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Red Sox chat

Joe McDonald answers readers' questions from Fort Myers, noon to 1 p.m. today at projo.com/chat

A good catch gone bad

The Red Sox reason for releasing backup catcher Doug Mirabelli had more to do with what he did at the plate than what he did behind the plate:

YR	HR	RBI	BA
2004	9	32	.281
2005	6	18	.228
2006	6	25	.193
2007	5	16	.202



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PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / JOHN FREIDAH

Tim Welsh's postseason record may be enough to cause a coaching change.

Why talk of Welsh staying?

Does Tim Welsh have compromising pictures of Sean McDonough and Bill Raftery?

Because the question is when, not if, Welsh will be fired — or, ahem, resign — from the job he has held for the past decade as basketball coach of the Providence College Friars.

Yet McDonough and Raftery spent a good portion of PC's bad loss Wednesday to West Virginia campaigning for Welsh to be retained.

Look, it's one thing to say Tim caught a tough break when, in a year when he absolutely had to have a successful season, he had to play without his point guard, Sharaud Curry.

That's certainly true. It's also true that Welsh is a good guy, and not a bad coach. If McDonough and Raftery wanted to say any or all of that, that would have made sense.

But to say he should stay, instead of go, stretches credulity and raises questions about whatever credibility the TV talking heads like to think they have.

Extend Welsh's contract? Are they kidding? Do they have a clue?

Welsh isn't being evaluated solely on the basis of this season by Bob Driscoll, the Friars' director of athletics, and PC's sports-minded president, the Rev. Brian Shanley.

They're looking at his body of work over the last 10 years.

Unfortunately, for the last four years, that body has resembled a cadaver.

It's been all downhill for Welsh and the PC program since they imploded at the end of the 2004 season.

SEE DONALDSON, C3

JIM DONALDSON



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Red Sox catcher Kevin Cash made enough of an impression last season and this spring to win the backup role to Jason Varitek. Sox management said it was impressed by the 30-year-old's defensive skills and knowledge of hitters.

Cash replaces Mirabelli as Sox' backup catcher

BY JOE McDONALD
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Doug Mirabelli was penciled into the Sox' lineup yesterday morning, but was a last-minute scratch. Then he was seen leaving City of Palms Park in street clothes. Not too long after that, the Red Sox announced the veteran backup catcher had been placed on unconditional release waivers.

It was a public changing of the guard.

There was a debate early in camp as to the direction the club would proceed with the backup catching position — which is more important than on most teams, since it involves catching Tim Wakefield's knuckleball — and, after many meetings, it was decided Kevin Cash had proven himself worthy enough to handle the job.

General manager Theo Epstein said yesterday the staff felt certain Cash was prepared to do a better job, and not only as just Wakefield's batterymate. According to the GM, Cash's defensive execution has been exceptional. He can call a good game, throw, receive and block, says Epstein. What also helped Cash's cause was his due diligence with advance scouting.

He's not considered a prospect, especially at the age of 30, and even though management knew he handled the job well last season in Boston, Epstein wanted to make sure Cash still has the skills.

"The evaluation in camp was Cash was doing a lot of things right," said the GM. "It was a tough decision, but the right choice for the club overall was Cash, or we wouldn't have done it."

Cash said he's friends with Mirabelli and it was tough to see him disappointed yesterday, saying the veteran has been nothing but "super nice" since Cash arrived at spring training in 2007.

SEE RED SOX, C5

For 6½ years, Mirabelli caught a great ride



THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL / BOB BREIDENBACH

Boston backup catcher Doug Mirabelli, with two World Series rings, became part of Sox lore.

Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them.

And others, like Doug Mirabelli, latch onto it. It was Mirabelli's good fortune to be acquired by the Red Sox when they were on the cusp of ascending into the baseball stratosphere. It was his better fortune to have a skill — the ability to snare a dancing knuckleball in midair — the Sox desperately needed, what with Tim Wakefield being a fixture in their starting rotation.

SECOND FIDDLE

Doug Mirabelli was one of a long line of Red Sox backup catchers who stayed with the team for many years but never claimed the starting job. Some of the others:

Years	Most games in season	Most AB in season	Overall Red Sox average	Played behind	
Doug Mirabelli	2001-07	62	163	.238	Jason Varitek
John Marzano	1987-92	52	168	.232	Rich Gedman, Rick Cerone, Tony Pena
Gary Allenson*	1979-84	108	241	.221	Rich Gedman
Bob Montgomery	1970-79	88	254	.258	Carlton Fisk
Russ Nixon*	1960-65	98	287	.275	Jim Pagliaroni, Bob Tillman
Pete Daley	1955-59	78	191	.245	Sammy White

* — spent part of a season as a regular

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