

# ***The Boston Red Sox Tuesday, October 29, 2019***

## **\* *The Boston Globe***

### **Red Sox sought out smart fit in their new chief**

Peter Abraham

On Monday, exactly one year to the day they beat the Los Angeles Dodgers to win the 2018 World Series, the Red Sox introduced Chaim Bloom as their chief baseball officer.

The timing was coincidental, the Sox getting permission from Major League Baseball to make an announcement on an off day in the World Series. But it was impossible not to take note of the date.

The arrival of a new baseball ops boss usually means something has gone terribly wrong for a team and there's a big mess to clean up.

Dave Dombrowski arrived in 2015 with the Sox in the process of finishing in last place for the second season in a row. When Ben Cherington got the job in 2011, it was after the worst September collapse in history.

But Bloom takes over a team that won 84 games this season and scored 901 runs. The Sox were a half-game out of a playoff spot in late July before their rotation collapsed. They've won the division three of the last four seasons.

As Bloom took questions from the head table, manager Alex Cora was seated in the crowd to his left, in the same row as baseball operations vice presidents Raquel Ferreira, Brian O'Halloran, Eddie Romero, and Zack Scott.

Cora isn't going anywhere; ownership has made that clear. O'Halloran was promoted to general manager Monday and Ferreira, Romero, and Scott will continue to oversee their respective areas of expertise.

Cora and the gang of four were actually part of the interview process that confirmed Bloom was the right choice.

In most cases, a new leader is named and the staff adjusts. Dombrowski quickly hired a few confidants and the big decisions were usually his alone.

The Sox went the other way this time and that was unusual. When was the last time you had a say in hiring your boss?

"I'd just say that we were extremely desirous of bringing in someone who would augment and add as opposed to just bringing in someone who might've just been an autocrat," principal owner John Henry said.

Bloom is in the tricky position of being the one who has to fit in. He's in charge, but it's clear the Sox expect him to work smoothly with Cora, O'Halloran, and the rest.

Bloom referred O'Halloran and the others as "talented executives" he's excited to work with and said he has "great respect" for Cora's talents as a manager.

"We will have each other's backs and what we do, we will do together," Bloom said.

Chaim Bloom introduced as new chief baseball officer for the Red Sox

Bloom is uniquely qualified to make that work. His title with the Tampa Bay Rays was senior vice president of baseball operations, but Bloom worked closely with general manager Erik Neander.

The Rays made up for their lack of payroll with intellectual capital, forming a staff that solved problems without throwing money at them. Bloom comes from an environment of collaboration, a word that was used throughout the news conference and afterward.

“I’m excited about the possibilities,” said Cora, who has long pushed for the Sox to get better at taking care of the little details, both on and off the field.

There’s a notion, usually incorrect, that modern, analytically driven front offices dictate strategy to the manager. Rays manager Kevin Cash, for instance, had as much to do with the team using openers to get the most out of their pitching staff as Bloom or Neander did.

The Astros succeed by including AJ Hinch in the process, not telling him after the fact. The information is out there, the best teams find a way to use it collectively and pull everyone, including the players, into the circle.

“They know stuff here,” Astros reliever Ryan Pressly said last week. “Why would you not want to use that to your advantage?”

Bloom was the only candidate the Sox asked permission to interview. Whether that’s confidence or hubris, they’re sure they got this right.

“In this case, I think we were so enamored with the job that the four people in our leadership group were doing that we thought the best thing we could do was find a candidate who could supplement them,” Henry said. “I know all of us felt this was the right fit for this organization given the strength of the existing organization.”

Henry has said the goal is to reduce payroll to below the \$207 million luxury-tax threshold to reset the penalties. That would mean a 15 percent cut for the Sox.

It sounds ominous and maybe a core player will have to go for that happen. But the Rays won 12 more games than the Sox this season with a payroll of roughly \$57 million. He’d never admit it, but Bloom must chuckle at the idea that \$207 million is considered a step down.

It’s not about payroll. It’s about how you use it. The Sox want sustained success, to become the cutting-edge team they had when Theo Epstein built a player-development machine. In Bloom, they hope they found a Sherpa to guide them back in that direction.

### **Red Sox chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom: The goal is ‘sustained long-term success’**

Julian McWilliams

A glimpse into the Red Sox’ future could be found Monday afternoon at Fenway Park.

The Sox’ fell short of a playoff berth just a year after winning a World Series. It was the first time the team missed the playoffs since 2015, resulting in the firing of former president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski in September.

The Sox wanted a new voice in the room who could keep the team competitive without having to spend as much. After an eight-week search, the team zeroed in on Chaim Bloom, the Tampa Bay Rays’ senior vice president of baseball operations, who had worked in the organization for 15 years.

On Monday afternoon with team president Sam Kennedy, chairman Tom Werner, owner and John Henry at the State Street Pavilion Club, the Sox officially introduced Bloom as their chief baseball officer.

“It’s a great day for the Red Sox,” Kennedy said. “Chaim’s demonstrated the ability to take a comprehensive approach to building a successful team at the major league level. And he understands what Red Sox fans want and what Red Sox fans deserve. That’s a sustainable baseball operation throughout the entire organization, which we hope will deliver more and more October baseball at Fenway.”

Bloom is just 36 years old, and — in addition to his baseball acumen — what stood out most to Kennedy was Bloom’s ability to connect with people. Furthermore, he has a track record of being able to find wins within the margins with a Rays squad that’s known for having a low payroll. The Sox had 20 candidates of potential hires, but Bloom was the only one they interviewed.

“[We’re trying] to build as strong of an organization as possible in all aspects so that we can have sustained long-term success and compete for championships year in and year out,” Bloom said.

Sustainability was thrown around a ton during the presser. While Dombrowski delivered on a World Series and was praised Sox brass for it, Bloom has shown a knack for keeping his teams competitive with prudent trades and a strong farm system. His 2018 acquisitions of starter Tyler Glasnow and outfielder Austin Meadows from the Pittsburgh Pirates for Chris Archer is an example of that. Furthermore, according to Baseball America, the Rays had the best minor-league system and the highest organization winning percentage among domestic affiliates.

“This is well deserved and long overdue,” said Rays general manager Erik Neander.

Bloom had interviewed for a number of front office jobs, including spots with the Mets, Giants, and Phillies to name a few. But each of those teams went in a different direction.

“The overriding emotion is feeling happiness for him. It really is,” said Neander. “The destination provides the benefit of seeing him a lot more often.”

This, of course, will be Bloom’s toughest task in a market and he comes into a situation with a lot on his plate. The Sox said it’s a goal to shed salary, which might come at the expense of J.D. Martinez and/or Mookie Betts. Kennedy said at the end of the season that it would be tough to keep both players.

Werner has had a discussion with Martinez’s agent, Scott Boras, regarding Martinez’s opt-out clause. That answer will come within five days after the conclusion of the World Series.

If Martinez does opt-in to his \$23.75 million deal, the Sox could try to trade him in order to keep Betts, who’s declined an extension in the past and could hit free agency at the end of 2020. Or, the Sox might have to make an even tougher decision and, perhaps, trade a generational talent in Betts, before he leaves via free agency.

Bloom said there have been conversations surrounding Betts, but that was one of many topics discussed before he took the job. As it relates to payroll in its entirety, Henry doesn’t see that as an excuse for the club not to win.

“I think that teams, in general, spending over \$200 million, as we will again this year, should be, ought to be, competitive,” he said.

Bloom’s title, chief baseball officer, is a new one, too. Brian O’Halloran was promoted to general manager.

“We tried to keep up with the change of nature of the structure of the baseball operations department,” Kennedy said on Bloom’s title. “That was part of our examination of the landscape. At the end of the day, we value the collaboration and brain power.”

Bloom admitted that there is still a lot that he doesn't know, but he found it an opportunity that excites him despite all the moving parts in the organization and the question marks on the roster.

"Obviously, there's a lot coming in here about the landscape within and what our options are going to be this coming offseason," Bloom said. "I think a lot of our responsibility as a group is to be creative and to figure out how many different potential paths we can construct to accomplish our goal. The more options you have, the better choices you can make."

The Rays were ahead of the curve on analytics and collaborative efforts, which included meetings with the coaching staff and manager, although didn't necessarily see it as authoritative rule over day-to-day lineups.

He also offered praise for the team's analytical department already in place.

"Hopefully, I'll be able to add some new thought and ideas that can help," Bloom said. "But the respect that I've had for this group's analytical efforts over the years is considerable."

Bloom's wife, Aliza, is a Lexington native. The two met while both were students at Yale.

### **Dave Bush the clear front-runner to be named Red Sox pitching coach**

Alex Speier

The Red Sox have new leadership for their baseball operations department, and they're also close to installing new leadership for their pitching staff.

According to multiple major league sources, Red Sox minor league pitching performance coordinator Dave Bush has emerged as a clear front-runner for the team's vacant pitching coach job.

While that arrangement has not been finalized, there is a clear expectation in the industry that Bush will be named to the role, perhaps within days.

Bush, 39, spent parts of nine years in the big leagues with the Blue Jays, Brewers, and Rangers, going 56-69 with a 4.73 ERA while logging 211 appearances (187 starts) and 1,144½ innings.

After his final season in 2013, he spent two years at Maine's Bridgton Academy (while also spending time coaching the South African and Chinese national teams) before joining the Red Sox in 2016 as a pitching analyst who worked with minor leaguers.

This past year, his role was redefined as that of a minor league coordinator of pitching performance, a role in which he worked with pitchers and pitching coaches to shape pitch mixes and pitch sequences. Bush also spent time working with the big league staff during the season in 2019, making him familiar to most of the returning pitchers with whom he's now likely to work.

A year ago, Bush described his position as one that eschewed a cookie-cutter approach in favor of a more flexible view of how to get pitchers to realize success in the age of incredibly sophisticated data.

"We don't pigeonhole guys in certain styles. We used to funnel everyone in one direction, kind of wait and see if it worked or not. We have a little better idea how to approach that now," Bush said.

"It's more personalized, just because we can quantify and evaluate so many more things now. We have a much better idea of what's actually happening on the mound, so we can personalize an approach based on the information we have. That changes how we look at guys and what we do with them."

Last winter, Bush received and declined offers from the Reds and Brewers to join their big league coaching staffs as a bullpen coach. But he was one of five candidates to interview for the Red Sox pitching coach job, a position that opened when the team reassigned Dana LeVangie after the 2019 season.

The Red Sox pitching staff had a 4.70 ERA this year, 19th in the majors. However, there were a number of successes of players graduating from the minor league system after making adjustments in the minors, among them relievers Josh Taylor, Darwinzon Hernandez, and Marcus Walden, as well as significant steps forward for multiple rotation prospects, including Bryan Mata and Thad Ward.

## **\* *The Boston Herald***

### **New Red Sox baseball boss Chaim Bloom pledges collaboration**

Tom Keegan

World Series, 2018: The Dodgers taped lineup cards to the dugout wall, ones that I'll go to my grave believing manager Dave Roberts never would have written if left to his own. It backfired.

The Dodgers didn't admit it, of course, because suits never acknowledge making out the lineup for men in uniform, and nobody holds them accountable to the truth. The Dodgers are far from the only organization practiced in the art of deception.

Andrew Friedman is the Dodgers' general manager. Chaim Bloom, new chief baseball officer of the Red Sox, spent his formative years in baseball working with and for Friedman with the Rays.

Uh-oh. Even Bloom's title sounds a little like a cop's: "Alex Cora, drop your Sharpie. Put your face and hands against the wall. Now spread your legs. You are about to be stripped of your power."

That was my fear heading into Bloom's introductory press conference Monday afternoon at Fenway Park, a beautiful place for a Boston baptism.

A few who had mentioned Bloom's name favorably to me early in the Red Sox search painted a picture of a grounded, friendly man more transparent than many in his chosen profession. That doesn't mean he'll share secrets. It does offer hope that he won't insult people's intelligence by telling blatant lies just for drill.

I figured that since the scouting report on Bloom reads, "good guy, not a pathological liar," it didn't seem like a waste of time to ask him: "Many in baseball are all but writing out the manager's lineup card but are afraid to admit it, so they must think there is something wrong with that. Do you think there is anything wrong with handing the manager the lineup and if you do that will you be forthcoming about it?"

Bloom: "If we did do that we'd be forthcoming about it, but I don't anticipate doing that because that to me is not collaborative. I think in a lot of really good organizations, including the one that I just came from, I think there is a lot of collaboration and conversation, but nothing is handed down. Things are talked through, ideas are bounced off and it's all with the goal of getting better."

It's imperative that the manager has the final say with the lineup card, even if it clashes with what the numbers say gives the Red Sox the best chance to produce and prevent runs on that given day or night. If the players reach the conclusion that the manager's not making out the lineup card they'll stop respecting him and trusting him because they'll rightly conclude he's not controlling their playing time.

