

The Boston Red Sox Friday, November 1, 2019

*** *The Boston Globe***

One way or another, Red Sox prospect Noah Song is happy to serve his country

Julian McWilliams

Red Sox pitching prospect Noah Song and his Team USA get their first shot at earning a trip to the 2020 Olympics, beginning Saturday.

Song, alongside other Sox prospects Bobby Dalbec, C.J. Chatham, and Tanner Houck, will play against the Netherlands in the World Baseball Softball Confederation Premier12 tournament in Mexico. Song will pitch out of the bullpen for the first time since high school. Houck will get a shot to start, an opportunity he's looking to capitalize on. Chatham and Dalbec will patrol the infield.

It's an experience of a lifetime for the four players. An opportunity that isn't easily attained and shouldn't be taken for granted.

"It definitely means a lot to me," Song said during a phone interview Thursday. "Probably more than most baseball players."

Song understands that, but there are depths to his story that don't necessarily pertain to his teammates.

Whatever the outcome, the rest of the USA squad is guaranteed more baseball with their respective organizations.

For Song, however, this tournament could be his last.

Song, 22, a fourth-round pick out of Navy in June, is still an active member of the military and has a two-year active service duty requirement. Currently, he's awaiting a decision by the Department of Defense on whether he can defer those two years, so he can continue to pursue baseball. If it rules against Song's request, the righthander will begin training as a Naval Flight Officer in December. The two-year gap could stall — or end — Song's baseball career.

"This is to be determined for me," said Song, a 6-foot-4-inch righthander. "All I have to look forward to is the next couple of weeks and trying to make the most out of it."

Song isn't dwelling on the outcome. Looking beyond this tournament does nothing for him. He's at peace with whatever decision is made.

"I think it helps me relax a little from a baseball standpoint," Song said. "It kind of takes the pressure off because I don't feel like I have to be perfect. Obviously still compete, but also enjoy the game, enjoy my teammates enjoy the opportunity that I have."

So far, he's made an impression on current Phillies pitching coach Bryan Price, who's the pitching coach of the US team.

"Noah is a great talent," Price said. "He has the athleticism, temperament, and feel to become an excellent pitcher. He has an explosive fastball, a hard late-breaking [slider] and a very good feel for his curveball and changeup. He is not afraid of the older competition and competes at a level well above his age and experience."

Houck, who's gotten to know Song through this tournament, described his pitches as a "heavy ball," which usually means a high spin rate.

"I've gotten the privilege to throw with him pretty much every day," Houck said. "He has a very electric arm. He's truly a unique individual."

According to Baseball America, Song's fastball sat at 95-96 miles per hour during an exhibition game last Saturday, topping out at 98. But while Houck said he's looking to make an impression heading into spring training, and is utilizing this opportunity to not only compete but to improve his pitch mix, Song waits. His fate, he said, is out of his hands.

"It very well could be the last time I throw," said Song, who allowed two runs and fanned 19 in 17 innings for the Single A Lowell Spinners this season. "It doesn't make me feel anymore demoralized or anything like that. It's the cards that I've drawn and what I've chosen to do by serving so if that's what it takes then that's what it takes. I've understood that."

Team USA Premier12 schedule
All times Eastern.

Saturday: US vs. Netherlands (Guadalajara), 2 p.m.

Sunday: US vs. Mexico (Guadalajara), 8 p.m.

Monday: US vs. Dominican Republic (Guadalajara), 8 p.m.

Nov. 11-16: Super Round (Chiba and Tokyo, Japan)

Nov. 17: Medal Round (Tokyo)

Red Sox claim lefthander Josh Osich off waivers, confirm changes to coaching staff

Julian McWilliams

It's just his first week on the job and Red Sox chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom has already hit the ground running. The Sox announced Thursday that they claimed lefthanded reliever Josh Osich off waivers from the Chicago White Sox.

In one season with the White Sox, Osich posted a 4.66 ERA in a career-high 67²/₃ innings. The 31-year-old lefthander excelled against lefties this past season, yielding just a .171 batting average in 115 plate appearances. He pitched his first four seasons with the Giants, compiling a 5.01 ERA in 160 appearances, all out of the bullpen.

Bloom comes from a Tampa Bay Rays organization that's known for finding talent within the margins, and the Osich move could prove to be his first shot at being creative. Additionally, in an era of playing the matchup, Osich might be the type of specialist manager Alex Cora and his staff could unleash in short spurts.

Osich gave up 15 homers this past season, but in September he incorporated more sliders and changeups, yielding just one home run while registering a 2.92 ERA in 11 appearances.

That alone, coupled with Bloom's history of putting together stellar bullpens during his time with the Rays, are two reasons why his addition could help.

Coaching changes

The Red Sox officially named Dave Bush their pitching coach for the 2020 season. Bush was promoted from his 2019 role of minor league pitching coordinator for performance, and had spent time assisting former pitching coach Dana LeVangie with the major league team for stretches of this past season.

LeVangie, who has spent 29 years with the organization, was reassigned to a pro scouting role, it was announced earlier this month. Bush's reputation and rapport with many of the Sox players should make this an easier transition. With the help of LeVangie, Bush helped develop relievers Darwinzon Hernandez, Marcus Walden, and Josh Taylor into forces coming out the bullpen. After the team lost David Price and Chris Sale to injury, Cora and his staff leaned on the trio of relievers to cover a lot of innings. Taylor produced a 3.04 ERA in 47⅓ innings while Walden had a 3.81 ERA in 78 innings, the most by a Red Sox reliever. The rookie Hernandez tired toward the end of the year, finishing with a 4.45 ERA, but he struck out 57 batters in just 30⅓ innings. In 10 appearances from July 16 through Aug. 6, Hernandez didn't allow an earned run. He allowed just one homer.

Assisting Bush will be Kevin Walker, who was promoted from Triple A, where he was the PawSox pitching coach the past two seasons.

