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Hall of Fame: Full speeches and top moments

Anthony Castrovine | MLB.com | July 29, 2018

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. -- There is no real mystery to the National Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony. The votes have long since been cast. The names have long since been announced. Between the time they get the official call and the time they board the bus that takes them to the induction site, those fortunate few welcomed into the hallowed Hall have ample opportunity to craft their speeches, calm their nerves, gather their emotions.

But then something happens. The bus actually arrives.

And reality arrives with it.

"You come through that cornfield and then you see that stage, that space, that tent and all those people who came out to see you go into the Hall of Fame," Chipper Jones said Sunday. "You think, 'I don't know if I'm ready for this.'"

Ready or not, the day arrived for Jones, for Jim Thome, for Vladimir Guerrero, for Trevor Hoffman, for Jack Morris and for Alan Trammell. One of the largest classes in Hall history generated, appropriately enough, one of the largest crowds in Hall history. An estimated 53,000 fans and family members packed the grass field outside the Clark Sports Center -- the second-largest attendance on record. And the 57 Hall of Famers in attendance were the most ever.

All these people showed on an idyllic, sun-splashed day that betrayed earlier forecasts threatening rain. They sat under pillowy clouds so still it

was as if the clouds themselves wanted to pause to appreciate the great players below. And they listened to the six new inductees express their gratitude for what this game has given them and their utter amazement to be in this fraternity of men.

"We stand here at the doorstep at one of the great shrines in all of sports," Hoffman said. "And each member of the Hall of Fame has a unique story."

The speeches were their opportunity to share those stories and to thank the many people who helped pave their path. Remarkably, there was no crying in baseball on this day. Not outright, at least. All six men managed to get through their prepared remarks without weeping. But there were still plenty of choked-back tears and plenty of moments that reminded you just how many people it truly takes to make a Hall of Famer.

Here were the highlights of the day:

Chipper Jones

Jones had more than just his speech to be nervous about. His wife, Taylor, was due to give birth to the couple's second child together literally any minute, which is why the Hall had him in the day's leadoff spot. The little boy had not yet arrived by the time the ceremony was over, but his name had already been decided -- Cooper.

"In honor of this occasion," Jones said.

Jones recognized his growing family and his baseball family with the Braves, whose great teams of the 1990s and 2000s have been rightly and roundly recognized in four of the last five induction ceremonies. Jones expressed enormous gratitude toward Hall of Fame manager Bobby Cox, who put Jones in the No. 3 hole as a rookie and watched him become an instant impact player on a World Series winner.

"You believed in me before I truly believed I belonged in the big leagues," Jones said. "Bobby, next to my parents, you had the biggest influence on my career than anybody. Thank you for drafting me, thank you for never hesitating to put the bat in my hands with the game on the line and thank you for never hesitating to believe in me."

And to the huge assemblage of Braves fans in attendance, doing the "Tomahawk Chop" as his name was called, Jones had a special message.

"You were the reason I never wanted to play anywhere else," he said. "I couldn't be prouder to go into the Hall of Fame today with an Atlanta 'A' on my cap."

Alan Trammell

Trammell's induction alongside Morris finally gave that great 1984 Tigers team its Hall of Fame recognition, but the man Trammell is most often associated with -- second baseman Lou Whitaker, who was his double-play partner for 19 years -- is still hoping to get his Hall call. Trammell did not let Whitaker -- or some incredible trivia -- go unnoticed.

"Lou and I were called up to the big leagues from Double-A on the same day," Trammell said. "We both played our first big league ballgame at Fenway Park on the same day. We both got hits in our first MLB at-bats, off the same pitcher, Reggie Cleveland. And we both got our last hits of our careers off the same pitcher, Mike Fetters. Can you believe that? Truly amazing.

"For all those years, it was Lou and Tram. Lou, it was an honor and a pleasure to play alongside you for all those years. It is my hope that someday, you'll be up here as well."

Trammell and Morris famously had to wait a long time to get up there. They both spent 15 years on the Baseball Writers' Association of America ballot without getting voted in. Their invitation finally arrived via the Modern Era Committee vote in December.

"When people ask me, 'Where were you when you received your phone call from the Hall of Fame?' I tell them I was standing in the aisle, deplaning my flight from the Winter Meetings," said Trammell, a special assistant to Tigers general manager Al Avila. "How can you describe your emotions in a time like that? I wanted to jump up and down and run and scream, but I didn't think that was appropriate in an aisle of a plane."

Trammell, a six-time All-Star and four-time Gold Glove winner, didn't jump and run and scream on this day, either. He simply delivered his speech with the same grace and dignity with which he played.

"I honestly didn't think this day would ever come," he said.

Vladimir Guerrero

On a day that was so big -- the size of the class, the size of the crowd, the enormity of the occasion -- Guerrero's speech was quite a contrast. He was quick and to the point, spending less than four minutes at the podium, with half of that time reserved for broadcaster Jose Mota's translation of his remarks from Spanish.

Guerrero, the first player to be inducted as an Angel, said that when he was a player he "wanted my bat to do the talking," and not much has changed there.

"I know I don't speak a whole lot," he said through Mota. "But let me tell you that I am so happy to be part of this group, because some of them I saw and watched play and I witnessed it, but also I got to play against a lot of them and it means a lot to me."

The first position player from the Dominican Republic to be enshrined in the Hall of Fame, Guerrero capped his induction speech by honoring his hometown of Nizao, D.R., where he first showed the tools that would make him one of the most talented outfielders of all time. His impact on the attendance figure was obvious, for there were many people waving the Dominican flag or the Canadian flag (in recognition of his time with the Montreal Expos). Air horns blared when his name was announced.

"Even more special today is that today we celebrate Father's Day in the Dominican Republic," he said. "Happy Father's Day to all the Dominican fathers."

Guerrero himself is a proud pop. His 19-year-old son, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. of the Blue Jays' organization, is the No. 1 prospect in baseball, per MLB Pipeline. The younger Guerrero was in the crowd and, after the ceremony, was due to head north to Triple-A Buffalo following a weekend promotion.

Trevor Hoffman

Hoffman, one of the all-time great closers, was the master of the changeup. And his career required a change of a different sort, as he was taken in the 11th round of the 1989 Draft as a shortstop before switching to pitching in 1993.

That was the background of what might have been the line of the day.

"It's an honor being up here with the other great shortstops of the game," he said. "Wink wink."

In addressing what it meant to make such an adjustment, Hoffman borrowed a line from a Hall of Famer of a different sort -- John Wooden.

"Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out," Hoffman said, quoting the legendary basketball coach.

Hoffman's circuitous route to this day made him all the more grateful for his enshrinement. When his professional career began, he might not have imagined he'd ever save a single game, much less 601. But once he became the Padres' closer, he was a constant.

"Wow, 15 years in one spot, and that spot's San Diego," he said. "Jackpot."

With, as Hoffman noted, "San Diego weather" at the scene of the induction, Hoffman felt like he hit the jackpot again.

Jack Morris

As with Trammell, Morris had an agonizing wait to get to this day, but that only amplified his appreciation for every moment of Hall of Fame week.

"It is extra special for me to be selected by my peers, the people I played with and competed against," Morris said. "And yes, thank you to the sportswriters. Whether you voted for me or not, thank you for keeping my name alive."

A respected workhorse, Morris won four World Series titles over his 18-year career and more games (162) than any other pitcher in the 1980s. He called being inducted with Trammell "a dream come true."

As he said, "1984 was an incredible year. I owe a huge thank you to Detroit."

Morris didn't spend nearly as long in his native Minnesota, but his one year there was memorable. And his 10-inning shutout in Game 7 of the Twins' 1991 World Series victory over the Braves was his seminal moment. Morris even thanked those Braves, noting that "it takes two teams to make a great World Series."

"The game has always been a part of what I am and who I have become," Morris said. "Many say that baseball is known as a game of failure. I

had plenty of challenges and failures, but it only made me work harder to find a path to success. It also didn't hurt to have a short memory."

Morris might have had a short memory, but he had a long wait. It proved to be another learning experience given to him by baseball.

"Winning and losing are facts of life," he said, "but it's how you deal with both that defines you. I believe in the human heart and the human spirit and no analytics can define them."

Jim Thome

Nobody -- not in this class and not in the history of this event -- invested himself more in the acceptance speech than Thome. How committed was he to the cause? When practicing it in front of his backyard hedges proved insufficient, Thome traveled to Cooperstown earlier this month. They set up a podium in the empty, open field, and he had a dress rehearsal the likes of which Hall employees had never seen.

"I felt like I wanted to do it," Thome had said before the event. "We did a lot of things to prepare."

And for Thome, induction day was a family affair. His 15-year-old daughter, Lila Grace Thome, a student of the arts, performed a beautiful rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the start of the event. Thome, therefore, was feeling emotional long before he closed things out with an eloquent speech that touched on growing up in Peoria, Ill., his love affair with Cleveland, his time in Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and Baltimore, his teammates and his family. But the first person he thanked was his mentor, Charlie Manuel.

"Charlie took a scrappy young kid who was anxious to hit a million home runs and actually encouraged those crazy dreams," Thome said. He told me I can hit as many home runs as I wanted to. ... I wouldn't be standing here if it wasn't for you. Thank you for everything, but most of all, thank you for your loyalty."

It was Manuel's suggestion that Thome replicate Roy Hobbs' pre-pitch stance from "The Natural" that helped launch a career in which Thome, a 13th-round Draft pick out of community college, hit 612 homers.

"For a kid who grew up in Peoria, Ill., hitting rocks in our gravel driveway on Southwest Drive with an aluminum bat until our neighbors couldn't take it anymore," Thome said, "this is the ultimate dream come true."

What truly came across -- both in Thome's speech and his preparation for it -- was his respect for the institution of the Hall of Fame and the city of Cooperstown. And the final words of the day, from a man commonly known as one of the nicest guys in the game, hit home most.

"My experience has taught me that, if you try to conduct yourself with authenticity and honesty, the end result is one of the most natural highs any human being can have," Thome said. "I'm so honored to be a part of something so special, something greater than the individual. It's been my great privilege to have played the game for as long as I did. And I can say this with certainty: the possibilities are just as important as the outcome. In living the dream that is MLB, the best part is not the result, but taking the journey with the people whose contributions make it all possible. Baseball is beautiful, and I am forever in its service."

Berrios labors through finale against Red Sox
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | July 29, 2018

BOSTON -- The Twins entered their four-game set at Fenway Park riding a three-game winning streak and took the first game of the series. But they left town as sellers, after the decision to trade Eduardo Escobar and Ryan Pressly on Friday, and also exited with three straight losses.

Right-hander Jose Berrios scuffled in the finale, lasting 4 2/3 innings, in a 3-0 defeat to the Red Sox on Sunday. It dropped the Twins nine games behind the first-place Indians in the American League Central heading into their three-game series against Cleveland that begins on Monday.

"He had trouble commanding the fastball, which led to other issues with his breaking ball," said acting manager Derek Shelton, who is at the helm with Paul Molitor in Cooperstown, N.Y., until Monday. "We've seen him command his fastball throughout the season. But today, it just wasn't the command he's usually had."

Berrios was off from the start, loading the bases with one out, only to escape the jam. He wasn't as fortunate in the second -- as he again loaded the bases but served up a two-run double to J.D. Martinez. Martinez did damage again in the fourth, ripping an RBI single off the Green Monster to score Andrew Benintendi after a double.

"They had a lot of baserunners the first three innings," Berrios said through an interpreter. "They were attacking me very well. Really good hitters. I couldn't locate my pitches early on, but my mentality was to keep attacking hitters."

Berrios gave up nine hits -- including three doubles -- and walked three before being removed in the fifth after giving up a single to Mookie Betts

with two outs. It was the fifth time in 22 starts this season that Berrios couldn't get through five frames. Lefty Gabriel Moya came on and got out of the inning, while fellow lefty Adalberto Mejia threw three scoreless innings in relief.

"Moya struggled a little bit yesterday, but came in and got Benintendi out," Shelton said. "And Mejia went through their lineup kind of like [Kyle] Gibson did [on Thursday] with his fastball and changeup -- [and] with his slider when he needed to. I think those are two positives to take out of today."

The offense, meanwhile, was held in check by right-hander Nathan Eovaldi, who was making his Red Sox debut after being traded from the Rays. Eovaldi, who gave up eight runs on nine hits in 2 2/3 innings against the Twins on July 13, scattered four hits over seven scoreless innings. He was helped by an incredible diving catch by center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. to rob Bobby Wilson of extra bases in the third.

"I wish we would've seen the version of Eovaldi we saw before the break," Shelton said. "The one thing different was he displayed a curveball he didn't throw last time. Efficient is the right word."

The Twins remain winless since becoming sellers -- and more moves are expected before Tuesday's non-waiver Trade Deadline, with impending free agents such as Brian Dozier, Lance Lynn and Fernando Rodney all possible trade candidates.

"Those are things that are out of my control -- and the rest of my teammates' control," Berrios said. "What we can do is just stay together and keep playing. My mentality is we can still turn this around and make something happen."

MORRISON NOT HAPPY WITH EDDINGS

Home-plate umpire Doug Eddings got into confrontations with both Twins and Red Sox players, including Brock Holt after a called third strike in the third and Eddie Rosario after a called check swing in the sixth. Eddings took his mask off both times and also got into it with Berrios in the first after Berrios asked about a pitch location on a walk to Martinez.

Minnesota first baseman Logan Morrison expressed his frustration with the situation postgame.

"I don't think he's a terrible umpire, by any means," Morrison said. "But the way he acted today, to both teams, that's not the way the game goes. ... Nobody came to see Doug Eddings umpire. They came to watch the Red Sox and Twins."

Eddings was not available for comment.

