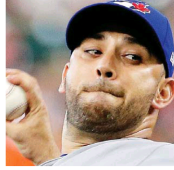


SPORTS

ESTRADA HEADS WEST TO JOIN A'S

Starting pitcher Marco Estrada is leaving the Toronto Blue Jays for the Oakland A's, the crafty right-hander confirmed to Postmedia on Friday. According to MLB Insider Ken Rosenthal, the contract is for one year at US\$4 million. The 35-year-old free agent went 39-40 in four seasons with the Blue Jays, despite suffering through back problems for much of his time in Toronto, particularly the final two seasons. He started six playoff



games for the Jays, going 3-3, and was dominant at times. The spacious Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum could benefit a fly ball pitcher like Estrada, who the Jays acquired for first baseman Adam Lind on Nov. 1, 2014. He enjoyed a couple of very good seasons in Toronto, going 13-8 in 2015 with a 3.13 ERA and then 9-9 with a 3.48 ERA in 2016. He was named to the all-star game for the first time in his career in 2016. *Steve Buffery*

MONTREAL GAZETTE SATURDAY, JANUARY 26, 2019

SECTION E



Alouettes players William Stanback, left, and Jean-Gabriel Poulin talk to students at Hampstead Elementary school on Friday, in support of the English Montreal School Board's Physical Literacy is Everyday Life! campaign. *PIERRE OBENDRAUF*

Alouettes start with young fans, building their 'new identity'

GM, players visit school to promote board's Physical Literacy is Everyday Life! plan



STU COWAN

I still remember being in Grade 4 at Victoria Park School in St-Lambert when the Alouettes came to visit. One of the players was quarterback Sonny Wade, who talked about the importance of school, etc., then grabbed a football and took my class out in the schoolyard, telling us to run and get open for a pass. Since I was one of the tallest kids, I was lucky to catch the perfect spiral that Wade threw.

It remains one of my fondest childhood memories. The year was 1972 and I believe it was the same year my parents gave me a choice for a birthday present: a Canadiens, Expos or Alouettes team jacket. I chose the Alouettes and still have that green jacket at home with the old Als logo thanks to my late mother, who never threw anything away. I was thinking about that pass from Wade and the green jacket on Friday morning when Alouettes general manager Kavis Reed, running back William Stanback and linebacker Jean-Gabriel Poulin visited Hampstead Elementary School to help the English Montreal School Board launch its Physical Literacy is Everyday Life!

campaign, which is built on four pillars: physical education and health programs, a 60 Minutes of Daily Physical Activity program, participation in inter-scholastic sports, and additional outdoor and active living activities. Off the top of my head, I can still rattle off a bunch of names from those 1970s Alouettes teams that won three Grey Cups (1970, '74 and '77): Wade, Junior Ah You, Peter Dalla Riva, Moses Denson, Terry Evanshen and Don Sweet to name six. Trying to name six players on the current Alouettes roster I think would be a big challenge for most Montreal school kids. The Alouettes' last Grey Cup championship was in 2010 when names such as Anthony Calvillo and Ben Calhoun were well-known in the city, but this is a franchise that has missed the playoffs the past four years, has a 21-51 record during that span and is closing 5,000 seats at Molson Stadium next season due to lack of fan interest. This is a team that is trying to rebuild on and off the field. Next Friday the Alouettes will hold an event to unveil their "new identity." "I've always believed in the fact that we as professional athletes, as professional organizations, we expect the community to support us," Reed said about attending Friday's school event. "It's equally, if not more, important for us to support the community

because we carry that banner for them and we represent our community. So it's critically important for our organization. Patrick Bolvin, our president, has made that an absolute mandate and I share in it. It's something that we have to do and should do. "Physical literacy and physical fitness make you a better person," Reed added about the school program. "It makes your mind more creative, it makes you more emotionally stable and balanced, and it gives you a confidence and a self-esteem boost that I feel is really important for all of us." The Alouettes got a big boost attention-wise last season when they acquired QB Johnny Manziel from the Hamilton Tiger-Cats in July, but it didn't result in many wins, as they finished with a 5-13 record, and the "Johnny Football" buzz faded quickly. Reed, who has an 8-28 record during his two seasons as Alouettes GM, said he has been inspired by the Canadiens' impressive turnaround this season under GM Marc Bergevin. "I follow hockey very closely," Reed said. "I love hockey and I'm cheering hard for the Montreal Canadiens in part because I knew and I registered what (Bergevin's) trying to accomplish. I follow him very closely. You always try to follow people in like situations with yourself. He's trusted himself and the process

that he started and that's critically important. "Everything is instant now," Reed added. "Instant information, instant return on investment. Everything now is all about the immediacy. He showed that a process does work. Stay true to yourself, quiet the noise and do what's right for the organization. In following him, I don't think I've seen one time where it was a motivation of self-preservation. It always seemed to be a motivation of what's right for this hockey team that's going to allow the team to be successful. I'm very impressed by what the Canadiens are doing and I'm wishing hard that they're going to be in the Stanley Cup." As for the Alouettes' new identity, Reed said: "Our football team is doing everything, from the person selling tickets to the guys on the field playing ... everything to make certain we bring back a pride that Montreal has had, not just in football but in sports. We're proud of what we have an opportunity to do. We're going to make certain that it's a new brand with a fresh attitude and continue that process of re-establishing the sports environment here." It definitely won't be easy, but Friday's school visit was a good early step. *scowan@postmedia.com twitter.com/StuCowan1*

Montreal's Fernandez edged out in Aussie Open girls' final

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA Canada's Leylah Fernandez came up just short in her attempt to win an Australian Open junior girls' singles title. Clara Tauson of Denmark downed the 16-year-old from Montreal in the tournament final on Saturday 6-4, 6-2. The top-seeded Tauson needed one hour and six minutes to take down the fourth-seeded Fernandez, who had won five straight matches to qualify for the final.

Entering the Australian Open final, Tauson had won two of three matches against Fernandez. Tauson had won both matches played on hard court, while the Canadian emerged victorious on clay in Brazil last year. Fernandez's first big junior Grand Slam result came last year at the French Open, when she reached the semifinals. She followed that up with a run to the quarter-finals at the U.S. Open.

Fernandez made her WTA Tour main-draw debut last September at the National Bank Cup in Quebec City. She beat fellow Canadian Gabriela Dabrowski in the opening round before falling to Heather Watson of the U.K. She opened her 2019 season by reaching the final at a junior event in Traralgon, Australia, this month, losing 6-3, 6-2 to Tauson in the championship match. *The Canadian Press*



Leylah Fernandez plays a forehand in her junior girls' singles final against Denmark's Clara Tauson in Melbourne. *MARK KOLBE/GETTY IMAGES*