



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF JUNE 11, 2018

"Lopez stifles Red Sox as White Sox take 2 of 3" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Sale says Hawk's impact goes beyond Chicago" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Three-headed monster: White Sox starters were dominant against Red Sox" ... NBC Sports Chicago

"White Sox keeping the faith in Yoan Moncada" ... Paul Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"Column: White Sox starter Reynaldo Lopez shuts down Red Sox in 5-2 win" ... Paul Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"Series preview: Indians at White Sox" ... Paul Sullivan, Chicago Tribune

"White Sox tip Red Sox, claim series win at Fenway" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"White Sox' Jose Abreu to Yoan Moncada: Be more aggressive" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"Scouting report: Cleveland Indians at White Sox" ... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"Sox is singular: Mat Latos brawl brings back memories of a failed 2016 season" ... Jim Margalus, The Athletic

"Could Lucas Giolito regain some of his lost velocity?" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"Bowden: Who'll be available at the trade deadline — and who may be a stretch—at every position" ... Jim Bowden, The Athletic

"Reynaldo López battles walks, escapes jams, and keeps providing optimism" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"How the powerful Daniel Palka is blowing away preseason projections" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"On Saturday in Boston, Carlos Rodón showed why everyone was waiting on his return" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"Snellville teen drafted to the Chicago White Sox after losing parents" ... Casey Rose, 11 Alive.com

Lopez stifles Red Sox as White Sox take 2 of 3

Chicago now 6-4 in June; 'Guys just are enjoying the game'

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / June 10, 2018

BOSTON -- It was a good weekend for the White Sox in Boston, completed by Sunday's 5-2 victory over the Red Sox at Fenway Park before 36,998. But it was a better 10 days overall for Rick Renteria's 22-41 squad.

The White Sox took a home series last weekend from Milwaukee, the National League Central leaders, and then split four games in Minnesota. They won the series from the Red Sox, outplaying a team sitting 22 games over .500 on Sunday afternoon and held Boston to six runs in total while scoring eight. The team's 6-4 record comes on the heels of being swept in Cleveland, followed by a players-only meeting.

[View Full Game Coverage](#)

"Well, yeah, we had our meeting, but it was private between the guys," said White Sox reliever Joakim Soria, who saved all four victories on this road trip, including a scoreless ninth Sunday. "Whatever is working we are going to keep doing it. The chemistry of the team is a little bit better.

"Guys just are enjoying the game. They are coming to the field expecting to win. It's pretty good lately. You have great chemistry on the team and it reflects on the field."

Dylan Covey pitched six scoreless innings Friday, topping former White Sox ace Chris Sale in a 1-0 final, and Carlos Rodon followed with a solid 2018 debut in Saturday's setback after rehabbing his way back from arthroscopic shoulder surgery in September. Reynaldo Lopez completed that starting pitching trifecta, allowing one earned run on six hits over 6 1/3 innings Sunday, while striking out six and walking three.

Over his two starts on the road this week, Lopez yielded seven hits in 13 1/3 innings. White Sox pitching as a whole held the Red Sox to 1-for-26 with runners in scoring position, and 1-for-11 on Sunday.

"We are playing good. We are doing the little things, and the hitters are doing their job," said Lopez through interpreter Billy Russo. "The pitching staff is doing their job, too. When you as a team can do the little things and can work as a team with all the parts integrated to the things that you need to do, you will have good results, and I think that's what we've been doing the last couple of weeks."

"Our pitching did awesome, and every game was close and low scoring," White Sox right fielder Daniel Palka said. "In that Game 1, we were like, 'Our pitching is going to be there, so play good defense and get enough runs and we've got a chance.'"

In both the third and sixth innings, the White Sox scored runs without getting a hit off of Boston starter Rick Porcello. Tim Anderson walked with the bases loaded to force home a run in the third. In the sixth, Anderson walked, was bunted to second by Charlie Tilson and scored from second on Trayce Thompson's ground out. First baseman Mitch Moreland flipped to Porcello covering on the Thompson play, but when Porcello slipped and collided with first-base umpire Quinn Wolcott, Anderson was able to beat the throw home.

"I kind of figured it was way away from first, and I knew he had a long run," Anderson said. "I saw him go down. I was busting it. And I was able to get in and score."

"When he's on the bases, he can do some pretty special things," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "He was able to take advantage of speed and the situation and scored the run. Great heads-up play by him."

Palka completed the scoring in the ninth, connecting on a 0-2 pitch from Matt Barnes for a two-run double, giving him 22 RBIs on the season.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Fielding gem: Anderson and first baseman Matt Davidson combined to take a hit away from Xander Bogaerts to end the fifth and, in the process, took a run away from the Red Sox to maintain the lead. With Sandy Leon on third and two outs, Bogaerts hit a grounder in the hole gloved by Anderson, who threw across his body to a stretching Davidson to nab a sliding Bogaerts.

"I just remember getting an out and getting excited," Anderson said. "It was a good play in a key situation. Was able to get out of the inning and scratch out a win."

That was close: The Red Sox sent 13 men to the plate combined over the sixth and seventh innings and scored a grand total of one unearned run. Lopez induced a routine pop fly to Anderson from Blake Swihart to strand the bases loaded in the sixth, and after a Yoan Moncada fielding error allowed a run to score in the seventh, Brock Holt's fly out to center against Jace Fry stranded the bases loaded once again.

"Today I was able to control the situation and slow the game down and be able to be effective in that situation," said Lopez of the sixth.

SOUND SMART

Lopez has held opponents to seven hits in the last 45 at-bats. He is limiting opponents to a .215 average this season.

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

The Sunday award for hard-hitting goes to Palka, with exit velocities of 113.7, 112.8, 116.4 and 107.1 mph in four of his five at-bats, according to Statcast™. Palka picked up two doubles in those four at-bats.

His first three connections made Palka just the third player this season to have a game with three 112+ mph batted balls in one game, joining Davidson on Opening Day and Nelson Cruz.

Four 107+ mph batted balls in one game ties him with Cruz (April 28) for the most hit by any player this season. The only players to previously do this before 2018 since Statcast™ began tracking data in 2015 were Tommy Joseph (May 24, 2016), Wilson Ramos (Aug. 1, 2016) and Giancarlo Stanton (May 7, 2015).

HE SAID IT

"It just goes along with what we wanted to start out in the month of June. We knew we had a bunch of good teams coming up, and we had a game plan to refresh ourselves and start out new." -- Palka

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

The White Sox challenged a ninth-inning grounder hit by Moncada, which ricocheted off of Barnes, but was ruled an out at first after Barnes recovered. The call was overturned by video replay, giving Moncada two hits for the day.

UP NEXT

The White Sox open a seven-game homestand and a four-game set against the Indians with a first pitch of 7:10 p.m. CT Monday at Guaranteed Rate Field. Lucas Giolito gets the call for the White Sox, with his 39 walks ranking among the Major League leaders. The White Sox have scored one run or less in seven of Giolito's 12 starts, including zero runs five times. Cleveland will counter with right-hander Carlos Carrasco.

Sale says Hawk's impact goes beyond Chicago

Legendary broadcaster in Boston to film documentary on his life
By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / June 10, 2018

BOSTON -- Ask Ken "Hawk" Harrelson to name favorite White Sox players from his 33 years in the television booth and Chris Sale's name falls in the top five along with Mark Buehrle and Robin Ventura.

That feeling of respect and admiration is reciprocated by the six-time All-Star, who sat atop the White Sox rotation for five years before being traded to Boston as part of the organization's rebuild. In fact, Sale has gained a greater feel for Harrelson's impact looking back from the outside.

View Full Game Coverage

"It was kind of all I knew," Sale told MLB.com about Harrelson, who is working primarily Sunday home games during his final season in the booth. "But I come in [the Boston clubhouse], and people are saying, 'He gone,' and 'Put it on the board,' all his sayings that he had. Guys from other teams really love listening to him talk and do what he does.

"He's funny, he's energetic. Shoot, he still sends me texts every once in a while. I always love looking down at the phone and seeing Hawk texting me or calling me. It kind of stinks that he's done, but hopefully he'll come in for some guest appearances or something like that."

Harrelson, 76, was in Boston this weekend filming a documentary on his life, and his public appearance still produces numerous requests for selfies or cries of "Hawk" from devoted fans. He's an unabashed supporter of the White Sox as a broadcaster, a supportive quality carrying over directly toward the players.

"Absolutely. No doubt. He's always one of the first ones in the clubhouse, picking guys up, patting them on the back," Sale said. "He's not afraid to tell you, 'Hey, that was unbelievable, that was outstanding.' I appreciated that, especially being young and kind of growing up a little bit, and he always stayed the same.

