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# SPORTS

## Remodeled Mariners believe they can become a contender

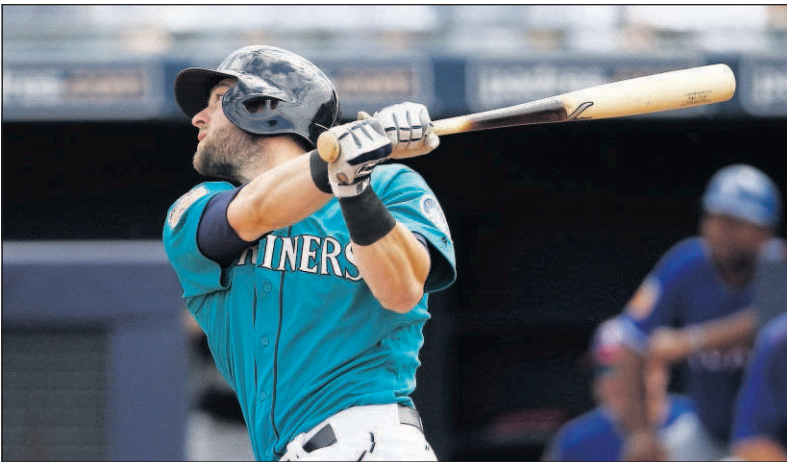
By TIM BOOTH  
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Jerry Dipoto was thrilled by the results from his first year in charge of the Seattle Mariners, when they won 86 games and were in contention for a playoff berth until the final weekend of the season.

And yet there were flaws. The Mariners didn’t play the way Dipoto expected or wanted. He wanted more speed. More athleticism. More reliance on defense and less on hitting the home run.

So instead of just tinkering with a roster that was on the cusp of the playoffs, Dipoto embarked on the second phase of Seattle’s makeover this offseason, based around trying to take advantage of the current window with stars like Nelson Cruz, Robinson Cano and Felix Hernandez not getting any younger.

“We maintained what we think



AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin  
**Seattle Mariners’ Mitch Haniger watches the flight of his double against the Texas Rangers during the first inning of a spring training baseball game in Peoria, Ariz., Saturday. The Mariners will still be a mostly veteran team, but there are a few youngsters being counted on in key roles. Haniger is at the top of the list as the primary option in right field.**

are the good parts of our team and this was kind of an inevitable reality, more change, although I couldn’t

have told you it was going to be as broad as it’s been,” Dipoto said. Seattle will go into the season

facing mixed expectations. Some believe they are contenders in the AL West and have a real shot at ending the longest playoff drought in baseball as a possible wild card team with an outside shot at the division title. Others feel Cano, Cruz and Hernandez are about to regress and that the other moves made by the Mariners won’t be able to make up for a drop in production by Seattle’s stars.

Whatever the answer, Seattle will be an intriguing team because there is so much uncertainty. Has all of Dipoto’s tinkering — somewhere around 40 trades since he arrived in September 2015 — created a viable winner or are the Mariners a collection of pieces that fail to solve the puzzle?

“You see all the pieces that he got and that tells you a lot about a GM, that he wants to win. As a player that’s what you want,” Cano said.

### BASEBALL 2017

## New digs in Atlanta, eggs on hot dogs in KC

By BEN WALKER  
Associated Press

NEW YORK — When Chris Archer throws the first pitch of the 2017 Major League Baseball season on Sunday, he’ll unleash all sorts of possibilities.

Can MVP Kris Bryant and the World Series champion Chicago Cubs repeat? Will home runs stay on the upswing? Heck, will Ryan Howard ever play again?

A look at what’s ahead, including new digs in Atlanta, fried eggs on hot dogs in Kansas City and a true throwback date in Florida:

**OPENING DAY:** The fun starts this weekend with a trio of tilts, beginning when Archer and Tampa Bay host the Yankees. Next, a neat matchup as Madison Bumgarner and the Giants take on Zack Greinke and Arizona. Followed by a Sunday night special as Jon Lester and those Cubs visit rival St. Louis.

