

Bauer a sleeper pick for All-Star Game

By Rhett Bollinger MLB.com @RhettBollinger

The All-Star Game is a special event that brings together the best players in the world on one stage, but sometimes those players aren't household names just yet.

Every club has at least one under-the-radar All-Star candidate, and it's no different in the American League Central. Here's a look at stealth candidates for each AL Central club for the 2018 All-Star Game, which will be held at Washington's Nationals Park on July 17.

Indians: Trevor Bauer

The case for him: On the position-player side, there is nothing surprising about what Jose Ramirez, Francisco Lindor or Michael Brantley are doing at this point. The intriguing All-Star cases for the Indians are on the pitching front, and Bauer is at the top of that list. Heading into Thursday's off-day, Bauer ranked in the top five in the AL in Fielding Independent Pitching, strikeouts per nine innings and homers allowed per nine innings. He is also in the top 10 in the AL in a variety of other categories. Bauer has been Cleveland's most consistent starter behind ace Corey Kluber.

Royals: Whit Merrifield

The case for him: Merrifield has emerged as one of the most dynamic offensive players in the league. Merrifield led the AL in stolen bases in 2017, and he has already swiped 14 bags this season. After a slow start, Merrifield has a .289 average with a .368 on-base percentage and a .418 slugging percentage, entering Thursday. He can beat you with his speed and his power. Merrifield has also emerged as perhaps the top super utility player in the league -- he can play all outfield and infield positions. He's a smart player who is aggressive on the basepaths.

Tigers: Jeimer Candelario

The case for him: Candelario, acquired in the trade that sent reliever Justin Wilson and catcher Alex Avila to the Cubs at last year's non-waiver Trade Deadline, got a taste of the Majors in 2016 and '17, but he has really put it together offensively this season. The 24-year-old has shown an impressive blend of power and patience at the plate, hitting .267/.361/.513 with nine homers and 26 RBIs through his first 50 games this season.

Twins: Eduardo Escobar

The case for him: Escobar has played well in the absence of starting shortstop Jorge Polanco, who is serving an 80-game suspension. Escobar's 24 doubles lead the Majors. Escobar has filled in capably at third and shortstop, but it's his surprising power -- despite his small stature -- that makes him an intriguing All-Star candidate. Escobar set a career-high with 21 homers last year, and already has 11 this season. He is having a breakout season in the last year of his contract with the Twins.

White Sox: Reynaldo Lopez

The case for him: Remember when Jose Quintana consistently put up quality starts for the White Sox but had a .500 individual career record to show for it? Well, this season Lopez has taken over that harsh role. Despite posting a 3.42 ERA over 12 starts and 71 innings pitched, Lopez has a record of 1-4. His ERA also is skewed by 13 runs given up over 4 2/3 innings in starts against the Pirates and Indians. He has held opposing hitters to a .212 average with 54 hits yielded, and beyond Jose Abreu, Lopez is the most deserving All-Star candidate on the White Sox.

Tribe scouting director thrilled with '18 Draft

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Scott Barnsby has had plenty of experience inside the Indians' Draft room, and the first-year director of amateur scouting is optimistic his picks from the 2018 MLB Draft will plant the seeds for the Tribe's long-term success.

Barnsby, who's been with Cleveland's amateur scouting department since 2002, took over the position from Brad Grant -- now the Indians' vice president of baseball operations -- in December, and he has been looking forward for the opportunity ever since.

"The last 364 days we were joking around, saying, 'All right, 2019 starts tomorrow,'" Barnsby said, after the Draft concluded. "But we need to take a step back, sign these guys and get them out and play them."

"In all seriousness, I don't think we could have been any more prepared. It's a good feeling leaving the Draft room. I don't think we left anything on the table in terms of effort and everything we did to get there."

Unlike last season, when the Indians went without a first-round pick, the Tribe was given four picks, including a compensatory pick for Carlos Santana's departure to the Phillies in free agency, and a Competitive Balance Round A pick on Day 1 of the Draft.

With their top pick, the Indians selected catcher Noah Naylor (No. 29 overall, No. 27 in MLB Pipeline's Top 200 Draft Prospects list) from St. Joan of Arc Catholic Secondary School in Ontario, Canada. The Tribe also selected right-handed prep school arms Ethan Hankins (No. 35/21) from Forsyth Central (Ga.) and Lenny Torres (No. 41/47) from Beacon High School (N.Y.), along with University of Southern Mississippi right-hander Nick Sandlin (No. 67/164) in the second round to finish Day 1.

Barnsby raved about the potential of Towson infielder Richard Palacios, Cleveland's third-round selection (No. 103/134) to kick off Day 2, which included rounds 2-10. Unlike pitching talent, which he said the organization likes to take its time to develop, promising position players may be able to rise through the ranks a bit faster.

"He's a guy that can really control the strike zone," Barnsby said of Palacios. "He's got quick hands, he can hit and he's athletic enough with defensive versatility. He can run, he can steal bases, and he's one of the guys that has a lot of upside".

Cleveland's top three selections hailed from high school, yet Barnsby heavily favored college players as the Draft got deeper, and in total took 30 collegiate players compared to 12 high schoolers. Of the 22 pitchers drafted, 15 are right-handed.

In all, seven of the Tribe's Draft choices ranked inside MLB Pipeline's Top 200 ranking, including sixth-round infielder Raynel Delgado (No. 193/124) from Cavalry Christian Academy (Fla.) and 14th-round pick Korey Holland (No. 433/141), an outfielder from Langham Creek High School (Texas).

"I think there's something to taking some of the college guys a little later in the Draft," Barnsby said. "Certainly maturity helps. But it's also an opportunity. These are good players who have worked hard throughout their careers to get to where they are. The doors open for them to get into professional baseball through an organization like ours that can develop them and give them every chance to get to the big leagues." Establishing relationships -- one of the jobs of an area scout -- played a big role in this Draft and especially helps on Day 3 when ciphering through rounds 11-40. The Indians used their 31st-round pick to take Michigan outfielder Jonathan Englemann, who was strongly recommended by Aaron Etchison, a first-year area scout who coached at Michigan for the past five seasons.

"That couldn't have happened without Aaron knowing [Englemann] well and knowing what his capabilities were," Barnsby said. "It's exciting for a scout to evaluate a player over an extended period of time, see that player get out of the top 10 rounds and still be passionate enough about that player and have enough conviction in their ability to give them an opportunity to play."

