



FORGET MANNY, BRYCE, BRING NOLAN ARENADO TO METS

By DINO COSTA
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Okay, Brodie my friend.

Your administration is now officially on the clock.

The Mets are going to win now and the Mets are going to win in the future, your words, and music to any Mets fans ears, of course.

While the very talented New York Post baseball columnist Joel Sherman recently made a compelling argument as to why the Mets should be in pursuit of free-agent Manny Machado, I'm here to suggest that it isn't Machado the Mets should be setting their sights on, nor is it talented outfielder Bryce Harper either.

In the next few weeks ahead, the Colorado Rockies should have a clearer indication of what their all-world third-baseman, Nolan Arenado, wants to do with the next few years of his professional baseball life.

Arenado will either be open to a long-term multi-million dollar deal with the Rockies or, for reasons that are his own, he'll inform the Rockies that he wishes to play someplace else. If it's someplace else then the Mets ought to jump right in and make the Rockies an offer they cannot refuse to land a player that can become the face of the franchise for the next 10-years ahead — and the fit is perfect on every level you may wish to consider.

Arenado is exactly the kind of player the Mets should be seeking to move heaven and earth to acquire.

He represents a crucial position of immediate need for the Mets, he's just now entering the prime of his incredible career, he's a tremendous leader with an infectious personality and a drive to win that rubs off on others, and continuing his hall of fame career in a city like New York should be something very appetizing to him.

Unlike Manny Machado, Arenado is driven to win, hustles constantly, takes losing personally, is willing to get in teammates face, and would be a significant tone-setter for a Mets franchise dying for someone who would immediately inject a professional aura and a legitimacy the club is currently lacking.

In the past, the Mets have been impacted by a few other significant acquisitions that have helped to re-direct the course of the franchise. We saw this when they made the in-season deal for Keith Hernandez back in 1983. We saw this when they traded for Mike Piazza and ended up signing him to a long-term deal after the 1998 season. Now an opportunity could be had if they're able to offer the Rockies a package that lands the best third baseman I've seen since I've been watching the game over the last 5-decades.

Arenado affects the game on both sides of the ball. With the bat, Arenado has become a monster player, particularly over the last 4-years where he's hammered 158 home runs since 2015, and if you're worried that Arenado is a creature of having the luxury of playing 81 games in the thin air of Denver, of his 186 career home runs, 108 of those have been hit at Coors Field while 78 of them have come out on the road. Last season, Arenado slugged 23 home runs at home but also nailed 15 of them at visiting ballparks. The season before that (2017) Arenado clubbed 37 home runs, 19 of them at home and 18 of them on the road.

Defensively there may not be a better infielder in the game. Since Arenado came up to the big league's in 2013 he's made the gold glove his personal domain winning it every year — including this past year. Arenado's glove work at third base has to be seen on an everyday basis to be truly appreciated. I cannot tell you how many times over the last few years I have had to pick my jaw up off the floor after yet another Arenado gem with the glove. Every time I think I've seen the best defensive play by a third baseman I can see, Arenado goes and shocks me one

more time with a stunning defensive sequence. Keith Hernandez was the best defensive first baseman I've ever witnessed, and Arenado is a better defender at third than Hernandez was for all those years at the other infield corner.

So, what would it take to land this generational talent who is on a fast track to Cooperstown? In two words: A LOT.

Colorado will always be looking for pitching, although to be fair, the Rockies have done an outstanding job the last few years of drafting and developing their own pitchers who have thrown very well at Coors Field. But as the saying goes, you can never have enough pitching.

I would offer Colorado a package something along these lines:

To the Mets: Nolan Arenado.

To the Rockies: Zack Wheeler, David Peterson, Peter Alonso, Ali Sanchez, and Jay Bruce.

Colorado needs a first baseman in the worst way, and Alonso, particularly with his strong showing in the AZ Fall League, should be a player Colorado likes and can see blasting home run after home run, especially at Coors Field. Getting Alonso would allow the Rockies to shift Ryan MacMahon over to his natural position of third base replacing Arenado. Wheeler, finally coming into his own, gives the Rockies one of the best young right-handers in the game and he slots nicely into their current rotation. Peterson is actually a Colorado kid, he has a huge upside, he's a left-hander, all things the Rockies should like. Carlos Gonzales won't be back next season in Colorado and neither will Gerardo Parra. Jay Bruce takes over right field and provides the Rockies with better production in 2019 than Cargo did last year – or the Rockies could spin Bruce off to another team addressing another area of need for them. Ali Sanchez is a few years away, and Colorado doesn't have any high-ceiling catchers in their system currently.

Look it, I hate the idea of including Wheeler in this trade because I truly feel he's going to be an all-star caliber pitcher in the years to come, but if it meant getting Arenado, I'd pull the trigger. I like that the Mets have some depth with some other pitchers in their system nearly ready to ascend to the big league's and I believe they can withstand the loss of Wheeler. Then again, if the Rockies want Steven Matz instead, I'll substitute him for Wheeler in a nanosecond.

And my package isn't the only one I'd consider or the Mets should consider either. The Mets have other players in their system, a combination in other ways that might entice the Rockies to bite on a potential swap for Arenado.

Nolan Arenado is a game-changer for the Mets or any team fortunate enough to acquire him. As I alluded to up the page, the potential acquisition of a player of Arenado's stature for the Mets would change the entire feel of their organization in multiple ways.

So, Mr. Brodie, if the Rockies might be the recipient of some bad news, and if Arenado makes it clear he has no intention of signing a long-term deal in the Rocky Mountains, then it behooves you to get on the phone with Rockies GM Jeff Bridich, and bring Nolan Arenado to The Ballpark In Queens.