There’s always a few guys you eartagged when you played with them that you’d think, ‘This guy would make a great manager,’” Beckett said Thursday morning while promoting January’s Diamond Resorts Invitational, a charity event that has raised \$2.3 million for the Florida Hospital for Children. “I always thought Alex just watched the game differently than the rest of us did.

“It’s almost like they’re thinking along with the game. Alex was always really good at dissecting small parts of the game — whether it was a pitcher who was tipping pitches, a guy you could steal on. He always just watched the game like that. You’d look over him at the bench and you could tell he was thinking about things differently than I was. That was his edge, to be able to play the game out before it happened. That made him a better player.”

Beckett, who shared three seasons in Boston with Cora, including 2007’s championship and 2008’s trip to the ALCS, said the new Red Sox manager had helped serve as a “bridge” in the clubhouse between Latin players and American ones.

“He can bridge any gaps that are there,” Beckett said. “He’s super friendly, but he knew when to get on somebody, too.”

Beckett, who worked part-time as an analyst for the Astros on Root Sports Southwest this season, said Cora’s time in Boston will serve him well as a manager.

“There’s going to be certain things that you [media] and the front office expect, so yeah, [it helps to be] somebody that’s been there and seen it first-hand,” he said, comparing it to the way John Farrell seamlessly took over in 2013. “I think he’s going to do great.”

*** *The Springfield Republican***

Red Sox Gold Glove finalists: Betts, Pedroia, Moreland, Sale named finalists

Christopher Smith

Mookie Betts ranked second among all major league defenders with 31 defensive runs saved, per Fangraphs.com.

The Red Sox right fielder -- who won a Gold Glove last year and was named the 2016 Wilson MLB Defensive Player of Year -- is one of four 2017 Red Sox Gold Glove finalists.

Betts is an AL right field finalist with Yankees' Aaron Judge and Angels' Kole Calhoun.

Dustin Pedroia is an AL second base finalist with Twins' Brian Dozier and Tigers' Ian Kinsler.

Mitch Moreland -- a 2016 AL Gold Glove winner -- is an AL first base finalist with Royals' Eric Hosmer and Indians' Carlos Santana.

Chris Sale is an AL pitcher finalist with Blue Jays' Marcus Stroman and Rays' Alex Cobb.

Jackie Bradley Jr. -- who had nine defensive runs saved and made several sensational catches (a couple to rob homers) -- is not an AL center field finalist.

Royals' Lorenzo Cain, Blue Jays' Kevin Pillar and Twins' Byron Buxton were named the three finalists.

Buxton should win. He led all major league center fielders with 24 defensive runs saved.

Red Sox third base coach Brian Butterfield, hitting coach Chili Davis hired away by Chicago Cubs

Nick O'Malley

The Alex Cora era with the Boston Red Sox will feature some significant changes in the clubhouse.

Days after the team's new manager was officially hired, the Red Sox announced that two of their assistant coaches were hired away. On Thursday, third base coach Brian Butterfield and hitting coach Chili Davis were both hired by the Chicago Cubs.

Butterfield has been the team's third base coach since 2013, and is also known as a key infield instructor. Davis, meanwhile, has been the team's hitting coach since 2015.

The exodus to Chicago follows the news that pitching coach Carl Willis has been hired by the Cleveland Indians to fill the same position under Terry Francona.

*** *RedSox.com***

Betts, Moreland, Pedey, Sale up for Gold Gloves

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- After a season of slick fielding around the diamond, four Red Sox players were named finalists for a Rawlings Gold Glove Award.

Right fielder Mookie Betts, first baseman Mitch Moreland, second baseman Dustin Pedroia and ace lefty Chris Sale were announced as American League finalists at their respective positions on Thursday. Betts and Moreland are hoping to make it back-to-back Gold Glove honors.

Winners will be announced on Nov. 7 at 9 p.m. ET on ESPN.

Playing half of his games in one of the most challenging right-field territories in the Majors, Betts made standout plays all season, registering eight outfield assists. According to Fangraphs, he led Major League right fielders in Ultimate Zone Rating (18.9) and Defensive Runs Saved (31). Kole Calhoun (Angels) and Aaron Judge (Yankees) are the other AL finalists in right field.

