

## **Kluber first to 18 wins as Tribe edges KC**

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Despite sweltering heat, Corey Kluber continued to work Wednesday afternoon without skipping a beat.

As temperatures rose steadily into the mid-90s, the Indians' ace worked methodically while mid-afternoon sun beat down on Progressive Field. Kluber struck out 10 and held the last-place Royals (46-93) to one run on two hits over 6 2/3 strong innings, helping secure a 3-1 win to take the series and reduce the American League Central-leading Tribe's magic number to nine games.

"He pitched really well," Indians manager Terry Francona said of Kluber. "The breaking ball had some shape to it, and he throws that two-seamer in to the lefties because it starts going back and forth. That's fun to watch."

Kluber (18-7) retired 10 in a row to start the game until Alex Gordon doubled to left to become the Royals' first baserunner in the fourth. Kluber struck out the next batter, but he left a 1-1 sinker floating at the top of the zone. Ryan O'Hearn punished it and legged out a run-scoring triple. Kansas City's first baseman, however, was stranded at third after Jorge Bonifacio struck out on a 3-2 curveball.

"Against me, they're always aggressive," Kluber said. "I think we kind of prepare for that coming into it. Basically, it kind of just comes down to executing pitches early in the count. When they're going out there and being aggressive, you don't want to go out there and give them good pitches to hit early on in the count."

Kluber's start bested Royals starter Brad Keller (7-6), who held the Tribe to three runs (one earned) across seven-plus innings. Cleveland (79-60) opened scoring in the second after Jason Kipnis laced a one-out double off the padded wall in left field, one of three straight hits. Kipnis moved over to third on a single from Yan Gomes, who was thrown out at second trying to extend a single. Greg Allen plated Kipnis on a line-drive single to left.

"Both were fantastic, in my estimation," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "Kluber, he's one of the best in this league. Keller was fantastic. I think half of the hits against him were against the shift or bleeders."

Encarnacion drove in the go-ahead run in the fifth, bringing home Michael Brantley, who began the rally with a one-out single. Yandy Diaz chopped a ball up the middle, misplayed by shortstop Alcides Escobar, which allowed Brantley to advance to third. Encarnacion knocked in Brantley on a forceout to give the Tribe a 2-1 lead.

In the seventh, Kluber issued a one-out walk to O'Hearn, his only free pass of the game. After a short infield meeting orchestrated by pitching coach Carl Willis, Kluber's outing ended after striking out Bonifacio for the third time with another curveball in the dirt. He gave way to lefty Oliver Perez, who struck out Brian Goodwin on six pitches.

Following Kluber's departure, the bullpen struck out six of the next seven to end the game. After Perez fanned Goodwin, Cody Allen then whiffed two in a perfect eighth, and Brad Hand struck out the side in the ninth to notch his 32nd save of the year and his eighth since joining the Indians in July.

"Our guys did a really good job of attacking," Francona said. "Oliver came in and got his lefty. Cody had a good inning, and Brad had a good inning on a day where we got our hits."

### **MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

Guyer adds insurance: Brandon Guyer entered the game in the seventh as a defensive replacement for right fielder Melky Cabrera, and he delivered a clutch hit in his only at-bat. Yonder Alonso led off the eighth inning with a single, setting the table for Guyer, who executed a perfect bunt down the third-base line. It was fielded by third baseman Hunter Dozier, but nobody was covering first base. Dozier double clutched, allowing O'Hearn to cover, but his throw went wide, allowing runners to advance to second and third with nobody out. The play ended Keller's day, and Kipnis (2-for-3) knocked Alonso in with a sac fly.

"It was a big play for us," Francona said. "We want to put him in because he covers more ground than Melky, but then when he adds to our offense, that's certainly welcome."

### **SOUND SMART**

With 10 K's, Kluber marked his fifth double-digit-strikeout game of the season and the 44th of his eight-year career. Indians starters have combined for 25 10-plus-strikeout performances, tying the club's single-season record, also held by the 1968 and 2017 teams. Additionally, Kluber became the first pitcher in baseball to 18 wins.

"The goal every day is to win the game," Kluber said. "I think there's going to be times where things are out of your control. You might pitch fairly well, but the guy on the other side pitches lights-out. But I think that more so than actually getting the win, it's giving your team a chance to win."

### **UP NEXT**

Right-hander Shane Bieber (8-3, 4.66 ERA) is scheduled to start the first of four games against the Blue Jays in a 7:07 p.m. ET first pitch on Thursday. Bieber was handed the loss after allowing four runs on nine hits in 5 1/3 innings against the Rays on Saturday. The rookie has never faced Toronto and will be making his Rogers Centre debut. The Jays have yet to announce a starter.

## **Indians 3, Royals 1: Corey Kluber delivers strong outing, Indians' magic number drops to single digits**

**By Ryan Lewis**

CLEVELAND: Corey Kluber's Cy Young case received a significant boost with recent injuries to Trevor Bauer and Boston's Chris Sale.

Although he probably still isn't the favorite, the Indians ace boosted his own stock Wednesday with six-plus strong innings in a 3-1 win over the Kansas City Royals at Progressive Field.

The win dropped the Indians' magic number to clinch the American League Central to nine.

Now leading the major leagues in wins, Kluber (18-7) was electric against the rebuilding Royals, allowing one run on two hits with 10 strikeouts in 6½ innings, and lowered his ERA to 2.75.

