



### **WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF September 9, 2018**

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"Michael Kopech reacts to Tommy John news: 'From just about my absolute peak to the absolute rock bottom'" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

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### **Shields gives up two Trout HRs in loss to Halos**

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / September 8, 2018

CHICAGO -- James Shields has been the model of consistency for the White Sox during the 2018 season, working at least six innings in 23 of his 29 starts entering Saturday's 12-3 loss to the Angels at Guaranteed Rate Field.

But Mike Trout single-handedly put a dent in Shields' streak with two swings of the bat. Trout launched a two-run home run in the first and knocked out a three-run blast in the third, accounting for two of his three hits against Shields (finishing 5-for-5 overall) as the Angels clinched the series victory. In 18 career at-bats against Shields, including the postseason, Trout has six home runs and 10 RBIs.

Only Felix Hernandez has been more frequently victimized by Trout, with eight home runs in 83 career at-bats.

"Obviously, one hitter kind of killed me today," Shields said. "I wish I would've went deeper in the game, but unfortunately that's the way it goes sometimes.

"He seems to get me quite often, unfortunately. I actually was going to throw a fastball in, and we ended up setting up outside and just got a little miscommunication right there on the first home run. On the second home run, we had a base open, I was trying to throw a curveball in the dirt and just hung it. He's one of the best hitters in the game, if not the best hitter. You can't really do that to that guy."

Shields gave up six runs on nine hits over 4 1/3 innings, striking out one and walking one. Juan Minaya, who was the second reliever behind Shields, gave the White Sox a chance to come back against Matt Shoemaker by striking out three over 1 1/3 innings.

The White Sox scored single runs in the first, third and fourth innings. Yolmer Sanchez and Kevan Smith had two hits and one RBI each, while Tim Anderson picked up his 26th stolen base of the season.

The Angels scored three in the ninth on Shohei Ohtani's bases-clearing triple against Jace Fry, and six in the inning overall. Seven White Sox pitchers combined for five wild pitches, with three coming from Thyago Vieira in the ninth, as the South Siders fell for the fourth straight time and slipped to 56-86 overall.

Following a strong run by the team, there's an understandable sort of buzzkill with the announcement of Michael Kopech's ulnar collateral ligament tear on Friday and his upcoming season-ending Tommy John surgery leaving him out through the entire 2019 season.

"We've had so many injuries this year. Not a lot of people talk about that," Shields said. "We haven't had our whole team the whole year. It just seems like one thing after another.

"To have him go down like that, obviously it's a blow to the team and our organization. But we've got to do a better job of moving on. We've been playing really good baseball because our starting pitchers have been doing really well. And the last few games, our starting pitching hasn't done good. So we've got to come back, and hopefully Lopey [Reynaldo Lopez] will come back tomorrow and pick it up for us."

#### SOUND SMART

Shields made his 30th start on Saturday and sits 13 1/3 innings away from 200 for the season. That goal remains in focus for Shields, who exited for Aaron Bummer after 78 pitches with Ohtani scheduled to hit and Trout on first in the fifth.

"Yeah. I'm on pace. I think this 4 1/3 didn't help me out too much. I'm trying to go as deep as I possibly can," Shields said. "I think [manager Rick Renteria] wanted to do a little matchup right there. We're going to keep grinding. We've got three more starts left and have some tough matchups coming up before the end of the season."

"He left some pitches out over the plate and, obviously, they got them," Renteria said. "Every inning, I think we had somebody up with him, but he ended up finding a way to get some outs."

#### HE SAID IT

"Unfortunately, it got out of hand there at the end, but not for lack of effort on those guys, who have done a really nice job since they've been here." -- Renteria, on the six-run ninth for the Angels

#### UP NEXT

Lopez (5-9, 4.37 ERA) is scheduled to make his 29th start of the season, 14th at home and first vs. the Angels in Sunday's series finale at Guaranteed Rate Field with a first pitch scheduled for 1:10 p.m. CT. Andrew Heaney (8-9, 4.16 ERA) starts for the Angels. Lopez is 1-3 with a 5.46 ERA in his last 10 starts, although he has allowed four earned runs in his last 19 2/3 innings. He has received a no-decision in six of his last seven starts.

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#### **Kopech looks to teammates for support**

*White Sox prospect gets Tommy John advice from Fry, Giolito*

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / September 8, 2018

CHICAGO -- Lucas Giolito had Tommy John surgery on Aug. 31, 2012, during the infancy of his professional career with the Nationals. Jace Fry underwent the same surgery as a sophomore at Oregon State and then had a second one performed in 2015 with the White Sox organization.

So, Michael Kopech, the No. 13 prospect overall, per MLB Pipeline, has some good resources to tap into as he prepares to undergo the same procedure. Kopech was diagnosed with a significant tear of the ulnar collateral ligament after an examination Friday, with Tommy John surgery as the recommendation. He is projected to be out until Spring Training in 2020.