Tribe's 3-run 5th, Cookie's 10 K's sweep Crew

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- The data shows that Michael Brantley has sliced pitches to the opposite field at a lower rate this year than in the past. Even so, few teams have actually employed a drastic defensive shift against the veteran Indians outfielder.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Brewers went with the numbers and Brantley went the other way, helping ignite the decisive rally in the Tribe's 3-1 victory at Progressive Field. The three-run outburst Brantley helped put in motion in the fifth inning provided all the support required for a 10-strikeout gem by Carlos Carrasco.

"He's a professional hitter," Indians outfielder Rajai Davis said of Brantley. "He's one of the best hitters we have. Obviously, he's been doing it for a while. He's an All-Star player. He just knows how to put the good part of the bat on the ball and hit it where they're not a lot of times."

The win gave the Indians a sweep of the abbreviated two-game set against the National League Central-leading Brewers, who have lost three in a row for the first time since late April. For the Indians, who sit atop the American League Central, the back-to-back wins helped the club regain some rhythm in the wake of a disappointing road series against the Twins.

The decisive turn arrived in the home half of the fifth inning.

Davis got things started with a one-out single and a successful steal of second base. Brewers starter Chase Anderson then walked Francisco Lindor, bringing Brantley to the plate. As the lefty-swinging Brantley settled into his stance, third baseman Travis Shaw took a few steps to his left and shortstop Eric Sogard positioned himself just to the left of second base.

Going into Wednesday, Statcast™ showed that teams had shifted against Brantley 13.2 percent of the time this year -- up from 7.1 percent in 2017. The All-Star outfielder had a .379 weighted on-base average with no shift, compared to a .365 wOBA with a shift on. Per Fangraphs, Brantley was going to the opposite field at a 19.1 percent clip this year vs. 25.3 percent in '17.

"My guess," Indians manager Terry Francona said, "is if they shift Brant, he'll be one of the hitters that will beat the shift more than he doesn't."

Brantley received a 2-2 changeup from Anderson that dropped just below the zone, but not enough to elude the left fielder's bat. Brantley sliced the pitch on the ground through the hole on the left side of the infield. Sogard sprinted to his right -- to where a shortstop traditionally positions himself -- dove and nicked the ball with his glove as it bounced into the left-field grass.

"Really, the Brantley ball is the ball that got us in trouble," Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. "He hits a squibber, and hits it in the right place that it ends up we can't get an out."

Davis scored on Brantley's single to pull the game into a 1-1 deadlock and Lindor hustled from first to third on the play. The Brewers then turned to reliever Jeremy Jeffress, who promptly allowed an RBI double to right field off the bat of Jose Ramirez. Two batters later, Jeffress issued a bases-loaded walk to Yonder Alonso to help the Tribe to a 3-1 advantage.

On the season, Brantley is now sporting a .325/.369/.547 slash line with 24 extra-base hits and 39 RBIs in 50 games for the Tribe.

That fifth-inning push was sufficient for Carrasco, who shook off some struggles in his last two turns and gave Cleveland seven effective frames. The right-hander scattered eight hits, limiting Milwaukee's potent lineup to an RBI single by Shaw in the third inning. Carrasco reached double digits in strikeouts for the 17th time in his career, walked just one batter and improved to 7-4 on the season.

"He found his best stuff and then for the rest of the game he was really good," Francona said of Carrasco. "Breaking ball, changeup, he was crisp. That was a nice bounce back from [his last start]."
Carlos has pitched well versus the current NL Central leaders in 2018.

In his two starts this season: 16.0 IP, 13 H, 3 ER, 24 K

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

In his previous two starts, Carrasco buckled after recording two outs. The right-hander allowed 10 runs and a .556 (10-for-18) opponents' average with two outs in those outings. In the second inning against the Brewers, Carrasco began to slip in the same regard, allowing three straight two-out singles to load the bases. The big righty worked the count full against Lorenzo Cain and then induced an inning-ending flyout to right to escape unscathed.

"Sometimes you have to be a little more aggressive," Carrasco said. "Bases loaded after two outs, it came back to me, what was going on for the last two games. It can't happen right here. I just got him to fly out to right field for the third out."

Francona called that moment a turning point in the game.

"He had fallen behind Cain, fought back into the count and got him to fly out," Francona said. "That, at the time, seemed big. And later in the game when you look back, it was big. Cain is a guy that has really given Carlos trouble. He got him out with the bases loaded. That was a huge turn in the game."

SOUND SMART

Davis finished Wednesday's win with three stolen bases, becoming the oldest Indians player on record to have at least three in a single game. Davis (37 years, 230 days) overtook the record previously held by Nap Lajoie, who was 37 years and four days when he achieved the feat on Sept. 9, 1911. Davis became the first Tribe player with three steals in a game since he and Ramirez each pulled it off on Aug. 12, 2016, against the Angels.

UP NEXT

Following an off-day on Thursday, the Indians plan on sending right-hander Trevor Bauer (4-4, 2.77 ERA) to the mound at Comerica Park, where the Tigers will host the Tribe in a 7:10 p.m. ET on Friday to open a three-game set. This season, Bauer has a 2.39 ERA in six road starts, including eight shutout innings against Detroit on May 16.

Benson homers twice for Captains

By William Boor MLB.com @wboor

- Indians' No. 8 prospect Will Benson went deep for the first time since May 17 and did so in grand fashion, hitting a grand slam as part of his second two-homer game of the season. Benson, who has 11 homers this season, finished 2-for-4 with five RBIs for Class A Lake County.

Danny Salazar is lost in the desert

Zack Meisel Jun 6, 2018 10

The alarm sounds. Danny Salazar treks to the Indians complex, tucked behind the airplane graveyard in the middle of the flat grid that is Goodyear, Arizona.

The sun is shining, the heat is overbearing. The routine is maddening.

Salazar spends some time in the newly renovated weight room, tosses the baseball, feels discomfort in his pesky right shoulder, halts his throwing task, retrieves some ice or other end-of-day treatment, heads home, eats dinner and sings karaoke with Michael Martinez. It's the same routine every day. Rinse, repeat.

It's the sort of monotony that tests one's mettle and keeps one's mind spinning like a wheel paced by a hamster that bathed in a Monster energy drink. The 110-degree heat doesn't help, either.

