

Lindor hits 28th HR, but Tribe's rally falls short

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- During a two-hour, 10-minute rain delay Tuesday night at Progressive Field, the only thing the Indians could do was wait while the storm loomed over the shores of Lake Erie.

Tribe hitters were forced to wait even longer than the 9:20 p.m. ET start time for a chance at any offensive breakthrough against Twins starting pitcher Adalberto Mejia. Said chance never surfaced, as the left-hander dominated Cleveland's bats across five shutout innings, surrendering a hit and allowing three baserunners to help lead the Twins (53-59) to a 3-2 win against the American League Central-leading Indians (62-50).

After letting the first two batters reach, Mejia (2-0) held the Indians 0-for-15 for the rest his outing, allowing a walk and striking out three before exiting after the fifth with 68 pitches due to a left wrist strain.

The Tribe's slow night at the plate magnified the biggest mistake made by starter Carlos Carrasco (13-6), who gave up a three-run homer to Mitch Garver in the second, supplying all the offense Minnesota would need. Carrasco set the table for Garver by hitting second baseman Logan Forsythe to lead off the frame, followed by a single to Jake Cave.

"He was trying to get back into the count with Garver, and mislocated," manager Terry Francona said of Carrasco. "[Garver] hit one a long way. So that ends up being their scoring. I mean, there was a lot of traffic the whole game, but he kept them off the board, except for that one swing. But it was enough."

Carrasco left a 1-0 fastball down the heart of the plate, and was still kicking himself about it after the game.

"I was just trying to get a ground ball right there," Carrasco said. "I threw a two-seamer and it came back kind of in the middle, so he got it."

The Twins recorded 10 hits off Carrasco, but the right-hander found a way to strike out eight against one walk in 6 1/3 innings. The outing is logged as a quality start, but marks the worst start for Carrasco -- who's posted a 1.33 ERA his last three starts -- since the All-Star break.

"We didn't get a lot of big hits, but we got one that really counted," Twins manager Paul Molitor said of Garver's homer. "We had baserunners all night long."

Francisco Lindor put the Tribe on the board in the eighth with a solo shot off right-hander Trevor Hildenberger, sending a 1-1 slider into the right-field stands for the shortstop's 28th in 2018. Michael Brantley kept the rally going with a single into right and advanced to third on a one-out single by Edwin Encarnacion. Newly acquired Leonys Martin pinch-hit for Brandon Guyer and lifted a sacrifice fly to center field, deep enough to score Brantley to make it 3-2.

The rally was thwarted after Hildenberger struck out Yonder Alonso -- who homered in Monday's 10-0 win against the Twins -- swinging on four pitches. Cleveland got the tying run to second in the ninth, but Twins closer Fernando Rodney struck out Lindor looking to end the game.

"Tomorrow's another day," Carrasco said. "So we'll play tomorrow hard."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Tribe strands two in the first: Lindor led off the first inning with a bloop single just past the reach of first baseman Joe Mauer in shallow right field. After Michael Brantley was hit in the lower back, Cleveland had runners at first and second for its No. 3 hitter, Jose Ramirez.

Ramirez, who entered hitting .300 with a 1.039 OPS (3rd in MLB), grounded into a fielder's choice, but reached first and advanced Lindor to third with one out. But the next two batters -- Encarnacion and Guyer -- popped out to right and lined out to Mejia, respectively, ending the biggest scoring threat against the southpaw.

"He's shown some adeptness at being able to handle baserunners and pitch out of jams," Molitor said of Mejia. "He did it a couple times early, made some really good pitches."

SOUND SMART

Twins outfielder Eddie Rosario finished Tuesday 4-for-5 with two doubles. His only out was a ninth-inning warning track flyout in left, bringing the left fielder's 2018 average against the Tribe to .356 -- with a .729 slugging percentage -- in 14 games. Rosario entered Tuesday in an 0-for-17 slump against Tribe pitching, hitting .459 (17-for-37) prior to that.

UP NEXT

Right-hander Mike Clevinger (7-7, 3.48 ERA) is scheduled to take the mound Wednesday in a 7:10 p.m. ET start at Progressive Field. Clevinger was tagged for three runs in six innings last Friday against the Angels, and surrendered four runs and seven hits in six innings against the Twins on June 3. Minnesota will counter with right-hander Jake Odorizzi (4-7, 4.60 ERA).

Stars and strings: 2019 ASG logo unveiled

By Anthony Castrovine MLB.com @castrovine

CLEVELAND -- The logo for next summer's Midsummer Classic is a celebration of stars and six-strings, an amalgamation of Cleveland's identity both as the capital of rock and roll and the host of the 2019 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard.

Major League Baseball and the Indians unveiled the logo -- a guitar image bordered by baseball stitching -- on Tuesday as the first official order of business in anticipation of the sport's 2019 summer showcase, which will take place at Progressive Field next July 9. It is an image intended to illustrate that, in sound and in sport, Cleveland rocks.

"You can look at this particular mark, and you can hear it," said MLB vice president of design Anne Occi. "You can hear the excitement, how big it is. You can hear the fans roar."

They'll be roaring at baseball's 90th All-Star Game, the sixth hosted by the Indians. That's the most of any single franchise, and this distinction will be celebrated in other theme art associated with the event, utilizing the six strings of a guitar to mark the years (1935, '54, '63, '81, '97, 2019) in which Cleveland has hosted.

"We're going to be the focal point of baseball for that week," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "For that, I'm thrilled for the city of Cleveland."

The Indians had six All-Stars -- third baseman Jose Ramirez, shortstop Francisco Lindor, outfielder Michael Brantley, pitchers Corey Kluber and Trevor Bauer and catcher Yan Gomes -- at this year's All-Star Game at Nationals Park in Washington. They hope to have similar representation in 2019 -- perhaps with a similar result to 1997, when Tribe catcher (and current first-base coach) Sandy Alomar Jr. hit the game-winning home run for the American League and won the MVP honor.

"It's always extremely special anytime you get to share the clubhouse with those superstars," Lindor said. "I can't wait for everybody to come to our house."

The 2019 game will also be a celebration of the 25th anniversary of Progressive Field. The ballpark, then known as Jacobs Field, was but a baby the last time the All-Star festivities came to town, and the logo at that time highlighted the so-called "toothbrush lights" that are a signature aspect of the facility.

This time around, the goal of the logo, which is emblazoned upon many a piece of merchandise now available at the Progressive Field Team Shops and MLB.com, was to capture an element of the city's culture.

"The Indians' goal was very specific -- to celebrate Cleveland as the birthplace and spiritual home of rock and roll," Occi said. "If you look back over the history of rock and roll, you see your favorite bands in very specific typefaces. We devised and created a unique type style that had the flavor of that genre."

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, placed in Cleveland in part because of the belief that disc jockey Alan Freed coined the term "rock and roll" on local station WJW, opened on the shore of Lake Erie just one year after Jacobs Field's debut. The success of the Indians in the 1990s and the arrival of the rock hall were considered key components of a downtown renaissance at the time.

Today, the Indians are again established as one of the most successful franchises in the AL, and baseball's jewel event is part of another upswing in national attention, which included the 2016 Republican National Convention, and a sort of finishing touch to the Progressive Field renovation project that took place in 2015 and '16.

"We have worked tirelessly to preserve and enhance Progressive Field," Indians owner Paul Dolan said. "We see this All-Star Game as a thank you to our community, which has helped us enhance this facility."

At Tuesday's logo unveiling, MLB Deputy Commissioner Tony Petitti said the club's "tremendous enthusiasm" played a role in the selection of Cleveland as the 2019 host site, and Cleveland mayor Frank Jackson highlighted the impact the event will have on the local economy.

"There's always spin-off from having a national and in some cases international event," Jackson said. "You have people come, visit, fill up hotels, restaurants -- you get the national exposure. This will add to that."

Rock on.

Chisenhall targeting return before postseason

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- Lonnie Chisenhall hopes to be back in Major League games before the end of this season, but the sidelined Indians outfielder is currently monitoring the Minor League standings. He knows that any postseason runs for Cleveland's affiliates can help provide chances for rehab games.

"The last thing I want to do," Chisenhall said on Tuesday afternoon, "is be playing catchup in September against Major League arms when we're in the division race. I'm keeping an eye on teams who are in first place down there."

This is familiar territory for Chisenhall, who is currently on the 60-day disabled list due to a severe left calf strain. A year ago, the veteran outfielder was dealing with a right calf issue -- one that flared up multiple times in 2017 and was also an issue earlier this year. Chisenhall returned in time to get in four Major League games at the end of the season in an attempt to be ready for the American League Division Series.

Chisenhall went 0-for-5 in seven plate appearances in the ALDS defeat against the Yankees, and he knows now that his offensive timing was not ready. With that history in mind, Chisenhall is hoping to find a way to get properly prepared in the weeks leading up to the postseason this year.

As far as Chisenhall is concerned, his season is not over. He also understands that the clock is ticking.

"I'll end up in a gray area," said Chisenhall, who has hit .297 with an .872 OPS in 111 games over the 2017-18 seasons combined. "I just want to end the year with a clean bill of health or come back with a clean bill of health. I don't want to shortchange any of the preparation. I'm going to have to jump through some hoops twice, three times.

"I think we've made some adjustments for preparing to come back. It's just going to end up at a bad time. Hopefully, some teams make some playoff runs in the Minors."

With Chisenhall out, along with Tyler Naquin (right hip surgery) and Bradley Zimmer (right shoulder surgery), the Indians are currently employing platoons in both center and right field. Leonys Martin and Rajai Davis are divvying up the innings in center, while Melky Cabrera and Brandon Guyer are handling the load in right.

Due to the setbacks with both calf muscles over the past two seasons, Chisenhall has undergone a series of tests in an effort to decipher the source of the issue. He had bloodwork done, had his nutrition habits studied and even had his gait analyzed. Chisenhall (a free agent at the end of the season) said no one has been able to figure out why he has experienced so many problems.

The good news is that Chisenhall has advanced to hitting off a machine and has resumed playing catch in his return-to-play rehab program. The outfielder has also been cleared for light jogging, along with running in an alterG treadmill. He continues to take steps forward, but there are still a lot of factors involved in the potential timing of his return to the Tribe.

"I don't know [when], but it'd be nice to have him back," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "It gives you another option and, you know, we wouldn't have to play him every day, because we have other guys. But, it sure would be nice to have him back."

Worth noting

- Tribe catcher Yan Gomes was back in the starting lineup on Tuesday after sitting out the past three games with right hamstring tendinitis. Francona noted that Gomes will start two out of the next three games and the manager also raved about the job Roberto Perez did while Cleveland's No. 1 catcher was sidelined.

"I thought 'Berto did a really good job," Francona said. "I know both of them want to be everyday guys. And I understand that and I respect that. But, as an organizational thing ... to have somebody back there where the game doesn't get altered -- regardless of who's pitching -- yeah, that's [helpful]."

