

Kluber hurls 7 scoreless, but Tribe falls in 11

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- Indians outfielder Michael Brantley slowed down as he approached Progressive Field's tall left-field wall, peering up as the baseball struck by Stephen Piscotty sailed over the railing and into the bleacher seats. A smattering of boos swept through a crowd that came to witness another Corey Kluber win.

Piscotty's two-run, go-ahead blast off Josh Tomlin in the 11th inning on Saturday helped send the Indians to a 6-3 loss. It was one of three home runs off the Cleveland bullpen within the final four innings, rendering Kluber's performance moot and snapping a five-game winning streak for the American League Central-leading Tribe.

"It's a really tough one," Tomlin said. "It's frustrating. Those are the games you want to win, you need to win, and we didn't get it done."

Following seven shutout innings from Kluber, right-hander Neil Ramirez took over for the Indians in the eighth, riding a streak of 17 consecutive scoreless outings, dating back to late May. After striking out Dustin Fowler to begin the frame, Ramirez yielded a single to Mark Canha and then surrendered back-to-back home runs to Jed Lowrie and Khris Davis.

That pulled the game into a 3-3 tie, sending Kluber to a no-decision after a strong effort that lowered his ERA to 2.49 on the season. Given how Ramirez has helped solidify the later innings out of the 'pen for the Indians, Kluber shrugged off Saturday's showing as an isolated setback for Cleveland's defacto setup man.

"He's throwing really well for us," Kluber said. "It's easy to magnify today, just because it's the most recent, but he's a good pitcher. He's been a big weapon for us down there. Again, you go through the course of an entire season, people are going to run into a rough outing here and there. It's part of the game."

The A's produced five hits, drew two walks and only struck out three times on Saturday against Kluber. The leader of Cleveland's rotation is a master when it comes to making in-game adjustments, however, and he dodged trouble at every turn. In this outing, Kluber relied heavily on his sinker and cutter and created 11 outs via fly balls.

Indians manager Terry Francona noted that Kluber was not at his best, but he still found a way to adapt against the A's.

"I think it's obvious he's trying to get back to where he can go to the rubber and get in a strong position," Francona said. "But, he's such a good pitcher and he's smart that he gave us seven really good innings. We lean on him so hard, I thought we'd go to [the bullpen]. And it didn't work."

The Indians managed three runs (two earned) against A's righty Edwin Jackson, who spun 6 2/3 shutout frames against the Tribe last week in Oakland. Edwin Encarnacion, Greg Allen and Francisco Lindor each contributed an RBI against the veteran right-hander to build a 3-0 lead.

The Indians could not hold that advantage. Tomlin, who is still adjusting to being used sporadically as a reliever, bore the brunt of the blame for the defeat.

"It's not an excuse whatsoever," Tomlin said. "I just came in and didn't execute pitches, and it cost us the game."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Stolen rally: Yonder Alonso led off the eighth with a single for the Indians and was replaced by pinch-runner Rajai Davis after Erik Gonzalez missed on two bunt attempts to slip into an 0-2 count. Davis entered with the sole purpose of stealing second, but the veteran was thrown out on his attempt by catcher Jonathan Lucroy. A's reliever Lou Trivino escaped the inning without allowing any damage.

By removing Alonso, Francona was then forced to send Encarnacion in to play first base, eliminating the designated hitter from the Tribe's lineup.

"When the bunt's not in play anymore," Francona said, "Trivino's a guy that I felt the best chance to score is to let Raj run, and go ahead and play a National League game [without the DH]. I didn't want to do it, but I thought that was our best way to win."

Davis said Trivino played the biggest role in stopping Davis from stealing.

"This is my first time in that situation, so I'd probably handle it different now," Davis said. "But, you live and you learn. You've got to give all the credit to the pitcher. If the pitcher doesn't do his job, he doesn't have a chance. But, he did his job. He was quick, and I wasn't able to see that he was quick. It is what it is."

Leaping Lindor: With two outs and a runner on second base in the ninth inning, the Indians handed the ball to closer Cody Allen to try to preserve the 3-3 deadlock. Fowler sliced a 1-2 pitch from Allen to the left side of the infield, where the soft liner seemed destined to find the left-field grass. Lindor swiftly ranged to his right, dove and made the inning-ending catch. As the crowd roared, Lindor moved to a knee and gave a hard fist pump in celebration of the critical out.

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Encarnacion took an expensive swing on an inside pitch from Jackson in the fifth. The Tribe slugger pulled a first-pitch sinker into foul territory up the third-base line, where the sharp liner -- one with a 104.9-mph exit velocity, per Statcast™ -- shattered the front of the TV camera used for the Oakland broadcast. More >>

HE SAID IT

"I think that I've always said that I'm not trying to strike guys out. I'm trying to get soft contact and get quick outs, so I don't really put too much stock in the fact that I didn't have a lot of swing and miss today. Aside from a couple balls, I don't think there were really that many that were hit too hard. So, I guess the way I look at it is, whether you get outs via strikeout, groundout, popout, to me, as long as you're getting outs, that's what you want to do." --Kluber

UP NEXT

Rookie right-hander Shane Bieber (4-0, 2.97 ERA) is scheduled to take the mound for the Tribe on Sunday, when the Indians host the A's at 1:10 p.m. ET in the rubber game at Progressive Field. In two home starts, Bieber has allowed one run in 12 2/3 innings with 16 strikeouts vs. two walks. Oakland will counter with lefty Brett Anderson (0-2, 7.63).

Chisenhall (left calf) to seek second opinion

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- Lonnie Chisenhall might not be done for the season, but the Indians know that the outfielder's latest calf injury is going to cost him a significant amount of time on the shelf. Under the circumstances, Cleveland's medical staff has encouraged Chisenhall to seek multiple opinions on his condition.

Prior to Saturday's game against the A's, Indians manager Terry Francona noted that Chisenhall is scheduled to meet with Dr. Wiemi Douoguih in Washington, D.C., on Monday to gather more information on the injury. Douoguih specializes in lower-half injuries and serves as the director of sports medicine for MedStar Washington Hospital Center's department of orthopedic surgery.

"Our guys kind of encouraged Lonnie to actually go do it," Francona said, "because he's going to miss significant time. And, if he gets another opinion that maybe is more positive, I don't know, we don't see anything it could hurt. Getting more information, we think, is good. And I kind of commend our medical people for feeling that way."

Chisenhall is currently on the 10-day disabled list due to a strained left calf, and the outfielder has had multiple previous stints on the DL this season and last year due to similar problems with his right calf. Over the past two seasons, the recurring leg injuries have limited Chisenhall to 111 games, in which he's hit .297 with an .872 OPS for Cleveland.

"We're trying to gather as much information as we can, because something's going on there," Francona said. "Is he predisposed? They've even talked about [having him see a gait specialist to analyze] the way a guy runs. They're trying to take advantage of the downtime to see if they can help for his future."

Mejia outfield transition ongoing

Heading into Saturday's action, Francisco Mejia appeared in right field in four of the six games he logged in July for Triple-A Columbus. The Indians are continuing to work with the highly touted catching prospect on fully embracing a move to the outfield to potentially hasten his path to the Major Leagues.

"He really wants to be a catcher. I don't disagree with that," Francona said. "But, I think we've had moments where his heart isn't in it as much as maybe [it could be]. He still views himself as a catcher. And we're trying to explain to him that, 'Man, you may be a catcher next year, but you could be a starting right fielder.'

"So, we're just not there, yet. I mean, I understand. It's just, I don't think it's kind of come as maybe as fast as we hoped."

Cleveland is content with its big league catching duo of Yan Gomes and Roberto Perez, leaving no room in the inn right now for Mejia, who is ranked as the Tribe's No. 1 prospect and the top catching prospect in baseball, per MLB Pipeline. The 22-year-old Mejia, who is headed to the SiriusXM All-Star Futures Game for the third straight year, has hit .398 (1.040 OPS) in 30 games at Triple-A, dating back to June 1.

