



### **WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF September 14, 2018**

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### **Kopech's injury won't delay White Sox plans**

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / September 13, 2018

CHICAGO -- There have been times this season when Lucas Giolito and his White Sox teammates looked out on the field at the players around them and thought about the organization's bright future ahead.

The same held true for catcher Zack Collins during his time at Double-A Birmingham.

"Sometimes, you are sitting in the dugout or whatever," Giolito said, "and we are looking around and we are like, 'We are going to be really nasty soon.'"

"There's definitely a lot of talk about it in Minor League locker rooms," Collins said. "We kind of put our team together, what we think it's going to be. You never know from year to year."

Actually, the team never knows from week to week or day to day.

It was Aug. 21, when Michael Kopech -- the team's No. 2 prospect per MLB Pipeline and No. 13 in all of baseball -- made his exciting Major League debut at Guaranteed Rate Field. An extra boost of energy came with the arrival of this electric talent.

On Sept. 7, two days after Kopech yielded seven earned runs over 3 1/3 innings with a slight drop in velocity against Detroit, general manager Rick Hahn announced a significant tear in Kopech's right ulnar collateral ligament had been found and Tommy John surgery was recommended. That procedure will sideline Kopech until Spring Training 2020.

Hahn looked shocked, understandably, with the news so fresh on that Friday. The same clearly could be said for Kopech, who was disappointed but certainly not defeated when he spoke to the media.

Some fans asserted the rebuild's growth was delayed because of Kopech's injury, as the White Sox temporarily lost their No. 2 starter and a valuable development year for the 22-year-old right-hander. But while the setback certainly changes the landscape, the rebuild plan does not waver.

"Part of this entire program from the start was making sure we had enough depth to withstand the inevitable setbacks that occur over the course of any Major League season," said Hahn on the day of Kopech's injury announcement. "It's disappointing because of the momentum he had built and the excitement he had created about the immediate future. But again, he's still going to be very much a part of our long-term future, and we're still very much excited about that."

Carlos Rodon presently is locked down as the staff ace, followed by Reynaldo Lopez and Giolito. It's not a huge stretch to project Dylan Cease, MLB Pipeline's 2018 Minor League Pitcher of the Year, as part of that same rotation at some point in '19.

That configuration leaves two spots to fill early for Hahn, executive vice president Ken Williams and the White Sox front office. Internal options such as Dylan Covey, Spencer Adams (No. 26-ranked prospect) and/or Jordan Stephens (No. 20) will be in play, but at this stage of the rebuild, the White Sox also would benefit from going outside the organization for a pitcher to strengthen that front five.

According to Cot's Contracts, the White Sox have only \$10.9 million committed contractually in 2019, \$4.5 million in '20 and \$7.25 million in '21. Free agency is an option, targeting a veteran in the 27-31 age range who not only could help in Kopech's absence but be primed for the planned contending years.

Names such as Patrick Corbin (29 years old) or Dallas Keuchel (30) jump off that list going into 2019. The White Sox also could search for a veteran fill for a year or two, package some of their young talent in a trade for another controllable arm or stick from within.

Even with this extremely tough news, the team should survive and advance in Kopech's absence. It has players such as Giolito in place who excitedly glance into the future while gaining valuable experience in the present.

"Yes, this is going to be a challenge," Hahn said. "But in the coming weeks and months, we will respond to it and put ourselves in the best position for the long term."

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### **In My Words: Nick Madrigal**

By Nick Madrigal / MLB.com / September 13, 2018

It definitely feels nice to have a few days off after the end of Class A Advanced Winston-Salem's season. I'm hanging out in my parents' home in Elk Grove, Calif. Next week, I report to Arizona for the White Sox fall instructional league for a month. After that, my real break will happen. So I'm still not through yet.

It's been quite a summer. I was part of an Oregon State team that won the 2018 College World Series. I got drafted by the White Sox, and then I played for three different teams in the system. It's been a lot, but it's all been great.

At Oregon State, my goal from the first day I stepped on campus was to win a national championship. It felt really good to do it with that group of guys. I have some friendships on that team that will stick with me forever.

The Major League Draft occurred during the NCAA playoffs. The whole Draft process is such an unknown. I didn't know the White Sox were taking me until about five minutes before the pick came in. I feel like the Sox are the perfect fit. My mom's always said, "You want to go some place where you're wanted." It definitely seemed like the White Sox wanted me the most.