- The Indians have been able to use the past two-plus weeks to get a feel for how their bullpen works with Brad Hand and Adam Cimber now in the fold. It has also been a week since Cleveland acquired Martin from the Tigers. Francona said he likes how his new-look roster functions.

"I think [functions] is a good word," Francona said. "The guys we have complement each other really well. You have Martin and Raj. You have Melky and Guyer. You added a lefty back-of-the-bullpen guy and a righty that can pitch the end of the game or in big situations. So it's not just what their numbers are, but they complement each other really well."

- Right-hander Cody Anderson (right elbow, 60-day DL) is still working through a throwing program at the Indians' complex in Arizona. Francona noted on Tuesday that, if Anderson is able to get into games in September, the team's preference would be to have it come in a Minor League setting.

Indians' biggest surprise? Bauer's breakout

By Richard Justice MLB.com @RichardJustice

NL CENTRAL

Brewers -- Jesus Aguilar is that breakout player who keeps scouts and executive awake nights attempting to project how a little-used player would project over 162 games.

Cardinals -- The Cardinals have played their best baseball of the season at a time when only one member of their starting rotation is older than 25 years old. They've got a 23-year-old (Dakota Hudson) and a 21-year-old (Jordan Hicks) in the bullpen. Regardless of how this season plays out, the future is bright for the Cardinals.

Cubs -- Javier Baez had long since established himself as a catalyst type of player when this season began. At times, his energy overcame some holes in this game. This season has established himself as a legitimate star and a cornerstone player.

Pirates -- Manager Clint Hurdle accomplished what only the really good skippers do. That is, he kept his team together and focused on pushing ahead in the worst of times. From a 40-48 start, the Pirates have won 17 of 25 since -- the best record in the NL in that timespan -- as the Pirates try to play themselves into the thick of the postseason conversation.

Reds -- Eugenio Suarez had a breakout season in 2017 with 26 home runs and an .828 OPS. Then, he did something some of us did not see coming: He got better. His OPS is up more than 100 points and he has already matched his homer total from last season.

NL WEST

D-backs -- Clay Buchholz has had a career rebirth at 33. In 10 starts since joining the D-backs' rotation on May 20 -- and then missing a month with a strained left oblique -- he has allowed more than three runs once.

Dodgers -- Matt Kemp returned to the Dodgers last offseason but was expected to be traded before he got on the field. Instead, he surprised almost everyone with an All-Star-caliber season.

Giants -- Dereck Rodriguez's debut on May 29 was notable for his being the son of Hall of Famer Ivan Rodriguez. In 13 appearances since, he has shown that he's going to have a bright and shiny career of his own.

Padres -- Christian Villanueva has 20 of San Diego's 99 home runs and has more than established himself as one of the pillars on which the roster can be built in the years ahead.

Rockies -- Trevor Story burst onto the scene in 2016 with 27 home runs and a .341 OBP. He then struggled enough in '17 that some surely wondered if that rookie season had been a fluke. This year, he played his way onto the NL All-Star team and has kept his production going at a high level.

AL EAST

Blue Jays -- Lourdes Gurriel Jr. is usually mentioned behind some of the more famous members of the Toronto Minor League system (Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Bo Bichette, Cavan Biggio). But he was the first to make the Majors this summer and has been everything the Blue Jays hoped he'd be.

Orioles -- Adam Jones surprised some by vetoing a trade to the Phillies at the non-waiver Trade Deadline even though it was a chance to return to the postseason. If the Orioles would like to re-sign him for 2019 and beyond, he seems willing to be the role model and leader he was for the previous rebuild.

Rays -- That crazy pitching thing works. Since the Rays began opening some games with relievers and playing mix-and-match for nine innings, their 3.55 ERA is the third-best in the American League.

Red Sox -- Sometimes, perfection. That's the story of the 2018 Red Sox, who began Tuesday on a pace to win 113 games, which would be the most since the '01 Mariners won an AL-record 116. Their offense is good. So is their pitching. Their rookie manager, Alex Cora, has been excellent. Any other questions?

Yankees -- Gleyber Torres was not overhyped, which is saying plenty considering that greatness had been bestowed on him when he was a teenager. He made his MLB debut on April 22, and until the last couple of weeks he hadn't really had anything approaching a meaningful slump.

AL CENTRAL

Indians -- Trevor Bauer is having the season forecast for him since he was the third overall pick of the 2011 Draft. He's leading the AL in innings and is ranked in the top 10 in almost every relevant category, including 11.6 strikeouts per nine innings.

History Watch: Five unheard-of baseball feats that we could see in the 2018 season

By Jayson Stark Aug 7, 2018 49

July is for trade rumors. August is for history.

For years now, that's been our motto. We recommend it highly.

You can only overdose on J.A. Happ trade rumors for so long, you know. Then it's time to take a nap, clear your head and remember something way more important:

There's a season going on out there. For a few special players in our midst, history is hanging in the balance, and you probably never even noticed.

So join with us now as we hone in on those players through this special August presentation of our History Watch – and give you something to occupy your attention now that you no longer have to devote every waking second to checking Ken Rosenthal's Twitter feed.

CAN'T CATCH THE TROUT

Apparently, Mike Trout is pretty good at baseball. What the heck, you've probably caught on, but it never gets old to remind you of that. Because he's pretty good at baseball, it's impossible to do one of these August History Watch columns unless you start with him.

The tough part is that just about everything Trout does in Anaheim at this point is historic, potentially historic or possibly even ridiculously historic. So there are roughly 87 ways to look at what could make this year especially ridiculously historic for him – assuming he can will his sore wrist to heal up ASAP. But how about this:

He's on a path to lead his league in Wins Above Replacement (baseball-reference version) for the fifth time.

Now perhaps you're curious about what other position players have led their league in Wins Above Replacement five times. Not shockingly, it's a cool list:

Babe Ruth 10
Willie Mays 9
Ted Williams 6
Rogers Hornsby 6
Barry Bonds 6
Mickey Mantle 5
Albert Pujols 5

Alex Rodriguez 5

OK, definitely heard of them. But now here's the ridiculously historic part. Today is Trout's 27th birthday. But since it's August, this is still considered his age-26 season. So how many position players in history have led their league in WAR five times by this age?

None, of course.

Who does that? Only this guy does that. In fact, just four position players have ever even led their league in WAR three times by their age-26 season:

Mantle 4
Mays 3
Hornsby 3
Stan Musial 3

Definitely heard of them, too. So Mike, keep icing that wrist. Us Mike Trout historians need something to do this fall!

NO WAY, JOSÉ

All that Trout-ian history aside, the American League MVP race gets more fascinating by the day. And that brings us to José Ramírez – yet another dude with a chance to do something that would seem impossible for most humans we know:

He could lead the American League in homers...but also extra-base hits...and also stolen bases...all in the same season.

Wait. Seriously? Yep. In real life. Ramírez currently leads the AL outright in extra-base hits (with 65). And he's tied for the lead in homers (with J.D. Martinez, at 33) and steals (with Dee Gordon, at 26). Want to know how rare this would be? Of course you do.

— Guys who led their league in extra-base hits and steals in the same season (live-ball era): Just Alfonso Soriano in 2002, Stuffy Stirnweiss in 1945 and Chuck Klein in 1932.

— Guys who did that in the dead-ball era: Honus Wagner (four times) and Ty Cobb (twice).

— And, finally, guys who led in homers and steals in the same season (any era): Klein in 1932, Cobb in 1909 and Joltin' Jimmy Sheckard in 1903.

But now comes the important stuff. When you ask who has led in all three of those exotic departments in the same year, only one of those names is still standing. That would be Klein in '32. That was 86 years ago, if you're not subtracting along with us at home.

Ah, but Chuck Klein did it in Philadelphia, for the Baker Bowl Phillies. And José Ramírez works in Cleveland. So...

Who has pulled this off in the history of American League, you ask? Nobody has done that, we reply!

That's nobody. As in ever. Sure, it helps Ramírez's stolen-base quest that he isn't going to have to swipe 50, let alone 100, to lead the league in steals. But Klein (20 SB in 1932) wasn't exactly Rickey Henderson, either. So the heck with the old-fashioned triple crown. This is the triple crown we should all be watching over the next eight weeks.

Awards Watch: The AL MVP race is a three-way battle for the ages

By Cliff Corcoran Aug 7, 2018 40

There are fewer than eight weeks left in the 2018 regular season, and none of the major player awards are even close to being decided. This month's Awards Watch finds a new leader in four of the six awards races. The American League's Most Valuable Player race is a three-way battle for the ages. The AL Cy Young award is also a three-man scrum. The National League Cy Young and the AL Rookie of the Year races are whisker-close two-man contests, and the NL's pitching award may yet expand beyond the current top two. The NL Rookie of the Year award race remains wide open, and the field of contestants for the NL MVP is so deep that I had to pore over the statistics of more than twenty players to come up with my expanded standings below.

Speaking of which, we have our first Cy Young/MVP crossovers of the season. So, to avoid spoiling the Cy Young rankings, I'm presenting the pitching award first with the MVP rankings to follow.

As always, the rankings below are based on who would most deserve each award if the season had ended Monday night. Last month's rankings are in parentheses after each player's name, where relevant. "Off the list" indicates players who have fallen out of the top five since last month. League-leading statistics are in bold. Major-league-leading statistics are in bold and italics. Rookies are players with fewer than 130 plate appearances or 50 innings pitched in the major leagues prior to this year who also had fewer than 45 days on an active major-league roster prior to this year (not counting time on the disabled list or during expanded rosters in September). Ozzie Albies and Josh Hader are not rookies.

Cy Young

American League

1. Trevor Bauer, RHP, Indians (5)

2.25 ERA, 197 ERA+ (2.36 FIP, 2.52 DRA), 3.68 K/BB, 31.3 K%, 1.12 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 24 GS

2. Chris Sale, LHP, Red Sox (4)

2.04 ERA, 216 ERA+ (2.07 FIP, 2.11 DRA), 6.27 K/BB, 37.6 K%, 0.87 WHIP, 6.4 IP/GS, 22 GS

3. Justin Verlander, RHP, Astros (1)

2.19 ERA, 178 ERA+ (2.79 FIP, 2.22 DRA), 7.29 K/BB, 33.7 K%, 0.88 WHIP, 6.5 IP/GS, 24 GS

This is very nearly a three-way tie. Per all of that bolded text, Sale has clearly been the best pitcher in baseball on a per-inning basis. However, he hasn't pitched since July 27 due to shoulder inflammation and now trails Verlander by 15 1/3 innings and Bauer by 18 2/3. The Red Sox hope to get Sale back this weekend, but he'll effectively be three starts behind his rivals by then. Sale's 28-point lead over Verlander in ERA+, when combined with his other rate-stat advantages, is large enough to compensate for that playing-time discrepancy for now. Bauer, however, has a greater advantage in innings and trails Sale by just 19 points of ERA+.

