

Clevinger flirts with no-no, but bullpen falters

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

NEW YORK -- The absence of Andrew Miller was felt again Sunday in the form of the shaking stands at Yankee Stadium. Thanks in part to a stellar effort from Mike Clevinger, Cleveland's bullpen was armed with a late lead, but it evaporated swiftly and led to a party at home plate in the Bronx.

The decisive blow was a three-run, walk-off home run by Yankees rookie Gleyber Torres, who sent a Dan Otero pitch over the wall in center to send the Tribe to a 7-4 defeat in the ninth inning. The roots of the loss can be traced to Cody Allen's entrance in the eighth, but they extend all the way back to Miller's trip to the disabled list last month.

Without their high-leverage relief weapon, the Indians' bullpen has descended into chaos.

"He's not available right now," Indians manager Terry Francona said bluntly when asked about Miller. "We've got to figure out ways to win games. We can't just win when our full complement's here. That's never going to work."

As recently as April 23, the Indians' bullpen ranked fourth in the Majors with a 2.55 ERA as a unit. Two days later, Miller grabbed his left leg after firing a pitch during an outing against the Cubs and wound up on the 10-day DL with a hamstring issue. Now, Cleveland has turned in a 9.29 bullpen ERA in its past 14 games, dropping to 28th (5.51 ERA) in MLB.

There have been factors involved in the relief corps' collapse. There was the 16-inning game against the Twins back on April 18 in Puerto Rico and -- more recently -- two extra-inning games, including one within a doubleheader, in the past six days. Righty Nick Goody (elbow inflammation) joined Miller on the DL last week, too.

There have been days impacted by poor weather, others sunk by abbreviated outings by starters and a wave of transactions that have rendered the bullpen almost unrecognizable. In the past five days, Ben Taylor has come and gone from Triple-A, both Matt Belisle and Jeff Beliveau were designated for assignment, and Alexi Ogando and Evan Marshall were called up.

When the Indians arrive at Miller Park in Milwaukee on Tuesday, righty Oliver Drake (acquired from the Brewers in a trade on Saturday) will join the bullpen as the latest reinforcement. Struggling starter Josh Tomlin has been moved to the 'pen to lend a hand this week, too.

"It's been very difficult," Allen said. "This game's not easy. Sometimes it can be a lot harder and that's just how it feels right now. It was a perfect storm this weekend. We're not playing our best baseball. And our bullpen, we're not throwing the ball very well right now."

Sunday's game began with a fantastic duel between Clevinger and Yankees rookie Domingo German. Clevinger struck out 10 and allowed only one hit through the first seven frames, while German spun six no-hit innings, struck out nine and only exited due to a pitch limit in his first MLB start.

Cleveland's lineup finally broke through in the eighth against Yankees setup man Dellin Betances, striking for four runs on four hits. Francona opted to stick with Clevinger to start the eighth and the righty did record an out, but he also issued two walks and saw his pitch count climb to a career-high 116.

That is when Francona handed the ball to Allen.

"The idea," Francona explained, "was to try to get to Cody with one out in the eighth -- just to give him a fair chance to be able to finish -- and he ended up walking two guys. So Cody had to work so hard to get out of that inning. That's a shame. [Clevinger] pitched really good."

With two outs, Allen allowed a run-scoring single to Brett Gardner before giving up a two-run double to Aaron Judge, trimming the Tribe's lead to 4-3. The closer needed 24 pitches to escape the inning, but was given the go-ahead to return for the ninth. Aaron Hicks and Neil Walker greeted him with consecutive doubles -- the latter tying the game.

"Once they tied it," Francona said, "I don't want to kill him."

Otero took over, recorded an out, intentionally walked slugger Giancarlo Stanton and then walked off the field as Torres circled the bases and the Yankees' players stormed the field. It was the latest ugly chapter in a brutally tough two weeks for the Tribe's bullpen.

"They've been having to cover a lot of ground," Clevinger said. "They're trying to do the best they can."

HE SAID IT

"I thought he was really good. I know he's young and I know he hadn't started, but he was [throwing] three pitches and he pitched like a veteran. I thought he was really good. And as long as we chase out of the zone, especially down, they're going to keep doing it. We have to kind of earn getting some pitches up in the zone." -- Francona, on German

"He pitched his tail off. That was probably the most frustrating part about losing a game like that -- or any game our bullpen gives it up. You're coming in after a guy just worked his tail off for his team to go get a win." -- Allen, on Clevinger

UP NEXT

Indians ace Corey Kluber (5-1, 2.41 ERA) is scheduled to take the mound on Tuesday when the Tribe takes on the Brewers at 7:40 p.m. ET in the opener of a two-game series at Miller Park. Kluber is 12-4 with a 2.19 ERA in 19 career Interleague outings. Milwaukee will counter with lefty Wade Miley (1-0, 1.50 ERA).

Indians recall Allen; Zimmer day to day

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

NEW YORK -- Bradley Zimmer woke up Sunday morning with soreness in his left shoulder and hip following a violent crash into Yankee Stadium's center-field wall one day earlier. The Indians do not believe a trip to the disabled list will be necessary, but the young outfielder could use a couple days off.

With that in mind, the Indians recalled outfielder Greg Allen from Triple-A Columbus prior to Sunday's game and gave him the nod in center field for the series finale against the Yankees. To clear a spot on the active roster, Cleveland optioned right-hander Ben Taylor to the same Minor League affiliate.

One thing Indians manager Terry Francona does not want is to have Zimmer ever alter his style of play based on situations like this one.

"I love it. I think there's a right way and a wrong way to play," Francona said. "I think that's the way you play the game. Obviously, you don't want guys to get hurt, but I don't know where you draw that line. Like, we say to a guy, 'Well, just try to catch these balls.' It just doesn't work that way. You just let guys play. Over the course of playing the game right, sometimes guys are going to get nicked up."

During the seventh inning of Saturday's 5-2 loss to New York, Zimmer exited the game with a left shoulder contusion after crashing hard into the wall in an effort to catch a deep fly from Austin Romine. According to Statcast™, the play had a catch probability of just 37 percent, but Zimmer got a glove on the ball before losing control of it upon impact with the wall.

Francona noted that Zimmer has passed all concussion tests over the past two days. With an off-day looming on Monday, Zimmer will have two days to recover leading up to the upcoming road series against the Brewers.

Allen appeared in 25 games for the Indians down the stretch last season and served as the team's 26th man during its April 17-18 series against the Twins in Puerto Rico earlier this year. In 21 games for Columbus this season, Allen has hit .260 with eight doubles, 11 walks, six stolen bases and a .778 OPS.

Miller on target for Friday

Indians relief ace Andrew Miller, who is on the 10-day DL with a left hamstring issue, got through a bullpen session with no issues on Saturday at Yankee Stadium. Francona said the left-hander is scheduled for another mound workout on Tuesday in Milwaukee and, barring any setbacks, appears on pace to be activated as early as Friday.

Worth noting

- Thanks to a pair of off-days coming up on Monday and Thursday, the Indians do not need a fifth starter until May 15 against the Tigers. Under the circumstances, righty Josh Tomlin will shift to the bullpen temporarily for the Tribe.
- Right-hander Oliver Drake, who was acquired from the Brewers via trade on Saturday, will join the Indians on Tuesday when the team is in Milwaukee for the two-game series.

The Indians' Weekend from Hell

Zack Meisel May 6, 2018 2

NEW YORK — First, there was Michael Jackson.

"Beat It" played at Yankee Stadium as Cody Allen gripped his glove in his right hand, wiped his face with his jersey and returned to the visitors dugout, Mike Clevinger's sterling start sapped of its significance.

Just beat it, beat it, beat it, beat it

No one wants to be defeated

Then, there was Frank Sinatra.

Yankees rookie Gleyber Torres smacked the ice cubes out of his hair following his Gatorade bath as members of the Indians' bullpen sauntered toward the dugout and "New York, New York" blared from the ballpark speakers. Andrew Miller, still a few days from lending a hand to the wallowing relief corps, led the pack, with Zach McAllister trailing right behind.

Start spreading the news, I'm leaving today

Finally, there was silence, save for the hustle and bustle of the clubhouse attendants who loaded up the Indians' duffel bags and gathered their dirty towels. In the corner of the spiritless room sat four pitchers: Mike Clevinger, Evan Marshall, Dan Otero and Trevor Bauer. Otero, who served up Torres' walk-off homer, stared at the ground. Bauer stared at his phone. Clevinger stared at the small group of reporters as they headed his way.

The Indians' Weekend from Hell is complete. The flashbacks to the rotten visit to the Bronx from last October gained some extra visuals. The nightmares about what could lie ahead later this season became even more haunting.

The Indians couldn't board their charter to Milwaukee quickly enough. Allen sneezed four times during his response to The Athletic's inquiry about his rocky outing Sunday afternoon. He said his allergies picked up when the team arrived in New York.

It's going to require more than some Claritin or Allegra to alleviate the Indians' ailments.