It's good to have Bloom on the record saying that no card will be handed down, just discussed, and he deserves the benefit of the doubt that he'll stick to that plan.

Red Sox owner John Henry and CEO Sam Kennedy made "collaborative" the buzz word of the day.

When Henry was asked for specifics of why Bloom is a better fit than fired Dave Dombrowski at this stage of the Red Sox development, he gave a great answer.

“I wouldn’t contrast the two,” Henry started, then contrasted them succinctly with an answer that should have come with a press conference to announce Dombrowski’s firing, a press conference that never happened because the firing was treated as if it involved a manager from a faceless corporation, not a private enterprise that doubles as a public trust, one that means so much to so many in a very personal way. “I would just say we were extremely desirous of bringing in someone who would augment and add as opposed to just bringing in someone who might have been an autocrat, for instance, a one-man show.”

Dombrowski had become an autocrat, made some very expensive mistakes, and the owners and Kennedy grew uncomfortable with that setup. Nothing wrong with that.

Henry, co-owner Tom Werner and Kennedy appear confident they have what they need in Bloom.

Men as intelligent and handsome as Bloom can tend to get a head start down a road where conceit is waiting at the finish line, especially when they encounter so much success so early in life. Bloom, 36, does not emit that vibe at all, at least not yet. He projects confidence, which will come in handy making decisions with so many powerful people offering opinions, yet he does not portray a trace of obnoxiousness. His ability to keep conceit at bay is about to get tested like never before because he’s moving into such a prestigious chair and so many will be angling to kiss his feet.

Growing without changing his core is a tough balancing act that not all can master. As much as transparency won’t compromise his ability to do the job, it’s the best path and one it seems Bloom can be trusted to walk.

World Series, 2019: The Astros are one victory from winning a World Championship and during the postseason managed to become the most hated team in professional sports because a front office bully thought the proper reaction to a closer getting a few big outs was to shame a woman for her advocacy of women victimized by domestic violence.

The Astros tried to lie it away and it wasn’t until MLB conducted an investigation that Brandon Taubman was fired. Now the entire organization will be picking eggshells out of their eyebrows for years.

### **Red Sox name Brian O’Halloran GM under Chaim Bloom**

Jason Mastrodonato

Weymouth native and Red Sox executive Brian O’Halloran wasn’t expecting a promotion.

One would think he’s grown used to them, having been promoted frequently on his way from a baseball operations intern in 2002 to becoming an assistant general manager in 2012, then earning two more promotions in 2015 and 2018.

But when the Sox decided to hire the Rays’ Chaim Bloom as their new chief operating officer and lead decision maker to replace Dave Dombrowski, Bloom wanted to promote O’Halloran one more time.

At his introductory press conference Monday, Bloom announced he was promoting O’Halloran to the role of general manager.

“I have known BOH for a long time, though of course not as well as all of you,” Bloom said. “As an adversary, I have always respected how he handled himself. He is smart, thorough, calm and capable. But if you think the people in this room are biased, go find out what his counterparts think of him. He is without question among the most respected and trustworthy executives in the game today.”

O’Halloran was part of the group that interviewed Bloom during a thorough two-day process at Fenway Park. He and the other acting general managers — Raquel Ferreira, Zack Scott and Eddie Romero — unanimously agreed that Bloom would be a wise choice as the new leader of baseball operations.

Never did O'Halloran think he'd get a new job, too.

"I was focused on the four of us doing a good job, making smart decisions for the Red Sox," he said. "Then I was focused on getting to know Chaim and it cemented what I thought about him already and I was hoping to work with him."

Being included in the interview process was appreciated, said O'Halloran.

"Ownership was great with us throughout the entire process, empowering us to do the job collectively, the four of us acting as a general manager to make the decisions that need to be made during that time," he said. "They expressed to us that we were doing a great job. I'm proud of the decisions we made collectively and the things we were able to accomplish."

Bloom and O'Halloran have been talking a lot over the last week.

Those conversations "have only bolstered my already high opinion of him," Bloom said. "He leads selflessly and without ego, and the good of the Red Sox is his highest priority."

Bloom said he consulted other members of the Sox front office before making the decision to name O'Halloran the GM.

"I realized at an even deeper level he means within this organization and how much he leads this baseball operations department as it is," Bloom said. "And then I also realized that I think we had a lot of alignment philosophically on the different ways we thought about the game and we thought about organization-building. It seemed to me like just an amazing fit and it has a chance to be a really good partnership."

### **Why the Red Sox changed directions and hired Chaim Bloom**

Jason Mastrodonato

Two months without Dave Dombrowski and the Red Sox owners learned something unexpected.

The front office wasn't rotting. It wasn't falling behind. It wasn't in dire need of a bold personality to save it.

It was actually quite healthy.

That's the reason the Red Sox changed directions, ignoring their original desire for a bold and experienced leader, and introduced Chaim Bloom, the 36-year-old former No. 2 in command with the Tampa Bay Rays, as the new chief baseball officer (and lead decision maker) on Monday afternoon.

"It caused us to sort of flip our priorities," principal owner John Henry told the Herald. "If you remember I initially said we wanted an experienced general manager, an experienced guy to lead. And after working with this group for two months, we were very impressed. And that moved us in a different direction."

Having given control of the baseball operations department to a four-headed team of Raquel Ferreira, Brian O'Halloran, Zack Scott and Eddie Romero (listed in order of seniority with the club), Henry, along with chairman Tom Werner, saw a front office that appeared to be operating smoothly in the two months since Dombrowski was fired.

"They assumed what we said in the beginning was correct (that we wanted an experienced GM)," Henry said. "I don't think anybody thought we were going to be interviewing No. 2's, or people that had not been at least a general manager. But because they were so strong, we decided that we should have somebody who can compliment them and lead the department."

Big names like Theo Epstein, Billy Beane and Andrew Friedman were being thrown around after the Sox let go of Dombrowski and announced the need for a new veteran leader. But Henry said they decided they didn't need one. They just needed someone to bring everyone together.

"We used the word collaboration today," Henry said. "Tampa is a very collaborative environment, so he was used to being in a very strong baseball organization. They're very smart. And he has quite a reputation among his peers in baseball. We thought he might be the right choice. Spending two days with him, we were really aligned."

Asked what Henry was so impressed with, the owner said, "the Rays develop pitching."

Developing pitching has turned the Rays into an annual contender despite never spending more than \$76 million on their payroll.

Failing to develop pitching has forced the Red Sox to spend a record-high \$240 million on their payroll in 2019, all while missing the playoffs.

"It's a very strong organization," Henry said. "I think in the last dozen years we have probably won two and a quarter more games than they have. They do everything right. They don't get supported but they do everything right."

Werner said the list for candidates to replace Dombrowski was "exhaustive" and included 20 names. But the Sox ultimately decided to interview only one: Bloom.

That the Sox were originally so distressed they thought they needed a big-name veteran to come in and steer them in a new direction says a lot about their original level of concern. Henry said again on Monday that he appreciated Dombrowski's efforts, but the two no longer agreed.

Dombrowski appeared more interested in spending big and riding the wave with the current roster. Henry has expressed the desire to rebuild and cut payroll (while staying competitive).

"Looking under the hood, we were very encouraged," Werner said of the Sox' front office. "We have an extremely strong analytics department. So if there was any thought on how to improve, it was probably more on how to communicate that information rather than the reliability of the information."

O'Halloran said all four of the acting GMs were brought into the interview process.

Across the board, the Sox were aligned in believing Bloom, a Yale grad who majored in Latin classics and spent 15 years working from intern to senior vice president in Tampa, was the right choice.

"I would say there's a big difference between our decision to hire Theo in 2003 and going forward with Chaim," Werner told the Herald. "Theo was very, very bright, but untested. Chaim has been through lots of challenges. When we talked about the composition of the roster, it wasn't simply that he picked a high first-round draft choice and he was successful. There was a lot of creativity. I would say one of the qualities about Tampa and Chaim is that they're fearless. So we admired that."

According to Werner, the Red Sox want to become more fearless.

Fearless in their pursuit of creativity and teamwork, that is, and much less fearless when it comes to spending freely without concern for the farm system.

Bloom seems to get that.

He offered no opinions on any baseball decisions, strategies or philosophies during a 47-minute introductory press conference on Monday, but continued to emphasize the same word: collaboration.

“How we collaborate, how openly and honestly we communicate, will determine how much we can accomplish,” Bloom said.

And that’s how the Red Sox found their man.

Ultimately they decided they didn’t need a veteran leader to change directions.

They wanted a people-person, someone who could gather all the Red Sox have done right in the last few years and pull it out, modernize it and turn the franchise into not just a powerhouse, but an efficiently run, creatively operated organization that is worth investing in.

“We will have each other’s backs,” Bloom said. “And what we do, we will do together.”

### **J.D. Martinez’ Red Sox future still uncertain as opt-out decision looms**

Steve Hewitt

The first domino of the Red Sox’ offseason will likely fall this week as they await a decision on J.D. Martinez’ future, but the club doesn’t have any indications on which way the All-Star designated hitter is leaning.

Martinez can opt out of the remaining three years and \$62.5 million on his contract to become a free agent, and he has five days following the end of the World Series to inform the Red Sox of his decision.

Tom Werner recently met with Martinez’ agent, Scott Boras, over dinner but there isn’t any new information.

“We really don’t know,” Red Sox principal owner John Henry said. “We’ll find out very soon.”

The Red Sox have not offered Martinez a new deal to restructure his contract, according to NBC Sports Boston, though Henry said Monday it’s been discussed. If Martinez does decide to opt out, the Red Sox could extend him a qualifying offer, which would ensure them a compensatory draft pick if he leaves for another team.

### **Mookie Betts’ Red Sox future looms as Chaim Bloom’s top offseason priority**

Steve Hewitt

In his first public words as the Red Sox’ new chief baseball officer, Chaim Bloom on Monday said that his mission is to build the organization into one that covets “sustained, long-term success.”

Now comes the hard part. Bloom wasn’t sure yet what his first tasks may involve in his new role. But there’s no escaping that he faces several big decisions this offseason — which could officially begin as soon as Wednesday — that will impact the future of the franchise.

And there is none bigger than the decision looming over Mookie Betts.

The star right-fielder is under team control for one more season before he can become a free agent, and he seems intent on testing those waters, where he’s in line to earn an enormous pay day. Betts has declined multiple offers to stay with the Red Sox, and the club could be at risk of losing him for nothing.

But Monday’s press conference didn’t provide any more clarity on Betts’ future. Though Bloom revealed that he and the Red Sox “did discuss him a little” during the interview process, he admitted there’s a lot more information he needs to gather before he and his staff will reach a conclusion on if Betts will be here next season and beyond.

“Without getting into too much detail, there was a wide variety of things we discussed during the interview process,” Bloom said. “I’m still trying to learn and there’s a lot of things I don’t know about potential directions for the roster, so it’d be premature of me to say anything other than we’re going to look thoroughly at all our actions. ...

“Generally, our priority is going to be sustainability and competitiveness over the long term. And that can take many forms. But really that’s going to be the top priority as we think about moves. With respect to those two guys (Betts and J.D. Martinez), I’m just coming in here and there’s a lot I don’t know. Looking forward to building relationships with them and learning more about them from everyone here.”

The Betts topic didn’t seem to take up much of the interview process, and Bloom wasn’t posed with any kind of question by ownership of what he would do with him. John Henry noted there are other big decisions at play (i.e. Martinez) that will create a domino effect of how the Red Sox attack their offseason — and ultimately, Betts.

“I would say that we talked about how there are a lot of tough decisions to make this offseason, and that’s not uncommon during offseasons, but there are some significant decisions,” Henry said. “The first one (Martinez) is not our decision to make, but it will impact us. ... We talked about Mookie, J.D., other issues, but we didn’t focus on, ‘Oh, what should we do?’ Because you’re going to be looking at a number of factors, including where Mookie wants to play for the long term.”

At least at the top, though, the Red Sox’ desire still seems to be keeping Betts in a Red Sox uniform. That will realistically be difficult given ownership’s stated goal to cut payroll and get under the competitive balance tax threshold that kicks in at \$208 million in 2020.

“As we’ve said ... we think he’s one of the great players in baseball and in a perfect world, we’d like to figure out a way for him to continue to be a player for us for his career, but he had the right to test free agency,” said Tom Werner. “We’ve had conversations with him in the past, and Chaim and his group will lead conversations going forward.”

### **Red Sox make it official: Chaim Bloom is new chief baseball officer**

Steve Hewitt

Exactly a year after the Red Sox won the World Series, they will introduce their new head of baseball operations.

The team officially announced Monday that Chaim Bloom, who previously served as the Rays’ senior vice president of baseball operations, has been hired as the Red Sox’ new chief baseball officer. He’ll take the reins from Dave Dombrowski, who was fired in early September.

