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AFTER A RECORD-BREAKING ROOKIE YEAR, **TREY MANCINI** IS READY TO STEP BACK INTO THE BATTER'S BOX AND PROVE HIS 2017 SEASON WASN'T A FLUKE

BY STEVE GINSBURG > PAGE 16

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ONE FAN'S OPINION



Chris Davis

What's Really Ailing Orioles Slugger Chris Davis?

★ STAN "THE FAN" CHARLES



Chris Davis has always had a problem with strikeouts. But last year's struggles were especially painful to watch.

Not only did the highest-paid player in Orioles history strike out 195 times, but he struck out looking 75 times -- often with men on base.

Trying to figure out why Davis had so many called third strikes is not an easy task.

According to Camden Chat's Nick Cicere, Davis' swing rate at balls in the strike zone was 72.2 percent in 2015. That number dropped to 64.1 in 2016 and to 60 percent in 2017 -- the 12th-lowest mark among qualified hitters. At the same time, Davis swung and missed at 14.2 percent of the pitches he saw, the 10th-worst mark in baseball.

So what becomes painfully obvious is that Davis struggled whether he swung the bat or not.

Throughout the 2016 and 2017 seasons, many said Davis simply wasn't adjusting to the way teams were shifting on him. He wasn't taking what the pitchers were giving him -- either a bunt or a line single to left field.

Davis hit .215 last season with a .309 on-base percentage, and while raising those numbers would certainly be nice, it isn't the answer.

If the Orioles are going to contend in 2018 and in the probable post-Manny Machado years to come, they need to get their money's worth out of Davis. They need the Davis of 2013 and 2015, when he hit 53 home runs with

138 RBIs and 47 homers with 117 RBIs, respectively.

During both of those monster seasons, Davis recorded a .361 or better OBP -- despite striking out 199 and 208 times, respectively.

Prior to signing his big free-agent deal, Davis had one eye-opening bad season in 2014. However, there appeared to be a major mitigating factor. Davis had failed to apply for a waiver that would have allowed him to take the prescription medicine he needs to combat his ADHD. By 2015, he was back on medicine, and in his free-agent pending season he returned to Crush Davis form. So entering free agency, the Orioles were justified in identifying Davis as a primary keeper, thinking if he were on his medication, everything else would fall into place.

But for those who strongly supported the club's need to sign Davis, I don't think anyone thought Orioles owner Peter Angelos would bid against himself the entire time and make such a miscalculation on Davis' value. Nobody in the pro-Davis camp thought it would take \$161 million and seven years.

It seems that the money has put an extraordinary level of pressure on Davis. But I think Davis' psychological issues border on what is known in sports as a case of the yips.

The yips is a term used to describe a sudden loss of a player's routine use of motor skills to accomplish a simple task he or she may have done hundreds of times before. There is no specific reason the yips come on, and there is no known cure that delivers an athlete back to a pre-problematic performance level. Some players have been able to get beyond them, but all too often the yips may have a significant impact on an athlete's ability.

Davis recently spoke to reporters in Sarasota, Fla., about taking too many strikes.

"There were too many called third strikes," Davis told reporters. "There were too many called first strikes. There were too many times when I was starting the at-bat 0-2 and hadn't even swung the bat, hadn't taken the bat off my shoulder. That's just not who I am as a hitter. It never has been."

One of the most celebrated cases of the yips came from former Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Steve Blass, who late in his career suddenly couldn't throw strikes. Blass beat the Orioles in Game 7 of the 1971 World Series, but two years later, he recorded 84 walks in just 88.2 innings.

A more current example of the yips can be seen in Chicago Cubs left-hander John Lester, who for some reason can't throw the ball to the first baseman without great distress. This year, Lester is reportedly even working on a pick-off throw to first where he will intentionally bounce the ball to the first baseman.

Second basemen and catchers also seem to have a penchant for the yips. Many fans have heard of second basemen Steve Sax and Chuck Knoblauch, who both mysteriously could not throw to first on grounders without fear of throwing wildly. Catchers Jarrod Saltalamacchia and Mackey Sasser were mysteriously afflicted with an inability to throw the ball back to the pitcher without the dramatics of throwing the ball into the outfield.

This brings us back to Davis. I thought the Davis signing was a smart move at the time. However, if he is indeed dealing with a case of the yips, all bets are off on his ability to deliver a return on his expensive contract. •

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FRONT ROW



MARK CONLON/ANTARCTIC ICE MARATHON

Robert Gensler

Baltimore Native Robert Gensler, 60, Completes Antarctic Ice Marathon

There are few tasks more daunting than running a marathon.

Marathons differ from most other competitions because the runners are typically not professional athletes. They are often everyday people who train to run 26.2 miles. Competing successfully in

a marathon requires an enormous commitment of time, and then there is the pain and wear-and-tear that marathon runners inflict on their bodies. Most marathoners can at least anticipate weather conditions appropriate for a grueling race -- unless you're 60-year-old Robert Gensler.

Gensler, a Baltimore native who attended Pikesville High School, competed in what is known as the Ice Mara-

thon Nov. 24, 2017, held annually in Antarctica. It was his seventh marathon in 2017.

While working as a portfolio manager for more than 20 years, Gensler has travelled extensively -- visiting 83 countries -- and lived in Africa, London, Singapore and the United States. He's always had a passion for running and took up marathons on a dare from a coworker. Then he fell in love with it.

"My coworker was supposed to be running a marathon, and six weeks before the race he got injured," Gensler said. "We were talking at the office and he said, 'Gensler, you'll run,' and I did and I've loved it ever since."

After his first race, Gensler competed in a couple more marathons -- including one in London in 1983 -- before focusing more on his career. Now retired, Gensler returned to one of his biggest passions.

As if competing in a marathon wasn't challenging enough, Gensler decided to take it a step further. He pledged to compete in seven marathons in 2017.

"Six for each decade and one for good measure," he said.

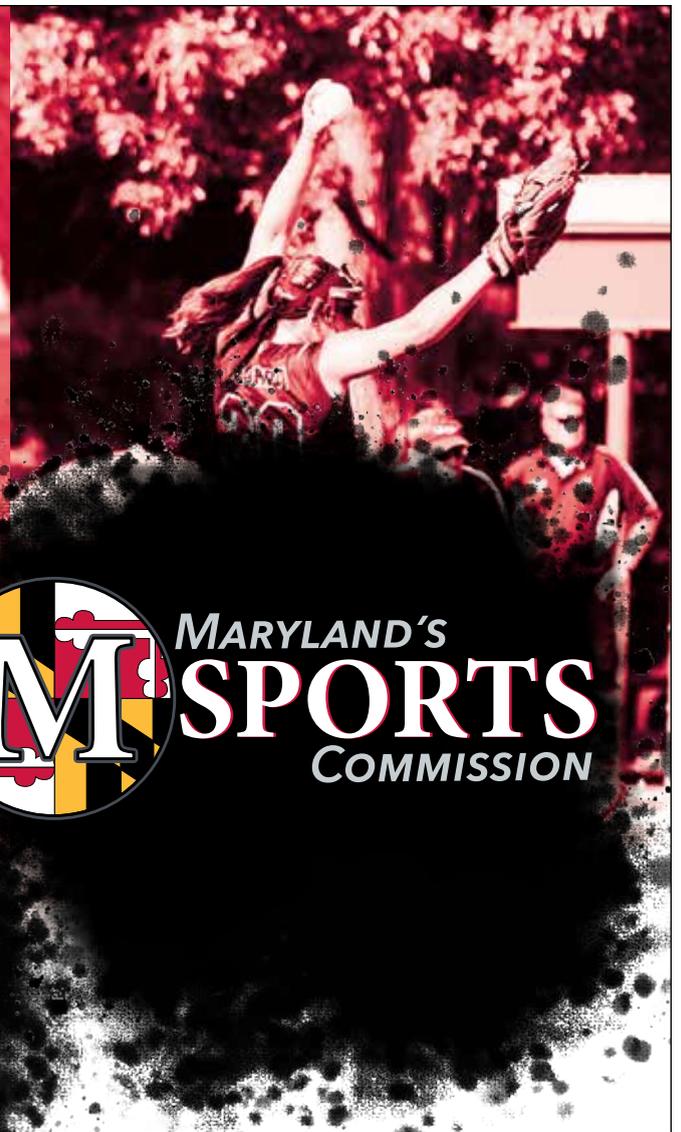
Gensler completed marathons in San Francisco, Chicago, Houston and Baltimore. But it all culminated in Antarctica.

"I was actually going down there to do my photography, which is another passion of mine," Gensler said. "That's when I heard about this race and thought while I'm down there I might as well do this, it would be something I've never done before and a great experience."

Gensler went to Antarctica, and with snow and ice covering the ground, ran a full marathon. People from all over the world came to participate, and Gensler loved the experience and the sights.

"I loved meeting people, and there were some really interesting people who made their way down," Gensler said. "One person I met actually dressed up as a pear for the race and apparently she dresses up in costumes for all the races she participates in."

Added Gensler: "I love the running community. In no



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other sport do you get the same sense of community that you do in running, because when you are running and training together everyone roots for each other and there are no enemies.”

Gensler prepared for the Ice Marathon like he would for any other race, but nothing could prepare him for the wind and horrible traction.

“You’re running in minus-25 to minus-30 degree temperatures, but that’s not even the hardest part,” Gensler said. “Running across the glaciers, it is almost impossible to get footing. I would say it is akin to running on sand.”

Despite having to take some breaks, Gensler completed the race and finished before four others out of a total of about 30 runners. He said he felt a sense of accomplishment in easily the most difficult environment he ever raced in.

“My body just wouldn’t let me keep running no matter how much I wanted to,” Gensler said. “I typically will always try to run for the entirety of the race, but for this one, I had no choice. I’m just happy I finished in front of the pear.”

-- EVAN RAIGRODSKI

Bill Aimed At Banning Youth Tackle Football Stirs Debate, Conversation

A Maryland House of Delegates committee recently killed a bill, which would have, among other things, prohibited children from playing tackle football until they reach high school.

The bill was overwhelmingly rejected by the Ways and Means Committee March 5, when 19 people voted to kill the bill and three abstained from voting, according to reports.

Still, the bill stirred up a lot of debate and emotion about whether children should be participating in sports that could result in head injury.

When first proposed earlier in the session as a “public health bill,” the bill proposed setting up many “restrictions and requirements aimed at addressing child head injuries from sports.” The bill specifically included elementary and middle school-aged children participating in public school or youth programs.

The legislation targeted youth football as well as soccer where it aimed to eliminate heading the ball.

Del. Terri Hill, the Howard County Democrat who filed the legislation, recently said she wasn’t terribly optimistic about the bill passing but wanted to start a conversation.

“At the very least, this is an issue that we need to have a serious discussion about,” Hill said during an interview with Glenn Clark Radio Feb. 8. “We need to recognize that we’re putting our kids at risk in ways that we never appreciated before.”

Recently, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) has become a hot-button issue in sports, particularly in the NFL. CTE is a progressive degenerative brain disorder, cases of which have been discovered more and more recently in those who’ve played football for a long time.

The issue of head injuries has reached the youth level, with many hoping the proposed bill would limit the amount of head trauma athletes are exposed to throughout their careers. Some, however, felt the bill was trying to do too much.

Reggie White has a unique perspective on the issue. He has been the head football coach at Milford Mill High School for 16 years, and he spent four seasons in the NFL as a defensive lineman. White believes completely doing away with tackling in youth football is not the answer.

He suggested making some changes that will help the children and the sport.

“I think that there are some adjustments that need to be made to youth football,” White said. “You can make adjustments to how many games they play as they grow up.

You’re taking the rights from the parents, and you’re telling the parents what they can and cannot do.”

White suggested giving more information to those who coach youth football.

Ernest T. Jones is the interim head football coach at Morgan State and has a 10-year-old who has been playing tackle football since he was 5 years old.

Jones was not a fan of the bill.

“I would not be excited about that bill going through and how it would stop my son from playing,” Jones said. “I wouldn’t want him to stop doing something he loves.”

Jones said he understands what the legislators are saying from a medical and a protection standpoint. However, he agreed with White on one big point: make sure the coaches know the right ways to do things.

“They should have training so that coaches should understand proper training,” Jones said. “They should be teaching them how to teach. Do what’s needed to teach youth coaches the right way to coach. As long as they’re teaching it from a fundamental standpoint, and the [kids] are wearing protective gear that’s been approved, then they should be fine.”

Maryland is the fourth state that’s tried to enact a bill like this. *Sports Illustrated* reported on March 1 that an Illinois bill “to ban tackle football for children under the age of 12 has passed through committee and will head to the state’s House for a full debate.”

New York and California have also tried similar measures. Such statewide legislation has not been passed anywhere.

As for Maryland, the bill could resurface in the future, but it will be up to Hill and others as to how it’s presented.

“What we are talking about is organized sports below a certain age,” Hill told Glenn Clark Radio. “This is not about banning football. We are doing damage. We should recognize that [and] should make sure kids are protected from damage to the brain.”

-- JEFF SEIDEL

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Kevin Plank Says 'Scars Are Cool' As He Looks Back On Under Armour's 2017

★ **HOLDEN WILEN**
Baltimore Business Journal



Under Armour Inc. "learned a lot of lessons" in 2017 that CEO Kevin Plank said will help the sportswear maker make a comeback and turn itself around.

In a recent interview with high-energy CNBC analyst Jim Cramer, Plank said Baltimore-based Under Armour's entire organization remains "focused as a business and we're confident in what we're doing." He also said the company is "the best at getting better."

Under Armour was a Wall Street darling for years with its fast-paced growth. But the 22-year-old company tumbled in 2017 amid a slowdown in North American sales and declining margins. Its stock fell almost 50 percent during the year.

Then, the brand began to show signs of a possible turnaround in the fourth quarter with stronger sales than analysts anticipated.

Appearing on Cramer's "Mad Mon-

ey," Plank said 2017 was a year for getting better and Under Armour made the changes that are necessary to be a "loud brand and a quiet company" that does \$5 billion in revenue. He also said the

company is better off because of what happened in 2017.

"I've got an 11-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy, and I've told them scars are cool," Plank said. "Scars are cool because they remind us of where we've been and remind us of what we've seen, but they also know that we're focused and we're moving."

Cramer said he thinks Under Armour "is poised to turn around" and that Plank has the chip on his shoulder that helped make Under Armour so successful in the first place.

Under Armour, which reported 2017 revenue of \$4.98 billion, battles top competitors Nike Inc. and Adidas in the sportswear industry. •

"SCARS ARE COOL BECAUSE THEY REMIND US OF WHERE WE'VE BEEN AND REMIND US OF WHAT WE'VE SEEN, BUT THEY ALSO KNOW THAT WE'RE FOCUSED AND WE'RE MOVING."

> **KEVIN PLANK**

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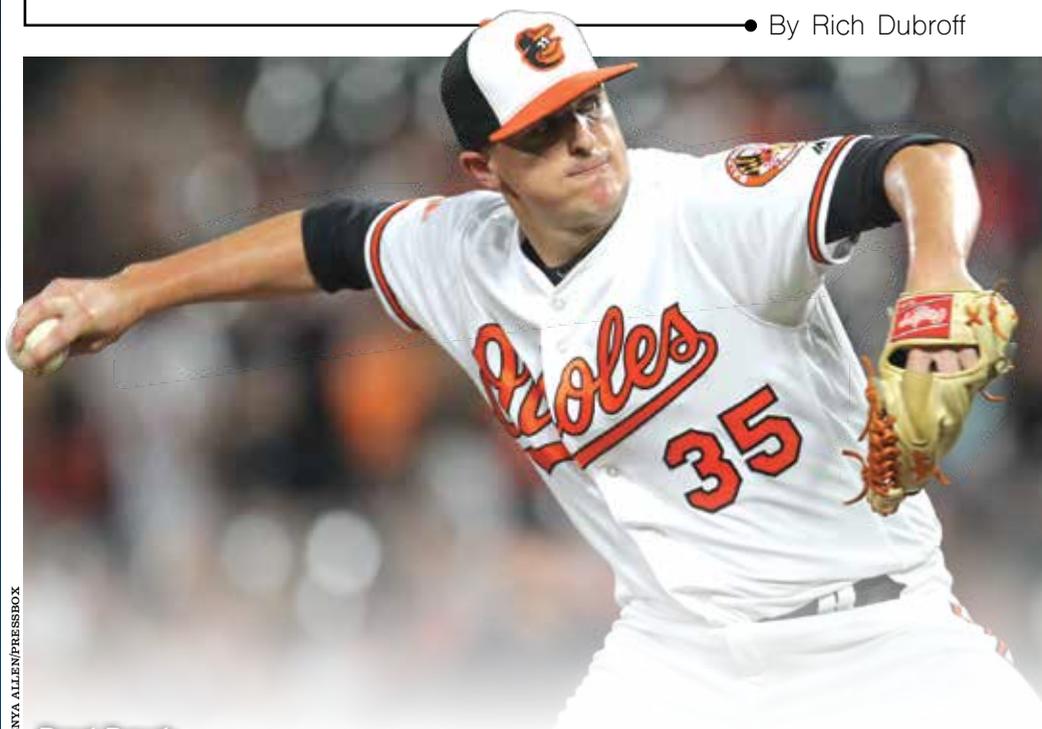


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10 Questions With Orioles Reliever Brad Brach

• By Rich Dubroff



KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX

Brad Brach

Q1 *What's a habit you wish you didn't have?*
I like to gamble a little bit -- casinos and horse racing, not that often, but every once in a while.

