

LHP Ryu gives Blue Jays ace to pair with talented young core

By Ian Harrison
The Associated Press

TORONTO — Hyun-Jin Ryu is the ace the Toronto Blue Jays needed to pair with a lineup flush with “baseball royalty.”

That’s the view agent Scott Boras has of the four-year, \$80-million deal that brought the Korean left-hander north of the border.

Ryu agreed to join the Jays in December, then flew in from Korea for an introductory news conference, greeting a live television audience with a wide smile and a few words in each of his new home country’s official languages.

“Hello, Canada,” Ryu said. “Bonjour. I’m happy to be here and I’m going to make the Toronto Blue Jays proud.”

Ryu was 14-5 with a major-league best 2.32 Earned Run Average (ERA) for the Los Angeles Dodgers last season. He started for the National League in his first All-Star Game and finished second in Cy Young Award voting to New York Mets ace Jacob deGrom.

Ryu’s is the second-biggest free-agent deal in Blue Jays history, trailing only the five-year, \$82-million contract former general manager Alex Anthopoulos gave catcher Russell Martin in November 2014.

“This is the next step in what we feel is a plan to build a sustainable championship team,” Blue Jays president Mark Shapiro said.

General manager Ross Atkins praised Ryu for his “insane athleticism” and his ability to get outs with different pitches in all four corners of the strike zone.

“You truly are fun to watch play,” Atkins told his new ace.

Toronto needed a dependable starter to stabilize its rotation and help get the most from its crop of young talent, including four sons of former players, a group Boras regards with regal admiration.

“It was very clear from our conversations with Mark that the Blue Jays were willing to move forward and start building a base to complement the young players



SUPERB STARTER. Hyun-Jin Ryu, top photo, the Korean left-hander who recently signed a four-year, \$80-million deal with the Toronto Blue Jays, is the fourth pitcher to join the Blue Jays during the offseason. Toronto has also signed Japanese right-hander Shun Yamaguchi, bottom photo, from the Yomiuri Giants.

“There’s not a week that went by that Ross wasn’t calling,” Boras said.

That persistence made an impact on Ryu.

“Toronto was one that first pursued me, and continued to pursue, and that’s why I’m here,” he said through a translator.

Ryu is the fourth pitcher to join the Blue Jays so far this offseason. Toronto signed right-hander Tanner Roark to a \$24-million, two-year deal, acquired right-hander Chase Anderson from Milwaukee, and signed Japanese right-hander Shun Yamaguchi from the Yomiuri Giants.

No starter won more than six games for Toronto in 2019, and the rotation ranked 22nd out of 30 teams with a 5.25 ERA. The Blue Jays went 67-95, finishing fourth in the AL East for the third straight season.

Ryu, who turns 33 in March, spent his first seven big-league seasons with the Dodgers after coming over from South Korea and signing a \$36-million, six-year contract before the 2013 season. He was effective the first two years but sat out the 2015 season and made only one appearance in 2016 because of left shoulder surgery and elbow tendinitis. He also missed time in 2017 with injuries to his left hip and foot.

Ryu reemerged with a 1.97 ERA over 15 starts in 2018 and accepted a \$17.9 million qualifying offer from Los Angeles for 2019, when he threw 182 2/3 innings in 29 starts for the NL West champions.

Ryu, who wears jersey No. 99, was asked whether he was familiar with Canadian hockey icon Wayne Gretzky, the last sports star to make a splash by moving between Los Angeles and Canada.

“Canada lent number 99 to L.A.,” Boras joked. “With Hyun-Jin, we thought we’d return it back to Canada.”

they have, and advance the royal youth to a level of championship play,” Boras said.

Now, Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Bo Bichette, Cavan Biggio, and Lourdes Gurriel Jr. have a starter they can rely on to keep them in games.

“We got one of the best pitchers in baseball,” manager Charlie Montoyo said. “We’re going to have a chance to win every time he takes the mound.”

Toronto isn’t the first place where Ryu

has teamed with a talented young core.

“When Hyun-Jin played for the Dodgers, you saw this happen with (Corey) Seager, with (Cody) Bellinger,” Boras said. “We certainly expect the royal youth of the Blue Jays [to continue] to grow at that pace.”

Three or four other teams were in the hunt, Boras said, including the Dodgers, who had “competitive interest” in retaining Ryu. No suitor was more tenacious than Toronto.

