



MEDIA CLIPS – April 14, 2018

CarGo's HR, sac fly enough for Rox in DC

Joshua Needelman / MLB.com | Apr. 13, 2018

WASHINGTON -- Before **Carlos Gonzalez** sent **Tanner Roark's** changeup deep into the D.C. night, dropping his bat and admiring his handiwork, no Rockies player had recorded a hit Friday at Nationals Park.

Gonzalez changed that with two outs in the top of the fourth. His 439-foot shot to center field put the Rockies on the board, and then two innings later his sacrifice fly scored **DJ LeMahieu**. In a game devoid of much hitting, Gonzalez provided all of Colorado's offense in a 2-1 win over the Nationals. The Rockies have now won the first two contests of a four-game series.

The homer was Gonzalez's third of the season; last year, he didn't hit his first long ball until May 21, 2017.

"When the home run comes, it's just a really good swing to a really good pitch. That means I'm in control, I'm not chasing bad pitches," Gonzalez said. "It's always nice to have a big fly over the fence, but I'm never looking for it."

The Rockies were forced to dip into their bullpen early, after left-hander **Kyle Freeland's** night ended after 4 2/3 innings. He left with two runners on base, having allowed just one run on a sacrifice fly to **Bryce Harper**. **Scott Oberg** entered and forced **Ryan Zimmerman** to ground out, beginning what would turn out to be a dominant night for the Rockies' bullpen.

The Nationals recorded no hits over the final four innings, as Oberg, right-hander **Bryan Shaw**, left-hander **Mike Dunn** and right-hander **Adam Ottavino** built the bridge to right-hander **Wade Davis**, who pitched a perfect ninth inning.

"These guys are horses," Gonzalez said of the bullpen. "We feel confident playing behind them, knowing they are going to keep the game the same."

"I'm proud of our pitching, that we hung in there on the road against a good team on a loud night, and our guys performed," manager Bud Black said. "That should continue to build confidence with our group, that we can win these types of games."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Flashing the leather: **Gerardo Parra** didn't seem to be bothered by the news of his four-game suspension due to his role in the Rockies' brawl with the Padres over the weekend. He made a couple of impressive catches in left field, the first coming in the first inning when he laid out to snag a liner off the bat of **Trea Turner**. He showed off the leather again in the sixth inning, robbing **Howie Kendrick** of a hit.

"We did a tremendous job playing defense. [Parra] making those plays in left field, giving confidence to the pitchers. I think that's our biggest strength," Gonzalez said.

SOUND SMART

Ottavino has gotten hitters to miss 50 percent of their swings against him. Entering play tonight, that was tied for the third-highest rate among 370 pitchers who had generated at least 25 total swings from opponents.

UP NEXT

Right-hander **Jon Gray** (1-2, 5.63 ERA) takes the ball for the Rockies on Saturday, looking to rebound after taking a loss against the Padres last time out. In five innings, he allowed seven runs on a career-high 10 hits. In his career, Gray is 0-1 with a 5.73 ERA against the Nationals. First pitch is scheduled for 11:05 a.m. MT.

Blackmon likely to avoid DL for quad injury

Joshua Needelman / MLB.com | Apr. 12, 2018

WASHINGTON -- Rockies center fielder [Charlie Blackmon](#) tested his right quad running in the Nationals Park outfield Friday evening before Colorado's game against the Nationals.

Though manager Bud Black didn't give a timetable for Blackmon's return, he said the center fielder is more likely to play in a game than go on the disabled list.

"We're encouraged by the process," Black said.

Blackmon has not played since Monday, when he went 1-for-3 with a single and two walks against the Padres. He was scratched from the lineup the following day.

Blackmon, the Rockies' usual leadoff hitter, owns a .282/.391/.641 slash line and has hit four homers and recorded six RBIs this season. Second baseman [DJ LeMahieu](#) has hit leadoff in Blackmon's place, and in Thursday's series opener against the Nationals he went [4-for-5 with two homers and four RBIs](#).

Arenado (5 games) among 7 disciplined for fracas

Perdomo also receives 5-game suspension; Parra gets 4 games; Baumann gets 1; 3 others fined

AJ Cassavell / MLB.com | Apr. 13, 2018

SAN DIEGO -- Four players were suspended and three more fined as the result of Wednesday's benches-clearing altercation at Coors Field between the Padres and Rockies.

Colorado's **Nolan Arenado** and San Diego's **Luis Perdomo** each received five-game bans for their roles as the primary instigators of the fracas. Rockies outfielder **Gerardo Parra** received a four-game suspension, while Padres reliever **Buddy Baumann** was hit with a one-game suspension. Arenado and Parra will appeal; it remains unclear if Perdomo will do the same.

"I think that falls in line with what you've seen the last number of years with these things," Rockies skipper Bud Black said.

"As of now [Parra and Arenado] are appealing. But that could change."

"We'll have to reconfigure the rotation, probably insert somebody in there to fill in for a start," added Padres manager Andy Green. "... It was what it was. I know Major League Baseball tries to sort through a lot of things when they make those decisions. Glad we're not losing a lot of guys."

All four suspended players were fined undisclosed amounts, as were Rockies starter **German Marquez**, Padres catcher **A.J. Ellis** and Padres shortstop **Freddy Galvis**.

Wednesday's incident sparked when Perdomo threw a 96-mph fastball behind Arenado, who promptly charged the mound. Perdomo responded by throwing his glove in Arenado's direction. Chaos followed as players converged from all directions on the left side of the infield.

"Five games is a lot of games, you know," Arenado said. "I was just defending myself. ... They throw hard out there and reactions happen, and that's all it was."

Perdomo declined to comment Friday evening, but has maintained his innocence throughout, claiming an inside pitch merely got away from him. The results preceding the incident tell a bit of a different story.

Padres center fielder **Manuel Margot** had been plunked in the ribs the night before and ended up on the disabled list as a result. The next day, Rockies shortstop **Trevor Story** and Padres right fielder **Hunter Renfroe** were also hit in the early stages of the game. Tensions boiled over in the third when Perdomo's pitch sailed behind Arenado.

