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San Francisco Chronicle

Giants, Madison Bumgarner lose lefty's long-awaited comeback game

Henry Schulman

There was an unmistakable sign that Madison Bumgarner was back, and it was not "Fire on the Mountain" serenading the crowd.

Bumgarner came to the plate in the fifth inning with the bases loaded, a run in and nobody out against Diamondbacks ace Patrick Corbin, struck out and was still steamed about it two hours later.

- Law enforcement officials: Fashion designer Kate Spade found dead in New York in apparent suicide

Never mind that paid hitters Gorkys Hernandez and Buster Posey struck out right after him, the key sequence in a 3-2 loss that ended the Giants' win streak at five games.

"No excuse for that," Bumgarner said. "I have to find a way to get a guy in there. That was the difference."

Well, not the entire difference. The Giants had another shot with the bases loaded in the seventh, with Posey hitting an inning-ending flyball, and the game ended on an Evan Longoria groundball that stranded the potential tying and winning runs.

For the long haul, none of that mattered more than what Bumgarner accomplished over 82 pitches in his first big-league game in more than eight months.

Like the rest of the starters of late, who have done a nice job keeping the Giants competitive, Bumgarner held Arizona to a pair of second-inning runs over six innings. The first scored on back-to-back doubles by Ketel Marte and Chris Owings, the second on a Kristopher Negrón single that Longoria should have fielded.

The ball rolled into left field when Longoria pulled up deferred to Brandon Crawford, who was behind him ready to backhand the ball if needed. It's hard to say whether either would have had a play at home on the speedy Owings.

Bumgarner showed some rust, but a rusty Bumgarner is better than most, and he did well to keep the game close even when the Diamondbacks threatened to run and hide.

He struck out three without a walk and got 13 of his 18 outs on groundballs, using his changeup effectively to complement his bread-and-butter cutter and a fastball that hit 91 mph. His velocity should rise a tick as he continues to pitch.

Manager Bruce Bochy called it a "solid start" that got better the longer Bumgarner pitched.

"He's only going to get stronger and build more stamina," Bochy said. "It's only his third start. You'll take it: six innings and two runs."

Bumgarner was clearly happy just to be back on the mound at AT&T, saying it's far better "to earn your paycheck instead of stealing it."

Just to prove Bumgarner is a Giant true and true, he allowed two singles and a double to Paul Goldschmidt, who is in the midst of a career-worst slump everywhere except the 13 waterfront acres where the Giants chose to build a ballpark.

Goldschmidt is hitting .429 against the Giants and .188 against the rest of baseball. Remarkably, he has more than one-quarter of his hits - 12 of 47 - in eight games against San Francisco.

None of his hits cost Bumgarner any runs.

The way the Giants had taken advantage of scoring opportunities during their win streak, there was a sense they could come back and win as Arizona nursed a 2-1 lead into the later innings.

But Hunter Strickland allowed a huge run in the ninth, on a pinch single by Jake Lamb, after Longoria whiffed on an Owings groundball that continued into left field for an inning-opening single.

The Giants still gave themselves a shot in the ninth against closer Brad Boxberger.

Alen Hanson hit a pinch-double with one out and scored on Posey's two-out single to right.

Andrew McCutchen extended the game with a single that sent pinch-runner Austin Jackson to second, but Longoria, with a chance to atone for two defensive mistakes, hit an easy bouncer to short to end it.

The Giants fell to 3-5 against the Diamondbacks ahead of Wednesday's series and homestand finale, which can be viewed only on Facebook.

The Giants need to win to return to .500 ahead of another three-city trip, to Washington, Miami and Los Angeles.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants: No complaints about Madison Bumgarner's sharp comeback

Bruce Jenkins

Bartender, you got any country music on that jukebox?

The saloon doors opened on Madison Bumgarner's 2018 season Tuesday night, and all the gunslingers made room. The Marshall Tucker Band's "Fire on the Mountain" greeted his purposeful stride. The only problem turned out to be the calendar.

- Law enforcement officials: Fashion designer Kate Spade found dead in New York in apparent suicide

For the Giants and Arizona Diamondbacks, it was a June evening at AT&T Park. For Bumgarner, it was farewell to winter, a veritable spring training start in the middle of the season.

Given that we judge the man by his lofty standards, it could have worked out better.

Bumgarner won't ever be happy about giving up eight hits in six innings, striking out just three batters and departing with his team trailing 2-1. But this wasn't about the scoreboard (a 3-2 Arizona win), or any kind of quantitative measure. After months of inactivity, that first start is about the psyche, that long-awaited taste of genuine competition.

In that sense, his performance was astounding.

Back on March 23, in the wilds of the Cactus League, Bumgarner stuck his pitching hand in front of a sharply hit ball and suffered a fractured little finger. His road back to the big leagues consisted of just two rehabilitation starts in the minors. No. 3 came Tuesday night against the first-place Diamondbacks, and it was all there: Fastballs at 90 mph-plus. Big-bending sliders. The slow curve. A dandy changeup that consistently had the hitters way off-balance. And not a single walk.

"Who does that? After two starts?" marveled Mike Krukow between innings in the Giants' broadcast booth. "That's unreal. I'm just amazed at his feel."

On the real side, Bumgarner was genuinely angry about just one thing: His at-bat in the fifth. What a moment: bases loaded, nobody out. Locked into a single mind-set, all the fans in the stadium's lower section rose to their feet. Most of them remained standing as Arizona's Patrick Corbin went to work against one of the most feared hitters ever witnessed in the pitching fraternity.

It came down to a 2-2 count, after a mighty Bumgarner swing that *just* missed loud contact (he fouled it off). He struck out on a wicked slider. Didn't put much of a swing on it, either.

Bumgarner pounded his bat into the dirt before retreating to the dugout, and the sound of impact could be heard throughout the yard.

Remarkable, though: There probably hasn't been this much anticipation surrounding a Giants at-bat all season. Such is the magnitude of Bumgarner's presence, and the thrill surrounding his return.

"It's definitely huge," reliever Hunter Strickland said before the game. "Couldn't come at a better time, to be honest with you, this last stretch before the All-Star break. It's a close race for first place, and we're all excited about it."

"It's one piece," Krukow said. "They need to get (Johnny) Cueto back, and (Jeff) Samardzija back. I like where it's going, these little hits of energy, and this is a huge one. These guys did exactly what they set out to do with Bumgarner out — and that's not to have a wreck."

The vagaries of baseball make folly of the grandiose statement, but the National League West really does look like a four-team race to the finish. In the realm of genuinely scary teams — think the Yankees or Astros — nobody qualifies.

Colorado will be a threat as long as the great Nolan Arenado unleashes his all-around magnificence. Arizona looks better when Paul Goldschmidt is raking, and his showing against Bumgarner (two singles and a double) suggests an imminent end to his slump.

As for the Dodgers, who crushed the division so convincingly last season, names that come quickly to mind are Clayton Kershaw (sidelined perhaps a month), Cory Seager (out for the season) and Cody Bellinger (so out of sorts manager Dave Roberts recently considered sending him to the minors). Virtually the entire rotation is on the disabled list at the moment. They're enjoying a bit of revival behind the likes of Max Muncy, Chris Taylor and Matt Kemp, but seriously: Not scary. Not in the slightest.

As for the Giants, it's on to Wednesday's final game of the Arizona series and that weekday-afternoon feature Major League Baseball likes to call "Screw you." Sure, you'd like to watch the game. Maybe it's the very heart of your existence. But if you don't have a Facebook account, you're completely blacked out of watching on television or any kind of streaming device.

We went through this last month, when the Giants were in Philadelphia, so the shock value has lessened some. Still, try to fathom the logic of a business model that states, in essence, “Deny your product to interested customers.” That’s MLB sailing cluelessly into the future, while thousands boo.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants’ Jeff Samardzija, former receiver, reflects on Dwight Clark and ‘The Catch’

Henry Schulman

Giants pitcher **Jeff Samardzija** does not see the video of **Dwight Clark**’s famous catch the way ordinary fans do. Samardzija has the perspective of a former college wide receiver.

