FOR THE WIN

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MAY ISSUE

https://latinosports.com/2019/05/18/urshela-hands-the-yankees-keys-to-first-place-on-top-the-al-east-with-walk-off-against-rays/

Letter from the editing staff:

Here's one for the road. Enjoy this walk off-issue just like Gio Urshela's walk off single against the Rays.

Sincerely,
FTW Editors

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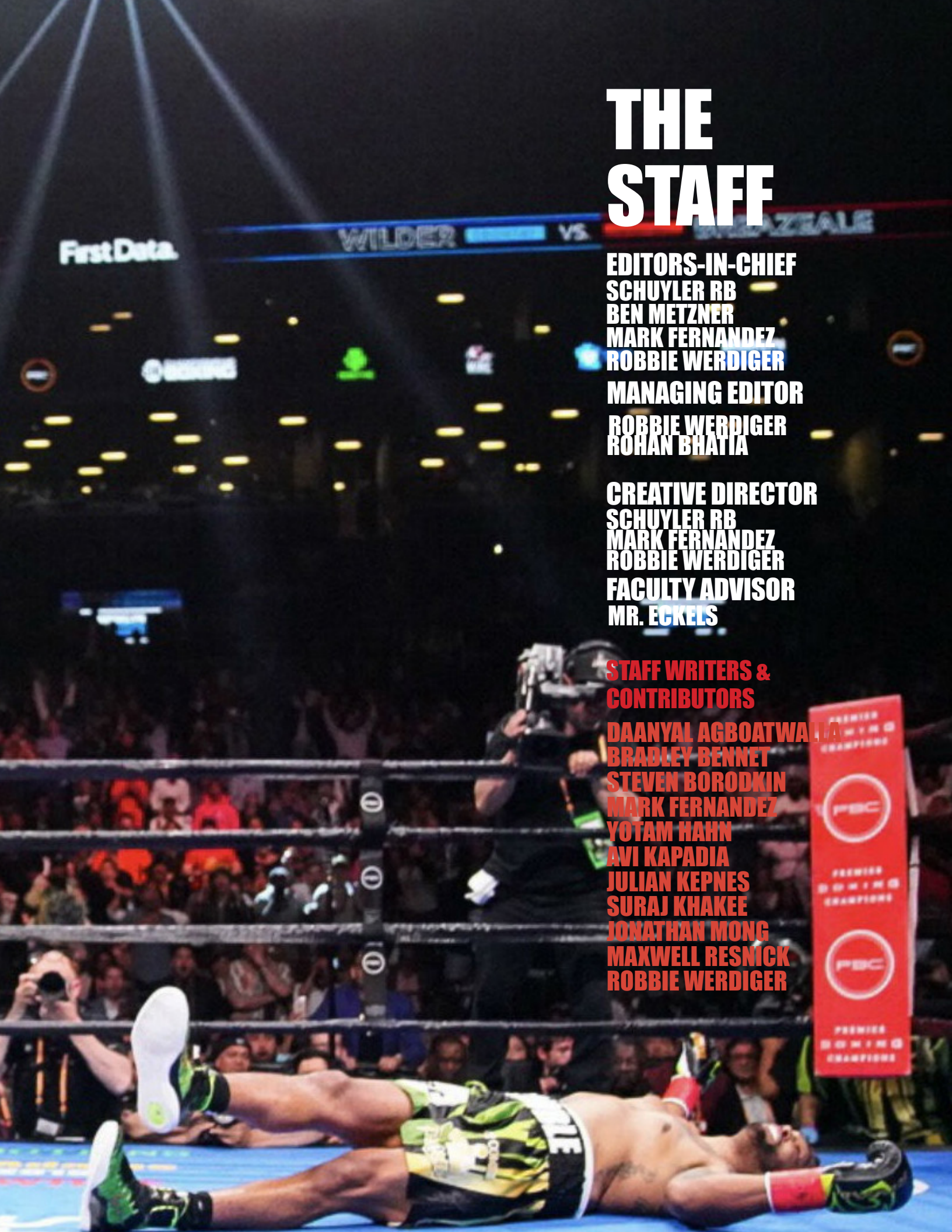

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Why James Harden is the MVP

The MVP race between James Harden and Giannis Antetekoumpo is one of the greatest, and most hotly contested, in recent memory. A 7-foot freak who can dunk with ease from nearly the free throw line, Giannis ran the East with freakish athleticism, dominance in the paint, and a brilliant display of passing that is rare for somebody that tall. Meanwhile, James Harden came back from his MVP season in 2018 and somehow got better. He raised his points-per-game average from his league-leading 30.4 last season to 36.1 this year, while dishing out 7.5 assists per night. He even brought his rebounds up to just over 6.5 per night and, despite increased responsibility, maintained a field goal percentage around 44% and a three-point percentage around 37%. Giannis had an MVP-caliber season, but there are levels to this. James Harden made history this year and to simply push that to the side because his style is boring or because you feel that he holds the ball too much is not what MVP voting should be about.

Let's start with what we all know. We all saw James Harden's streak of 32 straight 30-point games. That's the longest streak since Wilt Chamberlain, who as you may remember, averaged 50 points per game in a season. Harden scored at least 50 points 9 times this season, including at least 60 twice. These numbers weren't him just trying to stat pad. The team needed him. Chris Paul, Eric Gordon, and Clint Capela all missed large chunks of time early in the season after the Rockets had fallen to 14th in the Western Conference standings. Harden carried the Rockets all the way to 4th in the stacked West by season's end, and a lot of the heavy lifting was done by him alone. He had eight triple-doubles, including a pair of 50-point triple-doubles that have become somewhat commonplace when we see the highlights on Sportscenter. The man averaged over 43 ppg during the month of January and went on a streak of 302 consecutive points without being assisted on any of them. That's almost unheard of. Harden did all of this while sporting a true shooting percentage (61.2) that was by far the best of any player who averaged more than 35 points per game, and wass 5 full percentage points better than Michael Jordan's in 1986-87. Players with usage ratings such as Harden's (39.3), which was tops in the league by over 7%, aren't supposed to shoot so efficiently, as his true shooting percentage is almost 9 points better than the league average as well.

All of these factors together create an intricate yet clear statistical argument for why Harden is the MVP. His VORP (Value of a Replacement Player) was calculated to be 9.9, 2.3 higher than the second-place finisher Giannis. To give some context to that difference, Giannis' VORP is just .3 higher than Nikola Jokic- the third-place finisher. Harden also finished as first in the league in win shares and box plus-minus, which estimates the number of points per 100 possessions that a player adds compared to a replacement-level player. He even improved his defense, which had been his one weakness that people continued to point at when trying to knock his greatness. Not only did he average 2 steals per game, which was third best in the league, and ranked top-15 in defensive win shares. That's one spot ahead of defensive stalwart Joel Embiid.