In his first season with the Red Sox, Moreland came as advertised, consistently helping out his infielders with slick scoops at first base. He was credited with 10 Defensive Runs Saved, which trailed only Red Sox first baseman Joey Votto. Moreland is in competition with Eric Hosmer (Royals) and Carlos Santana (Indians) for the AL Gold Glove at first base.

Pedroia, a four-time Gold Glove Award winner, was named a finalist despite a problematic left knee that limited him to 105 games. In 366 total chances, Pedroia made just two errors and is a finalist at second base with Brian Dozier (Twins) and Ian Kinsler (Tigers).

As dominant as Sale was on the mound, he sometimes helped himself out with his own slick fielding. In his career, the southpaw has made just three errors. He has been errorless over the past two seasons, covering 61 total chances. Sale has never won a Gold Glove Award. Marcus Stroman (Blue Jays) and Alex Cobb (Rays) are the other two AL pitchers up for consideration.

Coaches Butterfield, Davis, Willis move on

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- New Red Sox manager Alex Cora has some key roles to fill on his coaching staff.

Third-base coach Brian Butterfield and hitting coach Chili Davis both departed on Thursday to fill those same roles for the Cubs, and pitching coach Carl Willis was hired to fill that job for the Indians.

All of Boston's coaches were under contract for 2018. But following the dismissal of manager John Farrell earlier this month, the Red Sox gave the coaches the opportunity to seek employment elsewhere.

Cora is currently finishing out the season as bench coach for the Astros, who are in the World Series. It's possible the Red Sox will wait until after the Series to fill their coaching vacancies.

Bench coach Gary Disarcina, first-base coach Ruben Amaro Jr., bullpen coach Dana LeVangie, assistant pitching coach Brian Bannister and assistant hitting coach Victor Rodriguez are still with the Red Sox at this point.

Ultimately, it will be up to Cora if he wants to maintain some stability or go with an entirely new staff. Bannister is highly regarded and there's a chance he could be promoted to pitching coach.

Butterfield, renowned for his work as an infield instructor, came to the Red Sox in 2013 when Farrell was hired to be manager.

Davis had been Boston's hitting coach since 2015. Willis was hired during the 2015 season and now returns to Cleveland, where he was pitching coach from 2003-09.

*** *WEEI.com***

Cubs hire former Red Sox coaches Brian Butterfield and Chili Davis to staff

Alex Reimer

The mass exodus of Red Sox coaches continues. The Cubs announced Thursday they've added third base coach Brian Butterfield and hitting coach Chili Davis to their staff. Earlier in the day, pitching coach Carl Willis returned to his old position with the Indians.

The exits aren't surprising, considering new manager Alex Cora has been given the freedom to build his own staff. President of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski has encouraged coaches who worked under John Farrell to look elsewhere for new positions.

Butterfield, 59, is considered one of the best infield instructors in baseball. He served as a member of the Blue Jays staff from 2002-2012, and is often credited with spurring the defensive development of several young players from that time period, including Orlando Hudson and Aaron Hill. After interviewing for the Jays' managerial opening in 2010, Butterfield worked under Farrell in Toronto for two years. The Maine native joined Farrell's staff with the Red Sox for the 2013 campaign, serving as third base coach for four seasons. He came under fire at times this year for the team's base-running blunders. The Red Sox ran into more outs on the bases than any other team in baseball.

Davis first joined the Red Sox organization as hitting coach for the Triple-A Pawtucket Red Sox in 2011. After a three-year stint with the A's, the ex-sluggger returned to Boston and served as hitting coach under Farrell from 2014-2017. The Red Sox finished last in the league in home runs this season.

With Cubs president Theo Epstein's ties to the Red Sox, it's not surprising to see him bring Butterfield and Davis aboard. When Cora officially takes over after the World Series, he'll now be presented with largely a clean slate. Bench coach Gary DiSarcina, first base coach Ruben Amaro Jr. and bullpen coach Dana LeVangie are still with the organization.

Indians hire ex-Red Sox coach Carl Willis as pitching coach

John Tomase

Carl Willis is leaving Boston to return to Cleveland.

The Indians on Thursday hired Willis to be their pitching coach, replacing Mickey Callaway, who was just named manager of the Mets.

Willis previously worked in Cleveland from 2003-09, overseeing Cy Young campaigns from CC Sabathia and Cliff Lee.