Worth noting

- Jason Kipnis was lifted from Friday's 10-4 win in the sixth inning due to hamstring tightness, but the issue was not deemed serious, and the second baseman was back in the lineup Saturday. Said Francona: "He woke up this morning feeling good. I just wanted to make sure we don't do something [irresponsible], because once you go too far, you can't go back."
- Lefty Tyler Olson (10-day DL, left lat strain) struck out two batters in an 11-pitch Minor League rehab appearance for Columbus on Friday. Olson was scheduled to pitch again for the Clippers on Saturday for his third rehab outing.
- Lefty Andrew Miller (10-day DL, right knee) was scheduled to throw off the mound again on Saturday, but there remains no established timetable for his return.

Athletics 6, Indians 3 (11): Indians lose lead after Corey Kluber's exit, fall in extra innings to A's

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The Indians turned what appeared to be a peaceful, drama-free win into an ugly 6-3 loss in 11 innings to the Oakland Athletics on Saturday afternoon at Progressive Field.

The Indians (49-38) led for most of the game behind a dominant outing by Corey Kluber. Kluber pitched seven scoreless innings, giving up five hits and two walks and striking out three.

Kluber exited before the eighth inning holding a 3-0 lead. The A's essentially celebrated his departure by belting two home runs off reliever Neil Ramirez to quickly tie it 3-3. Ramirez had gone 17 consecutive appearances without allowing an earned run before Mark Canha singled and both Jed Lowrie and Khris Davis hit home runs, erasing in a couple of swings a lead the Indians had held for hours.

The A's (49-40) finished the job in the 11th inning. With Josh Tomlin (0-5) on the mound, Matt Olson singled and Stephen Piscotty crushed a two-run home run over the 19-foot wall in left field, giving the A's their first lead of the day.

"It's a really tough one," Tomlin said. "You had a lead like that and then the guys kept battling. Thought we did a great job of holding that lead and then I come in and two swings of the bat it's a different game. It's frustrating and those are the games you want to win, you need to win and we didn't get it done today."

Later in the inning, with Matt Chapman on third base, Jonathan Lucroy — who has been booed before every at-bat in the series — grounded a ball that trickled by Francisco Lindor for a run-scoring error.

In the ninth, Lindor made a diving play to snag a line drive by Dustin Fowler with two outs and the go-ahead runner on second base that likely would have given the A's a lead. But the Indians didn't do much with the opportunity to end it in a walk-off in either the ninth, 10th or 11th and redeem Ramirez and Tomlin for the tough outings.

The Indians also played the ninth inning without a designated hitter after Erik Gonzalez replaced Jason Kipnis at second base, Rajai Davis pinch-ran for Yonder Alonso and Edwin Encarnacion, the DH to start the game, was needed to play first base. Indians manager Terry Francona wanted to avoid losing the DH, but when Gonzalez failed to get a bunt down with the go-ahead run (Alonso) on first in the bottom of the eighth, Davis was sent in as a runner with two strikes to try to steal second base. He was promptly thrown out before Gonzalez struck out.

"We didn't want to play a National League game for obvious reasons," Francona said. "But when the bunt's not in play anymore, [Lou] Trivino's a guy that I felt the best chance to score is to let Raj run and go ahead and play a National League game. I didn't want to do it. But I thought that was our best way to win."

Encarnacion brought home a run on a groundout in the first inning, Greg Allen doubled in a run in the second and Lindor singled to make it 3-0 in the sixth, though he was also thrown out trying to advance to second base to end the inning.

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Ryan Lewis: Indians have need, but few options, to add to outfield mix before trade deadline

Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: Aside from a move to bolster the bullpen or perhaps a mega-aggressive trade to acquire Baltimore Orioles star Manny Machado, one need the Indians could address before the trade deadline is in the outfield.

But, for a number of reasons, many external or internal options might be blocked.

Michael Brantley has put up an All-Star-caliber season in left field and can be comfortably written into the No. 2 spot in the lineup every day. Center field and right field have been somewhat of a mess, a revolving door without much consistency.

The current injury situation hasn't helped things. Bradley Zimmer (right shoulder inflammation) and Lonnie Chisenhall (left calf strain) are out for several weeks as a minimum.

That leaves Greg Allen, Tyler Naquin, Brandon Guyer and Rajai Davis to man center field and right field every day.

The Indians could use an upgrade but their options are limited. The free-agent market is barren. The Orioles' Adam Jones might be the biggest name available on a selling team, but his production has taken a downturn (101 wRC+, or about league average), he's been borderline awful in center field (-18 defensive runs saved) and he'd be a rental, as he's finishing up a six-year, \$85.5 million deal this season.

As Indians president of operations Chris Antonetti outlined, the primary focus will be to add controllable assets who can remain in Cleveland beyond this year. That isn't to say the Indians won't go the route of adding a three-month rental, but other paths will first be explored to acquire players who can help the Indians through their contention window, which has a good chance to run through at least the 2020 or 2021 seasons.

Detroit Tigers right fielder Nick Castellanos could have a hefty price tag, as he still has a year of arbitration left, but even in a rebuilding state, would the Tigers deal such a valuable asset within the division? It's one of those unwritten rules that so many teams follow, even in an instance in which a potential deal might fit so well for both clubs. Castellanos has been poor defensively (-11 DRS) but has been terrific at the plate, hitting .302 with an .865 OPS in the middle of the Tigers lineup.

Indians manager Terry Francona has repeatedly pointed out this year how important Guyer is to the club as the main offensive option in the outfield as a right-handed bat, and Davis' impact comes from his legs. Castellanos would help to ease that burden, but a silly fear of helping a division foe might block any progress there.

The Cincinnati Reds might have two options. One is center fielder Billy Hamilton, a terrific defensive player who is also a terror on the bases and under club control through next season. But he hasn't reached base consistently enough to let his speed impact the game as much as it could. Hamilton's on-base percentage has hovered around .300 the last three seasons, so even though he's as much fun to watch on the bases as any player in baseball, he hasn't been on base very often.

The other option is Adam Duvall, who is under club control through 2021. He's having a down year in some respects, hitting .204 with a .683 on-base percentage, below his career average of .760, but his line-drive and hard-hit percentages are up from 2017.

A couple of other options remain, but the Indians certainly have a much higher number of quality candidates to bolster the bullpen than they do to help an outfield that has lacked offensive punch. Entering Saturday's game, the Indians outfield had a collective fWAR of 1.9, 23rd in baseball, and its 88 wRC+ was 24th. Brantley this season has 1.3 fWAR by himself.

The biggest internal option is top prospect Francisco Mejia, a catcher by trade who the Indians have had splitting time in the outfield in an effort to find another avenue to get his bat to the major leagues.

Mejia, a switch-hitter, is known more for what he can do at the plate than behind it. This season, he's hitting .279 with a .758 OPS for Triple-A Columbus. He'd be a valuable addition to the Indians lineup, but that's contingent on him as least being serviceable in right field.

Promoting Mejia to bolster the lineup and seeing how he handles right field in the majors is also partly a possibly because of the American League Central, which has become the worst division in baseball and given the Indians a double-digit games lead. Without having to worry about a divisional race, the Indians could have more leeway to find out if Mejia can be their answer.

Thus far, the Indians say they haven't seen enough from him during his time in right field to warrant a promotion. Mejia wants to remain primarily a catcher, and it sounds like he hasn't yet bought into the idea of regularly playing right field as much as is needed, and that could be one of the reasons he's taking right field in Columbus instead of Cleveland.

