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Giants' Angel Pagan out for year

By Alex Pavlovic | apavlovic@mercurynews.com (<mailto:apavlovic@mercurynews.com>)

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The San Francisco Giants' Angel Pagan (16) singles against the Milwaukee Brewers in the third inning of their MLB game played at AT&T Park in San Francisco, Calif., on Saturday, Aug. 30, 2014. (Dan Honda/Bay Area News Group) (Dan Honda)

LOS ANGELES -- The announcement had started to seem inevitable. It was still crushing for a Giants team hoping to have another deep October run.

Center fielder Angel Pagan will have surgery on a bulging disc in his back, ending his season. The instrumental leadoff hitter is expected to be sidelined for about th
"It was just time to get something done," manager Bruce Bochy said. "This thing has been nagging him for three or four months. It's not getting better. We'll get it c
can have a full go in spring training. There was no sense in trying (to keep playing). This wasn't going to work."



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San Francisco Giants' Angel Pagan (16) holds a bat as he prepares to take on the Colorado Rockies in the first inning of their MLB game at AT&T Park in San Francisco, Calif., on Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2014. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group) (RAY CHAVEZ)

Now the Giants have to figure out how to make the lineup work without a player who might be their most irreplaceable
56-35 when Pagan starts and just 29-37 when he doesn't. Pagan will finish his third season in San Francisco with a .342 on-base percentage, 21 doubles, 56 runs and 16 stolen bases.

"You have to deal with these things," Bochy said. "Injuries are unfortunately a part of the game. The important thing is what we normally do when this happens. Don't talk about it. Don't dwell on it. Keep your focus."

Renowned spinal surgeon Dr. Robert Watkins will perform the procedure -- a discectomy -- in Los Angeles on Thursday. He said the procedure involves "sucking out portions of the disc" that are causing inflammation and pain in Pagan's back. He said surgery was necessary to make sure there was no long-term damage.



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"I have to make sure I'm 100 percent for next year," Pagan said. "It's a tough one, especially in the situation we have. I was trying. I did what I could with the injury. But I got to a point where I couldn't function."

Pagan missed 44 games during the summer because of the same injury. When he returned, he was often pulled from the lineup in the late innings. Pagan didn't play in Phoenix last week, the first game of this trip and saw Dr. Watkins on Monday. This time, the determination was that Pagan needed surgery.

Without Pagan, Bochy had Gregor Blanco in the leadoff spot Tuesday. That's how he will handle this for the time being. Juan Perez, Chase Gary Brown and Travis Ishikawa are options to play left field Wednesday.

shifted over to center. The Giants already are playing without Matt Cain (season-ending elbow surgery) and have gone practically the entire season without Marco Loretta (strain).

"It kind of sucks," first baseman Brandon Belt said. "He'll be missed, but at the same time, other guys have to step up. We have the team to do it. We have the team to get no strangers to this. This team has gone through this before and we know what we have to do."

Pagan, 33, has played just 167 games in the first two seasons of a four-year, \$40 million deal he signed in December of 2012. When he first got hurt, the Giants weren't sure any procedure could be pushed back to the offseason.

"I guess you always held onto hope with Angel that he would come back," Bochy said. "Now you know where you stand, so you move forward."

YSTL: How much will losing Pagan impact the Giants?

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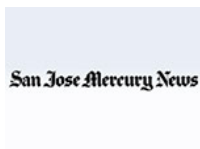
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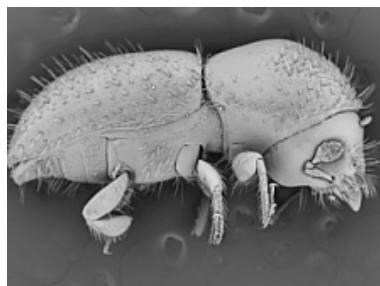
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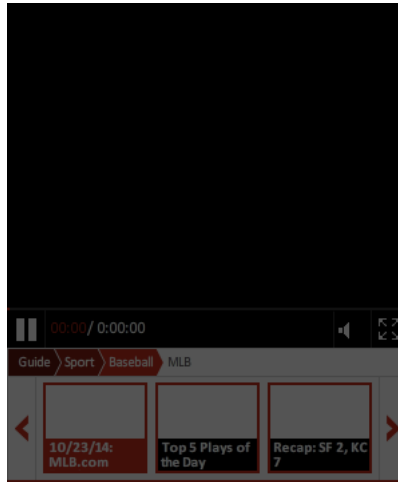
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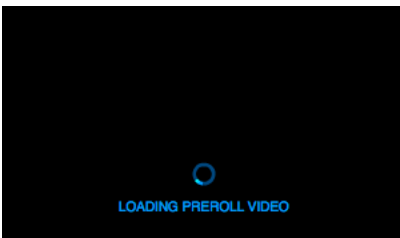
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