Pete Fatsis was officially announced as assistant hitting coach. The 32-year-old grew up in Western Mass. and played college baseball at UConn. He comes to the Red Sox from Minnesota, where he spent one season as the Twins' minor league hitting coordinator — his only season in a coaching role with a major league club.

The Red Sox also hired Rey Fuentes as mental skills coordinator. He spent the past five seasons as the Latin coordinator for the Cubs' mental skills program.

Phillies hire Price

Bryan Price will join Joe Girardi's staff as the pitching coach for the Philadelphia Phillies. Price managed the Cincinnati Reds for parts of five seasons, but was fired after a 3-15 start in 2018.

Price didn't manage or coach in 2019, but once the Sox reassigned LeVangie, he was considered a candidate as pitching coach.

"I had a great experience going through the interview process with the Red Sox," Price said via text Thursday. "I'm confident that their pitching staff will have a bounce-back season as they have quite a bit of talent on their roster."

*** *The Boston Herald***

Red Sox announce additions to 2020 coaching staff

Steve Hewitt

The Red Sox' 2020 coaching staff appears to be set after the team officially announced some additions on Thursday afternoon.

Dave Bush, as the Herald reported Wednesday night, has been made the Red Sox' new pitching coach. The 39-year-old former pitcher has been with the organization since 2016, when he was hired to be a pitching development analyst.

Bush served as the Red Sox' minor league pitching coordinator in 2019 prior to this promotion, where he will replace Dana LeVangie, who was reassigned as a scout.

Bush will be joined by Kevin Walker, who was promoted as the Red Sox' assistant pitching coach. The 43-year-old Walker has spent the last 11 seasons with the organization, including the last two as Triple-A Pawtucket's pitching coach.

Peter Fatse was announced as the Red Sox' assistant hitting coach, where the 32-year-old will work under hitting coach Tim Hyers. The Holyoke native spent the 2019 season as the Twins' minor league hitting coordinator, which was his first coaching role with a major league team.

Rey Fuentes was named the Red Sox' mental skills coordinator. Fuentes, 40, spent the last seven seasons with the Cubs.

The Red Sox' full 2020 major league coaching staff is listed below:

Manager – Alex Cora
Bench Coach – Ron Roenicke
Hitting Coach – Tim Hyers
Assistant Hitting Coach – Peter Fatse
Pitching Coach – Dave Bush
Assistant Pitching Coach – Kevin Walker
Bullpen Coach – Craig Bjornson
First Base Coach – Tom Goodwin
Third Base Coach – Carlos Febles
Coach – Ramón Vázquez

Red Sox claim LHP Josh Osich off waivers

Jason Mastrodonato

Chaim Bloom's first acquisition with the Red Sox is lefty reliever Josh Osich, who was claimed off waivers Thursday from the White Sox.

Osich, 31, had a 4.66 ERA and 1.14 WHIP with 61 strikeouts and 15 walks in 67 2/3 innings in 2019. He's projected to earn \$1 million in salary in 2020, his first year of arbitration.

The Red Sox under manager Alex Cora have never been adamant about having lefties in the bullpen, but did rely on southpaws Josh Taylor, Brian Johnson and Darwinzon Hernandez out of relief in 2019.

Of the 272 batters Osich faced in 2019, 115 of them were lefties, who he limited to a .171 average and .551 OPS. But righties crushed him to the tune of a .297 average and .903 OPS.

He had a 5.01 ERA in four years with the Giants before the White Sox claimed him off waivers in March.

*** *MassLive.com***

Boston Red Sox 2020 coaching staff announced: Kevin Walker is assistant pitching coach, Dave Bush officially new pitching coach

Chris Cutillo

The Red Sox announced their 2020 coaching staff Thursday, making official three changes to manager Alex Cora's group.

Boston announced the additions of Dave Bush (pitching coach), Kevin Walker (assistant pitching coach) and Peter Fatse (assistant hitting coach) to the staff. The Bush and Fatse hires had previously been reported but the news about Walker was new information.

Most notably, the Sox revamped their pitching department after reassigning both Dana LeVangie and Brian Bannister to new roles in the organization earlier in the month. Bush, who spent the last year as the team's

minor league pitching performance coordinator, and Walker, who has worked with the organization since 2009 and was Pawtucket's pitching coach for the last two seasons, will be tasked with building a more cohesive pitching philosophy from top to bottom within the organization.

Fatse, who was formerly the Twins' minor-league coordinator, is a Hampden native who is the only external addition to the staff. Boston also hired Rey Fuentes, who had previously been with the Cubs, as a mental skills coordinator.

The entire coaching staff under Cora is as follows:

Bench Coach – Ron Roenicke

Hitting Coach – Tim Hyers

Assistant Hitting Coach – Peter Fatse

Pitching Coach – Dave Bush

Assistant Pitching Coach – Kevin Walker

Bullpen Coach – Craig Bjornson

First Base Coach – Tom Goodwin

Third Base Coach – Carlos Febles

Coach – Ramón Vázquez

Boston Red Sox claim Josh Osich off waivers; lefty had 4.66 ERA with White Sox in 2019

Chris Cotillo

The Red Sox have made their first roster move under new chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom. The team claimed left-hander Josh Osich off waivers from the White Sox on Thursday, according to a team announcement.

Osich, 31, posted a 4.66 ERA and 1.138 WHIP in 67 $\frac{2}{3}$ relief innings for Chicago in 2019. A former sixth-round pick, Osich was especially effective against lefties last season, holding them to a .171 average and .551 OPS in 111 at-bats.

Osich is projected to earn \$1 million in arbitration this winter and is an early candidate to join the 2020 bullpen. Boston already has lefties Josh Taylor and Darwinzon Hernandez projected to be part of its relief group but is sure to add a few more options to a group that is expected to undergo significant turnover this winter.

Osich threw his cutter 66.7% of the time in 2019 and also features a slider, four-seamer, sinker and changeup, according to Baseball Savant. He has an option remaining, meaning the Sox could stash him at Triple-A if he doesn't make the team out of spring training.

