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In My Words: Jerry Reinsdorf

By Jerry Reinsdorf / MLB.com/ April 9, 2018

When I first heard about Major League Baseball having a special day every year for Jackie Robinson, I thought it was a terrific idea. This Sunday, we will once again pay tribute to a great man.

I actually went to the first game Jackie wore a Dodger uniform in New York. In 1947, the Dodgers played the Yankees in a preseason game in Brooklyn.

Back then, the significance of his color didn't sink in to an 11-year-old. I just knew the Dodgers had two rookies coming up: Jackie and Spider Jorgensen, a third baseman. We just wanted to see them play.

I don't really remember what he did that day or much about that game. Maybe I should revise history to tell a better story, but the fact of the matter is all I cared about was if he was going to be any good.

The first time it dawned on me that something more was happening was when I asked my friend, Lester Davis, who was African-American, who his favorite player was. He looked at me like I was an idiot and said, "Jackie Robinson, of course."

I said, "Oh yeah, that's right."

I was 11 years old. What did I know about social issues? In fact, it wasn't until a couple of years later that I became more aware of what was going on. In 1949, our family took a trip to Mexico and we had to go through San Antonio, Texas. I saw signs for colored water fountains and bathrooms. I thought, "What is that?"

None of that existed in Brooklyn. I grew up in a Jewish neighborhood, but our high school had a lot of African-American students. Looking back, Brooklyn probably was the ideal place for Jackie to play in the big leagues. It was a city of churches, and yet there was a big population of Jews, Irish and African-Americans. Everyone mixed with everyone else. It was a real melting pot.

It quickly became apparent that Jackie could play. He wasn't the best player I ever saw, but I always say he was the most exciting. He could do everything. He could run, bunt, steal bases and hit the occasional home run. I vividly remember Jackie jockeying back and forth on first base, messing around with the pitchers.

One maneuver Jackie loved was after hitting a single to right field, he would take a big turn around the bag. Very often, the right fielder would throw behind him and Jackie would race to second. Joe Torre once said the most exciting thing about Jackie Robinson is that you couldn't tag him out. He was incredible to watch in rundowns.

One time, I went with a friend to a sold-out game at Ebbets Field. This guy comes by and said, "Would you like to be on The Jackie Robinson Show?" He did a TV pregame show on the field. Well, we were pretty savvy and were thinking this guy just wanted our seats, so we said no. An hour later, these two kids came by and said, "Hey, we were on The Jackie Robinson Show." That's as close as I got to meeting Jackie.

When it comes to his legacy, Martin Luther King Jr. once said he couldn't have done what he did without Jackie Robinson. If Jackie had failed, it would have been years before we would have seen another African-American player in the big leagues. Everyone would have said, "They're not good enough." It was a major accomplishment for him to be able to face everything that was thrown at him and still be successful. It really opened the floodgates.

One of our initiatives with the White Sox involves growing the game in urban areas through our Amateur City Elite (ACE) program. Founded in 2007, it is designed to provide resources and hope to more than 100 inner-city youth each year, kids who might not otherwise be able to keep up with the travel-team culture that has permeated today's youth baseball.

We've had 19 players from the program get drafted, but the real goal of ACE is to help kids go to college, using baseball as a way to get an education. We've had 168 kids receive college scholarships.

I believe there is a crisis in this country with the underclass. The way to get people out of the underclass is through education and jobs. We didn't create ACE because of Jackie Robinson, but I would like to think he would be pleased with what we're doing with the program.

When I think of 1947, it makes me think of how old I am, and yet it seems like yesterday. Everyone from that era in Brooklyn felt like we were part of the Dodgers, and by extension, part of Jackie Robinson. I've always been very proud of the fact that Jackie Robinson was a Brooklyn Dodger, and that's where the

color barrier was broken.

Blue Jays duo stays hot to lead prospect performers

By Mike Rosenbaum /MLB.com / April 9, 2018

New Hampshire's superstar duo was at it again Monday, as Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Bo Bichette powered the Fisher Cats to another win with an 11-1 rout of Trenton.

Guerrero, Toronto's No. 1 prospect (No. 3 overall), went 3-for-3 with a home run, a double and a pair of sacrifice flies to finish with a career-high six RBIs in New Hampshire's fifth straight victory. Bichette also tallied three hits, including a double, and the Blue Jays' No. 2 prospect (No. 13 overall) finished the game 3-for-3 with three runs scored.

Guerrero's big game comes one day after the 19-year-old phenom's first Double-A home run, a late-inning solo shot against Hartford. Guerrero homered late in Monday's contest, too, belting a solo shot in the eighth inning, and then followed it with a two-run double in the ninth to cap his memorable performance. He also reached base once via a walk.

Bichette, meanwhile, continued his torrid start to the season by collecting multiple hits for the fourth time in five games. One of those hits was a double, the 20-year-old shortstop's second this season, and he also picked up his third stolen base in the contest. The performance upped Bichette's average to .391 (5-for-29), giving him a career average of .373 through 137 games.

Also standing out for the Fisher Cats was the Blue Jays' No. 28 prospect, Jonathan Davis. Batting leadoff and playing center field, Davis went 2-for-4 with two steals and a career-high five runs. Right-hander Jon Harris (No. 30) picked up the win on the mound behind five innings of one-run, ball during which he allowed four hits and struck out three.

The rest of the best performances from top prospects Monday

- No. 10 overall prospect Michael Kopech (White Sox No. 2) put his shaky Spring Training performance behind him with a lights-out season debut for Triple-A Charlotte. The 21-year-old flame-thrower struck out the side in the first inning -- while hitting 99 mph with his fastball -- en route to piling up eight strikeouts in four scoreless innings. Kopech allowed two hits, walked two and hit one batter, throwing 51 of 71 pitches for strikes in the performance.
- No. 21 overall prospect Hunter Greene (Reds' No. 2) was electric in his full-season debut for Class A Dayton despite a shaky first inning. The 2017 No. 2 overall Draft pick recorded eight of his nine outs via the strikeout, as his fastball sat at 96-100 mph while he paired it with an upper-80s breaking ball. He allowed two earned runs on five hits and threw 35 of his 53 pitches for strikes.
- No. 25 overall prospect Brendan McKay (Rays' No. 3) made it look easy in his full-season pitching debut, throwing 17 of his 24 pitches for strikes in two perfect innings for Class A Bowling Green. He struck out four batters and recorded his other two outs on the ground. At the plate, meanwhile, McKay has opened his season with a .556 average (5-for-9), six walks (.733 OBP) and five RBIs across his first three games.
- Astros No. 25 prospect J.J. Matijevic went deep twice in a 3-for-4 performance that helped power Class A Quad Cities past Kane County, 11-1. The No. 75 overall pick in last year's Draft hit a solo homer in the third inning and added a two-run blast in the seventh, both coming with two outs in the frame. Matijevic was just 1-for-9 at the plate prior to Monday's outburst.
- Blue Jays No. 6 prospect Danny Jansen picked up where he left off in his season debut, going 4-for-4 with a solo home run and two doubles in Triple-A Buffalo's extra-inning win over Pawtucket. Finally healthy in 2017, Jansen broke out to slash .323/.400/.484 with 10 homers and 25 doubles, with more walks (41) than strikeouts (40), across three levels and a career-high 104 games.