At the end of the day, the fact that Harden could put up historic, mind-blowing stats while leading an injury-riddled roster that featured stretches of games with Daniel House, Austin Rivers, Kenneth Faried, and James Ennis starting alongside Harden, to a fourth seed in the West is monumental. Sure, Giannis led the league in PER (Player Efficiency Rating). But he leads Harden in that stat by .3. Compare that to all of the areas where Harden blew Giannis out of the water and that slight advantage seems far less impressive. Both players had historic years and I do believe that Giannis will win MVP in the end. But just know that if his name is read at the NBA Awards in June, it's the wrong choice. Harden isn't very fun to watch and, yes, he did win the award last year. That doesn't make anything he did this season less special and it certainly doesn't make him undeserving of one the greatest honors in sports.

https://www.nba.com/rockets/news/james-harden-named-western-conference-player-month-january

https://www.theringer.com/nba-playoffs/2018/4/16/17241860/rockets-timberwolves-game-1

AVI KAPADIA

Trae Young for Rookie of the Year

Early in the season, Luka Doncic was considered the sure-fire Rookie of the Year. However, after the All-Star break, Trae Young put up extraordinary numbers, closing the gap on Doncic. The following is why Young should take home the award.

Doncic averaged 21.2 points, 7.8 rebounds, and 6 assists, while Young averaged 19.1 points, 3.7 rebounds, and 8.1 assists. While Doncic's statistics may seem better at first glance, Young's more detailed statistics placed him among the best players in the league--and the best rookies of all time. Young had seven 30-point and 10-assist games, while Doncic did not record any such combination. This is the most by any rookie ever, besides Oscar Robertson. Young also had a 40-plus point and 10-plus assist performance in March. The other two rookies to do this: LeBron James and Michael Jordan. Young was third in the league in assists in the entire league out of all players who competed in at least 60 games. He also ranks top five all-time in total assists in a rookie season. Young was awarded the Conference Player of the Week award not once but twice to Doncic's zero. Lastly, Young recorded three of the top five highest scoring games by rookies this season, while Doncic recorded none. Young also recorded all top five highest assist games by a rookie this season. These stats demonstrate how Young is a unique and rare talent in the context of the entire league and its history.

Now, let's compare some head-to-head stats for this season. Young has higher offensive and defensive ratings, despite being considered a "defensive liability". Young earned six more double-doubles than Doncic and shot 11.6% better from the free throw line. Young also possesses a higher offensive win share. His scoring streak to end the season put him first among all rookies in total points.

After the All-Star break, Young erupted, averaging 24.7 points, 9.2 assists and 4.7 rebounds per game. This is an improvement of nearly eight points from before the All-Star break. While Young's three-point percentage improved by more than three percent, Doncic's efficiency dropped by over eight percent to a weak 26.4%. Young's noticeable improvement in such a short time span was remarkable.

As a leader of a young and inexperienced team, Young's outstanding play guided the Hawks to place second in the league in points per game and three-pointers per game after the All-Star break. Young's rookie season has shown what a unique talent he is, especially in his facilitating and passing abilities.

https://hoopshype.com/2019/03/19/atlanta-hawks-trae-young-floater-teardrop-rookie-of-the-year/

DAANYAL AGBOATWALLA

Luke Doncic for Rookie of the Year

On June 21st, 2018, the night of the 2018 NBA draft, a trade was made that would define the careers of two young men forever. The first is Luka Doncic, the 20-year old Slovenian Euroleague MVP. The second, Trae Young, was a college superstar who led the nation in both points and assists while carrying Oklahoma to the NCAA tournament. In fact, both these players share a special connection as they were traded for each other on draft night. Luka was originally taken with the third pick by the Atlanta Hawks, whereas Trae was originally taken by the Mavericks with the sixth pick. After both players were drafted, the respective organizations agreed to a deal that brought Trae to the Hawks and Luka to the Mavericks. Early on in the year, Luka showed immense potential as a leader on the court and as a future all-star while Trae struggled. Trae was shooting under 40% from the field, while Luka set the league on fire by averaging around 20 points, seven assists, and seven rebounds right out of the gate. The Mavericks operated as a potential playoff team with Luka impressing fans with highlight-reel plays every night. One night, Luka hit a nearly impossible three-point buzzer beater fadeaway to beat the Trailblazers. Everyone was talking about this European sensation, who, according to many fans and analysts, would become the next face of the NBA. Luka was running away with the NBA's Rookie of the Year trophy, and while some other rookies were having impressive seasons, Luka was unmatched and unquestionably the favorite. That is until Trae Young showed up to the party. After a tough start to the season in terms of his three-point shot, Trae began to hit his shots more consistently and averaged 18 points in the month of January. It would only get better from there for Trae, as he would average above 23 points per game in the months of February, March, and April. People quickly took notice of Trae's offensive explosion, the Mavericks struggles, and Luka's decrease in efficiency and began to question whether the Rookie of the Year race was really over. Trae essentially swapped places with Luka in terms of being in the spotlight for much of the latter part of the season. Almost every night, NBA highlight pages were obsessed with "Ice Trae's" incredible vision, handles, range, and clutch shot-making ability. Their comment sections began to be filled with statements like, "Trae is better than Luka," and "Trae is the real Rookie of the Year." Even so-called NBA experts went on TV and proclaimed that Trae Young had pulled ahead of Luka in the race.

Now don't get me wrong, I love Trae Young, and I think that this Rookie of the Year storyline was great for the fans and for the league. Trae is an excellent player, but this Rookie of the Year "race" was never close. Recent bias has unfortunately swayed many people's opinions, but the facts are simple: Trae did for 3 months essentially what Luka had been doing all year, and did it arguably worse. His performance on the court is simply inferior to Luka's, which is emphasized by Atlanta's lack of victories throughout the year. Unlike the Hawks, the Mavericks won 35 games this year and were in serious playoff consideration, mostly due to Luka's contributions.

The NBA's awards races should not be popularity contests; they should be decided based on who had the better season. However, whether we like it or not, a player's popularity plays a significant part in how many votes they accrue, and Luka Doncic was easily one of the most popular rookies we have ever seen. As I mentioned earlier, for much of the season, the league was enveloped in "Luka Mania." Luka was on a highlight reel every single night, and almost instantly became the new face of the Mavericks franchise. Everyone was talking about him. Luka hit a few stepback threes in a game, and people put videos of him next to James Harden and compared the two. Luka also received the second-most fan votes for the All-Star game in the Western Conference

behind only Lebron James. Trae Young was definitely very popular in a similar fashion this season, but "Luka Mania" was on a completely different level.

Statistically speaking, Luka outperformed Trae in every category but assists. I know that these stats don't tell the whole story, but they do play a large role in determining the winner of the race, especially when considering that Luka led his team to a better record than Trae did, while having far less help from his teammates. This is partially because the Mavericks traded away their entire starting lineup for an injured Kristaps Porzingis midway through the season. Nevertheless, Luka is averaging more points, rebounds, blocks, and steals than Trae, and is shooting more efficiently from the field and from three-point range. Many people look at Luka's field goal percentage and say that he is not the most efficient scorer either, but Luka was shooting at around a 37% clip from three before many of his teammates were traded and defenses became completely focused on stopping him.