Salazar has grown tired of the drill, tired of starting and stopping and starting and stopping again. The karaoke — and the company of Martinez, who is recovering from a torn Achilles tendon — has kept him sane.

Still, Salazar needed to escape the desert for a few days, and the Indians wanted their in-house doctor to examine his shoulder. So, he returned to Cleveland last week. He received a cortisone shot. He reunited with the familiar faces in the home clubhouse at Progressive Field. He visited his locker, hidden behind a wall on the far end of the room, in between the stalls belonging to Trevor Bauer and Nick Goody.

Cody Anderson visited Cleveland for similar reasons last summer, a reprieve from the practice of languishing in the valley's summer sun. But the Indians had a better grasp on Anderson's timetable as he worked his way back from Tommy John surgery. Salazar's status remains a mystery.

Salazar returned to Arizona after his short stay near Lake Erie. It's back to the grind, back to the beginning. When he might reach the end of this cyclical pattern, nobody knows.

"We'll ramp him back up and see if we can have better luck this time," Terry Francona said.

Salazar's shoulder issue surfaced in January, before he arrived in Cleveland for Tribe Fest, multiple sources told The Athletic. Five months later, the team has learned more about the injury — he has an impingement and has received a PRP injection (platelet-rich plasma, for any non-doctors out there) and this latest booster shot — but it's still searching for the proper healing method. The next option might be a magic genie or a shoulder transplant.

Salazar can play catch. He can throw bullpen sessions if he refrains from exerting maximum effort. He says he feels far better than he did when a blanket of snow covered Cleveland five months ago. But when he throws from 120 feet — a common practice along the recovery checklist — or puts all of his might behind a pitch, he can't shake the pain or discomfort that follows.

"We just need to find the right treatment," Salazar said. "I've tried to throw hard. I can't."

It's been aggravating for the Indians, too. Salazar could have helped to plug two of the leaks on the S.S. AL Central Titans — the largest entity among the fleet of rowboats that represent the sorry division. Imagine the starting rotation with a healthy version of the guy who wields an electric fastball and a plunging split-change that tantalizes even the most patient hitters. Or, picture the bumbling bullpen with his arm available every other day or so.

Instead, the Indians have no idea if or when Salazar will contribute to the club this year. The calendar has already flipped to June and there are no answers. Before they even begin to consider whether Salazar would fit better as a starter or a reliever, they need to nurture him back to full health. There's no knowing when that will happen.

Can he handle the workload of a 95-pitch outing? Can he handle the rigors of pitching every other day, warming up swiftly once Scott Atchison answers the bullpen landline? That's a conversation for a day when he can throw hard without his shoulder barking.

"I'm trying to stay positive and do the best I can to fight it," Salazar said. "But when I see that I can't throw or it starts bothering me, pinching, that gets me down a little bit."

So, once Salazar gets the green light — he was to be shut down for about a week after receiving the latest injection — he'll return to the same throwing program and the same routine. The drive to the complex, the workout, the attempt to build upon the most recent step along his throwing program.

Whether his shoulder feels strong or it throbs, he'll return home, turn on some salsa music and sing karaoke with his teammate. It's the only thing keeping his mind off a frustrating start to what he hopes doesn't become a lost season.

Indians' bullpen shows beginnings of competence in midweek series vs. Brewers

By Jimmy Watkins

Cody Allen sat outside his locker with two beige-towel wrapped ice packs covering his right arm. He'd just finished converting his second save in less than 24 hours, the second requiring him to retire four Brewers.

"I didn't throw too many pitches last night," Allen said after Wednesday's 3-1 win at Progressive Field. "Was able to be fairly efficient today. I'm feeling OK."

It's been a while since the relievers have finished a series feeling good about themselves. And granted, they only played a two-gamer against Milwaukee. But Wednesday marked the first time in 12 games when the Indians' bullpen held an offense to zero runs

Allen struck out two in the final inning, both on his expert knuckle curveball that has eluded him for much of this season. Allen noticed a stark difference in hitters' approaches with his ability to change speeds. Maybe, he wondered, Travis Shaw wouldn't have been able to homer off him the night before if his breaking ball had been working. Maybe Shaw would've fouled the pitch off. Or even missed altogether.

He can't know for sure. But he's certainly glad to have rediscovered his difference-making pitch.

"It's a pitch that's been huge for me in the past," Allen said. "It's kind of been my bread and butter."

The Indians can't know whether Allen's knuckle curve is back for good, either. But they do know it changes Allen as a pitcher.

"Cody looks like he found his breaking ball," Terry Francona said. "It just seems to relax him. I can see why."

Allen wasn't the only reliever Francona praised after the two-game series sweep. Francona gave credit to Neil Ramírez, who pitched 1 1/3 innings of shutout ball against Milwaukee, and Oliver Perez, who has yet to allow a run in 2 1/3 innings with Cleveland. And while the sample size on bullpen success is exceedingly small, all small victories are to be celebrated considering the way this group has performed for much of the season.

"Neil came in and got one (out)," Francona said of Ramírez's brief Wednesday appearance. "Sometimes that's good enough."

But how much stock can you put in a two-game series? How fleeting will this positivity prove to be? What about Zach McAllister and Dan Otero, who didn't have redeeming moments this week?

Francona believes they'll find their form eventually, too. Allen reminds us that the Indians have been a second-half team in recent years.

"We've never been a club that's come out and set the world on fire in April or May," Allen said. "So you wanna try and limit those struggles early on in the season."

Entering this series with Milwaukee, the Indians hadn't limited those struggles. They led the worst division in baseball by 2 1/2 games over the supposed-to-be tanking Tigers, wasting both quality starts and the top-ranked offense in May.

But Wednesday, the relievers secured Carlos Carrasco's quality start. They overcame a subpar offensive performance. And really, they made small headway on the debt they feel they owe to their teammates.

"We kinda rode their backs for a little bit," Allen said. "We're gonna try and do our part to ease the burden a little bit on our starters."

Towson shortstop, Indians draftee Richie Palacios went the extra mile to carry on family legacy

At home, Richie Palacios was calm, texting words of "congratulations" to the guys he knew who were selected before him on the first night of the major league baseball draft — until the call he'd been waiting for lit up his phone Tuesday afternoon.

"Dream come true," he said.

