



WRIGLEY FIELD CHICAGO CUBS MEDIA RELATIONS

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#### **Tribune**

Cubs near deal with Dodgers to unload Marmol  
Trade would provide a little salary relief  
By Paul Sullivan

OAKLAND — When Carlos Marmol was asked to waive a no-trade clause to go to the Angels last November, his original response was "no thanks."

Marmol eventually relented, but the Cubs pulled out on the deal at the last minute and let Marmol return as the team's closer.

That didn't work so well.

Eight months later, the Cubs appear to be ready to send Marmol to Los Angeles once again, but this time to the Dodgers.

Cubs President Theo Epstein was unavailable for comment on an ESPN report the two sides were close to a deal. A source said the deal is likely to happen, providing the Cubs with minimal salary relief from the remaining \$4.9 million on Marmol's \$20 million deal.

Thus will end a chapter of Cubs history that began with much promise but imploded like a ninth-inning walk, wild pitch, hit batter and walk-off hit.

Marmol, who was designated for assignment last Tuesday, would give the Dodgers some late-inning options. He wouldn't replace 25-year-old closer Kenley Jansen, but he would provide the Dodgers with a veteran arm for a setup role. Jansen took over after Brandon League lost closer job on June 10 with his fourth blown save. Jansen has seven saves and a 2.41 ERA in 41 games.

The Cubs' priority is to not have to pay the rest of Marmol's salary. If they didn't trade him during the 10-day period, he'd become a free agent and the Cubs would be responsible for the entire salary.

Marmol took over as Cubs closer on Aug. 18, 2009, replacing Kevin Gregg, who eventually took Marmol's job this season.

"Obviously he has the stuff to do it, and he has the toughness to do it," then-manager Lou Piniella said upon making the change in 2009. "It's just a question of getting the ball over the plate."

Four years later, that question remains. But in spite of the nightmarish ending, Marmol still wound up ranked third in franchise history in saves (117), first in relief appearances (470), and first in strikeouts (657). He was hoping to go to a contender, feeling he can prove his first half was just a slump and not the end of a career.

In 2013, Marmol contributed to a bullpen collapse that has haunted the Cubs since the opening week, when he lost his closer's role. The Cubs bullpen ranked 25th on Monday with a 4.29 ERA, and was tied with the Orioles and Dodgers for most blown saves (16) in the majors.

"Obviously the bullpen has been the biggest culprit, but it's not to lay everything at the feet of the bullpen," Epstein said Sunday. "We also have to get better opening up games when we get leads early. We've fallen into the habit of making some quick outs in the middle."

Marmol's stay in Chicago was a roller-coaster ride that culminated in the blown game in New York that had Alfonso Soriano throwing a trash can afterward. The Cubs conceded Marmol had become a "distraction," and decided to designate him for assignment after futile attempts to deal him.

When Marmol signed his \$20 million deal in spring training of 2011, he said: "It's not just about money. I feel good here in Chicago. Hopefully I can sign a 10-year deal (after 2013)."

Cubs general manager Hendry added: "I hope I'm here to do it."

Hendry was fired the next season. The Marmol era ends now.

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#### **Tribune**

Marmol gone, but Cubs' bullpen problems aren't

Camp's ERA at 7.04

By Paul Sullivan

OAKLAND — With or without Carlos Marmol, the Cubs' bullpen remains a problem area.

Shawn Camp's season-long slump continued over the weekend in Seattle, leaving the Cubs with decisions on whether to keep him.

Camp gave up three runs on two home runs in the eighth inning of Sunday's 7-6 win over the Mariners, after giving up the game-winning hit in the 10th inning in Friday night's loss.

"He's getting guys with two strikes and not being able to put them away," manager Dale Sveum said. "Just making some big mistakes in those situations right now."

Camp has a 7.04 earned-run average and three blown saves in three opportunities. He spent three weeks on the disabled list with a right big toe sprain before returning on June 15. He doesn't have enough innings to qualify, but the worst ERA by a relief pitcher in the majors is the Tigers' Phil Coke at 6.29.

Hector Rondon, the Cubs' Rule 5 pick, is third-worst at 6.08, and Marmol is fifth-worst at 5.86.

Soriano watch: Alfonso Soriano has taken to the DH role, and appears to be heating up in time for the Cubs' sell-off.

Soriano went 7-for-14 with two homers and five RBIs in the three-game series in Seattle. He typically gets hot in the second half. Last year he had 17 home runs and 60 RBIs in the second half.

"You can count on it happening, for sure," Jeff Samardzija said. "When he gets going, look out. Hopefully that (game-winning home run Saturday) really gets him going, and the crazy thing is, his numbers are still pretty good and he hasn't been hitting that many home runs (nine). Think about when he gets going and what a difference that's going to be."

