

4 MLB Players Who Could Be Traded Before Aug. 31 Waiver Deadline

Written by Rob Smith
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The July 31st non-waiver trading deadline gets all of the attention from the baseball media, but by no means is it the last opportunity for teams to make trades during the season. Throughout the month of August, teams are permitted to continue trading players, with one caveat: all players involved in the deal who are on a team's 40-man roster must first clear waivers before moving on to a new team.

Most respectable big leaguers won't make it through waivers without being claimed by at least one team (the main reason why we typically don't see much movement after the July 31 non-waiver deadline), at which point the team who placed the player on waivers has the option of rescinding the waiver and retaining the player, working out a trade with the claiming team, or allowing the claiming team to simply acquire the player for no return consideration. While post-July 31 trades are not common, they're also not unheard of. Sometimes teams are just looking for any way to get out from an onerous contract or open up a spot for a young player who needs more seasoning. One example of this occurred last year, when the Marlins, looking to give since-departed centerfielder [Cameron Maybin](#) more at-bats, [allowed the Giants to claim and acquire outfielder Cody Ross](#), who went on to be named NLCS MVP en route to helping San Francisco win the 2010 World Series. A year earlier, [the White Sox acquired Alex Rios and his hefty contract from Toronto](#)

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With that in mind, let's take a look at which big-name players might soon be changing addresses, and why.

1. [Derek Lowe](#) , Atlanta Braves SP

- ESPN's Tim Kurkjian mentioned on Dan LeBatard's radio show last week that the Braves actively tried to rid themselves of some of the roughly \$20 million owed to [Lowe](#) through the 2012 season by dealing him before July 31, but with no luck. Lowe hasn't done much to make GM Frank Wren reconsider that stance, yesterday's 2-run outing notwithstanding. Lowe, a reliable innings-eater throughout his career, hasn't gone deeper than 6 and 1/3 innings in any of his last 10 starts, and his 4.78 ERA and 1.48 WHIP has rendered him expendable in an organization rife with elite starting pitching at both the major and minor-league levels. Lowe could be attractive to other teams due to his tendency to improve his performance late in the season. Just last season, Lowe was mired in a similarly mediocre season [before reeling off a 5-win September](#) and posting a 2.31 ERA in his 2 starts against the Giants in the NLDS. In 2008, his final year with the Dodgers, Lowe went 5-1 with a 0.94 ERA over his final 9 starts while leading Los Angeles to the NLCS. His 3.15 September ERA (103 starts) and 3.21 postseason ERA might be appealing enough to starting pitching-starved teams like the Red Sox or Yankees to look past what most teams would consider a prohibitive price tag. As Mark Bowman mentioned in the previously-linked article, Lowe was the winning pitcher in each of Boston's series-clinching wins during their 2004 World Series run.

2. Vlad Guerrero, Baltimore Orioles DH

- [Guerrero](#) will be a free agent after this season, and he's currently languishing on an Orioles team that finds itself no less than 26 games out of first. The Orioles would be better served giving his at-bats to younger players, and moving to a contender would present Guerrero with a better chance of boosting his stock before hitting free agency this winter. Guerrero is owed about \$2.7 million for the rest of the season, and at this point in his career is strictly a DH,

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limiting his list of potential suitors to AL teams. The Angels didn't make any moves at the July 31 deadline, but they currently sit just 1.5 games behind Texas in the AL West. [Mike Trout](#)

[Mike Trout](#)

has predictably struggled in his short stint, and

[Bobby Abreu](#)

seems to have lost his power. Guerrero isn't the hitter he once was, but he would be a welcome presence in a lineup that has produced the

[second-fewest runs in the AL](#)

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3. Alex Rios, Chicago White Sox CF

- Chicago should be looking to get rid of [Rios](#) in the same way in which they acquired him, by dealing him after he passes through waivers. A trade would have to be worked out, as no team is crazy enough to take on that monstrosity of a contract (\$38 million owed through 2014) without receiving significant cash considerations. Still, Rios is only a season removed from posting a .791 OPS and stealing 34 bases, and is relatively young at age 30. The Marlins have an unsettled outfield situation, with [38-year-old](#)

[Mike Cameron and his .170 batting average](#)

currently manning centerfield and no impressive outfield prospects left on the farm (don't tell me

[Chris Coghlan](#)

, either). Assuming the White Sox are willing to eat a lot of money, a low-pressure situation like Florida's (where his contract wouldn't be criticized as vehemently as it is in a baseball hotbed like Chicago) would be an ideal destination for Rios as the team moves into a new stadium in 2012. He still possesses enough upside to make it worth the Marlins' while.

4. [Carlos Lee](#) , Houston Astros LF/1B

- Trading [Michael Bourn](#) and [Hunter Pence](#) for prospects who are years from contributing to the big-league club is a clear indication that Houston does not expect to compete for a playoff spot for at least a few years. [Lee, 35,](#) is owed

about \$25 million through the end of the 2012 season, and does not figure into the team's long-term plans. He's a shell of the player who came to Houston in 2007 and put up consecutive seasons of .882, .937, and .831 OPS'. However, he hasn't been completely sapped of the power that made him one of the premier power hitters of the past decade. Arizona and San Francisco are separated by just a half game for the NL West lead, and both teams have gotten below-average production at first base. Lee might just provide enough pop to propel either one

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past the other down the stretch run.

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