



Padres Press Clips

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Reds pour it on Padres, who hope rain stops

[Kevin Acee](#)

The good news was that after a rain delay of more than 2½ hours the Padres played a game on Friday night.

That they lost 12-6 to the [Reds](#) wasn't the worst thing that could have happened.

[Scott Schebler](#)'s grand slam off rookie reliever Rowan Wick was the big blow in the sixth inning. [Phillip Ervin](#) hit two home runs for the Reds, including a two-run shot in the seventh.

Francisco Mejia, coming off his two-homer game, singled and scored one of the Padres' two runs in the first inning.

Then rookie pitcher Brett Kennedy couldn't make it out of the second inning. Kennedy allowed just two singles but walked four of the six batters he faced in the second, one of them scoring on a passed ball.

Matt Strahm was called on to replace Kennedy and allowed Jose Peraza's one-hop double to the wall that cleared loaded bases and gave the Reds a 4-2 lead.

Hunter Renfroe hit his team-leading 21st home run of the season in the third, and doubles by Franmil Reyes and Manuel Margot tied the game 4-4 in the fourth.

Ervin's solo homer off Strahm in the fourth gave the Reds the lead, and they extended it with five runs off Wick in the sixth, the first on a suicide squeeze and then Schebler's slam.

[Eric Hosmer](#) hit a two-run homer in the eighth.

Now the potential bad news.

Friday's game, which began at 9:17 p.m. and ended nine minutes after midnight, might be all the baseball they play this weekend at Great American Ball Park, as continuous hard rain is forecast here all the way until the middle of Sunday afternoon.

The Padres have made it clear to [MLB](#) and the Reds they will stick around as long as necessary on Saturday and/or Sunday.

Because they don't want to fly back to Ohio after a night game in San Francisco on Sept. 26 to play the Reds the following day, the teams' only mutual workable off-day the rest of the season.

That was discussed in a conference call between the parties earlier Friday, as rain is in the forecast virtually nonstop and usually hard until Sunday night.

(The Reds and Padres are also both off this coming Thursday, but the Reds will have had games scheduled on 20 successive days at that point, so even if there is a rainout the date didn't work for them.)

"We're hoping we find a window or two tomorrow to play some baseball and hoping for the same on Sunday," Green said. "It's going to take some hope and prayers, from what they're telling me."

Hedges welcomes Mejia, plans to be Padres catcher

[Kevin Acee](#)

[Austin Hedges](#) intends to be the [Padres](#)' primary catcher for some time.

In the most supportive, cooperative way possible, he is going about showing that. Pretty much the same as before Mejia Mania.

Several hours prior to Friday night's game, Hedges got up from the chair in the middle of the visitors' clubhouse at Great American Ball Park where he had been watching video with [A.J. Ellis](#), talking about some of the team's pitchers and how they could counsel them based on what they saw.

"You've got to be prepared, man," he said. "... There are certain things I might have some experience, wisdom to pass on. Whether with a pitcher, another catcher, whether it's a shortstop, if you feel like you have something you feel like you can make someone better, you have to find that and help someone out."

Hedges moved to the chair in front of his locker to talk some more about his past couple of months and the previous night and what might be ahead for the Padres — and what seems like the team's conundrum wrapped in catcher's gear.

First, about the night before and his sitting in the dugout watching Francisco Mejia hit two home runs in his first start at catcher.

"That was awesome. Awesome," Hedges said. "It's exactly what we need. We need offense on this team. If that's the guy, then let's go. We won. He was the main reason we won. So ..."

To know how much Hedges means it, you have to acknowledge where Hedges has been and all the work he's done to be where he is.

You have to know that there was a period of time, amid his eight years in this organization, that he wondered if the Padres would actually ever win and that now he sees so much promise and wants to be part of it in a big way. You have to know that even he wondered (just a little bit) whether he would prove the inaccuracy of his defense-only reputation. You have to know all the work he's done to become a leader of men at 25 years old.

So on the day after Mejia hit two home runs in the first two at-bats of his first major league start as a catcher, Mejia started again Friday.

Manager Andy Green said Hedges will start the two weekend games. The team decided prior to the series that the pair would split the games here, as they are expected to split the remainder of the season's starts.

Before assessing how both bats could fit in the lineup on a consistent basis and how a split of time behind the plate could go or whether one of them should be traded, the Padres must evaluate Mejia as a catcher.

Hedges understands that.

However, he has no intention of relinquishing his position.

He is coming off a two-month stretch in which he started 43 of the Padres' 55 games, a 126-game pace he thinks is more than sustainable.

"I'd like to catch 130, 135 – shoot, 140," he said Thursday. "That's the way I want it to be. It challenges you to keep your body in shape, stay fresh."

Now is a good time for him to say so.

Hedges hit .276/.324/.503 in his 46 games (43 starts, 163 at-bats) from July 3 to Sept. 4. His batting average led all major league catchers who had at least 120 at-bats in that span. His on-base percentage was eighth, his slugging percentage third and nine home runs tied for third.

There were 18 catchers with at least 120 at-bats in those two months-and-a-day. There were just five with at least 150.

The reality the Padres have noted is that almost no one is catching 130 games anymore. The Cubs' Willson Contreras is on pace for 125 starts. The Cardinals' [Yadier Molina](#), who missed a month due to injury, is on pace for 123.

Just those two, the Dodgers' Yasmani Grandal and [Reds' Tucker Barnhart](#) have caught even 70 percent of their team's innings. Over the course of a season, 70 percent equals 113 games.

Hedges, who missed almost eight weeks with an elbow strain from the beginning of May to mid-June, has caught just less than half the Padres' innings.

It was impossible to miss how liberally Hedges mixes in mentions of Mejia's versatility. The 22-year-old switch-hitter prefers catcher but worked extensively in the outfield and at third base in the minors.

"If (having Mejia in the lineup) means us winning ballgames and I still get to play baseball for this organization that I love in this city that I love, I can't think of anything better than winning ballgames," Hedges said. "That's what it comes down to. If we find something that works that way, I'm all for it. ... If that means helping us win games, he's going to play, and we need him in the lineup. What that means – if it means catcher, third base, outfield, just finding a way to get his bat in the lineup."