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## **Tribune**

Signing period for international players important for Chicago teams  
Cubs have 2nd-most money to spend; Sox eyeing 16-year-old Zapata  
By Phil Rogers

Sixteen-year-old Micker Zapata stands 6-foot-3 and weighs 225 pounds. He was born in the Virgin Islands and speaks fluent English, but is serious enough about baseball that he moved to the Dominican Republic two years to improve his training.

Zapata has great bat speed to go along with his size, throws well enough to play right field and has the best raw power of any prospect in Latin America. Ben Badler, who covers international players for Baseball America, links the White Sox to Zapata.

Baseball's 2013-14 signing period for international players begins Tuesday. It provides important opportunities for both Chicago teams.

While the Cubs have the second-most money to spend — with an allocated pool of \$4,557,200 — based off their finish in 2012, the White Sox are working just as hard to grab talented teenagers from the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and elsewhere.

The White Sox have an allotment of \$2,168,300, and could use more than half of that on Zapata, if early reports prove accurate. The Cubs, meanwhile, have two of the top players in their sights and were identified as front-runners to sign Dominican outfielder Eloy Jimenez and Venezuelan shortstop Gleyber Torres.

Both Chicago teams have become serious players on the international front, although it could be five to six years before the players they are signing are good enough to reach the big leagues. The White Sox and Cubs failed to land their share of talent in Latin America in the decade that led to the collapse of both farm systems.

Cubs Chairman Tom Ricketts built a new academy in the Dominican Republic and gave team President Theo Epstein the financial backing to pursue the biggest-ticket players around. The White Sox haven't been as financially aggressive but imported a top Latin America scout, Marco Paddy, almost two years ago.

Hiring Paddy away from the Blue Jays was an admission that they needed outside help to solve a problem that went from bad to worse when then-assistant general manager Dave Wilder was caught taking kickbacks from players, none of whom have proven to be worth the money they were given.

White Sox general manager Rick Hahn says the team has been looking to international talent as well as increased spending in the draft to address their flawed talent pipeline.

"A couple years ago we started the process — both domestically in the draft, as well as internationally and with some of our trade acquisitions — of building a stronger core within the farm system," Hahn said Sunday. "We do have players that we are high on that we think can be impact players in Chicago. Obviously, we didn't feel they were ready in 2013, and we'll see how we look at the end of the season about which ones can come in 2014."

All teams were given international allotments of \$2.9 million last year before the sliding scale was introduced for 2013-14.

The White Sox signed at least six players they hope will climb onto their list of top prospects in future seasons, the most significant of whom is Dominican outfielder Hanleth Otano.

Another player gifted with raw power, the 6-4 Otano signed for \$550,000. He's hitting only .220 in the Dominican Summer League but has shown the knack of being a run-producer, with 16 RBIs in 21 games.

The Sox also signed Dominican third baseman Luis Castillo, Dominican shortstop Johan Cruz and Dominican center fielder Antonio Rodriguez last year. It's too early to get too excited about any of these players, but they represent a start for an organization that needed to broaden the net it throws over players.

"We have invested more in the last 18 months in the system," Hahn said. "I think we're going to start seeing the fruits of that in the coming years."

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### **Tribune**

Series preview: Cubs at A's

Staff

All games on WGN-AM 720.

Season series: Cubs won 2-1 in 2010.

Tuesday: 9:05 p.m., CSN.

RH Scott Feldman (7-6, 3.46) vs. RH A.J. Griffin (6-6, 3.56).

Wednesday: 9:05 p.m., CSN-Plus, CLTV.

RH Matt Garza (3-1, 3.83) vs. RH Bartolo Colon (11-2, 2.79).

Thursday: 3:05 p.m., WGN-Ch. 9.

LH Travis Wood (5-6, 2.85) vs. RH Jarrod Parker (6-6, 4.27).

Who's hot: Alfonso Soriano is hitting .389 (7-for-18) with two homers and five RBIs on the trip. Colon went 5-0 in June with a 1.75 ERA.

Who's not: Welington Castillo is 3-for-17 (.176) on the trip, while Nate Schierholtz is at .200 (5-for-25). A's RF Josh Reddick is hitting .202 at home and .217 overall.

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### **Sun-Times**

Cubs 'close' to sending Carlos Marmol to Dodgers

BY GORDON WITTENMYER

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Cubs are "close" to completing a low-caliber trade that would send reliever Carlos Marmol to the Los Angeles Dodgers, multiple sources confirmed Monday.

The deal will provide the Cubs modest salary relief from the \$4.9 million remaining on Marmol's contract and provide the high-payroll Dodgers another option in their own troubled -bullpen.

The Cubs designated the embattled reliever for assignment Tuesday and faced releasing him if they were unable to make a trade.