"He came in here and it was like, 'Hey, I need the surgery done,'" said Fry of Kopech. "He accepted it. He was already talking about who he was going to see for the surgery and where he wanted to do his rehab and stuff like that. The fact that he has already progressed into the surgery situation, he's on the right path."

"I talked to him about it yesterday plenty," Giolito said. "There's kind of two sides to it, the way I see it. You have the physical side and the mental side."

Giolito explained the physical side as "obviously getting the surgery, recovering, getting to physical therapy, getting your routine set for the physical side of the recovery process, which is getting your range of motion back." That's followed by "getting with your PT, getting with the training staff and just hammering out the little mundane exercises you have to do every day just to get your arm right."

As for the mental side, beyond the grind of the rehab, Kopech will have to get through the ups and downs within the throwing program.

"There's going to be times where you have scar tissue releases," Giolito said. "There's going to be times when your arm doesn't feel good on a certain day, but you just push through it because it's part of your throwing program."

"Especially once you get through all that and get through your first full season, you're going to have games where your arm doesn't feel good. It's a pretty long process, but the biggest thing is just being mentally tough through it all. For my case, I had the surgery as an 18-year-old. Going through that process helped me develop a certain level of mental toughness that has helped me in my career."

When Giolito had the surgery, he was at peak velocity, touching 100 mph with his fastball and pitching at 95 to 97 mph. His velocity was the same when he came back, but he also developed a changeup for the first time during the rehab process.

Fry threw his slider harder after the second surgery, while also correcting timing on his arm swing on the back side, causing him to stab and hook. As was mentioned many times on Friday, this surgery is just a blip for Kopech and actually could produce helpful routines for his future career.

"Obviously we're down," Giolito said. "We feel bad for him and it sucks for the team. We see him as a great teammate, first and foremost, and, secondly, as a huge part of the future of this team, starting-pitching staff. He's a big part of that."

"It's unfortunate we're going to lose him for one year, but it's not the end of the story. He's going to get the surgery, recover from it well, get through the PT, rehab and he'll be just as good as he was, if not better."

#### Injury updates

Jose Abreu and Leury Garcia both took light batting practice off Nate Jones and Rob Scahill on Saturday and are getting closer to returning, said White Sox manager Rick Renteria. Abreu had surgery to relieve pain caused by testicular torsion and Garcia has been out of action with a left hamstring injury.

"LeRoy is feeling good," Renteria said. "He's probably a little further away, but we'll check and see how he feels tomorrow."

Abreu, who last played on Aug. 20, could be back in action Monday in Kansas City after he's put through a little more work prior to Sunday's series finale.

Jones, out since June 12 with a pronator strain, threw Saturday and looked good. He will have a couple days off and then either throw another simulated game or the right-hander will be activated.

"Our hope is he will be back," said Renteria of Jones.

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## **White Sox have plenty of Tommy John experience for Michael Kopech lean on: 'He'll be just as good as he was if not better'**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / September 8, 2018

News of Michael Kopech's UCL tear and his likely Tommy John surgery was a huge bummer for the world of South Side baseball. In the front office, in the stands, in the clubhouse, everyone was down about the team's top-ranked pitching prospect missing the entirety of the 2019 season.

Kopech, of course, was the one with the most reason to be upset, the high of his major league debut at the end of last month matched by the low of his next major league start not coming until 2020. The 22-year-old flamethrower shared with reporters his feelings on the matter, understandably saying that "it sucks."

But among the silver linings the involved parties were able to take from the situation was the fashion in which Kopech is expected to approach his rehab. Kopech's got a reputation as a workout freak, and the way he battled back from midseason struggles this season to reach dominance in his final seven starts at Triple-A Charlotte inspire confidence that he'll succeed in his return to the mound.

His teammates share that sentiment.

"Obviously we're down. We feel bad for him and it sucks for the team," Lucas Giolito said Saturday. "We see him as a great teammate, first and foremost, and secondly as a huge part of the future of this team, starting pitching staff. He's a big part of that. It's unfortunate we're going to lose him for one year, but it's not the end of the story. He's only 22 years old, he misses one season to rehab and then he'll be back and contributing. So I'm not too worried about.

"The success rate nowadays is pretty up there, and given the type of person he is — dedication, hard work — I'm not worried at all about his recovery process. He's going to get the surgery, recover from it well, get through the (physical therapy) rehab and he'll be just as good as he was if not better."

Giolito is one of several White Sox pitchers to go through exactly what Kopech is about to go through. Giolito had Tommy John surgery. So did Aaron Bummer. So did Caleb Frare. So did Jace Fry, twice. And so did Dylan Cease, not a part of the current major league pitching staff but like Kopech a highly ranked prospect who figures to be a big part of the team's long-term plans.