It's really exciting to be in the organization at this time and to hopefully be part of bringing back the winning culture. I've always enjoyed being on the underdog team rather than the favorite team. If I was playing three on two in basketball, I'd rather be on the team with two guys. I've always loved that challenge in my life.

I had an idea that I would finish the year at high-A in Winston-Salem, but I wasn't sure when that would happen. It was different going from clubhouse to clubhouse and not knowing anyone. That was a little tough

at first. But baseball is one of those games where you can relate to anyone, whether they speak English, Spanish or whatever. It's kind of crazy how you can relate to people through a game. I've witnessed how small the baseball world is.

As far as the competition, it really is the same game at every level. Some guys might throw harder; have a better curveball. I feel confident in my game. If someone is throwing harder, I just think about starting to swing a little bit earlier. I don't have to change my swing. The adjustment really hasn't been bad at all. I've enjoyed it.

Baseball is a game of adjustments. You learn as you go. I still have a lot to learn. Performance-wise, I felt comfortable at each level. I know there is a lot of room for improvement, but I'm happy with the way I played.

I'm looking forward to going to Arizona. I'm going to be open-minded about learning new things about the game. It's really hands on down there. I'll be excited to learn from different coaches.

After I get back from Arizona, I am going to start getting ready for next year. The weight room is going to be huge for me. I want to try to get faster.

I've never felt overmatched in baseball. With all the preparation I do during the offseason, when I step on the field, there's not a doubt in my mind about my belief in my abilities.

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### **Most important number for each AL Central club**

By Jason Beck / MLB.com / September 13, 2018

No, the most important number in the American League Central isn't the number of games by which the Indians lead the rest of the pack, sizable as it is. Every team has a story this season, and there's usually a number to tell it, sometimes better than words can.

For some, that number is on the stat sheet, either for the team or its individual standouts. For others, it can be found on the league leaderboard or roster. Other fates can be found on the transaction wire as rebuilding clubs shuttle players back and forth to Triple-A.

Here are some of the numbers that tell the story of the AL Central this year.

#### **INDIANS**

The number: 60/40

What it means: Jose Ramirez and Francisco Lindor are the first infield duo in MLB history to each notch at least 30 homers and 20 steals in a single season. That feat has only been achieved by eight sets of teammates (done nine times overall) in one season. Their blend of power and speed has powered the top of a lineup that has needed every ounce of their production to function. Ramirez, who is only the third member of the 30-30 club in Indians history, has emerged as an AL MVP Award contender. Lindor, who leads baseball in runs scored, is also in that conversation. Cleveland's rotation might be the backbone of the World Series contender, but Ramirez and Lindor serve as the motor for the offense.

#### **ROYALS**

The number: 5.15

What it means: This is the Royals' bullpen ERA, which is the worst in the AL and 29th in MLB. But here's the tricky part: The bullpen has been good, at times. But if you take away four pitchers' ERAs -- Blaine Boyer (12.05), Justin Grimm (13.50), Eddy Romero (20.25) and Brandon Maurer (8.54) -- Kansas City's bullpen ERA drops to a respectable 4.18, which would rank near the middle of the pack in the AL (8th) and MLB (18th). Consider, too, that Boyer, Romero and Grimm are no longer with the organization, and Maurer could be a non-tender candidate.

#### **TIGERS**

The number: 16

What it means: It's the number of times the Tigers have been shut out this season, most in the Majors through play Wednesday, most by an AL team since 2014 and most by a Detroit team since the AL record 119-loss season of 2003. Though the Tigers pitched fairly well for stretches this season, given their injury worries and inexperience, their offense proved overmatched at times, especially once Miguel Cabrera was lost for the season to biceps surgery. Three of those shutouts came during a winless West Coast trip in early August that included one run total over a three-game sweep in Oakland, and eight runs for the six-game journey, which included a three-game sweep to the Angels. Detroit's five 1-0 losses also lead the Majors this year and are the most by a Major League team since 2014. Two of those 1-0 losses occurred in games started by Matthew Boyd.