Q2 *What's your favorite guilty pleasure fast-food order?*
Cheesy Gordita Crunch from Taco Bell.

Q3 *If you could trade places with any TV or movie character, who would it be?*
I'd want to be the coach from "Remember the Titans." That's my favorite movie. I just think it's a good message. Denzel Washington's role would be pretty cool.

Q4 *What's your favorite pregame meal or snack?*
I like to eat beets every day. I'd say my favorite meal is probably some kind of chicken with rice or vegetables.

Q5 *Who was your favorite sports star when you were a kid?*
I loved Cal Ripken when I was growing up.

Q6 *What would you be doing if you weren't playing baseball?*
I'd be a teacher or a coach.

Q7 *How would you rate your cooking skills?*
If I have the directions and all the ingredients in front of me, I can put together a pretty good meal. Best dish? I can do chicken quesadillas.

Q8 *What's your hidden talent?*
I can do landscaping pretty well.

Q9 *What is your go-to karaoke song?*
Usually it's something by Justin Bieber.

Q10 *Do you have any pets?*
A female Labrador/dachshund mix named Belle.

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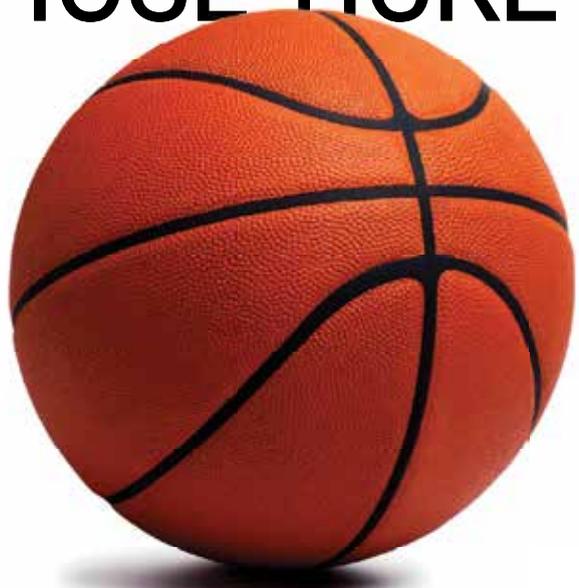
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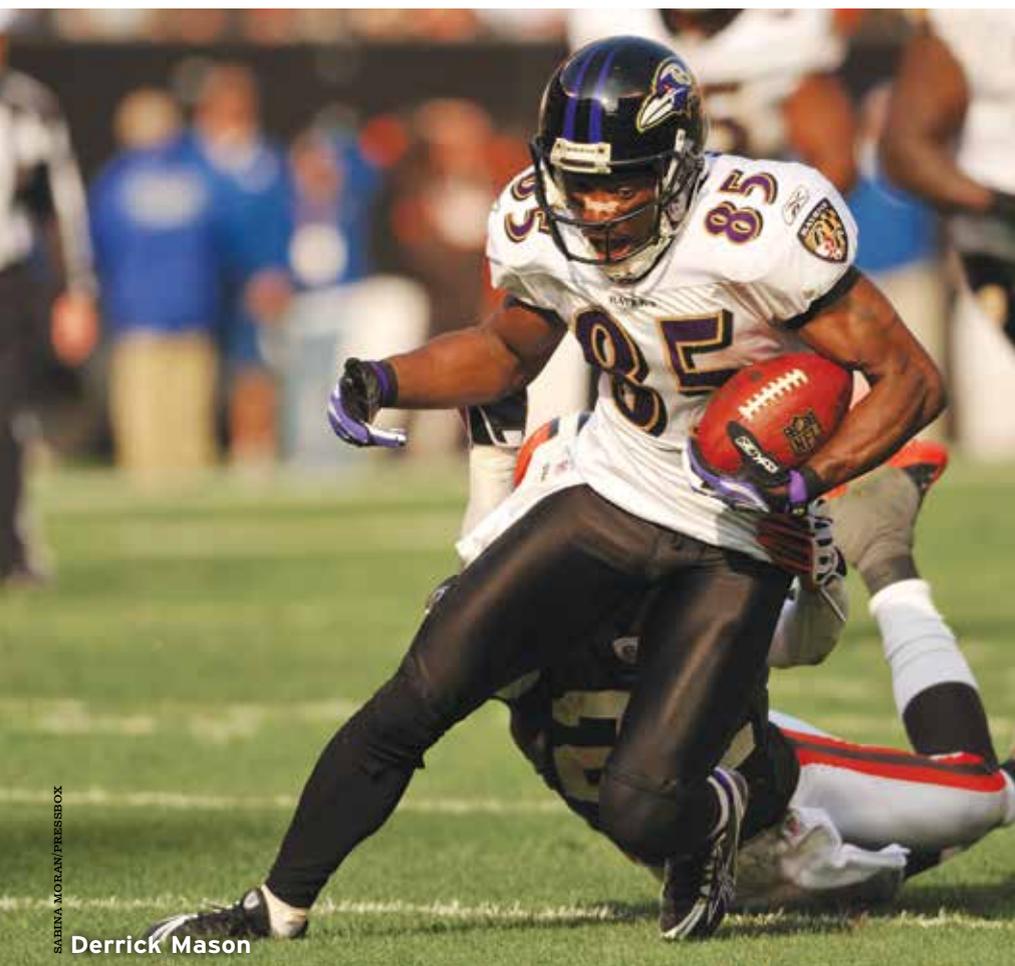
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RAVENS REPORT



SABINA MORAN/PRESSEBOX
Derrick Mason

Ravens' Top Five Offseason Free-Agent Signings

★ **BO SMOLKA**

Now that free agency has begun, the Ravens will be looking at all available options to bolster a team that has missed the playoffs for three straight years and has significant needs, particularly on offense. At his annual State of the Ravens news conference Feb. 2, team owner Steve Bisciotti said, "I think that we can make a splash and help us on the way to getting our offense clicking better."

It's not clear what type of "splash" Bisciotti was referring to, and the Ravens' salary cap limitations might take them out of the market for some players, but splashy free-agent signings have not traditionally been the way outgoing general manager Ozzie Newsome does business.

Last season represented something of a departure from that, as the Ravens struck early in free agency, signing safety Tony Jefferson to a four-year, \$34 million deal (\$19 million guaranteed) and then re-signing defensive lineman Brandon Williams to a five-year, \$52.5 million deal (\$29.5 million guaranteed).

More often, the Ravens stand on the sideline while the money flies during the early free-agency frenzy, then go bargain shopping later -- think running back Justin Forsett in 2014 or linebacker Daryl Smith a year earlier.

As Newsome continues to work the phones and salary cap guru Pat Moriarity continues to work the calculator in their quest to land 2018 free agents, it's worth looking back at five of the Ravens' best offseason free-agency signings in team history. Note that this list does not include players who were signed as free agents in the fall after being let go by other teams, such as defensive lineman Kelly Gregg or running back Alex Collins, nor does it include players acquired via trade, such as quarterback Steve McNair or wide receiver Anquan Boldin.

1. DB Rod Woodson

The Ravens signed the former Steeler in 1998 just before his 33rd birthday and three years removed from a torn Achilles tendon. Woodson never missed a game in four seasons with the Ravens, led the league in interceptions in 1999 with seven (then a franchise record) and was an integral part of the Ravens' record-setting defense that led them to the Super Bowl

title after the 2000 season.

Woodson, who made the transition from cornerback to safety, totaled 20 interceptions as a Raven, five of which he returned for touchdowns. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2009, becoming the first former Raven enshrined in Canton, Ohio.

2. DL Michael McCrary

Coming off a season in which he recorded 13.5 sacks for the Seattle Seahawks, McCrary, a former seventh-round draft pick, was signed by the Ravens in 1997 as they began to build what would become the league's best defense. The Ravens had the league's 25th-best defense in 1997, but they had the No. 2-rated defense three years in a row from 1999-2001. The 2000 team set NFL records for the fewest points (165) and the fewest rushing yards allowed (970) during a 16-game season.

McCrary had 14.5 sacks in 1998, the first of his two Pro Bowl seasons in Baltimore. He finished second on the Ravens to Ray Lewis in tackles in 1998 (102) and 2000 (103). McCrary had six sacks during the 2000 postseason and totaled 51 in six seasons in Baltimore (1997-2002). He was inducted into the Ravens' Ring of Honor in 2004.

3. WR Derrick Mason

After a 2004 season in which the Ravens ranked 31st in the league in passing and had no receiver with more than 421 yards, the team was desperate for an offensive spark. The Ravens landed Mason, a former conference rival who was coming off his fourth straight 1,000-yard season for the Tennessee Titans. At age 31, Mason immediately delivered in Baltimore. He set a franchise record with 86 catches in 2005, then topped that with 103 catches -- still a franchise best -- in 2007.

Throughout six seasons with the Ravens from 2005-2010, Mason topped 1,000 yards four times, and he remains the franchise record holder in receptions with 471. His mark of 5,777 receiving yards is more than 2,000 better than any other

wide receiver in team history. (Torrey Smith ranks second at 3,591).

Mason played one more season after leaving Baltimore, and then returned to announce his retirement in 2012. At that news conference, Newsome said, "Over the 16 years, 17 years that we've been here, we've signed a lot of free agents, a lot of them. But I don't know if there is any one player over the span of their career that did more for this organization than Derrick Mason did."

4. TE Shannon Sharpe

Looking to upgrade an offense that ranked 25th in passing in 1999, the Ravens signed the 31-year-old Sharpe to a four-year deal in 2000 after he had four All-Pro seasons with the Denver Broncos. In his first year in Baltimore, Sharpe and the Ravens won the Super Bowl.

Granted, the record-setting defense deserves much of the credit for that title run, but Sharpe led the Ravens in receptions (67), receiving yards (810) and touchdown catches (five), and his 96-yard touchdown catch -- still the longest pass play in franchise history -- proved to be the only touchdown during a 16-3 win against the Oakland Raiders in the AFC Championship Game. The future Hall of Famer ended up playing just two seasons with the Ravens, totaling 140 catches, 1,621 yards and seven touchdowns.

5. C Matt Birk

The Ravens signed the then-32-year-old Birk to a three-year deal in March 2009, luring the Minnesota native away from the hometown Vikings, with whom Birk had made the Pro Bowl six times in 10 seasons. Birk solidified the Ravens up front, and although he contemplated retirement after his first three-year deal, he re-signed with the Ravens in 2012 and promptly won a Super Bowl title.

Birk, a Harvard grad who was named the NFL's Walter Payton Man of the Year in 2011, never missed a game in four seasons with the Ravens and retired after the Super Bowl win. •



SABINA MORAN/PRESSEBOX
Matt Birk

2018 NFL Mock Draft

★ **KEN ZALIS**



Now that the 2018 NFL Scouting Combine is finished, here's a look at my preliminary first-round mock draft for the 2018 NFL Draft. Below, you will find the needs for each team plus my projected pick.

1. CLEVELAND (0-16)

TEAM NEEDS: QB, WR, DB
PICK: Saquon Barkley, RB, Penn State

2. TRADE CLEVELAND FROM NEW YORK GIANTS

TEAM NEEDS: QB, WR, DB
PICK: Josh Allen, QB, Wyoming

3. INDIANAPOLIS (4-12)

TEAM NEEDS: CB, Pass Rusher, OL
PICK: Bradley Chubb, DE, N.C. State

4. TRADE: NEW YORK GIANTS (3-13) FROM CLEVELAND

TEAM NEEDS: QB, WR, DB
PICK: Sam Darnold, QB, USC

5. DENVER (5-11)

TEAM NEEDS: QB, OL, TE
PICK: Josh Rosen, QB, UCLA

6. NEW YORK JETS (5-11)

TEAM NEEDS: QB, CB, End Rusher
PICK: Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma

7. TAMPA BAY (5-11)

TEAM NEEDS: DB, RB, OG
PICK: Minkah Fitzpatrick, DB, Alabama

8. CHICAGO (5-11)

TEAM NEEDS: WR, CB, LB
PICK: Calvin Ridley, WR, Alabama

9. SAN FRANCISCO (6-10)

TEAM NEEDS: Edge Rusher, OG/C, CB
PICK: Tremaine Edmunds, LB, Virginia Tech

10. OAKLAND (6-10)

TEAM NEEDS: OT, WR, Defense
PICK: Roquan Smith, ILB, Georgia

11. MIAMI (6-10)

TEAM NEEDS: OL, TE, QB, WR, CB
PICK: Denzel Ward, CB, Ohio State

12. CINCINNATI (7-9)

TEAM NEEDS: OL, QB, DL, LB
PICK: Quenton Nelson, G, Notre Dame

13. WASHINGTON (7-9)

TEAM NEEDS: DL, LB, DB, WR/TE, QB
PICK: Vita Vea, DT, Washington

14. GREEN BAY (7-9)

TEAM NEEDS: TE, OL, End Rusher
PICK: Marcus Davenport, DE, Texas-San Antonio

15. ARIZONA (8-8)

TEAM NEEDS: QB, OL, DB
PICK: Mike McGlinchey, OT, Notre Dame

16. BALTIMORE (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: WR, OL, TE
PICK: Courtland Sutton, WR, SMU

17. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: DT, LB, OL, QB
PICK: Da'Ron Payne, DT, Alabama

18. SEATTLE (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: OG, DB, WR, TE
PICK: Derwin James, S, Florida State

19. DALLAS (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: Defense, OG, WR
PICK: Isaiah Wynn, G/C, Georgia

20. DETROIT (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: DL, OG/C, CB
PICK: Taven Bryan, DT, Florida

21. BUFFALO (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: QB, DL, LB, WR, CB, C
PICK: Josh Jackson, CB, Iowa

22. BUFFALO - FROM KANSAS CITY (10-6)

TEAM NEEDS: QB, DL, LB, WR, C
PICK: Billy Price, C, Ohio State

23. LOS ANGELES RAMS (11-5)

TEAM NEEDS: OG/C, WR, DL, LB, DB
PICK: Rashaan Evans, LB, Alabama

24. CAROLINA (11-5)

TEAM NEEDS: WR, OL, DL, DB
PICK: Donte Jackson, CB, LSU

25. TENNESSEE (9-7)

TEAM NEEDS: OL, RB, CB
PICK: Will Hernandez, G, Texas - El Paso

26. ATLANTA (10-6)

TEAM NEEDS: DL, WR, OG
PICK: Harold Landry, DE, Boston College

27. NEW ORLEANS (11-5)

TEAM NEEDS: DL, LB, CB, WR
PICK: Lamar Jackson, QB, Louisville

28. PITTSBURGH (13-3)

TEAM NEEDS: LB, DB
PICK: Leighton Vander Esch, LB, Boise State

29. JACKSONVILLE (10-6)

TEAM NEEDS: OG, MLB, QB, TE
PICK: Hayden Hurst, TE, South Carolina

30. MINNESOTA (13-3)

TEAM NEEDS: OG, QB, CB
PICK: Connor Williams, OT/G, Texas

31. NEW ENGLAND (13-3)

TEAM NEEDS: CB, OT, DL
PICK: Kolton Miller, OT, UCLA

32. PHILADELPHIA (13-3)

TEAM NEEDS: LB, OT, DE
PICK: Sam Hubbard, DE, Ohio State •

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NEW ENGLAND

PHILADELPHIA

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4										
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* No company or person may enter this pool to win prize money directly. All proceeds will be awarded to the charities in the names of the companies or persons purchasing the winning boxes.

Spoiler alert: we don't actually know how the 2018 Baltimore Orioles season is going to play out. I mean, we all have our opinions about how the team was constructed and what it's capable of, but none of us actually know how it will all end. In fairness, the Orioles haven't missed the playoffs in an even year since 2010.

But hey, let's make some predictions anyway. Here are 15 bold predictions for the 2018 Orioles. Well, bold-ish, anyway.



BOLD PREDICTIONS FOR 2018 ORIOLES

01 JULY WILL BE THE MOST EXCITING MONTH OF THE YEAR ... EXCEPT FOR JULY 31, OF COURSE.

If things go better than expected for the first few months of the season, we're going to discuss the possibility of the Orioles adding pieces to make a run before some of their top players (third baseman Manny Machado, center fielder Adam Jones, injured closer Zach Britton) become free agents. It'll be the talk of the town for all of July. Inevitably, the team will deal a low-level pitcher to acquire a player who won't make enough of a difference to justify the move. If things go poorly for the Orioles, we'll spend the entire month discussing the possibility of dealing those players only for the team to say, "We tried, but we just couldn't get enough in exchange for them." We've seen this movie before.

