

SPORTS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 12, 2019 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

NFL PLAYOFFS

<<< AFC DIVISIONAL ROUND >>>



NO. 6 INDIANAPOLIS AT NO. 1 KANSAS CITY
Today, 1:30 p.m., Ch. 4



NO. 5 CHARGERS AT NO. 2 NEW ENGLAND
Sunday, 10 a.m., Ch. 2



NO. 4 DALLAS AT NO. 2 RAMS
Today, 5:15 p.m., Ch. 11



NO. 6 PHILADELPHIA AT NO. 1 NEW ORLEANS
Sunday, 1:30 p.m., Ch. 11



VERNON BRYANT Dallas Morning News

FORMER USC standout Antwaun Woods, right, with Dallas teammate Maliek Collins, made his way from fourth string to the starting lineup in training camp and will return to the Coliseum to face the Rams.

THEY WILL PUT IT ALL ON LINE

Woods has been surprise for Cowboys

SAM FARMER ON THE NFL

FRISCO, Texas — Antwaun Woods was little more than a training-camp body for the Dallas Cowboys, and a rotund one at that. One of his coaches warned the 6-foot-1, 312-pound nose tackle he was “eating his way out of the NFL,” even though the undrafted Woods barely had a foothold in the league as it was.

This summer in Oxnard, when the fourth-string Woods — essentially an anonymous human blocking sled — was not only making plays but had the temerity to trade punches with All-Pro center Travis Frederick during a Cowboys practice, people took notice.

The Cowboys even posted video of the fisticuffs on [See Farmer, D8]



GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times
AFTER a loss last season, Jared Goff and Sean McVay are hoping for a longer stay in the playoffs.

Rams are done with being one and done again

BY GARY KLEIN

The experience was new for most Rams players.

Quarterback Jared Goff had never played in an NFL playoff game. Neither had star running back Todd Gurley, nor star defensive lineman Aaron Donald, as well as less-heralded teammates.

Sean McVay also made his post-season debut as head coach last season in a wild-card game against the playoff-tested and defending NFC champion Atlanta Falcons.

The inexperience showed in a defeat that jump-started a flurry of high-profile offseason moves by the Rams.

A year later, the Rams are back in the playoffs. A 13-3 record helped them earn a bye [See Rams, D9]

Stinging loss hard to shake

Memories of Dodgers' World Series setback continue to haunt Turner in offseason.

DYLAN HERNANDEZ

While Justin Turner played a round of golf with friends this week, the subject came up again. It always does. “I still talk about it,”



Turner said. More than two months after the Dodgers recorded their final out of the season, the disappointment from the World Series remains.

“Unfortunately, I can say it was pretty similar to last offseason,” Turner said. “It stings for a long time. I said it last year: I could win three World Series in the future and I’ll remember losing the one. Well, now we’ve lost two. I don’t think that’s something you’ll really get over.”

As Turner recovered emotionally and started to prepare physically for next season, something happened that placed the de-



NATHAN DENETTE Associated Press
RUSSELL MARTIN hit only 194 last season.

Martin coming back to L.A.

The catcher, who played the last of his five seasons with the Dodgers in 2010, may team with Barnes behind plate. **D3**

Angels avoid arbitration again

All eligible players are under contract as Skaggs and Heaney get big raises with one-year deals. **D3**

feat to the Boston Red Sox in context: Parts of Southern California were ravaged by the Woolsey Fire. [See Hernandez, D3]

Kuzma, Lakers can't find basket

The young scorer and the rest of the team go cold in another listless game without James.

UTAH 113, LAKERS 95

BY TANIA GANGULI

SALT LAKE CITY — As Donovan Mitchell rose in the air with the ball in his right hand, JaVale McGee rose toward the basket but there was little he could do. Mitchell powered the ball past McGee’s outstretched hand for a dunk.

It was Mitchell’s most jaw-dropping play of the night, part of a dominant performance that helped his Utah Jazz beat the Lakers 113-95 on Friday. The Lakers (23-20) dropped to 3-6 without LeBron James and are only a game ahead the Jazz

(22-21) for the eighth seed in the Western Conference.