As for Bauer's inferior peripherals, this is one spot where failing to list home-run rates distorts the picture. Bauer's walk rate (3.2 BB/9) inflates his WHIP and diminishes his strikeout-to-walk rate, particularly relative to Verlander, who is issuing walks half as often. However, Bauer has allowed just seven home runs on the season to Verlander's 19. In terms of bases allowed, Verlander has surrendered 28 fewer bases on walks than Bauer, but 48 more bases on home runs, and every one of those home runs is a scoring play, whereas Bauer has been able to strand many of his walks, in part because he rarely gives up home runs. To wit, over his last dozen starts, Bauer has walked 28 men but allowed just two home runs in 81 2/3 innings, netting a 1.76 ERA. By comparison, Verlander has issued just 13 walks in his last 12 games, but has also allowed 14 home runs over the same span to the tune of a 3.36 ERA.

4. Corey Kluber, RHP, Indians (2)

2.63 ERA, 169 ERA+ (3.37 FIP, 2.72 DRA), 7.30 K/BB, 24.6 K%, 0.92 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 23 GS

Kluber hit a rough patch as June turned to July, giving up 22 runs in 26 innings across five starts while dealing with a right knee issue. Kluber withdrew from the All-Star Game due to that injury, and was lit up in his first start after the break. However, he appears to have put the issue behind him, allowing just one run in 16 1/3 innings over his last two starts. Most tellingly, Kluber gave up two fly balls for every ground ball during his five-start rough patch. Over his last two starts, however, his groundballs have outnumbered his fly balls.

5. Gerrit Cole, RHP, Astros

2.64 ERA, 147 ERA+ (2.76 FIP, 2.39 DRA), 4.12 K/BB, 35.1 K%, 0.99 WHIP, 6.4 IP/GS, 23 GS

Since busting out of the gate with a 1.42 ERA and five double-digit strikeout games in his first seven starts as an Astro, Cole has settled in as a reliable source of six innings, eight strikeouts, and roughly two runs allowed every five days. That's tremendously valuable, but it's not going to move him up in these standings.

Off the list: Luis Severino

National League

1. Max Scherzer, RHP, Nationals (1)

2.33 ERA, 182 ERA+ (2.67 FIP, 2.26 DRA), 5.53 K/BB, 34.7 K%, 0.91 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 23 GS

2. Jacob deGrom, RHP, Mets (2)

1.85 ERA, 204 ERA+ (2.28 FIP, 2.19 DRA), 5.24 K/BB, 30.1 K%, 0.97 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 22 GS

Jacob deGrom has been the best pitcher in the National League by a safe distance since returning from the disabled list on May 18. Both deGrom and Scherzer have made 14 starts since then. Here's a quick comparison:

deGrom	Scherzer
GS	14 14
IP	102 96
H	77 67
R	24 30
ER	21 29
HR	6 12
BB	19 25
K	117 119
K/BB	6.16 4.76
WHIP	0.94 0.96
ERA	1.85 2.72

However, here's how the two fared prior to May 18:

deGrom	Scherzer
GS	8 9
IP	44 1/3 58 2/3
BB	14 13
K	56 91
K/BB	4.00 7.00

WHIP	1.04	0.82
ERA	1.83	1.69

Scherzer's early dominance and deGrom's DL stint for a hyperextended elbow remain just enough to keep Scherzer on top for the fourth-straight month by virtue of his extra start, 8 1/3 extra innings, and advantage in strikeout-to-walk ratio and WHIP. However, if the current trend continues, deGrom will overtake Scherzer before we revisit the race at the end of the month.

3. Aaron Nola, RHP, Phillies (4)

2.37 ERA, 174 ERA+ (2.78 FIP, 2.40 DRA), 3.60 K/BB, 24.8 K%, 0.99 WHIP, 6.4 IP/GS, 23 GS

Nola has a 1.93 ERA over his last seven starts dating back to June 28 and is now closer to catching Scherzer than he is to falling back to fourth place.

4. Zack Greinke, RHP, Diamondbacks

2.96 ERA, 149 ERA+ (3.42 FIP, 2.54 DRA), 5.92 K/BB, 25.9 K%, 1.04 WHIP, 6.2 IP/GS, 23 GS

Greinke has allowed just four runs in his last five starts combined, three of them via solo home run. In eight starts since June 23, he has allowed just eight runs, only those three homers, and walked just six men for a 1.37 ERA, 0.84 WHIP, and 8.83 strikeout-to-walk ratio over that span. Sadly, that run of success has coincided with Greinke largely abandoning his slow curve, though the last two he has thrown have been two of his slowest yet, one looping in at 63 miles per hour to strike out Yairo Muñoz swinging back on July 3 (seen at the 30-second mark here).

5. Patrick Corbin, LHP, Diamondbacks (5)

3.31 ERA, 133 ERA+ (2.55 FIP, 3.02 DRA), 4.70 K/BB, 30.7 K%, 1.06 WHIP, 6.1 IP/GS, 23 GS

Kyle Freeland and Miles Mikolas have had better results, but Corbin has out-pitched both, even if his performance has flattened out some after an early-June skid. Over his last eight starts, Corbin has a 2.98 ERA, 5.70 strikeout-to-walk ratio, and has not allowed a single home run in 48 1/3 innings, all of that despite a .341 opponents' average on balls in play over that span. He has also recovered a bit of his missing velocity of late, cracking 93 mph for the first time since April in his final two July starts, and posting his highest average velocity since April in his July 28 start in San Diego.

Off the list: Ross Stripling

Most Valuable Player

American League

1. Mike Trout, CF, Angels (1)

.309/.459/.624 (197 OPS+), .438 xwOBA, 30 HR, 99 BB, 97 K, 21 SB (88%), 482 PA

Trout jammed his right wrist sliding feet-first into third base last Wednesday and has been sidelined ever since. He received a cortisone shot in the wrist before Monday's game, and the Angels hope he can return for the weekend series against the A's. A backdated disabled-list stint would keep Trout out until Sunday. Whatever the exact timing of his return, we can only hope he avoids a prolonged absence and that his performance doesn't suffer from the time off. In his last 10 games, Trout hit .355/.543/.935 with five home runs, 13 walks, and six stolen bases. The five games he has missed with the injury thus far are the only games he has missed all season.

2. José Ramírez, 3B, Indians (3)

.300/.410/.629 (172 OPS+), .407 xwOBA, 33 HR, 74 BB, 54 K, 26 (87%), 488 PA

Ramírez enters Tuesday's action tied for the major-league lead in home runs and the American-League lead in stolen bases. The last man to lead his league in both categories was Hall of Famer Chuck Klein in 1932 (38 homers, 20 steals). The last American Leaguer to do it was Ty Cobb in 1909 (9 homers, 76 steals). However, that may not be the most impressive thing about the season Ramírez is putting together.

It is entirely possible that we are witnessing the greatest season by a third baseman in major-league history. According to Baseball-Reference's wins above replacement (bWAR), the current gold standard at the position belongs to another Cleveland player, the late Al Rosen. In 1953, Rosen compiled 10.1 bWAR via a .336/.422/.613 (180 OPS+) batting line and an uncharacteristically strong performance in the field. Ramírez is trailing Rosen slightly at the plate, but he has already contributed more value in the field and on the bases than Rosen did in his unanimous MVP season. As a result, entering Tuesday's action, Ramírez is on pace for 10.8 bWAR this season. Per FanGraph's WAR, Adrian Beltre's 2004 tops the list of third-base seasons at 9.7 wins above replacement. Ramírez is on pace for 10.9 fWAR. Baseball Prospectus's Wins Above Replacement Player gives top honors to Mike Schmidt's 1974 at 11.6 WARP. Ramírez is on pace to best that mark by two whole wins above replacement. That is an absurd rate of production, and it underscores just how good Trout has been that Ramírez could have the greatest season ever at his position, by unanimous decree of all three wins-above-replacement metrics, and still be only the second-best player in the American League this year.

3. Mookie Betts, RF, Red Sox (2)

.342/.428/.652 (184 OPS+), .470 xwOBA, 26 HR, 52 BB, 58 K, 21 SB (88%), 425 PA

The two weeks Betts missed with an abdominal strain in early June continue to haunt him in this extremely close race between the three best players in baseball. More recently, Betts has hit a relatively pedestrian .254/.324/.448 over his last 16 games. Overall, Betts has slugged “just” .552 since returning from that injury, which would be a tremendous figure in almost any context, but is contributing to his falling behind in this absurd three-man MVP race.

4. Francisco Lindor, SS, Indians (4)

.295/.376/.560 (146 OPS+), .414 xwOBA, 27 HR, 54 BB, 77 K, 17 SB (77%), 514 PA

Lindor is an also-ran in this race, but his continued development at the plate in this, his age-24 season, suggests that we’re watching the blossoming of one of the greatest shortstops in the game’s history. Skeptical? Here are the all-time bWAR leaders among shortstops through their age-24 seasons:

Name	bWAR
Alex Rodriguez	38.1
Arky Vaughan	34.3
Cal Ripken Jr.	28.0
Jim Fregosi	23.3
Francisco Lindor	22.5
Robin Yount	22.0

Lindor won’t turn 25 until November and should pass Fregosi on that list before the end of August.

5. Trevor Bauer, RHP, Indians

2.25 ERA, 197 ERA+ (2.36 FIP, 2.52 DRA), 3.68 K/BB, 31.3 K%, 1.12 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 24 GS

6. Chris Sale, LHP, Red Sox

2.04 ERA, 216 ERA+ (2.07 FIP, 2.11 DRA), 6.27 K/BB, 37.6 K%, 0.87 WHIP, 6.4 IP/GS, 22 GS

7. Justin Verlander, RHP, Astros

2.19 ERA, 178 ERA+ (2.79 FIP, 2.22 DRA), 7.29 K/BB, 33.7 K%, 0.88 WHIP, 6.5 IP/GS, 24 GS

Even though everything beyond the third spot on this list is effectively an honorable mention, the three top pitchers in the league are so tightly bunched that I couldn’t justify cutting off the list after Bauer.

Given the confluence of Cleveland players in the middle of this list, it’s worth noting the stars-and-scrubs composition of the Indians’ roster this season. After Ramirez, Lindor, and their top four starting pitchers (adding Mike Clevinger and Carlos Carrasco to Bauer and Kluber), the Indians don’t have another player who has compiled more than a single win above replacement for them this season, per bWAR. The only team in baseball to have received more than 1.0 bWAR from fewer than six players thus far this season is the Marlins, with five, one of whom (Cameron Maybin) they have since traded. By way of comparison, the Red Sox, Yankees, and Cubs have all had 14 such players, and the Astros have had 15.