It was the two-time Cy Young Award winner's 44th double-digit strikeouts game of his career and fifth this season.

"He pitched really well," Indians manager Terry Francona said of Kluber. "The last couple times out, it seems like he's starting to get the feel back on his breaking ball, the shape to it. Then he throws that two-seamer in to the lefties, starts going back and forth, that's fun to watch. It wasn't like he had a ton of breathing room, either."

The Indians (79-60) did just enough offensively to support the staff's ace. Facing Royals starter Brad Keller, Jason Kipnis continued his recent hot streak with a double to left field in the second inning. With two outs, Greg Allen lined a single to left field to put the Indians on top 1-0.

After the Royals (46-93) tied it 1-1, the Indians retook the lead for good in the fifth. Michael Brantley singled to center and Yandy Diaz reached on a fielding error by Alcides Escobar. Edwin Encarnacion brought home the go-ahead run with a fielder's choice on which he beat out the throw to first base to deny a potential inning-ending double play.

Kipnis added an insurance run with a sacrifice fly to right field in the eighth.

Kluber gave way in the seventh to Oliver Perez, who finished the inning by striking out Brian Goodwin, the only batter he faced.

Cody Allen, who has continued to rebound after struggling for several weeks, worked a scoreless eighth with two strikeouts, and Brad Hand recorded his 32nd save of the season by striking out the side in the ninth.

Allen's return to form is of particular interest to the Indians after his rough stretch.

Following a mechanical change and work with pitching coach Carl Willis that resulted in Allen beginning to break his hands a bit earlier in his delivery, Allen told the Beacon Journal/ohio.com, he has again found his top form.

"I think the biggest thing is, when Carl went and looked at the video that night, it gave Cody something to attack — not four or five things, but one," Francona said. "They really wanted him to stay with that, and it's allowing his arm to be on time so he's not fighting to catch up."

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### **Indians notebook: Yandy Diaz celebrates first career homer; Jason Kipnis proving his case**

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: Everyone knew it had to happen eventually.

The man with the biggest biceps in baseball hadn't muscled one out in 69 career games. He was driving the ball all over the field, but hadn't had one clear the fence.

And then on Tuesday night, Yandy Diaz slugged his first career home run, a solo shot to center field off Kansas City Royals reliever Jake Newberry.

Diaz didn't think it was out until it was, in fact, out. But he finally had No. 1.

"Not really; I didn't think [it felt good off the bat]. I thought it was a flyout to center because I really didn't make good contact," Diaz said through a team translator. "But the ball carried pretty well, so it got out."

He smiled the entire time he rounded the bases. He couldn't help it. Everyone was waiting for the guy who looks like he might at any moment bench press half the stadium to muscle a homer over the wall. He had sent missiles all over Progressive Field, but never one with enough elevation.

"We've been waiting on that, especially with those biceps," Mike Clevinger said. "I think everybody has. He's been hitting the ball, even in BP, 120 miles an hour in the air. So it's the same thing for him. Progressing. Getting through the ball better. Getting that lift, that backspin.

"It's starting to come around for him. Even that last AB, he almost put another one out."

Diaz in the past has worked to make sure his mother, who is in Cuba, could watch him play on TV. It hasn't always been exactly easy. Now, he said he'll be trying to send her a very special baseball.

#### **Making their cases**

Diaz is trying to make his case to be on the postseason roster and is doing a pretty solid job. He's hitting .333 this season and has at least one hit in 11 of his 14 starts.

As the Indians configure their postseason roster, Diaz could be one of the last players named among the 25, with candidates Rajai Davis and Greg Allen as outfielders or for speed purposes off the bench and Erik Gonzalez as a utility infielder.

(Technically, Jason Kipnis could be considered a postseason roster candidate, too, but it would be extremely hard to imagine him being left off even in the middle of a slump.)

Diaz has built a solid case thus far, even while not having a clear path to much beyond pinch-hitting duties or, potentially, platooning with Yonder Alonso.

Kipnis, meanwhile, entered Wednesday hitting .400 over his past nine games with six extra-base hits, 10 RBI and six runs scored. That's the right way to vent about the frustrating situation he finds himself in after the team's recent trade for Josh Donaldson, which sent Jose Ramirez from third base to second and Kipnis to the outfield.

Kipnis said on Tuesday he wasn't exactly thrilled that he needed to not only switch positions but also prove he still needed to be in the lineup, but this is the path he must take.

And if he has a little extra motivation, then so be it.

"I like having that little fire behind me, though," Kipnis said. "Hopefully it's a good thing. Hopefully it stays. A lot of players play with different motivation. If they can find anything, any bulletin board material for themselves, then they do it. It's nothing more than that.

"Like I said, I didn't make it a thing about me last year, and I don't intend to make it anything this year."

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### **Corey Kluber grabs major league-leading 18th win as Cleveland Indians defeat Kansas City Royals, 3-1**

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Corey Kluber became the first major leaguer to reach 18 wins by pitching the Cleveland Indians to a 3-1 victory against visiting Kansas City at Progressive Field on Wednesday afternoon.

Cleveland reduced its magic number to clinch the American League Central Division and a third consecutive playoff appearance to 9. Second-place Minnesota plays at 8:10 p.m. at Houston, and a Twins loss would drop the magic number to eight.

Kluber (18-7, 2.75) was brilliant, recording his fifth start with at least 10 strikeouts. He tossed 6 2/3 innings, allowing a run on just two hits and walking one. Indians pitchers combined for 16 strikeouts against a Royals lineup that took an aggressive approach at the plate.