What most impressed Samardzija about Clark’s gravity-defying grab in the 1981 NFC Championship Game against the Cowboys was his hands, specifically the equipment the 49ers’ receiver was not wearing.

- Law enforcement officials: Fashion designer Kate Spade found dead in New York in apparent suicide
Gloves.

“To watch the hands he had and the plays he made, just barehanded and old-school, was unbelievable,” Samardzija said Tuesday when asked to reflect on Clark the day after he died at 61.

“I don’t know if anyone has gone out and bought any current receiver or running-back gloves these days. It’s a little bit on the cheating side of things,” he said.

Samardzija was a Clark fan because he was a **Joe Montana** fan. The Shark grew up in Indiana and followed Montana onto the football field at Notre Dame. When Samardzija’s Pop Warner league opened a new ballpark, Montana threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

Samardzija did not get to know Clark, but said, “I got caught up on his story and who he was as a guy. Everything seemed to check out like he was heck of a guy, did things the right way and liked playing the game.”

Samardzija is on the disabled list with a tight shoulder, but played a hard catch from about 100 feet Tuesday. He and **Johnny Cueto** are expected to throw full-on bullpen sessions in Washington on Friday. Samardzija is expected to rejoin the rotation ahead of Cueto.

Many arms: Madison Bumgarner was the 22nd pitcher to take the mound for the Giants this year, not counting **Pablo Sandoval**, a number that surprised manager **Bruce Bochy**.

“That’s too many, but you’ve got to do what you’ve got to do,” Bochy said. “You look at all the injuries we’ve had. We’ve had to get creative.”

Other teams have had to be more creative. Nine other big-league teams had used 22 or more pitchers through Monday. The Rays led with 24.

Draft continues: The Giants followed their first-round selection of Georgia Tech catcher **Joey Bart** with four straight college right-handed pitchers, starting with 6-foot-11 **Sean Hjelle** from Kentucky. They then selected **Jake Wong** (Grand Canyon University) before taking two junior-collegians whom they also drafted out of high school last year, **Blake Rivera** from Alabama and **Keaton Winn** from Iowa.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants pregame: It’s Madison Bumgarner Night at AT&T Henry Schulman

It's really amazing to look at the Giants' stat sheet for 2018. The numbers do not stand out as much as the names.

In 60 games, the Giants have used 38 players, 17 position players and 21 pitchers (aside from Pablo Sandoval).

So much debate about the roster hovers over spring training -- what it will look like, who is on and who is off, before some logical people step up and say, "It doesn't matter what the roster looks like on Opening Day, because it's going to change."

Player 39 takes the mound Tuesday night for the first time in 2018. Madison Bumgarner will

join Johnny Cueto, Chris Stratton, Derek Holland, Jeff Samardzija, Ty Blach, Andrew Suarez, Dereck Rodriguez, Roberto Gomez, Tyler Beede, D.J. Snelten, Reyes Moronta, Derek Law, Mark Melancon, Tony Watson, Cory Gearrin, Pierce Johnson, Sam Dyson, Hunter Strickland, Josh Osich, Jose Valdez and Will Smith on the Giants' pitcher stat sheet.

Whew!

That list of names underscores how divisions are won and lost not just with high-profile trades and signings over the winter meeting, but also with all the leg work done by dozens of team employees in scouting, drafting and player development.

Teams are going to lose high-profile players to injuries. It's happened a lot in the NL West this year. The key is whom they have in stock to replace them.

The Giants have used 21 pitchers who were homegrown (eight), signed as major-league free agents (six) or six-year minor-league free agents (three), acquired in trades (two) and claimed on waivers (two).

Now, perhaps folks understand why team officials and we humble scribes are reluctant to answer when fans ask, "What's going to happen when so-and-so comes back?"

Especially when so-and-so is weeks away.

The Giants have one advantage they lacked last year, a host of pitchers who have minor-league options, which allows them to send players back and forth based on need.

It's not fun for the players, but that is how the system works until they run out of minor-league options.

The latest to head east on Interstate 80 was Johnson, who was optioned to Sacramento to clear a spot for Bumgarner. Johnson had a 5.83 ERA in 23 relief appearances. Those numbers are not great, but he threw some valuable innings to save other relievers in games the Giants were losing.

He also got the win in Monday night's game against Arizona, making him 3-2 on the season.

More Bumgarner: The Big Fella allowed one run, on a solo homer by Diamondbacks prospect Pavin Smith, in 8¹/₃ rehab innings combined for San Jose and Sacramento.

The best sign was his strikeout stuff. Yes, even A-ball hitters can whack the ball around the yard if pitchers cannot move the ball around and change speeds. Ask Bumgarner, who gave up nine runs in a rehab game at San Jose last year.

Bumgarner has a tough draw in Arizona lefty Patrick Corbin, who did get whomped in his last start at home against the Reds (six innings, six earned runs), but also pitched a one-hit shutout against the Giants at Chase on April 4. He lost a no-hitter with four outs to go on a Brandon Belt check-swing single against the shift.

Ordinarily, with Belt out, manager Bruce Bochy might go with Nick Hundley behind the plate and Buster Posey at first base, but Posey said he was looking forward to catching Bumgarner. So Pablo Sandoval could get another start at first.

The Arizona hitter to watch?

Who else?

Paul Goldschmidt is a .310 hitter with three homers in 58 at-bats against the lefty.

Draft Day 2: After taking Joey Bart with the No. 2 overall pick, the Giants used their next four selections on right-handed college pitchers:

Round 2: Kentucky's Sean Hjelle, who is 6-foot-11.

Round 3: Jake Wong, Grand Canyon University

Round 4: Blake Rivera (Wallace State Community College, Alabama)

Round 5: Keaton Winn (Iowa Western Community College)

They then picked high school outfielder Patrick Hilson and Puerto Rican high school shortstop Edison Mora.

San Jose Mercury News

D’Backs ruin Bumgarner’s debut, halt Giants win streak at five games

Kerry Crowley

SAN FRANCISCO—Ten years into his major league career, four seasons after he authored the greatest postseason performance in franchise history and three months after he fractured the pinky on his pitching hand, a Madison Bumgarner start remains a must-watch event.

Each Bumgarner outing is simply a special occasion, and his 2018 debut at AT&T Park felt like a ribbon-cutting signaling a grand opening to a Giants season that began 61 games ago at Dodger Stadium.

But after the ace took a pair of scissors to the ribbon, the Diamondbacks cut into the celebration and defeated the Giants 3-2.

“As far as the pitching, I’d like to have done better,” Bumgarner said. “But for the first time out there, I feel pretty good about it.”

Bumgarner prepared for Tuesday’s outing with a pair of rehab starts, but he didn’t have much of a chance to ready himself for a moment he considered the difference in the game. With the bases loaded and no one out in the bottom of the fifth, Bumgarner struck out swinging against Patrick Corbin and the Giants didn’t score.

“What I’d like to have back is that at-bat with the bases loaded,” Bumgarner said. “I’ve got to find a way to get a guy in there. That was the difference I think.”

After the D’Backs extended a 2-1 lead to 3-1 with a run off of reliever Hunter Strickland in the ninth, Buster Posey delivered an RBI single to bring the Giants within a run against D’Backs closer Brad Boxberger.

But with two on and two out, Evan Longoria grounded out to shortstop to end the game.

Though the Giants didn’t have a runner reach base in the first three innings Tuesday, they left

11 on base in the final six frames which crushed their bid for a comeback.

“Timely hitting is what wins ballgames for you and (Patrick Corbin) is good,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “He got in a jam there in the fifth and struck out the side and you give him credit. He made pitches.”

With his first pitch to D’Backs leadoff hitter Nick Ahmed Tuesday, Bumgarner became the 22nd different pitcher used by the Giants this season. His absence created a gigantic hole atop their rotation, but injuries to Johnny Cueto and Jeff Samardzija also left the franchise scrambling for depth for the first two months of the year.

No pitcher’s presence means more to the Giants’ goal of contending for a playoff spot than their ace, who can lock down opposing hitters in the thick of a playoff race or single-handedly will a team through a postseason series.