## TWINS

The number: 33

What it means: It's the combined number of games played by Byron Buxton and Ervin Santana this season. They were major contributors to the Twins' run to the AL Wild Card Game in 2017, but they both dealt with injuries this season. Buxton, who led the team in Wins Above Replacement last season, played in only 28 games while missing time with migraines, a broken toe and a sprained wrist that limited his effectiveness offensively. Santana, who had been the staff ace over the previous two seasons, made only five starts after undergoing surgery on his right middle finger. It's a major reason why Minnesota is out of contention.

## WHITE SOX

The number: 26

What it means: That total represents the number of players called up from Triple-A Charlotte alone this season, surpassing the 22 promotions from 2017, per the Knights. Those promotions range from highly touted prospects such as Michael Kopech (Aug. 21), Ian Hamilton (Aug. 31) and Jace Fry (May 4), to talented players taking full advantage of their big league opportunity such as Daniel Palka (April 24). This large total makes perfect sense in the context of the development focus of Year 2 of the White Sox rebuild, with players getting a chance to grow in the Minors and prove themselves at the Majors. But it also shows a plethora of injuries dealt with by Chicago, including injuries to key players such as Jose Abreu, Avisail Garcia, Yoan Moncada and now Kopech, which contributed to the White Sox overall record being a little less than what they might have expected at the season's outset.

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## Great Falls scores early, wins Pioneer League

By Mike Rosenbaum / MLB.com / September 13, 2018

Great Falls jumped out to an early lead and survived a comeback for a second straight game to complete its sweep of the best-of-three Pioneer League finals with a 6-4 win over Grand Junction on Thursday.

After scoring 10 runs across the first two innings in their 12-9 Game 1 win, the Voyagers once again jumped out to an early lead when Lenyn Sosa hit a one-out triple and scored one batter later on a Romy Gonzalez single. Great Falls continued to apply pressure in the following frame, loading the bases with no outs ahead of leadoff hitter Travis Moniot, who delivered a two-run double to chase Grand Junction starter Trent Fennell from the game. Sosa would tack on another run on a groundout before the end of the frame, and Micah Coffey added an RBI single in the third to extend the lead to 5-0.

### • Box Score

White Sox No. 29 prospect Jonathan Stiever was sharp in his final start of the year for the Voyagers, tossing three scoreless frames during which he allowed three hits, walked one and struck out a pair. The 2018 fifth-rounder racked up 39 strikeouts over 28 innings (13 starts) during the regular season and fired three innings of one-hit ball in the opening round of the playoffs.

Grand Junction capitalized on an infield error, walk and a passed ball in the fifth inning en route to two runs, with Hunter Stovall delivering an RBI single in the frame. The Rockies scored twice in the following frame as well, once again taking advantage of a costly infield error.

The Voyagers tacked on an insurance run in the eighth inning on Amado Nunez's two-out single, and Devon Perez struck out the side during a scoreless ninth to seal the win. The right-hander worked the final 3 1/3 innings, striking out seven.

Moniot, Sosa and Gonzalez, the first three hitters in the Voyagers' lineup, respectively, combined for seven hits and four RBIs. Gonzalez finished 3-for-3 to finish the series with a .667 average.

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### **Is Tim Anderson silencing the doubters? 'He wants to prove that he is a shortstop and he's one of the best in the game'**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / September 13, 2018

In the top of the 12th inning, he hit a go-ahead home run. In the bottom of the 12th inning, he made a spectacular play to end the game.

It was just one night in Kansas City at the tail end of a losing season. But Tim Anderson's process of silencing the doubters might have hit a new high-water mark Wednesday.

Anderson has long been considered a key piece of the White Sox rebuilding project, and the team seems to have his name etched in as their shortstop of the future. But that hasn't stopped a great many fans from projecting otherwise. They've guessed his future might be in the outfield after he led the majors with a whopping 28 errors last season. They've guessed his future might not be as bright as it's been suggested after he finished last season with a .276 on-base percentage and 162 strikeouts.

This season, however, has looked quite different. He hasn't exactly pulled a 180 from a statistical perspective. He's slashing just .248/.290/.420 and ranking near the top of the league with 17 fielding errors with 16 games left on the schedule. Those are obvious improvements from last year — during which Anderson spent much of the season battling the effects of the death of his best friend — even if they aren't dramatic ones. But the main difference has been in Anderson's play of late, particularly defensively, where he's making plays (and impressive ones, at that) at a much greater rate than before and making fewer of the mistakes that defined the outlook many had on his future.