“We couldn’t ever get our rhythm going,” Lakers coach Luke Walton said. “We couldn’t find it. I think once we were struggling to score, I think we let that affect our overall energy, which is something we talk about. It’s a good learning experience for our guys. Unfortunately we didn’t find it tonight. A game against a good team that’s pretty close to us in the playoff race. But that’s the NBA. We’ve gotta get better, learn from it.”

Mitchell scored 33 points, including 19 in the first half. Rudy Gobert (12 points, 18 rebounds), Joe Ingles (14 points, 12 rebounds) and Derrick Favors (15 points, 13 rebounds) all made important contributions for the Jazz.

The Lakers’ leading scorer was Michael Beasley, [See Lakers, D4]



RICK BOWMER Associated Press

KYLE KUZMA, who scored a career-high 41 in his last game, scored 11 against Derrick Favors and Utah.

HERE’S A CHILLING TALE

Rivers, Gates, Brady recall wind-whipped 2008 AFC title game

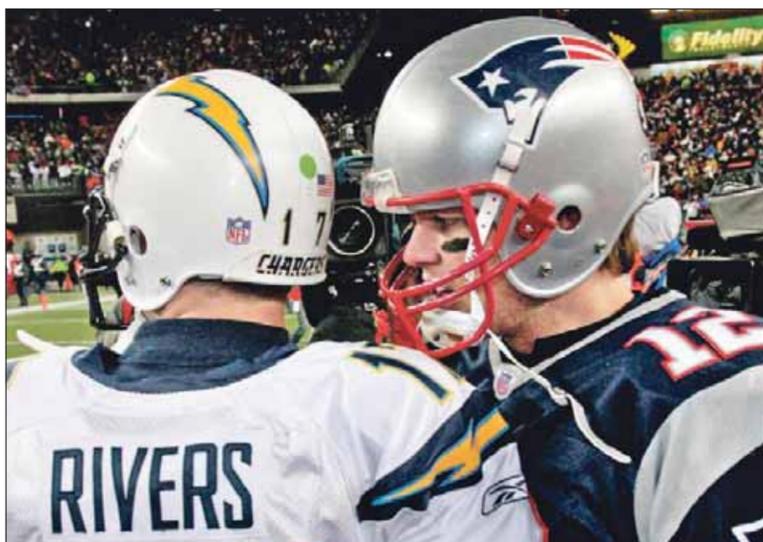
HELENE ELLIOTT

Time has a way of blurring the edges of our memories but keeping certain moments and feelings vivid for years.



New England quarterback Tom Brady remembers it was chilly on Jan. 20, 2008, when the Patriots faced the San Diego Chargers for the AFC championship at Gillette Stadium and profootballreference.com backs him up: The temperature was 23 degrees but a wind of 17 mph in Foxborough made it feel like it was 9 degrees for their 3:05 p.m. [Eastern time] kickoff.

Brady, already a three-time Super Bowl champion at the time, also clearly [See Elliott, D8]



GENE J. PUSKAR Associated Press

CHARGERS QUARTERBACK Philip Rivers, left, visits with counterpart Tom Brady after the 2008 AFC title game where the temperature was 23 degrees.

PITTSBURGH 7 DUCKS 4

Ducks' record slide continues

Jake Guentzel had a hat trick as the Ducks lost their 10th in a row. **D5**

Winger needs more netters

Kings are looking for more production from second-line forward Brendan Leipsic. **D5**

Embattled coach back in NFL

Former USC assistant Todd McNair joins Tampa Bay as running backs coach. **D7**



Old favorite faces Clippers

Blake Griffin takes on his former team at Staples Center for the first time. Doc Rivers says team should retire his number. **D5**

Teams prep for teachers' strike

Sylmar baseball coach among many LAUSD coaches in variety of sports offering final guidance to students. **D6**

BASEBALL



FRANK GUNN Associated Press

RUSSELL MARTIN, shown catching with the Blue Jays in 2015, was drafted by the Dodgers in 2002. "This year, it's a big year for me," he said. "I need to have a good year or else nobody's gonna wanna have me."

Dodgers bolster catching slot with trade for Martin

Team to have reunion with former draft pick and pair him with Barnes behind plate.

By MARIA TORRES

The Dodgers on Friday found a solution for their vacancy at catcher: They brought back Russell Martin, sending two minor leaguers to the Toronto Blue Jays in exchange for their former backstop.