The Sox had six players declare for free agency Thursday, giving them a handful of open 40-man roster spots. Bloom will likely keep adding depth pieces to fill out the back end of the roster with players who could potentially help.

Osich, an Idaho native who attended Oregon State, made his debut with the Giants in 2015. In 217 appearances over five seasons, he owns a 10-5 record and 4.88 ERA.

Boston Red Sox's Michael Chavis dresses as Batman, drives his own Batmobile down street

Christopher Smith

No, it's not Michael Keaton, Christian Bale or Val Kilmer.

Red Sox infielder Michael Chavis is starring as Batman on Thursday.

Chavis couldn't wait to dress as Batman for Halloween. The slugger tweeted Wednesday night, "I know Game 7 is going on right now but I seriously can't wait to wear my Batman costume tomorrow."

He did not disappoint. Below is a video of Chavis driving around in his own Batmobile.

@MichaelChavis11: "I know Game 7 is going on right now but I seriously can't wait to wear my Batman costume tomorrow"

@MichaelChavis11: "Good morning Gotham!!!! Was so excited that I wore my costume to the gym
☐📺♂"

Red Sox-MLB free agency: Edwin Encarnacion becomes another option if J.D. Martinez opts out

Christopher Smith

Edwin Encarnacion is a free agent and could be an option for the Red Sox if J.D. Martinez opts out.

The Yankees declined Encarnacion's \$20 million option for 2019. They exercised his \$5 million buyout.

It's an interesting move by the Yankees. Sure, \$20 million is a lot to commit to a soon-to-be 37-year-old designated hitter. But the buyout is so large that it might have been worth keeping him.

J.D. Martinez

Who might replace J.D. Martinez as Red Sox DH if the slugger opts out?

Boston Red Sox's J.D. Martinez can opt out of his contract's remaining three years, \$62.5 million. He'll receive a \$2.5 million buyout if he opts out.

Encarnacion batted .244 with a .344 on-base percentage, .531 slugging percentage, .875 OPS, 34 homers, 18 doubles and 86 RBIs in 109 games for the Mariners and Yankees in 2019.

Martinez has five days to tell the Red Sox whether or not he plans to opt out. He can opt out of his contract's remaining three years, \$62.5 million. He'll receive a \$2.5 million buyout if he elects for free agency.

Encarnacion represents a cheaper option who could serve as a short-term stopgap in the middle of the lineup.

The Yankees, meanwhile, are expected to make a big push to sign free agent starter Gerrit Cole this offseason. But with Encarnacion's money off the books, don't rule out them also pursuing Martinez.

*** *RedSox.com***

Series lesson: Don't let Mookie go

Bill Burt

My World Series MVP pick? Anthony Rendon.

A superstar. Clutch. No issues. Very good defender. Electric. And he was special when it counted most.

If the last 10 days proved anything, really the last month, you win with pitching and superstar hitting.

Rendon is not only gifted, he's calm and embraces being the go-to guy. His seventh-inning home run in Game 7, closing the deficit to 2-1, didn't win the game, but it changed the game.

He had three HRs, seven doubles and 15 RBI this postseason.

He's also a free agent, apparently already offered seven years, \$210 million by the Nationals.

I'm guessing he'll eventually accept that Brinks Truck load.

Guess what? Mookie Betts is better. At the very worst, they are brothers from another mother.

Statistically, these two are twins.

Rendon: .290 average, 994 hits in 916 games, 136 HRs, 546 RBI, .859 OPS.

Betts: .301 ave., 965 hits in 794 games, 139 HRs, 470 RBI, .893 OPS.

One factor in Mookie's favor in this comparison: He's two full years younger at 27.

He's got at least seven good years ahead of him, probably more.

And while he didn't have a good postseason last October (.220, 1 HR, 4 RBI) and was slightly down this past season (.295, 29 HRs, 80 RBI, .915 OPS), he is the best player on the Red Sox.

Period.

He's the kind of guy you build a franchise around. Like Rendon, he has caused zero conflict on or off the field.

*** *WEEI.com***

Red Sox make flurry of coaching staff announcements

Rob Bradford

The Red Sox have officially filled all their vacant major league coaching positions.

With the news of the hiring of assistant hitting coach Peter Fatse and pitching coach Dave Bush having previously been reported, the lone spot on Alex Cora's coaching staff that remained a mystery was assistant pitching coach, a position Brian Bannister left to spend his time working with minor-leaguers. The Red Sox announced Thursday afternoon that Kevin Walker would be filling that spot.

The 43-year-old Walker had served as the Pawtucket Red Sox' pitching coach for the past two seasons, having spent the last 11 seasons in the Red Sox organization. He pitched in the major leagues from 1995-2008.

Another new name announced by the team was Rey Fuentes, who has been hired as the Red Sox' Mental Skills Coordinator, having spent the previous seven years with the Cubs.

Red Sox pick up intriguing lefty pitcher off waivers

Rob Bradford

Chaim Bloom's first official move as the Chief Baseball Officer of the Red Sox is in the books.

The Red Sox have claimed lefty pitcher Josh Osich off waivers from the White Sox.

Having been picked up off waivers from the Orioles by Chicago last March, Osich turned in a solid season against lefty hitters. The southpaw held left-handed batters to a .551 OPS over 115 plate appearances. The problems came when he went up against righties, with hitters from that side of the plate managing a .903 OPS in 157 plates appearances. In total, Osich appeared in 57 games with the White Sox.

Such a weapon against lefties would previously be of tremendous value to most clubs, but with the new three-batter minimum rule coming into play in 2020 the ability to specialize might not carry as much weight. Osich is also out of minor-league options, meaning he would have to clear waivers in order to be sent to the minors.

The 31-year-old broke into the majors in 2015 with the Giants, playing for San Francisco for four seasons. He had originally been a sixth-round pick of the Giants out of Oregon State in 2011.