"You're not going out there, you don't want to charge the mound, you don't want to fight, that's not why we're playing this game," Arenado said. "But you know, 96 at you on purpose, I think would frustrate a lot of people."

Parra and Arenado were in the lineup for Friday's game against Washington. Should one of the two drop the appeal, the Rockies could stagger the suspensions so as not to have two regulars out of the starting lineup at the same time. After three games in Washington this weekend, Colorado heads to Pittsburgh for three before returning home to face the Cubs. Perdomo was slated to start Monday against the Dodgers. Barring an extended appeal, the Padres would need to fill his place in the rotation.

Long relievers **Robbie Erlin** and **Jordan Lyles** -- both of whom competed for starting jobs in Spring Training -- are the likeliest candidates to replace Perdomo. Right-hander **Walker Lockett** could also fill in. He's slated to pitch Monday for Triple-A El Paso, and already has a place on the team's 40-man roster.

Baumann, meanwhile, has since been optioned to El Paso, meaning he won't serve his suspension until he returns to the big leagues. Baumann was not ejected from the game, and after the kerfuffle he allowed five runs (two earned) in the inning in relief of Perdomo.

The Padres and Rockies, who have already met seven times this month, will square off again April 23-25 in Denver.

CarGo, stellar bullpen lead Rockies to victory over Nationals

Colorado escaped a possible meltdown in the fifth

Patrick Saunders / The Denver Post | Apr. 13, 2018

WASHINGTON — The Rockies' investments paid a big dividend Friday night.

Carlos Gonzalez, who returned to Colorado on a one-year, \$8 million deal, hit a homer, drove in both runs and had two of the Rockies' five hits in a 2-1 victory over the Nationals.

The bullpen blanked Washington for 4 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings to secure the Rockies' third consecutive victory. Right-hander Bryan Shaw (a three-year, \$27 million contract) pitched a perfect seventh, striking out two. Closer Wade Davis (three years, \$52 million) pitched a perfect ninth, striking out two, to notch his sixth save in seven chances.

Add in the performances of **Scott Oberg**, Mike Dunn and **Adam Ottavino** (one walk, one hit, no runs allowed and 18 strikeouts in 8 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings this season) and Colorado's bullpen was golden.

It wasn't too long ago that Gonzalez, perched in right field, would look on with trepidation whenever Rockies relievers entered the game.

"It's a tremendous difference," he said. "These guys are horses. They'll go out there and we feel confident playing behind them, knowing they are going to keep the game sane."

The Rockies carved out a 2-1 lead in the sixth with **DJ LeMahieu** reaching on an error by shortstop Trea Turner and advanced to third on **Gerardo Parra's** single to left. Gonzalez drove in LeMahieu with a sacrifice fly to right.

This was the kind of game manager Bud Black relishes, in part because of the strategy involved, and also because it tests his team's mettle.

"It was a well-pitched game," Black said. "It was one of those types of games where every pitch is critical."

Colorado escaped a possible meltdown in the fifth. The Nationals loaded the bases with one out against starter Kyle Freeland on a bloop single to shallow right by starter Tanner Roark, a walk by Turner and a single up the middle by Anthony Rendon. Up stepped perennial MVP candidate Bryce Harper, who hit a sacrifice fly to Gerardo Parra in left, tying the game 1-1.

Black figured the time was right to relieve Freeland, and he was right. Oberg entered in relief, getting Ryan Zimmerman to ground out to short. Freeland allowed just one run on four hits, but he walked four and needed 101 pitches to get through 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings.

"It was a battle out there; they kept fouling stuff off," Freeland said. "But were able to come out of it with a win."

Freeland was able to make some big pitches when he needed to.

“I was happy with that aspect of it,” Freeland said. “Where they had a lot of runners on in certain innings, me and (catcher Chris) Iannetta were able to minimize damage or have no damage at all. That came with good sequencing and executing pitches.”

With two out in the fourth, Gonzalez picked out Roark’s 2-0, 82 mph changeup and then unleashed his sweet swing to give Colorado a 1-0 lead. Gonzalez knew the ball was gone as soon as he hit it, and after a classic bat flip, he got to admire the ball’s flight deep into the right-field seats. It was Gonzalez’s third homer of the season. He didn’t hit his third homer last year until May 21.

Looking ahead

Rockies RHP Jon Gray (1-2, 5.63 ERA) at Nationals RHP Max Scherzer (2-1, 0.90), 11:05 a.m. Saturday; ATTRM, 850 AM

Jon Gray dreams about becoming one of baseball’s elite pitchers. Saturday afternoon, he’ll face one of the best in Scherzer, the three-time Cy Young Award winner. Scherzer is coming off a dominating performance vs. the Braves on Monday in which he allowed only two hits over nine shutout innings while striking out 10. He commanded his pitches all night, throwing 72 of 102 pitches for strikes en route to his fifth career shutout. Gray’s season has been a roller coaster — two bad dips with one triumph in the middle. The Padres ripped him for seven runs on 10 hits with two homers last Monday at Coors Field. Gray thought his stuff was excellent, but conceded that he threw too many mistake pitches. He’ll have to be nearly perfect to beat Scherzer.

Sunday: Rockies LHP Tyler Anderson (0-0, 5.65) at Nationals RHP Stephen Strasburg (2-1, 2.21), 11:35 a.m., ATTRM

Monday: Rockies RHP German Marquez (0-1, 4.97) at Pirates LHP Steven Brault (2-0, 3.46), 5:05 p.m., ATTRM

Tuesday: Rockies RHP Chad Bettis (2-0, 2.04) at Pirates RHP Trevor Williams (3-0, 1.56), 5:05 p.m., ATTRM

Rockies' Nolan Arenado, Gerardo Parra suspended for roles in brawl with Padres

German Marquez was issued an undisclosed fine

Patrick Saunders / The Denver Post | Apr. 13, 2018

WASHINGTON — Nolan Arenado clearly doesn't think the punishment fits the incident, but the Rockies' all-star third baseman is going to deal with his five-game suspension as best he can.

