

## COMMENTARY

# McCutchens deserved better treatment from the Pirates

BY PAUL ZEISE,  
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE  
The Tribune Content Agency

## PITTSBURGH

There is no easy way for a franchise to move on from a legendary player, especially when that player isn't ready to retire. It is a difficult and delicate process and one that usually is met with an awkward time when the player is resistant to move on.

Players often don't want to retire because they think they still have something to give. They don't want to move on with their life or they want to hang on to their place in the spotlight.

It is a tale as old as sports, and it is one that can be awkward in its execution because no front office wants to appear to mistreat a fan favorite and someone who has meant a great deal to the franchise.

And that is where the Pirates are with Andrew McCutchen. And of course, true to the Pirates, they managed to make a public relations disaster out of the situation.

Let me be clear. I agree that the Pirates have every right to build their roster as they see fit. They are looking to upgrade their designated hitter position - as they should. And at 39, McCutchen is probably at the point where he should begin to think about getting on with his life's work.

The Pirates have also attempted to upgrade their offense, and with some of the additions they have made they are squeezing McCutchen out of the



JESS RAPOFOL TNS

Andrew McCutchen of the Pittsburgh Pirates celebrates after hitting a double against the Washington Nationals at Nationals Park on April 1, 2024, in Washington, D.C.

lineup. Simply put, they haven't negotiated with him about this season because they are likely ready to move on.

And, again, that is perfectly fine. I have no issues with teams determining it is time to move on from a legend. But there is a way to do it with class and dignity.

This past weekend was PiratesFest, a chance for fans to reach out and touch players, coaches and even Cherington. It is a meet-and-greet kind of event with autographs and photos and some Q&A sessions and whatnot.

McCutchen wasn't invited because he isn't currently under contract, but that is about as shortsighted as it comes. He is still probably the most popular player on the team, he has been a great ambassador for the Pirates and he is one of the most important players in franchise history.

Why not just bring him to PiratesFest? Let him

mingle with the fans, sign autographs, create goodwill and be that ambassador that generates some much needed positive publicity for the team. It would be an easy thing to do, and that's especially true if last season was his last in a Pirates uniform before he retires.

And then when the question of whether McCutchen will be back is broached, a simple "That is something we will continue to discuss with Andrew" would suffice

as an answer. That would end any need to go into a long-winded explanation about why you as a franchise want to move on from him.

It would also at least allow people to entertain the idea that, if McCutchen is indeed squeezed out, it was on his own terms.

The Steelers did that with Ben Roethlisberger even as they pushed him out the door. Everyone knew that Roethlisberger wanted to play another year - and his comments since have confirmed this. But the Steelers made it clear they were moving on and he subsequently "retired" and received a hero's sendoff.

Clearly, Roethlisberger wasn't happy with the decision, as he openly talked on his podcast about how the general manager didn't want him back. But the Steelers handled it the right way. As a result, Roethlisberger is still close with the organization, is welcomed back and comes to all the reunions and tributes and still attends games with his family.

That is how you want it to end for players who have meant so much to the organization, but it appears the Pirates and McCutchen are headed for a messy divorce and it didn't need to be that way.

As I just wrote, McCutchen should have been invited to PiratesFest but I understand why he wasn't.

Cherington, though, could have handled the question about him a lot better than he did. All he needed to say was "Andrew is an all-time Pirate, he has done incredible things for this organization and we are keeping an open dialogue with him about 2026," and then moved on.

He did this at the start of his comments, saying the Pirates would love to maintain a great relationship with McCutchen into the future. But instead of ending it there, he went into some long-winded diatribe about the 40-man roster and fielding the best team and all kinds of other stuff that made it clear the team doesn't want McCutchen back.

"Our approach this off-season has been laser-focused on what gives us the best chance to win more baseball games in Pittsburgh than we have in the past seasons," Cherington said Saturday. "That's going to continue to guide

our decisions."

Why go there? It was unnecessary and merely stoked the flames of an already tense relationship with McCutchen, who predictably took to Twitter to object to the way he has been treated. He asked rhetorically if other teams have treated their all-timers like this and ended with "Rip the jersey off of me. You don't get to write my future, God does."

The Pirates have every right to build their roster as they see fit, and so this isn't about awarding a spot to McCutchen just because he has meant so much to them. The Pirates aren't a charity. This isn't the little leagues, where everyone gets to play three innings and there are orange slices after the games.

McCutchen is old and it is probably time for the Pirates to move on. I don't dispute any of that at all.

But there is the right way and the wrong way to handle it, and the Pirates handled this the wrong way.

I hope McCutchen and the Pirates can patch things up, as he is one of the most important and popular players in team history. He deserves to have tribute nights, be celebrated on team reunions and be welcomed warmly whenever he wants to go to PNC Park to watch his former team.