02 A RULE 5 PICK MIGHT DO SOMETHING THAT WILL MAKE US SAY, "MAN, MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING HERE" BUT INEVITABLY WE'LL LATER SAY, "DID THEY REALLY GIVE UP A ROSTER SPOT FOR THIS?"

By far the most successful Rule 5 pick of executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette's era in Baltimore has been former infielder Ryan Flaherty, who has a 1.6 career WAR. The Birds have no shortage of choices this year, with last year's Rule 5 pick Anthony Santander needing to be on the roster for the first month-and-a-half the season, plus this year's pitching picks Nestor Cortes, Pedro Araujo and Jose Mesa Jr. Undoubtedly, we'll end up being intrigued by at least one of them and we'll probably regret it.

03 SPEAKING OF FLAHERTY, HE'S DEFINITELY GOING TO BE AN ORIOLE AGAIN AT SOME POINT THIS SEASON.

I'm not saying there's no chance he succeeds with the Philadelphia Phillies. I'm just saying there's no way manager Buck Showalter spends an entire baseball season without his little buddy.

04 THERE WILL BE ROUGHLY AS MANY STRIKEOUTS FROM ORIOLES HITTERS AS THERE WILL BE CRAB MAG AND CHEESE DOGS CONSUMED BY ORIOLES FANS.

If sluggers Chris Davis and Mark Trumbo combine for 75 or more home runs, none of this will be an issue. If they don't, the potential to combine for 400 strikeouts will probably be at least a little bothersome.

05 RIGHT-HANDER KEVIN GAUSMAN WILL LOOK LIKE JIM PALMER AFTER THE ALL-STAR GAME. BEFORE THAT? YOUR GUESS IS AS GOOD AS MINE.

The numbers cannot be ignored. For his career, Gausman has a 3.58 ERA in the second half of the season. In the first half? Try 4.94. If this can be the year he finally figures out

how to start the season a little quicker, the Orioles could be on to something.

06 THE BULLPEN WILL BE GOOD, AS LONG AS IT DOESN'T HAVE TO THROW MORE INNINGS THAN I'VE HAD RAVEN BEERS AT THE BALLPARK.

Even with Britton's injury (Achilles, 60-day disabled list), there's reason for serious hope in the back end of the bullpen thanks to Brad Brach, Darren O'Day, Mychal Givens and even potentially Miguel Castro if he doesn't end up getting a rotation spot. But if the rotation gives the team an Ubaldo Jimenez/Wade Miley/2017 Chris Tillman-level innings effort it might not matter.

07 CATCHER CHANCE SISCO WILL BE THE MOST POPULAR MAN WITH THAT NAME IN THIS TOWN SINCE THE WORLD'S FOREMOST THONG CONNOISSEUR.

It absolutely seems fitting the youngster has a chance to take over the catching job long-term in the same town that produced Dru Hill vocalist "Sisqo," whose 1999 ode to the female undergarment was actually nominated for four Grammy awards. It feels as though the backstop should choose to alter the spelling of his last name simply on principle.

08 SHOWALTER, AGAIN, WON'T SMILE. OR FROWN. OR SHOW ANY EMOTION AT ALL. EVER.

I'd actually bet every penny I had on this one in particular.

09 SPEAKING OF SHOWALTER, AT SOME POINT SOMEONE IS GOING TO HAVE TO ADDRESS THE FACT THAT NEITHER HE NOR DUQUETTE IS UNDER CONTRACT AFTER THE SEASON. RIGHT?

I guess that wasn't really a "prediction" but more a request. It just doesn't seem like most teams allow the two most important baseball people in the organization to en-

ter their walk years with no clear path for the future. So, maybe the Orioles are innovators?

10 WE WILL ASK OURSELVES AT LEAST A TIME OR TWO: "SAY, WAS IT REALLY THE BEST IDEA TO TURN THE THIRD BASE JOB OVER TO A GUY WHO HAS PLAYED NINE CAREER GAMES THERE?"

My gut tells me Tim Beckham is a professional baseball player and will handle the role at a level that is at least serviceable. However, there will be audible groans throughout the city on the occasions when he actually does boot a ball or make a poor throw simply because capitulating to the desires of a player (Machado) who is almost certainly going to be wearing different colors in 12 months (if not sooner) is just about the textbook definition of "second guess-worthy."

11 OUTFIELDER ADAM JONES WILL MAKE US PROUD TO BE FANS EVEN IN MOMENTS WHEN NOT EVERYTHING ELSE DOES.

Jones is entering another contract year, and the chances of him finishing his career in Baltimore don't seem great. Hopefully we'll all be surprised by how things play out. But we might want to take the year to truly appreciate the quality of the man who has patrolled center field here for the last decade.

12 AT SOME POINT NEAR MEMORIAL DAY, SOMEONE WILL ENTER A GAME WHO YOU WILL BE FORCED TO ADMIT YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF.

Perhaps it will be Araujo if he somehow makes the team. Other options include middle infielders like Engelb Vielma and Luis Sardinas or pitcher Yefry Ramirez. It's inevitable. You're going to be telling your friends that you're the biggest Orioles fan in the world and yet you're genuinely going to have no idea who a player is that plays for your own team. It happens. Shake it off.

13 OUTFIELDER AUSTIN HAYS IS THE PLAYER WHO WE'LL HAVE A TREY MANCINI-LIKE OBSESSION WITH.

It seems unlikely Hays will produce at Mancini's level this season (certainly not at his power numbers) even if he plays the entire year at the big league level. But his skill set and baseball IQ make it seem as though he's a likely candidate to be really flippin' popular here as long as he's actually on the team.

14 WE'LL DEFINITELY WISH BEN MCDONALD COULD WORK MORE GAMES. PREFERABLY ALL OF THEM.

With no offense to any of the other members of the Orioles' radio crew, there is no baseball voice more refreshing to hear every year than that of the former No. 1 pick. As much as we love Jim Palmer in this town, it's arguable that McDonald is an even better analyst and storyteller. I'd listen to him doing color analysts during the games of "catch" I play with my 3-year-old.

15 COME THE END OF THE 2018 SEASON, WE'LL STILL HAVE NO RESOLUTION ON THE MASN DISPUTE.

Washington will host the MLB All-Star Game this season while Baltimore will host its next Mid-Summer Classic ... never? At this point it feels like the MASN dispute will actually last longer than MASN itself. I honestly can't even remember what the most recent developments were. And at this point I'm not even sure if I want the dispute to be over. It's sort of like the Guns N' Roses record "Chinese Democracy." I'd almost rather still be waiting for it. •

[BY GLENN CLARK | PRESSBOX IS AVAILABLE EVERY MONTH ON THE 15TH]



THE

SAGE

SOPHOMORE

BY STEVE GINSBURG

TERRY CROWLEY REMEMBERS THE PRECISE MOMENT

he realized Trey Mancini was going to be special.

At the end of the 2014 season, the Orioles' minor league hitting instructor handed Mancini and other members of the Class-A Frederick Keys a video he created of a batting cage session featuring big leaguers Adam Jones and Luke Scott.

"When the players come back for the next season, we're in the cage, and I'm flipping them the balls, like I showed them on the video," Crowley said. "And Trey is just bam, bam, bam. He's hitting outside pitches, inside pitches. The pitches that I purposely throw bad; he doesn't swing at.

"I stopped the session and I say, 'Trey, that's the best workout that I've had with anybody in a long, long time. What's the deal?' He said, 'Crow, I paid attention to the video, and that's what I practiced over the winter.'"

The exercise showed Crowley, a former Orioles outfielder, that Mancini was not only blessed with raw talent, he was a student of the game and would do whatever it takes to improve.

"I saw this guy in the cage and he has everything I look for in a young hitter," said Crowley, who played on the Orioles' World Series-winning team in 1970. "He's got God-given power and God-given bat speed."

Crowley immediately called Orioles manager Buck Showalter and simply said: "We've got a special one."

Last year, Mancini outperformed even his most optimistic supporters, hitting .293 with 24 home runs and 78 RBIs while finishing third in balloting for Rookie of the Year honors. He was the first Oriole since Daniel Cabrera in 2004 to place in the top three for the coveted honor.

The affable, soft-spoken Mancini, undrafted following high school and an unheralded eighth-round pick out of Notre Dame in 2013, was thrilled just to be in the majors.

"I always knew I had the potential, but going into the season, I didn't really have set goals," Mancini told *PressBox* in a recent interview at Camden Yards. "I just wanted to make the team out of spring training. That was my goal. So once I did that, I just wanted to stay on the team."

'I WAS PINCHING MYSELF'

Mancini will be 26 on Opening Day this year, but in many ways, he remains a wide-eyed kid who cannot believe he's playing against some of his childhood idols, like New York Yankees left-hander CC Sabathia or San Francisco Giants third baseman Evan Longoria.

"Playing baseball is what we've all wanted to do since we were little kids," he said with a grin. "Every time we played in a new stadium, it would hit me all over again. What a really cool experience. It kind of kept it fresh throughout the whole year. I was pinching myself every day."

Although Mancini grew up in Winter Haven, Fla., he has strong ties to Maryland. His mother, Beth, was born and raised in Bowie, Md., in Prince George's County and would often take her son to Orioles games. Mancini also attended games for the Double-A Bowie Baysox.

"I'd visit Maryland every summer," Mancini said. "We would joke at the time that it would be really cool to play in Bowie. But what were the odds? There are 30 teams in the league, so there's a one-in-30 chance that you'd get drafted by the Orioles. And then you have to make it to Bowie."

None of the big-time Florida schools offered Mancini a scholarship coming out of high school, so he decided to attend Notre Dame and major in political science -- just in case baseball didn't work out.

"I knew I needed to go to college to get better as a player," Mancini said. "As soon as I visited Notre Dame, it was game-over for me. I always thought it was a possibility I could play in the majors, but I always wanted a Plan B. I know how baseball is; your career can end in one day.

"You have to have a backup plan, and Notre Dame has such a good combination of athletics, academics and social life, it was the best fit for me. Sure, it's not your baseball powerhouse, but we had some good talent when I was there."

One of Mancini's teammates in South Bend, Ind., was Pat Connaughton, who ultimately gave up baseball in favor of basketball and is now a member of the NBA's Portland Trail Blazers. Connaughton is "not at all" shocked that Mancini is one of MLB's emerging stars.

Connaughton said Mancini's stock dropped after he hurt his shoulder prior to his junior season and that might have discouraged big league scouts.

"Trey was always a performer," Connaughton said. "It's no surprise now that Trey is getting a chance. He's showing what he can do. He's always been one of the hardest workers and least talkative guys on the field.

"That doesn't mean that he's not a leader. He just gets in, gets his work done and you'll never hear him complain. You might hear him yell if he miss-hits a ball that he feels he should have crushed. But other than that, he's going to work as hard as he can and be humble and grateful for everything that comes his way."

LONG PATH TO THE MAJORS

Mancini received no shortcuts to the majors. He played in short-season Class-A Aberdeen and Single-A Delmarva before getting the chance to play for his mother's hometown club, the Baysox.

Following a stint at Triple-A Norfolk, Mancini made it to the Orioles in 2016, and although he had just 14 at-bats as a late-season call-up, he made the most of his five-game stint in the majors. He hit .357, but it was his big league debut that ignited the buzz in Baltimore.

In his second career major league at-bat, Mancini lined a shot deep into the stands in left-center for his first career homer.

"Luckily, I guessed right. And luckily, hit it well. The rest was a blur. I almost blacked out running the bases. I just remember being in the dugout afterward being embraced by my teammates. It was an incredible moment, for sure."

His mother Beth was in the stands, and she became an MLB highlight of sorts with video cameras capturing her once-in-a-lifetime celebration. An inning later, an usher handed her the home run ball while the fans roared.

"It wasn't just that home run. For a mom, it was 24 years of what we had gone through to get to that point," she said. "He had hit many home runs. But it was the emotion of the ups and the downs, the good times and the bad times, everything wrapped up into, 'I can't believe we're here.'"



The Camden Yards crazies cheered wildly for the Orioles' newest hitting sensation.

"On a personal level, I don't know if anything will trump that, as far as the joy I felt in that moment," Mancini said, leaning back in his chair while gazing at the ceiling, obviously re-living the moment. "Playing your whole life and hitting a home run in your first major league game was something I will never forget."

Mancini had gotten jammed in his first at-bat that night and flew out. Boston Red Sox left-hander Eduardo Rodriguez tossed a pair of changeups to open Mancini's next trip to the plate, both off the plate outside.

"I was thinking to myself, 'He's going to try to throw an inside fastball right here,' and I kind of sold out on it," Mancini said.

"Just sitting in that stadium was breathtaking, and then to have that happen, it was just incredible. That was 24 years of emotion coming out."

If making the big leagues isn't hard enough, having to change positions during your first full major league season would overwhelm many players. But last season Mancini easily made the switch from first base -- where Chris Davis was the immovable incumbent -- to the outfield.

Mancini showed little evidence that he was shifting to the outfield for the first time since he was 10 years old.

"For a first-year guy, he handled left field like a professional," said Orioles first base coach Wayne Kirby, who played eight seasons in the majors. "His mentality" →

was to play in the big leagues. We thought if he could get 500 at-bats, he's going to be great for us. And to Trey's credit, he was open to trying the outfield. If there's a will, there's a way."

Kirby said Mancini is getting better at reading the ball coming off the bat and tracking it in flight.

"I played the outfield my whole life. It was second nature," Kirby said. "This is Trey's second year, and he should have more fun at it. And his decision-making will be 100 percent better."

Mancini played 90 games in the outfield, and when Davis got hurt in mid-June, 2017, Mancini moved back to first base, giving the Orioles some much-needed flexibility.

NO 'PROSPECT DARLING'

Orioles executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette concedes Mancini was not "a prospect darling," according to several publications, but Duquette insists the stellar numbers in 2017 were no fluke.

"A lot of people were surprised by the breakout year Trey had," Duquette said. "He put up some offensive numbers that had him in the same neighborhood as Cal Ripken in his rookie year. But it didn't surprise me that he did so well because he has such a consistent approach."

"He's so passionate and determined about being a good player."

Being compared in any way to Ripken, a first-ballot Hall of Famer for the Orioles, can

be daunting. But Duquette is certain Mancini is supremely self-assured and will not succumb to the so-called sophomore slump, where pitchers learn to better exploit the weaknesses of a hitter in his second season.

"Teams will focus on any hitter that had a good first year," Duquette said. "I'm confident that Trey has all the traits and skills to make adjustments and do well. I expect him to continue what he's doing."

Mancini said the notion of a second-year slide "is a story that can generate pre-season buzz" but he's not worried about it.

"I don't really buy into anything like that," he said, "I'm just going to try to do exactly what I did last year. And I hope it works out."

Showalter said the veteran players respect how Mancini carries himself.

"They think he's very humble," he said. "He's obviously been brought up well. He knows how hard this is to do and how the game can humble you. His teammates have gotten on page with him because they like the way he carries and handles the success he's had in a short period."

The 6-foot-4 Mancini, who grew up as a Tampa Bay Rays fan, knows the game can be humbling, so he tries to keep his focus and maintain the same demeanor throughout the season.

"You want to work hard; you want to be in a routine," Mancini said. "You want to do what you've always done. You can't get complacent. Baseball is the last game where you can become complacent. This game will tear you down in a second if you think you're on top of the world."

"And it's happened to me so many times. Things are going well, and then all of a sudden you go in an 0-for-5 slump. You can never, ever get too high in this game."

Mancini admits he can get jittery at the plate, saying, "It takes a while to learn how to use your nervous energy in a good way."

"You can use it just to focus better," he said. "You have to tune out the crowd noise. You have to tune out everything else but you and the pitcher. That's all that really matters -- seeing the ball come out of the pitcher's hand and reacting to it."

Mancini's 159 hits in 2017 were the second-most all-time among Orioles first-year players, trailing only Hall of Famer Eddie Murray's 173 in 1977. His 17-game hitting streak is the most ever by an Orioles rookie.

TOUGH ROAD IN AMERICAN LEAGUE EAST

The Orioles will need Mancini to continue to improve if they want to challenge the Yankees, Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays in the AL East.

Crowley said pitchers gained a lot of knowledge about Mancini in 2017. But, he adds, Mancini will use his ability to hit to all fields to make the needed adjustments.

It's all a chess match, said Crowley. "It's a thinking process," he said. "I know the swing is there. The strength is there. The talent is there. And, to take a quote from Buck, the 'want-to' is there. It's just a matter of putting it all together. No doubt,

he can do it."

Kirby, whose batting average improved 24 points during his second full season in the majors, said he'd be stunned if Mancini's numbers declined this year.

"Usually when people get in jams like that, it's because they went home in the offseason and changed their swing -- they want to hit like somebody else," he said. "Trey's not that kind of guy. He's going to use the same M.O. -- hit the same way, work out the same way, and not change anything."