- Orioles No. 17 prospect Zac Lowther was unhittable in his full-season debut for Class A Delmarva. The 21-year-old left-hander, the No. 74 overall pick in last year's Draft, struck out the side in the first three innings and again in the fifth to finish with 13 strikeouts in six hitless frames. Lowther issued one walk in the outing, throwing 53 of his 80 pitches for strikes. He fanned 75 batters in 54 1/3 innings (12.4 K/9) in his 2017 pro debut after finishing fourth in NCAA Division I in whiff rate (13.3) as a Xavier junior.
- D-backs No. 6 prospect Daulton Varsho staked Class A Advanced Visalia to an early lead as he hit a two-run double in the first inning, followed by a three-run homer in the second to lead the Rawhide past Lake Elsinore, 7-1. One of the better offensive catchers in the Minors, Varsho, 21, hit seven homers and 16 doubles last season in 193 at-bats (50 games) in the Class A Short Season Northwest League.
- The Marlins' 2017 Draft class was on display in Class A Advanced Jupiter's win over Clearwater, as Marlins' Nos. 19 and 20 prospects Joe Dunand and Riley Mahan, both hit home runs and combined for five RBIs and five runs scored. Dunand, the club's second-round pick, hit a solo shot as well as a double to finish 3-for-5 with three runs and two RBIs, while third-rounder Mahan delivered a three-run shot in a 2-for-4 performance. It was the first home run this season for both players.
- Braves No. 24 prospect Brett Cumberland connected on his third home run in five games as Class A Advanced Florida fell to Fort Myers, 6-4. The 22-year-old switch-hitting catcher hit a solo shot in his first at-bat and later pushed across a run with a single to finish 2-for-3 with two runs, two RBIs and a walk. Cumberland hit just one homer over 56 games with the Fire Frogs last season.
- Phillies No. 25 prospect Cole Irvin took a no-decision in his debut for Triple-A Lehigh Valley despite striking out 10 batters in five innings. Throwing 52 of his 81 pitches for strikes, the 24-year-old righty allowed two runs on four hits -- including a two-run home run -- and one walk. Irvin posted a 3.39 ERA in 151 1/3 innings in his first full season, splitting the year between Class A Advanced Clearwater and Double-A Reading.

The White Sox and Cubs had some fun in Monday's Chicago snow

By Chris Landers /MLB.com/ April 9, 2018

Monday, April 9 should be a time for green grass, blue skies and the celebration of baseball's much-anticipated return to Chicago after a week spent on the road. Instead, it turned out to be a time for ... a whole lot of snow: The Chicago area saw flurries all morning, and it created a winter wonderland in spring.

Even the Guaranteed Rate Field scoreboard was confused by the weather:

Alas, Mother Nature eventually won out, and Wrigley Field won't see baseball until Tuesday. Still, we got to see Pirates starter Trevor Williams act like a kid in a candy store, so it wasn't a total loss:

White Sox grounds crew 1, snow 0 in Chicago

Groundskeeper Bossard rigs mowers to plow Guaranteed Rate Field

By Scott Merkin /MLB.com / April 9, 2018

CHICAGO -- White Sox head groundskeeper Roger Bossard started working on snow-covered Guaranteed Rate Field at 5:30 a.m. CT Monday morning to get ready for the 1:10 p.m. first pitch in the series opener against the Rays.

And one of the preeminent figures in his field, if not a downright groundskeeping genius, disposed of the snow by using mowers to remove it and water to melt it. Chicago water comes out at 48 to 50 degrees, per Bossard, and he employed it in 20-minute intervals as he cycled across the outfield to melt about 1 1/2 inches of snow in four to five hours.

As for the mowers' involvement ... ?

"This is the first time I've ever done it," the always upbeat Bossard said. "In the past, if you have like four to six inches of snow, I've got a couple snowblowers that I'll use with that type of snow.

"Today I didn't need it. I came up with this. I tricked them again. It's not a plow. I literally used the mowers themselves. I didn't turn the mowers on, but I just pushed it with the mowers and it worked well. Every once in a while I come up with some crazy stuff. This time it worked."

Bossard and his 23-man crew removed "200 to 300 tons" of snow, and even with light snow continuing on past noon, they make the conditions playable. Ultimately, it was just another bad weather situation for the White Sox during the first 10 days of the 2018 regular season.

"Again you just never know year to year," said White Sox veteran starting pitcher James Shields, who pitched the home opener this past Thursday. "There are some years in the beginning of April where it's 60 or 70 degrees and some where it's really cold. The weather is unpredictable. It is what it is and we have to play through it."

"All of us, I think at some point in time, have played in weather like this," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "It's an uncomfortable feeling, but it's kind of a little bit mind over matter."

Renteria remembered playing in a Minor League contest where the game-time temperature was below freezing. When asked if he enjoyed the challenge of that game, Renteria smiled and said, "I don't know anybody who enjoys playing in it."

Shields pointed to Game 5 of the 2008 World Series in Philadelphia when he was with the Rays as his worst weather memory. The game was suspended after the top of the sixth inning due to rain, with the Phillies finishing off the victory and the championship two days later.

"One thing I can remember is B.J. Upton sliding into second base and him getting completely covered in a whole puddle of water during the game," Shields said. "That was pretty cold out there.

"Then we were actually checking out that day because we were going back home for Games 6 and 7 and we had to drive 45 or 50 minutes to Delaware because there were no hotels available. It was all sold out. We ended up playing [two days later], which was just as cold but it wasn't raining. We ended up losing and that was the last game of the World Series."

Saturday's first-pitch temperature for the Tigers-White Sox contest in Chicago was 32 degrees, warming up to a balmy 36 on Sunday and checking in at 35 Monday. But many players felt the wind and snow flurries made Thursday's home opener worse, weather-wise.

Every effort was made to play Monday, as the Rays won't make another trip to Chicago. The Cubs canceled their home opener 11 miles away, but they had a built in off-day Tuesday, which boasts a vastly improved forecast. Bossard also admitted a little more snow fell at Wrigley.

"Disco Demolition, that was a horrific day for me. This wasn't near as bad as that," said Bossard with a laugh. "This was a heck of a challenge, and I've got to be honest with you. I got a hold of my crew when they came in at 7 o'clock, and I wanted to get this thing done. I love the challenge, and we made it thanks to my crew. You're only as good as your crew."

Delmonico cranks his first 2018 HR off Archer

By Scott Merkin/ MLB.com / April 9, 2018

CHICAGO -- Nicky Delmonico did a little bit of everything for the White Sox during Monday afternoon's 5-4 loss to the Rays at Guaranteed Rate Field.

The left fielder made a diving catch of Daniel Robertson's line drive to open the second, a play that rose in importance after Mallex Smith and Rob Refsnyder followed with singles.