A press conference to introduce Bloom is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Monday at Fenway Park.

“It is an incredible honor to have the opportunity to lead the Red Sox baseball operations department,” Bloom said in a statement. “The talent and dedication of our staff, and the culture that they represent, are remarkable. I’m excited to work with them to take this organization to new heights, and humbled by the faith that John (Henry), Tom (Werner), and Sam (Kennedy) have in what we will accomplish together. The bond between the Red Sox and our fans is second to none, and my family and I are eager to make New England our home.”

The Red Sox’ search for Dombrowski’s replacement was quiet until late last week, when reports circulated that Bloom had been interviewed. It seemed to be a quick process as the hiring was reportedly finalized by Friday.

“We believe Chaim is exactly the right person to lead the Boston Red Sox baseball operation based on a number of attributes we sought in this process,” Red Sox principal owner John Henry said in a statement.

“We had done exhaustive work narrowing down candidates. That work led us to Chaim, who was the first executive invited to Boston for an interview. He made a strong impression on all of us and validated our initial research that he was the one to lead our baseball operation.”

Henry also thanked Eddie Romero, Brian O’Halloran, Zack Scott and Raquel Ferreira for leading the baseball operations departments for the last two months, in which they made a few changes.

The 36-year-old Bloom spent the last 15 years with Tampa Bay, working in every area of the Rays’ baseball operations department. He’s been pegged as a rising star in baseball, and the Sox are certainly happy to have him.

“This is a great day for the Red Sox,” Red Sox president & CEO Sam Kennedy said in a statement. “It became clear during the search process why Chaim has become one of the most respected and talented executives in the game. I am looking forward to working closely with him and his team to bring our fans the fifth World Series championship under this ownership group.”

## **\* *The Providence Journal***

### **How bright is Red Sox future with new Bloom in season?**

Kevin McNamara

It’s time to buy a fresh slide rule and snap up a new graphing calculator. The geeks are now in charge at Fenway Park.

Say goodbye to the free-spending, fat and happy Boston Red Sox. Say hello to the new baseball operations mantra of collaboration, creativity and group think.

Despite winning three division titles in four years and only 10 months removed from the most dominant season in franchise history, Red Sox ownership insisted Dave Dombrowski wasn’t their man. After a search which ended after only one interview, owners John Henry and Tom Werner say they found a better fit for the franchise’s long-term baseball health.

That man is Chaim Bloom, a 36-year old Yale who looks like he could still be leading the Skull and Bones society. A Latin Classics major who pronounces his first name ‘High-em,’ Bloom grew up in a devout Jewish family in Philadelphia loving baseball. After graduation, he left New Haven to intern with the San Diego Padres and then jumped to the Tampa Bay Rays in 2005. He’s been knee-deep in scouting, operations, personnel, analytics and everything else a modern baseball executive touches ever since.

While you’d think consistent winners like the Astros, Dodgers and Red Sox would be the model baseball franchises, the truth is owners like Henry and Werner look most favorably at the Rays. They are the team with an awful ballpark, few fans to speak of and, most importantly, the lowest payroll in the game.

After spending a MLB-high \$229 million on an under-achieving team this season, Henry certainly noticed when the Rays dropped only \$64 million and beat his Red Sox in the standings by 12 games. How did this happen? Some wags would insist that injuries to Chris Sale, David Price and Nate Eovaldi conspired to doom the Sox from a repeat run at a World Series but it seems Henry and Werner noticed deeper problems.

A few years ago the New York Times dubbed the Rays “baseball’s most innovative think tank,” and there is wide agreement in the game today that brains, combined with brawn, will help win championships. The Red Sox see some of this in Bloom, or at least a lot more than they did from Dombrowski. They’re interested in out-smarting, and not always out-spending, opponents on a more consistent basis.

Of course Bloom was never the ultimate baseball boss during his time in Tampa. First he worked under Andrew Friedman, who now runs the Dodgers. The current baseball boss in Tampa is Erik Neander.

Instead of targeting an executive with a proven track record like one of those two, the Red Sox settled for what they hope is a rising star.

Bloom was christened Boston's Chief Baseball Officer and it's clear ownership wanted someone who could "work collaboratively" with a few holdovers from Dombrowski's four-year tenure. One is Brian O'Halloran, who was named general manager. He's a Colby College grad who studied ethnic conflict in the Republic of Georgia and worked in business in Moscow before joining the Sox' Baseball Ops department 15 years ago. He's an analytics advocate as is Zack Scott, another holdover who studied Mathematics in college and was working on baseball simulation software when he caught Theo Epstein's eye back in 2004.

Henry and Werner lean on these guys when it's time to invest their millions. They should. It's their money and we sure don't want them breaking down scouting reports but pity poor Alex Cora. The Sox manager is a good baseball man who says he appreciates analytics but can you imagine the reams of stats and computer formulations he's going to sift through when the numbers guys offer advice as he writes out his lineup card?

In Tampa, Neander and Bloom embraced any and all ideas to compensate for the financial and talent gaps they faced with the Red Sox and Yankees. One move was shifting analytics director Jonathan Erlichman from the front office into the dugout as a "process and analytics" coach. It didn't seem to matter that Princeton Math major hadn't actually played baseball since he was a five-year old in Tee Ball.

Bloom and company will need creative ideas to face some of the problems Dombrowski is leaving behind. Next week he'll find out if J.D. Martinez wants to exercise his option and stay in Boston with a \$23 million price tag. The guess here is he will, further challenging a Henry mandate to keep payroll below the \$208 million luxury tax level.

More importantly he'll weigh what to do with Mookie Betts, the star outfielder who is fixed on entering free agency after the 2020 season. He's also tied into a combined \$79 million in each of the next three years for pitchers Sale, Price and Eovaldi. To top it off, Dombrowski and his staff drafted poorly and few cheaper, major league-ready players are in the minor league pipeline.

It all adds up to a tight spot for Bloom, especially if the goal is to play in the post-season every year. Dombrowski led the Sox into October in three of his four years in the corner office. We'll see if Bloom and his analytic pals are given the chance to last that long.

## **\* *MassLive.com***

### **Red Sox hire Chaim Bloom: Boston made a good hire, will it let him do the job?**

Matt Vautour

BOSTON - Collaboration was the word of the day.

If the Red Sox got \$50 for every time somebody said it at the press conference introducing Boston's new chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom Tuesday, they could almost pay Mookie Betts whatever he'll ask for.

Collaboration is in itself a good thing. Lots of smart minds coming together to create the best answers, solutions and innovations. Collaboration between the baseball ops department. Collaboration between Bloom and manager Alex Cora. Collaboration between ops and scouting. Ops and ownership. etc. etc. etc.

On a day with very few specifics, the quest for collaboration was one of the few reveals. Red Sox principal owner John Henry said he doesn't want an autocrat, but the question left unanswered among all of the kum-ba-ya is how much autonomy does Bloom actually have?

Bloom is a good hire. Nobody has that many admirers around baseball without being capable. He came of polished and self-assured without being arrogant. The Red Sox liked him so much they hired him without interviewing any other candidates, which is pretty weird in itself. But how much control does he have?

Bloom has got a lot of important decisions in front of him over the next weeks and months. Input is good, but it should be his call. He's at this point for reason.

That isn't a crazy concern. Theo Epstein's constant tug of war with Larry Lucchino contributed to Epstein leaving his dream job at his dream franchise. He could have been the face of the Red Sox for most of his adult life. Instead, he's running the Cubs and the Red Sox are on their third general manager since he left.

The Red Sox didn't want to hire or even interview anyone from the quartet of Brian O'Halloran, Eddie Romero, Raquel Ferreira and Zack Scott for the opening, but it was made clear that the foursome, who collaboratively filled the position on an interim basis, will remain part of the decision-making process.

That might be fine. Bloom and his new team gushed about how much they admire each other and the work they did during the press conference. But not everybody is a good professional match. It might work itself out as at least one of them could be elsewhere before long.

But either way Bloom, as a first-time ops leader, should have the chance to create his own inner circle. Maybe he keeps some of the institutional memory in place given the option. Maybe he goes another way. But better an organic union than an arranged marriage.

John Henry bristled at the suggestions that the Red Sox have had a lot of turnover leading their baseball ops, but he's on leader No. 4 since taking over the team in 2002. But Theo Epstein famously split before taking over the Cubs and Ben Cherington and Dave Dombrowski were both pushed out after winning a World Series.

Henry deserves more respect than he gets in Boston. He turned the Red Sox from a team known for its failures to one defined by its successes. He, Tom Werner and Sam Kennedy made a good hire. They should let him take the franchise into its next era.

### **Brian O'Halloran named Red Sox GM; will work closely with chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- Even before Chaim Bloom was officially hired as the Red Sox' chief baseball officer Monday, he had a say in building the structure of the team's front office.

In his interviews with Red Sox ownership last week, Bloom worked with his then-future bosses to name his top lieutenant. He lobbied for someone he had always respected as an adversary, helping longtime assistant Brian O'Halloran be promoted to the title of general manager.

The former intern known around Fenway Park as "BOH" emerged as Bloom's No. 2 during the interview process. After days of debate, the team settled on the GM title, making him the first executive to have that label in Boston since Mike Hazen left the organization in Nov. 2016.

"I have known BOH a long time, though of course not as long as all of you," Bloom said during his introductory press conference Monday. "As an adversary, I have always respected how he handles himself. He is smart, thorough, calm and capable. If you think the people in this room are biased, go find out what his counterparts think of him. He is without question among the most respected trustworthy and respected executives in the game today."

O'Halloran, who joined the Red Sox as a baseball operations assistant in 2002, has been one of the team's lead negotiators in recent years. In that role, he frequently crossed paths with Bloom, who worked for the Rays in a variety of roles for 15 years.

“I had been, from afar, and knowing him to some degree, a huge fan,” Bloom said Monday. “In the course of learning more about the organization and talking to him, my already strong impression of him became a lot stronger. I realized how much he means within this organization and how much he leads this baseball operations group as it is. I also realized we had a lot of alignment philosophically on the different ways we thought about the game and organization-building.”

The conversations between Bloom and O’Halloran during the interview process impressed Bloom further, leading to the team’s decision to promote O’Halloran. Previously, the top candidate for a promotion was assumed to be fellow assistant GM Eddie Romero, who was thought to be one of the favorites to replace former president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski.

Bloom will have final say in the team’s moves, giving him more power than he had in his partnership with Rays general manager Erik Neander over the past few years. But O’Halloran will surely have a very vocal seat at the table.

“He leads selflessly and without ego and the good of the Red Sox is his highest priority,” Bloom said. “In that regard and so many others, he is a model for so many here. That I can now work closely with him is a privilege. I’m excited for our partnership.

“It seemed to me like an amazing fit. It has a chance to be a really good partnership.”

### **How Red Sox keeping payroll under \$208M has a connection to Mookie Betts, 2020-21 free agency**

Christopher Smith

The Boston Red Sox will avoid paying a tax penalty and earn a full revenue sharing refund if they stay below the \$208 million Competitive Balance Tax threshold in 2020.

Keeping the payroll below the \$208 million tax threshold isn’t a mandate but it is ownership’s goal.

In addition to significant financial incentives, the Red Sox also have baseball motives to stay under the threshold.

The baseball advantages relate to the 2021 MLB Draft and it has a connection to Mookie Betts’ pending free agency and the 2020-21 free agent market.

Betts is eligible for free agency after the 2020 season and he has expressed zero interest in signing a contract extension. He has made it clear he wants to test free agency. Chairman Tom Werner said the Red Sox are hopeful they will sign Betts to an extension but they will decide on a “Plan B or Plan C” at a certain point if the two sides are unable to come to terms.

Sam Kennedy

Red Sox slashing 2020 payroll means greater revenue sharing refund, including A’s proceeds

The Red Sox want to keep their payroll under the \$208 million Competitive Balance Threshold in 2020 but it's only a goal but not a mandate.

The Red Sox have three options if they fail to sign Betts to a contract extension:

- 1). Trade him this offseason.
- 2). Trade him at next season’s July 31 trade deadline if out of postseason contention.

3). Commit to keeping him for the 2020 season, extend him a qualifying offer after the year and then try to sign him in free agency. If he were to sign elsewhere, the Red Sox at least would receive draft-pick compensation because they extended him a qualifying offer.

If Boston explores Betts' market this winter, it obviously won't trade him unless it receives a fair prospect package in return. The Red Sox might determine there's more value in keeping Betts for 2020 and receiving a compensation draft pick if he leaves via free agency.

The Red Sox would receive a higher compensation draft pick for Betts in the June 2021 Draft by keeping the 2020 payroll under the \$208 million tax threshold.

The compensation pick would immediately follow the final selection in the Competitive Balance Round B, which is after second round. The Red Sox, therefore, would select right before the third round.

The compensation draft pick would drop to after the fourth round if Boston's payroll exceeds \$208 million.