The Towson University shortstop became the highest Tigers position player ever drafted, trading black and gold for the navy and red of the Cleveland Indians, who selected him in the third round (103rd overall).

"I've been working my whole life for this opportunity to be able to finally say that I'm a Cleveland Indian," Palacios said.

The third-highest player drafted in Towson history, Palacios follows left-hander Chris Nabholz, the 49th overall pick by the Montreal Expos in 1988, and left-hander Chris Russ, chosen by the Texas Rangers 94th overall in 2000.

Orioles select pitchers in third, fourth rounds; Towson junior Richard Palacios goes to Indians in third

In the winter leading up to draft day, Palacios gave countless interviews, eye tests and psychoanalyses to scouts from all over the major league map. Afterward, scouts would tell Towson coach Matt Tyner, "He's a good kid."

To Tyner, that meant work needed to be done.

Tyner gave Palacios a scouts' wish list: The right-handed-hitting shortstop needed to learn to hit the opposite way, improve his swing-to-miss and walk-to-strikeout ratios, and increase his speed.

"What's really valuable is his willingness to learn," Tyner said. "He's not a kid who will say, 'I'm doing it my way.' He's the guy that goes, 'Give me more, give me more, give me more.' "

After his coach's instructions, Palacios struggled in preparation for the season. Then, in the third inning of the second game this season, against New Mexico State, he hit a home run to right-center field, followed by another home run the next day, again the opposite way.

"He looked me dead in the eye and said, 'We'll stay with it,' " Tyner said.

Palacios hit .301 with 18 doubles, eight home runs, 31 RBIs and 56 runs scored this spring. He walked 52 times and stole 25 bases. He is one of only two Division I players with 50 walks, 50 runs and 25 stolen bases this season.

"Richie possesses the fastest hands I've ever coached," Tyner said. "It gives him the innate ability to attack medium-to-high fastballs. His hand-eye coordination is incredible. He's going to be a threat offensively at every level."

Along with a .323 career average, 38 doubles, eight triples, 19 home runs and 98 RBIs, Palacios became the first player in program history to reach 200 hits in his junior season. He was the first Tiger to be named Colonial Athletic Association Rookie of the Year.

"Once I came to Towson, I tried to work harder than everyone in the United States," Palacios said, "to stay focused on my dream, not let the other stuff in college distract me and let everything follow."

Mirroring his regal last name, Palacios was raised with hopes of being the latest in his family to play baseball professionally.

"I came out of the womb with a baseball in my hand," he said. "My father, my uncle, my brother [showed] me what was going to happen in the future, before it even happened."

His uncle, Rey, spent parts of three seasons catching with the Kansas City Royals. And while growing up enveloped by his family's stories and highlight videos, it was trading batter's boxes with his older sibling, Joshua, on Brooklyn, N.Y., diamonds that developed Palacios' competitive drive.

The two seemed determined to take a different road from each other to reach their collective end: while Joshua prepped at the School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology, Richard played for the Berkeley Carroll School. Josh took to the outfield, Richard to the infield. Joshua enrolled in junior college and turned down a 31st-round selection by the Cincinnati Reds in 2014 before transferring to Division I Auburn, while Richard was recruited out of high school by former coach Mike Gottlieb to Towson.

"A lot of the top programs recruited me and then came to say I was too small for their school, for their conference," the 5-foot-11 shortstop said. "That was added motivation to show those people I can."

When his brother signed with the Toronto Blue Jays after being picked in the fourth round in 2016, Palacios added another layer of motivation to his mission.

"It just made that a little bit more of a reality," Palacios said. "Seeing my old brother get drafted put it on my mind that, 'Yes, this could be a real thing. If I work even harder, then teams will follow you and it'll one day be your time.'"

By then, the younger Palacios had already produced remarkable seasons for Towson, setting a single-season stolen base record (32) and a freshman record for hits (74).

Approaching June this year, Tyner had an inkling where his star shortstop might land.

"We started hearing third [round]. Then you see draft forecasts, and your guy's not in there," the coach said. "We were hoping for fourth and fifth and we were prepared for beyond fifth."

The Tigers staff narrowed Palacios' prospects to a handful of teams, and two weeks out, it was Towson pitching coach Miles Miller who guessed Cleveland.

And it's nestled into the Indians organization that Tyner sees Palacios' athleticism transforming him into a utility player who can hit and defend.

"He won't be pigeonholed," Tyner said.

But as high as Palacios was feeling on draft-day euphoria, he has a realistic outlook. There will be long months and years ahead of him in the minor league trenches.

That's why Palacios has kept his dad's advice close to the chest.

"Put all the time and effort and not get distracted and work so hard that if it doesn't happen, you don't feel any regrets that you could have done more, that you could have done better," Palacios said.

Carrasco strikes out 10 as Indians beat Brewers 3-1

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) -- Carlos Carrasco pumped a fist and strode off the mound after his final pitch of the afternoon resulted in a crucial double play.

Carrasco struck out 10 and allowed one run in seven innings, helping the Cleveland Indians defeat the Milwaukee Brewers 3-1 on Wednesday.

His 109th pitch induced Lorenzo Cain to bounce into a double play that preserved Cleveland's two-run lead.

"I had over 100 pitches," Carrasco said. "Then, I just tried to get a double play. That's what we did."

Carrasco (7-4) worked out of a bases-loaded jam in the second and got a double-play ball in the fifth as he improved to 2-0 against the Brewers. He struck out 14 in a five-hitter at Milwaukee on May 9.

Michael Brantley hit a tying single in a three-run fifth, when Jose Ramirez hit a go-ahead double and scored on Yonder Alonso's bases-loaded walk from Chase Anderson (4-5). Travis Shaw's RBI single had put Milwaukee ahead.

Cody Allen got four outs for his 11th save in 12 chances as the Indians completed a two-game sweep. Allen saved Tuesday night's 3-2 win for ace Corey Kluber.

"We faced two pretty good starters and a very good closer," Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. "We didn't have any margin for error against their pitching."

Anderson (4-5) allowed three runs in 4 1/3 innings. The Brewers have lost three straight for the first time since April 26-29, when they dropped four in a row.

Counsell was ejected by plate umpire Quinn Wolcott after Shaw was called out on strikes in the eighth. Counsell said he was in the dugout when he was tossed.

