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San Francisco Chronicle

Giants lose 8th straight as Madison Bumgarner hits Ryan Braun, allows slam Henry Schulman

MILWAUKEE — If the sight of Ryder Jones dislocating his left kneecap on an otherwise normal swing was not strange enough, how about the Brewers emerging from their dugout after Jonathan Schoop’s grand slam as if they just walked off the Giants — in the sixth inning?

In losing their eighth in a row Sunday, 6-3 to Milwaukee, the Giants completed their first 0-6 trip in three years and found an entirely new way to go off the rails.

They were leading 2-1 behind a very effective Madison Bumgarner, who had retired 15 in a row until he walked Christian Yelich with two outs in the sixth, followed by a Jesus Aguilar single.

Bumgarner then threw a high and tight pitch that knocked Ryan Braun off the plate, another ball that was up and a third pitch that hit Braun in the elbow, loading the bases and getting the Milwaukee side heated.

The Brewers got their payback the way the best way they could, when Schoop blasted a grand slam to send his team toward the sweep.

A good number of Brewers ran out of the dugout to greet Schoop and the three runners ahead of him, as if the game were over, jawing at Bumgarner as a side benefit. First-base umpire Dan Bellino had to shoo them back to the dugout.

Bumgarner got the third out and was done for the afternoon, agitated with himself for the pitch to Schoop, not the Brewers’ unusual celebration.

“I’m sure they were excited,” Bumgarner said. “That was a big hit for them.”

Braun had done nothing to warrant being drilled, other than crushing two balls against Bumgarner earlier in the game, one for a double, the other for a warning-track out.

Manager Bruce Bochy and Bumgarner insisted the Big Fella was not trying to hit Braun to load the bases in a one-run game but hoping to jam him after Braun got his arms extended on the first two balls.

“If a guy’s swinging the bat well on other pitches, you try to make adjustments,” Bochy said. “With the game on the line, he’s not trying to hit him. He’s trying to get him out pitching pretty aggressively inside.”

Said Bumgarner: “I’m aware of the kind of hitter he is. He seems to see me pretty well. If the ball leaks out over the plate, he has a chance to do some damage.”

The Brewers can be forgiven for believing otherwise. Bumgarner’s hubris is well-documented, and Braun did rip balls with exit velocities of 110 and 103 mph.

Braun theorized that Bumgarner might have misheard something Braun said after his second at-bat.

“I jogged by him and I think maybe he thought I said something that I didn’t say,” Braun said, according to the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel. “I told him, ‘Good pitch, good battle,’ something like that, and maybe he misunderstood me. I don’t know.”

Bumgarner and Braun had a stare-down after the second pitch of the sixth-inning encounter. When Bumgarner hit him with the third, he came off the mound and appeared to invite Braun to “visit” him if he was so angry, while catcher Nick Hundley stood between them.

The Brewers emerged from their dugout slowly, ready to go if Braun and Bumgarner went at it. Home-plate umpire Tim Hallion warned both sides, which enraged Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell because the Brewers had not done anything. Counsell was ejected quickly, with two of his players getting tossed, too.

Bumgarner threw some warm-ups during the lengthy argument, then served up his fourth career slam to a hitter he had struck out twice. Bumgarner didn’t blame the Braun spat or delay for the gopher ball.

“I was in the same spot mentally the whole game,” Bumgarner said. “It was just a bad pitch.

“That was probably the worst road trip any of us have been on. It’s hard to swallow.”

That also goes for the Jones injury, which will end his season. Bochy said the first baseman had dislocated that patella before and noted the bizarre coincidence that pitcher Dan Runzler did the same thing in the same stadium in 2010.

“It was a freak accident,” Bochy said. “It’s a shame. The kid was getting a chance.”

San Francisco Chronicle
Giants have the strikeouts, just not the homers
Henry Schulman

MILWAUKEE — Striking out is not a sin in baseball in 2018, when everyone including the batboy seems to have a high-90s fastball. But big strikeout numbers without the commensurate power, well, that's an issue.

Through Saturday, the Giants had the fourth-most strikeouts in the National League at 1,286. The wild-card-leading Brewers had seven more, but they had outhomered the Giants 187-124.

The Giants have done a good job of covering the plate with two strikes, tied for the lowest percentage of looking strikeouts in the league at 21.2. But they are taking more third strikes in RBI situations on this trip, including five in Saturday night's 4-3 loss, and manager Bruce Bochy has noticed.

"We've talked about it," Bochy said. "At times, we could be a bit more aggressive. We're facing good pitching. If you get a good pitch early in the count, swing at it. We have taken some called third strikes. We have had too many."

The trend in baseball no longer favors an offense working high pitch counts to get the other starter out early, because every team has a full complement of hard-throwing relievers. On Friday night, Chase Anderson held the Giants to two runs in five innings and Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell pulled him after 74 pitches, forcing the Giants to contend with Josh Hader, Joakim Soria and Jeremy Jeffress for four shutout innings.