Beyond that, a unique event on June 10 at Tropicana Field: A’s-Rays in the majors’ first scheduled single-admission doubleheader since 2011. The last day of the season? That would be Nov. 1, if the Fall Classic again goes to Game 7.

**SWITCHING SIDES:** Lefty ace Chris Sale got traded from the White Sox to the Red Sox, slugger Edwin Encarnacion joined the AL champion Indians and Carlos Beltran signed with Houston. Other top names who wound up in new jerseys included Dexter Fowler (Cards), popular and portly pitcher Bartolo Colon (Braves) and NL homer champ Chris Carter (Yankees).

**SO LONG:** Fenway Park won’t look the same without Big Papi — David Ortiz retired, done at 41 despite hitting .315 with 38 home runs and 127 RBIs for Boston.

Dodger games won’t sound the same without Vin Scully — for decades, from Ebbets Field to Chavez Ravine, fans would tune in from their seats for his dulcet tones. This will be the first Dodgers opener since 1950 without him in the broadcast booth. At 89, he doesn’t plan to listen, saying, “I’ll probably have things to do.”

Also gone is Turner Field after just 20 seasons in Atlanta. The Braves open 41,000-seat SunTrust Park in the suburbs on April 14, hoping the city’s notorious traffic snarls don’t cause too much trouble. The next new MLB stadium is set for Texas in 2020.

**OUCH!:** Tigers star J.D. Martinez, Rockies newcomer Ian Desmond and Mets lefty Steven Matz got injured during spring training and are out for a while.

Red Sox ace David Price, Cleveland second baseman Jason Kipnis, Yankees shortstop Didi Gregorius and Baltimore starter Chris Tillman also are banged up. The disabled list is down to 10 days, instead of the previous 15-day stint.

Mets closer Jeurys Familia is out 15 games, suspended under MLB’s domestic violence policy.

**THEY ALL COUNT:** No one really liked that the All-Star Game determined who got home-field advantage in the World Series. And now, it doesn’t. Under baseball’s new labor deal, the pennant winner with the best regular-season records gets to host Game 1.

This year’s summer showcase is July 11 at Marlins Park in Miami.

**MENU MADNESS:** Hungry for more? Check out the rookie items at the concession stands.

The Sunrise Dog at Kauffman Stadium in KC features a hot dog topped with fried eggs, bacon, cheddar cheese and gravy. Or try the crab doughnut holes at PNC Park in Pittsburgh. And don’t forget dessert — apple pie nachos at Coors Field in Denver.

A tasty season on deck, no doubt.

## SPORTS IN BRIEF

### Loggers drop twinbill at Heppner

The Daily Astorian

HEPPNER — Heppner overcame a pair of big deficits to score two victories over Knappa Thursday, 16-15 and 10-9, in nonleague softball doubleheader action.

The Loggers led 10-1 in Game 1, but lost the game in eight innings.

Knappa starting pitcher Madelynn Weaver went down with an early injury after sliding into a base, and the Mustangs rallied.

Kaitlyn Truax led the Logger offense, going 4-for-4 at the plate. Paris Vanderburg was 3-for-3 and Katie Denny was 2-for-4. Vanderburg pitched and struck out nine batters.

In Game 2, Knappa led 8-1, but Heppner won with a big rally in the bottom of the seventh.

Jaden Miethe was 2-for-3 with a triple, and Truax finished 2-for-2.

“We played good today, we just have to learn to finish games,” said Knappa coach James Nichols, whose team hits the road again Saturday for a doubleheader at Santiam.

### Joy Christian Eagles defeat Gulls, 13-0

The Daily Astorian

GLENDALE, Ariz. — The Joy Christian Eagles of Glendale, Ariz., built a quick 5-0 lead after one inning, on their way to a 13-0 win over Seaside in baseball action at the Coach Bob Invitational in Arizona.