After the Rays knocked out White Sox starter Miguel Gonzalez with two runs and jumped out to a 4-1 lead in the top of the fifth, Delmonico connected for a two-out, two-run homer off Chris Archer in the bottom half to move the deficit back to one run. Delmonico's first homer of the season and 10th of his young career came on a 0-2 slider from Archer and was the team's 15th this season, tied for second in the Majors.

"I was trying to look for something up. Fortunately he hung a slider," said Delmonico, whose two hits raised his average to .261. "I'm feeling a little better [at the plate]. I felt like I was a little late early on. It felt like I was more on time today."

Delmonico's blast to right with a 103-mph exit velocity per Statcast™ ended a 0-for-19 stretch for the White Sox with runners in scoring position. Despite the wintry conditions, with two inches of snow cleared off the field hours prior to the 1:31 p.m. CT first pitch, Delmonico also had no problem in the field.

"It was great," Delmonico said. "I was surprised the way the field felt after today. It's pretty good out there.

"We came in today knowing that we were going to play. We were told that we were going to play, so we had our mindset on playing."

White Sox keep pressure on, but fall to Rays

By Max Gellman/ MLB.com / April 9, 2018

CHICAGO -- Playing from behind almost all game, stout defense kept the White Sox from being left completely in the dust. Once down 4-1, the White Sox nearly completed an impressive comeback but ultimately fell to the Rays, 5-4, at Guaranteed Rate Field.

The White Sox threw out three Rays baserunners at home, including speedy outfielder Mallex Smith twice. That kept the door open in the later innings against a Rays bullpen that entered Monday with the fourth-highest ERA (4.78) in the American League.

But ultimately the White Sox came up short.

"We just needed that one big hit," manager Rick Renteria said. "I thought it did line up very well toward the end, we just couldn't get that big knock to at least, at that point, maybe win the ballgame."

The White Sox were fortunate to play at all Monday. Though the game was originally moved up from a 7:10 p.m. CT start time to 1:10 p.m., two inches of snow fell overnight at Guaranteed Rate Field. The grounds crew began to ready the field at 5:30 a.m., however, and turned a potential snowout into a mere 21-minute delay.

Chicago's offense, as cold throughout the weekend as the mid-30s game-time temperature, rustled slightly in their slumber Monday, as Nicky Delmonico hit his first home run of the season and Omar Narvaez collected an RBI double. But on the whole, the White Sox went 2-for-16 with RISP and left 12 men on base.

"We're in the mindset sometimes of a hitter. They start thinking about the hit as opposed to the pitch and just getting something that you can handle," Renteria said. "Because the guy on third is nothing until he crosses home plate, he's just a runner on the base. So ultimately getting the positive result, trying to get a good swing on the ball and getting those runs across, I thought we battled."

The White Sox start the season 0-4 at home following a sweep by the Tigers. Their big opportunities came in the eighth and ninth. Rays reliever Sergio Romo struck out Yoan Moncada and Avisail Garcia to protect the Rays' lead in the eighth. When Chicago put runners on second and third with no outs in the ninth, Rays closer Alex Colome induced three straight groundouts to end the game.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Defending the plate: The Rays had a couple of chances to break Monday's game open, but were stopped by some excellent White Sox defense. In the fourth inning, Smith dashed home from third on a hard ground ball. Chicago shortstop Tim Anderson, with the infield playing in, picked up the short hop and nailed Smith at the plate to prevent the Rays' from scoring a second run in the inning. Then in the fifth, center fielder Leury Garcia fielded Wilson Ramos' single and threw out Matt Duffy at home on the fly to keep the score at 4-1 Tampa Bay.

Archer relieved: The White Sox were able to knock Rays starter Chris Archer out in the sixth inning when Moncada drew his second walk, putting runners on first and second for Avisail Garcia. The opportunity was ripe, as they had their first hit with runners in scoring position since Thursday when Delmonico homered in the fifth, but Garcia grounded into a forceout to end the threat. The Rays' bullpen locked it down after that.

QUOTABLE

"We've got to be ready. Doesn't matter the circumstances. We have to keep playing, keep grinding, going out there and giving our all. Everyone else is doing it. There's no excuses on that." -- White Sox starting pitcher Miguel Gonzalez, on playing through the rough weather on this homestand

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS

It has not been a good homestand for the White Sox offense in clutch situations. Their effort in Monday's loss left them 6-for-40 on the homestand with runners in scoring position, contributing to the team's first 0-4 home start since 1987.

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

The Rays had a third runner thrown out at home in the eighth inning. With one out, Smith stood at third base when White Sox reliever Luis Avilan attempted a pickoff throw to first. Smith took off for the plate, but first baseman Jose Abreu fired home in time to get Smith out at the plate. The Rays challenged the out call, but the ruling stood after a two-minute review.

WHAT'S NEXT

White Sox: Chicago plays its fifth straight day game on this six-game homestand when the White Sox take on the Rays at 1:10 p.m. CT at Guaranteed Rate Field. Carson Fulmer makes his second start of the season and second against the American League East.

Daily White Sox prospects update: Dylan Cease strikes out seven in 2018 debut

By Vinnie Duber/ NBC Sports Chicago / April 9, 2018

Here's your daily update on what the White Sox highly touted prospects are doing in the minor leagues.

Class A Winston-Salem

Dylan Cease's first outing of the 2018 regular season didn't last too long, but it wasn't bad. He gave up two earned runs (five total) on two hits and two walks and struck out seven in 4.2 innings. Cease didn't allow a run in his 6.1 spring innings, only giving up three hits and striking out nine during Cactus League play. Winston-Salem played two games Sunday and lost both. Micker Adolfo went 1-for-5 on the day, while Blake Rutherford and Gavin Sheets went hitless.

Double-A Birmingham

Ian Clarkin threw 5.1 shutout innings in his outing Sunday, giving up four hits, walking two batters and striking out two batters. Birmingham also played a doubleheader, winning both games. Seby Zavala homered in one of the games.

Class A Kannapolis

A doubleheader for Kannapolis, too, which came away with a pair of wins. Luis Gonzalez hit a homer in one of the games.

Triple-A Charlotte

Ryan Cordell and Charlie Tilson each had a hit in Charlotte's win over Durham. Casey Gillapise was 2-for-3 with a walk and two runs scored.

Roger Bossard and the White Sox grounds crew performed a miracle to transform the winter wonderland of Guaranteed Rate Field

By Vinnie Duber/ NBC Sports Chicago / April 9, 2018

The MVP of this terrible day of Chicago weather? Hands down, it's the White Sox grounds crew.

Roger Bossard earned his "Sodfather" nickname Monday, with his crew transforming a winter-wonderland version of Guaranteed Rate Field.

This is what things looked like on the South Side around 9:30 on Monday morning.

Thanks to the scheduled off day for Tuesday, the Cubs' home opener was bumped a day. The White Sox and visiting Tampa Bay Rays (making their lone trip to the South Side this season) have no such luxury, meaning the show must go on — even when the conditions make a snowball fight more likely than a baseball game.

Everyone who made the commute Monday morning knows how bad things were. To get the field ready for baseball, that's what makes you one of the best in the business.

Hats off to the Sodfather..