Osich is entering his first year of arbitration-eligibility. He is projected by MLB Trade Rumors to make in the neighborhood of \$1 million.

Potential J.D. Martinez replacement for Red Sox emerges

Rob Bradford

We are going to have to wait a little while longer for J.D. Martinez's decision. The designated hitter/outfielder has until 5 p.m. Monday to decide if he is going to opt-out of his current deal with the Red Sox or return and be paid \$23.75 million for the 2020 season by Boston.

But if Martinez does choose free agency a potential replacement for the Red Sox has officially emerged.

The Yankees announced that they weren't picking up the 2020 option on Edwin Encarnacion, which would have paid the 36-year-old \$20 million. Instead, New York is giving Encarnacion a \$5 million, buyout, sending him off to the free-agent market.

While Encarnacion clearly doesn't represent the level of player Martinez delivers he is still classified as one of the best designated hitters in the baseball.

He finished 2019 with 34 homers and an .875 OPS in a combined 109 games with both Seattle and the Yankees, having missed a good chunk of time in New York with a broken wrist.

Encarnacion is completing a three-year, \$60 million deal signed with Cleveland after the 2016 season. When entering that offseason he given his agent a list of three teams which the righty hitter wanted to prioritize, the Red Sox being one of them. Then-President of Baseball Operations Dave Dombrowski, however, showed no interest in bringing Encarnacion aboard, both as the immediate replacement for David Ortiz or when the Yankees dealt for the slugger last June.

As for Martinez, there is a split in baseball circles regarding which way he might be leaning, with perhaps the slight consensus leaning toward the idea of the 32-year-old choosing free agency. He is guaranteed \$62.5 million over the next three seasons with the Red Sox, with another opportunity to opt-out after the 2020 season. Barring a National League team taking the chance of playing Martinez in the outfield on a regular basis, the most logical suitors figure to be the White Sox and Rangers.

One obstacle which Martinez will face if he chooses to opt-out is the Red Sox' plan to offer him a qualifying offer. If that happens any team signing Martinez (other than the Red Sox) will be forced to surrender a draft pick.

Martinez continued to establish himself as one of the best hitters in the game throughout 2019, hitting .304 with a .939 OPS and 36 home runs in 146 games. He played in the outfield for 38 games.

* ***Bostonsportsjournal.com***

Red Sox notebook: Free agency officially begins; Bloom makes his first transaction

Sean McAdam

Just minutes after the Washington Nationals' Daniel Hudson struck out Michael Brantley of the Houston Astros to secure the final out of the 2019 World Series, free agency officially began Thursday morning.

That meant that six more Red Sox players became eligible for free agency. It's entirely possible that not a single one returns, with the club in payroll-cutting mode and many of the team's free agents of the role-player variety.

(Four Red Sox players had already qualified for free agency — — outfielder Gorkys Hernandez, pitcher Josh Smith and infielder Chris Owings, while pitcher Steven Wright was released earlier in October.)

Additionally, of course, J.D. Martinez has the right to opt-out of his contract. He has until Monday to inform the Red Sox of his decision.

For now, here's a look at the free agents and their chances of coming back to the Sox in 2020:

RHP Rick Porcello

The skinny: Porcello had his worst season with the Red Sox, going 14-12 with a 5.52 ERA while allowing 31 homers.

2019 salary: \$21 million.

The future: Porcello would jump at a qualifying offer, but given the season he had and the Sox' efforts to reduce payroll, there's no way they'd risk paying him \$17.8 million. Still, the Sox have an opening in their rotation, Porcello loved his experience in Boston and a one-year pillow deal at sharply reduced money can't entirely be ruled out.

INF Brock Holt

The skinny: Holt rebounded from injuries in the first six weeks to enjoy a strong season, slashing .297/.369/.402, mostly playing second base. He's highly versatile, but probably not an everyday player for a contending team.

2019 salary: \$3.575 million. His .402 slugging percentage is troublesome in today's power-obsessed game.

The future: Like Porcello, Holt has made clear his love for Boston, having been highly involved in a number of philanthropic endeavors. This will likely come down to his willingness to accept less — both in terms of AAV and term — to remain with the Sox as a super-utility option.

1B Mitch Moreland

The skinny: Moreland helped carry the team offensively in the early part of the season, but missed time on the IL during the middle of the year and appeared in just 91 games. His .502 slugging percentage represented a career high, but his .598 OPS against lefties makes him a platoon candidate.

2019 salary: \$6.5 million

The future: Moreland, a strong clubhouse presence, will be missed by the Sox. But his age (34), durability and the presence of several other options at first base (Bobby Dalbec, Michael Chavis) make a return tough to envision.

1B Steve Pearce

The skinny: After being named 2018 World Series MVP, Pearce's year began with injuries in spring training...and never got better. He was limited to just 29 games and 89 at-bats. He spoke of the possibility of retirement in the final week of the season.

2019 salary: \$6.25 million

The future: It's virtually impossible to see a fit with the Sox going forward. His five or so months with the Sox in 2018 were memorable, but that now seems like a long time ago.

P Andrew Cashner

The skinny: Obtained at the deadline as a No. 5 starter, Cashner face-planted in that role (8.01 ERA) before being moved to the bullpen, where he pitched relatively well (3.86 in 19 games).

2019 salary: \$9.5 million

The future: The Sox will be in the market for bullpen depth, but with younger and less expensive options available, it's tough to imagine them re-signing Cashner.

P Jhoulys Chacin

The skinny: So desperate were the Red Sox for healthy arms that they signed Chacin at the end of August based on a side session workout in Anaheim. He served as an "opener" for the Sox in a number of bullpen games in September and finished with an 0-2 mark and a 7.36 ERA in six appearances.

2018 salary: (with Red Sox) prorated major league minimum.

The future: Chacin is a journeyman coming off a poor season and there exists no role for him with the Sox going forward.

The Red Sox claimed lefty Josh Osich from the Chicago White Sox Wednesday, marking the first acquisition from outside the organization since Chaim Bloom was named chief baseball officer earlier this week.