"I'd say (there's been a growth) within the last two to three months," said White Sox bench coach Joe McEwing, who works with Anderson every day. "He's gone through a stage where he understands and he's accountable for the mistakes he was making on the field. And now he's able to sit back and learn from them and adjust, and he's just running with it now.

"I believe he's playing free. There's not a weight on his shoulders. He wants to prove everybody wrong. (People say,) 'He's not a shortstop.' He wants to prove that he is a shortstop and he's one of the best in the game."

General manager Rick Hahn has said multiple times that the young players on the White Sox major league roster aren't finished products just because they're on the major league roster. Anderson, along with the likes of Yoan Moncada, Lucas Giolito, Reynaldo Lopez and others, are still developing, still becoming the players they are projected to become when the franchise shifts from rebuilding mode to contention mode.

What we're seeing now from Anderson could be another benchmark in his development. A guy who's worked extremely hard in his three seasons in the big leagues could finally be seeing that work catching up.

"I kind of feel like the work finally caught up. I'm figuring out the glove and learning the position, figuring out how to play the position. It's working, man," Anderson said. "A lot of credit to Joe, he works with me every day and we get out there. It's been good. Just honored and blessed to be in the position I'm in."

There's an obvious difference in the way Anderson is playing defensively right now, and it's been pointed out by everyone in the organization. Pitchers have lauded how great he's playing behind them, and in the midst of this losing campaign described by Hahn as "the toughest part of the rebuild," both the general

manager and manager Rick Renteria have pointed to Anderson's defensive improvement as one of the big positives to come out of this campaign.

How has it happened? Again, work. The daily grind of the developmental process isn't something that jumps out at any observer when a team plays every single day. But Anderson's defensive development over the course of this season is perhaps as good an example as any of what the team's big league staff is doing and how important their work is in crafting the planned perennial contenders of the White Sox future.

"I kind of challenged him and said, 'I'm extremely proud of the progress you've made, let's not stop, let's not stop here, let's take it to another level,'" McEwing said. "'You say you want to be the best. What does that entail, as far as work-wise, maturity-wise, leadership-wise?' I challenge him every day to be that leader, take over the infield, make sure everybody's in the right spot, communicate constantly with each other. And he's taken it to that level.

"I think he's starting to understand his body more on the baseball field as far as what he can and cannot do. Before, it was almost, he was afraid to make that mistake. Now he's just playing to where he's not worried about making that mistake because he's playing free.

"As far as understanding his body, he's throwing from so many different angles now without fear. He's confident in each throw, he's confident where his feet are, he's coming to get hops, he's seeing hops better now to where (it's either), 'I'm going to get eaten up by that' or 'I'm going to go get it.' I think he's just understanding a lot more of who he is, and I could not be happier or prouder of him. He's putting in the work every single day."

There will surely still be plenty of questions heading into the 2019 season. Anderson will finish with new career bests in home runs, doubles, RBIs (he ranks second on the team in that category), stolen bases and walks, but he could finish with a career-low batting average and his second consecutive sub-.300 on-base percentage. He has more walks this season than in his first two seasons combined, but he also ranks in the top 25 in the majors in strikeouts.

But everyone you talk to in the White Sox organization sees improvement, and even from the outside it's not difficult to notice, especially defensively. So when Hahn says that these young players aren't finished products, he can point to Anderson as an example of the growth that can occur at the major league level.

And that ought to make fans far more bullish on Anderson's future — and the future of this entire rebuilding effort.

"Last year was a tough season overall, off the field. This year, it's been great," Anderson said. "I feel like I've been playing with that same energy all season and nothing changes. But I'm getting better.

"When I step over those lines, I feel like I'm the best player on the field, and that's how I go about it. Nobody can beat me. I want to compete and be dominant every day, try to just go out and play hard and see what happens.

"Hopefully we can bring a championship to the South Side. We've got the pieces and got the players and got the guys down in the farm system. It's going to be fun."

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### **Series preview: White Sox at Orioles**

By Chicago Tribune Staff / September 13, 2018

All games on WGN-AM 720.

Friday: 6:05 p.m., NBCSCH

RH James Shields (6-16, 4.58) vs. RH Luis Ortiz (0-0, 40.50).

Saturday: 6:05 p.m., WGN-9.

RH Reynaldo Lopez (5-9, 4.22) vs. RH Yefry Ramirez (1-5, 5.94).

