

Lindor's 2 HRs, 7 RBIs power Tribe past KC

KANSAS CITY -- It was the Francisco Lindor show on Monday night.

The Indians' shortstop blasted two homers -- including a grand slam -- for a career-high seven RBIs in a 9-3 victory over the Royals in the series opener at Kauffman Stadium.

Lindor's home runs came off breaking balls from Royals starter Jakob Junis, and both came scorching off the bat.

"The one at-bat, he got it in a hitter's count, the other at-bat, he fouled off some good fastballs, got to the breaking ball and man, just drove both of them," said Terry Francona, who picked up his 500th win as the Indians' skipper. "They weren't the lofted -- they were line drives that he just hit over the fence. That's a gorgeous piece of hitting."

Tribe right-hander Corey Kluber allowed two runs in the first, including a leadoff homer by Whit Merrifield. After that, however, he settled in for six solid innings and his 12th win of the season. He allowed seven hits and three runs.

"He fell behind Merrifield, he hit a home run. Then, he gave up the second run," Francona said. "After that, he just kind of pitched to the scoreboard."

The difference, according to Kluber, was getting better control on counts. Merrifield's homer came after he got ahead, 2-0, and Salvador Perez's RBI single later in the frame came after he battled for an 11-pitch at-bat.

"Today what hurt me was falling behind, or getting too deep in at-bats in the first inning," Kluber said.

After Junis allowed a single and hit two batters to load the bases in the fourth, Lindor deposited a 3-1 changeup from the right-hander into the right-field bullpen to give the Tribe a 6-2 lead. Statcast™ projected the homer to travel 409 feet with an exit velocity of 108.1 mph. Of his 83 career homers, only three have come off the bat faster.

It was Lindor's second career grand slam and his first since April 5, 2017.

Lindor went yard again in the sixth -- a three-run shot to right that chased Junis from the ballgame and made it a 9-2 lead. The second homer left Lindor's bat at 105 mph, according to Statcast™, and traveled a projected 418 feet.

"I love home runs, don't get me wrong," Lindor said. "When I see the ball go over the fence, it's great. But I'm not trying. My job is to move guys, to get on base, to score, drive the ball. If it goes out, it goes out. I'm not trying to hit home runs. I'm not trying. That's when I go on an 0-for-35 slump, so trying to stay away from that."

Lindor now has four multi-homer games this season and six in his career. His 17 career homers against the Royals are his most against any club. His seven RBIs are the most by any Indians batter since Brandon Moss had seven against the Tigers on April 24, 2015.

Kluber's performance was a needed return to form for the former AL Cy Young Award winner, as he surrendered six runs in just 1 2/3 innings on Tuesday against the Cardinals in the shortest start of his career.

Michael Brantley and Edwin Encarnacion picked up Kluber with sacrifice flies off Junis in the third inning to make it 2-2.

CHISENHALL HEADED TO DL

Outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall was scratched shortly before game time with a left calf strain. An MRI determined it to be a "moderate strain."

"He's a definite DL," Francona said. "We'll know more in the next few days."

Chisenhall missed more than a month earlier this season with the same injury in his right calf. He was hitting .343 since returning to the lineup at the beginning of June.

SOUND SMART

Lindor is just the fourth Indians hitter to hit a grand slam and a three-run homer in the same game -- joining Manny Ramirez (1999), Vic Wertz (1957) and Pat Seerey (1945).

Lindor and Chico Carrasquel (April 26, 1956, against the Kansas City Athletics) are the only Cleveland shortstops since 1908 to log at least seven RBIs in a game.

HE SAID IT

"If somebody gave me \$154 million, I'd probably go somewhere too. Everybody, I've seen all the quotes -- he did what he said he was gonna do, got them a championship. When you're a free agent, you've earned that right. I will miss it, because I loved going to games when he played because it was fun. It's hard to begrudge somebody. He earned it." -- Francona, on NBA star LeBron James leaving the city's Cavaliers to play for the Los Angeles Lakers

UP NEXT

Indians right-hander Shane Bieber (3-0, 2.22 ERA) starts the middle game of this series against the Royals at 8:15 p.m. ET on Tuesday at Kauffman Stadium. In three starts since returning from Triple-A, the rookie is 3-0 with a 0.96 ERA and 21 strikeouts in 18 2/3 innings. Lefty Danny Duffy (4-7, 4.94 ERA) will start for Kansas City.

Jordan Wolf is a reporter for MLB.com based in Kansas City.

Salazar out for '18 following shoulder surgery

KANSAS CITY -- Indians starter Danny Salazar is done for the 2018 season after undergoing arthroscopic surgery on his throwing shoulder Monday morning.

The procedure was done in Dallas by Dr. Keith Meister, who performed an arthroscopic debridement and bursectomy on Salazar's right shoulder. In layman's terms, the doctor cleaned up areas of inflammation in the shoulder/rotator cuff area.

Salazar will not throw again for 12 to 16 weeks. While the club is certainly disappointed that he won't be able to step on the mound again this season, the outlook towards Monday's procedure and moving forward is positive.

"It was what we hoped," manager Terry Francona said. "You hoped it was just a cleanup, and not something structural."

"I think it is probably the best possible outcome, because nothing was repaired," head athletic trainer James Quinlan said. "It was cleaned, things were cleaned up. They went in there anticipating it to be just a cleanup, and that's all that was done."

Salazar began the season on the 10-day disabled list after developing shoulder inflammation at the beginning of the year. He was transferred to the 60-day DL in early May, with plans for this surgery to determine his fate for the 2018 season. He'll finish the year having not thrown a pitch.

Heading into this season, Salazar was expected to be a key part of the Indians' rotation, but he injured his shoulder during an offseason workout in January, and he arrived at Spring Training behind the rest of the pitchers. At the time, the club expressed optimism about Salazar making a healthy return, but he has hit several snags in his throwing program in the months since the preseason.

The lingering issues with Salazar's health have hampered him from fully seizing his spot in the rotation. He's missed time with arm problems in each of the past two seasons and he underwent Tommy John surgery while in the Minor Leagues in 2010.

Injury updates

- Left-hander Tyler Olson will pitch on Wednesday after throwing a pair of bullpen sessions over the weekend in Oakland. He was placed on the 10-day disabled list on June 17 with a left lat strain.

- Lefty reliever Andrew Miller threw a bullpen session of 20 pitches on Monday morning, and he will throw again either Tuesday or Wednesday. He was placed on the 10-day DL on May 26 with right knee inflammation, and while his return is believed to be on the horizon, this came as a bit of a surprise.

"That's good, just the fact that he feels good enough to want to get up on the mound," Francona said. "Because we weren't really expecting that until we got home."

Lindor still in hunt to start All-Star Game

CLEVELAND -- Despite career bests in many offensive categories, Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor still ranks third among American League shortstops in the latest update of the 2018 Camping World MLB All-Star Ballot, released Monday afternoon.

With 898,977 votes, Lindor is still roughly 375,000 votes shy of the Orioles' Manny Machado -- the top vote-getter among shortstops. Lindor also trails the Astros' Carlos Correa (1,135,152), who landed on the disabled list on Friday with a back ailment but isn't expected to miss much time. The Yankees' Didi Gregorius (824,710) and the Mariners' Jean Segura (675,140) round out the top five at the position.

There's not much else Lindor can do with his bat to convince voters he's deserving of a fan selection. Per Fangraphs, his 4.8 Wins Above Replacement ranks fourth in the AL and is the best among all big league shortstops. Lindor is also tied with Machado for the highest slugging percentage (.564) at the position, and Lindor's .936 OPS is only second to Machado's (.941).

"He's a threat," Indians veteran outfielder Rajai Davis said of Lindor on Sunday. "He just knows how to hit and drive the ball a quarter-mile. No matter the ballpark, he makes the ballpark look small. It's amazing. It's impressive. It's fun to watch. A lot of guys wish they could be that kind of hitter, but to watch it, it's amazing."

Lindor finished Sunday's 15-3 rout against the A's 3-for-4 with a home run and two doubles, which gives him a team-high 27 doubles and 21 homers. Lindor, teammate Jose Ramirez (24 homers and 22 doubles) and Boston's Mookie Betts are the only players in MLB to currently have at least 20 homers and 20 two-base hits.

Manager Terry Francona said Sunday that Lindor's season is perhaps shaping to be his best one yet.

"He's a fantastic hitter from both sides of the plate," Francona said. "He can change the game with one swing, he can change a game with his legs, and he can change it with his glove."

Though Lindor is looking for a way to earn a spot on the All-Star team, Ramirez has built a solid lead among third basemen. He has 1,811,902 votes, approximately 761,000 more than the Astros' Alex Bregman, who surged past the Yankees' Miguel Andujar (963,641) for the No. 2 spot. The Rangers' Adrian Beltre (590,283) remains fourth and the Mariners' Kyle Seager (447,940) replaced the Royals' Mike Moustakas.

Ramirez's 5.5 WAR ranks second in all of baseball, and he is tied for second in the big leagues with 24 home runs -- one behind Red Sox designated hitter J.D. Martinez.

Several other Indians players appeared among top vote-getting ranks at their respective positions. Jason Kipnis (372,885), ranks fourth among second basemen, which is led by the AL's overall leader, Jose Altuve (3,405,815). Michael Brantley (1,093,376) ranks fifth among outfielders, but trails third-place Yankees slugger Aaron Judge (2,021,348) by nearly 925,000 votes. Tyler Naquin (344,639) ranks 15th among outfielders.