During Willis's two-plus years in Boston, the Red Sox featured a Cy Young winner of their own in Rick Porcello, and this past season finished second in the American League in ERA (3.70), trailing only the Indians. They also set a franchise record with 1,580 strikeouts, led by Chris Sale's league-leading 308.

The rest of the Red Sox coaching staff remains under contract in the wake of John Farrell's firing, but has been encouraged by president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski to seek other employment. New manager Alex Cora will be introduced after the World Series and will be free to build his own staff.

Why Josh Beckett is all in on Alex Cora as Red Sox manager

Rob Bradford

Josh Beckett saw what Dave Dombrowski did when it comes to Alex Cora, albeit more than 10 years earlier and from a completely different perspective.

Speaking from the Diamond Resorts Invitational Golf Tournament Thursday morning (an event that benefits the Florida Hospital for Children), the former Red Sox pitcher explained why his former teammate, and new Sox skipper, was destined to be heading for the manager's seat.

"I think he will do great," Beckett said. "There were always a few guys you kind of ear-tagged when you played with them, that this guy would make a great manager. I always thought Mike Redmond when he was with the Marlins, and I always thought Alex Cora and Mike Lowell would make great managers. You just kind of ear-tag those guys as you go through your career.

"I always thought Alex watched the game differently than the rest of us did. I knew when he became a bench coach and left ESPN, and became the bench coach of the Astros, this was eventually going to happen. I didn't know it was going to be this quick. I thought maybe a couple of years of being back in the game. He was definitely someone I ear-tagged when I played with him that he would make a really good manager."

Cora played with Beckett with the Red Sox from 2006-08, making the postseason in two of those seasons. During that run, Beckett witnessed some qualities in the former infielder that would seemingly translate well to life after playing the game.

"It's the way they watch the game," Beckett explained. "When I watch the game, I'm watching a baseball game. It's almost like they're thinking along with the game. Alex was always really good with dissecting small parts of the game, whether it was a pitcher tipping his pitches, or a guy you could steal on. He always just watched the game like that. I didn't think about it and he was always doing it. You look over at him on the bench and you could tell. He's just thinking about things differently than I was. I wasn't saying Alex wasn't a really talented baseball player, but I think that was his edge, to be able to play the game out before it happened and I think that made him a better player.

"He's super friendly but he knew when to get on somebody's ass, too. I think he's going to be great bridging. And Mike Lowell was like this when we were in Boston, too. Kind of the bridge between the Latin guys and the American guys. He kind of would bridge any gaps that there are there."

And then there is the reality that Beckett came to know -- having played in Boston is the best preparation of all when it comes to living life in this unique market.

"There are going to be certain things that you guys and the front office expects, so, yeah, somebody who has been there and seen it first-hand," he said. "John Farrell, too, when he came in he had already seen and talked to Tito and done all of that. If you're just coming in without knowing there are going to be some things that you're going to be surprised by."

*** NESN.com**

Why Josh Beckett Believes Alex Cora Will 'Do Great' As Red Sox Manager

Joshua Schrock

The Boston Red Sox think Alex Cora is the right man to lead the franchise going forward, and a former Red Sox great couldn't agree more.

Josh Beckett, who played with Cora on the 2007 World Series championship team, thinks the former Red Sox infielder will be a perfect fit for the first base dugout at Fenway Park.

"There's always a few guys you ear tagged when you played with them that you'd think, 'This guy would make a great manager,' " Beckett said, per The Providence Journal. "I always thought Alex just watched the game differently than the rest of us did.

"It's almost like they're thinking along with the game. Alex was always really good at dissecting small parts of the game — whether it was a pitcher who was tipping pitches, a guy you could steal on. He always just watched the game like that. You'd look over him at the bench and you could tell he was thinking about things differently than I was. That was his edge, to be able to play the game out before it happened. That made him a better player."

The hard-throwing right-hander played 6 1/2 seasons in Boston and knows that Cora's playing days with the Red Sox have prepared him for the pressure-cooker environment he is walking into.

"There's going to be certain things that you (media) and the front office expect, so yeah, (it helps to be) somebody that's been there and seen it first-hand," Beckett said. "I think he's going to do great."

Cora has spent this season as the Houston Astros' bench coach, and he returns to Boston primed for success as one of the brightest baseball minds in the game. Beckett and the Red Sox seem to agree.

MLB Gold Glove Finalists 2017: Chris Sale On List; Jackie Bradley Jr. Omitted

Darren Hartwell

We have good news and bad news, Boston Red Sox fans.