"Nothing was brewing all day," he said. "It was a benign ejection. I didn't use any profanity, so I'm not sure why it happened. Now, once he ejected me, there were some words exchanged, but why it happened, I don't understand it."

Carrasco struck out four of his first six hitters and then allowed hits to five of the next seven. Christian Yelich led off the third with a double, took third on a groundout and scored on Shaw's single.

Milwaukee loaded the bases with two outs in the second, but Cain flied out. Shaw grounded into an inning-ending double play with two on in the fifth.

"It was one of the toughest parts of the game, bases loaded," Carrasco said. "But it's OK. I have to get outs. That was big."

Indians manager Terry Francona thought Carrasco's early troubles helped him later.

"Because he had to reach back for his last stuff, I think he found his best stuff and then for the rest of the game he was really good," Francona said.

SPEEDWAY

Rajai Davis stole three bases for the 13th time in his career.

MILLER TIME?

Francona said LHP Andrew Miller (inflammation in right knee) felt fine after throwing a bullpen session. Miller will have one more side session, but it hasn't been decided whether he will go on a minor league rehab assignment. Miller went on the 10-day DL on May 26 with the knee injury and also missed two weeks with a strained left hamstring.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Brewers: LHP Wade Miley (right oblique) continues to make progress while playing catch, according to Counsell. The 31-year-old was injured in a May 8 start against the Indians and has been on the 60-day DL since May 12.

Indians: OF Brandon Guyer (strained neck) could come off the 10-day DL Friday when the Indians open a series in Detroit.

UP NEXT

Brewers: RHP Jhoulys Chacin (4-1, 3.39 ERA) is to start Friday at Philadelphia.

Indians: RHP Trevor Bauer (4-4, 2.77 ERA) is slated to open a series at Detroit on Friday.

Indians 3, Brewers 1: Carlos Carrasco deals, Indians' three-run fifth enough to down Brewers

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The Indians beat up one of baseball's best bullpens, their own held the lead, and Carlos Carrasco turned in a dominant start in a 3-1 win over the Milwaukee Brewers on Wednesday afternoon at Progressive Field.

The Indians (32-28) entered the fifth trailing 1-0 with Brewers starting pitcher Chase Anderson still on the mound. Rajai Davis singled and Francisco Lindor walked to put two runners on base and Michael Brantley followed with an RBI single to left field to tie it 1-1.

Trying to keep it a tied game, the Brewers (37-25) turned to reliever Jeremy Jeffress, who has been among the game's best and entered Wednesday with a sub-1.00 ERA. It set up an elite matchup between him and Jose Ramirez, who has turned in an MVP-candidate season thus far.

Ramirez won the battle, roping a double to right field to score Lindor and give the Indians a 2-1 lead. Edwin Encarnacion walked to load the bases and Yonder Alonso drew another walk to score a run and extend the lead to 3-1.

Davis went 2-for-3 with three stolen bases and played a key role in the Indians' lone scoring inning.

"That's the hope when Raj plays, that he can influence the game, and he did," Indians manager Terry Francona said.

That one inning was enough for Carrasco, who turned in one of his best outings of his season, allowing just one run on eight hits in seven innings to go with 10 strikeouts. It marked the 17th double-digit strikeout game of his career and the second this season.

Coming off of a rough outing, Carrasco escaped a bases-loaded jam in the second inning and allowed the lone run of the day in the third on a single by former Kent State standout Travis Shaw. After that, Carrasco cruised through the seventh inning.

"Earlier in the game there were a lot of hits," Francona said. "It was the [second] inning, bases loaded, and he had fallen behind [Lorenzo] Cain, fought back into the count and got him to fly out to right. That at the time seemed big and later in the game when you look back, it was big.

"Cain is a guy that has really given Carlos trouble. He got him out with the bases loaded. That was a huge turn in the game."

For the second consecutive game, the Indians turned to Neil Ramirez with a tight lead. Ramirez allowed a single but then struck out former Indians first baseman Jesus Aguilar.

Recently acquired Oliver Perez then struck out Shaw before Cody Allen recorded a four-out save to close the door.

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 06.07.2018

Indians notebook: Starters working to shoulder larger load; Lonnie Chisenhall has positive return

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The Indians' starting rotation has been working deeper into games this season, in part because of its collective effectiveness and in part as an attempt to ease the burden on a struggling bullpen.

Entering Wednesday's game, Indians starting pitchers this season were averaging 99.7 pitches per game, up from 93.1 last season. The combination of the rotation pitching at such a high level — Corey Kluber, Trevor Bauer and Mike Clevinger especially — and the bullpen cycling through relievers seemingly every other day has forced the starters to carry the load to a greater degree.

It brings up the balance between wanting to win each night with making sure the rotation isn't overworked — and all the while keeping October and the postseason in mind. And it has manager Terry Francona and the starters ensuring they are on the same page.

"I think that just because he's sending guys back out there, he's still checking with us and making sure we're good and things like that," Kluber said. "It's not just a throwing guys out there and see what they can do kind of a thing. There's been times when I've been at a lower pitch count and you kind of feel gassed and we talk to him and you've got to be honest about it."

Bauer says he could throw well over 100 pitches and be just fine. Kluber can handle a heavier workload as well. Carrasco, though, has reached 200 innings only once in his career and Mike Clevinger will likely set career highs in that area as well.

Pitchers are often at different points, and handing the ball to Francona might be what's best in the short and long term.

"Sometimes, it's hard to swallow your pride, so to speak, and take a step back and realize that maybe I'm out of gas at this point," Kluber said. "Because, obviously, everybody wants to keep pitching. You only get to throw once every fifth day. You want to stay out there as long as you can.

"So, I think a lot of it is just going back to having trust in [Francona] and him having trust in us to be honest with each other."

Back again

Lonnie Chisenhall's saga with his temperamental calf has been akin to that friend in a toxic relationship. It's on. It's off. He's almost completely over it, he's moved on, and then it comes back all the same.

Chisenhall hadn't logged a major-league at-bat since April 7 and quipped in the clubhouse a few weeks ago that it was like *deja vu* as he battled the injury that had sent him to the disabled list multiple times dating back to last year. He finally returned on Tuesday and immediately drove in two runs with a single.

"It's tough after you go through it a third time," Chisenhall said. "So, just err on the side of caution. It took a little longer, but I think we got it right. ... It was nice to be in a good situation. Guys were on base in front of me. Always enjoy when guys are on base."