Off the list: José Altuve

National League

From 1993 to 2010, the Most Valuable Player awards in both leagues were exclusively the property of the game’s everyday players. However, this decade the voters have shown an increased willingness to give the award to a pitcher, honoring Justin Verlander in the AL in 2011 and Clayton Kershaw in the NL in 2014. Both years were notable not necessarily for the dominance of the pitcher who won the award (Kershaw was more valuable in 2013 but finished seventh in the MVP voting; Verlander was nearly as good in 2012 and finished eighth), but for the lack of a clear alternative among the league’s hitters. AL runner-up Jacoby Ellsbury couldn’t separate himself from third-place José Bautista in 2011, and in 2014, Giancarlo Stanton’s season, and his bid for his first MVP award, came to an end when he took a fastball to the face on September 11.

This year’s underwhelming NL scrum may yet yield another Most Valuable pitcher, as the most impressive performances in the league have clearly belonged to the league’s top pitchers. That is reflected below, but, as I did with the AL rankings above, I’ve expanded my list beyond the usual top five to include a representative sample of hitters. Those of you who don’t think the MVP should go to a pitcher are welcome to renumber this list accordingly, provided you understand that you’re doing so in direct violation of the voting instructions for the award.

1. Max Scherzer, RHP, Nationals

2.33 ERA, 182 ERA+ (2.67 FIP, 2.26 DRA), 5.53 K/BB, 34.7 K%, 0.91 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 23 GS

2. Jacob deGrom, RHP, Mets

1.85 ERA, 204 ERA+ (2.28 FIP, 2.19 DRA), 5.24 K/BB, 30.1 K%, 0.97 WHIP, 6.7 IP/GS, 22 GS

3. Aaron Nola, RHP, Phillies

2.37 ERA, 174 ERA+ (2.78 FIP, 2.40 DRA), 3.60 K/BB, 24.8 K%, 0.99 WHIP, 6.4 IP/GS, 23 GS

One could argue that Nola has been more important to the Phillies' success than Scherzer and deGrom have been to the Nats' and Mets' relative lack thereof. However, the Nationals, who enter Tuesday's action three games over .500, are 40-48 (.455) in games not started by Scherzer, while the Phillies are 47-42 (.528) in games not started by Nola. As for the Mets going a seemingly impossible 4-10 in deGrom's last 14 starts, I refuse to blame a player for his team's inability to cash in his value. Think about it this way: if you can't afford something that costs \$30, the \$20 bill in your wallet is not to blame. More directly: individual awards should reward individual performance; team context is irrelevant. Scherzer and deGrom have both been better than Nola thus far, and all three have been more valuable than every hitter in the league this season.

4. Matt Carpenter, 1B/3B, Cardinals

.282/.394/.590 (165 OPS+), .431 xwOBA, 29 HR, 72 BB, 105 K, 33 2B, 467 PA

Carpenter's bat caught fire in mid-June after a very slow start, and he has hit .347/.467/.812 with 21 home runs in just 210 plate appearances since June 15. That's a 72-homer pace over 162 games. Those numbers might be even more impressive had new manager Mike Shildt not taken him out of a blowout against the Cubs on July 20. In his first five at-bats in that game, Carpenter had three home runs and two doubles. That's 16 total bases, three more than any other batter has had in a single game this season, and Carpenter did it in just six innings. The all-time record for total-bases in a game is 19, set by Shawn Greene in his six-hit, four-homer game in 2002. Carpenter could have broken that record with one more home run, though it might have come with an asterisk given that the Cubs used position players to pitch the final three innings of what proved to be an 18-5 Cardinals win.

Twins top Tribe, 3-2

By Steve Herrick, The Associated Press

Fernando Rodney struck out Franciso Lindor with the tying run on second base in the ninth inning after Adalberto Mejia pitched one-hit ball over five innings, and the Twins beat the Indians, 3-2.

Lindor homered in the eighth but struck out looking on a 2-2 pitch as Rodney recorded his 325th career save — moving him into 17th place on the career list.

Yan Gomes led off the ninth and was credited with a hit after Miguel Sano bobbled his groundball behind third base. Sano recovered, but Gomes beat the throw. Jason Kipnis struck out and pinch-hitter Melky Cabrera flied out.

Gomes took second on Mitch Garver's passed ball, but Rodney closed out his 25th save this season.

A bloop single by Lindor in the first was the only hit off Mejia (2-0), making his fourth start and fifth appearance of the season. The left-hander retired the last 12 hitters he faced and was pulled after throwing 68 pitches with a strained left wrist.

Gabriel Moya relieved Mejia to begin the sixth. The injury was announced the following inning.

Minnesota's pitching rebounded from a 10-0 loss Monday. Cleveland managed only two hits through seven innings, but Lindor's homer and pinch-hitter Leonys Martin's sacrifice fly made it a one-run game.

Garver's homer in the second inning denied Carlos Carrasco (13-6) a chance to move into a tie for the AL lead in wins. The right-hander allowed three runs in 6 1/3 innings.

Eddie Rosario was 4 for 5 and is batting .355 (21 for 59) in 14 games against Cleveland this season.

Mejia dominated the Indians at Target Field last week, also pitching five scoreless innings and allowing one hit. He struggled against the first two hitters Tuesday before quickly settling in.

Lindor's popup fell in shallow right field. First baseman Joe Mauer raced out with his back to home plate and right fielder Max Kepler charged in, but the ball dropped between the two.

Mejia hit Michael Brantley with a pitch, but retired the next three hitters. Jose Ramirez hit into a forceout that moved Lindor to third, but Encarnacion flied out to shallow right and Mejia caught Brandon Guyer's soft liner to the mound.

Mejia walked Yonder Alonso to lead off the second, but that was the last baserunner he allowed.

Garver's homer also ended stretch of 22 straight scoreless innings by Cleveland's pitching against Minnesota.

The start of the game was delayed by rain for 2 hours, 10 minutes.

Twins >> RHP Matt Belisle (sore right knee) was placed on the 10-day disabled list and RHP Matt Magill was reinstated from the paternity list.

Indians >> Gomes was in the lineup after missing three games with right knee tendinitis.

RHP Jake Odorizzi (4-7, 4.60) starts for Minnesota on Wednesday against RHP Mike Clevinger (7-7, 3.48).

Rock stars: Indians unveil guitar logo for 2019 All-Star Game **Tom Withers | The Associated Press**Published on Aug. 8, 2018

CLEVELAND — Cleveland's rock 'n' roll roots will be on display for the 2019 All-Star Game.

Inspired by the city's deep musical history, the team unveiled the logo for next year's game — a red-white-and-blue guitar with a body bordered with baseball stitching.

The blending of baseball and music is a not-so-subtle reminder to the rest of the country that Cleveland rocks.

The Indians are hosting the annual mid-season event on July 9 for a record sixth time. And next year's game coincides with the 25th anniversary of Progressive Field, which was known as Jacobs Field when it hosted the 1997 game.

Owner Paul Dolan, MLB Deputy Commissioner Tony Petitti, Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson and Indians manager Terry Francona, All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor and first-base coach Sandy Alomar, who hit the game-winning home run for the American League in '97, attended Tuesday's ceremony that officially begins the countdown to next year's game.

Plans for the logo began shortly after the team was awarded the game.

"We ask them what do they want to do with their mission and what they wanted to do was celebrate Cleveland as the birthplace and spiritual home of rock and roll," said Anne Occi, MLB's vice president of design, who has been involved in creating All-Star logos for 28 years. "They wanted to talk us through the game and the experience and how the idea of baseball and rock and roll go together within the central part of Cleveland culture."

Occi said one of the biggest challenges in designing a logo that can be used across a variety of platforms — from merchandise to uniform patches to being painted on the field.

She's especially proud of the 2019 logo, which she described as "unique."

It's certainly not divisive.

Under pressure from MLB and others, the Indians will no longer wear the contentious Chief Wahoo on their caps and jerseys starting next season. And while there has been speculation that Cleveland conceded to the move in order to host the All-Star Game, the team has insisted the timing was just coincidental.

Dolan said there was no discussion about Chief Wahoo in designing the All-Star logo.

"That wasn't even on our radar," he said. "One, we did this a long time ago. The typical All-Star logo is the skyline of the city, maybe with the ballpark in the background, and we said we would like to do something different and we would like to draw on music as being a theme and that was the extent of our instruction."

Cleveland, which also hosted All-Star Games in 1935, 1954, 1963 and 1981, has long been considered the birthplace of rock after local disc jockey Alan Freed coined the term "rock and roll." The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame opened one year after Jacobs Field, and the two structures have been linked to the city's downtown rebirth.

The Indians and MLB officials have met with the Rock Hall about being incorporated into festivities around next year's game.

"You can see from the logo what we think the tie-in should be in Cleveland," Petitti said. "We try to do something unique in every market we're in, so music is what you can expect to see in 2019."

Tito's pregame minutiae: Aug. 7 **by Jordan Bastian**

Q: Yan Gomes is back in the starting lineup today, so he's obviously feeling much better?

Francona: "Yeah, he's good to go. We'll probably catch him—I don't know—we'll catch him two out of the next three. I'm not sure yet which ones, but he's doing fine. That's good. I thought 'Berto did a terrific job. I think it was good for Bert to know he was going to play three, four, parts of five games in a row. I thought it was really good for him. So, sometimes when things don't go perfect, it can help you in other ways. At least that's the idea. I thought 'Berto did a really good job."

Q: How much does it help to have a catching situation like you guys have with Gomes and Perez?

Francona: "And I know both of them want to be everyday guys. And I understand that and I respect that. But, as an organizational thing goes... because how many teams got through a year where a catcher doesn't get nicked up? It doesn't happen very often. So, to have somebody back there where the game doesn't get altered—regardless of who's pitching—yeah, that's [helpful]. And we know that."

Q: Do you think Perez is a better hitter than he's shown this year, because of the sporadic playing time?

Francona: "Yeah, you saw last night. He took some good swings last night. One, it's hard to hit when you don't have regular at-bats. And he, at times, if you get into some habits, they get exacerbated when you're not playing every day. But, as long as he can be a threat when he's playing. You kind of throw out the batting average sometimes, because I just don't think that's the most important tool or factor when you're looking at a catcher that's catching twice a week."

Q: Along those same lines, do you feel like Melky Cabrera is getting closer to his usual level of play in light of the regular playing time?

Francona: "Yeah, I do. He's got the barrel to the ball a lot. At times, he hadn't had a lot to show for it, but just sitting down there usually in that six or seven hole, the ability to switch hit and give you a real professional at-bat. And like I've said before, it allows us to use Guyer in ways where we can really leverage Guyer."

Q: How much do you think it helped Guyer to get some rest over the All-Star break for his wrist?

Francona: "He sure seems to think so. I think part of it is I think he's a good hitter. It had been a struggle for him and, if the wrist feels that much better, I mean, he looks different. He's letting it fly at the plate, which is good. He can get real dangerous, especially against left-handers."