It was one of three times Hedges alluded to Mejia's versatility in less than two minutes.

When talking about next season, Green is counting on the proverbial "these things take care of themselves."

Hedges is willing to believe that as well.

"We'll be all right," he said. "There's always a position called the batter's box. You'll find a way in the lineup if you play well in the batter's box."

Minors Cal Quantrill keeps El Paso's playoff run alive

[Jeff Sanders](#)

Statistically speaking, of the pitchers that [Padres](#) pushed up the ladder in 2018 – think all the big league debuts, **Logan Allen** arriving at Triple-A El Paso and **Chris Paddack** forcing his way to Double-A San Antonio – **Cal Quantrill's** summer in the Texas League did not exactly warrant a promotion.

The Padres challenged their 2016 first-rounder anyway.

He has been more than up for it.

Quantrill continued a strong start in the [Pacific Coast League](#) with six dominant innings in a [2-0 win over host Fresno](#) on Friday night, keeping the Chihuahuas' postseason run alive.

Down two games to none in the series, Quantrill struck out seven and allowed three baserunners – two hits and a walk – before four relievers teamed up for four scoreless innings to secure the win.

After posting a 5.15 ERA in the Texas League, the 23-year-old Quantrill has struck out 29, walked six and posted a 2.92 ERA in seven starts for El Paso. He has won four of them.

“The challenge was the promotion,” Padres minor league pitching coordinator **Eric Junge** said before Friday's start. “It seemed like it was time for a change of scenery, a new challenge – stop things from getting stale and see if the stuff works. It was, let's see if Cal can go to Triple-A, face the next caliber of hitter and he's honestly met the challenge and performed even better. It's gone well.”

Quantrill's third pitch, his slider, remains a work in progress. It's at times a strikeout pitch, albeit an offering not nearly as consistent as the plus fastball and plus change-

up that led the Padres to draft him eighth overall despite Tommy John wiping away his sophomore year at Stanford.

The Padres are continuing to stress the fastball-change-up combo, especially using his heater more effectively on the inside of the plate to open up down-and-away punchouts and soft contact.

While his Double-A struggles dropped his standing in prospect rankings – out of MLB.com’s top-100 and down from No. 4 to No. 10 in the Padres’ top-30 – a strong finish has buoyed the organization’s faith in Quantrill as he’s moved further and further away from his 2015 elbow reconstruction.

“We’ve taken the floaties off and he’s swimming,” Junge said.

Quantrill was working with a lead from the first inning on after [Allen Craig](#)’s two-run double.

Carlos Asuaje went 3-for-4 with a run scored and **Forrestt Allday** went 2-for-5 with a run scored.

Right-hander **Gerardo Reyes** fetched the final four outs, striking out three in the save.

Right-hander **Colin Rea** will face Fresno right-hander **Cy Sneed** on Saturday.

Missions’ Game 3 suspended

Double-A San Antonio rallied from an 8-1 deficit to tie its Game 3 tilt at home against Corpus Christi. The game was [tied 8-8](#) in the bottom of the 11th with **Buddy Reed** on second and nobody out for **Owen Miller**.

San Antonio is down 0-2 in the series. Play will resume noon Saturday with a potential Game 4 set to start 30 to 45 minutes after the conclusion of Game 3.

Missions right-hander **Jesse Scholtens** allowed seven runs on eight hits and a walk, including four home runs.

Reed was 1-for-3 with a triple, an RBI, two walks and two runs scored.

Peter Van Gansen went 2-for-4 with a double, an RBI, a walk and two runs.

Right-handers **David Bednar**, **Andres Munoz** and **Jason Jester** had combined for four scoreless innings when the game was halted.

Kennedy off kilter as Padres fall in rainy Cincy

Renfroe stays hot with homer; Hosmer adds home run, 3 RBIs

By Jeff Wallner

CINCINNATI -- [Brett Kennedy](#) wasn't himself on the mound at Great American Ball Park on Friday night. Whether it was the long rain delay or just a mechanical issue, it was a rough outing for the 24-year-old right-hander.

"It was pretty evident early his velo wasn't where it had been [in prior outings], and his command wasn't there," said Padres manager Andy Green after the 12-6 loss to the Reds. "It wasn't like they were really close misses today, he was missing fairly significantly."

Kennedy walked four and allowed four earned runs. He was lifted after only 44 pitches, making for a long night for the Padres' bullpen, which allowed eight earned runs in 6 1/3 innings, including a pair of homers by [Phillip Ervin](#) and [Scott Schebler](#)'s grand slam in the sixth inning.

On the bright side for San Diego, [Hunter Renfroe](#) continued to make his case for a starting outfield spot next season with his 21st home run, and [Eric Hosmer](#) added his 14th homer, his first since Aug. 21, in the eighth.

But Green seemed concerned about Kennedy following the game, although he hadn't yet spoken to him or the training staff. After posting a 2.81 ERA in his previous three starts, including his first career victory, Kennedy hit a bump in the road on Friday.

"The ball just wasn't coming out of my hand right," Kennedy said. "It's something I haven't dealt with before. I felt like I always do. No excuses, my mechanics were just not there. It made it really tough on our bullpen."

Following a two-hour, 37-minute rain delay due to torrential rain, the Padres greeted Reds starter [Anthony DeSclafani](#) with four straight one-out singles, capped by [Wil Myers](#)' hit up the middle, to produce two runs in the first.

[Matt Strahm](#) replaced Kennedy and allowed [Jose Peraza](#)'s bases-loaded double to clear the bases and put the Reds ahead, 4-2.

Kennedy allowed one hit, but he was charged with four earned runs in 1 2/3 innings. The four walks equaled his total over the previous two outings.

"From a baseball perspective, we thought it was prudent to go ahead and get to the bullpen as soon as possible," Green said. "We hope he's fine."

Renfroe homered for the second straight night in the third inning. He has 14 homers since the All-Star break, and six in his past 11 games.