This is one reason why Bochy likes what he has seen from his rookies, especially those with power.

Last Monday, Chris Shaw swung at the three pitches he saw from Seunghwan Ho and hit the third one into the second deck to give the Giants an eighth-inning lead. (Strikeouts will be an issue for Shaw. He swings at too many pitches out of the zone, too.)

In the eighth inning Saturday, Ryder Jones came off the bench, swung at a first-pitch changeup that Soria left up and hit a two-run homer to push the Giants back into a game they were losing by three.

"That's what we want from these kids — what they're doing," Bochy said. "Come up and swing the bat."

Walks are still desirable, if somewhat devalued in the current game. Since July 2, the Giants have the second-lowest walk rate in the league.

Briefly: The Giants have seven pinch homers, their most since 2001 and second only to the Brewers in the league. ... Gregor Blanco drove in two runs Sunday with a homer and sacrifice fly. Austin Slater had an RBI with his first big-league triple.

San Jose Mercury News

Bumgarner hits Braun, tensions flare as Brewers fight back to sweep Giants

Kerry Crowley

MILWAUKEE—Don't give in.

It's the mentality Giants ace Madison Bumgarner took into a sixth inning battle with Brewers cleanup hitter Ryan Braun, and the approach Milwaukee took into a three-game series with San Francisco.

Bumgarner refused to give in to Braun. And the Brewers refused to give into the Giants, finishing off a three-game sweep with a 6-3 win Sunday.

“That’s probably the worst road trip most everybody here has been a part of,” Bumgarner said. “It’s hard to swallow.”

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With the Giants ahead 2-1 in the sixth, Braun stepped to the plate with two on, two outs and a chance to swing the game in Milwaukee’s favor.

Bumgarner watched Braun crush a 110-mile per hour double off the wall in the first and a 369-foot flyout in the fourth, so he crafted a careful plan of attack.

After the first two fastballs whizzed by Braun, he felt Bumgarner lacked a plan and simply wanted to attack. As hitters often do, Braun took issue with the high and tight location of the offerings that started the at-bat.

He smiled at Bumgarner, and then wore a 2-0 fastball on his left elbow.

“I don’t know if he thought I was trying to throw at him or what,” Bumgarner said. “The second pitch was right over the middle of the plate, just up too much. But he looked at me, I don’t know what he’s thinking or not thinking. But that didn’t have any kind of effect on what I’m trying to do out there.”

Giants catcher Nick Hundley moved in between his starter and the Brewers’ cleanup hitter to prevent a physical altercation as Braun and Bumgarner exchanged words. Home plate umpire Tom Hallion dealt with verbal altercations, tossing Brewers manager Craig Counsell out of the game and sending pitcher Wade Miley and catcher Jacob Nottingham back to the clubhouse from the dugout, too.

“He’s going to pitch him aggressively inside,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “He’s swinging the bat well and that’s part of the game.”

The Brewers grew enraged that Hallion issued warnings and continued to let Bumgarner pitch instead of ejecting him for what they felt was an intentional plunking.

The anger in the Milwaukee dugout didn’t last long, though, as it was soon replaced by elation.

Bumgarner came after the Brewers, and the next hitter came after Bumgarner.

With the bases loaded and two outs, a 2-1 Giants lead disappeared when second baseman Jonathan Schoop launched a Bumgarner cutter over the left field fence.

“I was in the same spot mentally that I was the entire game,” Bumgarner said. “It was just a bad pitch. That sucks. Get to two outs there and end up giving up a four-spot in the big inning.”

Brewers players poured out of the dugout, celebrating an emotionally-charged home run that put them well on their way to a sweep of the lowly Giants, who have now lost eight straight games to begin September.

As Schoop rounded the bases, first base umpire Dan Bellino warned Milwaukee players to stay off the field, ushering them back to their dugout.

The Brewers acted as if Schoop had clubbed a walkoff homer to end the game, and it's hard to blame them. Though the two sides had to play out the final three innings of the series, it was just a formality.

"They're dangerous," Bochy said. "Throughout their lineup, they have guys that can beat you with the long ball. He probably didn't place that quite where he wanted."

The Giants finished the series with eight runs in three games in a hitter-friendly Miller Park on their way to the team's first 0-6 road trip since a swing through Miami and Washington, D.C. from June 30-July 5, 2015.

Though San Francisco suffered several deflating defeats on a journey that took them from Coors Field to Miller Park, Sunday's was particularly brutal as they watched their ace starter fail in the game's most critical moment.

Had Bumgarner found a way to retire Braun or Schoop in the sixth, he could have exited the game in line for the win or tried to preserve the lead if he returned to the mound for the seventh. Instead, a heated exchange with Braun and a rocket over the left field wall from Schoop crushed the Giants' chances.

The Giants didn't just lose the game, they also lost first baseman Ryder Jones to a freak knee injury during a fifth inning plate appearance. After taking a swing against Brewers starter Zach Davies, Jones' left knee buckled and he collapsed in the batter's box.

