

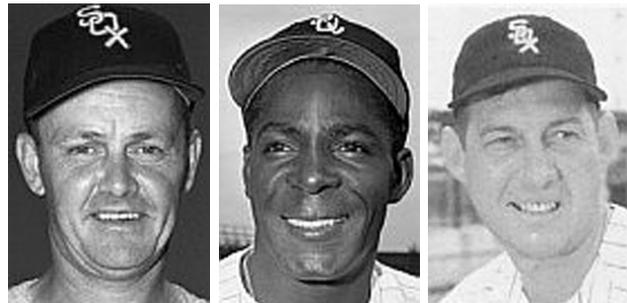


Savvy trades mark timeline of Sox rebuilding projects

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If White Sox GM Rick Hahn really scores long-term in his first two deals of the newly-minted rebuilding era, he'll merely be following a successful blueprint from past housecleaning efforts.

Sox fans had their first crack at meeting the products of the deals at a SoxFest with a very different theme this winter that was as much about the future as the present and past.



Nellie Fox (from) left, Minnie Minoso and Sherman Lollar all were acquired by Frank (Trader) Lane.

Going back to the start of the "Go-Go Sox" era at the dawn of the Fifties, the Sox have frequently supplemented home-grown prospects with trades that netted young talent. The only exception was a kind of reverse-rebuilding after the 1959 season, in which the Sox foolishly traded all their best young hitting talent for veterans in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to beef up the lineup to ensure a repeat pennant.

The voluble, colorful Frank (Trader) Lane is given credit for assembling the Go-Go teams that finally buried the decades of hubris from the 1919 Black Sox. If Hahn could strike gold in the same fashion as Lane, he'll be remembered long after his own GM tenure concludes.

One of the greatest trades in Sox history took place soon after the 1949 season. Lane obtained second baseman Nellie Fox, who had just broken into the Philadelphia Athletics' lineup in '49, for catcher Joe Tipton. Future Hall of Famer Fox, of course, was the Sox's heart and soul for more than a decade. He was the American League's MVP in 1959, the one pennant season the Sox could carve out due to Yankees' dominance and lack of one or two additional run producers to round out pitching-strong teams.

Almost equal in stature was the acquisition of lefty Billy Pierce one year earlier from the Detroit Tigers for another middling catcher, Aaron Robinson. Pierce, who was in uniform as an 18-year-old at Wrigley Field for the 1945 World Series, pitched sparingly for the veteran-laden Tigers. What they did not know did hurt them! Pierce and Whitey Ford were the AL's top lefties throughout the 1950s, with Pierce enjoying back-to-back 20-win seasons in 1956-67.

Lane, living up to his nickname, crafted a three-team deal on April 30, 1951 with the Indians and Athletics that netted the Sox Minnie Minoso. Breaking Chicago baseball's color line immediately, Minoso's arrival was the real spark to the Sox's breakthrough season in 1951. He began a near-lifelong association with the Sox, interrupted only by brief service with the likes of the Indians and Cardinals.

Stalwart catcher Sherman Lollar arrived after the '51 revival season. Lollar already had played in the Indians, Yankees and St. Louis Browns organizations. Bill Veeck traded Sherm to the Sox in a deal that netted, among others, Jungle Jim Rivera for the Browns. Then, Veeck dealt Rivera back to Chicago in July 1952, where he became a colorful part of the contending teams of the next decades.

For good measure, Sox scouts signed center fielder Jim Landis in 1952 and shortstop Luis Aparicio out of Venezuela in 1954.

We won't belabor what has been written here countless times. Veeck, after one year of Sox ownership, agreed to deals that dealt away home-grown hitters Norm Cash, Don Mincher, Johnny Callison, Earl Battey and John (Honey) Romano after the '59 season. Subtracting the fact the hitters enjoyed their productive years elsewhere, that quintet still has been unmatched in a Chicago team's original scouting efforts, even through the 2016 Cubs. Remember, Kris Bryant, Javy Baez, Kyle Schwarber and Wilson Contreras are original Cubs, while Anthony Rizzo and Addison Russell were trade acquisitions.

Hemond joins Lane in remaking Sox

The next big rebuilding effort was thanks to CBM friend Roland Hemond, who dealt away the last remnants of the "Go-Go Sox" in the early 1970s. Hemond built a contender on a tight budget from owner John Allyn. His grand move was the acquisition of Dick Allen for lefty Tommy John (himself a trade product from Cleveland) at the 1971 winter meetings. Other Hemond deals netted pitchers Tom Bradley and Stan Bahnsen, and outfielders Pat Kelly, Jay Johnstone and Rick Reichardt.

Third baseman Bill Melton and outfielder Carlos May were original Sox. Much-beloved catcher Ed Herrmann was a first-year minor-league draft acquisition from the Braves.

Hemond rebuilt the Sox again on behalf of new owners Jerry Reinsdorf and Eddie Einhorn in the early 1980s. He had cashed in on young players developing from 1977 trades in Richard Dotson and LaMarr Hoyt. Later deals brought Tom Paciorek, Julio Cruz, Rudy Law, Vance Law, Jerry Koosman, Dick Tidrow and Dennis Lamp. Carlton Fisk and Floyd Bannister were free agents, while Greg Luzinski was purchased from the Phillies. Harold Baines, Ron Kittle, Greg Walker and Britt Burns were original Sox.



Dick Allen was the centerpiece of Roland Hemond's rebuilding deals.

Moving up a decade, the 1993-94 Sox contenders were assembled by GMs Larry Himes and Ron Schueler. Himes was most famous for scoring, with top aide Al Goldis, on four consecutive No. 1 draft picks – Jack McDowell, Robin Ventura, Frank Thomas and Alex Fernandez – from 1987 to 1991.

Lance (One Dog) Johnson and closer Roberto Hernandez arrived via Himes trades. Schueler deals netted new Hall of Famer Tim Lincecum, Joey Cora and George Bell. The last Hemond trade to still impact the team (late 1984) was channeled through Ozzie Guillen. Ellis Burks and Bo Jackson arrived via free agency.

Finally, the 2005 World Series champions had a big trade flavor, starting in 1997-98, when Schueler landed Jon Garland from the Cubs and Paul Konerko from the Reds. Kenny Williams took over for Schueler after the 2000 season, quickly establishing a Lane-like yen to swap. Williams most famously – and successfully – sacrificed power for speed in dealing Carlos Lee to the Brewers for Scott Podsednik. He also traded for starters Jose Contreras and Freddy Garcia, so crucial in the rotation's dominance in the 2005 postseason, along with shortstop Juan Uribe and dinosaur-denying DH Carl Everett. Key home-grown Sox were Mark Buehrle, Joe Crede and Aaron Rowand.



Jon Garland (left) and Paul Konerko were products of Ron Schueler trades in 1997-98 that paid off handsomely in 2005.

So the baton has been passed to Hahn. Based on past record, he has a better than even shot of mining some gold from his trades.