HE SAID IT

"I think you have to maintain course. We made a couple of trades before the Deadline. In the last 48 hours, things can heat up. I mean, who knows what happens in the game if somebody gets hurt, if somebody wants to push the pedal down and go after somebody else. But I think you just maintain course and go." -- Shelton.

UP NEXT

After a 10-game road trip, the Twins return home to host the first-place Indians in a three-game series that begins on Monday night at 7:10 p.m. CT. Right-hander Ervin Santana (0-0, 5.40 ERA) will make his second start of the season after allowing three runs over five innings against the Blue Jays. His fastball averaged roughly 90 mph, as he's still building arm strength after undergoing surgery on his right middle finger in February. The Indians will start rookie right-hander Shane Bieber (5-2, 4.80 ERA).

Trades add more depth to Twins' rich system

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | July 29, 2018

BOSTON -- With the trades of Eduardo Escobar and Ryan Pressly on Friday, an already deep Twins farm system added five Minor Leaguers, including four who immediately were ranked among Minnesota's Top 30 prospects, according to MLB Pipeline.

Escobar was sent to the D-backs for Class A prospects Gabriel Maciel, Jhoan Duran and Ernie De La Trinidad, while Pressly was traded to the Astros for prospects Jorge Alcala (Double-A) and Gilberto Celestino (Class A). Alcala is the top-ranked prospect among the group, checking as the club's No. 11 prospect, while Celestino (No. 14), Maciel (No. 17) and Duran (No. 22) rank among the Top 30.

"For us, that's very exciting," Twins general manager Thad Levine said. "By and large, we hadn't seen a lot of these players play first hand -- so we're relying heavily on the scouts and some of our [research and development] folks. The players that we got back have a chance to climb the ladder for us. We have what we believe to be a good farm system. I believe four of the top five will go right into our Top 30 prospects, and I think that's meaningful."

MLB Pipeline also updated its Top 100 list and re-ranked each club's Top 30 prospects this week, with four Twins prospects among the new Top 100. Shortstop Royce Lewis, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2017 Draft, leads the way as the No. 10 overall prospect, while the system also boasts

fast-rising outfielder Alex Kirilloff (No. 31), near-Major League-ready middle infielder Nick Gordon (No. 76), and flame-throwing right-hander Brusdar Graterol (No. 81).

Outfielder Trevor Larnach, the No. 20 overall pick in this year's Draft, isn't among the Top 100, but ranks as Minnesota's No. 6 prospect -- just behind left-hander Stephen Gonsalves (No. 5) and ahead of outfielder Brent Rooker (No. 7). Shortstop Wander Javier, out for the year with Tommy John surgery, right-hander Blayne Enlow and left-hander Lewis Thorpe round out the Top 10.

Alcala, 23, is the most advanced of the newly-added prospects and is expected to remain a starter. The hard-throwing Dominican Republic native posted a combined 3.29 ERA with 82 strikeouts and 35 walks in 79 1/3 innings between Class A Advanced Buies Creek and Double-A Corpus Christi. He's joined Double-A Chattanooga's roster.

Celestino, 19, has seen some action at Double-A this year, but has mostly played at Class A -- hitting .317/.383/.476 with four homers and 21 RBIs in 33 games. He's earned frequent comparisons to Cubs center fielder Albert Almora and is considered a potential leadoff hitter of the future. He's temporarily on Rookie-level Elizabethton's roster, but is expected to move up soon.

Maciel, a switch-hitter from Brazil, has joined Class A Cedar Rapids' roster. The 19-year-old batted .287/.362/.333 with one homer, 10 doubles and 14 stolen bases in 68 games with Class A Kane County. Maciel is considered athletic enough to stick in center and has impressive on-base skills. But he's lacked power, with four career homers in 180 games.

Duran, who is also at Cedar Rapids, is a projectable 6-foot-5 right-hander with a power sinker that sits in the mid-90s, with a solid curveball and a developing changeup. He had a 4.73 ERA with 71 strikeouts and 28 walks in 64 2/3 innings with Kane County this season, as his results haven't matched up with his stuff.

De La Trinidad, 22, isn't among the club's Top 30, but the left fielder was immediately moved up to Class A Advanced Fort Myers, after hitting .311/.403/.442 with eight homers, 56 RBIs, 13 doubles and two triples in 91 games at Kane County.

Jack Morris, in front of many Twins and Tigers fans, enjoys his Hall of Fame moment **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 30, 2018**

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. – Jack Morris looked out at one of the largest crowds to ever watch the Hall of Fame induction ceremony — a crowd that included several thousand Tigers fans and many Twins fans as well — and blurted a two-word introduction that he later admitted was corny.

“Helloooooooo, Cooperstown!” Morris bellowed as the audience cheered its approval.

He couldn't have thrown a better get-me-over breaking ball for strike one.

That move settled him down. And for the next 15 minutes and 29 seconds Sunday, the 63-year-old righthander passed out thank-yous to everyone important to his career, one in which he won 245 games over 18 years and four World Series titles with three franchises — the Tigers in 1984, the Twins in 1991 and the Blue Jays in 1992 and '93.

An estimated crowd of 53,000 attended the event, held on a field adjacent to the Clark Sports Center.

Among the 57 Hall of Famers seated behind Morris were Dave Winfield and Paul Molitor, with Molitor getting approval from Twins owner Jim Pohlad to leave the team during its series in Boston to attend the ceremony.

Morris, who graduated from Highland Park High School and attended Twins games at old Metropolitan Stadium, spoke of being the third player from the same town to be in the Hall of Fame.

“I'm also proud to have been teammates with St. Paul, Minnesota's Dave Winfield and Paul Molitor,” Morris said. “I'm thrilled to join you both here in Cooperstown as the third Hall of Famer from St. Paul.”

Morris' class includes Chipper Jones, Alan Trammell, Vladimir Guerrero, Trevor Hoffman and Jim Thome, the slugger who played for the Twins in 2010 and '11.

Trammell spent his entire 20-year playing career with Detroit, and Morris said it is “a dream come true” for the longtime friends and teammates to be part of the same Hall of Fame class. Both were voted in by the Modern Era committee after failing make it via Baseball Writers Association of America voting over a 15-year eligibility period.

“We signed together in 1976, spent 13 years together in Detroit,” Morris said. “And now, 42 years later, Cooperstown. Wow. Wow.”

Minutes earlier during his own speech, Trammell looked toward Morris, and the shortstop put a twist on a phrase popularized by legendary Tigers announcer Ernie Harwell.

“Like Ernie Harwell used to say, when the Tigers turned a double play, you get two for the price of one with Jack and I going in together,” Trammell said.

When it was time to talk about the 1991 Twins, Morris thanked manager Tom Kelly for allowing him to pitch the 10th inning in Game 7 of the World Series that year. He took a playful shot at Ron Gardenhire, who was the first coach Morris had who was younger than him. And he spoke of how Kirby Puckett’s memorable home run in Game 6 had a calming effect on him, for it gave him one more game to pitch.

Morris said he could not wait to get to the park on game days to see what hijinks that 1991 team was up to — with Puckett usually at the center of it. It was a one-year homecoming for Morris that paid off in many ways.

“It would be a dream come true to follow in the footsteps of my heroes,” Morris said, “Harmon Killebrew, Bob Allison, Tony Oliva, Jim Kaat and Rod Carew.”

Morris’ voice cracked a few times, especially when he spoke about his supportive family, but he avoided breaking down. His opening words were intentional, to help him relax as he addressed the throng of fans in front of him, while also making sure he did nothing that the Hall of Famers sitting behind him would rib him for at the dinner later that night.

Another complete game effort for No. 47, this time at a place he described as magical.

“God blessed us with a gorgeous day on a weekend that was maybe going to bring a lot of [wet] weather and so all of those things come into play,” Morris said, “and I’m looking out at the stands and I have those very same thoughts. There’s a lot of people who love this game. How lucky are we?”

Twins, Jose Berrios drop series finale 3-0 to Red Sox at Fenway Park
Phil Miller | Star Tribune | July 30, 2018

BOSTON – The Twins were hoping that their front office would supplement their roster, not subtract from it, for a run at the postseason. On Sunday, they were reminded why.

Nathan Eovaldi, a righthander the Twins clobbered when he pitched for the scuffling-along Rays just two weeks ago, appeared electrified and invigorated by his sudden transfer to the top of the standings. The Twins, meanwhile, looked like a team deflated by its front office’s trade-deadline sell-off. Eovaldi, making his Red Sox debut, outpitched Jose Berrios with seven shutout innings, and the Twins lost their third game in a row, falling 3-0 at Fenway Park.

Maybe it wasn’t the hangover from losing longtime, popular players Eduardo Escobar and Ryan Pressly that caused the Twins to sleepwalk at the plate. Twins players and fill-in manager Derek Shelton disputed that notion, pointing out that they were facing the best team in baseball on its home turf.

But they also managed only four hits Sunday, two of them infield singles, and have gone 15 innings without scoring a run. No Twins player has reached third base since the sixth inning Saturday night.

“Definitely deflating,” Logan Morrison said after taking an 0-for-3 courtesy of Eovaldi, his former teammate. “But it’s not so much the trades, it’s really more about just not scoring runs. It’s easy to be excited when you’re scoring runs and getting hits. When the bats are quiet, the dugout tends to be quiet.”

And what terrific timing: Minnesota opens a three-game series with first-place Cleveland at Target Field on Monday, but the Twins’ chances of making a charge in the AL Central were seriously damaged over the past week. They arrived in Boston surprisingly buoyant over their sweep in Toronto, and talking about their determination to make the final 60 games count. They depart Fenway Park trailing the Indians by nine games, and facing the prospect of being stripped of even more veterans before Tuesday’s deadline.

“You have to maintain course. We made a couple of trades, [and] in the last 48 hours, things can heat up,” Shelton said. “Who knows what happens?”

Berrios isn’t going anywhere, but he too appeared unusually afflicted Sunday. Just two starts removed from his All-Star appearance, the righthander was strafed for a career-high nine hits by Boston’s best-in-the-business lineup, while recording only 14 outs. Berrios walked three and hit a batter, too, and put runners on base in all five innings. In three of them, Boston loaded the bases.

That Berrios allowed only three runs was remarkable, and an indication of his ability to pitch out of trouble. Yes, J.D. Martinez hit a sharp grounder to the wall in left field for a double that brought home two runs, and then singled home Andrew Benintendi in the fourth. But he was the only hitter having success in the clutch; the Red Sox were 2-for-10 with runners in scoring position against Berrios.

“That’s a testament to who Josie is as a pitcher, and his maturation,” Shelton said. “He went out there without his best stuff, against one of the best lineups in baseball, and he was still able to get himself out of jams. Even when he’s off, he can still contain things.”

It was Eovaldi who did most of the containing, though. The same pitcher who was pummeled for eight runs and retired only eight hitters in Target Field just before the All-Star break was simply dominating, needing only 82 pitches to complete seven innings. In part, Shelton said, the reason was a curveball that Eovaldi didn’t have a chance to show in their last meeting.

“It wasn’t a pitch that JRo [hitting coach James Rowson] had seen before,” Shelton said. “He used it well, dropped it in for strikes and then was able to expand with it. It took us by surprise and ended up being really effective.”

Twins' Dozier, Lynn and Duke on trading block as deadline nears **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 30, 2018**

The Twins are willing to deal second baseman Brian Dozier, lefthander Zach Duke and righthander Lance Lynn as Tuesday’s nonwaiver trade deadline creeps closer, according to Major League Baseball sources.

After trading infielder Eduardo Escobar and reliever Ryan Pressly on Friday — receiving a total of five prospects in return — the Twins would like to make the best of a disappointing season, continue to add to their inventory of prospects and look ahead to the offseason, when they will have payroll flexibility.

Dealing Dozier, Duke or Lynn isn’t that simple. Since all three are headed to free agency, the Twins don’t figure to receive a lot in return.

Another hurdle is performance. Dozier is batting only .224 with 16 home runs. Lynn is 7-8 with a 5.10 ERA, although he has had some encouraging outings of late. Duke had a 3.62 ERA and is walking 3.6 batters per nine innings. But he hasn’t given up a home run all season.

Teams have shown interest in righthander Kyle Gibson, but it will take a lot for the Twins to move a player they drafted, developed and who is starting to turn the corner. Gibson, 5-7 with a 3.42 ERA, is arbitration-eligible after the season and is a candidate to receive a multiyear contract offer. The Twins prefer to have Gibson be part of their rotation next season.

Speaking of offers, the Twins looked into signing Escobar to a multiyear deal during the season, but they were unable to build momentum toward one, sources confirmed. Escobar, who was dealt to the Diamondbacks for three prospects, will be a free agent in the offseason. He was very comfortable with the Twins and could re-sign with them, but that doesn’t happen very often.

Jim Thome took plenty from his Twins years **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 29, 2018**

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. – Jim Thome was teary-eyed before he could say a single word.

That’s because his 15-year-old daughter, Lila, walked onto the stage and perfectly sang “The Star-Spangled Banner” before the ceremony began. He walked up to her at the end of the performance, wrapping her up in his still-massive arms for a hug.

“She sang beautifully,” Jim Thome said. “For the Hall of Fame to give her the opportunity was amazing.”

The day couldn’t start any better for Thome, whose 612 home runs — many of them prodigious — propelled him to this day. Paul Bunyan with a bat is now a Hall of Famer. The final speaker of the afternoon, Thome further cemented his status as one of the nicest men in baseball as he praised seemingly everyone who helped him along the way — and made fans of the six teams he played for feel as if he spent his entire career with their club.

“I wore six uniforms in my career,” he said, “and every time I pulled one on, I had the honor of representing a community with each its own identity.”

When he spoke of Minnesota, the team with which he hit his 600th home run, he mentioned the “endless blue skies for day games in Minneapolis.”