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## Legals &amp; Public Notices

## NOTICE TO INFORM:

At the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council meeting on January 22, 2026 Ordinances 001-011 were enacted related to: (1) changing the zone from an Agricultural-Rural (A-R) zone to a Medium Density Residential (R-4) zone and a Light Industrial (I-1) zone, for 65.69 net (73.72 gross) acres for properties located at 200, 201, 250, 251 and 301 Canebrake Dr.; (2) amending certain of the Budgets of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government to reflect current requirements for municipal expenditures, and appropriating and re-appropriating funds, FY 2026 Schedule No. 21; (3) Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government authorizing the issuance of its Various Purpose General Obligation Bonds, Series 2026A, in one or more subseries, in an aggregate principal amount of \$18,040,000 (which amount may be increased by an amount of up to ten percent (10%) or decreased by an unlimited amount); approving a form of Series 2026A Bonds; authorizing designated officers to execute and deliver the Series 2026A bonds; authorizing and directing the filing of notice with the State Local Debt Officer; providing for the payment and security of the Series 2026A Bonds; maintaining a sinking fund; creating a bond payment fund for the Series 2026A Bonds; authorizing acceptance of the bid(s) of the bond purchaser of the Series 2026A Bonds; and repealing inconsistent ordinances; (4) amending the authorized strength by abolishing six (6) classified positions and creating six (6) classified positions, all in the Div. of Waste Management; (5) amending the authorized strength by abolishing one (1) unclassified position and creating one (1) classified position, all in the Div. of Parks and Recreation; (6) amending the authorized strength by abolishing one (1) unclassified position in the Div. of Accounting; (7) amending the authorized strength by abolishing one (1) unclassified position in the Div. of Emergency Management; (8) amending the authorized strength by abolishing one (1) unclassified position and creating one (1) classified position, all in the Div. of Grants and Special Programs; (9) amending the authorized strength by abolishing one (1) classified position and creating one (1) classified position, all in the Div. of Code Enforcement; (10) amending the authorized strength by abolishing one (1) classified position and creating one (1) classified position, all in the Div. of Enterprise Solutions; (11) amending the authorized strength by creating one (1) classified position in the Div. of Police. These documents may be viewed in their entirety at <https://bit.ly/ords01-11> or in the Council Clerk's Office at 200 E. Main St. Lexington, KY 40507. 859-258-3240. View all LFUCG legal notices at <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/public-notices>

IPL0309754  
Jan 30 2026

## Legals &amp; Public Notices

## Legal Advertisement

The Urban County Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Monday, February 9, 2026 at 1:30 pm, Council Chambers 2nd floor Government Center Building, 200 E. Main St., to consider Variance Appeals, Conditional Use Appeals, Administrative Appeals and other items. To view the list of applications or for further information please see <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/government/boards-commissions/board-adjustment> or call the Division of Planning at (859) 258-3160.

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## Field Level Media

Tom Brady labeled Bill Belichick's snub from the Pro Football Hall of Fame as "completely ridiculous" on Wednesday.

Brady obviously knows a thing or two about his long-time former head coach with the New England Patriots. The three-time NFL MVP shared his thoughts on the voting committee's decision against embracing Belichick on his first year on the ballot.

"I don't understand it," Brady said Wednesday during an interview with Seattle Sports 710 AM. "I mean, I was with him everyday. If he's not a first-ballot Hall of Famer, there's really no coach that should ever be a first-ballot Hall of Famer, which is completely ridiculous because people deserve it."

"He's incredible. There's no coach I'd rather play for. If I'm picking one coach to go out there to win a Super Bowl -- give me one season -- I'm taking Bill Belichick. So that's enough said."

The proof is in the pudding for Belichick, whose six Super Bowl victories as a head coach are the most in NFL history. He went 266-121 (.687) in his 24 seasons leading the Patriots, with an undefeated regular season in 2007. He also won two Super Bowls as defensive coordinator of the New York Giants.

Per ESPN, Belichick was informed Friday that he did not reach the threshold of 40 out of 50 votes from the Hall of Fame's selection committee.

The Coordination Meeting will be held via Zoom and in-person at 171 Howell Heights Jackson, KY 41339. Please find below the information and instructions on joining the Transportation Coordination Meeting via Zoom.

Middle Kentucky is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Middle Kentucky Transportation Coordination Meeting

Time: Mar 3, 2026 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88123038454>

Meeting ID: 881 2303 8454

To Join the Meeting by:

**Computer:** Go to Zoom.com, select 'Join a Meeting' at the top of the page. You will be prompted to enter a Meeting ID. Enter the Meeting ID from above to join.

**Smart phone or tablet:**

Download the Zoom app to your device. Open the app and select 'Join' on the home page. You will be prompted to enter a Meeting ID. Enter the Meeting ID from above to join.

**Landline or Cell Phone:**

Using a cellphone or landline, choose one of the phone numbers listed below to call in. There will be an automated message asking for a Meeting ID. Enter the Meeting ID from above followed by the pound (#) sign. Next, you will be asked for a Participant ID followed by pound (#). The Participant ID is used if you do not have a microphone on your computer and would like to connect a phone to be able to talk in the meeting. Your Participant ID will be unique to you and given by Zoom. If you do not have a Participant ID, press pound (#) and you will be entered into the Meeting.

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Meeting ID: 881 2303 8454

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