"Look, Trey had an awesome rookie season. He faced all different types of pitchers. They know what he could hit and what he couldn't hit. And he made all the adjustments he needed to make. That's the sign of a big league hitter. He understands what he needs to do."

Mancini, the 249th player selected in the 2013 draft, believes he can improve on last year's numbers. Although he's not a superstitious person, Mancini admits to having one irrational custom.

"Right before game time, I go in the cage and take seven swings," he said. "That's it. Seven swings."

He paused briefly. "Well," he admitted, holding his fists on top of each other, like he's holding a bat, "if the seventh one is bad, I'll take an eighth. Or a ninth. With the game coming up, I need the last one to be a good swing."

- PHOTOGRAPHY -

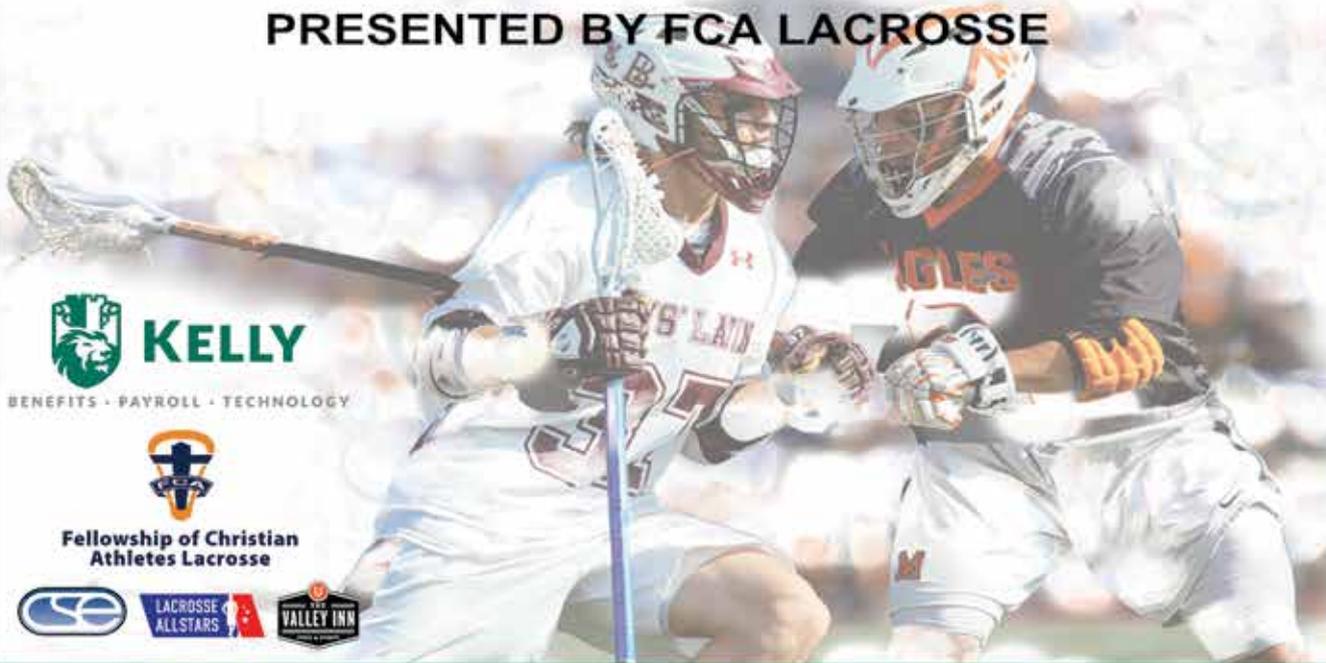
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Landon vs. Haverford

MARCH 29TH
Culver @ McDonogh

APRIL 3RD
Gilman @ Calvert Hall

APRIL 6TH
St. Pauls @ Loyola

APRIL 10TH
Calvert Hall @ McDonogh

APRIL 13TH
McDonogh @ Boys Latin

APRIL 17TH
Boys Latin @ Loyola

APRIL 20TH
Calvert Hall @ Boys Latin

APRIL 27TH
Severn @ Calvert Hall

MAY 1ST
FLEX* (Loyola @ McDonogh)

MAY 4TH
FLEX* (Calvert Hall @ St. Pauls)

MAY 8TH
Rivalry Day--FLEX*--(St. Paul's @ Boys Latin)

MAY 11TH
Quarterfinals--FLEX*

MAY 15TH
Semifinals

MAY 18TH
Championship

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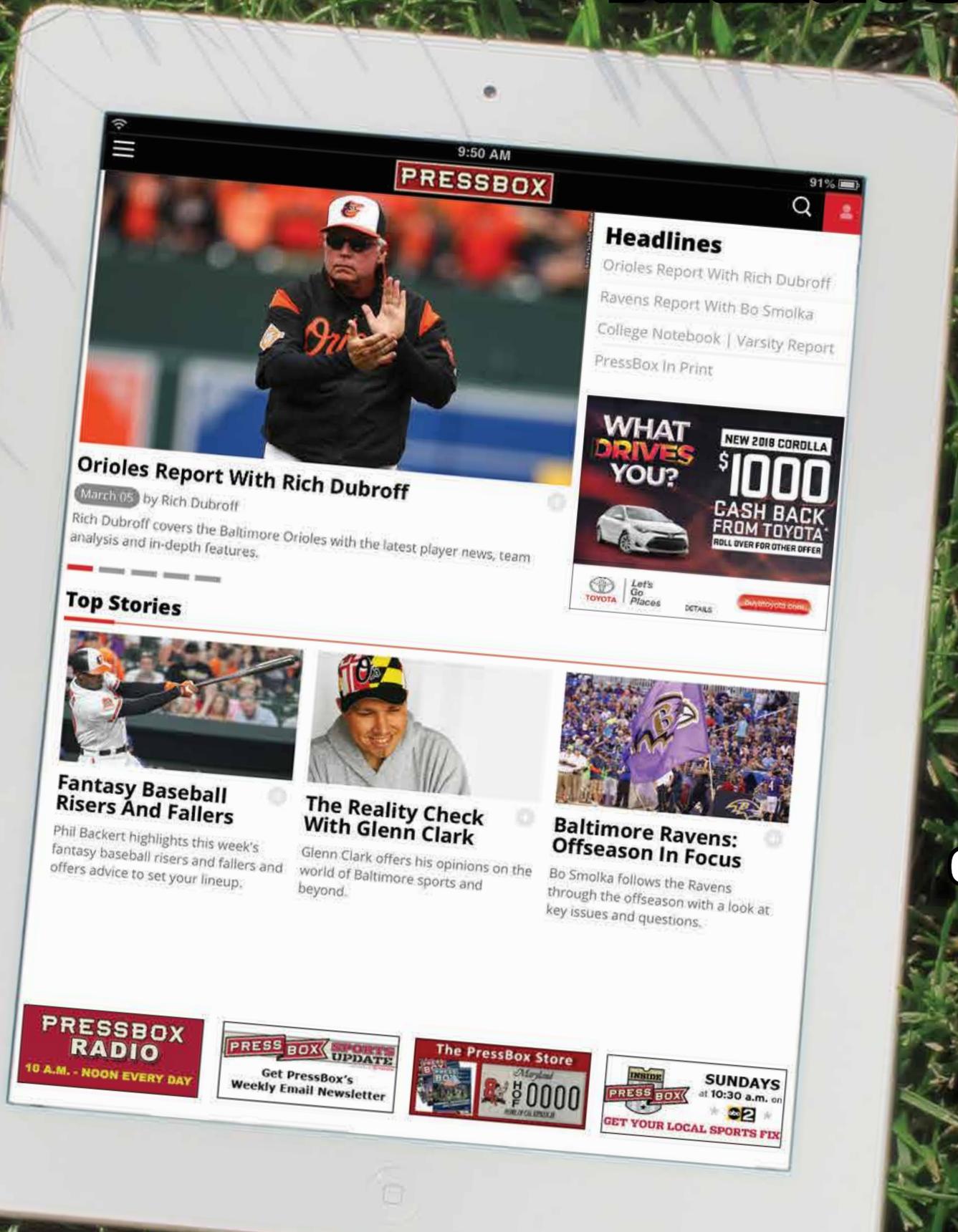
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ORIOLES REPORT

Tim Beckham Confident Third Base Doubters Will Be Silenced

★ RICH DUBROFF

Tim Beckham was the first position player to arrive at Orioles spring training in Sarasota, Fla., and he hasn't stopped working since.

Beckham has much to work on. He has moved to third base -- where he's started just five regular-season games -- so Manny Machado can play the position

he's always wanted to, shortstop.

"It's been going smooth," Beckham said early during spring training "I don't want to go out there first day of camp and look like I never know where I've been. I wanted to get down early and get some work in with [infield coach] Bobby Dickerson and attack this spring."

Beckham arrived to Sarasota a week early, and the day Machado and second baseman Jonathan Schoop arrived, Dickerson hit his infielders dozens of ground balls. Beckham fielded about 40 grounders and only had trouble with one. Beckham has spent the majority of his major league career at shortstop and second base.

"More than anything right now, [it] is reps and trying to get them position responsibilities," Dickerson said. "We're doing some actual things to talk about, like with Beckham, changing angles and things."

Learning the angles around third base hasn't been difficult for the 28-year-old Beckham, who insisted he was a shortstop when he was acquired from the Tampa Bay Rays at the non-waiver trade deadline last July.

The Orioles were looking for a long-term successor for J.J. Hardy at short, and they targeted Beckham.

He had a terrific first month in Baltimore, and he might have won the American League Player of the Month award for August if Machado hadn't put up even better numbers.

In August, Beckham hit .394 with six homers and 19 RBIs. He had 50 hits, the second-most in team history for a month.

"There wasn't a better player in the American League for a month," manager Buck Showalter said.

Beckham cooled markedly in September and ended the season with a .278 average with 22 home runs and 62 RBIs.

"Tim's been a pleasure to work with since the day he got here," Showalter said. "He's all about the team. I think he realized the opportunity he had and could have for a long time here if he takes advantage of it."

Beckham was the Rays' No. 1 overall pick in the 2008 draft but never really lived up to expectations in Tampa Bay. Now, he knows he has a chance to make a name for himself at third base.

"So far, it's been a couple adjustments," Beckham said. "Just making those adjustments and getting used to making them on a consistent basis. Shortstop is kind of, you've got a lot more time and you want to go get everything. But third base, you kind of just chill and play your position."

He's gotten considerable help from Machado, who was confident Beckham could make the switch.

"He's looking good. He's looking real good," Machado said. "He's a workhorse, and he's up for taking up that challenge. He's looking good, man. I think we're going to have a good team. We're going to surprise a lot of people."

Machado and Schoop quickly bonded with Beckham when he was traded to the Orioles, and this spring their lockers are in a neat row.

"We're here together. We're here to play," Machado said.

"He's going to go out there and do his job. He's going to go out there and catch the ball. That's all we can do as defenders. That's what we talk about around here as an organization is, catch the ball first and you make the out later. If you don't catch it, you're not going to be able to make the out. I think I'm confident he's an athlete. He can play any position in the field."

Showalter considered using Beckham as a super-utility player, hoping he could play the infield and outfield positions, but he abandoned that idea when he decided Machado would play short.

"I don't really consider it a shuffle," Showalter said. "Manny's a shortstop that's been playing third base. He played a lot more shortstop than he has third, so I look at it more Tim making an adjustment to a new infield position."

"There's a lot of things about infield that's infield, but third base is different. It's about angles. Between Bobby and Manny, I think he's going to have some good people around him to help him. I think Tim's a guy that's not going to look at it as an excuse to fail. He's going to figure some things out."

Beckham felt that he was ready for this new challenge, and

his play in early Grapefruit League games didn't disappoint.

Before Machado arrived in August 2012, Showalter had seen some shaky defense at third base.

The Orioles' manager has been spoiled by Machado but believes Beckham can do the job.

"There'll be some moments," Showalter said. "Anybody that would follow Manny defensively ... [it's] going to be hard to hold that standard. We don't expect him to. I think he knows; he's smart enough to know that nobody really knows what the future holds for the shortstop position as we go forward."

With Machado eligible for free agency after the 2018 season, Beckham could move back to shortstop a year from now -- or even sooner if Machado is traded, perhaps at July's non-waiver trade deadline. Beckham is under team control through the 2020 season

Dickerson, who worked with Machado at Double-A Bowie to prepare him for a move to third, knows about transitions and personalities when it comes to infielders.

"Beck is kind of opposite of Manny," Dickerson said. "Beck's high-strung, man. He plays the game real energetic. You can just see him. He's fired up; he wants to do it. He's going to make it happen. Manny's more laid back, lets the game come to him a little bit. That's one difference in them. Beck, I always said if you give me a guy that has some work ethic, some aptitude, then you know what? We can get it done. And Beck has both. He works his tail off. He has some aptitude, so that's the thing."

As for those who are questioning the position change, Beckham, who calls himself "Swaggy T," is confident he'll silence the critics.

"I'm definitely excited to get it going," Beckham said. "I think people have got a lot to look forward to. Whoever is doubting me at third base, I think they've got a lot to look forward to. I'm ready to get out there and play some ball." •



Tim Beckham



THE REALITY CHECK

Five Tips For Surviving Orioles Opening Day

★ GLENN CLARK

The Baltimore Orioles open the 2018 season at Camden Yards against the Minnesota Twins March 29. Whatever your opinion of the 2018 version of the team may be, Opening Day represents some sort of civic holiday in these parts. The day is, of course, about much more than just the first nine-inning baseball game of the season that will count toward the standings.

As a veteran of many Opening Days here in Charm City, I know well that mistakes can be made while participating in the sea of Halloween-colored revelry. With that, I offer my top five tips for surviving Opening Day.

1. No matter how old you are, there is no reason for you to

be drinking at 6 a.m. -- or doing much of anything else that you're not being paid for.

This has long been the most insane part of Opening Day to me. I know that morning radio shows will be broadcasting from various establishments starting at 6 a.m. I just don't understand why you'd be there with them. The game doesn't start until *nine hours later*. The game won't end for another *actual half of a day*. What are you doing?

Perhaps you're thinking about going into the game early for some reason. Sure, there are pregame ceremonies and perhaps you just want to bask in the aura of the stadium or whatever, but seriously, you can start at like 10:30 a.m., drink for a few hours and still be at the game in plenty of time to devour 13 different food items covered in Old Bay.

If you start drinking at 6 a.m., you're going to end up being left by your friends to sleep

for a while in the corner of a bar. They're going to ask a friendly bartender to make sure you don't die. Best-case scenario, you get into the stadium and fall asleep in your seat. You miss the chance to meet the governor or take a selfie with Adam Jones. But it's cool; you'll always get to tell everyone about the time you were at a bar at 6 a.m. for no apparent reason at all.

2. Don't have a ticket? No reason to stay away.

Speaking of that guy who started drinking at 6 a.m., when he does pass out at noon, his friends might be more than willing to sell you his ticket for like \$10. Hell, they might just give it to you.

If you don't have a ticket and really want to go to the game, there are plenty of possible ways to get in. Considering the lack of confidence fans seem to have in this year's team, scalpers probably won't be able to get the sums of money they're looking for on the street.

But even if you can't get in, you'll probably spend your afternoon guzzling brews at an establishment that suddenly has a little elbow room and still enough fellow fans to be able to high-five someone after Jonathan Schoop goes yard. You could do far worse.

3. Hydrate. Then hydrate again. And again. And again.

This is far easier to remember on a huge

drinking day in the middle of the summer. But Opening Day weather is such a wild card that it's easy to forget. It could be 85 degrees and sunny. It could be snowing. But as much as you're going to be drinking, you need to mix in water. Identify a hydration partner when you arrive downtown. Look after each other. Every time you go to the bar, get a water, too. Someone needs it.

4. Wear a jersey ... but don't wear the new \$250 authentic jersey you bought at FanFest. Maybe save that one for a quiet Tuesday evening affair.

If you're planning to drink, this should be a no-brainer. Even if you're not, you're going to be in a city with more drunk people than a Kid Rock concert crowd has regrettable tattoos. If everything goes well, you'll just end up having that Trey Mancini jersey you invested in covered in beer and mustard. If things go south, the thing will somehow end up being ripped apart and fashioned into some sort of skirt after your roommate pees his pants. If you want to just toss away that much money, my Venmo is open.

5. For one day, do everything in your power not to talk about baseball.

This is the hardest of all. You're at a baseball game. You're surrounded by tens of thousands of baseball fans. Every inclination you have is to talk about baseball. It would be like going to Preakness but not talking about horse racing. Wait. Sorry, no. That's a terrible example.

Look, Opening Day is the one day all year that presents reason for actual optimism -- even if it can be misguided. Why spend such a glorious day screaming about how you think the general manager has screwed up the franchise when you can just start random "O'Day, O'Day, O'Day, O'Day" chants for no reason -- even when you're standing at a urinal. You don't have to pretend like the team is going to win the World Series. It would just be nice to not end up getting into a fistfight about which Rule 5 draft pick should've made the team.