"He's a character. He's full of life. He loves baseball. He knows his stuff. So, it's pretty impressive when you come to other teams, and they are saying 'Gas,' and all of that stuff. Looking back I appreciate it more now than I did when I was there."

Former White Sox standouts such as Paul Konerko, A.J. Pierzynski and Hall of Famer Frank Thomas will be in the booth with Harrelson for one game each this season.

Gonzalez eager to pitch

Miguel Gonzalez threw a bullpen Sunday at Fenway Park, marking the right-hander's second session this week. He pointed toward a possible Minor League injury rehab assignment in 10 days, but Gonzalez simply wants to be as healthy as possible after being out since April 18 with right rotator cuff inflammation.

"I gotta be for sure 100 percent this time," Gonzalez said. "I don't want another setback and have to do this again.

"Watching our guys play, it does get frustrating after a little while. It's getting to that point where I want to go out there and be able to pitch and perform and help the team win."

Gonzalez, 34, has made 155 career appearances and 148 as a starter. But Gonzalez wants to pitch again over any particular role.

"That's the No. 1," Gonzalez said. "If I feel healthy, to help the team win, it doesn't matter if it's in the bullpen or as a starter, I really don't care."

Third to first

- White Sox manager Rick Renteria had a pregame chat with Yoan Moncada on Sunday about pressing in his return to Boston. Moncada was hitting .167 over his last 16 games and was 4-for-26 on the road trip before getting two hits in Sunday's 5-2 victory.

"He's just got to be himself," Renteria said. "What we want him to do is to continue to improve every single day. Those expectations that he has of himself, that people have of him, those will take care of themselves as he continues to improve."

- Joakim Soria saved all four victories on this seven-game road trip, but Renteria wouldn't call him his closer. Renteria still could use Nate Jones in the ninth, although he refers to the usage of Jones as his crisis-managing situations. Both pitched scoreless baseball, as did Jace Fry, on Sunday.

- Adam Engel missed his fourth straight game with a strained right hamstring. But Renteria expects the center fielder back Monday against the Indians.

- In conjunction with Danny Farquhar's return to Guaranteed Rate Field on June 1, Chicago White Sox Charities raised \$10,000 with all proceeds benefitting the Joe Niekro Foundation, an organization committed to supporting patients and families, research, treatment and awareness of brain aneurysms.

Three-headed monster: White Sox starters were dominant against Red Sox

By NBC Sports Chicago Staff / June 10, 2018

The White Sox closed out their series against the Boston Red Sox with a 5-2 win on Sunday afternoon at Fenway Park.

The highlight of the weekend? Starting pitching.

Dylan Covey, Carlos Rodon and Reynaldo Lopez combined for three earned runs and recorded 20 strikeouts in 17.1 innings pitched. Not too shabby.

[View image on Twitter](#)

[View image on Twitter](#)

White Sox Talk



@NBCSWhiteSox

#WhiteSox starters were dominant in Boston this weekend.

3:46 PM - Jun 10, 2018

207

42 people are talking about this

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

The series started off with Covey on the mound, who pitched six innings and had six strikeouts in a shutout win, outdueling former White Sox ace Chris Sale.

Rodon, making his season debut, followed that up the next day with seven strikeouts in five innings. He allowed four runs, though only two of them were earned. Despite the 4-2 loss, it was a solid outing for the 25-year-old southpaw coming back from significant shoulder surgery.

On Sunday, Lopez had another strong outing, registering seven strikeouts in 6.1 innings while allowing two runs (one earned) on six hits and three walks.

Here's a look at Lopez's numbers in his last five outings:

Christopher Kamka

@ckamka

Reynaldo López last 5 starts: 2.90 ERA in 31.0 IP, 22 H, 13 BB, 23 K.

And that includes a start with 7 ER in 2.2 IP. That's how good he has been outside of that bad start.

#WhiteSox

2:39 PM - Jun 10, 2018

121

44 people are talking about this

[Twitter Ads info and privacy](#)

Pitching hasn't been a bright spot this season for the White Sox, but this weekend in Boston was definitely something to be encouraged about.

White Sox keeping the faith in Yoan Moncada

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / June 10, 2018

Yoan Moncada was 0-for-8 with five strikeouts in the first two games of his return to Boston, where he was a much-heralded Red Sox prospect and made his major-league debut in 2016.

Rick Renteria stuck with Moncada and even inserted him into the leadoff spot Sunday. Moncada rewarded his manager with a pair of hits in the White Sox's 5-2 victory over the Red Sox.

Renteria conceded before the game that Moncada likely was pressing in his homecoming.

"We just talked to him a little bit," Renteria said. "He's trying to live up to expectations. We just told him to be himself. What we want him to do is to continue to improve every day. Those expectations he has of

himself, that people have of him, those will take care of themselves as he continues to improve and gain experience. ...

"You've got to try to drown out the noise as much as you can. For a young man who is trying to live up to everyone's desires of him being a great player, he ultimately will be everything everybody hopes he will be, I believe."

Closing arguments: Joakim Soria has not allowed an earned run in his last 10 appearances covering 10 1/3 innings, but Renteria wasn't ready to anoint him the closer.

"He's been closing as of late," Renteria said. "(I wouldn't) say he's the only one we have to close, but he is doing a nice job. He could come in in the seventh and eighth as well if I see a matchup that suits him better."

Soria's recent success bodes well for the Sox's chance of dealing him for a prospect at the trade deadline. He's a veteran closer, and contending teams are always looking for bullpen help in July.

If the Sox deal Soria, they appear to have a potential replacement in Jace Fry, who has a 2.12 ERA with 20 strikeouts in 17 innings in 17 appearances since his call-up. On Sunday, Fry bailed Nate Jones out of a bases-loaded jam in the seventh and pitched a scoreless eighth.

Extra innings: Adam Engel (right hamstring) is progressing and is expected to return to the lineup Monday or Tuesday. ... Jose Abreu's first-inning double gave him 18 in his last 28 games and 25 in 62 games this season. That's the fastest a Sox player has hit that many doubles since Bibb Falk had 28 in 62 games in 1926. ... The Sox bullpen has a 2.48 ERA over the last 27 games. ... The Sox are 6-7 against the AL East after going 13-20 against the division in 2017.

Column: White Sox starter Reynaldo Lopez shuts down Red Sox in 5-2 win

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / June 10, 2018

White Sox players held a postgame meeting May 30 in Cleveland, basically calling for a do-over.

They had just been swept by the Indians. They had the worst record in baseball after enduring two miserable months. But with a day off before opening a three-game series against the Brewers on June 1, they had a chance to hit the refresh button.

"We knew we had a bunch of good teams coming up and we had a game plan to refresh ourselves and start out new," outfielder Daniel Palka said. "And that's exactly what's going on this first (10 days of June)."

Their renewed confidence was on full display Sunday at Fenway Park as the White Sox beat the Red Sox 5-2 to take the series from the American League East power.

The White Sox are 2-0-1 in their three series since the meeting. Is it a residual effect?

"Yeah, a little bit," Palka said. "And just all-around recognizing ourselves, too, individually."

Reynaldo Lopez threw 6 1/3 strong innings to notch his second win, and Palka chipped in with a pair of doubles, including a two-run shot off the Green Monster in the ninth.

"When you as a team can do the little things and can work as a team with all the parts integrated, you will have good results," Lopez said. "And that's what we've been doing the last couple of weeks."

Palka said the key has been the pitching, which appears rejuvenated since the emergence of Dylan Covey. They got solid starts from Covey, Carlos Rodon and Lopez, respectively, against the Red Sox, offsetting a lack of scoring.

The White Sox scored twice Sunday without a hit. Tim Anderson forced home a run in the third with a bases-loaded walk to break a 1-1 tie and used his head to bring home another in the sixth.

Trayce Thompson hit a grounder to the right side, but pitcher Rick Porcello stumbled and fell after getting the throw from first baseman Mitch Moreland, bumping into first-base umpire Quinn Wolcott. Anderson kept running from second and scored easily.

"I figured (the ball) was way away from first, and I knew he had a long run," Anderson said. "I saw (Porcello) go down. I was busting it."

It was just one moment on one series, but it showed what the White Sox can do when they're aggressive, focused and smart.

"A great play by Timmy, keeping his head up and watching the play develop," manager Rick Renteria said. "He's an explosive young runner. When he's on the bases he can do some things that are pretty special."

Renteria allowed Lopez to get out of a bases-loaded jam in the sixth and was rewarded for his faith when Lopez induced Blake Swihart to hit a weak pop-up.

