

## Cubs trade for Monroe to help against lefties

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SAN FRANCISCO -- Eight days short of the deadline for setting playoff rosters, the Cubs acquired outfielder Tigers to give the lineup a boost against left-handers and the roster another playoff veteran.

The slumping Monroe, who was designated for assignment last week, was acquired for a player to be named of the remaining \$900,000 on his contract.

"It's one of those situations where you couldn't pass up a veteran like this who's already been there and help postseason," general manager Jim Hendry said.

Especially when it's a guy hitting .302 against left-handers during an otherwise bad offensive season. The Cubs are 12-19 against lefties, going 12-19 when the opponent starts one -- even after winning the last two. Their .253 average is the lowest in the National League.

"Our young players have played terrific, but going into September, it would be nice to give us a guy that's done it before. We've proven when you're young and you can come up and do it, you play. But at the same time, as a general manager, you have any regrets that we didn't try to get one more veteran that could help us in that situation."

Manager Lou Piniella said Monroe, who is scheduled to join the team today in Arizona, will be in the lineup and means a Cubs starting debut Saturday against the Diamondbacks' Doug Davis. His addition probably has the playing time of outfielder Matt Murton, a right-handed hitter who's batting .250 against lefties.

The Cubs designated minor-league outfielder Buck Coats for assignment to clear space on the 40-man roster and optioned him back to Class AAA Iowa to make room on the 25-man active roster.

Monroe, 30, hit .255 with 28 home runs and 92 RBI last season for the American League champion Tigers, tied for the most five postseason homers. But he slumped this season, hitting just .222 with 11 homers -- and 92 strikeouts --

The Tigers added outfielder Gary Sheffield in the offseason, and Monroe was the odd man out last week when they traded Cameron Maybin from Class AA Erie.

Cubs bench coach Alan Trammell managed Monroe in Detroit for three seasons and recommended him when the Cubs needed a veteran.

"He's a great guy, and he'll be a nice fit here," Trammell said. "He's an above-average outfielder. He gives us what you need that's produced at the major-league level. I don't know what happened this year, but he's had some pretty good years."

Piniella said he expects to meet with Hendry early next week to discuss how to shape the playoff-eligible roster.

"We're getting close," Piniella said. "You might see us add one more piece, and that's the end of it."