While many argue that this year's Rookie of the Year race is a lot closer than it seems, it really is not. Luka has been superior to Trae in almost every aspect of the game. Luka has simply had one of the best rookie seasons in recent memory and definitely deserves to win the award at the end of the year.

https://theathletic.com/731292/2018/12/25/have-we-ever-truly-seen-a-player-like-luka-doncic-we-searched-for-the-closest-comparisons/

YOTAM HAHN

The Future of The New York Knicks

As the 2018-2019 season came to a close for the New York Knicks, fans were left with another disappointing season without a playoff appearance. With an atrocious record of 17 wins and 65 losses this season, the Knicks were able to secure the highest odds to receive the number 1 draft pick, which everyone expected to be 18 year old Duke star Zion Williamson. However, this was not the case as the Knicks ended with the third pick in the lottery. Throughout the season there has been lots of talk of the Knicks acquiring big names in free agency this summer, such as Kyrie Irving, Kevin Durant, and/or Kemba Walker. With the addition of these stars in free agency along with a high draft pick, the Knicks could possibly have a star studded team with the potential of making a playoff push. Along with the possibilities of these big named players coming to play in New York, the Knicks front office has finally made a few sensible moves during the season. For example, they were able to stack up a lot of inexpensive young players with leadership qualities that have the potential to be influential role players on a team with a few stars. Also, in a big trade before the trade deadline this winter, the Knicks were able to trade away Kristaps Porzingis and Tim Hardaway Jr and receive talent like Dennis Smith Jr. Although it may not seem obvious, that trade was beneficial to the Knicks. Even though they might have gotten rid of their most talented players, those two definitely did not have the talent or intangibles to lead a team to a championship. While a championship for the Knicks may seem overly ambitious at this point, that is the goal for every team, whether it is in the near future or far down the road. In addition to their lack of abilities to lead the team, Hardaway was on a huge contract that completely oversold his actual capabilities on the court and Porzingis was very injury prone, did not seem to have the drive to work on his body, and also began to be the focus of issues off the court with rape allegations. Porzingis made it clear that he did not want to play in New York anymore so there was no reason to keep him around.

Up to this point, the Knicks have done many things right in the last year in terms of front office decisions. The recent draft lottery ended up not giving the Knicks the number one pick which is unfortunate considering they had the best odds, but they could have been worse off. Instead, they will wind up picking at number three. That high up in the draft there will still be lots of talented players available like RJ Barrett, De'Andre Hunter, and possibly Ja Morant. These young and talented rookies will all help the Knicks attract the interests of big-name players in free agency this summer. This summer could decide the prosperity or failure of the Knicks for the next decade or so and it will all depend on landing big free agents. If the front office continues to take steps in the right direction the way they have this season, there is a very good possibility the Knicks could end up with two or three superstars on their roster next season, but there is always the fear that the Knicks organization will go back to its old ways and find a way to mess up golden opportunities. Only time will tell.

https://www.reddit.com/r/NYKnicks/comments/almfy6y/the_future_knicks/

STEVEN BORODKIN

Dave Gettleman Is The Worst General Manager In The NFL

After Jerry Reese got fired during the 2017 season, I thought that the Giants would finally get a competent general manager. I could not have been more wrong. Not only is Gettleman incompetent, but he is somehow worse than Reese. In just one year, Gettleman managed to derail the entire Giants franchise by making one head-scratching decision after another. First, Gettleman completely overpaid for left tackle Nate Solder, making him the highest-paid offensive lineman at the time. Solder is a fine player, but he has never made a Pro Bowl or All-Pro team and is not close to worth the amount of money that the Giants are paying him. Gettleman then took running back Saquon Barkley over quarterback Sam Darnold with the second pick in the draft. While Barkley is a phenomenal player by any measure, franchise quarterbacks are much more valuable and harder to find than running backs. While both of these moves seemed pretty bad at the time, it would only go downhill from there. After a bad start to the season, Gettleman started his purge of the Giants' roster. He started by trading cornerback Eli Apple to the Saints for a 4th round pick, which was not actually a terrible trade, as Apple struggled on the field and was also considered to be a cancer in the locker room. The next day, though, things went from bad to worse. Gettleman traded away defensive tackle Damon Harrison, the best run-stopping defensive tackle in the NFL, to the Lions for a 5th round pick. A 5th round pick! After the trading away Harrison, the Giants defense clearly regressed, especially against the run. Gettleman was able to make it through the rest of the season without any more bad moves, but things picked up again in the offseason. He started by letting star safety Landon Collins walk in free agency, only to see him sign with the Giants' rival: the Washington Redskins. Then, in arguably his worst move, he traded away one of the best wide receivers in the NFL, Odell Beckham Jr, to the Cleveland Browns for next to nothing--safety Jabrill Peppers, a first-round pick, and a third-round pick. They would use the first-round pick to take run-stopping defensive tackle Dexter Lawrence, essentially a worse version of Damon Harrison. So basically, Gettleman gave up Beckham, Harrison, and Collins for a worse player in each position and their third-round pick, Oshane Ximines, a defensive end from Old Dominion. Additionally, Gettleman seemed to put no effort into getting a better offer for Beckham, which he easily could have. He views Jabrill Peppers as the same value as a first-round pick, which is completely wrong. He was unable to even get the Browns better 3rd round pick. Then draft day came, and pass-rusher Josh Allen, considered to be one of the best players in the draft, fell to Giants at the 6th pick. But in typical Gettleman fashion, he instead took Daniel Jones, a quarterback from Duke. Football is not the sport where you take a guy from Duke with a top-ten pick. Not only was Jones far from the best prospect available, but he wasn't even the best quarterback available, as Dwayne Haskins was considered by everyone (except David Gettleman) to be the best quarterback left in the draft. To make matters worse, Haskins ended up getting drafted by the Redskins, so the Giants will be reminded of Gettleman's mistake twice a year for years to come. Jones would have assuredly been available for the Giants second first-round pick, and has been described by scouts as having "pedestrian talent," and being a career backup at best.

The Giants will never be successful under Gettleman because of his philosophy and lack of a plan. Gettleman does not value defensive backs, a very important position on defense. He refuses to pay them. As the Panthers GM, he let Josh Norman walk and ended up losing his job because of it. Now he has done the same for the Giants. One would think he would have learned from his mistakes. He believes a team can be rebuilding and trying to win at the same time. He cannot be more wrong. If he keeps trying to win with a bad team, the Giants will continue to be stuck with five-win seasons, and will never get that top draft pick they need to reach the next level. Finally, although he claims he has a plan, he clearly does not. He stated multiple times that the Giants did not sign Beckham to trade him, but his plan obviously changed, and the Giants ended up eating $16 million in dead money because of it. He has also stated multiple times that you have to take the best player available in the draft. He evidently changed his mind on this belief, as Jones was not even a top 30 player in the draft.

https://nypost.com/2019/03/05/just-how-badly-did-dave-gettleman-blow-the-landon-collins-exit/

JULIAN KEPNES

NFL 2019 Quarterbacks With Explosive Potential In This Upcoming Season

While the 2019-2020 NFL season seems a light-year away, right now, many quarterbacks are deep in thought during this offseason. Instead of looking forward, they are looking back, no doubt reflecting on their 2018 season; specifically, on the opportunities they missed to take their skills to the next level. Whether due to injuries or the disappointment on the stat sheets, here's my list of quarterbacks I believe are motivated to have their defining season, either driven by a chip on their shoulder, or the belief that their jobs are on the line.

