

The Boston Red Sox Friday, October 4, 2019

*** *The Boston Globe***

David Ortiz will be a studio analyst for Fox during playoffs

Chad Finn

It's always fitting when David Ortiz, who led the Red Sox to three World Series titles in his 14 seasons with the team, is a part of October baseball.

That's especially so this year, given all he has been through recently.

Ortiz will be part of Fox's MLB broadcast team for its postseason coverage. His return to the studio comes nearly four months after he was left fighting for his life after he was shot in bar in the Dominican Republic June 9.

Ortiz, who turns 44 on Nov. 18, will join host Kevin Burkhardt and fellow analysts Frank Thomas and Alex Rodriguez on Fox's studio programming through the playoffs.

Ortiz tweeted a photo of the four broadcasters Tuesday afternoon with the caption "soon."

This will be his third postseason in the role with Fox. He also contributed as a guest analyst in 2014.

After being shot once in the back from close range, Ortiz was flown by the Red Sox from the Dominican Republic to Boston so he could be cared for at Massachusetts General Hospital. He underwent three surgeries, requiring the removal of his gallbladder as well as part of his intestines and colon.

Ortiz made his first public appearance since the shooting Sept. 9 when he threw out the first pitch at Fenway Park.

*** *MassLive.com***

Red Sox legend David Ortiz to work as analyst during MLB postseason four months after shooting

Christopher Smith

Boston Red Sox legend David Ortiz again will work as an analyst on FOX's pregame and postgame shows during the MLB postseason.

Ortiz tweeted a photo of when he worked with Kevin Burkhardt, Frank Thomas and Alex Rodriguez during a FOX broadcast outside Fenway Park last offseason. He wrote the message "soon."

This comes a little less than four months after he suffered a gun shot wound in the lower back in the Dominican Republic.

The shooting happened June 9. He initially underwent surgery in the D.R. before an air ambulance transported him to Mass. General Hospital where he underwent two more surgeries before being released from the hospital July 26.

Marcus Wilson, who Red Sox acquired in Blake Swihart trade, making case for 40-man roster

Christopher Smith

Marcus Wilson, who the Red Sox acquired from the Diamondbacks in April for Blake Swihart, is making a case to be placed on the 40-man roster next month.

The Red Sox must add Wilson or else leave him unprotected in December's Rule 5 Draft.

The right-handed hitting center fielder is 7-for-22 (.318) with a .423 on-base percentage, .500 slugging percentage, .923 OPS, one homer, one double, eight RBIs and three runs in six Arizona Fall League games for Peoria.

Wilson turned 23 in August. He was a Rule 5 eligible player last offseason for the Diamondbacks and no team selected him.

Wilson initially struggled for Double-A Portland in 2019. The Red Sox demoted him to High-A Salem where he slashed .342/.413/.603/1.016 with eight homers, 12 doubles and one triple and 29 RBIs in 45 games.

He then returned to Portland where he posted a .250/.325/.486/.811 line, seven homers, 13 doubles and 20 RBIs in 43 games.

The Red Sox are expected to add Bobby Dalbec and C.J. Chatham to the 40-man roster in November. Wilson, Eduard Bazarzo, Chad De La Guerra, Josh Ockimey and Kyle Hart are candidates.

Jarren Duran, who won 2019 Red Sox minor league Baserunner of the Year, has impressed in the Arizona Fall League. He's 9-for-29 (.310) with a .394 on-base percentage, .448 slugging percentage, .842 OPS, one homer, one double, two RBIs, two stolen bases and six runs for Peoria.

Chatham is 9-for-31 (.290) with a .371 on-base percentage, .387 slugging percentage, .759 OPS, three doubles, five RBIs, nine runs and three steals for Peoria.

*** *RedSox.com***

With eye on payroll, tough calls await Red Sox

Ian Browne

The offseason is underway for the Red Sox, and it's going to be an interesting one.

Ownership has stated there is a goal -- not a mandate -- to get the payroll below the first luxury-tax threshold of \$208 million. Boston's payroll was approximately \$240 million in 2019.

How the club will get there remains to be seen. Here are the issues -- in FAQ format -- it faces in the meantime.

Which players are free agents?

RHP Rick Porcello, 1B Mitch Moreland, 1B Steve Pearce, INF-OF Brock Holt, RHP Andrew Cashner, RHP Jhoulys Chacin.

Are any of them likely to receive qualifying offers, and when would they have to make that decision?

With the qualifying offer price expected to be \$18 million or more this offseason, it's hard to imagine the Red Sox will extend one to any of their free agents, particularly when you consider the organizational goal to trim payroll. The deadline for making qualifying offers is the first five days after the World Series.

Which free agents are most likely to come back?

Invaluable utility man Holt has not only been a rock for the Red Sox on the field, but he's also their leader in the community. The Sox would like to keep Holt if it is financially feasible, and Holt lives in Boston year-round. Ultimately, however, it will come down to a business decision for both the player and the team. Moreland is another respected veteran who might return if the price is somewhere around the \$6.5 million salary he received in each of the last two seasons.

While it initially seemed a foregone conclusion that Porcello would be gone, the fact he had the worst season of his career at least creates the possibility he could return on an incentive-laden, short-term deal. Pearce -- the 2018 World Series MVP -- mentioned last week he might retire. Either way, he doesn't fit into Boston's future.

Which players have options, what's the dollar figure and impact on payroll, and when does it need to be decided upon?

J.D. Martinez has an opt-out clause after both this season and next and his decision -- which is due five days after the World Series -- could have a huge impact on how the rest of the offseason plays out for Boston. Martinez is on the books for \$23.75 million for 2020, and will get a \$2.5 million buyout if he opts out.

If Martinez "opts in", the Red Sox will face a difficult challenge in also carrying the salary of superstar Mookie Betts next season, which is expected to be at least \$25 million in the arbitration process. Team president/CEO Sam Kennedy acknowledged earlier this week that "there is a way" to keep both start hitters, but it would be difficult. There's also a chance Martinez could be traded if he opts in.

Who might be a non-tender candidate, and when does the club have to make that decision?

The Sox must tender offers to all arbitration-eligible players by Dec. 2. Catcher Sandy Leon hasn't given the Red Sox much of anything offensively for three straight seasons, so the club could definitely elect to non-tender him after he made \$2.475 million in 2019. It's hard to believe knuckleballer Steven Wright still isn't eligible for free agency, given that he threw his first pitch for Boston in '13. But it's true. Wright has been plagued by injuries and was also suspended by MLB in each of the last two seasons, so it wouldn't be surprising if the Sox let him go.

The one possible stunner on the non-tender front would be Jackie Bradley Jr., who should make about \$10 million this season through the arbitration process. Bradley remains an enigma on offense but a gem on defense. If the Sox need to get his salary off the books, it seems more likely they would trade him than non-tender him. Righty Heath Hembree, who missed a big chunk of time with right elbow issues, could also be non-tendered.

What kind of help do they need and will they be active in free agency? Who might they target?

Needs will have a lot to do on how things play out with existing players. In other words, if Martinez leaves, that means the Sox need a run producer. For sure, the Sox need to fortify a pitching staff that struggled mightily in 2019, particularly in the starting rotation. This will be challenging when you consider that Chris Sale, David Price and Nathan Eovaldi are set to earn a combined \$79 million next season. One thing to keep an eye on: If the Sox can trade a couple of players who are on big salaries, could they make a blockbuster with the Mets for Noah Syndergaard? Though the bullpen stabilized in the second half, the Sox will still be on the hunt for some late-inning options.