On Friday, Thome even attended a reception for longtime Akron Beacon-Journal reporter Sheldon Ocker, this year’s winner of the Spink Award for excellence in baseball writing. Thome said he appeared out of respect for someone who had covered him for years with the Indians.

Thome played only 179 games with the Twins, 108 in 2010 and 71 in 2011 before he was traded back to Cleveland. But he left his mark with some whopper home runs while being a popular teammate.

“The Twins organization is great, and to this day my wife and I talk about those amazing people we met while being part of those fundamentally sound Twins teams led by Ron Gardenhire, Cuddy [Michael Cuddyer], [Justin] Morneau, [Joe] Mauer and Shredder [Nick] Punto, just to name a few,” Thome said. “Those postgame celebrations were epic.”

Punto, who played with Thome with the Phillies as well, and Morneau made the trip to Cooperstown for the ceremony. Punto waved a large picture of Thome’s face on a stick during the speech.

“Obviously, what he means to me as a person and player,” said Thome, who played golf with Punto on Saturday. “Mournie, the same way.”

Fans wearing Phillies, Indians and Twins jerseys cheered frequently as Thome talked about hitting rocks in his family’s driveway in Peoria, Ill., to being a 13th-round draft pick to being enshrined in Cooperstown following a 22-year career.

“I’m so honored to be a part of something so special, something greater than the individual,” Thome said. “It’s been my great privilege to have played the game for as long as I did. In living the dream that is Major League Baseball, the best part is not the result, but taking the journey with the people whose contributions make it all possible.”

Umpire Doug Eddings gets under Twins' skin **Phil Miller | Star Tribune | July 30, 2018**

BOSTON – Home plate umpire Doug Eddings got into a confrontation with Boston’s Brock Holt after a called third strike in the third inning, an escalation that caused manager Alex Cora to hurry out to prevent his player from being ejected.

The Twins could commiserate.

Eddings was hostile and argumentative all day, players said afterward, with Logan Morrison saying, “I’m not going to tolerate it.”

Morrison was offended by Eddings’ demeanor toward Twins starter Jose Berrios in the first inning. When Berrios threw a fastball low to J.D. Martinez for ball four, Berrios asked if the pitch was too low. Eddings said yes, and Berrios turned his back to prepare for the next batter.

When he turned back around, Eddings was standing in front of the plate, his mask off, angrily waiting to get Berrios’ attention.

“He said again, ‘Yeah, it was down,’ ” Morrison recalled, but it was his attitude, not his words, that he objected to. “It was a ‘How dare you question my authority’ type deal, and that’s not the way the game goes. ... The reaction it caused was not warranted.”

Eddie Rosario also had words with Eddings, objecting when the home plate umpire ruled he didn’t check his swing in time on a sixth-inning third strike, without asking for help from a base umpire. “Rosie didn’t come at him in any way, but yet he’s chasing him with his mask off,” Morrison said. “Walk away. Turn your shoulder. There’s no need for it. Nobody came to see Doug Eddings umpire. They came to watch the Red Sox and Twins.”

Morrison said Eddings is known as a “you’ve got to watch what you say” umpire, “and that’s fine. ... But what I saw today was not acceptable.”

Eddings is not a bad umpire, Morrison said, “not by any means. But the way he acted today ... sometimes I think we need to do a better job of keeping our officials in line.”

Mejia finding role

Adalberto Mejía has remained with the Twins all week, wondering when he would pitch again. He found out Sunday: For now, he’s a reliever.

The lefthander pitched three innings against the Red Sox, and allowed only one hit while striking out four. It was an impressive follow-up to his start Monday in Toronto, when he gave up just one run in 5½ innings.

“He pounded the zone and came after guys. It’s a really good sign for us,” said bench coach Derek Shelton, who filled in for manager Paul Molitor on Sunday. “A kid that comes in here in a 3-0 game and gets the heart of their lineup and he just goes fastball/changeup. That’s not an easy thing to do.”

Mejia said he is willing to do it more often, too, if it’ll keep him in the majors. He knows it’s not likely at the moment, barring a trade.

“I understand the situation — there’s five starters and I’m probably the sixth,” he said. “If the team needs to use me this way, then so be it. I just want to be here and help the team win.”

Etc.

- Addison Reed walked two and struck out one in a 21-pitch scoreless seventh inning for Class AAA Rochester at Louisville on Sunday, two days after he threw 17 pitches while giving up a run on a pair of doubles in his first rehab appearance. The Twins plan to make a decision about what to do next with the righthander, who is preparing to return from a triceps strain.
- Max Kepler had hoped to return to the lineup Sunday, but after doing some throwing during batting practice, Shelton chose to give him another day of rest. Kepler’s right shoulder was bandaged after the game, where he had crashed into the Fenway Park wall on Friday night. Kepler pinch-hit for Bobby Wilson in the eighth inning and took a called third strike.

Jack Morris, from his speech and on his plaque
Staff Report | Star Tribune | July 29, 2018

Jack Morris from his speech

“As early as 6 years old, I remember telling my mom I was going to play in the big leagues someday for the Minnesota Twins, and I believed it would happen. I’ll never forget my excitement of seeing my first big-league game at Metropolitan Stadium. It was magical and left an everlasting impression on me.”

On his plaque

John Scott Morris “Jack”

Detroit, A.L. 1977-90; Minnesota, A.L., 1991; Toronto, A.L., 1992-93; Cleveland, A.L., 1994

Intense competitor with a spirited drive and determination who propelled his teams as staff ace. Three-time 20-game winner and five-time All-Star harnessed split-fingered fastball to become winningest pitcher of the 1980s. Won 19 regular season games — and each of his three postseason appearances — for Detroit’s 1984 juggernaut. Durable workhorse totaled 175 complete games, most of any pitcher since 1975, and made record 14 straight Opening Day starts. Winner of four world championship rings with three clubs. Earned 1991 World Series M.V.P. honors, carrying Minnesota to title with 10-inning shutout in Game 7.

Jim Thome, from his speech and on his plaque
Staff Report | Star Tribune | July 29, 2018

Jim Thome from his speech

“This is the ultimate dream come true. I was only in college for a short time before being drafted, but I can’t imagine any fraternity experience I could have had would have better than this one. This is the ultimate fraternity.”

On his plaque

James Howard Thome “Jim”

Cleveland, A.L., 1991-2002, 2011; Philadelphia, N.L., 2003-05, 2012; Chicago, A.L., 2006-09; Los Angeles, N.L., 2009; Minnesota, A.L., 2010-11; Baltimore, A.L., 2012

Lefty slugger powered his way through 22-year major league career, amassing 612 home runs with a textbook uppercut swing. Authored six seasons of at least 40 homers and 12 seasons with 30-or-better. Drove in 1,699 runs, including nine years with 100-or-more. Drew 1,747 walks, pacing the A.L. three times. Led Cleveland to 1995 and 1997 A.L. pennants as key member of Indians renaissance. Five-time All-Star first baseman began career at third base. Became eighth player to top 600 home runs, requiring the second-fewest at-bats to do so.

Sunday's Twins-Boston game recap
Phil Miller | Star Tribune | July 29, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Nathan Eovaldi, Boston

Only four Twins reached base in his seven impeccable innings, two of them on infield singles, as the righthander won his Red Sox debut.

BY THE NUMBERS

41 Games above .500 for the Red Sox, a level of success the Twins have not reached since 1965.

11 Season-series victories by Boston over the Twins in the past 12 seasons; the Red Sox won this year's series 4-3.

9 Hits given up by Jose Berrios, tying his career high for most in a game.

Twins-Cleveland series preview

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | July 29, 2018

Three-game series at Target Field

Monday, 7:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

RHP Ervin Santana (0-0, 5.40) vs. RHP Shane Bieber (5-2, 4.80)

Tuesday, 7:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

RHP Kyle Gibson (5-7, 3.42) vs. RHP Trevor Bauer (9-6, 2.32)

Wednesday, 12:10 p.m. • Facebook, 830-AM

RHP Lance Lynn (7-8, 5.10) vs. RHP Carlos Carrasco (12-5, 3.89)

Twins update

These are the first of 10 games remaining with the division leaders, and the final ones at Target Field this year. The Twins are 6-3 against the Indians this year, including 1-1 in Puerto Rico and 3-1 in Minneapolis. They travel to Cleveland for a four-game series beginning next Monday. ... In eight starts with the Twins against Cleveland, Santana owns a 2.82 ERA. ... OF Eddie Rosario's .305 batting average ranks seventh in the AL. ... Eight of OF Max Kepler's 49 career home runs have come against Cleveland, but none this year. He is 6-for-33 (.182) against the Indians in 2018. ... 3B Miguel Sano, back in the majors following Friday's trade that sent Eduardo Escobar to Arizona, is a career .186 hitter (33-for-177) against Cleveland, with 30 strikeouts. But he has homered seven times. ... RHP Fernando Rodney is 22-for-28 in save opportunities but has blown three of his past eight. ... Wednesday's game will not be televised but will be available online at Facebook.

Cleveland update

The Indians are only 5-4 since the All-Star break but still own a nine-game lead in their quest for a third consecutive AL Central title. ... They are 24-26 on the road but 7-2 away from home in July. ... LHP Brad Hand, a graduate of Chaska High School, was acquired along with RHP Adam Cimber on July 19 from San Diego. Hand, who has one save and has given up one run in 3⅓ innings since joining the Indians, has only one career major league appearance at Target Field. ... 3B Jose Ramirez is second in the AL in home runs (30), third in RBI (73) and second in stolen bases (23). ... Bieber has made only eight major league starts, but the first two were against the Twins. Bieber has a 3.97 ERA in those games, but Cleveland won both. ... Carrasco has started three games against the Twins in 2018, and the Twins have won them all. ... The Indians are without OF Lonnie Chisenhall (calf), OF Tyler Naquin (hip), RHPs Danny Salazar (shoulder) and Josh Tomlin (hamstring) and LHP Andrew Miller (knee).

Jack Morris joins Dave Winfield, Paul Molitor in St. Paul wing at Hall of Fame

Dane Mizutani | Pioneer Press | July 29, 2018

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Jack Morris took center stage on Sunday afternoon with more than 50,000 fans in front of him and a pair of St. Paul baseball legends behind him.

While it's arguable which of the two made him more nervous on this particular day, Morris said he couldn't be prouder to be joining Dave Winfield and Paul Molitor as St. Paul natives in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

“I’m thrilled to join them both in Cooperstown as the third hall of famer from St. Paul,” Morris said late in his induction speech.

The three were born within five years of each other and within a few miles of each other. Winfield, 66, Morris, 63, and Molitor, 61, each made a name for themselves growing up and playing ball in St. Paul. They were the best of the best, and whenever they stepped on the diamond, the rest of the kids in the neighborhood knew it.

“Think about that,” Molitor said, pausing as he thought about how crazy it is that the trio is now in the Hall of Fame “A very small geographical area that produced three players who are part of baseball immortality.”

Morris never played with Winfield as a kid, though he had definitely had heard of him. Winfield’s reputation as a dominant pitcher for Central High School preceded him.

“He used to stride halfway to home plate and he grunted like a dragon,” Morris said. “It scared the crap out of people. I remember watching him pitch a game in American Legion when I was a kid. I went to a game over at Dunning Field to watch him pitch, and I’m going, ‘That’s different. I haven’t seen that.’ ”

Winfield went on to star for the University of Minnesota, with Morris and Molitor holding down the ballfields back in St. Paul.

“We played against each other probably from when we were 12 years old on up,” Morris said of Molitor. “He was a great athlete. His reputation back when I was a kid was, ‘There’s the best player in our town right there.’ ”

They rarely played each other in high school games — Morris at Highland Park High School; Molitor at Cretin-Derham Hall. Most of their battles came during the summer American Legion season.

“You knew it was going to be something because he was different than anybody else at that time,” Molitor said, noting how Morris was always a bit of an unknown on the mound — with noted control problems. “I remember him hitting a kid on our team in the face with a pitch. It was one of the ugliest things I’d seen at that level.”

As both players grew up, they went their separate ways, Morris blazing his own trail at Brigham Young University and Molitor staying home to play for the University of Minnesota.

After that, Winfield, Morris and Molitor wouldn’t cross paths again until nearly 20 years down the road, as teammates with the Toronto Blue Jays.

In Toronto, Morris and Winfield played together in 1992, and Morris and Molitor played together in 1993. The Blue Jays won the World Series both seasons with the kids from St. Paul playing a major role in the success.

Now the trio will live together forever in Cooperstown.

“We are all very proud of it,” Morris said. “I’m the last guy to join the group. It means a lot to all of us.”

Take a look at Jack Morris’ Hall of Fame acceptance speech

Staff Report | Pioneer Press | July 29, 2018

Jack Morris’ acceptance speech at the Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony Sunday in Cooperstown, N.Y.:

Hello, Cooperstown!

I am humbled and honored to be with all of you today. Above all, I give thanks to God for His many blessings. Thank you, commissioner (Rob) Manfred. Thank you, Jane Forbes Clark, for all that you have done and continue to do to make this place so special. Jeff Idelson, thanks for being so supportive for so many years, and the Hall of Fame staff for all that you’ve done for me and my family.

To all the men behind me, thank you for all that you have brought to the game of baseball and all that you have brought out in me. You have inspired me and helped to elevate my game.

To the committee who voted me into the Hall of Fame, thank you so much. It is extra special to me to be selected by my peers, the people I played with and competed against.

Yes, thank you to the sports writers for your support for the 15 years I was on the ballot. Whether you voted for me or not, thank you for keeping my name alive. Thank you to all the fans for being here today to share this with all of us.

I can't possibly thank everyone that has contributed to my baseball journey. I hope to be able to thank you all in person in the near future.

Congratulations to my fellow inductees, Chipper, Tram, Vlady, Trevor and Jim. What an honor it is to be inducted with all of you.

