

The Boston Red Sox Friday, October 11, 2019

*** *The Boston Globe***

USA Baseball picks four Red Sox prospects for Premier12 team

Julian McWilliams, *The Boston Globe*

The USA Baseball Premier12 roster is set, and it features four Red Sox top prospects: infielders Bobby Dalbec and C.J. Chatham, in addition to pitchers Tanner Houck and Noah Song.

The team will partake in the World Baseball Softball Confederation Premier12 tournament starting Nov. 2 in Guadalajara, Mexico.

The US will compete in a pool that includes the Netherlands, the Dominican Republic, and Mexico, with the first game coming against the Netherlands.

The top two teams from the pool will advance to the Super Round in Tokyo Nov. 11-16. The tournament gives the US its first shot at qualifying for the 2020 Olympics.

The 28-man US team is made up of players not on major league 40-man rosters. The Red Sox feature the most players on the team with four.

Dalbec hit .239 with 27 homers between Triple A Pawtucket and Double A Portland this past season.

He wasn't among Boston's September call-ups, but Alex Cora kept him around the clubhouse for a week to get him some major league experience. With Mitch Moreland hitting free agency, Dalbec could be an option for the Sox at first base next season.

C.J. Chatham, a second-round pick by the Sox in 2016, hit .298 with five homers for Pawtucket and Portland.

Houck, the Sox' first-rounder in 2017, posted a 4.01 ERA between Portland and Pawtucket. He and Chatham are also playing in the Arizona Fall League.

Song, a fourth-round pick in 2019 out of Navy, pitched just 17 innings in short-season Single A for the Lowell Spinners and allowed two earned runs while striking out 19.

Cora said last month that Red Sox infielder Tzu-Wei Lin would most likely compete for Taiwan in the Premier12.

Lin had two stints with the major league team this year and was 4 for 20 in 13 games. Lin suffered a concussion Aug. 26 when he crashed into the left-field wall in Pawtucket, but Cora remained confident that he would play.

"Most likely he's going to play in that tournament," Cora said. "We just have to make sure he's OK."

The US team will be managed by Joe Girardi and his coaches will include Scott Brosius and Willie Randolph.

The US team

28-MAN ROSTER

OF Jo Adell, Angels
LHP Clayton Andrews, Brewers
INF Alec Bohm, Phillies
INF C.J. Chatham, Red Sox
INF Jake Cronenworth, Rays
INF Bobby Dalbec, Red Sox
RHP Brandon Dickson, Orix Buffaloes
RHP Parker Dunshee, Athletics
INF Xavier Edwards, Padres
RHP J.P. Feyereisen, Brewers
LHP Brian Flynn, Royals
C Taylor Gushue, Nationals
RHP Tanner Houck, Red Sox
RHP Spencer Howard, Phillies
RHP Tyler Johnson, White Sox
C Erik Kratz, Yankees
RHP Wyatt Mills, Mariners
OF Mark Payton, Athletics
RHP Brooks Pounders, Mets
LHP Clayton Richard, Blue Jays
OF Brent Rooker, Twins
RHP Connor Seabold, Phillies
RHP Noah Song, Red Sox
LHP Caleb Thielbar, GBraves
LHP Daniel Tillo, Royals
C/OF Daulton Varsho, Diamondbacks
INF Andrew Vaughn, White Sox
OF Drew Waters, Braves

MANAGER

Joe Girardi

COACHES

Scott Brosius

Roly de Armas

Phil Plantier

Bryan Price

Willie Randolph

Ernie Young

*** *The Boston Herald***

Dave Dombrowski's Red Sox career looks better after passing on Joe Kelly, Craig Kimbrel

Jason Mastrodonato, *The Boston Herald*

Dave Dombrowski's reputation with the Red Sox has started to shine a little brighter.

Sure, he left the Red Sox farm system in bad shape and the payroll is a serious problem, but it could be much worse, as proven while watching the Cubs and Dodgers implode over the last month.