Millennial Money: Six empowering money moves

Continued from page 7

First things first: If you don’t know your credit score, start there. Several credit card issuers and personal finance websites offer free credit scores, so you can monitor it regularly and keep tabs on your progress. You can get your full credit report for free every year from each of the three credit bureaus using <www.AnnualCreditReport.com>. (Note: Checking your credit report does not hurt your credit score.)

Now, look for ways to increase your score. A few ideas:

- Check for errors on your report and dispute any you find with the credit bureau.
- Lower your credit utilization (the percentage of your credit card limit that you use) by paying down cards or increasing your credit limits.
- Become an authorized user on a partner’s or parent’s

credit card.

You can use a credit score simulator to learn ways to boost your credit score, as well as see the negative impact certain moves could have, like missing payments or increasing your credit utilization.

4. Pay off one loan or credit card

Ever feel like you’re throwing money at your debt, but the balances never seem to go down? Instead of trying to pay them all off at once, direct your energy (and extra money) at one debt, while making the minimum payments on the rest.

You can tackle your debt in order from the smallest to largest balance to net some quick wins, or get rid of your most expensive debt first by focusing on the account with the highest interest rate.

Tackling debt in a disciplined way will put you back in the driver’s seat with your money.

5. Plan for expected expenses

You can’t plan for every expense, but there are some you can see coming. Homeowners, for example, can anticipate things like property taxes and certain repairs.

“If you have an old roof, you’re going to eventually need to replace it, so start setting money aside for that,” says David Carlson, founder of Young Adult Money, a personal finance blog.

The financial hit won’t sting so much if you’ve set a little aside each month, and you’ll feel more confident knowing you can cover the cost without rearranging your budget or going into debt.

6. Negotiate your salary

Few things are more empowering — or intimidating — than advocating for your own worth. If you’re on the job hunt, start practicing your negotiation skills now so you can use them when an offer comes in. Arm yourself with salary data for your role and experience level and list the various qualifications you bring to the table. The same tactics help when asking for a raise from your current employer.

This column was provided to The Associated Press by the personal finance website NerdWallet. Kelsey Sheehy is a writer at NerdWallet.

Hmong celebrate new year in California amid tighter security

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Thousands of people gathered recently in central California to celebrate the Hmong New Year amid heightened security in the wake of a neighborhood shooting last year that killed four people.

The celebration ran through January 1 and featured Hmong food, dance, music, and games along with sports tournaments. It’s believed to be the largest of its kind in the country and typically draws tens of thousands of people from around the nation.

Minnesota state senator Fong Hawj shared a toast with Fresno mayor Lee Brand for a more peaceful future as the event opened. Minneapolis-St. Paul has the largest Hmong population of any U.S. metro area.

“This is a wish for 2019 to move away (with) all the evil,” Hawj said as a toast, according to *The Fresno Bee*.

The November attack on a backyard TV football-watching party in Fresno killed four Hmong men and wounded six other people.

Fresno Police chief Andy Hall said at a news conference on December 31 that they have arrested six self-admitted gang members for the attack. It is believed that the gang members carried out the shooting to retaliate against a rival gang they believed was responsible for the killing hours earlier of the brother of one of the shooters.

Law enforcement was increased at the Fresno Fairgrounds for the new year’s celebration.

“We will not rest until justice is done,” Hall said.

Hmong fought for the U.S. during the Vietnam War. Recruited by the CIA in Laos to fend off communist forces, they helped guide U.S. bombing missions and rescued downed American pilots, often risking their own lives.

After the war, many Hmong refugees moved to Minnesota, Wisconsin, and California, where they settled in the Central Valley. Sponsors hoped they would find work there given their agricultural background.

There are about 300,000 Hmong in the U.S. California has the most of any state and Fresno has the nation’s second-largest concentration with about 34,000 people.

Retirement Living

- Studio & One-Bedroom Apartments
- Beauty and Barber Shop
- Activities, Clubs, and Garden Area
- Safety, Security, and Companionship
- Federal Rent Subsidies Available

Westmoreland’s Union Manor

6404 SE 23rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97202
503-233-5671

Marshall Union Manor

2020 NW Northrup Street
Portland, OR 97209
503-225-0677

Kirkland Union Plaza

1414 Kauffman Avenue
Vancouver, WA 98660
360-694-4314

Kirkland Union Manors

3530 SE 84th Avenue
Portland, OR 97266
503-777-8101

www.theunionmanors.org