The Red Sox also might want to sign a qualified free agent next offseason (2020-21) to replace Betts.

Astros star George Springer, a Connecticut native, is eligible for free agency after the 2020 season. He'll be available unless he signs an extension before next offseason.

Springer is unlikely to earn as much as Betts because he's three years older.

By staying under \$208 million in 2020, the Red Sox would forfeit just one draft pick (instead of two picks) if they signed Springer or another qualified free agent next offseason as Betts' replacement. They also would lose \$500,000 less in international signing money.

A CBT payor club that signs a qualified free agent must forfeit its second-highest and fifth-highest available draft picks. Its international signing bonus pool is reduced by \$1 million as well.

A club that stays below the threshold, conversely, forfeits its second-highest available selection only and has its internal signing bonus pool reduced by \$500,000.

**Boston Red Sox's Chaim Bloom emerged from list of 20 candidates to become chief baseball officer: 'We made a big bet'**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- What started with a methodical internal evaluation ended in a frantic sprint to the finish line as the Red Sox got the man they wanted to lead their baseball operations department.

Former Rays senior VP of baseball operations Chaim Bloom was introduced as Boston's "chief baseball officer" Monday, seven weeks after the club fired president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski. Bloom, a 36-year-old who spent 15 years with Tampa Bay, was the only external candidate of the 20 or so considered by ownership to be brought in for an interview.

"We compiled a list of about 20 candidates that were reviewed and scrutinized internally," said team chairman Tom Wener. "In the end, there was only one we felt compelled to ask permission to interview. That candidate was Chaim Bloom."

After Dombrowski's firing, team president/CEO Sam Kennedy led an internal review of the organization designed to allow the Red Sox to get a better grasp of their strengths and weaknesses. That review resulted in the determination the organization would hire its new top executive from outside the organization. The original list of 20 candidates dwindled as rival top executives like Arizona's Mike Hazen, Los Angeles' Andrew Friedman and Minnesota's Derek Falvey decided to stay put.

Of the attainable candidates out there, Bloom emerged early as a strong possibility. Conversations with players, coaches and executives from around baseball led Boston to believe Bloom was a good fit.

“Instead of casting a wide net and going out and asking permission on 8-10 people, we really took the time to read, do research and examine what the options might be,” Kennedy said. “All of those roads, from conversations with people throughout the game, led the three of us to believe that Chaim would be the absolute ideal choice to come in and partner with the front office and be an incredible teammate.”

Principal owner John Henry first reached out to Rays owner Stuart Sternberg about 10 days ago and received permission to interview Bloom. Bloom then completed a series of interviews over two days last week, meeting on a 1-on-1 basis with members of all areas of the organization, including ownership, front office members and manager Alex Cora.

“Going in, we felt he was the right candidate before we met with him,” Henry said. “During the two days that we met with him -- a long two days -- especially for him. He met with everyone. I think all of us came away thinking this was the right fit for this organization. Given the strength of the existing organization, this was the right man for the job.”

Bloom, who was considered by the Giants and Mets for their top openings a year ago, said he wasn't surprised to be contacted after going through the process previously. He enjoyed the opportunity to converse with the people that would soon become his front office coworkers.

“The week went quickly and it was packed,” Bloom said. “Really a lot of good baseball conversations which I really enjoyed. As this thing became more real, thought started to turn to ‘Ok, how do we get ready for today and get some kind of plan to get me plugged into (the organization).’”

The hiring process was an unusual one, as virtually nothing leaked out publicly until the deal was close to completion Wednesday night. By Friday, plans were made for Monday's press conference and the Red Sox officially had their first chief baseball officer in franchise history.

“It's a testament to everyone in the organization,” Kennedy said. “It obviously doesn't benefit an organization to have things getting out there and people's names. We're all human beings. When you read that someone may be leaving or that someone's considered or not considered, you can, from an organizational perspective, it can cause disruption.”

For a while, the search for Dombrowski's replacement seemed like it was crawling along with little progress. The emergence of Bloom and the race to the finish ended with the Red Sox extremely satisfied in their choice.

“We made a big bet that our research and all of the phone conversations we had with other executives, players, coaches and people at MLB in terms of what we were looking for to complement the four people in our existing staff that he was the exact right guy,” Kennedy said. “We made a big bet that he would be that right person. We said, alright, we're just going to focus on him and see how it goes. Thankfully, it worked out.”

### **Boston Red Sox's Chaim Bloom knows Yale Classics degree is unconventional for a baseball executive; 'But it worked for me'**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — Chaim Bloom holds an unconventional bachelor's degree for a baseball executive. The 2004 Yale University graduate studied Classics (Latin).

But the new Red Sox chief baseball officer said the degree has helped him during his career in baseball.

The Red Sox introduced Bloom at a press conference here at Fenway Park on Monday. He previously served as senior VP of baseball operations for the Rays. He started out as a baseball operations intern with Tampa Bay in 2005.

“I wouldn’t necessarily proactively recommend a Classics major to anybody to get into baseball, but it worked for me,” Bloom said, smiling. “I think what it did do was it really taught me how to learn. I think that’s a really valuable skill when you get into a game that forces you to be adaptable and rewards that adaptability. So it may have not been the most intuitive path. But I do think in its way, it actually really helped me prepare for some of the challenges I’ve encountered in my career.”

Bloom isn’t the only member of the Red Sox front office with an unconventional college degree for a baseball exec.

Brian O’Halloran — who the Red Sox officially promoted to General Manager on Monday — holds a double major in government and Russian Studies from Colby College. O’Halloran did, however, also earn a M.B.A. (sports management) from UCLA.

O’Halloran, who speaks Russian and Georgian, spent two years studying in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia, then three years in Moscow, Russia, “supervising business operations for an international logistics company,” per the Red Sox media guide.

### **Top Boston Red Sox executive interviewing with another team; Eddie Romero, Raquel Ferreira or Zack Scott could leave organization**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON — The hiring of Chaim Bloom as the Red Sox’ new chief baseball officer may lead to more change in the front office.

Principal owner John Henry said Monday one of the team’s interim baseball operations leaders — Raquel Ferreira, Eddie Romero or Zack Scott — is being pursued for a front office role by another team.

“One of them has been asked permission and is interviewing somewhere,” Henry said. “It’s possible we could lose one.”

Assistant general managers Romero, Scott and Brian O’Halloran combined with Ferreira, the team’s senior VP of major and minor league operations, to run the department on an interim basis after president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski was fired in September. O’Halloran was promoted to general manager under Bloom, who was officially announced as the chief baseball officer Monday.

The Pirates, who fired new GM Neal Huntington on Monday, are looking for a new person to run baseball operations. The Giants are actively searching for a GM who would be the No. 2 under president of baseball operations Farhan Zaidi.

Ferreira, Romero and Scott were all thought to have a shot at Boston’s top job before Bloom was hired. Romero, who was a top lieutenant under Dombrowski and has an international scouting background, is considered the most poachable of the group.

The Red Sox haven’t yet developed their exact front office structure below Bloom and O’Halloran, said team president and CEO Sam Kennedy. Kennedy expects almost everyone currently with the Sox to remain and Bloom to bring some people from the outside in the coming weeks.

### **J.D. Martinez’s opt-out: Boston Red Sox haven’t made new contract offer, have 5-day exclusive window at start of MLB free agency**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — Red Sox chairman Tom Werner has met with super agent Scott Boras regarding slugger J.D. Martinez who can opt out of his contract's remaining three years, \$62.5 million once the World Series ends.

Werner and Boras spoke over dinner.

But the Red Sox have not made a new offer to Martinez that would restructure (add additional years/money) to his current contract.

Principal owner John Henry said he has no idea whether Martinez will opt out. The 32-year-old slugger has five days after the World Series ends to inform the Red Sox about his decision.

"We really don't know," Henry said. "We'll find out very soon."

J.D. Martinez must inform the Red Sox about his decision within five days after the World Series ends.

Boston has exclusive negotiating rights with Martinez during this first five days of MLB free agency. He receives a \$2.5 million buyout from Boston if he opts out.

The Red Sox will extend Martinez a qualifying offer if he decides to opt out by 5 p.m. on the final day of the five-day quiet period. Therefore, Boston will receive a compensation draft pick if Martinez, as a qualified free agent, leaves for another club.

The compensation draft pick would fall after the fourth round of the 2020 MLB Draft.

### **Chris Sale injury: Boston Red Sox expect ace will visit Dr. James Andrews for follow-up in mid-November**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — The Boston Red Sox haven't yet scheduled Chris Sale's follow-up appointment with Dr. James Andrews. But they have a timeframe in mind of when the appointment will happen.

The ace missed the final six and a half weeks of the 2019 season because of left elbow inflammation.

"We really anticipate ultimately he'll have a pretty normal offseason. We expect that he'll see Dr. Andrews in mid-November and then begin his throwing program shortly thereafter," Red Sox GM Brian O'Halloran told MassLive.com on Monday at Fenway Park.

Sale initially visited Dr. Andrews and underwent a PRP injection Aug. 19. A press release from the Red Sox on that day said Dr. Andrews "recommended a period of shutdown from throwing" and Sale would "be re-evaluated in six weeks by Dr. Andrews."

Monday (Oct. 24) marks 10 weeks since the initial visit.

"With the original timetable, the six weeks, part of the reason for that was we were still in it," O'Halloran said. "We still had a chance to make the postseason. So we talked about the early end of the range of when he could be ready. Once it became clear that we weren't going to be in the postseason, we decided to take all the time that we could because why not? Why not slow it down?"

"The literature on these injuries and PRP is that there's a range of how long you can wait," O'Halloran added. "Six weeks would have been on the early end of that range. And it would have been certainly appropriate. But you can also take longer. And if you have the time, why not take the time? So we just slowed it."

## **\* *The Portland Press Herald***

### **New Red Sox boss needs to hit the ground running**

Tom Caron

Now the real work can begin.

On Monday, the Boston Red Sox introduced Chaim Bloom as their new chief baseball officer. Bloom will join Boston after 15 years with the Tampa Bay Rays, the only organization he has ever worked for.

The move has been universally lauded throughout the industry. Bloom is thought to be one of the game's brightest young minds. He's 36 years old and is said to understand all layers of a baseball operation – from analytics to scouting and development. People who know him says he has little to no ego, and is an executive who gets the most out of his staff.

It's been seven weeks since the Red Sox dismissed Dave Dombrowski, the man who Bloom replaced. While there have been small internal moves, the organization has been somewhat stuck in neutral as it waited for a new leader.

Bloom is that leader – and he will have to hit the ground running. Things are going to start happening quickly in the offices at 4 Jersey St., with J.D. Martinez declaring his intentions to stay or go by the beginning of next week.

After that, the first order of business has to be solidifying the Mookie Betts situation. We all know Betts is entering the final year of his contract, and has reportedly turned down previous offers for a long-term deal.

We've known for a long time that this is the winter to lock up Betts or do the once unthinkable. Red Sox chairman Tom Werner told us towards the end of the season that "there'll be a point where hopefully we can make a deal, or we'll decide at that point what is Plan B or Plan C."

In other words, signing Mookie is Plan A. Yet Bloom knows the team can't overspend to do so. Plan B would be to trade him for the best return. Plan C, of course, is letting Betts play his final season with the Red Sox before potentially moving on to the highest bidder.

With the Rays, Bloom was part of an organization that traded players at or near the peak of their careers in order to bring in new talent to keep the team competitive. One of the best moves they made came at the trading deadline in 2018 when they dealt homegrown ace Chris Archer to the Pittsburgh Pirates in exchange for Tyler Glasnow, Austin Meadows, and a player to be named later (Shane Baz).

It has been one of the most lopsided deals in the recent history of the game. Archer went 3-9 with a 5.19 ERA this season making \$7.5 million. Meadows hit .291 and led the Rays with 33 home runs, 89 RBI and a .922 OPS while making the league minimum. Glasnow was an eye-popping 6-1 with a 1.78 for Tampa Bay before a forearm strain put him on the shelf. He returned to start two postseason games against the Houston Astros, all the while making \$1.9 million.

Using Wins Above Replacement as a comparison, Meadows and Glasnow combined for a 6.3 WAR for the Rays this season, while Archer posted a 0.7 WAR for Pittsburgh. So Tampa Bay got a 5.6 WAR improvement – while saving about \$5 million in 2019 payroll.

Those are the kind of deals the Sox hope Bloom can make as he looks to lower the team's MLB-leading payroll while refreshing a depth chart that was gutted on the way to a 2018 championship. It's a high-wire act that will be performed before an audience that expects nothing short of a championship.

Usually baseball execs come into situations where a complete rebuild is in order. Not at Fenway. The Red Sox are still the reigning world champs, at least for another day or two, and don't have the patience for reconstruction projects.

Bloom is expected to build a contender now. And now that he's here, that work can finally get under way.