"He really wants to be a catcher," Francona said of Mejia on Saturday. "I don't disagree with that. But I think we've had moments where his heart isn't in it as much as maybe [it could be]. He still views himself as a catcher. And we're trying to explain to him that, 'Man, you may be a catcher next year, but you could be a starting right fielder.'

"So, we're just not there, yet. I mean, I understand. It's just, I don't think it's kind of come as maybe as fast as we hoped."

If the Indians were to acquire Machado, or even the Reds' Scooter Gennett, it's also possible that Jason Kipnis could be moved to the outfield, as he was near the end of last season. Or perhaps Mejia can make the required strides and embrace right field.

If the Indians are to address a need in the outfield without as many candidates as in the controllable reliever market, some creativity might be needed — or they'll have to jump on one of the few available external targets.

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Indians notebook: Outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall to see specialist for calf injuries

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The ongoing saga between Lonnie Chisenhall and his ailing calves has no end in sight, and the Indians are turning to new avenues to find a solution.

Chisenhall, on the 10-day disabled list with a strained left calf, has dealt with injuries to both calves dating back to last year.

These two seasons have seen Chisenhall's best offensive production when he's been healthy, but he has missed significant time because of a series of calf strains (starting with his right calf) and aggravations to original injuries.

He even missed one game with bilateral calf soreness when both were sore at the same time.

Indians manager Terry Francona said that Chisenhall is likely to miss "significant" time with his current injury, meaning "more than a couple of weeks." In an effort to resolve the issue, the Indians are having Chisenhall meet with Dr. Wiemi Douguieh in Washington, D.C.

"It's kind of a lower-half specialist," Francona said. "Our guys kind of encouraged Lonnie to actually go do it, because he's going to miss significant time and, if he gets another opinion that maybe is more positive — I don't know — we don't see anything it could hurt.

"... I think we're trying to gather as much information as we can, because something's going on there.

"If he kept hurting the same one, but ... Is he predisposed? They've even talked about there's a doctor, they call him like the gait doctor, kind of like the way a guy runs.

"They're trying to take advantage of the down time to see if they can help for his future."

Since the beginning of last season, Chisenhall has hit .297 with a 130 wRC+ and been worth 2.3 fWAR while playing in only 111 games.

Easy does it

Second baseman Jason Kipnis was taken out of Friday's game in the sixth inning after drawing a walk. Erik Gonzalez entered as a pinch runner and replaced Kipnis at second base.

Kipnis stole second base earlier in the game and, according to Francona, said he felt his hamstring a bit, but didn't think it was anything serious. Francona didn't want to take a chance.

"I probably over-worried a little bit and Kip came out and he said, he goes, 'I'll text you in the morning,'" Francona said. "And [Kipnis] goes, 'I'm going to be fine.' And he woke up this morning feeling good.

"I just wanted to make sure we don't do something, because once you go too far, you can't go back."

Bash brothers

The record-breaking season for Francisco Lindor and Jose Ramirez, both individually and as teammates, hasn't let up.

Lindor went 2-for-3 with three runs scored in Friday night's game to become the first shortstop in major-league history with at least 75 runs scored and 50 extra-base hits before the All-Star break, according to STATS LLC.

Ramirez — who had a two-hit, three-RBI game that included a two-run double off the wall Friday night — joined Lindor as the first teammates in Indians history and the fifth pair overall to each have at least 50 extra-base hits before the All-Star break.

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A's 6, Indians 3: 11 Walk-Off Thoughts

By Ryan Lewis

Here are 11 Walk-Off Thoughts on the Indians' 6-3 loss to the Oakland A's Saturday night.

1. Indians manager Terry Francona didn't want to turn the Indians into a National League team on Saturday night, but, the bottom of the eighth inning quickly devolved into a rough situation. Yonder Alonso was on first base as the go-ahead run. With nobody out, Erik Gonzalez—in the game for Jason Kipnis, who the Indians have been cautious with after he felt his hamstring a bit Friday night—tried to bunt him over into second position but failed twice.

2. That's when the downward spiral began. Not being able to get the bunt down led to Indians manager Terry Francona calling on Rajai Davis to pinch run for Alonso in an effort to steal second base instead of being bunted over. This ended up being the Indians' best chance to take the lead, but it also resulted in the Indians being in some tough spots once it unraveled. The first was that Davis entered the game with two strikes on the hitter—instead of having an entire at-bat to pick his spot, he basically had to check in and go. He was promptly thrown out, and Erik Gonzalez then struck out, clearing the scoring threat completely.
3. Said Davis: "It's a little bit more pressure. What can you do? This is my first time in that situation, so I'd probably handle it different now. But, you live and you learn. ... You've got to give all the credit to the pitcher. If the pitcher doesn't do his job, he doesn't have a chance. But, he did his job. He was quick and I wasn't able to see that he was quick. It is what it is."
4. The second aspect was that it left the Indians with the need to move designated hitter Edwin Encarnacion to first base, since Gonzalez needed to remain at second base. Meaning, the Indians would be without the DH for the rest of the game. No pitchers needed to hit, but Josh Tomlin likely would have since the Indians were wanting to avoid going to Dan Otero and needed him to throw multiple innings.
5. Said Francona: "We didn't want to play a National League game for obvious reasons. But when the bunt's not in play anymore, Trivino's a guy that I felt the best chance to score is to let Raj run and go ahead and play a National League Game. I didn't want to do it. But I thought that was our best way to win."
6. What led to all of the madness was Neil Ramirez's rough outing. He had entered with 17 consecutive scoreless appearances as he acted as one of the main catalysts who helped to calm down the bullpen after their disastrous May. But, Saturday night was not kind. Jed Lowrie belted a two-run home run and then Khris Davis launched a solo homer to quickly tie it and erase the three-run lead built by Corey Kluber's seven scoreless innings. In a flash, a routine win with Kluber on the mound was turned on its proverbial head.
7. Said Josh Tomlin: "He's been great. He had a little bit of a hiccup tonight. I'm sure he's being tough, trying to get back on the mound, get back in there. He's been great for us and he's going to continue to be great for us. Just had a little rough one tonight."
8. This has been a nightmare of a season for Tomlin. He has been regulated to the bullpen and has now given up 20 home runs in 47 innings for a 6.89 ERA. Though, he isn't using the different usage as an excuse.
9. Said Tomlin: "I've gone on a little bit of a run and then have a bad outing. Go on a little bit of a run and then have a bad outing. So, I stay fresh in the bullpen. I throw bullpens before the game, things like that just to stay fresh off the mound. So yeah, like you said, it's not an excuse whatsoever. I just came in and didn't execute pitches and it cost us the game."
10. Kluber delivered a stellar outing, even though he hasn't quite seemed to be at the top of his game for a stretch. After the game, Kluber offered an interesting perspective on "chasing" perfection, or the trying to always follow that time when he felt he was at his best. In his eyes, doing that is a losing proposition. It's not about rediscovering that feeling every outing, it's about adjusting.
11. Said Kluber: "Throughout the course of the year if you make every start, whatever you throw, 30, however many starts you make, you're not going to feel great every time. That's just to be expected. I think that's kind of part of it is when things don't feel right, you figure out a way to manage it. There's going to be times throughout the year where you feel really good and times where you don't feel good. ... I guess I think, talking to a lot of other guys, if you're always chasing a certain feeling, you might never get there. To me, you try to make the best out of what you have each day. If you want to feel the way you felt two years ago, your body's different. You might never get to that point. I view it more as each day you want to feel like you have a grasp of your delivery that day. Go out there and execute pitches."

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Cleveland Indians bullpen stumbles late as Oakland Athletics rally for 6-3 win in 11 innings

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Oakland's Stephen Piscotty and Jed Lowry burned Cleveland's bullpen for a pair of late home runs as the Athletics dealt the Indians a 6-3 defeat Saturday at Progressive Field.