“You’ve got your guy back,” Bochy said. “It’s a lift for everybody, the rotation, the club, it’s good to have him back. You heard the crowd and I know he was excited to be back.”

Even though the Giants started 30-30 and began the night 1.5 games out of first-place in the National League West, their roster felt incomplete and their playoff dreams appeared hollow without Bumgarner serving as a centerpiece in the rotation.

So while Corbin –a starter who logged a one-hit shutout against Cueto back in April– served as Bumgarner’s adversary Tuesday, the Giants stepped onto the field beaming with an overwhelming sense of optimism.

That spirit radiated from the field in the top of the first, as Bumgarner capped off the inning by rolling a softly hit grounder to the left side that Longoria bare-handed before firing a dart to first.

The sense of invincibility Bumgarner seems to afford the Giants faded in his next inning, though, as back-to-back doubles helped Arizona open a 1-0 lead. The left-hander induced another slow chopper to the left side, but Longoria and shortstop Brandon Crawford both pulled up expecting the other infielder to glove the ball. Instead of having a play at the plate, the Giants had a communication error and suddenly faced a 2-0 deficit.

Bumgarner surrendered two more hits to lead off the third, including one of three he gave up to D’Backs first baseman Paul Goldschmidt, but received help from his defense as Crawford

fielded a one-hopper and tossed a strike to the plate to cut down the lead runner for the first out of the frame.

Arizona's inability to capitalize with two on in the third and again in the fifth kept the Giants in the game and nearly cost the D'Backs the lead after Mac Williamson ignited a rally in the bottom of the fifth.

The Giants left fielder kicked off the frame with a double down the left field line and traded places with Brandon Crawford, who doubled him home to end Corbin's shutout bid. But after the D'Backs lefty loaded the bases, he fanned Bumgarner, Gorkys Hernández and Posey in order to pull off a Houdini-like escape.

Bochy's decision to send Bumgarner to the plate after five innings of work came a night after he pulled starter Derek Holland with the bases loaded in the bottom of the fourth. Pinch hitter Alen Hanson delivered the go-ahead double in Holland's place in Monday's win, but on Tuesday, Bumgarner failed to put the ball in play against Corbin and slammed his bat into the ground following a whiff on strike three.

"I've just got to find a way to get a guy in, bases loaded, no outs," Bumgarner said. "There's no excuse for it. Pitcher or not."

Bumgarner only lasted one additional inning, throwing a one-two-three top of the sixth before Bochy turned the game over to the bullpen. Despite surrendering eight hits, the southpaw only allowed two runs to cross on his watch and finished the evening with 82 pitches.

After Bumgarner exited Tuesday's showdown, Mark Melancon made his second appearance of the 2018 campaign, logging a scoreless seventh inning that once again allowed the Giants to challenge Corbin in their quest to extend a season-best five game win streak.

But despite a leadoff walk from Crawford against Corbin to start the seventh, three different D'Backs pitchers including their starter combined to thwart a scoring threat. For the second time in three innings, it was Posey who made the final out with the bases loaded as his bid to get his battery-mate off the hook came up shy on an easy flyout.

With the Giants trailing 2-1, a Longoria misplay on a chopper to open the ninth inning came back to haunt the club, as Posey delivered a two-out RBI single to plate an elusive second run in the bottom of the ninth.

San Jose Mercury News

The one with potential to make Giants more dangerous in June

Kerry Crowley

SAN FRANCISCO—Madison Bumgarner will make his 2018 debut Tuesday against the D'Backs, but the Giants' starting staff isn't the unit that will carry the team through the month of June.

Even though Chris Stratton, Andrew Suárez and Dereck Rodríguez recorded consecutive quality starts to open the month, the Giants' rotation is still without workhorses Johnny Cueto and Jeff Samardzija.

While both starters will throw bullpens on Friday in Washington, D.C., it's unlikely Samardzija returns before the middle of June while Cueto is sidelined until at least June 30.

Manager Bruce Bochy is optimistic Cueto will be reinstated from the 60-day disabled list shortly after he's eligible to pitch again and hopeful Samardzija can contribute in the near future, but his shoulder tightness has bothered him since spring training. Though it would be a significant development for the Giants if both starters can pitch pain-free before the start of July, the Giants are set up to make a run in the National League West thanks to the newfound depth in their bullpen.

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A group that opened the season with several question marks is now among the deepest in the National League, as left-hander Will Smith is healthy and thriving after missing the 2017 season with Tommy John surgery while closer Mark Melancon is easing back into action.

Melancon wasn't among the four relievers Bochy used to close out Monday's 10-3 blowout of Arizona, but he did tell his skipper he was available if needed.

"Mark came up to me yesterday and said he was good to go," Bochy said. "That would have been back-to-back and I didn't do it, but he said he was fine to handle it after he had a light load the day before."

Melancon isn't expected to reassume his closer role in the immediate future, but having another healthy and effective right-hander with experience pitching late in games offers Bochy additional flexibility.

Though the Giants will likely be cautious with using Melancon on back-to-back days, his

presence will allow Bochy to call on Cory Gerrin in less critical situations while the right-hander attempts to regain his form.

“He’s pressing, I think,” Bochy said. “His stuff is there. 92, he bumped to 93, he’s just got to get that command and get that sink back to where he normally is.”

Gerrin finished the 2017 season with a 1.99 earned run average, but his ERA ballooned more than 1.5 points after surrendering five earned runs in his last two outings. At 4.92, Gerrin’s ERA is now the highest-mark among Giants relievers after rookie Pierce Johnson was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento following Monday’s game.

Though Gerrin is struggling, the Giants do have an impressive mix of veterans capable of shouldering the load in the late innings as they’ve proved throughout the team’s season-high five-game win streak. The Giants’ bullpen did not allow a run during their series sweep of the Phillies over the weekend and Gerrin was the only reliever to give one up Monday.

With interim closer Hunter Strickland and set-up men Tony Watson and Sam Dyson all possessing sub-2.50 ERAs, the Giants have a trio of arms at the back of the bullpen that have proven reliable since Opening Day.

If Smith continues pitching well and Melancon builds off of a three-strikeout debut Sunday, the Giants will suddenly have an abundance of arms to turn to in high-leverage situations. They also can deploy lefty Ty Blach as a long reliever after Blach was moved from the rotation to the bullpen last week.

Bumgarner is slated to become the 22nd different pitcher the Giants have used this season when he takes the mound Tuesday, and while that’s a big number, the club’s 30-30 record is a testament to organizational depth that appeared thin at the outset of the year.

“22 is a lot in June,” Bochy said. “I didn’t realize that. That’s a lot, that’s too many. But you’ve got to do what you’ve got to do and you look at the injuries we’ve had.”

Several of the pitchers the Giants used have been cycled in and out of San Francisco, including players like Jose Valdez and D.J. Snelten who were recently designated for assignment. However, injuries have created opportunities for others to prove they belong and no player has taken advantage of the situation more than rookie Reyes Moronta.

The hard-throwing right-hander routinely hits 98 miles per hour on the radar gun and lowered

his ERA to 1.33 with a clean inning of work Monday. Moronta may have a future as a set-up man or closer, but as the Giants show off the depth of their bullpen, he'll remain in a middle relief role.

"You're going to have growing pains especially when you have this many pitchers and young starters," Bochy said. "But hopefully they continue making their progress and that's what's happening right now."

With Bumgarner expected to provide an immediate jolt to the Giants, it's easy to see why Bochy is confident about his club's chances moving into the summer.

At the same time, it's important to recognize what helped the Giants reach this point: Eight of the team's 30 wins belong to rookies.

Belt recovering from appendectomy

Brandon Belt is recovering from undergoing emergency surgery to remove his appendix Friday.

Belt exited Friday's game after one at-bat and was placed on the 10-day disabled list following his surgery as the Giants estimate he'll be sidelined for about three weeks.

The first baseman won't travel with the club to Washington, D.C. or Miami, but Bochy said he could join the team on the upcoming road trip in Los Angeles to check in with team doctors.