## **\* *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune***

**New Sox president's key fix: Red Sox image**

Bill Burt

BOSTON – It was exactly one year, to the day, that we monitored a celebration on the field at Dodgers Stadium.

Families. Photos. Smiles. Hugs. Thanks. There was nothing but love after a dominating series and Red Sox World Series championship, its fourth in 14 years.

The Patriots Dynasty was still within reach.

The Red Sox outsmarted everyone again.

Or so we thought.

Chaim Bloom, 36, was announced Monday as the new Red Sox head of baseball operations or Chief Baseball Officer as they noted on the press release.

Bloom is an interesting guy. He never actually played baseball after Little League. He attended Yale, studying the classics (in Latin!). He is a devout, practicing Jew.

And, most of all, he was part of the miracle workers in Tampa Bay baseball ops department that somehow helped make the Rays legit contenders in the American League East for most of the last dozen years.

Their best work in Tampa was probably the last three years, with 80, 90 and 96 wins.

Why was he the Chosen One?

Beyond being well-liked, he apparently obsesses about minor league development, analytics and pitching.

The Red Sox, as it looks from here, are slumping, big-time, in all three of those categories.

But I believe there is a bigger hole in the organization right now that needs as much of Bloom's time and obsession as any of those.

He needs to make it cool being a member of the Red Sox.

What does that mean?

Well, if the Red Sox will overpay, and they have a lot recently, they can get anybody, even guys not suited for this rabid audience – see David Price.

Something hasn't been right with the Red Sox during the Dombrowski tenure.

Case in point, Mookie Betts.

He has been the Red Sox property a month after he graduated high school in 2011.

He is one month away from 1,000 hits over his career. He has won a World Series here. He has won a league MVP Award. He's witnessed a few dozen of the coolest Red Sox pregame productions, from Patriots' Lombardi trophy celebrations to team anniversaries to David Ortiz's retirement, etc., etc.

He's played to more sellouts, home and away, than any player of over his six seasons.

He loves baseball. Boston loves baseball. And Boston loves Mookie.

So what's the disconnect? Why isn't Mookie signing his 10-year, \$250 million-ish kind of deal so everybody can move on to other pending matters.

In an exit interview with long-time Cincinnati Red Sean Casey, who played only one year with the Red Sox in 2008, after the Sox lost to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, he told me:

"If I could wish anything for every player in baseball it would be to spend at least one year in Boston," said Casey. "There's no place like it. The fans won't let you give up. It's amazing ... It's a baseball heaven."

Former Red Sox player and current NESN analyst Jerry Remy said sometimes players don't get or desire the "Boston experience" like us natives think they should.

"I played with guys who came up through the system, but never felt comfortable here," said Remy. "Look at Sonny Gray. The Yankees get him from Oakland and he struggles his entire time there. Then he gets moved to Cincinnati and he's back to being Sonny Gray again."

I understand. But I don't buy it.

J.D. Martinez is also a prime example. He has spent two seasons here, getting the same benefits of Red Sox Nation, etc., and becoming a household name in baseball, yet it doesn't seem to matter.

Red Sox owner John Henry is very careful when he discusses the Dombrowski Era. Out of Belichick-speak, he doesn't like comparing people or departments.

But Dombrowski was the architect of this carpet-bagging lifestyle. He was a hired gun. And he had a big, big checkbook to work from — at least he did for a few years — and spent to the limit.

In the meantime, the Red Sox lost their way.

Mind you, New Englanders/Red Sox fans are different. While we do eat our own, we also, in the end, appreciate those that tough it out.

Case in point is Carl Yastrzemski, who is a god-like figure due to his 23 years and mind-numbing career stats to go with maybe the two greatest, clutch months in baseball history in 1967.

Winning is great. It really is. And in the end, Bloom's legacy will be based on the Red Sox consistently competing (and winning a few) championships.

But Bloom has other immediate issues to fix, including convincing players that there's no place like Boston.

Sox head majored in Classics

New Red Sox Chief Baseball Officer Chaim Bloom did not play baseball at Yale University, but he did study "The Classics" in Latin.

It's true. The Philadelphia native, who spent the last 15 years in the Tampa Bay Rays baseball operations department, was a noted writer and thinker at Yale and credits his work there as preparing him for his work in baseball.

"I wouldn't necessarily proactively recommend a classics major to anybody who's looking to get into baseball, but it worked for me," Bloom said.

"I think what it did do was really taught me how to learn. I think that's a really valuable skill when you get into a game that forces you to be adaptable and rewards that adaptability," he added.

## **\* *RedSox.com***

### **Bloom to foster collaboration at Red Sox helm**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- Given the title the Red Sox created for Chaim Bloom -- chief baseball officer -- there is no question who will sign off on the key decisions the club faces in the present and future.

But what became equally clear during Bloom's press conference unveiling at Fenway Park on Monday is how much collaboration will take place in the lead-up to those decisions.

The dawn of a new day has arrived for the Sox, and it is one in which the lead baseball executive will foster a unified approach in baseball operations. This was the reputation Bloom had with the Rays, a franchise that has been one of the most forward-thinking in the game for several years. It is also one that Theo Epstein had during his successful run in Boston from 2003-11.

"The best part about this opportunity is the chance to lift up your whole staff and to put them in position to succeed," said Bloom. "I had a lot of good experiences with that with my former club, and that was the most satisfying part of the job to me. By empowering people and also challenging them productively, asking good questions, you might be able to make them a little bit better. They're going to make you better. That is a big part of what appeals to this type of leadership to me."

The 36-year-old Bloom was introduced to Red Sox Nation on the one-year anniversary of the team's fourth World Series since 2004. It is unusual to see a team make a shake-up at the top of baseball operations just a year after winning it all.

It has become clear in recent days and weeks that there are clear reasons that the club moved on from veteran baseball executive Dave Dombrowski, who Red Sox owner John Henry continues to say will wind up in the Hall of Fame.

The first is that the Sox simply didn't agree with Dombrowski's vision going forward. They wanted an executive who would be more open to embracing new ideas and also rebuilding a farm system that has taken a hit in recent years. The club also wanted somebody who would also embrace a more efficient payroll.

The second is that they felt Dombrowski under-utilized many of the other bright minds in the front office, particularly the four (Brian O'Halloran, Eddie Romero, Zack Scott and Raquel Ferreira) who ran the front office on an interim basis until Bloom was hired at the end of last week.

"I would just say that we were extremely desirous of bringing in someone who would augment and add, as opposed to just bringing in someone who might have been an autocrat, for instance, or a one-man show," said Henry. "One of the things we were so impressed with Chaim was, and I know we keep using the word 'collaborative,' but that's what it takes to run a successful organization, the size of this organization."

Along those lines, one of the first things Bloom did upon getting his new job was promote O'Halloran to the position of general manager. Romero, Scott and Ferreira are also likely to have a bigger voice, though not a change in titles at this point.

"It was exciting to hear from Chaim and to have the opportunity to work with him as he leads the organization," said O'Halloran. "I'm thrilled. It was a very exciting moment for me."

In Bloom's world, there is strength in numbers when it comes to running a baseball operations department. For example, Bloom has never taken credit for the Rays' vision to utilize openers on the pitching staff, a decision that helped keep the club competitive the last two seasons. Instead, he helped build that consensus.

That doesn't mean the Red Sox will go crazy with openers in Boston now that Bloom has arrived. He mentioned that the job is to maximize the Red Sox based on their resources and roster.

"He's someone that is really thoughtful and likes to really get to know people and understand how they can help an organization and he likes to think about how he can empower them to impact the organization and I really appreciate that about him," O'Halloran said.

"Obviously the buzzword of the day is collaborative. It's clear that he's very collaborative. And that's the model that they had there. He's very intelligent, very hard working. I'm just really excited to work with him. I think he'll be a great leader for the organization."

It took the Red Sox seven weeks to find Dombrowski's successor mainly because they pored through the a list of 20 candidates in search of what they were looking for. In the end, Bloom was the only external candidate they spoke to. And within a week of first reaching out to Bloom, the Red Sox hired him.

"Chaim's experience with the Rays allowed him to touch, understand and lead every aspect of a Major League team's baseball operations, from setting a vision and structure for player development to the seamless integration of analytics into game management," said Red Sox president/CEO Sam Kennedy.

"At the age of 36, Chaim has developed a well respected reputation across the league, and is known by his colleagues as someone who is creative, thorough and collaborative."

Red Sox manager Alex Cora is looking forward to that collaboration with his new boss.

"He's a great asset," Cora said. "Everything I heard about him, he's been outstanding. When you're 36 and you've been in the big leagues for 15 years, you have to be good. And he's really good at what he does. I'm very eager to learn from him and obviously, it's a little bit different because we haven't had a president of baseball operations for a month and a half, but the people here, they're going to make it easy. And they've made it easier. I'm looking forward to working with him on a daily basis and continuing to get better."

There will be critical moments for the front office in the coming weeks. Slugger J.D. Martinez has an opt-out in his contract that he has to exercise within five days of the conclusion of the World Series. Mookie Betts is going into his walk year, and Bloom and his crew will determine if the star outfielder should be dangled in trade talks or if the club should hold out hope he will stick around beyond 2020.

There also needs to be an evaluation of the pitching staff. As presently constituted, the Red Sox have \$79 million invested in three starting pitchers for next season in Chris Sale, David Price and Nathan Eovaldi. All three are coming off injuries. Henry has stated he prefers that the team get the payroll below the first luxury tax threshold of \$208 million for next season. It was roughly \$240 during the underwhelming '19 season.

Bloom and his think tank of executives will navigate all of these issues together. The process will start immediately.

“The backbone of our department will always be our people,” said Bloom. “Our staff and players. How we collaborate, how openly and honestly we communicate will determine how much we can accomplish.”

### **Bloom doesn't tip hand about plans for Betts**

Ian Browne

BOSTON – Welcome to Boston, Chaim Bloom. Now it's time to get cracking on helping to determine the futures of stars Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez.

The thirsty Boston media wanted answers Monday at the very outset of Bloom's introductory press conference as chief of baseball operations.

But Bloom isn't making those decisions rashly. He will spend a couple of days learning the ins and outs of the organization.

Martinez has an opt-out clause in his contract he must exercise within five days of the end of the World Series if he wants to become a free agent. It remains to be seen whether there will be a robust market in free agency for a DH-only player who just turned 32 years old, and that will be the determining factor in Martinez's decision.

The situation with Betts is more complex. He is entering the walk year of his contract and has steadfastly said he plans to get to free agency rather than sign an extension with the Red Sox.

Bloom didn't make any definitive comments Monday on the status of Betts and Martinez as he joins the Red Sox, but he noted that the team would emphasize long-term sustainability in the moves it makes. That seems to suggest that a Betts trade shouldn't be ruled out as a possibility.

"I would say generally, our top priority is going to be sustainability and competitiveness over the long term," Bloom said. "And that could take many forms, but that's really going to be the top priority as we think about moves. With respect to those two guys, I'm just coming in here and there's a lot that I don't know, and I'm looking forward to building relationships with them and learning a little bit more about them from everybody here."

Ownership has stated it would like to trim payroll from the \$240 million it was at last season to below the first luxury tax threshold of \$208 million for 2020.

With \$79 million committed to three starting pitchers, it might be difficult to stay below the threshold with both Martinez and Betts, who will get a considerable bump in the arbitration process from the \$20 million he made in 2019.

"As we've said, we think [Betts is] one of the great players in baseball, and we would, in a perfect world, like to figure out a way for him to continue to be a player for us for his career," Red Sox chairman Tom Werner said. "But he had the right to test free agency. We've had conversations with him in the past, and Chaim and his group will lead conversations going forward."

Red Sox owner John Henry said, "I would say that we talked about that there are a lot of tough decisions to make this offseason. And that's not uncommon during offseasons. But there are some significant decisions - - that aren't all in our hands, obviously. [Martinez] is not our decision to make, but it will impact us. There was more of a general discussion -- we talked about Mookie, J.D., other issues. But we didn't focus on 'What should we do?' Because you're going to be looking at a number of factors, including where Mookie wants to play for the long term."

Asked about Betts specifically, Bloom again didn't want to get into the details, but he confirmed that the 2018 American League Most Valuable Player Award winner was discussed during his interview process with the Red Sox.

"With respect to Mookie, without getting into too much detail, there was a wide variety of things we discussed during the interview process," Bloom said. "I'm still trying to learn, and there's a lot of things I don't know about potential options for the direction of the roster. So it would be premature of me to say anything other than that we're going to look thoroughly at all of our options."

Obviously, the decision the club makes on Betts will have a big impact on how manager Alex Cora will piece together his lineup going forward.

"He's a guy that is a complete player," Cora said, "and also a complete person. Obviously, he's a game changer. But at the same time, he's a franchise player. We know that. But at the same time, obviously, those conversations are going to come up, not only with the organization and the front office and ownership, but with the player.