Piscotty's two-run homer in the top of the 11th off Cleveland's Josh Tomlin put Oakland ahead 5-3 and Blake Treinen (4-1, 0.80 ERA) shut the door in the bottom of the frame as the Athletics evened the weekend series with the Tribe at one game apiece.

The A's added a third run in the 11th on a Francisco Lindor error that allowed Matt Chapman to score from third base.

Tomlin (0-5, 6.99 ERA) took the loss after Cleveland's bullpen could not hold a three-run lead for starter Corey Kluber.

Oakland rallied from a three-run deficit in the eighth behind Lowry's two-run homer to right field off Indians reliever Neil Ramirez. Kris Davis followed with a solo blast to the bleachers in left that tied the score at 3-3.

The home runs marked the first earned runs allowed by Ramirez in his last 18 appearances, snapping a streak of 15 2/3 scoreless innings. They were also the first extra-base hits Ramirez surrendered in his last 13 innings.

Ramirez's stumble ruined an otherwise brilliant outing for Kluber who tossed seven shutout innings, scattering five hits and striking out three. It was his seventh quality start in seven outings against an American League West Division opponent.

Francisco Lindor made a diving catch of a Dustin Fowler line drive in the top of the ninth inning to preserve the tie with two out and the go-ahead run at second base.

Lindor led off the bottom of the first with a base hit and advanced to third on Michael Brantley's fourth double in his last three games. Lindor later scored on Edwin Encarnacion's RBI groundout to put the Indians in front 1-0.

It was Lindor's big-league best 79th run scored, the most by an Indians hitter through 87 team games since Kenny Lofton also had 79 at the same point in 1999.

Greg Allen made it 2-0 Tribe in the second with an RBI double over the head of Oakland's Stephen Piscotty to chase home Yan Gomes who had opened the inning by reaching base on an error.

Tyler Naquin singled and scored to make it 3-0 Indians in the sixth on Lindor's bloop single to right off Oakland's Ryan Buchter.

Shattered

The Indians' home winning streak was not the only thing that did not survive Saturday's game. A television camera along the third base line was also among the casualties of the day.

Encarnacion ripped a foul line drive in the bottom of the fifth that smashed the front of the camera, rendering it useless for the remainder of the game.

According to StatCast, Jackson's two-seam fastball arrived at 93.1 mph and left Encarnacion's bat at 104.9 mph before obliterating the camera.

First and foremost

The Indians have scored 65 runs in the first inning, most in the American League and second in the majors (Colorado - 73). The club ranks third in baseball with 18 first-inning homers and fourth with a .276 batting average.

What it means

The loss snaps Cleveland's eight-game home winning streak, which was the longest since the club won 11 in a row from Aug. 24 through Sept. 14 of 2017 as part of their American League-record 22-game win streak.

The pitches

Kluber threw 102 pitches, 63 (62 percent) for strikes. Jackson threw 98 pitches, 58 (59 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Indians and Athletics drew 33,195 fans to Progressive Field on Saturday afternoon. First pitch was at 4:11 p.m. with a temperature of 77 degrees.

Next

Right-hander Shane Bieber (4-0, 2.97) faces the Athletics on Sunday afternoon at 1:10 p.m. SportsTime Ohio, WTAM/1100 and WMMS/FM will carry the game. Lefty Brett Anderson (0-2, 7.63) gets the start for Oakland.

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Cleveland Indians' baserunning is infectious, contagious and effective against Oakland A's

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Edwin Encarnacion saw the stop sign that Cleveland Indians third base coach Mike Sarbaugh threw in the air following Jason Kipnis' one-out base hit to right field in the second inning, but he decided to keep running anyway.

"I was coming hot toward the plate, so I couldn't stop in that situation," Encarnacion said with a grin after the Tribe's 10-4 win against Oakland at Progressive Field. "I had to keep going. Sorry, Sarby."

Normally when a player ignores a sign like that it might draw a negative reaction from the manager, but Terry Francona said when a veteran like Encarnacion makes that kind of play, it can light a spark in the dugout.

"I think the energy of the game gets a little infectious," Francona said. "We're certainly not going to win a ton of games with (Encarnacion's) legs, that's not why we have him, but when he does things like that it really gets the guys riled up and I think it's contagious."

Encarnacion added to his good night on the bases in the seventh when he advanced to third on a wild pitch by A's reliever Emilio Pagan and scored on Yonder Alonso's RBI sacrifice fly.

On a night that saw the Indians steal four bases, including their second steal of home this season when Francisco Lindor swiped the plate on the back end of a double-steal, Encarnacion's base running was a highlight that his teammates could rally behind.

Jose Ramirez said baserunning is extremely important for this team.

"First and foremost because it puts pressure on the other team," Ramirez said through interpreter Will Clements. "But also whenever we can take an extra base, that's always going to put us at an advantage and put us in a better position to score and a better position to win."

Ramirez initiated Lindor's steal of home by taking off for second with one out and Encarnacion batting in the seventh. When Oakland's Jonathan Lucroy threw to second base, Lindor broke for home and dove in safely head-first around the catcher's left leg in front of the plate.

"As soon as I become a runner, I'm trying to score," Lindor said. "I knew Josey was going to try to steal second. So, I made sure I had a good lead. As soon as I saw him stand up and see the ball's rotation, I just took off."

Afterward, it was Lucroy's positioning at the plate that had Francona fired up. According to MLB rules, the catcher is supposed to give the baserunner a lane to slide into the plate, rather than risk injury to both players by blocking it. But replay shows Lucroy's left leg was firmly planted in Lindor's path.

"I think catchers are starting to take advantage of us a little bit with this rule," Francona said. "(Lindor) had no lane and that's not the way this rule was designed. So I'd like to see the league maybe help out a little bit or you gotta tell the runners, 'Hey, you gotta start taking guys out a little bit or slide' because that's not why the rule was put in. You're putting our runners in a pretty precarious spot."

Home runs off bullpen propel Athletics past Indians, 6-3

By Brian Dulik, The Associated Press

Jed Lowrie and Khris Davis gave the Athletics an opportunity for another come-from-behind win. Stephen Piscotty completed the job.

Piscotty belted a go-ahead, two-run homer in the 11th inning as Oakland rallied for a 6-3 victory over the Indians on July 7.

It was the Athletics' 22nd comeback win of the season, six of them occurring in extra innings. The Indians carried a 3-0 lead into the eighth before reliever Neil Ramirez gave up back-to-back home runs to Lowrie — a two-run blast — and Davis to tie it.

"You can't sleep on our offense because we can vaporize the lead really quick," Piscotty said. "We know that and that's why we keep grinding and keep playing."

Matt Chapman, who had a career-high four hits and stole his first base in the majors, scored later in the frame on Jonathan Lucroy's grounder to make a winner out of A's closer Blake Treinen (5-1).

Nine of Oakland's last 19 victories have occurred via runs in the eighth inning or later, including its last two. The A's scored twice in the eighth Wednesday to beat San Diego 4-2.

"Just knowing that we're not out of the game, no matter how late it is, definitely builds confidence," said Davis, who has a team-high 21 homers. "We'll just keep learning from them and hold onto the momentum."

Cleveland had its home winning streak snapped at eight and fell to 1-6 in extra-inning contests. Josh Tomlin (0-5), the Indians' sixth pitcher, allowed all three runs after entering to start the 11th.

Right-hander Corey Kluber tossed seven shutout innings, but was denied in his bid to become the first Indians pitcher with 13 wins before the All-Star break since Hall of Famer Gaylord Perry had 15 in 1974.

The two-time AL Cy Young winner allowed only one runner to reach third base, scattering five hits and striking out three before exiting after 102 pitches. Kluber is 7-1 with a 1.43 ERA at Progressive Field this season.