Cubs officials did not immediately return messages.

Marmol, 30, returned home to the Dominican Republic a few days ago as he awaited news on his future.

The 2008 All-Star was 2-4 with a 5.86 ERA and three blown saves in five chances, having lost the closer job a week into the season.

He converted 18 of 19 saves with a 3-1 record and 2.06 ERA after June 11 last season.

Marmol was one of eight Cubs relievers who have blown saves this year, a crew that blew two more over the weekend in Seattle after his departure.

The Cubs' bullpen ranks 25th in the majors in ERA and has the worst save percentage.

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### **Sun-Times**

What we know and what we don't about the Cubs at midseason

BY GORDON WITTENMYER

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Cubs reach the halfway mark of the season Tuesday, and to say their glass is half-full would be inaccurate.

The first half has done less to reveal progress in their rebuilding plan and more to expose flaws that suggest a long, uncertain timeline.

What we have learned so far

1. The Cubs can't close, and it's only going to get worse. The bullpen ranks 25th in the majors in ERA and has the worst save percentage in the game. Eight relievers have at least one blown save (16 total).

After they almost blew another in a game they led 7-1, manager Dale Sveum said, "Looked real easy for a while. That's why we play nine."

To which one media wise guy said, "And why you only want to play seven."

"No kidding," Sveum said. "Get back to Little League days, we'll be OK."

Wait till next month, when closer Kevin Gregg (13-for-14 in save chances, 1.65 ERA) figures to be gone. He's among at least three Cubs most likely to be traded by the July 31 deadline.

2. The National League Central is dramatically better. The Pirates and Cardinals are the top two teams in baseball, and the third-place Reds are one of the top four teams in the league. The long road to the top just got longer.

3. Travis Wood is part of the young core. Since the start of August last year, the left-hander is the team's top-performing pitcher with a 3.15 ERA in 29 starts. Wood leads the majors with 15 quality starts and is the Cubs' likely All-Star representative.

"I think he's definitely taken his game to the next level," team president Theo Epstein said. "It's really remarkable when you think where his command is now compared to 15 months ago. It's like night and day. Travis deserves a ton of credit for getting to where he is right now."

What we're waiting to find out

1. Who goes where and how fast? The trading season hits full stride with the start of July, and Epstein estimated a "50-50" chance the Cubs could pull off a deal by the All-Star break, which is in less than two weeks.

The front office tends to be deliberate, sometimes to a fault, but starters Scott Feldman and Matt Garza could go fast as contenders try to get 15 or more starts out of anyone they pick up for the stretch run.

Either one could be making his last start this week in Oakland, when they start back-to-back games before what might be the largest collection of scouts at a Cubs game this year.

2. What kind of hitter will Starlin Castro be by the end of the season: the two-time All-Star he is or a player with a lot to prove who continued his first-half struggles (.233 batting average, .594 OPS)?

He's 7-for-24 (.292) with a homer and a double since his first game off since 2011 on Tuesday.

"I think he'll come out of it a much better player for it," Epstein said.

3. Is there a price a team is willing to pay to get the Cubs to trade Jeff Samardzija?

Probably not. But the Cubs already had a brief discussion with onetime Epstein mentor Kevin Towers of the Diamondbacks. Towers backed off when the Cubs demanded his top two prospects as part of any deal.

If Samardzija goes, consider the Cubs back to ground zero on their competitive timeline.

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### **Daily Herald**

Cubs will be subject of plenty of trade rumors

By Bruce Miles

The baseball calendar reads something like this: April, May, June, Rumorville, August, September, October.

In the real world, it read "July 1" on calendars Monday, but every baseball fan knows the days of this month are filled with trade talks until the 31st, the deadline for making deals without waivers being required.

The Cubs will be sellers again, and Sunday in Seattle, team President Theo Epstein told reporters there's a 50-50 chance the Cubs will make a deal.

Figure on the odds being better than that.

The Cubs have several movable and marketable pieces and some that aren't so movable and marketable.

We'll get into all of that here and discuss the consequences of making any move.

Starting pitching:

Matt Garza and Scott Feldman are the two pitchers likely to be traded by the end of the month, as it appears the Cubs want to build around Jeff Samardzija and Travis Wood.

Garza has come back from last year's stress reaction in his right elbow and this spring's left-lat strain to pitch well. He takes a 3-1 record and 3.83 ERA into Wednesday night's start at Oakland.

There may be no better time than now to move Garza. He's been on the disabled list in each of his three years with the Cubs, twice for lengthy stints. He's also a free agent at the end of this season. As one of the top two or three starters on the market, he could fetch the Cubs a couple of nice prospects, bringing his situation with the Cubs full circle. Former general manager Jim Hendry dealt several prospects to Tampa Bay to get Garza in January 2011.

