

DISPATCH 1 OF 2 · TRADES

Mets Flip Struggling Olson to Toronto for Two-Player Prospect Package

NEW YORK — The Mets moved right-hander Reese Olson to the Blue Jays on Thursday, cashing in the veteran's name value before his 6.75 ERA and 0-3 start could sink it any further, and came away with a return that rival evaluators were already calling one of the more lopsided sells of the young season.

New York gets back second baseman JoJo Parker, a 23-year-old with 40-man-ready tools who could be at Citi Field within weeks, along with 19-year-old complex-leaguer Manny Terc and a sixth-round pick. Toronto, in the middle of a playoff push, needed rotation innings regardless of the surface-level results and is betting Olson's underlying stuff plays better than his April line suggests.

"That's a really strong return for a fifth starter with a losing record. Whoever ran that market for the Mets found a live one."

— RIVAL NL FRONT-OFFICE SOURCE, GRANTED ANONYMITY

Parker is the headliner. He has options remaining, which buys the Mets time to develop him without a roster-clock complication, and evaluators peg him as a potential everyday second baseman if the bat continues to round into form. Terc is younger and further away, but at 19 he's exactly the kind of lottery ticket a system likes to stockpile in a return built around a struggling veteran rather than a controllable one. For a front office that spent the winter selling into a retool rather than a full rebuild, it's the second trade this month that reads as addition-through-subtraction — shed an underperforming veteran, restock the pipeline, keep the big-league roster's ceiling intact.

METS SEND

Reese Olson, RHP (30, 52/52 grade, 6.75 ERA)

METS RECEIVE

JoJo Parker, 2B (23, 42/50) + Manny Terc, 2B (19, 24/47) + 6th-rd pick

Mets Add Closer Josh Hader From Baltimore, Insurance for a Shaky Díaz

NEW YORK — Hours after the Olson deal, the Mets doubled up on bullpen business, acquiring left-hander Josh Hader from the Orioles for a 25-year-old blocked corner infielder in Jesus Baez — with Baltimore agreeing to retain 15 percent of the money to get a deal done before the weekend.

Hader, 36, still carries a 70-grade arm and a slider that rates as a genuine plus pitch against left-handed hitters, and the price was about as light as a rental of his caliber gets: a bench piece who wasn't going to play regularly behind Trey Snyder anyway. The move lands at a pointed moment. Incumbent closer Edwin Díaz owns a 1-3 record and, six days ago, coughed up three earned runs without recording an out — the kind of outing that turns a tidy ERA into a talking point regardless of the underlying number.

"You don't wait until it's a full-blown problem in the ninth inning in September. You get ahead of it now, while the return's still cheap and the seller still just needs a bat off his bench."
— RIVAL AL SCOUT ON THE TIMING OF THE HADER DEAL

To clear the 26-man spot, right-hander Liam Judd was optioned to Triple-A Syracuse — a low-cost move on a pitcher who still has options and, by the Mets' own account, room left to develop away from the big-league grind. Hader has not yet debuted for his new club, but the pairing gives New York two legitimate high-leverage arms in the ninth for the first time all season, with the front office betting the depth is worth more than whatever it costs to keep Díaz as the unquestioned closer on his own.

METS SEND	Jesus Baez, 3B (25, 40/42 grade, blocked by Snyder)
METS RECEIVE	Josh Hader, LHP (36, 70/70 grade, BAL retains 15%)
ROSTER MOVE	Liam Judd (RP) optioned to Syracuse to open the spot

IN BRIEF

- **Standings:** The moves land with the Mets at 15-15, sitting third in the NL East, 2.0 games back of first-place Washington through May 1.
- **Two deals, one day:** Thursday's pair of trades were completed within hours of each other — a rare doubleheader of activity this early in the season for a club that entered the year positioned as a contender, not a seller.
- **What's next:** With both Parker and Hader still awaiting their Mets debuts, the more interesting question — whether either move actually shows up in the box score — starts now.