"Even though we didn't beat him, to get a win with a guy like Kluber on the mound to start, that might be worth two for us," Lowrie said. "It never seems like we're out of a game."

Oakland righty Edwin Jackson went 5 2/3 innings in his third big league start of the year, allowing single runs in the first, second and sixth. Ryan Buchter, Lou Trevino and Treinen combined to blank Cleveland the rest of the way.

Ramirez hadn't allowed a run in his previous 17 appearances, but manager Terry Francona didn't second-guess his decision to pull his ace.

"Corey is such a good pitcher and he's smart, and he gave us seven really good innings," Francona said. "We lean on him so hard, I thought we'd go to Neil. And it didn't work. Neil has been good, but today, not so much."

Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor scored his major league-leading 79th run and had an RBI, while Greg Allen doubled home Yan Gomes. Lindor committed the error that scored Chapman with the game's final run.

The Indians played the final three innings without a designated hitter after Francona made a flurry of strategic moves that forced RHP Zach McAllister into the batting order. The former Phillies skipper also pulled off a rare AL double-switch in the 11th to avoid having Tomlin bat.

"We didn't want to play a National League game for obvious reasons," Francona said. "I didn't want to do it, but I thought that was our best way to win."

Athletics >> OF Matt Joyce (lumbar strain) was placed on the 10-day disabled list. He missed 15 games in June with the same ailment. OF Nick Martini was recalled from Triple-A Nashville, where he has a 65-game on-base streak.

Indians >> OF Lonnie Chisenhall (left calf strain), who was hurt Monday in Kansas City, will travel to Washington for a second opinion on his oft-injured lower legs. This marks his third DL stint with calf problems in a calendar year.

Athletics LHP Brett Anderson (0-2, 7.63 ERA) will be activated to face Indians RHP Shane Bieber (4-0, 2.97 ERA) in the three-game series finale. Anderson has not pitched for Oakland since May 18 because of a strained right shoulder.

Kirk McCarty in fine form as Captains down Whitecaps, 3-0

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

This time, Captains starting pitcher Kirk McCarty was not the tough-luck loser.

The 22-year-old left-hander was a most impressive winner on July 7, blanking the West Michigan Whitecaps on two hits over 6 1/3 innings as the Captains posted a 3-0 victory at Classic Park.

McCarty (2-8, 4.83 ERA) notched a career-high 11 strikeouts and yielded one walk. He threw 84 pitches, 60 for strikes, in his second straight quality start.

"I had a good feel the whole game," McCarty said after getting in the win column for the first time since May 2.

In his previous start, at home against the Dayton Dragons on July 2, McCarty yielded one run on four hits in seven innings. He had the misfortune of running up against Dayton right-hander Hunter Greene on a night when the 18-year-old right-hander was in superb form.

Greene, taken by the Cincinnati Reds with the second overall pick in the first round of the 2017 draft, limited the Captains to two hits in seven innings that night.

West Michigan starter and eventual loser Tom de Blok (0-2, 4.32 ERA) was pretty good against the Captains, surrendering three runs on eight hits in six innings.

He wasn't nearly as sharp as McCarty, who has pitched much better than his record would indicate since the end of May. "It isn't just the starts, it's the days in between, putting in the work and figuring out who I want to be," McCarty said.

Selected by the Indians in the seventh round of the 2017 draft out of Southern Mississippi, McCarty uses a pitch mix of fastball, slider, curve and change-up.

In 17 starts covering 87 2/3 innings, he has a Midwest League-high 99 strikeouts.

"I want to be the best I can be and see where that takes me," McCarty said.

The Captains gave McCarty all the runs he needed in the early going. Oscar Gonzales had an RBI single in the bottom of the first inning. Todd Isaacs and Jesse Berardi had RBI singles in the bottom of the second inning.

Relievers Robert Broom and Nick Sandlin, both products of the 2018 draft, preserved the Captains' third shutout of the season.

Broom, a 10th round pick out of Mercer (Ga.) University, was making his first appearance for the Captains after being promoted on July 6 from the rookie-league Arizona Indians. He limited the Whitecaps to one hit in 1 2/3 innings.

Sandlin, the second-round pick, was McCarty's teammate at Southern Mississippi for two seasons. He worked a scoreless top of the ninth to earn his first save.

SPORTS Indians Notes: Lonnie Chisenhall to seek second opinion on chronic calf issues

Chris Assenheimer | **Chris Assenheimer** | **The Chronicle-Telegram** | **Published on July 7, 2018** | **Updated 2:03 a. m.**

CLEVELAND — Lonnie Chisenhall is seeking a second opinion on his chronic calf issues. The right fielder will meet with a specialist in lower body injuries in Washington.

Manager Terry Francona said the Indians' medical staff had no problem with Chisenhall going elsewhere for assistance.

"Our guys kind of encouraged Lonnie to do it. He's going to miss significant time and, if he gets another opinion that is more positive, we don't see how it could hurt," Francona said. "Getting more information is good. And I commend our medical people for feeling that way, because I don't think everybody always does. It's good that they do encourage guys to do that."

Francona was asked if "significant time" meant a season-ending injury for Chisenhall, who missed nearly two months with a right calf strain shortly into the season and is currently on the disabled list with a left calf strain.

"I didn't mean that, but significant time is significant time," Francona said. "It's more than a couple weeks."

This is the second straight season the oft-injured Chisenhall has dealt with calf issues. Off to a promising start last year, he missed nearly the entire second half with a right calf strain.

"I think we're trying to gather as much information as we can, because something's going on there," Francona said. "If he kept hurting the same one, but ... Is he predisposed? There's a doctor — a gait doctor — kind of like the way a guy runs and they're trying to take advantage of the down time to see if they can help him for the future."

Chisenhall, 29, has spent time on the injured list in each of the past three seasons.

Mejia moment

There is an opportunity in right field for Francisco Mejia, but the Indians are meeting some resistance from the highly touted prospect, who has been splitting time at catcher and the outfield at Triple-A Columbus.

"He really wants to be a catcher. I don't disagree with that," Francona said. "But, I think we've had moments where his heart isn't in it as much as it could be. He still views himself as a catcher. And we're trying to explain to him that, 'Man, you may be a catcher next year, but you could be a starting right fielder (this year).' So, we're just not there, yet."

The position change hasn't affected Mejia at the plate. He started slowly, but hit .455 in June and had his season average up to .279 with seven home runs and 42 RBIs in 73 games through Friday.

He's been selected to the Futures Game for the third consecutive season.

Bouncing back

After a miserable start to the season, veteran right-hander Dan Otero has improved, lowering his ERA from 7.47 on May 15 to 5.51.

"He always almost throws the ball the same. He's just down," Francona said. "He's going to give up base hits through the middle or on the ground, but he stays on the ground for the most part. And when he's doing that, he's fine. He's always one pitch from a double play. His WHIP is really good. He sometimes just gives up hits."

My bad

Edwin Encarnacion ran through a stop sign from third base coach Mike Sarbaugh to score the Indians' first run in a 10-4 victory over the A's on Friday night.

Encarnacion said he saw Sarbaugh indicating that he should stay at third. He just couldn't.

"I was coming hot to the plate, so I can't stop in that situation," Encarnacion said. "I gotta keep going. Sorry, Sarby."

Encarnacion's 61 RBIs through Friday ranked third in the American League.

Roundin' third

Francisco Lindor entered Saturday leading the majors with 78 runs, accounting for the most by an Indians player through the first 86 games since Kenny Lofton and Roberto Alomar matched the total in 1999.

** With 24 home runs and 18 stolen bases, Jose Ramirez is one of only three major league players — the Angels' Mike Trout and Minnesota's Eddie Rosario — to lead their teams in both departments.

A's 6, Indians 3: Bullpen blues return as Tribe drops a tough one in 11 innings

Chris Assenheimer | **By Chris Assenheimer | The Chronicle-Telegram** Published on July 7, 2018 | Updated 2:29 a. m.