It's a wealth of resources for the soon-to-be-recovering Kopech, and a wealth of examples for White Sox fans that pitchers make full recoveries from Tommy John surgery all the time. Kopech doesn't even have to leave his chair in the White Sox clubhouse to hear about a Tommy John success story: Giolito, who had Tommy John as an 18-year-old, has the locker right next to Kopech's.

"I talked to him about it yesterday plenty," Giolito said. "There's kind of two sides to it, the way I see it. You have the physical side and the mental side. Physical side is obviously getting the surgery, recovering, getting to physical therapy, getting your routine set for the physical side of the recovery process, which is getting your range of motion back. And then just getting with your PT, getting with the training staff and just hammering out the little mundane exercises you have to do everyday just to get your arm right.

"Then the mental side is once you get through all that, which in of itself is kind of a mental grind because you're doing all these things that you never really had to do before and that can be boring and at times uncomfortable. You get over that part, you start throwing again, and there's going to be times where you have scar tissue releases. There's going to be times when your arm doesn't feel good on a certain day but you just push through it because it's part of your throwing program. Especially once you get through all that and get through your first full season, you're going to have games where your arm doesn't feel good. You're

going to have bits of stretches where there just might be some scar tissue there that's bothering you, but you just keep pushing through it.

"It's a pretty long process, but I think the biggest thing is just being mentally tough through it all. ... Going through that process helped me develop a certain level of mental toughness that I think has helped me in my career."

The questions fans and observers are asking, understandably, have more to do with what happens once Kopech returns. Will he be the same pitcher? Will his ceiling be as high as it was a couple days ago? Will he still be able to throw 100 mph? Will he still be able to be the ace of the White Sox rotation of the future? Will he be able to catch up to rest of the pieces of this rebuilding effort? Will his injury and injuries to other top prospects alter the timeline of the entire rebuild?

The answers to those questions won't come for more than a year. But Giolito was peppered with many of those same questions and spoke from his own experience in a way that should help to allay some of the fears floating through the fan base right now. He said that his velocity was unaffected by the surgery and that the recovery process actually helped him develop a changeup he didn't have before.

That's encouraging news for those expecting the worst in Kopech's case.

"I think it's all a mental thing," Giolito said, asked specifically about returning to the same velocity. "A lot of guys have trouble — I had a little bit of trouble with this — once you start to get past the early stages of the rehab throwing where you're just tossing and lobbing, allowing your arm to lay back, it's kind of a mental hump to get over. It's like, 'Hey, it's not going to hurt, it's going to be fine.' But in the back of your mind, it's like, 'Well, the last time I did this, I had to get surgery.' You just get over that. It takes some guys longer than others, but for the most part you get over that mental hump and then you're fine."

So, yes, Kopech's situation remains a bummer for the world of South Side baseball. But there's a great deal of faith in his ability to recover, which should keep the hopes for the 2020 season high.

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### **White Sox pitchers Lucas Giolito, Jace Fry show Tommy John surgery can be overcome**

By Phil Rogers / Chicago Tribune / September 8, 2018

Michael Kopech and Lucas Giolito already were friends but now they have a new topic of conversation — Tommy John surgery.

"I talked to him about it yesterday," Giolito said. "Plenty."

Kopech's damaged ulnar collateral ligament, which was revealed in an exam Friday, is an emotional blow for the White Sox. His arrival had brought a buzz to Guaranteed Rate Field that will be missed as he most likely undergoes reconstructive elbow surgery that will sideline him until 2020. Though he plans to get a second opinion on the diagnosis, the outcome isn't expected to change.

You take a breath and you have to make an adjustment," manager Rick Renteria said before Saturday night's 12-3 loss to the Angels. "We as an organization will have to make an adjustment and continue to look toward the people we have within the system and obviously some on the outside, something that will bridge us to where we need to be when he returns."

Giolito was upbeat discussing Kopech's unwanted challenge.

"We feel bad for him and it sucks for the team," Giolito said. "We see him as a great teammate first and foremost and secondly as a huge part of the future of this team, starting pitching staff. He's a big part of that. It's unfortunate we're going to lose him for one year but it's not the end of the story."

Giolito had Tommy John surgery in 2012, when he was a senior at Harvard-Westlake High School in Los Angeles. He and other Tommy John survivors in the Sox clubhouse, including lefty reliever Jace Fry, should be good resources for Kopech to lean on as he goes through rehab and works his way back to the mound.

Jace Fry, who had Tommy John surgery first in his senior season of high school and again after the White Sox drafted him, said both his conditioning and mechanics benefited from the rehab process.

"I started throwing my slider harder," he said. "I don't know how. It might have the mechanics, ironing those out."

Giolito said he gained fortitude persevering through rehab.

"I had the surgery as an 18 year old," he said. "Going through that process helped me develop a certain level of mental toughness that I think has helped me in my career."