Sunday: 12:05 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Lucas Giolito (10-10, 5.76) vs. TBA.

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### **Reliever Rob Scahill living the dream pitching for White Sox**

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / September 13, 2018

BALTIMORE — Right-hander Rob Scahill worked a perfect eighth inning for the White Sox in their 6-3 loss Tuesday to the Royals, an outing that went largely unnoticed in a rather meaningless game between two of the losingest teams in baseball.

But it was kind of a big deal for the 31-year-old Scahill, whose years in the game haven't diminished his love and appreciation for it — or for the team he grew up rooting for. Scahill remembers where he came from — suburban Villa Park, Willowbrook High School and Bradley University in Peoria — and wearing the uniform of the team he was a fan of wasn't lost on him.

"Everybody dreams of playing in the major leagues, and then to play for the team you grew up rooting for means a lot," Scahill said. "It's very cool."

Scahill, who has a 3.77 ERA in 119 career relief appearances in seven seasons with the Rockies, Pirates, Brewers and Sox, signed on as a non-roster invitee last winter. He pitched well in spring training but spent most of the season at Class AAA Charlotte. When right-hander Michael Kopech went down with a torn ulnar collateral ligament last week, Scahill was called up to give the Sox an extra bullpen arm for the final three weeks of the season.

Scahill had posted a 5.64 ERA at Charlotte, a figure inflated by three appearances in a short span that went off the rails. Rainouts had stacked games together, and Scahill had to take one for the team.

"The worst week I've had as a baseball player," he said. "I gave up 17 earned runs in three innings [with one walk and six strikeouts]. And it was all singles, too. It wasn't like I was getting banged around the yard. Not a lot of hard contact."

Scahill, who had a Frank Thomas poster on his wall and attended about one or two Sox games a year growing up, was a freshman at Bradley when the Sox swept the Astros in the 2005 World Series. He and a bunch of his pals and teammates stormed up and down the halls of his dormitory and celebrated with the rest of Sox Nation after Paul Konerko pocketed the final out on Oct. 26, 2005.

A 48th-round draft pick by the Yankees out of high school and a ninth-rounder by the Rockies out of Bradley in 2009, Scahill never severed his bond with the Sox. Becoming a pro ballplayer can do that, but not in his case.

"You're still a fan," Scahill said. "It's hard to replace 25 or 26 years supporting a team. It's like being a working professional who grows up a Steelers fan. If you move to Washington, D.C., you're not going to root for the Redskins just because you work there. You root for the team you play for, but outside of that you're a fan of baseball."

NOTES: Omar Vizquel was named Carolina League manager of the year after leading the Sox' Class A Winston-Salem affiliate to an 84-54 regular-season record. Vizquel, 51, completed his first season as a manager after being hired by the Sox last winter.

• Winston-Salem designated hitter Micker Adolfo, outfielder Blake Rutherford and catcher Yermin Mercedes were named to the Carolina League's year-end all-star team. The Dash are the only team with three hitters on the list.

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## **Chicago White Sox stumble in aftermath of Kopech news**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / September 13, 2018

Joining the starting rotation from Class AAA Charlotte on Aug. 21, Michael Kopech was everything the Chicago White Sox were hoping for, and more.

Not only was the 22-year-old righty 1-0 with a 0.82 ERA in his first 3 major-league starts, Kopech brought the kind of attitude found on most contending teams.

"Since I've been here, we've been a winning team," he said. "Hopefully it stays that way for a long time. I think we're all pulling in the same direction, and it's a lot of fun to be a part of right now."

The fun came to a screeching halt in Kopech's next start.

Lasting just 3½ innings in a Sept. 5 game against the Tigers at Guaranteed Field, Kopech's potent fastball lacked pop, his off-speed pitches were flat and his ERA jumped to 5.02 after Detroit scored 7 runs on 9 hits -- 4 of them home runs.

Complaining of elbow soreness the next day, Kopech saw team physician Dr. Nikhal Verma and an MRI revealed "a rather significant tear in his ulnar collateral ligament," according to Sox general manager Rick Hahn.

Kopech is seeking a second opinion, but Tommy John surgery is likely coming, and that puts the top pitching prospect out for the entire 2019 season.

The news was deflating.

"We've had so many injuries this year," starting pitcher James Shields said. "Not a lot of people talk about that, to be honest with you. We haven't had our whole team the whole year. It just seems like one thing after another.