"I figured it would be somewhere around there, but I think it's a lot," Arenado said Friday evening before the Rockies played the Nationals. "It is what it is. Five games is a lot of games. I was just defending myself. They throw hard out there — reactions happen."

Earlier on Friday, Major League Baseball handed out discipline for Wednesday's melee between the Rockies and Padres at Coors Field. In addition to Arenado's suspension for charging the mound and throwing punches, Padres starting pitcher Luis Perdomo received a five-game suspension for intentionally throwing a pitch at Arenado to open the third inning.

Perdomo also threw his glove at Arenado when Arenado came charging after him.

Asked if the suspension would affect how he might deal with a similar situation in the future, Arenado said: "Well, I mean, he's throwing 96 (mph) at me on purpose, you know? I think everybody is going to have their own reaction. It's hard not to react in a certain way when you know somebody is trying to do something on purpose.

"When you go out there, you're not going out there to fight, that's not why we are playing this game. But 96 at you, on purpose? It's frustrating."

Rockies outfielder Gerardo Parra received a four-game suspension for fighting during the incident, while Padres pitcher Buddy Baumann has received a one-game suspension. Perdomo, Arenado, Parra and Baumann all received undisclosed fines in addition to their suspensions.

Arenado said he would appeal the suspension, as will Parra. Both players were in the starting lineup for Friday night's game and can continue playing until rulings on their appeals are heard and dates of the suspension are set.

The players who were fined for their actions during the brawl were catcher A.J. Ellis and infielder Freddy Galvis of the Padres, and Rockies starting pitcher German Márquez. Marquez, who got in the middle of the melee and was ejected, didn't throw a punch, but he did throw a towel.

Last season, Washington all-star outfielder Bryce Harper was suspended four games for fighting, and one day later it was reduced to three games, upon appeal. The longest suspension MLB issues for fighting is 10 games. Rangers second baseman Rougned Odor received an eight-game suspension after he landed a punch against Blue Jays' slugger Jose Bautista in 2016.

Rockies manager Bud Black said the suspensions were about what he expected.

"This falls in line with watch you have seen the last couple of years for these things," Black said.

The Rockies have already been discussing when Arenado and Parra would begin their suspensions. They will not have to serve their suspensions at the same time, meaning the Rockies' 25-man roster will only be depleted by one player at a time.

"We'll talk about all of that after tonight's game and go from there," Arenado said.

Arenado, the equivalent of a baseball gym rat, admitted it will be difficult to sit while his team plays.

"We will see how long this is going to be, but I'm going to find a way to figure it out," he said. "I'll either keep hitting in batting practice or maybe go to Arizona and get some bats down there in extended (spring). I don't know.

"I'll find a way to stay ready and stay locked in. It's five days, it's a pretty long time. So I need to see some pitching and somehow stay ready."

Blackmon update. Center fielder Charlie Blackmon was out of the starting lineup for the fourth consecutive game Friday as he dealt with a strained right quadriceps, making a trip to the disabled list a slight possibility. Prior to the game, Blackmon ran and stretched while head trainer Keith Dugger and Black looked on.

"He's looks better, he's gaining on it, for sure," Black said. "Charlie was encouraged, as was Keith. We'll see how this plays out over the next day or two. We are hoping (he doesn't go on the DL). I think it's more likely that he will play in a game before then."

The Morning After: Rockies' offense remains MIA, but they've won three straight
Adam Ottavino and rest of bullpen pulling its weight

Patrick Saunders / The Denver Post | Apr. 14, 2018

WASHINGTON — The Rockies are hitting .228 as a team, ranking 12th in the National League. Yet, they have won three consecutive games and own an 8-7 record.

Why? The bullpen has been, for the most part, stellar, posting a 3.83 ERA in the early going and are paced by closer Wade Davis' six saves. Plus, Colorado's 20 homers rank second in the NL.

But the tepid offense remains a concern. Consider:

— Ian Desmond is hitting .196 with a .208 on-base percentage.

— Trevor Story is hitting .200 with a .290 OBP.

— Pat Valaika is hitting .069 with a .100 OBP.

Fortunately for the Rockies, center fielder Charlie Blackmon could be back this weekend after missing four consecutive game with a tight right quad. Unfortunately, Nolan Arenado will have to begin serving his suspension for fighting soon.

Here are five takeaways from the Rockies' 2-1 victory over the Nationals Friday night:

No. 1: Manager Bud Black loves the chess game of baseball, especially when he's got the bullpen pieces to play the game. Case in point: in the eighth inning, Black brought in left-hander Mike Dunn to face the dangerous Bryce Harper. Dunn got Harper to ground out, and brought in right-hander Adam Ottavino, who has been almost untouchable this season. Harper, by the way, is now 3-for-21 with seven strikeouts vs. Dunn.

No. 2: Ottavino has allowed one walk, one hit, and no runs while striking out 18 batters in 8 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings this season. Enough said.

No. 3: In Washington, the Rockies are now 29-16, including 22-12 at Nationals Park.

No. 4: Shaw has held opponents scoreless in eight of his team-high nine appearances.

No. 5: Left fielder Gerardo Parra made two excellent defensive plays. In the first inning, he laid out to snare a line drive off the bat of Trea Turner. In the sixth, he robbed Howie Kendrick of a hit.

Quotable: “I’m proud of our pitching, that we hung in there on the road against a good team on a loud night, and our guys performed. That should continue to build confidence with our group, that we can win these types of games.” — Bud Black

Shortstop Brendan Rodgers, the Rockies' top prospect, off to slow start with Double-A Hartford

Rodgers, who made big impression at spring training and is expected to advance to at least Triple-A in 2018, is hitting .172

Kyle Newman / The Denver Post | Apr. 13, 2018

While the Rockies are in the midst of finding their identity early this season, over at Double-A Hartford, the Yard Goats are having trouble winning, having started 1-6.

