



# CHICAGO CUBS DAILY CLIPS

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April 14, 2018

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### **Cubs.com**

Darvish struggles in Wrigley debut for Cubs

By Carrie Muskat

CHICAGO -- It wasn't Yu Darvish's day.

Making his Wrigley Field debut for the Cubs, Darvish took the loss in Atlanta's 4-0 victory over Chicago on a chilly Friday. Preston Tucker hit a three-run homer and another run scored on a wild pitch by Darvish in a long fifth inning.

The problem wasn't the home run as much as a balk called against Darvish in the fifth during Freddie Freeman's at-bat when Ozzie Albies was on second. Both Darvish and Cubs manager Joe Maddon disagreed with home-plate umpire Bruce Dreckman's call.

"Obviously, everything went south after the balk, which was not a balk. It was not a balk, but it was called a balk," Maddon said. "It seemed to create a little bit of awkwardness. [Darvish] was doing well up to that point ... then it came apart really quickly."

Darvish said he became "frustrated" after the call.

"The umpire told me it's because I paused in the motion," Darvish said. "Over the course of my career, I've done that many times and it's never called balk. Even Freeman told me it wasn't a balk."

Darvish did strike out Freeman but the next two batters got hits and set up Tucker's homer, the fourth three-run blast they've served up in the last four games.

"The three-run homer really hurt," Maddon said. "We've had this bad run of bad luck regarding three-run homers."

This was Darvish's first start at Wrigley since signing a six-year deal in mid February, and he apparently has no trouble dealing with the cold weather. The game-time temperature was 42 degrees and the 17 mph north wind made it feel like 34. Darvish was in short sleeves.

"I was surprised how cold it was but I told myself I'll perform better if the weather is colder," Darvish said. "When I was on the mound I didn't feel any cold."

The Cubs could not muster much against Braves starter Anibal Sanchez, who gave up three hits and struck out six over six innings. Their best chance came in the third when they loaded the bases with two outs as Jason Heyward walked, Ian Happ singled and Kris Bryant was hit by a pitch. Sanchez ended the threat when he got Willson Contreras to ground out.

The Cubs now have been shut out for the third time this season. They miss Anthony Rizzo, who is on the disabled list, but that's not the problem, Happ said.

"I think we have enough guys in the clubhouse and the lineup every day that no one guy will make the difference between it being a good offense or bad offense," Happ said. "We are a good offense no matter who is in the lineup."

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Opportunity knocks: The Braves sent 10 batters to the plate in the fifth. Albies doubled with one out and Darvish was called for a balk on the fourth pitch of Freeman's at-bat, which upset the right-hander. Darvish then struck out Freeman but Albies scored on a wild pitch during Nick Markakis' at-bat. Markakis singled and Kurt Suzuki doubled to set up Tucker's home run, which bounced off a patio deck in right and onto Sheffield Avenue.

Leading off: Happ was a last minute sub at the top of the lineup for Albert Almora Jr., who has been sick. Happ went 2-for-4, and now has hit safely in three straight games. The Cubs' offense has scuffled, scoring 11 runs in their seven losses.

"You look around this room, look at our lineup every day, that's not going to be an issue," Happ said of the offense. "I think we're doing a good job of putting a plan together. We've hit some balls hard at people. There will come a point when everybody starts clicking at the same time."

#### YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

The Braves had a runner at second when Sanchez bunted down the first-base line in the fourth. Catcher Contreras picked up the ball and tried to throw to first baseman Bryant, but the ball sailed past him. Sanchez ran inside the line and was called out because of interference, ending the inning. Contreras fired the ball to Bryant.

"We've been trying to work on the touch pass over the middle, the Kenny Stabler thing," Maddon said. "But if you saw the replay, the runner was way inside the line. Under those circumstances, I would encourage the catcher to try to hit the runner because he's that far in. We need to work on downshifting a bit on the throw."

#### HE SAID IT

"It never helps to not have Rizzo. We have to win games like that. We're not getting anything going. A couple good at-bats, couple well-struck balls but nothing with real consistency. Their pitcher had us off balance the entire game. He doesn't throw as hard as he used to but he really knows how to pitch. He pitched well but we have to do a better job offensively." -- Maddon

#### MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

The Cubs had a runner at first and nobody out in the sixth when Bryant hit a potential double-play ball to third baseman Ryan Flaherty, who threw to second baseman Albies for a forceout. Bryant was called safe but the Braves challenged the ruling. After a review, the call stood. Sanchez then got Contreras to hit into a 4-6-3 double play and end the inning.

#### UP NEXT

Jose Quintana will make his Wrigley Field debut on Saturday. He's coming off a solid start against the Brewers in which he gave up three hits over six scoreless innings. Last year, the lefty was 5-0 with a 4.76 ERA in eight starts at Wrigley after being acquired from the White Sox. First pitch is scheduled for 1:20 p.m. CT.

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#### **Cubs.com**

Sanchez interferes at first in fourth inning  
By Mark Bowman

CHICAGO -- Braves shortstop Dansby Swanson's attempt to break a scoreless tie by essentially stealing a run was denied when Anibal Sanchez was called out for baserunner interference to end the top of the fourth inning of Friday afternoon's 4-0 win over the Cubs at Wrigley Field.

Swanson broke toward third base before Yu Darvish delivered a pitch that Sanchez bunted down the first-base line. He alertly continued toward a vacant plate as Cubs catcher Willson Contreras fielded the ball approximately 30 feet up the line.

Contreras' throw sailed wide of first base, but home-plate umpire Bruce Dreckman immediately called interference on Sanchez, who ran through the infield grass on his way toward third base.

The Braves knew the right call was made, but there was some concern about Contreras throwing so violently in Sanchez's direction.

Cubs manager Joe Maddon said there are instances where it calls for the ball to be thrown at a player who might be running out of the baseline. But he also indicated he would have liked to have seen a softer throw.

"We've been trying to work on the touch pass over the middle, the Kenny Stabler thing," Maddon said. "But if you saw the replay, the runner was way inside the line. Under those circumstances, I would encourage the catcher to try to hit the runner because he's that far in. We need to work on downshifting a bit on the throw."

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### **Cubs.com**

Maddon encourages Baez's emotion for game

By Carrie Muskat

CHICAGO -- Cubs manager Joe Maddon said he was surprised by Pirates manager Clint Hurdle's criticism of Javier Baez's play, and he complimented his second baseman for how he responded to it.

Hurdle said he didn't like it when Baez flipped his bat after popping up in the seventh inning on Wednesday, saying, "Where's the respect for the game?"

When it happened, one of Baez's teammates talked to him about the bat flip, and after the game, he said he had learned from the experience. And then on Thursday, Baez responded to Hurdle's comments.

"No one plays this game harder than me," Baez said. "But you don't go out there and talk trash about someone."

"To be honest, I have a lot of things I could say right now. I don't control what's out there, what people say about me. I'm just going to keep playing my game."

Maddon addressed the back-and-forth exchange before Chicago's series-opening matinee against Atlanta.

"I was surprised by it," Maddon said Friday about Hurdle's comments. "I did not see it coming at all. Clint and I have had a great relationship. I don't understand why he did what he did. I do believe in not interfering with other groups."

"I thought Javy did a great job in his response and I was very proud of him," Maddon said. "First of all, I didn't see him throwing the bat and missed that completely. When his response to whomever spoke to him and the fact that he owned up to it, my God, what else could you want out of one of your guys?"

Will this add to the Cubs-Pirates rivalry?

"I just know it will motivate Javy," Maddon said. "Javy is motivated anyways. It will be curious to watch him perform in Pittsburgh from now on."

Maddon hasn't said anything to Baez because he felt the Cubs' players took care of the matter themselves, and he said it was a "non-issue."

"If you went to Puerto Rico, [Baez] fits in real well," Maddon said. "You wouldn't be that concerned with how he plays the game. He plays with a joy."

And Maddon likes Baez's flair.

"I don't want him to be robotic," Maddon said. "I never want to take that joy out of his game."

"I love the way Javy plays baseball," Maddon said. "I love the way [Willson] Contreras plays baseball. I love the emotion and the passion. You get the other end of that, you get the guy with none of that drive and is lethargic. I would much prefer [Baez] than the lethargic approach any day of the week."

Worth noting

- Kris Bryant made his first start at first base since June 24, 2017, subbing for Anthony Rizzo, who is on the disabled list because of tightness in his lower back. Bryant didn't need to borrow one of Rizzo's gloves but did do some early work before Friday's game with infield coach Brian Butterfield.

"It's just a matter of knowing what to do in certain situations," Bryant said. "I'm ready for it."