Yan Gomes (522,139) ranks fifth among catchers, led by the Rays' Wilson Ramos (1,556,195), and Edwin Encarnacion (559,915) is fifth among DHs, led by Martinez (2,236,945).

Fans may cast votes for starters at MLB.com and all 30 club sites -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online using the 2018 Camping World MLB All-Star Ballot until Thursday at 11:59 p.m. ET. On smartphones and tablets, fans can also access the ballot via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps. Each fan can vote up to five times in any 24-hour period, for a maximum of 35 ballots cast.

Following the announcement of this year's All-Star starters, reserves and pitchers, fans should return to MLB.com and cast their 2018 Camping World MLB All-Star Final Vote for the final player on each league's roster. Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans may visit MLB.com to submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 MLB All-Star Game MVP Vote.

The 89th Midsummer Classic, at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., will be televised nationally by FOX Sports; in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and RDS; and worldwide by partners in more than 180 countries. FOX Deportes will provide Spanish-language coverage in the United States, while ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide exclusive national radio coverage of the All-Star Game. MLB Network, MLB.com and SiriusXM also will provide comprehensive All-Star Week coverage. For more information about MLB All-Star Week and to purchase tickets, please visit AllStarGame.com and follow @MLB and @AllStarGame on social media.

Clement goes perfect 5-for-5 for Lynchburg

By Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com @GoldenSombbrero

• Indians No. 25 prospect Ernie Clement is hitting .436 through his first 10 games in the Carolina League after a perfect 5-for-5 performance out of the leadoff spot for Class A Advanced Lynchburg. The 22-year-old infielder collected 17 hits in that span, thanks to a handful of multi-hit games. Eli Morgan (No. 28) tossed six innings of one-run ball, allowing four hits and striking out four, en route to his third straight win. The 22-year-old righty has been outstanding at two levels this season, combining for a 2.08 ERA, 0.84 WHIP and 104-to-17 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 90 2/3 innings (16 starts) between Lake County and the Hillcats.

No. 6 int'l prospect among Tribe's 7 signings

The Indians signed more than 30 prospects during last year's international signing period and the club is off to another good start this year.

The Tribe signed seven international amateur free agents on the first day of the signing period, the team announced on Monday.

"We're thrilled to add these seven players to our organization," said Paul Gillispie, Cleveland's senior director of international scouting. "Our scouts spent the last several years working to build history on the best young players across the globe and develop relationships with them and their families. We're grateful for their hard work, dedication and commitment, which put us in a position to be able to sign these seven players."

Three talented infield prospects headline the bunch: Gabriel Rodriguez -- whom MLB Pipeline ranked as the No. 6 international prospect -- Junior Sanquintin (No. 12) and Angel Martinez. According to industry sources, Rodriguez signed for \$2,100,000, Sanquintin for \$1,250,000 and Martinez for \$500,000.

The best infield prospect out of Venezuela this year, Rodriguez is also one of the best hitters in the class. Known for his projectable body and good control on both sides of the ball, the 16-year-old reminds some scouts of Wilmer Flores at the same age. Overall, he has easy actions on defense and a smooth swing at the plate with developing power.

Sanquintin, a 16-year-old from the Dominican Republic, favors comparably with Rodriguez, and there's a chance he has more upside on offense and defense. He just lacks Rodriguez's consistency. He's known for his emerging raw power, bat speed and overall skill set across the board.

Martinez is the son of Sandy Martinez, the Nationals' Dominican Summer League manager and Dominican field coordinator, and his brother -- Sandy Jr. -- is currently a catching prospect in the D-backs' system. Angel Martinez is a steady producer at the plate, a switch-hitter whose efficient swing earns him a lot of line drives all across the field. He'll likely develop into either a shortstop or second baseman.

The other players the Indians signed include infielders Dayan Frias and Jesus Lara, and outfielders Sterling Romero and Luis Ostos. Three players were signed from both Venezuela (Rodriguez, Lara, Ostos) and the Dominican Republic (Sanquintin, Martinez, Romero), with one (Frias) from Colombia.

According to the rules established by the Collective Bargaining Agreement, clubs that received a Competitive Balance Pick in Round B of the MLB Draft received a pool of \$6,025,400, while clubs like the Indians that received a Competitive Balance Pick in Round A of the Draft received \$5,504,500. All other clubs received \$4,983,500.

Teams are allowed to trade as much of their international pool money as they would like, but can only acquire 75 percent of a team's initial pool amount. Additionally, signing bonuses of \$10,000 or less do not count toward a club's bonus pool, and foreign professional players who are at least 25 and have played in a foreign league for at least six seasons are also exempt.

Clippers 11, Mud Hens 1 | Clippers score early, often in rout

Nellie Rodriguez hit a three-run homer Monday night, Yandy Diaz and Drew Maggi both went 3-for-6 at the plate, and the Clippers rolled to an 11-1 win over the host Toledo Mud Hens at Fifth Third Field.

Rodriguez homered in the third inning to give the Clippers, winners of five straight games, a 6-1 lead. Earlier, Greg Allen had scored on a wild pitch in the first and hit a two-run single in the second. The damage was done off of Mud Hens starter Jacob Turner (1-2), who allowed six hits in three innings, striking out three and walking four. All six runs were earned.

The Toledo bullpen combined to allow an additional five runs. In the fifth, Eric Haas had an RBI double and Diaz a bases-loaded, RBI single. The Clippers offense came back to life in the ninth. Francisco Mejia had an RBI single and Adam Rosales a two-run homer.

Clippers starter Adam Wilk (3-6) allowed one hit in seven innings, a single to Dawel Lugo in the first that scored Jacob Robson, who had a leadoff walk. Wilk struck out seven and walked two.

The Clippers and Mud Hens meet again Tuesday night in Toledo before the series concludes at Huntington Park with games Wednesday and Thursday.

Dragons edge Captains as pitchers dominate

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

This was a game owned by the pitchers and not the guys swinging the bats.

In the opener of a two-game series between the Captains and Dayton Dragons on July 2 at Classic Park, the five guys who toed the rubber were the stars in a 2-1 Dayton victory.

It was a classic pitchers duel, with Dragons starter Hunter Greene and reliever Cory Thompson getting the better of Captains starter Kirk McCarty and relievers Tommy DeJuneas and Riley Echols.

Greene, an 18-year-old right-hander from southern California, demonstrated why the Reds made him the second pick overall in the first round of the June 2017 draft. The Reds then secured his services with a \$7.23 million signing bonus, the largest since Major League Baseball adopted its new slotting format in 2012.

In seven dominant innings, Greene blanked the Captains on two hits, both singles. He finished with a season-high 10 strikeouts and did not walk a batter.

Of the 69 pitches Greene threw in what Dayton manager Luis Bolivar said was his best outing of the season, 52 were strikes.

"Hunter has been getting better his last seven or eight starts, but tonight he was lights-out," Bolivar said.

At 6-foot-3 and 215 pounds, Greene cuts an imposing figure on the mound. And then there's the powerful right arm that mixes hard sliders with fastballs that regularly sit at 97 mph and have reached 101 mph in several of his 15 starts this season.

The record of 3-6 and 4.18 ERA point to Greene being a work in progress, but there is no escaping the obvious talent of a young man who also was highly regarded as a shortstop on his nationally ranked high-school team.

Away from the field, the well-spoken phenom paints and plays violin.

"I look at myself as a pitcher first and then a thrower," Greene said. "If you can't put pitches in the right spots, you won't be effective."

Greene agreed with Bolivar's bullish assessment of his outing.

"I felt good out there. The command was there and my teammates made plays behind me and got some big hits," he said.

Greene had to be good because McCarty also turned in his best outing in 16 starts.

The 5-11 left-hander from Mississippi allowed one run on four hits in seven innings. He finished with seven strikeouts and did not issue a walk.

"Kirk was really good tonight. He made pitches, stayed ahead in the counts and got quick outs," Captains manager Luke Carlin said.

McCarty (1-8, 5.20 ERA) was the tough-luck loser on a night when he deserved a better fate.

The difference in the ball game turned out to a solo home run by Dayton third baseman Leandro Santana off Echols in the top of the ninth inning. Lake County threw a scare into the Dragons when Jose Medina rifled a two-out RBI single in the bottom of the ninth.

But Thompson fanned Oscar Gonzalez to earn his fourth save.

With the pitchers setting the pace, the game was played in a tidy 2 hours, 6 minutes.

"It's nice to score bundles of runs, but I'll take a game like this anytime," Carlin said. "It was awesome to watch."

Love yourself: Shane Bieber trusts his stuff, makes believers out of Indians

Jorge L. Ortiz, USA TODAY Published 10:37 a.m. ET July 3, 2018 | Updated 10:48 a.m. ET July 3, 2018

OAKLAND – Now that he has claimed a regular spot in the Cleveland Indians' rotation, Shane Bieber knows he'll get to make his third home start next Monday.

He just doesn't know which walk-up song will greet him.

Teammates Corey Kluber and Trevor Bauer played a prank on the rookie right-hander before his last start at Progressive Field on June 22, getting his usual entrance song, a reggae tune by the band Rebelution, switched to something more in line with his famous last name.

"I heard the young Justin Bieber song; I think it was 'Baby,'" Bieber said. "I looked around and Frankie (Lindor) was messing around on the mound, kind of singing along. I looked at him and said, 'Did you do this?' And he goes, 'No.' Then I ended up getting out of the first inning, came back in and all the pitchers were laughing."