"It meant a lot to me," Lopez said. "That was a really tough situation, but in spring training I was working to be ready for those situations. Today I was able to ... slow the game down and be effective in that situation."

After Lopez was removed in the seventh, a two-out, bases-loaded error by Yoan Moncada allowed the Red Sox to creep to within 3-2. But Jace Fry escaped the jam, Palka added some insurance runs in the ninth and Joakim Soria pitched a scoreless inning for his eighth save.

The Sox are too far behind to make up for the first two months, but after talking things out in Cleveland they've seemingly turned the page on the disastrous start.

"We had our meeting, but it was private stuff," Soria said. "Whatever is working, we're going to keep doing it. The chemistry of the team is a little bit better."

Series preview: Indians at White Sox

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / June 10, 2018

All games on WGN-AM 720

Monday: 7:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Carlos Carrasco (7-4, 4.23) vs. RH Lucas Giolito (4-6, 7.08).

Tuesday: 7:10 p.m., WGN-9.

RH Adam Plutko (3-0, 3.93) vs. RH James Shields (1-7, 4.92).

Wednesday: 7:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Trevor Bauer (5-4, 2.62) vs. RH Dylan Covey (2-1, 2.22).

Thursday: 1:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Mike Clevinger (4-2, 3.31) vs. LH Carlos Rodon (0-1, 3.60).

White Sox leaving their mark inside Fenway Park's Green Monster

By Paul Sullivan / Chicago Tribune / June 10, 2018

The White Sox left their mark this weekend on Fenway Park, literally speaking.

Several Sox players ventured inside the Green Monster in left field to etch their names on the walls of the hallowed structure, a tradition that dates back decades at the place billed as "America's Most Beloved Ballpark."

Lucas Giolito, Joakim Soria, James Shields and Charlie Tilson were among the players. Some took their wives and kids inside as well.

"We've had a great time, especially with the White Sox here," said Green Monster scorekeeper Aaron Kanzer. "A lot of the younger guys like to come back here because it might be their first time at Fenway and the older guys say, 'Hey, you've got to go out there and sign.'

"The White Sox have a young team, and they brought their families back. It was a big group. Everyone likes to sign."

Tilson and Tim Anderson made return trips to the Monster on Sunday morning to look for their names.

Tilson had signed "C. Everett Tilson" on Saturday, using his middle name prominently in a tribute to his grandfather and namesake, Everett Tilson. He was taking a video of the name Sunday morning with his phone.

"He's a die-hard Yankees fan," Tilson said. "I thought he'd get a kick out of it if I wrote his name in the Monster. It's my name too."

Anderson checked on his name, which he wrote in August when the Sox made their annual trip to Fenway. He found it near the door and added the names of his wife, Bria, and his daughter, Peyton.

"I had to put it where I could remember it," Anderson said, adding "atmosphere-wise" Fenway is his favorite ballpark.

Anderson pointed to the ceiling, where Adam Engel had climbed a ladder Saturday to write the name of his daughter, Clarke Isabella.

The Green Monster, only 310 feet from home, is one of the most iconic parts of any ballpark. Unlike the Cubs, who rarely allow people inside their center-field scoreboard without an escort, the Red Sox encourage players to go inside the Monster and even provide Sharpies to write their names.

Players from Ted Williams to Bryce Harper have left their marks over the years, though many are barely visible now after being written in ink. The names of several Tom Petty songs, including "Runnin' Down a Dream," are spray-painted on the walls in various places.

"It's so cool, man," Tilson said. "I was telling a buddy it's like playing at Wrigley but in a different world almost because (the two old parks) have all the traditions, but they're all different. They even have the little nuances. Wrigley has the ivy and the brick wall, and here you've got the triangle (in center field) and the Monster."

Kanzer and two other employees work inside the Green Monster, manually updating the game inning by inning, as well as scores from other games around baseball. He has an old laptop with dust on it in the dingy space but said they don't rely on it much for updates.

"We try to be as fast, if not faster, than your iPhone," he said.

The Sox seemingly enjoyed the trip to Fenway, which has an aura like few other ballparks.

"It's a unique ballpark, obviously one of the older ballparks in the game," manger Rick Renteria said. "Everyone kind of enjoys coming here and playing here. It's a good city.... I still kind of like Guaranteed Rate Field."

Better than Fenway?

"I'm a homey," Renteria said. "But, no, this is a great ballpark. You can't take anything away from this ballpark."

Dick Allen honored

Former Sox slugger Dick Allen was inducted into the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum's Hall of Game on Saturday, along with Kenny Lofton, Eddie Murray, Jim "Mudcat" Grant and J.R. Richard. Museum President Bob Kendrick told the Kansas City Star the inductees were honored for playing the game "with the same pizzazz, the dazzle, the sizzle" of the Negro leagues players.

Allen certainly fit the bill. He's still revered by Sox fans for his MVP season in 1972, when Allen almost single-handedly resurrected the franchise. His pinch three-run, walk-off homer off Yankees closer Sparky Lyle in Game 2 of a doubleheader on June 4, 1972, at old Comiskey Park is one of the legendary games in franchise history.

The Sox honored Allen at U.S. Cellular Field in 2012 on the 40th anniversary of his MVP season, and he told the media that day his one regret was leaving Chicago: "This is where baseball really should have started for me and ended right here."

Maybe it's time to bring him back. No one deserves more thanks than Allen.

Yolmer time

Yolmer Sanchez was wearing a customized black T-shirt Sunday morning in the Sox clubhouse. On the front was a photo of Sanchez making his signature "mouse ears" gesture. On the back was a photo of Sanchez dumping a Gatorade bucket on his head after a Trayce Thompson walk-off homer.

Where can one buy this T-shirt?

"A fan made it for me," Sanchez replied.

Memo to Sox marketing: Find that fan and sell the Yolmer T's at the park.

Noises off

One of Renteria's most cited pieces of advice for his players is the need to "eliminate the noise." As the Sox return home for seven games against the Indians and Tigers, the people in charge of the sound system at Guaranteed Rate Field should heed Renteria's advice and eliminate the fake crowd noise frequently played to incite fans to get louder.

Sox fans know when to make noise.

Exit this

Daniel Palka has the third-highest exit velocity in an at-bat this season — 118.4 mph — behind Aaron Judge (119.3) and Giancarlo Stanton (119.3). But Palka doesn't pay much attention.

"I'm definitely not a new-age-stats guy because I probably wouldn't be here based on the new-age-stats stuff," he said. "I look at it every once in a while. It is what it is. Hit balls hard."

White Sox tip Red Sox, claim series win at Fenway

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 10, 2018

BOSTON — The White Sox' starting pitching is rounding into form.

Right-hander Reynaldo Lopez's 6 1/3 strong innings Sunday was the latest contribution to an improved stretch from Sox starters. Lopez (2-4, 3.26 ERA) allowed one earned run and struck out six in the Sox' 5-2 victory against the Red Sox. It was the sixth time this season he yielded one or no earned runs in an outing.

Sox starters have a 2.87 ERA in their last nine games. Lopez allowed one hit in seven scoreless innings in a no-decision against the Twins in his previous start.

The Sox (22-41) took two of three from the Red Sox (44-22), who were without injured outfielder Mookie Betts, to complete a 4-3 road trip. They are 2-0-1 in their last three series, including a series victory at home last weekend against the Brewers.

"I knew that I was facing a really good team, one of the best in the league, and that's a challenge and a motivation, too," Lopez said. "I didn't lose my focus today."

Daniel Palka's two-out double in the ninth — his second double of the game — extended a 3-2 lead to 5-2, and Joakim Soria pitched the ninth for his fourth save of the trip. Soria struck out J.D. Martinez and Eduardo Nunez to end the game.

A day for Anderson

Shortstop Tim Anderson walked twice — once with the bases loaded for his 26th RBI — and alertly scored from second on Trayce Thompson's grounder to first baseman Mitch Moreland in the sixth. Red Sox pitcher Rick Porcello made the putout at first but stumbled, fell and threw home from his knees.

Anderson has 20 walks after walking only 13 times last season. He also made a tough play on a grounder to his right to retire Xander Bogaerts with two outs and a runner at third in the fifth, saving a run.

Closing time

Manager Rick Renteria wouldn't go so far as to give Soria an official "closer" title, but Soria — who has 212 career saves, including eight this season and five in his last five chances — looks to be settling into that role.

"He's not the only one we have to close, but he is doing a nice job," Renteria said. "He could come in in the seventh and eighth, as well, if I see a matchup that suits him better. I wouldn't be opposed to using him in those situations."

Nate Jones, the guy the Sox had in mind in spring training to be the closer, has four saves. Jones walked a batter and hit another in a third of an inning.