Q: Has that wrist issue lingered?

Francona: "I think Guyer has played through way more than we know. He's a tough, tough kid. I don't doubt that one bit. If it doesn't feel great, you can play, but are you going to [be impacted by it]. It's one thing if your leg hurts, but if your wrist hurts, that can really get in the way."

Q: How much do you look for opportunities to get Guyer regular at-bats to keep him feeling good at the plate, even if the matchup isn't ideal?

Francona: "I'm not opposed to that, though. I think that's a really good way of putting it, is you look for opportunities. If there's a chance to put him in the game for defense, maybe you do it a little earlier hoping he'll come around and get an at-bat. Things like that."

Q: Do you think the recent progress by Cody Allen is because you took him out of the ninth inning for that short spell?

Francona: "No, I don't think he was ever worried about the ninth inning. I just thought it was a way of maybe jump-starting him. He's a good pitcher. I think guys get to their level. He'd have got there regardless. I just thought it would help it along."

Q: Does the presence of Brad Hand create a kind of competition for Allen?

Francona: "I don't know about competition, but I think he's probably thrilled. When guys have been around for a while now, they understand the objective is to win, and anybody who can help you win is appreciated."

Q: Can getting more appearances actually help a player get out of a rut?

Francona: "Yeah. I think his workload is pretty consistent with what he's usually been. Some guys that rely on two-seam movement like Otero, that can really help, because they can get their movement. Cody is not that type of pitcher. He's kind of a power pitcher with a big breaking ball. But, we try to listen to them. There's been times where, we were in Texas and he said, 'I really need to pitch tonight,' and he had thrown a lot of pitches anyway. So, we got him in there for a couple hitters."

Q: You've had a couple weeks to see how Hand and Adam Cimber can help the bullpen and it's been about a week with Leonys Martin in the fold. What have you thought about the way your roster functions now?

Francona: "I think that's a good word. The guys we have complement each other really well. You have Martin and Raj. You have Melky and Guyer. You added lefty back-of-the-bullpen guy and a righty that can pitch the end of the game or in big situations. So, it's not just what their numbers are, but they complement each other really well."

Q: What's stood out to you about Jason Kipnis' at-bats over the last few weeks?

Francona: "I think he's understanding that—he's looking up at the scoreboard and not liking what he sees, but that that doesn't mean he's not a good hitter. I think he's hit .300 in the last whatever, the last 20 games. And we actually kind of talked about that. I said, 'You can look at this one of two ways. One, "I don't like what my average is," or two, "I'm actually a .300 hitter."' You just have to be strong enough mentally to look up there and know that's not you."

Q: What have you thought of Carlos Carrasco's season so far?

Francona: "Since he came back from getting hit, it's almost like what was it, three or four years ago, when he tore his hamstring and he missed significant time. And when he came back, he was fresh and you really didn't see the rust. That's been really good. That's what we're kinda hoping with Andrew [Miller], is that once we get him going then you've got a guy that hasn't pitched a ton, so it actually helps you. We've just got to get him there. Carrasco, for whatever reason, when he comes back ... even when he was throwing his bullpens, Carl [Willis] was like, 'Man, he's electric.' So, maybe he has more in the tank, because he didn't pitch every five days."

Q: Are you hopeful that Lonnie Chisenhall can return before the end of the season?

Francona: "He's out there now, he's jogging out on the field. He's been doing the on the alterG running. He's going to go with us on this trip, because he can do baseball activities. You know what? I don't know, but it'd be nice to have him back. It gives you another option and, you know, we wouldn't have to play him every day, because we have other guys but it sure would be nice to have him back."

Q: Chisenhall said he's hoping for some Minor League affiliates to go on playoff runs, so he can get in some rehab games in September...

Francona: "It helps. It really helps us when like, I think Cody Anderson's a guy that that kind of could impact. If they keep playing, he might be able to pitch. So, those things really do help. We were talking today. If he's ready to come pitch, and there's no games, especially a guy coming off Tommy John, that's a big jump coming straight to the Major Leagues. So, it would be nice if there were some games somewhere."

Q: Did you hear Angels manager Mike Scioscia use the word "poppycock" the other day when that report came out about him stepping down?

Francona: (laughs) "It's funny, because I called him the other day after I saw that and he used that [word] with me and I was kind of laughing. I was like, 'That's kind of old fashioned, but whatever.' And then I saw it in the paper and I was cracking up. It must have been poppycock."

Clippers 2-3, Bulls 0-0 | Clippers sweep with consecutive shutouts

Adam Plutko pitched six scoreless innings with eight strikeouts in the opener, and four pitchers combined on a two-hit shutout as the Clippers swept the Durham Bulls 2-0 and 3-0 in a doubleheader on Tuesday night at Durham Bulls Athletic Park.

The Clippers managed only three hits in the opener but made them count. Drew Maggi doubled, took third on a passed ball and scored on a sacrifice fly to give Columbus a 1-0 lead in the first inning. Haase went deep in the fifth, his 15th homer of the season, off reliever Austin Pruitt.

Plutko (6-3) allowed four hits and a walk, lowering his ERA to 1.82, and Tyler Olson pitched a 1-2-3 seventh to earn his first save for Columbus.

The second game was a makeup of a rainout on April 15 in Columbus.

Starter Stephen Fife allowed two hits in three innings, then relievers Evan Marshall, Josh Martin (3-0) and Ben Taylor didn't allow a hit after that. Taylor notched his eighth save.

Greg Allen got the Clippers off to a good start with a solo homer in the first inning. Yu Chang and Allen added an RBI singles in the fifth inning to make it 3-0.

Fightin' Phils 2, RubberDucks 1

Storylines: Mark Mathias' one-out base hit in the eighth broke up a no-hit bid by Reading Fightin' Phils starter Ranfi Casimiro. It was the only hit for the Ducks.

Ducktails: Casimiro was perfect through six and still had a no-hitter after he walked to Sam Haggerty and Tyler Krieger to open the seventh. Casimiro went 7½ innings and struck out six and walked three.

Next: The three-game series continues Wednesday at 7:05 p.m. at Canal Park. Indians pitcher Josh Tomlin will start for the RubberDucks. Right-hander Felix Paulino (1-0, 5.70) will go for the Fightin' Phils.

RubberDucks report: Shortstop Sam Haggerty shakes off early injury, is catalyst at top of lineup by ABJ/Ohio.com correspondent

Take it all in, adjust and then mash.

That's how the season has gone for shortstop Sam Haggerty and it has paid dividends for the RubberDucks, who sit atop the Eastern League Western Division.

Haggerty made the jump from the Carolina League to the EL with some frustration after the injury bug put him on the disabled list from April 17 to May 23 with a shoulder strain.

"There was a little bit of an adjustment to the league on top of coming back from the injury," RubberDucks manager Tony Mansolino said. "To see him put it together and take on the responsibility of playing shortstop, he's worked his tail off."

With the club during his rehabilitation, his time on the bench was antsy but also academic as he learned the league and how pitchers attack hitters.

He learned that it wasn't much different except for the fact pitchers don't make as many mistakes at this level.

He came into Tuesday's game against the Reading Fightin' Phils on an absolute tear. The reigning EL player of the week went 8-for-19 (.421) with a double, three triples, home run and five RBI in a six-game stretch.

Push those numbers out to the past 10 games and Haggerty is batting .433 (13-for-30).

"It's always a struggle when you get hurt," Haggerty said. "You come out of spring training ready to go and then hit that speedbump where you don't see live pitching and lose the flow of the game. It takes a while to get back into, but that's part of the game. You have to learn faster."

What the Ducks have learned is that they produce well with Haggerty in the leadoff spot.

Tyler Krieger just recently came off a 24-game hitting streak. Connor Marabell had his 19-game hitting streak stopped Tuesday night.

"He can be the sparkplug," Mansolino said. "He can be the guy. If he is himself, he can be as much a sparkplug as anybody in this league. He draws walks, so if he's not getting hits and walks, it's like an automatic double with his speed."

That speed — he stole 49 bases last season — has led to not only more runs for the RubberDucks, but better at-bats as well.

With Haggerty wreaking havoc, opposing pitchers lose sight of their gameplan for attacking hitters.

"I've been playing with Haggerty since I was drafted in 2015 and he's always been a great player," Marabell said. "He's always been a gamer. He gets on base and he disrupts the defenders. He steals bags and scores from first. It's fun hitting behind him when he's on base."

"I get a lot more fastballs. They try to be a lot quicker to the plate because they think he's going to steal some bases. It helps me out and helps the guys behind me out, too."

Haggerty is quick to point out that batters in the No. 1 hole might only bat first in an inning once a game.

For the 24th-round pick in the 2015 draft, it's as much about individual performances as it is the team feel.

The Ducks entered Tuesday second in runs scored (561) and RBI (520).

"We have a great locker room," Haggerty said. "Every guy is rooting for the next one and that's a big part of how everyone contributes on different nights. It results in a lot of wins."

The post RubberDucks report: Shortstop Sam Haggerty shakes off early injury, is catalyst at top of lineup appeared f

Twins 3, Indians 2: Late rally not enough in loss to Twins

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The rains came, but the needed hit never did.

The Indians' lineup was stifled by Minnesota Twins starting pitcher Adalberto Mejia, and one early blast was enough to lead to a 3-2 loss at Progressive Field Tuesday night.

The first pitch was delayed two hours and 10 minutes due to heavy rains that rolled through downtown Cleveland. The Indians' offense remained absent for nearly the entire game once play began.

Mejia had the Indians off balance all night, allowing only one hit in his five innings. The only thing capable of forcing his exit from the game was a wrist injury, which pulled him prior to the bottom of the sixth.

The Indians had a scoring opportunity in the first that went for naught. Francisco Lindor led off the first with a single and Michael Brantley was hit by a pitch. Jose Ramirez grounded into a force out, Edwin Encarnacion flied out to right field and Brandon Guyer lined out back to Mejia, ending the rally.

The Twins pounced on Indians starting pitcher Carlos Carrasco in the next half inning, and that ended up being the difference. Logan Forsythe was hit by a pitch to open the inning and Jake Cave followed with a single. Mitch Garver then drilled a three-run home run over the 19-foot wall in left field, providing all the offense the Twins needed.

Carrasco kept it a three-run deficit from there, lasting 6½ innings. He gave up 10 hits, walked one and struck out eight.

The Indians did manage to make it interesting as the clock ticked past midnight. Facing Twins reliever Trevor Hildenberger in the eighth, Lindor launched his 28th home run of the season, a solo shot to right-center field. Brantley followed with a single and advanced to third on a single by Edwin Encarnacion. Leonys Martin, pinch-hitting for Brandon Guyer, drove a ball to center field but had it fall just shy of the wall, forcing him to settle for a sacrifice fly to make it 3-2.