How the Sodfather made White Sox baseball happen on a snowy day in Chicago

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

Roger Bossard is one of baseball's best groundskeepers. Monday, he outdid himself.

"Every once in a while I come up with some crazy stuff. This time it worked."

The man known as "The Sodfather" arrived at Guaranteed Rate Field around 5:30 a.m. Four hours later, the snow-removal process was just beginning as Mother Nature continued to drop frozen water down on Chicago. But the White Sox were on a cleared, baseball-ready field by first pitch at 1:30 p.m., the grounds crew pulling off an apparent miracle to transform a winter wonderland into a playable surface.

It wasn't a miracle, though, it was Bossard's latest trick. With a little too much snow to try and melt it using the sprinkler system — something the Cubs tried on the North Side before postponing their home opener at Wrigley Field until Tuesday — Bossard used his mowers as plows and pushed the snow onto the warning track, where it was shoveled off and carted away. He said his crew removed 200 to 300 tons of snow from the field.

By 1:30 p.m.? Ta da!

"This is the first time I've ever done it," Bossard said. "In the past, if you have like four to six inches of snow, like last year we had a lot of snow, I've got a couple snowblowers that I'll use with that type of snow. Today I didn't need it. I came up with this. I tricked them again.

"It's not a plow, I literally used the mowers themselves. I didn't turn the mowers on, but I just pushed it with the mowers and it worked well.

"Every once in a while I come up with some crazy stuff. This time it worked."

While it wasn't the worst thing he's ever had to deal with — that, he said, was the famous Disco Demolition night — Bossard was visibly pleased with the job he and his grounds crew did Monday, as he should be. The transformation was incredible.

"Disco Demolition, that was a horrific day for me. This wasn't near as bad as that," Bossard said. "This was a heck of a challenge, and I've got to be honest with you. I got ahold of my crew when they came in at 7 o'clock, and I wanted to get this thing done. I love the challenge, and we made it thanks to my crew. You're only as good as your crew."

It's been a ridiculous week of Chicago weather for Bossard and his crew, who had to deal with a frozen infield as temperatures have been more appropriate for January than for April.

"Let me say this, the beginning of the homestand was hectic. I've never had three straight days — Ricky Renteria and I talked about it — where literally at 9 o'clock in the morning my infield was frozen," he said. "So the start of the homestand was really crazy for me. I've been around for a few years and I never remember anything like that.

"Then today, I knew this was coming, I've got my doppler and I'm always in touch with the weatherman. I knew it was coming."

Whether he was prepared or not, it doesn't make the job any less impressive. Neither rain nor snow nor sleet can stop the Sodfather from making White Sox baseball happen.

With offense scuffling at home, how can rebuilding White Sox develop clutch hitters?

By Vinnie Duber/ NBC Sports Chicago / April 9, 2018

When they left Toronto last week, the White Sox led the majors in home runs. They were having no problem blasting the ball out of the yard. You'll remember the six long balls they hit on Opening Day.

Fast forward to now, and the White Sox bats have gone as cold as the freezing Chicago temperatures that have so far dominated this homestand.

Whether the weather is to blame or not, the White Sox haven't been without their opportunities to score runs and win games. And yet they've gone 0-4 in four games to start the home portion of the 2018 schedule, with a quartet of losses to a pair of expected non-factors in the Detroit Tigers and Tampa Bay Rays.

Manager Rick Renteria uttered a common baseball phrase after the latest loss Monday: "We just couldn't get that big knock." That's been the unfortunate trend for this lineup in these last few games.

In the home opener, the White Sox were 4-for-13 with runners in scoring position, leaving a total of nine men on base. Saturday they went 0-for-8 and stranded 11 runners. Sunday it was 0-for-3 with four left. Monday they were 2-for-16 and stranded 12. Add it all up, and in games played at Guaranteed Rate Field this season, the White Sox are 6-for-40 with runners in scoring position with 36 runners stranded.

None of that is good, and there have been some particularly glaring moments, too. The White Sox loaded the bases with one out in the first inning both Sunday and Monday and got just one run out of the deals. Saturday, they loaded the bases with nobody out in the second inning and scored zero runs. Monday — after Yoan Moncada and Avisail Garcia struck out with two men on in the eighth — they had runners at second and third in a one-run game and grounded out weakly three straight times, unable to score.

None of this speaks to anything, necessarily, just as all occurrences at this part of the year demand filing in the Department of Small Sample Sizes. But this rebuilding team has a lot of young players, and the front office has talked about these players continuing to develop at the major league level so they're ready when the time of planned contention arrives.

So after all these early struggles to cash in on opportunities, how does Renteria and his staff go about developing clutch hitters? When the development is complete, should these guys be expected to perform differently in similar situations?

"I think that's more a byproduct of slowing the game down a little bit, making sure you don't try to do too much," Renteria said after Monday's loss. "Ultimately the result is based on putting yourself in the position to get a good pitch that you can handle and do what you can, put a good swing on it.

"But I think, as you continue to play these games and you have those opportunities — I can assure you that those experiences that they're having right now in those particular moments, that we've had a couple over this homestand actually where we haven't been able to get that big hit, where in the mindset sometimes of a hitter they start thinking about the hit as opposed to the pitch and just getting something that you can handle. Because the guy on third is nothing until he crosses home plate, he's just a runner on the base.

"I know they want to get the big hit. I think that the biggest thing is allow them right now to marinate on what's going on and let them gather their thoughts. Because I know what they're wanting to do, I know the result that they're wanting to get. At the end of the day, it's going to be tomorrow when it's all settled down, you can talk to them and say, 'OK, what was the thought process in that particular at-bat? Did you feel like you got the pitch that you wanted? Did you feel like you put the swing you wanted to put on it?' And they'll have the answer to that question. But they've got to experience those moments.

"It's a great question: Can you develop clutch hitters? I think you just develop guys that slow the game down and give themselves a chance to go through a process and put in a good swing on a pitch that they can handle, try not to do too much."

So far this season, we've already seen some big strides made at the plate by hitters like Matt Davidson, Tim Anderson and Yolmer Sanchez. The latter two softly grounded out in the ninth inning Monday. It goes to show that, as general manager Rick Hahn has said about these young players, they're not finished products.

Perhaps when they are, games like Monday's — and Thursday's and Saturday's and Sunday's — don't happen very often. Until then, in what is already becoming a common theme in this rebuilding season, the growing pains will be on display.."

Spotty spring yields to dominant debut for White Sox top pitching prospect Michael Kopech

By Vinnie Duber/ NBC Sports Chicago / April 9, 2018

Michael Kopech didn't have the world's greatest spring. But his first regular-season start of 2018 ought to reinvigorate rebuild-loving fans who can't wait to see Kopech arrive on the South Side.

Kopech made just his fourth start at the Triple-A level after making three at the end of the 2017 campaign. He struck out eight batters in just four innings, allowing no runs on two hits and two walks and throwing 77 pitches.

It was a great way to start the regular season after a spotty spring training. In four Cactus League outings, Kopech turned in an 11.57 ERA in seven innings of work. All that damage came in the final two outings after he pitched his first 4.1 innings without allowing an earned run. He struck out seven and walked seven during the spring.