"To have (Kopech) go down like that, obviously it's a blow to the team and our organization. But we've got to do a better job of moving on."

As Kopech alluded to before blowing out his elbow, the White Sox were 7-5 when he was on the roster.

Since the news broke about his injury, the Sox lost five in a row before defeating the Kansas City Royals 4-2 in 12 innings Wednesday night.

Manager Rick Renteria always tries to find the positives, and he stayed in character after the Kopech bombshell.

"If we look at it from a pessimistic perspective, it could bring you down," Renteria said. "If you look at it from an optimistic perspective, which is he's going to be back and still be a part of this thing, I think that's the route that I would take.

"We really can't do anything for him now; it's up to the professionals that deal with those things. He is a driven person. There's no doubt in my mind he's going to go through everything very, very well and he'll be back."

Kopech is expected to be back in the White Sox's rotation in 2020, but there's no way around it -- his absence next season is a crushing blow in the rebuild process.



"It's disappointing because of the momentum he had built and the excitement he had created about the immediate future," Hahn said. "But he's still going to be very much a part of our long-term future, and we're still very much excited about that."

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### **Roster Requirements: Immediate category help**

By Eno Sarris / The Athletic / September 13, 2018

This late in the season, there's no way to please everyone. Those of us still in the game are tearing our hair out trying to find a way to win our fantasy leagues, but for each of us, there's a different focus.

HOW CAN I FIND SOME STOLEN BASES

WHO WILL WIN ME A GAME

SOMEONE HAS TO HIT A HOMER THIS WEEKEND

This column tries to help the largest swath of you, and it's maybe nowhere more impossible than it is right now, as we're all zeroed in on one category or two that are our weaknesses, and we're all staring at the end of the season. But let's do our best to identify a couple of players who can help in the major categories.

A shallow leaguer, and a deep leaguer, depending on your needs. It's the best we can do, other than to offer up a beer to soothe the nerves as you watch the box scores roll in. Well, I guess we could do both.

Stolen Bases / Session Beer

Jonathan Villar / Lagunitas 12th of Never

I've already recommended Brett Gardner (56 percent owned in Yahoo), and he's facing the Blue Jays, who have allowed the third-most stolen bases this year, so he's a good pick. A little like Firestone Walker Easy Jack, Gardner is seemingly always available and good for some stats.

Villar (66 percent owned in Yahoo) might not be available, but if he is, pounce. He's facing the White Sox, which gives you the best combination of terrible pitching and an inability to throw out base stealers — Chicago's been the worst in the league at that skill all year.

Villar is hitting .285 with 20 steals (only two caught stealings) with his new team, and only four players have added more launch angle in the second half, so maybe he'll give you a homer, too. In the end, he is worth picking up for steals in leagues of any size, particularly since you can plug him in all over the diamond, as he's eligible at second, short and the outfield.

In that way, he's like those tall purple Lagunitas cans of 12th of Never. They're light, so they'll keep you fast, and they're everywhere.

Jackie Bradley Jr. / Melvin Hubert MPA

Bradley Jr. (24 percent owned) can be a streaky guy, but lately he's been lifting the ball and it's working for him.

Still, really all that matters is that he's an available guy who can run who's facing the Mets, who have given up the second-most stolen bases in baseball this year.

But maybe you don't love his matchups — he gets Noah Syndergaard on Friday, and maybe Jacob deGrom on Sunday, and it's tough to love him even though he gets two righties. If Corey Oswalt pitches Saturday, maybe you can do a one-day thing with him.

Or you can try Joey Rickard in Baltimore for the weekend. He's owned in exactly no leagues according to Yahoo and he's playing regularly and even has two stolen bases in September. If he gets one, celebrate with a Melvin Hubert or four — it smells like heaven and goes down easy.

#### Home Runs / IPA

##### Luke Voit / Offshoot Relax IPA

I was tempted to put Maikel Franco (46 percent owned) in here instead, because only 15 players have added more launch angle in the second half than Franco, and the Phillies are home in a park that allows homers on hard drives more than all but four parks in baseball. But Franco's neck and shoulder are barking and he's not even playing every day right now.

