



TRIPLE PLAY WITH DENARD SPAN

Denard Span was acquired by Seattle along with reliever Alex Colomé from Tampa Bay in May in a trade that added depth and talent to the roster. It also sent a clear message to excited Mariners fans that the team, which was off to a great start with a 30–20 record the day the trade was made, was looking to get even better.

Now in his 11th season in the Majors, Span brings speed, good defense and a solid bat to the club. He also brings playoff experience to a team that doesn't include a lot of guys with that background – among current Mariners, only Nelson Cruz and Robinson Canó have played in more postseason games than Span.

Span has had a busy year of packing and unpacking. In December, San Francisco included him in a trade package to Miami for Giancarlo Stanton. The deal was agreed upon, but Stanton refused to waive his no-trade clause and instead ended up with the Yankees. A few days later Span was traded to the Rays. He admits all the moving around he's done in his career can be frustrating.

On Changing Teams

I remember the first time I got traded, from Minnesota to Washington, it was very difficult on a personal level because I had been with the Twins organization for 10 years and with the snap of a finger I was in a totally new environment. You've got to learn everyone's name and create new relationships. Relationships have been broken with your past city and, to me, that's the toughest thing. You've spent time with a group of guys and it comes to an end abruptly.

Leaving Tampa was tough. I was unsure how it was going to be playing in my hometown, but I fell in love with being there. I was able to attend family gatherings. It was perfect. So, when this trade came it definitely stung because I was really getting used to the idea of being in Tampa. But as far as the baseball side of things goes, there couldn't be a better move for me than to come to Seattle.

On the Value of Speed

When you have an athletic team, it opens so many opportunities and creates chances. It puts pressure on the other team. We're fortunate to have so many guys with speed and that gives us a better chance to win close games.



It's a difficult thing to scout and you can't neutralize it. How many times this year have we gotten things going with an infield hit? How many times have we shut down a potential big inning for the other team with a running, diving catch? Someone on our defense is always making a play and that provides so many other ways to win games.

When you're a fast guy and you're on base, even if you don't steal, even if you're just threatening or faking a steal, you can get the pitcher to focus on you instead of the guy at the plate. Once that's the case, you've won the chess game and the hitter will be more likely to get a good pitch to hit.

On Playing Postseason Ball

I can talk about all my experiences, but as a player you won't fully grasp it until you're in that moment. When you've been through it you can kind of prep the guys who haven't been in those situations, so they at least have an idea of what to expect.

Playoff baseball is different. It's like the game is sped up because every pitch and every play is heightened. It's a lot of fun to be playing for something in September and October. We've got a lot of work to do, but we've got the ingredients and the makeup to have a solid run.

—Mike Gastineau