Extra innings: James Shields was lifted in the fifth, trailing 6-3. Mike Trout homered twice off him en route to a 5-for-5 night. "He's one of the best hitters in the game, if not the best hitter," Shields said. ... The Sox had five wild pitches, including three by Thyago Vieira in the Angels' six-run ninth against Fry and him. ... Jose Abreu took batting practice Saturday and could return as early as Monday after being out since having surgery for testicular torsion on Aug. 21. ... The Sox purchased the contract of Willowbrook High product Rob Scahill after placing Kopech on the 60-day DL. ... Renteria said no decision has been made about how to replace Kopech in the rotation.

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### **Mike Trout goes deep twice against James Shields in the White Sox's 12-3 loss to the Angels**

By Chicago Tribune Staff / September 8, 2018

Mike Trout homered twice to carry the Angels to a 12-3 victory over the White Sox on Saturday night before 27,146 at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Both of Trout's home runs came off James Shields (6-16), the American League leader in losses. Trout finished 5-for-5, with three singles off relievers.

"He seems to get me quite often, unfortunately," Shields said. "I actually was going to throw a fastball in, and we ended up setting up outside and just got a little miscommunication right there on the first home run. On the second home run, we had a base open, I was trying to throw a curveball in the dirt and just hung it. He's one of the best hitters in the game, if not the best hitter."

Shields was charged with six earned runs in 4 1/3 innings. He allowed nine hits and was on his heels through the game.

"It was a bit of a rough one today for Shieldsy," Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "It looked like he was having a little bit of trouble. He left some pitches out over the plate and obviously they got them."

Shields could feel trouble coming early.

"I didn't really feel strong in the bullpen," he said. "It was just one of those days where you don't have very good stuff. ... I wish I would've went deeper in the game, but unfortunately that's the way it goes sometimes"

Shohei Ohtani also had a big game for the Angels, going 2-for-4 with a three-run triple in the ninth. He also stole a base in the first inning. He scored on a wild pitch in the ninth and was slow to get up.

Yolmer Sanchez had a pair of doubles for the Sox.

Matt Shoemaker (2-0) worked five innings in his third game this season after sitting out the first two months with a forearm injury. The Angels will try to sweep the Sox on Sunday.

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## **White Sox' Lucas Giolito, Jace Fry part of advice squad for Michael Kopech**

By David Just / Sun-Times / September 8, 2018

For advice and support, right-hander Michael Kopech has good company to lean on in the White Sox' clubhouse the next 18 months.

Kopech, 22, the No. 2 prospect in the organization, has a torn ulnar collateral ligament in his pitching elbow that will require Tommy John surgery. Barring a different second opinion, the surgery will sideline him until 2020.

Sox pitchers Lucas Giolito and Jace Fry have three Tommy John surgeries between them. Their advice for Kopech: Be positive, put in the work and trust the process.

"I'm not worried at all about his recovery process," Giolito said. "He's going to get the surgery, recover from it well, get through the [physical-therapy] rehab, and he'll be just as good as he was, if not better."

Kopech's absence will be a blow to the Sox' aspirations in 2019, but Giolito and Fry said he can come back from the surgery mentally and physically stronger.

Giolito, a 2012 first-round pick, had Tommy John surgery in '12 less than two months after signing with the Nationals. He said the recovery process helped him develop a "certain mental toughness" that he has maintained.

Fry had Tommy John surgery in college in 2012, then again as a Sox prospect in 2015. He said his recovery helped him learn his body and develop a routine to stay healthy.

"It's taken five or six years to build [my routine]," Fry said. "And now I feel great in September. Tommy John gives you 10 to 14 months to figure out your own body and figure out what works for you."

Both pitchers said there were unintended physical benefits, too. For Fry, it was increased velocity on his slider.

Giolito actually discovered a new pitch.

"This is something I don't talk about very often, but Tommy John actually gave me my changeup," he said. "I didn't have a change at all as an amateur player in high school.

"[After the surgery], I threw a changeup grip on, and it pretty much developed the changeup I have right now. Before the surgery, I had no feel for a changeup. Those weird things can happen. In that case, it helped me become a better, more complete pitcher. Obviously, a lot of work still has to be done, but that's just kind of one little thing that I got out of it."

Of course, there will be challenges for Kopech. And while Giolito and Fry have inspiring stories of their recoveries, it's not typical for pitchers to perform better after the surgery.

The American Sports Medicine Institute released a position paper in 2014 that disputed the idea that Tommy John surgery makes pitchers stronger. The paper said the combination of fixing the tear and the work players put in after the surgery is what makes them perform better. It went on to say that performance actually decreases over time for MLB pitchers after Tommy John surgery.

Giolito said there are two parts to the recovery process. First, the physical side of getting the surgery, recovering, going to physical therapy and slowly getting your range of motion back and exercising the arm every day.

He described the mental side of the recovery as a grind, constantly dealing with the ups and downs of your progress.

Sox manager Rick Renteria said Kopech's attitude and work ethic are going to be assets as he goes through that process.