The excitement level is through the roof for Kopech, whose acquisition in the Chris Sale trade with the Boston Red Sox after the 2016 season helped jolt the now-beloved rebuild to life. MLB Pipeline ranks him as the No. 10 prospect in baseball and the No. 2 prospect in the White Sox organization, behind outfielder Eloy Jimenez.

Kopech's spring signaled that while he already might be the best pitcher at any level in the White Sox organization, there's no need to rush the 21-year-old to the major league level. He can take as long as he needs to iron out any kinks at Charlotte before getting promoted to the majors, which figures — though, of course, is not guaranteed — to occur at some point before the 2018 season runs out.

Daily White Sox prospects update: Kopech, obviously, but Blake Rutherford and Micker Adolfo teamed for five hits, too

By Vinnie Duber/ NBC Sports Chicago / April 9, 2018

Here's your daily update on what the White Sox highly touted prospects are doing in the minor leagues.

Triple-A Charlotte

The news of the day was Michael Kopech's dominant regular-season debut for the Knights, who beat the Norfolk Tides on Monday night. Kopech, who had an up-and-down spring with the White Sox and finished Cactus League play with an ERA north of 11.00, struck out eight hitters in his four shutout innings Monday, allowing two hits and walking two batters. Not bad for just his fourth start at the Triple-A level.

Class A Winston-Salem

Kopech wasn't the only White Sox prospect with a big day, though. Outfielders Blake Rutherford and Micker Adolfo combined for five hits in Winston-Salem's win over Myrtle Beach. Rutherford went 3-for-4 with a double, two RBIs and a run scored. Adolfo was 2-for-4 with a double and an RBI. Luis Alexander Basabe also had two hits, and Gavin Sheets had a hit, as well.

Double-A Birmingham

Eyes continue to be on the catchers at Birmingham, where both Zack Collins and Seby Zavala are playing. Collins was 1-for-4 on Monday with a run scored as the designated hitter, while Zavala went hitless but drew a walk.

Class A Kannapolis

In more catching news, Evan Skoug had a two-hit day for Kannapolis, though he also did it as the designated hitter.

Snow job? Cubs postpone while White Sox play — and both teams made right call

By David Haugh/ Chicago Tribune / April 9, 2018

You know what they say about the weather in Chicago.

If you don't like it, wait 15 minutes.

Or is it, if you don't like the weather, go eight miles south?

That was the case Monday in the city spring forgot, where enough snow fell at Wrigley Field for the Cubs to postpone their home opener 24 hours to 1:20 p.m. Tuesday. Yet the White Sox's 5-4 loss to the Rays started only 20 minutes late Monday on the South Side despite 2 inches of the white stuff greeting head groundskeeper Roger Bossard at 5:20 a.m. when he arrived at Guaranteed Rate Field. It created such a wintry scene that the giant video board carried the message pregame: "Happy Holidays."

The legend of "The Sodfather" grows.

"Disco Demolition in 1979 was horrific day for me, and this wasn't as bad as that, but still one heck of a challenge," said Bossard, who has been saving Sox playing surfaces since 1967. "I have to be honest with you. I got hold of my crew when everyone came in at 7 and said I wanted to get this done. I love the challenge and have to thank my crew."

The Sox played a game against the Rays, the Cubs blamed bad conditions for scrapping theirs with the Pirates, and both teams did the right thing. Anybody driving to Wrigleyville from Chicago's southern corridor Monday morning understood that quirky dynamic based on how snowy traveling became just north of the Loop. Nobody wins with left fielder Kyle Schwarber chasing a fly ball on such a slick surface.

"Just too much lake-effect snow," Cubs business president Crane Kenney told reporters outside the clubhouse. On the frozen grounds of the Park at Wrigley, four snowmen fans built made Kenney's description easy to believe. So did the snowballs thrown by catcher Willson Contreras, a Venezuelan seeing snow for the second time in person.

The Cubs had a scheduled off day Tuesday as protection against weather wiping out the home opener. The Sox had no such luxury with the Rays making their only visit to the South Side and an organizational charity event Tuesday night, making a Wednesday doubleheader nobody relished playing the only alternative, according to a team official.

Frustrated Cubs fans who took a day off work to attend Monday's game at Wrigley probably still wonder whether the Cubs could have played if they had started clearing snow as early as the Sox and Bossard did. Two groups of people stopped me on Waveland Avenue on my way from Wrigley to 35th and Shields — both of whom lived a two-hour drive away — to question why the Sox still were playing when the Cubs didn't. Sorry, only Mother Nature and The Sodfather know for sure.

Bossard reported 2.25 inches of snow at his ballpark and immediately started spraying water — which comes out between 48 and 50 degrees in Chicago — to melt eight hours before the scheduled first pitch. To remove the rest, Bossard came up with an unorthodox plan for his 23-person crew to clear what he estimated was between 200 and 300 tons of snow.

"I made my lawnmowers into snowplows and just pushed it off with the mowers," said Bossard, 69. "Every once in awhile, I come up with some crazy stuff and this time it worked. I tricked them again."

Not that Bossard believes trickery could have helped his good friend Justin Spillman, the Cubs groundskeeper. Spillman also tried using the sprinklers to melt more snow than Bossard had to confront but his crews didn't begin clearing it until after the team postponed the game just after 11. The Cubs originally delayed the first pitch to 2:20 before calling it altogether an hour later, with manager Joe Maddon's blessing.

"On the way out I had no idea if I was going to the Cubs Convention (in January) or opening day, so I thought it was the right thing to do," Maddon said.

Every weary reliever in the Cubs' active bullpen agreed.

"I'm glad it was them and not me," said Bossard, who communicated with Spillman throughout Monday morning. "Justin Spillman is one of the better young groundskeepers in baseball and used the water procedure too. But if you have more than two inches of snow, you're not going to be able to do it. They made the right call. They had more snow."

Blame Lake Michigan more than the Cubs, says ABC-7 meteorologist Cheryl Scott. Whenever a northeast wind blows off the lake, as it did Monday, Scott said Wrigley Field will be affected more than Guaranteed Rate Field. Cubs officials read from the same weather radar the city's meteorologists do.

"The forecast called for more on and off snow showers through the early afternoon and the focus was along the lakefront because of boundary layer convergence and the influence of a northeast wind off the lake," Scott said.

Scott Stombaugh, a Cubs season-ticket holder who lives in Bloomington, Ill., received the bad news on his phone just after pulling into his parking spot near Wrigley. Stombaugh's 10-year-old son, Wesley, reminded dad the Sox were in town too.

"Wesley said, 'Let's go,' " said Scott, who quickly bought four tickets for \$53 online. "We can't get enough baseball."

Sitting three rows behind the Rays dugout, the Stombaughs sat in a crowd that looked like a gathering of Sox friends and relatives — from small families. Seats were open enough that Sox vice president Brooks Boyer instructed ushers to let people sit as close as they wanted.

The Sox announced paid attendance at 10,377, an inflated number that included hundreds of fans in Cubs gear whose day got better heading south.