Highlighting Hartford's struggles is the slow start of shortstop Brendan Rodgers, the Rockies' top overall prospect and the third overall pick in the 2015 draft. The 21-year-old is hitting .172 through 29 at-bats, with two home runs and seven RBIs.

Rodgers impressed in his first big-league camp at spring training, hitting .286 (14-for-49) with three home runs while showing consistency, range and arm strength from both shortstop and second base. Last season, Rodgers hit .336 with 18 home runs and 64 RBIs and split time at High-A Lancaster and Hartford.

Whether his early season troubles at the plate with Hartford will derail Rodgers' fast-track to the big leagues remains to be seen. Expectations before the season were that he was capable of playing his way up to Triple-A Albuquerque this summer, and even potentially cracking the Rockies' 25-man roster in the second half.

Rockies-Padres suspensions: Nolan Arenado receives 5-game ban, 3 other players suspended

All the players are expected to appeal suspensions

Ryan Schoppe / Purple Row | Apr. 13, 2018

Major League Baseball announced suspensions for 2 Rockies players involved in the brawl during Wednesday's game against the San Diego Padres. 2 Padres also received suspensions for instigating and participating in the brawl as well.

Nolan Arenado, **Gerardo Parra** and Germán Márquez were all ejected from the game for their participation in the brawl as well as two Padres, AJ Ellis and **Luis Perdomo**.

Arenado received a 5-game suspension for charging the mound and taking a swing at **Perdomo** after having a high-90s fastball thrown behind him. Parra received a 4-game suspension presumably for landing a punch squarely to the face of Ellis. Perdomo and Buddy Baumann also received five and one game suspensions respectively for their roles in the fight. All four players also received undisclosed fines. While not disclosed yet, all players are expected to appeal their suspensions.

Despite being ejected, Marquez and Ellis only received fines as well as Freddy Galvis who managed to escape ejection despite his role in the brawl.

The imbalance of the suspensions is immediately noticeable and worth mentioning as a 5-game suspension for a starting pitcher and 1-game suspension for a reliever don't impact a team other than pushing Perdomo's start back one day.

Baumann who has since been optioned to Triple-A will have to serve his when he is recalled.

The brawl captured the national media's attention for a few hours before being superseded by similar festivities between the Yankees and Red Sox later in the day. It appears that even MLB got distracted by the second brawl as they issued suspensions for that brawl yesterday despite it occurring later in the day on Wednesday.

Rockies 2, Nationals 1: Bullpen excellent in win

Adam Ottavino and Wade Davis were particularly fun to watch

Eric Garcia McKinley / Purple Row | Apr. 13, 2018

The Rockies beat the Nationals 2-1 in Washington D.C. Friday night on the strength of the bullpen, which was *nails*. **Kyle Freeland** had an alright start, but he was dealing with a lot of traffic in the fifth and couldn't get out of the inning. The only run he gave up was a **Bryce Harper** sacrifice fly with the bases loaded and one out, so it obviously could have been much worse. Carlos González hit a solo home run and drove in another run with a sacrifice fly, and that constituted the Rockies' offense for the night.

Did I mention the bullpen?

Freeland departed having pitched $4\frac{2}{3}$ innings of pretty good baseball. The night's bullpeners—**Scott Oberg, Bryan Shaw, Mike Dunn, Adam Ottavino**, and **Wade Davis**—allowed just one baserunner in the remaining $4\frac{1}{3}$ innings of the game. Ottavino continued his dominance, as he struck out both batters he faced. He's now struck out 18 of the 27 batters so far in 2018. That's a pretty good development.

What more do you want?

The game didn't have a lot of excitement—two of the three runs scored were sacrifice flies and the other was a solo home run, which isn't much more interesting—but it was nice to see the bullpen shine and the Rockies win a close game on the road. However much we may want to say “but the offense needs to pick it up,” and however much that's true, it was a good win.

Looking ahead

Tomorrow's matchup looks like it should be a great one, as **Jon Gray** takes on Cy Young winner Max Scherzer. That ACE OFF gets going at 11:05 MT.

Colorado Rockies: Super bullpen proves to be super against the Nats

The Colorado Rockies prevailed in a 2-1 win against the Washington Nationals to win their third straight and hand the Nationals their third straight lost.

Noa Yingling / RoxPile | Apr. 14, 2018

The Colorado Rockies won on Friday night by a score of 2-1. The Rockies held the Nationals to just four hits and all of them were allowed by Rockies starter **Kyle Freeland**.

The Rockies pitching

Freeland threw 104 pitches in only 4 2/3 innings. In the first inning, he walked **Anthony Rendon** and allowed a single to **Ryan Zimmerman** but got out of the inning without allowing any further damage. However, he labored a bit as he threw 24 pitches in the first inning alone.

Freeland struck out the side in the second inning but still threw 16 pitches and, in the third, he threw 24 more pitches while allowing a double to **Trea Turner** and another walk to Rendon. He retired the side in the fourth and added 15 more pitches to his count to bring it up to 79.

He added 22 more after allowing a single to pitching counterpart **Tanner Roark**, another walk but this time, it was to Turner, a single to Rendon, and a sac fly to **Bryce Harper** to tie the game at 1-1. That would knock him out of the game. Just to Rendon alone, Freeland made 21 pitches.

Scott Oberg came in and he started the bullpen's dominance. He allowed a four pitch walk to **Wilmer Difo** in the sixth inning. Otherwise, in 4 1/3 innings, the bullpen did not allow a base runner.

Oberg went 1 1/3 innings, **Bryan Shaw** went an inning striking out two, **Mike Dunn** went a third of an inning and **Adam Ottavino** went two-third of an inning striking out both batters. Rockies closer **Wade Davis** slammed the door shut as he struck out two to end the game and get his sixth save on the season.