MLB.com

Giants edged in Bumgarner's solid debut

Chris Haft

SAN FRANCISCO -- His velocity fell short of its peak. He didn't deliver another of those Paul Bunyanesque clouts that delights fans. And the "L" next to his name in the box score always looks unfamiliar.

Nevertheless, the plurality of zeros on the scoreboard and the sheer presence of the man himself erased any doubt: This was **Madison Bumgarner**, all right. And though Bumgarner absorbed the decision in San Francisco's 3-2 loss Tuesday to the Arizona Diamondbacks, his performance provided hope for the Giants, whose five-game winning streak dissolved as they welcomed back their ace left-hander.

View Full Game Coverage

Recovered from a fractured left pinkie finger, Bumgarner lasted six innings and sustained a respectable performance in his regular-season debut. But **Patrick Corbin** and the D-backs bullpen combined to limit San Francisco to five hits through the first eight innings.

Bumgarner sustained a respectable effort, yielding two runs and eight hits while walking none and striking out three. His most significant lapse occurred in the second inning, which began with doubles from **Ketel Marte** and **Chris Owings** that scored a run. **Kristopher Negron** then recorded an RBI single on a dribbler that trickled past third baseman **Evan Longoria** and shortstop **Brandon Crawford**. Bumgarner's fastball reached 91 mph; about 2-3 mph below its usual level. But it's generally assumed that the four-time All-Star and 2014 postseason hero will regain his usual form as the season progresses. Giants manager Bruce Bochy rated Bumgarner's stint as "solid." Said Bochy, "He did a nice job, for his first start back. That was a good effort. ... You get your guy back, it's a lift for everybody -- the rotation, the club. He's still going to build strength and stamina."

Bumgarner's typical competitiveness remained constant.

"You know you're going to get his best bolt every time out," Giants catcher **Buster Posey** said.

Center fielder Chris Owings, who grounded an RBI double and scored to account for both of Arizona's second-inning runs, noticed Bumgarner's diminished velocity yet expressed respect for him.

"I felt like we had a really good plan and a really good approach," Owings said. "Not a lot of strikeouts from the offense with him and I thought that was a big deal. We kind of jumped on him a little bit early and when he threw strikes. Getting those two runs early really helps out. Putting the ball in play against him takes it to our advantage, just a little. He's so good out there that we got a couple of cheap hits and it kind of puts the pressure on them a little bit."

Bumgarner felt no pressure. He adjusted by throwing more changeups.

"They [the D-backs] were pretty aggressive," Bumgarner said. "... I kind of saw that right away."

The adoration for Bumgarner also was evident. He drew repeated ovations, including one as public-address announcer Renel Brooks-Moon delivered the lineups to the AT&T Park crowd and referred to Bumgarner by saying, "Batting ninth, the man who needs no introduction."

Bumgarner appreciated the reaction.

"I was definitely glad to be back," he said.

There wasn't much to be said about the Giants' offense, either. **Mac Williamson** doubled and scored on Crawford's double in the fifth inning, but otherwise, San Francisco's offense mostly remained silent. Other than the fifth, San Francisco mustered two hits before **Alen Hanson's** pinch-hit double and Posey's RBI single generated a run in the ninth. The Giants used a trio of walks to load the bases with two outs in the seventh, but D-backs reliever **Yoshihisa Hirano** coaxed Posey's harmless fly ball on a 2-0 pitch to end the threat.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Giants right-hander **Mark Melancon** maintained his effectiveness since overcoming a right elbow flexor sprain and missing the season's first 56 games. Keeping the score close, Melancon blanked Arizona in the seventh inning, his second shutout inning in as many appearances since being reinstated from the disabled list. Melancon struck out two batters, complementing his season-opening effort Sunday against Philadelphia when he struck out the side.

SOUND SMART

D-backs first baseman **Paul Goldschmidt** is hitting .429 (12-for-28) with two homers and five RBIs against the Giants this season, compared to a combined .188 (35-for-186) average with six home runs and 15 RBIs against every other team.

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

With one out in the Giants' ninth, Hanson hoisted a drive to the right-field corner, where Negron dove for the ball. The D-backs challenged the "fair" ruling, which was confirmed after a replay review. Hanson had a double and soon scored, but it wasn't enough for the Giants.

UP NEXT

The Giants will conclude the series and the relatively brief homestand Wednesday with a 12:45 p.m. PT clash against the D-backs. **Chris Stratton**, who ended a month-long slump in his last start with six shutout innings against Philadelphia, will start for the Giants against fellow right-hander **Clay Buchholz**. The Giants are 5-1 in Stratton's outings at home and 4-2 on the road.

MLB.com

Giants dig deep to draft pitching talent
Do-Hyoung Park

SAN FRANCISCO -- On Monday night, Giants assistant general manager John Barr reiterated his team's "best player available" approach to drafting, as opposed to drafting to fill any perceived need on the Major League roster.

- **Draft Tracker: Follow every Giants Draft pick**

If the Giants' selections in Rounds 3-10 of the 2018 MLB Draft on Tuesday were any indication, it seems that they're identifying a wealth of collegiate pitching talent at schools off the beaten path.

The Draft concludes Wednesday, with exclusive coverage of Rounds 11-40 beginning on MLB.com at 9 a.m. PT.

- **Giants pick C Bart 2nd, tall righty at No. 45**

San Francisco used six of its eight picks Tuesday on college pitchers, but only one came from a major conference school (Solomon Bates, USC), and Grand Canyon University right-hander Jake Wong, the club's first selection of the day, was the only other Division I player taken by the Giants.

In Blake Rivera and Keaton Winn, the Giants redrafted two high-upside junior college arms they found last season but didn't sign, and they also claimed Ben Madison and Alex DuBord out of the NAIA, a lower division of college baseball, with their final two picks of the day.

Round 3: RHP Jake Wong, Grand Canyon University (Ariz.)

Tim Salmon, by far the most notable alum of Grand Canyon's baseball program, threw out the first pitch when GCU opened its new baseball stadium in 2018.

But Wong formally christened the stadium by throwing six shutout innings and nine strikeouts against No. 4 TCU. Playing in the Western Athletic Conference, Wong didn't get to face premier opposition often, but when he got those chances, he'd rise to the occasion. He hurled six more scoreless innings against Penn State a month later, striking out 10. He also held Oklahoma State scoreless in the 2017 season opener. He departs college with the second-best ERA (3.59) and third-most strikeouts (168) in GCU Division 1 history.

Though he made his name as the Friday starter at GCU after transitioning from the bullpen after his freshman year, Wong saw perhaps the best success of his career as a reliever in the Cape Cod League, typically considered to be the toughest summer league. He finished as the 2017 league leader in **WHIP**(0.74) and retired 34 of the 36 hitters he faced in a remarkable July. He uses a sharp curveball and a changeup to complement his best pitch, a fastball in the low- to mid-90s.

Round 4: RHP Blake Rivera, Wallace State Community College (Ala.)

Eleven years ago, in the 2007 MLB Draft, a freshman right-hander out of Wallace State was drafted in the 33rd round. He returned to college, improved his Draft stock and was drafted in the third round a year later.

Last year, in the 2017 MLB draft, freshman Rivera of Wallace State was drafted in the 32nd round. He returned to college, improved his Draft stock and now finds himself a fourth-round selection of the Giants.

By the way, that first guy's name? **Craig Kimbrel**.

Drafted by the Giants for the second year in a row, the 6-foot-4 Rivera complements a power fastball with a changeup and a sharp curveball described as one of the best pitches in the southeast, and commands all three pitches well. He posted a 17-1 record with 170 strikeouts in 122 2/3 innings in two seasons for Wallace State, but scouts have inquired about his ability to close as well. He will always draw Kimbrel comparisons due to his circumstances -- and head coach Randy Putnam, who coached both at Wallace State, thinks Rivera is more polished now than Kimbrel was when he was drafted.

Round 5: RHP Keaton Winn, Iowa Western Community College (Iowa)

Hailing from Ollie, Iowa, a small town of 215 located 40 miles from the nearest interstate highway, Winn largely escaped the notice of major college programs despite starring in football, baseball, basketball and track in high school.