"He's worried about the downtime of the surgery, not the returning from it," Renteria said. "His work ethic, his heart and mind, how strong he is, I'm sure he's going to be back and doing well."

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### **White Sox' James Shields is used to Mike Trout's home-run trots**

By David Just / Sun-Times / September 8, 2018

The White Sox had a little bit of a rhythm going in the second half of August, but September has brought some ugly losses and ugly news.

The news about Michael Kopech's torn ulnar collateral ligament didn't help matters and may have further taken the wind out of the Sox' sails.

"We've had so many injuries this year," said James Shields, who was tagged for six runs and nine hits in a 12-3 loss to the Angels on Saturday. "And to have him go down like that, obviously it's a blow to the team and the organization. But we have to do a better job of moving on."

Mike Trout cranked two home runs off Shields on his way to a career-high five-hit night. Trout has five home runs off Shields, the most he has hit off any pitcher after Felix Hernandez (eight).

"[Trout] seems to get me quite often, unfortunately," Shields said. "I was going to throw a fastball in, and we ended up setting up outside and just had a miscommunication there on the first home run. On the second home run, we had a base open, and I tried throwing a curveball in the dirt, and I hung it."

Trout had five RBI — all coming on the two home runs — and three runs scored.

Shields, who leads the majors with 16 losses, only made it through 4, innings.

"It was a bit of a rough one today for Shields early," manager Rick Renteria said. "It looked like he was having a little bit of trouble. He left some pitches out over the plate, and obviously they got them."

Next man up

The Sox purchased the contract of Rob Scahill before the game and put Kopech on the 60-day disabled list.

Scahill, 31, went 3-4 with a 5.64 ERA in 52 appearances with Class AAA Charlotte.

The Lombard native signed with the Sox as a minor-league free agent after the 2017 season.

Injury updates

Jose Abreu and Leury Garcia took light batting practice off Nate Jones and Scahill and are getting closer to returning, Renteria said.

Abreu, sidelined since Aug. 21 after having surgery to repair a testicular torsion, could be back in the lineup Monday.

"We'll put him through a little more work tomorrow," Renteria said. "In the morning, we'll discuss it and see how he's doing."

Garcia, out with a Grade 2 strain of his left hamstring, is a bit further away than Abreu.

Renteria also hopes Jones will be back in action soon. He said Jones is scheduled to throw one more simulated game before being activated.

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## **Kopech finds comfort in Chicago White Sox's clubhouse**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / September 8, 2018

If misery does indeed love company, Michael Kopech has found plenty in the Chicago White Sox's clubhouse.

Diagnosed with "a rather significant tear in his ulnar collateral ligament," according to general manager Rick Hahn, Kopech is facing Tommy John surgery that is expected to sideline the prolific starting pitcher until spring training 2020.

Just to stay on the safe side, the 22-year-old righty is going to get a second opinion before having his throwing elbow repaired.

Three current Sox pitchers -- Lucas Giolito, Jace Fry and Aaron Bummer -- had Tommy John surgery and came back strong.

Giolito and Kopech are locker neighbors in the White Sox's clubhouse.

"I talked to him about it yesterday plenty," Giolito said Saturday. "For him it's just about ... there are kind of two sides to it, the way I see it. You have the physical side and the mental side.

"The physical side is obviously getting the surgery, recovering, getting to physical therapy, getting your routine set for the physical side of the recovery process, which is getting your range of motion back. And then just getting with your PT, getting with the training staff and just hammering out the little mundane exercises you have to do every day just to get your arm right.

"Then the mental side is once you get through all that, which in of itself is kind of a mental grind because you're doing all these things that you never really had to do before and that can be boring and at times uncomfortable.

"You get over that part, you start throwing again, and there's going to be times where you have scar-tissue releases. There's going to be times when your arm doesn't feel good on a certain day, but you just push through it because it's part of your throwing program. Especially once you get through all that and get through your first full season, you're going to have games where your arm doesn't feel good.

"You're going to have bits of stretches where there just might be some scar tissue there that's bothering you, but you just keep pushing through it. It's a pretty long process, but I think the biggest thing is just being mentally tough through it all."

Kopech was understandably down after getting the bad news Friday, but he was rising back up Saturday.

"Life happened," Kopech wrote on his Instagram account. "The 2019 @whitesox are going to surprise a lot of people and I can't wait to see that. It's gonna be a long journey but I've never backed down from a challenge & don't plan to now."

Kopech also leaned on Fry after getting the bad news. The White Sox's left-handed reliever has come back from two Tommy John surgeries.

"(Kopech) came in here and it was like, 'Hey, I need the surgery done.' He accepted it," Fry said. "He was already talking about who he was going to see for the surgery and where he wanted to do his rehab and stuff like that. The fact that he has already progressed into the surgery situation, he's on the right path."

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## **Trout tees off on Chicago White Sox in Angels' 12-3 win**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / September 8, 2018

Over his first six full major-league seasons, Mike Trout has twice been voted American League MVP and he has finished second three times.

