

A's News Clips, Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Brandon McCarthy, Joey Devine accept A's deals

San Francisco Chronicle

The A's avoided arbitration by agreeing to one-year contracts with right-handers Brandon McCarthy and Joey Devine, the team announced Tuesday.

McCarthy, who made a career-high 25 starts and had a career best 3.32 ERA last season, will earn \$4.275 million in 2012.

Devine, a candidate for the closer job, will earn \$737,000. The deal includes incentives that could take its total value to \$1.1 million based on games pitched and games finished.

They were the final two arbitration-eligible players on the A's roster.

- Susan Slusser

Martinez injured: Tigers designated hitter Victor Martinez has injured his left knee and is likely to miss most of the 2012 season.

The Tigers said Martinez tore his left ACL last week during offseason conditioning. An MRI exam Monday in Lakeland, Fla., revealed the injury. The team said he will be re-examined next week and surgery is expected.

Martinez hit .330 with 103 RBIs last season in helping Detroit win the AL Central.

Brewers add Aoki: The Milwaukee Brewers have signed Japanese outfielder Norichika Aoki to a two-year deal with a club option for 2014.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed, but Brewers general manager Doug Melvin said it contains a "fair amount" of incentives.

Aoki's team, the Tokyo Yakult Swallows, accepted the Brewers' bid of \$2.5 million under the posting system in December. The Brewers had until 2 p.m. Tuesday to complete a deal.

Back in Arizona: Pitcher Joe Saunders, who was cut loose last month by the Diamondbacks because they didn't want to go through arbitration with him, agreed to return to the team on a \$6 million, one-year contract.

Other contracts: The Kansas City Royals and former Giants pitcher Jonathan Sanchez avoided arbitration by agreeing to a one-year, \$5.6 million contract, along with up to \$200,000 in performance bonuses. ... The Mets and former Giant Andres Torres agreed to a one-year, \$2.7 million deal. ... Andre Ethier agreed to a \$10.95 million, one-year contact with the Los Angeles Dodgers. ... Left-hander Cole Hamels and the Philadelphia Phillies agreed to a one-year, \$15 million contract. ... In all, about 80 players reached deals avoiding arbitration.

Briefly: Boston Red Sox outfielder Carl Crawford had surgery on his left wrist and could miss Opening Day. ... The Baltimore Orioles hired former A's pitching coach Rick Peterson to be their director of pitching development.

A's agree to deals with McCarthy, Devine

By Alden Gonzalez / MLB.com

The Athletics agreed to terms on one-year contracts with right-handers Brandon McCarthy and Joey Devine on Tuesday, and with that they settled with all their arbitration-eligible players before sides were scheduled to exchange figures. McCarthy's 2012 contract will be for \$4.275 million, according to the San Francisco Chronicle. The 28-year-old, who's eligible for free agency after the '12 season, is coming off a career year in '11, one in which he went 9-9 with a 3.32 ERA and a 4.92 strikeout-to-walk ratio -- an A's club record -- in 25 starts.

McCarthy posted career highs in wins, starts, complete games (five), innings pitched (170 2/3) and strikeouts (123) in 2011, while setting career lows in ERA, opponents' on-base percentage (.281) and slugging percentage (.377). McCarthy's 1.32 walks per nine innings was the second-lowest mark in A's history.

Devine, two years away from free agency, returned to the Majors for the first time in three seasons last year after undergoing Tommy John surgery. The 28-year-old posted a 3.52 ERA and a 1.261 WHIP in 23 innings -- 26 appearances -- during a two-month stint with the A's last season. For Triple-A Sacramento, he went 4-0 with three saves and a 4.24 ERA in 23 appearances.

The A's had previously agreed to terms with Daric Barton (\$1.1 million reported figure), Dallas Braden (\$3.35 million), Landon Powell (\$620,000) and Adam Rosales (\$600,000).