Chisenhall's return coincided with the annual midge takeover of Progressive Field. Any camera view within the stadium made the park look like an apocalyptic scene. But even with the midges, Chisenhall will take a day in Cleveland over another game in a minor-league rehab assignment.

"I swallowed a few of them, so I'm going to skip dinner," Chisenhall said. "But it was nice to just be out there. ... I've been touring northeast Ohio and upstate New York for the past 10 days, so it's nice to be back here with the team.

"You miss them when you're gone."

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 06.07.2018

Carlos Carrasco strikes out 10 as Cleveland Indians sweep 2-game series from Brewers with 3-1 win

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- In his last two starts, Carlos Carrasco kept getting ahead of hitters in the count, but couldn't send them back to the dugout twirling their bats in disgust.

He did not have that problem on Wednesday afternoon in a 3-1 win over the Brewers, the team with the best record in the National League.

Carrasco struck out 10 and allowed one run in seven innings. It wasn't like he threw a lot more strikes. In Friday's 7-4 loss to the Twins, Carrasco threw 65 percent strikes. In the start before that against Houston, he threw 67 percent strikes. On Wednesday, he finished at 65 percent.

The difference was that he didn't let the Brewers hit a lot of the strikes he threw. Carrasco (7-4, 4.23) is 2-0 with a 1.69 ERA and 24 strikeouts against Milwaukee this season. In interleague play for his career, he's 7-4 with a 2.97 ERA against the NL.

Carrasco improved in another area as well. In his last two starts he allowed 11 earned runs. Ten of them scored with two out.

Milwaukee's lone run on Wednesday came with one out.

"They told me I have to be a little more aggressive with two out," said Carrasco. "It was good. It was something I could learn from here so that it doesn't happen anymore."

Closer Cody Allen on state of Indians' bullpen

The Indians supported Carrasco with just enough help to complete a two-game sweep.

Manager Terry Francona used three relievers to get through the eighth as Neil Ramirez, Oliver Perez and Cody Allen each registered a strikeout after a leadoff single by Christian Yelich. Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell was so upset with the proceedings in the inning that he was ejected by plate umpire Quinn Wolcott.

Allen pitched the ninth for his 11th save and second in as many games.

"Neil came in and got one and sometimes one is good enough," said Francona. "Oliver came in and got his lefty (Travis Shaw) and Cody looks like he's found his breaking ball. That's a big key for him."

The Indians beat Milwaukee, 3-2, Tuesday night with just the right amount of offense. They did the same thing Wednesday as they came from behind to beat Chase Anderson (4-5, 4.57).

The Indians, trailing 1-0 through four innings, finally took the lead against Anderson in the fifth.

Rajai Davis, with one out, singled and stole second. Anderson walked Francisco Lindor. Michael Brantley, with singled in the first, sent a ground ball single through the hole at short. Shortstop Eric Sogard, shifted toward second base, dove for the ball, but had it deflect off his glove and roll into left field.

Davis scored the tying run, while Lindor raced to third. Jeremy Jeffress relieved Anderson and Jose Ramirez doubled to right for a 2-1 lead. The Indians were in position to take command of the game, but it didn't happen.

Jeffress walked Edwin Encarnacion to load the bases. Then he walked Yonder Alonso to score Brantley from third. But that's as far as the Indians got.

Jeffress, who entered with a 5-0 record and a 0.60 ERA, left the bases loaded by striking out Jason Kipnis and Yan Gomes.

The Brewers took a 1-0 in the third on a Shaw single. Yelich opened the inning with double off the center field wall. He took third on a grounder by Jesus Aguilar and scored on Shaw's single to right.

Carrasco gave up a leadoff single to Lorenzo Cain to start the game, but retired the next three batters. He found trouble of a more serious nature in the second when Milwaukee loaded the bases on two-out singles by Jonathan Villar, Erik Kratz and Sogard. He escaped by retiring Cain, who entered the game hitting .361 (13-for-36) against Carrasco, on a fly ball to right.

"With bases loaded right there after two out it came back to me what happened in the last two games and it can happen right here," said Carrasco. "Then I got the fly out to right field for third out. That was a tough part of the game and I needed to get an out."

Terry Francona on Carlos Carrasco pitching out of a bases-loaded jam vs Brewers

What it means

Ramirez, with 19 RBI in his last 22 games, leads the big leagues with 38 extra base hits.

The pitches

Anderson threw 85 pitches, 50 (59 percent) for strikes. Carrasco threw 109 pitches, 71 (65 percent) for strikes.

End of the line

Encarnacion's 11-game hitting streak ended Wednesday as he took an 0-for-3. It was the third longest streak by an Indians' player this season behind Brantley's 19-game and Lindor's 15-gamer.

Encarnacion entered Wednesday's game with 30 RBI since May 1, tied for the most in the big leagues.

Run, Rajai, run

Davis finished Wednesday's game with two hits and three steals. It was the 13th time he's stolen three or more bases in one game.

Terry Francona on Rajai Davis' speed and Michael Brantley beating the shift

Thanks for coming

The Brewers and Indians drew 21,315 fans to Progressive Field on Wednesday afternoon. First pitch was 1:10 p.m. with a temperature of 58 degrees.

Next

The Indians are off Thursday before starting a seven-game trip to Detroit and Chicago. They open a three-game series against the Tigers on Friday night at Comerica Park before a four-game series against the White Sox begins Monday night at Guaranteed Rate Field.

The Indians will send Trevor Bauer, Mike Clevinger and Corey Kluber to the mound against the Tigers this weekend.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.07.2018

Cleveland Indians OF Rajai Davis steals three bases Wednesday; Did he slide into some job security as well?

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Roster moves are expected ahead of this weekend's Cleveland Indians series in Detroit, but if Wednesday's outing against Milwaukee was any indication, veteran outfielder Rajai Davis has represented himself rather well in front of manager Terry Francona and the Tribe's front office.

Davis, starting for the first time since May 25, stole three bases and scored a run against the Brewers in a 3-1 Indians victory. Davis raised his season steal total to a team-high 11 and tied for seventh-most in the American League.

Manager Terry Francona said once the Indians got Davis' speed on the bases, Wednesday's game changed.

"That's the hope when Raj plays, that he can influence the game, and he did," Francona said.