As early as 6 years old, I remember telling my mom I was going to play in the big leagues someday for the Minnesota Twins, and I believed it would happen. I'll never forget my excitement of seeing my first big-league game at Metropolitan Stadium. It was magical and left an everlasting impression on me.

Life was simple then, but the kids in our neighborhood spent countless hours emulating our heroes and practicing the game. After high school, I attended Brigham Young University hoping to advance my baseball skills and get the exposure necessary for a professional career. To my college coach, Glen Tuckett, thank you for being here today, Coach. You taught me a lot during those wonderful years in Utah. Coach, I also need to confess one thing: I went skiing way more than you ever realized.

In 1976, after three years in college, I was drafted by the Detroit Tigers. I had no idea how I would come to appreciate and love the hard-working people of Michigan and Detroit. I will always cherish the friendships I made there. My teammates, coaches, managers in my Detroit years taught me what winning was all about. Many of us players came up together through the amateur draft, the minor leagues, instructional league, and even winter ball. Could any of us have guessed who would finally make it to the major leagues?

Each of us came from a different background. We had unique personalities. The late nights and laughter we shared on bus rides and road trips created a bond. We grew together in the minor leagues and eventually won together in the major leagues. I appreciate all of my teammates in my Detroit years. Thank you, Jim Leyland, for your tough love that I needed during our time together. Your encouragement helped me to realize that I never want to go back to the minor leagues.

Dick Tracewski, thanks for making me smile and laugh at myself and for your lifelong love and commitment to our game. 1984 was an incredible year. A 35-5 start, wire-to-wire in first place, and a world championship that brought joy to a lot of people.

I owe a huge thank you to Detroit. I know Sparky Anderson is with us here today. He taught me so many things, especially to respect this great game. In 1980, I was struggling late in games. Sparky told me he had confidence in me, but that I needed to finish games to rest the bullpen. He said he couldn't tell me how to do it, wasn't coming out to get me, so I shouldn't look for any help. He taught me a valuable lesson by allowing me to fail and fight through adversity.

I understood what my role was, and appreciated his willingness to guide me into being a complete-game pitcher. Our conversation had a huge impact on my role in baseball. Thank you pitching coach Roger Craig. Even though we didn't always agree, I knew you were always in my corner.

To go into the Hall of Fame with my friend and teammate Alan Trammell is a dream come true. We signed together in 1976, spent 13 years together in Detroit, and now 42 years later, Cooperstown. Wow, wow. Thanks to the owners in Detroit, John Fetzer and Tom Monaghan, and a special thanks to Mike and Chris Ilitch for what you've done for me and the city of Detroit.

People ask me the question all the time: Who is your toughest out? It happened in my first trip in Boston to Fenway Park. The PA announcer, Sherm Feller, had a unique way of introducing players. I will never forget what he said: "Batting third, left fielder, No. 8, Yastrzemski. Carl Yastrzemski, No. 8." It was a memorable moment.

My first pitch: fastball, on the corner, down and away, perfect pitch — ball one. Second pitch, on the black, down and in, perfect pitch — ball two. The next pitch was a fastball, underneath his hands, another perfect pitch — ball three. I just shook my head and wondered if this was the way it was going to be when a rookie faces a great player for the first time.

The fourth pitch was a fastball down the middle. I needed to throw a strike. Whack! Line drive off the Green Monster in left. As Yaz was rounding first, heading to second, I heard footsteps. I turned around to see home plate umpire, Ron Luciano, coming towards me. He said, Jack Morris, that's Carl Yastrzemski, he's one step away from the Hall of Fame. Welcome to the big leagues.

Yaz's at-bat was the toughest I ever had to endure, but it was nothing compared to having to face George Brett for 15 years. Pretty sure every guy behind me got a few hits off me.

In 1991, I had a chance to go back to Minnesota and complete the dream I had as a young boy. It would be a dream come true to follow in the footsteps of my heroes — Harmon Killebrew, Bob Allison, Tony Oliva, Jim Kaat, and Rod Carew. I knew the Twins had a talented group of ballplayers, and free agency worked very well for me that year. The team chemistry was special, and every day I couldn't wait to get to the ballpark to see what was going to unfold.

We had so much fun in the clubhouse with Kirby Puckett as our ringleader. His home run in Game 6 of the (1991) World Series brought a calm over me that I had never experienced. He gave us an opportunity to play one more day, and I could not wait to pitch and have my chance in Game 7.

Thank you to my locker mate, Ron Gardenhire. You were the first coach I had who was younger than me, and I'm sure I never, ever let you forget that. Thank you for your lifelong passion of our game.

Tom Kelly's leadership cultivated another world championship that couldn't have been scripted any better. Thank you, T.K., for believing in me. I will always be grateful for your decision to leave me in Game 7. We were two teams that went from last to first, playing for the title. I want to thank all of my teammates for that great experience, and all of the Twins fans who were our 10th player.

I also want to thank the equally talented Atlanta Braves for your effort, which made it such a great World Series. It takes two evenly matched teams to make a classic. Thanks to the Pohlad family and Dave St. Peter for all that you have done for me.

My ride continued in '92 and '93 to Toronto. It was another great city with extremely talented baseball players that included Robbie Alomar and Ricky Henderson. I am also proud to have been teammates with St. Paul, Minnesota's Dave Winfield and Paul Molitor. I'm thrilled to join you both here in Cooperstown as the third hall of famer from St. Paul.

My years in Toronto were like playing on all-star teams, and my time spent in Canada is always appreciated. For two summers, Jays fans packed the SkyDome and gave us a huge home-field advantage, with the record-setting attendance. Like Sparky and T.K., Cito Gaston was a perfect fit for that group of guys. Thank you, Cito.

My favorite memory in Toronto came the night I signed my contract with them. Team president Paul Beeston invited me to dinner in celebration of my signing. After dinner, at the end of the evening, he proposed a toast to Jack Morris, the newest member of the Toronto Blue Jays, "May you never know how much more I was willing to pay you." I have loved that man ever since.

In 1994, it was on to Cleveland where I played with talented teammates including Eddie Murray and newly inducted Hall of Famer, Jim Thome. We all felt that a championship run was a possibility if not for the labor dispute that ended the season before any postseason games were played. Thank you to Cleveland's owner, Richard Jacobs.

Over the last 18 years I've surprised many by joining the media and working in TV and radio as a baseball analyst. Who would have ever thought? Thank you to the Detroit Tigers, Minnesota Twins and Toronto Blue Jays for your support. Thank you to Fox Sports North, Fox Sports Detroit, and a special thanks to all my friends at MLB.com.

My success and accomplishments would not have been possible without the sacrifice and support of my family and friends. Thank you for your effort in being here today to share this with me. I love you all.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for everything you taught me and have done for me. Mom, I know you're smiling down on us today. Dad, thank you for instilling in me the work ethic that was so vital to my success. But more than that, you showed equal love to all your children. Thank you both for everything.

My sister, Marsha, you've been a loyal fan and a huge support system my entire life. I can't thank you enough.

My brother, Tom, you've always been my best friend, and I consider you one of the best human beings I've ever known.

My two older sons, Austin and Erik, I'm proud of what each of you have become. We shared some of my greatest baseball memories together, and I especially cherish the summer of 1994 where you spent time with me in Cleveland. I look forward to our future journeys together and spending more time with you and your families.

My youngest son, Miles, I'm so grateful to share this experience with you since you weren't able to see your dad play. You've brought a lot of joy into my life in my post-baseball years. I can't wait to see what your future has in store for you.

I'm also grateful to share this day with my daughter-in-laws, Laura and Jennifer, and my six grandchildren, Olivia, birthday girl Lucy, Kate, Patrick, Jax, and a granddaughter on the way.

Finally, my wife Jennifer, I can't begin to cover it all. Thank you for inspiring me in so many ways. You've shown me that balance is important in my life and have reminded me at times that there is more to life than baseball. Our family is the most important thing to me in my life. I love you.

With age comes more aches and pains, gray hair, if you're lucky, but also wisdom and perspective. The game has always been a part of who I am and what I have become. It has somehow been connected to almost every lesson that I've learned in life. To be successful, I believe it takes

practice, patience, focus, concentration, work ethic, desire, determination, trust, will and confidence, and more practice.

Many say that baseball is known as a game of failure. I had plenty of challenges and failures, but it only made me work harder to find a path to success. It also didn't hurt to have a short memory. Work can be rewarding as long as you keep your goals attainable.

Whether in Little League or in the big leagues, I would encourage all baseball players to learn the history of our game. Learn about the great players behind me. Learn about the owners and the history of the players union. Only then will you have a better understanding of who you are and where you fit into its history.

Baseball is a team sport played by individuals, and so is life. Winning and losing are facts of life, but it's how you deal with both that defines you.

I believe in the human heart and human spirit, and no analytics can define them. There is no telling what you can accomplish if you have the will and desire to try. God blessed me with a gift, and it was meant to be shared with others. My life in baseball has been an incredible journey, and I am grateful for everything.

I want to thank you again for sharing this wonderful day with me. Praise be to God. Thank you.

'Hello, Cooperstown!' St. Paul's Jack Morris takes his place in Hall of Fame
Dane Mizutani | Star Tribune | July 29, 2018

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Jack Morris cried on Sunday afternoon. Just like he thought he would.

After belting out a rousing "Hello, Cooperstown!" to open his speech, his eyes started to well up with tears late in his speech, the dam bursting at about the 11:45 mark when he started talking about his family.

While he quickly composed himself, it was a strange sight, especially considering the big, bad Morris made a career out of being the gruffest competitor on the field, the very definition of the idea that there's no crying in baseball.

It was emotional for the 63-year-old St. Paul native because he never thought he'd be in this position. After baseball writers opted not to vote him into the National Baseball Hall of Fame during his 15 years on the ballot, Morris had come to peace with the fact that he might never make it into the exclusive club.

And then, six months ago, Little Jack Morris from St. Paul got the call telling him he had been voted in by the Modern Era Committee.

"I was literally shocked because I had been prepared, like I had been for so long before, to go through it again, and not get in," Morris said. "I was in a good place. And I think it was good for me to be in a good place. It made it more special."

Jack Morris' Hall of Fame plaque. (Milo Stewart Jr. / National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum)

Morris entered the Hall of Fame alongside former teammate Alan Trammell, also voted in by the Modern Era Committee, and Chipper Jones, Vladimir Guerrero, Trevor Hoffman and Jim Thome.

"I think the one thing that makes it special for us is the fact that we're older," Morris said. "We can put it in perspective in a way that a lot of the younger guys can't. It's just different. We appreciate it because we've been through a little bit more of an ordeal to get here."

Morris has made the most of Hall of Fame Weekend.

Whether it was playing a round on Leatherstocking Golf Course with his three sons — Austin, Erik and Miles — or making appearances at the countless parties around town, Morris has been like a kid in a candy store making up for lost time.

"I was joking with my wife that I've never hugged so many grown men in my entire life," Morris said. "It's been so much fun."

"I think everybody should feel something like this at some point in their life. It is genuinely a great group of guys that love each other. They are welcoming this group of guys just like they're part of the family. That's what makes it so cool."

OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL

One of the more polarizing Hall of Fame inductees of the modern era, Morris is a perfect representation of the longstanding debate between old school vs. new school.

He won more games than anyone in the 1980s, yet carries a 3.90 career earned-run average, highest of any pitcher at Cooperstown. He won four World Series with three franchises, yet only contributed 44 wins above replace over 18 full seasons, which ties him for 416th all time with current

Chicago Cubs utility player Ben Zobrist.

“I was the guy that got caught up in that debate of old school vs. new school, the debate of eye test vs. analytics,” Morris said. “Maybe more so than anybody ever will again. It is what it is.”

Morris claims he isn’t mad at the writers for not voting him in during his 15 years on the ballot. He credits his wife, Jennifer, with not letting him hold on to that resentment.

“She kept reminding me that it was out of my control,” Morris said. “I came to peace with it. After that, quite honestly, I didn’t worry about it. I didn’t care. I believed in my heart of hearts, that if I made it to the Hall of Fame, it was going to be on the ballot from my peers. That’s the way it worked out.”

It’s clear that Morris, and his performance on baseball’s biggest stage, resonated most amongst his peers. He always seemed to rise to the occasion when it mattered most, and his masterful 10-inning shutout for the Twins in Game 7 of the 1991 World Series will go down as one of the greatest postseason performances ever.

“I think the guys that voted me in know what I’m about,” Morris said. “They knew I was a competitor. They knew I took the ball. They knew I pitched through pain. They knew I wanted to finish the games.”

Morris also referenced going a 4-for-4 in the World Series, winning once with Detroit Tigers (1984), once with the Twins (1991), and twice with the Toronto Blue Jays (1992, 1993).

“As players, when we all look at it, the postseason is what we play the game for,” Morris said. “Everybody wants to play in a World Series. Everybody wants to win a World Series. And every team I played on that was in a World Series, won the World Series. I’ve got to believe in a couple of them I had a little something to do with it.”

As his generation ages, Morris thinks the shift to analytics will become even more prominent. That said, he says he will always stand by the fact that he’s never cared about the numbers.

“It’s always been about letters to me: ‘W’ and ‘L,’” Morris said. “That’s all that matters. You play the game for those two letters. You don’t play for on-base percentage. You don’t play for WHIP or WAR or anything like that. You play to win the frickin’ game. If that ever changes, let’s forget playing.”

GOING THE DISTANCE

Morris was especially proud of always being able to go the distance. Of all his career statistics, he said, the 175 complete games stand out most, especially when looking at it through the current lens of the league.

“I was like that because I was emulating the guys that I wanted to be like,” Morris explained, noting that the legendary Cy Young finished with his career 749 complete games. “You look at the complete games that most of those guys had and I look like a little kid. Those guys would have 25 complete games a season and 300 innings a season. As a kid growing up watching that, we were conditioned to do the same thing.”