Since Dombrowski was fired at the end of August, former Red Sox relievers Craig Kimbrel and Joe Kelly have combined to blow huge games for the Cubs and Dodgers, effectively ending both team's seasons early while posting a collective ERA of 5.13 in 2019.

The Sox are trying to cut payroll to get under the \$208-million luxury tax threshold next year. They'll have to cut about \$30 million as it is.

Now imagine if they also owed Kimbrel's \$16 million per season over the next two years (and a \$1 million buyout) and \$8.5 million per season over the next two years for Kelly (plus a \$4-million buyout).

That's \$54 million committed to a pair of over-30 relievers in the next three years that the Red Sox don't have to worry about.

They could've used the relief help in 2019, but it's difficult to say the additions of Kimbrel or Kelly (or both) would have lifted the Sox into the playoffs. The lack of health and effectiveness from their starting rotation was too much of a problem for one reliever to overcome.

Dombrowski and the Red Sox saw their declines happen in real time.

Kelly's decline was less obvious. He started hot in 2018 but fell apart, with a 6.13 ERA from June 1 through the end of the regular season. He allowed an .813 OPS in that span.

But because Kelly became a superstar in October, when he re-discovered his command and started throwing his curveball twice as often as he did in the regular season, the flame-thrower was a hot commodity going into the offseason.

The Dodgers locked him up in the Winter Meetings, signing him to a three-year, \$25-million contract. The Red Sox never seemed to have much interest in bringing him back.

The Dodgers might regret it.

Kelly started the season with a 10.13 ERA through his first 13 outings. And while he found his groove in May and posted a 2.61 ERA over his final 42 outings, he ended the season with just 51- $\frac{1}{3}$ innings in total. In this day and age, when relievers are often being used in multi-inning roles and pitching more frequently than in previous years, 51 innings isn't much of a workload.

This October, Kelly fell apart.

His command disappeared again. He walked five and allowed six runs in three games and blew the Dodgers' season, allowing the eventual game-winning grand slam to Howie Kendrick as the Nationals eliminated the Dodgers in the National League Championship Series on Wednesday.

Kimble helped end the Cubs' season even sooner.

After signing a three-year, \$43-million contract in June, Kimble was throwing 96 mph fastballs with the Cubs.

"I think it's impossible to pinpoint how much of his struggles have been because of that," Cubs president Theo Epstein said recently on 670 The Score in Chicago. "But from my perspective, I think it's the single biggest factor. He's never struggled like this before, he's never even been close to having this type of performance before."

But that's not quite true. Kimble had been quietly struggling with the Red Sox in 2018, particularly at the end of the season.

Over his career, Kimble's average fastball velocity had been increasing to about 99 mph until 2018, when he had a late start in spring training and never fully regained his triple-digit fastball with the Red Sox. By the time the World Series came around, Kimble was throwing 96 mph. He didn't pitch in the clinching game and Chris Sale closed out the game instead.

All 30 teams passed on him during the offseason. He might be on a Hall of Fame path, but teams deemed him too much of a risk to pay him what he wanted.

After signing with the Cubs midseason, his fastball was knocked around at a .326 clip and he went 0-4 with a 6.53 ERA in 23 games.

In key games against the Milwaukee Brewers in July and September, Kimble couldn't handle the late innings. He gave up six runs in total and the Cubs lost both crucial games against their divisional rival.

Injured twice this year, Kimble has a long way to go to becoming the elite closer he once was with the Red Sox.

Dombrowski surely didn't do enough to help the Red Sox bullpen in 2019, but at least he didn't further sink the payroll with big financial commitments to aging relievers.

Neither Kelly nor Kimble has been worth the money thus far. Letting both of them go might've been two of Dombrowski's best moves of the year.

*** *MassLive.com***

Ex-Boston Red Sox manager John Farrell will interview for Angels job

Chris Cotillo

Former Red Sox manager John Farrell will interview for the Angels' managerial opening, according to Maria Torres of the Los Angeles Times.