Feldman has been a model of quiet consistency after dropping his first 3 decisions. He'll start Tuesday's series opener at Oakland with a 7-6 record and 3.46 ERA. He'd be a nice mid-rotation starter for some contender and could bring prospects along the lines of what Ryan Dempster and Paul Maholm brought at last year's trading deadline.

Consequences: The Cubs want to avoid the embarrassment of another 100-loss season. In the second half of last year, they ran out the likes of Jason Berken, Justin Germano and Chris Volstad to start games along with rookies Chris Rusin and Brooks Raley. The results were predictable.

Epstein and general manager Jed Hoyer could ask for a major-league arm in return with any trade they make. If the Cubs don't deal swingman Carlos Villanueva, he's an option to go back to the rotation. Rusin and Raley are at Class AAA Iowa, with each having more experience now.

Back end of bullpen:

Since signing with the Cubs and eventually taking over as closer, Kevin Gregg has been a revelation in his second go-round with the team.

He blew his first save chance Saturday but rebounded Sunday with his 13th save in 14 chances. That makes Gregg an ideal candidate to be traded, either as a contender's closer or setup guy.

Consequences: If the Cubs trade Gregg, they'll need somebody to close games. Carlos Marmol is gone. Shawn Camp is still there, even though he has been less effective than Marmol was.

A trade of Gregg could give the Cubs a chance to look at Blake Parker as their closer. He did that job in Iowa, piling up 41 saves over the years there and 66 overall in the minors. Granted, there's a big difference between closing in Triple-A and closing in the big leagues, but the Cubs would have nothing much to lose in giving the 28-year-old Parker a shot over the final two months.

Center field and right:

The Cubs could get center fielder David DeJesus (shoulder) off the disabled list right before or after the all-star break. He's in the final season of his two-year deal and could give a team a solid left-handed bat and consistent on-base threat.

Right fielder Nate Schierholtz has been an under-the-radar achiever in right field for the Cubs. He could be in demand as a left-handed bat.

Consequences: There aren't many adverse consequences in moving DeJesus, even with Ryan Sweeney heading to the DL with a broken rib, suffered Saturday in Seattle.

The Cubs could use Brian Bogusevic in center. Dave Sappelt is a likely September call-up. And we'll see if Brett Jackson gets healthy enough at Iowa to merit a shot.

The Cubs would miss Schierholtz, but any of the names above could hold down right field as well as center in a crunch.

The Soriano question:

When left fielder Alfonso Soriano sat out a couple of games in Milwaukee last week, Twitter lit up with questions from fans wanting to know if a trade was in the works.

Let's be realistic.

Soriano swung the bat well in Seattle, and he indeed may be heating up. But he has a hitting line of .257/.284/.428 for an OPS of .712. He has 9 homers, 35 RBI, 9 walks and 71 strikeouts in 292 at-bats.

Of course, Soriano still has one more season after this left on his eight-year, \$136 million contract.

The contract aside — and it takes two people to shove that contract aside — the bigger problem is finding a team that wants Soriano. As a player with 10-and-5 rights, Soriano can veto any deal involving him.

If you're the GM of a contending club, you've got to ask yourself, "How can Soriano help us?" He is 37 years old, and if he indeed is entering a hot streak, it could well be followed by a cold streak.

And if you're a GM, shouldn't you be able to find five, six or seven left fielders or designated hitters who can give you more than what Soriano can bring? (If you're a contender, chances are you've got those guys on your team already.)

I've always felt Soriano would play out his contract with the Cubs. It'll take some doing to change that opinion.

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## **Cubs.com**

Rowson brings fresh approach, patience to Cubs  
Hitting coach strives to keep batters focused and calm at the plate  
By Carrie Muskat

OAKLAND -- Monday is an off-day for the Cubs. Some will play golf. Some will tour San Francisco. Some will catch up on their sleep.

Cubs hitting coach James Rowson has video to watch.

It's been an odd year for the Cubs offensively. They lead the National League with 166 doubles and rank second in extra-base hits, yet they've struggled to score runs and are last in batting average with runners in scoring position.

Rowson was hired last season to be the Minor League hitting coordinator, and he took over as the Cubs' hitting coach in June when Rudy Jaramillo was dismissed.

"The thing about James is that he came from the Yankees organization that was big into the whole OPS side of things, and he's bringing that outlook to us," Chicago's Darwin Barney said. "It's nice working with him because he's not going to change you, he's not going to say, 'Maybe you should do this, maybe you should do that.' He'll say, 'Let's make what you do better.' Ever since I bought into that, I've felt really comfortable with that."