This team has flaws, and while there's ample time to iron them out, the weak links are dragging down other areas of the roster (not to mention the win column). Mike Clevinger tossed a career-high 116 pitches Sunday, the third Tribe starter to reach that total since Miller landed on the disabled list. (Carlos Carrasco also threw 113 pitches Thursday.)

The Indians can't trust their bullpen. And when Allen, the lone dependable wolf remaining in the pack, shrivels in the spotlight, all hell breaks loose. The Indians and Yankees combined for one hit through seven scoreless innings Sunday. The teams erupted for 11 runs in the final two innings.

Two weeks ago, the Indians' bullpen ranked fourth in the majors with a 2.55 ERA. Since, the unit has logged a 9.29 ERA, and now only two teams — the Twins and Royals, denizens of the junior-varsity AL Central — sit behind the Indians.

Ah, the division, the caveat attached to every argument about the urgency for the Indians to right the ship. The AL Central grants the Indians additional time to sort things out, but it doesn't gift them the ability to cruise to October and cross their fingers.

After all, Terry Francona has been leaning on the team's stars as though the calendar skipped ahead from Earth Day to Columbus Day. He summoned Allen to extinguish an eighth-inning fire Sunday, with the hope that the closer would register the game's last five outs.

Miller, slated for a final tuneup Tuesday, would typically factor into that equation in some capacity.

"He's not available right now," Francona said, "so we've got to figure out ways to win games. We can't just win when our full complement's here. That's never going to work."

Last season, the Indians limped into mid-June with a 31-31 record. It's never wise to overreact in early May — whether a team's start is blistering, or is as painful as a popped blister. This is different from the Indians toting an underperforming offense or a scuffling rotation, as was the case early last season.

The bullpen doesn't boast the same degree of track record. The unit certainly could use some external upgrades (that's been the case since November). The team also must learn more about the unfamiliar pieces it has collected in recent days, from Marshall to Alexi Ogando to Ben Taylor to Oliver Drake. Can any of them shoulder the load in a tight spot? Or is Francona destined to continue to bridge the gap from the rotation to the back-end duo with more of the rotation and more of the back-end duo? At the club's current pace, Allen, Miller and the starting pitchers will be begging for mercy come September.

"It's been very difficult," Allen said, minutes after the Yankees secured the three-game sweep. "This game's not easy. Sometimes it can be a lot harder and that's just how it feels right now. It was a perfect storm this weekend. We're not playing our best baseball, and our bullpen, we're not throwing the ball very well right now."

Allen returned to the mound for the ninth inning, despite firing 24 pitches in the eighth.

"I told him, 'I'll give you a chance for the save,'" Francona said, " 'but I'm not going to kill you.' "

After he surrendered a pair of doubles, Allen exited, ushered to the dugout by Michael Jackson's rhythmic decree.

"We're just hoping to get out of here, flush it, get into Milwaukee and start fresh," Allen said.

A couple of sorely needed off days this week and the impending return of the Indians' relief ace? That's music to their ears.

Top photo: Yankees pitcher Jonathan Holder topples Tyler Naquin (Wendell Cruz/

Starting 9: Are the Indians stretching players too far? Where can the club find relief help?

By Travis Sawchik 30m ago 2

1: Player rest has become of greater interest in pro sports, particularly those leagues where the schedule is a six-month grind like that of the NBA or Major League Baseball. But Indians manager Terry Francona again does not seem to be assigning much value to days down, an issue this author documented last season.

2: After ranking among the game's leaders in plate appearances and innings played last season, Francisco Lindor and José Ramírez rank third and 21st in the majors in innings played. Lindor ranked fifth in innings played last season. Lindor (2nd) and Ramírez (24th) again rank near the top of the game in plate appearances. Ramírez (6th) and Lindor (12th) each ranked in the top 15 of plate appearances last season. This season, Jason Kipnis joins them in ranking 19th in times to the plate.

The Indians have three of the highest-volume players in the league. Yes, Lindor and Ramírez don't want off days, players want to play, but the lineup card is not written by players. Could Lindor's sloppy play over the weekend be in part be attributed to fatigue?

3: On the pitching side, the Indians also have three of the highest-volume performers in terms of total pitches thrown. Trevor Bauer — who loves the work and has been incredibly durable — ranks sixth in the majors (757 pitches). Corey Kluber ranks 14th (707 pitches), and Mike Clevinger (705) ranks 16th. Kluber has regularly exceeded 100 pitches, and Bauer has exceeded 120 in a start. Clevinger threw 116 pitches Sunday.

4: It might not be so much that the Indians and Francona don't value rest, it might be that they don't trust their bench and middle bullpen options.

On Monday, Cody Allen threw 41 pitches in a relief appearance. Allen threw 114 pitches during the week. He twice entered games in the eighth inning, including Sunday when he relieved Clevinger. Allen looked fatigued. He didn't hit intended targets and he couldn't finish the game. Erik González broke camp with the club and has just 23 at-bats. Francona seems to be lacking some trust in middle bullpen options after losing his trusted bridge in Bryan Shaw. That issue is further exacerbated by the loss of Nick Goody. The Indians have stars among their position players, rotation and bullpen, but perhaps the club would do well to bolster its depth, its bench and middle bullpen, whether through internal (Yandy Díaz comes to mind) or external avenues.

It's difficult to know how much rest players ought to receive to increase efficiency on the field and prevent injury. Teams do have the ability to better measure fatigue through wearable technology and testing. But without trusted depth options it might be difficult for the manager and front office to give regular off days. Still, with Kluber seemingly running out of gas last season, even prior to the postseason, with the Indians faltering in October after their historic winning streak, it does beg the question of whether the club could have used some more rest earlier in the season.

5: To secure a division title and be competitive in October in the age of super pens, strengthening the club's bullpen seems to be a priority. That need only increased with the injury to Goody.

Goody was one of the top candidates to take on much of Shaw's work and had positioned himself for even more beyond this season as he entered the year striking out 10.8 batters per nine innings against 3.6 walks per nine. Only Andrew Miller and Allen miss bats like Goody in the Indians' bullpen. It's not clear whether Tyler Olson can be more than a left-handed specialist, Zach McAllister has been unable to develop a breaking ball, and Dan Otero is a ground-ball specialist but is dependent on quality defense behind him to excel and doesn't have the stuff to miss in the zone.

The Indians made a trade to try to strengthen the position over the weekend in acquiring Oliver Drake from the Brewers for cash considerations. Drake misses bats and gets ground balls at a league average rate. His velocity has spiked.

But his command issues might make him difficult to trust in crucial situations. The Indians need to do more to strengthen their options after Allen and Miller.

6: One modest proposal is to move Danny Salazar to the bullpen when and if he returns from the disabled list. This is an opinion shared by many in Northeast Ohio. Salazar might not only stay healthier in a more limited role, but even if he were healthy in the rotation he might not factor in a postseason rotation. Salazar has impact talent to fill a need.

The Indians should scour all potential internal upgrades. But they also ought to, and assuredly are, look at external options as the Brewers trade suggests. The San Diego Padres could be a potential match. The Padres are falling far out of the NL West race and have talented bullpen arms in Brad Hand and Kirby Yates and two intriguing submarine-style arms in Kazuhisa Makita and Phil Maton. While Hand has emerged as a Miller-lite lefty over the past couple of seasons, Yates is one of the more underrated arms in the game. Since the start of last season, Yates ranks ninth among all relievers in strikeouts per nine (13.6) and has a sub-3 walk rate (2.9).

7: Don't forget about center fielder Greg Allen, recalled Saturday, who has posted a .420 on-base percentage to date in Triple-A Columbus and a .378 mark for his minor-league career. If Bradley Zimmer's struggles continue or deepen, the Indians have an interesting alternative in Allen.

8: Catching defense remains an advantage for the Indians.

Baseball Prospectus now has team totals for framing, and the Indians rank second (4.5 runs above average) trailing only the Diamondbacks (5.1), who live with Jeff Mathis' poor bat because of his excellent glove. It's one reason why the Indians aren't in a rush to find a spot for Francisco Mejía behind the plate.

9: Trevor Bauer might have conducted an experiment and proved his point about substance and spin rate Monday. Someone ought to blow the whistle on the pine tar issue if it is a widespread issue. And it wouldn't hurt the Indians if the commissioner's office took a greater interest in what the Astros, the top spin-rate team in the majors, are up to in Houston.

STAT OF THE WEEK: 0

Teams above .500 in the AL Central.

STAT OF THE WEEK II: 1,500

The win milestone for Terry Francona.

STAT OF THE WEEK III: 445 feet

Distance of Francisco Lindor's home run Wednesday. Lindor then homered twice Thursday, including an opposite field shot. He still, however, refuses to call himself a power hitter. Lindor has now hit 41 home runs since the beginning of last season, tied for 16th in the game. No one predicted that when he was in the minors.

Swept aside: Indians fall to Yankees again as bullpen lets another lead slip away

Mike Fitzpatrick | The Associated PressPublished on May 7, 2018 | Updated 6:27 a. m.

NEW YORK — Another day, another lead and another loss for the Cleveland Indians.

Injured reliever Andrew Miller can't get back soon enough for the suddenly stumbling Indians bullpen.