Just talk about something else. Anything else. When someone brings up how the team bungled the Zach Britton trade last summer, respond by saying: "Hey, what flavor of Naty Boh do you guys think they should make next?"

And have a wonderful Opening Day. •



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4 TIMES THE ORIOLES HAVE PLAYED MINNESOTA IN THE HOME OPENER; ALL HAVE COME WITHIN THE PAST SEVEN YEARS.

2 NUMBER OF PRESIDENTS TO THROW THE FIRST PITCH. GEORGE H.W. BUSH THREW OUT THE FIRST PITCH FOR THE FIRST GAME AT CAMDEN YARDS IN 1992, AND BILL CLINTON THREW OUT THE FIRST PITCH IN 1993 AND 1996.

19-7 THE ORIOLES' RECORD IN HOME OPENERS.

20 NUMBER OF TIMES THE ORIOLES HAVE OPENED AT HOME IN 26 SEASONS.

10 THE MOST RUNS THE ORIOLES HAVE SCORED DURING A HOME OPENER; IT'S HAPPENED THREE TIMES (1999, 2002, 2009)

3/29 THIS YEAR'S MARCH 29 OPENER IS THE EARLIEST IN HISTORY.

5/1 BECAUSE OF THE PLAYERS' STRIKE, THIS MAY 1, 1995 OPENER WAS THE LATEST IN HISTORY.

0 THE ONLY TIME THE ORIOLES WERE SHUT OUT DURING A HOME OPENER WAS THAT MAY 1, 1995 GAME.

48,891 THE LARGEST CROWD FOR AN OPENER (APRIL 9, 2010).

9 NUMBER OF DIFFERENT MANAGERS THE ORIOLES HAVE HAD FOR HOME OPENERS.

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CONNOLLY'S CORNER

How Many Games Will The Orioles Win In 2018?

★ DAN CONNOLLY

In the last few weeks, I've had several people ask me to put a win total on the 2018 Orioles.

My job is not to prognosticate -- thank goodness -- but to report, evaluate and analyze. But people love the bottom line; they love numbers and they want it all in succinct terms.

So, I take a breath and give them the number that keeps sticking with me: 75 wins.

Sound familiar?

That's how many games the Orioles won last year (they lost 87, their most defeats since 2011, when they dropped 93 in their final year of a 14-season losing skid).

I think 2018 -- as a whole -- is particularly hard to gauge, because I have no idea what this team will look like Aug. 1. Will it still have shortstop Manny Machado? Center fielder Adam Jones? Closer Zach Britton? Reliever Brad Brach? Those are four exceptionally important players, and all are free agents at season's end.

If the Orioles limp into July, it would be prudent to deal that quartet -- or some of it -- for prospects, instead of allowing those veterans to walk for 2019 draft picks.

But based on what I know about this

organization, there would have to be a whole lot of limping into July -- maybe even some crawling -- for a true roster implosion to be approved by ownership.

The Angelos family has often shied away from a true in-season rebuild, believing it's disingenuous to substantially alter the on-field product after season tickets have been sold. It's an appreciated sentiment, but it also doesn't seem to buoy a mediocre club that appears to be sliding into another baseball abyss while losing several marquee players.

Sometimes in baseball you have to step back to go forward. It's what the Orioles did from 2008-2011, and it's what created a core for the postseason run from 2012-2016.

But even when the Orioles stepped backward, they didn't fall off the cliff the way the Houston Astros did from 2011-2013, when they lost more than 100 games each season. The Astros did a full reboot, and, as part of that, ended up winning the World Series in 2018.

It's a plan, but not one I ever see happening in Baltimore. As bad as they have been at times, the Orioles have lost 100 or more only twice in their history: in the disaster that was 1988 and in 1954, their first year in Baltimore.

That's why when people tell me the Orioles could lose 100 games this year, I laugh. I think it is more likely the Orioles make the playoffs than lose 100 in 2018. You almost have to try and lose 100 --

and that hasn't been the organization's modus operandi.

This team, as currently constructed, doesn't look like a playoff contender, either. It looks a lot like the 2017 club, except veteran right-hander Andrew Cashner is in the middle of the rotation, Colby Rasmus has essentially replaced Seth Smith in right field and Caleb Joseph will catch more now that Wellington Castillo is with the Chicago White Sox.

That's probably not what Orioles fans wanted to see after a last-place finish. It's kind of what I expected, though, because I didn't envision the Orioles maintaining their record payroll, not after tens of millions came off the books this winter.

The direction heading into 2018 seemingly had two roads: Get better and make one last run at the postseason with this group; or get a lot worse now, stockpile prospects and improve for the future.

Staying in neutral, however, looks like the preferred course of action.

That's why I'm sticking with 75 wins in 2018.

To be fair, executive vice president of baseball operations Dan Duquette and company think this team can be a lot better in 2018. For one, last year's starting rotation posted a 5.70 ERA, the worst mark in franchise history.

Gone from that rotation are Ubaldo Jimenez, Wade Miley and Jeremy Hellickson, among others. Chris Tillman is back, and the hope is that a healthy offseason will help him wipe away the worst season of his career. And Cashner is a solid big leaguer. He should provide some more guidance to Kevin Gausman and Dylan Bundy, who have graduated

from prospect status and now have to begin their master's degree in big league pitching.

Duquette likes to point to the new blood heading to Baltimore to join the likes of Bundy and Trey Mancini: outfielders Austin Hays, DJ Stewart and Cedric Mullins; catcher Chance Sisco, and pitchers Hunter Harvey and Tanner Scott -- players who should be able to contribute at some point in 2018.

Add those players to the current mix, and, conceivably, 75 wins again should be low.

The problem is the Orioles' division rivals, specifically the New York Yankees, Boston Red Sox and Toronto Blue Jays, all could be better in 2018. And, if that's the case, the challenge for the Orioles to win against those teams consistently ratchets up.

So, is there a chance the Orioles could be a lot better in 2018? Well, there's always a chance. I wrote off the 2012 Orioles as just another bad team that spring, and they won 93 games and made the playoffs.

It's why the games are played.

And this Orioles roster has plenty of talent. If all goes right, this club could contend.

Mancini, Bundy, Gausman, third baseman Tim Beckham, reliever Mychal Givens, Hays and Sisco, among others, need to reach the next level, while Machado, Schoop, Jones and Cashner have to at least maintain their 2017 production. And first baseman Chris Davis, designated hitter Mark Trumbo, Tillman and others have to experience a rebound.

There are a lot of good players, yet, also a lot of "ifs."

The bottom line is that all the "ifs" have to be answered positively, and that rarely happens.

That's why I'm saying 75 wins and, for the sanity of Orioles fans, hoping my prognostication skills fail me again. •



Dylan Bundy



Kevin Gausman



UPON FURTHER REVIEW

Is Former Yankees Manager Joe Girardi Destined To Become The New Buck Showalter?

★ JIM HENNEMAN

SARASOTA, Fla. -- There haven't been any concession speeches drawn up that we've heard about, but the way the New York Yankees are squeezing opponents in the Grapefruit League (weak humor, but it's spring training for everybody) has some people starting to use that "D" word again.

You've heard the word "dynasty" to describe the Yankees before, but it's been a while. Almost a quarter of a century in fact, but this time it has a familiar ring to it, especially when you consider the cast of characters involved in the managerial department.

Is first-year manager Aaron Boone the new man arriving at just the right time? And, perhaps more significantly, is former manager Joe Girardi destined to become the new Buck Showalter; the guy left behind at just the wrong time?

Those with good memories will recall that it was Showalter who led the 1995 Yankees to postseason play for the first time in 14 seasons (sound familiar?), winning the Wild Card game before being eliminated by the Seattle Mariners. As a reward, owner George Steinbrenner offered Showalter a two-year extension, but it came with a caveat not a carrot -- Showalter would have to fire hitting coach Rick Down.

Showalter refused, so technically he "resigned," a decision he doesn't second-guess to this day, but one that almost certainly changed the direction of his career and most likely set the stage for Joe Torre to end his by being elected to the Hall of Fame. The "Core Four" of catcher Jorge Posada, left-handed starter Andy Pettitte, center fielder Bernie Williams and shortstop Derek Jeter was in place, and closer Mariano Rivera was knocking on the door of greatness.

Unlike Showalter, who came up through the system as a player, coach and manager for the Yankees (that's how the Orioles used to do it, too), Torre had previous

big league managing experience with what could most generously be described as mixed results. He was a surprise choice (prematurely tabbed "Clueless Joe" by the tabloids), having been recommended to Steinbrenner by Bob Watson, then the Yankees' general manager. Watson played under Torre with the Atlanta Braves from 1982-1984 and was not deterred by an unimpressive 894-1,003 managing record with the New York Mets, Atlanta Braves and St. Louis Cardinals.

The rest, we know, is history. The Yankees won four of the next five World Series with baseball's most recent dynasty, Torre solidified a plaque in Cooperstown, N.Y., and Showalter moved on to help build three teams -- the expansion Arizona Diamondbacks, the Texas Rangers and the Orioles -- into contenders, even as Girardi succeeded Torre and won another World Series in 2009.

Torre's departure from the Yankees after the 2007 season was actually similar to Showalter's. After leading the Yankees to 12 straight postseason appearances, he was offered only a token one-year extension, so he also technically "resigned," and ultimately took the job in Los Angeles with the Dodgers.

There is no comparison, of course, between Boone and either Girardi or Torre, because both had major league managing experience before getting the Yankees' job. As a fledgling manager, plucked from the ESPN broadcast booth, Boone brings a pleasing personality (something Girardi was never accused of having, for whatever the reason), good knowledge of the game and some strong convictions. But probably most important, he also brings a willingness to accept and grasp whatever benefits analytics can provide.

Girardi won 910 games while managing the Yankees, meaning his "average" record was 91-71, but the only number that mattered was 1 -- his only World Series championship. The Yankees came within one game of the World Series last year, when many think Girardi did his best job.

He wasn't given the ultimatum of firing a coach, as

happened with Showalter, but he didn't get an offer of extension either. He got a verbal "thanks for your services" pat on the back along with a warning not to let the door hit him in the butt on the way out.

Now baseball people are wondering if we've seen this act before. Here comes the new sheriff in town, right after all the crooks had been locked up, while Girardi must be wondering about what he left behind. Showalter doesn't dwell on the early days of his career (though he doesn't try to hide his disdain for the Yankees), but anybody who knows his competitive nature and his take-charge personality has to wonder if there aren't any what-might-have-been moments -- just as Girardi must be feeling now.

Things are so boring in the Yankees' camp that one of the big stories was that Boone was toying with the idea of using slugging outfielder Aaron Judge as an occasional leadoff hitter. I'm not sure how many 6-foot-7, 275-pounders have batted first in major league history, but I'm certain nobody that size, who also led the league in strikeouts, has ever occupied the No. 1 spot in the batting order.

Where Judge bats in the Yankees' lineup is a moot point really, because he spent most of last year in the No. 2 hole, where his impact was ... well ... let's just say it was significant. Where he bats in the lineup will undoubtedly be determined by what the analytics suggest, and it won't be the toughest decision Boone has to make. He's part of the "new breed" of managers, all of whom will be guided by analytics that rely on what happened in the past, without regard for what might happen in the future. It's the "new age" of baseball.

Girardi, Showalter and certainly Torre, would all fall under the classification of "old school" managers today, even though all three bought in somewhat as "the shift" made its impact. Statistics have slowly, but surely, taken over the game, making the term "gut feeling" obsolete.

There is more than a little irony in the fact that Girardi declined to interview with Andy MacPhail before Showalter took the Orioles' job in 2010. It worked out for all parties concerned, but leaves us with the analytical question of the day.

Did they both sign up for their last rodeo? •

★
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Loyola Attackman Pat Spencer Makes Strong Case For Tewaaraton Award

★ TODD KARPOVICH

Loyola junior attackman Pat Spencer dealt with a defenseman on his heels for most of a pivotal game against rival Johns Hopkins during the Battle of Charles Street in the early part of the lacrosse season.

Finally, he got behind his defender, took a pass from senior midfielder Brian Begley in front of the net and fired a shot past Blue Jays goalie Brock Turnbaugh. The Greyhounds went on to win, 12-5.

When Spencer wasn't finishing off scoring chances, he was creating opportunities for his teammates. He turned in another balanced performance, which has been a hallmark of his three-year career.

"If opposing teams are going to press out, it creates more space and allows us more opportunities," Spencer said. "We've

given them the green light to go, and they are going to go by them if they press out."

Spencer has been making plays since he walked onto Loyola's campus after graduating from Boys' Latin. Earlier this season, Spencer took over possession of second place all-time in points (199) and assists (122) at Loyola in just his 39th career game. And for the second consecutive season, Spencer is a finalist for the Tewaaraton Award, which is given to the top male and female college lacrosse player in the United States.

The other players on the list for a second consecutive year are Stony Brook's Kylie Ohlmiller, Denver's Trevor Baptiste, Albany's Connor Fields and Yale's Ben Reeves.

However, few players draw the type of attention from defensemen like Spencer, who seems to thrive under pressure.

Johns Hopkins head coach Dave Pietramala developed a specific defensive game

plan for Spencer ahead of their early season matchup. Pietramala thought his players were effective holding Spencer to a goal and three assists.

However, he did not discount the impact Spencer had on his teammates, who were able to find some open space when the defenders gravitated toward their best attackman.

"With him more than anything, it's about not letting him get to good spots," Pietramala said. "Coming in, we thought we had a guy that was athletic enough to cover him, but he's not nearly the same size. We had another guy who is good enough in terms of size, but he's not athletic enough. So, I didn't feel we had that perfect guy to cover him.

"... He's an extremely talented player. The attention we give to him benefits the other guys. You can't look at it and say he does not have an impact on this game. He

does because the attention that is given to him provides the other guys with opportunities."

Even though Spencer likes to keep his teammates involved, he can still take over a game when the Greyhounds need him the most.

During a closely contested game against Towson Feb. 28, Spencer had two goals and two assists in the final quarter to propel Loyola to a 12-8 victory. On March 4, he scored three goals and had six assists during a 13-5 victory against Holy Cross -- one point shy of his career-high 10 points.

"I want the ball," Spencer said about putting his team on his back against Towson. "I feel like I can control the game and get guys in the right spots and make the right reads. My shots weren't falling in the beginning, but these guys stuck with me and said keep shooting the ball. Eventually, guys started making plays for me as well."

Spencer has continued to improve since arriving at Loyola from Boys' Latin, where he was a U.S. Lacrosse High School All-American and a finalist for the Ensign C. Markland Kelly Jr. Memorial Award as the state's top attacking player.

He made an immediate impact on Loyola his freshman year when he tied Gary Hanley (1981) for the Greyhounds' single-season record with 89 points. Spencer also led the team with 52 assists, one away from the single-season record set by Justin Ward in 2014. In addition, Spencer tied for the team lead with 37 goals in one of the toughest schedules in college lacrosse.

He was named a second-team United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association All-American and became the first player to win the Patriot League Offensive Player and Rookie of the Year honors outright.

There was no sophomore slump the following year, when he became the first player in conference history to be named Patriot League Offensive Player of the Year during his first two seasons. Spencer set the school and Patriot League single-season record with 55 assists, eclipsing the previous mark of 53 set by Ward.

He also led the Greyhounds with 28 goals and finished with 83 points, tying for fourth-most in school single-season history. Spencer also led the Patriot League in points, points per game (5.19), assists and assists per game (3.44).

This season, he has Loyola in position to make a run at its second national championship since 2012, as the Greyhounds have the balance to make another deep run.

Loyola head coach Charley Toomey said Spencer does a phenomenal job adjusting to opposing defenses, and that has been a significant boost for the Greyhounds.

"He's our offensive leader," Toomey said after the Towson game. "... It's fun to watch him be a part of the offense and watch him lead the offense.

".. Obviously, as a coaching staff, when you know you can dodge that alley and throw it through to Pat, probably something good is going to happen and very rarely do we make bad decisions when the ball's in his stick. So yes, it's very settling to know that he's out there in the fourth quarter." •



LARRY FRENCH/LOYOLA ATHLETICS

Pat Spencer



LARRY FRENCH/LOYOLA ATHLETICS

Taylor VanThof

Loyola Midfielder Taylor VanThof Continuing To Dominate In The Circle

★ **SCOTT LOWE**

Junior midfielder Taylor VanThof knew she would have big shoes to fill when she chose to follow in her sister's All-American footsteps by playing lacrosse at Loyola University.

And after two years of working to carve her own niche and becoming one of the top draw specialists in the country, VanThof now finds herself trying to emulate her sister.

"When I watch myself play on video, I can see how people think we are similar players," VanThof said, comparing herself to older sister Taryn, a three-time All-American and former U.S. National Team player. "Now that I'm getting older I'm like, 'Wow, when I'm running, I really do look like her.'"

"She did really well with draws, too, so we always had some similarities, but there were a lot of differences, too. She was a leader and very good at being vocal when the team was on offense and defense and made a big impact as a midfielder. My goal is to continue to be strong on the draws

like her, but also to be more impactful all around as a midfielder like she was."