After [Manuel Margot](#)'s RBI double drove home the tying run in the fourth, Ervin's fifth homer, off Strahm, put the Reds ahead, 5-4. Ervin added a two-run homer in the seventh off [Miguel Diaz](#) for his first career multi-home run game.

[Rowan Wick](#) allowed five runs in 1 1/3 innings, including Schebler's second career grand slam in the sixth inning, giving the Reds a Major League-best 10 grand slams this season, which also is a single-season franchise record.

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

It was a one-run game in the sixth inning when a pair of bunt singles led to a five-run frame for the Reds. On Ervin's suicide squeeze, with one out and runners at the corners, [Luis Urias](#) failed to cover second base. The next batter -- [Michael Lorenzen](#) -- bunted toward Wick, who wasn't quick enough off the mound to field the ball. Schebler followed with his grand slam. The Reds have used the bunt as a weapon under interim manager Jim Riggleman, and Green took responsibility for his team not being better prepared.

"It's a lesson that little bunts can lead to big innings," Green said. "We have a lot of young kids up here, but we can't use that as an excuse. We'll work on the bunt defense. There's a conversation with a young second baseman who probably hasn't seen a lot of suicide squeezes in Triple-A this year. We have to get off the mound a little quicker. I have to take ownership with not setting us up to defend it better."

UP NEXT

Left-hander [Robbie Erlin](#) is looking to snap a personal two-game losing streak when he makes his ninth start of the season against the Reds on Saturday at Great American Ball Park. Erlin is starting against the Reds for the first time -- he has one career appearance against them. The Padres will face right-hander [Matt Harvey](#), who will make his 21st start for the Reds since being acquired in May. First pitch is set for 1:10 p.m. PT.

The Top 10 Padres rookie performances of '18

By A.J. Cassavell

It's the year of the rookie in San Diego. Fifteen players have made their big league debuts in a Padres uniform this season. That number doesn't count [Francisco Mejia](#), who played a few games with Cleveland before he was traded, then homered twice in his first start for San Diego on Thursday.

On Friday, Mejia was slated to bat second against Cincinnati, behind fellow [top-25 prospect](#) in baseball, per MLB Pipeline, and recent callup [Luis Urias](#). In total, 20 rookies have suited up for the Padres this season -- and the majority of them have held their own.

After Mejia's heroics on Thursday, here's a look at San Diego's 10 best rookie performances in 2018.

10. [Urias vs. Mariners, Aug. 29](#)

3-for-5, 2B, first career hit

Urias' big day could easily be higher on this list, if not for a crew chief review that overturned his first home run in the fourth inning. No matter, Urias still pounded out three hits -- including a double -- and he'd record his first homer two days later, an opposite-field shot to roughly the same part of the ballpark.

9. [Robert Stock vs. Mets, July 24](#)

3 IP, 0 R, 5 K's, 1 H

Even the Padres weren't entirely sure what they had in Stock until this late July contest in New York. Stock came out firing, mixing 99-mph heat with a devastating breaking pitch -- and he maintained it for three innings. Stock threw 37 pitches and recorded 10 swings and misses and eight swinging strikes, on his way to racking up five strikeouts.

8. [Franmil Reyes vs. Brewers, Aug. 7](#)

3-for-3, HR, 2B, BB, 3 RBIs

Reyes reached base all four times, including a fourth-inning homer that cut the Padres' deficit to one. But his biggest contribution came in the seventh. Facing Brewers ace reliever [Josh Hader](#), Reyes smashed a slider into the left-center-field gap for a go-ahead two-run double. The Padres won the game, 11-5, mostly through Reyes' contributions.

7. [Jacob Nix vs. Phillies, Aug. 10](#)

6 IP, 0 R, 4 H, 4 K's, 2 BB

Nix's gem against the Phillies is the only game on this list that counts as a debut (Mejia and Urias put forth their big days in their second game with the Padres). After a shaky first inning,

Nix settled in for six brilliant frames on just 88 pitches. He faced 24 batters and didn't allow an extra-base hit.

6. [Joey Lucchesi](#) vs. Phillies, Aug. 12

6 IP, 0 R, 2 H, 6 K's, 3 BB

Two days after Nix's gem, Lucchesi was similarly excellent. He, too, worked six scoreless and probably could've gone longer if the Padres weren't already running away with an eventual 9-3 victory. Lucchesi owns a 3.59 ERA through 22 starts, the best for a San Diego rookie with at least 100 innings since [Cory Luebke](#) in 2011. This was probably his best performance.

5. Reyes vs. D-backs, Sept. 3

2-for-3, 2 HRs, 4 RBIs

No one disputes Reyes' other-worldly power. He put it on full display Monday in Arizona. Reyes smashed home runs to both fields for his first career multi-homer game, and both dingers were emblematic of his skill set at the plate. The first pitch jammed him, yet he still muscled it out to right-center. The second came on a 3-2 count after he laid off an enticing [Zack Godley](#) curveball just outside of the zone.

4. Mejia vs. Reds, Sept. 6

2-for-4, 2 HRs, 4 RBIs

Mejia became the first player in franchise history to homer in the first two plate appearances of his first start with the club. The most impressive part? The bat speed. Mejia caught up with fastballs at 96 mph and 97 mph for his home runs, making him just the third player in the Majors this season to go deep twice in a game on pitches thrown at 96 mph or harder.

3. Nix vs. Mariners, Aug. 28

8 1/3 IP, R, 8 H, 0 K's, 0 BB

Nix had completely avoided any of the three true outcomes until [Nelson Cruz's](#) homer in the ninth. Still, Nix did not walk or strike out a Mariners hitter, routinely inducing weak contact en route to 8 1/3 innings of one-run ball. Only Randy Jones has recorded a longer start without a strikeout or a walk in Padres history (Jones pitched a 10-inning complete game against the Giants during his 1976 Cy Young Award-winning season).