The Blue Jays also sent \$16.4 million in cash to offset the majority of the \$20-million salary that Martin, who turns 36 in February, will make in the final season of a five-year contract he signed in November 2014.

Martin batted .194 with a .663 on-base-plus-slugging percentage and 25 RBIs in 90 games last season. He and Austin Barnes are expected to serve as the Dodgers' stopgaps until catching prospects Keibert Ruiz and Will Smith are ready for the major leagues.

The move does not preclude the Dodgers from pursuing coveted Miami Marlins catcher J.T. Realmuto, who remains available via trade. But as they formulate a plan for the 2019 season, the Dodgers could justify moving on from the loss of free agent Yasmani Grandal by having Martin and Barnes share duties.

Barnes will arrive at spring training in Arizona next month trying to distance himself from the .205 batting average and equally

dismal .290 slugging percentage he had in 100 games last season. The Dodgers are betting on his potential, but he'll have to earn his share of the workload.

"Obviously if Barnes were coming off the season he had in 2017, it'd be easier to answer," president of baseball operations Andrew Friedman said during a conference call. "We still believe that there's a lot of upside there and that he will be a significantly better player than he was in 2018. We're making that bet. But what that means, exactly, he's got a lot of time to figure that out."

Enter Martin. The Dodgers selected him in the 17th round of the 2002 draft and received five productive major league seasons from him. After debuting in 2006, he played in 667 games, was a two-time All-Star and won one Gold Glove and a Silver Slugger award before landing with the New York Yankees and eventually the Pittsburgh Pirates.

Although his slugging output declined, Martin maintained a .338 on-base percentage over the last three seasons. The Dodgers are optimistic his approach, which Friedman characterized as elite, will allow Martin to bounce back.

Martin is determined to prove that he can. He said in a conference call that he's put in extra offensive work this offseason.

"This year, it's a big year for me," he said. "I need to have a good year or else nobody's gonna wanna have me. It's really simple. The

motivation's there and the purpose is there. I'm gonna be as professional as I possibly can be and that hopefully translates to some good results."

Since last playing for the Dodgers in 2010, Martin has logged innings at second base, third base, shortstop and left field for the Blue Jays.

He also became an All-Star in 2015, a year in which he slugged .458 during the regular season but was held to only four hits and one RBI in eight postseason games. Dodgers executives who have remained in the organization since Martin's free-agent departure are familiar with his postseason struggles: He hit .224 (15 for 67) with nine walks and nine RBIs in 19 playoff games from 2006 to 2009.

The Dodgers are also familiar, and comfortable, with Martin's ability behind the plate. Three of his four best defensive seasons came in a Dodgers uniform, according to Baseball Prospectus' rating for fielding runs above average adjusted for position.

"Over time, I think I have somewhat polished my whole game," Martin said. "I think I've gotten probably a little bit better at receiving, learned some tricks behind the plate when it comes to blocking ... overall the understanding of how to manage a pitching staff and get the best out of each individual pitcher."

However, Martin has rarely been efficient at cutting down would-be base stealers. After leading the

American League by throwing out 44% of runners in 2015, he allowed a league-high 61 stolen bases the next season. He ranks second among active catchers with 817 stolen bases allowed.

"Obviously at that position the offensive bar isn't extremely high," Friedman said. "There's obviously a lot more that goes into a catcher having value as well. We feel like between [Martin] and Barnes that we'll get good offensive production and really good production behind the plate that will contribute to our team's success."

The Blue Jays received right-handed pitcher Andrew Sopko and infielder Ronny Brito from the Dodgers to complete the transaction.

"We like the team that we have in place right now but that doesn't mean that we're not focused on ways to continue to improve it," Friedman said. "Whether that's before the season starts, whether that's as the season is in progress, it's too difficult to say right now."

Etc.

The Dodgers avoided salary arbitration hearings for a 12th consecutive year when they reached agreements on Friday with right-handed pitchers Pedro Baez, Josh Fields and Yimi Garcia, utility players Enrique Hernandez and Chris Taylor, shortstop Corey Seager and outfielder Joc Pederson. Financial details were not announced.