The key thing is being in the right place at the right time.

"It's just getting to the bag," Bryant said. "With certain right-handed hitters, you'll be playing a little more pull. As a third baseman, you want the first baseman to get there pretty quick so you're not trying to hit a moving target. That's my big thing is to get there and not be a moving target."

When Bryant won the National League Most Valuable Player Award in 2016, he moved around quite a bit, playing third base and the outfield. He likes being a little uncomfortable.

"Anywhere from taking cold showers to just putting yourself out of that comfort zone is big, especially in sports," Bryant said. "You don't ever want to feel comfortable or complacent, because that's when you start to go backwards."

Maddon has encouraged players to become more versatile because it augments their value.

"There was a time when it was frowned upon," Maddon said. "If you're a second baseman at [Class A] ball or Double-A, there's no way I'm going to put you at shortstop or third base. I don't want to retard your development. When it comes down to it, when the bat's ready, you're ready, so we need to have a position for you."

- Rizzo is eligible to come off the disabled list on Monday and should be ready, Maddon said.

"He's doing really well," Maddon said of the first baseman. "I think he could play today if it was necessary and there weren't the restrictions of the DL."

- Triple-A Iowa won, 6-3, over Nashville on Thursday to give manager Marty Pevey his 1,000th managerial win and 356th with the Iowa Cubs.

"He's a great partner, and in Spring Training, he does a wonderful job in so many different areas," Maddon said of Pevey.

- Cubs outfielder Kyle Schwarber hosted some Marines and their families on Thursday at Wrigley Field. Schwarber provided each guest with a T-shirt, answered questions and gave them a behind-the-scenes look into the new batting tunnels.

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## ESPNChicago.com

Yu Darvish's post-balk meltdown unearths some ugly skeletons

By Bradford Doolittle

CHICAGO -- If Chicago Cubs starter Yu Darvish isn't used to scrutiny by now, he probably never will be. After a rough home debut at Wrigley Field, that scrutiny will only get that much more concentrated.

Darvish has been under the spotlight for most of his athletic career, but it has been especially intense over the past few months. First there was the pair of unsightly World Series starts, including Game 7, that punctuated his brief career with the Los Angeles Dodgers last autumn. Two starts, 3½ innings, nine runs allowed and two losses.

Then came a protracted stay on the free-agent market that finally ended when Chicago signed him to a six-year, \$126 million deal just before spring training. And of course that contract has Darvish under the microscope to start the 2018 campaign.

Under that microscope, Friday's specimen wasn't a pretty one. Darvish wriggled his way through four scoreless innings by stranding six Braves baserunners, but fell apart in the fifth inning of Atlanta's 4-0 victory Friday. The Cubs have now lost three of their first four games this season at Wrigley Field and fell below .500 at 6-7.

"I thought he had good stuff," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "I thought he got better, getting his backdoor slider in there. Stuff was fine. Just blew up in one at-bat."

Preston Tucker hit the big homer, but Atlanta's Ozzie Albies was the real culprit in the unseating of Darvish. He'll do that to a lot of pitchers over the course of his career. Cubs fans probably saw a little of Javier Baez in Albies on Friday, with his headlong diving stab to rob Kyle Schwarber of a base hit in the fourth, and another dive, this one to beat Jason Heyward's throw into second for a double to get things started in Darvish's fateful inning.

With Albies dancing off second base, Darvish was called for a balk. Darvish, catcher Willson Contreras and Maddon all pleaded their case with plate umpire Bruce Dreckman to no avail. Darvish struck out Freddie Freeman, but then proceeded to uncork a wild pitch to Nick Markakis as Albies raced home for the game's first run.

"Obviously, everything went south after the balk," Maddon said, "which was not a balk. Called a balk, but it was not a balk. It seemed to create a little bit of awkwardness, because he was doing really well to that point. Really well."

It was that kind of post-adversity result that led to so much hand-wringing over Darvish's response to the big stage of the Fall Classic. And until he comes through again on that big stage, that's going to be part of the larger discussion around the talented righty. Darvish is a potent, top-of-the-rotation ace who has the highest strikeout rate of any qualifying pitcher in baseball since he reached the majors in 2012. The focus on his troubles is not fair, but that's sports in the 21st century.

What happened after that first run was not a data point in Darvish's favor. With the bases now clear, and the score a manageable 1-0, Darvish gave up a single to Markakis, a double to Kurt Suzuki and a missile-like, three-run homer to Tucker. The home run came on the slider that has given Darvish so much trouble of late. According to ESPN Stats & Information, all three homers Darvish has allowed so far have come off sliders. He allowed just five homers with the pitch all of last season.

“The first four innings up until Freeman, that was great,” Darvish said through an interpreter. “But after the balk, I was thrown off-guard. It went downhill from there.”

With the bases again clear after the home run, he issued two walks -- one to opposing starter Anibal Sanchez -- and a bunt single. That was it for Darvish, who burned through 105 pitches during his 4⅓ innings.

“I was thinking six innings [for Darvish],” Maddon said. “Then it came apart really quickly.”

What made the day particularly disappointing for Darvish was that he was so sharp in his previous outing, a win against Milwaukee in which he allowed just one run and two hits over six innings. After Friday’s game, Darvish now has a 6.00 ERA to show for his three starts during his nascent Cubs career.

“I definitely look at the good parts of the game,” Darvish said. “As well what I can take away, like the home run to Tucker today. I can look back and make improvements. I look at both the good and the bad.”

Darvish is unfailingly honest in his answers, offered up through his interpreter during postgame media sessions. So it wasn’t surprising that he admitted that the balk -- just the fourth of his career -- got to him.

“[I was] frustrated,” Darvish said. “Again, because it had never occurred before. It was in a critical situation, and then it happened. So that’s frustrating.”

Honesty is good, but effective pitches are better. The narrative about Darvish’s perceived failing in pressurized spots might be unfair, but it didn’t appear out of a vacuum. Yet the track record is mostly terrific. Darvish is, after all, a pitcher who has made four All-Star teams and has finished as high as second in the Cy Young balloting. His World Series was unfortunate, but before that, he pitched well in both the National League Division and NL Championship Series.

Darvish is in a tough spot from a perception standpoint, at least if you buy into the idea that you're viewed through your most recent results. Since the beginning of the 2017 World Series, he is 0-3 with a 8.84 ERA in five starts. In between the Series and this season, he signed a \$126 million contract with one of the most visible franchises in sports.

Scrutiny comes with that territory. With a few more innings like Friday's fifth, the spotlight on Darvish will get only brighter.

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### **NBC Sports Chicago**

Glanville: The intertwining of baseball's cultures and its unwritten rules

By Doug Glanville

I was sitting outside the Cubs dugout in Thursday's 6-1 loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates.

To close the bottom of the seventh inning, Efen Navarro strikes out with Jason Heyward on first base. Immediately, there is a mad dash of musical gloves. Ben Zobrist is making arrangements to get Heyward his glove so Heyward doesn't have to come all the way back to the dugout, but Zobrist is playing infield this upcoming inning and it is customary for outfielders to bring outfielders their glove. So he picks up



Heyward's glove, hands it to Kyle Schwarber and tasks him to bring Heyward his hardware. It is the courteous thing to do.

These examples are part of the spirit of baseball's unwritten and often unspoken rules that get overshadowed by the latest controversy of beanball or how Javier Baez is supposed to handle hitting a frustrating pop-up. Most of the spirit of these rules are centered around sportsmanship and respect, courtesy and ideals. Passed down generation to generation in a sport that cares about its legacy of traditions.

Any baseball team is composed of players that at the start of any season, will spend more time with each other than they will their own families. It goes beyond a temporary arrangement with the most intimate details of your life exposed to this new family. You learn people, you begin to fully understand from where they come, country, cities, towns, or neighborhoods. It often causes you to re-think the assumptions we tend to make about people because of the boxes we check. It forces you to go beyond the frustrating pop-up but the off-camera, the post-game, the whispers in the corner of the locker room.

And deeper I went when I played two years in Baez's home country of Puerto Rico. It turned into a life-changing experience where an entire community embraced me, the kid from New Jersey, as family. I also learned about a different way to play the game, one which centered around passion, around expression from the salsa dance team to the band in the stands to the mascot that dove across the dugout. It was not necessarily what my unwritten rules endorsed up until that point, and what I had assumed to be true about the game, but I learned quickly that this was just another way to do things, another way to bring culture into a game that involves so many different groups of people.