No matter how much video Rowson watches or hours he spends in the batting cages, it has to be frustrating when the Cubs strand runners, or Starlin Castro struggles to hit his weight (the 190-pound shortstop was batting .165 this month).

"I'm holding up fine," Rowson said. "We know we have the right players, we know what these guys are capable of. I feel we have to stay with the process and stay with the plan ... you can't expect everything to be great all the time. It'll get better."

Before a game in Seattle, Rowson addressed some of the Cubs' hot hitting topics in the first half. Let's start with Castro: The two-time All-Star shortstop has looked like anything but. He was batting .233 overall. This is a player who began the year hitting .297. Has he regressed?

"My thing with Starlin is any time you're talking about changing a little bit of your approach or something you've done for a long time, there will always be a period of struggle," Rowson said. "I think right now we're seeing that. We're seeing that he's going through some struggles, but he's making adjustments."

Rowson said Castro understands the process.

"I believe he's accepting it," Rowson said. "But he's playing at the Major League level, and he's trying to go out there and compete. While he's competing, he's also working on making some adjustments, so there's going to be some ups and downs and there will be times when it gets frustrating. He may go back to some things he did before, but overall he's been very accepting, he's worked hard at it. We feel like at the end of this, he'll come out and be a good player."

What about Anthony Rizzo? The first baseman batted .234 in the No. 3 spot in the lineup and was dropped to fifth, where he's hitting .255. He does lead NL first basemen in doubles and is in the top five in extra base hits. But he's hitting .216 in June.

"Anthony can be a little bit of a tinkerer with his lower half and where he starts his hands," said Theo Epstein, Cubs president of baseball operations. "Most great hitters are obsessed with hitting and work on it every day. Anthony's like that. He's still continuing to get to know himself and the player he's going to be."

Rowson agrees.



"When he goes up there, he knows he can hit home runs, and there are times when he may get a little big or try to hit a few more home runs than he needs to," Rowson said of Rizzo. "When he's taking a good swing, it's conducive to driving the ball to all fields and also being able to hit home runs.

"Some of his streaks are just a matter of him staying within himself and getting back to what he does well," Rowson said. "We'll battle that off and on, and as he gains maturity and experience, we'll see less and less of these ups and downs."

Is there anything Rowson can do to improve the Cubs' numbers with runners on base?

"Sometimes what happens is you start putting pressure on yourself as an offense," he said. "The good teams that hit with runners in scoring position, you look at some of their swings when there's no one on, and their swings are similar. One thing you have to do is try to stay within yourself and try not to press."

In Sunday's 7-6 win over the Mariners, the Cubs delivered in spurts. For the game, they hit six doubles, went 5-for-11 with runners in scoring position and stranded six. Imagine if they had knocked in a couple of those other runners.

"You have to get them comfortable and just be themselves and not feel like they have to do more when there is a runner in scoring position," Rowson said.

Rowson was in the Yankees organization when Robinson Cano came up. The Yankees second baseman had a strong, veteran supporting cast. Castro and Rizzo don't, and they are being counted on to deliver while still very inexperienced.

Barney said players rely on Rowson. They know he's waiting in the dugout after each at-bat if needed.

"It's really about having a relationship with someone you trust, someone who can help you stick to a routine and find a routine and be part of a routine," Barney said.

Rowson feels that someday soon, Castro and Rizzo will look back on their struggles this year and realize how much they learned from the experience.

"It's a matter of being calm and not hitting the panic button and understanding that sometimes it takes time," Rowson said. "I really feel like with this group of players -- what we're going through now, on the other side of it -- it'll be that much better once we get to the other side of this hill. What we're going through, in a nutshell, is really grinding it out now, learning how to grind it out, learning how to work at-bats, going through the struggles of doing that, but down the road, we'll be ahead of the game."

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### **Cubs.com**

New Interleague slate brings clubs to new territory

Cards, Cubs to be the latest teams to visit cities for first time in franchise history

By Adam Berry

Shortly after 7 p.m. PT on Tuesday night, a little bit of Interleague history will be made at Angel Stadium and O.co Coliseum.

If the matchups on those fields -- Cardinals at Angels, Cubs at A's -- don't look familiar, it's because they've never happened. The Angels have never played host to the Cardinals in Anaheim, and the A's have never welcomed the Cubs to Oakland.

Those clubs have met before, of course. St. Louis has won five of its nine games against the Halos, but they've all come at home. The Cubs are 4-2 all-time against Oakland, but their trips to the Bay Area have been limited to the San Francisco side of the Bay Bridge.

We'll see an equally rare meeting in California next month, when the Rays head west to Dodger Stadium for the first time. The Dodgers and Rays have split six games at Tropicana Field since Tampa Bay's first season in 1998, but that matchup will finally make its way from the Sunshine State to the Golden State for a three-game series Aug. 9-11.