Joy Christian pitcher Anthony Quattrocchi tossed the one-hit shutout, striking out eight with one walk. Dawson Blanchard had the lone hit for the Gulls, who finish the tournament Friday against a team from Ketchikan, Alaska.

The Eagles had 15 hits off four Seaside pitchers and did not commit an error in the field.

After five runs in the first, Joy Christian scored six in the second, highlighted by a Joey Martinez home run. Martinez was 4-for-4 with five RBIs and three runs scored.

## SCOREBOARD

### PREP SCHEDULE

**TODAY**  
**Baseball** — Warrenton at Amity, 1 p.m.

**SATURDAY**  
**Baseball** — Willamina at Warrenton (2), Noon; Knappa at Santiam (2), 1 p.m.  
**Softball** — Knappa at Santiam (2), 1 p.m.



AP Photo/Steve Dykes  
**Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard celebrates as the Blazers take the lead late during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game against the Houston Rockets in Portland Thursday.**

## Lillard leads Trail Blazers past the Rockets, 117-107

By ERIK GARCIA  
GUNDERSEN  
Associated Press

PORTLAND — The Portland Trail Blazers are finishing the regular season on a good note, and the Houston Rockets are the latest to be frustrated by them.

Damian Lillard had 31 points and 11 assists, leading the Trail Blazers past the Rockets 117-107 on Thursday night. Lillard is the first player in franchise history to score 30 points eight times in a calendar month.

Jusuf Nurkic had a team-high 11 rebounds to go along with 19 points for the Trail Blazers, who have a season-high five-game winning streak and a 1 ½-game lead over the Denver Nuggets for the eighth seed in the Western Conference.

### UP NEXT: TRAIL BLAZERS

- Phoenix Suns (22-54) at Portland Trail Blazers (37-38)
- Saturday, 8 p.m. TV: FSAZ, CSNW

“They’ll be a handful in the playoffs,” Rockets coach Mike D’Antoni said of the Blazers.

James Harden finished with 30 points and eight rebounds to lead the Rockets. Harden’s 3-pointer at the end of the first quarter gave the Rockets 1,078 3s, an NBA single-season record.

Portland held a 96-85 lead into the fourth, but Houston made a run early in the quarter. Trevor Ariza’s dunk tied the game at 105 with 2:29 left, but Nurkic’s post-up gave Portland the lead right back with 2:05 remaining.

Allen Crabbe sealed the win

with steal on Harden, taking it coast-to-coast to give the Blazers a 113-105 lead with 1:12 left.

Harden had three turnovers in the fourth quarter.

After recording 13 turnovers or more in four straight games, the Blazers have had 12 or fewer in the past two games.

“We’ve been really in tune with every possession,” Blazers coach Terry Stotts said of his team’s low turnover total in the past two games. “Consistency in the first half of the season was a challenge. I think we are valuing each possession at both ends much better.”

## NC hopes ‘bathroom bill’ deal saves NCAA events

Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Basketball-mad North Carolina is hoping its move to roll back its “bathroom bill” will help it avoid another costly hit when the NCAA selects four years of championship sites for a variety of sports.

College athletics’ governing body has said that it is deciding on locations for tournaments through the spring of 2022 and that it wouldn’t award any to North Carolina if the law known as House Bill 2 was still on the books.

On Thursday, amid the mounting pressure, North Carolina’s Republican-controlled legislature voted to undo HB2, and Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper signed the measure into law. But it wasn’t clear if that would satisfy the NCAA, which made no immediate decision on North Carolina’s fate.

NCAA President Mark Emmert said the association would review the legislation before making a decision in the coming days. He told reporters at a news conference that the NCAA Board of Governors will hold discussions to determine whether the new legislation “is a sufficient change in the law for the board to feel comfortable going back to North Carolina.”

But he added: “I’m personally very pleased that they have a bill to debate and discuss.”

While lawmakers repealed the much-criticized provision that said transgender people must use the public bathrooms that correspond to the sex on their birth certificate, activists complained that the new law still denies gay and transgender people certain protections from discrimination.