"Against me, they're always aggressive," Kluber said. "We kind of prepare for that. It basically comes down to executing pitches early in the count. When they're coming out aggressive, you don't want to give them good pitches to hit early in the count.

Oliver Perez relieved Kluber in the seventh and struck out Royals center fielder Brian Goodwin with a runner on base. Cody Allen and Brad Hand each pitched a scoreless inning for manager Terry Francona's bullpen.

Hand earned his 32nd save overall and eighth with Cleveland. Since joining the Indians in late July, Hand has posted a 1.86 ERA across 19 appearances.

Kluber's only blemish came in the fourth inning when he allowed a one-out double to K.C. left fielder Alex Gordon and a two-out RBI triple to rookie Ryan O'Hearn. He improved his record to 9-2 with a 2.23 ERA against A.L. Central Division teams.

"The last couple times out it seemed like he started to get the feel back," Francona said of Kluber. "The breaking ball had some shape to it, and he throws that two-seamer in to the lefties because it starts going back and forth."

Greg Allen got the Indians on the board in the second inning with a two-out RBI single against Royals starter Brad Keller (7-6, 3.14) after back-to-back hits by Kipnis and Yan Gomes.

Allen is now batting .280 (25-89) with two doubles, a homer, 11 RBI and 14 runs in 26 games since the All-Star break.

Edwin Encarnacion's RBI groundout in the fifth gave the Tribe a 2-1 advantage before Kipnis delivered an insurance run with an RBI sacrifice fly in the bottom of the eighth. Kipnis batted .357 (10-28) in nine games on the homestand, with three doubles, two homers, seven RBI and four runs.

Brandon Guyer set up Kipnis' RBI with a bunt single down the third-base line. Royals third baseman Hunter Dozier's throwing error allowed Guyer and Yonder Alonso to advance before Kipnis plated Alonso with a fly ball to right.

"It was a big play for us," Francona said of Guyer's bunt. "We want to put (Guyer) in because he covers more ground than Melky (Cabrera), but then when he adds to our offense, that's certainly welcome."

What it means

In the race to host the ALDS on Oct. 5, the Indians (79-60) trail AL West-leading Houston (86-53) by 7 games.

The pitches

Keller threw 99 pitches, 69 (70 percent) for strikes. Kluber threw 105 pitches, 68 (65 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Royals and Indians drew a crowd of 18,435 to Progressive Field on Wednesday afternoon. First pitch was at 1:10 with a temperature of 91 degrees.

Next

The Indians travel to Toronto to open a four-game series against the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre. Right-hander Shane Bieber (8-3, 4.66) will take on righty Sam Gaviglio (3-7, 5.02) on Thursday at 7:07 p.m. SportsTime Ohio, WMMS and WTAM will carry the game.

Bieber takes on the Blue Jays for the first time in his career. He is 4-0 with a 4.44 ERA in eight road starts this season. Gaviglio has never faced the Indians. He is 2-1 with a 2.68 ERA in 11 appearances at home in 2018.

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### **WWE's Mike 'The Miz' Mizanin dreams of another MVP performance when Cleveland Indians host 2019 All-Star Game**

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- WWE superstar Mike "The Miz" Mizanin loves seeing a plan come together, and thus far his celebrity softball scheme is halfway to fruition.

Mizanin tossed out the first pitch Wednesday before the Cleveland Indians took on Kansas City at Progressive Field. But the Parma native and pro wrestling megastar has plans to be back on the field in July as the Tribe hosts Major League Baseball's All-Star Game and the All-Star celebrity softball game that precedes it.

When Mizanin found out he was going to participate in this year's celebrity softball game at Nationals Park, he took batting practice every day leading up to the event. "I knew we were going to have a helluva pitcher on the mound (Jennie Finch)," Mizanin said. "I knew she was a pro at it, but I was about an inch from taking her yard, twice."

Mizanin finished with a pair of doubles and five RBI. He even pitched a 1-2-3 inning and was named MVP for his team. "You're damn right I was -- I'm from Cleveland," Mizanin said.

Mizanin, however, had a secret motivation for playing in the game. And he's halfway to achieving his goal.

"The whole reason I wanted to do it this year was I wanted to take the MVP and be the reigning MVP and come to Cleveland for next year's All-Star Game and be the first-ever two-time MVP," he said.

That would be, as The Miz often says, "Awesome."

The Miz's AWESOME first pitch at Cleveland Indians game

Wednesday was Mizanin's second time throwing an opening pitch at Progressive Field. His first attempt took place in 2011 when he fired a perfect strike over the plate. After that, Mizanin considered walking off on a high note.

"It was amazing," Mizanin said. "I'd thrown first pitches at other stadiums and they were always balls. But if I throw at Progressive Field, I'm 1-for-1 laying them in there."

Wednesday's offering to relief pitcher Tyler Olson ended up in the right-handed batter's box. But Mizanin, who captained Normandy High's baseball team in his prep days, was quietly confident that he could still be in line for a contract.

"I plan on getting signed today," Mizanin quipped. "I've got a helluva split-finger that would strike out 90 percent of major league hitters."

Scouting report says this kid's got potential!

Thanks for hanging out with us today, @mikethemiz!#RallyTogether pic.twitter.com/7GB6kfJ2bo

-- Cleveland Indians (@Indians) September 5, 2018

A diehard Tribe fan since the days of old Municipal Stadium, Mizanin wore an Indians jersey with his 5-month-old daughter Monroe's name and the No. 1 on his back.