Because of that, Morris is baffled by things like the Quality Start stat that has become a major league metric. In today’s game, if a pitcher completes at least six innings and allow no more than three earned runs, it’s considered a Quality Start.

“For me, a Quality Start me was a nine-inning, complete-game shutout,” Morris said with a laugh. “That was it and everything else filtered down after that.”

That said, Morris points to some of his Non-Quality Starts as the ones that made the biggest impact on his way to the Hall of Fame. He can thank legendary Tigers manager Sparky Anderson for that.

“In 1980 I was struggling late in games,” Morris recalled in Sunday’s acceptance speech. “He told me I needed to finish games to rest the bullpen. He said he couldn’t tell me how to do it, and wasn’t coming out to get me, so I shouldn’t look for any help.”

Those struggles are seared into his memory, Morris said, and undoubtedly helped him reach the Hall of Fame.

“I remember he left me out there to rot a few times (early in my career),” Morris said. “It taught me an unbelievable lesson. Getting my butt beat on the mound in front of 35,000 people is the worst thing in the world.”

“I feel like pitchers have to go through a failure wall to know what success is. If they aren’t ever allowed to fail, they’re never going to get through that wall. You’ve got to let them bang on the wall a little bit to figure out if they’re going to make it or not. He let me make it. He forced

me to make it.”

‘THE GREATEST FRATERNITY’

There’s no greek life at Brigham Young University, where Morris played collegiately, so no, he’s never been a member of a fraternity.

Until now.

In hindsight, Morris wouldn’t have had it any other way. After all, the long wait has made Hall of Fame Weekend that much more special.

“They talk about the way guys kind of use this as the greatest fraternity,” Morris said. “I didn’t know what that meant until I got here. I can say this: They genuinely care about each other here and it’s such a special feeling to be welcomed by those people. I’ve had so many of them tell me, ‘You belong with us. You’ll get there someday. You’ve got to hang in there.’ ”

Well, Morris is in, and as he wrapped up his speech on Sunday afternoon, the speech he pored over for months leading up to the once-in-a-lifetime event, he made his message clear.

“This game has always been a part of who I am and what I have become,” Morris said. “It has somehow been connected to almost every lesson that I’ve learned in life. To be successful, it takes practice, patience, focus, concentration, work ethic, desire, determination, trust, will, confidence and more practice.”

It also takes failure, according to Morris.

“I’ve had plenty of challenges and failures, too,” Morris said. “It only made me work harder to find a path to success.”

That path, at long last, has led him to Cooperstown.

How tough was the wait to get here?

“Well, I guess the answer to that is now it doesn’t matter,” Morris said with a smirk. “None of that matters anymore.”

Twins’ Logan Morrison calls out umpire Doug Eddings after 3-0 loss to Red Sox **Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | July 29, 2018**

BOSTON — A nondescript 3-0 loss to the Boston Red Sox on Sunday afternoon picked up steam in the losing clubhouse after the game.

Twins first baseman Logan Morrison, offended by what he considered the confrontational actions of plate umpire Doug Eddings, detailed a first-inning exchange between Eddings and Twins starter Jose Berrios. After missing with four straight fastballs, two of which registered as strikes on online pitch trackers, Berrios motioned with his glove to ask if ball four was low.

According to Morrison, Eddings took off his mask, walked out in front of home plate and barked his answer at Berrios. He then fired baseballs back at him with added velocity as the game progressed.

“We need to do a better job of keeping our officials in line,” Morrison said. “A lot of that (junk) can’t be tolerated. I’m not going to tolerate it.”

Berrios confirmed this account through a translator.

“I asked, ‘Was it low?’ He said yes,” Berrios said. “I turned around, so when I turned around again to get ready to pitch, he was like, ‘It’s low.’ I was surprised. I said, ‘OK, do what you want.’ ”

Frustration was palpable on the Twins’ side as they fell for the third straight time in this four-game series. Held to four hits (two on the infield) by Nathan Eovaldi and two relievers, the Twins wheezed to the end of a 4-6 road trip that included the trades of popular infielder Eduardo Escobar and setup reliever Ryan Pressly.

They fell nine games behind the first-place Cleveland Indians with a three-game series between the two division foes set to begin Monday night at Target Field.

Eddings, meanwhile, also took off his mask to bark at Red Sox shortstop Brock Holt after a called third strike in Berrios’ favor in the third inning. Holt jabbed a finger in Eddings’ face, but first-year Boston manager Alex Cora was able to race out in time to save his player from ejection.

“It’s his prerogative whether to run him or not, but it wouldn’t have come to that if he’d just keep his mask on and not come at somebody like

that,” Morrison said. “We’re competing our butts off, and somebody asks you a question and you’re offended by that? Walk away. Just turn your shoulder. Nobody came to see Doug Eddings umpire.”

Eddings, 49, also exchanged words with Twins left fielder Eddie Rosario after calling him out on a pair of check swings in the late innings. Now in his 21st season as a big-league umpire, Eddings worked the 2017 All-Star Game along with one of the wild-card games in 2014.

“I don’t think he’s a terrible umpire by any means,” Morrison said. “I have him as being, ‘You’ve got to watch what you say, how you say it’ type deal. I just felt today, what happened is not acceptable.”

Berrios went on to issue three total walks while tying a career-high with nine hits allowed, including three doubles. Coming off a strong showing in Toronto upon returning from his first All-Star Game appearance, the Twins’ right-hander labored through 4 2/3 innings on 106 pitches.

Berrios struck out six and got just eight swinging strikes. He jumped ahead with strike one to 18 of 28 batters, but he also let the count reach three balls seven times.

“Between Berrios and (Eddings), I know exactly what happened: ‘How dare he question my authority’ type deal,” Morrison said. “It’s not the way it goes.”

Sixteen days after pounding Eovaldi for eight earned runs at Target Field, the Twins barely laid a glove on Carl Pavano’s doppelganger. The hard-throwing Eovaldi entered with a 6.83 earned-run average in five career starts against Minnesota.

The hardest-hit ball off him this time was Bobby Wilson’s third-inning gapper at 97.8 mph, but center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. ran it down with a tumbling grab on the warning track. Rosario, now six hits behind the injured Jose Altuve for the AL lead, whacked a one-out cutter off the Green Monster for a double in the first.

The Twins were shut out for just the fourth time this year and the first time since July 3 at Milwaukee.

Martinez entered 2 for 9 against Berrios, but that changed after their recent chat as all-star teammates. The major league leader in home runs (32) and runs batted in (89) went 2 for 2 with a walk and a ringing two-run double off the Twins ace.

The latter blow left the bat at 107.6 mph, hissing its way past Miguel Sano at third base and rolling all the way to the wall. Martinez added a long single off the wall in the fourth with an exit velocity of 103.4 mph.

Has Twins’ Lance Lynn fixed the problem with his control?

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | July 29, 2018

BOSTON — Struggling right-hander Lance Lynn and Twins pitching coach Garvin Alston have been searching for answers most of the year as Lynn’s walk rate spiked to a majors-worst 13.2 percent, 40 percent higher than his career norm.

In the bullpen at Toronto’s Rogers Centre early last week, they might have found it.

“We might have figured some things out,” Lynn said after walking just one in six strong innings at Fenway Park on Friday. “We went back to some stuff from the past. I’m looking forward to building off it.”

According to Alston, Lynn moved a little closer to the third-base side on the pitching rubber. He also made slight alterations in the way his right foot contacted the slab — “so he can get into his glutes a little bit more” — as well as the way his left foot moved toward home plate.

Stride length wasn’t the issue, Alston and his team determined, so much as the way Lynn’s hips worked.

“What it allowed him to do was make sure he was connected properly from his top half to his bottom half,” Alston said. “That allows the ball to stay on plane just a little bit longer.”

If Lynn, who has \$4.13 million remaining on his expiring contract, can string together a couple of solid starts, it could enable the Twins to move him to a pitching-starved contender for a mid-level prospect. In August, only the claiming club that is first in waiver priority can talk trade for a given player unless all 29 other clubs pass.

Lynn, who issued a five-pitch walk to Mookie Betts after giving up a two-run homer to Jackie Bradley Jr. in the fifth inning, went to just three other three-ball counts against the majors’ most imposing lineup. Although he struck out just three, it was the fifth time in 20 starts he had allowed fewer than two walks.

“I heard a statement before which made perfect sense to me: Anything you do on the mound which is real small pays huge dividends at the plate,” Alston said. “For me, that’s what it did. That small thing allowed him to stay on the plate just a little bit longer. Now his pitches are doing what he expects them to do instead of being off the plate.”

RULE 5 PLANNING

A key point about the first wave of five prospects the Twins received in the Eduardo Escobar and Ryan Pressly trades is that none of them must be added to the 40-man roster in advance of the Rule 5 draft in December.

Right-handers Jorge Alcala (Double-A) and Jhoan Duran would be Rule 5 eligible in December 2019, as would outfielder Gilberto Celestino.

Class A outfielders Gabriel Maciel and Ernie De La Trinidad would be eligible in December 2020.

Typically, players 18 or younger on June 5 before their signing date get five seasons before reaching Rule 5 eligibility. Those who are 19 or older on June 5 before signing must be added after four seasons.

Unless they call them up to the majors beforehand, the Twins must add three former first-round draft picks — infielder Nick Gordon, lefty Tyler Jay and right-hander Kohl Stewart — in November. Stewart, the fourth overall pick in 2013, was actually left exposed to the Rule 5 draft last December but no club paid the \$100,000 draft fee.

Other names to watch this November: Double-A second baseman Luis Arraez; outfielders LaMonte Wade Jr., Jean Carlos Arias and Jaylin Davis; lefty reliever Alex Robinson, and first baseman Zander Wiel.

The Twins don’t have to add Class A right-hander Brusdar Graterol until November 2019.

KEPLER SITS

Twins outfielder Max Kepler was out of the lineup for a second straight game Sunday after slamming into the low wall in pursuit of Rafael Devers’ game-tying homer off Fernando Rodney on Friday night.

Kepler, who also slammed into the wall in Toronto while making a circus catch in right center on Monday, has been dealing with “total body” soreness, according to acting manager Derek Shelton. The Twins didn’t post a lineup Sunday morning until Kepler had a chance to throw, but he ultimately was replaced in right field by Robbie Grossman.

“Both were pretty firm collisions,” Shelton said. “He made a heck of a catch the other night in Toronto. He’s just sore.”

Kepler has a .370 on-base percentage and five homers over his past 19 games (81 plate appearances), dating to July 5.

BRIEFLY

— Barring trades, the Twins named their starting rotation for the three-game home series against the Cleveland Indians. Ervin Santana will start on Monday night, followed by Kyle Gibson on Tuesday and Lynn on Wednesday.

— Reliever Addison Reed (elbow impingement) was due to throw 25-30 pitches Sunday in his second rehab outing for Triple-A Rochester at Louisville. He gave up a run on two doubles in his first outing on Friday.

— Byron Buxton had a scheduled off day on Saturday and was due to return to the Red Wings’ lineup on Sunday.

Jim Thome’s Twins years cemented his Hall of Fame credentials **Dane Mizutani | Pioneer Press | July 29, 2018**

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. — Sometimes things have a funny way of working themselves out. Such is the relationship between Jim Thome and the Minnesota Twins.

A once-in-a-generation power hitter who was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame on Sunday afternoon, Thome made a career for himself by tormenting the Twins, particularly during his early years with the Cleveland Indians and Chicago White Sox.

He ranks eighth on the all-time list with 611 home runs, and his 61 homers against the Twins are more than any player in the history of the game.

Yet, when Thome signed a one-year contract with the Twins on Jan. 26, 2010, none of that seemed to matter. His infectious Mr. Nice Guy persona was a hit in the Twin Cities, as was his ability to hit the long ball even as he was pushing 40 years old.

“I loved my time there,” Thome said. “It was an instant connection. I just remember the fans embraced me coming there. You could really feel the

love.”

After playing against the Twins for his entire career, Thome arrived at spring training in 2010 and instantly noticed the attention to detail that former manager Ron Gardenhire asked of his team. While he was aware of that reputation from afar, Thome never fully appreciated it until he saw it firsthand.

“That was the thing I noticed right away,” Thome said. “They were so fundamentally sound as an organization. It was something else watching them take ground balls and run the bases and do the little things.”

Thome only spent 18 months in a Twins uniform before being traded back to the Indians for just \$20,000 — an odd move at the time and even more puzzling in hindsight. Regardless, Thome made the most of his time with the Twins, so much so that even though he enters the Hall of Fame wearing an Indians hat, many in the Twin Cities will remember him as one of their own.

Maybe it’s because of everything Thome did in his short time with the Twins. He helped christen Target Field during its inaugural season, belting 25 home runs as the Twins won the AL Central.

“We moved into Target Field and instantly we could sense the vibe like, ‘Wait a minute. We have a pretty good team here,’ ” Thome said. “That first season I was there, we did some really good things.”

While the Twins bowed out quietly to the New York Yankees in the first round of the playoffs, Thome still maintains that things could have been different. Justin Morneau was on pace for another AL MVP Award before being lost to a concussion right before the all-star break, and closer Joe Nathan missed the season after having Tommy John surgery.

“If we could’ve had him in our bullpen with that lineup, it could’ve been special,” Thome said. “We had two or three guys on the bench that were not playing every day that were everyday guys.”

Thome signed a one-year extension to remain with the Twins the following season, but the club wasn’t nearly as successful, finishing last in the AL Central.

Thome hit one of longest home runs in Target Field history on July 17, 2011, turning on a pitch from Kansas City Royals starter Felipe Paulino and sending it to heights unseen since the days of his hero, Harmon Killebrew.

A month later, Thome essentially locked up a spot alongside Killebrew in the Hall of Fame with his two-homer game against the Detroit Tigers on August 15, 2011, giving him 600 career home runs in back-to-back at bats at Comerica Park.