The Rockies offense

Combined, the Rockies offense only got five total hits. **Gerardo Parra**, who will be appealing his 4-game suspension that was handed down by Major League Baseball before Friday's game, went 2-for-4 with two singles and **Trevor Story** went 1-for-3 with a single without a strikeout (big shocker there).

However, the both runs and two of the Rockies five hits came from **Carlos Gonzalez**. He hit a solo home run off Tanner Roark in the fourth inning for his third home run of the year. In the sixth inning, he had a sacrifice fly to score **DJ**

LeMahieu (who got on by an error). He also had a single in the ninth inning to cap off his 2-for-4 day with two RBI and the homer.

The Rockies will take on the Nationals again today at 11 AM MT. It will be **Jon Gray** against **Max Scherzer** so it will be a battle of aces between the two teams.

Colorado Rockies: LeMahieu's future hinges on Story's success revisited

Colorado Rockies second baseman DJ LeMahieu is in the final year of his contract and the Rockies will soon have to decide whether or not they can, or they are willing to, sign him to a contract beyond this season. That decision may lay upon the performance of shortstop Trevor Story.

Noah Yingling / RoxPile | Apr. 14, 2018

Before the start of spring training, I talked about how DJ LeMahieu's future in a Colorado Rockies' uniform may hinge on the success of Trevor Story. At the time, I thought it was a nice topic of discussion in the off season, even though, in the back of my mind, I felt the chances of LeMahieu returning to Denver in 2019 was slim to none.

With DJ channeling his inner "**Chuck Nasty**" (4 for 5 with 2 HRs Thursday night against the Nationals) to go along with his fantastic start to the season and Trevor Story's horrid start, this topic is proving to be even more relevant.

Assuming that the plan has been to move top prospect **Brendan Rodgers** to second base next season to replace LeMahieu, Story would need to completely stake his claim at shortstop. That has not happened, to put it mildly.

Since I've been told that I have been too negative lately, I won't bash on Story but I will give some numbers. So far, he is 10 for 52 (.192/.288/.404) with 20 strikeouts (38% rate), 3 HRs, and 6 RBIs. These are numbers that the Rockies cannot have in their everyday lineup let alone cleanup.

On the other side, LeMahieu has been putting up ridiculous numbers to start the year. Along with his gold glove defense, DJ is hitting .351/.422/.649 with 4 HRs, 8 RBIs, and 8 runs. DJ has also discovered power in his bat and should easily surpass his career high of 11 home runs this year.

Brendan Rodgers showed during spring training that he is more than capable of playing in the majors. If Story is still struggling in a couple months and Rodgers does well in Double-A Hartford and gets elevated to Triple-A Albuquerque, it may be time to cut ties with Story and find a way to keep LeMahieu long term.

Obviously, the decision to keep LeMahieu will come down to the dollars and length of contract that he desires and DJ is getting more expensive by the day. The 29 year old is making \$8.5 million this year and could easily fetch \$10+ million a year if he continues his hot pace. Now that Charlie Blackmon has been re-signed and Nolan Arenado's pending free agency, the money might not be there.

GM Jeff Bridich may have to give up on the future of Story for the sake of winning now. No matter what happens, DJ LeMahieu will be getting paid this off season. I just hope that money is coming from Colorado.

Colorado Rockies: We should've seen THIS DJ LeMahieu coming

All the signs were there. We all missed them. Every single one of us. It's only 14 games but if you look in hindsight, it's pretty easy to figure out why DJ LeMahieu has started off as the hottest hitter on the Colorado Rockies

Jake Shapiro / RoxPile | Apr. 13, 2018

On Thursday, LeMahieu joined **Corey Dickerson** and **Todd Walker** as the only players in Rockies history to record at least two doubles and two home runs in the same game. LeMahieu has now tallied four round trippers on the young season, last year he hit eight in 155 contests.

He's raised his batting average to around .350 which is the mark he won him the 2016 NL Batting Title. The 29-year-old has raised his walk rate, on base percentage, slugging rate all while dropping his strikeout rate.

Small sample size or is there something to this?

Let's add a qualifier, LeMahieu has already batted leadoff four times in 2018, something he had done just 30 times in his eight big leagues seasons before this one. LeMahieu is doing this because **Charlie Blackmon** has faced several nagging ailments.

Naturally, LeMahieu has made like his best buddy and done just as well as the history making Blackmon when leading off.