Bieber finds it easy to laugh at the frequent references to the pop icon, but he's serious about his pitching craft. Called up twice from the minors to make spot starts on May 31 and June 17, Bieber made enough of an impression that he kept getting the ball, and his performances continued to improve.

After yielding five runs over 11 1/3 innings in his first two outings, both against the Minnesota Twins, Bieber shut down the Detroit Tigers and St. Louis Cardinals in his next two starts, giving up a total of one run in 13 innings. For the season, he's 3-0 with a 2.22 ERA, and the Indians have won all four of his starts. On Sunday they demoted Adam Plutko, making Bieber the fifth starter.

During his time with Cleveland, Bieber has continued to display the uncanny command that has been his hallmark during a swift rise from fourth-round pick in 2016 to a member of the rotation with the third-best ERA in the majors this season.

Bieber's four bases on balls in 24 1/3 innings and excellent walk percentage of 3.9 pale in comparison to his astonishing numbers in the minors. At Class A and AA last season, he gave up 10 walks in 173 1/3 innings, or one for every two complete games. He was nearly as stingy at Class AA and AAA this year, with six walks (and 72 strikeouts) in 76 2/3 innings while fashioning a 1.29 ERA.

Armed with a fastball that averages 93 mph and is complemented by two effective secondary pitches in a slider and a curve, Bieber became convinced early on he was better off flooding the zone with strikes than nibbling against major league hitters and risk putting them on base.

"It's going out there and having the competitive mind-set that if you're going to beat me, you're going to beat me. I'm not going to beat myself," said Bieber, who turned 23 on May 31, the day of his debut. "If I'm going to get beat, I'm going to get beat throwing something in the zone and my best pitch. It makes it easier to cope with if things don't end up going well, which happens in this game."

As a lowly recruited pitcher whose fastball did not impress scouts, Bieber took that approach to UC Santa Barbara, where he was invited to walk on but had no guarantee of making the team, let alone getting a scholarship.

He wound up becoming the top starter of a club that reached the 2016 College World Series – a first in school history – and concluded his college career with a 23-12 record, a 2.73 ERA and a 6.2-1 strikeouts-to-walk ratio.

Through training and refining his mechanics, the 6-3, 195-pound Bieber has increased his fastball velocity to a shade above major league average, which is reflected in his strikeout rates of 8.4 per nine innings in the minors and 10 per nine so far in the big leagues.

But it's the feel for pitching he developed in his younger days – manager Terry Francona says he's "in the mold of Kluber" – that has made Bieber an instant success, kind of like that fellow who shares his last name.

"I was a little bit of a late bloomer, so I had to learn how to pitch, learn how to manipulate the zone and pitch with multiple pitches," Bieber said. "I definitely think that factors in."

Lindor has 2 HRs, 7 RBIs as Indians beat Royals 9-3

The Associated Press The Associated Press Jul 3, 2018, 12:27 AM

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) -- Francisco Lindor had an exceptional Monday after a very good Sunday.

Lindor homered twice, including a grand slam, and finished with a career-high seven RBIs as the Cleveland Indians beat the Kansas City Royals 9-3 on Monday night.

On Sunday, he had two doubles and a solo homer in Oakland.

Lindor homered in the fourth after Yan Gomes singled and Jakob Junis hit Tyler Naquin and Rajai Davis with pitches. He added a three-run homer in the sixth to finish Junis' evening.

"One was a changeup and the other one was a slider," said Lindor, who has 23 home runs. "My approach is hit the ball and if it goes out it goes out. It was a good pitch to hit (on the grand slam). I was just trying to get one guy in. I'm not a power hitter. Just get a good pitch to hit and drive it."

Lindor has 17 home runs and 54 RBIs in 54 games against the Royals.

"Just a routine day for him, today and yesterday," Indians starter Corey Kluber said. "He continues to get better, which is kind of scary."

Kluber (12-4), who failed to make it out of the second inning in his previous start at St. Louis, gave up two runs in the first, but little after that. He allowed three runs and seven hits, walked none and struck out five over six innings.

Davis had three hits and scored three runs.

"I got myself into trouble with a couple of hit batters and good teams are going to take advantage of that," Junis said.

Junis (5-10) has lost his last seven starts and is tied with teammate Jason Hammel for most losses in the American League. He has yielded a major league-high 24 home runs, including 12 in his last five starts over 27 innings.

"You worry about his confidence more than anything else," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "Again, it's an easy fix. When you're off the side of the slider, it's gonna be a cement mixer. He started off good, just didn't end that good."

Whit Merrifield homered on Kluber's third pitch for his fourth career leadoff home run. Salvador Perez singled home Mike Moustakas, who had doubled, in an 11-pitch at-bat for the other Kansas City run in the first.

Jorge Bonifacio logged his first RBI of the season in the Kansas City sixth after being suspended the first 80 games for taking a performance enhancing drug.

The Royals have lost 23 of their last 28 games. They are tied with the Baltimore Orioles for the most losses in the majors with 54. They scored four runs or fewer for the 23rd time in the last 24 games.

ROYALS SIGN FIRST-ROUND PICK

The Royals signed right-hander Jackson Kowar, a first-round compensation selection and the 33rd overall pick, to a \$2.118.700 signing bonus. He went 10-5 with a 3.04 ERA as a Florida junior.

GOODBYE LEBRON

LeBron James has left the Cleveland Cavaliers to join the Los Angeles Lakers. "If someone gave me \$154 million I'd probably go somewhere too," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He did what he said he was going to do. He got them a championship. When you're a free agent, you've earned that right. I will miss him, because I loved going to games when he played. It's hard to begrudge somebody. He earned it."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians: RF Lonnie Chisenhall was a late scratch with a strained left calf. Francona said Chisenhall would definitely go on the disabled list. ... RHP Danny Salazar underwent season-ending shoulder surgery in Dallas. "It just kind of came to a point," Francona said. "That's the last option. You try everything else before you go into somebody's shoulder. The good side is there was no structural (damage). The rotator cuff was good. They cleaned him out. It's a shame we lost him for the whole year."

UP NEXT

Indians: RHP Shane Bieber is 3-0 with a 2.22 ERA in his first four big league starts.

Royals: LHP Danny Duffy is winless in six home starts this season, going 0-3 with a 6.32 ERA.

Indians lose starter Danny Salazar to shoulder surgery

Pitcher Danny Salazar underwent arthroscopic surgery on his right shoulder Monday morning in Dallas, the Cleveland Indians announced.

Salazar, who has been on the disabled list all season, will not throw for 12 to 16 weeks and will miss the rest of the season, the team said.

Salazar, 28, was an All-Star for Cleveland in 2016. He has had problems with his elbow and forearm in recent years. Last year, he went 5-6 with a 4.28 ERA.

With Danny Salazar out for the season, what becomes of his Indians future?

Zack Meisel Jul 3, 2018 13

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The Indians brass never scribbled Danny Salazar's name into the master plan for repairing the oft-maligned bullpen. Terry Francona and Chris Antonetti refused to rule one way or the other on whether Salazar would travel the path toward starting or relieving on his recovery from shoulder inflammation that had bugged him since January.

So now, you can officially wipe Salazar's name from any dream scenario you may have envisioned that included the right-hander joining forces with Andrew Miller and Cody Allen beneath the bright lights in October. There will be no August comeback, September return or October emergence. If he's lucky, Salazar will pick up a baseball by the time the Indians flip the script to the postseason.

Salazar's future was already perplexing, a puzzle fresh out of the box, the pieces jumbled, some awkwardly stuck together, others devoured by the family dog. After Salazar underwent an operation Monday, which will sideline him for the duration of the 2018 season, his future is now less clear than a seven-day forecast in Seattle.

Not only are his health and recovery in question, but the Indians must decide if and how he fits into their plans for 2019. Is he worth a gamble? He's eligible for arbitration the next two years. The Indians will pay him \$5 million this season for a whopping zero innings.

Dr. Keith Meister cleaned out Salazar's right shoulder in Dallas on Monday morning. There were no tears, no structural damage, which the Indians found encouraging. Meister smoothed out pockets of inflammation and removed the bursa sac, which — as head athletic trainer James Quinlan explained — helps to cushion the shoulder, but was causing discomfort.

"I think it is probably the best possible outcome," Quinlan said, "because nothing was repaired. Things were cleaned up."

Salazar had started and restarted and re-restarted his throwing regimen at the team's complex in Goodyear, Arizona. In one instance, Terry Francona revealed Monday, the club was preparing to send Salazar out on a minor-league rehab assignment. But each time Salazar pushed the limits, his shoulder barked. Start. Stop. Start. Stop. Season over.

"That's the last option," Francona said. "You try everything else before you go into somebody's shoulder. It's a shame we lost him for the whole year."

Salazar won't begin throwing again for 12 to 16 weeks. By that time, his teammates will take on the treacherous waters of October, with him watching yet again. In 2016 and '17, he was limited to mop-up duty after missing considerable chunks of the summer. He made only three appearances over the two postseasons.

It's a frustrating situation for the Indians, who have exhibited plenty of patience with the guy blessed with an electric fastball and a split-change that tantalizes opposing hitters before plunging toward the dirt. Instead of aiding the ailing bullpen or solidifying the Indians' dominant starting staff, Salazar has spent all but one week of the season toiling away in the desert, perfecting the routine of working out, throwing, hydrating and singing salsa tunes on a karaoke machine with Michael Martinez. He visited Cleveland in late May for a checkup and for an opportunity to escape Arizona's arid conditions.