Jones was helped off the field by Giants trainer Dave Groeschner and diagnosed with a dislocated left knee, an injury that will end his season.

"It's a freak accident and it's a shame," Bochy said. "A kid getting a chance to play up here and he takes a swing and does that."

San Jose Mercury News

Ryder Jones suffers freak injury during fifth inning plate appearance

Kerry Crowley

MILWAUKEE—Ryder Jones earned a start at first base Sunday in part because he hit a pinch-hit home run Saturday, and also because the Giants wanted to give Brandon Belt an additional day to rest a sore knee.

In the fifth inning, Jones suffered his own knee injury, as his left knee buckled after he swung at an offering from Brewers starter Zach Davies.

After the game, manager Bruce Bochy announced that Jones will undergo an MRI Monday, but the initial diagnosis is a dislocated knee which will end Jones' season.

Jones immediately went to the ground after completing his swing and clutched his knee before trainer Dave Groeschner and Bochy came out to check on the corner infielder.

He exited the field with assistance from Groeschner and was replaced by Belt, who pinch hit on Saturday but has battled lingering knee soreness since he returned from the disabled list in August. Belt initially hyperextended his right knee running the bases July 25 in Seattle.

Jones was 0-for-1 with a strikeout before leaving the game. Belt finished out the plate appearance and drew a walk.

San Jose Mercury News

Why some rookies are starting, others sitting in final weeks for the Giants

Kerry Crowley

MILWAUKEE—With an expanded September roster that now includes 32 players, the Giants have the ability to roll out a lineup that includes six position players age 25 or younger.

Manager Bruce Bochy hasn't ruled out the option of starting all of his rookies in the same game, but he has yet to do so.

Even though the Giants are out of the playoff hunt and using September as an opportunity to evaluate their young talent, Bochy says the club has an obligation to try to win as many games as possible.

And in his estimation, the best combination on any given day is typically a mix of rookies and veterans.

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"We have to do what's right for this ball club," Bochy said. "We're trying to balance that out. We feel like we're putting a competitive team, our best team by mixing it up and putting young guys and veterans (together)."

The Giants have lost seven straight to begin the month of September, but they're down a slew of regular starters who are recovering from injuries and battling teams in playoff contention. San Francisco was swept in Colorado and is in danger of losing three in a row to Milwaukee, but Bochy noted many of the younger players on the roster have shown impressive fight to keep the Giants close late in games.

With the Giants trailing 4-1 in the eighth inning Saturday, 24-year-old infielder Ryder Jones smashed a pinch-hit, two-run homer to pull his team within one. Jones will start for the second time this season Sunday, but other young talents like Chris Shaw and Abiatal Avelino are on the bench.

"You want these guys to come up and show and to even have that attitude that this is a great opportunity for me to come up and show what I can do," Bochy said. "You still look at the body of work the whole year. It's not 20, 30 at-bats. But still, you want them to show they have that sense of belonging up here."

Jones isn't going to convince the Giants' decision-makers he's worthy of an Opening Day roster spot next year in 25 at-bats, but even if he was installed as a regular starter over the final three weeks of the year, the sample size still wouldn't be enough for him to prove he could handle the same role over a 162-game season.

The Giants are in a difficult position because they're trying to win games and develop prospects in

September, but they have yet to win and the opportunities for development are somewhat limited.

Bochy and the front office could commit to a wholesale period of development, but doing so would bump regulars like Brandon Crawford, Brandon Belt and Joe Panik out of the starting roles they're paid to fill.

While tanking is a popular tactic in the NBA and an increasingly common strategy in MLB, it's difficult for a team that built a roster with the intention of competing to suddenly blow up in the final weeks of the year. And even if doing so was easy, it's not a concept the Giants will entertain.

"We want to finish strong," Bochy said. "Some young guys have a chance to show that they can hit big league pitching or that they can pitch up here. But keep going hard, we have a job and a responsibility to each other, to our fans, to baseball to go out there and give it our best every day."

MLB.com

Bumgarner gives up slam as Giants' skid hits 8 Andrew Wagner

MILWAUKEE -- For a brief moment, it looked as if the Giants might be in a position to snap their longest losing streak of the season.

Gregor Blanco led off the game with his second home run of the season, then broke a 1-1 tie with a sac fly in the fifth. A 2-1 lead appeared to be just enough of a cushion for Madison Bumgarner, who'd retired 13 straight batters as he took the mound for the sixth inning and ran that streak to 15 batters with two quick outs.

Christian Yelich brought the streak to an end with a walk and Jesus Aguilar's single kept the inning alive. Ryan Braun was next and Bumgarner's first offering buzzed the veteran outfielder, just missing Braun's chin.

Braun looked at ball two before Bumgarner came inside again, this time drilling Braun in the shoulder. Braun made his displeasure with Bumgarner known while Milwaukee's dugout emptied briefly and Braun and Bumgarner traded words before Braun eventually made his way to first base.