The Los Angeles Angels' center fielder showed why in Saturday night's 12-3 win over the Chicago White Sox at Guaranteed Rate Field.

"Trout's obviously a special person in terms of what he brings to the lineup," Sox manager Rick Renteria said.

While he is having a bit of an off year by his standards, Trout was 5-for-5 with 2 home runs and 5 RBI in the Angels' romp over the White Sox. The 5 hits matched his career high.

Both of Trout's homers were off Sox starter James Shields, who was shelled for 6 runs on 9 hits and 1 walk in 4⅓ innings. Trout now has 6 career home runs off the veteran right-hander.

"He seems to get me quite often, unfortunately," Shields said. "I actually was going to throw a fastball in, and we ended up setting up outside and just got a little miscommunication right there on the first home run. On the second home run, we had a base open, I was trying to throw a curveball in the dirt and just hung it.

"He's one of the best hitters in the game, if not the best hitter. You can't really do that to that guy."

The Sox were guilty of 5 wild pitches in a game that dragged on for 3 hours, 45 minutes. Rookie reliever Thyago Vieira threw 3 wild pitches in the ninth inning while giving up 2 runs.

"It was a bit of a rough one today for Shieldsy, early," Renteria said. "It looked like he was having a little bit of trouble; he left some pitches out over the plate and obviously they got them. I thought the relief, obviously up until the end, did a really nice job just kind of keeping us there."

Abreu update:

Out since Aug. 20 and recovering well from testicle surgery, White Sox first baseman Jose Abreu took batting practice Saturday.

Abreu wanted to return to the Sox's lineup this weekend, but manager Rick Renteria is likely to wait until Monday.

"We'll see how he feels (Sunday) after doing his groundball work and a little more activity," Renteria said. "He could potentially be in the lineup Monday. In the morning, we'll discuss it and see how he's doing."

Roster move:

After officially placing Michael Kopech on the 60-day disabled list Saturday with an ulnar collateral ligament sprain in his right elbow, the White Sox purchased the contract of 31-year-old relief pitcher Rob Scahill from Class AAA Charlotte.

A Lombard native and Willowbrook High School and Bradley University product, Scahill was 3-4 with a 5.64 ERA and 5 saves in 52 appearances with Charlotte this season.

The right-hander has made 118 career relief appearances with the Rockies (2012-14), Pirates (2015-16) and Brewers (2016-17) and is 5-7 with a 3.79 ERA.

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### **How one lesson learned in New York can vault Reynaldo López from intriguing arm to valuable starter**

By James Fegan / The Athletic / September 8, 2018

Reynaldo López's seven innings of one-run ball in Yankee Stadium at the end of August did not begin in the most flattering fashion.

"I knew what was happening," López said of his diminished velocity in the early innings through team interpreter Billy Russo. "I didn't stretch properly before the game. That was the reason why I felt my arm heavy, a little tight. When I felt that, I tried to do more. I tried to get my arm in shape but not in a proper way, because I didn't do the proper preparation before."

Accustomed to sitting 96-98 mph with his four-seamer out of the gate, López hit as low as 90 mph when he reached back for a fastball to Brett Gardner in the first inning. Barely three weeks removed from an emotional and impressive effort holding the fearsome Yankees lineup to one run over seven innings in Chicago, while chugging 70 percent fastballs, López had an adjustment in mind.

When you can throw 98 mph, it's a safety valve that always looks more appealing than Plan A. The mini-velocity crisis, which thanks to some stretching in the dugout saw him hit 97.5 mph by the fifth, served as the little push he needed. López threw his lowest percentage of fastballs since late-April, threw his changeup one out of every four pitches, and dusted off a curveball that had been more or less dormant all season behind the development of his slider.

"In order for you to have success and to establish yourself at this level as a pitcher, you need to change your plan every time," López said through Russo. "You can't show a specific team that you're probably going to face three or four times per year the same plan, because they're going to make adjustments. I think probably right now around the league people probably know I have a pretty good fastball. I know now and I understood that I need to change my plan in order to be effective."

López came out of that start in Yankee Stadium claiming he had learned something, and carried the same changeup-heavy approach into another seven innings of one-run ball against the Tigers in his most recent start, a team he had beat his head against the wall about in three inefficient outings already this season. In a year that has mostly seen López's results (4.37 ERA, 4.97 FIP) and strikeouts (17.5 percent) lag behind the raw power of his stuff, a 12 percent swinging-strike rate over his last two starts suggests he's found a balance subverting the stubborn, fastball-reliant reputation he's built for himself.

"You don't have to hump up and throw your hardest every pitch to get guys out," said Kevan Smith, who caught López in New York. "It's good to hear that he said that it's a learning curve and something he can take with him. Just learn that sometimes you don't need to throw 70-80 percent fastballs like you could in A-ball. Up here there's a lot of veteran hitters, lot of balanced hitters and you've got to work both sides of the plate and keep them off balance."