The Indians again made some noise in the ninth only to again fall just short of matching the Twins. Yan Gomes singled off Twins reliever Fernando Rodney to open the inning. Jason Kipnis tried to bunt him over but couldn't and struck out looking.

Melky Cabrera sent a Rodney pitch to deep right-center but didn't get enough of it to end the game with a walk-off win. With the tying run on second, Rodney struck out Lindor looking to finally seal it.

Home / Sports / Indians / Indians notebook: Trevor Bauer making adjustments in Cy Young-caliber season; familiar dugout celebration returns; 2019 All-Star Game logo unveiled

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: Trevor Bauer's Cy Young-caliber season has continued to steamroll forward, in part due to his ability to make adjustments ahead of opposing lineups.

On Monday night, Bauer delivered six scoreless innings against the Minnesota Twins, lowering his ERA to 2.25. It gave Bauer the major-league lead in both innings pitched (159½) and fWAR (5.7). He also struck out 11 batters, setting a career high with 206 strikeouts this season and clearing the 200-strikeout plateau for the first time in his career.

Monday night's start, in particular, was powered through some adjustments Bauer made in response to his previous outing, which also happened to come against the Twins. In that start on July 31, Bauer allowed only two runs on four hits in 6½ innings, but he only struck out three hitters, tied for the lowest total for any of his starts this season.

The Twins in that previous start were content trying to sit on his slider or curveball with two strikes. Fast forward to Monday night, and Bauer instead tried to pump the fastball by them with two strikes. It worked.

Bauer ended up striking out every Twins starter at least once en route to his 10th double-digit strikeout game in 2018.

"I looked at some numbers in-between, found the holes in that approach of theirs and exploited them," Bauer said. "If they're going to sit there and swing at the slider, then they can't be ready for fastballs. So, I had a lot of looking strikeouts on fastballs, a couple of bad swings on fastballs."

Bauer has also begun using his change-up more. The fastball-curveball-slider combination has been a driving force for his dynamic season, but Bauer has expanded his repertoire. He threw his change-up 17 times in Monday night's start, according to Baseball Savant. In his previous start, he only threw it eight times. In his outing prior to that, only twice.

"I have confidence in it. I just haven't needed it to this point in the year," Bauer said. "Shoot, my strikeout rate's been a career high, and all that different stuff. Swing and miss, chase, all that. So, until someone showed me that they were going to make an adjustment, I didn't need it. ... I've said it a couple times now, the nice thing about being able to throw everything is hitters can't hit everything."

Monday night also featured the return of "the Bar Mitzvah Chair," the dugout celebration that has at times followed a home run by Jason Kipnis. As Kipnis reached the dugout, two players would hold up his legs and carry him down the length of the dugout.

Kipnis blasted his 11th home run of the season on Monday night, a shot to center field that just barely cleared the wall. His overall season numbers still don't look great, but for roughly the last two months, Kipnis has quietly been a productive hitter in the lineup. After a rough start to the season, he posted a .776 OPS in June and a .754 OPS in July.

So when Kipnis got back to the dugout after his homer, Mike Clevinger and Carlos Carrasco surprised him by holding their arms out for the traditional celebration. It had been awhile. And, as Kipnis has done recently, he brought some self-deprecating humor.

"Yeah. Haven't seen it in a while. Don't know why, I've been raking," Kipnis joked. "No, I came back in. I saw the two open arms. They decided to bring it back. It surprised me even. A very good surprise. ... Usually it's a blur. I black out when I get back in there. But I think it was Clev and either Cookie or Bieber. I'm going to ask them to not make it our starting staff to be doing that anymore."

New logo

The Indians and Major League Baseball unveiled the logo for the 2019 All-Star Game, to be held in Cleveland on July 9 of next year.

The logo has clear ties to the city of Cleveland, boasting the shape of a guitar in reference to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame with baseball stitching on the outside.

"This is a very exciting time for our city and organization," Indians owner Paul Dolan said in a news release. "Today's logo unveil starts the countdown to 2019 All-Star Week festivities and is an invitation to baseball fans around the world to come visit our Rock 'n' Roll city. With significant renovations over the last few years at Progressive Field, our ballpark truly is a crown jewel and we look forward to putting on a great show for Major League Baseball."

Cleveland Indians' Trevor Bauer reaches goal of 200 strikeouts, but he's eyeing 300

By Paul Hoynes, [cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com](mailto:phoynes@cleveland.com)

CLEVELAND, Ohio - A lot of good numbers are starting to slide toward Trevor Bauer's side of the table and they were headed that way well before he struck out 11 in six innings Monday night in a 10-0 win against the Twins at Progressive Field.

- * He leads the big leagues with 159 2/3 innings pitched.
- * He's second in the AL with 206 strikeouts, trailing Boston's Chris Sale by one.
- * He's tied with Sale for the AL lead with 10 games of 10 or more strikeouts.
- * He's 6-1 with a 1.87 ERA in 12 starts at home.
- * He's the 11th different Indians pitcher to strike out 200 or more batters in one season. It's happened 29 times in team history, but Bauer is only the fifth pitcher to do it in 24 or fewer appearances.
- * He has a 1.83 ERA against the AL Central this year, the third-lowest ERA behind Sale's 1.13 and teammate Cory Kluber's 1.62.

Bauer, however, still has a problem. He can't find the ball he recorded his 200th strikeout with Monday night. It came in the third inning when Minnesota catcher Bobby Wilson took a called third strike.

The FBI hasn't been called yet, but it appears one of Bauer's teammates may have kidnapped it. There has been no word on a ransom demand.

"I was just hoping I could get it," said Bauer, when asked what became of the 200th strikeout ball. "I mean it took me three years to actually get my first-hit ball and after some teammates lost it and I discovered it in the bottom of a drawer two years later.

"So honestly, I'm just hoping I get the ball and then I'll figure it out after that. Maybe Bart (Swain, Indians director of media relations) won't hand it over to my teammates again when I do get it this time."

Trevor's just getting started, folks.

For the first time in his career, Bauer has eclipsed 200 strikeouts in a single season.

Catcher Roberto Perez pleaded innocent when asked the whereabouts of the baseball. But that did not stop him from suggesting who may be behind such a nefarious deed.

"I really don't know," said Perez, when asked about the ball. "I wasn't paying attention to those things. I've got so much to care about - calling the game, blocking balls, all of Trevor's shaking (off the pitches Perez calls).

"Probably (Carlos) Carrasco has it. He's probably going to get it, but they're going to give him a hard time. He likes to mess with people so they're probably going to do the same thing to him."

Perez was asked if this was a baseball version of what goes around comes around.

"That's right," said Perez with a smile. "That's karma."

Bauer (11-6, 2.25) fell four strikeouts shy of 200 last year. He was not about to let that happen again. He set 200 strikeouts as a goal for this season.

"Given how last year ended and being pulled out early - four strikeouts away from it - that's something I wanted to accomplish," said Bauer. "So, yeah, that's a milestone. Next up is 300. So, maybe not this year, but hopefully next year."

No Indians pitcher has struck out 300 or more batters in a season since Sam McDowell struck out 304 in 1970.

Terry Francona on Trevor Bauer's outing vs. MIN.

Bauer was facing the Twins on Monday for the second straight start. On July 31, he earned the decision in a 6-2 win, but was unhappy because he was slow to adjust to the strategy the Twins used against him. Bauer said the Twins were sitting on his slider and not swinging at his fastball. So in Monday night, he threw more fastballs.

"I've said it a couple times now, the nice thing about being able to throw everything is hitters can't hit everything," said Bauer. "So, you find out what they're looking for and you throw something else. And I have a lot of weapons that I can punch people out with. You just have to recognize their approach and throw what they're not looking for."

Monday night Bauer didn't allow a run. As usual he would have liked to go deeper into the game, but it took him 112 pitches get through six innings and manager Terry Francona felt that was enough on a hot night.

The win was Bauer's third in as many starts. He's 6-1 over his last 10 starts.

"You'd have to say he's taken a step forward," said second baseman Jason Kipnis. "Earlier in the year you thought, 'OK, he's going toe-to-toe with some of the best.' From the All-Star break on he's arguably been the best."

Kipnis said he's excited to see what the rest of the season holds.

"It's going to be fun," he said. "It's going to keep him motivated. He's talked about Cy Youngs before. He's going to be in the thick of things down the stretch. It's going to be fun to see."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.08.2018

Let it rock: MLB, Cleveland Indians unveil logo for 2019 All-Star Game at Progressive Field

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- MLB and the Indians unveiled the logo for the 2019 All-Star Game to be held on July 9 at Progressive Field. It's a guitar connecting the Indians to the city's Rock and Roll history, including the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

"We're officially on the clock," said Paul Dolan, Indians owner.

Dolan and Tony Petitti, MLB's deputy commissioner, unveiled the logo at a Tuesday afternoon press conference in the Corner Bar at Progressive Field.

The logo is in red, white and blue, the Indians team colors. The body of the guitar is bordered by the red stitches of a baseball. The MLB logo is at the head of the guitar.

Petitti said MLB and the Indians have already had conversations with the Rock Hall about taking part in the festivities that come with the All-Star Game.

"You can see from the logo what we think the tie in should be in Cleveland," said Pettitti. "We try to do something unique in every market we're in so music is what you can expect to see in 2019."

Greg Harris, president of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, was an executive at the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y. In 2016, the Indians held their World Series gala at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

This will be the sixth All-Star Game held in Cleveland and the second held at Progressive Field. The last Midsummer Classic held at Progressive Field, it was called Jacobs Field back then, was 1997.

Also on hand for the unveiling were Mayor Frank Jackson, former Tribe manager Mike Hargrove, current manager Terry Francona, first base coach Sandy Alomar and All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor.

Alomar was the MVP of the All-Star Game in 1997, hitting a game-winning home run for the American League in front of his hometown crowd.

"That was such an impactful year for the organization, myself and the city of Cleveland," said Alomar, a six-time All-Star with the Indians. "The chance to play an All-Star Game in my own ballpark, with my brother (Robbie Alomar), one of my best friends, Joey Cora, Jim Thome and my manager Mike Hargrove. . those are great memories.

"The cherry on top was hitting that home run to win the game. I wasn't expecting to be the MVP with so many superstars there. The exciting part for me was being a part of the game because it was in Cleveland. Hitting that home run, I'll never forget it, it made a big impact on my life."

The Indians will not only try to incorporate the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame into the All-Star Game party, but League Park as well. Although the Indians have hosted six All-Star Games, not one was played at League Park.

Pettitti and other MLB officials who were at Tuesday's announcement toured refurbished League Park and were impressed.

"We are certainly expecting and hoping that League Park (is part of the All-Star Game festivities)," said Bob DiBiasio, senior vice president of public affairs.

The first five All-Star Games held in Cleveland were in 1935, 1954, 1963, 1981 and 1997.