2. [Eric Lauer](#) vs. Dodgers, July 10

8 2/3 IP, R, 4 H, 8 K's, 2 BB

Lauer's performance against the Dodgers is arguably the best by a Padres pitcher this year. He came one out from becoming the first San Diego rookie to pitch a shutout since Clay Hensley in 2006. [Max Muncy](#) took him deep, negating that possibility. But Lauer would further endear himself to Padres fans after the game. When asked about his success against the Dodgers, he responded, "It's the Dodgers, man. Nobody likes the Dodgers."

1. [Christian Villanueva](#) vs. Rockies, April 3

3-for-3, 3 HRs, HBP, 5 RBIs

From the outset, Villanueva came out slugging this year. In his second start, Villanueva put forth one of the all-time great performances from a Padres rookie, going deep three times in an 8-4 San Diego victory. Villanueva, who is currently sidelined with a broken right middle finger, went on to win the National League Rookie of the Month Award in April.

Two Padres make Pipeline Team of the Year

By Jim Callis

A year after making their full-season debuts, Blue Jays third baseman Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and White Sox right-hander [Dylan Cease](#) dominated the Minor Leagues throughout 2018. Guerrero made a run at becoming the Minors' first .400 hitter in 29 years and Cease was unhittable for much of the season, especially down the stretch.

Guerrero was a no-brainer choice as [MLB Pipeline's Hitter of the Year](#), and Cease was nearly as obvious a pick as [our Pitcher of the Year](#). They also headline our annual Prospect Team of the Year, which includes eight [Top 100 prospects](#) on the 12-player first team.

To be eligible for the Prospect Team of the Year, a player must have spent at least half of the season in the Minors and ranked on MLB Pipeline's Top 30 Prospects list for his organization at some point.

First Team

C: [Francisco Mejia](#)

([Padres No. 3 prospect/MLB No. 21](#))

AAA: .293/.338/.471, 427 AB, 14 HR, 68 RBI

MLB: .286/.444/1.143, 7 AB, 2 HR, 4 RBI

Famous for his modern Minor League-record 50-game hitting streak in 2016, Mejia put up the best numbers of his pro career (.328/.364/.582) after the Indians traded him to the Padres for [Brad Hand](#) and [Adam Cimber](#) in July. Whether he'll receive well enough to stay behind the plate is still in question, but his bat easily would play on an outfield corner.

1B: Peter Alonso

([Mets No. 2 prospect/MLB No. 61](#))

AA/AAA: .285/.395/.579, 478 AB, 36 HR, 119 RBI

Alonso homered three times in the last four games to tie Reds first baseman [Ibandel Isabel](#) for the Minor League lead, and he had wrapped up the RBI crown well before that. In his first injury-free season as a pro, he also ranked third in extra-base hits (68) and total bases (277), fifth in slugging and ninth in OPS (.975).

2B: [Jeff McNeil](#)

(graduated from [Mets Top 30](#))

AA/AAA: .342/.411/.617, 339 AB, 19 HR, 71 RBI, 6 SB

MLB: .321/.385/.463, 134 AB, 2 HR, 12 RBI, 4 SB

As a 12th-round pick out of Long Beach State in 2013, McNeil lacks the prospect pedigree of most of the other hitters on the PTOY first team. But he holds his own statistically -- he came in second in the Minors in slugging and OPS (1.028), trailing only Guerrero -- and has continued to thrive in New York.

3B: Vladimir Guerrero Jr.

([Blue Jays No. 1 prospect/MLB No. 1](#))

R/A+/AA/AAA: .381/.437/.636, 357 AB, 20 HR, 78 RBI, 3 SB

The lone repeater from [the 2017 Prospect Team of the Year](#), Guerrero topped the Minors in hitting, slugging and OPS (1.120) and finished third in on-base percentage. He also nearly walked as much as he struck out while reaching Triple-A at age 19.

SS: Gavin Lux

([Dodgers No. 6 prospect](#))

A+/AA: .324/.399/.514, 463 AB, 15 HR, 57 RBI, 13 SB

The first shortstop selected (20th overall) in the 2016 Draft, Lux struggled at the outset of his first full pro season but rallied with a strong second half and built on that momentum this year. He ranked in the top three in the high Class A California League in hitting, slugging, OBP and OPS (.916) at age 20, then posted similar numbers during the final month in Double-A.

OF: [Eloy Jimenez](#)

([White Sox No. 1 prospect/MLB No. 3](#))

AA/AAA: .337/.384/.577, 416 AB, 22 HR, 75 RBI

Acquired from the Cubs along with Cease in a July 2017 trade for [Jose Quintana](#) that could be a steal for the White Sox, Jimenez is Guerrero's closest rival as the best offensive prospect in the game. Despite missing time with strains of his left pectoral and left adductor muscles, he still finished seventh in the Minors in slugging and eighth in batting while setting a career high in homers and tearing up Triple-A with a .996 OPS at age 21.

OF: Alex Kirilloff

([Twins No. 2 prospect/MLB No. 30](#))

Low Class A/High Class A: .348/.392/.578, 512 AB, 20 HR, 101 RBI

Coming back from Tommy John surgery that cost him the entire 2017 season, Kirilloff showed he may take over as baseball's best offensive prospect once Guerrero and Jimenez graduate to the big leagues next year. He led the Minors in doubles, extra-base hits (71) and total bases (296) and placed second in hits, third in batting, sixth in slugging and seventh in RBIs.

OF: [Kyle Tucker](#)

([Astros No. 2 prospect/MLB No. 8](#))

AAA: .332/.400/.590, 407 AB, 24 HR, 93 RBI, 20 SB

MLB: .154/.254/.212, 52 AB, 3 RBI

Just one of six 20-20 players in the Minors this season, Tucker also accomplished the feat in 2017, making him the first player to do so in consecutive years since fellow Astros outfielder [Derek Fisher](#) (2015-16). He led the Triple-A Pacific Coast League in slugging and OPS (.989), ranking third in the Minors in both categories.

