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Revamped front office key to turnaround
La Russa, Stewart lead staff with help from Johnson, Gonzo
By Barry M. Bloom / MLB.com
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D-backs Fan Fest draws huge crowd
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bloom-revamped-d-backs-front-office-key-to-turnaround

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- The D-backs have washed away the immediate past, utilizing Major League Baseball's storied past to do it. As pitchers threw their bullpen in the cages at the gleaming Salt River Fields at Talking Stick complex on Sunday, general manager Dave Stewart and his new assistant Joe Carter were watching them work. Tony La Russa, the club's chief baseball operator, rode a golf cart from field to field and station to station.

Luis Gonzalez and Randy Johnson -- two former D-backs stars who are among a quartet of special assistants to team president Derrick Hall -- were not even on the premises. That's a whole lot of baseball expertise for Arizona players of any level to tap into.

"I think it's going to be great," new D-backs manager Chip Hale said. "We mentioned that in the first meeting with the pitchers and catchers. We have World Series heroes, guys who ended World Series games. That's pretty impressive. Hall of Famers, Randy is going to be around. He's going to talk to the team [on Monday]. I think it can be nothing but positive."

To Hale's point: Carter is one of only two players to end a World Series with a walk-off homer, doing it for the Blue Jays in 1993 over the Phillies in Game 6 at what was then called SkyDome.

Stewart, the right-hander with 10 postseason wins in his career, was a teammate that season and was named MVP of the American League Championship Series over the White Sox.

Stewart was 8-0 with a 2.03 ERA in 10 ALCS starts for Oakland.

Gonzalez won the 2001 World Series for the D-backs over the Yankees with a dump base hit in the ninth inning of Game 7 at what is now called Chase Field. The epic single came off Mariano Rivera and sailed over the head of shortstop Derek Jeter, who was pulled in to the infield grass to make a possible play on the runner on third at the plate. Johnson pitched the top of the ninth of that game in relief to earn the win and was named co-MVP of the series along with Curt Schilling.

La Russa won six pennants and three World Series titles as manager of the A's and Cardinals and Stewart won 64 games for the La Russa-led Oakland teams that snagged three successive AL pennants from 1988-90, winning at least 21 each year. He also won 20 games for the A's in 1987.

La Russa was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame last year along with fellow managers Bobby Cox and Joe Torre.

Johnson was elected to the Hall this year and will join fellow pitchers John Smoltz and Pedro Martinez, plus 3,000-hit Astros star Craig Biggio, in Cooperstown, N.Y., on July 26.

Even Hale has been to the postseason four times under Bob Melvin since 2007.

"We've had a lot of success and that's the whole key," said Carter, who hasn't worked in the Major Leagues since retiring at the end of the 1998 season. "You bring young guys into this organization and they see myself, Dave and Tony and you know we are guys who know about winning. There's kind of a different pep in everyone's step because of that and the expectations. You forget about what happened last year and learn from that. And as you go forward you know these guys want to win."

The D-backs lost 98 games last year during a season that was beset with injuries to almost every key player on the roster: Patrick Corbin, Bronson Arroyo, Brad Ziegler, A.J. Pollock and Paul Goldschmidt. At one point, the D-backs had five pitchers recovering in some stage from Tommy John surgery.

Goldschmidt and Pollock were both hit in the hand and suffered fractures that caused them to miss a huge chunk of the schedule.

All of them are either ready to play or are getting there.

It was too much for any management team to overcome. La Russa, who retired after his Cardinals defeated Texas in the 2011 World Series, was hired in May to conduct a complete evaluation. Who needed to go? Manager Kirk Gibson or GM Kevin Towers? In the end it was both of them. Towers was replaced by Stewart, earning a long overdue chance to run baseball operations for a big league club. Hale, a coach under the highly-regarded Melvin in Arizona and Oakland, won a derby among nine candidates scrutinized by La Russa and Stewart.

Hall put his stamp of approval on the choice.

"I'm very happy with the way it all worked out," Hall said about his star-studded executive team. "They're hard working. They're all on the same page. I don't think there's any confusion over whose roles are what. They're not looking to take the credit. They're all looking to win. I'm very impressed, especially with Tony. His leadership, his success, his mentorship has been tremendous. I just worry because the guy is here seven days a week, 20 hours a day. But they're all that way."

La Russa is 70, but acts like a 30-year-old. In fact, he was already on the go at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday, sitting in on early meetings, chatting it up with players and coaches. Barely even saying hello, La Russa said:

"Don't pick us to finish last. I don't know how good we're going to be, but we're going to be highly competitive, a very tough team to play."

One would expect nothing less from a La Russa-led team. After all, as a manager he finished third all-time behind Connie Mack and John McGraw with 2,728 regular-season wins and second to Joe Torre with 70 postseason victories.

Don't pick the D-backs again to finish last in the tough National League West?

"Well, you've got to have confidence. A lot of us like what we see here," said La Russa later in the morning after making the rounds. "I like our talent. I like the way our guys are working. We're going to be tough. You keep score. We'll see. Talk is cheap."
Yes, it is. But this kind of executive talent is not. Its value is priceless. The sky may be the limit if the D-backs players take advantage of it.

D-backs agree to new TV deal with FOX
New deal said to be for 15 years, more than $1.5 billion
By Steve Gilbert / MLB.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- D-backs president/CEO Derrick Hall could not get into the specifics of the new deal the D-backs reached recently with FOX Sports Arizona to continue to broadcast games well into the future, but he could describe the impact it would have on the organization.

"This is game-changing for us," Hall said. "It puts us on par with a lot of our colleagues. Any increase in revenues as we've said in the past will go directly towards our [team] so it will help our product on the field."

The D-backs current deal with FOX Sports Arizona runs through the 2015 season and is reported to be worth around $30 million per season. The new deal is said to run more than 15 years and be worth north of $1.5 billion.

"It made sense for us to remain with FOX," Hall said. "They've been great partners. In fact we believe so much in FOX that we got creative through the process in finding other ways to make this deal more lucrative, to partner with them."

Hall did not specify what those creative ways would be, but other teams have negotiated equity stakes in their FOX regional affiliates when signing deals and it's possible that the D-backs could be getting a similar stake in FOX Sports Arizona.

Over the past couple of years the D-backs have examined all their different options when it comes to their broadcast rights before signing again with FOX Sports Arizona.

"We looked at other partners besides FOX and we looked at doing it on our own," Hall said. "At the end of the day it just made more sense to remain with FOX. They wanted to be our partner, we wanted them, they're very good at what they do. They put out a great product, they're willing to invest in our future and in the quality of the broadcast so we let the experts do what they do best and let's partner with them for a long time and in different ways. We believe in their model, we believe in their future and we thought it would be great to work shoulder to shoulder with them for a long time."

The D-backs had an Opening Day payroll of around $110 million in 2014, which was a club record. They shed some salary as the season went on and the team fell out of contention.

As of right now this year's Opening Day payroll is around $93 million.

Not included in that figure is the $16 million the D-backs spent on Cuban free agent Yoan Lopez. The right-hander received a signing bonus of a little more than $8 million and the D-backs had to pay a 100 percent penalty on that figure for going over their international signing allotment.