The Indians wasted Mike Clevinger's brilliant start and a four-run lead in falling 7-4 on Gleyber Torres' ninth-inning home run Sunday.

On a day when hits were hard to come by in the Bronx, the rookie second baseman became the youngest Yankees player to hit a walk-off homer, a three-run shot that carried New York to its 15th win in 16 games.

At 21 years and 144 days, Torres bettered Yankees legend Mickey Mantle, who was 21 years and 185 days when he hit three-run, ninth-inning drive off Boston's Ellis Kinder in a 6-3 win on April 23, 1953.

"He's been special," smiling manager Aaron Boone said about Torres.

Domingo German pitched six hitless innings in his first major league start for the Yankees, who nonetheless fell behind 4-0 when Cleveland broke through against relievers Dellin Betances and Jonathan Holder. Yonder Alonso's leadoff single against Betances in the eighth was the first hit for the scuffling Indians, who have lost seven of 10.

But after managing only one hit against Clevinger, the streaking Yankees fought back to win their sixth straight and finish a three-game sweep. New York also took the final three games of last year's playoff series between the teams.

"We could have easily packed it in here today after the four-run eighth and we didn't do that," first baseman Neil Walker said. "Days like today and really this whole weekend are signs of a really good team."

Clevinger went 7 1/3 innings in his first start against the Yankees, setting career highs with 10 strikeouts and 116 pitches. He issued two of his four walks in the eighth as New York rallied.

Short in the bullpen, Cleveland manager Terry Francona called on closer Cody Allen, looking for a five-out save. Allen gave up a two-out RBI single to Brett Gardner and an opposite-field, two-run double to right by Aaron Judge before retiring Gary Sanchez with two on.

Aaron Hicks and Walker, who began the day batting .182, opened the ninth with consecutive doubles to tie it and chase Allen (2-1). One out later, pinch-hitter Giancarlo Stanton was intentionally walked, and Torres drove a full-count pitch from Dan Otero over the right-center fence and into the Yankees' bullpen.

"That was a rough one," Allen said.

The Indians' 2.55 bullpen ERA ranked fourth in the major leagues on April 23. But after Miller went on the disabled list shortly after that with a strained left hamstring, the Indians relief corps has turned in a 9.29 ERA over the past 14 games to drop to 28th in the majors with a season ERA of 5.51.

Miller plans to throw off a mound Tuesday, perhaps with hitters standing in, but won't be reinstated from the disabled list until Friday at the earliest.

Tyler Naquin's RBI single and Francisco Lindor's RBI double keyed Cleveland's four-run burst in the eighth. The Indians also scored on Sanchez's sixth passed ball this season and Jason Kipnis' sacrifice fly.

Until the eighth, Hicks' leadoff single in the fifth against Clevinger was the only hit in a scoreless game.

"It was like he was going out there, five minutes later I was back out there, then five minutes later he was back out there," Clevinger said. "I think it really kept us both in a good rhythm."

It was the first major league game since 1908 in which both starting pitchers struck out at least nine and allowed no more than one hit.

German was removed after 84 pitches, 23 more than his previous high this season, which came in relief Tuesday at Houston. The 25-year-old rookie, who stepped into the rotation for injured Jordan Montgomery, struck out nine and walked two.

"He was so efficient, attacking so much," Boone said.

Betances worked a 1-2-3 seventh before giving up three straight singles starting the eighth.

Torres, who connected for his first big league homer Friday night, raised one arm and turned back toward the New York dugout after rounding first base after Sunday's game-winner. He was mobbed and doused by excited teammates at home plate.

"It's like a big family right here and I enjoy that," Torres said.

Torres, who also made two outstanding defensive plays, is the first position player since 1900 to start and win 14 of his first 15 major league games.

"Everybody knew what kind of talent Gleyber has. That's not a secret," Sanchez said through a translator.

Chasen Shreve (2-0) struck out two in a perfect ninth for the win.

The 15-1 stretch matched the Yankees' best 16-game run since 1980. Three of their last four home games have been walk-off wins, and the Yankees (24-10) are off to their best start since 2003.

"They're a team that's really dangerous right now," Francona said.

After winning their ninth consecutive home game, the club's best streak in eight years, next up is a Yankee Stadium showdown with the rival Red Sox for first place in the AL East. A three-game series between the top two teams in the majors begins Tuesday night.

Starting five

German became the sixth pitcher to start for the Yankees this season, leaving Houston, Colorado and the Chicago Cubs as the only teams to use only five.

Trainer's room

INDIANS: With banged-up center fielder Bradley Zimmer out of the lineup, Cleveland recalled outfielder Greg Allen from Triple-A Columbus. Allen played center and batted ninth. Zimmer exited Saturday's loss after crashing hard into the fence trying to catch Austin Romine's double. He has a bruised left shoulder and hip but no concussion, Francona said. After a day off today, the team hopes Zimmer can return to the lineup Tuesday night in Milwaukee.

Up next

INDIANS: Two-time Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber (5-1, 2.41 ERA) pitches the opener of a two-game interleague series Tuesday against Milwaukee LHP Wade Miley (1-0, 1.50).

YANKEES: Right-hander Luis Severino (5-1, 2.11) starts Tuesday night against Boston lefty Drew Pomeranz (1-1, 6.14). Coming off his first career shutout last Wednesday in Houston, Severino is 2-5 with a 4.82 ERA vs. the Red Sox.

Clippers 4, Knights 3 | Eric Haase breaks out of slump with timely homer

By Mark Znidar

Clippers catcher Eric Haase wasn't exactly enjoying the good life during a planned day off Sunday afternoon after hitting some balls hard but going 0 for 11 during the first three games of a series against Charlotte.

In the third inning, though, he was called to pinch-run after Yu Chang was struck on the left wrist by a 96 mph fastball from Michael Kopech, the top pitching prospect of the Chicago White Sox.

The slump reached 0 for 12 when Haase struck out swinging with a runner on third base in the fifth inning, but he hit a laser shot of a two-run homer in the eighth to snap a 2-2 tie. The Clippers went on to a 4-3 victory over the Knights at Huntington Park.

The Clippers (15-13) have won five of their past six games.

"I knew we were (short-handed) from the get-go, and there weren't a whole lot of options," Haase said. "I just tried to stay ready and help keep the team in the ballgame. I've hit the ball well, but got nothing to show for it. I lined out here and there — a lot of hard balls and guys making plays. I just got a pitch that I could handle. I didn't try to change anything."

The 25-year-old Haase, who signed with the Cleveland Indians after they drafted him in the seventh round in 2011, has climbed to become one of the top prospects in the organization. The Detroit native, who signed to play at Ohio State before joining the Indians organization, raised his stock after hitting 26 home runs and driving in 59 runs in 95 games last season for double-A Akron.

His previous high for homers in the minors had been 16 in 2014 with Class A Lake County.

"I put in so much work to get stronger, and tried to hit the ball higher," he said. "I made some adjustments to my swing. Hitting ground balls wasn't doing too much for me. I wound up hitting more home runs."

The Clippers were thin on the bench with center fielder Greg Allen being called up by Cleveland and third baseman Yandy Diaz missing a third straight game with an ankle injury.

"They go out there and play hard," manager Chris Tremie said. "We talk about playing the game the right way and taking care of what you can take care of. It's triple-A, and rosters are going to shuffle. They did a good job of focusing on the task at hand."

Right-hander Stephen Fife gave up two earned runs on seven hits and one walk in six innings. Neil Ramirez (2-0) got the victory by pitching two scoreless innings, and Luke Eubank picked up the save despite giving up a run in the ninth.

Covering the Bases: Game 34

by Jordan Bastian

FIRST: After the eighth inning on Sunday, after Cody Allen inherited two baserunners and had to grind through five batters to escape, after he allowed three runs to score to nearly wash away the Indians' lead, he had a chat with manager Terry Francona.

"I checked with Cody just to make sure he was OK," Francona said. "I told him, I said, 'I'll give you a chance for the save, but I'm not going to kill you.'"

Allen had already logged 24 pitches in the eighth, but the closer said he was good to go. The options are limited right now and Allen—a few hiccups aside—is the most reliable option coming through the bullpen gate at the moment for the Indians.

"You're not thinking about pitch count," Allen said. "You're thinking about just trying to get a guy out. Especially right now. Getting outs right now is tough, so if you're thinking about pitch count..."

Allen turned away from reporters and unleashed a sneeze.

"Excuse me," said the reliever, who tried to gather himself.

Allen sneezed again.

"Excuse me," he repeated.

One more time.

"All right," Allen said, hoping the attack was over. "Getting outs right now is tough, so if you're thinking about pitch count..."

And another one.

"Sorry, guys," Allen said. "If you're thinking about pitch counts in that situation, that makes the game that much harder and this game is already hard, especially right now. So, you're just trying to get people out until Tito comes and gets you."

It's allergy season right now and, well, if you are allergic to bad numbers, you might not want to read beyond this point. The bullpen has been having a terribly bad reaction to life without Andrew Miller.