"From my end, I'm the manager. If they ask me questions about Mookie, obviously, I'm going to give my best view of the situation, what I think about the player, and then after that, let's see what happens."

## **\* *WEEI.com***

### **The unique path the Red Sox took to locking up Chaim Bloom**

Rob Bradford

The Red Sox did call Theo Epstein. They did call Andrew Friedman. And they did call Mike Hazen.

But the communication with the big fish in Major League Baseball's decision-making world wasn't for the reasons many would have originally surmised.

The calls were made to find out who the most important call should be made to.

The answer from all three -- and others -- was unanimous: Chaim Bloom.

The whole process wasn't as many expected, and certainly not how most of the recent GM/President of Baseball Operations searches have unfolded. Take the Giants' quest to fill their spot a year ago. A wide net was cast and a lot of permissions were asked. But with each plea by San Francisco -- which also interviewed Bloom -- more and more feathers were starting to get ruffled, which is often the case when so many candidates and their employers are being put on hold.

On Oct. 18 Red Sox principal owner John Henry called Rays owner Stu Sterberg for permission to interview Bloom. The next day, after getting the final go-ahead from Tampa Bay president Matt Silverman -- with the mandate that the Red Sox had a week to get something done -- Sam Kennedy reached out to the candidate. But along with the usual inquiry regarding Bloom's interest, there was another piece Kennedy passed along. The Rays exec was told flat-out there were no other candidates.

Unlike his other interviews for GM jobs -- which also included Philadelphia, Milwaukee and the Mets -- there was going to be no worrying about competition for the position in question.

"It's flattering. It's wasn't something I necessarily spent time worrying about one way or another," Bloom told WEEI.com. "I was just more focused on if this was going to be a fit for everybody. It's not just about me trying to get a job. It's about figuring out if this has a chance to be really successful and if this has a chance to be a fit. That's where my focus was.

"I did appreciate they were so thorough in the interview process. And one of the reasons I thought it might have a chance to be a fit was because the things they identified as strengths are things that I'm proud of and

things I like to think are strengths and the organization I came from really believes in. That showed to me that they had spent a lot of time thinking about this."

The Red Sox had their list of 20 names, each of which offered some intrigue. But the merit belonging to Bloom kept being bubbled up by the big-name decision-makers from Chicago, Los Angeles and Arizona -- each of whom so many thought would be pursued by the Red Sox. Directness. Decisiveness. Creativity. Ability to stay ahead of the curve. And a personality that has endeared himself to the baseball community. Some of the biggest names in the sport were identifying each and every quality with the 36-year-old.

The Red Sox ownership group knew it liked what Tampa Bay was doing.

"They develop pitching," Henry said. "They have certain advantages we don't have in the draft. The goalposts have sort of moved a little so they have some advantages. It's a very strong organization. I think in the last dozen years we have probably won two and a quarter more games than they have. They do everything right. They don't get supported but they do everything right."

In the last few weeks, they discovered -- through long talks about Bloom and then to the man himself -- exactly what made the Rays way even more likable.

"I would just say in our extensive conversations with Chaim, he really ticked every box we were hoping he would check out," said Red Sox chairman Tom Werner. "He's thoughtful, innovative, collaborative. Every person we talked to within other teams in baseball had the highest regard for Chaim. We were so pleased that our in-person interviews matched our expectations."

### **Red Sox still haven't offered new deal to J.D. Martinez**

Rob Bradford

J.D. Martinez mentioned in spring training the Red Sox hadn't made a move to rework his current contract.

"Nothing has happened," Martinez told WEEI.com the week leading into Opening Day, a reality he reaffirmed when the season began.

Just days away the date Martinez will be forced to choose whether or not to exercise his opt-out the Red Sox approach doesn't seem to have changed. According to Red Sox principal owner John Henry there has been no offer made to increase the three years, \$62.5 million left on the slugger's deal.

"It hasn't changed," said Henry, who acknowledged chairman Tom Werner has met with Martinez's agent Scott Boras.

Martinez, who is slated to make \$23.75 million in 2020 if he doesn't opt-out of his deal, has until five days after the completion of the World Series to make his decision. Henry said the organization currently doesn't have a good read on which way it will go.

"I don't know what they are thinking," the owner said.

Boras certainly sounded like an agent who was ready to take his client to free agency when the season began, as was evident in his tone while talking at the press conference for Xander Bogaerts' contract extension on April 1.

"This guy is some kind of hitter," Boras said. "He and (Washington's Anthony) Rendon (also a Boras client) are probably going to be the two most focused on offensive players on the market as far as guys who are elite offensive players. Yeah ... Not that I think about those things."

One roadblock for Boras and Martinez is the certainty that the Red Sox will offer Martinez the qualifying offer (just under \$18 million this year), meaning whatever team that signs him -- other than the Sox -- will be forced to surrender a draft pick.

Boras represents a good amount of the top tier free agents in this year's market. What this means is that there will be less room for interpretation when it comes to which free agent might go where. The three biggest free agents starting next month -- Rendon, Stephen Strasburg and Gerrit Cole -- all are represented by Boras, as are Nick Castellanos, Dallas Keuchel, Mike Moustakas and Hyun-jin Ryu. There is some thought that if Martinez does hit free agency Boras will prioritize getting the righty hitter's new deal done on the earlier side.

## **\* *NBC Sports Boston***

### **Big names gave Chaim Bloom their seal of approval, two moves Red Sox loved, and other takeaways**

John Tomase

Wrapping up a busy afternoon from Fenway Park, where Chaim Bloom completed a whirlwind 10 days that started with the Red Sox seeking permission to interview him and ended with Monday's introduction of the team's new chief baseball officer. . .

\* Red Sox ownership sought input from Theo Epstein of the Cubs and Andrew Friedman of the Dodgers, among others, when contemplating whether to put Bloom in charge of their baseball operations.

The responses were unanimous: he's your man.

Friedman hired Bloom in Tampa in 2005 and promoted him to Director of Player Development three years later. They worked together until Friedman left to run the Dodgers in 2014. Epstein needs no introduction in these parts, and he also spoke glowingly of his fellow Yale grad.

"Andrew Friedman thought he was one of the very great talents in baseball," said Red Sox chairman Tom Werner. "Theo Epstein thought the same thing. He's thoughtful. He's innovative. He's hungry to win. He is everything that we would hope he can be."

Sox haven't made any new offers to J.D. Martinez

\* A portion of Bloom's interview was devoted to breaking down his deal-making thought processes and two deals stuck out in particular: the free-agent acquisition of right-hander Charlie Morton last December, and the three-way trade that netted reliever Emilio Pagan the very same day.

The 35-year-old Morton didn't seem like an obvious small-market strike, but the Rays landed him for two years and \$30 million on Dec. 21, fresh off a 15-win season and his first All-Star berth with the Astros. It was the largest contract they had ever given a pitcher.

Morton followed up with another outstanding campaign, going 16-6 with a 3.05 ERA while reaching career-highs in innings (194.2), strikeouts (240), and strikeouts per nine (11.1). Not bad for someone with elbow and hip surgeries on his resume. The Rays looked past his age and saw a pitcher with a unique weapon -- a sweeping curveball -- that could be a separator. Combined with an elevated 94 mph fastball, Morton quickly became Tampa's ace.

The other deal that impressed the Red Sox was a complicated three-team trade with the A's and Rangers that netted Tampa a competitive balance pick, as well as Oakland's Pagan.

The well-traveled Pagan was going on his third organization in three years, following a 2017 debut with the Mariners and solid, albeit unspectacular 2018 in Oakland. He appealed to Tampa in part because he had shown an ability to pitch multiple innings, an obvious plus for a franchise employing the opener strategy.

A slight dip in strikeout rate and a similar rise in walk rate had depressed his market, but he bounced back in 2019 with a career year, going 4-2 with a 2.31 ERA and striking out 96 in 70 innings. He was acquired for a well-regarded prospect -- left-hander Brock Burke -- who was nonetheless expendable because of a 40-man roster crunch.

Sox brass addresses Mookie's uncertain future

"We studied decisions that they made and we were impressed," Werner said. "The total decision-making was impressive. They went out in the free-agent market and got Charlie Morton. They made a great three-way trade for Pagan. You can just go up and down that roster and say they found talent in very creative ways."

\* Owner John Henry made a pair of eyebrow-raising statements. The first was that the Red Sox recognized Bloom's strengths as a collaborator, which they deemed necessary following the stewardship of Dave Dombrowski, who ran a more traditional top-down structure.

"I wouldn't contrast the two. I'd just say that we were extremely desirous of bringing in someone who would augment and add as opposed to just bringing in someone who might've just been an autocrat for instance, kind of a one-man show," Henry said.

Henry later addressed the future of Mookie Betts and how it was broached during Bloom's interview.

"It was more of a general discussion," Henry said. "We talked about Mookie, J.D., other issues, but we didn't focus on, oh, what should we do? Because you're going to be looking at a number of factors, including where Mookie wants to play for the long term."

Maybe it's just me, but the line about where Mookie wants to play long-term caught my eye. Is Henry suggesting the team believes Betts would rather play somewhere else? It's possible.

\* New general manager Brian O'Halloran has been with the Red Sox since 2002, when he started as an unpaid intern before becoming Epstein's assistant. The Weymouth native and Colby grad has since earned universal respect across the game for a steady demeanor and selfless attitude tailor-made for Bloom's collaborative approach. He's also fluent in Russian, should that ever come up . . .

\* Bloom was asked about writing out the lineup card (he won't) or about having a stats guy on the bench in Tampa (he didn't). But to manager Alex Cora, those kinds of questions sell the Red Sox short from an analytics perspective, and he cites one of the key hits of the 2018 postseason, a pinch homer from Eduardo Nunez in Game 1 of the World Series, as proof.

"I do feel that as far as like what we do on the field, people think we were old school, but I think we were very balanced," Cora said. "We saw it. We made decisions last year based on information. You go back to Game 1 of the World Series, the information I got from Zack (Scott) and the information department — start (Rafael) Devers because he's a good matchup for (Clayton) Kershaw, but as soon as they bring in one of those lefties, bring Eduardo (Nunez). You saw what happened. So, it's not magic. I'm glad I'm able to say this now: It wasn't a magic ride. It was information and collaboration, and that's what we're doing. Obviously, with Chaim here he's going to bring some good ideas and we're going to make some adjustments and we're going to keep getting better."

### **Red Sox haven't made offer to J.D. Martinez, holding firm at final three years of original contract**

John Tomase

The Red Sox have conducted talks with representatives for J.D. Martinez, but they have not offered the slugger a new contract as he weighs whether to opt out of his deal and test the free agent market.

According to multiple sources, the team is holding firm at what remains of Martinez's contract, which is three years and \$62.5 million, and will risk the possibility that he receives a four- or five-year offer elsewhere. Owner John Henry said that chairman Tom Werner has spoken with Scott Boras, Martinez's agent.

Martinez has until five days after the conclusion of the World Series to decide whether to remain in Boston or opt out and become a free agent. If he does leave, the Red Sox will tender him a qualifying offer for \$17.8 million, a source said, which could partially depress his market, since any team signing him would lose a draft pick.

**TOMASE:** Martinez-to-Yankees is nightmare scenario for Sox

Qualifying Martinez wouldn't be a surprise, however, since the one-year salary it guarantees is lower than the \$23.75 million he's due next season, and it will also ensure that the Red Sox receive at least a small measure of compensation if he departs.

With new chief baseball operator Chaim Bloom being introduced on Monday, the Red Sox can begin mapping out their offseason. While the organization recognizes Martinez's immense impact on the lineup, it's also aware that the decision to hit the market is his and not theirs. With the team hoping to drop below \$208 million and reset its luxury tax schedule, letting Martinez walk could help achieve that goal.

It's hard to overstate what a massive loss he'd be, though. Over two seasons in Boston, Martinez has made a pair of All-Star teams while averaging 40 homers, 118 RBIs, and a .317 average.

If he does leave, he will likely be limited to the pool of American League teams, since he's no longer a full-time outfielder. The White Sox are considered possible suitors, while there's some unease in the Red Sox organization that the Yankees could become involved, even though they would seem to need pitching more than another bat.

## **\* *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

### **Hiring of Bloom an attempt by Red Sox to return to their roots**

Sean McAdam

Since the beginning of this century, the Red Sox have been arguably the most successful franchise in the game with four World Series championships, and even after this past season's disappointing finish, have won what may be baseball's toughest division in three of the last four years.

But outcomes aside, the process may have gone off course somewhat in recent years.

No longer were the Red Sox on the cutting edge when it came to analytics. No longer was there evidence of the creativity that had marked the franchise in the first decade or so under this current ownership. And perhaps most notably, gone was the notion of collaboration which had marked their operation.