"She's my No. 1, she's my everything," the new father said. "I just want to dedicate this pitch to her because I remember back in the day when I used to go to Municipal Stadium with my dad."

Mizanin recalled getting tickets for the cheap seats and walking down to the front row as he cheered on Cory Snyder and Joe Carter. Someday he plans to share the experience with Monroe.

"It's what you did with your kid," he said. "Some of the best times I could ever remember. I can't wait until she's old enough and I can take her to a baseball game. And this will be her first jersey."

Though he spends most of his time on the road, Mizanin says he catches games at Progressive Field whenever he gets the chance. Unsuspecting Indians fans can find themselves standing next to The Miz at The Corner bar in right field.

"It's my favorite spot," he said. "Today I have a skybox and I'm probably not even going to go to it. I'm probably going to be in The Corner having a nice craft beer watching the game from right field and enjoying myself."

He'll enjoy himself even more if the first-place Indians can find success in the playoffs. Mizanin says he is looking forward to October.

"Our pitching is stacked," Mizanin said. "Last year they clicked about a month too early. This year, hopefully we can click at the right time and find the right kind of feel, get everybody healthy and go to the playoffs, go to the Series and take one for Cleveland."

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## **Mapleside Farms pays tribute to Francisco Lindor and the Indians with its largest corn maze yet**

By Joey Morona

BRUNSWICK, Ohio -- Here's something that will bring a smile to the man they call Mr. Smile.

Mapleside Farms has created a seven-acre corn maze that pays tribute to the Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor. From the air, you can see an outline of the three-time All-Star as well as the Indians block "C" logo and the words "Go Tribe."

The maze is part of Mapleside's annual fall festivals and Pumpkin Village, which open for the fall season on Friday, Sept. 7.

"We've had an incredible string of great teams here in Cleveland over the past 3-4 years and we love the way the Cleveland Indians represent our great city, and specifically how Francisco plays the game with his whole heart and soul," said Mapleside Farms owner Greg Clement in a Facebook post.

In previous years, Mapleside has honored Browns left tackle Joe Thomas and LeBron James and the Cavaliers 2016 NBA Championship team with their own corn mazes. Compared to those, the Lindor maze is "50 percent larger and a couple levels harder," a Mapleside spokesperson said.

Other attractions include a 311-foot slide, Ohio's largest "jumping pillow," hayrides and train rides. For adults, there is a second maze that will be used for Mapleside's Wine Your Way Out, where guests search for wine and beer tastings throughout the wine-themed corn maze every weekend from Sept. 14-Oct. 27.

The fall festival events at Mapleside Farms, located at 294 Pearl Rd., are open weekends through Oct. 28. Admission to Pumpkin Village is \$14, while Wine Your Way Out tickets (ages 21 and over) are on sale for \$28.

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### **Cleveland Indians' Francisco Lindor helps Make A Wish foundation grant a special request**

By Hayden Grove

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Once upon a time, Francisco Lindor was a boy on a baseball field, dreaming of playing ball with his idol, Roberto Alomar.

On Tuesday, Lindor was the one playing ball with a youngster who yearned to meet the young Major League Baseball star.

Christopher Petiton of Queens, N.Y., visited Progressive Field on Tuesday and spent time with Lindor and the Indians thanks to the Make A Wish foundation.

The high school infielder received an orthotopic heart transplant two years ago and, when offered the opportunity to have a wish granted, his heart was set on Cleveland.

"It's awesome. It might be a dream for them, but it's a dream for me too," Lindor said of Petiton's wish. "I want to impact kids' lives. That's what I'm here to do: play the game and impact people's lives. Being able to share half of my day with him, it's extremely special."

Before they took the field for some grounders, Petiton visited the clubhouse with Lindor and the two took batting practice with the Indians in the cages.

Great stuff: As part of @MakeAWish, Chris Petiton from Queens, NY requested to spend a day with Francisco Lindor. Today, his wish was granted! #Indians pic.twitter.com/BAY2rLWNfB

-- clevelanddotcom (@clevelanddotcom) September 4, 2018

When it was time to hit the field, Indians third base coach Mike Sarbaugh hit grounders to the duo, with Lindor giving the youngster pointers along the way.

As the workout ended, Petiton and his family took photos with several Indians players, while the high schooler received a signed Lindor jersey and plenty of autographs from the many players on the field.

To top it all off, with Petiton and his family watching intently, Lindor started the game with a home run.

"It's a blessing," Lindor said of Petiton's wish to spend time with him. "It shows that we're not only touching people's lives here, but we're touching people's lives nationally and globally as well. It's a beautiful thing."

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### **Indians' Josh Donaldson boosts Akron RubberDucks to win in playoffs opener**

By Cliff Pinckard, cleveland.com

AKRON, Ohio -- Josh Donaldson hit a two-run homer and right-hander Kyle Dowdy gave the RubberDucks nearly seven solid innings Wednesday in a 5-2 win over Altoona in the Class AA Eastern League playoff series opener at Canal Park.

Akron erased a 1-0 lead with three runs in the third inning. Jodd Carter started the inning with a double off Curve starter Cam Vieaux, and Ernie Clement brought him home with a one-out single.

Donaldson, the Indians infielder in Akron on a rehab assignment, then sent a 2-0 pitch over the center field wall to give Akron a 3-1 lead.