Osich, 30, was 4-0 with a 4.66 ERA in 57 games. He had a 1.138 WHIP.

Osich performed best against lefties (.551 OPS), and might have some value as a specialist. However, MLB's likely plan to institute a rule which forces every reliever to face at least three hitters could well limit his appeal.

He's arbitration eligible for the first time with a projected salary of \$1 million for 2020. He previously spent four years with the San Francisco Giants.

The Red Sox officially rounded out their coaching staff with the announcement that Dave Bush will serve as pitching coach, Pete Walker assistant pitching coach and Pete Fatse as assistant hitting coach.

Bush replaces Dana LeVangie, who was re-assigned to the role of pro scout after two seasons as the Sox' pitching coach. Bush, 39, spent last year as the team's pitching performance coordinator after three previous seasons as a pitching development analyst. He pitched nine seasons in the big leagues and is known to be very analytically inclined, which is more in keeping with what the Sox want from the pitching coach's role.

Walker has been a minor league pitching coach in the organization for the last 11 seasons, having spent time with Lowell, Greenville, Salem, Portland, and for the last two seasons, Pawtucket. Walker pitched in the big leagues for six seasons with the Padres, Giants and White Sox.

Fatse was the Minnesota Twins minor league hitting coordinator last year. He's a Western Massachusetts native and played at the University of Connecticut.

*** *The Athletic***

The next big decision: Will it help or hurt Red Sox if J.D. Martinez opts out?

Chad Jennings

On the day they introduced their new chief baseball officer, the Red Sox still had no idea whether they would keep their chief run producer. At least, that's what they said.

In two seasons with the club, J.D. Martinez has led the Red Sox in RBIs, home runs and slugging percentage. He's trailed only the multi-faceted Mookie Betts in batting average and on-base percentage. Martinez has been the team's regular cleanup hitter with one job to do: clean up. That he can play the outfield is a definite plus, but it's not what makes him special.

Now comes the tricky part.

In the middle of a five-year, \$110-million contract, Martinez has the right to opt out now that the World Series is over. If he doesn't, he can opt out again next offseason. Or the offseason after that. Martinez has until Monday to make his decision, meaning the first big choice of Chaim Bloom's first year at the helm will be the one he doesn't make. The ramifications of Martinez's decision will be far-reaching.

The contract

For the game's great players, a contract is rarely as simple as X-number of years for X-number of dollars. Opt-outs and deferred money quite often change the calculus. For Martinez, his current deal pays \$110 million only if he stays all five years. He has the right to opt out before each of the last three years, and the payments are not equal. Martinez made \$23.75 million the past two years, he's scheduled to make \$23.75 million again next year, and he'll make \$19.375 million in 2021 and 2022. Plus, there's a \$2.5 million buyout if he opts out.

For the current decision, these are the two options:

1. Martinez stays. The Red Sox pay him \$23.75 million next season, and both sides go through this same dance next winter. Martinez's entire \$23.75-million yearly salary – not the average annual value of \$22 million – would count against the Red Sox luxury tax bill. A luxury tax charge typically is based on average annual value, but Martinez's contract is treated differently because the last two years are conditional based on health.
2. Martinez opts out. The Red Sox pay him the \$2.5 million buyout, and that payment becomes part of their luxury tax bill for 2020. The Red Sox will have trimmed \$21.25 million off their payroll, which seems to be enough to get a bit beneath the \$208 million luxury tax threshold.

The roster

It's important to note, if Martinez opts out, it likely will put the Red Sox below the luxury tax threshold only to begin the offseason. They still will have holes at first base, second base, designated hitter and fifth starter, and they will still have questions about the back end of their bullpen. Having Martinez opt out does not, on its own, solve the Red Sox luxury tax issues.

Again, there are two possibilities:

1. Martinez stays. The Red Sox have the vital parts of a productive offense returning, but they also have a massive spending problem. To trim payroll, the team could look to trade Martinez (saving more money than they would if he opts out), or seriously explore a difficult trade of Mookie Betts (saving roughly \$30 million while robbing the team of its best player), or offer to pay down one of its starting pitching contracts in order to trade them (something they might try to do anyway). Or, the team could simply abandon the luxury tax goal.

2. Martinez opts out. The Red Sox lose one of their key sluggers but trim considerable payroll. This could leave the Red Sox bargain shopping for a lesser hitter – like what the Rays found in Ji-Man Choi back when Bloom still worked for them – and it could further open the door to everyday at-bats for young hitters Michael Chavis and Bobby Dalbec. The Red Sox would presumably remain open to other cost-saving measures – non-tendering Sandy Leon, for example, or perhaps trading Jackie Bradley Jr. – to assure they avoid luxury tax penalties.

The market

By opting out, Martinez would be wagering on his ability to find a better contract on the open market. He would be leaving essentially a three-year, \$60-million contract on the table.

Three years ago, Edwin Encarnacion signed exactly a three-year, \$60 million deal as one of the game's elite designated hitters who could occasionally play the field. At the time, Encarnacion was about a year and a half older than Martinez is today, and he was coming off a 146 OPS+ his previous five years. Martinez has a 152 OPS+ the past five years.

More recently, Twins designated hitter Nelson Cruz had to settle for a one-year, \$14-million contract last winter. He's considerably older than Martinez, but by many measures had a better season. Astros left fielder Michael Brantley is basically Martinez's age, and he signed for two years, \$32 million last winter. A's designated hitter Khris Davis signed a two-year, \$33.5-million extension in April.

For many reasons – age, production, consistency – Martinez is surely more valuable than the above comparisons, but how much more valuable? Only three free agents signed for multiple years at more than \$20 million per season last winter. They were Patrick Corbin, Bryce Harper and Manny Machado.