Jace Fry, who is emerging as the top lefty in the bullpen, got four outs for a relief crew that has a 2.48 ERA in the last 27 games.

This and that

Jose Abreu hit his 25th double off the wall in left-center to score Yolmer Sanchez in the first.

- Renteria said he expects center fielder Adam Engel to play Monday, when the Sox open a four-game home series against the Indians. Engel has missed the last four games with a strained hamstring.

On deck

Monday: Carlos Carrasco (7-4, 4.23 ERA) vs. Lucas Giolito (4-6, 7.08), 7:10 p.m., NBCSCH, 720-AM.

Tuesday: Adam Plutko (3-0, 3.93) vs. James Shields (1-7, 4.92), 7:10 p.m., Ch. 9, 720-AM.
Wednesday: Trevor Bauer (5-4, 2.62) vs. Dylan Covey (2-1, 2.22), 7:10 p.m., NBCSCH, 720-AM.
Thursday: Mike Clevinger (4-2, 3.31) vs. Carlos Rodon (0-1, 3.60), 1:10 p.m., NBCSCH, 720-AM.

White Sox' Jose Abreu to Yoan Moncada: Be more aggressive

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 10, 2018

BOSTON — White Sox first baseman Jose Abreu says he knows which switch second baseman Yoan Moncada needs to flip.

Abreu, the Sox' leader and a mentor to his young Cuban countryman, has seen Moncada's strikeouts pile up at a rather jarring rate and said the solution is fairly cut-and-dried.

"Right now, I'm advising him to be more aggressive," Abreu said. "Figure out the way people are attacking him. Just be more aggressive. I passed through that in 2016, too. I was being a little passive at home plate. I finally figured it out. Sometimes you get — I wouldn't say too comfortable, but passive. Then you need to figure it out."

Moncada went into the series finale Sunday against the Red Sox batting .233 with eight home runs and 22 RBI. His talent is obvious, but he also turned only 22 in May, giving pause to many who see 84 strikeouts in 241 plate appearances in a player's first full season and declare him a bust.

"It's easy to jump ship on a guy," said Sox hitting coach Todd Steverson, who isn't jumping. "Everybody says he is this or he is that. It happens to a lot of players where people say, 'Aw, he's not this,' and he turns out to be an All-Star."

"The man can strike the ball out of the ballpark to left, center or right from both sides of the plate. He's strong as all get-out. He can run, catch and throw, he has power and can hit for average and has a good [batting] eye."

"Athletically gifted," Red Sox manager Alex Cora told reporters last week. "It's unreal what he can do on the field."

Sox manager Rick Renteria, sensing that Moncada might be pressing a bit, said he talked with him Sunday morning. After batting Moncada sixth against tough left-handed starters in the first two games of the series, Renteria led him off against right-hander Rick Porcello.

"We told him he's just got to be himself," Renteria said.

Moncada apparently took Abreu's advice, swinging at Porcello's first pitch of the game and lining it into center for a single on a 2-for-5 day in which he scored a run. After Moncada was forced at second in the first inning, Abreu doubled off the wall to score Yolmer Sanchez to give the Sox their first run in a 5-2 victory.

Moncada went after Porcello's first pitch again in the second and grounded out. In the fourth, Moncada took ball one before flying out to center on the second pitch. He also struck out and had an infield single.

Abreu said one way Moncada can be better at the plate is to look for good pitches to hit early in the count. Moncada had swung at the first pitch 41 times in his career entering play Sunday, and the results had been good: a .463 average with two homers.

He might want to pounce on the first pitch more often if it's a get-me-over strike, Abreu suggested.

"Definitely," Abreu said. "Right now pitchers are attacking him, starting with the first strike and then working him with breaking balls. Then it's tough to figure out breaking balls at this level, especially if you

are too passive at the plate. So you need to be more aggressive, especially the first pitch in the count. When he figures it out, then you are going to see the results.”

Abreu, 31, said he’s still learning in his fifth season, so give Moncada — who committed his seventh error of the season and cost the Sox a run in the seventh — some time.

“He has the talent, and one thing I always tell him: ‘Don’t lose your confidence,’” Abreu said. “That is the force that will drive you through it and to the success we know he can have.”

Scouting report: Cleveland Indians at White Sox

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / June 10, 2018

White Sox vs. Cleveland Indians at Guaranteed Rate Field TV

NBC Sports Chicago Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; WGN Tuesday

Radio

WGN 720-AM

Pitching matchups

The Sox's Lucas Giolito (4-6) vs. Carlos Carrasco (7-4) Monday at 7:10 p.m.; James Shields (1-7) vs. Adam Plutko (3-0) Tuesday at 7:10 p.m.; Dylan Covey (2-1) vs. Trevor Bauer (5-4) Wednesday at 7:10 p.m.; Carlos Rodon (0-1) vs. Mike Clevinger (4-2) Thursday at 1:10 p.m.

At a glance

The White Sox return home after going 4-3 on a road trip to Minnesota and Boston. The White Sox won 2 of 2 vs. the Red Sox at Fenway Park over the weekend. The White Sox have won 6 of their last 10. Giolito won his last start, in Game 2 of a doubleheader against the Twins last Tuesday, allowing 2 runs on 6 hits and 2 walks in 6 innings. Sox starting pitchers have a 2.87 ERA over their last 9 games. The Indians have won 4 of 5 and are running first in the AL Central. Cleveland swept a three-game home series while outscoring the White Sox 25-10 in late May.

Next

Detroit Tigers, Friday-Sunday at Guaranteed Rate Field

Sox is singular: Mat Latos brawl brings back memories of a failed 2016 season

By Jim Margalus / The Athletic / June 10, 2018

Should you happen to find yourself looking for family-friendly fun in northern New Jersey, why not try a New Jersey Jackals game? Kids 36 inches and shorter get in free, and they have a 1-in-5 chance of seeing Mat Latos getting thrown out of a game.

You might have seen the video of Latos starting a bench-clearing brawl on Saturday. If you haven't, it's worth your time, and not just for the reasons you might expect.

Obviously there's a visceral aspect. If you can't watch the video, a quick summary: In retaliation for a sketchy collision at home plate, Latos throws twice at the next hitter, Kevin Krause. He misses both times, after which he decides to skip the difficult part and get right to the fighting, walking toward home plate. Krause accepts the challenge and starts walking toward Latos, but neither of them is the first one to charge. Instead, that honor goes to the runner on first, pitcher Ryan Deemes, who attacks Latos.

Deemes miscalculates and comes in high. Latos gets low, wraps him up and lifts him up. That's when Latos' teammate comes flying in from the first base side to clothesline the runner in a move YouTube commenters identified as the Hart Foundation's finisher.

But what makes the video extra compelling is the narration underneath it. There's an air of resignation as Latos fires his unsuccessful beanballs ("Yuuuuuuup ... next one will be inside, too"), and no audible reaction as chaos ensues. As the noise dies down, a woman caps the commentary with, "That's the second start in a row that he's been thrown out." Sure enough, Latos was ejected after "repeatedly barking" at the home plate umpire the Sunday before.

There's a lot going on over these four and a half minutes, and I didn't expect a spectacular video from the rare violent baseball brawl to end on such a melancholy note.

I also didn't expect to be thinking of Latos. As White Sox pitchers go, he was certainly one of them. He went 6-2 for the White Sox in 2016, but with a 4.62 ERA and even worse peripherals. (Editor's note: Bad guy, too.)

The Sox cut him loose in early June after a loss to Washington. That defeat dropped the Sox to .500 after their 23-10 start, and his DFA was among the many fruitless moves the Sox made in a desperate attempt to resuscitate their season. Latos eventually reappeared in the majors that year for those same Nationals, but only for an unsuccessful September call-up. After a cameo with the Blue Jays in 2017, he hasn't been in the majors since. Judging by this video, he won't be back anytime soon.

While the White Sox weren't Latos' most recent team, they were the last team with defined hopes for him. They signed Latos with the hopes of a resurrection in their fifth starter spot, and while the Sox won more games than they lost with him on the mound, his biggest contribution might've been this photo with Courtney Hawkins.

And yet Latos wasn't alone. So many other name-brand players met their professional demises that year. Jimmy Rollins played his last big-league game with the White Sox. So did Brett Lawrie. So did Justin Morneau. Dioner Navarro was traded to Toronto in late August, but he failed to surface in 2017. Adam LaRoche didn't even get to the regular season, quietly retiring in spring training.

Latos just happened to be the one making headlines this weekend, and it brought some context to the rebuild.

That same day Latos started a brawl in indy ball, the White Sox had one of their too-typical 2018 losses to the Red Sox. Part of it was talent, because their entire Opening Day outfield is injured. The bigger issue was a lack of simple execution. Three errors led to two unearned runs, and two runs happened to be the margin of defeat Saturday.