An error by Altoona third baseman Ke'Bryan Hayes allowed another Akron run in the fifth inning, and Nellie Rodriguez's RBI single in the seventh put the RubberDucks up, 5-2.

Meanwhile, Dowdy held the Curve to two runs on four hits in 6 2/3 innings, striking out six. Four RubberDucks relievers combined to close out the game, with Jordan Milbrath getting the final out to earn the save.

The best-of-five series continues Thursday night at Canal Park.

See the box score from the game.

Notes: Donaldson, who is rehabbing a left calf injury, left the game after the sixth inning. It's unknown if he will play in Thursday's game. ... Top Indians prospect Triston McKenzie was left off the Akron playoff roster because of arm soreness.

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### **Cleveland Indians win, Minnesota Twins lose: Tribe's magic number falls to 8**

By Joe Noga, cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- The Cleveland Indians knocked off the Kansas City Royals for the second straight day, and Houston defeated the Minnesota Twins Wednesday, reducing Cleveland's magic number to clinch a third consecutive A.L. Central Division title to 8.

Cleveland's division lead over Minnesota is at a season-high 16 games with 23 to play. Any combination of Indians wins or losses by the second-place Twins that is greater than or equal to 8 will clinch the division title for Cleveland.

The Indians (79-60) open a four-game series against Toronto on Thursday at 7:10 as Shane Bieber faces Sam Gaviglio.

You can calculate the first-place Tribe's magic number by starting with 162 (games in a season) and adding one, then subtracting the number of Indians wins and subtracting the number of losses by the second-place team.

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## **Cleveland Indians, Toronto Blue Jays series preview, pitching matchups**

By Paul Hoynes

TORONTO -- Here is the preview and pitching matchups for the Indians' series against the Blue Jays.

Where/when: Rogers Centre, Thursday through Sunday.

TV/radio: SportsTime Ohio, WTAM and WMMS will carry the series.

Pitching matchups and starting times: RHP Shane Bieber (8-3, 4.66) vs. RHP Sam Gaviglio (3-7, 5.02) Thursday at 7:07 p.m.; RHP Carlos Carrasco (16-8, 3.52) vs. RHP Marco Estrada (7-11, 5.43) Friday at 7:07 p.m.; Adam Plutko (4-5, 5.04) vs. Sean Reid-Foley (1-2, 5.51) Saturday at 4:07 p.m. and RHP Mike Clevinger (11-7, 3.11) vs. LHP Thomas Pannone (1-1, 4.50) Sunday at 1:07 p.m.

Series: The Indians are 1-2 against the Blue Jays this year. The Blue Jays lead, 207-206, overall.

Hot pitchers: Clevinger is 4-0 in his last five starts with a 2.12 ERA after losing his four previous decisions for the Tribe. The Indians drafted Pannone, Sunday's starter for the Jays, in 2013. They traded him to the Blue Jays last year as part of the deal for Joe Smith.

Hot hitters: Jason Kipnis hit .357 (10-for-28) with two homers and seven RBI on this just completed homestand for the Indians. Rookie Billy McKinney is hitting .370 (17-for-46) in his first 14 games with Toronto. He was acquired from the Yankees in the J.A. Happ deal.

Team updates: The Indians are coming off a 5-4 homestand and embark on their second last trip of the regular season. Toronto, after winning five straight, went into Wednesday night's game against the Rays with seven losses in their last nine games. Toronto has won six of the last 10 games with the Tribe.

Disabled list: Indians - 3B Josh Donaldson (left ankle), LHP Andrew Miller (left shoulder), RHP Trevor Bauer (right fibula), OF Leonys Martin (illness), CF Tyler Naquin (right hip), OF Lonnie Chisenhall (left calf), RHP Nick Goody (right elbow), RHP Danny Salazar (right shoulder) and RHP Cody Anderson (right elbow) are on the disabled list.

Blue Jays - RHP Joe Biagini (left oblique), RHP Rhiner Cruz (right groin), 3B Brandon Drury (left hand), 3B Yangervis Solarte (right oblique), SS Troy Tulowitzki (surgery on both feet) are on the disabled list. RHP Marcus Stroman (blister right middle finger) is day to day.

Next: Indians open a three-game series against the Rays on Monday night at Tropicana Field.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 09.06.2018

### **Josh Donaldson homers for Akron in rehab appearance**

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

AKRON >> The signs are promising for Josh Donaldson.

Acquired by the Indians on Aug. 31 from the Toronto Blue Jays, the three-time American League All-Star third baseman and 2015 AL Most Valuable Player continues to swing the bat with authority in a minor-league rehab assignment.

Playing for the Double-A Akron RubberDucks on Sept. 5 at Canal Park in the Eastern League playoffs, Donaldson slammed a two-run home run in the bottom of the third inning against the Altoona (Pa.) Curve.

The blast to center field gave the RubberDucks a 3-1 lead en route to a 5-2 victory. Akron has a 1-0 lead in the best-of-five Western Division series.

Game 2 is scheduled for Sept. 6 at Canal Park. First pitch is scheduled for 6:35 p.m.

Donaldson flied out to left field and center field in his other two at-bats. As per the plan laid out by the Indians, Donaldson's work on the balmy evening was finished after the Curve were retired in the top of the sixth inning.

Sidelined since May 28 with shoulder and calf injuries, Donaldson was placed on the 10-day disabled list by the Indians on Sept. 3, retroactive to Sept. 1.