So in Clint Hurdle's comments about Baez and Willson Contreras on their face, fell into the generalization box we all can fall prey to at times. He knows, as he has shown as a successful manager, that there is a difference between superficial understanding and the knowledge only your team has about their own player. Who is the player in the weight room after the game, who looks after his teammates when they are struggling, who lights the fire on the team when needed, who makes everyone laugh at the right time. This knowledge is often shared internally inside the sacred home of a baseball team, that what you see on the field is a direct form of expression, but it also does not tell the entire picture. One which a manager will have intimate knowledge. Therefore, it is their teammates and those in the team's daily family, that will have the most valid input about the expectations of their players, love it from afar or not.

Cubs manager Joe Maddon has coached a life of working with young players. Patiently advancing their maturation to recognize that although this game is for the young, it is a requirement for it to be for the mature too. They are learning and many of these unwritten conversations can be constructive even when hurtful and full of presumption. You must know yourself, leave it all on the field, before the field is no longer an option as you age out. Like any player, lines will be pushed, an offense to a grizzled veteran will occur, or a player from two generations prior will wrinkle his nose about the slide rule as I have from time to time, but we also must have trust in the game to preserve what is important to its future. It's culture. And I contend that this culture must be informed from all of us who love the game, all of us who play the game, but first we must understand who they are, just like Puerto Rico took the time to do for me.

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## **NBC Sports Chicago**

Joe Maddon responds to Clint Hurdle's comments on Javy Baez: 'It reveals you more than it reveals the person you're talking about'

By Vinnie Duber

Don't judge a book by looking at the cover.

Whether you learned that lesson from your parents, from a teacher or from Bo Diddley, the message is universally accepted as a good one.

But in practice, sadly, it's not quite as well-adopted.

It's the message that Joe Maddon delivered Friday morning, a day after controversy arose because someone failed to remember that lesson.

That someone was Pittsburgh Pirates skipper Clint Hurdle, who criticized Javy Baez and questioned his "respect for the game" after Baez emphatically tossed a bat in frustration during Wednesday night's game. It wasn't exactly an unexpected moment from a player who seems to do everything at full go and has won tons of fans for his style of play. But it didn't appeal to Hurdle, whose team lost that game by a 13-5 score.

Baez defended himself after Thursday's game, defended his work ethic, defended his style of play. The following morning, Maddon said he was thrilled with how his player handled things and took the opportunity provided by Hurdle's judgments to offer an important life lesson to anyone paying attention — including Hurdle.

"I was surprised by it. I did not see it coming at all. Clint and I have had a great relationship, I've known him for many, many years. I don't really understand why he did what he did," Maddon said a day after controversy arose when Hurdle attacked Baez for not respecting the game in response to the Cubs second baseman tossing a bat during Wednesday's game.

"I've had commentary, and I don't deny that I have, but to try to disseminate exactly what I think about a guy on another team based on superficial reasons, I'll never go there. I don't know the guy enough. I'm not in the clubhouse with him. I don't have these conversations. I don't know what kind of a teammate he is. I don't know any of that stuff. I would really be hesitant.

"(It's) just like people making decisions about (Cubs relief pitcher Pedro) Strop just because of the way he wears his hat, or (Minnesota Twins closer and former Cub) Fernando Rodney. I think most of the time when you hear critical commentary, it's really, pretty much, self evaluation. It's about what you believe, it's about your judgmental component. It reveals you more than it reveals the person you're talking about. I've always believed that.

"So whenever you want to be hypercritical of somebody, just understand you're pretty much revealing yourself and what your beliefs are more than you are being critical or evaluating somebody, because you have not spent one second in that person's skin."

Who knows if Hurdle saw what Baez said after Wednesday's game, when he owned up to the "ugliness" of his bat toss on the pop up and talked about how a teammate approached him about his reaction and used it as a teaching moment.

But Maddon is among the many who watch this team on a daily basis who hope none of this changes how Baez plays the game. Baez is hands down one of the game's most exciting players at the plate, in the field and as a base runner. To tamp down his enthusiasm wouldn't just be bad for fans — it could cost the Cubs games. Baez is a flashy player, and all that flash turns into spectacular plays, must-see tags, huge home runs and game-winning trips around the bases.

"If you went to Puerto Rico, he fits in pretty well. You wouldn't really be all that concerned about how he plays the game or the methods. This is how we view things here," Maddon said. "For me, he plays with a joy. I also believe that guys that are really good at this game and in some regards do a lot of it easily, you almost want to accuse them of being flamboyant.

"I don't want him to be robotic. How about the play he made at shortstop yesterday? Is that flamboyant or is that outstanding? ... Whether people describe it as flamboyant, I would have to believe that if you're paying a good dollar to come watch the Cubs play, you're looking for that flamboyant play that he's able to make that nobody else can.

"I love the way Javy plays baseball. I love the way Contreras plays baseball. I love the emotion and the passion. ... I would much prefer that than the lethargic approach any day of the week."

As for how Hurdle's comments will reverberate with Baez himself, Maddon thinks they will have an effect, one that will be evident the next time the Cubs and Pirates get together.

"I just know it's going to motivate Javy, I really believe that," Maddon said. "Javy's motivated anyway, but I'll be eager to watch him perform in Pittsburgh from now on."

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Column: Former Cubs pitching coach Chris Bosio has no hard feelings over firing  
By Paul Sullivan

If anyone was going to have a job for life in the Cubs organization, Chris Bosio seemed like the perfect candidate.

When Bosio came to the North Side as pitching coach at the start of the Cubs' rebuild in 2012, many of us figured he was here because his old friend, Dale Sveum, was hired as manager.

But Bosio proved his worth immediately, outlasted Sveum and Rick Renteria and was instrumental in the development of Jake Arrieta, Kyle Hendricks, Pedro Strop and other pitchers while helping to make the Cubs an annual contender.

But Bosio shockingly was fired in the purge of some of Joe Maddon's coaches after the 2017 season, and he left without much of a goodbye. When asked for reasons for the split, Maddon and Cubs President Theo Epstein stressed the need for a "new voice," which basically is sports lingo for "it's none of your business."

Bosio left town without saying his piece and eventually wound up with the same job with the Tigers, joining another crusty veteran in manager Ron Gardenhire.

“He’s a very intelligent baseball guy, and with pitchers he thinks beyond the lines and outside the box and has a lot of plans,” Gardenhire said. “I enjoy that kind of stuff. We’re all trying to get into this new world, us older guys, and ‘Bos’ has been in it and is helping me.

“We’re communicating and getting to know each other. It’s a good working situation, and these (pitchers) have to be happy they have a guy like him. You know he’s tough. He’s tough on love, but he says it like it is. That’s kind of my way too. I like to lay it out there and see where we are.”

Bosio never shied away from giving his opinion on things in Chicago. So why stay mute after his firing?

“It was time to move on,” he said before a game last week against the White Sox. “There’s nothing really to be said.”

So he’s OK with the Cubs providing the narrative for the decision?

“I have a job to do here, and that’s the way I generally go about life,” he said.

Bosio said he had no hard feelings about the decision, which left many of us scratching our heads.

“I have a lot of great memories, a lot of great friends,” he said. “A World Series ring, three National League championships the last three years, We came from the very bottom of the NL Central to the top and were there every year and a couple of wins from getting back to the World Series again last year. How can you have any hard feelings about anything? Everybody gave their heart and soul, and I wish them nothing but the best of luck.”

The Cubs have a new pitching coach in Jim Hickey, Maddon’s old sidekick with the Rays, and seem more than happy with the way he has handled the staff. They entered the weekend ranked 11th in ERA at 3.47, while the rebuilding Tigers were 14th with a 3.72 ERA. Bosio took a leave this week while dealing with unspecified health issues, but Gardenhire suggested it’s nothing serious and they want him to “just sit back and relax a little.”

Last week Bosio was excited that Arrieta was back and finally starting his season after missing part of spring training. The two Cubs exiles spoke in spring training after Arrieta signed with the Phillies.

“He’s happy with where he’s at, hungry and dying to get out there,” Bosio said. “We said our words to each other. He’s like a younger brother to me, just like a lot of those guys are. I’m so appreciative of how those guys went about their business when we were together and wish them all the best in their careers. They know that.”

Bosio said he also has communicated with some of his former Cubs pitchers, but now is time for everyone to move on and look to the future.

“There were some text messages when everything went down, but I want to give them their space,” he said. “They should be concentrating on their season. I would expect the same out of any one of our guys who left. There’s always going to be lines of communication, but this is a big year for all of us. We’re trying to do a lot of things in Detroit. And there are a lot of expectations on that team on the North Side, like we had. ...

“When you accomplish what we accomplished and invest the way they have with the stadium, like the Rickettses have, and the baseball operations department, the expectations are to win it all. But that’s

the way it is when you build that franchise. I wouldn't expect anything less, and their fans shouldn't either."