"That's part of the game," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "[Braun] is swinging the bat well so [Bumgarner] is trying to make adjustments. That's what he's trying to do. The game's on the line. He's not trying to hit him, he's trying to get him out by being aggressive inside. That's baseball."

Bumgarner denied that he threw at Braun intentionally.

"I know what kind of hitter he is and he seems to see me pretty well, so I know if it leaks back out over the plate, he's going to have a chance to do some damage," Bumgarner said.

The Brewers' dugout emptied and warnings to both teams were issued by plate umpire Tom Hallion. Before play resumed, Hallion ejected Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell for arguing that warning, then tossed left-hander Wade Miley and emergency catcher Jacob Nottingham from the bench.

"I mean, I don't know that he was trying to hit him," Counsell said. "The first pitch was at his face. There was a little conversation between Bumgarner and Braun, then the next pitch is inside and the next pitch he gets hit. If they're trying to pitch around him, just put him on."

After play resumed, Schoop made Bumgarner pay for the miscue by belting a 2-1 cutter to left, giving the Brewers a three-run lead.

Bumgarner finished the inning, but gave way to the bullpen for the seventh after throwing 95 pitches. He allowed five runs, all earned, on four hits and a walk while striking out four and took his first career loss at Miller Park.

"I was in the same spot mentally I was the entire game," Bumgarner said. "It sucks, getting two outs there then giving up a four-spot in a big inning. The last two games, three big innings for me. It's hard to win a ballgame like that."

The Giants have lost nine of their last 10 games, including eight in a row for the first time since April 2015, and have lost 12 of their last 14 on the road and are 29-46 on the road for the season. They finish the season with a 1-6 record against Milwaukee, their worst record vs. the Crew since going 0-6 in 2008.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Jones gets a start, then gets hurt: Ryder Jones got his second start of the season, but had to leave the game after dislocating his left patella during a fifth-inning at-bat against Milwaukee right-hander Zach Davies.

Jones fell to the ground clutching his knee after fouling off a 1-0 pitch. He was tended to by the Giants' medical staff and able to walk off the field while Brandon Belt, whose own sore knee opened a spot for Jones to get the start, came in to replace him.

"It's a freak accident and it's a shame," Bochy said. "The kid gets a chance to play up here, takes a swing and does that."

SOUND SMART

Bumgarner had never taken a loss at Miller Park before Sunday. In four previous starts in Milwaukee, he was 3-0 with a 2.36 ERA and had a 7-3 record and 2.25 ERA in 11 career starts against Brewers.

HE SAID IT

"That was probably the worst road trip anybody here has ever been a part of. It's hard to swallow." -- Bumgarner, on the Giants' 0-6 road trip through Colorado and Milwaukee

UP NEXT

Right-hander Dereck Rodriguez takes the mound Monday night when the Giants open a three-game series against the Braves at AT&T Park. The rookie right-hander has been impressive this season, leading

the rotation with a 2.41 ERA, .211 opponents' batting average and 1.05 WHIP, but will be looking for his first victory since Aug. 12.

MLB.com

Jones done for season after dislocating patella

Andrew Wagner

MILWAUKEE -- Ryder Jones is expected to miss the remainder of the season after dislocating his left patella Sunday during the Giants' 6-3 loss to the Brewers at Miller Park.

With regular first baseman Brandon Belt dealing with a sore knee, San Francisco manager Bruce Bochy gave Jones his second start of the season.

He struck out against Zach Davies his first time up, then, in the third, fell to the ground clutching his knee after fouling off a 1-0 pitch from Davies. He was tended to by the Giants' medical staff and able to walk off the field.

Belt finished the at-bat, drawing a walk, and later scored the go-ahead run on Gregor Blanco's sacrifice fly. Belt stayed in the game, playing first base.

"It's a freak accident and it's a shame," Bochy said. "The kid gets a chance to play up here, takes a swing and does that. A tough break for him."

Bochy said Jones would undergo an MRI Monday when the team returns to San Francisco and is likely done for the season.

"I don't see him playing this year," Bochy said.

Ryder was one of several young players the Giants called up for the final weeks, not only to fill roster holes created by injuries, but also for the team to get a first-hand look at what each of them can offer as the Giants, out of playoff contention, shift their focus to 2019 and beyond.

Jones played 53 games for the Giants last season, but with Belt at first, he appeared in just one big league game this season before he was recalled on Sept. 4 after rosters expanded.

He made the most of his limited action. He put the Giants ahead with a solo home run off Edwin Jackson on July 20 and came up big again Saturday night with a pinch-hit, two-run shot off Joakim Soria as San Francisco tried to rally late in a 4-3 loss to the Brewers.

"Everybody here wants to be on the Opening Day roster next year," Jones said Saturday night. "You're just trying to go out and do what you can and show your ability, be aggressive and help the team."