He played for the Triple-A Columbus Clippers on Sept. 3. In his second at-bat, he connected for a grand slam.

"It feels good. My timing is coming around a lot quicker than I expected," Donaldson said on Sept. 5 in the home clubhouse at Canal Park. "Calf feels great. Body feels great. It feels great to be back on the field moving around. My rhythm, my timing, pitch recognition feel good. Any time my body is feeling right, I'm going to perform to my capability."

In 35 games this season for Toronto, the 32-year-old Alabama native batted .234 with five home runs and 16 RBI. Donaldson has a career batting average of .275 in eight seasons with 179 home runs and 544 RBI. He was the AL Silver Slugger Award recipient at third base in 2015 and 2016.

Donaldson said he didn't realize it was the Indians who were most serious about obtaining his services with an eye on a successful postseason run.

"Honestly, I tried to not pay much attention to that," he said. "My focus through the entire process was getting back to 100 percent. There were a few setbacks that made it more frustrating, but I feel really good where I am now."

The Indians are in Toronto to open a four-game series against the Blue Jays on Sept. 6. Donaldson smiled when asked if he wished he could be there to face his former team.

"I was trying to petition to get out there, but everybody in the front office thought it was in the team's and my best interest to finish this rehab assignment," Donaldson said. "I'm itching to get back out there. I'm looking forward to helping this ballclub win and being around those guys."

Donaldson will be eligible to come off the DL on Sept. 11.

### **Jim Ingraham: As good as the Indians have been the last two years, this year's team has a chance to be even better**

Jim Ingraham | The Chronicle-Telegram Published on Sept. 6, 2018 | Updated 6:23 a. m.

It was the best of times. It was the most teasing of times.

It was this time of the season, one year ago.

On Aug. 27, 2017, the Indians extended their winning streak to four games with a 12-0 win over Kansas City, completing a three-game sweep in which the Indians outscored the Royals 20-0. That's right, 20-0.

Three days later, the Indians completed a three-game sweep of the Yankees in New York by sweeping a doubleheader 2-1 and 9-4.

Then the Indians flew to Detroit, and after enjoying an off day, they swept a doubleheader, 3-2 and 10-0, from the Tigers on Sept. 1. Back-to-back doubleheader sweeps by a combined score of 20-7.

The Indians won two more games in Detroit, completing a four-game sweep, then flew to Chicago and swept four games from the White Sox. Then they flew home and swept a three-game series from Baltimore.

Then the Tigers came to town and the Indians swept them again, a three-gamer.

On the night of Sept. 14, at Progressive Field, the Indians were losing 2-1 to Kansas City with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning when Francisco Lindor bounced a double off the left field wall, driving in the tying run.

In the bottom of the 10th, Jay Bruce ripped a walk-off RBI double down the right field line, giving the Indians a 3-2 victory, their club-record and American League-record 22nd win in a row.

The next day, Sept. 15, the Indians lost.

It was their first loss since Aug. 23.

They went nearly a month without losing. When they finally did, after the final out, 30,874 fans at Progressive Field stood and cheered the players, and 30 Indians players came out of the dugout and cheered the fans.

The numbers from The Streak were ridiculous. Indians starting pitchers won 19 games and had a 1.77 ERA. The bullpen ERA was 1.17.

The Indians outscored their opponents by 105 runs (142-37). Tribe pitchers had seven shutouts, meaning the Indians shut out their opponents in one-third of the games during the streak. At the start of the streak the Indians led the division by 4½ games. At the end of the streak they led by 1 ½ games.

It was the best of times, the most teasing of times.

After the loss to the Royals on Sept. 15, the Indians won five more in a row. That made them 27-1. Then they lost another game, then they won six of the last eight to end the regular season on a preposterous 33-4 (.892) run.

They finished the season with a record of 102-60, the second-most wins by the Indians in their 117-year history in the American League.

Then they beat the Yankees in the first two-games of the Division Series to extend their runs to 35-4 and 104-60.

Then— wham! — they hit the wall.

One win from advancing, they lost to the Yankees three times in 72 hours, by a combined score of 13-5.

Just like that, The Streak, the season, the dream was over.

There were respected analytics sites that suggested the 2017 Indians had the best pitching staff ever. They are certainly one of the best teams ever to not win the World Series, maybe the best team ever to not even GET to the World Series.

They rode 104-60 to within a short cab ride of the ALCS, then couldn't find their wallet.

The 2017 Indians were better, across the board, than the 2016 Indians. But the 2016 Indians made it all the way to extra innings in Game 7 of the World Series while the 2017 Indians couldn't even get their car out of the postseason garage.

The 2016 Indians were a big story.

The 2017 Indians were a big tease.

What will the 2018 Indians be?

You don't have to be the best team to win it all. You only have to be the best team in October.

The 2018 Indians are a jigsaw puzzle, with important pieces missing, and with over three weeks of relatively meaningless games still to play before the postseason tournament begins.

The Indians will likely go into the postseason as a division champion with a worse record than both wild-card teams, but there's nothing wrong with hiding in the weeds.

This Indians team may not be the best team statistically in the postseason, but you win with pitching, and if Trevor Bauer returns healthy, name a better starting rotation.

That's a month away, however. For now, their division lead is in double digits, their magic number is in single digits.

So these are tricky times for Terry Francona, who wants to keep his team sharp, but also fresh.

The 2017 Indians never took their foot off the gas. The 2016 Indians chitty-chitty-bang-banged their way to the World Series.