So Voit it is. It's a difficult one, because it says in Yahoo that he's only owned in 31 percent of leagues, but if you looked at active leagues, you might get a different number. In any case, Voit is at home, in a park that is second-friendliest to the home run in baseball, and he's facing the Blue Jays, who have allowed more homers in the last month than all but seven teams in baseball. It's a great combination for the new first baseman in New York, who also happens to be in the top 10 percent of the league in exit velocity since July 1.

If you can get him, maybe you can just Relax with Offshoot's new hazy IPA, which was rated the second-best IPA in America in a recent taste test by Paste, when it beat out more than 600 other submitted beers. The Bruery's great offshoot, which was created to allow it to brew IPAs without breaking its promise to not brew IPAs, is off to a great start, just like Voit in New York.

If you can't get him, try Matt Davidson, who is only 18 percent owned. We've rec'd him before, but now he's added more launch angle (25th-most in the second half) and is in Baltimore, facing the staff that has allowed the third-most homers in baseball in the last month. Feast!

##### Devon Travis / Local Hazy IPAs

The Blue Jays are in New York, which is the second-friendliest to homers, and Travis has five homers since August began, so that makes him a decent pickup. At two percent owned, he's available, which is another crucial aspect for deep league pickups.

But the reason I really like him (and his alternative) is this leaderboard, which shows the players who have added the most launch angle in the second half.

Player	First Half	Second Half	Diff	
JT Riddle	1.9	11.5	9.6	
Devon Travis	1.6	10.6	9.0	
Shohei Ohtani	7.6	16.5	8.9	
Alex Gordon	6.8	15.3	8.5	
Jonathan Villar	-2.0	6.1	8.1	
Leury García	3.0	10.8	7.8	
Ryan McMahon	4.3	11.3	7.0	
David Dahl	9.8	16.6	6.8	
Brett Gardner	5.0	11.8	6.8	
Elias Díaz	7.4	14.2	6.8	
Devin Mesoraco		18.4	24.9	6.5
Kole Calhoun	8.4	14.9	6.5	
Orlando Arcia	1.9	8.3	6.4	

Brandon Guyer	11.5	17.9	6.4
Carlos Asuaje	11.8	18.1	6.3
Maikel Franco	6.9	13.1	6.2
Hunter Renfroe	14.8	20.9	6.1
Yuli Gurriel	8.6	14.5	5.9
Ketel Marte	3.3	9.2	5.9
Harrison Bader	9.8	15.7	5.9

If Travis is owned ... good luck. Maybe you're in a super deep mixed league, though, and you can pivot to JT Riddle in Florida. He's lifting the ball and in Philadelphia, which is friendly to homers by park (fifth friendliest) and staff (seventh friendliest in the last month).

It can be hit or miss on the local hazy IPA, but maybe you're close to one of the following, so you can enjoy a fluffy fruity beer while you root for a home run.

Burial Surf Wax (Southeast)  
 Collective Arts Life in the Clouds (Ontario)  
 LIC Coded Tiles (Northeast)  
 Hanging Hills Heartbeat (Northeast)  
 Lamplighter Birds of a Feather (Northeast)  
 Pinthouse Pizza Electric Jellyfish (Southwest)  
 Great Notion Ripe (Northwest)  
 Fieldwork Pulp (West)  
 Highland Park Super Cloud (Southwest)  
 Modern Times Dymaxion (Southwest)  
 Hubbard's Cave Fresh (Midwest)  
 Narrow Gauge Cloud City (Midwest)  
 Wins / National Beers

How is a win, found on the waiver wire, built? It has to be a pitcher who has been better recently for a concrete reason, headed into a good matchup in a park that might help him, right? They probably have to be on a team that doesn't go to the bullpen in the third inning, too...

Let's just rank the possible streamers this weekend so you can pick and choose.

Andrew Heaney (v SEA, 49 percent owned in Yahoo)

With his velocity trending up, and coming off a 12-strikeout, no-walk performance in his last outing, Heaney might not be available to you. If he is, pounce.

Matt Boyd (@ CLE, 27 percent owned in Yahoo)  
 Michael Fulmer (@ CLE, 38 percent owned in Yahoo)

Surprisingly, the Indians offense rates in the bottom 10 in the league by park and league adjusted offense in the last month. While Fulmer's velocity is down and he's had one bad start in three since returning from injury, his teammate's velo is up, unquestioned. I'd rather have Boyd despite the difference in ownership, but both might be underrated on the wire.