NBC Sports Bay Area

Defining moment of Giants' collapse comes after dispute with Brewers

Alex Pavlovic

MILWAUKEE -- It's nearly impossible to find positives on a winless road trip, but for a few minutes Sunday morning, Giants manager Bruce Bochy was energized. He leaned back in his office chair and spoke about the fight he sees in a group that simply doesn't have the talent right now to compete with teams like the Brewers.

This likely wasn't what Bochy had in mind.

The Giants capped a winless road trip with an awful loss that turned when their franchise pitcher gave up a grand slam moments after the benches briefly cleared.

Giants left-hander Madison Bumgarner hit Brewers left fielder Ryan Braun to load the bases in the sixth inning, and Braun clearly thought it was intentional. The two exchanged words, and Bumgarner appeared to invite Braun out to the mound to try and do something about his feelings.

Instead, the Brewers punched back at the plate. Second baseman Jonathan Schoop hit a grand slam, and the Giants went down quietly, losing 6-3.

There have been many low points over the last month, but the defining image of this collapse might have come as Schoop rounded the bases. The Brewers emptied the dugout, greeting Schoop so enthusiastically in front of it that an umpire had to usher them back to their bench. Schoop practically walked around the bases as Bumgarner stood on the mound and looked up into the seats, rubbing up a new ball.

It appeared some of the Brewers were yelling at him, but Bumgarner said he didn't notice.

"I don't know. I don't know," he said. "I didn't hear them. I'm sure they were excited. It was a big hit for them."

It was another crushing blow for the Giants. They have long since abandoned any playoff hopes, but Bochy wanted this group to try and finish strong. With a one-run lead in the sixth, it appeared Bumgarner could help them end this road trip on a high note. Instead, he very nearly ended up in the middle of another fight.

Braun hit a double off the top of the wall in the first and flied out to center in the fourth. With two on in the sixth, Bumgarner certainly wasn't trying to load the bases. But he wasn't trying to give Braun a chance to extend his arms, either. The first pitch was up and in, and Braun took a deep breath. The second pitch wasn't in, but it again was up at eye level, and Braun took a long look out at the mound.

"That's where we're trying to go," Bumgarner said. "I know what kind of hitter he is, and he seems to see me pretty well. If it leaks back over the plate, he's going to have a good chance of doing damage. I don't know if he thought I was trying to hit him or what. The second pitch really was over the middle of the plate but up."

The third pitch clipped Braun. As Giants catcher Nick Hundley stepped between the hitter and pitcher,

Braun said a few words to Bumgarner. It appeared Bumgarner told Braun to come out to the mound.

"There was no intent," Bumgarner said later. "That's it."

Both benches were warned, and three Brewers -- including manager Craig Counsell -- were ejected before play resumed. Bumgarner then hung a cutter to Schoop, and that was that.

Bumgarner said he still wasn't thinking about the near-altercation.

"I was in the same spot mentally that I was in the entire game," Bumgarner said. "That's just a bad pitch."

At one point, Bumgarner looked poised to hand a lead over to Will Smith. He ended up being charged with five runs and took the loss.

The Giants had their first winless six-game trip in two years, and Bochy is right in a way. This Giants team, overmatched as it is, does tend to scratch and claw in the late innings. But it's not enough, and it's not a good team. A season that started with so much promise has become a slow, depressing march toward Game 162.

In a silent clubhouse, Bumgarner tried to make sense of the last week.

"That's obviously not what any of us set out to do," he said. "That's probably the worst road trip most anybody in here has been a part of. It's hard to swallow."

NBC Sports Bay Area

Giants infielder Ryder Jones out for season with dislocated knee

Alex Pavlovic

MILWAUKEE -- On Saturday night, Giants rookie infielder Ryder Jones stood in front of his locker at Miller Park and said he hoped to make a good impression over the final three weeks and put himself in position for the Opening Day roster.

Less than 24 hours later, he was on crutches.

Jones crumpled in the batter's box while taking a swing in the fifth inning of Sunday's loss to the Brewers. He was diagnosed with a left knee patella dislocation and will have an MRI on Monday to see if there is further damage.

Jones' season is over just when it was starting to get interesting.

"Bizarre, trust me. It's unbelievable," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said of the injury. "I've seen it before here with (Dan) Runzler. I've seen it twice and both times here. It's just a freak accident. It's a shame."

Runzler dislocated his knee while taking a swing against the Brewers in 2010. As much as this was a replay of history for Bochy, it was for Jones, too. The young infielder had the same injury in 2015.

Jones was set to get some time as Brandon Belt's backup over the final three weeks, and that could have

meant a few starts. Belt is dealing with his own knee issue and has been in and out of the lineup. The injury leaves Chase d'Arnaud and Austin Slater as the backups at first base.

The Athletic

Madison Bumgarner barks, the Brewers bite, and the Giants likely lose another young player for the season

Andrew Baggarly

MILWAUKEE — The English language is so rich and textured. Even something as specific as flared tempers on a baseball field can be described using any number of words.