A native of Livonia, N.Y., VanThof has had a tremendous impact in the circle, ranking second in the country in draw controls last season. Last year, she broke Taryn's Loyola single-game record by winning 20 draws against American and 21 in her next game against Colgate, which also tied her for the second-highest single-game total in NCAA history.

After her two record-breaking performances last year, Syracuse head coach and men's lacrosse hall-of-famer Gary Gait stopped play at one point to question the officials about VanThof's technique -- to no avail.

"I don't think there is anything more frustrating in our sport than to have something that is supposed to be a 50-50 situation every time and then run into a player who defies the odds and gives her team a more favorable opportunity to gain possession," Loyola head coach Jen Adams said. "I think with Taylor it's more like 70-30 in our favor."

VanThof's draw proficiency and improved offensive contributions were good enough to earn her second-team

all-region and first-team All-Patriot League honors last season, as well as preseason second-team All-American honors this year. She improved her scoring from six goals and eight points as a freshman reserve to 17 goals and 23 points as a sophomore starter, but she came into this year wanting to do more.

"She's very competitive within herself as well as from a team standpoint," Adams said. "Whenever she breaks a record or receives an accolade for something, she sets her goals even higher. I think her best attribute is that she continues to strive to be better in everything she does. She's not the loudest person, but she has a quiet confidence about her. The way she goes about her business and her work ethic speaks for itself."

With the Greyhounds once again facing one of the toughest schedules in the country -- opening the season with games against six ranked teams -- VanThof has already made a larger impact.

She recorded four goals against 13th-ranked Penn Stan March 3, helping Loyola to a 16-15 upset win. For her efforts against Penn State, VanThof was named Patriot League Midfielder of the

Week for the third time in her career.

"It's more than scoring goals," she said. "I want to be more of a presence for the team in transition and get back to help the defense clear and to help the goalie. I'm not really worried about the goals or the big things, I just want to do all the little things that help the team win -- set the screens that get my teammates open, carry the ball up the field when I need to and make the slides that allow my teammates to make defensive plays."

Adams is pleased with what she's seen from VanThof so far.

"What I have seen this year is her evolving into more of an impact player in the midfield and not just being a draw specialist," Adams said. "She's playing really well in the center, scoring some goals and causing some key turnovers that have been big for us."

For VanThof, though, it's business as usual: working individually before or after practice on draws or whatever part of her game she thinks needs work and doing whatever she can to help the team win.

"The outside accolades are not something I'm thinking about when I'm playing the games," she said. "It's just the beginning. ... For myself and the whole team, we still have to learn so much. There is somewhere that we want to be by the end of the season, and we are not there yet." •

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COURTESY OF MARYLAND ATHLETICS

Matt Canada

Matt Canada Brings Tried-And-True Offensive System To College Park

★ LUKE JACKSON

It was the first day of spring practice for the Maryland football team, but the Terps already featured a brand new offense in a scrimmage setting. Offensive players huddled before plays, quarterbacks took snaps from under center and personnel packages included multiple tight ends and running backs, while myriad pre-snap motions and quick-hitting jet sweeps were tested for the first time.

For Maryland offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Matt Canada, hired in late January after Walt Bell departed for the same position at Florida State, it was the third straight spring of installing his offense at a new school. He was the offensive coordinator at Pittsburgh (2016) and Louisiana State (2017) before arriving in College Park, Md.

“You know, it’s funny, but I don’t like change,” Canada said March 5. “I don’t like moving, so that doesn’t look the way it is.”

The 46-year old Canada’s coaching career began in a less nomadic fashion, as he learned the trade as a student coach and graduate assistant at Indiana from 1992-1995, and then circled back around to the Hoosiers, whom he coached from 2004-2010 in various roles as offensive coordinator or an assistant. Maryland is Canada’s sixth stop since he left Indiana, and he has been the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at all of them.

“Early on there, we were going pretty well, and then there’s been more change. Everyone’s been great. I’ve met great people everywhere, and I think, as I look around, my daughter has said it best: I mean, all the moves we’ve had, it’s been awesome every place we’ve been,” said Canada, whose family includes his wife, Erin, his daughter, Tori, and his son, Chris. “It’s not easy, our profession. For me, you come in, you coach, you do your deal. But for your kids, it’s a challenge, but they’ve actually made it better for me and tell me all the things they’ve gained from it. I’m very, very blessed.”

Canada has consistently created productive offenses. North Carolina State was sixth in the ACC in total offense in 2014 and 2015 and third in the conference in points in 2015. Pittsburgh was fifth in the ACC in total offense in 2016 while scoring a program-record 40.9 points per game. LSU was seventh in total offense in the SEC in 2017.

At N.C. State, Canada developed Indianapolis Colts quarterback Jacoby Brissett, who transferred to the Wolfpack after spending his first two seasons at Florida. Brissett threw for 5,268 yards, 43 touchdowns and 11 interceptions while completing 59.9 percent of his throws from 2014-2015. At Pitt, Canada aided the development of Buffalo Bills quarterback Nathan Peterman, who threw for 2,855 yards, 27 touchdowns and seven interceptions on 60.5 percent passing in 2016.

One of Canada’s top priorities at Maryland will be developing Tyrrell Pigrome, who will be a redshirt sophomore in the fall, and Kasim Hill, who will be a redshirt freshman.

Both quarterbacks tore the ACL in their right knee last September and won’t practice during the spring. Rising junior Max Bortenschlager, rising freshman and early enrollee Tyler DeSue and rising sophomore walk-on Legend Brumbaugh will see all the snaps during the spring.

“When you look at our quarterback situation, I think when we’re healthy at quarterback, we’re as good as there is,” Maryland head coach DJ Durkin said.

Canada’s main objective will be improving a Terps team that finished 11th in the 14-team Big Ten in total offense and points per game. Maryland scored 51 points and racked up 482 yards of offense in a season-opening win at Texas with Pigrome and Hill under center and put up 63 points and 534 yards of offense in a win against Towson with Hill at quarterback. But the Terps averaged just 17.2 points per game during the final 10 games of their season as injuries and a difficult schedule caught up with them.

Maryland also didn’t help itself. The Terps typically limited their sets to four wide receivers and one back (no tight end) or three wideouts, one back and one tight end. They failed to spread the ball around, with wide receiver DJ Moore (who declared for the NFL Draft Dec. 19) and rising senior wide receiver Taivon Jacobs making more than 72 percent of Maryland’s catches. Tight ends did not catch a pass despite being a potential safety valve for Bortenschlager.

The ball tends to be spread around in Canada’s offense, as eight players caught double-digit passes at N.C. State in 2015, seven at Pitt in 2016 and seven at LSU in 2017. Canada will also use some exotic personnel packages, which include unbalanced offensive lines.

“I think if you look at our tight ends over the last few years, they’ve caught a lot of balls, been very involved, but it goes back to who deserves to play,” Canada said of his offenses in recent years. “And I think that’s the challenge we’ve given to our players. Do we need to play two or three backs at one time? Do we need to play four wideouts, three wideouts, two tight ends, three tight ends, six linemen? ... It’s more about who shows up and who wins the jobs.”

Rising senior Ty Johnson and rising junior Lorenzo Harrison, who combined to catch just 16 passes last year, have the potential to grow into greater all-around backs and possibly be on the field at the same time. Johnson has the electric speed, and Harrison the quickness to operate in space in the passing game. Johnson thinks he’ll get that opportunity.

“You heard Coach Canada say there’s going to be possibly two-, three-back sets,” Johnson said. “... I think there’s definitely going to be a big chance of running backs catching the ball out of the backfield or lining up in the slot or something like that.”

Another subtle change could also be in store for the Terps’ running backs. The group could be helped by quarterbacks taking snaps from under center.

“It definitely gives you a more open view to the backside cut, banging it in there or bouncing it. It allows you to get your shoulders squared up more,” Johnson said. “When we take our steps, you’re squaring your shoulders on the second step already, and you’re squaring them on when you’re at 5 yards, not when you’re 3 yards away from the line, so it kind of helps, giving you more time and space to make a decision.”

Canada’s offense is also an adjustment for the Terps’ defense during practice. The jet sweep got a workout during a scrimmage March 5, with Jacobs and fellow receiver Jashaun Jones ripping through the defense one time apiece.

“Oh, those jet sweeps. They comin’,” rising senior defensive lineman Mbi Tanyi said after practice. “We’ve seen them today; that was a little surprise, they threw it in. Coach Canada, he’s always got something. They’re always shifting and this and that, but once we get set, we should be good.” •

Four Steps Terps Can Take To Get Back To The NCAA Tournament

★ LUKE JACKSON



he Maryland men's basketball team didn't earn a spot in the NCAA Tournament this year after going 19-13 overall and finishing eighth in the Big Ten. Here are

four ways the Terps can make it back to the Big Dance next year:

1. GIVE GUARDS ANTHONY COWAN JR. AND KEVIN HUERTER SOME HELP

Cowan and Huerter were the only players to start all 32 of Maryland's games. Cowan played 40 or more minutes in eight different conference games, while Huerter played at least 37 minutes in eight league contests. The duo scored 41.7 percent of the Terps' points and dished out 60.2 percent of the team's assists for the season.

Maryland needs to be less dependent on the rising juniors. The returns of rising sophomore forward Bruno Fernando, a Big Ten all-freshman honoree, and rising junior forward Justin Jackson, who missed most of the season with a torn labrum in his right shoulder, would help -- but their status with regards to the NBA Draft is unclear. Regardless of their decisions, Maryland needs help from other corners of the roster.

Rising sophomore guard Darryl Morsell scored 8.7 points per game while showing off his ability to slash through the lane and create contact. He also rebounded well, was third on the team in assists and was the Terps' most versatile defender. But he made just three of his 25 3-point attempts, turned the ball over 70 times and wasn't suited for the backup point guard role. Maryland needs the Mount St. Joseph graduate to at least develop a consistent mid-range jumper to unlock his potential.

"I learned that I've got a lot of improving to do," Morsell said. "I'm a freshman, but I've still got a lot of work to do to improve my game. This is big-time basketball. This is definitely a big step up from high school. I want to improve everything. In the summer, I want to work on everything: ball-handling, shooting, getting bigger, stronger, everything."

Rising senior guard Dion Wiley shot 36.7 percent from 3-point range, displaying the shooting touch he's long had. His activity level, however, is inconsistent on each end of the court. But an energetic Wiley can be a productive player, like when he posted 10 points, five rebounds and four assists during a win against Northwestern Feb. 10.

The Terps need that version of Wiley more often next year.

"Obviously, coming in, the opposing defense, they want to stop me and Kev-

in," Cowan said. "So having another big-time scorer on the court with us, that really helps us a lot. [Wiley] being active and hitting shots and scoring, that really helps us."

2. DEVELOP AN ON-COURT IDENTITY.

If Maryland had an identity this year, it was losing close games in strikingly similar fashion. The Terps lost nine games by six points or fewer, and were never able to get over the hump during those contests. Otherwise, Maryland was a team that played slow without being terribly efficient on the offensive end, often plagued by turnovers.

But the Terps showed some flashes of offensive prowess down the stretch. Maryland head coach Mark Turgeon installed a motion offense after being blown out at Ohio State Jan. 11 and went to a four-guard starting lineup for the last nine regular-season games.

"Just trying to find different ways to score each possession," Morsell said of his team's late offensive success. "Maybe try to get Kevin an open shot, or next possession try to get Bruno in the post and different stuff, just switching stuff up and trying to find different ways to score and moving the ball around, making it hard for the defense."

Whether Turgeon builds on the motion offense or reverts back to his read-and-react style, Maryland should have the talent to be better than it was this year (45th in the nation in offensive efficiency, per kenpom.com, a college hoops analytics website).

It also has to be better defensively. Maryland ranked 20th in defensive efficiency at the conclusion of its nonconference schedule but gave up 72.9 points per game to conference opponents, which shot 40 percent from 3-point range against the Terps. Maryland is 68th in defensive efficiency, and will have to get back to playing an effective, high-effort brand of man-to-man defense next year.

3. INTEGRATE THE 2018 RECRUITING CLASS INTO THE ROTATION.

Turgeon signed power forward Jalen Smith (Mount St. Joseph), small forward Aaron Wiggins out of North Carolina and guard Eric Ayala out of Delaware during the early signing period in November 2017. The haul ranks 14th in the nation and second in the Big Ten, according to 24/7 Sports' composite rankings.

Smith is a McDonald's All-American and a two-time Baltimore Catholic League Player of the Year. He projects as a do-it-all power forward as a Terp and will see plenty of playing time regardless

of who returns.

"He can do everything on the court," said Josh Stirn, basketball recruiting analyst for Inside Maryland Sports. "He doesn't have very many limitations in the sense [that] there's nothing holding him back from reaching his potential. He's a great athlete; he can step out and shoot; he's very mobile."

Wiggins is a scoring wing that'll have a chance to replace forward Jared Nickens' minutes. The 3-point shot is Wiggins' top weapon at this stage, but "throughout his career, you're going to see him develop more and more into a go-to scorer," Stirn said. Ayala, meanwhile, is a combo guard that brings toughness and a history of being on winning programs. He'll ease Cowan's workload after the Terps chose to enter the 2017-18 season without a true point guard.

"I think the last couple years, he's proven that he can run a team as well as score, and I think that's exactly what Maryland needs," Stirn said of Ayala. "They don't just need a facilitator. They need a guy that can also come in and play alongside Cowan and bring scoring."

4. TOUGHEN UP THE NONCONFERENCE SCHEDULE A BIT.

The Terps played 13 nonconference games during the 2017-18 season. Games against Maryland-Eastern Shore, Jackson State, St. Bonaventure and New Mexico were part of the Emerald Coast Classic. They faced Butler in the Gavitt Tipoff Games and Syracuse in the ACC/Big Ten Challenge.

That left seven dates for Maryland to fill. The Terps scheduled Stony Brook, Bucknell, Ohio, Gardner-Webb, Catholic, Fairleigh Dickinson and UMBC. Bucknell has the highest RPI of that group, according to ESPN, at 90. UMBC (143) was another solid pick, though the rest of the lot disappointed this year. Catholic is a Division III team that didn't affect the Terps' RPI.

Maryland's number of nonconference dates will shrink with the Big Ten going from 18 to 20 league games next year, but resume-building will still be important outside of the conference.

"The reality is what you really want to do is avoid awful teams, the teams that are going to go 5-25 and destroy your strength of schedule that way," said Patrick Stevens, bracketologist for the *Washington Post*. "If you simply fill up your nonconference schedule with teams that you think are going to be about .500, you're going to be fine. Essentially, if you're aiming for a bunch of teams around [a 150 RPI], nobody's getting excited about that, but that's actually a very crafty way to go about building a schedule." •



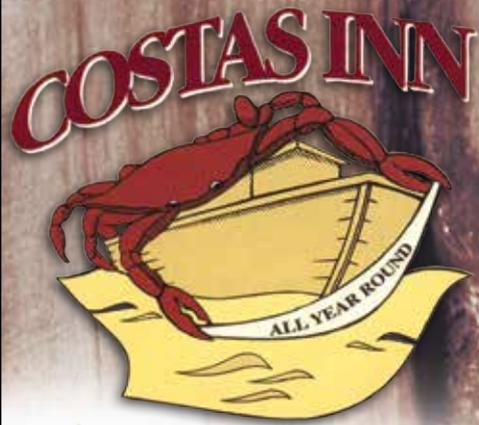
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VARSITY REPORT

Trio Of Seniors Leads Franklin Girls' Indoor Track To New Heights

★ WICK EISENBERG

When Franklin girls' track head coach Paul Hannsen found out during the summer of 2016 that his program would be gaining two talented junior transfers, he knew his team was on the verge of something special.

Franklin already had a star in that year's junior class in Nyjari McNeil, but the additions of Tylar Colbert from Digital Harbor and Cameron Hinton from Maryvale made the group dynamic.

The trio had known each other for years, having competed in track together and against each other for some time before high school. Hannsen was also aware of the ability of the program's newcomers beforehand, having seen them

compete during their first two years of high school.

"All three were very good at that time," Hannsen said. "They had done summer track for a long time, so they were quite talented even before they got to high school. Then they continued to progress, which leads to where we are now."

Franklin stands at the peak of Maryland girls' high school indoor track, having won the Maryland Public Secondary School Athletic Association 3A state championship in 2017 and 2018. The centerpiece of those teams has been the trio of Colbert, Hinton and McNeil.

Franklin scored 145.5 points across those two state championship meets, and all but 22.5 of those points were won either individually by Colbert, Hinton and McNeil or by relay teams featuring at least one of them.



COURTESY OF PAUL HANNSEN
Cameron Hinton, Nyjari McNeil, Tylar Colbert

At this year's state meet, McNeil led the individual charge, setting a state record time of 1:13.3 seconds in the 500-meter dash. She also picked up a first-place finish in the 800 meter, while Hinton finished first in the 300 meter and fourth in the 500 meter. Colbert claimed fourth in the 300 meter and sixth in the 55 meter.