As was pointed out in this space a couple games ago, the Indians bullpen actually ranked fourth in baseball in ERA (2.55) on April 23. That wasn't all that long ago. In the 14 games since then, though, the Indians 'pen has turned in a 9.29 ERA with an opposing slash line (.324/.409/.632) worthy of MVP votes.

When the smoke cleared on Sunday, when the Tribe's relief corps coughed up seven runs (five charged to Allen and Dan Otero combined) in the final two innings, the team's bullpen ERA for the season climbed to 5.51. That, along with a 4.70 bullpen FIP, rank 13th in the American League and 28th in MLB.

In the eighth, Allen allowed an RBI single to Brett Gardner and a two-run double to Aaron Judge with two outs, cutting Cleveland's lead to one run. He then gave up back-to-back doubles in the ninth to bring the tying run in. Otero was pressed into duty and went on to allow a three-run, walk-off homer to Gleyber Torres.

Ballgame.

"It's been very difficult," Allen said. "This game's not easy. Sometimes it can be a lot harder and that's just how it feels right now. It was a perfect storm this weekend. We're not playing our best baseball and our bullpen, we're not throwing the ball very well right now."

"This [Yankees] team is very talented and feeling pretty good about themselves. We're just hoping to get out of here, flush it, get into Milwaukee and start fresh."

The good news here is that Miller—sidelined on April 25 with a left hamstring injury—could be back as early as Friday. He threw off a mound Saturday in New York and is slated to do so again Tuesday in Milwaukee. It would've been fun to have Miller return in Miller Park, but we can't always get what we want.

Miller's return will be much-welcomed for the Indians. When he exited, it caused a ripple effect on the roles throughout the bullpen. That said, one pitcher—no matter how elite—should not be the cause for as much damage as has occurred over the past couple weeks.

"He's not available right now," Francona said, "so we've got to figure out ways to win games. We can't just win when our full complement's here. That's never going to work."

SECOND: The shame in this is it looked like this was going to be a day for throwing the spotlight on Mike Clevinger's season. Clevinger was brilliant on Sunday at Yankee Stadium.

For good reason, the big three of the Indians' rotation garner the attention. Corey Kluber has his two Cy Young Awards, Carlos Carrasco has put himself among the game's top arms and Trevor Bauer's outings are backing up his outspokenness.

Clevinger is showing that he deserves to be mentioned in the same breath.

Against the Yankees, Clevinger set career highs in strikeouts (10) and pitches (116) and only allowed one hit (a fifth-inning single) in his 7 1/3 innings. Given the game's outcome, though, Clevinger had a hard time enjoying all he accomplished in the Bronx's raucous ballpark.

"There was bright spots in there," Clevinger said. "But, you're never going to be happy when you leave like this."

Clevinger was kicking himself over the two walks he issued in the eighth inning. He put Neil Walker aboard to lead things off, induced a flyout from Miguel Andujar and then walked Tyler Austin with two outs. That is when Francona turned to Allen.

"I got extra tight. I should've attacked better," Clevinger said. "I should've pitched more to the situation. That's why I was so mad at myself, because we had a four-run lead."

Both of those walks turned into runs after Clevinger's exit, marking the first runs he has allowed on the road this season and ending his road scoreless streak at 21 1/3 innings. Clevinger picked up a no-decision, but has a 2.76 ERA through seven starts this year.

Dating back to Aug. 26 of last year, he is 8–1 with a 1.94 ERA (17 earned runs in 79 innings) in 15 games (11 starts).

"He pitched his tail off," Allen said. "That was probably the most frustrating part about losing a game like that, or any game our bullpen gives it up. You're coming in after a guy just worked his tail off for his team to go get a win. Today I came in and cashed in his [runs], cashed in mine. That was a rough one."

Francona said his idea was to have Clevinger get an out and bring in Allen for a five-out save with no runners aboard. That plan did not come to fruition. That also seems like it's still asking a lot of Allen, and it also extended Clevinger to the highest pitch total of his career.

Maybe another reliever could have handled the desired out in the eighth before turning to Allen. Once it got to the top of the Yankees' lineup in the eighth, Allen was the guy. And now, with the benefit of hindsight, it's easy to second-guess.

THIRD: Before things went off the rails, this game was a fun pitchers' duel between Clevinger and rookie Domingo German.

German was making his first MLB start and he had Cleveland's lineup—one that scored 50 runs on 74 hits in the past six games (five days)—in fits over his six frames. The righty departed due to a pitch count after striking out nine and allowing exactly zero hits.

"I thought he was really good," Francona said. "I know he's young and I know he hadn't started, but he was three pitches and he pitched like a veteran. I thought he was really good. And, as long as we chase out of the zone, especially down, they're going to keep doing it. We have to kind of earn getting some pitches up in the zone."

German was locking up batters with his changeup and getting swing-and-miss with a breaking. Here's a look at his results over six: And here's a look at his nine strikeouts:

HOME: It's hard to sift through the wreckage of a game like this and find a silver lining. Beyond Clevinger's outing, the only other positive today was the offensive sequence in the eighth inning.

Facing Dellin Betances for the second straight inning, Yonder Alonso fell behind, 0–2, before working the count even and delivering a single to end New York's no-hi bid. Rajai Davis took over at first base as a pinch-runner.

Yan Gomes then worked ahead, 2–1, and singled up the middle. On a 2–0 pitch to Tyler Naquin, Davis strolled off second before bolting for third, stealing the bag. On the next pitch, Tyler Naquin came through with an RBI single.

Francisco Lindor (two-run double) and Jason Kipnis (sac fly) followed with run-scoring contributions and Cleveland had a 4–0 lead.

“Everybody did something,” Francona said. “A lot of little things added up to a lot of big things. That was terrific.”

And then, things got ugly.

NOTE: I will not be in Milwaukee for the upcoming two-game series with the Brewers. I’ll be back on the Tribe beat Friday, when the Indians open a three-game weekend series against the Royals at Progressive Field.

Tito’s pregame minutiae: May 6

by Jordan Bastian

Q: How is Bradley Zimmer doing?

TF: “We knew he got hit pretty good. And he was passing all the tests last night, but we’ve all seen where maybe you show up the next day. So, we got Greg Allen here. Zim showed up and as far as concussion wise, he’s fine, which is good. His hip and his shoulder are pretty sore. So, we’ll let Greg play today.”

“We optioned Ben Taylor. He wasn’t going to be available today anyway, and we’ll give Zim a couple days to kind of bounce back, which will be good for him. And then we’ve got [Oliver] Drake waiting in Milwaukee. That would take Taylor’s spot.”

Q: Will Josh Tomlin move to the bullpen without the need for a fifth starter until May 15?

TF: “Yeah, he’s not going to throw a bullpen today. So, he’ll be available in Milwaukee and then I think Tuesday would be his day to start.”

Q: Is it nice to at least know you’ll have some length available in the bullpen, if needed, given how the past couple weeks have gone?

TF: “Yeah, we’ve kind of had a pretty challenging week. To be able to not go to guys when you don’t want to, that’s the hardest thing, is I think going to them when you don’t want to. They’re willing. They’re unbelievable. The amount of cooperation is unbelievable. Like that one day, when [some relievers] told me that [they were willing to pitch during the doubleheader]... I’ve got a responsibility. You have a long career. I just can’t do that. I feel like we use our guys a lot anyway, but to overuse is I think not right, not respectful.”

Q: Do you ever have concerns over Zimmer’s all-out style of play?

TF: “I love it. I think there’s a right way and a wrong way to play. I think that’s the way you play the game. Obviously, you don’t want guys to get hurt, but I don’t know where you draw that line. Like, we say to a guy, ‘Well, just try to catch these balls.’ It just doesn’t work that way. You just let guys play. Over the course of playing the game right, sometimes guys are going to get nicked up.”

Q: How did Andrew Miller’s bullpen session go on Saturday?

TF: “Good. Good. I think Tuesday he’s [going to throw off a mound again]. We’ve got the field early on Tuesday, so some of this is going to be up to him, but we’ll get the trainers and [pitching coach Carl Willis] and, does a hitter stand in in the bullpen? Does he face a couple hitters on the field? We’ll see. We’ll see what we kind of want to do.”

Q: Could Miller be activated on Wednesday?

TF: “I don’t think Wednesday, because we have Thursday off. It seems like [Friday night] makes sense.”

Q: How do you think Francisco Lindor will respond after making three costly errors in the past two games?

TF: “I would say, when he makes a mistakes, you hope he has something to say about the outcome of the game, because he usually kind of plays with a vengeance. I remember thinking, ‘I hope he comes up when he’s the tying run.’ In fact, I think I said to Carl, ‘If he comes up, he’s going to hit a home run.’ I know that’s not as easy as it sounds, but we’ve seen him do it, because he gets so mad at himself. But, he’s so good that it seems like it elevates him. Not like he’s going to start winging wild out of the zone. He just kind of has that ability where he can change a game.”

Q: When you started to feel that Mickey Callaway had a future as a manager, did you ever talk about it to help prepare him for the job?