CLEVELAND — Just when manager Terry Francona thought it was safe to go back into the bullpen.

The Indians' relief corps had pitched much better over the last month or so, but it was at the root of a disappointing defeat Saturday afternoon at Progressive Field, with Oakland rallying for a 6-3 win in 11 innings.

Cleveland took a 3-0 lead into the eighth inning, when the pen began to unravel.

Right-hander Neil Ramirez, who took the mound riding a 17-game scoreless streak, allowed the A's to tie it, and three innings later, right-hander Josh Tomlin allowed them to leave with a win.

The poor effort from the bullpen ruined a quality — if not dominant — performance from ace Corey Kluber, who tossed seven scoreless innings before departing in line for his 13th win.

"I think it's obvious he's trying to get back to where he can go to the rubber and get in a strong position," Francona said of Kluber. "But he's such a good pitcher that he gave us seven really good innings. We lean on him so hard, I thought we'd go to Neil and we've got Oliver (Perez) behind him for a lefty. And it didn't work."

Kluber has been working through some mechanical issues over his last five starts, looking beatable and without the high strikeout totals that were present over the first two months of the season.

He struck out only three Saturday, accounting for his second-lowest total over 19 starts.

"Throughout the course of the year if you make every start, you're not going to feel great every time," Kluber said. "That's just to be expected. I think that's kind of part of it is when things don't feel right, you figure out a way to manage it.

"If you're always chasing a certain feeling, you might never get there. To me, you try to make the best out of what you have each day. If you want to feel the way you felt two years ago, your body's different. You might never get to that point. I view it more as each day you want to feel like you have a grasp of your delivery that day. Go out there and execute pitches."

An Indians offense that had been clicking was shut down for the second time in a little over a week by 34-year-old journeyman right-hander Edwin Jackson.

Jackson, who has made three starts since joining Oakland's rotation, allowed only two earned runs over 5 2/3 innings.

Francisco Lindor and Michael Brantley started the opening inning with hits, but Jackson only allowed one more over the next four innings — an RBI double to Greg Allen in the second that put the Indians in front 2-0.

Cleveland scored its third run on consecutive singles from Tyler Naquin, Allen and Lindor to chase Jackson in the sixth.

Kluber retired three of the four batters he faced in the seventh before Francona turned to Ramirez.

Ramirez struck out the first batter in the eighth, before allowing a single to Mark Canha and surrendering back-to-back home runs to Jed Lowrie and Khris Davis.

"It's easy to magnify today just because it's the most recent, but he's a good pitcher," Kluber said of Ramirez. "He's been a big weapon for us down there. Again, you go through the course of an entire season, people are going to run into a rough outing here and there. It's part of the game."

There have been plenty of rough outings for Tomlin, who lost his spot in the rotation and has struggled pretty much the entire season.

He began the 11th inning by allowing hits to the first three batters he faced, including a two-run homer from Stephen Piscotty.

"It's a really tough one," said Tomlin, who has allowed 20 homers over 47 innings. "You had a lead like that and then the guys kept battling. Thought we did a great job of holding that lead and then I come in and two swings of the bat it's a different game. It's frustrating and those are the games you want to win, you need to win and we didn't get it done today. I just came in and didn't execute pitches and it cost us the game."

The loss snapped a five-game winning streak for the Indians, who had won eight straight and 15 of their last 17 games at Progressive Field.

Nick Cafardo / SUNDAY BASEBALL NOTES / It's almost payday for some of the Red Sox' top young players

By Nick Cafardo

There comes a time for every franchise when the bill comes due. When you have good, young players they eventually become good, high-priced players. The advantages you enjoyed while they were making little money and producing are suddenly gone.

The Red Sox still have time with Andrew Benintendi and Rafael Devers, but the bill is about to come due on Chris Sale, Mookie Betts, Xander Bogaerts, and Jackie Bradley Jr., among others.

The luxury-tax threshold is \$197 million, and there is a 20 percent tax on that. Two surcharges follow, at \$217 million and \$237 million. The Red Sox' payroll is already at around \$234 million, \$17 million more than the first tax surcharge. They are charged a 12 percent tax on the overage. Should they exceed \$237 million, an additional 45 percent would be charged. Given the revenues the Red Sox enjoy, they could certainly push it and pay the tax, but the penalty also includes losing 10 slots in the draft order if they go over that second threshold.

The first threshold will be raised to \$206 million in 2019 so that should help the Red Sox' ability to retain some of their stars. Suffice it to say, not everyone is going to get re-signed. The hope is that you can replenish your core every five or so years, but in Boston's case you don't see many players in their farm system who you can project being in the position to replace Bogaerts, Betts, or Bradley when they become free agents.

Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski said he projects payroll five years down the road, and normally the projections are pretty accurate, though he warns "there are so many factors involved that could change." The projections could go haywire if there are injuries and a need for replacement players. There's dead money, as is the case now with Pablo Sandoval and Hanley Ramirez, that has to be accounted for.

Everything baseball every Monday-Friday during baseball season, and weekly in the offseason.

Here is what's facing Dombrowski and the Red Sox ownership over the next couple of years:

AFTER 2018

Craig Kimbrel — He is first and foremost on Dombrowski's plate, and Red Sox ownership will have to think about whether to re-sign the closer. Kimbrel can certainly make a legitimate case for an Aroldis Chapman deal of five years, \$86 million. Will the Red Sox go there for a closer? It's tough enough for the Red Sox to commit big dollars and years to starters, let alone closers. If you choose to part ways, who would replace him? The Red Sox could give the job to Joe Kelly, but there's really no standout candidate internally to replace Kimbrel. The Red Sox would have to think about a cheaper possibility such as Baltimore lefthander Zach Britton, who would likely not demand the salary Kimbrel will demand.

Joe Kelly — Boston's setup man will also be a free agent. He will be in demand because of his stuff and velocity. It's hard to envision the Red Sox being able to re-sign both Kimbrel and Kelly, but that's what they're faced with. Kelly could get a three-year, \$27 million deal somewhere.

Drew Pomeranz — The first half of 2018 has been a wasted year for the tall lefthander, but if he recovers and has a solid second half, the Red Sox would have to think about re-signing an under-30 starter (he turns 30 on Nov. 22) who won 17 games just a year ago. If he has a good second half, don't be surprised if he gets an Alex Cobb-like four-year, \$52 million deal.

David Price — He has an opt-out after this season, but don't expect him to exercise it unless he's so miserable with the Red Sox that he would leave millions on the table. We expect that the Red Sox will be sending him checks for the next four years.

AFTER 2019

Chris Sale — Buckle up on this one. The Red Sox need to get to this long before he becomes a free agent. The team does hold a 2019 option for \$13.5 million. If Price got seven years, \$217 million, won't Sale be demanding something in the same range? Sale will likely be a \$30 million-per-year pitcher, which means he'll go from \$13.5 million after 2019 to \$30 million on what could be a five- to seven-year deal. Quite a leap. There'll be plenty of interest. The question is, will Sale get seven years or will he have to settle for five for an annual average of \$30 million? Then you have to ask, how many \$30 million pitchers can one staff have?

Rick Porcello — Yes, his four-year, \$82.5 million deal will be up. He'll be 31 when he seeks free agency. He's on his way to having a very good 2018. For some reason, Porcello has had good seasons every other year. It seems logical that Porcello will hold his value in the \$20 million-\$25 million-per-year range even in his early 30s. Again, how many of these high-priced guys are the Red Sox willing to pay?

J.D. Martinez — He's scheduled to earn \$23.75 million in 2020, so if Martinez is putting up big numbers would he use his \$2.5 million buyout of the remaining three years or would he try to renegotiate a bigger deal with the hope of getting a new contract that averages about \$30 million a year? This is something to watch because Martinez's agent, Scott Boras, has always felt that his client got less than what was expected.