It might seem like an obvious lesson: to use the off-speed pitches in his arsenal that have always shown swing-and-miss potential, to be willing to pitch backward and throw all of his pitches in any count, and to flip his approach and get into his breaking pitches earlier when facing a team for the second, third or fourth time in a season. But there's a difference between understanding those principles and implementing them when the game is on the line, and López can admit now that he merely conquered the former earlier in the season.

Despite having such easy access to premium velocity at almost all times, López admitted the pressure to establish himself in the majors has often pushed him to overthrow and try to reach back for 100 mph even when 98 mph worked well enough. Case in point was López getting burned by a three-run, eighth-inning Salvador Perez home run July 14. He knew Perez was an aggressive, fastball-hunting hitter. He knew Smith wanted a changeup, and he knew it was the right call, but in such a big spot, López still trusted his ability to throw it past Perez. Even at 98 mph in a perfect spot outside of the zone, Perez's opposite-field blast proved his raw talent didn't mean he shouldn't still listen to his catcher.

"I think if I was able to agree with Smith and throw that changeup, even right in the middle, he wouldn't be able to hit that pitch because he wasn't expecting that pitch," López said through Russo. "For a hitter, when they know you're able to throw every one of your pitches in every count, you're playing with them, because they're not expecting, they're reacting instead of waiting on the pitch they're supposed to hit."

In all, López has the opportunity to end his season looking like someone who has taken his raw stuff and slowly — sometimes painfully — added the feel to his starts. The difference between an intriguing arm and a reliable starter is being able to have the awareness to work against hitters' expectations to every game situation, rather than just dominating every time good stuff and good command line up in one night.

That's why this second half, his second successful romp over the Yankees, and this final month mean more to López than anything else. It's a test of his endurance, but also of his ability to adjust and out-plan competition that is ready to cheat on his heater.

"In the second half, men distance from the kids," López said through Russo. "At the beginning of the season, it's easy as a pitcher in your first full year to have success. Maybe the teams don't know you very well and you have an advantage, but for me, it is very satisfying to have this second half. It has been a challenge because I know the other [teams] know me better and have better reports and I have to execute and have to perform better. For me, it has been a greater experience in the second half. I think my best outings have been facing all the teams in the second half because they have been challenging me and I have been challenging myself in those outings."

López now has the breakthroughs this season to remember the importance of varying his approach every time, and probably has a reason to remember his pre-game stretching too.

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### **Michael Kopech's teammates confident he has what it takes to thrive in rehab process: 'The kid's got a drive I've never seen before'**

By James Fegan / The Athletic / September 8, 2018

Aaron Bummer has been Michael Kopech's teammate at three levels of the White Sox organization and can relate a bit to Kopech's feeling of surprise upon receiving a diagnosis of a tear in his ulnar collateral ligament.

"I was kind of relieved to find out that there was something wrong," Bummer said. "I had TJ in 2015, end of 2015. I had bone spurs and some loose bodies taken out in March to kind of prevent that. There was a point in time where I was like, 'If I want to keep playing baseball, I'm just going to keep pitching in pain.' That's just the way it was because I didn't think there was nothing wrong with it. I just woke up one day and said, 'All right, I can't do this anymore.'"

Maybe the part about a season full of agony is a bit different, but Kopech can go around the White Sox clubhouse and get a full gamut of experiences. From Bummer to double-Tommy John recipient Jace Fry, to Caleb Frare, Nate Jones and Kopech's locker neighbor Lucas Giolito, there's plenty of proof on the roster that a torn UCL is not a death sentence, though it might require him to go through the grieving process.

"When you first find out I think it's just accepting that it's happening," Fry said. "It depends on if you want to be positive or negative about it and how long it takes you to really grieve about what happened. Some people can accept it right away. Some people might take a few days. Some people might take a month. But I know Kopech is strong-willed. He knows what happened. He's willing to accept it and move forward so he's going to be good during his rehab."

There's been something close to 500 references to Kopech's work ethic — from teammates, coaches, general manager Rick Hahn, Kopech himself and in writing on this website — being an aid to him in the rehab process, and there's no doubt it will be. For someone with an already-healthy appetite and knowledge of weightlifting and mobility exercises, there will be plenty of that.

But while the fundamental instinct for any top-level athlete is to push themselves to the absolute limit, and then maybe a little further, that urge will have to be curbed for part of the rehab process. There will be stretches, especially in the first six weeks after his operation when his arm is in a brace, when Kopech will actually need to reign himself in and restrict himself to the limited activity he's allowed.

“You can’t go past a certain range of motion even though a lot of the time you feel fine,” Giolito said. “It’s like, ‘I’m good to go, I can probably push through this.’ But it is what it is, you just have to be patient with it. You have to understand that it’s all part of a process that’s been finely tuned by doctors, trainers, [physical therapists], and you just trust it and wake up every day with your goal to just complete, accomplish whatever it is that’s going to get you better that day.”