The 2018 Indians have a chance to outperform them both.

### **Eastern League Western Division Series: Josh Donaldson's home run sparks RubberDucks to 5-2 win over Curve in Game 1**

by ABJ/Ohio.com correspondent

Ducks like rain. The RubberDucks might like it even better.

Altoona? Not so much.

Nicknamed "Bringer of Rain," Josh Donaldson introduced himself to the Curve in Game 1 of the Eastern League Western Division Series by doing what he does best in a 5-2 win by the Ducks Wednesday night at Canal Park.

On a rehab assignment with the RubberDucks, the 2015 American League MVP hit his second home run in as many games.

This one came in a three-run third when the third baseman absolutely crushed a two-run shot to center field.

"I feel pretty good," Donaldson said. "[My] rhythm, my timing, pitch recognition feels good. My body is feeling even better. Anytime my body is feeling right, I'm going to perform to my capability."

Since coming to the Indians in a waiver trade, Donaldson has been impressive. In two games, he's batting 2-for-5 with two home runs and six RBI.

On Monday, he hit a grand slam for the Triple-A Columbus Clippers in their season finale.

"It feels good," Donaldson said. "As I was telling the front office and [Indians manager] Tito [Francona] before I went on the DL, my timing has come around a lot quicker than I even expected it to. I'm seeing the ball pretty well right now and I've had some success here recently."

The left calf strain didn't seem to be an issue as he threw a perfect strike to first on a grounder by Ke'Bryan Hayes in the sixth.

Although Donaldson can't come off the disabled list until Sept. 11, he's more than ready to help the Indians in the stretch run as they look to go deep into the postseason.

"The calf feels great," Donaldson said. "The body feels great. It's good to be back on the field, moving around. I'm looking forward to playing some meaningful games."

The 12-year veteran hasn't played in a major-league game since May 28, but doesn't see anything holding him back in terms of a debut with the parent club.

"I'm itching to get back out there," Donaldson. "I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to helping that ball team win and playing some meaningful games down the stretch."

Donaldson had help as Kyle Dowdy returned to the postseason and looked much like the pitcher who excelled for the Detroit Tigers organization when he made two playoff starts for the Single-A Michigan Whitecaps in 2016 when he posted a 2.31 ERA in 11 innings.

Against the Curve, the right-hander went 6⅔ innings of four-hit ball and gave up two earned runs. He walked two and struck out six.

It's the third consecutive strong outing for Dowdy, who came over in the trade for Leonys Martin.

In his last three starts, Dowdy has allowed four earned runs in 18 innings and struck out 19.

"We're focusing on the simple things, really," said Dowdy, who touched 99 mph. "I'm trying to bring the fastball down in the zone and building off that on each hitter. I'm just kind of simplifying the approach."

Dowdy's showing held up with help from R.C. Orlan, who worked himself out of jam. On in relief after Dowdy sandwiched walks to Jordan George and Stephen Alemas around a single by Christian Kelley, Orlan worked himself out of it by getting Cole Tucker to ground out to second.

"That's why we brought him in in that situation," RubberDucks Tony Mansolino said. "It's kind of like how Tito uses Andrew Miller. It's bringing one of your best players in to bridge that gap."

Game 2 begins at 6:35 p.m. Thursday at Canal Park. Indians right-hander Cody Anderson will pitch one inning and face Curve right-hander Eduardo Vera (8-3, 3.62).

### **Kluber earns 18th win, fans 10 as Indians beat Royals 3-1** **BY STEVE HERRICK**

Corey Kluber says the goal each time he takes the mound is to give the Cleveland Indians a chance to win, rather than getting the W himself.

The reigning AL Cy Young Award winner is doing pretty well in both departments.

Kluber became the first 18-game winner in the majors this season, striking out 10 and pitching the Indians past the Kansas City Royals 3-1 Wednesday.

"I don't pay attention to it," he said. "There's going to be times things are out of your control. You might pitch fairly well and the guy on the other side pitches lights out."

"More so than actually getting the win, it's giving our team a chance to win. That's what I base things on," he said.

The Indians moved closer to a third straight AL Central title, and their magic number for clinching the division was reduced to eight when Minnesota lost at Houston on Wednesday night.

Kluber (18-7) is a major reason the Indians will be playing again in October. He allowed one run and two hits in 6 2/3 innings. He was pulled after throwing 105 pitches.

Kluber has won six of his last seven decisions and is a leading candidate to be chosen the league's best pitcher for the third time in five seasons. Luis Severino of the Yankees was set to start Wednesday night at Oakland.

"The last couple times out, seemed like he started to get the feel back. That's fun to watch," Indians manager Terry Francona said.

Royals manager Ned Yost watched Kluber retire the first 10 hitters before Kansas City got its only two hits of the game.

Alex Gordon lined a double on a 3-2 pitch in the fourth. Hunter Dozier struck out, but rookie Ryan O'Hearn's long drive was over center fielder Greg Allen's head and fell for an RBI triple.

The right-hander struck out Jorge Bonifacio to get out of the brief jam and retired nine of the last 10 hitters he faced.

Cleveland used three relievers to complete the two-hitter. Brad Hand struck out the side in the ninth for his eighth save since being acquired from San Diego and 32nd this season.

The game began in sweltering conditions with the temperature at 91 degrees for the first pitch.

Brad Keller (7-6) allowed three runs — one earned — in seven-plus innings and lost for the first time since Aug. 7.