The pending deal with FOX Sports Arizona did have some impact on the decision to spend the money on Lopez as well as commitment of $68.5 million over six years to fellow Cuban free agent Yasmany Tomas.

"That helped our thinking knowing there was a brand new light at the end of the tunnel," Hall said.

Right versus left no issue for Hale in rotation
New manager will take five best prepared starters
By Steve Gilbert / MLB.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- There are three open spots in the D-backs rotation behind Josh Collmenter and Jeremy Hellickson and almost a dozen candidates to fill those slots.

With both Collmenter and Hellickson being right-handed, D-backs manager Chip Hale was asked Sunday if it was important for a left-hander to win at least one of the final three spots.

"We're not going to force it," Hale said. "We're going to take the five most prepared guys."

In other camp news:

• With rain in the forecast for Monday, Hale and his coaches checked the mounds in the covered batting cages to make sure they were in good shape.

Of most concern at this time of camp is making sure that the pitchers get their scheduled bullpen sessions. That way if it does rain, the other drills may be cancelled, but the pitchers will still be able to throw in the cages.

• Daniel Hudson, who has had two Tommy John surgeries, will be looked at as a starter at least initially in camp.

"He's going to be stretched out to a certain point and then we'll all make a decision," Hale said.

• Hitting coach Turner Ward will report to camp Tuesday after almost a dozen candidates to fill those slots.

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SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Chip Hale has been with some organizations where getting players to attend fan events was not always easy, but the D-backs manager had no such trouble with his team when it came to Sunday's Subway Fan Fest at Chase Field.

"It's fantastic," Hale said of the event. "I try to tell the players and the fans are really good about it here. They're excited to see our fans. Once you get into it and see the electricity of the fans and the energy that they have it kind of gets you pumped up for Spring Training."

Around 25,000 fans attended the event, now in its 11th year and D-backs players made their way from a morning workout at Salt River Fields to downtown Phoenix to join them.

"It keeps getting bigger and bigger and the response from our fans is extremely positive," D-backs team president/CEO Derrick Hall said. "It provides the perfect setting to allow fans to have full access of the stadium while getting face-to-face with our players and coaches. It was clear today how excited our fans are for the upcoming season."

Said pitcher Patrick Corbin, "It's great to see the whole team go. It's a good opportunity for us to thank the fans for the way they've supported us. Every year it's packed and there are a lot of fun events going on. If I was a kid I would enjoy it. That's how I look at it."

Jeremy Hellickson hoping for fresh start with Arizona Diamondbacks
By Zach Buchanan / Arizona Republic

He doesn't know if the feeling started cropping up during his final, abbreviated season with the Tampa Bay Rays, but it became a certainty when Jeremy Hellickson was traded to the Diamondbacks a mere two weeks after the World Series.

The 27-year-old had gone from organizational gem and American League Rookie of the Year in 2011 to so expendable that he could be moved before the offseason had really sunk in.

"I kind of felt like that because it happened so early," Hellickson said. "I felt like I was the first trade of the offseason. I really wasn't expecting it to happen that early."

There are plenty of reasons the Rays might have been justified in moving on from Hellickson, and Hellickson doesn't let himself off the hook for any of them. He refuses to write off his 5.00 ERA over his last two years in Tampa as the result of a lingering elbow injury in 2013 and the resulting rehab and comeback a season later.

Related: Diamondbacks prospect Archie Bradley looking for bounce-back year

Sure, being hurt had some effect. Hellickson thinks his last 10 starts or so of 2013 were probably affected by powering through with a hurt elbow, and he admits that he wasn't really prepared for the rehab process, debuting midway through 2014 less fit than he should have been.

But mostly, he should have pitched better.

"I felt good enough to be out there," he said. "I definitely should have pitched better last year. I felt really good."

When he tries to explain why he didn't, Hellickson looks at two factors. First, he lost something with his bread-and-butter pitches, his fastball and changeup, leaving them up in the zone. The fastball's ineffectiveness was particularly alarming — batters hit .244 and .267 against it his first two years, and .280 and .309 the last two.

He also feels he struggled out of the stretch, which led to more men scoring. He held opposing hitters to a .614 OPS with men on in 2012, but that ballooned to .865 in 2013 and .784 last season.

More : D-Backs healing as spring training begins

Still, there were silver linings. His strikeout rate jumped from about 16 percent his first two years to 18.6 his last two. Conversely, his walk rate dropped from 8.7 to 7 percent.

Hellickson will take the strikeouts, but stops short of giving himself credit for the walks. In fact, he feels lowering his walk rate may have adversely affected him elsewhere.

"There were times last year where I probably should have walked a guy and I ended up giving in and giving up a two-run double or a three-run homer or something," he said. "I think my first couple years, I wasn't going to give in. (The Rays) came to me after the first couple years and wanted me to throw more strikes and walk less."

"Don't get me wrong, you don't want to walk a guy. But there are definitely situations where you'd rather not give in to the guy and move on to the next guy."
"I definitely don't hold any grudges, but I definitely feel like they lost a little faith in me and gave up on me a little too early," he said. "That's why I'm excited to be here and ready to get back out there and get back to the pitcher I know I can be."

Diamondbacks celebrate 11th annual Fan Fest
By Paula Pineda / Arizona Republic

Tempe resident April Addington made her way to the front of the stage Sunday at the Diamondbacks Fan Fest at Chase Field in Phoenix.

Diamondbacks pitcher Bronson Arroyo — Addington's favorite player — was being interviewed by Arizona Sports 98.7 broadcasters Paul Calvisi and Anthony Dunlap.

Wearing her autographed Arroyo jersey, Addington snapped pictures and listened to Arroyo talk about the Diamondbacks, whose 2015 season gets a soft opening of sorts next week with a spring-training game against Arizona State University's baseball team.

After the interview, Addington yelled out Arroyo's name and waved. Arroyo waved back at the crowd.

"His personality makes him who he is," Addington gushed. "He's so genuine. He's in it for the love of the game, the fans and his teammates."

Such interactions, from a friendly wave from a star such as Arroyo to hitting pointers from coaches to Little Leaguers, are what make the free, family-friendly event a yearly hit with Diamondbacks fans.

Sunday's 11th annual fest featured autograph and photo sessions on the field, tours of the home clubhouse and a "kids zone" with bounce houses and inflatable obstacle courses.

Fans could also practice their swings in the batting cages, catch fly balls on the field and play whiffle ball with players and staff.

For 9-year-old Billy Padilla III, touring the clubhouse was second only to batting and playing catch on the field.

"It's cool to see their lockers," said Billy, whose favorite player is first baseman Paul Goldschmidt.

A cornerstone of Sunday's event, particularly for adult D-Backs fans, was the live question-and-answer sessions with players and staff.

Spanish broadcaster Oscar Soria spoke with David Peralta, Ender Inciarte and Yasmany Tomas about the future of Hispanic players in the league.

Diamondbacks TV broadcaster Steve Berthiaume spoke with pitchers Josh Collmenter, Archie Bradley, Braden Shipley and Aaron Blair about the team's pitching rotation.