Farrell, who was fired after the 2017 season, is one of a handful of experienced candidates scheduled to meet with Los Angeles' front office. Though Joe Maddon is the clear frontrunner, it appears the Angels are also considering Farrell, Buck Showalter and another unknown candidate.

Farrell, 57, went 432-378 in four years as Boston's manager, winning a World Series title in 2013 and A.L. East titles in 2016 and 2017. Since being replaced by Alex Cora, Farrell has worked as an advisor for the Reds organization and spent time on his lobster boat in Massachusetts.

Farrell interviewed with the Phillies in 2017 and the Reds last year, so he has kept an eye on returning to managing since being fired.

Boston Red Sox prospects Bobby Dalbec, Tanner Houck named to Team USA roster for Premier 12 tournament; C.J. Chatham, Noah Song also playing

Chris Cotillo

Four Red Sox prospects -- infielders Bobby Dalbec and C.J. Chatham and pitchers Tanner Houck and Noah Song -- were named to the Team USA roster for next month's Premier 12 tournament Thursday.

All four prospects will compete in the 12-team tournament, which begins Nov. 2 in Guadalajara, Mexico, and serves as a qualifying event for the 2020 Olympics. Team USA's 28-man roster is made up of players not currently on 40-man rosters, meaning many top prospects will take part.

Dalbec (Boston's No. 2 prospect, per MLB Pipeline) spent a week working out with the major league team in Boston last month to prepare for the tournament and both Houck (No. 5 prospect) and Chatham (No. 9) are playing in the Arizona Fall League. Song (No. 15), who was Boston's fourth-round pick in this year's draft out of Navy, was supposed to begin military service in November and is a surprise addition to the tournament roster.

The Red Sox lead the league in prospects playing for Team USA and will likely have other players competing for other countries. Lefty Dedgar Jimenez will try out for the Venezuelan team and infielder Tzu-Wei Lin is expected to compete for Taiwan while lefty Daniel McGrath (Australia) will not pitch after having a heavy workload during the regular season.

The Premier 12 tournament is a round-robin tournament sponsored by the World Baseball and Softball Confederation that takes place from Nov. 2-17. South Korea won the inaugural event in 2015.

Boston Red Sox shouldn't make same mistake with J.D. Martinez they made in 2017 when failing to replace David Ortiz

Christopher Smith

The Boston Red Sox kept their payroll below the Competitive Balance Tax threshold in 2017 because they chose not to sign a replacement for DH David Ortiz after he retired.

The club avoided (and reset) tax penalties for staying under the CBT. It also received its full revenue sharing market disqualification refund.

Boston succeeded from a business perspective. But its offense suffered greatly during the 2017 season.

With Ortiz in 2016, the Red Sox led the major leagues in batting average (.282), on-base percentage (.348), slugging percentage (.461), OPS (.810), doubles (343), runs (878), total bases (2,615) and extra-base hits (576).

In 2017 without Ortiz or any adequate replacement, the Sox finished 13th in batting average (.258), 11th in on-base percentage (.329), 26th in slugging percentage (.407), 22nd in OPS (.736), seventh in doubles (302), 10th in runs (785), 22nd in total bases (2,305) and 22nd in extra-base hits (489).

Don't let history repeat itself.

The Red Sox want their payroll under the Competitive Balance Tax threshold (\$208 million) again in 2020. Owner John Henry and team president Sam Kennedy have stressed it's a goal, not a mandate.

"There may be strategic reasons this offseason to be over that we might not be aware of yet," Kennedy said Sept. 30.

Designated hitter J.D. Martinez has an opt-out clause in his contract he can exercise after the World Series ends. There's a decent chance he'll elect to become a free agent.

If he does opt out, the Red Sox should make every attempt possible to re-sign him.

Boston didn't attempt to sign then-free agent Edwin Encarnacion during the 2016-17 offseason after Ortiz retired.

The Indians signed Encarnacion — who's now with the Yankees — to a very reasonable three-year, \$60-million contract with a \$20 million option and \$5 million opt-out clause for 2020. Encarnacion has 104 homers in three seasons.

Again: Don't let history repeat itself.