DH: Nathaniel Lowe

([Rays No. 13 prospect](#))

A+/AA/AAA: .330/.416/.568, 482 AB, 27 HR, 102 RBI

The Rays made Joshua Lowe the 13th overall choice in the 2016 Draft, then grabbed his older brother 12 rounds later. Nathaniel has shattered all expectations, hitting 27 homers this year after going deep just seven times the season before and finishing in the top 10 in the Minors in hits (fourth), OPS (fifth, .985), total bases (fifth, 274), RBI (fifth), on-base percentage (eighth), runs (eighth) and slugging (10th).

LHP: [Jesus Luzardo](#)

([Athletics No. 1 prospect/MLB No. 12](#))

A+/AA/AAA: 10-5, 2.88 ERA, 109 1/3 IP, 129 SO, .220 AVG, 1.09 WHIP

Both of our first-team starting pitchers blew out their elbows as high school seniors and required Tommy John surgery, still commanded seven-figure bonuses that look like prudent investments and got traded last summer. Dealt by the Nationals in a package for [Sean Doolittle](#) and [Ryan Madson](#), Luzardo rushed from high Class A to Triple-A a year later at age 20, including a streak of six straight Double-A starts without allowing an earned run.

RHP: Dylan Cease

([White Sox No. 5 prospect/MLB No. 44](#))

A+/AA: 12-2, 2.40 ERA, 124 IP, 160 SO, .189 AVG, 1.06 WHIP

Handled carefully after his 2014 elbow reconstruction, Cease didn't really get turned loose until this year, when he ranked fifth in the Minors in opponent average and eighth in strikeout rate (11.6 per nine innings). His numbers improved after his midseason promotion to Double-A, where he had a 1.72 ERA, 13.4 whiffs per nine innings and a .168 opponent average.

RP: [Colin Poche](#)

([Rays No. 24 prospect](#))

AA/AAA: 6-0, 0.82 ERA, 2 SV, 66 IP, 110 SO, .151 AVG, 0.79 WHIP

The lowest-drafted player (14th round, 2016) on the first team, Poche went from the Diamondbacks to the Rays in May as one of the players to be named for Steven Souza in a three-team trade three months before. Following a spectacular first full pro season in 2017 (1.25 ERA, 14.5 strikeouts per nine innings, .174 opponent average), he somehow managed to improve this year. Among full-season Minor Leaguers with as many as his 66 innings, he ranked first in ERA and strikeout rate (15.0), second in WHIP and third in opponent average.

Second Team

C: Ronaldo Hernandez

([Rays No. 7 prospect](#))

A: .284/.339/.494, 405 AB, 21 HR, 79 RBI, 10 SB

1B: Roberto Ramos

([Rockies No. 23 prospect](#))

A+/AA: .269/.368/.574, 413 AB, 32 HR, 77 RBI

2B: [Brandon Lowe](#)

([Rays No. 10 prospect](#))

AA/AAA: .297/.391/.558, 380 AB, 22 HR, 76 RBI, 8 SB
MLB: .258/.372/.439, 66 AB, 3 HR, 12 RBI

3B: Taylor Ward

(Angels No. 8 prospect)

AA/AAA: .349/.446/.531, 375 AB, 14 HR, 60 RBI, 18 SB
MLB: .211/.263/.366, 71 AB, 3 HR, 9 RBI

SS: Kevin Smith

(Blue Jays No. 6 prospect)

A/A+: .302/.358/.528, 523 AB, 25 HR, 93 RBI, 29 SB

OF: Jo Adell

(Angels No. 1 prospect/MLB No. 16)

A/A+/AAA: .290/.355/.543, 396 AB, 20 HR, 77 RBI, 15 SB

OF: Austin Dean

(Marlins No. 27 prospect)

AA/AAA: .345/.410/.511, 397 AB, 12 HR, 68 RBI
MLB: .206/.254/.397, 63 AB, 3 HR, 9 RBI

OF: Corey Ray

(Brewers No. 2 prospect)

AA: .239/.323/.477, 532 AB, 27 HR, 74 RBI, 37 SB

DH: J.D. Davis

(graduated from Astros Top 30)

AAA: .342/.406/.583, 333 AB, 17 HR, 81 RBI
MLB: .176/.247/.235, 85 AB, 1 HR, 5 RBI

LHP: Patrick Sandoval

(Angels No. 20 prospect)

A/A+/AAA: 11-1, 2.06 ERA, 122 1/3 IP, 145 SO, .196 AVG, 0.96 WHIP

RHP: Chris Paddack

(Padres No. 5 prospect/MLB No. 48)

A+/AA: 7-3, 2.10 ERA, 90 IP, 120 SO, .204 AVG, 0.82 WHIP

RP: Tyler Johnson

(White Sox No. 23 prospect)

A/AA: 9-0, 1.40 ERA, 14 SV, 58 IP, 89 SO, .172 AVG, 0.88 WHIP

Franmil Reyes' rapid improvement leaves the Padres with a good problem

By Dustin Palmateer

When the Padres opted not to protect Franmil Reyes from the Rule 5 draft over the winter, they made a calculated gamble. Reyes had something of a quiet breakout in 2017, finally tapping into the power behind his giant frame. He clobbered a career-best 25 home runs in Double-A San Antonio after hitting just 24 in the two previous years combined. Luckily, Reyes made it through the Rule 5 draft unscathed, perhaps thanks to a broken hamate bone he suffered in last year's Arizona Fall League.

With Reyes recovered from surgery and still in the organization, the Padres started him in Triple-A El Paso in 2018. He promptly feasted on the hitter-friendly Pacific Coast League; over his first 36 games, his walk rate ballooned to 13.6 percent and he clubbed 14 more homers. When Wil Myers and Hunter Renfroe both hit the disabled list in May, clearing up what was then a jam-packed outfield in San Diego, the [Padres made the logical move](#) to give the 22-year-old Reyes a shot.

At that point, Reyes' forward momentum hit a wall. He struck out twice in his first game and six times in his first four; from May 5 through June 30, Reyes' first stint in the majors, he whiffed in 40.6 percent of his plate appearances. Despite [flashes of his prodigious power](#), the overall approach was lacking as wily pitchers exploited weaknesses. With Myers set to return from his oblique injury in late June, the Padres shuffled Reyes back to El Paso to wait for another opening.