Diamondbacks CEO Derrick Hall called the team's new lucrative television deal a financial "game-changer," but he cautioned that it won't effect the way the club spends in the immediate short-term.

"Our budget is our budget," Hall said Sunday. "We were already spending money assuming this deal would get done and it took a little longer than we thought it would. Our plans were already in place and that included this nice bump, this nice lift."

Just how nice of a lift it is remains unclear, though more details emerged about the agreement with Fox Sports Arizona.

There are indications the deal is for 20 years and guarantees the club north of $1.5 billion. Moreover, the deal is also believed to include an equity stake in the network.

Related: Complete Cactus League coverage

"This is game-changing for us," Hall said. "It puts us on par with a lot of our colleagues. Any increase in revenues, as we've said in the past, will go directly toward our (organization). It will help the franchise. It will help the product on the field."
Asked if the team can suddenly become big spenders in a market that currently includes a handful of presumably high-priced Cuban free agents, Hall said, "No, we really can't."

He said the deal includes a signing bonus but that the increased rights fees don't kick in until next year. In addition, he said, the team spent money this offseason on free agents such as Cuban slugger Yasmany Tomas ($68.5 million) and fellow Cuban pitcher Yoan Lopez ($16.27 million) in part because it knew the TV deal was coming.

Hall said the club considered launching its own regional sports network but ultimately decided it preferred to remain with Fox Sports Arizona.

Related: D-Backs' new TV deal believed to be worth more than $1 billion

"At the end of the day, it just made more sense to remain with Fox," he said. "They wanted to remain our partner. We wanted them. They're very good at what they do. They put on a great product. They're willing to invest in our future and in the quality of our broadcast. Let the experts do what they do best. Let's partner with them for a long time and in different ways."

While other markets, including Los Angeles and Houston, have seen prolonged disputes between networks and cable/satellite providers after hefty deals resulted in increased carriage fees, Hall said he doesn't expect any such problems in Arizona.

"Fox has really good relationships with all the distribution channels and the chains," Hall said. "We have no concerns. I think it's business as usual. Our deal is not going to shake it up. We don't see that changing the way they do business at all."

More: Jeremy Hellickson hoping for fresh start with D-Backs

Short hops

- Manager Chip Hale said hitting coach Turner Ward is expected to arrive in camp on Tuesday. The rest of the coaching staff has been at Salt River Fields, but Ward has been at home due to a family issue.

- Hale was glad to see Giants manager Bruce Bochy return to camp Sunday after needing a procedure to treat a heart problem, but he said it was probably a good thing that it was spotted in a pre-season training physical.

"I was telling the trainers that you don't realize how important these physicals are," Hale said. "I was in Minnesota when they recognized Kirby Puckett's eye issue."

"This is really the only doctors that you have, for a lot of guys. Someone asked me who my general practitioner is. It's whoever the team doctor is. I think every year it ramps up more and more with how much care they take."

Photos: Arizona Diamondbacks spring training - 2015

D-Backs players rock out at Fan Fest
By Arizona Republic

http://www.azcentral.com/videos/sports/mlb/diamondbacks/2015/02/22/23867763/

(Video embedded on webpage).

Boivin: Brandon Knight great addition to Suns; Catching up with Diamondbacks
By Paula Boivin / Arizona Republic

http://www.azcentral.com/story/sports/heat/index/2015/02/21/boivin-brandon-knight-great-addition-to-suns/23808095/

Some final thoughts on Goran Dragic's exit and Brandon Knight's arrival:

• The addition of Knight will be terrific for the Suns. He is 23, quick and an underrated defender. With 3-point shooting and spacing such a huge part of the present-day NBA, his abilities from the perimeter will be huge for this team.

• I don't know who got in Dragic's ear at the end – it's clear someone did – and his whole disrespected hoo-ha was over the top. But I also don't think he should be characterized as an agitator either. He was a consummate pro during his time here. He simply made a sloppy exit.

• A Miami journalist told me Dragic won over a big portion of the Heat fan base Saturday when he answered several questions at his introductory press conference in Spanish. Yes, Dragic speaks several languages.

• The stat the Heat surely liked most this season: When Dragic was playing point without the other two point guards, he averaged 27.9 points and 9.8 assists per 48 minutes.

• One of his agents, Rade Filipovich, told the Miami Herald that Dragic is excited to play point again. "It's a great fit," he said. "Goran and (Dwyane) Wade to bring the ball up, create offense, very good shooters, very interesting team. A playoff team. He feels lucky he ended up in Miami. He's very happy."

• TNT's Charles Barkley loves this trade for the Heat: "Are they as good as Cleveland, Toronto, Washington, Chicago, Atlanta? They're in the conversation. Yes, they are," he said. "They added an All-Star point guard. That was the one thing they were missing. They went from irrelevant (to relevant). They got a lot better today. The two big winners today were Oklahoma City and Miami."

• Knight's high school, Pine Crest in Fort Lauderdale, also produced Wayne Huizenga and Kelsey Grammer.

McManaman: Suns pleased to be rid of 'selfish' Goran Dragic

Baseball banter

The off-season meant different things to Diamondbacks players.

Pitcher Addison Reed got married. Sort of. He already wed last year, at a courthouse, but in November he had a party in San Diego celebrating the event with close friends and family.
"Great time," he said. "And then we went to Maui for a week."

Pitcher Oliver Perez, who grew up in Mexico, took family to Big Bear Lake in Southern California, where some experienced snow for the first time.

"That's the dream as a kid to have Christmas in the snow," he said. "You can make a snowman. It was fun for them."

Perez, 33, said he didn't see snow until his early 20s.

Related: Yoan Lopez a poster boy for Diamondbacks' scouting efforts

Pitcher Trevor Cahill took a 15-day European trip, stopping in Paris, Rome, Florence, Venice and Prague. He had been to Europe before, when he was in high school, but this visit was far better, he said.

More comfortable?

"More money," he said, smiling.

Catcher Tuffy Gosewisch traveled, too, with his wife up and down the coast of California, but spent much of the off-season working out at the Diamondbacks facilities at Salt River Fields.

He already was there in November and was impressed by the amount of players that also came in regularly.

"There were a ton of people," he said.

Eye for talent

Gosewisch was asked if any of Diamondbacks' many pitchers stood out to him. He said everyone looked promising but mentioned Will Locante, 25, as someone he had never seen before.

"I caught him a week ago and just, great arm, very deceptive," he said. "He's got some good sink and out of a lefty you don't see that very often. I think if he can locate his fastball and have a slider, he's going to be successful."

More: D-Backs' Tuffy Gosewisch motivated by doubters

Locante posted a 1.53 ERA in 53 innings for Low-A South Bend.

ASU flashback

Funny how, back in the day, a college basketball program's hiring of an assistant coach to help lure a star recruit was seen as controversial.

It couldn't have worked any better for ASU when James Harden and his coach at Artesia High in Lakewood, Calif., Scott Pera, came to Tempe together. Pera was hired in the summer of 2006 as the director of basketball operations and Harden committed two months later. (ASU also offered a scholarship to Harden's teammate, Derek Glasser).