"I felt like my fastball was pretty good and I hydrated myself all last night, so once the adrenaline kicked in when I got out there, I felt pretty good the whole time," he said.

Edwin Encarnacion's RBI grounder broke a 1-1 tie in the fifth. Allen's RBI single in the second gave Cleveland a 1-0 lead before Kansas City tied it.

Michael Brantley's one-out single started the go-ahead rally. Shortstop Alcides Escobar couldn't handle Yandy Diaz's chopper and Brantley took third when the ball rolled into the outfield on the error. Encarnacion's grounder put Cleveland ahead.

Jason Kipnis had a sacrifice fly and two hits.

Cody Allen, the Indians' closer until Hand was acquired, struck out two and retired all three hitters in the eighth. Oliver Perez struck out the only batter he faced and Cleveland's pitchers combined to fan 16.

Royals right fielder Brett Phillips was out of the lineup after running full-speed into the wall chasing Jose Ramirez's fly ball Tuesday. He was removed from the game an inning later. Phillips was diagnosed with a bruised right shoulder.

## DONALDSON PLAN

Indians 3B Josh Donaldson was scheduled to play for Double-A Akron against Altoona in the first game of the best-of-five Eastern League playoffs on Wednesday. He's on the disabled list with a strained left calf, which has prevented him from playing in a major league game since May 28.

Donaldson, acquired from Toronto on Friday, is eligible to be activated Sept. 11. It's unclear how many minor league games he'll play before joining the Indians.

## TRAINER'S ROOM

Royals: LHP Danny Duffy (sore shoulder) will not pitch again this season after leaving his Tuesday start in the first inning. Duffy was on the disabled list from Aug. 13-23 with a similar injury and recently received an anti-inflammatory shot.

"The doctors said he can't have another shot for a while, so it makes sense just to shut him down," manager Ned Yost said.

Indians: LHP Andrew Miller (sore shoulder) is expected to throw a bullpen session on Thursday in Toronto. He's been on the disabled list since Aug. 29.

## UP NEXT

Royals: RHP Heath Fillmyer (2-1, 4.01 ERA) opens a three-game series Friday in Minnesota.

Indians: RHP Shane Bieber (8-3, 4.66 ERA) starts Thursday at Toronto.

## Blue Jays stave off series sweep with decisive win against Rays

### ROBERT MACLEOD

What did the Toronto Blue Jays get for their star third baseman, just three years removed from American League most-valuable-player honours? Apparently, a 26-year-old pitcher coming off Tommy John elbow surgery, who has yet to play a single major-league inning.

Meet Julian Merryweather who, according to unconfirmed reports, will be the player to be chosen later in last week's trade, which sent Josh Donaldson to the Cleveland Indians.

At least the pair have one thing in common. Donaldson is also recovering from an injury – a calf strain that put him on the shelf in late May.

The Blue Jays have yet to publicly confirm that Merryweather is the swap for Donaldson. The confirmation is unlikely to come until the season ends.

The 6-foot-4 right-hander, who was Cleveland's fifth-round pick in the 2014 draft, underwent elbow surgery in spring training, sidelining him for the season.

In 2017, splitting his time between Triple A and Double A, Merryweather was a combined 7-9 with a 5.32 earned-run average. He does possess a fastball that has been clocked at 97 miles an hour.

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons said before Wednesday night's game against the Tampa Bay Rays at Rogers Centre he had no idea if the rumours regarding Merryweather were true.

He had weightier matters on his mind, such as trying to figure out why Rays' pitching has dominated his team this season.

Heading into Wednesday's game, the Blue Jays were on the verge of a dubious distinction. They had five or fewer hits in each of their past seven games against the Rays, which is tied for the longest streak against one opponent in the live-ball era, which began in 1920. To add insult to injury, their .169 batting average against the Rays this season is their lowest against any opponent.

And it is not as if the Rays – although they have enjoyed a good season this year – are a powerhouse. It just seems that way whenever they play Toronto.

"So, we need six hits?" Gibbons said before the game, without a hint of a raised eyebrow.

The Blue Jays got that – all in the first inning – as Toronto (63-76) steamrolled Tampa Bay (75-64) 10-3 to prevent a three-game sweep against a division rival.

"One thing, we've always had trouble with Tampa, whether it's here or down there," Gibbons said. "Their pitching's always been tough on us. I don't care if this is basically a new group. They've always done a number on us and it's lasted a few years."

Toronto scored seven runs off six hits in the first inning against Tampa Bay starter Tyler Glasnow, who had only two outs before heading for the showers. Toronto finished with 16 hits.

The big blast in the first came off the bat of Aledmys Diaz, a three-run home run, his 17th of the season. Billy McKinney also homered for Toronto, his fourth.

September minor-league call-up Rowdy Tellez made his major-league debut for Toronto with a pinch-hitting assignment in the sixth and collected a run-scoring double.

Kevin Kiermaier had two home runs for Tampa.

The seven runs tied Toronto's largest single-inning outburst this season, equalling the seven they scored against the Chicago White Sox on April 3 in the eighth inning in a 14-5 Blue Jays win.

The Blue Jays said before the game that starter Marcus Stroman, who has been hampered by a blister on the middle finger of his right pitching hand, will not make his scheduled start against Cleveland on Sunday

Stroman could not even get out of the second inning in his last outing on Monday, a 7-1 loss to the Rays, and the team is leaning toward shutting him down for the rest of the season.

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