Instead, the Sox, under president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, came to be known for dramatic signings (David Price! J.D. Martinez!) and blockbuster trades (Chris Sale! Craig Kimbrel!) — big, sweeping gestures that, in part, led to three consecutive division titles that culminated with 2018's World Series win, but also stripped the minor league system of its depth and left it directionless when things didn't go as planned.

Worse, the free-flowing exchange of ideas that had typified the team's front office workings had been done away with, as Dombrowski largely withdrew and leaned on only longtime associates Frank Wren and Tony La Russa for input.

When the Red Sox went searching for Dombrowski's replacement, it was with the idea that they needed to return to what had made them successful under Theo Epstein, and his successor and protege, Ben Cherington.

In Chaim Bloom, they think they found their man.

Principal owner John Henry couldn't have been any more direct when asked about what the Sox had prioritized in finding their new executive.

"I wouldn't contrast the two," said Henry about Dombrowski and his successor. "I would just say we were extremely desirous of bringing in someone who would augment and add as opposed to just bringing in someone who might be an autocrat, for instance, or a one-man show."

Well, that was blunt.

"One of my jobs," noted Bloom a bit more subtly, "is to add to what's already here."

In 15 seasons with the Tampa Bay Rays, Bloom was known for his creativity and his ability to work well with others. Surely, it was no coincidence that "collaborate" was the word perhaps most often uttered when Bloom was introduced Monday as the Sox' new chief baseball officer.

Team president Sam Kennedy, who conducted the job search, said it. So did team chairman Tom Werner and principal owner John Henry.

The game is now too complex, too detailed, to rely on just a couple of familiar faces. Teamwork is needed, pushback is encouraged. And the more qualified voices involved in the discussion, the better.

That's how the Sox operated under Epstein, and apparently, will again under Bloom.

"Frankly, I talked to Theo a lot during the process — as did Tom at one point — just to do some digging on Chaim," Kennedy told BSJ, "and he couldn't have been more supportive (of Bloom). He said, 'if you're going to look at someone outside the organization, Chaim is someone you should target and you shouldn't waste time. You should go and get him.'"

Kennedy was quick to dismiss the idea that the Sox were hiring the modern-day version of Epstein, despite the obvious comparisons (young, Yale-educated). For one thing, Bloom is already eight years older than Epstein was when he was given the reins of the Red Sox late in 2002. For another, Bloom, despite his experience hasn't been in charge of an organization to date.

But this is less about looking for an Epstein clone and more about trying to build a baseball operations department that is modern, innovative and unafraid of dissent.

"There's definitely a desire for one organization where everyone is functioning together," Kennedy said, "and there's a lot of questioning each another and everyone is trying to improve all the time. There's some similarities between the two, though Chaim is definitely his own guy."

"Something that was very important throughout the process was to identify a leader to come in and supplement the group that we have. What we thought we knew about Chaim ended up being exactly what he is and that's someone who wants to be collaborative with the department. But, to be clear, he's had a successful track record in Tampa and we really did want to hear some new ideas and a new approach that could sort of blend with what we have."

Kennedy was quick to dismiss any suggestion that the Sox are looking to capture past glories or retreat in a business that is constantly evolving.

”I don’t think we’re going back to the early 2000s in any way; I really think we’re going forward,” he said. “In several of my conversations (which included Epstein, Dodgers president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman, Arizona general manager Mike Hazen and MLB executive Morgan Sword), it’s incredible how baseball ops departments are advancing and new tools that folks are using to move forward.

“I do think Chaim represents the future of the game, which is using new and different ways to look at the game, using creativity. But at his core, he’s a relationship-builder and that’s really important.”

And, in the end, what landed Bloom the job.

## **\* *The Athletic***

### **Inside the clandestine Red Sox process to hire Chaim Bloom**

Jen McCaffrey

Ten days ago, Chaim Bloom received one of the most important phone calls of his life. It was Red Sox president Sam Kennedy inviting him to Boston to interview for the team’s front-office vacancy.

Three days later, Bloom arrived in the city. Over the course of roughly 48 hours, he met with over a dozen Red Sox executives as he interviewed for the job.

For six weeks, speculation swirled as to who might be on the shortlist of candidates for the role, but not one name emerged as a confirmed candidate. For such a high-profile job, it was oddly quiet, but that’s because the Red Sox hadn’t asked for permission to speak with anyone until Bloom. They’d compiled an extensive list of roughly 20 candidates, drafting packets on each person before whittling down the list internally.

The Red Sox search was so covert that by the time word got out about Bloom on Thursday night, he’d already been offered the job, was flying back to Tampa and was on the verge of accepting the offer.

The 36-year-old Bloom had interviewed for top executive positions with MLB clubs before, but this time he was the lone candidate for the job. It was more or less his to lose.

“In the end, it was only one we felt compelled to ask permission to interview, and that candidate was Chaim Bloom,” chairman Tom Werner said Monday as the Red Sox introduced Bloom as their new chief baseball officer.

Principal owner John Henry described two days of meetings the Sox had with Bloom as a “long two days.”

“Especially for him,” Henry said. “He met with everyone, and all of us came away thinking this is the right fit.

“Chaim was the right guy for the job.”

Initial guesses centered on the Red Sox turning baseball operations over to one of the four who led the team in the interim — Eddie Romero, Brian O’Halloran, Raquel Ferreira and Zack Scott. But Bloom emerged as an enticing candidate, similar to their interim foursome but with an outsider’s perspective.

“We came to the conclusion that we may benefit from adding an external voice or resource, and so it was a bit of a high-risk, high-reward strategy,” Kennedy said.

On Oct. 18, Henry called Rays owner Stu Sterberg for permission to speak with Bloom, who’d been a part of the Rays front office since 2005, most recently as their vice president of baseball operations. Sterberg allowed the process to proceed, and Kennedy called his longtime friend, Rays team president Matt Silverman, who offered final approval and suggested that Kennedy call Bloom the following day.

“I thought that would be a five- or 10-minute phone call to talk logistics, and we ended up talking for an hour and a half,” Kennedy said of his initial call with Bloom. “It was a very open and candid conversation about our situation, what we were looking for. I got to learn a little bit about him and from all the research and background that we had done on him.”

In their thorough research of Bloom before the in-person interview, the Red Sox reached out to a number of baseball executives, including former Rays and current Dodgers executive Andrew Friedman, Diamondbacks general manager Mike Hazen, Cubs president of baseball operations Theo Epstein, MLB deputy commissioner Dan Halem and MLB senior vice president of league economics Morgan Sword.

“It was like, this feels like it could be exactly the person we’re looking for to come in and complement our group,” Kennedy said.

Bloom arrived in Boston on Tuesday night and had dinner with Kennedy and O’Halloran before launching into a jam-packed Wednesday schedule. He first met with Henry alone in the morning, then Kennedy and Werner joined them for lunch, with some of their non-baseball executives in marketing, partnerships and operations joining.

Bloom then had one-on-ones with manager Alex Cora, O’Halloran, Scott, Romero and Ferreira. That night, he met with Fenway Sports Group president Mike Gordon. They discussed a variety of topics and situations, including how to build a sustainably successful team, collaborative leadership and deploying resources efficiently.

On Thursday morning, Henry invited Bloom to his house in Brookline, where he, Werner and Kennedy met with Bloom for a few more hours before offering him the job. Bloom had a follow-up phone call with Kennedy the next day to negotiate a few details before Bloom accepted the job.

Three days later, Bloom was being introduced by the Red Sox in Fenway Park as the new boss, with O’Halloran as his general manager.

“The week went quickly, and it was packed,” Bloom said. “Really a lot of good baseball conversation, which I really enjoyed, and then, as this thing became more real, then the thoughts started to turn to, OK, what’s step one? How do we get ready for today and how do we have some kind of plan to get me plugged into an organization, as I said, that already has a lot of really talented people functioning at a really high level.”

The exhaustive six-week-long process of gathering information, researching candidates and making phone calls resulted in the Red Sox reeling in their candidate within a week of initial contact with him.

“In our extensive conversations with Chaim, he really ticked every box we were hoping he would check out,” Werner said. “He’s thoughtful, innovative, collaborative. Every person we talked to within other teams in baseball had the highest regard for Chaim. We were so pleased that our in-person interviews matched our expectations.”

Now the work for Bloom is just getting started.

### **Chaim Bloom arrives with Red Sox without all the answers but focused on asking the right questions**

Chad Jennings

In the days before his introduction as the Red Sox chief baseball officer, Chaim Bloom went out to drinks with some of his new coworkers, many of whom had been with the organization for more than a decade. They tried to prepare the new guy for the press conference ahead. There would be complicated questions about payroll and trade candidates and a roster in flux, and Bloom would have to answer while facing more reporters and television cameras than he’d seen in 15 years with the Tampa Bay Rays.

It was Bloom who eventually told them the tough questions would be the easiest. He literally didn't know enough to answer them anyway, so he could deflect and move on.

"There's a lot I don't know," Bloom said Monday. "And a lot I'm still learning. I'm eager to get together with our group a little bit more and learn a lot about what I don't know coming in."

The choice of Bloom, 36, to run the Red Sox baseball operations had a lot to do with not knowing. There is no all-powerful man behind the curtain. No single solution can solve every problem. No successful baseball team can be all about scouting, all about analytics, all about payroll or all about player development. "Collaborative" was the word of the day, quite the change from four years ago, when Dave Dombrowski was introduced and made clear he would be the one calling the shots.

"I'd just say that we were extremely desirous of bringing in someone who would augment and add," principal owner John Henry said. "As opposed to just bringing in someone who might've just been an autocrat, for instance, kind of a one-man show."

Bloom's press conference sounded more like the event held two years ago when Alex Cora was introduced as a young, inexperienced, open-minded manager. He arrived looking for information rather than assuming he had all the solutions. Cora himself noticed the parallel.

"I like the fact that he said a few words that I said here on this same stage a few years ago: genuine, transparent and responsible," Cora said. "It's not that I told him to say it, but I'm glad that he did."

That's no coincidence.

"(Bloom) reminds me a lot of Alex in that he's incredibly intellectually curious," team president Sam Kennedy said. "Alex is always texting me during the year: 'Bro, I heard they're doing this in Cleveland! What do you know about Oakland? What do you know about this (or that)?' So, Alex's mind goes at a really, really, really, really high speed. And Chaim's does as well. So, I think they're going to be really incredible teammates in terms of knowing that they don't have all the answers."

Not having all the answers requires asking all the right questions, and understanding that represents the true evolution in Red Sox decision-making. No more managers who lead from behind office doors, and no more roster decisions that flow from a singular mindset. There was a time when baseball worked that way — a manager's word was final, and a general manager steered the ship largely on his own — but the game is too big these days. There's too much information for one person. The Red Sox coaching staff has grown to include an assistant hitting coach, an extra bench coach for analytics and a traveling data specialist. The front office now has a chief baseball officer, plus a general manager — the freshly promoted Brian O'Halloran — and three more vice presidents who would have been candidates for the top job, yet they sat in on Bloom's interviews and were, to some extent, a part of the hiring process.

"What we have to do in the front office, and what the manager has to do, has grown exponentially since I started in the game," said O'Halloran, who joined the team in 2002 as a baseball operations assistant. "Totally different. We have much larger staffs, much more information, much more data to factor into the equation. It's a much different job."

Look at the immediate reaction to the Dombrowski firing, when ownership told O'Halloran, Eddie Romero, Zack Scott and Raquel Ferreira to be proactive and begin making decisions together. There would be a new person in charge eventually, but the collective group was trusted to make significant changes. Look, too, at the decision to reassign Dana LeVangie from pitching coach to pro scout, a role in which his distinctive talent for seeing the game can pull at the collective rope rather than dictate decision-making at the top. And look at the promotion of Mike Rikard, who was named vice president of scouting after proving he could meld on-the-ground scouting reports with high-end analytical data while encouraging input and collective decision-making. "Collaborative" was a buzzword long before Monday's press conference.

During his time with the Rays, Bloom worked in a front office that often had two or three people on nearly equal footing atop the decision-making hierarchy. It's easy to credit the Rays with being innovative, especially in their use of the opener, but they also developed well, made a handful of savvy free-agent signings and pulled off key trades at the right times. It was not one thing that kept the Rays competitive despite a low payroll, and it was not one person who made all the key decisions.

Henry and chairman Tom Werner said their interviews with Bloom were not so much about specific ideas — Would you trade Mookie Betts this winter? How would you react if J.D. Martinez opts out? — but rather were more general and philosophical. Kennedy specifically said he liked Bloom's sense of humor. Asked whether he's going to fill out the manager's lineup card each day — a common dismissal used against analytic front offices — Bloom said that's not the way it's supposed to work, and it's not the way the Red Sox will work under his leadership.

“To me, a lot of really good organizations, including the one I just came from, there is a lot of conversation and collaboration, but nothing is handed down,” he said. “Things are talked through. Ideas are bounced around. It's all with the goal of getting better.”