Related: ASU honors former All-American James Harden

The results speak for themselves. Harden, of course, is one of the top players in the NBA and a badge of honor for ASU. Pera has proven to be a successful coach, moving on to be an assistant at Penn after leaving Tempe and is now the associate head coach at Rice.

Quick hits

- What is the toughest road trip in the Pac-12? One could make a pretty strong argument for the Arizona swing. Last season, the Wildcats went 9-0 in conference games at home, the Sun Devils 8-1. With teams traveling in pairs, that makes Arizona the toughest road trip in the Pac-12 during the past 18 seasons. The last to do that were the Bay Area schools – California and Stanford – in the 1997 season.

- Those Miller brother sure have a knack for success on their home courts. Heading into Saturday's game, Arizona coach Sean Miller has won 35 in a row at home. Archie Miller has won 18 straight at University of Dayton Arena.

- Quote: "Every day is to allow the pitcher to have a great outing and to do everything I can to make his outing better. If he has a great outing it makes me feel good. If he has a bad outing, it crushes me as much as him I think." – Gosewisch.

Follow Paola Boivin at paola.boivin@arizonarepublic.com and on Twitter at Twitter.com/PaolaBoivin. Listen to her streaming live on "The Brad Cesmat Show" on sports360az.com

D-backs pitchers working their way back from injuries

By Jack Magruder / Fox Sports Arizona


SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Had Tommy John not intervened last season, the Diamondbacks would have fewer available spots on the pitching staff this spring in a normal extension from 2014. They even may have made fewer offseason moves to address the group.

The surgeries that depleted the staff will still have an effect; as many as five pitchers who had significant roles in the past and could have been expected to make the roster this season will be delayed in camp.

As the competition for the opening day slots begins, a look at those who will be working their way back this spring:

Patrick Corbin

An All-Star in 2013, Corbin underwent Tommy John surgery on March 25, 2014, to repair a partial tear in his ulnar collateral ligament, a week after he was forced out of a spring training game. He began light throwing late last season and remained in Phoenix through October to continue his rehab program. Corbin plays long toss at 105 feet and is expected to move back to 120 feet Monday. Following that will be throwing sessions at 60 feet on flat ground, then bullpen sessions off a mound. The D-backs target June as a soft return, but nothing is set in stone.
"I just want to be healthy," Corbin said. "Everything right now feels great. When I shut it down last season after throwing for two months and came back throwing in January, everything felt fine. There is nothing wrong with the elbow or shoulder. I don't even think about it anymore.

"Just continue throwing and hopefully when I get on a mound, I want to get things going and not slow-play that and get things rolling. We'll just see when that happens. Maybe take more time throwing to get to that part, but being back on a mound is a huge step in this process. Definitely looking forward to that. When that happens, it will feel like I am that much closer to getting back in a game.

Corbin will return as a starter, where he was 14-8 with a 3.41 ERA in his first full season in the rotation in 2013.

"That's why we are going to take time and make sure everything is right," Corbin said. "And when I'm back, I'm back to where I was a couple of years ago.

Bronson Arroyo

Arroyo had Tommy John surgery on July 15 and is playing catch at 75 feet as he works his way toward the long-toss program. He had a different version of Tommy John than Corbin and David Hernandez. All had holes drilled in the bone where a new ligament was attached, but Arroyo's forearm was severed during the process in order for a nerve to be tucked under the muscle. It kept him in a cast about a week longer.

Arroyo believes it is much too early to set a timetable, although he believes he will be ready sooner rather than later. He believes his window will open sometime between June 1 and Aug. 1.

"The beginning parts of the process we are really trying to stick to the program they want me to do, because you don't want to push the envelope," Arroyo said.

"When I get completely pain-free and things really start feeling good, there I think I'll be able to have a better time frame and maybe push the envelope or not, depending what the body gives you. It's kind of like watching the hour hand on a clock. It doesn't look like it is moving, but it is. It is more about how did you feel two weeks ago versus today. It is such a slow process."

Arroyo, who will turn 38 on Tuesday, believes the surgery and rehab could elongate his career.

"In a way, not being able to pitch for 11 and 12 months makes you a bit hungry to get back out there," he said. "I see a lot of my old teammates and friends retiring from the game at about that age (38). When they do much longer I want to pitch and I say maybe five, six, seven more years, they look at me and think I'm crazy. But I've made my living by doing things other people haven’t been able to do. And part of that is longevity and consistency. I'm going to ride the wave for awhile."

The two-year, $23.5 million contract Arroyo signed before last season includes an $11 million option for 2016, and he fully intends to see that exercised.

Brad Ziegler

Ziegler underwent microfracture surgery on his left knee on Sept. 9, 2014, after feeling discomfort in the joint since late June. The operation was scheduled as a simpler arthroscopic procedure, but doctors found segments of the knee met bone-on-bone, so the microfracture was done. Ziegler has been playing catch but will not throw off a mound for a week or two. Relievers do not need quite the preparation time as starters and the D-backs believe Ziegler might be ready for the start of the regular season.

"If that's the case, and my knee holds up, I'm all for it," Ziegler said. "I'm excited about that possibility. If it doesn't happen, then it shouldn't be long after that barring a major setback. It's going to be close. I can feel myself getting stronger, which is a good thing, but I haven't pitched off a mound yet."

The most difficult adjustment to the surgery is remembering you had it, Ziegler said. A big University of Kansas basketball fan, Ziegler was told not to go to games because of the stress the constant standing would put on his knee.

"Even if it feels good, if you do something too early you can tear down any of the healing tissue that is growing," Ziegler said. "The hardest part is everyday life. In December, I said, 'I can jump up on this curb.' I did it and I'm like, 'I wasn't ready for that.'"

A siderarm, Ziegler has been one of the most dependable setup men in the majors recently. Ziegler has made 422 appearances since his first full season with Oakland in 2009, 236 with the D-backs. He has been playing catch overhand since December, to keep from stressing his left knee.

"Throwing overhand doesn't bother it," Ziegler said. "My front leg is pretty stiff and I only have pain whenever it is bent, when I put weight on it.

David Hernandez

Hernandez and Corbin have been rehab partners most of the last year. Hernandez underwent his Tommy John surgery last March 30 and has been on the basically the same schedule as Corbin. He began throwing late last season and remained at the D-backs' training facility through October before picking up a ball again in January. He has not thrown off a mound but expects to begin in about three weeks.

"I expect to be in games at the end of spring training," Hernandez said. "I feel like I'm ahead of schedule, if anything. I guess it just depends on how I feel, what pace they want to go. Right now, it feels like I never even had surgery. It feels really good."

Hernandez said he sees nothing wrong with pushing a forward if he is not feeling any pain. He and Corbin are participating in pitcher's fielding practice and pickoff practice with the rest of the group, although not throwing, of course.

"We're getting close. It's always good to see the end, the finish line," Hernandez said. "You're not really missing spring training, but this is the first time in nine years I won't be full go. It's
different but just keep putting one foot in front of the other. I want to get out there."

Hernandez was a candidate to join Brad Ziegler as a top setup man last season before the surgery. He made 208 appearances and had 17 saves with the D-backs from 2011-13 after being acquired from Baltimore.