Like most managers and coaches, Bosio knows nothing is "forever" in baseball. He rejected the notion that his place in Cubs history meant he was going to be with them as long as he wanted. No one is immune from change in baseball, no matter how good your resume looks.

"It's hard for any coach to stay in one place for a long time," he said. "A perfect case in point is Theo. Who ever would have thought Theo would have left Boston after what he had accomplished there? There are a lot of good people in this game, and opportunity is everywhere if you keep working hard and doing your thing.

"I had plenty of opportunities. I'm hopeful there will be more along the way, but I'm happy where I'm at and hope to be here a long time."

Revisionist history: Mark McGwire hit what was then a major-league-record 70 home runs in 1998, dueling with Sammy Sosa all summer in what was called the Great Home Run Race.

Twenty years later, long after admitting to PED use, McGwire told The Athletic columnist Jayson Stark he could have done it without steroids.

"Absolutely," he said. "I just know myself. I just know. I was a born home run hitter. I mean, unfortunately, I did (take PEDs). And I've regretted that. I've talked about that. I regretted it. I didn't need to. That's the thing. Didn't need to.

"But I know. Deep down inside, I know me as a hitter. And I know what I did in that box. And I know how strong my mind is. And I know what kind of hitter I became. And yes. Yes. Definitely."

It's funny how sure he is of himself two decades later.

If he was so sure of his ability to do it without PEDs in 1998, he should have tried to do it while clean. Unfortunately, he can't go back in time. McGwire would have been better off keeping his thoughts to himself on this, but when your ego is that inflated, I guess you can't help yourself.

Modest proposal: The actual attendance at Monday's rescheduled White Sox-Rays game on the South Side was 974, according to a report from the Tampa Bay Times. The paid attendance was 10,377, which will go down in the box score as the official number. If the Sox were smart, they would offer free tickets to the Cubs-Sox series in late September to anyone with a ticket stub from that game. Only true diehards would come out on a day like that. They should be rewarded for keeping the faith and perhaps have their names on the video boards in tribute.

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Column: When Joe Maddon and Clint Hurdle clash it's never a dull moment

By Paul Sullivan

When a teammate told Javier Baez he was wrong to flip his bat dramatically and not run hard on a popup Wednesday night, Baez took the criticism to heart and apologized afterward for setting a bad example for his young fans.

Baez surely didn't realize the story would take on a life of its own.

When Pirates manager Clint Hurdle commented on the bat flip, questioning Baez's "respect" for the game, Baez calmly disputed the charge.

"I bust my ass every day," he said, informing his critics to "save" their opinions.

That might have been the end of it, but Cubs manager Joe Maddon entered the steel-cage match Friday with a figurative folding chair, verbally bashing Hurdle with some not-so-veiled criticism of the veteran manager's old-school thinking.

"It reveals you more than it reveals the person you are talking about," Maddon said of Hurdle's criticism.

In so many words, Baez and Maddon were saying: "We can police ourselves, so mind your own bleeping business."

No matter where one stands on the debate over Baez's bat flipping, the fact the Cubs and Pirates are engaging in a spitting match this early in the season is interesting. It shows the Cubs aren't going to back down to any insult and the Pirates aren't afraid to call out what may be the cockiest team in baseball.

It's great theater, and we can only hope it continues when they meet again in Pittsburgh on May 28.

It's reminiscent of the Cubs-Cardinals spat in the summer of 2015, when Anthony Rizzo allegedly was hit on purpose and Maddon accused an unnamed Cardinal of employing mob mentality.

"I don't know who put out the hit," Maddon said that day. "I don't know if Tony Soprano is in the dugout. I didn't see him in there, (but) we're not going to put up with that from them or anyone else."

Back then the Cubs were the underdogs and Maddon was trying to get in the Cardinals' heads. It seemed to work, and when the teams met in the National League Division Series the Cubs upset the Cardinals 3-1 to advance to the NL Championship Series.

It was a strategical maneuver former manager Dusty Baker had used in 2003 when the Cubs played a big September series against the Cardinals and their manager, Tony La Russa, accused Kerry Wood of throwing at hitters.

"I've heard Tony say things before," Baker said. "As far as I'm concerned, tricks are for kids, and I don't take kindly to threats."

The Cubs won four of five in the series, and Baker and La Russa engaged in a shouting match from the opposing dugouts during one memorable game. Doug Glanville, now an analyst with NBCSCH, said Friday it was probably the best series he ever had been involved in during his career.

Maddon and Hurdle could make this year's Cubs-Pirates series one to watch. Maybe the Baez thing will blow over, though we still haven't heard from Willson Contreras, whom Hurdle also ripped for complaining to the plate umpire.

Maddon insisted he has a great relationship with Hurdle, in stark contrast to Baker and La Russa, who obviously had no use for each other.

But even if the Hurdle-Maddon relationship gets strained by Maddon's comments, the two men couldn't possibly replicate the Baker-LaRussa shouting match because the Wrigley Field dugouts are now so far apart they couldn't hear each other yell.

One thing we do know is Hurdle can't match Maddon when it comes to confusing everyone with his stream of consciousness. Asked Friday about all the "sideshows" going on with the team early in the season, he said the Cubs don't try to "hide" anything.

"If we can't give you an answer, we'll tell you we can't tell you," Maddon said. "Otherwise the best way to disarm is ... the protagonist from the Tom Clancy movies, the Jack Bryant theory ... it wasn't only the president's friend, it was his best friend, the dude in 'Clear and Present Danger' ... with the drug bust in the Caribbean.

"Why run away from that answer? That was Jack's advice to the president. Where the spin doctors are trying to create this smokescreen to throw everybody off course, I love the way our guys do this, and they have our support. We're all going to screw up on occasion and say some stupid things, but we try to keep it to a minimum."

What's Maddon talking about? Who knows?

It looks as if it's going to be one of those seasons. Keep the beer cold.

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Cubs' bats stay cold during listless 4-0 loss to the Braves  
By Teddy Greenstein

Bad luck at Wrigley Field on Friday the 13th?

Yes, if you plucked this game in the office lottery. The first-pitch temperature was 42 degrees with 17 mph winds out of the north, and the listless Cubs managed four hits in their 4-0 loss to the Braves.

The only bit of bad luck on the field, in the Cubs' minds, came when Yu Darvish was called for a balk.

Both he and manager Joe Maddon insisted it was a faulty call, with Darvish saying he has never been flagged for looking back the runner at second during his two-piece delivery.

Valid or not, it had a venomous effect on the veteran right-hander in his first home start as a Cub.

"I got thrown off guard," Darvish said via interpreter Daichi Sekizaki. "It went downhill from there."

That it did. The fifth-inning balk preceded this ugly string: wild pitch, single, double, scorched home run by Preston Tucker, walk, bunt single, walk.

Next thing you knew, a scoreless game had turned into a 4-0 deficit and Darvish was surrendering the ball to Maddon, who blew on his hands while strolling to the mound.

"Everything went south after the balk, which was not a balk," Maddon said. "It seemed to create awkwardness."

Darvish is 0-1 with a 6.00 ERA and two fifth-inning knockouts in three starts. Not good.

The team's larger issue is an offense that produced one run over the last two games.

Ian Happ had two of the Cubs' four hits Friday, and he was only in the lineup because fellow outfielder Albert Almora Jr. is suffering from an illness.

"Wrigley can be a tough place to hit for the first couple of months," Happ said. "(But) both teams are dealing with it."

The return of Anthony Rizzo should help. Maddon expects him to return to the lineup Monday when he's eligible to come off the disabled list for a sore back.

Said Happ: "Tony's a great player ... but we are a good offense no matter who's in the lineup."

Happ also took a bit of exception to a question about his current 5-for-9 stretch being a small sample size. Happ said his 5-for-32 start was the small sample size, adding: "Just wait until the end of the year."

Kris Bryant, who played first base and handled some tough chances, surely wishes Rizzo would come back ASAP. Darvish misfired on a pickoff attempt. Catcher Willson Contreras whizzed a throw past Bryant on an Anibal Sanchez bunt that resulted in an out for interference. And after shortstop Addison Russell made a sliding stop on a grounder, his throw hit the lip of the grass and skipped past Bryant's glove. It was ruled a single.

Bryant said before the game he actually likes feeling uncomfortable because that can be a path to progress. He even sometimes takes cold showers because "sometimes I need to trick myself. Sometimes I take ground balls in a different position or try something new off the tee or in the cage just to switch things up."

It must be uncomfortable to have Contreras fire a fastball at your face from about 45 feet.