The Indians finished with 72.5 points, while second-place Northern (Calvert County) had 51. It's the third MPSSAA state title in the past four years for Franklin, which had never won a state championship before 2015.

"To be the first girls' program in our school's history to repeat as state champions is really an honor and makes winning this time that much more special," McNeil said. "We all knew going into this year that our team would be really good. To be able to win a team state championship again is an amazing feeling."

While Colbert, Hinton and McNeil all made tremendous impacts in their individual events, it's the team event they all collaborated on that really stands out. Colbert, Hinton and McNeill take up three spots on Franklin's 4x400 relay team, with the fourth being held by sophomore Jasmine Johnson.

It's an all-star group that has dominated the event for much of the past two seasons.

"There's a couple reasons why I transferred to Franklin before my junior year, but one of them was that relay team," Colbert said. "I knew that group was going to be really good, and I just wanted to be a part of it."

At the state finals, Colbert ran the first leg, followed by Hinton. Johnson competed third, and McNeil closed it

out. Every member of the quartet performed well, as the group completed the race in 3:52.15, a new state record. Franklin beat second-place Blake by 3.2 seconds and third-place Mt. Hebron by 8.02 seconds.

"I love the fact that we're a team. I love all my teammates, especially the ones in the 4x4," Hinton said. "For us, it's a big thing, trusting your teammates to do what they're supposed to do in every race. I feel like I have that trust with all my teammates and it's truly an amazing thing."

That trust has translated to a friendship and special bond away from the track that won't stop when they graduate this spring. All three girls plan to compete collegiately. Colbert is still in the process of deciding where she wants to go, while McNeil will compete at San Diego State and Hinton has signed with Auburn.

Despite being in different regions of the country, all three girls said they plan to keep in contact and will train together during the offseason.

As for the future of Franklin's girls' indoor track team, Hannsen acknowledges there will be some holes to fill. But he is confident the Indians will still be among the serious contenders to win the state title again next season.

"They are inspiring the younger group, which is exciting," Hannsen said. "If those girls see success after success, then they'll believe they can do it too. All three of those girls had a lot of good practices, put in the hard work and won a lot, but you don't want to put their legacy in terms of just winning. First and foremost they're three fantastic girls, who also happen to be very fast on the track." •



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Courtney Shaw Named U.S. Army Impact Player Of The Month

★ WICK EISENBERG



Perry Hall High School girls' basketball senior guard Courtney Shaw has been named the U.S. Army Impact Player of the Month for February.

Shaw was nominated for the award by Perry Hall head coach Linda Caccavalla.

"Currently, Courtney takes six AP classes and is on honor roll at Perry Hall," Caccavalla wrote in her nomination. "She is a member of AVID leading workshops for the underclassmen at Perry Hall. She is a four-year athlete in basketball and volleyball as well as a two-year captain."

Shaw was presented with her award in front of a crowd of her teammates, friends and family prior to the Gators' 91-38 victory against Dundalk Feb. 14. Numerous members of the Baltimore Recruiting Battalion attended the celebration, including Maj. John Groefsema, who presented Shaw with her award.

It was a special day for Shaw, as it was also Perry Hall's senior night, but winning an award associated with the U.S. Army was extra sentimental.

"My dad was a Marine, as was my grandfather, so it's pretty cool to win an award that the military is involved with," Shaw said. "My dad used to coach me, and he was a Marine-styled coach. Very disciplined and emphasizing teamwork, which has definitely impacted me as a player."

Those early lessons have helped turn Shaw into a star on the basketball court; she has eclipsed the 1,000-points-scored mark for her high school career.

Shaw's best performance came this season against Lansdowne Jan. 26, when she scored 37 points during Perry Hall's 64-40 victory. Her effort set a new program record for most points scored during a single game.

"We were coming off a frustrating loss, which definitely made our whole team more focused," Shaw said. "From the jump ball, I just took the ball and didn't stop until they were able to stop me. I scored six points in the first minute, so I got off to a hot start and my teammates just kept finding me. When I got close to breaking the record, they kept passing to me, which was great because it made the record a total team effort."

Shaw said working with a group toward a common goal is one of the best parts of playing basketball.

"Everyone loves to put the ball in the hoop, and that's definitely exciting, but the team aspect of the sport is amazing," Shaw said. "Getting to know your teammates and creating a family with them is



(from left to right) Linda Caccavakka and Courtney Shaw

really fulfilling because then when you get on the court, you play for them. It's a lot of fun to play with people you love."

Shaw has also thrived in the classroom, where she currently holds a 3.88 GPA.

"I've always enjoyed athletics, but I'm academically driven," she said. "My parents and older sister set that standard. When I got to high school and took more difficult classes, while balancing it with playing sports, it opened my eyes because I realized my grades would be reflective of how hard I worked, just like with basketball."

Shaw's hard work has paid off. She will play college basketball at Northwestern University on scholarship and plans to study bioengineering in college.

"Bioengineering is interesting because I want to help the human body heal and perform better, but I also want to create things," Shaw said. "I want to make something new and apply it to biological needs. It's a broad field, so I can go in a few different directions with it, which I'm excited to figure out."

Though Shaw has clearly excelled in many areas at Perry Hall, her many triumphs won't be what Caccavalla remembers most. It's Shaw's character that truly makes her stand out.

"In college recruiting they say prospect, project or suspect in regards to a recruited athlete," Caccavalla said. "Courtney is a true prospect, checking off all the boxes that a coach would want in a student-athlete. At the same time, she is a 17-year-old young woman who carries herself with pride, kindness, and intelligence. I'm one lucky coach to be able to work with Courtney." •

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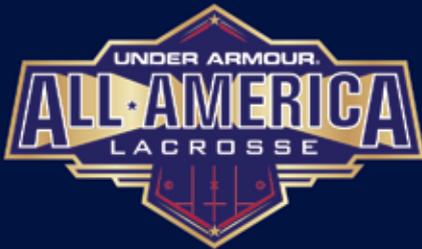
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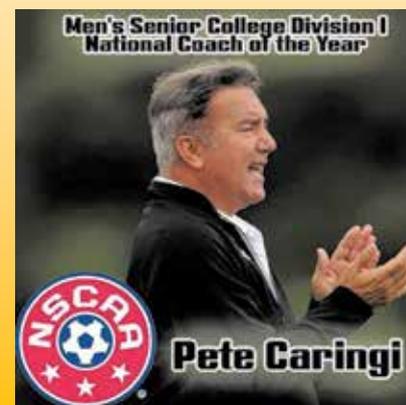
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COMMUNITY BEAT



★ WALKS/RACES

APRIL 7 -- FIFTH ANNUAL 7K RUN/1K WALK TO REMEMBER

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association presents the fifth annual 7K Run/1K Walk to Remember at Centennial Park. This event benefits the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. Online registration closes April 4; walk-up registration is available the morning of the race. Registration for runners and walkers is \$35. For more information or to register, visit MNADV.org/2018Run.

APRIL 7 -- RUNNERS FOR OTHERS AN IGNATIAN 5K

Join us for Runners For Others An Ignatian 5K in Patterson Park. The race begins at 9 a.m. and supports the social ministry programs of the Jesuit organizations of Baltimore. For more information and to register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/4/7/runners-for-others-an-ignatian-5k.

APRIL 8, 15, 22, 29 & MAY 6 -- HEALTHY KIDS RUNNING SERIES TOWSON

Healthy Kids Running Series is a nonprofit organization that organizes running events in towns across the country each spring and fall. The goal of the series is to get children ages pre-k through middle school active and interested in the sport of running. The event takes place from 4-5 p.m. at Dulaney High School. For more information, visit healthykidsrunningseries.org/race_locations/towson-md/.

APRIL 8 -- PHIL'S SURVIVOR RUN

Please join us for Phil's 11th Annual Survivor Run at the MA & PA Heritage Trail (Williams Street Entrance) in Bel Air. This year's race benefits The Stroke Network and The RASAC Scholarship Fund. This year we will be offering a randomly selected grand prize -- a new bike from Vivic Cyclery in Bel Air. For more information and to register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/4/8/phils-11th-annual-survivor-run.

APRIL 8 -- RED SHOE SHUFFLE 5K RUN AND WALK

Join us at 635 W. Lexington Street as we commemorate the last Red Shoe Shuffle in our current location and get ready to embark on the future in our new house. Ask a friend, form a team, make a donation and come out to help us break some records to make this our best Shuffle ever. For more information and to register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/redshoeshuffle.

APRIL 14 -- LOG JAM 5K

Don't miss this wonderful, family friendly 5K and Family Fun Run/Walk at Centennial Park in Ellicott City. We'll have a 200-yard and 50-yard Kids Fun Run. This family-friendly event benefits the Lamb of God School in Halethorpe. For more information or to register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/4/14/9p51o67c2zek72o02c6ivjs48hpjg.

APRIL 14 -- UNDER ARMOUR SOLE OF THE CITY 10K

Join us for the Under Armour Sole of the City 10K presented by

KELLY. We'll run the streets of Baltimore and finish at Charm City Run McHenry Row. For more information and to register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/soleofthecity.

APRIL 15 -- ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL FULLERTON HASA 5K/FAMILY FUN WALK

The St. Joseph School 5K/Family Fun Walk is an opportunity for the whole family to get out and enjoy a morning of fitness and fellowship. Race proceeds benefit areas of need within the school, including technology, classroom improvements, books and programs. For more information and to register, visit charmcityrun.com/calendar/2018/2/4/st-joseph-school-fullerton-hasa-5kfamily-fun-walk.

APRIL 28 -- ROAR FOR KIDS

Get ready to ROAR for kids at Kennedy Krieger's annual 5K run/low-mileage fun walk and family festival at Oregon Ridge Park. This year the event features an all new jungle theme. Registration begins at 6:30 a.m.; the event begins at 8 a.m. For more information or to register, visit kennedykrieger.org/overview/event/roar-kids-kennedy-krieger-institute.

MAY 20 -- KEEP PUNCHING 5K RUN, 1-MILE WALK & KIDS RACES

The fifth-annual Keep Punching 5K, 1-Mile Walk & Kids Races takes place at Goucher College. Opening ceremonies begin at 8 a.m. All proceeds assist patients, families and clinicians who wish to pursue integrative approaches to healing. For more information and to register, visit runsignup.com/Race/MD/Towson/KeepPunching5K1MileWalkKidsRaces.



★ BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

MARCH 17 -- NATIONAL ANTHEM AUDITIONS AT PRINCE GEROG'S STADIUM

The Bowie Baysox will host live auditions for a chance to sing the national anthem before a 2018 Baysox home game. Stadium gates open for registration at 9 a.m. and auditions begin at 9:30 a.m. Every participant must register, and auditions are conducted on a first-come, first-serve basis. The auditions are held rain or shine and no word sheets are allowed during the audition. All auditions must be done in person, no CD's or videos are accepted for review.

APRIL 14 & MAY 12 -- BASEBALL CARD SHOW

A sports card and memorabilia show to benefit Monsignor Slade Catholic School will be held at Monsignor Slade Catholic School in Glen Burnie from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. For more details, call Leo at 443-416-6447.

LUTHERVILLE-TIMONIUM REC COUNCIL SOFTBALL

The Baltimore County Lutherville-Timonium Rec Council has open team registration for the spring slow-pitch softball program at Seminary Park, which runs from May to mid-August. Men's leagues are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings, and the coed league is Tuesday evenings. Individual players seeking spots will be referred to the registered team managers.

For additional details, email tjharrington51@netscape.net or call 443-847-1072.

BLUE DEVIL UMPIRE ASSOCIATION

New baseball umpires are needed to officiate in Baltimore, Carroll and Frederick counties. No experience is necessary. Email Bob Frank at lawyerfrank@comcast.net or call 410-493-7011, or contact Larry Silverman at Bluedevilumps@comcast.net or call 410-484-2118.

ADULT BASEBALL

Join the Eastern Baltimore County over-40 baseball league, which plays with wood bats on 90-foot diamonds. Players of all skill levels are encouraged to visit over40baseball.org or call Mike Lockett at 410-446-0443.

COCKEYSVILLE RECREATION

For updates about baseball registration for the Cockeysville Recreation Center, visit cockeysvillerecouncil.org.

MUSEUM OF NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL

Visit the Hubert V. Simmons Museum of Negro Leagues Baseball at the Owings Mills Metro Centre. The museum is named after Bert Simmons, who played for the Baltimore Elite Giants. The museum is open daily and admission is free. Volunteers are always welcome. For more information, visit smnlbinc.org.



★ SOCCER/RUGBY/SQUASH

TERPS SPRING LACROSSE REGISTRATION

Register now for Terps spring lacrosse to learn and play the fastest sport on turf. Whether you are a beginner or expert, the Terps is where you want to play this spring season. For more information and to register, visit baltimoreterps.com.

SPRING LACROSSE

Baltimore Youth Lacrosse is accepting registrations for spring lacrosse for kids ages 4-13. This Baltimore City-based program is open to beginners as well as experienced players. For more information, visit our website at baltimoreyouthlax.com or call 443-863-8377.

CELTIC SOCCER CLUB

Tryouts for the Celtic Soccer Club are for boys ages 6-18 and girls 6-12. Registration and additional information is available at baltimoreceltic.com.

SQUASH

SquashWise provides incentives for middle school students to excel academically, athletically and socially, as well as the opportunity to compete in local and national squash tournaments. No squash experience is necessary to become a tutor. Visit baltimoresquashwise.org to make your tax-deductible donation. To make equipment donations and/or become a volunteer tutor, email abbym@baltimoresquashwise.org.

YOUTH COACH

Baltimore Youth Lacrosse is looking for volunteer youth coaches for all age groups for the 2018 spring season. If interested, call 443-863-8377 to apply.

MIGHTY KICKS PUP LEAGUE

The Pup League provides year-round soccer training for boys

and girls of all abilities ages 2-7. It's designed to build motor skills, self-confidence and basic techniques. Ongoing programs are available around Baltimore. For more information, visit mightykicksbaltimore.com.

RUGBY

The Baltimore-Chesapeake Rugby Club, the region's only Division I men's rugby club, is looking for experienced players or those new to the game. For more information, email baltimorechesapeakeclub@gmail.com or visit baltimorerugby.net.



★ FOOTBALL

MARCH 17 -- TORREY SMITH FAMILY FUND CHARITY BASKETBALL GAME

Royal Farms arena will host Torrey Smith's seventh annual charity game at 6:30 p.m. Join Torrey along with his current and former teammates and local celebrities as they test their skills on the basketball court, all in the name of charity. While the game is the main event, there will also be giveaways, live entertainment during halftime and fun for the entire family. All proceeds will benefit the Torrey Smith Family Fund. For more information, visit torreysmith.org/.

MARCH 24 -- JOIN THE RAVENS' BAND

Become part of the Baltimore Ravens' game-day experience by joining Baltimore's Marching Ravens. Auditions will be held at Owings Mills High School. For more information or to register, visit BaltimoreRavens.com/MarchingRavens.

BALTIMORE TERPS YOUTH

Games are open to all players ages 4-14 regardless of weight or skill level. The games provide a platform for participants to play the proper position for their body size while also ensuring their success as they move on to high school and beyond. To register, visit baltimoreterps.com or call 443-863-TERP.

★ OTHER ACTIVITIES

APRIL 19 -- HOMERUN FOR RECOVERY

The Baltimore Station will host its annual Homerun for Recovery fundraiser at PBR Baltimore from 6-9:30 p.m. Presented by Fortego, LLC, the sports-themed event will benefit The Baltimore Station's residential treatment center and therapeutic programs for veterans and others who are transitioning through the cycle of poverty, addiction and homelessness to self-sufficiency. Homerun for Recovery tickets are \$70 in advance and \$80 at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased online at 501auctions.com/homerunforrecovery/tickets.

MAY 7 -- 11TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Leadership Through Athletics, Inc. (LTA) is excited to announce its 11th annual golf tournament, which will be held at Chartwell Golf and Country Club in Severna Park. For sponsorship information, contact Kelsey Grace at kelsey@leadershipthroughathletics.org or 410-533-1174.

BABE RUTH MUSEUM

The improved Babe Ruth Birthplace Museum has reopened next to Camden Yards. Babe Ruth's legacy shaped the sports and American life we live now. Consider making a tax-deductible donation. Visit baberuthmuseum.org/donate or call 410-727-1539, ext. 3012.

HOMESCHOOL SPORTS

Baltimore-area homeschooled boys and girls in grades six-12 interested in playing interscholastic sports -- such as soccer, volleyball and baseball -- can register for the upcoming school season. For more information or to register, email chensports@verizon.net.

MARYLAND OFFICIALS CLUB

Interested in becoming a high school swimming official in the Baltimore-Anne Arundel area? Experience as a competitive swimmer or coach at the high school, college or masters level -- or prior experience officiating -- is strongly preferred. Email mdcommish@comcast.net or call Mike Connors at 410-653-7307.