When that series rolls around, we'll be left with only one site-specific pairing that's never come across the schedule: Padres at Blue Jays, SoCal vs. the Great White North. Toronto has played nine games in San Diego, and won five of them, but the Padres have never made the trip to Ontario.

Entering this season, there were nine site-specific matchups that had never taken place in the regular season, excluding those involving the Brewers, who moved to the National League in 1998, and the Nationals, who were the Montreal Expos from 1969-2004.

Five of those previously unseen matchups have already taken place this year: Braves at Royals (June 25-26), Rangers at Cardinals (June 21-23), Twins at Braves (May 20-22) and White Sox at Mets (May 7-8). Half of the remaining four will come off the board Tuesday night.

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## **ESPNChicago.com**

Five trades for Matt Garza

By Jim Bowden

Chicago Cubs right-hander Matt Garza might end up being the best starting pitcher dealt at baseball's July 31 trade deadline.

After beginning the season on the disabled list, Garza has returned to form as a top-of-the-rotation difference-maker. In his past three starts, he's gone at least seven innings and given up less than a run per game with 23 strikeouts. It's clear his stuff is all the way back and his command and control is phenomenal. As such so is his trade value.

The Cubs' front office is concentrating on fixing its pitching in the long-term, and that's what they'll focus on in any trade talks for Garza. The preference will be acquiring young starting pitching which is either close to the big leagues or major league ready.

The Cubs match up well with the Cleveland Indians, Texas Rangers, San Diego Padres, Los Angeles Dodgers and Colorado Rockies, as all can offer them major league-ready pitching either in the rotation or the bullpen. Garza's injury history makes him somewhat of a risk, and perhaps that will temper some the return on Garza the Cubs are hoping for. So here are five trades the Cubs could realistically make for Garza:

### 1. Cleveland Indians

RHPs Cody Allen and Dylan Baker

The Indians don't have any young starting pitching to surrender for a rental such as Garza, but they might be willing to sacrifice a significant bullpen arm if they can make a major acquisition for the pennant race. Allen's velocity is now up to 94-97 mph and his hard 84 mph slider is nasty, with curveball-type tilt. Allen, 24, is striking out more than 10 per nine innings and could replace Kevin Gregg as the Cubs' closer if Gregg is dealt as expected at the deadline, as well. Baker would be a solid throw-in for the Cubs. Baker was the Indians' fifth-round draft pick in 2012 and currently has a 3.63 ERA in low Class A. He throws in the mid-90s with a hard slider that doesn't break much and looks more like a cutter.

## 2. Texas Rangers

LHP Robbie Ross and IF Drew Robinson

It would be difficult for the Rangers to part with Ross, who's been an integral part of the Rangers' bullpen the past two years. However, Garza would be a solid No. 2 starter between ace Yu Darvish and No. 3 Derek Holland and would greatly improve their chances of winning the AL West and advancing in the playoffs.

The Cubs, on the other hand, could put Ross into the rotation -- he started in the minors -- and since he's not eligible for salary arbitration until 2015, he would fit nicely in their long-term plans. Robinson would be a solid throw-in. He can play second or third and has some gap-to-gap power.

## 3. San Diego Padres

LHP Robbie Erlin and RHP Keyvius Sampson

Erlin originally was drafted in the third round by the Rangers in 2009. He was included in a 2011 trade deadline deal for setup man Mike Adams, who was one of the best in the business at the time. Erlin had a 5.25 ERA in 12 Triple-A starts this season, but has pitched very well since being promoted to the majors, posting a 3.60 ERA with 12 strikeouts and one walk in 15 innings. His fastball sits 88-91 mph with a slow 12-6 curveball and a solid change.

Sampson has a history of shoulder and elbow injuries but finally appears healthy. This season he has a 3.64 ERA between Double- and Triple-A with almost a strikeout per inning. He has a 90-94 mph fastball with late sink and a solid changeup.

## 4. Los Angeles Dodgers

RHPs Stephen Fife and Matt Magill

In Fife and Magill, the Dodgers can offer the Cubs two young major league-ready starters, both of whom have had time in the majors this year. Fife's 88-92 mph fastball highlights a solid four-pitch mix that includes a curveball, changeup and slider. His repertoire doesn't wow scouts, but he should be a solid back-of-the-rotation starter in time.

Magill's fastball, however, is 92-95 mph and runs in on right-handed hitters. When his slider has optimum spin, it's a wipeout pitch. His changeup needs more work to be effective. He has had trouble with control and command at the major league level, but in time he should settle down and improve. He also could become a back-of-the-rotation starter.