Salazar earned an All-Star nod in 2016, but even that year, he tapped out after 137 innings. Excluding his rookie year, he has registered five seasons in the big leagues. He'll wind up with an average of 107 major-league innings over the course of those five years.

Can the team commit another \$4-5 million toward him for next year? Teams can only reduce an arbitration-eligible player's salary by a maximum of 20 percent, and that sort of practice is pretty uncommon. The Indians will likely have voids to fill in their bullpen this winter. They can always use some rotation depth, though that should be a less pressing need now that Shane Bieber has dipped his toes into the big-league pool.

How does Salazar fit into the equation? That's something the Indians have long been trying to solve.

A Trip Around the Farm: A sit-down with Lake County manager Luke Carlin

By Michael Hattery 3h ago 2

With numerous priority and high profile prospects playing in Lake County, I asked manager Luke Carlin a few questions about what he has seen so far in 2018. Carlin spent parts of three seasons in the big leagues and is in his second full season of managing. In 2017, Carlin managed the Mahoning Valley Scrappers, the Indians' short-season New York-Penn League team where he tutored many of the same young men under his command in 2018, including Nolan Jones, Ernie Clement and Will Benson. Besides his managerial duties, Carlin along with Dave Wallace has run the Indians catcher development program the past two seasons. Here's what we talked about:

Will Benson is in a little bit of a slump and has dealt with recurring contact issues. How concerned are you about his ability to stabilize himself?

We would love for him to be performing better than he is; I think he would, too. Some of the objective numbers that we look at are improved from last year, so I think that is super encouraging. Swing and miss, swing rate in the zone, swing rate out of the zone, those things are really good compared to last year. Would love to see more. I think Will's biggest adjustment will be making contact earlier in the count, you know, in hitter-advantaged counts and early. He finds himself in the hole quite a bit. Pete (Lauritson, Lake County hitting coach) and I were just talking about that yesterday where it is like, guess what? Joey Votto is a terrible hitter 0-2. He is not an All-Star hitter, just like everybody else that tries to hit with two strikes, not very good. So, the difference with that is that when Votto is in fastball counts, ahead counts, batter-advantage counts, he is really, really good. So, I think it is taking advantage of those opportunities and being aware of some of the things that he can control. Definitely, a talk that we have been talking to him about. I think it is more approach, psychological-based than it is a swing mechanics thing. So I think it is about just getting a more consistent approach mentally for him.

How do you feel about Nolan Jones' progression at third base defensively this year?

Really excited about his defense. So, seeing him two years ago in instructs 2016, I was like huh, looks like we have got a first baseman on our hands here. You know, trying to play third, and our infielding group Johnny Mac and Travis Fryman, they were just like "give him some time, just learning the position." And then last year at Mahoning Valley you could start to see some flashes, and then this year you could see it. (He) started off a little bit slow but I think he has kinda found his stride there at third base where he is a lot more confident. He has made some nice plays where you are like wow, this guy could be a major-league third baseman. So, he has improved a lot, and shows you how naive I am about the position. So happy he has proven me wrong to this point.

Oscar (Gonzalez) has gone off for the last month, but selectivity remains an issue for him. Has that been hidden in this stretch?

Yeah, I think it is interesting. So, you look at the law of small numbers and it is like uh, is it being hidden, do we need to take a large sample size? I think the things that we need to consider with Oscar is that he is 20 years old, and he is growing. So, I think if you look at his chase out of the zone, does it show up once in a while? Absolutely. Major-league hitters chase out of the zone once in a while. I think it's difficult to stereotype, profile guys into that when they are showing you something different more recently, and that is just our perspective. That we are always forward looking, is he trending in the right direction? Yes. Will it be a steady climb to the top? No. It is gonna look messy, but I think he is improving in the right directions. Obviously, his focus is through the roof right now. He has been so clutch for us in a lot of games. I mean, he has been the driving force in our offense for the most part. I mean, Nolan has done a fantastic job as well with those two really driving most of the offense for us. He (Gonzalez) has been fantastic defensively for us. I mean, we have seen so much growth from him defensively. We can put him in any spot in the outfield right now and feel really comfortable.

Are we (publicly) undervaluing how young Oscar is, and how much production he is putting up at that age?

I look at like the growth from last year. So, even he had about a month stretch here where it was like, you could throw him anything and it seemed like he was going to swing at it. I mean, you don't see it as much, the tendency, it is just not occurring as often. That is super exciting. If that continues to grow, it is going to be scary how good he could probably be. So, I don't know, I don't have a crystal ball but it is certainly trending in the right direction.

Ernie Clement was called up to Lynchburg recently, but what were you most impressed by with Ernie during his time in Lake County this season?

Obviously, offensively he was impacting the ball a little bit harder this year, and I think that was a big focus for him in the offseason. I know that our hitting group has worked with him quite a bit, so it was nice to see. It was nice to see him kinda drive the ball a little bit. And, obviously, he is outstanding defensively. You know, I think one of the things that most impressed me with Ernie this season was kinda the leadership role he jumped into. So, he wasn't really one of our leaders last year. He just showed up on the scene, quiet, fun, not quiet, fun. Played a veteran role but wasn't vocal about it. This year he stepped in as one of our leaders. He was super encouraging to the guys, I think he helped Nolan a lot too. So, I am more impressed with that stuff, I think he is gonna be able to hit, I think he can defend. He is gonna be a good player but I am excited for some of the intangibles that he has with it. Hot three hitters

| Name | Level | AVG | OBP | ISO | K% |
|-----------------|----------------------|------|------|------|--------|
| Tyler Freeman | Mahoning Valley (A-) | .433 | .444 | .100 | 3.17% |
| Francisco Mejia | Columbus (AAA) | .291 | .340 | .162 | 18.50% |
| Andrew Calica | Akron (AA) | .302 | .410 | .120 | 19.30% |

Hot three pitchers

| Name | Level | IP | ERA | K/9 | BB/9 |
|------------------|----------------------|----|------|-------|------|
| Henry Martinez* | Akron (AA) | 22 | 2.45 | 9.40 | 2.50 |
| Luis Oviedo | Mahoning Valley (A-) | 16 | 0.56 | 15.19 | 1.69 |
| James Karinchak* | Lynchburg (A+) | 18 | 0.50 | 15.50 | 5.50 |

Starting 9: Why the Indians shouldn't overinvest in relief pitching; Francisco Mejía ought to remain at catcher; plus more Travis Sawchik Jul 2, 2018 5

1: The Indians are in a tough position with their bullpen as many readers are probably aware. Not only are their top-two relievers, Andrew Miller and Cody Allen, free agents after the season, and behind them is a heap of question marks, but also the bullpen market was historically expensive the past two offseasons. Teams spent a record \$419 million on relief pitching in 2017 (34 free agents signed) and \$359 million last winter (41 free agents signed). Those were the top-two spending totals in MLB history for free-agent bullpen help, according to Spotrac. Last winter, it was the only positional group immune from an ice-cold free-agent market.

And what did teams get for that spending last winter? As Craig Edwards found for FanGraphs, to date, the return has been a losing one. Wrote Edwards:

THE HIGHER-PRICED FREE AGENTS FROM LAST YEAR ARE WAY BEHIND THE LOWER-PRICED ONES. EVEN IF THEY WERE EVEN — AND IT ISN'T CLOSE — THAT STILL WOULDN'T PROVIDE MUCH OF AN ARGUMENT FOR SIGNING RELIEVERS TO BIG CONTRACTS.

2: On one hand, this should not be a surprise. Relievers have smaller samples of work than starting pitchers, making their performance fluctuate more year to year. One of the principal tenets of "Moneyball" and first-generation sabermetric thought, beyond valuing on-base percentage, was selling high on relievers. On the other hand, since that 2002 Oakland A's club, the bullpen has continued to gain a greater share of work and of innings, particularly high-leverage innings. Paradoxically, bullpens have never been more important, but investing in relief help remains a dubious strategy.

3: No team invested more heavily in free-agent bullpen help than the Rockies last offseason, committing more than \$100 million. This author was present in Denver last week when former Indians reliever Bryan Shaw was booed off the mound after another rough outing, another home run allowed, as his ERA rose to 7.57. Shaw, a consistent, workhorse in Cleveland, has been a disaster to date for the Rockies even when adjusting for the home park he now pitches in.

The lesson? Clubs have to be careful in paying for relief help.

4: I was asked during The Athletic's meetup at the Great Lakes Brewing Co. last month about how the Indians should retool their bullpen. A team like the Padres has both premium and non-premium relief assets that could help the Indians. The Indians ought to explore bolstering their bullpen during this summer's trade market, ideally targeting pitchers who are cost-controlled for multiple years. It would be ideal if they could avoid giving up premium prospects for relief help. Again, the Indians don't have to add an elite arm like Brad Hand to improve their bullpen, assuming Miller returns to form and Allen locks down the endgame. They simply need more quality innings. If the Indians could add multiple years of relief control at the deadline, it could be beneficial in two ways: improving this year's team while also staying out of the upcoming free-agent relief market. The Indians' front office is not given a budget large enough to allow them to make significant mistakes. And as we've seen this winter, it's easy to make mistakes in the free-agent bullpen market.