Two other factors:

1. By opting out, Martinez would lose the right to opt out after each of the next two seasons (unless he can get that added to another deal). That flexibility is valuable considering the league could soon install a universal designated hitter, which would improve Martinez's market size if he can time his free agency correctly.
2. If Martinez opts out, the Red Sox most certainly would give him a qualifying offer, which he would just as certainly reject. It's worth wondering whether qualifying offer penalties – which hurt Dallas Keuchel and Craig Kimbrel last winter – might similarly affect Martinez's open-market value.

While the Red Sox said on Monday that they still didn't know what Martinez is going to do, the consensus expectation from those who follow the team seems to be that Martinez will opt out. There's an argument for and against such a decision, and it will bring good and bad for the Red Sox. To this point, their deal with Martinez has been overwhelmingly positive. Whether it's in their best interest for that deal to continue is less clear.

Who should win the Gold Glove Awards this year? A look at the game's best defensive players by the numbers

Mark Simon

Who were the best defensive players in baseball in 2019?

We'll get one answer to that question when the winners of the Gold Glove Award are announced Sunday evening. All season, we've been providing defensive analysis here, so it makes sense to try to pick the most deserving players. Let's get right to it.

Keep in mind that I am picking who should win among the finalists, which were previously announced. The actual voting is done by a combination of coaches and managers, along with the use of a statistical

formula (the SABR Defensive Index, comprising several defensive stats, including Sports Info Solutions' Defensive Runs Saved). This is an award in which the stats account for up to 25 percent of total votes.

Rawlings has eligibility rules requiring a position player to have played 713 total innings by his team's 142nd game (catchers have to have appeared in 71 games, pitchers have to have pitched 142 innings by that point).

There are a few instances in which I think someone should have won who didn't even make the list of finalists (Cubs fans, we hear you on Javier Báez). I will note those within each section.

Catcher

AL finalists: Danny Jansen (Blue Jays), Roberto Pérez (Indians), Christian Vázquez (Red Sox)

NL finalists: Austin Hedges (Padres), Yadier Molina (Cardinals), J.T. Realmuto (Phillies)

Who should win: Roberto Pérez and Austin Hedges

Pérez didn't just excel behind the plate. He dominated. His 29 Defensive Runs Saved were one shy of the highest total for a catcher since the stat was introduced in 2003 (Molina had 30 in 2013). He had the second-most runs saved for pitch framing and the most for pitch blocking in MLB. Here's what the gap looks like between Pérez and the other two AL finalists in a couple of key areas:

AL Gold Glove finalists — runs saved by skill

Player	Pitch framing	Pitch blocking
Roberto Pérez	11	7
Christian Vázquez	7	-5
Danny Jansen	5	0

It makes him an easy choice for the Gold Glove.

As for the National League, Molina is a defensive hall of famer, but this year's Gold Glove Award comes down to Hedges versus Realmuto. What pushes Hedges over the top is that he was the best pitch-framer in baseball by a good margin, and that superseded Realmuto's excellence in throwing out basestealers and blocking pitches. In fact, Hedges doubled Realmuto in runs saved, 22-11. Remember, too, that the Padres had a winning record when Hedges was their starting catcher. Don't be surprised if the vote goes to Realmuto because his success is easier to see, but it should go to Hedges.

Padres' numbers by catcher

Catcher	Staff W-L	ERA	K-BB ratio
Hedges	47-46	4.1	3.4
Others	23-46	5.28	2.9

First base

AL finalists: Yuli Gurriel (Astros), Matt Olson (Athletics), Justin Smoak (Blue Jays)

NL finalists: Paul Goldschmidt (Cardinals), Anthony Rizzo (Cubs), Christian Walker (Diamondbacks)

Who should win: Matt Olson and Christian Walker

Olson is in a class by himself among first basemen, and that holds whether we use the current publicly available version of Defensive Runs Saved or the new version that will incorporate additional information, such as how the fielder fared in a defensive shift (you can learn more here). He's the most sure-handed and a highly rated throw handler out there (much needed in Oakland with its spacious foul territory).

I voted for Olson No. 1 in our company's Fielding Bible Awards and Joey Votto No. 2. Alas, Votto is not a finalist for the Gold Glove. My next-highest vote went to Walker, who replaced Goldschmidt for the Diamondbacks. The 11 errors may scare you off, but Walker got to a lot of balls that other first basemen

don't reach, especially on balls hit to the right of where he was positioned. As such, he separated himself from Rizzo and Goldschmidt by enough to get the vote.

Second base

AL finalists: José Altuve (Astros), DJ LeMahieu (Yankees), Yolmer Sánchez (White Sox)

NL finalists: Ozzie Albies (Braves), Adam Frazier (Pirates), Kolten Wong (Cardinals)

Who should win: Yolmer Sánchez and Kolten Wong

LeMahieu is the best defender of the three AL finalists if you look at runs saved on a per-1,000-innings basis, but he played only 75 games at second base compared with Sánchez's 149 (Altuve had a negative runs-saved total, so he wouldn't be our pick). It wouldn't quite be a Rafael Palmeiro-with-28-games-at-first-base-in-1999 scenario to pick LeMahieu, but it feels like Sánchez was good enough at the position to deserve this.

The most deserving in the NL is an easy call. Wong led second basemen in Defensive Runs Saved as it stands, and the difference between him and everybody else is most evident when performance in defensive shifts is accounted for. Last year, Wong felt he did everything he could to win the award but was in competition with LeMahieu and Báyez and came up short. With LeMahieu in the AL and Báyez now at shortstop full time, the path is clear for Wong to deservedly win.

Shortstop

AL finalists: Marcus Semien (Athletics), Andrelton Simmons (Angels), Francisco Lindor (Indians)

NL finalists: Nick Ahmed (Diamondbacks), Paul DeJong (Cardinals), Trevor Story (Rockies)

Who should win: Andrelton Simmons and Nick Ahmed

You run into a similar issue with AL shortstops as you do at second base, though Andrelton Simmons played 102 games in the field as opposed to LeMahieu's 75 (Simmons reached the Gold Glove innings qualifier in the last possible game). Nonetheless, the gap between him and the other AL shortstops in runs saved per 1,000 innings is such that his winning would be justifiable.