White Sox get in snow-delayed game but end up with 5-4 loss to Rays

By Phil Thompson/ Chicago Tribune / April 9, 2018

After three straight home games in 30-degree weather, including a 21-minute snow delay on Monday, the White Sox probably are getting the hang of shrugging off unfavorable field conditions. Now if they could just to nail down clutch hitting.

The Sox put the potential tying run on third base in the eighth and ninth innings but couldn't capitalize in a 5-4 loss to the Rays. The setback marked the first time they had lost their first four home games since 1987.

"Ultimately we left 12 runners on base," said manager Rick Renteria, whose team has stranded 27 runners in the last three games.

The Sox had their best chance to rally in the ninth after Jose Abreu walked, Nicky Delmonico singled and both runners advanced on Rays reliever Alex Colome's wild pitch, but the next three Sox grounded out to end the game. With two outs in the eighth, the Sox executed a double steal to put two men in scoring position but Avisail Garcia struck out swinging.

Renteria said his young team will remember such missed opportunities and pointed to some strides the bullpen has made.

"The relief came in and picked up (starter Miguel Gonzalez) very well," he said. "On the day, we just needed that one big hit. It did line up very well toward the end, but we just couldn't get that big knock to win the ballgame."

Gonzalez (0-2, 8.68 ERA) lasted fewer than five innings for the fifth time in his last seven starts, giving up eight hits and four earned runs in 4 1/3 innings.

Renteria said he thought Gonzalez was throwing enough strikes (55 of 93 pitches) to be effective, but like his poor season debut, location was an issue. "He attacks the strike zone. His zone might have been out of sync a little bit, you know he had quite a few runners on, but again he tried to minimize the damage to the best of his ability. Again, I don't want to make excuses for any of these guys because they're all throwing in that weather, but they're still working through that stuff too."

Game time temperature was 35 degrees, but Gonzalez dismissed the weather as a factor.

"We have to be ready, it doesn't matter our circumstances," he said. "... Everyone else is doing it (in cold weather), there is no excuse from that."

Rays starter Chris Archer struck out eight in 5 2/3 innings to get his first victory of the season, though he gave up a two-run homer to Delmonico in the fifth inning.

"I was trying to look for something up. Fortunately, he hung a slider," Delmonico said. "I'm feeling a little better (at the plate). I felt like I was a little late (on swings) early on. Just trying to get going a little early and a little slow. It felt like I was more on time today."

Whether the chilly conditions played a role or players just had old-fashioned mental miscues, the game had its share of slip-ups. Second baseman Yoan Moncada flubbed an RBI grounder and Delmonico let Rob Refsnyder's grounder to left field get by him for an error.

Five pitchers threw wild pitches between both teams.

Monday morning, a layer of wet snow blanketed the field and the start time that already had been rescheduled Friday from 7:10 p.m. to 1:10 because of weather concerns, was moved again from 1:10 to 1:30.

One cheeky stadium technician played "Informer" by rapper Snow on the sound system as a little snow picked up before game time.

Several players and coaches wore face masks to ward off the cold. A few fans did, too — those of the announced crowd of 10,377 who braved the stands — but a more curious sight was the handful of Cubs blue jackets and jerseys dotting the stands. With Wrigley Field's 2018 debut postponed until Tuesday, Guaranteed Rate was just a train ride away.

One Cubs fan waved a "W" flag in an apparent attempt to heckle the Sox's flag bearer, who didn't seem to notice.

White Sox's Sodfather raises his game a notch as the Snowfather

By Phil Thompson/ Chicago Tribune / April 9, 2018

As if Roger Bossard's legend needed another page.

Certainly White Sox fans will boast to their Cubs brethren that their team's groundskeeper was able to squeegee enough slush from Guaranteed Rate Field to avoid postponing Monday's game while the Cubs home opener was snowed out — never mind that Wrigley Field accumulated more snow and its grounds crew used some of Bossard's same measures before the decision came down to postpone their game until Tuesday.

Still, observers marveled at Bossard's methods, such as using water warmer than air temperature to combat snow on the field icing over and plowing snow with grass mowers, a spur-of-the-moment inspiration.

"I've never had three straight days — (manager) Ricky Renteria and I talked about it — where literally at 9 a.m. my infield was frozen," he said. "So the start of the homestand was really crazy for me. I've been around for a few years and I never remember anything like that. Then today, I knew this was coming, I have my Doppler and I'm always in touch with the weatherman."

"The trick to this is, if you get two inches or less you're actually able to melt the snow by using the water. Chicago water comes out of the system probably about 48 to 50 degrees, so you actually can melt a little bit at a time. I had a little more than two inches so I had to come up with something and I don't know how I did this, but I actually used my mowers to push the snow, as snow plows. I've never done that before. It worked out well."

Bossard also empathized with what the Cubs crew faced Monday.

"Actually, Justin Spillman, the head groundskeeper with the Cubs and I, we're very close, and he's probably one of the better young groundskeepers in baseball. They had 3½ inches of snow so they were a little bit different than us."

Getting an education: Once again, Renteria was left with a setback and a teachable moment. After the 5-4 loss to the Rays on Monday, the White Sox have gone 2-for-27 with runners in scoring position.

Could the young group be pressing? Maybe, but Renteria wants to let his players reflect on why they're not cashing in when the opportunities are there.

"I know they want to try to come through, I know they want to get the big hit. The biggest thing is allow them right now to marinate on what's going on, and let them gather their thoughts, because I know what they're wanting to do, I know the result that they're wanting to get.

"When it all has settled down, you can talk to them and say, 'OK, what was the thought process in that particular at-bat? Did you feel like you got the pitch that you wanted? Did you feel like you put the swing you wanted to put on it?' And they'll have the answer to that question, but they have to experience those moments."

White Sox's Matt Davidson and Jason Benetti's new podcast has 'no direction'

By Phil Thompson/ Chicago Tribune / April 9, 2018

You'd think as the White Sox play-by-play announcer Jason Benetti would always get the last word on Matt Davidson.

To hear the third baseman tell it, "Me and Benetti, the fans liked me bashing on him a little bit" during a SoxFest segment they did in January.

The pair tried to bring those antics to a podcast they launched Monday, which — stop us if this suddenly sounds like a "Seinfeld" episode — is a show about nothing that officially doesn't have a name yet.

"We called it 'No Direction.' It's really no direction. We're going in, we might have some questions and stuff but we're going to let the conversation go how it goes. We wake up and do the same thing every day. It's very monotonous. ... To break it up we do kind of random stuff. I think that's what the fans will see: how we stay sane for seven months doing the same thing every day."

The podcast is available at: whitesox.com/podcasts

Of course they talk baseball, but it can veer off into pop culture subjects like Lululemon and Justin Timberlake. Davidson also hopes to show what teammates such as Yolmer Sanchez or Tim Anderson are like or what they do off the field, and but guests could come from anywhere.

But right now Davidson and Benetti are playing a lot of it by ear and depending on the natural give-and-take between them. And maybe Benetti can give Davidson the business sometimes.

“He tries. He’s not very good at it,” Davidson said. “He tries to get back at me a little bit but I try to stay one up on him.”