In the fifth inning, with Cleveland trailing 1-0, Davis delivered a one-out single to center and stole second base with Francisco Lindor at the plate. After Lindor walked, Davis scored on Michael Brantley's base hit to beat an infield shift at shortstop.

"I just went out there trying to do what I do, be a threat out there and get in scoring position," Davis said. "Obviously, it's easier to score when you're at second as opposed to first."

Rajai Davis on his three-steal effort vs. Milwaukee

The 37-year-old veteran was 2-for-3 with a pair of singles a walk, posting his fifth multi-hit effort of the year.

"I was just trying to produce and help us win," Davis said. "That was my main focus at the plate, just trying to get good pitches to hit and just staying with that approach."

Francona said with Brewers starter Chase Anderson on the mound mixing in a good changeup and breaking ball, it was a good day to play Davis in center.

"His first time up, he really hit that ball well and got nothing for it," Francona said. "He had good swings all day."

Davis became the oldest Indians player, at 37 years and 230 days, to steal three bases in a game in the Baseball Reference Play Index era (post 1908).

He beat Nap Lajoie's mark of 37 years, four days in 1911 against the St. Louis Browns.

Davis and Jose Ramirez were the last two Indians to steal three bases in a single game, both doing so on Aug. 12, 2016 against the Los Angeles Angels.

Meanwhile, Davis became just the third player in Tribe history to steal 10 or more bases while age 37 or older. He joins Omar Vizquel, who had 19 steals in 2004, and Lajoie who did so three times, including 18 steals in 1912.

The Indians are expected to make a roster move Friday or shortly thereafter when Brandon Guyer is ready to come off the 10-day disabled list. With second-year outfielder Greg Allen getting the nod to remain on the big league roster Tuesday over Bradley Zimmer, veterans including Davis and Melky Cabrera could be fighting for a spot by the end of the week.

"I can't focus on that," Davis said. "I can't make that decision. I don't make those decisions. When my name is called, I try to help us win."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.07.2018

Is a stronger bullpen rising from the ashes of May for the Cleveland Indians?

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Out of the rubble of May, is there an actual bullpen taking shape in June for the Indians?

It's a question that is a long way from being answered, but the last two days have been encouraging. They've involved closer Cody Allen and two arms that weren't supposed to be here unless something went wrong.

As has been mentioned once or twice, something went wrong. It's called May when the bullpen went 2-7 with a 8.01 ERA. In 73 innings, Indians' relievers allowed 65 earned runs on 92 hits, including eight homers and 35 walks. That is a long way from leading the big leagues in ERA, which is what this bullpen did last season.

The Indians have already used 15 relievers. Last year they used 12 primary relievers for the whole year.

Two of the newcomers helped the Indians complete a two-game sweep of the Brewers. Milwaukee came to Progressive Field with the best record in the National League.

Closer Cody Allen on state of Indians' bullpen

In Tuesday's 3-2 victory, Neil Ramirez started the eighth in relief of starter Corey Kluber and retired the side in order to protect a 3-1 lead. Allen started the ninth, but allowed a leadoff homer to Travis Shaw before getting the next three outs for his 10th save.

In Wednesday's 3-1 win, Ramirez started the eighth in relief of starter Carlos Carrasco. He had a 3-1 lead, but allowed a leadoff single to Christian Yelich. Ramirez came back to strike out Jesus Aguilar and was relieved by left-hander Oliver Perez. The Indians signed Perez on Saturday after he opted out of his minor league deal with the Yankees on Friday.

Perez struck out Shaw for the second out and was relieved by Allen, who proceeded to retire the next four Brewers in order for his 11th save.

The Indians signed Ramirez to a minor-league deal and brought him to spring training. He opened the year at Class AAA Columbus and joined the Indians since May 15. He has not allowed a run in his last 4 2/3 innings pitched.

So have the Indians found the next Bryan Shaw? That's not a fair comparison, but in a bullpen where critical outs have been scarce Ramirez is getting some.

"When guys are starting to back up (good performances) and be consistent, I think they earn pitching in leverage situations," said manager Terry Francona, referring to Ramirez. "We're just trying to, like we always do, put out there who we think has a chance to succeed in the right positions.

"But this doesn't mean we're running away from (Dan) Otero or (Zach) McAllister. They're all going to pitch."

When the season started, Otero, McAllister, Nick Goody and Tyler Olson were going to form the link between the rotation and Allen and Andrew Miller in the late innings. Otero, McAllister and Olson have struggled, while Goody and Miller are on the disabled list. So the organization has been in scramble mode trying to make the pen operational again.

"We see how the starters are getting it done," said Ramirez. "We feel the load down there when we don't get it done. ... I know the bullpen struggles have been highlighted. When we go out there and focus on the pitches we need to make, we'll be fine."

Francona has been waiting for a reliever to get hot so he has someone to carry a lead to Allen. Maybe Ramirez is the guy. If nothing else, he's latest candidate.

"I'm just here to get outs," said Ramirez. "I'm happy to pitch in any situation. For him to have trust in me later in games, is awesome. But I know that everybody else out there can do the job, too. We're just going to keep rolling."

Perez just parachuted into this situation. The veteran lefty hasn't allowed a run in 2 2/3 innings. In three appearances, he's struck out four and allowed two hits.

Oliver Perez's career with the Indians began when he arrived in Minnesota thirty minutes before the game in which he would make his debut, but it takes a lot more than that to rattle the veteran reliever. pic.twitter.com/ZY6jR0jLsU

-- SportsTime Ohio (@SportsTimeOhio) June 6, 2018

Ramirez has pitched in parts of four seasons in the big leagues. Perez is in his 16th year in the big leagues.

"This is a long season and anything can happen," said Perez. "Sometimes the offense slows down, sometimes it's the starters and sometimes it's the bullpen. The most important thing is we're in first place.

"We don't have to worry about nothing. We have to concentrate on the positive stuff. This is the spot where we want to be. We want to be in first place and competing for the playoffs."

The faces in the bullpen have changed quickly this season, but Francona thinks Perez just might stick around.

"I think he's going to help us," said Francona. "I think he's a major league pitcher that got caught (in last winter's free agent freeze). He was in Triple-A and had his out on June 1 and we took advantage of that.

"I think we caught a break there. We don't look at this as short term."

Allen has taken some bumps and bruises this season. In five of his 11 saves, he's had to get four or more outs. The absence of Miller, on the disabled list for the second time, has hurt the entire bullpen, but mostly Allen.