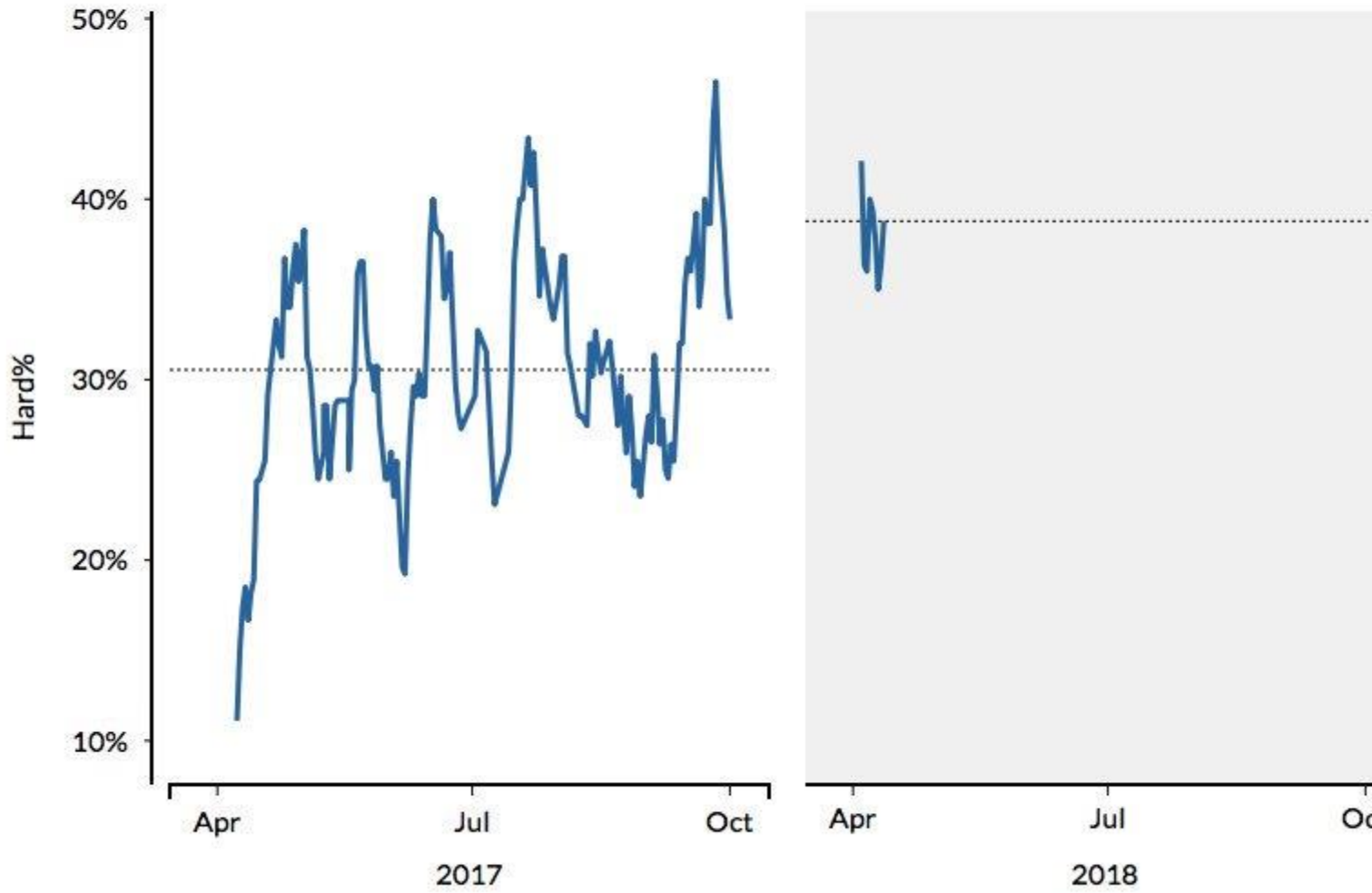
Yet there is too small of a sample size to really dive into that at this point.

What we do know is that LeMahieu had a killer second half last season. In his final 75 games (from July on), he OPS'd .828 with a batting average of .320 while walking 33 times against 44 strikeouts. This was somewhat in stark contrast to his first 80 where he somewhat struggled, at least for him, OPS'ing .741 and hitting .302 while striking out nearly twice as many times as he walked.

LeMahieu struggled with balls up and in early on last season. By the end of 2018, teams were trying radical shifts to stop his bat. You can actually see how much hotter LeMahieu has gotten by looking at his hard hit percentage and rolling exit velocity.

DJ LeMahieu's Daily 15-Game Rolling Hard%

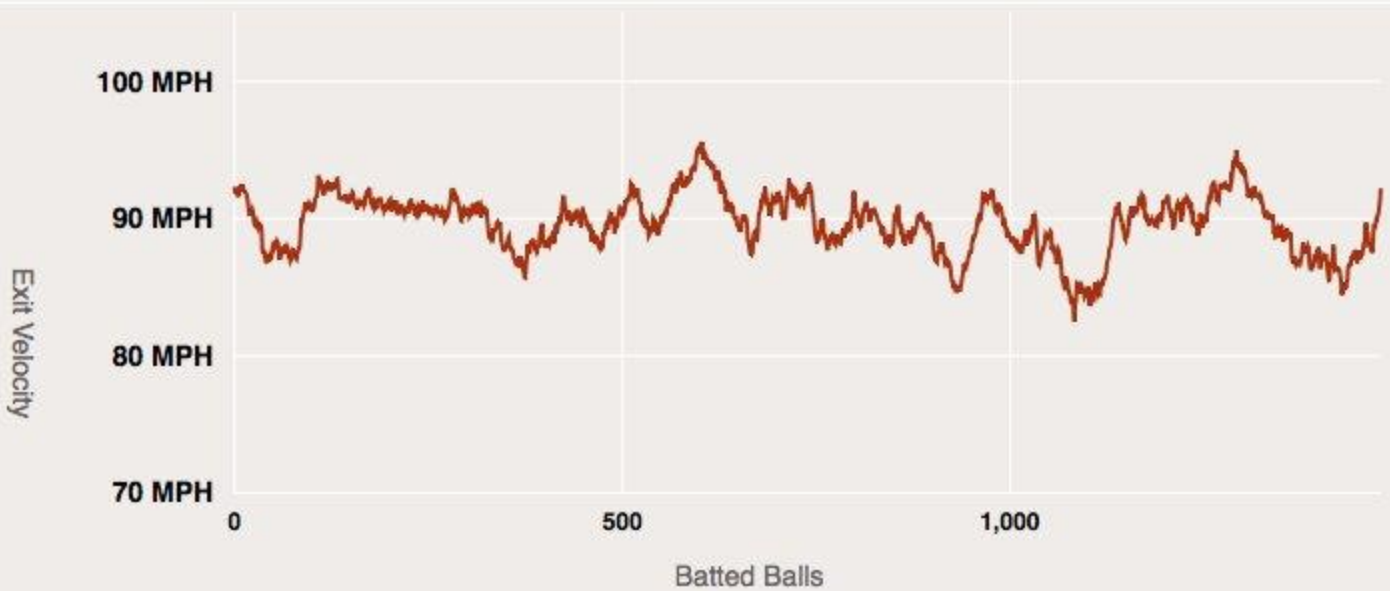
Percentage of balls in play hit hard, 2017-2018



50 Batted Ball Rolling Average - Exit Velocity



DJ LeM



Source: Baseball Savant

This can also be seen slightly in LeMahieu launch angle which has raised. In those first 80 games of 2017, hit only hit 2.95% of the pitches he saw for a launch angle of 25 degree or more. In the second half, that number jumped to 3.29%. To start 2018, that number has exploded to 4.60%.