Clutch hitting eludes White Sox in loss to Rays

By Brian Sandalow/ Chicago Sun Times / April 9, 2018

The White Sox were one hit away. They’re still waiting for that hit.

The Sox left 12 runners on base in their 5-4 loss Monday to the Rays, including two each in the eighth and ninth innings. In the ninth, they had runners on second and third with no outs against struggling Rays closer Alex Colome, but Yolmer Sanchez, Tim Anderson and Leury Garcia grounded out to extend the Sox’ losing streak to four.

Leaving runners on base and struggling with runners in scoring position have been themes for the Sox recently. In their last three games, they’re 2-for-27 with runners in scoring position and have left 27 runners on base.

“I feel like we are in every game,” outfielder Nicky Delmonico said. “It’s just that one hit or that one [at-bat] that can change the game.”

Tyler Saladino is tagged out by C.J. Cron during Monday’s game. | Getty Images

Grounds crew gets field ready, but White Sox can’t rally past Rays

Adam Eaton’s excess value helped White Sox get bundle in trade

Manager Rick Renteria knows driving runners in is just another part of the maturation process his young team is going through. The more they play, the more experience they’ll get and the slower the game will get.

Instead of talking immediately with his players about what they could have done differently or better, Renteria said he prefers to allow them to “marinate” on what happened and to gather their thoughts.

“When it’s all settled down, you can talk to them and say: ‘OK, what was the thought process in that particular at-bat? Did you feel like you got the pitch that you wanted? Did you feel like you put the swing you wanted to put on it?’” Renteria said. “And they’ll have the answer to that question. But they’ve got to experience those moments.”

More from Fulmer

Right-hander Carson Fulmer’s spring training wasn’t what anybody wanted. He gave up 14 earned runs and walked 13 in 10 2/3 innings and didn’t look like the top-10 pick he was in 2015.

So Fulmer’s first start of the season, a no-decision last week in Toronto, was encouraging for the Sox. He allowed three runs and five hits in five innings, striking out five and walking one.

The Sox want to see him continue to throw strikes and to use his secondary pitches Tuesday against the Rays.

“I think he’ll continue to build on that,” Renteria said. “I think it was very similar to how he finished last season. And I think that he’s continued to gain confidence, continued to go out there [and] have an idea, execute pitches and give himself a chance, give us a chance.”

Fast start

Anderson is the first Sox player since Kenny Lofton in 2002 to steal five bases in the team’s first nine games. But he said he’s just trying to keep things simple and have fun and is confident the rest will take care of itself.

“I feel great,” Anderson said. “I’m swiping bags. I’m hitting, playing with a lot of energy. It’s fun. It’s contagious. It’s helping our ballclub get going, and hopefully I can keep the same intensity up.”

Adam Eaton’s excess value helped White Sox get bundle in trade

By John Grochowski / Chicago Sun Times / April 9, 2018

Whenever White Sox fans watch Yoan Moncada, Lucas Giolito and Reynaldo Lopez this season — and many other prospects as coming attractions — they can thank metrics and the concept of excess value on contracts.

Pitchers Chris Sale and Jose Quintana and outfielder Adam Eaton all had excess value on their remaining contracts before the Sox traded them. That led to big returns.

A player whose projected wins above replacement are worth more than he’s paid brings a premium return on the trade market.

Let’s look at Eaton as an example. He had big excess value when the Sox traded him to the Nationals after the 2016 season.

He had three years left on his contract, plus an additional two years as club options. For the first three years, his salaries were set at \$4 million, \$6 million and \$8.4 million. The option years were worth \$9.5 million and \$10.5 million.

That meant the Nationals’ three-year commitment was \$18.4 million, with a total of \$38.4 million if they exercised all five years of club control.

That’s a low price for a player who has put up big WAR numbers. In 2016, Fangraphs.com measured Eaton at 5.8 WAR, the eighth-best position player in the American League. That was after 3.7 in 2014 and 3.8 in 2015.

There are variations among projection systems and ballclubs have their own metrics, but assume a projected 2017 WAR of 4.5 for Eaton before the injury that sidelined him last season. The projection is less than his big year of 2016 but more than his previously established level.

Next, build in a decline of about a half-win a season for aging. That would leave projected WARs of 4.5, 4.0 and 3.5 for three years, then 3.0 and 2.5 in the option years. That yields total projected WAR of 12 for three years or 17.5 for five.

The going rate for free agents at the time was about \$8 million per win above replacement. Even with no increases in the going rate, Eaton's value on the open market could be calculated at about \$96 million for three years or \$130 million for five.

Eaton's salary was \$77.6 million less than his projected value for three years or \$91.6 million less for five. Those figures represent his excess value.

If the Sox spent that money on the free-agent market, it would have been enough to keep Eaton and buy players worth between 8 and 9 WAR over three years or about 16 WAR over five. Instead, they extracted a high price from the Nationals in Giolito, Lopez and highly regarded pitching prospect Dane Dunning.

Pre-metrics, returns are unlikely to have been quite so high. A team looking at Eaton's .284 batting average and modest 14 home runs in 2016 wouldn't have been quite as impressed as a modern front office seeing his 5.8 fWAR.

But metrics are a major part of the game now, and excess value makes an impact on the balance of trade.

It wasn't Disco Demolition, but The Sodfather pulls off another trick to remember

By James Fegan / The Athletic / April 9, 2018

With snow pelting down on a jammed Lake Shore Drive at 9:30 a.m. Monday and creating something that a less initiated person might call "whiteout conditions," it didn't really feel like a morning that would lead into baseball being played outside in Chicago. But at that point, the forecast was already looking a fair bit rosier than when White Sox groundskeeper Roger Bossard checked into work.

"I was looking for people to help me. I didn't see any of you guys here at 5:20 a.m.," Bossard said to the scrum of reporters gathered to listen to how the revered "Sodfather" took more than two inches of snow covering Guaranteed Rate Field and reduced it to a mere 21-minute delay before the White Sox series opener against the Tampa Bay Rays.

A mere four hours earlier, when Bossard was meeting with manager Rick Renteria to discuss field conditions, they weighed the prospects of an infield that was frozen solid, for the third day in a row, at that.

"I'm hoping that they'll be able to put their spikes into the ground," Renteria said of his players before the game. "Those are things that we talked to them about it. If they feel the ground is too firm or they can't really get a footing, I want them to be mindful of it. But that being said, I think Roger's done a great job of getting the field ready. I don't see him having any problems. I spoke to him this morning. He said, 'Don't worry what it looks like right now. We'll be able to get that game in.'"

Bossard is regularly revered as a genius and the most trusted and knowledgeable groundskeeper in the city and beyond, even consulting with other teams and other parks. Yet his basic strategy to clear a snow-covered Guaranteed Rate Field seems like it was developed by someone who has impatiently thawed their windshield a few times: spray warmer water (48 to 50 degrees he estimates) onto snow to get it to melt. It was still a maddening, possibly five-hour process, because Bossard had to water in 20-minute cycles across the quadrants of the outfield to avoid making any part of the field too heavy, but it's been proven as an effective way to eliminate an inch and a half of snow.