A brawl. Brouhaha. Rhubarb. Fracas. Ruckus. Skirmish. Melee. Donnybrook. Hullabaloo. Fisticuffs. Kerfuffle. Gonfalon. (OK, that last one means something entirely different. But it's a fun, old-timey baseball word. Look it up.)

For all those choices, there isn't an appropriate word to reflect a certain kind of baseball incident, such as the one that involved the Giants and Milwaukee Brewers in the sixth inning Sunday afternoon at Miller Park. What do you call it when you mix adversarial stares with baiting words, when both teams casually exit the dugout without posturing to fight, when no punches are thrown or fists even raised? When both bullpens dislodge but the relievers only advance a few hesitant steps onto the outfield grass before they begin milling about? What do you call it when nothing really happens?

Maybe call it a Bumgarner.

Yes, the Giants' intense, alpha-male ace was at it again. Madison Bumgarner's aggression on the mound might come across as petty and pointless sometimes. But he is not unstable or unhinged. Right or wrong, MadBum usually has a method to his madness. And sometimes, it backfires on him.

He got into it with Ryan Braun, and ... well, let's assume you spent your day watching NFL Red Zone and give you the quick summary:

Braun had made hard contact in his two earlier at-bats against Bumgarner, crushing an RBI double in the first inning and lining out to center in the fourth. When Braun batted in the sixth, the Giants were leading 2-1 and the Brewers had runners on first and second with two outs.

The game was very much on the line. And the Giants needed a victory to avoid a winless road trip.

Bumgarner relishes challenging hitters, but he also will not give in to someone swinging a hot bat — especially with a base open and the struggling Jonathan Schoop on deck. Braun had extended his arms to make hard contact in those two earlier confrontations. So catcher Nick Hundley set up for inside pitch. Bumgarner probably wanted the pitch to bristle Braun a bit, if not completely brush him back.

It brushed him back. Bumgarner threw too high and too far in, and Braun backpedaled halfway to the Giants dugout.

"I mean, I know what kind of hitter he is and he seems to see me pretty well," Bumgarner said. "So I know if it leaks back out over the plate, then he's going to have a good chance to do some damage."

The next pitch was also at eye level but over the plate, and then Braun stared at Bumgarner until the pitcher barked something at him. Braun appeared to say in response, "Just throw the ball, man."

Bumgarner did. The third pitch glanced off Braun's elbow, and touched off the ... well, I guess we're calling this a Bumgarner now.

Braun said he wasn't sure if the first pitch was on purpose. Brewers manager Craig Counsell said he had no doubt the third one was.

"It did look clear," Counsell said. "If they're trying to pitch around him, then just put him on."

"Anytime you get a pitch thrown at your face, it's never fun," Braun said. "As a competitor, it's a situation you don't enjoy. (We) never really had history. His competitiveness is what makes him one of the best pitchers of our generation."

Perhaps it was Bumgarner's competitiveness that compelled him to walk halfway from the mound to the plate to issue a challenge. Perhaps it was his pride or his ego. Perhaps he sized up a player that he knew would back down, and saw an opportunity to perform his masculinity.

"If you want some, come on," he appeared to say to Braun.

The rest of the scene played out predictably. Braun has a reputation for many things in this game, but fighting is not one of them. He wore a bemused expression and said a few things to Hundley as he walked to first base. Although both teams went onto the field, nobody ventured into fair territory.

But the game was delayed several more minutes before Bumgarner threw his first pitch to Schoop. Plate umpire Tom Hallion issued a warning to both teams, which did not strike Counsell as especially fair. Hallion ejected Counsell, and then he gave the thumb to two players from an animated Brewers dugout, pitcher Wade Miley and catcher Jacob Nottingham.

The Brewers couldn't exact vengeance by hitting a batter.

They found a better way.

Schoop drilled Bumgarner's 2-1 cutter over the left field fence for a grand slam, and the Brewers won, 6-3, to sweep the series.

It was the fourth career grand slam that Bumgarner has allowed, and his first since Justin Ruggiano took him deep in 2016.

"I was in the same spot mentally I was the entire game," said Bumgarner, asked if the incident or the delay affected him. "It's just a bad pitch. It just sucks, you get two outs there and end up giving up a four-spot in a big inning. The last two games, it's been three big innings. It's hard to win a ballgame like that."

"Not much affects him," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "He's so tough. He was making good pitches on him all day and they just got ahold of one. You know, they're dangerous and they can beat you with the long ball up and down the lineup."

It was like a scene out of Little League as Schoop rounded the bases. More than a dozen Brewers players ran out of the dugout and stood in foul territory, some of them appearing to scream in Bumgarner's direction. First base umpire Dan Bellino waved his arms and ordered them to return to the dugout.

Bumgarner said he didn't hear what they were yelling.