That may not sound like much, I know but here's some context. The on-fire lauded-for-his-launch-angle **Bryce Harper** has hit 4.76% of the pitches he's seen at a launch angle of 25 degree or more to start this season. Last year Harper's mark was 4.86%.

This is not nothing, but it's not league leading territory. For context, **Nolan Arenado**'s mark was 7.18% last year and it still trailed **Kyle Seager** and **Justin Turner**, who were up above 8%.

However it still does explain why LeMahieu's seen an uptick in his power numbers.

He's clearly hitting balls harder and at a steeper launch angle to start this season. Both good things. And it's not really a fluke as seen in his numbers in 2017's second half.

Oh yeah, he's in a contract year too, which always gives a nice boost.

Nolan Arenado and the Rockies did what needed to be done

Drew Creasman / BSN Denver | Apr. 13, 2018

DENVER - The first rule of Fight Club is: you do not talk about Fight Club.

And the second rule of Fight Club is: if you throw a weapon at my head, you better be ready to stand and throw hands.

The Colorado Rockies, from manager Bud Black on down, have made it abundantly clear that they are not proud of what transpired at Coors Field on Wednesday between themselves and the San Diego Padres.

They understand their position as role models and, to a man, apologized to any young kids who happened to witness the dust-up between the division rivals.

"We don't show up to the ballpark to create that kind of atmosphere. We understand that there's a lot of kids watching us play, you know," said team-leader Carlos Gonzalez. "There's a lot of kids who love number 28 [Nolan Arenado] and that's the last thing they want to see. But, we're human beings and everyone reacts different. We all make mistakes if you want to call it that way. But, no matter what, we've always got each other. So, Nolan reacted that way, of course we're going to support him and we all went out there and tried to protect him. Like I said, we're not trying to fight. This isn't a fight, it's baseball, and sometimes it happens."

In this statement, CarGo sums up the Catch-22 that he and his teammates found themselves in the moment Arenado took a step toward the mound after a 96 mph fastball went whizzing behind him at about shoulder height.

You don't get to threaten a person's livelihood just because you're angry and silly, ancient, unwritten rules dictate you do something stupid and dangerous.

German Marquez, who was ejected for his part in escalating things, reiterated the regret emanating from the post-game clubhouse: "I saw things that should never really happen. You know, we are role models for kids. We know they're watching this game and we all watch this game. We all make mistakes in life, and we made one today."

But perhaps the only mistake worse than outright engaging in a benches-clearing brawl would have been not to.

"We are a team and we care for one other and fight for each other," Marquez said later.

So many little combustible elements had been bubbling under the surface but once your best player, a premier player in the game, has decided what just happened is unacceptable, the team better have his back. And they did.

"I mean the guy was throwing 94, 93. That was the hardest pitch he threw all day, like 96, 97, close to your head,"

continued CarGo. "We don't know how you're going to react. I don't know how I'm going to react if I'm going to charge the

mound or say something. But, everyone's different. Nolan reacted that way, and we're going to go out there and try to protect him, and that's exactly what we did."

Gonzalez and teammates had one goal in mind once they stormed the field.

"By the time I reached the mound, we were surrounded by Padres, so my one concern was to try and protect him the whole time," he said. "Even if you have to take a couple punches or throw some punches, just make sure you're gonna be out there for your teammates."

But there were some involved in the fracas who seemed to have another agenda. Padres coach Mark McGwire could be seen engaging in an intense conversation with Arenado as the umpires struggled to restore order.

According to Gonzalez, who was nearby, McGwire admitted that the Padres had team-wide intent with their decision to throw at one of the best players in the game as a retaliation for Scott Oberg's accidents the night and series before.

There was some back and forth, some words," CarGo said of the altercation within an altercation. "He said we hit a couple guys and he was like, 'What do you expect? Of course we're going to send a message.' But, it's over. We still have a lot of games ahead of us against the Padres. We're here to play baseball, we're not here to create any more problems, so I'm excited to do that."

Arenado was a bit more diplomatic about the exchange.

"He was trying to explain something, I was trying to explain something, no big deal," Arenado said. "I got respect for Mark."

Where Gonzalez' statement about the surging tensions being relegated to the past came off like a declaration, the man at the center of the action struck more of a hopeful tone.

"I don't know, we'll see. I don't have the answer for that one," Arenado said about this whole thing being over and done with. "We play them in a couple weeks here, so we'll see. But hopefully, we can win the series. They won the series, and I don't think we're happy about that. So, hopefully, we can get a series against them."

And he knows the hammer is coming down on him.

"Yeah, I expect to get suspended, he said. "I don't know how long. Hopefully, it's not a long time, but I expect something probably be happening."

Manager Bud Black says, despite knowing his pitchers weren't hitting anyone on purpose, he could tell the Padres' frustrations were growing.

"I could sense some, you know, when you're down on the field, you can hear some frustration from the other dugout at times, and I sensed that from their side," he said.

As far as commenting on the fight itself, Black wouldn't go much farther than to say: "It's part of the game."

The Rockies would prefer to Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind this whole incident away. There were a lot of hit batsmen but nothing was intentional.

Blessed are the forgetful, for they get the better even of their blunders.

McGwire and Luis Perdomo made it clear that their, far more reprehensible actions, were intentional. And then Perdomo didn't even have the courage to stand by his, cowering away from an encounter he unnecessarily started.

It's also important to remember the seventh rule of Fight Club: fights will go on as long as they have to.

These two teams will be battling each other, one way or another, all year.

"I mean, things happen," Arenado stated. "It's part of the game. I know these situations are part of the game. You drill a couple guys, they're going to come at you. It is what is. But, like I said, we won today and that's all that matters. I was really happy about that. Hopefully go back tomorrow and get another win."

The Rockies have been playing .500 baseball so far in 2018, but they are 1-0 in the ring.