More than an inch of a half of snow hit Guaranteed Rate Field, however.

For a major snowfall, as the White Sox dealt with last year, Bossard would employ snowblowers. But the two and a half inches that blanketed the entire field even as the clubhouse opened to media at 10:00 a.m. fell in a sort of middle ground, so with no grass visible, Bossard turned on his lawnmowers.

"I had to make my mowers into snow plows," Bossard explained. "It's not a plow, I literally used the mowers themselves. I didn't turn the mowers on, but I just pushed it with the mowers and it worked well. Every once in a while I come up with some crazy stuff. This time it worked."

Grounds crew members used any means necessary to remove snow from the field prior to the White Sox's game against the Tampa Bay Rays Monday. (Jeff Haynes/AP Photo)

Despite snow still tracked across the outfield with less than two hours before the eventual first pitch at 1:31 p.m., and the Cubs postponing their home opener eight miles to the north, the White Sox and Bossard talked as if the game being played Monday was inevitable. There's a charity gala being hosted at the park Tuesday night, and Wednesday is getaway day for both teams, with no matchups in Chicago scheduled for the rest of the year, so there was some extra motivation. At the same time, Bossard was leveraging a method he had never tried before to move what he estimated was "a couple thousand tons of snow," but as someone who has been in his current job for 35 years, he talks like he enjoys the feeling of the workdays of thousands of people turning on the success of his experimentations.

"This was a heck of a challenge, and I've got to be honest with you," Bossard said of the work of his 23-person crew. "I got ahold of my crew when they came in at 7 o'clock, and I wanted to get this thing done. I love the challenge, and we made it thanks to my crew. You're only as good as your crew."

Bossard said the endless chug of freezing temperatures and multiple days of open snowfall is something unprecedented for his career, but when asked about how this ranks among the most difficult projects of his tenure, Bossard immediately blurted out "Disco Demolition," like a victim of previous trauma.

Between rescheduling an original 7:10 p.m. first pitch to the afternoon, the snow, a 35-degree first pitch, and a showdown between the rebuilding White Sox and a Tampa Bay Rays team that came into the day with a 1-8 record, Bossard's handiwork was seen in person by only several hundred people. Yet in a season with dozens of flights across the country, keeping both the Rays and Sox from having to make one more is still sacrosanct. And after all that rambling about his process and wealth of past experience and work, Bossard did eventually get down to the important matter of the day: are the Cubs chumps for postponing their game when it was possible to clear the field by 1:30 p.m., or not?

"[Cubs groundskeeper] Justin Spillman and I are very close," Bossard said. "They had more snow, so I get it. He was using the watering procedure, too. He's a very knowledgeable, talented young groundskeeper. When you've got more than two inches of snow, when you're at that three, three and a half level, they made the right call.

"I'm glad it was them and not me. I'm glad I only had the two inches. But from what I understand, I guess they've got an off day tomorrow. They made the right decision."

By the Numbers: Central theme not hard to find after another White Sox loss

By James Fegan / The Athletic / April 10, 2018

The White Sox don't look like they're worse than the 2-8 Tampa Bay Rays, or like the worst team in the AL Central, but provided an easy opportunity to confirm that authoritatively, they've left it on the table.

In that same spirit, the Sox (3-6) left 12 runners on the bases in a frigid Monday afternoon 5-4 loss to woebegone Tampa, which was sealed with three straight weak bouncers in the ninth from Yolmer Sánchez, Tim Anderson and Leury García off closer Alex Colomé while the tying and winning runs sat in scoring position. It was preceded by Yoán Moncada and Avisail García striking out against Sergio Romo in the eighth inning while Leury waited to be driven home for the equalizer. The Sox went 2-for-16 with runners in scoring position on the day so at least this wasn't one of those confusing games without a theme.

“Ultimately the result is based on putting yourself in the position to get a good pitch that you can handle and do what you can, put a good swing on it,” manager Rick Renteria said. “But I think, as you continue to play these games and you have those opportunities, I can assure you that those experiences that they’re having right now in those particular moments, that we’ve had a couple over this homestand actually where we haven’t been able to get that big hit, we’re in the mindset sometimes of a hitter, they start thinking about the hit as opposed to the pitch and just getting something that you can handle.”

2-for-27: White Sox hitting with runners in scoring position over the last three games, which included a straight-up three-day 0-fer streak until Nicky Delmonico laced a hanging Chris Archer slider just over the wall in right field in the bottom of the fifth. “Moneyball” was published 15 years ago, so at this point it’s understood that hitting numbers with runners in scoring position are mostly noise rather than a significant measure of clutchitude. At the same time, it would be hard to sum up watching the White Sox offense for the last three games without pointing to a bevy of stranded runners that could have saved them from sinking toward last place.

“Feel like we are in every game, it’s just that one hit or that one at-bat that can change the game,” Delmonico said. “It’s definitely different going up there and trying to stay warm the whole game. But you know we’ve been grinding and like I said, we are just one at-bat away from the game being in our favor.”

77-to-112: The path of Moncada’s ascendant wRC+ as he reached base four times in five trips to the plate. The primary takeaway to this is that it’s so early in the season that one good day can take Moncada’s results from 23 percent below average to 12 percent above, and also to show that no amount of statistical progress can erase the pain of him striking out in a favorable matchup against Romo with the tying run at second in the eighth.

2: Swinging strikes for Miguel González in 93 pitches, as there was no sign of the effective split-change he flaunted during his last outing in Arizona. That first swing-and-miss generated by González didn’t come until he was already 70 pitches deep and got Rob Refsnyder to whiff on a fastball, and he went without a strikeout on the day, and disconcertingly, was not the first White Sox starting pitcher to do so this season. Most pitchers struggling to miss bats to this degree would have their day fall apart much sooner than with one out in the fifth, but González has always compensated for stuff with grit. He has an 8.68 ERA to start the season, so eventually some sharpness will need to make its way in too.

“Everyone else is doing it, there’s no excuses on that,” said González when asked about the 35-degree temperature. “It was tough, but I’m feeling good, I’m healthy. That’s the important thing. Got to keep grinding.”

3: Outs at home plate made by a Rays team seemingly deadset on making as little out of 14 hits as humanly possible. Leury García caught Matt Duffy trying to score from second on a Wilson Ramos single in the fifth, and speedster Mallex Smith was thrown out at the plate on a fielder’s choice in the fourth, and unsuccessfully tried to steal home on Luis Avilán’s pickoff move to first in the eighth. In sum, Smith wound up scoring once despite four hits, including a triple and a double.

123: wRC+ for Delmonico on the season, which suddenly looks like a pristine stat line after his first big game of the year. Between his first homer of 2018 and a big base hit in the ninth to give the Sox some false hope of a rally, he was close to playing the hero Monday, but will have to settle for just looking like someone who belongs near the middle of the order. Despite not joining in on the first-week power barrage, he continues to draw walks and maintain his approach.

"I'm feeling a little better," Delmonico said. "I felt like I was a little late early on. Just trying to get going a little early and a little slow. It felt like I was more on time today."