Ideally, teams don't pay for "proven" relievers. They go find a flawed starter or a bullpen arm in need of a tweak, acquire them and create their own value through improvement. (See: Ramírez, Neil)

5: Francisco Mejía is on a tear at Triple-A Columbus.

Some major-league clubs would have already called upon Mejía to fill a catching need. The issue, of course, is the Indians like their major-league catching duo. Terry Francona said over the weekend that Mejía is not ready to play the major-league outfield, where he has made 30 starts in Triple A, and Francona explained why the Indians don't want to — at least not yet — alter their major-league catching depth chart.

Francisco Mejia went 0-5 on May 24 to drop to a .178 average (.513 OPS). He's hit .443 (1.167 OPS) in 116 PA since, including .500 (1.192) in 16 games since being in MLB for one day on June 11.

Here's Francona, on reasons for Perez to remain the backup catcher over Mejia...

6: But Roberto Pérez simply isn't hitting and Mejía ought to remain at catcher. That's where he can most create a competitive advantage for the club.

The Indians are correct in making defensive value a priority at the position. The catcher has an impact on every called pitch. And some defensive aspects of the position like game-calling, reading swings and pregame planning are not quantifiable. Beyond framing and run-game control metrics, it's quite possible that a large portion of a catcher's defensive value is not measurable. It's quite possible catchers are still largely undervalued. Recall Billy Beane and the A's dismissed catcher defense in 2002, but at that time, aspects of it, like framing, were not quantifiable. We know now Pérez and Yan Gomes have formed a valuable framing tandem as both are above-average receivers. Maybe there's even more hidden value there. Indians pitchers like Trevor Bauer, for whom Pérez has essentially become a personal catcher, has immense respect for the way he works a game and receives pitches.

But Mejía has elite arm strength, the best in the entire system. As a minor-leaguer, he has also been rated by Baseball Prospectus as an above-average framer. Moreover, teams like the Astros believe receiving can be taught and, at least, improved. And at some point, Pérez's bat begins to likely outweigh the total contributions of his glove. Pérez has been one of the worst hitters in the league, 76 percent below average offensive production (24 wRC+). As discussed in this space last week, while the Indians can run away with a historically weak AL Central with Pérez dragging down offensive production at catcher, to maximize their postseason chances, they need to maximize production at all positions against super teams like the Astros and Yankees.

And running away with a division is an ideal time to find out whether a young player can handle a major-league job.

7: Mike Trout remains the best player in baseball. Despite the elite season by José Ramírez, Trout remains the AL MVP front-runner. Trout should be the front-runner as he's on track for a career-best season, an all-time great season. But there are other ways to consider value. By certain interpretations, Ramírez is the most valuable player in baseball.

8: One interesting way to consider value is to consider trade value, which essentially combines four elements: a player's present production level, his expected future performance (tied to aging and health track record and projectable skills), his years of club control remaining and his contract. Surplus value is a player's actual wages subtracted from his market wages, what he is estimated to be worth on the open market. As FanGraphs and other websites formulate trade value lists this summer, don't be surprised to see Ramírez rank No. 1. He'll at least be near the top of the list.

9: Ramírez is under contract for five more seasons, when including two club options that, at this point, seem certainly to be exercised. Including this season, he's under contract for six years and \$49 million. But according to the FanGraphs contract estimator and performance projections, if he finishes, conservatively, with an 8 WAR season — and that's about his new sustained level of performance — he projects to be worth north of \$400 million in performance value over the remainder of his contract. Given that players like Trout have fewer years of club control remaining, they are not as attractive trade assets.

HE SAID IT

"Until you actually get in there and find out (it's an unknown issue). I just think (surgery) is the last thing you do, because when you go inside somebody's shoulder, that in itself is difficult." — Indians manager Terry Francona to reporters on Danny Salazar. Salazar's ability to stay on the mound and be an impact arm in Cleveland seems more unlikely by the day.

STAT OF THE WEEK: 27 to 4

Strikeout-to-walk ratio of Indians rookie Shane Bieber. Pitchers control very little once the ball is put in play. They have much greater control over strikeout and walk outcomes. Given that, it's particularly encouraging to see how Bieber has racked up strikeouts in addition to his well-known command. The Indians might have developed another quality arm.

Indians pitcher Danny Salazar undergoes surgery, will miss remainder of 2018 season

By Ryan Lewis

Danny Salazar underwent arthroscopic shoulder surgery on Monday, the continuation of a long and frustrating journey for the Indians' former All-Star, but often injured starting pitcher.

The surgery, an arthroscopic debridement and bursectomy of Salazar's throwing shoulder, was performed by Dr. Keith Meister. Salazar is now headed for a lengthy rehab. According to a release from the club, Salazar won't throw for 12-to-16 weeks and will miss the remainder of the season, making 2018 essentially a lost year.

Salazar has spent the past several months almost entirely at the club's facility in Goodyear, Ariz. rehabbing after being diagnosed with right shoulder impingement tendonitis. Salazar received a PRP injection in May and then a cortisone injection after he met with Dr. Mark Schickendantz.

Each time in the past couple of months that Salazar ramped up his workload and intensity to a certain point, he ran into the same type of problems and wasn't able to reach his former levels. Salazar noted that he felt good after the first injection, but once he tried to throw from 120 feet, the shoulder started to bother him again.

"It's frustrating," Salazar said in May. "I've been playing catch, feeling good one week. Then this week, it's like, the same thing [comes] back. It's just been like that all the time."

Salazar struggled through multiple instances in which he had progress, but that positive work would be halted each time, not allowing Salazar to rear back like he knew he could. Indians manager Terry Francona on June 15 relayed that Salazar was doing well but made sure to note that he had done fine up until a certain point multiple times only to hit a setback shortly thereafter. The frustration has only continued.

In May, Salazar said there was no reason for surgery at that time. Though, with no end in sight to his shoulder issues, a surgery became necessary to potentially find the answer to get Salazar back onto a major-league mound. But it won't be until at least 2019.

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 07.03.2018

Cleveland Indians ink seven international free agents on first day of signing period

By Paul Hoynes,

KANSAS CITY, MO. -- Monday was the first day teams could sign international free agents and the Indians, as expected, announced seven signings.

The top three signees were shortstops Gabriel Rodriguez, Junior Sanquintin and Angel Martinez. The Indians also signed shortstop Jesus Lara, Venezuela; infielder Dayan Frias, Colombia; and outfielders Sterling Romero, Dominican Republic and Luis Osto, Venezuela.

The seven players spent the weekend in Cleveland visiting Progressive Field with their families. They took their physicals and signed their contracts.

"We're thrilled to add these seven players to our organization," said Paul Gillispie, Indians senior director of international scouting. "Our scouts spent the last several years working to build history on the best young players across the globe and develop relationships with them and their families. We're grateful for their hard work, dedication and commitment, which put us in a position to be able to sign these 7 players."

Rodriguez, Sanquintin and Martinez were ranked among the top international players in this year's class. Rodriguez signed for an estimated \$1.5 million, while Sanquintin signed for an estimated \$1 million.

The 16-year-old Rodriguez is a right-handed hitter from El Tejero, Venezuela. According to mlb.com, he projects to be one of the best hitters in the class and was probably one of the most consistent all-around players available.

Sanquintin, 16, is a switch-hitter from Sabana Buey, Dominican Republic. MLB.com says the 6-2, 182-pound Sanquintin shows power and bat speed and could end up at third base because he's not done growing.

Martinez, 16, is the son of former big league catcher Sandy Martinez. The switch-hitter is from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and has a good grasp of the game since he was raised in a baseball family. He's a line drive hitter, who has a chance to stay at shortstop.

Baseball American ranked Rodriguez, Sanquintin and Martinez as the No. 8, No. 21 and No. 39 prospects, respectively, in the international free agent class.

The international signing period last from today through June 15, 2019. The Indians bonus pool is \$5,504,500.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 07.03.2018

Cleveland Indians' Danny Salazar will miss rest of season following surgery on right shoulder

By Paul Hoynes,

KANSAS CITY -- Indians right-hander Danny Salazar, following surgery on his right shoulder on Monday, will miss the rest of the season. He will not throw for the next 12 to 16 weeks.

Dr. Keith Meister, team physician for the Texas Rangers, performed an arthroscopic debridement and bursectomy on Salazar's shoulder. Dr. Meister and Dr. Mark Schickendantz, team physician for the Indians, performed the second surgery on outfielder Michael Brantley right shoulder on Aug. 15, 2016.

Salazar came to spring training with a sore shoulder and has been on the disabled list since the start of the year.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 07.03.2018

Cleveland Indians' roster games: Plutko optioned, Rzepczynski promoted, Carrasco on the way

By Paul Hoynes,

KANSAS CITY - A baseball locker room can be the most awkward place in the world. Never more so than when a roster change takes place in front of 30 to 40 witnesses. No one gawks, but you know everyone is looking.

Most of the time it is handled with discretion. A player getting sent down or released is out of the locker room well before his teammates and the media punch in for work.

But Sunday morning was getaway day for the Indians at the Oakland Coliseum and schedules were tight. Lefty Marc Rzepczynski joined the team in San Francisco on Saturday night. Right-hander Adam Plutko had been told he was being sent down after he started and lost to the A's on Saturday.