The Red Sox wasted the 2017 season after trading for ace Chris Sale at the 2016 Winter Meetings.

The 2017 season marked Sale's only completely healthy year in a Red Sox uniform to date. But the Red Sox did nothing about the glaring hole at DH. Everyone saw it coming, right? Chris Young (.235/.322/.387/.709 line) started 24 games at DH.

Boston planned for Mitch Moreland and Hanley Ramirez to platoon at first base. The team wanted Ramirez to start at first base vs. lefties and DH vs. righties. The Red Sox planned to use a rotation of players at DH when Ramirez played first. But Ramirez started only 17 games at first because of an ailing shoulder.

Boston is unsure whether the Martinez plans to elect for free agency. Kennedy wouldn't answer whether the Red Sox plan to try to re-sign Martinez if he does opt out.

"I wouldn't want to comment about what we would or wouldn't do with respect to opt-outs and or anything like that just given the truth is we don't know at this point," Kennedy said (Sept. 30).

Kennedy has said there's a way for Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez both to be on the 2020 roster while keeping the payroll under \$208 million.

"But obviously it will be difficult given the nature of the agreements and the contracts that we have in place," Kennedy said. "Look, we have a very targeted and strategic plan that we're building right now."

That strategic plan should include either re-signing Martinez (if he opts out) or finding a comparable replacement.

Payroll is overrated. The Rays and A's continue to show us a club doesn't need a high payroll to win. But Martinez has proved he can thrive in this market. The Red Sox shouldn't just let that caliber of hitter walk away to slash payroll.

"You want J.D. Martinez in the middle of your lineup," Kennedy said. "He's a World champ and was a key part of last year's success. So we'll see where it goes in the future. But we haven't engaged on any specific discussions. And we know there's a timetable on it; five days after the World Series. So he'll let us know of his decision."

*** *NBC Sports Boston***

The perfect Red Sox GM candidate just became a free agent -- Dodgers boss Andrew Friedman

John Tomase

The shocking elimination of the Dodgers in Game 5 of the NLDS on Wednesday creates an opening for the Red Sox to pursue their white whale -- Andrew Friedman.

L.A.'s president of baseball operations is widely considered the shrewdest executive in the game, and he has built a juggernaut out west, with the Dodgers simultaneously cutting payroll and competing for World Series titles on an annual basis.

His contract happens to be up, and there's some unease about why he hasn't yet agreed to an extension. A couple of weeks ago, all involved expressed optimism to the L.A. Times that Friedman would return, albeit in less than absolute terms; president Stan Kasten said he was "pretty confident" Friedman would be back.

And if he's not? Expect the Red Sox to be first in line.

The 42-year-old cut his teeth over a decade ago with the Rays, becoming their general manager in 2005 at age 28 and building the 2008 team that beat the Red Sox in the ALCS to reach the World Series. Friedman worked wonders in the small-market setting en route to four playoff appearances before joining the Dodgers in 2014.

All he has done since is build one of the game's most sustainable success stories. L.A. has won seven straight division titles, first by spending limitless amounts of money -- their \$291 million payroll in 2015 remains the highest ever -- and then by doing it in a way that should certainly capture the attention of Red Sox owner John Henry.

From that high four years ago, the Dodgers have steadily dropped, culminating in 2018, when they dropped below the luxury tax threshold with a \$195 million payroll to reset their penalties. They barely surpassed the limit this year, checking in at about \$210 million. That's where Henry would like to get the Red Sox, who hope to drop from \$242 million to \$208 million.

Friedman did it by building a powerhouse player development system that has produced stars like MVP favorite Cody Bellinger, All-Star right-hander Walker Buehler, and slugging shortstop Corey Seager. Friedman's Dodgers have also been opportunistic on the margins, adding stalwarts Max Muncy and Justin Turner for nothing after they were jettisoned by the A's and Mets, respectively.