Those signature moments, more than anything else, ensured Thome will always be a part of Twins history, and the Twins a part of his story.

“I have a lot of respect for that organization,” Thome said. “My time there was incredible.”

Notes from Fenway: Max Kepler sits after collision; Matt Magill on breakout season
Jake Depue | ESPN 1500 | July 29, 2018

BOSTON—The Twins entered Sunday’s game at Fenway Park eight games behind Cleveland, and in the midst of an apparent sell-off.

Still in the lineup, though, was Brian Dozier, who seems to have survived the four-game series in Boston in which teammate and good friend Eduardo Escobar was shipped to Arizona, and Ryan Pressly to Houston. Whether he’s still in a Twins uniform Tuesday night against Cleveland, after the non-waiver trade deadline passes earlier that day, is an open question.

Cleveland, coincidentally, is one of the teams rumored to be in on Dozier, along with San Francisco, Boston and L.A. At the beginning of the Boston series, I wondered whether Dozier would start it in a Twins uniform, and end it playing against them. A similar possibility exists at Target Field in the coming days against the Indians.

“The main thing is just, it’s a cliché and we say it all the time, but there is another game today and we have to find a way to win today,” Dozier said. “It really is that simple. In this game you try to find motivation however you can. It comes and goes and it’s different every week, every month, and if people want to find it [trades] motivating right now, that’s a good thing.”

Kepler sits again

Max Kepler was out of the lineup for a second consecutive day Sunday, after hitting the wall hard in the ninth inning of Friday’s 4-3 loss. Kepler tried to reach out over the wall trying to rob Rafael Devers of a game-tying home run, hitting his ribs against the short wall that separates Boston’s bullpen from the field. The play was a bit reminiscent of Torii Hunter’s attempted catch of David Ortiz’s grand slam in the 2013 ALCS, when

Hunter tumbled over the wall, hitting his head on the ground in the bullpen.

The Twins posted their lineup a bit later than usual Sunday, waiting to see how Kepler responded to throwing. Apparently, he was still sore enough to be held out. Kepler also collided with the wall hard earlier this week in Toronto.

“He’s okay, he’s a little bit sore,” said acting manager Derek Shelton. “He’s had two major collisions. He had the one in Toronto on the heck of a catch he made there. Then [Friday], it was a really weird play. The ball takes almost like a left turn late and he ended up hitting the wall pretty hard.”

Magill’s breakout season

After two brief stints in the majors as a starter and eleven years mostly in the minors, Matt Magill appears to finally be sticking with a big league team.

Magill’s been an underrated part of the Twins’ bullpen since getting called up in late April. In 38 IP, he has a 3.78 ERA, 23.9% strikeout rate, and very low 5.0% walk rate, while flashing a mid-90s fastball. Walks had been a major issue in his two previous big league stretches, when he worked as a starter for the Dodgers in 2013 and reliever for the Reds in 2016. In both those years, his walk rate was over 20%. Even in Triple-A, he mostly had walk rates above 10% prior to this year. Clearly, something’s clicked.

“It’s not anything mechanical, it’s just a mindset,” he said. “For me, it was mental. I think baseball’s a huge mental game. Everyone knows that. I needed to get my mental side focused on what I needed to do and go into the game confident on what I can do.”

Magill says the two cups of coffee he got in 2013 and 2016 have helped him not feel overwhelmed in the majors.

“It helped me a lot,” he said of his prior experience. “It made it easier to come up here. It wasn’t my first time and I felt like when I got up here I belonged. It was just my time to put my stamp on being here and staying here. I felt like I deserved to be here.”

Thursday’s starter, Kyle Gibson, has said his ability to pound the strike zone this season with his fastball has been a big key to his success. In past years, Gibson would sometimes nibble, finding himself behind in counts and forced to come in with a middle-middle fastball or issue a walk. Magill echoed those sentiments.

“Attacking the hitters and having confidence I can get guys out with my stuff,” he said about how his approach has changed. “That’s how it’s been this year. Last couple years when I was in the big leagues I was a little more scared of throwing to hitters, throwing to contact, and this year I’m trying not to nibble and just go right at guys.”

“Coming out of the ‘pen, you have that adrenaline going that you’re just going to go right after guys. This is my best stuff, hit it if you can. It’s a good one-on-one battle.”

So far, he’s winning that battle more often than not, and it’s earned him a spot on the roster.

Cave adjusting to not playing every day

Jake Cave has played well in the big leagues, as he fills in for Byron Buxton. In 100 plate appearances through play Saturday, he’s slashing .274/.310/.484 while showing an ability to play a solid center field.

Although he’s been getting regular at-bats, they’ve come mostly against right-handed pitching. (81 of his 100 plate appearances through play Saturday came against righties.) Molitor has generally sat Cave when a lefty starter is on the mound, inserting Max Kepler in center and Robbie Grossman in right. That was the case again Thursday against Boston southpaw Brian Johnson, though Cave did start Friday against Chris Sale, going 0-for-4.

In the minors, of course, there isn’t as much specificity in matchups. Prospects like Cave generally play every day, and if they don’t play, rarely come off the bench as a pinch-hitter or defensive replacement. Aside from the obvious step up in competition, that’s been one of the biggest adjustments for the rookie.

“I had to get used to not playing every day,” he said. “That’s something you never really do in the minors. Pinch hit. Pinch run. Defensive substitutions, that type of thing. You either start or you don’t. [In the majors] There’s a good chance of me coming in [later in the game]. Have to be warm and ready to go.”

Cave said when he starts the game on the bench, he typically goes into the training room to stretch and stay loose, along with taking cuts in the cage if it’s close to the field. He’ll also watch video of relievers he may face late in the game.

Kepler’s improvement against left-handed pitching this year is likely part of the reason he’s getting those at-bats over Cave. Cave, though, has

performed fairly well against lefties in the minors. His slugging percentage in Triple-A this season is actually 10 points higher against lefties than righties, though his splits in 2017 tell a different story.

Of course, he'll gladly take a bench role against lefties in the big leagues over regular at-bats against them in Triple-A.

Buxton's day off

One day after hitting a home run in his first game back from the DL in Rochester, Byron Buxton was out of the lineup Saturday. Shelton said that was a scheduled day off. Buxton should be back in the lineup Sunday, as he continues to work his way back to the big leagues.

Twins' Jack Morris inducted into Baseball Hall of Fame **Staff Report | Fox Sports North | July 29, 2018**

Jack Morris has been inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Morris, now 63, pitched 18 seasons for the Tigers, Twins, Blue Jays and Indians, and played on four World Series champions. In the 1980s, he led all pitchers with 2,444.2 innings pitched and 162 wins and topped all AL pitchers in strikeouts with 1,629.

Among those he thanked were his late parents and the late Sparky Anderson, who managed the Tigers to the 1984 World Series championship.

"I know Sparky Anderson is with us today," Morris said. "He taught me so many things. He taught me to fight through adversity."

The crowning achievement of Morris' career was his 1-0 complete-game victory in Game 7 of the 1991 World Series while pitching for his hometown Twins against the Braves. Minnesota manager Tom Kelly wanted to take him out after nine innings and the 36-year-old Morris convinced him not to.

Morris also thanked Kelly for that decision.

Twins blanked in series finale loss to Red Sox **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | July 29, 2018**

BOSTON — Nathan Eovaldi is ready to be back in the Red Sox-Yankees rivalry. He knows he'll have the fans on his side in Fenway Park, too, especially after his debut with Boston.

Eovaldi pitched seven impressive innings, J.D. Martinez drove in all three runs to increase his major league-leading RBI total to 89 and the Red Sox beat the Minnesota Twins 3-0 on Sunday for their 18th victory in 22 games.

"What a great way to start his career with the Red Sox," Boston manager Alex Cora said. "People can now talk about how good he is and how he's going to help us out."

Acquired in trade from Tampa Bay for a minor league pitcher on Wednesday, Eovaldi (4-4) gave up four hits, striking out five without issuing a walk. Matt Barnes pitched the eighth and Craig Kimbrel got the final three outs for his 33rd save.

Eovaldi was sharp from the start, relying on a 95-97 mph fast ball with a slider and curve. The 28-year-old righty was hammered two starts ago by the Twins, giving up eight runs and nine hits in 2 2/3 innings.

"I feel like my emotions were under control," he said. "I try not to put any extra pressure on myself. It was nice pitching with the crowd behind me today instead of against me."

Eovaldi was with New York for two seasons before signing with the Rays prior to 2017. He missed that year following Tommy John surgery.

His next start will be part of a four-game series against the longtime rivals next week.

"Extremely efficient. I mean, I wish we would've seen the Eovaldi we saw a couple weeks ago before the break," said Twins bench coach Derek Shelton, who was running the team with manager and Hall of Famer Paul Molitor in Cooperstown, N.Y. for induction ceremonies.

Martinez had a double, single and walk, and Andrew Benintendi added two hits and a walk for the Red Sox. The AL East-leaders improved to a majors' best 74-33 by winning three of four in the weekend series.

The Twins finished 4-6 on a 10-game trip that saw them give up a bit on making the playoffs after they traded two players Friday night.

Jose Berrios (10-8) was in trouble every inning, giving up three runs on nine hits with three walks and five strikeouts in 4 2/3 in his first career start in Fenway.

“I couldn’t locate my pitches early on, but my mentality was to keep attacking the hitters,” he said.

Martinez’s RBI double made it 2-0 in the second. In the fourth, Benintendi doubled off the Green Monster and Martinez followed with a hard single halfway up the left-field wall.

SAD NEWS

Cora was visibly upset at the end of his postgame press conference, talking about the death of University of Miami pitching coach J.D. Artega’s son, Ari. The Miami Herald reported the 16-year-old was killed in a single-car crash Saturday night.

“Today was a tough day for us as a family,” he said. “J.D., he’s my best friend. They adopted me, basically, when I went to Miami. . It puts everything in perspective. We get caught up in this madness, the pennant race, the AL East, the Red Sox and the Yankees, but in the end, it’s just baseball.”

GOTTA SEE IT

Red Sox CF Jackie Bradley Jr., running at full speed, made a backhanded catch on Bobby Wilson’s liner into the left-center gap. After the catch, he tumbled over at the edge of the warning track and slid on his back hard into the left-field wall.

He got a standing ovation and when he headed to the dugout at the end of the inning, his teammates were lined up waiting to give him ‘High 5s.’

“Once I got closer, I thought I had a pretty good chance,” he said. “I hit (the wall) a lot harder than I thought I did after looking at the replay. I’m sure I’ll have a few bumps and bruises.”

LOOK WHERE I’M PLAYING

Back-up catcher and infielder Blake Swihart made his first career start at third. He even started a nifty DP in the fourth, snagging a hard grounder as he went to his knees, got up and turned the 5-4-3 play.

FUN UNDER THE SUN

The Red Sox improved to a majors’ best 26-5 in day games, and they’ve won 20 of their last 22.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Red Sox: Placed 3B Rafael Devers on the 10-day disabled list with a strained left hamstring he sustained running the bases a night earlier.

UP NEXT

Twins: RHP Ervin Santana (0-0, 5.40 ERA) makes his second start of the season after returning from surgery on the middle finger of his pitching hand in February as Minnesota opens a three-game series Monday at home against AL Central-leading Cleveland.

Red Sox: LHP David Price (11-6, 4.17) is set to start Monday’s opener of a two-game interleague series at Fenway, facing Phillies’ righty Aaron Nola (12-3, 2.42). Price went a scoreless inning in his last start Wednesday in Baltimore before the game was rained out.

Twins hope to make progress in AL Central race vs. Indians **STATS | Fox Sports North | July 29, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS – For the Minnesota Twins, Monday night represents their last chance to begin repeating history.

Any chances the Twins have of making a surprise re-entry into the American League playoff race for a second straight year likely rest on sweeping the AL Central-leading Cleveland Indians, who visit Target Field for the opener of a three-game series Monday night.

Ervin Santana (0-0, 5.40 ERA) is scheduled to make his second start of the season – and possibly his final start with the Twins – when he opposes the Indians’ rookie Shane Bieber (5-2, 4.80 ERA) in a battle of right-handers.

The Twins’ playoff hopes continued flickering Sunday, when they suffered their third straight loss by falling to the host Boston Red Sox, 3-0. The

visiting Indians lengthened their division lead over second-place Minnesota to nine games by beating the Detroit Tigers, 8-1.

The weekend series against the Red Sox appeared to signal a shift into sell mode by the Twins (48-56), who made two trades Friday when they dealt shortstop Eduardo Escobar to the Arizona Diamondbacks in exchange for three prospects on Friday and sent reliever Ryan Pressly to the Houston Astros for two prospects.

“We felt like where we were at this moment, for those decisions, it was the right decision for the organization moving forward,” Twins general manager Thad Levine told reporters in Boston on Saturday.

The move stung the holdovers from last year’s Twins squad, which began selling off pieces at the deadline – pitchers Jaime Garcia and Brandon Kintzler were dealt on consecutive days – but Minnesota ended up going 35-24 after Aug. 1 to win the AL’s second wild card.

“It just sucks when you put together a good team to accomplish something and you’re right there and you can taste it and there’s still a ways to go and all of a sudden this happens,” second baseman Brian Dozier, who has been the subject of free agents as an impending free agent, told reporters Friday. “That’s the most disappointing part.”

Of course, a return trip to the playoffs is a far longer shot this year than last year, when the Twins were 4 1/2 games out of the second wild card race after the games of July 31. The wild card is not an option this year for Minnesota, which is 13 1/2 games behind the current second wild card, the Seattle Mariners.