Jimmy Garoppolo

The 2018-2019 season came to an abrupt end for the San Francisco 49'ers' Jimmy Garoppolo. Formerly the backup for New England Patriots' Tom Brady, Garoppolo suffered a torn ACL during a game against the Kansas City Chiefs. What makes this injury particularly brutal is that Garoppolo was just three games into his first season as a starter for the 49'ers. Expectations were set high for Garoppolo this past season. His brief 2017 performance for the 49'ers had earned him a 5-year, $137 million deal. He took the title of highest paid player in the entire league after winning just five remaining games of the 2017 season. During rehab for his knee, he told the website "Bleacher Report", "It's been a very productive offseason. Whether it was in the film room or out on the field. Even trying new things. Different drops, how your movement is." He added, "I'm willing to do whatever. Whatever they say, I'll do." Jimmy is motivated to have a comeback year that will propel him to the playoffs with help from an underrated roster.

Kirk Cousins

If you thought that a three-year, $84 million deal offered to former the Redskins quarterback would fuel this star-studded Minnesota Vikings team to the playoffs, you would be wrong. Soon after a disappointing playoff miss, partly due to the emergence of the Chicago Bears' powerhouse defense led by Khalil Mack, the memes started flowing in. The topic of these memes explored the fact that Case Keenum, a no-name quarterback who had led the Vikings on a Cinderella story-esque playoff run all the way to the NFC Championship, had been forced to pack his bags and depart to the Mile-High City. And who did they get in return? Cousins - who got mopped by the Buffalo Bills, a team which was at their season low after one of their players retired at halftime earlier in the season. While his stat sheet says otherwise, there were clear moments in big games where he could've stepped up but he didn't deliver. Hopefully, he'll take this offseason to further learn his new offense, and with his clear work ethic, we should expect some big changes this upcoming season.

Kyler Murray

Kyler Murray is an athlete who I refuse to believe is human. His freakish athleticism not only earned him the number one overall draft pick of the 2019 NFL Draft but it also earned him the ninth overall pick in the 2018 MLB Draft. He is the first player to ever be selected in the first round of the NFL and MLB drafts. Also, he earned himself the 2018 Heisman Trophy for his colossal performance at the University of Oklahoma. He was selected by the Arizona Cardinals, who dumped their 2018 first-round pick Josh Rosen after being put under an offensive line that offered no protection. But the Cardinals are hoping that, considering their new quarterback-mightalready be the fastest in his position, they won't have to worry as much about the O-Line issue. Kyler's extraordinary ability to throw on the run will provide hope and a new dynamic for this Cardinals offense. My prediction is that Kyler will be a top 15 quarterback in the NFL by the end of this year.

Baker Mayfield

If you follow football this is probably the quarterback you have been waiting to see included in this list. If Baker's talent and work ethic were not clear enough in the 2018 season, you are definitely going to see it shine this year. The new acquisition of Odell Beckham Jr., the wide receiver with arguably the best hands in the league, is bound to fit perfectly with Baker's similar fiery passion for the game. Baker, being the rookie with the most passing touchdowns, is bound to put on a show this upcoming season. Don't sleep on the dangerous sophomore who only has one thing in his sights, the Lombardi Trophy.

https://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/ct-jimmy-garoppolo-better-than-advertised-20171218-story.html

https://bsndenver.com/trevor-story-shunned-as-bbwaa-nl-rookie-of-the-year-finalist/

BOLD MLB Award Predictions

MAXWELL RESNICK

Last season, nobody would have expected Christian Yelich to win NL MVP or Blake Snell to win AL Cy Young. While these are purely bold predictions, each of these players or managers has the potential to create a compelling case for their respective award.

American League Most Valuable Player: George Springer
Conversation regarding the plethora of talent in the Astros' lineup often revolves around Jose Altuve, Alex Bregman, and Carlos Correa, unfairly excluding Springer. No Astro hitter, however, is performing better this season than George Springer. Not only is Springer a longshot for the American League MVP award, he's far from a safe bet to win the Astros' MVP award. However, batting leadoff in a potent lineup creates more at-bats, causing his counting stats to potentially be inflated for his own benefit. If Springer is able to sustain this production for an extended period of time, he has the ability to compile a compelling case for the most prestigious individual honor in baseball.
Honorable Mentions: Tommy Pham, Tim Anderson

National League Most Valuable Player: Trevor Story
Ever since Story burst on the scene with 7 home runs in his first 6 career games, he's fallen under the shadow of teammate Nolan Arenado. Many believe Arenado, a top-five MVP finisher each of the past three years, is due for his share of the trophy. However, Story quietly put together a spectacular season last year.
Honorable Mentions: Marcell Ozuna, Anthony Rendon

American League Cy Young: Charlie Morton
Last year with Houston, Morton was often overlooked due to the star power of the Astros' rotation. Morton quietly pieced together a nice season for himself, however, with a 3.13 ERA, a 15-3 record, and over 200 strikeouts. This season, Morton has actually improved, with a sub-three ERA and an even higher K/9. Once again, Morton has been overlooked due to the success of last year's Cy Young winner, Blake Snell and the breakout performance of phenom Tyler Glasnow.
Honorable Mentions: Matthew Boyd, Mike Clevinger

National League Cy Young: Hyun-Jin Ryu
While few predicted this type of breakout for Ryu, he did provide us with signs of improvement at the end of last season. Ryu only made 15 starts last season, but he managed an impressive 1.97 ERA. This season, Ryu has arguably been the biggest surprise in baseball. Recently termed "the new Greg Maddux", Ryu has gotten better as this season has progressed. He currently owns a 1.72 ERA, along with 21 consecutive scoreless innings, and an absurd 18:1 strikeout to walk ratio. If injuries don't hold him back, it's actually plausible to believe the 32-year-old breakout star could take home this award.
Honorable Mentions: Zack Greinke, Luis Castillo

American League Rookie of the Year: Brandon Lowe
Before the start of the season, ESPN released a poll for the public, asking who they believe will win the AL Rookie of the Year award. Lowe was not even an option. The debate was limited to Triple-A phenoms and prospect ranking headliners Vladimir Guerrero Jr., and Eloy Jimenez. While the hype around those prospects is deserved, no AL rookie has been more surprising than Brandon Lowe, who won AL Rookie of the Month in April. While it is possible that Guerrero will go on a tear and win the award, Lowe's made quite a compelling case for himself so far.
Honorable Mentions: Yusei Kikuchi, Michael Chavis

National League Rookie of the Year: Mike Soroka
Five starts into the season and ten into his career, Mike Soroka looks promising. In a race featuring Chris Paddack, Pete Alonso, Fernando Tatis Jr., and Nick Senzel, Soroka has the potential to be among the best of them all. So far this season, Soroka has earned a 1.21 ERA, and has not given up more than one earned run in any start this season. If he keeps this up, it will be hard to deny him of the award.
Honorable Mentions: Victor Robles, Keston Hiura

American League Manager of the Year: Terry Francona
Few teams in recent memory have suffered from injuries as badly as the Indians have this season. It started when franchise player Francisco Lindor began the year on the Injured List, then budding superstar Mike Clevinger went on the 60-day Injured List with a back injury. To top it off, two-time Cy Young award winner Corey Kluber fractured his arm. Additionally, 2018 AL MVP third-place finisher Jose Ramirez has been very disappointing thus far. And yet, the Indians find themselves three games ahead of .500. In a very weak AL Central, it is possibly a healthy Indians pitching staff could lead a division title. Francona probably will not win, but it is unfair to rule him out so far.
Honorable Mentions: Brad Ausmus, Rick Renteria