In 1997 MLB and the Indians started a legacy program as part of the All-Star Game. They opened the Larry Doby Playground. It has become a part of every All-Star Game since.

Just what the Indians will do in 2019 to continue that legacy has yet to worked out, but DiBiasio said, "I would expect it to be on mult-levels."

The Indians sent six players to this year's All-Star Game in Washington, D.C. including Lindor, Corey Kluber, Trevor Bauer, Michael Brantley, Yan Gomes and Jose Ramirez. They also sent several members of their organization to study how the Nationals prepared and conducted the All-Star Game.

"It's always extremely special when you get to share that clubhouse with all those superstars," said Lindor. "You see players who you saw growing up, players who you idolized. It's going to be a cool moment for the city of Cleveland. I can't wait for those players to come to our house and experience it."

Cleveland Indians' offense awakens too late in 3-2 loss to Minnesota Twins

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Home sweet home was not so sweet Tuesday night for the Indians.

Carlos Carrasco struggled early and the Indians' offense didn't find its footing until it was too late in a 3-2 loss to the Twins at Progressive Field in a game that started 2 hours and 10 minutes late because of a rain delay.

Carrasco, who had no idea where the ball was going in the first two innings, allowed a three-run homer to Mitch Garver in the second. They were the only runs the Twins scored, but they were enough to give them a 8-6 series lead over the AL Central leaders.

The Indians entered the game with 330 runs at home, the most in the big leagues. A wave of left-handers, led by starter Adalberto Mejia, sent a chill through those numbers Tuesday night.

Mejia, facing the Indians in consecutive starts, held them scoreless on one hit for five innings. He left the game with an injury to his left wrist after striking out three and walking one on 68 pitches.

In two starts against the Indians this year, Mejia (2-0, 2.01) has held them scoreless for 10 innings while allowing two hits. His career ERA against the Tribe is 1.54.

"He's got good stuff and we've seen that every time he's faced us in limited looks," said manager Terry Francona. "He threw some good changeups. You could see him stretching out there (like he was injured). I thought maybe we'd catch a break there, but we didn't get going until late."

Mejia was relieved by lefties Gabriel Moya and Taylor Rogers, who threw a scoreless inning each.

Carrasco (13-6, 3.69) hit Logan Forsythe with a pitch to start the second and allowed a single to Jake Cave to bring Garver to the plate. Garver hit Carrasco's 1-0 fastball into the left-field bleachers for his sixth homer.

"I was trying to get a ground ball there," said Carrasco. "I threw a two seamer and it came back over the plate and got a three-run homer right there."

Garver is a double threat for the Twins. In Monday's 10-0 loss to the Indians, he saved the bullpen by pitching a scoreless eighth inning.

Terry Francona on Carlos Carrasco and Adalberto Mejia

It took Carrasco 42 pitches to get through the first two innings as he faced 13 batters and allowed six hits. The damage could have been worse if Michael Brantley didn't rob Joe Mauer of a leadoff double with a nice catch against the left field wall to start the game because Eddie Rosario and Jorge Polanco followed with hits.

"I was trying to find myself," said Carrasco. "I was trying to correct something during the game. I'll have to work on that in my bullpen."

"But there's no excuses. I think I threw 21 pitches in the first inning, loaded the bases and got out of it. The second inning I gave up three runs. Then I just tried to put up as many zeroes as I could."

The Indians made it 3-2 in the eighth, but they did it against right-hander Trevor Hildenberger, not a lefty. Francisco Lindor opened the inning with a 417-foot homer into the right field seats to make it 3-1. It was Lindor's 28th homer and his fifth against the Twins this season.

Brantley followed with a single and Edwin Encarnacion moved him to third with a single to right after Jose Ramirez struck out. Leonys Martin scored Brantley on a sacrifice fly to center to make it 3-2, but Hildenberger ended the inning by striking out Yonder Alonso to protect the lead.

Yan Gomes opened the ninth with a single, but Fernando Rodney retired Jason Kipnis, Melky Cabrera and Lindor for his 25th save.

Carrasco allowed three runs on 10 hits in 6 1/3 innings. He struck out eight and walked one. After the second, he regained his control to give the Indians a chance to rally. Rosario knocked Carrasco out of the game with a one-out double in the seventh. It was his fourth hit of the night.

With Polanco at the plate, Rosario stole third, but Polanco was called out for batter's interference for hindering Gomes' throw to third. Rosario had to go back to second.

What it means

The Indians were dominated by Mejia for five innings on Tuesday night, but overall this season they're 18-12 in games started by lefties.

The pitches

Mejia threw 68 pitches, 42 (62 percent) for strikes. Carrasco threw 97 pitches, 63 (65 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Twins and Indians drew 19,921 on Tuesday night to Progressive Field. First pitch was at 9:20 p.m. with a temperature of 75 degrees. The start of the game was delayed for 2 hours and 10 minutes by delay.

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Indians notes: Trevor Bauer, not Corey Kluber, building strong case for AL Cy Young award

Chris Assenheimer ByChris Assenheimer | The Chronicle-TelegramPublished on Aug. 7, 2018 | Updated 6:09 a. m.

CLEVELAND -- It's no surprise the Indians have a strong candidate to win the American League Cy Young award this year. It's just not the guy most would have expected when the season began.

Trevor Bauer -- not two-time and reigning Cy Young winner Corey Kluber -- is one of the frontrunners to win the award for the league's top pitcher, producing one of the franchise's finest performances over 24 starts.

Both right-handers began the season strong, but Bauer has been the only one in Cleveland's rotation to offer up top-shelf outings on a consistent basis.

"Now he's taken a step forward, you have to say," second baseman Jason Kipnis said. "Earlier in the year you thought, 'OK, he's going toe-to-toe with some of the best.' From the All-Star break on he's arguably been THE best. It's going to be fun. It's going to keep him motivated.

"He's talked about Cy Youngs before. He's going to be in the thick of things down the stretch. It's going to be fun to see. He's definitely taken that step forward here and worked on a couple pitches that have brought him this success."

On Monday, Bauer (11-6, 2.25 ERA) became the 11th different pitcher in franchise history to record 200 or more strikeouts in a single season and just the fourth to accomplish as much over 24 starts or fewer -- joining Kluber, Sam McDowell and Bob Feller.

Needing only 156 innings, Bauer is the second-fastest Cleveland pitcher to reach the total behind Kluber (147 innings in 2017).

"Given how last year ended and being pulled out early -- four strikeouts away from it -- that's something I wanted to accomplish," said Bauer, who struck out 196 last year in 32 games (31 starts) covering 176 1/3 innings. "So, yeah, that's a milestone. Next up is 300, maybe not this year, but hopefully next year."

Bauer, an All-Star for the first time in his career, has certainly built a strong Cy Young case thus far.

He led the AL with 159 2/3 innings pitched through Monday, while ranking second with 206 strikeouts, third in ERA and fourth in strikeouts per nine innings (11.6). His 10 double-digit strikeout games is tied with Boston's Chris Sale for the most in the AL -- second-most in the majors behind Washington's Max Scherzer.

Comeback trail

Outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall (left calf strain) has begun participating in baseball activities and did some light running at Progressive Field prior to Tuesday's game, with manager Terry Francona saying he would accompany the team on its upcoming road trip.

Calf injuries have limited Chisenhall to 29 games, with the most recent issue sidelining him since July 3, but there is still the chance he will return before the regular season is complete.

"Ya know what, I don't know, but it'd be nice to have him back," Francona said. "It gives you another option and we wouldn't have to play him every day because we have other guys. But it sure would be nice to have him back."

Chisenhall, who will become a free agent at the end of the season, has spent time on the disabled list in each of the past three years, playing only 82 games in 2017.

Catching on

Yan Gomes returned to the lineup after missing three games with right hamstring tendinitis.

Gomes' injury gave Roberto Perez an opportunity to play on a regular basis for the first time all season.

"I thought 'Berto did a terrific job," Francona said of Perez, who went 1-for-3 with an RBI double in Monday's 10-0 win over the Twins. "I think it was good for Bert to know he was going to play three, four, parts of five games in a row. So, sometimes when things don't go perfect, it can help you in other ways. At least that's the idea."

It was supposed to be a platoon situation this season, but Gomes, an all-star (reserve) for the first time in his career, has taken over as the regular catcher.

Getting limited playing time and at-bats, Perez has struggled mightily at the plate, batting .162 with a homer and eight RBIs in 45 games.

"I know both of them want to be everyday guys. And I understand that and I respect that," Francona said. "But, as an organizational thing goes - how many teams go through a year where a catcher doesn't get nicked up? It doesn't happen very often. So, to have somebody back there where the game doesn't get altered, regardless of who's pitching, yeah, that's helpful. And we know that."

"I would love to play every day, but I understand," Perez said. "I've got to keep working at it and try to get better every day. Whenever I get a chance to play, I want to get the most out of it."

Roundin' third

The Indians entered Tuesday having scored 300 runs at Progressive Field (5.79 per game), which accounted for the most in the majors at home. ... Jose Ramirez had driven in a big league-high 31 runs in the first inning through Monday. The total was 12 more than anyone in the AL. ... Wednesday, 7:10, STO; WEOL 930-AM, WTAM 1100-AM, WMMS 100.7-FM. Clevinger (7-7, 3.48) vs. Odorizzi (4-7, 4.60).

Twins 3, Indians 2: Tribe offense quiet in first loss in four games

Chris Assenheimer | **The Chronicle-Telegram** Published on Aug. 8, 2018 | Updated 6:37 a. m.

CLEVELAND -- The Indians own the highest-scoring offense in the majors at home, but it was tough to tell Tuesday night.

Managing only six hits and going 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position, Cleveland dropped a 3-2 decision to Central Division rival Minnesota in front of a sparse crowd that had to wait out a two-hour and 10-minute rain delay prior to first pitch.

It was the first loss in four games for the Indians, who posted their American League-leading 14th double-digit run total to open the four-game series Monday.

Cleveland got a leadoff single from shortstop Francisco Lindor, then didn't get another hit until a one-out single from Michael Brantley in the sixth.

Twins starter Adalberto Mejia allowed only one hit before leaving after five innings with a right wrist injury.

The Indians scored twice off right-hander Trevor Hildenberger in the eighth inning, with Lindor belting his 28th home run. But after Minnesota closer Fernando Rodney allowed a leadoff single to Yan Gomes in the ninth, Jason Kipnis, pinch hitter Melky Cabrera and Lindor went down in succession.

"(Mejia's) got good stuff and you see that every time he's faced us in limited looks," manager Terry Francona said. "We didn't really get going until late."

With little run support, right-hander Carlos Carrasco was forced to go it alone and wasn't up to the task.

Carrasco, who entered the night riding a personal five-game winning streak and allowing only seven earned runs over his last six starts, surrendered six hits over the first two innings.

He allowed all of Minnesota's runs on a home run from No. 9 hitter Mitch Garver in the second.

