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Former St. Peter's star Stan Saleski passes away

MLB NOTES

The World Series-bound San Francisco Giants said longtime major league scout Stan Saleski, a Worcester native who was a star pitcher at St. Peter's High in the 1970s, has died. He was 59.

The team announced Friday that Saleski died unexpectedly last Saturday in Baltimore while scouting the AL Championship Series.

Saleski spent more than three decades scouting at the major league level for the Giants, Marlins and New York Yankees. He worked for the Marlins during their run to the franchise's first World Series championship in 1997, then for the Giants as they captured their first title since moving West in 1958 with the 2010 crown and again in '12. Saleski joined the Giants organization in 1998.

General manager Brian Sabean called Saleski "a longtime friend and an integral part of our organization."

Saleski went 39-3 in his four seasons at St. Peter's, losing only one regular-season game. He went 11-0 as a freshman for the varsity, and as a senior led the Guardians to the state final.

After high school, Saleski played for Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, when the Yankees drafted him in the 27th round in 1977. He spent two years in the Yankees minor league system before moving into the front office as the youngest scout in baseball at 23, according to the Giants. He also served as a minor league pitching coach for the Yankees before becoming a full-time scout in 1984.

Saleski had been living in Oakwood, Ohio. He is survived by his wife, Lisa, and daughter, Whitney.

Services were pending.

New look with umps

Boosted by their strong results on replay challenges this season, several umpires will get to work the World Series for the first time.

The seven-man crew includes a rare four newcomers, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press this week. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because Major League Baseball hadn't made an announcement yet.

Hunter Wendelstedt, Eric Cooper, Jim Reynolds and Jerry Meals are heading to their first World Series.

Wendelstedt had only two of his calls overturned this year under baseball's expanded replay system. Cooper had just three decisions reversed and Reynolds had seven.

"An umpire's entire body of work is evaluated when assigning postseason series, and we always strive to have the most deserving umpires working postseason games," MLB's Michael Teevan said.

"This year," he added, "instant replay also became another facet of performance."

Jeff Kellogg will be the crew chief and call his fifth World Series when Kansas City hosts San Francisco in Game 1 on Tuesday night. Ted Barrett and Jeff Nelson will work the Fall Classic for the third time.

Nearly 20 umpires had at least 10 calls changed this year. Barrett had 12 and Meals 10, while Kellogg had five.

Overall, there were 1,275 reviews in the majors this season, and 47 percent of the calls were reversed.

Several factors determine which umpires get picked for the playoffs and World Series by MLB. Ball-strike ratings on plate jobs, skill at handling situations on the field, experience and time missed during the season are all considered.

MLB tries to include at least one first-time umpire on the World Series crew every year. Starting in 1998, the lone exception was 2009 — stung by a spate of missed calls earlier in that postseason, MLB chose an all-veteran crew.

In the previous 35 World Series, only twice has the crew included four first-timers, most recently in 1996.

Under a new plan this year, seven umpires handle all best-of-seven postseason matchups. One umpire works the first two games on the field, then changes places with an umpire in the New York replay booth for the rest of the series.

World Series umpires are picked from a pool of umps who worked in the Division Series.

Wendelstedt, whose father, Harry, umpired in the World Series five times, joined the MLB staff in 1999, as did Reynolds and Cooper. Meals became part of the staff in 1998.

Mattingly will stay put

The new president of baseball operations for the Los Angeles Dodgers plans to hire a new general manager and retain Don Mattingly as manager.

Andrew Friedman was introduced at Dodger Stadium on Friday, and he said he's having conversations about hiring a GM to work under him. Friedman said that since he was hired from Tampa Bay on Tuesday he has spoken twice with Mattingly, and they plan to meet next week.

Friedman said Mattingly will "definitely" be the manager next season. Mattingly has two years remaining on his three-year deal. Friedman tamped down speculation that Rays manager Joe Maddon would follow him to Los Angeles. Friedman said he's going into his new job "with the mindset that we're going to work with Donnie for a long time."

Texas' own gets shot

Jeff Banister is a baseball lifer who calls Texas home. He grew up there and played his entire amateur career there before getting drafted.

Now the former catcher who got a pinch-hit single in his only major league at-bat, who was temporarily paralyzed from the neck down after a home-plate collision in junior college and who overcame bone cancer with multiple surgeries in high school is a big-league manager in the Lone Star State.

Banister was introduced Friday as the new manager of the Texas Rangers after 29 years in the Pittsburgh Pirates organization as a player, coach and instructor at all levels.

"The best opportunities to come along are the ones you're not looking for," Banister said. "Have I prepared myself for this opportunity? Yeah, from the day that I stopped playing until now, I've truly dreamed and wanted to and tried to. I got to a point in my life that I told myself that I wasn't going to chase it. If it happened, it happened."

The 50-year-old Banister, who lives in the Houston area, was the bench coach the past four seasons for Pirates manager Clint Hurdle, whose only season as the Rangers' hitting coach was when they went to their first World Series in 2010. Banister's introduction came six weeks after manager Ron Washington's resignation for personal reasons.

Texas gave Banister a three-year contract with an option for a fourth season. The injury-ravaged Rangers are coming off a 67-95 season, their worst since 1985, after reaching the World Series in 2010-2011 and becoming a trendy postseason pick each year

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