Xander Bogaerts — The shortstop will enter free agency relatively young at 27, and if his game is still very good, he would receive lots of interest. Is he a player the Red Sox want to attempt to sign before free agency comes up? Boras has recently signed more of those types of deals to head off free agency. Bogaerts could land a five- to seven-year deal in the \$20 million-a-year range.

Mitch Moreland — He has a two-year deal that ends after 2019. The first baseman is a good player, plus-defender, and a solid teammate. He's considered a complementary player and won't break the bank should he still be an asset and the Red Sox want him to return.

AFTER 2020

Mookie Betts — He has resisted the temptation of signing a long-term deal pre-free agency, and you can understand why. Betts and the Angels' Mike Trout will hit free agency at the same time, and you can bet both organizations will try hard to head that off. Trout will likely become the highest-paid player in the game, but if Betts continues on his present path, are we talking \$30 million, \$35 million, maybe even \$40 million? A seven-year, \$260 million deal?

Jackie Bradley Jr. — The center fielder will be the least expensive of his free agent teammates, and one supposes the Red Sox have a couple of years to determine whether he's worth the outlay over a multiyear deal. Bradley is still a great defender and so-so offensive player, so the Red Sox would likely take a pass.

Apropos of nothing

1. You can't blame Nolan Arenado or Mike Trout for wanting to win. Arenado has played in only one sudden-death playoff game in his career in Colorado, and Trout has appeared in just one playoff series, in 2014. It was sad that Ernie Banks, one of the greatest players this game has known, never played in a postseason game during his long, illustrious career. Arenado's frustration came out during the week when he discussed the Rockies' plight. The Gold Glove third baseman came into the season feeling the Rockies were going to accomplish something special, only to be disappointed with underperforming teammates. The same holds true for Trout. All great players want to show their talents when it counts most.

2. What managers are on the hot seat during the second half of the year? It may be that nobody is. Buck Showalter's Orioles have been a nightmare. Mike Scioscia's Angels have suffered many injuries, but they've been awful. On the flip side, the top two managers in the league have been Tampa Bay's Kevin Cash and Oakland's Bob Melvin, a pair of former Red Sox backup catchers. In the NL, Atlanta's Brian Snitker and the Phillies' Gabe Kapler are heading toward serious Manager of the Year consideration.

3. It's obvious that commissioner Ron Manfred wants the DH in the National League. I'm all for tradition, but it's time for the resistant NL owners to give in. While Jon Lester has found his batting stroke so many years into his career, and while Rick Porcello helped the Red Sox beat Max Scherzer last Monday, watching the pitcher hit is a waste of time.

4. As evaluators for contenders start heating up their coverage of available players to acquire, one thing they keep in mind is this: Can that player go from a no-pressure, non-winning situation to the heat of a pennant race? This is where scouts and GMs really have to assess the players they're pursuing. That's why so many teams want Adrian Beltre. That's why as good as Kyle Barraclough has been in Miami and Raisal Iglesias has been in Cincinnati, there's that question — would those two relievers be as effective working in the stressful innings of a pennant race? It's not an easy thing to measure. You can go by the numbers and they usually don't lie, but they don't tell you whether a guy can pitch a ninth inning with a one-run lead at Yankee Stadium.

5. Who was the last pitcher the Red Sox developed? Clay Buchholz? My goodness, it's been a dark hole for this organization for a long time and the result has been having to sign pitchers to enormous contracts.

6. There have been a few mistakes made by the Red Sox that have cost the organization millions. The Hanley Ramirez, Pablo Sandoval, and Rusney Castillo contracts were awful. The acquisition of Allen Craig in the John Lackey deal was also horrible. But the biggest mistake of all? Not re-signing Lester. The Red Sox could have had him for about \$120 million over seven years. Lester is now in the fourth year of a six-year, \$155 million deal with the Chicago Cubs, and he's 11-2 with a 2.25 ERA. He earns \$27.5 million this year and next, and \$20 million in 2020. There's a \$25 million option in 2021. Still a bargain. Yet, after all the mistakes and lack of pitcher development, the Red Sox have won more games than any team in baseball.

7. The Braves, Indians, Phillies, Dodgers, and Brewers are mentioned a lot with Manny Machado. The Cardinals are another team that should be in the hunt for the Orioles shortstop as they need something to energize that team. But one team to watch is the Nationals. As they start to fade in the National League East, they too need a fix. What they would do with shortstop Trae Turner and/or third baseman Anthony Rendon is up to GM Mike Rizzo, but the Orioles probably would love to get Turner as part of a return package. The Nationals have the players that would entice the Orioles, including outfielder Victor Robles, 21, currently on the Triple A disabled list.

8. Topps will for the first time feature a scientist — Dr. Lawrence Rocks — on Paul DeJong's Future Stars card to commemorate their baseball temperature study in the offseason.

Updates on nine

1. Francisco Mejia, C, Indians — He is the player the Orioles would have to get in any Manny Machado deal. The switch-hitting Mejia, 22, is having a strong season at Triple A Columbus, hitting .285 with seven homers and 41 RBIs. The Indians would balk at parting with such a good prospect for a rental, but the sons of Terry Francona are happy with their catching tandem of Yan Gomes and Roberto Perez.

2. Bryce Harper, OF, Nationals — ESPN analyst Eduardo Perez brought up a good point: If the Nationals feel they've fallen out of the race by the trade deadline, would they consider trading Harper and then reacquiring him in the offseason? This would be akin to the Aroldis Chapman deal in which Yankees GM Brian Cashman dealt him to the Cubs at the 2016 trading deadline, got back Gleyber Torres in the deal, then re-signed Chapman in the offseason.

3. Bobby Dalbec, 3B, Red Sox — Earlier this season Dalbec was going so bad that opposing scouts were of the opinion that he should go back to being a pitcher. He's come a long way since, and he is now showing positive signs albeit at advanced Single A Salem as a 23-year-old. The third baseman leads the league in slugging (.517), home runs (17), doubles (24), and RBIs (64).

4. Travis Shaw, 3B, Brewers — He has never been able to play his best position — first base — in Milwaukee. He's only played 4⅓ innings at first since joining the Brewers last season. Shaw is now taking ground balls at second base, and at least he's on his better side of the diamond. Shaw, who was acquired from the Red Sox in the Tyler Thornburg trade, has been dealing with a sore wrist that has hampered his swing.

5. Zach Britton, LHP, Orioles — According to a major league source, there are “a couple” of scenarios where Britton could be traded in tandem with Machado or another Orioles reliever. Britton has been working toward knocking the rust off and seems to be making some progress. The Orioles are trying to get maximum return for him, but the fact he hasn’t pitched much the last two years doesn’t help.

6. Josh Donaldson, 3B, Blue Jays — The best the Blue Jays can hope for regarding the oft-injured infielder is that he’s an August trade candidate. It would appear Donaldson would clear waivers and the Jays would be able to move him to a contender. But counting on a healthy Donaldson by the end of August is also an iffy proposition.

7. Blake Treinen, RHP, Athletics — The A’s are putting out the word that their closer (22 saves) is not available, which some teams are seeing as a sign that he is — but that it will cost a lot to get him. The A’s have certainly overachieved, but entering the weekend they still trailed the Mariners by 7½ games for the second wild-card spot in the AL.

8. Wilson Ramos, C, Rays — The Nationals recently dispatched special assistant Dan Jennings to watch Ramos, their former catcher who was having his best season in Washington two years ago before he tore up his knee. Ramos is having another fine season (.291/12/45) and it’s not so farfetched he could return to the Nationals.