The night before, however, the Sox had one of their better moments of the season when Dylan Covey, of all people, outdueled Chris Sale in a 1-0 victory. Covey started the season outside the 40-man roster after failing to keep his head above water as a Rule 5 pick in 2016, but he fought his way back to the big leagues. Carson Fulmer's failures had something to do with that, but Covey performed at Charlotte and he's doing so in the majors. He's 2-1 with a 2.22 ERA, and he boasts the enviable combination of a 60 percent ground-ball rate and a 0 percent home run rate while averaging a strikeout an inning.

Covey still looks like the same sinker-slider guy from last year in terms of his approach, but he's throwing the sinker a little harder, and he's locating it a lot better. Maybe this is a small-sample-size success story begging for a correction when the Indians get a second look at him over a two-week period. Maybe this is what Covey looks like when he's fully healthy and gets time to finish developing in Triple-A, a luxury that his Rule 5 status couldn't afford last season.

Stories like Covey's are one of the things I've grown to appreciate about a full and proper reconstruction. Both the 2016 and 2018 seasons share a high body count, but the White Sox aren't joylessly wringing the last useful moments out of a ballplayer and discarding the husk. The year's kind of roster churn stands the chance at yielding a useful player. Covey wasn't supposed to be starting now, but maybe he can hold down a rotation spot with that sinker. Daniel Palka could be too powerful to deny. Charlie Tilson...well, he's only struck out six times over 48 plate appearances, so there's the potential of a hit tool?

These are stretches of varying degrees, but they're low-stakes dreams, not prayers in need of an answer. Covey deserves to take the ball every five days because he's outpitching the competition, and there's a non-zero chance he's one of those random surprises that gives the Sox winning roster depth. If Covey doesn't pan out, hey, nobody expected him to. And if he were to resurface in a CanAm League royal rumble two years from now, we'd just likely remember him as one of the guys who kept a seat warm for Michael Kopech. You know, the one who had that great start against Chris Sale.

Could Lucas Giolito regain some of his lost velocity?

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 10, 2018

BOSTON — Back in spring training, when Lucas Giolito was sitting 93-95 mph and generally looking like he was on the precipice of a breakout season, he credited the increased velocity — which would have been a 1-2 mph jump from the 92.8 mph Brooks Baseball had his four-seamer averaging in 2017 — to “using my body a little bit better than last year.”

“I'd say I'm hoping that'll be more the norm, throw some 95s in there, start sitting a little bit of a higher velocity,” Giolito said in February. “But at the same time, I did get a little out of sync today. So I'm going to keep working on that.”

Instead what has followed has been a very long first two months of the season for Giolito, who has more walks than strikeouts, an average four-seam velocity of 92.2 mph, and plenty of self-critiques about his mechanics — “flying open,” and “spinning off,” are frequently mentioned after frustrating outings. After two walks in 12 innings in his last two starts, he's claiming some gradual progress toward the eternal goal of getting his long, leveraged body “in sync.” He's also touting his recent work in the gym, and says this is the best his arm has felt all season.

“For me being with long arms, tall, I think that higher velocity and better stuff are kind of the product of my body lining up properly and using it efficiently, using my body to throw, not my arm,” Giolito said. “Kind of letting the arm come through late, and driving my legs, things like that. I definitely feel like I made some good progress the past week to two weeks.”

Back in the 2015 Futures Game, Brooks Baseball clocked Giolito as averaging 97.4 mph on his fastball. Giolito would be doing himself a disservice if he wasn't prepared to go out Monday at Guaranteed Rate Field and win with 92 mph, and knows 92 mph with command and an assortment of off-speed pitches is more important than maxing out and hitting 97 mph again. But at the same time, he's not hurt, he's in the best shape of his life, so it stands to reason that he could get back there, even if it seems too far away to think about right now.

“I'm bigger and stronger than I was when I was throwing that hard,” Giolito said. “It's just things have gotten out of sync over the years. It's not really a concern. I'm much more concerned with competing and going as deep into games as possible. If the velocity goes up, if my stuff goes up, that's just a byproduct of hard work and things coming together.”

One locker over from Giolito in the Fenway visitor's clubhouse is proof that it's not a pipe dream to think cleaner mechanics could result in a velocity jump and uptick in the sharpness of his stuff, even if it's not quite reclaiming five mph. Dylan Covey hasn't beefed up like Michael Kopech in one year's time, but cleaner footwork and a straighter line to the plate have allowed him to add 1.5 mph to his average fastball since last season at the age of 26, and he's seen a marked jump in the liveliness of his stuff and effectiveness.

“I can see some different things he's doing mechanically since last year,” Giolito said. “Especially with his landing and his transfer and obviously the results speak for themselves so far, he's doing unbelievably well and his stuff is nasty so that's kind of proof in the pudding right there.”

It took Covey a while; it was “a zig-zag path,” as he put it. Manager Rick Renteria even admitted that while they saw some incremental signs of improvement from Covey in spring training, it took a couple weeks of success in Charlotte until they started thinking that they had a different guy. And just as Giolito spent the first half of 2017 chasing a new balance and being in sync, it figures to be a multi-week or multi-month climb to get back to the 1-2 mph jump he saw in spring training — albeit hopefully a climb he’s already started.

In the meantime, he’s leaning on some advice from James Shields, who at 36 cannot expect to recapture lost velocity, but has coped by finding command of a big looping curve that Giolito would love to match. Giolito says Shields shook him out of the approach of throwing two different curveballs — one for strikes, one as a wipeout — because it required him to be consistent with two different pitches. Instead he’s now trying to throw the same curve while making more subtle efforts to guide it to different locations.

Dumping in five or six curves for strikes, or burying the same amount for whiffs against Cleveland Monday night, would probably do a lot more to swing the result of the game than hitting 95 mph. But in contemplating Giolito’s long-term place in the White Sox rotation, it remains a tantalizing question: what if he could get back there? He can’t focus on it too much, because there are games to be pitched in the here and now, but Giolito still thinks he could.

“I’m excited to see what’s in store, especially these next few starts I have coming up because I do feel really good,” Giolito said. “My body’s a little bit more synced up right now than it was earlier in the season.”

Bowden: Who’ll be available at the trade deadline — and who may be a stretch—at every position

By Jim Bowden / The Athletic / June 10, 2018

As of Sunday, 51 days remained until the trade deadline, with a flurry of trades and player movement expected. The powerhouse teams have just as many needs as the teams contending to reach the postseason.

Some of the game’s best teams have glaring needs. The New York Yankees need another veteran top-of-rotation starting pitcher behind Luis Severino; the Houston Astros need a closer and a left-handed specialist; and the Cleveland Indians need set-up relief help in the worst way. Contending teams need to make trades just to get to October baseball — consider the Phillies and Cardinals, who each need another big bat for the middle of their lineup — while the Rockies need to improve their lineup depth, and the Braves could use an upgrade in their bullpen.

So let the fun begin. Here is a list of trade targets for contending teams to consider. I’ve broken them down into two categories: realistic or dream targets. Realistic, of course, means these players will be available for the right return. Dream targets are players not presently on the market — trading for them would take a franchise-changing, lopsided package for their team to even consider such a move.

REALISTIC STARTING PITCHER TARGETS

LHP Cole Hamels, Texas Rangers – The Rangers are in “sell” mode, and Hamels is expected to give them the biggest return of prospects. The Yankees, Mariners and Giants are best fits.

LHP J.A. Happ, Toronto Blue Jays – Happ, like Hamels, is in his free-agent year, and has won 37 games since the start of the 2016 season, with an ERA and FIP in the mid 3s over that span.

RHP Michael Fulmer, Detroit Tigers – Fulmer is having a down year, and the Tigers prefer to build around him. However, with a farm system loaded with starting pitching prospects, they have to at least listen to offers.

RHP Tyson Ross, San Diego Padres – The Padres need to sell now while his value is high. Ross is healthy, cheap (\$1.75m salary) and has an ERA of 3.31 after 12 starts.

RHP Marco Estrada, Toronto Blue Jays – Estrada looks to be in decline at 34, giving up more hits than innings pitched with an ERA over 5. However, a change of divisions and leagues could result in an uptick of performance for an NL-contending team that plays in a big ballpark.

LHP Danny Duffy, Kansas City Royals – Duffy has a WHIP of 1.608, an ERA of 5.81 and three years left on a \$65 million contract. I doubt anyone takes that chance unless the Royals eat most of the contract and some pitching coach believes he can fix him quickly, since he's only 29 and experiencing his only bad season since 2011.