Violence on the baseball diamond should never be condoned and storylines about how moments like these can spark a team that needs one are a bit overblown.

But the Colorado Rockies have established early on that they will literally run into hand-to-hand combat for each other if they must.

That trust will embed itself in the team but now it's time to move on and focus on the field. After all, the first rule is... well, I'm not really supposed to talk about it.

MLB suspends Nolan Arenado, Luis Perdomo as part of brawl punishments

The Associated Press | Apr. 13, 2018

NEW YORK -- Rockies third baseman **Nolan Arenado** has been suspended five games for charging the mound after **Luis Perdomo** threw a pitch behind his back, inciting a benches-clearing brawl during Wednesday's game against the San Diego Padres.

Major League Baseball announced Friday that Perdomo was also suspended five games for intentionally throwing at the All-Star third baseman.

EDITOR'S PICKS

Colorado's Nolan Arenado sparked a brawl that cleared the benches Wednesday after a pitch from Padres starter Luis Perdomo sailed behind Arenado's back. Arenado and Perdomo were ejected, along with three others.

Red Sox reliever Joe Kelly was suspended six games, and Yankees DH Tyler Austin suspended five games by MLB for their roles in a bench-clearing brawl Wednesday night.

"Five games is a lot of games," Arenado said before Friday night's game. "I just defended myself."

Rockies outfielder **Gerardo Parra** was suspended four games for fighting.

Arenado and Parra appealed their suspensions, allowing them to play for Colorado against the Washington Nationals on Friday night.

Padres pitcher Buddy Baumann got a one-game suspension for fighting. The suspended players were also fined.

Padres catcher **A.J. Ellis** and infielder **Freddy Galvis** and Rockies right-hander **German Marquez** were fined but not suspended.

The Padres said Perdomo would not appeal. Baumann was optioned to Triple-A on Thursday, so he'll serve his suspension the next time he's up with the big league club.

Arenado swung wildly at Perdomo after he reached the mound, but none of his punches landed squarely.

"It's hard not to react a certain way when you know someone's trying to do something on purpose. It is what it is," Arenado said. "Obviously, five games -- you don't want to fight. That's not why we're playing this game. But 96 [mph] at you on purpose, you get frustrated."

The brawl came during a tense series that included three batters being hit by pitches before the benches-clearing incident. San Diego's **Manuel Margot** was hit first and ended up on the disabled list.

Gonzalez homers to lead Rockies past Nationals 2-1

Harvey Valentine / The Associated Press | Apr. 13, 2018

Carlos Gonzalez has watched a lot Colorado Rockies relievers work over the years. He definitely likes what he's seeing now.

Gonzalez homered and had a sacrifice fly to drive in both of Colorado's runs, and the bullpen threw 4 1/3 scoreless innings in the Rockies' third straight victory, a 2-1 win over the Washington Nationals on Friday night.

Scott Oberg (1-0) pitched 1 1/3 innings in relief for the win and Wade Davis, the last of five relievers, worked a 1-2-3 ninth for his sixth save.

"This year and last, obviously, they're horses," Gonzalez said. "They go out there and we feel confident playing behind them knowing that they're going to keep the game the same."

Gonzalez gave the Rockies a 1-0 lead in the fourth inning with his third homer of the season, and hit a go-ahead sacrifice fly in the sixth.

Bryce Harper hit a sacrifice fly in the fifth for Washington, which has scored five runs while losing its last three games.

"As a team, I think we're having good at-bats," Harper said. "Plugging along the best we can."

Washington's Tanner Roark (1-1) allowed two runs— one earned — and three hits over six innings.

Rockies starter Kyle Freeland left with two outs in the fifth, allowing a run and four hits. He pitched out of jams in the first and third innings, but allowed the tying run before departing.

"Kyle, you know he bobbed and weaved his way through 4 2/3 innings, kept us there," Rockies manager Bud Black said.

"The game, with one swing, could have went the other way and it didn't."

Roark didn't allow a hit until the fourth, when Gonzalez homered to center off a 2-0 changeup.

"If our pitching continues to give us a chance to win, we're going to start winning these games," manager Dave Martinez said. "I know we are. I'm not worried about that."

Gonzalez didn't hit his third home run last season until late May.

"I never consider myself a power hitter," he said. "When the home run comes, it's just a really good swing to a really good pitch and that means I'm under control, I'm not chasing bad pitches."

DJ LeMahieu reached on shortstop Trea Turner's error to start the sixth, went to third on Gerardo Parra's single, and scored on Gonzalez's fly to right.

PAIN-FOUL AT-BAT

3B Anthony Rendon left the game after fouling a ball off his left big toe in the fifth inning. Martinez said X-rays were negative. "We'll see how he feels tomorrow," Martinez said.

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER

After Sunday's finale, the Rockies and Nationals don't meet again until the final series of the season, Sept. 28-30 at Colorado.

BRAWL FALLOUT

Colorado's Nolan Arenado (five games) and Parra (four) received suspensions from Major League Baseball for their roles in Wednesday's brawl with the Padres. Arenado charged the mound after San Diego's Luis Perdomo threw a pitch behind his back. The pair has appealed.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Rockies: OF Charlie Blackmon (right quad tightness) missed his fourth straight game. Black, asked if a trip to the disabled was possible, said: "I don't want to say no, but I think it's more likely that he'll play in a game before he'll go on the DL."

Nationals: 2B Daniel Murphy (offseason knee surgery) took groundballs with a brace on his right knee. "I'm assuming that he's going to have to wear some kind of brace (when he returns). I don't know the size of the brace," Martinez said. "What I do know is that I watched him run and he ran pretty good. He's getting close."

UP NEXT

Rockies: RHP Jon Gray (1-2, 5.63) allowed a career-high 10 hits in his last start, a loss to the Padres.

Nationals: RHP Max Scherzer (2-1, 0.90), who threw a two-hit shutout Monday against Atlanta, is 1-4 with a 4.76 ERA in eight career starts against the Rockies.