National League Manager of the Year: Clint Hurdle
Every year, the Pirates get off to an abnormally hot start. And every year, they falter and return to their mediocre ways. Perhaps this year could be different. Josh Bell looks like a breakout candidate. When healthy, Jameson Taillon and Chris Archer have the potential to be a dominant one-two punch in that rotation. Unfortunately for the Pirates, they play in an incredibly tough division, but if they can sustain this level of play for an extended period of time and sneak into a wild card spot, it is very possible Hurdle develops a strong case for the award.
Honorable Mentions: Andy Green, Mike Shildt

MARK FERNANDEZ

MLB Standings Predictions

American League

AL EAST

1) New York Yankees

The Yankees definitely didn't get worse this offseason. Adding key reliever Adam Ottavino and bringing in veteran experience in Troy Tulowitzki and D.J. Lemahieu to fill in the gap for the first two months for the injured Didi Gregorius. The team also brought back all star starter J.A. Happ to complete their starting rotation.Last year the team won 100 games even with Aaron Judge missing a month due to injury. Pending another huge injury, this team looks to bring havoc in 2019.

2) Boston Red Sox

The World Series Champions seemed to regress this offseason as they lost their two best relievers in Craig Kimbrel and Joe Kelly to free agency making their bullpen one of the worst in the league. Even with the abysmal bullpen, the Sox will look to repeat this year behind Mookie Betts, J.D. Martinez, and their stellar pitching. If they can add an arm or two to their bullpen, than they could push their way to another 100 win season.

3) Tampa Bay Rays

The Rays seemed to be the biggest, yet quiettest surprise of 2019. Tampa mustered up 90 wins and kept themselves in the wild card race until the last second.. The team will have to have another surprising year to get to 90 wins, but its not out of the question. The team will rely on AL cy young winner Blake Snell and hope for a bounce back season for Tommy Pham. Look for the team to regress by a few games, but still be competitive in the AL wild card chase.

4) Toronto Blue Jays

This year seems to be a throwaway year for the Blue Jays as they seem to have not put together a very competitive team as they lost Marco Estrada in free agency and traded away Josh Donaldson at the end of last season. The one bright spot for the team this year will be the debut and development of the highly touted rookie Vlad Guerrero Jr.

5) Baltimore Orioles

The Orioles seem to be heading to a record setting year of losses as they have no immediate plan for success. All the team can hope for is a "tank" in hopes of getting a high draft pick as they wait out the dominance of the Red Sox and Yankees.

AL CENTRAL

1) Cleveland Indians

It seems that the Indians were going to blow it all up this offseason by trading either Kluber or Baur. Instead Kluber and Baur sit on the roster at the start of spring training and are looking to wreak havoc this year. Losing Michael Brantley, Andrew Miller, Cody Allen, and the rented Josh Donaldson will bring the team down a peg or two this season. The indians are also resting easy as no other team seems to be competing for their number one spot.

2) Minnesota Twins

The Twins will need this year to be a success as all of their young talent is getting to the point that they need to start producing. The offseason was good to the twins as they signed Nelson Cruz ,and locked up Max Kepler and Jorge Polanco until they are 30. Byron Buxton will also look to bounce back as he had a season full of injuries in 2018; If healthy Buxton can be one of the best center fielders in the game and could potentially be the star that the team craves. If Kepler and Buxton can finally step into what they have been made out to be and Polanco continues what he did last year than this team could be the surprise team of the AL.

3) Chicago White Sox

They missed out on Machado and Harper, but definitely improved. The addition of Alonso should be a good power bat to pair with Abreu on a daily basis. Along with the addition of Alonso, the team has bolstered their bullpen with Alex Colome and Kelvin Herrera. Both players are strong relievers and should help close games. Even with all the additions through trades and free agency, the team's greatest addition will be number one prospect in the system, Eloy Jimenez.

4) Kansas City Royals

The Royals are an interesting team as they have veered away from the idea from power and have instead opted for speed-spotlighted by the addition of Billy Hamilton. The biggest brightspot will most likely be Adalberto Mondesi who will be the everyday shortstop for the club; Mondesi will bring speed and all around great defense to the team. This team will feel the loss of Salvador Perez who will be recovering from Tommy John Surgery from a injury in Spring Training.

5) Detroit Tigers

The Tigers will probably be better than the Royals in the up and coming years, but they don't seem to have any big prospects close to the big leagues. The team lacks star power with Miguel Cabrera being on the final part of his career and the team trading away the rest of their good players in the last few years.

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AL WEST

1)Houston Astros

The Astros look to be a lock for another AL West Pennant after winning 100 wins last year. The team will definitely feel the losses of Dallas Keuchel and Charlie Morton, but still have the two headed beast of Justin Verlander and Gerrit Cole leading their rotation. The Team also had the most underrated signing of the offseason with the acquisition of Michael Brantley, who when healthy is an all star. Don't forget that the core of this team is still young and will be better than last year. The hole in this team that might stop them from getting to another World Series is their bullpen.

2) Oakland Athletics

Last year's team felt like Moneyball 2.0. The team filled with rookies, unproved players, and a few great players made an incredible push and finished way above expectations at 97 wins. The team did lose key players in Jed Lowrie and Jeurys Familia to free agency. The team did make a trade for Jurickson Profar over the offseason and he could fill the roll that lowrie has left open. The team could miss their ace Sean Manaea for the whole 2019 season as he is still recovering from shoulder surgery in September. Expect this team to still be really good, but take a step back from last year.

3) Seattle Mariners

The Mariners seemed to give up this offseason as they traded 3 of their best players in Robinson Cano, Edwin Diaz, and James Paxton. This doesn't mean they don't have anyone. The team comprises of veterans like Jay Bruce, Dee Gordon, Kyle Seager, and Felix Hernandez who can still produce. They also have good young players like Tim Beckham who will look to break out this season. WIth little to no expectations meant for this team, look for them to turn some heads.

4) Los Angeles Angels

Shohei Ohtani proved to everyone that he could pitch and hit in the MLB, unfortunately he will only hit this. With Ohtani on the DL with tommy john, the pitching staff for the Angels looks very questionable. The team did makes some good moves this offseason as they signed Matt Harvey to a one year deal, signed slugger Justin Bour, and locked up Mike Trout for 12 years and 426.5 million dollars. This might not be the Angel's year as their pitching resembles a group of leftovers, but they are on the up and coming.

5) Texas Rangers

The Rangers seem like the runt of the AL West as their team lacks components of a championship team. The Team's pitching seems to be part of the worst rotations in the MLB and they also lack a steady catcher among other positions. Even with Joey Gallo, Rougned Odor, and Shin-Soo Choo, the team will end up at the bottom of the pack once again.

NL EAST

1) Philadelphia Phillies

Probably the biggest offseason out of any of the teams, the Phillies will look to reek havoc on the rest of the MLB. With additions of Bryce Harper, Jean Segura, and J.T. Realmuto, the Phillies might be favorites to win the World Series. While the World Series might not happen, a NL East Pennant is extremely possible.