9. Jose Abreu, 1B, White Sox — There’s been a strong flirtation by the Astros with Abreu. While they’re monitoring the bullpen market, they could easily switch gears and pull this off. If they do, according to one scout, “Print the World Series tickets.”

Extra innings

From the Bill Chuck files — “Juan Pierre, whose last season was 2013, stole home twice in 2010, just like Javy Baez this season. Also, Pierre had 2,217 career hits and never made the All-Star team, which puts him just ahead of Nick Markakis, who has 2,160 hits and has never made the All-Star team (but that’s about to change).” . . . Also, “Through July 4, J.D. Martinez had 35 multihit games; he had 36 all last season. His high is 45 in 2015.” . . . Happy birthday, Matt Mantei (45), Glenn Hoffman (60). and Chuck Goggin (73).

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A’s potential All-Stars lead the way in win at Cleveland

Susan Slusser

CLEVELAND — Before Saturday’s game, A’s manager Bob Melvin said he believes his team has three All-Stars: Jed Lowrie, Blake Treinen and Khris Davis.

Lowrie and Davis then went out and hit back-to-back homers in the eighth to tie the game and Stephen Piscotty crushed a two-run shot out to left in the 11th, the game-deciding blow as Oakland beat the Indians 6-3. Treinen, who worked two innings, got the win to improve to 5-1 with 22 saves.

“You can’t sleep on our offense,” Piscotty said. “We can vaporize a lead really quick. We know that. . . Jed’s been doing it all year, huge homer, KD, huge homer, and in an instant, we’re right back in it.”

The A’s, back at a season-high nine games over .500, gained a game in the wild-card standings with Seattle’s loss; they’re 6½ games back in the chase for the second wild-card spot.

The A’s offense, usually homer happy on the road, was held in check for seven innings by Corey Kluber, who has a 2.29 ERA in eight career starts against Oakland. The A’s managed only five hits against him and only one man advanced past second while he was on the mound.

“I was just trying to follow up with a good AB, I wasn’t trying think about hitting another homer,” Davis said, adding that homers “come and go, you just try to minimize the drought as much as you can, hang with it.”

The A’s had a man in scoring position in the ninth, after Matt Chapman’s third hit (of his four) and a sacrifice bunt by Marcus Semien, but with two outs Cleveland shortstop Francisco Lindor made a tremendous diving catch to rob Dustin Fowler of an RBI single.

In the 11th, with Josh Tomlin in for Cleveland, Matt Olson singled to right and, after being down 0-2 in the count, Piscotty worked the count full before smacking his eighth homer. “I was just grinding right there, 0-for-8 in the series and just trying to do something, survive,” he said. “I got a pitch in the middle and was able to do some damage with it.”

Chapman then doubled against Tomlin, stole third - his first career steal (“He’s been getting a little grief about that, took him over a year,” Melvin said) - and came home on a grounder

Sunday evening, the A’s will find out whether they have more than one All-Star. At least two, Lowrie and closer Treinen, are deserving, and Davis has been one of the top sluggers in the game for three years.

“I hope we have at least a couple,” Melvin said. “For me, I always feel like Khris Davis is an All-Star, but whether or not he makes it or not, I’m not sure. I don’t know if it’s the most important thing in the world to him, either. He just wants to be a regular teammate for everybody, but he puts up spectacular numbers every year.”

Lowrie is 26-for-74 with six homers and 19 RBIs over his past 19 games, and he’s been among the league leaders in hits, doubles and RBIs all year. He’s also leading all major-league second basemen with a .998.

“That’s All-Star quality if I’ve ever seen it,” Melvin said. “I think he’s been as consistent as anyone in the American League. I mean, it’s MVP quality, to an extent. He had a really good year last year, maybe his best ever — and he’s having an even better one this year.”

“Fabulous. I wouldn’t want to hit behind anyone else, because he’s always on base,” Davis said. “He’s the glue that makes everything stick.”

Treinen, acquired in the Sean Doolittle-Ryan Madson deal with the Nationals last summer, has converted each of his past 19 save opportunities and his 0.81 ERA is the best mark among AL relievers.

“I don’t know what to say about Blake. It’s tough to explain,” Melvin said. “The numbers would suggest what he’s doing, but to see it first-hand . . . upwards of 100 mph with that kind of movement, that sharp a breaking ball. There aren’t many guys in the league, if any, with that kind of stuff.”

Veteran Edwin Jackson made his third appearance for Oakland and he has yet to allow more than two earned runs in a start, including Saturday, when he allowed three runs, two earned. "I thought he pitched fantastic," Melvin said.

Chapman reached base five times, while Davis extended his hitting streak to nine games Saturday, and he's 11-for-31 during that stretch. Canha has hits in each of his past 13 starts, going 17-for-47 in those games.

Brett Anderson to come off DL, start for A's on Sunday

Susan Slusser

CLEVELAND - Brett Anderson's second career stint with the A's resumes Sunday, when the left-hander is scheduled to come off the disabled list to face the Indians.

Anderson has been out since May 19 with a shoulder strain. With Anderson's return, Frankie Montas will start Monday at Houston, instead.

The A's have not announced a corresponding move, but either Chris Bassitt or Josh Lucas could be sent out; Bassitt might move into the long-relief role if Lucas is the odd man out.

Anderson went 0-2 with a 7.63 ERA in four starts before getting hurt, with most of the runs, seven, coming in three innings vs. Houston on May 7. He did have a strong first start back, allowing five hits and two runs in 6 1/3 innings at Seattle on May 2, but Anderson will have to perform consistently well to remain in the rotation, considering that the A's are getting other starters back soon.

Manager Bob Melvin said that Trevor Cahill, returning from an Achilles tendon strain, could rejoin the rotation before the break. Daniel Mengden, who worked 3 1/3 innings for Triple-A Nashville on Friday while rehabbing from a sprained foot, will make at least one more rehab start, but he, too, potentially could return before the break.

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Back problems force A's Matt Joyce onto DL again; Nick Martini recalled

Susan Slusser

CLEVELAND — Before Saturday's game against the Indians, Oakland placed outfielder Matt Joyce on the disabled list with a recurrence of the back issues that landed him on the DL earlier in the season.

Nick Martini, riding a 65-game on-base streak at Triple-A Nashville, was recalled to fill the outfield spot.

Manager Bob Melvin said Joyce will see Dr. Robert Watkins in Los Angeles in the next few days.

"I can see in batting practice he's having a tough time pulling the ball and driving the ball," Melvin said. "He wants to be there for his team, but it came to a head (Friday) and we had a conversation. The best thing to do is to try to get him healthy."

Martini, signed as a minor-league free agent last winter, provided the winning hit in Chicago, his hometown, on June 23. It was his first big-league hit. Martini used that same bat for about 30 games of his on-base streak at Nashville, he said.

"Then they put the authenticated thing on it," Martini said of the sticker that certified he'd used the bat for his first hit. "I was like, 'I don't know if I should stop using it or not.'"

The bat is now with Martini's dad, Scott, in Crystal Lake, Ill.

Anderson returning: Left-hander Brett Anderson, out since May 18 with a shoulder strain, will come off the DL to start the series finale at Cleveland on Sunday and Frankie Montas will be pushed to Monday at Houston.

The A's have not made a corresponding move, but Chris Bassitt or Josh Lucas could be sent out; Bassitt might move into a long-relief role if Lucas is the odd man out.

Melvin said Trevor Cahill (Achilles strain) could rejoin the rotation before the All-Star break. Daniel Mengden (foot) will make at least one more rehab start, but he, too, could return before the break.

Briefly: Catcher Sean Murphy, named to the Futures Game on Friday, came out of Double-A Midland's game Saturday with a finger injury incurred on a swing and the A's are awaiting an evaluation. ... Kendall Graveman (forearm) has not yet begun throwing after being placed on Nashville's DL last month.

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