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Helping those in need part of Turner's forte

[Hernandez, from D1]

Turner will play Sunday morning in a celebrity softball game to raise money for people affected not only by the Woolsey Fire, but the Borderline shooting in Thousand Oaks and the Camp Fire in Northern California. Other confirmed participants include Adam Sandler, Jamie Foxx, Charlie Sheen, Brad Paisley and Mira Sorvino. Tickets can be purchased at www.ca-strong.com.

The event was organized by three Milwaukee Brewers who were born and raised near the affected areas: Christian Yelich, Ryan Braun and Mike Moustakas.

Turner spent his childhood in Lakewood but now lives in the San Fernando Valley. His residence was never in danger, but he could see the flames from there.

"The ashes were in our backyard," Turner said.

Moustakas, a free agent, reached out to Turner about participating in a fundraiser. Their relationship dates a couple of years to when Moustakas was playing for the Kansas City Royals. They were both candidates to earn All-Star berths via the online Final Vote, and the Dodgers agreed to encourage their fans to vote for Moustakas on the condition the Royals did the same for Turner. The campaign was a success, as Turner and Moustakas made their first All-Star teams.

"To be that close to it, when they reach out and say they want to put something together to help people out, I'm always onboard for that kind of stuff," Turner said.

Turner will be hosting his own charity golf tournament in Thousand Oaks on Jan. 28. Information is available at justinturnergolfclassic.com.

Between planning community events and visiting children in hospitals, Turner has been working out at Dodger Stadium this off-season. Other regulars include Corey Seager, Cody Bellinger, Joc Pederson, Austin Barnes and Enrique Hernandez. Closer Kenley Jansen is expected to join the group soon. Newly added reliever Joe Kelly dropped by last week.

The offseason was especially short for Turner.

"I actually think I went back and worked out three or four days later," he said. "I can't sit at home and do nothing and think of the World Series. I have to go out there and blow off some steam."

Mindful that he is now 34, Turner is following a workout program designed by Dodgers trainers Brandon McDaniel and Travis Smith. Turner credited a similar



WALLY SKALIJ Los Angeles Times

JUSTIN TURNER will host his own charity golf tournament in Thousand Oaks on Jan. 28.

program for limiting him to a solitary stint on the disabled list after returning from a broken wrist he suffered at the end of spring training.

Turner is particularly upbeat about the progress of the Seager, the former All-Star shortstop who is recovering from elbow and hip operations.

"Seager looks awesome," Turner said. "He's not ahead of schedule, he's not behind schedule, he's right where he thought he would be at this point. He's working out, lifting weights with us, he's conditioning with us. He's on the field playing catch. He seems to be in a pretty positive frame of mind going forward, which is obviously a very, very, very uplifting thing for all of us."

Seager started running outdoors with the other players, according to Turner.

Of the salary dump that sent outfielders Yasiel Puig and Matt Kemp to the Cincinnati Reds, Turner acknowledged, "It caught me off guard, obviously."

The Dodgers also traded left-hander Alex Wood and catcher Kyle Farmer as part of the deal. In exchange, they received two prospects and right-hander Homer Bailey, whom they promptly released.

Turner said he doesn't share the widespread concerns about the shortage of upgrades the Dodgers have made this winter.

"I've been around these guys for enough years now where I trust what they're doing," he said. "Our guys, they're not pulling stuff out of left field. There's a reason for why they do what they do. Obviously, they haven't made a corresponding move yet, but I'm sure there's something in the works."

"At the end of the day, I feel like when opening day comes, it will probably make a lot more sense to everyone than right now because I'm sure a lot of people are scratching their heads trying to figure out what's going on."

Asked if he is a fan of free agent Bryce Harper, Turner responded, "I mean, yeah."

He laughed.

"Listen, there's no guarantees," Turner said. "You have some guys that outperform their contracts, you have some guys that underperform their contracts and there's no way to predict one way or the other. Just to go out and throw a bunch of money at someone — as a guy who's been through free agency before, yeah, that would be nice if you're that guy getting showered with money — but at the same time it doesn't guarantee anything."

What Turner is certain of is that the Dodgers are better prepared to return from a World Series loss than they were last year. Because the Dodgers had a short winter as a result of playing into November the previous season, Turner said position players had questions about how to pace themselves in spring training last year. They endured a rough start to the regular season and were 10 games under .500 in mid-May.

"Everyone has that feel and knows exactly what they need to do coming off a short offseason," Turner said.