Said Maddon: "We're working with Willson on downshifting the throw a bit ... (develop) a Kenny Stabler touch pass over the middle."

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Joe Maddon: Clint Hurdle's tough talk reveals more about Hurdle than Javier Baez

By Teddy Greenstein

Joe Maddon was taken aback by Pirates manager Clint Hurdle's criticism of Javier Baez, saying, "I don't understand why he did what he did."

But Maddon was more than prepared to respond Friday.

The Cubs manager spoke specifically about Baez ("He plays with a joy. ... Billy Williams said he runs the bases like Willie Mays") and generally about how odd it was for Hurdle to come down on a 25-year-old player from another team for reacting to an at-bat that yielded an infield pop-up.



“Whenever you want to be hypercritical of somebody,” Maddon said, “just understand you are revealing yourself and your beliefs more than you’re evaluating somebody — because you have not spent one second in that person’s skin.

“I’ve had commentary. But to try to disseminate what I think about a guy on another team based on superficial reasons, I’ll never go there.

“I don’t know the guy enough. I’m not in the clubhouse. I haven’t had these conversations. I don’t know what kind of teammate he is. ... Just like people making decisions on (Pedro) Strop based on wearing his hat (tilted). I think most of the time when you hear critical commentary, it’s self-evaluation. ... It reveals you more than it reveals the person you are talking about.”

To review: Baez flipped his bat in frustration Wednesday against the Pirates, popping up toward the end of a two-homer night and Cubs victory. He also dogged it to first, as players often do on obvious outs.

Unprompted, Hurdle responded Thursday morning: “You watch their kid flip that bat last night? Where’s the respect for the game? The guy hits four homers in two days, so that means you can take your bat and throw it 15, 20 feet in the air when you pop up like you should have hit your fifth home run?”

Had Hurdle done his homework, he would have known Baez essentially apologized after the game, admitting it was a bad look because kids were watching. Strop, the veteran reliever, pulled Baez aside, and the young infielder listened.

Maddon applauded the Cubs’ self-policing, saying it reflected a strong culture.

But Hurdle’s comments prompted Baez to say after Thursday’s game: “I bust my ass every day to play hard. I don’t think anyone plays this game harder than me. I respect 90 (feet).

“If I have to apologize, I have to apologize to my teammates and my manager, not to the other team. We’re playing a game, we’re winning 13-something (Wednesday) and I think it got to him. ... People who talk about me, they can save it. I don’t really care about it.”

Maddon said of Baez: “I thought Javy did a great job in his response. I’m very proud of him ... He owned up to it. ... How old is Javy — 24, 25? Just put yourself in that position. When I was coming out of Lafayette playing some ball and getting released, I was an absolute idiot. And I’m not saying Javy is. I’m saying give young people an opportunity to make some mistakes. The mistakes of youth are preferable to the wisdom of old age any day of the week.”

Maddon said he and Hurdle, by the way, “have a great relationship.”

The Cubs and Pirates will meet 16 more times this season.

“I believe Javy is motivated anyway,” Maddon said. “But I will be curious and eager to watch him perform in Pittsburgh.”

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Ian Happ replaces ill Albert Almora Jr. in Cubs lineup

By Teddy Greenstein

The Cubs have made a lineup change for Friday's game against the Braves, replacing center fielder Albert Almora Jr. with Ian Happ, who will lead off. Almora has been dealing with an illness.

The lineup against right-hander Anibal Sanchez (0-0, 2.25 ERA) looks like this for the 1:20 p.m. start at chilly Wrigley Field:

1. Happ, CF
2. Tommy La Stella, 3B
3. Kris Bryant, 1B
4. Willson Contreras, C
5. Kyle Schwarber, LF
6. Addison Russell, SS
7. Javier Baez, 2B
8. Jason Heyward, RF
9. Yu Darvish, P

Note that Bryant is playing first base with Anthony Rizzo on the disabled list. Manager Joe Maddon expects Rizzo to be back in the lineup Monday.

Bryant took ground balls at first before the game and said of the most challenging plays: "It's just getting to the bag on time. With certain right-handed hitters, you're going to play with a little more pull, and as a third baseman, you want the first baseman to get there pretty quick, so you're not trying to hit a moving target."

Bryant also said he actually likes feeling out of his element: "I kind of strive to be uncomfortable because it's the only way to make progress. I mean, anywhere from taking cold showers ... to being out of that comfort zone is big in sports. You don't ever want to feel like you're comfortable or complacent because that's where you start to go backward."

Cold showers, really?

"Yeah, absolutely," he replied. "Sometimes I need to trick myself. Sometimes I take ground balls in a different position or try something new off the tee or in the cage just to switch things up."

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

Both sides in the Javy Baez bat-flip flap have something to offer baseball

By Rick Morrissey

Let's try to see the point of view of two colliding landmasses.

On one side is Pirates manager Clint Hurdle, who wants baseball players to "respect the game," a phrase many people suspect is code for an insidious plot to eradicate fun and, um, color from the sport.

On the other side is the Cubs' Javy Baez, a talented, demonstrative, excitable second baseman and the object of Hurdle's recent frustration.

Baez comes from Puerto Rico, though he and some of his family moved to the United States when he was 13.

Hurdle comes from the 1970s.

Now, you might laugh at that last characterization, but it's really what this is all about. Baez comes from a different place than Hurdle, and Hurdle comes from a different time than Baez.

That's why tremors have been felt at Wrigley Field and beyond the last several days.

Baez flipped his bat in frustration after he popped up a pitch Wednesday against the Pirates. He had hit a home run earlier in the game to go with the two he had hit the day before. He would hit another homer after the pop-up to short.

Hurdle was not pleased with Baez's toss.

"You watch their kid flip that bat?" he said to reporters. "Where's the respect for the game? The guy hits four homers in two days, so that means you can take your bat and throw it 15, 20 feet in the air when you pop up, like you should have hit your fifth home run? I would bet that men over there talked to him because I do believe they have a group over there that speaks truth to power."

Baez responded in kind.

"There's no one that plays the game harder than me," he said. "I bust my ass every day to get here and learn something. If anybody's got negative stuff to [say to] me, they can save it."

There happens to be merit in both parties' views, which I know sounds completely ridiculous and impossible in these polarizing times.

Baez is good for the game. He makes plays at second base that no one else can make. He's the definition of fun-loving, and fans — most important, young fans — love that he loves fun. The no-look tags, the diving stops and the big smiles on the field make him a huge draw.

One of the major lures of baseball is tradition. No other sport connects so regularly with its past. There's something noble in the game being played in the same tough manner it was played 25 years ago or 50 years ago. Having unwritten rules of conduct, even if some of them seem odd and arcane, gives baseball a quirky singularity. I find that attractive, for reasons I'm not sure I completely understand.

This is where Baez and Hurdle collide, though they're only stand-ins for the two sides of a greater debate.

One side wants baseball to be like the NBA and the NFL, where individual celebrations are the norm. The other side wants baseball to be like baseball, where the focus is on the individual without showing up the opponent.

When Hurdle played, mostly for the Royals in the 1970s and early 1980s, the sport was primarily white. The correct way to conduct yourself on the field had been passed down from player to player over

generations. In many ways, it's still being passed down that way. If Hurdle hugs the Unwritten Rules of Baseball like a Pentecostal minister hugs his Good Book, he's not alone by a long shot.

But it's a different world now. At this time last season, 31.9 percent of major-league players were Latin, the highest in history. The brand of baseball that evolved in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Venezuela and Cuba is flashier and more exciting than that of its American cousin.

So here we are in 2018, with the predictable mashing of tectonic plates.

My argument against bat flips and look-at-me-look-at-my-home-run-ball gazes is that they make baseball like every other sport. If that's the goal, then have at it. But just know some of the quaintness that separates baseball from, say, the NBA will be lost.

And perhaps this is the most important point of all: If you think the only way for the game to be saved in this hectic world is by bat flips, then it's probably going to die anyway.

Conversely, if Hurdle and other old-timey baseball people fail to change some of their thinking, the game will remain in the rut it has been in for years. What they view as a lack of respect for the game and its competitors, many other people view as fun.

Can both sides be completely right? No. But it is possible that both sides have something good to offer the game. Baez's flip and Hurdle's reaction are just the latest in a culture war that has been going on in the sport for years. They could be the impetus for Major League Baseball to have discussions about what it is and what it wants to be.

Talking seems a much better route than throwing a baseball at somebody's head.

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

Balk? Yu Darvish unravels in Wrigley Field debut with Cubs in 4-0 loss to Braves

By Mark Potash

Did Yu Darvish balk on a 2-2 pitch to Freddie Freeman? Or didn't he?