Trying to figure out who should win the NL Gold Glove Award is a polarizing conversation because of Báyez's omission from the list of finalists. If we go by the wisdom of the experts (our very smart Fielding Bible voting panel), it's Ahmed over Story, but it's really, really close. The argument for Ahmed comes in how good he is at making plays going to his right, plays that often have a high degree of difficulty but he makes because of his outstanding arm.

This is one of two positions where I wouldn't object to a tie.

Third base

AL finalists: Alex Bregman (Astros), Matt Chapman (Athletics), David Fletcher (Angels)

NL finalists: Nolan Arenado (Rockies), Josh Donaldson (Braves), Anthony Rendon (Nationals)

Who should win: Matt Chapman and Nolan Arenado

There's no comparison between Chapman and any other third baseman in baseball right now. He led third baseman in our current version of Defensive Runs Saved, and the margin widens when factoring in his positioning and how he fares in defensive shifts (the 2020 Bill James Handbook shows him at 34 runs saved for the season in the sneak peek of our new system, the most for any player in MLB).

Arenado and Donaldson are neck-and-neck for the NL award when you take everything into account. The separator for Arenado comes in the degree of difficulty of the plays. SIS Video Scouts reward players for Good Fielding Plays (Web Gems and things like keeping the ball on the infield). Arenado had 47 to Donaldson's 35, including a 38-22 edge on groundballs and line drives.

Left field

AL finalists: Robbie Grossman (Athletics), Alex Gordon (Royals), Andrew Benintendi (Red Sox)

NL finalists: David Peralta (Diamondbacks), Hunter Renfroe (Padres), Juan Soto (Nationals)

Who should win: Robbie Grossman and David Peralta

This is one of the harder ones for us, because our top AL left fielders by Defensive Runs Saved were Mike Tauchman of the Yankees and Michael Brantley of the Astros. Tauchman didn't play enough innings to qualify. Brantley qualified but was not a finalist. Of these three, we'll pick Grossman. He had the most runs saved of the three finalists and rated above average on balls hit both to the shallowest and deepest parts of the outfield. His winning would be remarkable given that in 2016 with the Twins he finished with -21 runs saved. Here's the biggest difference between Grossman now and Grossman then.

On balls hit to the deepest part of the outfield

	Outs made	Plays	Success
Grossman 2016	40	74	54%
Grossman 2019	65	86	76%

* Balls on which Grossman had a >0% chance of recording an out and no other fielder made the play

The NL is hard, too. Renfroe qualified as a left fielder even though he played more innings over the full season in right field (where he was better). We're trying to judge partial seasons of Renfroe and Peralta against a full season of Soto. We choose Peralta on the strength of his 10 runs saved, which tied Tauchman and Brantley for the MLB lead. Choosing him is largely based on the success he had catching balls hit to the deepest part of the outfield (similar to Grossman) and on balls of medium depth.

Center field

AL finalists: Jackie Bradley Jr. (Red Sox), Kevin Kiermaier (Rays), Mike Trout (Angels)

NL finalists: Harrison Bader (Cardinals), Lorenzo Cain (Brewers), Víctor Robles (Nationals)

Who should win: Kevin Kiermaier and Lorenzo Cain

Kiermaier still is very good in center field, though injuries have rendered him a little less than what he once was. His 13 runs saved were still good enough that he's an easy choice over the other finalists, who are not in the same class from a statistical perspective (Bradley Jr. and Trout each actually finished with -1 runs saved). Had Byron Buxton played enough games to qualify, he might have forced us to reconsider, but an injury left him 21 innings short of making the ballot.

Cain versus Robles is a coin flip. Robles came on at the end of the season to edge Cain in Defensive Runs Saved, 22-20. Cain was consistently good the whole season and wowed with five home run robberies (matching the most recorded in a season, a mark he shares with Carlos Gómez in 2013 and Josh Reddick this season) and an array of nice catches on deep fly balls. Robles had a much better arm. You could make a case that either should win. I'd be as fine with a tie here as I would be at shortstop.

Right field

AL finalists: Mookie Betts (Red Sox), Kole Calhoun (Angels), Josh Reddick (Astros)

NL finalists: Cody Bellinger (Dodgers), Bryce Harper (Phillies), Jason Heyward (Cubs)

Who should win: Mookie Betts and Cody Bellinger

It would have been cool to see a head-to-head comparison of Betts and a healthy Aaron Judge. However, despite totaling more Defensive Runs Saved than Betts, Judge failed to qualify by Rawlings' innings standards. With Judge out of the picture, Betts (and his 15 runs saved) is the best in the AL. With Judge in the picture ... it's a close call.

Bellinger is the most deserving in the NL even though he spent most of the latter part of the season playing center field. He tied Judge for the MLB lead in runs saved among right fielders, with 19. That was 10 more than Harper and 12 more than Heyward.

Bellinger excelled in all facets, including with his arm.

NL right field finalists

Player	Baserunner advance rate	Unaided assists	OF arm runs saved
Cody Bellinger	39%	9	5
Bryce Harper	49%	9	2
Jason Heyward	56%	4	1

* Advance Rate = Rate of runners taking an extra base on base hits

* Unaided assists = assists without cutoff man

Props to a couple of players who fell short: As noted in the center-field section, Reddick tied Cain and Gómez for most home run robberies in a season, with five. Also, kudos to Harper, who had the greatest single-season Defensive Runs Saved improvement from one year to the next since we began tracking the stat in 2003, going from -26 in 2018 to 9 in 2019.

Pitcher

AL finalists: José Berríos (Twins), Lucas Giolito (White Sox), Mike Leake (Mariners)

NL finalists: Jack Flaherty (Cardinals), Zack Greinke (Diamondbacks), Aaron Nola (Phillies)

Who should win: Mike Leake and Zack Greinke

If I had a vote and could have voted for Greinke in both leagues, I would have. He led the majors in chances fielded, started an MLB-best 12 double plays (no other pitcher had more than five) and allowed only two stolen bases on six attempts. So, he's a worthy winner, even just judging him on his NL work.