TF: “No, you know what? I don’t know that we really do that. I mean, we all hang around together, so we probably learn from each other all the time. But, it’s not just like you tell somebody, because that’s just not how we do things. But, I think through the course of being together for years, you kind of learn. like, I’ve learned a lot from him about stuff. If some of the stuff I did rubbed off, good. But, I think Mickey’s smart enough and confident enough. He’s going to be true to himself, because that’s the most important thing. He’s so good that he’s going to be good at whatever he does.”

Q: What's one thing that you can't be prepared to handle until you're actually in the dugout as a manager?

TF: "Oh boy, how do you say it? Everybody cares. Your third-base coach, your pitching coach, whoever. But, when you're the manager, you kind of take the losses home with you. You can't help it. I've heard, like Millsie said to me, when he went to Houston and came back, he's like, 'Man,' he goes, 'Now, I think I'll be a better bench coach, because I know the feelings and the thoughts.' That's probably the biggest thing. As a coach, yeah, you lose a game and you're pissed, but you go home. As a manager, you kind of wear it the whole year."

Q: Have you ever slept in a hyperbaric chamber?

TF: (laughs) "That would be a negative. At least not to my knowledge, how's that? Why do you ask?"

Q: Brandon Guyer said he has been sleeping in one and it's helped him bounce back quicker day to day. He said he even brought it on the road trip.

TF: "I didn't know you could do that. You know what's funny? I think I saw it in the training room. It looks like a mini coffin. One of my goals is to stay out of those for as long as I can. I know J.D. Drew used to do that. From what I understand, it helps like the healing process, like the more oxygen or something. Is that right? I probably should. Doesn't it take a while to set up and get it pressurized or whatever the word is? I remember seeing something. It might've been his—in the training room. And I was like, 'Ehh, that's all right. I'll just feel [crappy].'"

Q: You've had enough MRIs over your career to want to climb into that thing...

TF: "I don't know if I could do that. When I'm dead, I don't want to know it. I don't want to lay there and think, 'Boy, this is what it's like.' I want to make sure I'm gone."

Q: Did you see Trevor Bauer throw his glove down after Lindor made the errors in Saturday's game?

TF: "Yeah, I did actually. I think it was just not at Frankie. I think it was just [the inning]. Trev has a way of, sometimes his body language is probably not [great]. We've talked to him about it a lot. I don't think he ever intends to show somebody up or anything like that. In reality, if you follow the play, which usually guys kind of tend to do, maybe it would've saved a run. That's what we want to tell them about—not so much the other stuff. It's just sometimes emotions get the best of you. You'd rather not see it. On the flip side, that's what I've told him before, is, 'Hey, if you give up a long home run, how would you like to see people in the dugout reacting like that? You probably wouldn't.'"

Q: Bauer said he tried to convince you to let him keep pitching in Saturday's game?

TF: "Yeah, my response was, 'If we tied the game, yes.' And, if we didn't tie the game, no, because last time out he threw 122. It wasn't that I didn't think he could get them out, because I told him, 'If we tie it, you can stay in the game.' I just thought that we have an obligation, like I was telling you earlier. I mean, he's got to be able to pitch in August and September, too."

Yonder Alonso going to battle with his 'little warriors'

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: For most of the position players in the Indians clubhouse, their bats are strewn to one side or the other of their locker in a pile. Some have them piled together in a bag. Others have them leaning up against a nearby wall, rattling together whenever moved.

That won't do for Yonder Alonso. He is meticulous with his locker. Everything has its place. Everything is accounted for. It's something he says he got from his dad, who always made sure that each item in the house was perfectly neat and orderly. Nothing could be out of place or not up to the highest standard. Anything less was unacceptable.

So, it's no surprise that Alonso goes to great lengths to ensure his bats are kept in the best condition possible. Just to the left of his locker is a roughly 3-foot wooden stand with nine cutouts at the top from which his bats hang in perfect order. All accounted for, all with a spot, all neatly hanging just out of reach of one another and the floor.

Because, you see, those are his tools for battle. Those are his "little warriors," as he calls them.

"A fighter needs to always take care of his boxing gloves. A warrior needs to take care of his sword," Alonso said. "So, I take care of my stuff. I travel with that big [protective suitcase]. I'm just really meticulous, man. As you can see with my locker, I'm very clean. ... I've just always been like that with my bats."

Alonso said he once went to Home Depot with the idea for something similar. When he came to Cleveland, he had this rack built for him by Jack Efta, the umpires room attendant at Progressive Field. It now sits proudly by his locker as Alonso's pride and joy — at least while he's in the clubhouse.

"It's my baby," he said. "It's probably the most important thing in this locker besides my wallet and my wedding ring."

This season, the story with Alonso has been that he's been doing more damage with those little warriors than his traditional stat line might indicate. Entering this weekend, Alonso was hitting .213 with a .731 OPS to go with eight home runs and 21 RBI in 31 games. The marquee free-agent addition to the club this past winter, Alonso has outplayed his departed counterpart Carlos Santana. Santana, who signed a three-year, \$60 million deal with an option with the Philadelphia Phillies — dwarfing the two-year, \$16 million deal with an option for 2020 that Alonso signed to come to Cleveland — has struggled in his new home, hitting .151 with two home runs, seven doubles and 11 RBI.

But there isn't much digging needed to indicate that Alonso has hit the ball better than the story those numbers would tell (which, to note, has always been the case with Santana).

Among hitters with at least 100 at-bats entering Friday's games, Alonso was 80th in baseball with a .308 wOBA, a catch-all offensive statistic that aims to value how a hitter affects run production. But his expected wOBA (xwOBA), which is what his wOBA should be based on the quality of contact he's made, is .400, which would rank 23rd.

Using a slightly more traditional variable, Alonso's .454 slugging percentage was 54th in the game among hitters with at least 100 at-bats. But his expected slugging, again based on exit velocities, launch angles and other factors relating to quality of contact, was .613, good enough for the 12th-best mark in all of baseball.

It has forced Alonso to believe in the process more than the results. Every hitter wants to be rewarded. Knowing those averages will regress to the mean when that isn't happening as often takes patience.

"I think as I've gotten older, I've realized not to get so concerned with [bad results]. You can be hitting .300 and it could be the softest .300 you can hit, right? ... So, for me, I try to just relax and understand that just continue to work and things will take care of itself."

It took time for Alonso, as he has progressed through his career, to understand all of this, and to be able to buy into that disciplined approach even when line drives continue to be caught for outs. Alonso was one of 13 players this season with at least 14 barreled balls, according to Statcast. He knows the power he can bring to the Indians' lineup — his 2017 season and the swing changes he made have proven that. He's been productive, but not quite as much as what some numbers based on contact indicate.

"I don't really pay attention to that as much as how much I worry about the process of it," he said. "I understand I'm strong. I understand I made some adjustments with my swing. I understand that things are working in those regards. So, for me, it's trying not to oversee these crazy numbers, right? Understand that my exit velocity is good. My at-bats are good. I'm having good pitches to hit. I'm not swinging at balls. I'm just going out there and competing."

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 05.07.2018

Bullpen mess just keeps getting messier and messier for the Cleveland Indians

By Paul Hoynes,

NEW YORK - The Indians' bullpen is a mess and the Yankees made it even messier Sunday by scoring seven runs in the last two innings to complete a three-game sweep at Yankee Stadium.

After the top of the eighth inning, the mess was manageable. The Indians not only averted being no hit, but they took a 4-0 lead. But with a taxed bullpen, manager Terry Francona elected to send starter Mike Clevinger back out for the eighth to try and get one out so Cody Allen could have a chance for a five-out save with nobody on base.

Clevinger, to that point, had pitched his best game as an Indian. He allowed one hit, struck out 10 and walked two. Well, Clevinger got the one out Francona wanted, but not before walking Neil Walker and Tyler Austin, while throwing a career high 116 pitches.

Allen, who allowed a game-winning hit to Yankee rookie Miguel Andujar in the ninth inning Friday night, was not sharp again. Brett Gardner singled and Aaron Judge doubled to make it 4-3 before he ended the eighth after 24 pitches.

He came out for the ninth and allowed consecutive doubles to Aaron Hicks and Walker to tie the score. Dan Otero relieved and gave up a three-run, walk-off homer to Gleyber Torres, another Yankee rookie.

Terry Francona on Cody Allen and the Yankees

That is how the entire series went for the Tribe and the pen.

Since left-hander Andrew Miller injured his left hamstring on April 25 and went on the disabled list, the bullpen is 1-5 with one save and two blown saves. In that stretch, the relievers have allowed 38 earned runs in 34 innings for a 10.06 ERA.

The pen has gone from being one of the AL's best in the first couple of weeks of April, to one of the worst in the big leagues. They're currently 3-9 with a 5.51 ERA. The only teams with a higher ERA in the big leagues are AL Central rivals Minnesota and Kansas City. That helps explain why the Indians are still in first place in the division despite being 17-17.

"It's been very difficult," said Allen. "This game is not easy. Sometimes it can be a lot harder and that's just how it feels right now.

"It was a perfect storm this weekend. We're not playing our best baseball and our bullpen, we're not throwing the ball very well right now. This team (the Yankees) is very talented and feeling pretty good about themselves. We're just hoping to get out of here, flush it, get into Milwaukee and start fresh."