Barring a sweep at the hands of the Twins, the two-time defending AL Central champion Indians (57-47) can all but begin plotting for October. With that in mind, manager Terry Francona said Sunday the team will take it slowly with Andrew Miller, the shutdown left-handed reliever who is just 1-3 with a 4.40 ERA this season and hasn’t pitched since May 25 due to a nagging right knee injury.

Miller continued to struggle in his latest rehab assignment Saturday, when he gave up four runs (two earned) over two-third of an inning for Single-A Lake County.

“A month from now, when he’s striking guys out, nobody’s going to care that he had a couple tough outings in the minor leagues,” Francona told reporters Sunday. “But I think it shows that he needs to pitch, and I think he knows that.”

Santana, whose contract expires after the season, made his 2018 debut last Wednesday, when he didn’t factor into the decision after giving up three runs over five innings in the Twins’ 12-6, 11-inning win over the Toronto Blue Jays. He missed the first four months of the season recovering from right middle finger surgery.

Bieber endured the worst of his eight big league starts last Tuesday, when he took the loss after giving up seven runs over 1 2/3 innings as the Twins fell to the Pittsburgh Pirates, 9-4.

Santana is 7-11 with a 3.70 ERA in 25 career starts against the Indians. Bieber is 1-0 with a 3.97 ERA in two career starts against the Twins, the only team he has faced more than once.

‘Rough couple of days’: Dazed Twins fall again in Boston; Morrison calls out ump
Dan Hayes | The Athletic | July 30, 2018

BOSTON — While it may have resembled a hangover, the Twins suggested Sunday’s loss had far more to do with Nathan Eovaldi than Eduardo Escobar or Ryan Pressly.

Good pitching can do that.

Eovaldi mixed his pitches and was much better than two weeks ago in Minnesota as the Red Sox downed the Twins 3-0 at Fenway Park. Three outs from securing a series split on Friday, the Twins instead dropped their third straight. But players and coaches weren’t concerned about any kind of holdover from a traumatic Friday in which two of the team’s more popular players were traded in separate transactions. The Twins begin a three-game series at home on Monday against first-place Cleveland.

“It’s been a rough couple of days, for sure,” veteran catcher Bobby Wilson said. “To come back on Friday night and wind up losing that game, that one is the one that stung the most. We were feeling pretty good after that Thursday game. Losing Esky and Pressly, it’s hard because those guys are so well-liked. Really, the glue of a team.

“It has been a rough couple of days, but I won’t allow guys to quit. I won’t quit. As an older player, I can say a little bit more to keep guys motivated, playing hard.”

Nobody would blame the Twins for feeling down. Not only was Escobar always upbeat and full of energy, he's the kind of player who interacts with everyone in the clubhouse. The Twins can't manufacture that kind of personality no matter how hard they try.

It's why a handful of players were visibly upset by the news before Friday's contest against Red Sox ace Chris Sale. Brian Dozier admitted Saturday — when the Red Sox won 10-4 — also was difficult as the Twins learned to adapt to life without Escobar.

But the Twins remained within striking distance on Sunday despite an off-day by José Berríos and a strong performance by Eovaldi. Filling in for manager Paul Molitor, who was in Cooperstown for Sunday's Hall of Fame induction ceremony, bench coach Derek Shelton didn't sense a lack of energy from his team the rest of the weekend despite the turmoil caused by the trades.

"We came out and played really well the second night, had that game won and ended up giving up a couple homers," Shelton said. "(Saturday) was a close game and then they kind of blew it open in the eighth. We got minimalized a little by their pitching today."

The Twins also had their chances hurt by Jackie Bradley Jr., whose diving grab in left-center to start the third inning robbed Wilson of extra bases. Instead of facing the top of the Twins lineup with a man on second base and no outs, Eovaldi was aided by fantastic defense.

"That sucked," Wilson said. "That's the turning point in the game right there."

"I told (Bradley) when he came up to the plate I was mad at him and didn't want to talk to him and we both kind of chuckled."

With Tuesday's trade deadline closing in, Twins players undoubtedly haven't had as much fun as they must continuously scan social media for trade rumors. Players are on even higher alert with Friday's activity and considering there are still a handful of free-agents-to-be left on the roster. But Shelton said he thinks players would have been aware regardless and must instead keep their focus on the field.

"Ten years ago, they started talking about (the trade deadline) on July 25th, July 26th," Shelton said. "All of a sudden, now it's July 1st and its 30 days of it because it makes for a really good conversation. I think we just kind of maintain."

Morrison displeased with umpire's actions

The way plate umpire Doug Eddings responded to the query of Berríos about the location of a first-inning pitch to J.D. Martinez didn't sit well with Logan Morrison. After he missed with a 3-1 pitch to Martinez to load the bases, Berríos motioned to Eddings to see if it was low. Eddings didn't appear to be pleased to have his zone inquired about and made it clear to everyone.

"Sometimes I just think that we need to do a better job of keeping our officials in line," Morrison said. "A lot of that shit can't be tolerated. I'm not going to tolerate it. I don't think he's a terrible umpire by any means, but the way he acted today, to both teams — I'm not exactly sure the (Brock) Holt and him confrontation, but between Berríos and him, I know exactly what happened. A 'how dare you question my authority' type deal. That's not the way the game goes."

"I mean, it was a borderline pitch. I have no idea if it was a strike or a ball, but I do know the reaction it caused was not warranted."

"It's how he did it: Stood in front of the plate, waited for him to turn around. With his mask off. We're worried about pace of the game so much, he's throwing the balls back really fast to him. And we had to wait for that."

"Again, I'm not commentating about the calls, the non-calls, the balls, the strikes. We're competing our butts off, you know what I mean? And it gets in the heat of the battle and somebody asks you a question. And you're offended by that?"

Berríos seemed to be surprised by how long Eddings waited in front of the plate before returning to his position. While Berríos escaped the jam unscathed, he allowed three earned runs in 4 2/3 innings, the result of not having his best fastball command. Berríos also registered only eight swings and misses among 106 pitches.

"I asked, 'Was it low?'" Berríos said through an interpreter. "He said yes. I turned around. When I turned around again to get ready to pitch, he was like, 'It's low.' I was surprised. I said 'Ok. Ok. Do what you want.'"

Eddings also had several strong interactions with Holt, who disputed his strike zone and outfielder Eddie Rosario, who questioned the ump's call of a checked swing.

Lynn's adjustment pays off

Lost in the shuffle of Friday's tradefest was perhaps Lance Lynn's most important contribution of the season. Hours after they had been crushed by the news of Escobar's trade, Lynn delivered six of his sharpest innings all season and afforded the Twins an opportunity to rally past the Red Sox.

The Twins lost 4-3 in 10 innings, but Lynn came through when the Twins needed him most. He credited a recent exchange with Garvin Alston in between starts for an adjustment, though neither he nor the rookie pitching coach would divulge more than that.

“We just talked in the bullpen in between starts,” Lynn said. “Typical pitching stuff. Mindsets. It was between us and the whole rotation. Was kind of one of those things, everyone was just talking baseball.

“I had good success and I need to build off it.”

Lynn allowed two earned runs and six hits in six innings while walking one and striking out three. He threw strikes on 65 of 103 pitches.

“I thought about something I did with rehab guys and put something together and asked if he wanted to try it,” Alston said. “He said, ‘Yeah, let’s try it,’ and here we are.

“He wants to work. He likes to work. He wants to be good. He definitely is a good pitcher and it’s just a matter of finding that rhythm and timing and keeping him in that flow. (Friday) for me, he was behind the baseball. He was throwing it well. The ball was moving around around pretty good. The breaking ball was there. The changeup was there.”

While he’s seen teammates traded, Lynn said Sunday he’s never been on a team where such an important piece had been dealt. Lynn noted that Escobar had been listed as the team’s cleanup hitter before the trade altered the Twins’ lineup on Friday.

Lynn said it was a combination of being professional, enjoying the Fenway Park atmosphere and being worried about getting it handed to him by the American League’s top offense.

“I’ve had people that leave your team before but never someone like your four-hole hitter or something like that,” Lynn said. “You just try to do your job. That’s all you can control.

I’ve never been on a team that has sold like that. When it’s all said, we’ve got to be professionals. That’s the only way to treat things. There are still other guys. You’ve got to do what you’ve got to do.”

Scenes from Cooperstown, where the game is always good
Bradford Doolittle | ESPN | July 30, 2018

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. -- By now, pretty much everybody knows that the game of baseball was not invented in this little hamlet of upstate New York, along the shores of Otsego Lake.

Abner Doubleday, the game's mythical inventor, did not in fact invent it. Baseball had been played in nascent forms long before 1839, the year in which Doubleday supposedly but not really invented the game. Baseball's story did not begin in a cow pasture in Cooperstown. The myth is a false tune written by tycoons like Al Spalding.

They still play footsie with the myth in Cooperstown. There is a cafe on Main Street named after Doubleday. There is of course the ballpark there -- Doubleday Field -- two blocks from the Hall of Fame, on the spot that used to be Elihu Phinney's farm. There's still a barn there -- it's used to house maintenance equipment.

But the Hall doesn't try to pull the wool over people's eyes about baseball's origins. It wouldn't be much of a museum if it did. There's a small display on the topic in the Hall that says, "Doubleday didn't invent baseball; baseball invented Doubleday."

No, baseball was not invented in Cooperstown. But it should have been.

Every summer, the village of less than 2,000 people swells exponentially with hordes of baseball fans, bearing the colors of every team in existence and even some that are no longer around. Every conversation on the street is about baseball. Every store is either selling baseball merchandise or servicing baseball fans.

The occasion, as always, is to recognize the newest members of baseball's Hall of Fame. Every year is the same. Media conferences. A golf tournament. A parade. An afternoon of speechifying. The hanging of the plaques in the Hall. The rhythms are familiar, like the game itself. The only thing that changes are the names of those giving the speeches.

"In a sense, he is here, and always will be," 2018 Ford Frick Award honoree Bob Costas said of his late friend Dick Enberg. "That's part of the beauty of the Hall of Fame. Like Dick Enberg in his category, the six we will celebrate [Sunday] become certified baseball immortals. They are eternal citizens of Cooperstown, an eternal part of the history of the game.

"Membership here isn't for a lifetime -- it's for all time. And it's part of baseball's unique appeal that in some cases those enshrined here are forever linked with men they never knew: Cal Ripken with Lou Gehrig. Nolan Ryan with Walter Johnson. Hank Aaron with Babe Ruth.

"The richness of its fabric, the depth and significant unanimous of its history, the generational connections, they all set baseball apart."

Those creating the newest links, the six Costas alluded to, are Alan Trammell, Jim Thome, Chipper Jones, Jack Morris, Vladimir Guerrero and Trevor Hoffman. That became official on Sunday, when all six made their induction speeches at the Clark Sports Center, and, afterward, had their plaques unveiled back at the Hall of Fame, four-fifths of a mile down Susquehanna Avenue.

By its very nature, baseball's Hall of Fame induction weekend is an exercise in nostalgia. Likewise, the Hall itself is a record of the past -- a preservation, recognition and celebration of things that have already happened.

This stands in stark contrast to so much of what has been written and said about baseball over the past few months. Whether it's about pace of play or defensive shifts or the rise of strikeouts or the downtick in attendance or the furor over whether the game's best player should pound his chest more often, it's come to feel like the discussion has been dominated by the idea that baseball itself is unraveling.

It's largely a matter of framing. Of course we should be open to innovation. Of course we want as many people to love the game as possible, and we have to work to make that happen. Of course we want to make sure that the on-field product is not permanently distorted by forces with unintended consequences.

But what if, just maybe, we stop delving into these truly interesting discussions with a terribly misleading question: What is wrong with baseball? Instead, how about framing it as: How do we make baseball even better? What if, just maybe, baseball is not broken? What if, in a time of record-level revenue, the game is not facing an existential crisis?

These are the kinds of questions that arise after a few days in Cooperstown, the heart of it all. Here, where the very air is thick with baseball, it's hard to imagine that the game has any problems at all. Maybe that's the solution. Send everybody to Cooperstown for a weekend.

Here, the game of your youth, no matter when that youth may have occurred, is alive and well. Here, in the cradle of lush green hills surrounding a picturesque lake, is baseball's Eden, myth or no myth.

Here, in Cooperstown, the game is always good. Here, as Hall president Jeff Idelson said, "The heart of baseball beats strong every day."

Even if it's ailing, baseball repairs itself, given a little time and patience. At least that's what Jack Morris says. On Friday, he was asked about the notion of baseball banning the extreme defensive shifts that have become so common in the game.

"I would rather throw to one power hitter than four guys that put the ball in play," Morris said. "I think it will come full circle. If there's proven data that one guy isn't gonna hit it there, then why play him there? Once hitters take enough practice [with] putting the ball the other way, then everything will go back to normal."

Morris had famous moments with the Blue Jays and Twins, but he's best remembered as a member of the Detroit Tigers, for whom he won 198 games. He will wear a Tigers hat, with its old-timey "D," on his plaque, as will longtime teammate Alan Trammell, with whom he shared the stage on Sunday.

For one day, at least, it looked like it was going to be a Detroit-dominant weekend in Cooperstown. That was on Friday, before the faithful of the Atlanta Braves arrived in full force. For whatever reason, the Michiganders turned out a little earlier.

The Friday of induction weekend is a sleepy one. The trickle of baseball tourists picks up steam as the day goes along. It's a good day to visit the Hall itself, before the lines begin to build. Hall of Famers, new and old, arrive with their families for their stays at the carefully guarded Otesaga Resort Hotel. Main Street is blocked off, but you can walk down the sidewalks without much resistance.

Even then, nearly every conversation you overhear is about baseball.

"I don't care what anybody says," a man in a Braves hat says to a man in an Indians hat. "If your pitcher isn't going seven or eight innings, you ain't gonna win."