Baseball: A's agree to deals with pitcher Brandon McCarthy, Joey Devine

Associated Press

The A's agreed to one-year deals with starting pitcher Brandon McCarthy and reliever Joey Devine on Tuesday, bringing all of their arbitration-eligible players under contract.

McCarthy, who went 9-9 with a 3.32 ERA last season, will get \$4.275 million, a sizable jump from the \$1 million he earned in 2011 after signing with the A's as a free agent.

The 28-year-old right-hander came to the A's with a history of shoulder problems, and he missed six weeks last season because of a stress reaction in his right shoulder. But he emerged as one of the A's bright spots.

McCarthy's five complete games were tied for second in the American League. With 123 strikeouts and 25 walks, he set an A's record for strikeouts-to-walks ratio.

McCarthy might be in line for an opening-day start with Trevor Cahill and Gio Gonzalez having been traded and Brett Anderson sidelined while recovering from elbow surgery.

Devine, 28, will get \$737,500 plus incentives. After missing the 2009 and 2010 seasons because of elbow surgery, the right-hander went 1-1 with a 3.52 ERA in 26 appearances last season.

Tigers: Designated hitter Victor Martinez could miss the 2012 season after injuring his left knee during offseason conditioning.

The Tigers said Martinez suffered a torn left anterior cruciate ligament last week.

Martinez hit .330 with 12 home runs and 103 RBIs last season, helping Detroit win the A.L. Central division. He signed a \$50 million, four-year contract before the season.

"After you feel sorry for yourself for a day or so, you move on," general manager Dave Dombrowski said. "We have a good club. We've got a lot of players who will step up."

Red Sox: Outfielder Carl Crawford had surgery on his left wrist and could miss opening day.

Deals done: Eighty players agreed to contracts Tuesday. The largest one-year deals went to Philadelphia pitcher Cole Hamels (\$15 million), Dodgers outfielder Andre Ethier (\$10.95 million), Boston outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury (\$8.05 million), Milwaukee reliever Francisco Rodriguez (\$8 million), San Diego outfielder Carlos Quentin (\$7,025,000) and Tampa Bay outfielder B.J. Upton (\$7 million).

Other notable deals went to Atlanta outfielder Michael Bourn (\$6.845 million) and pitcher Jair Jurrjens (\$5.5 million); Detroit outfielder Delmon Young (\$6.725 million) and pitcher Max Scherzer (\$3.75 million); Los Angeles outfielder James Loney (\$6.375 million); Cleveland outfielder Shin-Soo Choo (\$4.9 million); Tampa Bay ace David Price (\$4.35 million); and Colorado outfielder Dexter Fowler (\$2.35 million).

Heading for arbitration: Designated hitter David Ortiz had the second-highest arbitration request at \$16.5 million (behind Giants ace Tim Lincecum's \$21.5 million request) and was offered \$12.65 million by the Boston Red Sox.

Other large amounts among the 54 players who exchanged figures with their teams involved Chicago Cubs pitcher Matt Garza (\$12.5 million vs. \$7.95 million), Philadelphia outfielder Hunter Pence (\$11.8 million vs. \$9 million), Texas catcher Mike Napoli (\$11.5 million vs. \$8.3 million) and Los Angeles Dodgers left-hander Clayton Kershaw (\$10 million vs. \$6.5 million).

Barring agreements, hearings before three-arbitrator panels will be scheduled for the first three weeks of February.

Brewers: Outfielder Norichika Aoki, a three-time batting champion in Japan's Central League, agreed to a two-year deal with a club option for 2014.

Financial terms were not disclosed.

Rangers: Texas, facing a 2 p.m. deadline Wednesday to reach an agreement with Yu Darvish, was confident it could sign the Japanese pitcher.

Darvish visited Arlington, Texas, this month and already has passed his physical.

"If we get him on the dotted line, he will fit right in," manager Ron Washington said.