"I don't know. I don't know," he said. "I'm sure they were excited. It was a big hit for them."

It wasn't the first time the Giants saw the Brewers test the bounds of exuberance. Remember Prince Fielder's "bowling pin" home run celebration here following a walk-off shot in 2009? And how Barry Zito, armed with a pea shooter of a fastball, was tasked with dispensing frontier justice by hitting Fielder with a pitch the next spring?

It's hard to imagine anything from this series will spill into the following spring. The Brewers landed something better than a sucker punch. They dented Bumgarner's pride. They embarrassed him, as much as he tried to put an unaffected face on it.

But in some other ballpark, in some other season, against some other hitter and over some other grievance, this is bound to happen again with Bumgarner.

It's been several years since Giants manager Bruce Bochy was last asked whether he would talk to Bumgarner about reining in his orneriness on the mound. It's what makes him so good, Bochy would say. Nobody even bothers to ask the question anymore.

And really, it's hard to tell if Bumgarner is all bark and no bite, since we haven't ever seen the bite. Does he only pick fights with players that he knows will back down? Or is he hoping for the day when someone will charge him?

Is he Nolan Ryan, waiting for his Robin Ventura?

Perhaps one of these days, when Bumgarner asks an opponent if he wants some, the answer will come with a charge to the mound. And we'll all find out.

As if going 0-6 on a trip for the first time since 2015 wasn't bad enough, the Giants received yet another injury setback Sunday.

Ryder Jones, who was starting at first base in place of Brandon Belt, dislocated his left knee on a swing in the fifth inning and is almost certainly out for the season.

"It's a shame," Bochy said. "The kid was getting a chance to play up here and fix his swing, and that happens."

Jones also dislocated his knee in 2015 and said the injury cost him a month at Single-A San Jose. He said he was hopeful an MRI would not show that he sustained the same injury, but acknowledged the feeling was "déjà vu" to what he felt the previous time.

"My cleat stuck in the clay a little and my knee kept going," Jones said. "Yeah, it's tough. I wanted to be

able to end the season on a high note and take a positive feeling into the offseason. There's not much to do now. Just get healthy and cheer these guys."

Injuries are a major reason the Giants weren't able to stay in contention or make a push for the NL West title this season. Now injuries to Jones and Steven Duggar (shoulder surgery) are depriving them of important time that they want to use to develop players.

It makes these last three weeks seem more and more pointless, doesn't it?

"No question, it's easy to get in ... I hate to say shutdown mode, but to coast the rest of the way," Bochy said. "That's what we won't allow to happen here. We're playing the guys who are playing hard. There's always one or two that have to be reminded that these games are important to us, important to a lot of people.

"They do a good job of holding themselves accountable."

San Francisco Examiner

San Francisco Giants drop eighth straight as tempers flare

Ethan Kassel

The big left-hander's allegedly-intentional beaming of Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Ryan Braun in the sixth inning loaded the bases and led to a go-ahead grand slam by Jonathan Schoop.

That sent the Giants to a 6-3 loss — their eighth straight — and a sweep at the hands of a Brewers team that could provide a blueprint for how the Giants go about the rebuild that the front office won't call a rebuild.

Milwaukee's mix of talented youngsters and veteran trade acquisitions looked something like the Giants of prior years, with energy, clutch hitting and a lights-out bullpen. Much of that team was compiled through a window not unlike the one the present-day Giants are in, when a middling Brewers team sold off pieces, stocked the farm and prepared for a future that quickly arrived.

One of the reasons that future came to be was on the mound Sunday. Zach Davies, acquired from the Baltimore Orioles at the 2015 trade deadline in a trade for outfielder Gerardo Parra, won 17 games in 2017, and though he's been on the shelf much of the year with rotator cuff irritation, he's averaged 5 1/3 innings per start this season, with 7.1 strikeouts per nine innings

Davies did allow a leadoff homer to Gregor Blanco and a second run on a fifth-inning Blanco sacrifice fly, but allowing two runs over five innings is more than sufficient with the bullpen that backs up the Brewers' rotation.

St. Mary's product Corbin Burnes pitched the sixth and got the win after Schoop's grand slam. Though Joakim Soria allowed a run for the second straight day, Corey Knebel — who was previously demoted from the closer role — got a four-out save with both Jeremy Jeffress and Josh Hader overworked.

Braun had been the offensive sparkplug for Milwaukee (82-62) in the early innings, stinging an RBI double off Bumgarner in the first and lining out on a hard-hit ball in the fourth. That seemed to get under Bumgarner's skin, and he hit Braun to load the bases in the sixth. Braun initiated conversation,

and Bumgarner appeared to be welcoming of the challenge. Benches cleared and the ensuing argument led to the ejections of Brewers manager Craig Counsell and pitcher Wade Miley and catcher Jacob Nottingham — neither of whom were in the game.