As for the AL, this is a toss-up. The award probably would have gone to Marcus Stroman had he pitched enough innings to qualify (he was 17 1/3 short before getting traded to the Mets). Instead, we'll give it to a pitcher with decent numbers and a longstanding reputation for being a good fielder, Leake. Leake had by far the most chances of the three (46, to Berríos' 32 and Giolito's 19) with only one error. He also held baserunners to five stolen bases in 12 attempts.

These are the players who we believe should win. Feel free to share your takes in the comments, and we'll respond to what we can.

Who should win the Gold Glove?

Position	AL	NL
C	Roberto Pérez	Austin Hedges
1B	Matt Olson	Christian Walker
2B	Yolmer Sánchez	Kolten Wong
SS	Andrelton Simmons	Nick Ahmed
3B	Matt Chapman	Nolan Arenado
LF	Robbie Grossman	David Peralta
CF	Kevin Kiermaier	Lorenzo Cain
RF	Mookie Betts	Cody Bellinger
P	Mike Leake	Zack Greinke

*** *The New York Daily News***

How Chaim Bloom positions the Red Sox to compete with Yankees' depth-centric approach

Bradford William Davis

On Monday, Tablet Magazine's Yair Rosenberg dropped a small nugget about Chaim Bloom that explains everything you should know about the new Red Sox head of baseball operations.

Right before the 2019 season started, when Yankees fans were naturally dissatisfied with the team's lack of interest in superstar free agents Bryce Harper and Manny Machado, Bloom, then with the Rays, praised the Yankees' imperceptible acquisition of a 28-year-old Rockies outfielder with 69 unimpressive big league plate appearances.

The anonymous minor-leaguer was none other than Mike Tauchman, who hit .277/.361/.504 over 82 games, filling in with clutch hits and memorable defense across the outfield. Meanwhile, Bryce Harper produced a virtually indistinguishable .260/.372/.510 line last season.

Don't get it twisted — Tauchman is not a better player than the younger, more accomplished Harper. Harper has over 200 more home runs, over 30 career WAR and maintained his comparable batting line in nearly twice the games played. The Phillies paid for a really good player on a Hall of Fame trajectory. If you expect Tauchman to match Harper pound for pound, we should play cards sometime. But making baseball's minimum salary meant he was a bargain relative to his production.

Bloom's capacity to find the overlooked (and underpaid) could help the Red Sox avoid the crash from this year, one exacerbated by the lack of reliable depth the Yankees used to fuel their "Next Man Up" success. Bloom has already preached the importance of "sustained long-term success." But raising the floor doesn't mean climbing the summit.

[More Yankees] What the Yankees can learn from World Series champion Nationals »
Understanding Bloom means knowing the team he spent 15 seasons with, working his way up from a baseball operations intern in 2005, working with Andrew Friedman's highly successful unit, then being promoted to VP of Baseball Operations when Friedman left for the Dodgers.

Under Friedman, and his successor Matthew Silverman, the Rays have operated as MLB's freegans, philosophically committed to their perpetual dive through the league's Quad-A dumpsters for discarded middle relievers-turned-openers, scouting platoon first basemen far and wide by asking their teams, "You not gonna finish that, right?" As they say, one man's trash is another man's seven-hole hitter in a Division Series game. (The trick rarely gets Tampa past the first round.)

Pursuing sustainability matched with the willingness to retain your stars can take you all the way. The Astros are notably adept at finding underutilized talent and getting the most of them, and they might win their second title in three years later Wednesday night. Meanwhile, Friedman's Dodgers have won at least 100 games twice as well as back-to-back pennants. Yet, as successful as the Dodgers have been and as close as they've come, they're still searching for the ultimate prize.

Less than one year after the Red Sox won the most combined regular and playoff games since the 1998 Yankees, the 2018 World Series champs appeared to do the league and their rivals a solid. Boston fired Dave Dombrowski quicker than you can say "flags fly forever," following a four-year run with three division titles and an average 94 wins a year. Though Dombrowski had legitimate concerns eddying his behind-the-scenes leadership — troubles that don't appear to follow Bloom — the veteran GM's chief mistake was winning a championship the wrong way. By prioritizing the big league roster over Baseball America clout or John Henry's QuickBooks, his teams may have splashed gallons of champagne, but their spreadsheets were bloated.

Of course, keeping a steady supply of minor league depth is a laudable goal, so long as it's not an end to itself. And so is being the best Red Sox team of all time. To each their own. The shame would be if this is a good hire drenched in cynicism. Or, ironically, valorizing a dishonorable process with a sound result.

It does mean the next time Brian Cashman is burrowing a minor league wastebin in search of the next Tauchman, Bloom will be carrying out the greatest rivalry in sports in the same back alley, thrifting for the next champion.

*** *Associated Press***

Red Sox name Dave Bush pitching coach

BOSTON -- New Red Sox chief baseball officer Chaim Bloom is filling out the team's coaching staff, promoting Dave Bush to pitching coach and Kevin Walker as his assistant.

Bloom and manager Alex Cora also named Peter Fatse as assistant hitting coach and hired Rey Fuentes as mental skills coordinator on Thursday.

Bush had been the Red Sox pitching coordinator last year after three seasons as a pitching development analyst. He pitched nine seasons in the majors, going 56-69 with a 4.73 ERA for Toronto, Milwaukee and Texas.

Walker spent time with the Padres, Giants and White Sox, going 7-3 with a 4.76 ERA over 122 games in six seasons. He has spent the last 11 years as a pitching coach in the Red Sox organization, most recently for Triple-A Pawtucket.

Fatse spent last season as the Twins' minor league hitting coordinator. Fuentes was in the Cubs' organization for the last seven years.