Matt Reynolds

Reynolds, who had his Tommy John surgery on Sept. 24, 2013, appears most likely to be the first pitcher back from his operation. Reynolds was playing catch by the end of last season and picked it up again in December. He has been throwing bullpens since the end of January, although he still is being monitored. He felt soreness after his early bullpen sessions but said things are better of late.

"We're at that (next) stage, hopefully," said Reynolds, who has resisted setting a timetable for his return because that "kind of sets yourself up for a let-down. Physically, I feel good now. If I come out here and throw the ball the way I am capable of and if my arm is recovering the way I hope it is going to, then ideally I'd like to be ready to go for the season.

"The sooner the better, but if it takes a little bit longer, then so be it. Then that's going to be the way it is."

Reynolds, a left-hander, was 0-2 with a 1.98 ERA and two saves in 2013, when tied a franchise record with 19 scoreless innings at the start of his D-backs career. He suffered his elbow injury in June and attempted to rehab it that summer before settling on surgery.

Bronson Arroyo plays lead singer as D-backs rock out at Fan Fest

By Kevin Zimmerman / Fox Sports Arizona


PHOENIX -- Losing 98 games isn't fun in itself, but Diamondback pitcher Bronson Arroyo has another good reason for his team to find success in 2014: more rock band sessions in the clubhouse.

"If you're playing well, they kind of let you off the leash a little bit and let you do what you want to," Arroyo said.

The D-backs held their annual fan fest at Chase Field on Sunday afternoon, and Arroyo playing lead singer was most certainly the highlight. His jam session included Arizona players Mark Trumbo, A.J. Pollock and Aaron Hill, but they got a little support from The Walkens, the musical group that played sets in between Q&A sessions between players and fans.

"That was The Walkens and we were The Walk-ons," Arroyo cracked.

With the four D-backs on stage, the group covered pieces from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Tom Petty, Oasis and Pearl Jam. The baseball players, who perform in front of tens of thousands of fans regularly, find performing on guitar and vocals more intimidating than stepping to the plate.

"I don't know what I'm doing as much up here," Pollock said. "Hitting, you're kind of expected not to succeed. Here, you've got to be perfect with everything you're doing."

Arroyo, whose singing talents have been well-chronicled, was nothing but humble despite getting rave reviews. He doesn't see himself having a chance in American Idol once his baseball career ends. ("They're looking for a nice clean or pretty boy for American Idol," he said.)

If Arroyo and friends end up jamming in the clubhouse all year long, it just might mean they're winning. And it'd at least give them a band name.

"I'll be nice to one day to call them the World Champs," said D-backs president and CEO Derrick Hall. "That would be nice. But they are good. They are legitimate."

Quick hits from Derrick Hall

On a common comment he heard from fans at the fest: "I'm hearing from fans that they're really excited to see (catchers Peter) O'Brien and (Oscar) Hernandez. I'm hearing, 'Ooh, a lot of new faces and names, we're excited about it, but we're excited to see the catchers because they bring so many different aspects to the game.'"

Hall's favorite move this offseason: "I'm really excited about our Cuban acquisitions. I can't say just one, I'm excited about both. Yasmany Tomas has huge upside. This guy's got tremendous power, we've heard from all of our scouts and international experts forever. But also Yoan Lopez. I mean, this kid has the potential to be a No. 1 or No. 2 (pitcher). Watching him in his bullpens and his throwing sessions, I'm really excited about those guys and that we got so aggressive in the international market."

On his mindset entering 2015: "For me, I've always said don't get too high, don't get too low. After a season like last year, things aren't bad as they seem either. I'm not overly optimistic, I'm not pessimistic, I'm just hopeful. I think we have a lot of questions that were unanswered after last year; we're still going to have to answer those this year."

Putz hit with revenge

Former D-backs closer J.J. Putz, the new special assistant to Hall, is known to be a prankster. The team's coordinator of communications, Jim Myers, has been a victim many times, but he got his revenge Sunday, which happened to be Putz's birthday.

@BertDbacks

At #DbacksFanFest @jimyers2 center stage sneak attack on JJ Putz. @Dbacks

"He deserves it," Hall said of Myers. "He's been abused over the years by J.J. (Putz). I'm very happy for Jim."
Collmenter gets involved in the Territorial Cup

During a Q&A session, pitcher Josh Collmenter was asked by one young fan whether he was or was not at this year’s Territorial Cup football game between Arizona and ASU. Indeed, Collmenter was.

And his rooting interest is ...

"I had a Sun Devil shirt on because that’s my adopted team," Collmenter said. "A man said, 'If I buy you a Wildcat shirt, will you put it on?'"

The answer was yes.

Catching options bring intrigue to D-backs’ spring

By Kevin Zimmerman / Fox Sports Arizona


SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- The Arizona Diamondbacks find themselves in a common corner for a team dealing with roster turnover. Change causes chemistry issues, and nowhere is that more concerning than between pitchers and catchers.

Arizona shipped away cornerstone catcher Miguel Montero during the winter and did not make a major acquisition to replace him. The D-backs’ relatively young group of pitchers would benefit if Arizona put an experienced and comforting catcher on the other end of their pitches, but there’s more complexity for a reconfigured team also searching for its next young stars.

Manager Chip Hale’s team has eight catchers in camp this spring, and deciding which couple make the opening day roster depends on who can work best with pitching staff.

"The biggest thing is, this is a brand new team for me," said non-roster invitee and catcher of the future Peter O’Brien. "The most important thing is for me to learn the pitching staff right now and learn what they do well, maybe learn what they don't do so well. I've been watching video and I was trying to get as many guys as I can in pens. That was just the start of it."

Of course, O’Brien, as a 24-year-old who has grown in the minors, will have to play catchup in terms of experience.

"It's hard to go out there and tell a guy with 12 years in the big leagues this and that," said Gerald Laird, the 35-year-old who has spent 12 previous years in the majors and signed as a minor-league free agent. "Sometimes that's what it takes. Some pitchers like a guy back there they can rely on and guys that aren't afraid to speak up."

Laird, O’Brien, Blake Lalli, Matt Pagnozzi, Jordan Pacheco and Mark Thomas are among those fighting for roster spots. But the competition begin with the two players currently on Arizona’s 40-man roster, Tuffy Gosewisch and Oscar Hernandez.

Tuffy Gosewisch

The 31-year-old Gosewisch, an Arizona State and Horizon High School product, fought through the minor leagues to earn spot on the roster the last two seasons. The battle to reach the majors was long.

"I was going to play until they took my jersey away," he said.

Things won’t get any easier for Gosewisch’s opportunity despite the trade of Montero. The expectation Gosewisch would retain his starting spot has been a lightening rod for criticism when the club didn’t acquire a replacement for Montero.

"I've had really good catching people around the league tell me, 'He could be an everyday catcher for you,'" Hale said. "Those are really impressive things to hear about him. His catching and throwing and handling the staff is not questionable. We'd like to see what we can get offensively out of him. He's very much in the mix."

Gosewisch hit .225 last season.

Oscar Hernandez

The D-backs nabbed Hernandez with the first overall pick in the past Rule 5 draft. A 21-year-old Venezuelan who has five minor league seasons under his belt, Hernandez is well-liked because of his catch-and-throw ability.