2) Atlanta Braves

The Braves had an amazing 2018 winning the NL East with their big breakout rookie Ronald Acuña Jr. What did they do to improve this offseason, just added a former AL MLP in Josh Donaldson. Donaldson will bolster their lineup, but the real concern is their starting pitching which lacks a star studded ace. If the team can somehow land Dallas Keuchel than they might be set to repeat being NL East champions for another year

3) New York Mets

If healthy this team can compete with anyone, but that's a big if. The Mets had an interesting offseason with trading for Robinson Cano and Edwin Diaz, while also signing Wilson Ramos and Jed Lowrie. In a time where teams are looking to get younger and not older, the Mets seem to be going against that trend to become a winning team again. With Cespedes out, the team will rely on its younger bats like rookie Pete Alonso who will be the everyday starting First Baseman and in my opinion will be a top 10 one at that. This team is an interesting team to keep an eye on and could reke havoc if the stars align correctly

4) Washington Nationals

The Nationals lost Bryce Harper to a division rival and it seemed over for them. That is not the case as star studded prospect Victor Robles will be taking over in centerfield for the team this year and will be a staple in the lineup for years to come. Along with Robles, a new addition to the team will be Patrick Corbin who signed for a 6 year, 140 million dollar contract. Corbin could be the third starter in this stacked rotation that could help the Nationals go over the top. Like the Angels, this may not be their year, but look for them to be on the rise come 2020.

5) Miami Marlins

Sorry Marlins fans, but this is going to be another dreary season in Florida. Miami had one star in J.T. Realmuto last year and they traded him away this offseason. With most people not being able to name most of their starting 9 players, the team is looking to continue its slow rebuilding process under new owner Derek Jeter.

NL CENTRAL

1) Milwaukee Brewers

The brew crew looks to repeat their outlook from last year and with the NL MVP Christian Yelich, they might just do it. While pitching looks

looks to be the weakness of the Brewers, they are filled with stars all throughout their lineup and have a lockdown closer in Josh Hader. With a full year of Mike Moustakas and Jonathan Schoop, along with another year of dominance from Christian Yelich, Lorenzo Cain, and Jesus Aguilar, the Brewers could be trouble for anyone who steps in their way.

2) St.Louis Cardinals

Paul Goldschmidt is now a St. Louis Cardinal. He finally gives them a star hitter to plug into the lineup everyday, while also giving the Cardinals their first steady first baseman since Albert Pujols. The cardinals also bolstered their bullpen by adding lefty reliever Andrew Miller. While this may sound like a broken record, their problem will be starting pitching. This rotation doesn't consist of a star ace, with Mike Mikolas holding down the spot. Hopefully Yadier Molina can stay healthy and help lead this team to another postseason birth.

3) Chicago Cubs

The cubbies did not finish out the season well last year as they blew their lead in the NL Central, lost the one game playoff for the NL Central lead, and then lost the wild card game. The scary part is they didn't add anyone to their team to fix this mistake from last year.While they still have stars Kris Bryant and Anthony Rizzo along with what is a starting rotation with three aces in Jon Lester, Cole Hamels, and Jose Quintana and two above average pitchers in Kyle Hendricks and Yu Darvish, their problem is their bullpen. The pen for the Cubs is atrocious and doesn't have one standout pitcher that comes in and lets you believe that they can get the job done every time.

4) Cincinnati Reds

The Reds finally look like a major league team. The Reds went out and got better this season by adding pitching and hitting to their team. The most underrated trade of this offseason in my opinion was the Reds acquiring Sonny Gray from the yankees. When Gray was not pitching at Yankee Stadium, he boasted an above average ERA and was somewhat dominate; with a new change of scenery to the NL, Gray will face a platoon of teams that have never seen him pitch which will help him throughout the season. Besides that, Puig will bring energy to the clubhouse and team. Once Scooter Gennett comes back, this team will be dangerous.

5) Pittsburgh Pirates

Pittsburgh is going to need to rely on its pitching staff if it wants to win games this year. The team has two aces in Jameson Taillon and Chris Archer who can give them 35 wins combined. This team has a Tampa Bay Rays-esque feel to it, but then again they could finish last in the NL Central

NL WEST

1) Los Angeles Dodgers

They went to the world series last year and they only improved this year. This offseason, the Dodgers lost Manny Machado, but gained AJ Pollock and Joe Kelly to bolster their roster. Along with Corey Seager coming back, the Dodgers seem to be the deepest team in the NL and have a real shot of winning the league this year.

2) Colorado Rockies

Locking up Nolan Arenado this offseason was a smart move for the Rockies. Along with Arenado, the team is rocking a strong lineup that includes All Star Charlie Blackmon, and sluggers Mark Reynolds and Daniel Murphy. The biggest question for the team will be their pitching which seems to have a lot of untapped potential and skill.

3) San Diego Padres

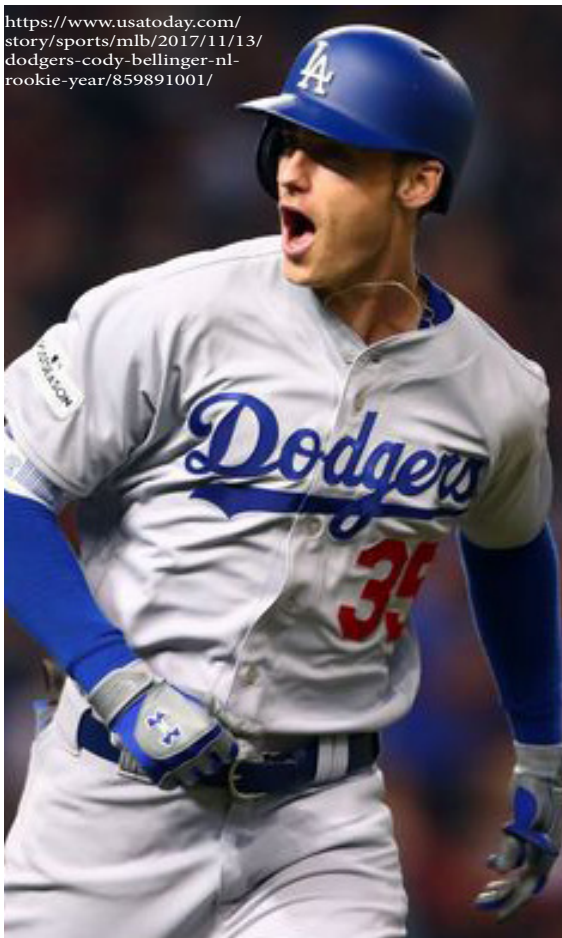
Speeding up the rebuild, the signing of Manny Machado will pay off right away for the Padres. Machado will provide a star to San Diego and another experienced veteran to the clubhouse. Along with Machado, rookies Fernando Tatis Jr. and Chris Paddack with dramatically change the outlook of the team. In a few years, this might be a World Series team.

4) San Francisco Giants

It would be a great storyline for the Giants to win the division of Manager Bruce Bochy's last season, sadly it most likely won't happen. The team contains good pieces in Evan Longoria, Buster Posey, and Madison Bumgarner, but it doesn't seem as that will be enough to push the team to the finish line. The pitching has been a disappointment in the past, and will number 2 rotation Pitcher Johnny Cueto being out the entire year, it doesn't seem to getting better. The Giants had a dynasty, but now they are just hanging on by a thread.