Umpire Bruce Dreckman said he did. Cubs manager Joe Maddon said he did not. Darvish said he did not. Even Freeman said he did not.

But whether the call was right, one undeniable certainty is that Darvish can't fall apart afterward like he did Friday. Two pitches later, he threw a wild pitch that broke a scoreless tie. Then Nick Markakis singled. Kurt Suzuki doubled. And Preston Tucker hit a three-run home run just inside the right-field foul pole for the crushing blow in a 4-0 loss in Darvish's home debut as a Cub before 29,775 disappointed fans at chilly Wrigley Field.

"Obviously, everything went south after the balk, which was not a balk, but it was called a balk," Maddon said. "It seemed to create a little bit of awkwardness because he was doing well up to that point. He got into a groove. Everything seemed to be working really well. It seemed like after the balk, things changed a bit."

Though he only had three balks in five previous big-league seasons, it's not the first time Darvish has been bitten by one. In a 2014 game against the Yankees, Darvish allowed one run on a balk to Brett Gardner, who homered four pitches later to beat Darvish 2-1.

Darvish, who has a hesitation at the beginning of his windup, acknowledged he was frustrated by the call. He held his arms out with palms up after the call, seeking an explanation.

"The umpire told me it was because I paused the motion," Darvish said. "But over the course of my career, I've done that many times, and it's never called a balk. Even Freeman told me it wasn't a balk."

After Tucker's home run, Darvish walked No. 7 hitter Dansby Swanson, gave up a bunt single to Ryan Flaherty and walked pitcher Anibal Sanchez, and he was pulled by Maddon with an unimpressive bottom line — four runs and nine hits allowed with four walks, the balk, the wild pitch and four strikeouts in 4<sup>th</sup> innings.

In three starts with the Cubs, Darvish is 0-1 with a 6.00 ERA. His first start against the Marlins was bad. His next start against the Brewers was good. This one was a little of both. Darvish squirmed out of trouble in the first, second and fourth innings, stranding six runners. He almost made it out of the fifth. But the balk got him.

It was what the Cubs (6-7) are paying for, but Maddon put the best light on it.

"I thought [his performance overall] was good," Maddon said. "If he kept them at 1-0 . . . the three-run homer really hurt. I thought he had good stuff. He kept getting better. He started locating his backdoor slider. Threw some more splits or changeups — whatever he wants to call them. His stuff was fine. It just blew up in that one at-bat. One pitch to Tucker, and all of a sudden, the game changed."

The 42-degree game-time temperature probably didn't help Darvish. It was by far the coldest game he has pitched in since coming to the big leagues. His coldest previous start was a 55-degree night against the Athletics in April 2014.

"I was surprised how cold it was," Darvish said. "But I told myself, I'll perform better. If the weather's colder, I'll perform better. When I was on the mound, I didn't feel any cold."

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

R-E-S-P-E-C-T? Cubs' Joe Maddon tells Pirates' Clint Hurdle to R-E-L-A-X

By Mark Potash

Saying he was "surprised" and that it wasn't his style to criticize another player without knowing him, Cubs manager Joe Maddon calmly but directly responded to Pirates manager Clint Hurdle's rebuke of Javy Baez for "disrespecting the game" with an emphatic bat flip in frustration on a pop-out to shortstop in the Cubs' 13-5 victory Wednesday.

"I was surprised by it," Maddon said when asked before Friday's game against the Braves about Hurdle's response. "Clint and I have a great relationship. I don't understand why he did what he did. I do believe in not interfering with other groups.

"I'll never go there. I don't know the guy enough. I'm not in the clubhouse. I haven't had these conversations. I don't know what kind of teammate he is. So I'd be hesitant [to be critical].

"I think most of the time when you hear critical commentary, it's self-evaluation. It's about your judgmental component. It reveals you more than it reveals the person you are talking about."

Baez regretted the bat flip but took umbrage with Hurdle's assertion that he was not respecting the game.

"There's no one that plays the game harder than me," Baez said. "I bust my butt every day to get here and learn something. If anybody's got negative stuff to [say to] me, they can save it."

That was good enough for Maddon.

"I thought Javy did a great job in his response," he said. "I'm very proud of him. I didn't see him throwing his bat, but his response . . . and the fact that he owned up to it — what else could you possibly want from one of your guys? I'm saying give young people an opportunity to make mistakes. The mistakes of youth are preferable to the wisdom of old age any day of the week."

Maddon probably hopes the war of words ends here. But that doesn't mean there won't be a residual impact.

"I just know it's going to motivate Javy," Maddon said. "I really believe that. Javy's motivated anyway, but I'll be eager and curious to watch him perform in Pittsburgh."

Rizzo update

Maddon said first baseman Anthony Rizzo, who has missed the last seven games with a bad back, is expected to play Monday against the Cardinals. He said Rizzo could've played Friday "if it was absolutely necessary" and if he wasn't on the disabled list.

Happ heating up

Ian Happ had a single, double and fly ball to the warning track and is 5-for-9 in his last three games to increase his batting average from .156 to .244. He was 5-for-32 in his first eight games.

"That's the small sample size," Happ said of the first eight games. "Just wait until the end of the year."

Slow start

The Cubs had only four hits against starter Anibal Sanchez (1-0, 1.29 ERA) and three relievers to fall to 6-7. That's a disappointing start but the same record they had after 13 games last season, when they finished 92-70 and won the National League Central.

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

Kris Bryant thrives on being uncomfortable, will start at first base for Cubs

By Madeline Kenney

Sometimes Kris Bryant gets into the shower in the morning and turns the faucet to cold.

"You know, just to switch things up," Bryant said.

Bryant might appear cool, calm and collected on the field, but don't let his composure fool you. The Cubs' go-to third baseman thrives off being uncomfortable.

"I might look comfortable [at third base or on the plate]," Bryant said, "but I kind of strive being uncomfortable because it's the only way to make progress ... Putting yourself out of that comfort zone is big especially in sports. You don't ever want to feel like you're comfortable or complacent because that's where you start to go backwards."

When the Cubs take the Braves on at Wrigley Field Friday at 1:20 p.m., Bryant will not take his usual spot near the third base bag.

The Cubs are starting Bryant at first. He'll fill the temporary void left by Anthony Rizzo, who was put on the 10-day disabled list earlier this week after dealing with a sore lower back.

This will be Bryant's ninth start at first base over the last four seasons. Although he hasn't started at first base since last June, he most recently switch to the first base bag in the Cubs' 5-2 win over the Brewers on April 7.

The biggest challenge for Bryant is to get to the bag on time.

"With certain right-handed hitters, you're going to play with a little more pull and as a third baseman, you want the first baseman to get there pretty quick," Bryant said, "so you're not trying to hit a moving target. So, that's my biggest thing is to get there and give him a good target."

Bryant fielded some ground balls before Friday's game and although Rizzo hasn't given him any advice, he feels confident in his ability to play at first.

"I've played there before — just a matter of knowing what to do in certain situations," Bryant said. "And you don't have to throw the ball — that often which is nice. So, I'm ready for it."

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### **Daily Herald**

Balk in fifth inning proves fateful for Cubs in 4-0 loss

By Bruce Miles

It's been a balky start to the season for the Cubs, to be sure.

So it was fitting that a balk call against starting pitcher Yu Darvish derailed his start Friday in another lackluster team loss, this one 4-0 to the Atlanta Braves and cold and windy Wrigley Field.

The stop-and-start Cubs have fallen to 6-7 for the season while the upstart Braves are 8-5.

The fateful inning for Darvish and the Cubs was the fifth, which Darvish did not finish.

Darvish opened the inning by striking out Ender Inciarte. Ozzie Albies, the Braves' phenom of a second baseman, doubled to right field.

With Freddie Freeman up, home-plate umpire Bruce Dreckman called Darvish for a balk on a 2-2 pitch. Although Darvish struck out Freeman, he seemed unnerved by the balk call, and the Braves went on to score 4 runs, 3 coming on a long home run down the right-field line by Preston Tucker.

Darvish exited after the ninth Braves batter of the inning and admitted the balk call hurt.

"The umpire told me it's because I paused during the motion," Darvish said through a translator. "But over the course of my career, I've done that many times, and it was never called balk. Even Freeman told me it wasn't a balk.

"Frustrated, again, because it has never occurred, and it was in a critical situation when that happened. So that's very frustrating."

Managers are not allowed to argue balks calls, but Cubs manager Joe Maddon went out and tried to get an explanation from Dreckman.

Either way, Maddon wasn't buying balk even as he conceded the call bothered Darvish.