The Dodgers are set up to maintain their success, too, with \$113 million committed to next season, \$89.5 million on the books in 2021, and only \$20 million committed to 2022 (per Baseball-Reference). Compare that to the Red Sox, who have \$118 million in guarantees committed to 2022 as part of a bloated payroll that's the reason they're seeking new leadership in the first place.

The Dodgers do not have a single player on a \$100 million contract. Their highest-paid player is left-hander Clayton Kershaw, who signed a three-year, \$93 million extension before this season. His two remaining years are eminently more manageable than, say, the five years for Chris Sale staring at the Red Sox.

In Los Angeles, Friedman built an All-Star front office featuring no fewer than five former GMs: Josh Byrnes, Alex Anthopoulos, Tommy Lasorda, Ned Colletti, and Gerry Hunsicker. He hired liberally from the Red Sox, stealing respected figures like Dave Finley and Galen Carr. He has built the Dodgers into an analytics-driven powerhouse, which is how they ended up on the forefront of the launch angle revolution.

Friedman has proven he can win with baseball's smallest payroll and its largest payroll. He has laid out a blueprint for shedding salary while remaining competitive -- his first act as Dodgers boss was to rid the organization of bloat like Hanley Ramirez, Matt Kemp, and Dan Haren, acquiring young talent such as Yasmani Grandal and Kike Hernandez in return -- and it's hard to imagine a more qualified candidate emerging for the task now confronting the Red Sox.

The Dodgers could render this entire discussion moot by agreeing to an extension with Friedman tomorrow. But until that happens, consider him the most important free agent of the offseason if you're the Red Sox.

*** *The Athletic***

What the 4 teams still alive in MLB playoffs have that Red Sox lacked

Chad Jennings

Four teams remain. Not all of them were preseason favorites, not all of them chased the biggest free agents, and not all were built from the game's best prospects. But the Yankees, Astros, Cardinals and Nationals have one thing in common – they are the only teams still playing.

As they watch the championship series from home, the Red Sox will surely notice many things the postseason survivors have done to outlast the defending champs.

Astros – Making all the right moves

Losing 100-plus games three years in a row set the foundation for the current Astros juggernaut, and that's an advantage the Red Sox wouldn't want. But the Astros also supplemented the core they built via tanking with big and important moves, including a huge one this summer.

It started when Houston added some leadership in the form of Brian McCann, Carlos Beltran and Josh Reddick heading into 2017. It continued with the franchise-altering Justin Verlander deal as the clock expired on trade season in 2017, and then the Gerrit Cole deal a few months later (the Astros don't miss Daz Cameron or Colin Moran). This winter, it was picture-perfect free-agent additions Michael Brantley, Wade Miley and Robinson Chirinos. Finally, they added and added via trade deadline deals, including the big one this year for Zack Greinke without losing either of their elite prospects, Forrest Whitley or Kyle Tucker.

This is something the Red Sox, too, did very well in the 2018 season. Beginning with the re-signing of Mitch Moreland and the high-profile addition of J.D Martinez, and continuing through the savvy midseason additions of Steve Pearce and Nathan Eovaldi, the Red Sox supplemented in meaningful ways. Even minor-league deals with Ryan Brasier and Marcus Walden paid dividends, and relative flops with Eduardo Nunez and Ian Kinsler did little to hurt.

But the same can't be said for the 2019 season. Bringing back Eovaldi and Pearce were mistakes in the short term, and even the contract extension with Chris Sale proved troubling. When the Red Sox finally supplemented the pitching staff with a July trade for Andrew Cashner, the result was a 6.20 ERA and Cashner being bumped from the rotation after just six starts.

The Red Sox were better than the Astros last year, but the Astros made the right moves to jump back in front this season.

Yankees – Finding depth to survive

Depth is a tricky thing in baseball. Unless it comes from within – top prospects rising through the farm system – the second string is almost always underwhelming. Middle-of-the-order bats and top-of-the-rotation arms are not available on minor-league deals to be stashed beneath emergency glass in Triple A.