Diamondbacks: Left-hander Joe Saunders agreed to a \$6 million, one-year contract with Arizona, which cut him loose last month rather than allow him to become eligible for arbitration.

Orioles: Baltimore has hired former A's pitching coach Rick Peterson to be its director of pitching development.

Even in poverty, A's should be doing what Tampa Bay does -- and they're not

By Sam McPherson, Oakland A's Examiner

There's a team on the East Coast with the same problems as the Oakland Athletics: an allegedly bad ballpark, an allegedly small budget and an allegedly small fan base.

Yet the Tampa Bay Rays have still been to the playoffs three times in the past four seasons, echoing the success the A's had in the early 2000s when Oakland went to the playoffs five times in seven seasons with the same challenges they still face today.

So what happened? Why did the A's suddenly go into the tank while the Rays have risen to the top of the American League consistently -- and are poised to do so again in 2012?

It's a question not too often explored: why did the A's suddenly drop off a performance cliff in 2007?

The stadium is still the same, the small budget is still the same, and the fan base is still the same (at least in spirit -- see below). We all know the A's are working on a new stadium, which will increase revenue and thus the future budget possibilities.

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And Oakland retains a very loyal -- if small, as it ever was -- fan base that put plenty of bodies in the seats when the team was winning in their "old" stadium with their "small" budgets: see the team's attendance numbers from 1999-2006.

So the team that drafted and/or signed All-Stars like Jason Giambi, Miguel Tejada, Eric Chavez, Mark Mulder, Tim Hudson and Barry Zito seemingly lost its ability to draft, sign and develop great players all of a sudden?

It could be argued the Moneyball draft of 2002 started the downfall, but the A's did get some good players there who produced at the major-league level (and still do): Nick Swisher and Joe Blanton, to name a few.

Generally, the Oakland organization hasn't really drafted and developed too many studs in recent years, although trading away rising players has often helped replenish a new "generation" of talent.

And a lot of that traded-away talent itself came from trading away Hudson, Mulder, et al, earlier.

So overall, a team like Tampa Bay has done a much better job at mining the draft to pick talent that has then been nurtured into a winning team at the major-league level.

This is why the A's haven't been to the playoffs in five years. In essence, the Rays are doing what the A's used to do -- so why can't Oakland do the same thing still?

Baseball is an inexact science, of course, despite the Moneyball approach everyone has adopted in the last ten years. The risks are still risky, and more financial flexibility means you can take more risks.

Yet the A's have also shot themselves in the proverbial foot by limiting revenues intentionally: shutting down the third deck of the stadium in 2006 was perhaps one of the most foolish actions Lew Wolff's management tenure has undertaken.

Why would you intentionally limit your ability to put fans in the seats? Why would you take away the chance for fans to spend more money at your ballpark on food, merchandise, etc.?

Oakland has chosen its current path to mediocre "poverty"; Tampa Bay has chosen a different path to on-the-field success and playoff opportunity.

And perhaps that's the saddest statement of all -- the A's could have kept going the way they were going prior to Wolff's purchase of the team and still driven the momentum to move to a new stadium, but they chose to gut the team of talent, play it "poor", and drive away casual fans instead (not to mention the loss of nationwide respect for one of the most successful organizations in MLB history).

So while the Rays continue to succeed under comparable hardships -- and perhaps even greater ones -- the A's continue to flounder on the field and sink in the standings while blaming everyone else but themselves.

This Oakland situation is really a microcosmic metaphor for the larger American problem facing society in the 21st century: the American ideal of helping those who help themselves is gone -- why should MLB or anyone else help or reward Lew Wolff for cannibalizing his own organization?

The Tampa Bay organization certainly deserves more credit for pursuing their goals the right way.

But in the end, it all comes down to the same truth: Oakland A's fans deserve better right now, and they're the ones getting screwed by this whole situation -- even if there is a happy ending down the road to San Jose next month as rumored.