So on Sunday morning there was Plutko packing his equipment bag and cleaning out his locker in a crowded locker room. On the other side of the room Rzepczynski was talking to reporters, telling them how excited he was about rejoining the Indians, a team he pitched for from 2013 through 2015.

"I feel like a rookie again who just got called up," said Rzepczynski, in his 10th year in the big leagues. "The butterflies are there. The adrenaline is there. I'm ready to go."

A few minutes later, Plutko, his equipment bag slung over his shoulder, was out the door headed back to Class AAA Columbus. Plutko is a real rookie, who has pitched well for the Indians and should be back at some point this season. He just got caught in the Tribe's ever-changing roster manipulations.

The Indians had only one lefty in the bullpen, Oliver Perez, and manager Terry Francona didn't want to overuse him. So Rzepczynski, who started the year with Seattle, but was released in June, had his contract selected from Columbus.

It meant someone had to go and that was Plutko, riding the shuttle back to Columbus for the second time this season.

There were a couple of other things at play as well.

*Carlos Carrasco pitched well in his rehab start on Saturday night at Class AA Akron. He's expected to be activated and start Friday night against the A's at Progressive Field.

*While Plutko pitched well as the Tribe's fifth starter, Shane Bieber, another rookie, pitched better. So for the time being Bieber is in the rotation and Plutko is in Columbus.

"Carrasco came through everything really well on Saturday," said Francona. "He threw 65 pitches and went to the bullpen and threw a few more. He touched 97 mph, picked off a couple of guys. He texted me and said he's ready to go."

"So what we did was option Plutko and got Zep. So we'll have to make a move when Carrasco comes back, but for basically a week we'll have an extra bullpen arm and getting a lefty should help."

Carrasco was placed on the disabled list after getting hit in the right elbow on a Joe Mauer line drive on June 16 that left the bat at just under 100 mph.

Plutko retired the first 12 batters he faced Saturday. He entered the sixth with a one-hitter and a 2-0 lead, but Oakland scored three runs on the way to a 7-2 win. Still, he's been impressive this year, going 4-2 with a 4.66 ERA in seven games, including six starts.

"We've been impressed with both kids - Bieber and Plutko," said Francona. "Plutko has done a pretty good job here. We think Bieber has done an outstanding job. We told Adam he wasn't being demoted because of how he pitched or because he gave up runs in the sixth."

"It's just that we have Carrasco coming back. It's like he said, 'It hurts a little bit, but I told him, 'your career is going this way (pointing his hand toward the ceiling).' I think he's smart enough to understand that.'"

How small a world is baseball? In 2015, the Indians were in Oakland to play the A' when they traded Rzepczynski to San Diego for Abraham Almonte at the July 31st deadline. Almost three years later he rejoined the Indians in the same city and tonight will be them the team when they open a three-game series against Almonte and the Royals at Kauffman Stadium.

"They know who I am here," said Rzepczynski. "Most of my success has been here for the most part. I was pretty good here for a season and a half or two. . .however long it's been. It's a familiar clubhouse and that's one of the reasons I signed back here because I know all the guys."

"I loved playing for Tito. Hopefully, I can give Ollie some time off because he's been up almost every day. I'm here to do whatever I have to do and get people out. That's my mentality. I've been doing it a long time and my stuff hasn't changed."

The one thing that has changed is that one of Rzepczynski's bullpen mates, Scott Atchison, is now the Tribe's bullpen coach.

"It's funny that Atch is now a coach of mine instead of a teammate, but the core group of guys have been here for a long time," said Rzepczynski. "Obviously, that's the reason we've been having success. That's one of the things I wanted to walk into."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 07.03.2018

Cleveland Indians, right-hander Ethan Hankins, 2nd draft pick, have agreed to terms

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- The Indians and high school right-hander Ethan Hankins have agreed to terms on a signing bonus. Hankins still has to pass a physical for the deal to become official.

The Tribe selected Hankins with its second overall pick in the June draft. They used the 35th overall pick in the draft to take the 6-6, 200-pound right-hander out of Forsyth Central High School in Georgia.

Hankins' signing bonus is not known, but his slot value was \$2,016,400.

Still no word on No.1 pick, high school catcher Noah Naylor. The signing deadline is Friday. Naylor's slot value is \$2,337,700.

A physical could be a tricky for Hankins. He was in line to be one of the top 10 picks in the country headed into his senior season, but he injured his right shoulder and his draft value dropped.

The Indians, however, have been on Hankins for a long time. They've had their medical team examine him after the injury and feel he's healthy.

The 35th pick of the draft, recognized as a No. 1 pick, came to the Indians as compensation for losing Carlos Santana to the Phillies via free agency.

The Indians have signed 27 of the 42 players they selected in the draft. They had a bonus pool of just over \$9 million to sign the 12 players they took in the first 10 rounds.

When the Indians drafted Hankins, he was committed to attending Vanderbilt University. Just recently he signed with Chipola Community College in Florida, a move seen to give him more bargaining power as well as a chance to re-enter the draft in 2019.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 07.03.2018

Francisco Lindor drives in 7 runs, Corey Kluber returns in style as Cleveland Indians beat Royals, 9-3

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Corey Kluber made it out of the second inning Monday night and Francisco Lindor kept hitting the ball out of the park. That's not a bad formula to win a ballgame.

Kluber followed the shortest start of his career with six decent innings, and Lindor drove in seven runs with two homers as the Indians beat the reeling Royals, 9-3, at Kauffman Stadium.

The Royals, 5-21 in June, have lost four straight.

On Sunday, the Indians beat the A's, 15-3, with 20 hits. Lindor was the driving force in that game with two doubles, a homer and four runs. He continued that style of play Monday night.

He did it in a way that Tribe manager Terry Francona would appreciate. Francona, the last two days, has talked about what the Indians do offensively when they're at their best. He's talked about them going first to third, moving runners, hitting the opposite way and keeping the line moving.

In the second inning, with the Tribe down, 2-0, Rajai Davis hit a leadoff double. Lindor promptly moved him to third with a sacrifice bunt and reached first when KC starter Jakob Junis (5-10, 5.13) couldn't handle the ball cleanly. Michael Brantley scored Davis with a sacrifice fly.

Jose Ramirez kept the inning going with a double that sent Lindor to third. Edwin Encarnacion delivered him with the second sacrifice fly of the inning to make it a 2-2 game.

As for the home run, Francona said if that's all a team does, it had better hit a lot of them. Well, that's not all the Indians do, but they can go homer for homer with just about any team in the big leagues, and Lindor is one of the reasons why.

He hit a grand slam in the fourth on a 3-1 pitch from Junis to put the Indians head to stay, 6-2. It was his 22nd homer of the season and the Tribe's seventh slam.

In the sixth he continued to haunt Junis with a three-run homer. They both cleared the fence in right field, the first one at 409 feet, the second at 418.

"One was a change up, the other was a slider," said Lindor. "My approach is to hit the ball and wherever it goes it goes. If it goes out, it goes out."

Lindor is the first Indians player to drive in seven runs in a game since Brandon Moss did it against the Tigers on April 24, 2015. The only other Indians shortstop with seven RBI in a game was Chico Carrasquel. Like Lindor, Carrasquel did it in Kansas City, but he did it against the Kansas City Athletics, who would later become the Oakland Athletics, on April 26, 1956.

The Indians finished with 11 hits and Lindor felt it could be traced to Sunday's big win.

"Definitely, guys come in here a lot more positive," he said. "They know they're turning things around. We definitely had a lot of good at-bats (Sunday and Monday)."

Terry Francona on Francisco Lindor, Corey Kluber, Rajai Davis after win over KC

The game did not start well for Kluber (12-4, 2.64). For the second time in as many starts he allowed a leadoff homer. Against St. Louis on June 26, it was Matt Carpenter. Monday night it was Whit Merrifield.

When Mike Moustakas followed with a one-out single and scored on Salvador Perez's doubled after an 11-pitch at-bat, it looked like Kluber was in for another short night after going just 1 2/3 innings against the Cardinals.

Kluber, however, escaped the first with no further damage, even though he threw 24 pitches. Then he found cruise control, retiring the Royals in order on 13 pitches in the second and third innings.

"In the first inning against St. Louis I was getting ahead and then making bad pitches," said Kluber. "In the first inning tonight, I was getting behind and making bad pitches.

"When you get ahead of guys and make good pitches, you're going to have quick innings. When you fall behind guys and don't make good pitches, they tend to drag on. That was the difference tonight."

The only other trouble spot came in the sixth, when the Royals scored their final run on four singles. But by that time the Indians were leading 9-3.

Before Francisco Lindor's two homers, there was a sacrifice bunt

Kluber allowed three runs on six hits. He struck out five and didn't walk a batter. Junis allowed nine runs on eight hits in 5 1/3 innings.

Barrel: Francisco Lindor (33) [CLE] off Jakob Junis [KC]: 105.0 mph, 26 degrees (Home Run - 418 ft)

-- MLBExitVelocity (@MLBExitVelocity) July 3, 2018

Barrel: Francisco Lindor (32) [CLE] off Jakob Junis [KC]: 108.1 mph, 26 degrees (Home Run - 409 ft)

-- MLBExitVelocity (@MLBExitVelocity) July 3, 2018

What it means

The Indians improved to 26-13 against teams in the American League Central and 5-2 against the Royals this season.

The pitches

Junis threw 94 pitches, 60 (64 percent) for strikes. Kluber threw 99 pitches, 63 (64 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Indians and Royals drew 18,825 to Kauffman Stadium on Monday night. First pitch was at 8:15 p.m. with a temperature of 88 degrees.