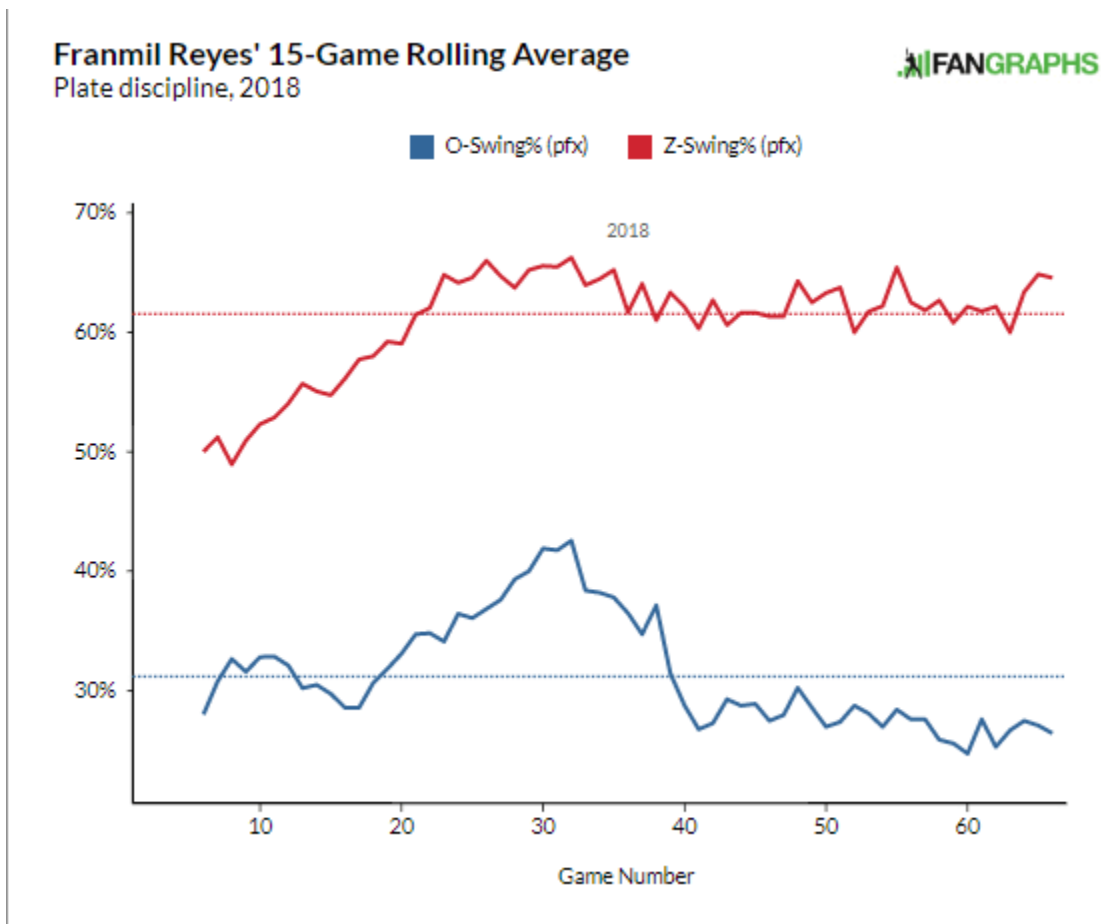
Without further adjustments, the Franmil Experiment wouldn't work. At a listed 6-foot-6, 275 pounds, it takes a while for Reyes to get everything moving. In other words, while he's not as slow as you might expect once rolling, he projects as a below-average outfielder and baserunner. He *must* hit.

After a brief and uneventful return to the majors in July, Reyes went back to El Paso for four games before reaching San Diego again for good in August. He returned a different hitter. In fact, one could argue that he's been the most improved hitter in baseball in the second half.

Player	Strikeout Improvement (%)
1. Franmil Reyes	15.8
2. Jedd Gyorko	11.9
3. Greg Allen	11.9
4. Robinson Chirinos	11.7
5. Austin Hedges	11.1

Among the 317 hitters with at least 50 plate appearances in both the first and second half, Reyes' 15.8 percentage point K rate improvement — it's dropped from 40.6 percent in the first half to 23.8 percent in the second — *easily* paces the league. Beyond the added contact, both Reyes' walk rate and ISO have jumped forward in corresponding fashion. After posting a .717 OPS in his first month and change in the majors, Reyes is slashing .316/.372/.696 since his Aug. 5 call-up.

How has he done it? First, Reyes has picked better pitches to swing at.



In the first half, Reyes swung at 60.3 percent of the pitches seen in zone and

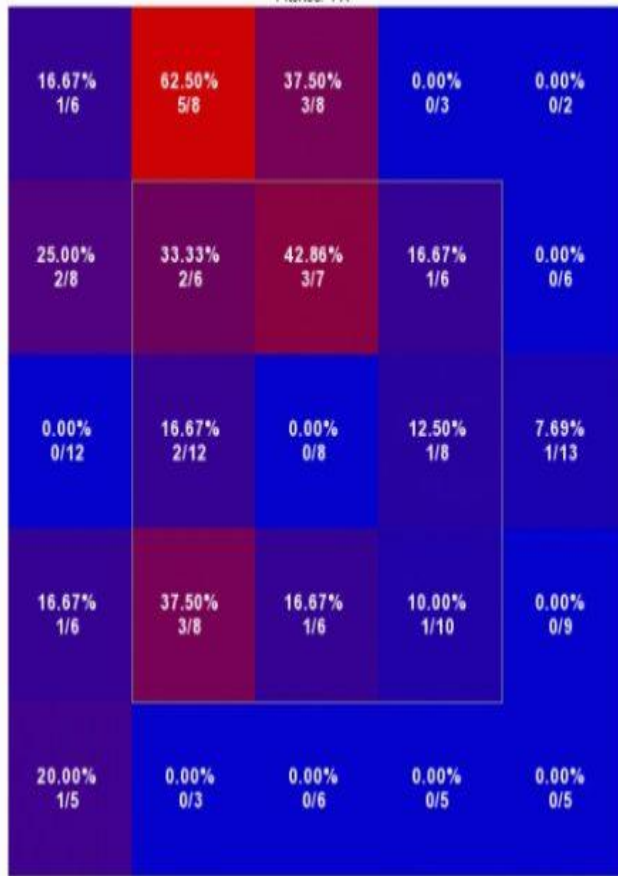
34.2 percent of the pitches seen out of the zone, according to [Pitch Info data from FanGraphs](#). Sticking with the 50-PA threshold, that 26.1 percent differential ranked 401 out of 434 hitters. Reyes was swinging at too many balls and not enough strikes.