The Indians have an off day Monday before opening a two-game series against the Brewers at Miller Park on Tuesday.

Comeback Kid. pic.twitter.com/fuhJBFE4f

-- New York Yankees (@Yankees) May 6, 2018

Miller will throw a bullpen session Tuesday, but the earliest he's expected to come off the disabled list is Friday in Cleveland. And the way the pen has been pitching, Miller doesn't have enough fingers or toes to plug all the leaks.

The cast of arms is changing every day - Nick Goody (disabled list), Ben Taylor (optioned), Jeff Beliveau (designated for assignment), Alexi Ogando (selected from Class AAA Columbus), Evan Marshall (selected from Columbus), Matt Belisle (designated), Oliver Drake (acquired from Milwaukee) have come and gone in the last few days. If you're not pitching in the Tribe's bullpen by Monday, just stick around, the phone will ring.

When asked if this was another example of trying to protect a lead in the late innings without Miller, Francona said, "Yeah, but he's not here. He's not available right now. So we've got to figure out a way to win games. We just can't win when our full complement is here. That's never going to work."

We'll be the Judge of this one ... Not tall enough.

[?] [?][?][#RallyTogether](https://pic.twitter.com/vDiGjIQTPo) pic.twitter.com/vDiGjIQTPo

-- Cleveland Indians (@Indians) May 6, 2018

The Indians have done a good job over the last several years when it comes to the pen. They've always been able to find a solid reliever or two from an unexpected source - Scott Atchison, Tyler Olson, Goody, Jeff Manship and Dan Otero to name a few. They have yet to hit on one this year. Compounded with the failure to re-sign free agents Bryan Shaw and Joe Smith and the injury to Miller, the bullpen has never looked this vulnerable since Francona became manager in 2013.

What's more it's taking a toll on the rotation. Trevor Bauer threw 122 pitches, the second most in his career, two starts ago. Clevinger set a career high Saturday.

"Clev pitched is tail off," said Allen. "That was probably the most frustrating part of losing a game like this, or any game where our bullpen gives it up. You're coming in after a guy just worked his tail off to go get a twin. Today I came in and cashed his (runs) and mine --- that was a rough one."

If this bullpen doesn't get straightened out, there are going to be a lot more results similar to the one the Indians got Sunday afternoon in the Bronx.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 05.07.2018

Did he or didn't he and 4 other things we learned about the Cleveland Indians on Sunday

By Paul Hoynes,

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Whether Trevor Bauer threw his glove in disgust or knocked it off his hand when he slammed his fist into it on Saturday afternoon against the Yankees, manager Terry Francona was watching.

Before Sunday's series finale against the Yankees, Francona was asked if he saw what Bauer did with his glove after Francisco Lindor committed a critical double error at shortstop in the fifth inning.

"Yeah, I did actually," said Francona. "I think it was just not at Frankie. I think it was just (the inning). Trev has a way of, sometimes his body language is probably not (great). We've talked to him about it a lot. I don't think he ever intends to show somebody up or anything like that."

Bauer entered fifth inning with a 1-0 lead and a perfect game intact. But with one out, the next four Yankees reached base. Bauer walked Austin Romine to force home a run and tie the score. Ronald Torreyes sent a double-play ball to Lindor at short, but he couldn't handle it as a run scored. Then Lindor compounded the problem by throwing to third, but his throw sailed past Jose Ramirez as another run scored.

During Lindor's double error, Bauer's glove ended up on the infield grass.

"It's just sometimes emotions get the best of you," said Francona. "You'd rather not see it. On the flip side, what I've told him before is, 'Hey, if you give up a long homer, how would you like to see the people in the dugout reacting like that? You probably wouldn't.'"

After the 5-2 loss, Bauer said told reporters that he wanted to stay in the game because the Tribe's bullpen had been used a lot lately. He pitched six innings, allowing four runs, two earned, with eight strikeouts and three walks.

"My response was, if we tied the game, yes," said Francona. "And if we didn't tie the game, no, because the last time out he threw 122 pitches."

The Indians made it 4-2 with a run in the sixth, but did not tie the score.

"I just thought that we have an obligation. ... I mean he's got to be able to pitch in August and September, too."

No. 1: No Miller Time at Miller Park

The symmetry would have been nice, but it does not appear Andrew Miller will be activated in time for the Tribe's two-game series in Milwaukee on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Miller, on the disabled list with a strained left hamstring, is scheduled to throw a bullpen session on Tuesday. There's a chance he could face some hitters, but Francona said the earliest he could be activated was Friday when the Indians return home to play a three-game series against Kansas City.

No. 2: Hyperbaric experience

Outfielder Brandon Guyer has brought his hyperbaric chamber on the road with him. Francona was asked if he had ever used one.

"You know what's funny?" he said, "I think I saw it in the training room. It looks like a mini coffin. One of my goals is to stay out of those for as long as I can."

No. 3: Extra bullpen arm

The Indians will put Josh Tomlin in the bullpen for the Milwaukee series. His next scheduled start will be Tuesday on May 15 in Detroit.

"Josh won't throw a bullpen today (Sunday) so he'll be available in Milwaukee," said Francona.

The bullpen has undergone a lot of changes over the last several days. Nick Goody was played on the disabled list between games of Thursday's doubleheader against Toronto and Evan Marshall was promoted from Class AAA Columbus.

On Friday, Alexi Ogando's contract was selected from Columbus and lefty Jeff Beliveau was designated for assignment.

On Saturday the Indians acquired reliever Oliver Drake from Milwaukee; and on Sunday, they optioned Ben Taylor, another reliever to Columbus.

"It's been a pretty challenging week," said Francona.

No. 4: In closing

It's no secret that Francona is a big fan of Mickey Callaway, his former pitching coach and now rookie manager of the Mets. Asked what's the one thing a manager can only learn by managing, Francona said, "Everybody cares - your third base coach, your pitching coach, whoever. But when you're the manager, you kind of take the losses home with you. You can't help it. ... That's probably the biggest thing.

"As a coach, you lose a game and you're mad, but you go home. As a manager, you kind of wear it all year."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 05.07.2018

New York Yankees rally past Cleveland Indians, Cody Allen, 7-4, for three-game sweep

By Paul Hoynes,

NEW YORK -- The Yankees received their first extended look at Indians starter Mike Clevinger on Sunday afternoon. The Indians, meanwhile, got their first ever glimpse of Yankees starter Domingo German.

It's safe to say both teams were impressed by what they saw. After those reviews came in, the second game began.

After the Indians took a 4-0 lead with four runs in the eighth inning, the Yankees rallied for a 7-4 victory in the ninth inning off closer Cody Allen and Dan Otero to complete a three-game sweep at Yankee Stadium. Rookie Gleyber Torres ended it with a three-run walk-off homer against Otero.

The Yankees scored three runs in the eighth before winning it in the ninth.

Allen took the loss in his first blown save of the season. New York, which has won 15 of its last 16 games, knocked Allen out of the game on consecutive doubles by Aaron Hicks and Neil Walker to start the ninth and tie the score, 4-4.

German, in his first big-league start, threw six innings of no-hit baseball. Clevinger didn't have no-hit stuff, but he was as close as you can get over 7 1/3 innings. He allowed one hit and struck out 10.

Comeback Kid. pic.twitter.com/fuhJBFE4f

-- New York Yankees (@Yankees) May 6, 2018

"Clev was really good," said manager Terry Francona, whose team has lost three straight and seven of their last 11 games. "Those pitchers kind of matched each other pitch for pitch.

"After all that he did, then to go out and walk two (in the eighth), man. The idea was to try to get to Cody with one out in the eighth -- just to give him a fair chance to be able to finish -- and he ended up walking two guys. So, Cody had to work so hard to get out of that inning. That's a shame. He pitched really good."

The Indians had been no-hit by German and Dellin Betances through seven innings before Yonder Alonso singled to lead off the eighth and start a four-run rally. After Alonso singled, and was replaced by Rajai Davis, Yan Gomes singled to move Davis to second.

Following a Yankee mound meeting, Davis caught the Yankees napping and stole third. He scored on Tyler Naquin's broken-bat single through the middle for a 1-0 lead. Jonathan Holder relieved and retired Greg Allen, who popped up a bunt attempt.

Francisco Lindor, however, doubled to right to score Gomes and send Naquin to third. Naquin scored on a passed ball by Gary Sanchez, and Lindor scored on a sacrifice fly by Jason Kipnis.

"That inning was as exciting on the good side as it was bad the next (inning)," said Francona. "Everybody did something. A lot of little things added up to a lot of big things. That was terrific."

Terry Francona on Cody Allen and the Yankees

Clevinger, who threw a career-high 116 pitches, came out for the eighth, but recorded just one out as he walked Neil Walker and Tyler Austin. It was the start of a three-run Yankee rally, as Allen gave up an RBI single to Brett Gardner and a two-run double to Aaron Judge."

"I got extra tight," said Clevinger. "I should've attacked better. I should've pitched more to the situation.

"That's why I was so mad at myself, because we had a four-run lead. Knowing you've got good arms out there, why put someone in a situation? Say they hit a solo, and somebody gets a fresh inning. I should've just attacked better there."