Bloom did not speak Monday as someone who had all the answers. He seemed far more prepared to ask questions than to answer them, and that said the most about the direction of the Red Sox organization.

### **Settle in, Chaim Bloom. It's on you to determine what happens now between Mookie Betts and Red Sox**

Steve Buckley

One of the key takeaways from Monday's Fenway Park unveiling of Chaim Bloom as the new “chief baseball officer” is that the Red Sox are acknowledging they aren't necessarily the smartest kids in the class after all. And Bloom suggested as much about himself during a discussion with a group of reporters following the news conference. “If we're going to be successful over the long haul,” he said, “given the way the game is, given how resourceful the other 29 clubs are, we are going to have to be very consistent and have great processes as to how we look at the world.”

Yes, there are 29 other teams out there. And they, too, have assembled their own collection of Ivy League-educated number crunchers. And while big-market teams can always use money to wallpaper the holes on their walls, it's the teams with the brains that look to keep those holes from appearing in the first place. So the Red Sox are bringing in a guy with book smarts and street smarts and asking him to rebuild their organization.

Bloom used the book smarts to get through Yale. And he used the street smarts to understand that beginning his baseball career as a low-level intern with the Tampa Bay Rays was a great way to learn the game from the ground up. Just ask Theo Epstein, who did a stint handing out press box notes during his early days with the San Diego Padres.

Now that he has Epstein's old Red Sox gig, Bloom is going to need both — book smarts, street smarts — when he sits down to address an issue that, depending how it plays out, has the potential to be attached to the new guy's résumé for the rest of his life.

We're talking about Mookie Betts. And before continuing, please allow me to submit my over-the-top take on Boston's All-Star right fielder: He is a generational talent who should be to Boston what Derek Jeter was to New York, what Cal Ripken Jr. was to Baltimore, what Robin Yount was to Milwaukee ... what Ted Williams and Carl Yastrzemski were to Stone Age Boston. These are Hall of Fame players who were scouted, drafted, developed and promoted by a team that saw them not just as special talents but also as franchise players who must never, ever show up wearing another team's colors.

It's somewhat dated, sure, this notion of one player serving one team for his entire career. And to be honest, it's often not even practical, which is why the world didn't come to an end when lefty Tom Glavine moved

on from the Braves after the 2002 season. Everyone understood Glavine would always be “a Brave” no matter where he wound up, which was with the Mets. He did his five years in Queens and then returned to the Braves to close out his career.

Maybe that’s what happens with Betts, who can be a free agent following the end of the 2020 season. Maybe he gets traded during the winter in one of Bloom’s first big moves, or maybe the deal happens during the season. Maybe the Sox find a way to give Betts a contract extension now or after he reaches free agency. Or . . . maybe Betts opts for free agency and then shows up on television, all smiles as he’s handed a crisp new shirt showing the logo and colors of his new team.

However this drama plays out, it’s going to happen on Bloom’s watch. The Red Sox insist the Betts decision did not come up during the interview process. Said CEO Sam Kennedy, “We didn’t pose the question to him specifically, we just talked philosophy and kind of a higher-level approach about how he thinks of roster construction.” But, sorry, it’s impossible to have that kind of discussion without circling back to the 2018 American League MVP.

“It’s something I’m aware of, certainly,” Bloom said. “I think that’s the fortunate aspect of having such a great player on the team. I think it’s something that we certainly have to be aware of, but we also need to make sure we are making a really sound decision, and I’m sure Mookie’s going to think the same way.”

Fair point: Mookie Betts, ballplayer, is also Mookie Betts, businessman. That’s the reality. And if he should declare free agency after next season and be overwhelmed with a drunken-sailor offer from one of those other 29 resourceful teams, then, well, it’ll be hard to pin that on Bloom or on Red Sox ownership.

But that’s later on. For now, this issue is right smack in the middle of Bloom’s new Red Sox desk. And did we say this has the potential to be attached to the new guy’s résumé for the rest of his life? How about long after his life? We all loved, and still love, the late, great Lou Gorman, but it’s impossible to have a discussion about the longtime Red Sox GM without at some point mentioning that in 1990 he traded a Double-A prospect named Jeff Bagwell to the Houston Astros for reliever Larry Andersen.

Gorman had the best of intentions: The Red Sox needed relief help in pursuit of capturing first place in the American League East, and Andersen’s 15 appearances helped them achieve their goal.

But the Sox were swept by Tony La Russa’s Oakland A’s in the ALCS, and Andersen wound up signing with the Padres. Bagwell wound up in the Hall of Fame. Poor Lou never heard the end of it.

Summoning not his book smarts but his street smarts, along with a deep, deep love of baseball history, Bloom wants you to know he gets it.

Have you considered the possibility, I asked Bloom privately, that you could be the reason Betts leaves the Red Sox?

“That’s part of this responsibility,” he said without hesitating, not a bit of dancing, no throwaway lines about “collaboration” and other industry buzzwords. “It’s something I’m aware of but not something I worry about. For me, it’s really all about how can I lead a process that’s going to make the best decisions for the Red Sox?”

OK, that last part, about leading “a process,” that’s boilerplate stuff from a textbook, and it was a too-often go-to of his on Monday. But owning any potential Betts decision by saying he’s not worried about it, that’s important and refreshing and something to file away for future discussions.

**At this point, expectations for Chaim Bloom’s first Red Sox team shouldn’t be too high**

Steve Buckley

Talk about Back to the Future: With their decision to bring in Tampa Bay Rays whiz kid Chaim Bloom to run baseball operations, the Red Sox are signaling their interest in returning to the 21st century.

Hey, it was swell, that little visit the Sox made to the 20th century these past few seasons. They even won a World Series, right? Whatever thoughts you may have about the tenure of old-timey president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, the man used a little of this, a little of that, and, presto, rings for everyone!

The Red Sox needed to get back to the cool kids analytics table, however, and that's why there will be a fancy Fenway Park press conference Monday afternoon. Welcome to Boston, Chaim Bloom.

But while the long-term future of the franchise appears to be in good hands — assuming Bloom doesn't get a sudden, unexpected push off a ledge, as happened to Dombrowski and his predecessor, Ben Cherington — it's the short-term future that may require Red Sox fans to dig into the attic and find something they haven't had to use in a while. It's called patience.

Can Bloom clean up the mess that was the 2019 Red Sox and produce a World Series contender for 2020? That's an interesting question, and I believe the correct answer is a two-parter:

1. No, he can't.
2. Common sense tells me he does not have a mandate from ownership to win the World Series right now, as in 2020, as in sorry for the bad pun but John Henry and Tom Werner aren't counting on Chaim Bloom to have 2020 vision.

The instant conundrum facing Bloom once he gets past Monday's meet-and-greet, and it's the conundrum that generates the most buzz, is how to keep Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez on the roster while addressing Henry's sort-of mandate to keep next year's payroll under the \$208 million competitive balance threshold. But — and this is where I play the part of Jor-El, screaming and hollering that Krypton is about to explode — the Red Sox have a starting pitching problem that might not be solvable in 2020.

Yes, it's possible that lefties Chris Sale and David Price, who both had health issues in the second half of 2019, can regain their form and be big-time pitchers again in 2020. It's also possible that right-hander Nathan Eovaldi, whose own health issues all but derailed his 2019 season, can be a front-line starter in 2020. And maybe right-hander Rick Porcello, whose 2019 season was a disaster, signs some kind of team-friendly deal for 2020 and does something along the lines of what he did in 2018 (17-7, 4.28 ERA) or, better yet, what he did in 2016 (22-4, 3.15, Cy Young Award).

But all of that isn't going to happen in 2020, is it? Have you taken a look at the stud pitchers on the teams that went deep in the playoffs this year? That's what it takes to win the World Series, and it's what the Red Sox had in 2018. We can agree that everything went right for the 2018 Red Sox, but even so they went into the season with an intact pitching staff that was expected to produce, and did.

Chaim Bloom isn't coming to Boston to build a team. He's coming to Boston to build an organization, which means having a farm system whose players routinely get the glossy, front-page treatment in those "Top Prospects" editions of Baseball America.

The tricky part is going to be convincing an anxious fan base that the Red Sox are going to be fun and exciting in 2020 while not necessarily being looked upon as the team to beat. And that's become a tough sell with all of Boston's big-league sports franchises, and for obvious reasons. All four teams have been championship-caliber for most of this century — yes, that would be "always" for the Patriots — and because of that there now is an annual expectation that the hits'll keep on coming.

What made the 2019 Red Sox so enormously disappointing as they brought needless swaggerer to spring training and then couldn't back it up. They wanted to keep replaying the 2018 World Series, and, worse yet, they concocted a scheme to hold back on their starting pitchers during Grapefruit League games because ... well, just because. The Sox were 6-13 by April 17 and didn't spend a single day in first place all

season, and an eight-game losing streak that began in late July effectively killed their chances of grabbing a wild-card berth.

Put another way, after Opening Day there was nothing, nothing, to embrace about the 2019 Red Sox.

You may not want to hear this, Red Sox fans, but you may need to adjust your set for 2020. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. The Red Sox won two World Series championships in the first decade of the 21st century, and two more in the second decade. Now we're on to the third decade, as Bill Belichick would say, and Chaim Bloom has a lot of work to do.

## **\* *Associated Press***

### **Red Sox introduce Chaim Bloom as new baseball boss**

BOSTON (AP) — Theo Epstein won two World Series with the Red Sox and burned out in Boston after nine years. Ben Cherington won one, too, and was gone less than two years later.

Dave Dombrowski lasted less than a year after riding through the streets of Boston in a celebratory duck boat parade. All he did was build the rosters that won three straight AL East titles, including a franchise-record 108 games last season and a fourth World Series championship in 15 years.

So when the Red Sox hired former Tampa Bay Rays exec Chaim Bloom to take over as their new chief baseball officer, they gave him a clear mission: not just another trophy for the Fenway Park mantel, but the chance to compete for one year after year.

"I know how high the expectations are here," Bloom said at his introductory news conference on Monday, a year to the day after Dombrowski's team clinched the World Series against the Los Angeles Dodgers. "My expectations are high. I know the expectations of the baseball operations staff are high. That's a good thing."

A 36-year-old Yale graduate who worked his way up from intern to Rays assistant general manager, Bloom will take over a franchise that won it all in 2018 but missed the playoffs this season despite the biggest payroll in baseball.

It's a cycle that many cities would welcome but not Boston.

"We very much want to be a stable organization. But we all wake up every day saying, 'How can we improve?'" Red Sox chairman Tom Werner said. "A year ago today, we were considered the best baseball club in the world. And obviously we didn't achieve our objective this year. But we have the pieces in place to be competitive every year."

Owner John Henry disputed that there has been a lot of turnover in the front office, saying, "I've been an owner for 21 years, and at that time I've had three and now four general managers." But during that time no other team has parted ways with a baseball boss within a year or two of a title, and Boston has now done it three times.

Bloom said he understands that winning one championship might not be enough.

"When you're looking to have success over the long haul, you're always keeping an eye on tomorrow," he said. "And even if you win a World Series, the next day you're getting ready for the offseason. So that doesn't change."

"Everything I know about all the people that I've spoken to, and my own experiences: When you are fortunate enough to enjoy some success in this game, it just makes you hungrier for more. And so I understand the mindset that everybody has."

Bloom's first official move was to announce the promotion of assistant general manager Brian O'Halloran to GM. O'Halloran had been one of four executives running the baseball operations department since Dombrowski was let go.

"Our conversations over the last week have only bolstered my already high opinion of him," Bloom said. "He leads selflessly and without ego, and the good of the Red Sox is his highest priority. In that regard and so many others, he is a model for everyone here, and that I can now work closely with him is a privilege."

Among the decisions waiting for their collaboration: whether to sign 2018 AL MVP Mookie Betts to a long-term deal or trade him while the team can get some value in return. Designated hitter J.D. Martinez has five days after the World Series ends to opt out of the remaining three years and \$62.5 million of his contract; he would need to be replaced.

Henry said that came up in the interview process.

"We talked about that there are a lot of tough decisions to make during this offseason. That's not uncommon," Henry said. "We talked about Mookie, J.D. other issues, but we didn't focus on what should we do."

After working with one of the majors' smallest payrolls in Tampa Bay, Bloom now has a much bigger budget in Boston — perhaps \$150 million more. But his ability to work with limited resources could come in handy: Henry has said the team would like to get under baseball's luxury tax threshold of \$208 million in 2020, which would mean trimming about \$35 million from the payroll.

"We also have tremendous respect for the Rays organization, what they've accomplished over the last dozen years. They have been incredibly competitive with limited resources," Henry said. "They haven't been well-supported, but they've done everything right on and off the field. So we were eager to bring in some new ideas as well as to buttress what we're doing here."