5) Arizona Diamondbacks

Arizona lost its three best players in AJ Pollock, Patrick Corbin, and Paul Goldschmidt this offseason, but that doesn't mean they don't have anyone left. The team still has Ace Zack Greinke and young third baseman Jake Lamb. Look for the team to have surprise players pop out and for the team to at least be competitive this season.



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JONATHAN MONG

FREE AGENT FREEZE

The last two MLB seasons have shown a quite alarming trend—teams simply aren't spending money anymore. Besides Boston's J.D. Martinez deal, Philadelphia's Harper deal (which, at 13 years/330 million, was somehow a lower average annual value, or AAV, than his potential 10/300 Washington extension), and San Diego's Machado deal, which was reportedly the only one to even surpass $250 million, the majority of free agents are quite honestly being stiffed. As I write this, Dallas Keuchel, a man who has won a Cy Young not too long ago, and Craig Kimbrel, a very, very good closer, remain unsigned.

Minor leaguers literally make below minimum wage, but that's another story for another issue. However, when a minor leaguer comes up to the majors, he is paid the fraction of $545,000 proportional to how many days out of 172 he was on the 40-man roster. So if a player spends 86 days on a major league roster, he is paid $272,500. For the following two years (if the player is called up before a certain date, just the following year) he is on a roster, his team can pay him as much as they want, but no less than $545,000, and for every day the player is not on the Injured List (IL), the 25-man roster, or the 40-man roster, he loses a percentage of his salary. So Aaron Judge, who is in his third year, is earning $622,300. For comparison, by-no-means-MVP candidate but still solid-to-great free agent signing D.J. LeMahieu is making $12,000,000.

Next year, however, Judge will enter arbitration. Essentially, the Yankees will have a salary idea for Judge, and he and his agents will have a salary idea as well. Their goal is to get to an agreement on either a one-year contract or a long-term deal before a certain date, at which point they simply submit their ideas to an independent arbitrator, who will eventually hear their case and award the player one of the two salaries. This occurs until the player has played six years in MLB, or when his team decides that they don't want him anymore and cut him, at which point he will become a free agent.

However, here's the interesting part. Teams are simply non-tendering (cutting) arbitration-eligible players who were rather productive. For example, Billy Hamilton (1.3 WAR in 2018) was non-tendered by Cincinnati last winter. Hamilton, a known speed freak with about zero batting skill (he hit .236 and doesn't walk); after being cut, he signed a $4.25 million deal with Kansas City, where he is currently projected for a 0.7 WAR. Cincinnati has since replaced him with Nick Senzel, who is projected for a slightly worse 0.3 WAR. This is a trend. Jonathan Schoop (0.5 WAR in 2018) was non-tendered by Milwaukee. He signed an $8.5 million deal with Minnesota and has already outdone his entire campaign last year; he is currently at 1.1 WAR and projected for 3.9 WAR, a very good season. His replacement is Keston Hiura, who is projected for a below-replacement -0.3 WAR. It's clear that teams would rather not pay the few million in arbitration and instead take less production from a cheaper source.

This extends to free agents. Assuming 1 WAR = $5 million, Aaron Judge actually deserves to be paid $25.5 million this year. (For comparison, Mike Trout deserves to be paid $49 million.) While obviously the team has to pay 25+ guys a non-insignificant amount of money, there is still absolutely no reason that teams who clearly need a starter, for example, can't sign Keuchel. Boston needs relievers, what's wrong with signing Kimbrel?

Here's yet another issue. Teams are tanking. Miami is literally projected to lose 115 games this year. Kansas City is projected to lose 107. Baltimore is projected to lose 109. These teams are trying to be bad because in MLB (and every other North American major league) teams are rewarded for being horrible. While I'm not arguing for Miami to be relegated to AAA like in soccer, because that's a bad idea, I do think there should be some way to stop teams from trying to be so ridiculously bad that they don't have 10 wins by May. (Miami did that.) But as long as teams are rewarded for being bad, they will try to be bad. Maybe drop the draft pick 10 spots if a team loses more than 100 games. Something to stop teams from deliberately losing.

So teams aren't playing to win and teams want players who have low salary commitments. How do we stop it? A salary floor of at least $120 million. If you aren't at that level, the remainder gets paid directly to each player-so if you're $4 million under $120 million, like Atlanta is as of now, then $4 million gets paid to each player. That way, teams are really incentivized to not run a $62 million payroll like Tampa is doing (not that it isn't working, because Tampa is weird that way). At $120 million, 11 teams would be under the floor: Atlanta, Detroit, Toronto, San Diego, Kansas City, the White Sox, Oakland, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Miami, and Tampa Bay. Of these, only Tampa, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, and San Diego are near a .500 winning percentage. The rest of these teams are tanking. So you'd force them not to run bare-bones payrolls and actually do stuff with their money. Of course, Tampa has a $219 million total revenue, so this may not be remotely feasible, but it's a way to stop players from being out of jobs.

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FRENCH OPEN PREDICTIONS

ROBBIE WERDIGER

Favorites:

Dominic Thiem-Thiem is my pick to win Roland Garros this year. The clay offers Thiem time to execute his notoriously exaggerated wind-up on the forehand, which results in one of the fastest shots in tennis. Having already made a Roland Garros Final and beaten both Federer and Nadal on clay this year, it is without question that Thiem, when at his best, can take down anyone on the red dirt.

Rafael Nadal- It is blatantly obvious that the 11-time French Open champion is the Las Vegas favorite to win Roland Garros. Nadal is fully healthy, yet has had a few hiccups this clay season, failing to win Barcelona, Monte Carlo, or Madrid, where he has had unprecedented success in previous years. The question remains if Nadal can find his top game, at which he is invincible on the clay.

Novak Djokovic- Djokovic is the number one player in the world and had a tremendous comeback season in 2018 followed by a win in Australia to achieve an astounding 15 grand slam titles. However, Djokovic has been a complete mess since Australia, losing early to lower-ranked players in a variety of tournaments. Despite a short slump, Djokovic might have just regained his groove with a win in Madrid, one of the biggest tournaments leading up to the French. The tennis world believes that Djokovic will regain his motivation at the second grand slam of the year, but doubts exist due to his inconsistent performance this year.

Dark Horses:

Roger Federer-Federer has had a solid season so far, racking up two titles in Dubai and Miami. Roger would normally be a favorite for any tournament, but this is a peculiar situation. Federer skipped the clay court season the last two years and has not played the French Open since 2015. This clay season, Federer was a point away from beating Thiem in Madrid, but couldn't pull through. In recent years Roger has become more aggressive to shorten his matches, and I'm not sure how well Roger's body can hold up if he plays some tight and long early round matches. However, Roger is arguably the second-best clay court player in the world and has shown us countless times that he's still got some magic left and can achieve a Federer miracle.

Stefanos Tsitsipas-The 6'4" Greek freak of tennis, is headlining the Next Gen players and challenging Zverev's fame. This year, Stefanos has beaten Federer, Djokovic, and Nadal and is very comfortable on the clay, having won a title in Estoril and beaten Nadal in the semis of Madrid before falling to Djokovic. Look for Tsitsipas to make it through to the second week of Roland Garros, and potentially make a run to the quarters or semis.

Fabio Fognini- Fognini is an ultra-talented Italian who has been on tour for a while, currently ranked twelfth in the world. Fognini beat Nadal in the final of Monte Carlo to win his first masters 1000 title. Fabio has all the skills needed to compete to the later rounds of a slam, but the question remains if his effort level will be at full strength.