The good news is that Rawlings announced its finalists Thursday for the 2017 American and National League Gold Glove awards, and the Red Sox were well-represented: Starting pitcher Chris Sale, first baseman Mitch Moreland, second baseman Dustin Pedroia and right fielder Mookie Betts all were among three AL finalists at their respective positions.

But Boston fans might not be happy with a notable omission: center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr., who failed to receive a nomination despite compiling a lengthy highlight reel of incredible plays this season. Lorenzo Cain, Kevin Pillar and Byron Buxton were named the three AL finalists over Bradley, who has yet to earn a Gold Glove.

Pedroia (four Gold Gloves), Moreland and Betts (one Gold Glove apiece) all have taken home hardware before, while Sale never has won a Gold Glove.

Here are the rest of the nominees, whose fate will be decided at the MLB Awards on Nov. 17.

American League

Pitcher: Chris Sale (Red Sox), Marcus Stroman (Toronto Blue Jays), Alex Cobb (Tampa Bay Rays)

Catcher: Yan Gomes (Cleveland Indians), Martin Maldonado (Los Angeles Angels), Salvador Perez (Kansas City Royals)

First base: Carlos Santana (Indians), Eric Hosmer (Royals), Mitch Moreland (Red Sox)

Second base: Brian Dozier (Minnesota Twins), Ian Kinsler (Detroit Tigers), Dustin Pedroia (Red Sox)

Third base: Manny Machado (Baltimore Orioles), Jose Ramirez (Indians), Evan Longoria (Rays)

Shortstop: Elvis Andrus (Texas Rangers), Andrelton Simmons (Angels), Francisco Lindor (Indians)

Left field: Brett Gardner (New York Yankees), Alex Gordon (Royals), Justin Upton (Angels)

Center field: Lorenzo Cain (Royals), Kevin Pillar (Blue Jays), Byron Buxton (Twins)

Right field: Kole Calhoun (Angels), Mookie Betts (Red Sox), Aaron Judge (Yankees)

National League

Pitcher: R.A. Dickey (Atlanta Braves), Zack Greinke (Arizona Diamondbacks), Zach Davies (Milwaukee Brewers)

Catcher: Buster Posey (San Francisco Giants), Yadier Molina (St. Louis Cardinals), Tucker Barnhart (Cincinnati Reds)

First base: Joey Votto (Reds), Paul Goldschmidt (Diamondbacks), Anthony Rizzo (Chicago Cubs)

Second base: D.J. LeMahieu (Colorado Rockies), Dee Gordon (Miami Marlins), Ben Zobrist (Cubs)

Third base: Nolan Arenado (Rockies), Anthony Rendon (Washington Nationals), David Freese (Pittsburgh Pirates)

Shortstop: Freddy Galvis (Philadelphia Phillies), Brandon Crawford (Giants), Corey Seager (Los Angeles Dodgers)

Left field: Gerardo Parra (Rockies), Adam Duvall (Cincinnati Reds), Marcell Ozuna (Marlins)

Center field: Billy Hamilton (Reds), Michael Taylor (Nationals), Ender Inciarte (Braves)

Right field: Yasiel Puig (Dodgers), Giancarlo Stanton (Marlins), Jason Heyward (Cubs)

*** *The Boston Sports Journal***

Mets, Yankees coaches among Alex Cora's targets as he looks to build Sox staff

Sean McAdam

On a day in which three Red Sox coaches left the organization, some potential names for new manager Alex Cora's 2018 coaching staff began to emerge.

Joe Espada, who spent the last three seasons as third base coach and infield instructor for the New York Yankees, is a target of Cora's to become his bench coach in Boston, a baseball source said.

One possible complication: in the wake of the decision by the Yankees not to retain manager Joe Girardi, Espada could potentially be a candidate to replace Girardi or, at the very least, be elevated to bench coach with the Yanks under a new manager.

Like Cora, Espada is 42 and a native of Puerto Rico. Prior to coming to the Yankees, he served four seasons as the Marlins third base coach. Prior to that, he was the Marlins' minor league infield coordinator. Espada has also coached the Puerto Rican team in the World Baseball Classic in 2013 and '17.

Yankees third base coach Joe Espada (left) is a target of new Sox manager Alex Cora (right).