"They are giving me a big opportunity to try and make the team," Hernandez said. "I'm just having fun. This is my first big league spring training. I'm just trying to learn from those guys that got more experience like Tuffy."

As a Rule 5 draftee, Hernandez will remain on the D-backs 25-man roster or be offered back to the Tampa Bay Rays, who had his rights going into the Rule 5 draft.

Hale said the youngster’s offense isn't too shabby, either. With Low-A Bowling Green last season, Hernandez hit .249/.301/.401. But he's never played above the Low-A level.

Gerald Laird

Laird has owned a house in the Valley for a while now and he jumped at the chance to join the Diamondbacks. He’s fighting for a job and is the most experienced catcher of the bunch. He also could be called upon to provide leadership for the young group.

"You want to play and everyone wants to, but at the same time, we’re all a team," he said. "It's going to take 40 guys on the roster at some point to come out and win games."

"We’ve got some young catchers on this staff. I’m going to do what I can to teach them to get them going and finding a routine, and being prepared to go out there every day and put their pitchers in a spot to succeed. I think that's the biggest thing."

Offensively, Laird hit .204 in 152 at-bats in 2014 with the Atlanta Braves.

The rest of the crew
Peter O’Brien: A return on the Martin Prado trade with the New York Yankees a year ago, O’Brien appears to be a favorite of management and coaching staff because of his bat. He’s hit 217 RBI in 1,121 at-bats in the minors the past three years and owns a 1.04 OPS.

Jordan Pacheco: Arizona claimed Pacheco off waivers when the Dodgers released him in 2014, then ended up outrighting him from the 40-man roster during the offseason. The club still has interest in his future considering they re-signed him to a minor-league deal. Pacheco played in 47 games for the D-backs last season and is a capable offensive threat.

Matt Pagnozzi: The 32-year-old is a Highland High School grad and went to Central Arizona College. He appeared in one game for the Brewers last year and played for four other major league teams in his career.

Blake Lalli: Lalli, 31, received 39 at-bats in two seasons with the Cubs and Brewers.

Mark Thomas: He played for Double-A Mobile last season. The 26-year-old hit .191 because of his strikeout rate, but he does have big-hit capability.

Hill ready to compete for Diamondbacks’ second base job: new TV deal

By Mark Brown / Examiner.com


Diamondbacks’ second baseman Aaron Hill may have been knocked to the mat, but the count has not reached 10 at this point.

During the recent off-season, Hill was the subject of speculation, trade rumors, at the center of personnel decisions, trades and his future with Arizona questioned. Most figured the 33-year-old out of Visalia, Caif. was through in Sedona Red. After all, Hill is owned $24 million over the next two years ($12 mil for each of the next two years), and the Diamondbacks are trying to figure if he retains any value.

With the trade of shortstop Didi Gregorius over the winter, which ended speculation that Chris Owings would move to second and Nick Ahmed would be the shortstop of the future, the focus turned to Hill. That would leave Hill by default into a reserve role and a position which would yield little value to the Diamondbacks.

Now, Hill, after a vigorous off-season program, is ready to reclaim his spot in the middle of the diamond.

“Spent my time wisely and didn’t do much golf,” Hill said Sunday at the Diamondbacks’ Fan Fest in Chase Field. “Did a bunch of vertical stuff and each time, I went higher and felt stronger. Feel great, ready to go.”

Coming off a season in which he hit .244, with 10 home runs, drove in 60 runs in 133 games, Hill’s numbers were down from the past. That represented the lowest average for Hill in the last four years, and down from his .291 in the year before.

Still, Hill packs power in his 5-11, 205 pound frame and, if playing near his peak level, supplies solid muscle lower part in manager Chip Hale’s potential line-up.

Here at the advent of spring training, the second base job is Hill’s to lose.

“Right now, it’s Hill’s job at second,” said Hale. “He’ll play the majority of his time at second and spend a little time at third. He’s a solid player and put up good numbers in the past.”

Reason for Hale’s decision lays with Owings’ physical condition.

Coming off right shoulder surgery in the off-season, Owings is still not cleared to go at 100 percent. In fact, he will miss the opening eight to 10 pre-season games and that puts him in track, if he is cleared medically, to jump in the line-up possibly the weekend of March 14 and 15. By that time, the Diamondbacks would have three weeks remaining in spring training and whether that represents enough time for Owings to be opening day-ready remains uncertain.

With Owings out and Hill now affixed at second, that opens the door for Ahmed, who appeared in 25 games for Arizona last season (.200, 14-for-70). Ahmed came over from the Braves in the Justin Upton on Jan. 24, 2013, displayed solid defensive skills, but a negligible bat.

“This is a great opportunity for Ahmed and to see if he’s ready for the majors,” Hale added. “The infield is just one of many areas open to competition this spring.”

NEW TV DEAL

The Diamondbacks are on the verge of picking up mega-bucks in a new deal with FOX Sports Arizona.

While Derrick Hall, the team’s Chief Operation Officer, told MLB.com a deal is in the works, Hall would not supply details. According to MLB.com, the deal with could be a 15-year transaction and worth $1.5 billion to the Diamondbacks.

"It made sense for us to remain with FOX," Hall told MLB.com. "They've been great partners. In fact we believe so much in FOX that we got creative through the process in finding other ways to make this deal more lucrative, to partner with them."

JAM SESSION

During the Fan Fest Sunday, several players displayed their musical talents.

With pitcher Bronson Arroyo on vocals, he was supported by Mark Trumbo, A. J. Pollock and Hill, all on guitars, and the group has been playing together since formed last year.

“It’s fun, and we love to jam,” Arroyo said afterward. “Actually, (former manager Kirk) Gibson encouraged us last season and a room near the clubhouse was cleared so we could play.”
By Jim McLennan / SB Nation

The first of these had Berthiaume talking to three of our new pitchers, Robbie Ray, Allen Webster and Jeremy Hellickson, and we learned that they do not appear too excited about the prospect of having to hit for themselves in the National League - which drew a quick "#PitchersWhoRake" response from Daniel Hudson on Twitter! The biggest applause there went to Ray, for saying his role model growing up was fellow left-hander Randy Johnson. Hey, it may be cheap heat, but the guy seems to know how to work an audience!

This was followed by a panel (above) with the young pitchers - the "Killer B's" of Archie Bradley, Aaron Blair and Braden Shipley [who should change his name to Shipley Braden, to fit in better]. Also present was Josh Collmener, who began proceedings by "outing" Bradley as being newly single. In addition, we learned that Collmener is currently reading On Solitude. This is a work by 16th-century French philosopher Michel de Montaigne, so it appears we have our most intellectual Diamondbuck since Miguel Batista, who probably still has the edge considering he was a published poet.

But he's certainly not the only Diamondback with artistic tendencies as the next section proved. In between the panels, there was live music from local cover band, The Walkens - they did a particularly good version of The Who's Teenage Wasteland. However, for their final set, they were joined by the team's musicians: Mark Trumbo, A.J. Pollock and Aaron Hill on guitars, with Bronson Arroyo perhaps wisely avoiding anything that might strain his UCL and sticking to vocals. This was an offshoot of a sideline which arose last season, where Arroyo and his pals turned a Chase Field storage locker into a "rock room". And perhaps the biggest surprise? They were pretty good.