Bumgarner has been absolutely dealing and appeared to be leading the Giants out of their skid before the dust-up. A two-out walk to Christian Yelich and a Jesus Aguilar single were the first baserunners he had allowed since the opening inning, snapping a string of 15 straight batters retired.

After players returned to their benches, Schoop hit the go-ahead slam, with the entire Brewers team celebrating on the field front of their dugout. It was undoubtedly their biggest celebration against the Giants since Prince Fielder's bowling ball celebration in 2009.

To make matters worse for San Francisco (68-76), the Giants also lost Ryder Jones — who homered on Saturday — to a season-ending dislocated kneecap. Jones injured himself as he fouled a pitch off in the fifth inning.

Santa Rosa Press Democrat
Hit batter sparks slam as Brewers beat Giants
Jim Hoehn

MILWAUKEE — Jonathan Schoop responded to a tense situation in the biggest way possible.

Schoop hit a grand slam after Ryan Braun was hit by a pitch in the sixth inning, and Milwaukee beat the San Francisco Giants 6-3 on Sunday, completing a series sweep and preserving the Brewers' lead in the NL wild-card race.

Milwaukee moved within two games of the first-place Cubs in the NL Central heading into a three-game series at Chicago.

In the sixth, Madison Bumgarner hit Braun with his third of three consecutive pitches inside to load the bases with two outs. Brewers players came a couple of steps out of the dugout, and manager Craig Counsell was ejected by plate umpire Tom Hallion.

Schoop, who had struck out in his first-two at-bats, then drove a 2-1 pitch from Bumgarner (5-6) over the wall in left to make it 5-2. It was Schoop's fourth homer since being acquired from Baltimore on July 31.

"I was a little bit mad, but I calmed myself down a little bit, don't let the moment get me," said Schoop, who had a slow start after his trade to Milwaukee but now has 10 RBIs in his past four games. "Just focus, breathe and calm myself down, so I could get a good pitch and put a good swing on it."

Bumgarner allowed a first-inning RBI double to Braun and then retired 15 straight before a two-out walk to Christian Yelich in the sixth. Jesus Aguilar singled to left, bringing up Braun. Bumgarner's first pitch was high and inside, spinning Braun off the plate, and then he threw inside again, triggering a stare-down between batter and pitcher. He then plunked Braun with his third pitch.

"I don't know if he thought I was trying to throw at him or what," Bumgarner said. "The second pitch was right over the middle of the plate but just up, too much. He looked at me. I don't know what he is

thinking or not thinking, but that didn't have any kind effect on what I'm trying to do out there."

Milwaukee remained 2½ games ahead of St. Louis for the top wild card spot. The Brewers, who play their next 15 games within the division, completed a 5-1 homestand, including taking two of three from the Cubs.

"We're looking forward to a fun series," Counsell said. "We're still behind. We've still got to try to put a dent in it and that's what we'll try to do."

The Giants, who have lost a season-high eight straight, pulled within 5-3 in the eighth on Austin Slater's RBI triple. Schoop added an RBI fielder's choice for the Brewers in the bottom half.

Rookie reliever Corbin Burnes (4-0) struck out two of the four batters he faced in the sixth. Corey Knebel retired all four hitters he faced for his 15th save in 18 opportunities.

Bumgarner allowed five runs on six hits in six innings, striking out four and walking one.

San Francisco took a 2-1 lead in the fifth against Zach Davies on Gregor Blanco's bases-loaded sacrifice fly. Davies allowed two runs on six hits in five innings.

Blanco opened the game with his second homer, sending a 1-2 pitch over the right-field wall. Braun answered with a two-out RBI double off the top of the wall in left-center.

"Obviously, it was a good way for us to respond as a team," Braun said of the sixth-inning rally. "For Schoopie to hit that grand slam was pretty cool, a cool moment for us. The intensity of the game was fun. I think it's a good learning experience for everybody, to kind of control your emotions in a big situation and find a way to win the game."

NOTES

In addition to Counsell, Brewers left-hander Wade Miley and reserve catcher Jacob Nottingham were ejected from the dugout in the sixth after warnings were issued to both benches.

The Brewers recalled RHP Freddy Peralta and RHP Taylor Williams from Triple-A Colorado Springs. Both Peralta and Williams had been sent down on Aug. 30. Williams is 0-3 with a 4.35 ERA in 50 relief appearances with the Brewers this season. Peralta, who opened the season at Triple-A, is 6-4 with a 4.40 ERA in 14 starts with Milwaukee.

Giants 1B Brandon Belt, scratched from Saturday's game with a sore right knee, was not in the starting lineup Sunday, but pinch-hit in the fifth after Ryder Jones injured his left knee while fouling off a pitch. Jones suffered a patellar dislocation, the Giants said. "Bizarre, trust me," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "It is unbelievable. ... I've seen it twice, and both times here. It is a freak accident. It is a shame. A kid getting the chance to play up here, takes a swing and does that." Bochy said he assumed Jones was done for the year. Jones will get an MRI today.