LHP Francisco Liriano, Detroit Tigers – Last year the Blue Jays traded him to Houston in a deal for Teoscar Hernandez. Now let's see if the Tigers can get that same type of return a year later.

LHP Clayton Richard, San Diego Padres – The 34-year old southpaw can still help a team as a back-of-rotation starter who can eat innings.

RHP Dan Straily, Miami Marlins – Teams looking for a fourth or fifth starter might give the Marlins a mid-level prospect for the innings eater.

DREAM STARTING PITCHER TARGETS

RHP Jacob deGrom, New York Mets – The Mets have made it clear that deGrom is not available. However, when you look at their thin farm system, which has the least talent in the entire division, and you look at the aging position players, all options should be put on the table.

RHP Noah Syndergaard, New York Mets – I'm told that, like deGrom, the Mets don't want to talk about Syndergaard. However, if some team wants to unload the farm system, how do you not at least listen?

LHP Blake Snell, Tampa Bay Rays – Snell has taken over as the Rays' ace and they have no intention of trading him. However, they said the same thing about closer Alex Colome in spring training, and he was gone three months later. The Rays' financial challenges are such that they have to consider everything. If the Braves or Yankees want to overpay with a boatload of top prospects, they'll trade him; it's just unlikely it happens.

RHP Dylan Bundy, Baltimore Orioles – He's the only quality starter the Orioles have so it's doubtful they'd move him even if overwhelmed by an offer, but teams will ask.

RHP Chris Archer, Tampa Bay Rays – The Rays said in spring training they are rebuilding around Archer and have no intention of trading him. However, make a lopsided offer and they'll change their mind. They always do—just ask Colome or Steven Souza.

REALISTIC CLOSER TARGETS

RHP Kelvin Herrera, Kansas City Royals – The Royals will get a solid return for Herrera, with the Astros and Braves the best matchup for them.

RHP Brad Brach, RHP Baltimore Orioles – Brach has pitched better of late and his stock is creeping back up.

RHP Jeurys Familia, New York Mets – Familia, who's currently on the disabled list, can be used as a closer or two-inning set-up reliever, which bolsters his value.

RHP Shane Greene, Detroit Tigers – Contending teams don't look at him as a closer, but he could really help a team like the Indians improve their depth.

LHP Zach Britton, Baltimore Orioles – Britton will have to prove in June and July that he's healthy and pitching back to his accustomed level for the O's to get a huge return.

RHP Nate Jones, Chicago White Sox – A solid power arm that's primed to have a better second half.

DREAM CLOSER TARGETS

LHP Brad Hand, San Diego Padres – The Padres don't want to trade Hand, but if they're offered an elite prospect (as when the Yankees got Gleyber Torres for Aroldis Chapman), they won't hesitate to pull the trigger.

RHP Raisel Iglesias, Cincinnati Reds – Iglesias is the Reds' most valuable trade asset and they need to turn him into two or three solid pitching prospects by the deadline.

OTHER BULLPEN TARGETS

RHP Ryan Pressly, Minnesota Twins – The Twins will probably still be in the race at the deadline, but they might need to dangle their bullpen depth for a catcher like Wilson Ramos of the Rays.

LHP José Alvarado, Tampa Bay Rays – The Rays are open to trading everyone if they can make 2-for-1 or 3-for-1 solid prospect deals. Alvarado's stock is booming with a shortage of left-handed relievers.

RHP Mychal Givens, Baltimore Orioles – The Orioles will try and trade impending free agents Brach and Britton before entertaining any offers on Givens.

RHP Adam Cimber, San Diego Padres – His low arm angle and different look have contending teams interested.

RHP Craig Stammen, San Diego Padres – A solid middle reliever who can eat valuable innings for worn-out bullpens.

RHP Tyler Clippard, Toronto Blue Jays – His changeup still makes teams interested.

RHP Joakim Soria, Chicago White Sox – His trade value is lower now than it was in the offseason, when the White Sox acquired him.

RHP Sergio Romo, Tampa Bay Rays – His slider can still get good right-handers out in proper matchups.

RHP Brad Ziegler, Miami Marlins – He lost his closer's job in Miami but as a tenth or eleventh pitcher on a contending team, he still has value because of his unique arm angle.

CATCHER TARGETS

J.T. Realmuto, Miami Marlins – The Marlins shopped him the entire offseason and are still fielding calls on him. Realmuto is a top 5 overall catcher in the sport and any trade involving him will have to include an elite, no-risk prospect in return.

Wilson Ramos, Tampa Bay Rays – His trade value is much less than Realmuto's because he's a free agent at season's end. The Twins are a perfect match for the Rays here.

Jonathan Lucroy, Oakland A's – Lucroy has been invaluable in developing the A's pitching staff, so much so that they might just keep him for the rest of the season.

Francisco Cervelli, Pittsburgh Pirates – Cervelli is finally healthy and having the best year of his career. The Pirates should still be in the race, but they won't turn down a fair offer for him.

FIRST BASE TARGETS

José Abreu, Chicago White Sox – This will be the White Sox's toughest decision at the trade deadline because Abreu is by far their best trade asset. He's also an important leader by example for prospects like Yoan Moncada and Eloy Jimenez. His impact bat would be a difference-maker for teams like the Rockies and Cardinals.

Wil Myers, San Diego Padres – Myers is still on the DL, but his best position remains first base. And with Eric Hosmer signed long-term and the Padres deep in outfielders, Myers could be dangled for young controllable starting pitchers.

SECOND BASE TARGETS

Brian Dozier, Minnesota Twins – Whether the Twins are in or out of the pennant race, he could finally get dealt to the Dodgers or Nationals. He's on his free-agent year and is not expected to re-sign with the Twins; trading for prospects now would be a better play than a draft pick.

Scooter Gennett, Cincinnati Reds – The Reds have Eugenio Suárez and two first-round picks in Nick Senzel and Jonathan India to man both second and third base in the future, which makes Gennett available. Gennett is putting up serious numbers for the second year in a row and his trade value will never be higher.

Starlin Castro, Miami Marlins – Castro has demonstrated a great attitude for the Marlins since arriving from the Yankees in the offseason, and has been a consistent player on both sides. It's likely he's moved by the deadline.

Whit Merrifield, Kansas City Royals – Merrifield would be more valuable on an NL-contending team because he can play so many different positions, steal a base and hit the ball out of the park.

Asdrúbal Cabrera, New York Mets – He's been arguably the best Mets position player this year, but the high inventory of second basemen on the trade market might hurt the Mets' chances of getting a solid return for him.

SHORTSTOP TARGETS

Manny Machado, Baltimore Orioles – He is the headliner of this year's trade deadline, with the Cubs, Phillies and Cardinals the best suitors at this time.

José Iglesias, Detroit Tigers – He can still play elite defense.

Jurickson Profar, Texas Rangers – His ability to play both second and shortstop increases his trade value.

Adeiny Hechavarria, Tampa Bay Rays – The Rays would like to open up shortstop full-time for Willie Adames and will try to move Adeiny as soon as they find a taker.

Alcides Escobar, Kansas City Royals – He can play defense, with little offensive production.

Jordy Mercer, Pittsburgh Pirates – He's an impending free agent and the Bucs have Jung Ho Kang in the wings to take over shortstop if they trade him.

THIRD BASE TARGETS

Mike Moustakas, Kansas City Royals – Moustakas' free-agent market inexplicably collapsed last offseason, but he proved this year that 2017 was no fluke. He would be an immediate upgrade for the Braves or Cardinals.

Josh Donaldson, Toronto Blue Jays – He's been injured all season and having a down year, so he'll need to have a strong June and July for the Blue Jays to get anything close to a strong return for him.

Todd Frazier, New York Mets – Age and decline are showing up for Frazier, but he's still a strong clubhouse presence for contending teams and still has power.

Adrián Beltré, Texas Rangers – The future Hall of Famer deserves to have another chance at a postseason, but his injury history and the high inventory of third basemen on the trade market will make it tough for the Rangers to get a solid return for him.

OUTFIELD TARGETS

OF Yoenis Céspedes, New York Mets – Céspedes is signed through 2020, and with another season of nagging injuries, combined with being on the wrong side of his prime years, it won't surprise me if they listen to offers at the deadline. His best fits are with teams that don't want to go over the luxury tax, which could be a problem.

CF Adam Jones, Baltimore Orioles – The O's haven't extended Jones, nor have they shopped him, with the hopes that he'll stay an Oriole. However, without an extension, they're foolish not to trade him and then try to re-sign him as a free agent.

CF Starling Marte, Pittsburgh Pirates – With the emergence of Austin Meadows, it might be time for the Pirates to shop Marte and find out what type of prospect package they can get for him.