Mike Minor (@SD, 29 percent owned in Yahoo)

Did you know Mike Minor owns two of the best four months by a Rangers starting pitcher since 2002? We've been talking about him for a while here, but heading to San Diego against the sixth-worst offense of the past month, with his improving changeup ready to go? Gimme.

John Gant (v LAD, 30 percent owned in Yahoo)

A new slider has given Gant the most diverse arsenal of his career, and he's home, but he's not facing a cookie cutter lineup. Two of three ain't bad, though.

Jorge López (v MIN, 12 percent owned in Yahoo)

We told you about this power arm and then he went out and almost threw a no-no. Seventy percent of his pitches in that game were the sinker and the curve, which are his best pitches, but he's got other wrinkles yet.

Jaime Barria (v SEA, 23 percent owned in Yahoo)

Recently, Barria is throwing his four-seamer more. He's thrown it 124 times in his last four outings ... and gotten not a single whiff. That's okay, he's gotten five popups and it's made his change and slider effective enough to do fine. The Mariners have been a bottom 10 offense in the last month, so you're hoping the Angels leave him out there just long enough to get the W.

Edwin Jackson (@ TB, 23 percent owned in Yahoo)

Yes, he's throwing the cutter a ton, but his team is ready to take him out after three or four innings, and there's something that feels like standing on the edge of a precipice when you start Jackson. The Rays offense is not all that bad ...

Ian Kennedy (v MIN, 5 percent owned in Yahoo)

Kennedy looked good in his first start back from a core issue, but his velocity was the worst it's been all year. He used a ton of cutters and got a ton of whiffs, and is pitching at home ... but is also facing the same team. Only for the more desperate.

Robbie Erlin (v TEX, 2 percent owned in Yahoo)

Surprisingly the Rangers offense has been fourth worst in the league over the last month. Erlin has replaced his four-seamer with a sinker and started using a cutter, and if you take out a seven-run appearance against the Reds in his last game, he's had a 4.15 ERA with this current mix. This isn't impossible.

Streamers are like trying to reach for an emergency beer at the supermarket. My favorite supermarket brands are:

Firestone Walker  
Lagunitas  
Deschutes  
Sierra Nevada  
Pilsner Urquell  
Dos Equis  
Saves / Sours

Jace Fry / Almanac Tropical Galaxy

Dude might actually be the closer for the White Sox right now, but has anyone noticed? His 17 percent ownership on Yahoo says not many people have. It's true, good teams with good bullpens traditionally give their closers more save opportunities, and neither is true for the White Sox.

But! They face the Orioles this weekend, who are worse on all fronts. There's a decent chance that Fry gets a save this weekend. And he should convert — he's throwing his slider a ridiculous 46 percent of the time this month and still getting whiffs over a quarter of the time on the pitch.

That sort of pitch mix — 14 percent four-seamers!! — is pretty new wave, like a hoppy sour. Try Almanac's hoppy sour, Tropical Galaxy, which uses fruity hops to add flavor to its tart base, because it's also a new-school approach.

#### Ty Buttrey / Duchesse de Bourgogne

Somehow on this list of three, Buttrey has the highest velocity (good for potential closers) and the lowest strikeout rate (not good). But that's not super important, since these other two pitchers are not available to the Angels. More importantly, Buttrey (autocorrect Buttery) has been getting more strikeouts than Blake Parker recently, and throws harder, and is younger, and will be with the team longer.

That's why Buttrey has a couple of saves this September and will probably get the next opportunity. The always decent Angels get the sliding Mariners, so this is a good spot.

A hard-throwing converted starter turning into a closer? That's as old school as a Flemish Red, and the Duchesse de Bourgogne is a classic of the style.

#### Taylor Rogers / The Bruery Tart of Darkness

Trevor Hildenberger is getting the saves right now in Minnesota, but if you're looking at relievers who are owned seven percent of the time in Yahoo like Rogers is, you're just looking for someone who could come in and take over the job. And Rogers is that reliever.

Hildenberger is a good pitcher, but with his submarine release, he's vulnerable to pitching splits. And lefties have struck out a lot less and walked more and hit more homers than righties against Hildenberger in his career. Rogers is a lefty and could sneak in against a lineup with lefties and steal a save.

A southpaw closer isn't very likely (about half as likely as you'd expect), much like a dark, stout-like sour. The Bruery's Tart of Darkness tastes like plums and coffee and oak and is worth your time.

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