But after going 5-1 with a 2.47 ERA and 56 strikeouts in 51 innings as a freshman starter in 2017 for powerhouse Iowa Western Community College, the 6-foot-4 right-hander's strikeout numbers blew up in 2018, when he converted to closer and punched out 59 hitters while walking only nine in 36 1/3 innings.

Winn, like Rivera, was drafted by the Giants for the second year in a row; he had been San Francisco's 20th-round selection last season but opted to return to school. His best pitch is a 83-85 mph slider, which complements a two-seam fastball with life and a four-seamer in the low 90s.

Round 6: OF P.J. Hilson, Nettleton Senior HS (Ala.)

Speed is the name of the game for Hilson, who stole 45 bases in 73 games in his Nettleton career, but the toolsy switch-hitting outfielder can do it all: He walked 42 times with only 27 strikeouts in high school and also developed a power stroke during his senior season, in which he hit six homers and 12 doubles in 87 at-bats while hitting .402. He is committed to the University of Alabama, where he could also pitch, with his fastball having been recorded as high as 93 mph.

Hilson supplemented his high school career with appearances in the American Legion League, a youth league for ages 13 to 19 that counts 72 members of the MLB Hall of Fame among its

alumni, playing for a team based in nearby Paragould, Ark.

Round 7: SS Edison Mora, Puerto Rico Baseball Academy

You don't need to look too far to find a success story involving a shortstop from the Puerto Rico Baseball Academy -- Astros star **Carlos Correa** was educated there before he was selected with the first overall pick in the 2012 MLB Draft.

At 6-foot-2, 165 pounds, the right-handed Mora doesn't have Correa's prodigious physical tools at shortstop, but has a frame to build on and bolsters a Giants farm system that only has three middle infielders in its **top 30 prospects** according to MLB Pipeline.

Round 8: RHP Solomon Bates, Southern California

A native of Victorville, Calif., just northeast of the Los Angeles area, Bates stayed close to home by committing to USC, where he played alongside older brother R.J., a walk-on, for the Trojans. He didn't make an immediate impact, redshirting his freshman season before recording a 1-1 record and 4.50 ERA as a sophomore reliever.

Bates then emerged as a do-it-all force as a junior in 2018, pitching the second-most innings on the team and leading Trojans starters with a 3.14 ERA and 79 strikeouts in 77 1/3 innings, though he did struggle with the long ball, allowing a team-leading 10 homers. He was named All-Pac-12 honorable mention.

Round 9: RHP Ben Madison, Central Baptist College (Ala.)

As a junior in 2018, Madison dominated hitters with a fastball touching 96 mph, setting a Central Baptist College record and leading the NAIA with 172 strikeouts in 96 2/3 innings, good for a 16.0 K/9 rate. He was named NAIA All-America honorable mention, America Midwest Conference Co-Pitcher of the Year and first-team all-AMC as he led Central Baptist College to its fifth straight 30-win season.

Round 10: RHP Alex DuBord, Faulkner

Though originally slated to enroll at Middle Tennessee State University, DuBord remained at Neosho County Community College in Kansas for his sophomore season before enrolling at Faulkner as a junior in 2018. The 6-foot-5 native of Fargo, N.D., was a three-sport athlete in hockey, football and baseball in high school and went 7-1 with a 4.01 ERA, 55 strikeouts and 14 walks in 51 2/3 innings for Faulker, the No. 1 seed in the 2018 Avista-NAIA World Series.

NBCsportsbayarea.com

Bumgarner gets back to his old self after two-month layoff

Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO — Forget the standing ovations or “Fire on the Mountain.” Put aside the fastball that had David Peralta take a knee, the cutter that he turned to repeatedly, and the changeup that was so surprisingly sharp that Bumgarner threw a month’s worth of them on a whim

Here’s how you know Madison Bumgarner is back and feeling normal: He was pissed off that he didn’t get a run in during his second at-bat of the season.

“You’ve just got to find a way to get a guy in,” he said of a fifth-inning confrontation with Patrick Corbin. “Bases loaded, no outs...there’s no excuse for it.”

Well, there is, and it’s not the fact that Bumgarner is a pitcher. He had just one at-bat during a two-start rehab assignment, and Corbin is a monster. But Bumgarner wouldn’t want to hear that. He is dangerous at the plate, even coming off a long layoff, and he was disappointed in his strikeout, one of three straight for the Giants in that big spot.

There was little else to quibble with, though. Bumgarner scattered eight hits over six innings, didn’t walk any Diamondbacks, and struck out three. He got stronger as the night went on, but the Giants didn’t. They fell 3-2, wasting one opportunity after another against a scuffling Diamondbacks club.

The Giants left 11 on base, three in that fifth inning, when Gorkys Hernandez and Buster Posey followed with strikeouts. Posey later flied out with the bases loaded, but came up with an RBI single in the top of the ninth. Evan Longoria couldn’t finish the rally.

That left Bumgarner with a loss, but this wasn’t a bitter night. After missing two months with a fractured pinky — “I can’t believe all this is over a pinky finger,” he would often say — Bumgarner returned to lead the rotation. He mixed in a new wrinkle, too, throwing 14 changeups, his most in nearly four years.

“I had a good feel for it tonight,” he said. “More than I usually would. We started going to it and it was working. I’m trying to go out there and compete and adjust. I’m willing to change my gameplan.”

Bumgarner said he went changeup-heavy to offset the Diamondbacks’ aggressive swings, and that’s another way you know he’s feeling right. This night was not about getting his arm strength up. Facing hitters for just the third time since March, Bumgarner felt good enough to adjust and go for the jugular. He came up a bit short, but he was happy to be back out there trying to carry a heavy load.

“That’s what I get paid to do,” he said. “It’s nice to earn your paycheck instead of stealing it.”

NBCsportsbayarea.com

Bumgarner solid in return but Giants' win streak ends with close loss to D'Backs

Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO — Madison Bumgarner's return was supposed to nudge the Giants back above .500. Instead, it snapped a five-game winning streak, but the big lefty wasn't to blame.

The Giants had no answers for the other lefty starter, Patrick Corbin, wasting six strong innings from Bumgarner in his season debut. The 3-2 loss was the first since last Tuesday, and dropped the Giants back to 2 1/2 games out of first in the tight NL West race.

The Giants had their chances. They loaded the bases with no outs in the fifth, but Bumgarner, Gorkys Hernandez and Buster Posey struck out. They loaded the bases again in the seventh but Posey flied out. They put two on in the eighth, but Pablo Sandoval grounded out. The tying run got to second in the bottom of the ninth, but Evan Longoria grounded out.

Here are the rest of the details...

—- Bumgarner threw 82 pitches before giving way to the bullpen. He gave up two earned, allowing eight hits, walking none, and striking out three. Both runs came in the second, when Ketel Marte and Chris Owings led off with back-to-back doubles.

—- The fifth inning appeared to be when Bumgarner found his groove. He struck out Corbin on a cutter and threw a fastball up and in to David Peralta that had the outfielder down on his knees. He also waved both arms when he didn't get an outside strike. Bumgarner caught a break when Paul Goldschmidt's double skipped into the seats, keeping a runner at third, and he took advantage of it. The next pitch was an inning-ending groundout to short.

—- There was a new wrinkle on this night. Bumgarner threw a bunch of changeups, adding to an arsenal that is heavy on three pitches most nights. The tracking systems couldn't agree on how many he threw, but MLB had him at 14 and Baseball Savant said 16. He hadn't thrown 14 changeups in a game since June 27, 2014. He threw three total in his final three starts last season.

—- Mark Melancon looks like the guy the Giants thought they were getting. In two appearances since coming off the DL, he has five strikeouts. All have come on a big looping curveball.

—- The Giants drew 36,925 for Bumgarner's season debut. A good crowd, a loud crowd...but it has become very difficult for them to sell out AT&T Park like they used to.