## 5. Colorado Rockies

LHP Drew Pomeranz and C Will Swanner

Pomeranz made his 2013 major league debut Sunday against the Giants after posting a 4.20 ERA in 85 2/3 innings pitched at Triple-A Colorado Springs. He was acquired two years ago for Ubaldo Jimenez, but struggled a year ago finishing with a 4.93 ERA in his first full season with the Rockies. Scouts have told me they like Pomeranz but question if he ever will be effective at Coors Field.

As a result, Colorado might deal him to get an arm like Garza to go with Jorge De La Rosa and Jhoulys Chacin at the top of its rotation. Pomeranz would be quite a coup for the Cubs' Theo Epstein and Jed Hoyer, if they could get him for Garza.

Swanner, 21, is a big-framed, slow-legged catcher with power. He profiles as a backup catcher and first baseman, but because of the power would be a nice throw-in for the Cubs.

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**ESPNChicago.com**

Carlos Marmol trade in works

By Bruce Levine

The Chicago Cubs are closing in on a trade that would send Carlos Marmol to the Los Angeles Dodgers, according to two sources.

Marmol was designated for assignment on June 25, giving the Cubs a 10-day period to trade him or give him his unconditional release. He has a limited no-trade clause with six teams he could block, including the Dodgers.

It's unknown which player or players the Dodgers would send to Chicago.

Marmol is owed more than \$5 million on his \$9.8 million for this season, and another source said the Dodgers will absorb some of the money owed. He's ending a three-year, \$21 million contract with the Cubs, who are the only team he's played for in the majors.

Marmol can become a free agent after this season.

The 30-year-old Marmol went 2-4 with a 5.86 ERA in 31 relief appearances this season. He has struggled for parts of the past three seasons. He struck out 32 and walked 21 in 27 2/3 innings this season. He had 10 blown saves with a 4.01 ERA in 2011 and has lost his closer role several times.

Marmol has 117 saves over eight seasons with the Cubs. His best season as a closer came in 2010 when he had 38 saves, a 2.55 ERA and 138 strikeouts in 77 2/3 innings.

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Cubs close to trading Carlos Marmol to Dodgers

By Patrick Mooney

SAN FRANCISCO – Carlos Marmol's change of scenery could come in Hollywood.

The Cubs are very close to a deal that would send Marmol to the Los Angeles Dodgers, sources confirmed Monday. That would be some 2,000 miles away from Wrigley Field, where the lightning-rod reliever would get booed as soon as he started warming up in the bullpen.

The Cubs would gain a small amount of payroll savings in the trade. Marmol is still owed roughly half of his \$9.8 million salary this season. A few teams inquired after the Cubs designated him for assignment last week, but no one was willing to offer top-shelf prospects in return for someone with a 5.86 ERA.

The Cubs had tried to shop Marmol at least since last August, but found no takers, even as he posted a 1.52 ERA after the All-Star break and put together a streak converting 19 straight saves.

Entering his 14th year in the organization, Marmol reluctantly agreed to waive his limited no-trade rights and accept a deal to the Los Angeles Angels before it fell apart last November over concerns about Dan Haren's medicals/financials.

Chavez Ravine has a different vibe than Clark and Addison, but the Dodgers are still a win-now team with enormous expectations.

At least Marmol, 30, won't be the center of attention there. Maybe that will help him rediscover what made him an All-Star setup guy in 2008 and so dominant in 2010, when he notched 138 strikeouts in 77.2 innings. That lights-out performance earned him a three-year, \$20 million contract that will expire at season's end.

Maybe it was the new money, the frequent turnover on the coaching staff or simply the fleeting nature of bullpen careers. Perhaps this was the cost of becoming the franchise's all-time leader in relief appearances (470), or a mental block after hearing all that booing.

"This is a guy that relied on having one of the most devastating pitches in baseball to be effective," general manager Jed Hoyer said last week. "That pitch has gone from devastating to simply an OK slider. That's really been the difference. He's not injured. He's really a tough guy physically. He always wants the ball. He never made excuses.

"I just think the biggest difference is he had a wipeout slider for all those years. And whether it was innings or slot or mechanics, he doesn't have it anymore."

Also remember that Marmol saved 117 games for the Cubs and helped the organization win division titles in 2007 and 2008.

But Marmol became a trending topic on Twitter for the wrong reasons. The point of no return was a brutal 4-3 loss to the New York Mets on June 16 at Citi Field, where anger seeped into the clubhouse and manager Dale Sveum took the heat on talk shows and across the Internet.

Ex-Cub Aramis Ramirez spoke with Marmol last week as he was processing the news and said his friend expected to be moved this summer but didn't see a DFA coming. They hang out during the offseason back home in the Dominican Republic. The Milwaukee Brewers third baseman is also the godfather to Marmol's oldest daughter.