"Obviously everything went south after the balk, which was not a balk," Maddon said. "OK? It was not a balk but it was called a balk. It seemed to create a little bit of awkwardness because he was doing really well up to that point, really well. I'm thinking 6 innings right here. Bottom of the fifth, let him hit, of course, 1-0 game. Get us through 6, shortens the bullpen, etc., etc.

"Then it came apart really quickly. He got into that groove we were talking about (pregame). Everything was working really well. And I can't disagree with you, but it seemed like after the balk, things changed a bit."

Darvish threw 39 of his 105 pitches in the fifth, and he wound up allowing 9 hits and 4 runs in 4⅓ innings in falling to 0-1 with a 6.00 ERA.

Cubs hitters did little with Braves starter Anibal Sanchez (1-0, 1.29 ERA), who gave up 3 hits in 6 innings.

Ian Happ, a late lineup insert in place of the ill Albert Almora Jr., had 2 of the Cubs' 4 hits. The Cubs are batting .235 as a team. Happ said he is not worried about the offense.

"No," he said. "You look around this room, look at our lineup every day, that's not going to be an issue. I think we're doing a good job of putting a plan together. We've hit some balls hard right at people. I had a few of those games. There's going to come a point where everybody starts clicking at the same time and you'll see a lot of runs go up."

Both teams had to hit and pitch in the cold, blustery weather.

Darvish has pitched in the past for the Texas Rangers and Los Angeles Dodgers, so the blast of 42-degree weather with a north wind at 17 mph creating a windchill of 34 was new to him. That part of the day didn't seem to bother him.

"I was surprised how cold it was," he said. "I told myself I'll perform better. If the weather is colder, I'll perform better. When I was on the mound pitching, I didn't feel any cold or the effect of the weather."

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## Daily Herald

Cubs' Maddon responds to Hurdle's critical remarks about Baez

By Bruce Miles

Maybe now it's over.

Cubs manager Joe Maddon had his say Friday about the verbal dust-up started by Pirates manager Clint Hurdle about Cubs infielder Javier Baez.

On Thursday morning, Hurdle questioned Baez's "respect for the game" after Baez flipped his bat in anger over popping a ball up in Wednesday night's game at Wrigley Field.

Baez defended himself after Thursday's game, saying people who wanted to talk about him should "save it."

On Friday, Maddon was asked about it.

"I was surprised by it," Maddon said. "I did not see it coming at all. Clint and I have had a great relationship. I've known him for many, many years. I don't really understand why he did what he did.

"I think most of the time when you hear critical commentary, it's really pretty much self-evaluation. It's about what you believe. It's about your judgmental component. It reveals you more than it reveals the person you're talking about. I've always believed that. Whenever you want to be hyper critical of somebody, just understand you're pretty much revealing yourself and what your beliefs are more than you are being critical or evaluating somebody because you not spent one second in that person's skin."

Maddon said he was proud of how Baez handled the situation.

After Thursday's game, Baez said: "I bust my (butt) every day to play hard. I don't think (anyone) plays this game harder than me. I respect 90 (feet down the baseline). You don't go out there and talk trash about someone."

On the night of the bat flip, Baez said a teammate talked to him about it and that he had learned from it.

That brought another response from Maddon.

"Give young people an opportunity to make some mistakes," he said. "The mistakes of youth are preferable to the wisdom of old age any day of the week."

High praise indeed:

While praising Javier Baez's overall game, Maddon related a conversation he had with Cubs Hall of Famer Billy Williams.

"Even Billy Williams walking out the door yesterday told me he runs the bases like Willie Mays," Maddon said, referring to Baez. "I said that a couple days ago. People thought I was nuts. I didn't even ask Billy for that comment, but Billy offered it up walking out the door. So I thought, 'Billy knows what that looks like.'"

Out of the comfort zone:

Kris Bryant, the Cubs' everyday third baseman, started Friday at first base against the Braves. The Cubs have been making do at first base while Anthony Rizzo finishes a stint on the disabled list with lower-back tightness. Joe Maddon said Rizzo should be fine to come off the DL Monday, when he is eligible.

Bryant appeared in two games last year at first base, and he entered this year with 12 career appearances at first. He talked about being happy to get out of his comfort zone.

"I might look comfortable, but I kind of strive being uncomfortable just because it's the only way to make progress, anywhere from taking cold showers to putting yourself out of that comfort zone is big, especially in sports," he said. "You never want to feel like you're comfortable because that's where you start to go backward."

Hey, Buddy, congrats:

Joe Maddon began his pregame news conference by congratulating Class AAA Iowa manager Marty Pevey on his 1,000th victory, which came Thursday.

"That's pretty cool," Maddon said. "Spending so much time in the minor leagues myself, I know what that feels like. He's a great partner. In spring training he does a wonderful job in so many different arenas. So I know it's big for him and his family. I want to recognize that first of all."

Pevey is in his 10th year in the Cubs organization and in his sixth year as Iowa's manager.

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### **The Athletic**

Yu Darvish unravels, the Cubs offense goes missing and what happened to that fast start?  
By Patrick Mooney

Another Wrigley Field unveiling and the entertaining he-said, he-said, he-said between Javier Baez, Clint Hurdle and Joe Maddon created enough distractions for a few days.

The Cubs losing two of three games to the first-place Pittsburgh Pirates wasn't the main story because this is the only team where a new dugout and a bat flip can drive multiple news cycles.

But the focus shifted back onto the field during Friday afternoon's 4-0 loss to the Atlanta Braves and it wasn't pretty. You can admit that the Cubs haven't looked very good this season without overreacting or burying this team.

It's way too early to call it a good-start, bad-start trend for Yu Darvish, but the star Japanese pitcher who signed a six-year, \$126 million contract in February clearly has unbelievable talent and some underlying consistency issues.

It's way too early to panic about a Cubs' offense that was good enough to win the 2016 World Series, but all the talk about a fresh approach hasn't translated into results yet.

Darvish now has a 6.00 ERA through three starts. The Cubs have been shut out three times in their first 13 games by three different teams, with 39 of their 58 runs scored in four games. And this was supposed to be a soft part of the schedule.

"I think everybody's trying to settle into their rhythm," said Kris Bryant, who is already hitting like he's capable of another MVP year. "Early on in the season, it's kind of tough, everybody's trying to do so much at the beginning. Everyone wants to get off to good starts and stuff like that."

Sure, it was a gray afternoon and 42 degrees at first pitch with the wind blowing in from left field at 17 mph. But that didn't help Darvish, who burned through 105 pitches and couldn't finish the fifth inning, exiting with his team down by four runs.

Darvish had been one out away from keeping it a scoreless game. The Braves (8-5) manufactured their first run through an Ozzie Albies double and Darvish's balk and wild pitch. Home plate umpire Bruce Dreckman called the balk on Darvish's hesitation move while facing No. 3 hitter Freddie Freeman.

"The umpire told me it's because I paused during the motion," Darvish said through his translator. "But over the course of my career, I've done that many times and it was never called a balk. Even [Freddie] Freeman told me it wasn't a balk. Again – because it has never occurred and it was in a critical situation – that's very frustrating."

Darvish struck out Freeman swinging and gave up back-to-back two-out hits before Preston Tucker launched a 92-mph fastball that soared out toward the video board in right field and onto Sheffield Avenue for a three-run homer.

"I had all the data on Tucker," Darvish said. "I knew what kind of hitter he was, so I threw it with 100 percent confidence. It's just that he got it."

The Cubs weren't exactly facing the 1990s Braves. Opposing pitcher Anibal Sanchez famously used the Cubs to get a better offer from the Detroit Tigers after the 2012 season. Sanchez and his wife and his agent met with president of baseball operations Theo Epstein and chairman Tom Ricketts at a Miami restaurant, listening to their recruiting pitch and vision for what the Cubs would become.

A fake-news report that Sanchez reached an agreement with the Cubs pushed the Tigers to go to five years and \$80 million guaranteed. It was probably a good thing the Cubs didn't land him. Sanchez never made 30 starts or came close to 200 innings during any of these seasons, finishing last year with a 6.41 ERA.

Sanchez signed a minor-league deal with the Braves last month after getting released by the Minnesota Twins. The 34-year-old Sanchez allowed only three singles and one walk while notching six strikeouts in six scoreless innings.

"We got to win games like that," Maddon said. "We're not really getting anything going. A couple good at-bats, a couple well-struck balls, but nothing with any consistency."

"Sanchez had us off-balance the entire game. Give him credit for that. I've seen the guy before. He doesn't throw as hard as he used to, but he really knows how to pitch. He had the backdoor cutter going to the lefties, elevated fastballs, changeup, all the way down into the high 60s. He pitched well, but we have to do a better job offensively."