The Athletic

Giants go for upside and pitching depth on Day 2 of the MLB Draft

Melissa Lockard

The Giants played Day 1 of the draft in a traditional fashion, selecting arguably the top collegiate position player available with the No. 2 overall pick and selecting a polished college right-hander with some projection with their second-round pick.

On Day 2, the Giants went for a bit more upside, targeting several pitchers from the NAIA and the junior college ranks with intriguing arsenals. The Giants also added two high school picks with plenty of projection.

Below is a look at the Giants' Day 2 selections:

Third round: Jake Wong, RHP, Grand Canyon University

Overview: After splitting his freshman season between the bullpen and the rotation, Wong moved into the rotation at GCU the past two seasons. He threw a career-high 89 2/3 innings this year and had a career-best 2.91 ERA. He struck out 88 and walked 29. Wong had some impressive individual game performances this season, including a 10-strikeout effort against Penn State and a six-inning outing against Illinois when he allowed just two hits and one run.

Outlook: At 6-foot-2, 215, Wong has a sturdy, starter's frame and plenty of arm strength. His fastball sits in the 92-94 mph range and can touch 96 at times. The pitch is firm and can be hit when batters are expecting it, however. Wong also has an above-average changeup and solid curveball, as well as a slider. Wong is a good athlete who repeats his delivery well and he has solid command. He projects as a fourth starter in the big leagues.

Fun Fact: Wong is the highest-ever draft pick from Grand Canyon University.

Fourth round: Blake Rivera, RHP, Wallace State Community College (Hanceville, Ala.)

Overview: Rivera was dominant in his second season at Wallace State, posting a 1.75 ERA and striking out 98 in 67 innings. He was mostly a reliever, although he made four starts and often went multiple innings in his relief outings. He finished second on his team in innings pitched and first in wins (he went 10-0). In two years of community college, Rivera struck out 170 in 122 2/3 innings.

Outlook: Rivera has a solid fastball-curveball combination, with both pitches generating swings and misses. The curveball is potentially a plus pitch that sits in the low-80s and gets plenty of sharp downward movement. His fastball can bump up to 96 in shorter outings and sits 91-93 in longer appearances. Rivera also has a changeup and the development of that pitch could allow him to stick in the rotation. He should have a solid career as a reliever if starting doesn't work

out, however.

Fun Fact: If at first you don't succeed, try, try again — the Giants selected Rivera last year in the 32nd round after his freshman season, but he elected to return for his second year of community college and improved his draft stock considerably. The Giants shouldn't have trouble signing him this time around.

Fifth round: Keaton Winn, RHP, Iowa Western Community College

Overview: Like Rivera, Winn dominated the junior college circuit this season. Winn posted a 2.23 ERA and he struck out 59 in 36 1/3 innings. Winn mostly pitched in relief, starting two games out of his 19 appearances. Winn has a commitment to pitch at Mississippi State next year, but has already indicated to the *Des Moines Register* that he plans to sign with the Giants.

Outlook: Winn has a lively arm and he can run his fastball up to 95 mph. He also has a swing-and-miss slider that has tight, late movement. Winn also has a changeup that he didn't throw a lot in college but is a pitch that could help him move into a starting role. He is an excellent athlete with a strong build at 6-4, 220. In high school, he lettered in multiple sports. Winn has a repeatable delivery and has been durable thus far.

Fun Fact: Like Rivera, Winn was selected by the Giants last season after his first year of community college ball. Winn moved up 15 rounds after going in Round 20 last season.

Sixth round: P.J. Hilson, OF/RHP, Nettleton Senior High (Jonesboro, Ark.)

Overview: A two-way player in high school, Hilson flashed plus speed both on the bases and on the mound, where his fastball was clocked as high as 94 mph. Hilson hit .402 with 18 extra-base hits and 23 stolen bases as a senior. He has a commitment to play at Alabama. The Giants are likely to have to go over-slot to sign Hilson at this spot.

Outlook: A plus athlete, Hilson is a switch-hitter with above-average speed who projects to be a top of the order hitter in the pros. He has a short, line-drive swing from both sides of the plate and could add more over-the-fence power as he matures physically. Defensively, Hilson showed good instincts in center field and he has more than enough arm and speed to stay at that spot.

Fun Fact: Through the first 10 rounds, Hilson is the youngest player in the Giants' draft class. He turns 18 on August 25.

Seventh round: Edison Mora, SS, Puerto Rico Baseball Academy

Overview: The Giants waited until their seventh pick to select an infielder, taking the rangy Mora out of Puerto Rico.

Outlook: Mora is a string bean at 6-2, 160, but he figures to fill out his frame as he matures

physically. He has above-average speed and a strong arm. Mora has a decent approach at the plate, but there is still plenty of development left for him to undertake once he turns pro. Mora will turn 18 on Aug. 13.

Fun Fact: The Puerto Rico Baseball Academy is the alma mater of Astros star Carlos Correa.

Eighth round: Solomon Bates, RHP, USC

Overview: Bates becomes the Giants' first pick out of the state of California. The USC right-hander split his season between the Trojans bullpen and rotation, posting a 3.14 ERA in 77 innings. He struck out 79 and walked 21. Bates struggled with the longball, allowing 10 home runs.

Outlook: Bates has a firm fastball that can touch 95 and sits in the 91-94 mph range as a starter. Bates' best secondary offering is a hybrid curveball/slider. He is another solidly built right-hander. Bates has a strong lower-half that he uses well. He redshirted as a freshman, so even though he has one more year of college eligibility, he is likely to sign, perhaps even below-slot.

Fun Fact: Bates opened a lot of eyes on May 20 when he threw seven shutout innings against Oregon State, which has arguably the best lineup of any college team this season.

Ninth round: Ben Madison, RHP, Central Baptist College

Overview: Madison set a CBC school record this season with 172 strikeouts in just 96 2/3 innings pitched. He had a 2.70 ERA. The 6-3 right-hander was Honorable Mention All-American for the NAIA. He was a two-way player at CBC, also playing in the outfield.

Outlook: Madison is a big, physical right-hander who can touch the mid-90s with his fastball. He also features a swing-and-miss curveball and a developing changeup. He is a good athlete who repeats his delivery well and can field his position. His command can come and go, and if he can't improve in that area, he will likely move to the bullpen. Because he was a two-way player, Madison hasn't put his full energy into pitching yet, so there is still plenty of projection with his development.

Fun Fact: He twice had 18-strikeout games at CBC. Madison began his career at Crowder Community College and he struck out 75 in 57 2/3 innings in his one season there. He also played football in high school, suiting up at quarterback, wide receiver and free safety.

10th round: Alex DuBord, RHP, Faulkner University

Overview: DuBord helped take Faulkner to the NAIA World Series this year when he went 7-1 with a 4.01 ERA in 51 2/3 innings. He struck out 55 and walked 14. DuBord pitched at Neosho County Community College before joining Faulkner this season.

Outlook: DuBord's fastball sits in the low 90s, topping out at 93, but there is the potential for more velocity out of his 6-6 frame. He gets plenty of leverage out of his delivery and some deception. DuBord also features a tight breaking curveball. He is likely to be used as a starter in the pros initially but could eventually land in the bullpen.

Fun Fact: DuBord is from Fargo, South Dakota. He naturally lettered in hockey, as well as baseball, in high school.

The Athletic

Like minded: Madison Bumgarner returns to the Giants, reflects on a decade-long kinship with Buster Posey
Andrew Baggarly

The first ovation of the season for Madison Bumgarner came as he walked to the bullpen mounds and before he peeled off his warmup jacket. Then came the first inning, which was a scoreless one, three outs on 17 pitches. The first snot rocket came somewhere between those two grounders and a pop-up.

There was the first jam that he escaped, and the first jam that he did not. The first strikeout came a bit later than he might have hoped, when Arizona pitcher Patrick Corbin went down swinging to start the fifth.

And there was the first visible flare of anger, when the Giants' brawny, left-handed ace beat his bat into the dirt after striking out with the bases loaded.

Bumgarner's teammates and his fans reveled in his return to the mound in China Basin on Tuesday, 10 weeks after a fluke of a line drive fractured his hand in Scottsdale while the equipment trucks were already halfway up Interstate 5.