Daniil Medvedev-This Russian with a wicked two-handed backhand has made his mark on the tour this year. Medvedev beat Djokovic to reach the semis at Monte Carlo and fell to Nishikori in the final of Barcelona. Although Medvedev will most likely not win the tournament, look for him to push through to the later rounds.

Christian Garin- This-22-year old has jumped to 33 in the world in what seems like only a month. The Chilean has already won two ATP 250 titles on clay in the last few weeks, beating players such as Zverev, Schwartzman, and Cecchinato. I am looking forward to seeing how Garin competes in the

best-of-five format.

Busts:

Alex Zverev-Zverev has been plainly terrible this season and seems to be in a confused mental state. He has yet to defend any of his points this clay season and will drop in the rankings. On top of this, Zverev has failed to breakthrough at the slams and live up to expectations. Look for him to be upset in the early rounds.

Nick Kyrgios-Kyrgios is the most talented player on tour but resorts to tanking and showboating during most of his matches. Kyrgios has not been focused this season and I don't see anything changing heading into the French Open. However, he did win a tournament in Acapulco earlier this year after beating Nadal, Zverev, and Isner, which shows that he can break out at any moment.

Grigor Dimitrov-Dimitrov has fallen to 46 in the world, out of seeding range for the grand slams. If he gets matched up with a seed or clay court specialist early, I don't see him pulling through.

Denis Shapovalov-Viewing Denis for the first time on clay, it has become apparent that Shapo is not a clay court player. He has failed to win a match on clay thus far and is a good bet to get upset.

http://www.zimbio.com/photos/Novak+Djokovic/2018+French+Open+Day+Ten/HRRZ

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/464855992784093407/

BRADLEY BENNET

The Top 25 ATP in 2025

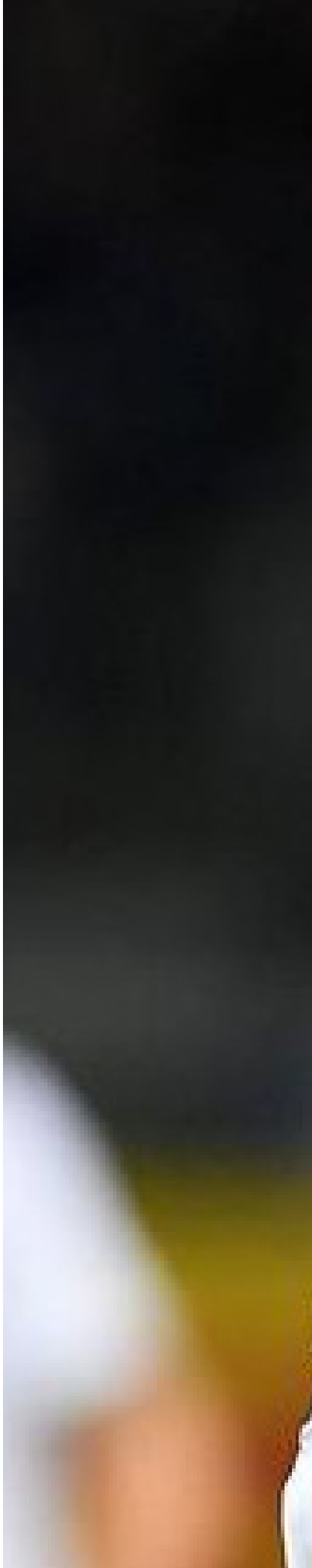
The last decade of men's tennis has been dominated by three players: Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic, and Rafael Nadal. Although it has been entertaining to watch these three masters of the game compete at a high level for an extended period of time, it is time to ask the question: who is part of the next wave? We have started to see signs of young players rising up the rankings in the last few years, so it is now time to predict who will sit atop the rankings when the "Big Three" can no longer play their best tennis. Here is my projected top 25 male tennis players in the year 2025.

1) Stefanos Tsitsipas, Greece
2) Dominic Thiem, Austria
3) Alexander Zverev, Germany
4) Borna Coric, Croatia
5) Felix Auger-Aliassime, Canada
6) Kyle Edmund, Great Britain
7) Daniil Medvedev, Russia
8) Alex de Minaur, Australia
9) Karen Khachanov, Russia
10) Denis Shapovalov, Canada
11) Hubert Hurkacz, Poland
12) Christian Garin, Chile
13) Lucas Pouille, France
14) Nikoloz Basilashvili, Georgia
15) Frances Tiafoe, United States
16) Nick Kyrgios, Australia
17) Laslo Djere, Serbia
18) Marton Fucsovics, Hungary
19) Filip Krajinovic, Serbia
20) Jaime Munar, Spain
21) Lorenzo Sonego, Italy
22) Taylor Fritz, United States
23) Casper Ruud, Norway
24) Andrey Rublev, Russia
25) Hyeon Chung, South Korea

BERK BALKIR

Life for Real Madrid and Ronaldo After the Transfer

Nearly everybody in the world knows the name Cristiano Ronaldo, regardless of whether or not they follow soccer - a superstar athlete who in recent years is as famous for his commercials as he is for his abilities on the field. But what many may not know about CR7 is his undoubted importance to a club's offense, especially to Real Madrid. Arriving in Madrid in 2009, Cristiano brought a level of sophistication and undeniable talent to the Los Blancos lineup. Madrid would immediately reap the benefits of having a player like Ronaldo, as they scored the most goals in the league that year and would finish second to Barcelona by only three points. In the following seasons, Ronaldo continued to be a menace, racking up 311 goals in 292 games, and winning 16 trophies for them in only eight years. On July 10, 2018, the improbable happened when Ronaldo was bought by the Turin-based, Italian club, Juventus. Ronaldo has gone on to continue his marvelous play with the Italian club, already scoring 21 goals, third in the Serie A, trailing only Fabio Quagliarella and Duvan Zapata. Additionally, Ronaldo has been the cornerstone to another Juventus championship and has had a good season in the Champions League, with Juventus advancing into the quarterfinals only to be eliminated by Ajax. While the transfer news was great for Juventus and Ronaldo, Real Madrid felt rather displeased with the thought of losing their top goal scorer, and Cristiano's absence has been extremely apparent thus far. Real Madrid has struggled to score goals as they have only scored 12 goals in eight games and have been shut out for the past 400 minutes of play during one point of the season. Their lack of goal-scoring has also hurt the performance of the team in the standings, as Real Madrid currently sits in third place. The team is playing as a set of individuals, instead of as a unified team, with everybody attempting to play the way Ronaldo did, but to no avail. Although many would argue that this is directly correlated to the fact that Real Madrid has also lost their coach, Zinedine Zidane, the fact that Zidane's brilliance could not make up for ronaldo's absence in the few months he coached the team this year weakens this argument. While Madrid has tried a couple of different strikers as replacements for Ronaldo, none can replicate the explosiveness and wicked finishing that Ronaldo brought to the pitch every single game. As Real Madrid relies on the talent of their high-paid superstars, losing the centerpiece of this trophy machine affected the team dynamics present in the squad and gave way to the current Real Madrid team. While many think that coach will be able to change the play of the team in order to score more goals, a lingering effect of Ronaldo's transfer will be visible for years to come.



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