Next

Rookie right-hander Shane Bieber (3-0, 2.22) will face the Royals and lefty Danny Duffy (4-7, 4.94) on Tuesday at 8:15 p.m. SportsTime Ohio, WTAM and WMMS will carry the game.

This will be Bieber's fifth career start. In his first four, he's struck out 27 batters, the third most in franchise history in a pitcher's first four outings. This will be his first appearance against the Royals.

Duffy is coming off a strong start against Milwaukee. He is 2-8 in his career against the Tribe.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 07.03.2018

Rosenthal: Pace of Manny trade talks accelerates; an unlikely All-Star; deadline market is flooded; more notes

By Ken Rosenthal 2h ago 9

As Manny Machado's world turns:

*The Baltimore Orioles want to act sooner rather than later, knowing they almost certainly will receive a greater return if they trade Machado with approximately three months of control remaining instead of two, major league sources say.

The pace of the talks has accelerated in recent days, according to one source, but are the Orioles even capable of acting quickly? A team that reaches a tentative agreement with Dan Duquette, the Orioles' executive vice-president of baseball operations, might be at only step one of the process.

One industry person familiar with the Orioles' operation says any club negotiating with Duquette also will need to be in contact with Brady Anderson, the team's VP of baseball operations. Anderson exerts considerable influence within the organization, working closely with the sons of owner Peter Angelos, John and Lou.

*The Orioles visit the Philadelphia Phillies on Tuesday and Wednesday, giving Machado a chance to showcase himself to the former O's executives now running the Phillies — and to the hungry Philadelphia ownership.

The conventional wisdom is that the Phillies do not want to trade top prospects for Machado when they can simply sign him as a free agent after the season. But the Phils, who just won three of four from the Washington Nationals, are not likely to fade anytime soon — their next 16 games are against sub-.500 clubs.

The question, for every club interested in Machado, is the acquisition cost. Would the Phillies, for example, be willing to part with shortstop J.P. Crawford, a favorite of GM Matt Klentak, without knowing whether they could sign Machado long-term?

The Orioles are thought to like Crawford. The Phils value him so highly that they traded Freddy Galvis, the major league leader in defensive runs saved, to create an opening at shortstop. But Crawford, who is on the disabled list a second time and batting just .194, continues to elicit mixed opinions within the industry.

*If the Los Angeles Dodgers acquired Machado to play shortstop, they almost certainly would need to trade an outfielder — probably center fielder Joc Pederson — to clear a spot for the displaced Chris Taylor.

The Dodgers are deep in outfielders, and all of their regulars have increased their values since the start of the season. Pederson has as many extra-base hits (27) as strikeouts against right-handed pitching. Yasiel Puig has a .912 OPS since coming off the DL on May 9. Matt Kemp is likely to be an All-Star starter and a leading candidate for Comeback Player of the Year. Oh, and for good measure, Andrew Toles and Alex Verdugo are performing well at Triple A.

Part of the Dodgers' motivation for playing Max Muncy at second base is to keep him in the lineup along with all three of their outfielders as well as Cody Bellinger at first. The team's greater need is pitching — one rival executive predicts the Dodgers will acquire controllable relievers and/or bargain relievers right at the deadline. But Machado is too big a potential upgrade to simply ignore.

*The Arizona Diamondbacks and Cleveland Indians might be the teams most motivated to trade for Machado — the D-Backs because their competitive window is starting to close, the Indians because their title drought will reach 70 years if they fail to win the World Series this season.

The Milwaukee Brewers are doing their due diligence on Machado, but likely will be unwilling to meet the Orioles' asking price, according to sources. The Chicago Cubs, viewed as an early favorite, would appear to have a less urgent need with Addison Russell surging both offensively and defensively.

No team is the favorite for Machado at this point, not when one text or phone call can change everything. The Orioles also are busy on other fronts, aggressively trying to move right-handed reliever Brad Brach, according to one rival club. Lefty reliever Zach Britton and center fielder Adam Jones, potential free agents like Machado, are among their other trade candidates.

Aguilar, as in All-Star?

The best All-Star stories are the out-of-nowhere stories. Kemp, perhaps more than any player, fits that description. So does Muncy, whose 1.024 OPS would rank fourth in the majors if he had enough plate appearances to qualify for the league leaders. Ditto for Brewers first baseman Jesús Aguilar, who is just five PAs shy of ranking fifth with a .998 OPS.

Aguilar, like Muncy, would appear a longshot to make the NL team — the Atlanta Braves' Freddie Freeman is the runaway and deserving leader in the fan balloting at first while the Arizona Diamondbacks' Paul Goldschmidt got hot in June after a dismal May. Still, Aguilar is second in fWAR only to center fielder Lorenzo Cain among the position players for the first-place Brewers.

"It would be a great honor for me, to be a part (of the game) with those superstars," Aguilar said on Monday in a phone interview. "I never imagined it would be that close. It would be my dream come true."

The Brewers claimed Aguilar on waivers from the Indians on Feb. 2, 2017. The Indians had just signed Edwin Encarnacion as a free agent and already had Carlos Santana at first base. Aguilar, then 27, had an .818 OPS in 1,647 career plate appearances at Triple A. But he was out of options — and like Muncy before the Oakland Athletics released him — had not distinguished himself in brief major league auditions.

The Indians had liked Aguilar — Triple A manager Chris Tremie had predicted to club officials that Aguilar would become a quality major leaguer — but they bumped him off their 40-man roster when they claimed infielder/outfielder Richie Shaffer, whom they designated for assignment four days later.

"It was unusual to see a hitter of his caliber on waivers," Brewers GM David Stearns said. "We didn't have a positional need. But we figured we might as well get the guy in the organization. He was deserving of a 40-man spot in our estimation."

Aguilar forced his way onto the Opening Day roster in both 2017 and '18, and began playing regularly this season when first baseman Eric Thames suffered a torn UCL in his left thumb on April 24. Thames moved into more of an outfield role after returning on June 11, leading to the demotion of Domingo Santana to Triple A.

Aguilar said Tremie texted him a week ago, saying, "We believed in you. We knew you could do this. We're happy for you." Chris Antonetti, the Indians' president, echoed those sentiments, calling Aguilar "a really good teammate, a really good guy."

Yet from 2014 to '16, Aguilar played almost entirely at Triple A for the Indians, wondering if he would ever develop into the player he is today.

"Kind of," he said. "I wasn't 100 percent sure. (The Indians) didn't give me the chance. They thought I could be an everyday player. They made me think that way. But until I got here, I wasn't."

Stearns claims no particular genius for his acquisition of Aguilar, giving all the credit to the player and saying other waiver claims did not work out as well. Antonetti, meanwhile, knows the Indians made a move that was entirely logical at the time, only to learn once more the game is forever humbling.

The All-Star Game is for Mike Trout, Mookie Betts and the rest of the sport's biggest names, but it's always inspiring to see players who rose from obscurity make it, too. Here's to Aguilar, Muncy and all the out-of-nowhere players who merit the trip to Washington, D.C.

Shifting plan in Milwaukee?

The Brewers had third baseman Travis Shaw working with coaches at second base during their last homestand, taking grounders and turning double plays. The intent of the drills was unclear — Shaw, 28, has never played second in the majors or minors. But if he proved capable of handling second, it would increase the Brewers' options both internally and at the non-waiver deadline.

Brewers second baseman Jonathan Villar, a switch-hitter, has a .645 OPS since June 1 and .634 OPS batting left-handed. Playing Shaw at second would enable the Brewers to trade for a third baseman such as the Kansas City Royals' Mike Moustakas; according to sources, they already have been talking to the Royals about second baseman Whit Merrifield, who would come at a higher acquisition cost due to his four additional years of control. Another option, one that might weaken the Brewers defensively at two positions, would be to play Shaw at second and Aguilar at third, with the idea of returning Thames to first and creating more at-bats in the outfield. Aguilar takes grounders at third every day and has made four appearances at the position this season.

Perhaps the Brewers simply want to increase Shaw's flexibility; the Washington Nationals had Bryce Harper taking grounders at first on Monday, trying to prepare him for an emergency situation. But Milwaukee, which has needs at catcher and shortstop and figures to seek pitching upgrades, also might be looking to improve at second from within.

A difficult call on Beltre

The Texas Rangers are in a unique, almost unprecedented trade-deadline position with third baseman Adrian Beltre, who might be in the last season of what almost certainly will prove to be a Hall of Fame career.

Beltre, 39, can veto any trade as a player with 10 years of service, five consecutive with the same team. He recently told Evan Grant of the Dallas Morning News that if he plays next season, it will be for the Rangers. It's no secret the Rangers will try to accommodate him if he expresses a desire to play for a contender, but the team's decision on whether to move him is more complicated than it might appear.

The Rangers do not want to trade a future Hall of Famer unless they receive a quality return, and they are not especially motivated by the idea of saving a portion of the approximately \$6 million Beltre will be owed at the deadline, sources say. Beltre has an .831 OPS in 100 plate appearances since returning from his second trip to the DL on May 31, and club officials recognize his enduring value as a mentor to their younger players.

Yet, the Rangers want to do right by Beltre, too.

The team has a history of bidding farewells to star players unceremoniously, both before and after the hiring of Jon Daniels as GM in October 2005. Daniels is mindful of the pattern, sources say, and the last thing he wants to do is create friction with Beltre, one of the franchise's all-time greats.