In the second half, he's offered at roughly the same amount of strikes while cutting his chase rate down by 4.4 percentage points. It might sound like a modest improvement, but the 31.5 percentage point differential jumped him to a more palatable 238 out of 354 in the second half, right next to fellow rookie Shohei Ohtani.

Like many youngsters, Reyes remains susceptible to good breaking pitches, but he's made big strides on the fastball and changeup. According to [Brooks Baseball](#), his whiffs/swing in his first big league stint was 32.5 percent on fastballs and 30.8 percent on offspeed pitches. In the second half, those numbers have dipped to 23.3 and 21.4, respectively.

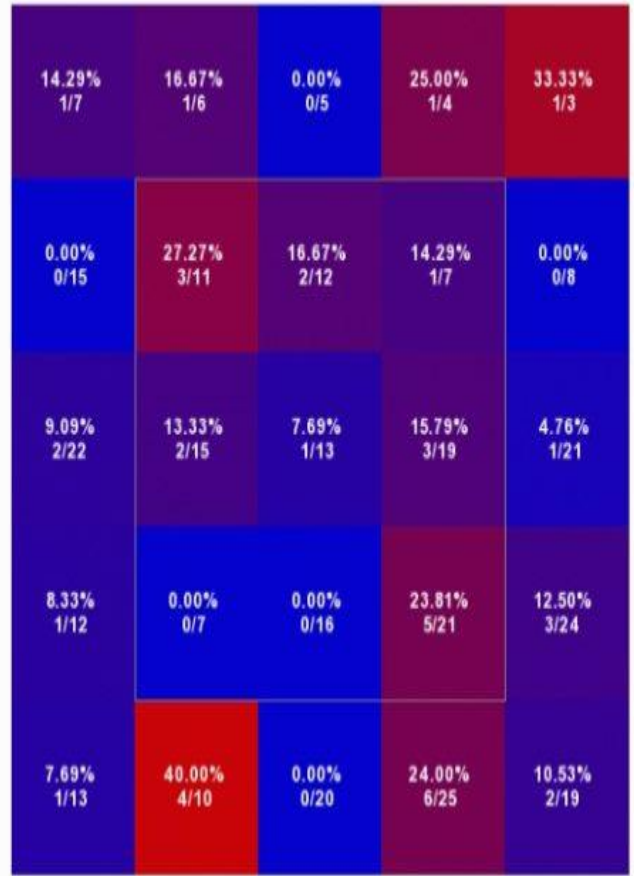
In turn, on a per-pitch basis, Reyes has been the league's [second-best hitter against fastballs](#) in the second half after rating well below-average in the category in the first half. Similarly, he's made the below-average to above-average jump on changeups as well, although the improvement hasn't been quite as dramatic. (Small sample caveats apply, as always.)

Franmil Reyes: Percentage Whiffs
 From 04/01/2018 to 06/30/2018 | All Competition Levels
 From the Catcher's POV: Against RHP & LHP
 Pitches: FA



BrooksBaseball.net

Franmil Reyes: Percentage Whiffs
 From 08/01/2018 to 09/06/2018 | All Competition Levels
 From the Catcher's POV: Against RHP & LHP



BrooksBaseball.net

On fastballs up and in, Reyes whiffed at 16 of 43 pitches in his first crack at the majors (left image). Since August, he's swung through just seven of 56 pitches in the same six zones. He's also hit four home runs on up-and-in heaters in August compared to just one in May and June.

All told, Reyes' 130 wRC+ [ranks fifth in baseball](#) among rookies, within shouting distance of phenoms like Ohtani, Ronald Acuña and Juan Soto. Since 2010, only 37 rookies have posted a better wRC+ (min. 200 PAs).

Still, Reyes hasn't yet ensured a permanent spot in San Diego's outfield, thanks in part to its crowded nature. Hunter Renfroe has made adjustments of his own this season, perhaps re-establishing his footing. Wil Myers could find his way back to an outfield corner if the third base experiment doesn't stick. Both Manuel Margot and Franchy Cordero — the latter of whom should be ready for an Opening Day return in 2019 after undergoing season-ending elbow surgery earlier this year — provide added value with their legs. Even recent call-up

Francisco Mejía could see some time in the outfield next year, at least when he cedes the catcher spot to Austin Hedges.

Eight months ago, the Padres presumably waited nervously throughout the Rule 5 draft, wondering if any team would take a flyer on Reyes. Now they've got a better problem on their hands. If Reyes keeps adjusting and keeps hitting, he could force the Padres into a tough decision about which outfielders to play and which ones to trade away.

For a team that's witnessed some of its younger players backpedal before moving forward, Reyes' rapid ascent could give him an inside track on a much longer audition.

Schebler's club-record slam leads Reds over Padres 12-6

Associated Press

CINCINNATI -- The Reds tied their club record for grand slams on July 1 and figured it wouldn't be long before someone got the next one. They waited more than two months before [Scott Schebler](#) hit No. 10.

Schebler hit the grand slam that set a Reds season record, and [Phillip Ervin](#) homered twice as Cincinnati pulled away to a rain-delayed 12-6 victory over the [San Diego Padres](#) early Saturday.

Schebler connected off [Rowan Wick](#) in the sixth for Cincinnati's 10th grand slam, putting the Reds up 10-4 and ending the long wait. Every time a Reds batter came up with the bases loaded at Great American Ball Park, the statistic flashed on the scoreboard.