German, who replaced injured Jordan Montgomery in the rotation, struck out nine and walked two in six innings. He'd made five relief appearances before Sunday.

Clevinger pitched one inning against the Yankees last year during the regular season. He also made two relief appearances against the Yankees in the AL Divisional Series.

The Indians had two base runners through the first seven innings. Jose Ramirez drew a two-out walk in the fourth, ruining German's bid for a perfect game.

no-hitter shutout tie game.#RallyTogether pic.twitter.com/mDyrxBaL5o

-- SportsTime Ohio (@SportsTimeOhio) May 6, 2018

Edwin Encarnacion started the fifth with a walk, but German struck out Alonso and Gomes to bring Naquin to the plate. Naquin sent a hard grounder between first and second, but Torres made a sliding stop and threw him out to end the inning.

As far as coming close to an actual hit, Encarnacion hit a ball to deep short with two out in the seventh. A faster man may have beaten it out, but Didi Gregorius threw him out easily.

Clevinger was just as effective with the exception of giving up a hit.

New York's Hicks singled through the middle to start the fifth. Clevinger walked the next batter, Walker, but Miguel Andujar hit into a double play and Austin struck out.

In the fourth, Gregorius reached second on a two-base error by Alonso at first base. It appeared Alonso thought first-base umpire Lance Barksdale called the ball foul, but replays showed he raised his arms trying to get out of the way of the ball.

An error was called because the ball went off the end of Alonso's glove. Clevinger picked up his teammate by striking out Sanchez to end the inning.

"I've got to make that play," said Alonso.

What it means

The last no-hitter thrown against the Indians belonged to Ervin Santana of the Angels on July 27, 2011 at Progressive Field.

The pitches

German threw 84 pitches, 53 (63 percent) for strikes. Clevinger threw 116 pitches, 72 (62 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Indians and Yankees drew at 40,107 to Yankee Stadium on Sunday. First pitch was at 1:08 p.m. with a temperature of 61 degrees.

Next

The Indians will spend their off day in Milwaukee on Monday. They'll play a two-game interleague series against the Brewers starting Tuesday at Miller Park.

The Indians will start RHP Corey Kluber (5-1, 2.41) against lefty Wade Miley (1-0, 1.50) on Tuesday night at 7:40 p.m.

On Wednesday, RHP Carlos Carrasco (4-1, 3.95) will face Milwaukee righty Junior Guerra (2-1, 0.82) at 1:10 p.m. SportsTime Ohio, WTAM and WMMS will carry the series.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 05.07.2018

Cleveland Indians recall OF Greg Allen from Triple-A Columbus; option RHP Ben Taylor

By Paul Hoynes,

NEW YORK - It turns out Bradley Zimmer's injury may have been more serious than the Indians thought.

The Indians recalled outfielder Greg Allen from Class AAA Columbus on Sunday after Zimmer crashed into the center field fence Saturday chasing a double by New York's Austin Romine in the seventh inning of a 5-2 loss at Yankee Stadium. Zimmer left the game with a bruised left shoulder.

The Indians optioned right-hander Ben Taylor to Columbus to make room for Allen.

The move leaves the Tribe's depleted bullpen with just six arms. The Indians could use Josh Tomlin in an emergency, but he pitched seven innings on Friday.

"He hit the wall pretty good, but he was passing all the (concussion) tests last night," said manager Terry Francona. "We've all seen where you show up the next day (and concussion symptoms surface). So we got Greg Allen here and Zim showed up, he's fine concussion wise, he's good.

"But his hip and shoulder are pretty sore. So we'll let Greg play today and we optioned Ben Taylor because he wasn't going to be available today anyway. We'll get Zim a couple days to bounce back which will be good for him. Then we're got (Oliver) Drake waiting for us in Milwaukee so he'll take Taylor's spot and we'll send Greg back."

Zimmer went on the disabled list last year in September with a broken left hand. He was stepped on while in a headfirst slide into first base.

The 6-5 Zimmer plays aggressively and Francona has not asked him to change.

"I love it," said Francona. "I think there's a right way and a wrong way to play. I think that's the way you play the game.

"Obviously, you don't want guys to get hurt. But I don't know where you draw the line. Do we say to a guy, 'Just try to catch these balls?'

"It doesn't work that way. Just let guys play. Over the course of playing the game right, guys are going to get nicked up."

The Indians acquired right-hander Oliver Drake from the Brewers in a cash deal on Saturday. The Indians will travel to Milwaukee after Sunday's game and open a two-game interleague series at Miller Park on Tuesday after an off day Monday.

Allen, recalled for the second time this season, started in center field on Sunday. The switch-hitter is batting .260 (19-for-73) with eight doubles and three RBI at Columbus. He ranks third in the International League with 17 runs and is tied for sixth with six stolen bases.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 05.07.2018

Captains bats not productive enough in loss to Snappers

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

Captains manager Ljke Carlin likes his team a lot and thinks it will make some waves in the Midwest League.

For now, the Captains are stuck in the mode of one step forward, two steps back.

With a 2-1 loss to the Beloit (Wis.) Snappers on May 6 at Classic Park, the Captains slipped to 13-15 on the season.

They dropped four of six games on the homestand and have seven losses in their last 10 games.

The Captains have some batters pounding the baseball and some pitchers pounding the strike zone.

Problem is, they haven't brought together those elements nearly often enough in this still-young season.

"We'll get good pitching but the hits won't come. Then we'll hit and not get the pitching," Carlin said. "We need to be more consistent."

Lake County's pitching was good enough in the series finale to put the Captains in position to win.

Starter and eventual loser Francisco Perez (1-3, 6.00 ERA) limited the Snappers to two runs on four hits in six innings. Tommy DeJuneas worked three scoreless, hitless innings in relief.

The bats weren't in concert with the arms, however.

Beloit starter Jean Ruiz and two relievers limited the Captains to one run on nine hits. The Captains stranded 10 baserunners and did not take advantage of good scoring chances in the bottom of the third, fourth, sixth and eighth innings.

"Give their pitchers credit for limiting the runs with so much traffic out there," Carlin said.

The Captains got their run in the bottom of the fourth inning on a double by Nolan Jones and RBI single by Will Benson. First baseman Ulysses Cantu, returning to the lineup after missing six games with a sore shoulder, doubled and pushed Benson to third base.

The rally died when Ruiz struck out Jose Vicente and Gian Paul Gonzales to end the inning.

"We're a better team than we've showed the last three series," Carlin said.

Beloit improved to 11-13.

The Captains open a six-game trip on May 7 against the Kane County (Ill.) Cougars. First pitch is 7:30 p.m.

With seven shutouts already, Brewers offense has not lived up to preseason expectations

Tom Haudricourt, Published 7:50 p.m. CT May 6, 2018

It often is said that momentum in baseball starts and ends 60 feet, six inches from home plate.

That certainly was the case Sunday afternoon at Miller Park, where Pittsburgh's Chad Kuhl continued his career dominance of Milwaukee and Brewers starter Chase Anderson allowed a home run to the very first batter he faced.

So much for any momentum generated by the Brewers' stirring late-inning victory over the Pirates the previous evening. After Pittsburgh tied that game, 3-3, in the eighth inning on Starling Marte's shocking two-run homer off previously indomitable reliever Josh Hader, Ryan Braun delivered a huge two-run double as the Brewers made off with an uplifting 5-3 victory.

While that finish had adrenaline flowing for participants and spectators alike, the Brewers' 9-0 shellacking by the Pirates on Sunday had all the drama and suspense of a quilting bee. The lopsided game left the 38,285 there with little to talk about except the merits of sitting in the sun vs. sitting in the shade with the roof open on a mild day.

"There's not much good to report about today's game," manager Craig Counsell admitted. "We didn't do much right. (Kuhl) was pitching well. There wasn't anything good happening."

The red flag is that these days have come so often this season, especially for a team expecting a more productive offense with the off-season additions of Lorenzo Cain and Christian Yelich. The Brewers have been shut out seven times in 35 games, compared to eight times all of last season.

Five of those shutouts came against the Chicago Cubs, including three on the last road trip in a series plagued by miserable weather. But, even if you're playing in the Arctic Circle, seven goose eggs is a tad high before reaching one quarter of the season.

"It's a big number already, for sure," Counsell said. "The series in Chicago, conditions played a role. But seven is too many right now."

It is a testament to the Brewers' superb pitching that they have won 20 of their first 35 games. They are averaging 3.77 runs per game, below the 4.0 level that usually separates winning from losing.

A deeper dive into the run scoring reveals a more concerning issue. The Brewers are 14-1 against four horrible teams (San Diego, Cincinnati, Miami and Kansas City). In those games, they averaged 5.5 runs per game.

In their other 20 games against winning teams (St. Louis, Chicago, New York and Pittsburgh), the Brewers have averaged 2.5 runs per game. Not surprising, they are 6-14 in those contests.

"We've got to score runs," Counsell said. "We're not scoring enough runs. It's going to come back and hurt you eventually. We've got to score more runs. That's the bottom line."