"I thought he gave up a lot of hits for him," Francona said of Carrasco, who allowed 10 hits, walked one and struck out eight. "He was trying to get back into the count to Garver and mis-located it and he hit it a long way. There was a lot of traffic the whole game, but he kept them off the board except for that one swing. But it was enough."

On a positive note, Cleveland got an effective outing from left-hander Andrew Miller, who was activated Friday after a lengthy stay on the disabled list with right knee inflammation.

Miller pitched a scoreless 1 2/3 innings, walking one and adding a strikeout. He hasn't allowed a run in three appearances off the injured list.

"I think he keeps taking steps forward," Francona said. "He came out early and commanded his fastball really well the first couple hitters. Then he lost it for a hitter, but he corralled it back in. That's the first time he's pitched, sat and gone back out. We just keep trying to make strides forward."

It was the Indians' first loss in nine games at home against division rivals, dropping their record to 19-4 in the department -- 33-16 overall.

Eddie Rosario's 4-hit night helps Twins to 3-2 win over Cleveland Indians

By MIKE BERARDINO | mberardino@pioneerpress.com | **Pioneer Press**

CLEVELAND — As he sat at his Progressive Field locker a few hours before Tuesday night's rain-delayed game, Eddie Rosario looked up to see his name high on the list of American League hits leaders on a media member's cell phone.

Six players stood within five hits of the lead, with Houston's injured second baseman Jose Altuve setting the pace at 134 hits. Rosario, three hits back to start the night, nodded and smiled.

"I know," the Twins' left fielder said before banging out four more hits in the Twins' 3-2 win over the Cleveland Indians. "My father brings it up every day."

That would be Eddie Alberto Rosario, who shares his wiry frame and facial features along with an unmistakable energy. Eddie Manuel Rosario, his talented son, just wishes his father wouldn't worry so much about his statistics.

"I say to him, 'Don't tell me. I don't want to know. Just let me play my game,' " the younger Rosario said with a smile. "Would I like that? Sure. That would be great. But I don't want to think about it."

Rosario, clearly not lulled by the two-hour, 10-minute rain delay at the game's outset, passed the idle Altuve with a 4-for-4 salvo against Indians power righty Carlos Carrasco. It started with a 1-0 single up the middle on a 90-mph changeup in the first. Next came a one-out single to right on a 1-1 curve at 81 mph.

Of course, Rosario being Rosario, he tried to build on the momentum of Mitch Garver's three-run homer moments earlier only to get thrown out by a step as he tried to stretch for a double. Applying the tag was Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor, his fellow Puerto Rican who reached 133 hits on the year with a first-inning flare into short right field off Twins lefty Adalberto Mejia.

That would be the only hit off Mejia through five spotless frames. He was pulled at just 68 pitches with a strained left wrist, marking his second quick exit in as many starts.

Twins manager Paul Molitor said Mejia, after finishing his outing with a slider, described "a stinging effect in the lower left forearm, closer to the wrist, that radiated up to the elbow." Mejia noted the sensation was on his outer arm, which should alleviate concerns about a possible elbow ligament problem.

No MRI was planned after Mejia responded well to initial treatment.

Mejia was removed at 74 pitches last week at Target Field after five one-hit innings in a 2-0 loss to the Indians. In five career starts (23 1/3 innings) against the division leaders, Mejia has a 1.54 earned run average; in 99 1/3 innings against all other teams, he is 4-5 with a 4.72 ERA.

Lindor added his 28th homer in the eighth, giving him 134 hits. That's one shy of the new AL lead shared by Boston's J.D. Martinez and Rosario, who added a fourth-inning double off the base of the wall in center (0-2 curve) and a double in the seventh on an 0-1 cutter.

In 62 career games against the Twins' division rival, Rosario is hitting .342 with 15 homers and a combined on-base/slugging percentage of .985.

If he could face the Indians more than 19 times a year, he'd contend for the batting title every year. As it stands, he's bidding to become the first Twins hitter to lead the league in hits since Molitor enjoyed a 225-hit homecoming in 1996.

Rosario, on pace for 195 hits through 112 games, is trying to become just the third Twin since '96 with as many as 190 hits in a season. The other two won AL MVP awards that season: Justin Morneau (190) in 2006 and Joe Mauer (191) in 2009.

Just seven players in Twins history have reached 195 hits in a season (19 total times). Kirby Puckett did it seven times, Rod Carew four times and Tony Oliva three times.

Garver's homer, his sixth, ended a stretch of 22 straight scoreless innings for the Twins against Indians pitching, dating to last Tuesday at Target Field. It also marked just the 10th three-run homer for the Twins this season; they have five grand slams, 34 two-run shots and 61 solo homers.

Fernando Rodney worked the ninth for his 25th save, giving him seven such seasons since the start of 2009. Just two other closers have seven or more 25-save seasons in the past decade: Craig Kimbrel and Kenley Jansen.

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Twins don't think Adalberto Mejia's wrist injury is serious

By La Velle E. Neal III AUGUST 8, 2018 — 12:26AM

Twins lefthander Adalberto Mejia looks to be trending upward after a pair five-inning shutout starts against Cleveland.

"He's throwing a lot of strikes, and I think that's really helping him," Twins catcher Mitch Garver said. "He's pounding the zone with his fastball and his change up is really improving. And I think both his breaking balls are also getting better. It's something we have been utilizing a lot. Just making his fastball better when he's throwing his off speed for strikes."

So the hope is that Mejia can make his next start on Sunday and not miss any time because of a left wrist strain suffered when he threw his last pitch of the fifth inning.

"My last pitch was a slider, and I felt like a shock in there," Mejia said. "The trainer checked me. It's just a little tension in my wrist."

The area is in the forearm but more toward the wrist than the elbow. Mejia underwent treatment afterward and felt better, so everyone feels it's a minor issue. They won't know for sure until he throws a bullpen session later this week, but they weren't too worried after the game.

"He said the last pitch he threw kind of had a stinging effect in the lower left forearm, closer to the wrist, that radiated up to the elbow," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "There was some swelling in the area we kind of checked out. We think it's a mild strain. We're going to see how it reacts tomorrow, see if we can get it under control. I don't think we'll make any decision on his next start until we get a look at him tomorrow."

As of now, there are no plans for Mejia to have X-Rays or an MRI taken. It would not surprise me if they did as a precaution.

"It was lower forearm," Molitor said. "I don't really know the medical term for it. Not accustomed to seeing that in a pitcher, especially one pitch effect like that. Mejia said he's feeling a lot better postgame than he did right after it occurred. We'll give him a chance to respond tonight with treatment and see tomorrow."

After throwing 10 shutout innings over his last two starts - and retiring the final 12 batters he faced Tuesday - Mejia looks like he's getting on a roll. He worked quickly and attacked the strike zone on Tuesday, and you could see that his confidence is growing. He's far from the guy who would give up a lot of foul balls then get frustrated for not putting away hitters.

Actually, that could have happened in the first inning Tuesday. Michael Brantley fouled off four pitches and pushed Mejia into an eight pitch encounter than ended with him being hit by a pitch to put two men on. But Mejia got a force out and two fly balls to get out of the inning.

I asked Garver if he could tell that Mejia's confidence is growing from how more quickly he's working.

"I think it's a little bit of that, a little bit of me and him being on the same page and I think he's starting to trust me little bit and we're not fighting to get on the same page," Garver said. "Just working together over the past few starts. Hopefully it will continue and we'll keep that pace up."

Nothing wrong with a pitcher and catcher gaining experience together - especially in a game in which the catcher's three-run homer was the game-winning hit.

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Adalberto Mejia shines again before leaving because of injury in Twins' 3-2 victory at Cleveland

By La Velle E. Neal III Star Tribune AUGUST 8, 2018 — 1:06AM

CLEVELAND – In two starts spanning seven days, Adalberto Mejia has shut out AL Central-leading Cleveland for 10 innings on two hits and one walk.

It represents a step forward for the young lefthander — as long as his injury is not too much of a step back.

Mejia left Tuesday night's rain-delayed game after five innings with a three-run lead, and a strained left wrist. But, up until his last pitch, he was aggressive and efficient.

Cleveland scored twice in the eighth, setting up a nail-biting finish. With the tying run on second, Fernando Rodney struck out Francisco Lindor looking early Wednesday morning as the Twins held on for a 3-2 victory, making Mejia's outing hold up.

The Twins hope Mejia can make his next start Sunday at Detroit and not miss any time because of the injury, suffered when he threw his 68th and last pitch of the fifth inning.

"My last pitch was a slider, and I felt like a shock in there," Mejia said. "The trainer checked me. It's just a little tension in my wrist."

The area is in the forearm but more toward the wrist than the elbow. Mejia underwent treatment afterward and felt better, so the Twins believe it is a minor issue. They won't know for sure until he throws a bullpen session later this week, but they didn't seem too worried after the game.

"He said the last pitch he threw kind of had a stinging effect in the lower left forearm, closer to the wrist, that radiated up to the elbow," manager Paul Molitor said. "There was some swelling in the area we kind of checked out. We think it's a mild strain. We're going to see how it reacts tomorrow, see if we can get it under control. I don't think we'll make any decision on his next start until we get a look at him tomorrow."

Mitch Garver provided all the Twins' scoring with a three-run homer in the second. Eddie Rosario tied a career high with four hits. And Rodney collected his 25th save.

VideoVideo (01:35): Twins catcher Mitch Garver worked well with Twins lefthander Adalberto Mejia in addition to hitting the game-winning three-run homer.

After waiting 2 hours, 10 minutes for storms to blow out of town, the rematch between Mejia and Indians righthander Carlos Carrasco began.

Mejia, who tossed five shutout innings last week vs. the Indians at Target Field, added five more scoreless innings against Cleveland on Tuesday. He even made it look easier the second time around, as he retired the last 12 batters he faced before leaving the game.

Carrasco was magnificent vs. the Twins last week, striking out 10 over 7½ shutout innings. But he gave up 10 hits over 6½ innings Tuesday — including a big blow in the second.

"We had baserunners all night long," Molitor said. "We didn't get a lot of big hits, but we got one that counted."

Logan Forsythe was hit by a pitch and Jake Cave singled to bring Garver up. Carrasco threw a pitch over the middle of the plate and Garver smashed it 411 feet and into the seats in left-center for a 3-0 Twins lead.

"I was looking fastball over [the plate], and he missed location," Garver said, "and I made him pay."

Trevor Hildenberger gave up a home run to Lindor and a sacrifice fly in the eighth as Cleveland got within 3-2. Yan Gomes led off the bottom of the ninth with an infield single, on a grounder to third Miguel Sano could not handle. Gomes went to second on a passed ball by Garver.

Lindor batted again with two outs. But Rodney fired a 2-2 fastball past him for strike three, and then shot his imaginary arrow into the Cleveland night.