DUCKPIN BOWLING

There are openings for youth duckpin-bowling leagues for ages 3-21 at various duckpin centers in Baltimore. Most programs run Saturday mornings and include bowling, shoe rental and coaching. For more information, visit ndya.org, call Stacy Karten at 410-356-0936 or "like" duckpin bowling at facebook.com/theduckpinnews.

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MARYLAND GAMING

Horse Racing Enthusiasts Should Pay Attention To 'The Road To The Kentucky Derby'

★ **BILL ORDINE**



any sports fans don't start thinking about horse racing until a couple of weeks before the Kentucky Derby. And some won't even be aware of who the marquee horses are until the

NBC racing analysts give a primer on the field during the televised prelude to the 144th Run for Roses May 5.

And that's too bad. Because there's a dramatic chase leading to the Kentucky Derby and the Triple Crown, which includes Baltimore's Preakness Stakes and New York's Belmont Stakes.

For the last several years, a point system has been central to determining which horses end up in the 20 starting gates at Churchill Downs. Unfortunately, there just hasn't been enough attention paid to that storyline.

The point system has helped decide the Kentucky Derby field since the 2013 race. A group of races -- that actually starts when horses are 2-years-old and continues through the 3-year-old campaign -- awards points to the top four finishers.

The number of races included in the point system has varied slightly, but this year it's

about 35. Overall, they comprise what is called, not surprisingly, the Road to the Kentucky Derby.

Prior to the point system, Derby contenders were determined by purse earnings from all graded stakes races.

The point races basically fall into two groups on the calendar. The first group is from September of the 2-year-old campaign to about mid-February of the 3-year-old campaign (known as Prep Season). The latter group of races run mostly from March to mid-April (called the Championship Series), and frankly are far more important.

Not all the races award the same number of points. While many of the early races give 10 points for the winner, the later races -- such as the Florida Derby (March 31), the Wood Memorial (April 7), the Santa Anita Derby (April 7) and four others -- reward 100 points to the winner, 40 for second place, 20 for third and 10 for fourth.

So with the Road to the Derby just hitting its full stride, you've got time to start paying attention so you can sound (and perhaps bet) like an expert come Derby Day.

There have already been a handful of bellwether races that award 50 points for first place, including the Fountain of Youth at Gulfstream Park March 3 that was won by

long-shot Promises Fulfilled, who went off at 18-1.

So what relevance does any of this hold regarding the art and science of picking winners in the Kentucky Derby itself?

Here's the history since the points system was first used in 2013 (keeping in mind that it's a small statistical sample that includes just five campaigns):

- Every winner of the five Kentucky Derbys of the points-system era earned at least 100 points, and all won at least one of the 100-point races to reach their point total.
- None of the five Derby winners finished lower than seventh in the points standings.
- Three Derby winners finished either first or second in the points standings.
- Three of the five winners of the points-system era won the Florida Derby.

It's also worth noting Derby officials have created a points system for races in Japan and Europe to allow for possible international competitors to come out of both of those places. A colt named Sumahama won the right of first refusal for Japan's Derby slot in winning the Hyacinth Stakes in February.

Here are the 100-point races remaining on the calendar:

March 24 -- Louisiana Derby

March 31 -- Florida Derby, UAE Derby

April 7 -- Wood Memorial, Santa Anita Derby, Blue Grass Stakes

April 14 -- Arkansas Derby

HORSES TO WATCH

Good Magic was the darling of the early Triple Crown season, having won the Breeders' Cup Juvenile by more than five lengths in November, the top race for 2-year-olds. But the Fountain of Youth Stakes at Gulfstream Park March 3 sent the smart-money crowd back to the drawing board. Long-shot Promises Fulfilled went wire-to-wire in winning the Grade 2 stakes race, while Good Magic, the 3-5 favorite, finished a lackluster third.

Good Magic's loss in the Fountain of Youth (although he was third, he never really challenged in the stretch) means horse handicappers will be searching for a Kentucky Derby front-runner as the Derby's Championship Series plays out through the end of March and into April.

In the tally of Derby points, Promises Fulfilled's 52 points (50 for winning the Fountain of Youth and two for finishing third in a Prep Season race last year) should be good enough to put him in the top 20 that qualify for the Derby. The Dale Romans-trained Promises Fulfilled seems to like the Gulfstream dirt; he will run at the same track during the Florida Derby March 31, with another 100 points up for grabs to the winner.

Good Magic's 34 points (10 for finishing third in the Fountain of Youth and 24 from his 2-year-old campaign) should also place him among the top 20. Strike Power has 21 points (20 for finishing second in the Fountain of Youth and one point for a fourth-place finish last year). •

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KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX

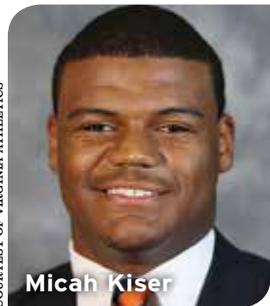
JC Jackson

"He's all for the kids. He knows how to get the best out of you. I love [D.J. Durkin]; he's a wonderful coach, man. He made me a man. He didn't just teach me football; he taught me how to be a man outside of football. ... I would love to play for the Baltimore Ravens. I'll be back where I just was. I loved the DMV area. It's a really good area, really good environment."

- Former Maryland cornerback JC Jackson Dec. 26 on his relationship with Maryland football head coach DJ Durkin and what it would mean to him to be drafted by the Ravens

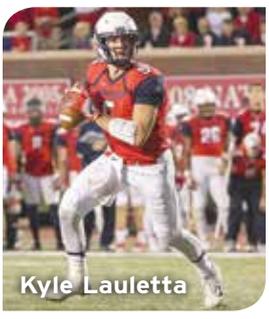
"My whole life, growing up watching [former Ravens linebacker] Ray Lewis, [he's] always been my idol. Then him kind of passing the mantle on to [linebacker] C.J. Mosley, watching C.J. Mosley bring it or a lot of great inside linebackers come through the Ravens. So that would be a great dream. It would be awesome. At the same time, it would be really hectic. So it's kind of like a double-edged blade there. A lot of family members would want tickets; a lot of friends would want tickets and hit me up and stuff. So it would be great, but at the same time I know it would be exhausting."

- Former Virginia inside linebacker Micah Kiser (Gilman) Dec. 19 on how special it would be for him to be drafted by his hometown Ravens



COURTESY OF VIRGINIA ATHLETICS

Micah Kiser



JORDAN BURGESS/RICHMOND ATHLETICS

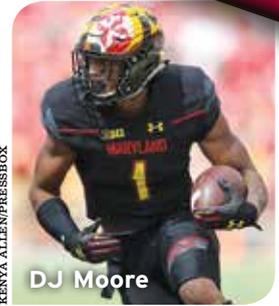
Kyle Lauletta

"Man, that would be really, really cool. At this point, I know it sounds cliché, I would be blessed for anybody to take me, but no, you're absolutely right. With the connection - I have some family that lives in Maryland - and taking over hopefully some day from a guy like [Ravens quarterback] Joe Flacco, that would be a dream come true."

- Former University of Richmond quarterback Kyle Lauletta (son of former Navy quarterback Joe Lauletta) Feb. 20 on the possibility of being drafted by the Ravens

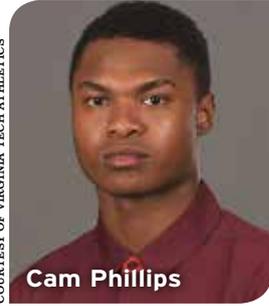
"Just seeing him come out of Maryland, seeing what he did at Maryland - now he's just transferring it over to the NFL. It's something that I can see myself doing. Just sticking to what I know and what I've seen from all the Terps that came out, is just go out and do my best to get where they are. It would definitely be a good opportunity. I've been in Maryland for awhile, so I've got fans all throughout the DMV, and I've got fans in Philly, so my family would be able to come down and watch me play just like they did at Maryland. So that would be a good situation for me."

- Former Maryland wide receiver DJ Moore Feb. 9 on comparisons to fellow former Terp Stefan Diggs and what it would mean for him to be drafted by the Ravens



KENYA ALLEN/PRESSBOX

DJ Moore



COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

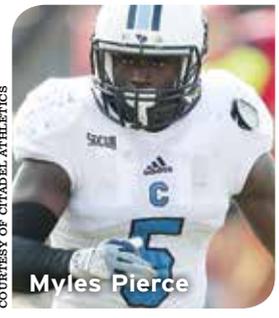
Cam Phillips

"I'm originally from North Carolina, I moved up to Maryland when I was 12. I lived in Charlotte up until I was 12, and then I moved up to Maryland around there. My mom was a big Panthers fan, huge Panthers fan actually. And you know what man? I hope I don't hurt no feelings, but the first Little League team I played for was the Steelers, so I've always been a fan [of them]. I think my mother would be ecstatic actually, man. I think that's what she would really like on her own agenda."

- Former Virginia Tech wide receiver Cam Phillips (DeMatha) Feb. 14 on who he rooted for growing up and what it would mean to his mom (who lives in Laurel, Md.) if he were to be drafted by the Ravens

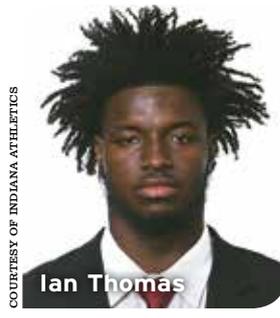
"If ever the opportunity arose it would definitely be a blessing for both of us. I feel as though it would be very enjoyable. ... I've never really looked at it as a shadow or something that's holding me back. I've always looked at it as something that's pushed me forward to be better and push myself to be a better football player because of a standard that he set before me. I'm always trying to push myself to live up to that. So it's definitely something that prepared me rather than held me back."

- Former Citadel linebacker Myles Pierce Feb. 7 on the possibility of being drafted by the Ravens and whether he'd be intimidated playing in the shadow of his older brother, Ravens defensive tackle Michael Pierce



COURTESY OF CITADEL ATHLETICS

Myles Pierce



COURTESY OF INDIANA ATHLETICS

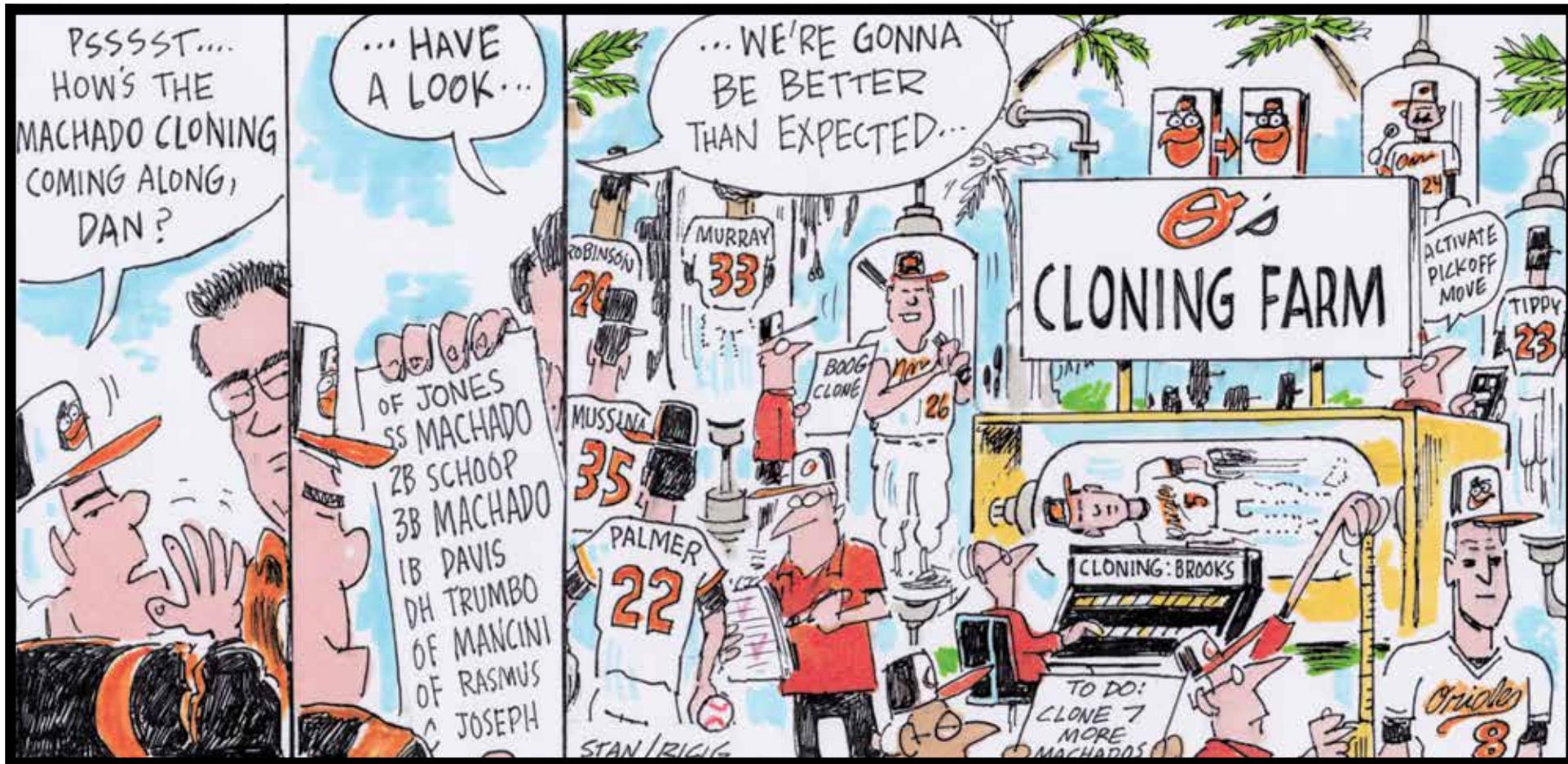
Ian Thomas

"It would mean so much because growing up in Baltimore, we didn't have much. When the Ravens did those things for Thanksgiving and Christmas, we always were there getting turkeys. Those Ravens players were always an impact on our lives, and those are the guys that we looked up to as a family and me as a player. So if I can go to Baltimore - that would be a blessing and a dream come true. I [met] Ray Lewis, Lardarius Webb, Ray Rice, Haloti Ngata, a bunch of guys."

- Former Indiana tight end Ian Thomas (Digital Harbor) Jan. 20 on what it would mean to him to be drafted by his hometown Ravens

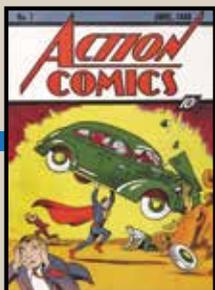
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Safety
Sense¹



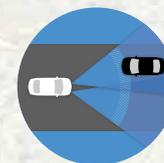
Pre-Collision System with
Pedestrian Detection Function²



Dynamic Radar
Cruise Control³



Lane Departure Alert⁴



Automatic High Beams⁵

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 **TOYOTA**
Let's Go Places

¹DRIVERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN SAFE DRIVING. ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS AND DRIVE SAFELY. SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING ROAD, WEATHER AND VEHICLE CONDITIONS. ²THE TSS PRE-COLLISION SYSTEM IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR SAFE AND ATTENTIVE DRIVING PRACTICES. DRIVERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN SAFE DRIVING, ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS AND DRIVE SAFELY. SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING ROAD, WEATHER AND VEHICLE CONDITIONS. THE PEDESTRIAN DETECTION SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO DETECT A PEDESTRIAN AHEAD OF A VEHICLE, DETERMINE IF IMPACT IS IMMINENT, AND HELP REDUCE IMPACT SPEED. IT IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR SAFE AND ATTENTIVE DRIVING. SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, SUCH AS SPEED, SIZE AND POSITION OF PEDESTRIANS, AND WEATHER, LIGHT AND ROAD CONDITIONS. ³DYNAMIC RADAR CRUISE CONTROL IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE DRIVER AND IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR SAFE AND ATTENTIVE DRIVING PRACTICES. SYSTEM EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING ROAD, WEATHER AND VEHICLE CONDITIONS. ⁴LANE DEPARTURE ALERT IS DESIGNED TO READ LANE MARKERS UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AND PROVIDE VISUAL AND AUDIBLE ALERTS WHEN LANE DEPARTURE IS DETECTED. IT IS NOT A COLLISION-AVOIDANCE SYSTEM OR A SUBSTITUTE FOR SAFE AND ATTENTIVE DRIVING. EFFECTIVENESS DEPENDS ON MANY FACTORS, INCLUDING ROAD, WEATHER AND VEHICLE CONDITIONS. ⁵AUTOMATIC HIGH BEAMS OPERATE AT SPEEDS ABOVE 25 MPH. FACTORS SUCH AS DIRTY WINDSHIELD, WEATHER, LIGHTING & TERRAIN LIMIT EFFECTIVENESS REQUIRING THE DRIVER TO MANUALLY OPERATE THE HIGH BEAMS. SEE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR ADDITIONAL TSS LIMITATIONS AND DETAILS.