Beltre would fit best with an American League club that also could use him as a DH. All of the AL contenders already are near-locks for postseason berths, so they could rest Beltre when warranted. The playoff schedule also offers additional days off, providing further protection for Beltre, who has a history of hamstring injuries.

The Boston Red Sox and Indians are potential fits for Beltre, but it's also possible no trade opportunity will arise. For the Rangers, that actually might be the preferred outcome, enabling them to avoid parting with their beloved third baseman.

Infielders everywhere!

Last week, I wrote about the glut of relievers on the trade market, and how it would behoove sellers to be realistic with their expectations if they want to move quickly. The same dynamic applies with infielders. As one executive put it, "There aren't going to be enough chairs for everyone."

Consider this partial list of players who are known or likely to be available:

Second base: DJ LeMahieu, Brian Dozier, Scooter Gennett, Josh Harrison, Asdrúbal Cabrera, Starlin Castro.

Shortstop: Manny Machado, Eduardo Escobar, Jordy Mercer, Freddy Galvis, Adeiny Hechavarria, José Iglesias.

Third base: Beltre, Josh Donaldson, Mike Moustakas, David Freese.

The only players in that group who are not potential free agents are Castro, who is under contract through next season, and Gennett, who will be in his final year of arbitration (Harrison and Freese have club options on their deals).

The group of shortstops beyond Machado and Escobar is a glut within a glut — and not an especially appealing one.

Hechavarria, Iglesias, Mercer and Galvis all earn between \$5.9 million and \$6.825 million. All are below-average hitters. All except Mercer rate as above-average defenders.

The Tampa Bay Rays would love to move Hechavarria to clear shortstop full-time for Willy Adames. But in this environment, making such a deal is not easy.

Hey Twins: Maybe keep this guy

In most cases, it's difficult for a team to re-sign a potential free agent after trading him — the relationship is severed, at least temporarily, and the player often experiences a form of rejection.

For that reason, the Minnesota Twins should think twice about trading Eduardo Escobar. And Escobar — according to Ozzie Guillen, his old mentor with the Chicago White Sox — should think twice about signing with another club.

"If Escobar gets traded, I don't mind if he gets traded somewhere to help," Guillen told Mike Berardino of the St. Paul Pioneer-Press. "But I would be back after that to play for the Minnesota Twins again. That's what I would say to him.

"Obviously the agent is going to look for more money because there's money for both sides, but I think the Minnesota Twins know who he is and Paul Molitor and the organization know how to use it and everybody likes him. To me, that may mean he's going to take less money."

The Twins might not share Guillen's enthusiasm for retaining Escobar, who turns 30 on Jan. 5. Third baseman Miguel Sanó is under control through 2021, shortstop Jorge Polanco through '22. Royce Lewis and Nick Gordon — the team's top two prospects, according to MLB Pipeline.com — both are middle infielders.

On the other hand, Sanó required a demotion to Single A less than a year after making an All-Star appearance, and Polanco only was activated on Monday after serving an 80-game suspension for testing positive for a performance-enhancing drug. The expiring contracts of three players — Dozier, right-hander Lance Lynn and first baseman Joe Mauer — will amount to a \$44 million savings for the Twins in 2019. Even if Mauer returns, it will be at a salary far below his current \$23 million.

Escobar is a switch-hitter, versatile defender and in the words of one Twins person, "as good a teammate as there is." Sounds like a keeper, no?

Around the horn

*Not that Seattle Mariners GM Jerry Dipoto needs any encouragement to make trades, but one rival executive says the M's need to go all-out trying to edge the Houston Astros for the AL West title.

The exec reasons that if the Mariners qualify only as a wild card, the "reward" for their first postseason appearance since 2001 likely would be a one-game playoff against Chris Sale at Fenway Park or Luis Severino at Yankee Stadium.

The Astros' run differential is plus-170; the Mariners' is plus-22. The teams will meet 10 times before the end of the season, including seven times between July 31 and Aug. 12.

*The season is barely more than half-over, but by one measure the Red Sox's J.D. Martinez already has earned his \$23.75 million salary for 2018 — and then some.

Fangraphs' "dollars" metric converts Wins Above Replacement to a dollar scale on what a player would make in free agency. Martinez stands at \$24.3 million, and the number is sure to grow.

If Martinez continues producing at this level, he almost certainly will exercise the first opt-out in his five-year, \$110 million contract after 2019. Sale, righty Rick Porcello and shortstop Xander Bogaerts also are eligible for free agency after that season.

*One rival executive points out that David Price cannot succeed without optimal command, something the left-hander clearly lacked when he allowed a career-worst five homers on Sunday night against the Yankees.

Price, even in his best seasons, did not have overwhelming stuff. He has cracked the top 25 in swing-and-miss percentage only three times, and his highest ranking was 18th in 2015.

*Speaking of Price, the emergence of Willy Adames might finally salvage the Rays' trade of the homegrown left-hander to the Detroit Tigers at the 2014 deadline.

Price's remaining financial obligation at the time — he earned \$14 million that season and was headed for a \$19.75 million salary in arbitration the following season — helped limit the Rays' return to Adames, who was then at Class A, left-hander Drew Smyly and infielder Nick Franklin.

Smyly, now completing his recovery from Tommy John surgery with the Chicago Cubs, actually out-performed Price for the remainder of '14 before the Rays capped his innings in early September; he missed more than three months with shoulder soreness in '15 and has yet to return to form. Franklin spent two seasons with the Rays before getting claimed on waivers by the Brewers.

*Attention deadline shoppers! An unstoppable force will meet an immovable object on Saturday when Toronto Blue Jays left-hander J.A. Happ makes his next start against the Yankees at Rogers Centre.

The Yankees, one of several teams interested in Happ, lead the majors with an .825 OPS against left-handed pitching. Happ, meanwhile, is holding opposing left-handed hitters to a .432 OPS, fifth lowest in the majors.

*And finally, if Bryce Harper fails to improve his current .217 batting average, it would not be the lowest entering the break for an All-Star Game starter. Not even close.

Eight previous All-Star starters entered the break with a batting average of .217 or lower, and seven of them were Hall of Famers, according to STATS LLC.

The complete list:

Davey Lopes, .169, 1981
Reggie Jackson, .199, 1981
Harmon Killebrew, .204, 1968
Ozzie Smith, .205, 1983
Luis Aparicio, .206, 1971
Roy Campanella, .215, 1954
Buddy Rosar, .216, 1948

Ted Williams, .217, 1959

A career night from Francisco Lindor dooms Royals, Junis in loss to Indians

By Maria Torres

Among a number of problems that have wrought havoc on this Royals season, two were on display Monday night at Kauffman Stadium.

Starter Jakob Junis is prone to giving up home runs and Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor is a bonafide Royals killer who magnified the issue plaguing the Royals' sophomore pitcher.

Lindor hit a grand slam in the fourth inning of the Royals' 9-3 loss to the Indians. He added to the damage with a three-run homer in the sixth that chased Junis from the game after 5 1/3 innings.

Start after start, Junis has left pitches out over the plate that opponents have pulverized for a majors-leading 24 home runs.

And on Monday, he was once more victimized by the long ball, as Lindor drove in a career-high seven runs with a pair of swings that knocked back any progress the Royals' lineup had begun to make.

Junis has battled location for the better part of a month. He's lost and re-found the feel for a slider that, when good, misses every bat. He's compiled such consistently poor results that the ledger on his misfortune totals out to six losses, 31 earned runs and 12 homers in six starts since June 3.

At times during this stretch, Junis has flirted with precision, striking out at least five batters in three of those outings. But Monday night offered no such silver lining. Junis threw 94 pitches and only got the Indians to swing and miss at five of them, according to MLB.com's Statcast system. He struck out just two batters before departing the game in the sixth inning.

"Inconsistent (slider)," Junis said. "Threw some good ones. Threw some bad ones. I got myself in trouble with a couple of hit batters and good teams take advantage of that."

Manager Ned Yost said the fix should be easy, and Junis agreed. Stop spinning the slider and it'll fall to the bottom of the zone as intended.

"It's consistent mechanics more than anything," Yost said.

The trouble began in the third, when Rajai Davis started a two-run rally with a double down the third-base line. It continued in the fourth, as Junis loaded the bases in front of Lindor on a single and consecutive hit-by-pitches. Lindor, who has batted .342 (71 for 207) with 54 RBIs against the Royals since 2015, hit the second grand slam of his career in the next at-bat, smashing a changeup left over the plate for 409 feet worth of damage.

The relief didn't come until later, when lefty Brian Flynn stepped onto the mound for 2 2/3 scoreless innings after Junis hung a belt-high slider for Lindor's three-run homer.

Yet it was too late for the Royals to get anything started against Indians starter Corey Kluber, who allowed three runs on seven hits and struck out five in six innings.

"You're hoping, OK, you're getting on the board early," Yost said. "Kluber had a rough start last time, you're thinking maybe the same thing. But he came out the second inning and really settled down."

A night that began with Whit Merrifield launching his first leadoff homer of the season and Mike Moustakas heedlessly barreling through third base coach Mike Jirschele's stop sign on Salvador Perez's RBI single up the middle in the first inning ended with the Royals' 59th loss of the season.

They'll try again Tuesday, with Danny Duffy taking the mound opposite rookie Shane Bieber at 7:15 p.m.

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