"I'm hoping and thinking we should get off to a way better start than we got off to last year."

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Angels keeping their streak alive

Skaggs, Heaney get hefty raises as team avoids arbitration.

By MARIA TORRES

It's been eight years since the Angels have gone into an MLB mediator's room, sat across from one of their players and taken part in a salary arbitration process that can turn ugly.

The streak continues. The Angels on Friday agreed to sign their remaining arbitration-eligible players to one-year contracts. As teams around baseball receive hearing dates and prepare to either attend or continue negotiations, the Angels successfully avoided the potential of eight trials and sidestepped arbitration altogether.

Starting pitcher Tyler Skaggs, who appeared poised for his first All-Star game last season before an injury wrecked his chances, nearly doubled his 2018 salary and settled for \$3.7 million.

After making 30 starts for

the first time in his career, fellow left-hander Andrew Heaney agreed to a contract worth \$3.4 million, receiving a \$2.6-million raise in his second year of arbitration eligibility.

Right-hander Cam Bedrosian will earn \$1.75 million, and bullpen mates Luis Garcia \$1.675 million and Hansel Robles \$1.4 million. Infielder Tommy La Stella, whom the Angels acquired from the Chicago Cubs in a November trade, signed for \$1.35 million.

The Angels agreed on salaries for right-handers Nick Tropeano (\$1.075 million) and J.C. Ramirez (\$1.901 million) on Thursday.

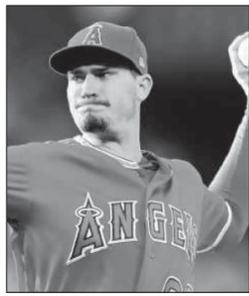
The Angels haven't gone to an arbitration hearing since former ace Jered Weaver and agent Scott Boras forced the issue in 2011. The Angels won the decision and saved \$1.435 million, but their relationship with Weaver did not sour. Six months later, Weaver signed a five-year, \$85-million extension that carried him through 2016.

An arbitration contract is not guaranteed until the player is placed on a 25-man



PAUL SANCYA Associated Press

TYLER SKAGGS will get a big raise and make \$3.7 million next season.



JOHN MCCOY Getty Images

ANDREW HEANEY will make \$3.4 million next season.

roster at the start of the season. Clubs will be responsible for only a portion of the salary if a player does not earn a major league spot out of spring training.

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AROUND THE MAJORS

Betts, DeGrom take big one-year deals

ASSOCIATED PRESS

American League MVP **Mookie Betts**, Nationals League Cy Young Award winner **Jacob deGrom** and major league home run champion **Khris Davis** reached high-priced one-year deals to avoid salary arbitration, while slugger **Nolan Arenado** and pitchers **Gerrit Cole**, **Luis Severino** and **Aaron Nola** were among 15 players still on track for hearings.

Betts and the World Series champion Boston Red Sox agreed to a \$20-million, one-year contract, a \$9.5-million raise for an arbitration-eligible player that topped **Max Scherzer's** \$8.8-million raise from Detroit in 2014. Betts' record didn't last the day, broken when DeGrom and the New York Mets agreed at \$17 million, a \$9.6-million increase.

Davis and the Oakland Athletics reached a \$16.5-million deal, a \$6-million raise after he hit 48 home runs with 123 RBIs.

Arenado asked for a record \$30 million in arbitration from Colorado and was

offered \$24 million. He will top the record for a salary for an arbitration-eligible player, a \$23-million deal last year by Toronto and third baseman **Josh Donaldson**.

Etc.

Gold Glove-winning free-agent second baseman **D.J. LeMahieu** and the New York Yankees have agreed to a \$24-million, two-year contract, a person familiar with the negotiations told the Associated Press, a deal that would appear to eliminate New York as a destination for **Manny Machado**. The Yankees also agreed to a three-year, \$39-million contract with reliever **Zach Britton**. ... Suspended shortstop **Addison Russell** and the Chicago Cubs have agreed to a \$3.4-million, one-year contract, a \$200,000 raise for a player whose relationship with the team appeared strained after a domestic violence suspension. ... The Washington Nationals avoided arbitration with infielders **Anthony Rendon** and **Trea Turner**, reaching an \$18.8-million deal with Rendon and a \$3.725 million agreement with Turner.