Yet, here are the Yankees, the only team that has yet to lose in the postseason, standing on the shoulders of Gio Urshela, Mike Tauchman, Mike Ford and Cameron Maybin. The acquisition cost of those four: three minor-league deals (one acquired in a trade) plus an undrafted free agent nearly lost in the Rule 5 draft. Together, they took 1,084 at-bats and each had an OPS well over .800 to make up for injuries to front-liners Giancarlo Stanton, Miguel Andujar, Greg Bird and Aaron Hicks. And when Gary Sanchez got hurt in late July, unheralded backup catchers Austin Romine and Kyle Higashioka each slugged .750 for two-and-a-half weeks while he recovered.

The Yankees' Plan B, it turned out, was better than most teams' Plan A.

As for the Red Sox, it's still hard to say whether they had a Plan B at all. Their lineup stayed pretty healthy, which was a good thing considering their intended bench players – Pearce, Nunez and Blake Swihart – all wound up hurt or designated for assignment. Their only backup position player with a positive fWAR was Michael Chavis.

Where lack of depth really hurt them, though, was in the rotation. Nathan Eovaldi was injured in mid-April, and the team had no way of filling the hole, a problem that got worse as other starters struggled. Hector Velazquez underperformed, Steven Wright was suspended and Brian Johnson was on the injured list. Eventually, 15 different pitchers wound up starting for the Red Sox, and nine of them had an ERA above 5.00 in their starts. The only ones with rotation ERAs below 3.80 were three openers who averaged no more than two innings.

Depth is tricky, but when the Yankees needed it in their lineup, they found it. When the Red Sox needed it in their rotation, they did not.

Cardinals – Winning at the right time

By almost every measure, the Red Sox offense was far better than the Cardinals. More powerful. More explosive. More weapons from top to bottom. But it's nearly impossible to imagine the Red Sox lineup doing what the Cardinals did in the first inning of their pivotal division series Game 5 against the Braves. Is there any chance the Red Sox would have seized that moment with 10 runs? Not based on what we saw this season.

It's not only that the Red Sox were underwhelming in the first inning – particularly in the first half – but they seemed always to fold in the moments they needed to stand tall.

Defending a championship, they lost eight of their first 10 games and were already 7 games out of first place by the end of April. At Fenway Park, where they were basically unbeatable in 2018, the Red Sox played well below .500. When they did pull into second place in the division, with control of a wild card spot in late July, they responded by losing eight in a row against the Yankees and Rays.

The Cardinals had a different sense of the moment. When they opened the season losing three of four in Milwaukee, they rebounded immediately to win seven of their next nine, including a four-game sweep of the Dodgers. They were terrific at home, going 50-31 at Busch Stadium. And when opportunity presented itself late in the year – with a three-game division lead heading into a four-game series at Wrigley Field – the Cardinals buried the rival Cubs with a four-game sweep. They clinched the division with a 9-0 win on the final day of the season.

With nothing left to play for, the Red Sox final game ended with a walk-off win – which they needed simply to avoid being swept by the Orioles.

Washington Nationals – Having a plan that actually works

Back in February, the Washington Post's longtime baseball columnist, Thomas Boswell, wrote about the Nationals' spring strategy. The headline: "The Nationals loaded up on pitchers and are betting their season on those arms."

Sound familiar?

The Nationals came into this season with one reliable reliever (Sean Doolittle). They signed one high-end free-agent starter (Patrick Corbin) to join headliners Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg atop the rotation, then grabbed Anibal Sanchez to make that rotation deeper. They gathered a boatload of relief options. Their bullpen had been so unsettled, actually, that only two relievers made it from Opening Day to the division series.

It's not exactly the Red Sox model, but it's close. The Red Sox, too, had only one particularly reliable relief pitcher (Matt Barnes), and they spent heavily on a free-agent starter (Nathan Eovaldi) to round out a rotation they expected to be one of the best in the game (headlined by Chris Sale plus a couple of former Cy Young winners). They, too, had lots of bullpen options in preparation for trying different things along the way.