Showing early signs of another boom-or-bust offense, the Cubs began the day hitting .193 with runners in scoring position – an average that ranked 27th out of 30 big-league teams – with 36 strikeouts in 119 at-bats (30 percent).

Are there any worries about the offense's inconsistencies?

“No,” leadoff guy Ian Happ said.

Why are you not concerned?

“You look around this room, you look at our lineup every day, that’s not going to be an issue,” Happ said.

Given that Happ hasn’t played a full season in the big leagues yet, he’s probably not the best source, but the Cubs are big on projections and believe in the young hitters they built their franchise around. It’s just that other teams haven’t stood still. You can’t ignore how everything seemed to be set up for a fast start coming out of spring training and the Cubs are only 6-7.

“The primary difference right now in our record not being better than is just that we haven’t hit to our levels yet,” Maddon said. “Otherwise, I think, pitching and defense, I’m good. We just got to get the ball in play more consistently and we will.

“But, yeah, I don’t want us to be pretentious or just think you can throw your glove out on the field. I want us to come and get ready and do your job every day. Do your work [and] I have no complaints there whatsoever.”

Maybe it’s a good thing the green seats of Wrigley Field have been more noticeable the past two games. After drawing 40,144 and 35,596 for the first two games, the tickets sold for the last two games, both afternoon starts, were 29,949 and 29,775. The Cubs never dropped below 32,000 during 81 home dates last year.

Here’s the good news: Anthony Rizzo is supposed to be activated from the disabled list on Monday for the beginning of a three-game series against the St. Louis Cardinals at Wrigley Field, though the All-Star baseman will probably have to manage his back all season long. The Cubs could use his presence in the lineup and hey, it’s never too early to throw on the Rocky trunks.

“Tony’s a great player,” Happ said. “He’s obviously one of the premier hitters in this league. But I think we have enough guys in the clubhouse and in the lineup every day that no one guy is going to make the difference between being a good offense or a bad offense. We are a good offense, no matter who is in the lineup.”

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### **The Athletic**

Joe Maddon's takedown of Clint Hurdle and baseball's unwritten rules: 'It reveals you more than it reveals the person you're talking about'

By Patrick Mooney

Cubs manager Joe Maddon sunk into his chair in the Wrigley Field interview room and didn’t raise his voice or deliver his lines with a satisfied smirk and a knowing wink. Maddon even claimed that he had “a great relationship” with Pittsburgh Pirates manager Clint Hurdle. That sense of calm made it such a withering takedown of Hurdle and baseball’s unwritten rules and coded language.

Maddon clearly came prepared to fire back at Hurdle late Friday morning, speaking in full paragraphs while defending Javier Báez and Willson Contreras after the Pirates manager took offense to a bat flip and a reaction to a called third strike and wondered: “Where is the respect for the game?”

“It reveals you more than it reveals the person you’re talking about,” Maddon said. “I’ve always believed that. So whenever you want to be hypercritical of somebody, just understand you’re pretty much revealing yourself and what your beliefs are more than you are being critical or evaluating somebody. Because you have not spent one second in that person’s skin.”

Maddon’s media session lasted almost 17 minutes before a Friday matinee against the Atlanta Braves and most of it revolved around Báez, the supremely talented second baseman with Gold Glove potential, off-the-charts instincts for running the bases and a World Series ring.

To recap what is now a three-day news cycle: In the middle of a four-homer binge against the Pirates, Báez popped out on Wednesday night and tossed his bat in frustration. Cubs reliever Pedro Strop privately reminded Báez to always run hard to first base. Báez volunteered that information to the media and admitted it was a bad look.

Hurdle went out of his way to bring up Báez during Thursday’s pregame press briefing. Báez had a lot of things he wanted to say to Hurdle, but it can be summed up with two words: Save it.

“It’s just like people making decisions about Strop based on (the way he’s) sporting his hat – or Fernando Rodney,” Maddon said. “I think most of the time when you hear commentary – critical commentary – it’s really pretty much self-evaluation. It’s about what you believe. It’s about your judgmental component.

“I thought Javy did a great job in his response. I was very proud of him, actually. Like I said the other day, first of all, I didn’t see him throwing the bats. I missed that completely. But we’ve talked about it. His response and the fact that he owned up to it, my God, what else could you possibly want out of one of your guys?”

Let’s be honest: Anthony Rizzo and Jon Lester are great players who sometimes show bad body language and we don’t hear about how they’re not showing proper respect for the game.

Maddon politely corrected a reporter who tried to make a distinction between how Báez is “so flamboyant” on the field and a quiet and diligent worker behind the scenes.

“If you went to Puerto Rico, he fits in pretty well,” Maddon said. “You wouldn’t really be all that concerned about how he plays the game or the methods. This is how we view things here. So for me, he plays with a joy.

“I also believe that guys that are really good at this game — and in some regards do a lot of it easily — you almost want to accuse them of being ‘flamboyant.’ I don’t want him to be robotic. I never want to take that joy out of his game.

“The big thing I’ve had with him is I’ve asked him to do this: Make the routine play routinely. And then go ahead and be athletic in everything else. So if there’s only one thing I’ve tried to coach out of him — or coach into him — is [with] the routine play. Don’t try to dress that up.

“But any other play, just go make the play, because you can do things that nobody else can. So whether people describe it as ‘flamboyant,’ I would have to believe that if you’re paying a good dollar to come to watch the Cubs play, you’re looking for that ‘flamboyant’ play that he’s able to make that nobody else can.”

To be clear, Báez did need to mature after former scouting director Tim Wilken took him with the ninth overall pick in the 2011 draft. Even Báez admits staying under control can be an issue with his game. Cubs officials describe how Contreras needed extra time in the minors to learn how to channel all his emotions — and then debuted in the middle of a World Series season and quickly learned how to handle a veteran pitching staff.

“I did not see it coming at all,” Maddon said. “Clint and I have had a great relationship. I’ve known him for many, many years. I don’t really understand why he did what he did. You’d probably maybe want to delve into that a little bit more deeply on his side.

“But I do believe in not interfering with other groups. I’ve commented post-fights. Maybe I’ve incited a few things when it came to things I didn’t like on the field, when it came to injury or throwing at somebody. I’ve had commentary and I don’t deny that I have.

“But to try to disseminate exactly what I think about a guy on another team based on superficial reasons, I’ll never go there. I don’t know the guy enough. I’m not in the clubhouse with him. I don’t have these conversations. I don’t know what kind of a teammate he is. I don’t know any of that stuff, so I would really be hesitant.”

Sometimes, Maddon grandstands and plays for the cameras, which no doubt bothers a small-market Pirates team that sunk below .500 the last two seasons after a heartbreaking loss to the Cubs in the 2015 wild-card game.

But this highlighted Maddon’s thoughtful side and some of his greatest strengths — the sense of empathy and the way he treats his players like human beings.

“Just put yourself in that position,” Maddon said. “When I was just coming out of Lafayette, playing some ball, getting released, I was an absolute idiot. And I’m not saying that Javy is. I’m just saying give young people an opportunity to make some mistakes. The mistakes of youth are preferable to the wisdom of old age any day of the week.

“Wouldn’t we all like to be in the position of being 25 years old again and make some kind of stupid mistake? When my hair was still really brown, you know? And I could actually run a mile on a track and not have my knees want to start burning. So, listen, it is what it is, but be careful when you start becoming hypercritical, because you’re pretty much defining yourself.”

Báez remembered how Pirates broadcaster Steve Blass talked about him last year, calling him “a difficult player for me to root for” because of his “flashiness.”

“Now this year, it’s a manager,” Báez said. “They can save it.”

As Báez faced the media after Thursday’s 6-1 loss, Rizzo walked through the clubhouse and raised his voice so reporters could hear: “Four homers in two days and he doesn’t respect the game. You should have hit five, Javy.”

“Even Billy Williams walking out the door yesterday told me, ‘He runs the bases like Willie Mays,’” Maddon said. “I said that a couple days ago and people thought I was nuts. I didn’t even ask Billy for that commentary, but Billy offered it up walking out the door. Billy knows what that looks like.

“I love the way Javy plays baseball. I love the way Contreras plays baseball. I love the emotion and the passion.”

Get your popcorn ready: The Cubs next play the Pirates on Memorial Day at PNC Park.

“I just know it’s going to motivate Javy,” Maddon said. “I really believe that. I mean, Javy’s motivated anyway. But I will be eager or curious to watch him perform in Pittsburgh from now on.”

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