"We've been looking at that on the scoreboard for, what, a couple months now," Schebler said. "It was really cool. It's all about the guys getting on base."

Ervin had a solo homer and a two-run shot, the first multi-homer game of his career.

The start of the game was delayed by 2 hours, 37 minutes because of rain and ended at 12:09 a.m. Both starters made quick exits.

San Diego's [Brett Kennedy](#) faced only 10 batters, replaced after he walked a career-high four batters in the second inning. [Matt Strahm](#) (3-4) relieved and gave up [Jose Peraza](#)'s bases-clearing double and Ervin's solo homer.

Kennedy threw 44 pitches in his short outing, only 20 of them for strikes.

"That second inning, I just kind of lost it mechanically," Kennedy said. "No excuses. It's something I really haven't dealt with before."

Ervin brought home another run in the sixth with his squeeze bunt, one of two bunts botched by San Diego in the inning. Reliever [Michael Lorenzen](#) (3-1) also reached on a bunt single that the Padres couldn't field -- Wick was slow getting off the mound -- loading the bases for Schebler's second career grand slam.

"It's a tough, tough lesson for him today that little bunts can lead to big innings," manager Andy Green said.

Lorenzen went three innings in relief of [Anthony DeSclafani](#), who had his second straight subpar start. DeSclafani gave up four runs in four innings. [Francisco Mejia](#)'s single started a two-run rally in the first inning. [Hunter Renfroe](#) and [Eric Hosmer](#) added homers.

Mejia made his first start behind the plate for the Padres on Thursday night and hit a solo homer and a three-run shot for a 6-2 victory, earning another start. Manager Andy Green plans to split

catching duties the rest of the month, giving Mejia a chance to learn the pitching staff while getting acclimated.

PERFECT 10

The Reds' 10 grand slams have been hit by [Adam Duvall](#) (2), [Scooter Gennett](#), [Eugenio Suarez](#), [Joey Votto](#), [Jesse Winker](#), DeSclafani, Lorenzen, Peraza and Schebler. The only other major league team with at least nine different players hitting a grand slam in a season was the 2000 Cardinals, who had 10 players connect, according to STATS.

STRAHM'S STREAK

Peraza's bases-loaded double ended Strahm's streak of not allowing a hit with two outs and runners in scoring position. Batters had been 0 for 14 against the left-hander.

BAILEY'S DONE

Interim manager Jim Riggleman has removed [Homer Bailey](#) from the rotation for the rest of the season, giving rookie [Tyler Mahle](#) a chance to start. Bailey is 1-14 with a 6.09 ERA and has lost nine straight decisions. Bailey won't pitch in relief, but will be confined to keeping in shape by throwing in the bullpen. The 32-year-old pitcher has been limited to 46 starts in the last four seasons because of three arm injuries that required surgery.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Reds: Gennett was back in the projected starting lineup after missing one game with a sore thigh. He went 0 for 5.

UP NEXT

Padres: Left-hander [Robbie Erlin](#) (3-5) makes his ninth start of the season. He's lost consecutive starts for the first time since April 12-17, 2016.

Reds: [Matt Harvey](#) (6-8) makes his 21st start for the Reds. He hasn't won since Aug. 18, going 0-1 in his last three starts with a 5.28 ERA.

#PadresOnDeck: Triple-A El Paso, Double-A San Antonio Each Face Elimination

By Bill Center

The Padres two minor league teams in post-season play each face elimination Friday night.

Despite a 4-for-5, three-RBI game from San Diego State product **Ty France**, Triple-A El Paso lost to Fresno at Southwest University Park in El Paso Thursday night to go down 2-0 in the best-of-5 Pacific Coast League Pacific Conference finals. The series moves to Fresno for Game 3 Friday night.

And Double-A San Antonio lost a second straight game at Corpus Christi Thursday to go down 2-0 in the best-of-5 Texas League Southern Division finals. San Antonio hosts the third game Friday night.

Both El Paso and San Antonio need to win three straight games to advance to their respective league championship series.

The Chihuahuas are getting offense. San Antonio is not.

France is 6-for-9 in the first two games of the PCL playoffs. And designated hitter **Brett Nicholas** (.444) was 2-for-5 with a double and two RBIs Thursday night.

Right fielder **Forrestt Allday** (.200) was 1-for-4 with a walk and two runs scored. Second baseman **Carlos Asuaje** (.286) had a double in three at-bats with two walks and a run scored. First baseman **Allen**

Craig (.286) was 1-for-4 with a walk and a run scored. Shortstop **Javy Guerra** (.111) was 1-for-4 with a run scored. Catcher **Raffy Lopez** (.333) was 1-for-4 with a walk.

Starting left-hander **Logan Allen** allowed three runs on 10 hits and a walk with four strikeouts in 4 1/3 innings to take the loss.

Right-hander **Kyle Lloyd** allowed a run on a hit and a walk with four strikeouts in 2 2/3 innings. Right-hander **Kazuhisa Makita** issued a walk in an otherwise perfect inning. Left-hander **Jerry Keel** issued a walk and allowed a run in the first two-thirds of the ninth inning. Right-hander **Colten Brewer** allowed two runs on four straight hits before getting the final out in the top of the ninth as the Fresno lead went from 4-2 to 7-2 before El Paso scored three in the bottom of the ninth.

Catcher **Austin Allen**'s solo home run in the ninth ended a run of 17 straight scoreless innings by San Antonio. Allen (.286) was 2-for-4 while left fielder **Josh Naylor** (.125) and designated hitter **Webster Rivas** (.143) were each 1-for-4. The Missions have one run on eight hits in the first two games of the series.

Starting right-hander **Emmanuel Ramirez** gave up four runs on eight hits and a walk with seven strikeouts in six innings to take the loss. Ramirez gave up three home runs. Right-handed reliever **Trevor Megill** allowed a run on two hits and two walks with four strikeouts in four innings.

Reds double up Padres 12-6 after lengthy weather delay

AP

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