Simply put, the Brewers have too many players contributing little or nothing to the offense. Catchers Manny Piña and Jett Bandy are hitting a combined .190 with seven RBI. Shortstop Orlando Arcia is batting .222 with a .252 on-base percentage. Second baseman Jonathan Villar has a .317 OBP and his primary backup, Eric Sogard, is in a dreadful 0-for-27 spiral, dropping his batting average to .100.

"We're just not getting production out of the bottom of the lineup," Counsell said. "It's been the catcher spot, and largely second base and shortstop. We've got a bunch of players struggling in those spots."

"We've got to look at our options. We're trying to get the guys here going. That's ultimately going to be the way you have the most success. But you've always got to look at it."

The malaise has spread to other spots in the lineup. Cleanup hitter Travis Shaw has four hits in his last 42 at-bats (.095), dropping his batting average to .230 with a .319 OBP. Leadoff hitter Lorenzo Cain is in an 8-for-40 slide (.200), dropping his average to .267 though with a still solid .381 OBP.

Ryan Braun is hitting only .243 with a .284 OBP but has made many of his hits count in the clutch. It has taken an 8 for 18 (.444) surge for Domingo Santana to finally make some contributions. Hernán Pérez, a good bat in the past off the bench, is hitting .215 with a .608 OPS.

Add it all together and it's easy to see why the Brewers' offense has been performing far below expectations.

"You don't want to be shut out," Shaw said after Sunday's two-hit showing by the offense. "But it's happened. I don't have an answer for you. It's disappointing, but each day is a new day."

The next new day is Tuesday against Cleveland ace Corey Kluber. It doesn't get any easier.

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Pirates 9, Brewers 0: Pittsburgh's Kuhl dominates Milwaukee ... again

Tom Haudricourt, Published 4:27 p.m. CT May 6, 2018 | Updated 7:59 p.m. CT May 6, 2018

As usual, Pittsburgh right-hander Chad Kuhl controlled the bats of the Milwaukee Brewers on Sunday.

That domination was hardly necessary, however, thanks to an offense that opened with a home run and never let up.

The result was the biggest stinker of the season for the Brewers, who did very little on either side of the ball in a 9-0 whipping at Miller Park that kept the 38,285 quiet from start to finish.

The game qualified as the biggest stinker of the year for the Brewers, who were shut out for the seventh time this season in 35 games, compared to eight blankings all of last season. They managed just two hits, a pair of singles on an otherwise quiet day from the offense.

Kuhl allowed just one hit during his seven innings of work – a soft single to right by Domingo Santana in the second inning. He walked two and struck out eight in boosting his record against the Brewers to 3-0 with a 1.91 earned run average in six career starts.

Not surprisingly, the Pirates are 6-0 against the Brewers in those games.

Right-hander Chase Anderson's day began with a home run by Pirates leadoff hitter Adam Frazier, who had one for the season. He also surrendered a homer in the second inning to Jordy Mercer, who entered the game with none.

Anderson, who allowed only 14 homers all season in 141 1/3 innings in 2017, already has given up 10 this season in 45 1/3 innings. He settled down in the middle innings but was charged with two more runs in the sixth, when Pittsburgh rallied for four runs to break open the game.

FIVE TAKEAWAYS

FIRST-INNING BLUES: Much like with starter Zach Davies, Chase Anderson has struggled in the first inning thus far this season. With the two runs he allowed, his first-inning ERA climbed to 7.88 (seven earned runs in eight innings). Anderson has a 3.13 ERA in the other innings he has pitched.

THE STREAKING CONTINUES: A couple of infielders have put together long hitting streaks at the Brewers' Class AAA Colorado Springs affiliate. Mauricio Dubon, who had the day off Sunday, is at 23 games in a row with at least one hit. Nate Orf boosted his streak to 17 games with a hit in his first at-bat Sunday.

BARNES FALLS OFF THE LIST: Entering the game, the Brewers have five relievers with earned run averages below 2.00 for the season. By surrendering one earned run in only two-thirds of an inning, Jacob Barnes fell off that list, with his ERA going from 1.65 to 2.12.

BRAUN BACK IN LINEUP: Ryan Braun, who came off the bench Saturday night and later delivered the decisive blow, a two-run double in the eighth, made his first start of the series. Braun has been bothered by tightness in his right calf, an issue that bothered him earlier in the season as well. It was a left calf issue that landed Braun on the DL twice last season.

NO HOME-FIELD ADVANTAGE: Entering the game, the Brewers had won seven of their previous eight games at Miller Park. Overall, however, they are only 9-8 at home after getting off to a 2-6 start. On the road, they have won 11 of 18 games.

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Brewers catcher Stephen Vogt has setback with shoulder on minor-league rehab

Tom Haudricourt, Published 12:24 p.m. CT May 6, 2018 | Updated 8:08 p.m. CT May 6, 2018

Catcher Stephen Vogt's plans for rejoining the Milwaukee Brewers took a significant step backward Saturday night when he removed himself from a game while on minor-league rehab assignment with Class AA Biloxi.

Vogt, who has battled a shoulder strain since early in spring training, exited in pain after making throws to second base and third base on steals by Jacksonville's Cade Gotta in the sixth inning.

The hope was that Vogt, 33, was getting closer to being activated by the Brewers. Instead, he will return to Milwaukee to be examined by team physician William Raasch on Monday and have his status reassessed.

"Obviously, it's not a positive sign," manager Craig Counsell said. "He was uncomfortable throwing and took himself out of the game. It's a setback, there's no question. We'll wait until he sees Dr. Raasch to tell you what's going to happen next."

Vogt, who reported to Miller Park late Sunday afternoon, said he felt a pinch in his shoulder on the throw to third base. He said the pain was in a different place than before — on top of the shoulder instead of the posterior side.

"My rehab assignment was going really well," he said. "Finally, I felt I had turned a corner and felt free and almost normal. The guy stole second, I didn't get a good grip, threw it into center field. But that one felt fine."

"The next pitch, he went to third and when I went to throw it, I felt something pinch in my shoulder. The ball kind of rolled to third base. I knew right away something didn't go right. I tried to throw one back to the pitcher and had to walk off the field."

"I'm in a lot of pain today, still. I'm going to see the doctor tomorrow and go from there. I'm guessing they will have to take a look in there because it's a different spot. Maybe, I just knocked something loose and am in pain. I'm trying to be me and stay as positive as I can right now."

Acquired last June off waivers from Oakland, the left-handed-hitting Vogt was expected to share time with Manny Piña again this season. With Vogt on the DL, Jett Bandy — who was out of minor-league options — has backed up Piña and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

The news was better on the Biloxi rehab assignments of relievers Boone Logan and Corey Knebel. Logan, who suffered a triceps strain in spring camp, made back-to-back appearances Friday and Saturday, and now will move up to Class AAA Colorado Springs to pitch Tuesday in Nashville.

Knebel made his second appearance for the Shuckers on Saturday and continues to make good progress from a hamstring injury suffered the first week of April. He will pitch again Sunday, moving another step closer to rejoining the Brewers and giving the bullpen its closer back.

"He's doing really well, too, all positive signs there," Counsell said. "He's on track to join us at the end of the week, at the latest."

Sticking with Sogard: Counsell gave utility infielder Eric Sogard his third consecutive start in a continued attempt to get him going at the plate. Sogard was batting .105 in 65 plate appearances but walked three times Saturday night in the 5-3 victory over Pittsburgh.

"He hit two balls hard Friday night and walked three times (Saturday night)," Counsell said. "Hopefully, he'll have another good day today."

That was not the case, however, as Sogard went 0 for 3 with two strikeouts and a double-play grounder, dropping his batting average to .100 and his hitless streak to 27 at-bats.

Counsell also has been trying to get rightfielder Domingo Santana and shortstop Orlando Arcia going at the plate, with both having some better at-bats of late.

"We've got some players that have gotten off to slow starts," Counsell said. "That's going to be the key to getting the offense clicking."

Nelson honored: Two weeks after the passing of Brewers front office member and TV analyst Davey Nelson, the Brewers had a pre-game moment of silence in his memory and announced a series of initiatives in his honor, many of which will take place in the June 21-24 series against St. Louis at Miller Park.

The stage in the right-field corner where Nelson performed analyst duties will be renamed "Nelly's Corner," with a memorial plaque placed there in his honor. The Brewers players and coaches will wear a "Nelly" memorial patch on their jersey sleeves during that series against the Cardinals. Proceeds from the Brewers Community Foundation 50-50 Raffle on June 23 will go to the Open Arms Home for Children in South Africa, Nelson's favorite charity. In addition, a private celebration of his life will be held at Miller Park prior to that game.

"We have been reminded every day of the impact that Davey had on countless individuals, not just in baseball, and not only in our community, but across the globe," Brewers chief operation officer Rick Schlesinger said. "It's our honor to put in place these remembrances, and we will continue work that he did every day to help others."

The celebration of Nelson's life will continue on Monday, June 25, with the 10th Annual Davey Nelson Celebrity Golf Classic held in Kohler. For more information or to register for the event, go online to Brewers.com/Davey.

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