His friend nods his head in agreement. These men, one would guess, are not sabermetricians. Neither is Morris, who for years seemed baffled that his 254 career wins had somehow become a point of controversy. In his day, wins were everything. By the time he hit the Hall ballot, the baseball world had begun to shift beneath his feat.

Whether or not you feel like Morris' wins, innings and complete games render him Hall-worthy, you'd have to be a cold-hearted soul to begrudge

him his enshrinement. It began at the winter meetings, where Morris could barely get through the media conference given for him and Trammell after their selection by the Veterans Committee was announced.

"Durability, consistency, wins -- it's amazing -- still matter," Morris said. "At least they do to me. But I never shy from that. That's why we play the game."

Morris was a combative personality as a player, particularly early in his career, and he knows it.

"When I look back and look at all the distractions with the press, negative interactions I had with them, it was because I wasn't thinking about what they're doing, I only thought about what I had to do," Morris said. "And I regret that. That's something I could've done different, could've still maintained my drive and focus without being so ornery to them."

Whether that hurt Morris' case during his years on the writers' ballot is hard to say. Probably not much. He wasn't that bad. You might think that Morris would let slip a little residual bitterness. You might think he'd even take a victory lap or two. Instead, he's just grateful. Time has softened Morris.

Just like the game itself, those who play it are capable of growth, capable of healing.

"I wasn't the kind of guy who would promote myself -- that's just not who I am," Morris said. "Time showed my numbers start rising, and more and more people could see the worth of what I accomplished. And I think I appreciate it more today than I did if it was my first or second ballot."

Morris' speech on Sunday was emotional, but he held it together better than he did in December. He's still a heart-on-his-sleeves guy.

"It's just really nice to know that a lot of old people like me came out," Morris said. "I just think this is a magical place. Every baseball fan, whether they've been here or not, knows what Cooperstown is. I think they get that it's in their hearts. It's part of their DNA."

There are always pessimists. That, too, is part of baseball.

This year, 57 living Hall of Famers returned to Cooperstown for the festivities, a record. It's not just the immortals who show up, though. You never know who you'll see.

On one block, Dale Murphy and Daryl Strawberry are autographing pictures -- an Odd Couple situation if there ever was one. At various times, you might see Goose Gossage, Roberto Alomar -- both Hall of Famers. You might bump into Mike Sweeney, or see Denny McLain and Darrell Evans signing stuff.

And in the back of a store along Main Street, a bitter old gambler named Pete Rose is holding court a couple of blocks from the Hall in which he has never been welcomed. Speaking to Bob Nightengale of USA Today, Rose savaged the game that made him both famous and infamous.

"I probably would have been kicked out of every game by the third or fourth inning," Rose told Nightengale. "If I was a pitcher you couldn't pitch inside. I don't know who these geniuses are who keep wanting to change these rules in baseball. Fans, every once in a while, like a fight at the ballpark. Instead of helping somebody up, kick dirt on him."

Baseball has never forgiven Rose for his transgressions and he, in turn, likely will fight the game until the day he dies. But baseball fans are forgiving, by and large. A superficial scan of internet forums will tell you this about Rose: There are many more fans who want Rose in the Hall than not.

Outside of the Cooperstown Inn on Friday night, a young couple were walking down the sidewalk and talking excitedly. They had patiently endured a long line, in which they waited to meet Rose, at the back of the store. Neither of the two could possibly have been old enough to have seen him play.

"That was so amazing," the young man said.

"I know," the young woman said. "It was way better than I even expected."

"He's just so cool," the young man said.

"Really cool," the young woman said.

Baseball is a drama. A great drama. No sport does it better. No sport is better able to establish its stakes, while giving you just enough time to ponder them and weigh the options. Some of that is surely due to the lack of a clock, which leaves all possibilities open.

Generally speaking, Hall of Fame weekend is highly ritualistic. Drama, if it exists, is mild. Last year, there was some question of whether Bud Selig would be booed when he was introduced. He wasn't, really, on that day. However, as he passed through the crowd during Saturday's Legends Parade this year, the reception was a little more emphatically negative.

Baseball's most dramatic moments live forever here. Every room you walk into in the Hall has videos of these moments. Costas, during his acceptance speech on Saturday, described some of these vividly, including an amazing story about Kirk Gibson's home run in the 1988 World Series.

Still, there was drama around this year's events, provided by Chipper Jones and his wife, Taylor, who is in her final days of pregnancy.

"I'm batting leadoff," Jones said on Saturday. He was referring to his speech on Sunday. He was the first to speak, knowing that Taylor could go into labor at any moment.

"I'm going to be a little nervous," Jones said. "The speech is one thing, but being nervous about your wife going into labor on Induction Sunday -- that's a whole other different kind of nervous."

Sunday arrived and Jones delivered a pretty solid Hall speech, not showing any anxiety about the impending expansion of his family, which already included six sons. In fact, he was downright jovial in his folksy way.

"Smoltzie pitched like his hair was on fire," Jones said. "Makes sense, looking at him now."

Jones was speaking of his former teammate, John Smoltz, who was sitting with the other Hall of Famers on the stage. Smoltz, if you didn't realize it, is now mostly bald.

Jones made it through his speech with no interruption, and posed for pictures after, just as scheduled. He was still around for the post-ceremony media conference, saying that Taylor got along just fine, though she did have to move to the shade. The baby wait would continue.

As for the new arrival of the Jones clan, they already know that it will be another boy. Number seven. They decided to name him Cooper.

Baseball is about parades. Every World Series champion has one. When the Cubs celebrated their victory in 2016, the entire city seemed to turn blue. Even the lions outside of the Art Institute of Chicago were wearing Cubs hats.

In comparison, the Legends Parade is more modest. A marching band comes out to lead off and plays "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." Then one by one, the Hall of Famers on hand ride down Main Street in the back of pickup trucks. They go in reverse order of their date of induction, with the oldest players going first, after the new media inductees, and the newbies going last.

Main Street is jammed on both sides. Children stand on tables to get a better look. Depending on where you stand, you'll have an entirely different experience. In a sign of the changed times, up on the rooftops, a pair of snipers kept close watch on the proceedings.

One man, who spoke in a heavy drawl, was a Braves fan, making his first trip to Cooperstown. His wife and adult daughter were with him. The man, likely in his late 50s, gradually morphed from reserved and dignified to certifiably giddy as the greats passed. At one point, as he half-laughed and half-cried with joy, his daughter asked him if he was having fun.

"There's a little boy in every man that loves baseball," he said. He said those words.

Next to the Braves fan was a contingent of Padres fans, much younger, who were drinking beers from the Cooperstown Distillery right behind them. They had traversed the country to celebrate the induction of Trevor Hoffman and, apparently, to critique the wives who rode with their Hall of Fame husbands. Their trip was the longest and, on Sunday, Hoffman said he noticed.

"I was overwhelmed by the number of people that were in attendance," Hoffman said. "We had a little bit of San Diego weather, so I think they were a little more at home. To travel as far as they did, and the masses, to not just support me but the Padre organization and the brand and what we are about, it really says a lot about our community in San Diego."

Back in the parade, Gaylord Perry passed by.

"Gaylord!" the Braves fan said, then telling his daughter: "He pitched for several teams."

"The Padres!" one of Padres bros said. "He played for the Padres!"

Perry waved to both sides of the street, then suddenly stuck the tips of the fingers of his right hand in his mouth. With a sly look on his face, he held the wet fingers out at the crowd, which roared. He was, of course, alluding to his reputation for throwing spitballs.

"Did you see that?" the Braves fan said to no one in particular. He was laughing so hard he had to wipe a tear from his eye.

Johnny Bench stood up and started dancing. Rollie Fingers twirled his mustache. They've been in a lot of these parades by now. For Hoffman and the other first-timers, it was all new. They are now part of the timeless ritual. Everything has changed, though for a Hall of Famer, Hoffman still does not consider himself famous.

"Shoot, people don't even know me right now, to be honest with you," Hoffman said. "Two-thirds of the country were asleep when I would come into most of my ballgames. So it's nice to introduce myself as Trevor Hoffman -- I'm one of your newest inductees into the Hall of Fame."

Baseball is made rich by connections, personal and professional, family and friends. As Costas said, the links are not just between those Hall of Famers still with us. The connective tissues spread in every direction and all through time. Because of its long history and sprawling coast-to-coast network of minor league affiliates, baseball has a communal feeling that no other sport can match.

"It's a feeling like no other," Thome said. "When I walked in late February down the hall, and you read those names, it gives you chills. To know your name will be with those greats, talk about being proud. When you see Bench, Aaron, Mays, it's as good a feeling as you could ever get."

Costas described listening to Waite Hoyt call Reds games back in the early 1960s, when he'd listen on the radio in his father's car. Hoyt would talk about his old Yankee teammates -- Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and the like. The history of the game always seems to be no more than one or two relationships removed from those who still work in it today.

While Jones waited near him, likely thinking as much about his wife and baby as his speech, Thome's daughter, Lila, took the stage and, in a soaring voice, sang the national anthem, as Thome wiped away a tear. She killed it.

"I got emotional right from the start," Thome said. "To watch her sing, she sang beautifully. For the Hall of Fame to give here the opportunity to do that was amazing."

Somewhere in the crowd, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. watched his father speak. When Vlad Jr. left Cooperstown, it was to go to Buffalo, where he'd just been promoted to play Triple-A ball, one step away from the majors. Earlier in the day, Vlady Jr., as his father calls him, sent him a video he'd made to mark the occasion, made all the more special because the induction date this year happened to fall on Father's Day in the Dominican Republic.

"I found a video that Vlady Jr. recorded for me for Father's Day as a surprise," Vlady Sr. said, via an interpreter. "People around me were thinking I was going to cry because they saw it before me and they cried. It meant a lot."

Also in the crowd was pitching great Pedro Martinez, Vlady Jr.'s godfather.

Jones' father was there as well, watching his son join his own boyhood idol, Mickey Mantle, as one of the immortals.

"Chill bumps on chill bumps," Jones said. "We walked through the gallery [Thursday] with my dad and my mom. My kids and my dad walked up to Mickey Mantle's plaque. He touched it and he had to turn away. He was welling up with tears.

"If he gets that choked up for Mickey Mantle, what do you think it's going to be when he goes up and puts his hand on his son's plaque?"

But it's more than the families of those who played. It's even more about the families and friends who flock here that never spent a moment in professional baseball. People who plan their visits months or even years in advance. Or two buddies from Detroit who drove in at the last minute because there was a cancellation at a campground. Both are retired but were as excited as school children.

These are the people who wait, and usually pay for, all of those autographs. They fill up the hotels, B&Bs and campgrounds for miles in every direction. They buy up the mementos and dig through the stacks of baseball cards that are the wares of what seems to be every other store on Main Street. They are the ones filling the streets with conversation about the game that brought them all together.

Cooperstown is where all these threads meet up. It's a baseball festival unlike any other, more organic than something like the All-Star Game.

While the crowds in Cooperstown generally reflect the teams represented by the inductees, their numbers from year to year are always plentiful. If for some reason a class of 30 went in, representing every market, upstate New York couldn't handle it.

"You don't play the game to go to the Hall of Fame," Thome said. "If you're elected, it's a feeling like no other. The best part is sharing it with your parents, your wife, kids, friends, organizations, getting texts from teammates. Ultimately you're doing this all together."

After Sunday's speeches, on a resplendent afternoon, the fans picked up the chairs they'd lugged to the Clark Sports Center and headed back out into the world to nurse their sunburns. The inductees headed inside the media center to answer questions about their speeches.

The fans were of all ages and ethnic backgrounds. They spoke English, French, Spanish and more. There were, it seemed, as many women as men. It was hard to see them go and consider that the game is broken in any way, shape or form. According to Hall spokesman Craig Muder, the crowd count was 53,000 -- the second largest ever.

"Second-largest turnout," Trammel said. "That's very cool. Looking out there, it was just a wave of people. When you get up there, with the nerves and anxiety, it's like you're playing."

After the final media conference, the journalists convened to the part of the gymnasium that was outfitted as a work area. Rows of work stations with basketball hoops looming overhead. Everyone began writing, editing, uploading and the like.

Tomorrow, if not before, like the fans, all of those journalists will head back to where they came from. Some will move on to other assignments. Many of them will go back to covering the regular season, with the upcoming non-waiver trade deadline.

Let's hope that everyone who was here takes a little bit of Cooperstown back with them. Baseball has its challenges. It always does. We know what they are because we never stop talking about them. Often it seems like we cover them so thoroughly that we forget everything that is good about the game in the first place. In the mania for perpetual entropy -- growth or doom being the apparent choice -- it would be a shame if baseball lost track of the qualities that set it apart. Those are good qualities, and if somehow their current cultural relevance is diminished, that's on the culture, not on the game.

"I think the commissioner is doing everything he can to better the game," Thome said. "I think the game and the athletes are heading in a wonderful direction and I'm seeing it from a youth side, too. The kids today are translating into Trout, Harper, Machado. I think it's in one of the best stages in where it's grown, and fans have helped as well."

Many of those good things are on display in Cooperstown, and very little of the bad. Remember those things, and share them where we can. As is proved year after year after year in this tiny village, there are countless scores of people who still relish this game, for what it was, and for what it is.

"This whole event is magical," Morris said. "It's magical for us, the inductees. It's magical for the returning Hall of Famers. I've got to believe it's magical for the staff because they see the importance of it. As I'm looking out at the stands, I had the thought, there's a lot of people who love this game. How lucky are we?"

As for this year's inductees, you can find them here again next year. Any year, for as long as Cooperstown exists.

After the last media conference, as the journalists worked up their stories, and the workers began to clear the grounds, and the people wandered away, there was one pair who seemed intent to stick around. It was a man and his young son, both wearing Indians caps. With the throng dissipated, there was room on the grounds for them to do something that is eminently timeless, and eminently perfect.

The man, and his son, decided to play catch.