RF Gregory Polanco, Pittsburgh Pirates – Polanco hasn't figured out how to make the adjustments necessary to get on base to make his power more valuable, and some are questioning if he'll ever live up to his tools. Polanco or Marte could get dealt but not both.

RF Scott Schebler, Cincinnati Reds – He's become the most valuable outfield trade asset for the Reds. He continues to improve in all facets of the game.

CF Billy Hamilton, Cincinnati Reds – Hamilton has never figured out how to get on base consistently but his speed is always desired by contending teams.

OF Jay Bruce, New York Mets – Bruce has had a slow start to the year and he needs to get on one of his hot streaks if the Mets are going to get anything for him at this year's deadline.

CF Kevin Pillar, Toronto Blue Jays – He's still stellar in center.

OF Randal Grichuk, Toronto Blue Jays – He's a fourth outfielder with every tool but the "hit" tool.

LF Adam Duvall, Cincinnati Reds – He has power and a strong arm.

Reynaldo López battles walks, escapes jams, and keeps providing optimism

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 10, 2018

BOSTON — I'm not expecting or calling for Reynaldo López to make the All-Star team, though the push for the most encouraging member of the White Sox rotation to receive some sort of honors is understandable.

In the latest chapter of a heartening 2018 campaign, López spun 6 1/3 sharp innings at Fenway Park Sunday, allowing one earned run in a 5-2 victory against a Mookie Betts-less Red Sox lineup. He walked three, hit another and had a run saved by a brilliant backhand and running throw from the hole by Tim Anderson in the fifth. Later, he had an unearned run added to his tab when Yoán Moncada misplayed a routine grounder in the seventh. He struck out six, with his slider working as his only true swing-and-miss pitch, even on a day his fastball touched 98 mph.

"When I throw the slider, I don't try to get swing and misses, I just try to get weak contact," López said through team interpreter Billy Russo. "They are a really good offensive team and they were able to make some contact, but they weren't hard contact, and that's what I'm looking for, weak contact with that pitch."

The effort lowered López's ERA — definitely the most pleasing element of his season stat line — to 3.26, 12th-best among 47 qualified American League starters, which is very good but probably not going to earn him an invitation to the Midsummer Classic on its own. All of his compatriots near the top of the ERA leaderboard have better strikeout and walk rates, not to mention longer track records than the 24-year-old in his first full season in the majors.

But I wouldn't reduce his performance to metrics such as FIP, DRA and xwOBA, either, as they would all categorize him as completely mediocre, or worse. Nor would I use the stats as a perfect measure of what he will regress to in the future. Because while this start, like many of his good starts, featured too many moments when he lost control of his fastball, too many walks and extra baserunners he won't always be able to get away with, and some dicey hard-hit balls, Sunday also showed his ever-present potential for more.

Perhaps it's easy to say about a guy who sits 95-97 mph through a 100-pitch start — whereas he would often waver over the course of his outings last year — but it seems like more bat-missing potential is lying in wait. Against Texas on May 20, López showed the ability to elevate his fastball with life and run for whiffs. In his prospect days it showed two-seam movement, and it's never lacked for zip throughout the whole process of refining a more stiff and lunging delivery. Even on a day when he recorded just seven swinging strikes on 96 pitches and seemingly struggled to see results from much of his arsenal, it's worth remembering his primary breaking ball is now a pitch he learned last year.

"I wasn't feeling very good with my curveball which is why I didn't throw it a lot," López said. "My slider was good. I was commanding the fastball really good, up and down. I was very focused today. I knew that I was facing a really good team, one of the best in the league, and that's a challenge and a motivation too. I didn't lose my focus today. I was in sync during the whole game and I was able to execute."

Manager Rick Renteria has spoken frequently about focus with López, perhaps because the pitcher has been more advanced and capable of keeping himself in ballgames amid lapses in control and command, and focus is all that's separating him from making the next step. Renteria said Sunday's game — on the road against a team now 22 games over .500 with a monstrous figure like J.D. Martinez in the middle of the lineup — was a good test for López. And after López let three straight batters in the bottom of the Red Sox order reach with two outs to create a jam entirely of his own making, Renteria left López in to see if he had the composure to get himself out of it.

"It meant a lot for me," López said. "That was a really tough situation, but like I was doing in spring training. In spring training I was working to be ready for those situations. Today I was able to control the situation and slow the game down and be able to be effective in that situation. That's one of the things that you have to be able to remind yourself, just to slow the game and be able to control the situation when the situation arises."

López escaped with a 97.7 mph fastball that an ice-cold Blake Swihart popped up, and he's now had 13 starts of good results. But hard regressions have come after far longer stretches of good results, and being up close has a way of tricking writers — like this one — into thinking that every positive statistical outlier is the real deal.

But if we can stop short of crowning López an All-Star for showing perseverance, dancing out of jams and not showing the inconsistency in stuff that other struggling young White Sox have dealt with — and we should, because a 5.8 K-BB percentage differential is not great — there's enough to be encouraged here as López moves forward, and that's about all that can be asked for this year.

How the powerful Daniel Palka is blowing away preseason projections

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 10, 2018

BOSTON — "Put down the luggage!" chides White Sox first base coach Daryl Boston.

For as jacked as Daniel Palka might look on television, he's more striking up close. His chest is wide, his arms are wide, and as result, when he walks, his arms are spread out like he's carrying a suitcase in each hand. This is how he's built. He couldn't abide by Boston's wishes even if he wanted to.

Palka and Boston are out together in the outfield hours before games on a daily basis, as they have been for the past three weeks, working on his right-field defense. They're drilling on reads off the bat, first steps, tracking balls over the shoulder and more.

"Everything, just everything," Palka said. "Honestly, it's getting comfortable in the stadium. That's it. I feel more comfortable being out there after being out there with him."

With José Abreu installed at first base and Matt Davidson having a breakout season and soaking up most of the opportunities at DH, the writing on the wall is pretty clear for the 26-year-old Palka as he gets his first major league shot with his third organization. He needs to man the outfield, and even after some notable misplays, including a costly drop of an Edwin Encarnacion popup late last month in Cleveland — one he was still stewing over hours later — the White Sox are going to continue to give him opportunities, and are even claiming progress.

"If everybody noticed him [Saturday] he was very aggressive moving forward on the fly balls off the bat," manager Rick Renteria said. "Most guys have more difficulty going back than coming forward but he's working on all aspects. Every day that he's out there he's going to get a little better. But certainly he's putting in the time and D-Bo's been out there with him consistently and he continues to improve."

The reason the Sox keep giving him opportunities to grow as a defender is pretty plain as well. Through his first 36 big league games, and after two big doubles Sunday, Palka is hitting .264/.298/.520 with six home runs, good enough for a 119 wRC+ in a White Sox outfield mostly starved for offense and certainly that level of pop. More encouragingly, he's an exit velocity monster. His max velocity of 118.4 mph is the third-highest in baseball for anyone with more than 50 batted balls. His average of 94.4 mph is seventh, and his rate of barrels per plate appearance is eighth in baseball.

"When you have an approach like that, take a swing like he does, he don't leave nothing in the bag, nothing left to chance," hitting coach Todd Steverson said. "They're going to do some things to you, try to pound you in or throw something soft at you, and he's starting to realize all the different things they're trying to do to him to combat what his approach is. If you're able to have a clear approach with what you want to do and make them throw it over the zone, you should be all right."

Palka is obviously an extremely strong guy with a power-based game, so stinging the ball when he makes contact is an assumed part of the package, and it doesn't completely wipe away the concern of a 28.2 percent strikeout rate paired with a 4.6 percent walk rate (though he got screwed on a 3-2 call against Craig Kimbrel on Saturday). Yet the ability to barrel balls at elite exit velocities, especially at the frequency with which Palka has done it so far, is not something just any guy who sells out for power — or doesn't leave anything in the bag — can do.

The Athletic's Rob Arthur wrote earlier this season that even just a single batted ball, let alone a month of action chocked full of them like Palka has, is a solid indicator that a player can outperform his preseason PECOTA projections. Palka is blowing away the very skeptical .211/.274/.404 projection he received before the 2018 season. And for Palka, the proof is in the results, because obviously how it looks is pretty unique.

"I've always had a pretty high leg kick," Palka said. "I was in about eighth grade when I was doing it. I don't remember before that, but I still got pictures of me when I was 13 doing the same exact thing. One hundred percent timing is all it is."