Of course, it's hard to tell for sure, how much was them, and how much was the Walkens, but either way, it all seemed to gel nicely with Arroyo's vocals, which reminded me of... Dammit, I can't quite remember. They did a nice selection of covers, from Pink Floyd to Oasis, and I have to say, I have heard an awful lot worse from acts playing in bars. Let's just hope none of them suffer a Joel Zumaya-like injury: given he hurt himself playing Guitar Hero, I can only imagine what actual excessive rock-star windmilling might do to a finely-tuned athlete.

The last panel was focused on the front office, with Dave Stewart, Chip Hale and Derrick Hall. Nothing especially startling came out of this, though Stewart did say he currently expects to see Peter O'Brien in the majors, if not on Opening Day, then during the first half of the season. Hall also dropped some more vague hints about the "exciting" uniform news, which will formally be announced in about 10 days: based on what he hinted at, I suspect that there may be more regular use of the throwback uniforms, e.g. maybe every last home Sunday game of the month, or something like that. We'll see.

And with that out of the way, events were clearly winding down and so, I climbed back up from the field of play, and wandered along the concourse, past the snaking lines of autograph seekers, waiting patiently for their sessions. The next time I'm at Chase, it will be for real baseball, and meaningful games as the Diamondbacks seek to show that last season was not who they really are.
I think most fans will agree, that day can't come soon enough!

**Baseball: Arizona Diamondbacks Spring Training**
By Darron Cummings / Havasu News
[http://www.havasunews.com/sports/baseball-arizona-diamondbacks-spring-training/collection_1e0d6d2c-bb3c-11e4-aa6e-f7756692d10c.html](http://www.havasunews.com/sports/baseball-arizona-diamondbacks-spring-training/collection_1e0d6d2c-bb3c-11e4-aa6e-f7756692d10c.html)

Diamondbacks Spring Baseball

Arizona Diamondbacks fans watch during spring training baseball practice Sunday, Feb. 22, 2015, in Scottsdale, Ariz. (AP Photo/Darron Cummings)

(Photos embedded on webpage).

**Questions abound as D-backs open camp**
By David Kelly / Tucson News Now

Pitchers and catchers reported for the Arizona Diamondbacks on Thursday and there are plenty of questions at both positions for new manager Chip Hale.

Hale, bench coach for Bob Melvin in Oakland, took over for the fired Kirk Gibson,

He says 12 to 14 pitchers have a chance to make the rotation. And he says the competition is "wide open" to replace departed catcher Miguel Montero. Hale says all eight catchers in camp have a chance to make the team.

The Diamondbacks had the worst record in baseball last season at 64-98.

Hale said that should provide motivation.

"It's human nature," he said. "No one likes to get laughed at. Ninety-eight losses is not good. They realize that."

With most of the position players on hand for informal workouts for the past few weeks, Hale said he has getting to know the players.

"What they're saying is unbelievable and the things that they've shown to me early on are really good," Hale said, "really good signs of a team that can come together and win. But the character issue and the drive and all these things, we'll have to see."

Talking a good game is the easy part.

"The things that are being said and different things I read on texts are the perfect things we're looking for," Hale said, "but we really won't see it until we get under fire and see how they react with each other."

Two pitchers who probably are locks to make the rotation are Josh Collmenter and Jeremy Hellickson.

Collmenter, 11-9 with a 3.46 ERA last season for Arizona, has moved from starter to long reliever and back to starter again. He could be the opening day pitcher.

"It's kind of been a revolving door for me as opposed to a one-way street," Collmenter said. "It's exciting to be back in the rotation and hopefully last year kind of solidified that. ... To potentially be the opening starter would be an incredible honor."

Hellickson, acquired in a trade with the Tampa Bay Rays, missed the first part of last season after undergoing surgery on his right elbow. When he returned, he struggled to a 1-5 record with a 4.52 ERA in 13 starts. The Diamondbacks are banking on him to return to his earlier form. In 2011, he was 13-10 with a 2.95 ERA and was American League rookie of the year.

"He's healthy again 100 percent for the first time in a while," Hale said. "He feels it. The trainers feel like he's ready to go and compete. He's a very good competitor."

Performance in spring training could determine the rest of the rotation.

"We like to go on what guys have done in the past, their seasons last year for example," Hale said. "But in this situation if a guy jumps out at us in spring training he could jump himself right on the team."

Peter O'Brien, a minor leaguer obtained from the New York Yankees last year in the Martin Prado trade, has a reputation as a good hitter with suspect defense.

"O'Brien has worked really hard with (bench coach and former catching instructor) Glen Sherlock all year. He's been here every day working," Hale said. "He can be really special."

Another candidate, the manager said, is Oscar Hernandez, "an exciting rule five guy that you guys are really going to like."

Hale said he and Diamondback head of baseball operations Tony La Russa have talked about how to proceed this spring.

"For us, the way you teach is to go back and start at ground zero," he said. "When a team loses 98 games, it's not hard to get their attention."

Outfielder Mark Trumbo won his arbitration case with Arizona on Thursday, awarded the $6.9 million he had sought. He was the first Diamondback to go to arbitration since 2001.

**NATIONAL**

**Red Sox Sign Moncada for Record International Amateur Bonus**
By Erik Matuszewski / Bloomberg.com

(Bloomberg) -- The Boston Red Sox signed 19-year-old Cuban infielder Yoan Moncada, MLB.com reported, giving him an estimated $30 million bonus that sets a record for an amateur international player.
Major League Baseball’s highest previous bonus handed to an amateur player from outside the U.S. was $8.27 million, which the Arizona Diamondbacks gave to 21-year-old Cuban pitcher Yoan Lopez last month, MLB.com said.

Moncada worked out for teams including the New York Yankees, Detroit Tigers, San Francisco Giants and Los Angeles Dodgers, and considered five offers, MLB.com reported, citing an unidentified person familiar with the situation. Moncada, who was given a passport and visa by the Cuban government, would have been a possible No. 1 overall pick in this year’s first-year player draft if he were eligible, MLB.com said.

Because the Red Sox had already exceeded their bonus pool for international signings, they’ll be taxed 100 percent on Moncada’s bonus, taking the cost of the deal to approximately $60 million, MLB.com said. Each team is allotted $700,000 to be used during the international signing period, with an additional amount of money based on the club’s record the previous season.

My Diamondbacks Fan Fest Experience
By Joseph Jacquez / Venom Strikes
http://venomstrikes.com/2015/02/22/diamondbacks-fan-fest-experience/

For my first ever Fan Fest, it was a ton of fun, and I got to spend it with my dad which made it even better.

Some of my favorite moments were the clubhouse tour, hitting in the batting cages, and taking pictures with Chris Owings, and Brad Ziegler. Also, the experience of being on a major league field for free was pretty special.

I’m glad I got to see the first panel of guests at the Subway stage. J.J. Putz was moderating, with Aaron Hill, A.J. Pollock, and Paul Goldschmidt answering questions from fans.