"I'm pretty sure somebody will take him," Ramirez predicted. "That's a guy who throws 94-95 (mph) with a good slider. He's just having a tough year. Hopefully, he gets a fresh start and turns his season around."

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Cubs bracing for trade-deadline madness to begin

By Patrick Mooney

SAN FRANCISCO – The Cubs should have traded everyone yesterday. Or they're going to trade everyone tomorrow.

At least that's what it feels like if you inhale enough information, with your head buried in the iPhone checking Twitter and hitting refresh on MLBTradeRumors.com. Cubs manager Dale Sveum got it wrong: Those twits do lie.

But on July 1, there's no doubt team president Theo Epstein and general manager Jed Hoyer are getting ready for the sell-off, with the possibility pieces from a 35-45 team could be moved as soon as the All-Star break.

By Monday night, the Cubs were very close to trading Carlos Marmol to the Los Angeles Dodgers. A few teams had been kicking the tires, wondering if the one-time All-Star reliever could be salvaged after being designated for assignment last week.

The scouts will make judgments with their own eyes on Tuesday and Wednesday night at O.co Coliseum, where Scott Feldman and Matt Garza will make showcase starts against the Oakland A's. Barring a last-minute glitch, they will be pitching in pennant races later this summer.

Of course, Garza's elbow injury took him off the trade market last July, when the Texas Rangers were among the teams expressing strong interest. "Ryan Dempster Watch" saw a deal with the Atlanta Braves collapse once it leaked on Twitter, and the veteran pitcher weighed his no-trade rights up until a buzzer-beater deal with the Rangers.

But it's difficult to truly create a sense of urgency, drive the price higher and spark a bidding war with an entire month left before the non-waiver deadline.

"Everyone always looks at that question from a seller's side," Hoyer said. "It also depends on the buyer's side. Some teams want to wait until the very end to see if they're in the race or not. And some teams clearly think they're in the race early to where they want to solidify that position.

"Some of that is dependent on the other side deciding: 'Hey, these are players we want and we want them back now.' As opposed to: 'Let's wait and see what position we're in on (July 31).'"

The Cubs front office knows two systems almost as well as their own: the Boston Red Sox and San Diego Padres. The Red Sox picked up West Coast coverage during this six-game road trip through Seattle and Oakland.

The Fourth of July week has begun with only four games separating the Arizona Diamondbacks in first place and the Dodgers in last. With no team running away with the division, the entire National League West figures to be looking for pitching.

Industry sources said that while the San Francisco Giants are circling the Cubs, they don't necessarily view Garza and Feldman as primary targets now. With Garza, you'd weigh the medical concerns and his walk-year freedom against his postseason credentials (2008 ALCS MVP). But Feldman (7-6, 3.46 ERA), who's from the Bay Area and also positioned to become a free agent, could be a possible fit.

"There's nothing I can do about it," Feldman said. "I'd love to just stay on this team and I love the guys here. I think that we're heading in the right direction. You never know what's going to happen, but it's kind of out of my control at this point.

"All I can really say is I hope I'm pitching well and I hope that I stay here."

The Cubs will be motivated to move Kevin Gregg, the lightning-in-a-bottle closer who has converted 13 of 14 save chances after getting released by the Dodgers in April. Gregg probably wouldn't close for a playoff team, but he stays in control – 29 strikeouts vs. eight walks in 27.1 innings – and would be a stabilizing force in the late innings.

The Cubs aren't in a rush to trade James Russell (2.53 ERA), who is 27 years old and under club control for two more seasons. The lefty reliever would like to be a long-term piece of the puzzle.

The same logic could lead the front office to hold onto outfielders Nate Schierholtz and David DeJesus, who both remain under club control next year.

The Cubs projected Schierholtz would hit 20 homers and play plus defense when they signed him to a one-year, \$2.25 million deal with the idea he would stick around in 2014. Sveum has mentioned Schierholtz, who's arbitration-eligible next year, as a possible All-Star.

The Cubs hold a \$6.5 million option on DeJesus for next season (or a \$1.5 million buyout) and he has been a strong veteran presence in the clubhouse. The trade talk doesn't matter until he recovers from a sprained right shoulder and comes off the disabled list, likely later this month.

The noise is only going to get louder. Just ask Edwin Jackson, who's pitched for eight teams across the past nine seasons.

"Unless you have a no-trade clause in your contract, then you have no control over where you go," Jackson said. "All trades aren't bad trades. You have some trades that work out well for people. I was traded from the White Sox to St. Louis (through Toronto in July 2011) and ended up coming out with a World Series ring.

"You just never know how trades work out. But if you have no control over it, it's definitely something you shouldn't worry about. Just take things in stride and roll with the punches and handle things as they come."

Get ready for a busy month, because the Cubs are open for business.

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