A day before Tuesday night's debut, Bumgarner nodded solemnly when asked if he felt as excited as Opening Day.

"Mmm hmm," he said. "It's been a minute. It's been a minute, for sure."

A minute, two months, a decade. You could measure time any number of ways when Bumgarner finished sweeping a cleat over the rubber, dug in his landing spot and took his first glance at Buster Posey's raised target.

Giants manager Bruce Bochy had planned to stick Posey at first base against left-handed opposing starters, but Pablo Sandoval was stationed there against Corbin. There was no chance that Bumgarner, in his first assignment, would be paired with anyone else.

When Bumgarner was ironing out his temper as a teenage prospect, it was a young Posey with a basic-training crew cut who held soothing reins. When they had to wend their way through a World Series game as rookies, they leaned on each other to make the moment seem less enormous. For all the franchise's supporting stars in three delirious championship seasons, for

all the October flashes that seared improbable players into memory, Bumgarner and Posey formed the backbone of it all. They still do.

So as much as Tuesday night was about Bumgarner's return, it wasn't the only red-letter event worth celebrating. It also marked the 10-year anniversary of the day when Posey became a Giant. It was June 5, 2008, when the club turned the fifth overall draft pick into a franchise-defining moment. They were drawn by his leadership as much as his pure hitting ability, and convinced after a thorough vetting that whatever his neophyte catching skills lacked, his acumen and aptitude would cover in time.

"He's going to be a run producer with the bat so it's kind of like getting two players in one," Giants GM Brian Sabean said on that momentous day 10 years ago. "It's very, very difficult to get an all-around catcher, especially a run producer. ... He'll have impact both ways in a hurry.

"He's far more advanced than people give him credit for by people who have no business evaluating him."

The Giants were right, of course, and they are confident they will be proven right again. They drafted another catcher on Monday, taking Joey Bart out of Georgia Tech with the second overall pick, and in some ways, he is an even safer selection than Posey was. He has caught since he was 11 years old, not merely for two college seasons. He even called his own pitches at Georgia Tech. He is a 6-foot-3 block of granite who hits for prodigious power – the tool that so many armchair evaluators bemoaned that Posey lacked when the Giants took him in front of other college bats like Justin Smoak and Yonder Alonso in that summer of 2008.

Bumgarner knows there will be a time when he'll throw to a different catcher, maybe Bart, or maybe someone in a different uniform. He also knows this: he will never form the same connection with another batterymate.

"I've got a story for ya, if you want," said Bumgarner, as he stood on the lime green turf next to the indoor batting cage.

Yes. By all means. Please.

"It's happened a few times in different ways, but this was the one ... it's like, man, it's unbelievable. We're in Atlanta, B.J. Upton was hitting, 3-2 (count). I think he may have just fouled a ball off the umpire or something, so (Posey) comes out to give him a second, and we talked over what we wanted to do. There was a runner on second, two outs. This was 2013, '14, somewhere in there.

"He comes out and we both decide to throw slider, or cutter, whatever you want to call it. He's going back (behind the plate) and I thought, 'Man, I'm second guessing. I'm thinking I need to throw a fastball here.' I don't remember why. It was just however the at-bat was going. I don't remember. I just thought it was a better pitch.

"So he goes back there, and you know, any time he goes out to talk, he doesn't put a sign down. I was just going to tell him, you know, let's reset, I changed my mind or whatever. But I didn't have to. He put down one finger. I was, like, amazing.

“That happens all the time. Maybe not like that. And oh yeah, we have different ideas between us a lot, too. Nothing’s perfect.

“But there’s times where maybe I hadn’t thrown a curveball, or haven’t thrown it much, and we’re getting (deeper) into the game. I’ll think I want to throw a curveball to this guy here, just a random spot. No reason for it, just I need to throw it. And he puts down a curveball. Same deal. And that’s happened a ton.”

Posey signed his first pro contract in August of 2008. Two months later, he caught Bumgarner in instructional league for the first time.

“It’s 10 years, like you mentioned,” said Posey, “and we worked together starting in instructional league in ’08, so it’s coming up on a decade. It’s pretty much easy to sync up with him, with all the history we’ve had.”

If baseball followed a script, Bumgarner would have won his season debut. Maybe he would’ve hammered one of those pitches over the plate that he fouled back with the bases loaded in the fifth – a moment he said he regretted more than any pitch he threw. Maybe Posey, who entered as a .325 hitter with runners in scoring position, would have come through in either of his spots with the bases loaded. (He struck out in the fifth and flied out in the seventh.)

And maybe if third baseman Evan Longoria had cut in front of Kristopher Negrón’s gently hit ground ball, instead of letting it go through to Brandon Crawford, the Arizona Diamondbacks’ second run of the second inning doesn’t score.

As it stood, Bumgarner’s short leash allowed him to get through six innings on 82 pitches. The Diamondbacks strung together enough of their eight hits against him to score a pair of runs, and they added another following another Longoria misplay in the ninth to hand the Giants a 3-2 loss.

Posey gave them life at the end. With the Giants down to their final strike against closer Brad Boxberger, he fouled off three pitches before lining an RBI single to right field. It was the kind of professional at-bat that has become his hallmark, and the more leveraged the spot, the more likely you are to witness it.

The Giants advanced the tying run into scoring position when Andrew McCutchen followed with a single under the third baseman’s glove, but Longoria grounded out to end it.

Bumgarner finished with just three strikeouts on the night but generated 10 swinging strikes, seven on his cutter, while working consistently away. His hardest fastball didn’t crack 91 mph, but give it time before he is overpowering batters at the top of the zone. He did it once Tuesday, when David Peralta fell down while swinging through a fastball at his eyes.

And regardless of what kind of stuff Bumgarner brings to the mound, you can count on him to read swings and find weaknesses. He is his own best scouting report. His catcher’s on-the-fly analysis ranks a close second.

“Neither one of us watches a lot of video or reads the scouting reports,” Bumgarner said. “We do our studying out there during the game.”

Bumgarner and Posey both felt good about the fading action on the left-hander's changeup. So they threw more than a dozen of them, and the pitch helped them escape traffic.

Is that one of Posey's more underrated attributes? His intuition behind the plate?

"Is there anything underrated about Gerald?" Bumgarner said. "I don't know if there is."

Yes, after almost a decade together, and with a bond so much closer than the 60 feet and 6 inches that separate them, Bumgarner still calls Posey by his given name.

"I always call him Gerald," he said, swallowing a smile. "Yeah. Well, it's his name, so ..."

USAtoday.com

Madison Bumgarner solid in season debut for San Francisco Giants

Jorge Ortiz

SAN FRANCISCO — After spending the last two-plus months recovering from a broken pinkie in his left hand, Madison Bumgarner is obviously still trying to get his arm back to peak form.

The same goes for his hitting stroke.

The San Francisco Giants ace navigated through a fair amount of traffic in a solid season debut Tuesday night while getting outpitched by fellow left-hander Patrick Corbin, who earned the victory as the Arizona Diamondbacks prevailed, 3-2.

What chafed at Bumgarner wasn't so much the eight hits and two runs he allowed in six innings, or the spotty early command that eventually got better. Rather, it was a fifth-inning strikeout with the bases loaded that gnawed at one of the majors' top hitting pitchers, because it represented a wasted opportunity for the Giants to turn the game around.

San Francisco put just one runner on base off Corbin in the first four innings but scored on back-to-back doubles to open the fifth before loading the bases with no outs. That's when Corbin turned to his devilish slider, which he used to strike out Bumgarner, Gorkys Hernandez and Buster Posey to quell the threat and keep the Diamondbacks ahead 2-1.

They never trailed in ending the Giants' five-game winning streak and preserving their one-game lead in the NL West.

MLB draft: Family members of Clemens, Rollins among legacy picks

Who's MLB's top draft pick? Ranking the top 25 No. 1 picks of all time

ESPN relents: Yankees moved out of 'Sunday Night Baseball'

“You just gotta find a way to get a guy in, bases loaded and no outs,” said Bumgarner, who fouled off a hittable 2-0 fastball. “There’s no excuse for it, pitcher or not. Or at least a better opportunity than striking out.”