Meanwhile, Carlos Febles, who has managed in the Red Sox minor league system for the last seven years, is also under consideration as a staff member. He could be a candidate either at first base or as hitting instructor.

Febles has managed at every level of the organization, from Rookie Ball (Lowell) to Low A (Greenville) and High A (Salem) and, for the past two seasons, Double A Portland. He's also served as a hitting instructor for four seasons at Single A levels.

Another source confirmed that Ricky Bones is a candidate to become Cora's pitching coach. He has served as bullpen coach with the Mets for the past six seasons after being a pitching coach for their Single A and Double A affiliates. Like Espada, he's been part of the coaching staff for Puerto Rico's WBC team, working as pitching coach for the team in the 2013 tournament.

Red Sox coaches head for the exits as Butterfield, Davis and Willis take jobs elsewhere

Sean McAdam

When managerial changes get made, often the coaches soon follow.

That was illustrated in a big way Thursday with the news that three Red Sox coaches were taking new jobs elsewhere: Carl Willis returned to the Cleveland Indians to (again) become their pitching coach, while third base coach Brian Butterfield and hitting instructor Chili Davis were hired by the Chicago Cubs.

All three were under contract with the Red Sox through 2018, but were given permission to seek other positions when John Farrell was fired two weeks ago.

There had been thought that Butterfield, regarded as one of the game's best infield instructors, might survive the regime change and remain with the Red Sox.

But Butterfield had no real relationship with incoming manager Alex Cora and, according to a source, felt it best to allow Cora to handpick his own staff.

Butterfield will serve in the same capacity with the Cubs – coaching third and working with the infielders.

“As a native New Englander, it was always my dream to play for the Red Sox,” said Butterfield Thursday. “But I did the next best thing. I spent five great years in a Red Sox uniform and won a World Series. I leave with nothing but good thoughts and no regrets.”

Butterfield was instrumental in working to help develop shortstop Xander Bogaerts and was seen as someone who would continue to help rookie third baseman Rafael Devers develop in the future. Butterfield was also credited with helping Hanley Ramirez make a successful transition to first base in 2016.

His tireless work ethic earned him the respect of the players. He encountered criticism for his work in the third base coaching box when the Red Sox led the league in outs made at home plate in 2017, but that baserunning aggressiveness was part of a team-wide philosophy, developed to overcome the lineup's lack of power.

Davis, who had served as hitting coach for the past three seasons, oversaw a lineup that scored more runs in the last three years than any other team in the game. But after leading all of baseball in runs scored in 2016, the Sox saw a dropoff this past season, along with an alarming dip in power and home runs.

A number of young players – including Bogaerts and Mookie Betts – experienced regression at the plate in 2017, though that didn't dim Davis's reputation around the game.

Davis had also spoken to the San Diego Padres about their hitting coach vacancy before accepting the job with the Cubs.

Earlier in the day, Willis, who was hired by the Red Sox early in the 2015 season to replace Juan Nieves as Red Sox pitching coach, was hired by the Indians to serve as their pitching coach.

Willis rejoins an organization with which he's had a long history. Willis was the Tribe pitching coach from 2003 through 2009 under manager Eric Wedge. He later served as pitching coach for the Seattle Mariners before returning to the Indians in 2014 as a special assistant. He was working as the Triple A pitching coach in 2015 when the Red Sox hired him away to replace Nieves.

Like the rest of the 2017 Red Sox coaching staff, Willis was under contract through 2018. But once Farrell was fired, the coaches were told they could seek employment elsewhere.

Willis had interviewed with the Minnesota Twins for their pitching coach vacancy two weeks ago. He inherits a talented staff in Cleveland, led by ace Corey Kluber. The Indians finished with the lowest ERA of any team in baseball in 2017, and their starters and relievers each had the lowest ERA in the American League.

He was a personal choice of Farrell, and thus, unlikely to be retained by Cora.

The Sox have been linked to several pitching coach candidates in the interim, having interviewed former Tampa Bay Rays coach Jim Hickey. The New York Post speculated recently that the Sox might have some interest in Rickey Bones, who worked as the Mets bullpen coach, as their pitching coach.

Other high-profile options include Mike Maddux (a free agent after Dusty Baker was fired by the Nationals), and Yankee pitching coach Larry Rothschild, who presumably will be available to look elsewhere after the Yanks decided not to retain manager Joe Girardi Thursday morning.