My favorite moment of the whole day came at the end of the question and answer session. Today was also Putz’s birthday, and after fans sang him happy birthday, he got pies to the face from Communications director Jim Myers. It was a great moment.

Bronson Arroyo, Hill, Pollock, and Mark Trumbo all performed on the Subway Stage together signing different tunes. That was really cool. Surprisingly, Bronson Arroyo has really good vocals. If he wasn’t playing baseball, he could easily make a living signing.

I also visited the arizonasports 98.7 F.M. booth. I saw Paul Calvisi, Steve Berthiaume, Greg Schulte, Bob Brenly, and the always entertaining Ron Wolfley.

Then there was Mark Grace!

Here is is me with Owings and Ziegler

My dad and I

Overall it was a great experience that I won’t forget! I can’t wait to come back to Chase Field for Opening Night 2015!
Ruben Amaro Jr. apologizes to Ryan Howard 10:36 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia)

Eye Test with Merloni: Craig, Owens, Johnson 10:32 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet New England)

Brewers talking to Scott Boras about Francisco Rodriguez 10:28 pm EST (NBC Sports)

In which spring training is a bit like junior high school 10:10 pm EST (NBC Sports)

David Price on contract extension talk: “I don’t feel like closing any doors.” 10:00 pm EST (NBC Sports)

McAdam: Is Buchholz durable enough to be Red Sox ace? 9:51 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet New England)

A’s spring training Day 3: Rodriguez aims to crack ‘pen 9:26 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Bay Area)

Rodon going through 'surreal' experience with White Sox 9:14 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

Albert Pujols hints at when he could retire 9:05 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Sabathia showed up to camp weighing 305 pounds 8:46 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet New England)

Cubs: Looking at the Jon Lester-David Ross connection 8:45 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

Major League Baseball roundup 8:31 pm EST (Reuters)

Reports: PawSox sale to be announced Monday 8:25 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet New England)

CC Sabathia showed up to camp weighing 305 pounds 8:10 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Jesse Hahn looks to make impact with A’s 7:59 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Bay Area)

Mat Latos on Reds’ clubhouses in 2012 and ‘13: “Everything went to...” 7:42 pm EST (NBC Sports)

McCatty excited to work with Nats’ crowded rotation 7:34 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Gausman hoping to earn a spot in Orioles’ rotation 7:33 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Oscars aficionado John Axford offers his expert picks 7:13 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Ugla hopes better vision helps him revive career 6:45 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Former Oriole recalls being ”abused” by Cal Ripken Jr 6:38 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Gregg Zaun apologizes, but not really, for pro-hazing comments 6:36 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Twins settle into spruced-up spring training home 6:31 pm EST (The Associated Press)

Phillies GM Ruben Amaro apologized to Ryan Howard 6:05 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Cubs expect Jorge Soler to be all systems go 5:09 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

John Danks said brother got 'fair shake' with White Sox 4:50 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

Showalter says Reimold has good chance to make Orioles 4:38 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Showdown: Dozier vs. Pedroia 4:38 pm EST (Rotoworld)

Never mind an ace, where is Sox pitching depth? 4:28 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet New England)

News and observations from Sunday’s workout 4:26 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Ventura: Adam LaRoche will have good influence on White Sox 4:11 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

Dodgers sign right-hander Dustin McGowan 4:11 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Mariners LHP Elias hoping to prove himself again this spring 4:10 pm EST (The Associated Press)

Where will Dylan Bundy start the season? 3:39 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Marlins newcomer Haren still feels the tug of family 3:32 pm EST (The Associated Press)

White Sox: Jesse Crain continues to show positives in comeback 3:18 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

Yankees RHP Tanaka smooth in bullpen session 3:11 pm EST (The Associated Press)

Giants spring training Day 5: Hudson to return to mound soon 3:03 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Bay Area)

Giants manager Bochy returns to camp after heart procedure 2:59 pm EST (The Associated Press)

Darren Daulton: Looking good, feeling good 2:59 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia)

On first day back, Bochy says he 'couldn't feel better' 2:54 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Bay Area)

Rangers might exercise Adrian Beltre’s $16 million vesting option for the 2016 season 2:47 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Ready Freddy — Galvis set to step in for Jimmy Rollins 2:44 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Philadelphia)

Braves outfielder B.J. Upton to go by new name in 2015 2:34 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Clevenger ready for whatever role Nats want him in 2:15 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Braves outfielder B.J. Upton to go by new name in 2015 2:15 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Orioles veteran on losing to team in arbitration 2:01 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Dodgers sign former Braves standout to major league deal 1:23 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

B.J. Upton will now go by Melvin Upton Jr 1:15 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Nolin’s injury interrupts his rotation bid 1:08 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Bay Area)

Trading Travis Wood would make a lot of sense for Cubs 12:58 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)

Jeffrey Maier’s glove sells for $22,705 12:44 pm EST (NBC Sports)

Craig arrives at camp with something to prove 12:17 pm EST (Comcast SportsNet New England)

Marlins veteran wants Jose Fernandez to return later in year 11:32 am EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Bruce Bochy returns to Giants camp after heart scare 11:38 am EST (NBC Sports)

David Freese is in The Best Shape Of His Life 10:22 am EST (NBC Sports)

Roark ready for whatever role Nats want him in 10:05 am EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Orioles have competition for starting roles 9:57 am EST (Comcast SportsNet Mid Atlantic)

Video: Mets offer predictions for Best Picture 9:02 am EST (NBC Sports)

Beachy agrees with Dodgers after 2nd Tommy John surgery 12:37 am EST (The Associated Press)
February 21, 2015

- Alex Gordon unsure about his 2016 player option
  11:35 pm EST (NBC Sports)
- Five from the Fort with Rick Porcello 11:00 pm EST
  (Comcast SportsNet New England)
- Jordan Zimmermann won’t discuss extension once the season starts
  10:53 pm EST (NBC Sports)
- Cubs need to see Javier Baez put it all together 10:27 pm EST
  (Comcast SportsNet Chicago)
- Mazz: Why didn't Sox simply pick up Farrell's option? 10:21 pm EST
  (Comcast SportsNet New England)
- What can Red Sox expect from Rusney Castillo? 9:57 pm EST
  (Comcast SportsNet New England)

MLB TRANSACTIONS
February 23, 2015 • MLB.com
http://www.cbssports.com/mlb/transactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Transaction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Atlanta Braves</td>
<td>Shae Simmons</td>
<td>Placed on 60-Day DL, (Right elbow surgery - out for season)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Orioles</td>
<td>Alejandro De Aza</td>
<td>Signed, (2015)(loses arbitration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati Reds</td>
<td>Daniel Cabrera</td>
<td>Signed to a Minor League Contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Dodgers</td>
<td>Brandon Beachy</td>
<td>Signed as Free Agent, (2015; Opt 2016)(one-year contract)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Dodgers</td>
<td>Chris Withrow</td>
<td>Placed on 60-Day DL, (Recovery from right elbow surgery)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle Mariners</td>
<td>Tom Wilhelmson</td>
<td>Signed, (2015)(loses arbitration)</td>
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