That same competitiveness that made Bumgarner rue the squandered chance got him through his first start of the season without his best stuff, and it’s a quality the Giants plan to lean on now that they have their staff ace back.

Despite missing not just Bumgarner but also No. 2 and No. 3 starters Johnny Cueto and Jeff Samardzija for extended stretches, the Giants entered Tuesday at 30-30, just 1½ games back of Arizona in the underwhelming division.

The AT&T crowd of 36,925 rose in excitement and anticipation as Bumgarner took the mound to the familiar strains of the Marshall Tucker Band’s *Fire on the Mountain* for the first time since mid-September, bringing a sense of optimism for a club that tied for the big leagues’ worst record last season.

“You get your guy back, it’s a lift for everybody, the rotation, the club,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “It’s good to have him back. He heard the crowd, he was excited to be back. He’s only going to get stronger, build more strength and stamina. It’s still early here. That’s his third start.”

And the first two, lasting 3 2/3 and 4 2/3 innings, were rehab assignments in the minors. So while the rest of the league is in midseason form, Bumgarner is essentially making his way through accelerated spring training.

It’s no surprise, then, that Bumgarner was hardly the imposing figure who commandeered the 2014 postseason as the Giants won their third World Series in five years. His fastball didn’t top 91 mph and his breaking pitches lacked bite early on. He didn’t get the first of his three strikeouts until the fifth inning. He elicited 10 swings and misses in 82 pitches, and only twice did he go three-up and three-down.

But what Bumgarner lacked in stuff he made up for in resourcefulness, finding success with his changeup and stranding six baserunners while escaping unscathed out of trouble in the third and fifth innings. RBI hits by Chris Owings and Kristopher Negron in the second accounted for the scoring against the big lefty.

It wasn't a pitching performance worthy of a country song, so no need to reach out to Marshall Tucker and company, but it made for a steady first step.

"As far as the pitching goes, I'd liked to have done better," Bumgarner said, "but for the first time out there I feel pretty good about it."

Now time to work on his swing.

ESPN.com

Names you should know from Day 2 of the MLB draft

David Schoenfield

Day 2 of the MLB draft doesn't get the attention of the first night's festivities, but it's a time when high-upside talent, well-known names and established college stars all go off the board. Here are some names from Tuesday's second day of this year's draft who are worth tracking through the minors.

EDITOR'S PICKS

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Law: Winners and losers from Day 1 of MLB draft

The Tigers did the right thing at the top and the Angels scored with both of their picks. Who else did well -- and who didn't?

•

2018 MLB draft order and pick-by-pick results

The 2018 MLB draft is underway with the Detroit Tigers making Auburn ace Casey Mize the No. 1 overall pick. Follow along for pick-by-pick coverage.

Kody Clemens, Tigers (2B, University of Texas)

Pick: 3.1

The youngest of Roger's four sons and the third to head to professional ball (once he signs), Kody wasn't projected to go this high even after a monster season at his dad's alma mater. He's hit .344/.432/.700 with 21 home runs for the Longhorns, leading the Big 12 in home runs and slugging percentage, and was the conference player of the year. The left-handed hitter ends up getting drafted five rounds higher than brother Kacy, an eighth-round pick last year out of UT by the Blue Jays who is currently hitting .301/.454/.624 for Class A Lansing as a first baseman.

Another interesting note: Kody becomes the highest-drafted Longhorns position player since

Drew Stubbs was a first-round pick way back in 2006. Clemens also had Tommy John surgery in 2016, and while he's played shortstop and third base in the past, he's probably strictly a second baseman moving forward.

Blaine Knight, Orioles (RHP, Arkansas)

Pick 3.9

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Some felt the Orioles overdrafted their top two picks -- high school pitcher Grayson Rodriguez and Oregon State shortstop Cadyn Grenier -- but maybe they got a steal in Knight. Pitching in the tough SEC, he's gone 10-0 with a 2.78 ERA, outdueling many of the pitchers drafted ahead of him.

The knock against him: He's 6-foot-3, but just 165 pounds, although his fastball sits 90-94 and hits 97. Unlike a lot of college pitchers, he's been handled carefully (he didn't play summer ball the past two years), and if he can add weight there is some projection left with the fastball. Arkansas has produced a couple good pitching finds in the later rounds: Cliff Lee was a fourth-round pick and Dallas Keuchel went in the seventh.

Tristan Pompey, Marlins (OF, Kentucky)

Pick: 3.11

The younger brother of Blue Jays outfielder Dalton Pompey, Tristan has hit .335/.448/.557 for the Wildcats, although the numbers weren't an improvement on his sophomore campaign (an identical OPS, in fact). He also struggled last summer with wood bats in the Cape Cod League, but he has solid all-around tools other than a weak arm.

One thing we've seen in the early returns from the Derek Jeter regime: They like tools and speed. The Marcell Ozuna trade netted speedy outfielder Magneuris Sierra and hard-throwing Sandy Alcantara. The tooled-up Lewis Brinson was the main piece in the Christian Yelich deal. First-round pick Connor Scott's best tool is standout speed. Second-round pick Osiris Johnson has big power potential, and supplemental second-round catcher Will Banfield has a high defensive ceiling. The question with Pompey, as with Brinson and Sierra and the others: Do they have the hit tool?

Jeremy Pena, Astros (SS, Maine)

Pick: 3.28

The son of former major leaguer Geronimo Pena, Jeremy went to high school in Rhode Island and has the glove and range to stick at shortstop. The question is the bat, as he's hit .308 with more strikeouts than walks in a weak conference.

Mike Siani, Reds (OF, William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia)

Pick: 4.5

A left-handed hitter and thrower from the Northeast, Keith Law had Siani ranked No. 36 on his big board while MLB.com had him ranked 40th, so this could be good value for the Reds if they can come up with enough bonus money to pull him away from his University of Virginia commitment.

Keith noted that some swing changes to improve Siani's launch angle didn't help his results this spring, and playing in the Northeast meant a lot of cold weather and a lack of strong pitching to gauge him against. He has plus speed and a strong arm (he could play both ways at Virginia given a low 90s fastball when pitching) and has the instincts to remain in center field.

Tristan Beck, Braves (RHP, Stanford)

Pick: 4.8

Beck had an outstanding freshman season at Stanford in 2016, when he went 6-5 with a 2.48 ERA and 76 strikeouts in 83 innings while allowing just two home runs. He missed all of 2017 with a stress fracture in his back, however, and though the Yankees took a flier on him in the 29th round as a draft-eligible sophomore, he returned to school.

His 2018 numbers haven't been quite as good, with a 2.99 ERA and a dip in his strikeout rate to 66 in 84 innings. While Keith didn't have Beck in his top 100, MLB.com ranked him 35th, citing an outstanding changeup to go with a 91-92 fastball and writing that, "When healthy, Beck may be the most complete college pitcher on the West Coast in this class."

William English, Angels (RHP/OF, Western International High School, Detroit)

Pick: 5.15

This is interesting because the Angels announced English as a two-way player -- as did the Rays with second-round pick Tanner Dodson (a reliever/outfielder at Cal). English is committed to Tennessee if he doesn't sign.

Drew Rasmussen, Brewers (RHP, Oregon State)

Pick: 6.21

The Rays made Rasmussen the 31st overall pick last year, even though he'd had Tommy John surgery early in his sophomore season. He returned to throw 27 innings for the Beavers and show enough to earn that high draft slot, but the Rays didn't sign him after a post-draft MRI showed some issues. Rasmussen returned to the Beavers but then underwent a second Tommy John surgery in September and missed all of 2018.

Dominic Pipkin, Phillies (RHP, Pinole Valley High School, Pinole, California)

Pick: 9.3

Keith had Pipkin ranked 64th on his big board while MLB.com also had him in its top 100. He's tall and thin and has hit 97 mph while settling in at lower velocities and just learning how to actually pitch. Pipkin is committed to Cal, so the Phillies will likely have to go way over slot to sign him (the pick value is about \$150,000).