Steverson would caution that having such a big moving part in his swing challenges Palka to stay balanced, and also runs the risk of allowing him to be exploited by off-speed pitches that get him out in front as he times his movement for the fastball. But 13 years of doing the exact same thing has given him a comfortable level of consistency and body control, and Steverson praised how well Palka can stay back despite looking like someone who might be geared up for the heater. When a player bashes his way to the major leagues, the imperative certainly is not to change what got him there. Besides, the adjustment that got him here, and the power in his swing, has not much to do with the movement in his legs.

Palka prominently draws his very strong hands down in his swing as his leg is going up. While for the most part, the quietest and cleanest path is usually best for a swing, you should notice Palka's movement. And if you don't, maybe it's because he needs to rev it back up.

"I don't know, maybe I need to get it back moving after the past two days if it hadn't been moving," Palka said when I suggested it looked quieter more recently. "I hadn't really worked hands at all. Hands are kind of what gives me my power, my swing. They've always moved. This offseason was more when I made the move from my hands moving a whole lot to a little less."

Palka is always going to draw his hands down, but as he recovered from a broken left index finger last season — which likely cost him his chance to break into the Twins' big league roster after he clocked 34 homers in the minors in 2016 — he shortened his hand path. While he used to set up high, draw his hands down and then bring them out to separate, now he starts lower.

"It cut down the strikeouts," Palka said. "Last year was probably the first time in probably my whole career where I struck out less games than I played. I know it doesn't really matter that much for power numbers, but I didn't want to just have power numbers, because that's not going to get me here. I've got to do both. That was pretty important, making more contact."

The strikeouts have gotten down to an acceptable level for someone of Palka's power, though the walks will need to rise in kind. Between trying to jam him or spam him with off-speed pitches, pitchers are throwing the kitchen sink at him as they adjust to his power, and he's working on getting a feel for it.

"It started out as guys were coming after me one way," Palka said. "About three series in they started a different thing and now it's kind of just a crapshoot of what I'm getting, which is what I'm used to, so it's a little more comfortable."

After five seasons in the minors putting up big offensive numbers, Palka was more hyped than the average player when he was claimed off waivers in October. He saw an opening in Chicago and is willing to make adjustments and put in extra work to make it stick. Just don't expect him to put his leg down, or his luggage.

On Saturday in Boston, Carlos Rodón showed why everyone was waiting on his return

By James Fegan / The Athletic / June 10, 2018

BOSTON — Carlos Rodón was in a playful mood Friday, the day before his return to the White Sox rotation. He laughed about getting drilled in the head with a line drive, he laughed about the concussion test he had to take, which he found objectively hard, even though he avoided a concussion. And he chuckled at questions about whether his dominant numbers during his stretch of rehab starts meant anything, or whether he thought he might be able to lock into his best fastball command more quickly than he did upon his midseason return last year.

The joke being, how would he know before he got on the mound?

"I don't have a crystal ball," Rodón mused.

Rodón is not looking to become any sort of expert on rehabbing shoulder injuries, but his prevailing opinion throughout the process is that this year has been better than last, and that the surgery on his throwing shoulder provided a long-term fix that simple rest and rehab did not.

In his first start on Saturday, a harsh and unforgiving assignment on the road against a Red Sox team playing .675 ball into the third month of the season, Rodón was imperfect. He ran through 97 pitches in five innings of work, he threw a 3-2 fastball that skirted away from Kevan Smith and to the backstop on his first batter of the game. He walked the famously impatient Eduardo Nuñez, he was bedeviled by three

errors behind him, he got burned on a belt-high changeup to J.D. Martinez that landed in the right field bullpen and turned the game in a 4-2 loss.

“It’s good to be back,” Rodón said. “There are some things I wish I would have done better in that outing. Get ahead of guys. There were a lot of 1-0, 2-0. I remember throwing a lot of 2-1 changeups. I have a good changeup, but I’m a fastball-slider guy. When I get ahead, I can throw those two pitches.”

He also made it pretty clear why everyone has been waiting for updates on him ever since he went under the knife. He’s a special talent. He has the stuff. He showed it more than a few times, and it was only his first day.

Pressed into a jam in the fourth inning, clinging to a 2-2 tie and burned for a pair of singles off a changeup — his third best pitch — and a 91 mph fastball, Rodón snapped into another level of precision. Just he had the previous inning, when he showed pinpoint command on a 3-2 fastball low and in to freeze Sam Travis and strike out the side, Rodón’s fastball revved up to the 94-96 mph velocity band at which he can be overpowering, and the nightmarish 90+ slider which had laid dormant burst forward to wipe out Andrew Benintendi.

“It kind of just showed up when luckily I needed it,” Rodón said. “That inning could have got out of hand. We were mostly fastball-changeup first three innings. Some of the sliders just weren’t there. We got in a situation and decided to throw a little harder. It ended up working for me at that time.”

In the wake of Chris Sale’s 2016 bid to conserve energy both early in games and early in the season, the way Rodón’s stuff tends to ease its way into games — and the way it ramps up suddenly in big situations — could be seen as intentional. It is and isn’t. He wants to throw hard all game, and he’s not trying to hold back his slider in his first trip through the order. At the same time, when a big situation comes, he does reach back for more, and sometimes — like Saturday — doing that brings the feel for his hard slider back. While facing Boston and J.D. Martinez made for an unforgiving and ultimately a losing introduction, it might have helped bring out the Rodón everyone longed to see right away.

“Carlos has that killer eye in his look whenever he starts getting a little geeked up, when he’s about to throw some stuff that is going to be unhittable,” said catcher Kevan Smith, giving an amusing turn on a familiar phrase. “Even whenever we were catching in Triple-A, he had the same things kind of happen. He would pitch out of these jams and that’s what I’m saying. He has a fastball that just — it’s very similar to Dylan [Covey]’s — they just move so much that if you can front hip guys like he was today, the righties, and just kind of control it and let it do its work, it’s an impressive pitch.”

Smith went on to add that the key going forward will be having the slider as a strike-grabbing pitch earlier in the count and earlier in the game — rather than just being a last-second hero that shows up exactly when he needs it — and seeing the changeup that he can sink down the zone rather than just a get-me-over to get hitters off his fastball when he’s behind in the count. Those would be the next steps for him to put everything together, and even though he is only 25 years old, and without a full season under his belt, those have been the next steps for him long enough for there to be an air of frustration hanging over them. But after just one start, he’s not building back to that level; it seems like he’s already there.

“He’s the guy you want, Game 7 of the World Series, on that mound,” Smith said. “He’s a guy who is going to give you everything he has and the stuff he has with three pitches is amazing.”

Snellville teen drafted to the Chicago White Sox after losing parents

By Casey Rose / 11 Alive.com / June 10, 2018

This Brookwood baseball player shares his story of loss and support that inspired the White Sox to draft him in the 38th round.

GWINNETT COUNTY, Ga. -- Atlanta Braves bobbleheads stand tall beneath the television in Matt Klug's bedroom. Other Braves and Georgia Bulldog memorabilia plaster the walls around him. Klug's smile

widens when he talks about his love of Georgia sports, but Chicago has a new, irreplaceable place in his heart - a place his parents helped create before they passed away.

"The first thing I thought when I was getting drafted is how happy my dad would be and how happy he is," Klug said, "My mom too."

Jeff and Julie Klug were high school sweethearts married for 36 years before Julie passed away. Matt said his mom was always sick but she constantly supported him.

"I would get home from games and she would have like the window paint written on our front screen door like 'Good job #33'," he said.

His dad supported Matt through his own cancer treatment. Jeff Klug came to games and practices whenever he could and he didn't let people see his sickness.

"He was the toughest person I've ever met in my life," Klug said, "I had people come up to me when he passed away like, 'I didn't know your dad was sick.' That's how he was."

Both of his parents passed away while Matt was a student at Brookwood High School. His team and the Brookwood community brought him meals, collected gas cards, and opened their homes according to Titus Martin, Matt's baseball coach.

"It's these bonds that really stick out and last a lifetime for these guys. I'm proud of the way our guys handled it. I'm proud of Matt especially," Martin said.

That pride inspired the coach to nominate Klug for several local and state character-based awards and share Klug's story with the world. White Sox scout Kevin Burrell read Klug's story in the Gwinnett Daily Post and made a decision that would go on to change Matt's life.

"We saw your story, we wanted to do something special. You can be in the history books forever."

"Hey Matt this is Kevin Burrell with the Chicago White Sox," Klug recalled from his conversation with the scout, "We're going to select you in the 38th round...You can be in the history books forever."

His immediate reaction was disbelief. Klug said that the White Sox wanted to do something special for him after everything he'd been through over the past few years. Even though his parents aren't with him physically, Matt is confident that they are still supporting him.

"I'm just really, you know, hoping to make them proud. And I think I've done a good job of that."
