

Tremayne Thurston	FC	MINN	70	Tremayne is an avid baseball fan and knows the start of his recruitment will be around the start of the MLB season. Tell Tremayne the most under-the-radar signing in free agency that you think will end up paying dividends for the team who signed him. Tremayne will commit to the coach who presents the most compelling argument.	540
-------------------	----	------	----	---	-----

TEXAS A&M MEN'S BASKETBALL

HEAD COACH SNIPIN' SEXTON



Tremayne,

The Royals were the greatest success story of the 2024 season, winning 30 more games than the year before - one of the biggest turnarounds in baseball history. Then they went out and made it to the ALDS and gave the Yankees a bit of a scare on their way to the World Series.

That team was good, but had some holes. Bobby Witt was snubbed of MVP and manager Matt Quatraro was snubbed for Manager of the Year, but injuries to key players and rough bullpen play hurt them down the stretch and in the playoffs. The team picked up Lucas Erceg from the A's to close games at the deadline, which in itself was the most underrated trade of last season.

But we're talking about under-the-radar signings from this offseason. The fact is, the Royals' bullpen still needed a ton of work. Erceg was excellent, but isn't your guy to close down games for an entire season. They wanted to build bullpen depth by going from the 9th inning down, and maybe move Erceg to a setup role, emulating the shutdown bullpen from their 2014-15 World Series teams.

And to that end we got the signing of Carlos Estevez from Philly, two years, \$22 million. The starting rotation, which was excellent last season (and looking excellent this season as well), would benefit from having another established late-inning guy to lock down wins for them even if the bats don't create a ton of offense (looking at you, MJ Melendez and Hunter Renfroe 😞)

Estevez had a career year in 2024, as he moved teams from the Angels to the Phillies mid-season to bolster the Phils' playoff hopes. In 54 appearances with both

teams, he put up a 2.45 ERA, the best in his career, and a total of 26 saves. Over the previous two seasons, he had 57 saves, good for 9th in the major leagues.

As of this writing, Estevez is third in baseball in saves, having settled in to the closer role in Kansas City. Erceg is thriving in the setup role that Estevez' arrival moved him into, posting five holds and a .474 WHIP. The way it's been going, if the Royals starters can get through six innings, then the Gauntlet is coming out of the bullpen. Daniel Lynch (who thought we'd say that, lol), then Lucas Erceg, then Carlos Estevez.

The last time the Royals were in World Series contention, which they are now as well (come for me, haters), they had one of the greatest bullpens of all time. Kelvin Herrera in the 7th, Wade Davis in the 8th, then Greg Holland in the 9th. In 30 playoff games in the two-year span of World Series appearances, these bullpen guys allowed a collective 2.62 ERA one home run in 11 games against the Giants and Mets - and those teams had some sluggers.

The Estevez signing shows that Kansas City is committed to reimagining their successes of the past by emulating them today. Lynch-Erceg-Estevez is the new HGH - I am trying to get the nickname "The Gauntlet" to be a thing; please help me with this endeavor! Estevez is the key that will get the Royals back to the playoffs this season.