Neither plan was perfect – the Nationals bullpen, in general, performed far worse than the Boston's – but the Washington rotation lived up to its billing. Scherzer, Strasburg and Corbin each finished top 10 in the National League in ERA, while Sanchez had a perfectly good 3.85 mark (and each of those four made at least 27 starts). Four other pitchers made at least eight starts, but the top end of the rotation was good enough to carry the load and finish with the highest FanGraphs WAR of any team in baseball. Doolittle, while not as good as he was last year, still proved a quality anchor for the revolving door of relievers around him.

If the Nationals rotation had underperformed the way the Red Sox did, they too might be on the outside looking in. But at a time of openers and deep bullpens, these two teams bet on their starters, and only one got what it bargained for. That's the team still alive.

Jackie Bradley Jr. is just like us: He doesn't know if he has a future on Red Sox either

Jen McCaffrey

As much of the baseball world remains rapt watching nail-biting postseason drama, a different type of anxiety hovers around Boston.

The Red Sox enter an offseason of uncertainty and transition with no shortage of questions from the search for a new general manager to looming decisions surrounding the futures of J.D. Martinez and Mookie Betts, to whether payroll will be trimmed to align with ownership's offseason resolution to recalibrate the team's finances.

But this winter will likely be no different than the several previous years in one regard: Jackie Bradley Jr.'s name will surface in trade proposals.

Since he debuted in 2013, the 29-year-old outfielder has dealt with his fair share of speculation from trade deadline scenarios to offseason blockbusters that never materialized. But as he enters his final season before free agency, the rumors may actually turn to reality.

Bradley earned \$8.55 million in 2019 through arbitration and is likely to see that rise significantly this winter. MLBTradeRumors this week projected him for an \$11 million salary through arbitration. If the Red

Sox are serious about shedding \$30 million from a payroll that was roughly \$240 million this past season, one possibility that's been floated — yet again — is trading Bradley.

A more drastic step, given the large salary Bradley might earn through arbitration, would be for the Sox to non-tender him and make him a free agent.

Bradley is plenty used to the uncertainty by now, though.

“You always think about it,” Bradley said. “You might not always share what you're thinking. But I guess I'll find out when you find out, too. It's one of those things you just have to wait and see what happens.”

Bradley's infuriating streakiness at the plate is matched by his consistently terrific outfield defense. The question has always been how to balance run prevention in the outfield against missed opportunities at the plate.

Bradley's 2019 season is a microcosm of his career. In April he hit .148 with a .406 OPS but in June he hit .315 with a .992 OPS over 26 games. In July and August he averaged .196 with a .709 OPS but in September he posted a .244 average and .794 OPS. By the end of the season, he'd compiled a .225 average and .738 OPS with 21 homers and 28 doubles over 147 games.

In seven big league seasons, Bradley has a .236 average, .409 slugging and .727 OPS.

A Bradley trade likely wouldn't happen until later in the offseason (assuming the team doesn't non-tender him). Much of the Red Sox' winter will hinge on whether Martinez opts out of his contract, a decision he has to make within five days of the end of the World Series. But beyond that, little can be even guessed at until it's clear who will be taking over the role once occupied by Dave Dombrowski. Though the team is operating in the interim with a quartet of existing baseball operations executives, it seems likely any major moves regarding the future of the team will happen after the next leader is in place.

What type of player does the next Red Sox executive value? Will that person be aggressively seeking to bolster the farm system through trades? Can they think creatively in shrinking the team's payroll? What kind of relationship does the new executive have with Bradley's agent, Scott Boras?

All of that will affect Bradley's future with the team.

Bradley is one of a handful of current players who were on the Red Sox in 2015 when they transitioned from a front office led by Ben Cherington to one led by Dombrowski. Experiencing that shift allowed him to see how the organization deals with major changes in leadership.

“It makes it more familiar,” he said. “I'm familiar with the way that things go on around here organization-wise and the people. It's one of those things where we're all waiting, I know you all are. We'll see whether changes happen or not. Change can be good. It's one of those things you just never know until it happens.”

As the Red Sox hash out their offseason outline, Bradley will continue to wait and see what the future holds, just as he has for the majority of his career.