“You’re just so limited the first six weeks after surgery, you really have to find something like poker that’s not so active and maybe uses your brain more than anything,” Fry said. “Do puzzles, find crosswords, something like that that you can do the first six weeks and after that he’ll be ready to rock and getting down to his rehab and actually strengthening and mobility and everything. Really it’s just that first month, month and a half of finding stuff to do in the downtime.”

“[Zack] Burdi started playing poker, I laid by the pool every day for two hours,” Bummer said. “One thing that was huge for me is that I went back to school. I started going back to school and I was able to put my mind into school. I would be able to go do my rehab. Instead of rehab being the be all, say all, I kind of turned into right after I had it, rehab was my escape from school. It was something I was excited to do every day because I didn’t have to go study. I didn’t have to go read a book or go do those things.”

Depending on where Kopech gets the material for his new tendon from — Bummer had a piece of his hamstring taken — he could be limited in his activity and motion from that part of his body too, requiring another level of patience for someone who has literally been physically active every day of his life for years. But his teammates and fellow Tommy John recipients (Bummer initially stopped himself, and then later did call it a “band of brothers”) believe the most difficult part for Kopech will probably come in April. His teammates will pack up and leave Glendale, Camelback Ranch will go from a buzz of activity to a near-ghost town, and he’ll be left to watch his buddies on television as the perilously slow progression of his throwing program continues.

There will be days when he’ll feel good enough to pitch but will be limited to what his throwing program dictates. And there will be times when his arm doesn’t feel good, or scar tissue releases, and he’ll have to push through it because it’s what his throwing program dictates. And there could also be times when his arm feeling bad is actually a setback, a real threat to his 2020 season like what Fry went through during his second rehab.

“It’s a tendon so it’s so fragile at the time that it will, you can get fluid in your elbow and your elbow gets swollen,” Fry said. “It can be scary. But they are there for you, so if you need the piece of mind to go get an MRI, they will get one for you right there.”

Despite the setbacks, despite having two of them, Fry is a devotee of the theory that he’s a better pitcher for the experience — as are Bummer and Giolito. If it’s not about physical improvements or increased strength, it’s about the self-discovery that comes from enduring such a grueling crucible.

“You kind of learn what your deficiencies are in your own body,” Fry said. “We are one-sided people — you throw from your left side over and over and over. You can strengthen your right side for a long time and you are kind of equaled out again. I think that’s something he will have to do with his physical therapist.

“It was timing on my arm swing on the back side,” Fry continued. “I was stabbing and hooking, which are bad things you don’t want to do as a pitcher. I still stab a little bit but I’ve gotten better. It’s a timing mechanism where when your front leg gets down, you want your arm in a strong position. We watched film and it wasn’t the case, and that’s why I was having setbacks. We worked on that.”

“I’ll never forget my first outing,” Bummer said. “I had never touched 96 mph before, and then all of a sudden when I was coming back from TJ, in my first sim game I threw I was 94-96 mph and I was like, ‘Holy crap this is the difference of not pitching in pain.’”

“This is something I don’t talk about very often but Tommy John actually gave me my changeup,” Giolito said. “I didn’t have a changeup at all as an amateur player in high school. I might have tried to throw one

just to show scouts but it didn't move and it was one of the pitches that actually got hit hardest when I was in high school. When I went through the Tommy John process, I don't know what it was, whether it was just starting your throwing over again. Really just focusing on being in the right position constantly. I threw a changeup grip on and it pretty much developed the changeup I have now right out of the gate whereas before the surgery, I had no feel."

There are potential pitfalls of the process, and the scouting doubts about Kopech's ability to get through 200 innings consistently with the torque and power in his delivery will not get quieter after this. Beyond a poker habit, or a finance degree like Bummer, what Kopech could really use is a partner in this process. Fry and Bummer forged their friendship by going through rehab together along with Sox prospect Blake Hickman, and Burdi was able to watch the experience of his older brother, who was a few months ahead of him in the process. Fry suggests that whoever winds up being Kopech's rehab coach should quickly become his close friend, because they're going to spend a lot of time together.

That part of the process can be figured out when Kopech wakes up from surgery, or arrives in Arizona to start his rehab. For now, all the fellow Tommy John recipients on his team testify that he has accepted what lies before him and has the attitude to come out of the process better for it, even if it's the longest wait of his life.

"The kid's got a drive that I've never seen before," Bummer said. "It's a tough situation for him, but it's definitely something where he's going to be able to take the next year or whatever it may be and really fine tune what he is as a pitcher. Get healthy, get stronger, do all these things that — he's already strong. He's strong as an ox right now. I can't imagine that 12 months from now he's not going to be even stronger than he is right now. It's a very unfortunate situation. It's going to be a long road but there are people here that can help him, that's for sure."

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