He said the contributions of Ramirez and Perez on Wednesday "were big shots in the arm. Our starting rotation has been our saving grace. In May we were the best offensive team in baseball. We've kind of rode their backs. We want to try and ease the burden on our starters and pitch well in these tight ballgames."

The Indians are 32-28. They have 102 games to play so the opportunities Allen is seeking for him and the rest of the bullpen will be there.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.07.2018

Is a stronger bullpen rising from the ashes of May for the Cleveland Indians?

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Out of the rubble of May, is there an actual bullpen taking shape in June for the Indians?

It's a question that is a long way from being answered, but the last two days have been encouraging. They've involved closer Cody Allen and two arms that weren't supposed to be here unless something went wrong.

As has been mentioned once or twice, something went wrong. It's called May when the bullpen went 2-7 with a 8.01 ERA. In 73 innings, Indians' relievers allowed 65 earned runs on 92 hits, including eight homers and 35 walks. That is a long way from leading the big leagues in ERA, which is what this bullpen did last season.

The Indians have already used 15 relievers. Last year they used 12 primary relievers for the whole year.

Two of the newcomers helped the Indians complete a two-game sweep of the Brewers. Milwaukee came to Progressive Field with the best record in the National League.

Closer Cody Allen on state of Indians' bullpen

In Tuesday's 3-2 victory, Neil Ramirez started the eighth in relief of starter Corey Kluber and retired the side in order to protect a 3-1 lead. Allen started the ninth, but allowed a leadoff homer to Travis Shaw before getting the next three outs for his 10th save.

In Wednesday's 3-1 win, Ramirez started the eighth in relief of starter Carlos Carrasco. He had a 3-1 lead, but allowed a leadoff single to Christian Yelich. Ramirez came back to strike out Jesus Aguilar and was relieved by left-hander Oliver Perez. The Indians signed Perez on Saturday after he opted out of his minor league deal with the Yankees on Friday.

Perez struck out Shaw for the second out and was relieved by Allen, who proceeded to retire the next four Brewers in order for his 11th save.

The Indians signed Ramirez to a minor-league deal and brought him to spring training. He opened the year at Class AAA Columbus and joined the Indians since May 15. He has not allowed a run in his last 4 2/3 innings pitched.

So have the Indians found the next Bryan Shaw? That's not a fair comparison, but in a bullpen where critical outs have been scarce Ramirez is getting some.

"When guys are starting to back up (good performances) and be consistent, I think they earn pitching in leverage situations," said manager Terry Francona, referring to Ramirez. "We're just trying to, like we always do, put out there who we think has a chance to succeed in the right positions.

"But this doesn't mean we're running away from (Dan) Otero or (Zach) McAllister. They're all going to pitch."

When the season started, Otero, McAllister, Nick Goody and Tyler Olson were going to form the link between the rotation and Allen and Andrew Miller in the late innings. Otero, McAllister and Olson have struggled, while Goody and Miller are on the disabled list. So the organization has been in scramble mode trying to make the pen operational again.

"We see how the starters are getting it done," said Ramirez. "We feel the load down there when we don't get it done. ... I know the bullpen struggles have been highlighted. When we go out there and focus on the pitches we need to make, we'll be fine."

Francona has been waiting for a reliever to get hot so he has someone to carry a lead to Allen. Maybe Ramirez is the guy. If nothing else, he's latest candidate.

"I'm just here to get outs," said Ramirez. "I'm happy to pitch in any situation. For him to have trust in me later in games, is awesome. But I know that everybody else out there can do the job, too. We're just going to keep rolling."

Perez just parachuted into this situation. The veteran lefty hasn't allowed a run in 2 2/3 innings. In three appearances, he's struck out four and allowed two hits.

Ramirez has pitched in parts of four seasons in the big leagues. Perez is in his 16th year in the big leagues.

"This is a long season and anything can happen," said Perez. "Sometimes the offense slows down, sometimes it's the starters and sometimes it's the bullpen. The most important thing is we're in first place.

"We don't have to worry about nothing. We have to concentrate on the positive stuff. This is the spot where we want to be. We want to be in first place and competing for the playoffs."

The faces in the bullpen have changed quickly this season, but Francona thinks Perez just might stick around.

"I think he's going to help us," said Francona. "I think he's a major league pitcher that got caught (in last winter's free agent freeze). He was in Triple-A and had his out on June 1 and we took advantage of that.

"I think we caught a break there. We don't look at this as short term."

Allen has taken some bumps and bruises this season. In five of his 11 saves, he's had to get four or more outs. The absence of Miller, on the disabled list for the second time, has hurt the entire bullpen, but mostly Allen.

He said the contributions of Ramirez and Perez on Wednesday "were big shots in the arm. Our starting rotation has been our saving grace. In May we were the best offensive team in baseball. We've kind of rode their backs. We want to try and ease the burden on our starters and pitch well in these tight ballgames."

The Indians are 32-28. They have 102 games to play so the opportunities Allen is seeking for him and the rest of the bullpen will be there.

Cleveland Indians OF Rajai Davis steals three bases Wednesday: Did he slide into job security as well?

By Joe Noga, cleveland.comjnoga@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Roster moves are expected ahead of this weekend's Cleveland Indians series in Detroit, but if Wednesday's outing against Milwaukee was any indication, veteran outfielder Rajai Davis has represented himself rather well in front of manager Terry Francona and the Tribe's front office.

Davis, starting for the first time since May 25, stole three bases and scored a run against the Brewers in a 3-1 Indians victory. Davis raised his season total to a team-high 11 steals, tied for seventh-most in the American League.

Manager Terry Francona said once the Indians got Davis' speed on the bases, Wednesday's game changed.

"That's the hope when Raj plays, that he can influence the game, and he did," Francona said.

In the fifth inning, with Cleveland trailing 1-0, Davis delivered a one-out single to center and stole second base with Francisco Lindor at the plate. After Lindor walked, Davis scored on Michael Brantley's base hit to beat an infield shift at shortstop.

"I just went out there trying to do what I do, be a threat out there and get in scoring position," Davis said. "Obviously, it's easier to score when you're at second as opposed to first."

The 37-year-old veteran was 2-for-3 with a pair of singles a walk, posting his fifth multi-hit effort of the year. He enters the weekend batting .232 (22-for-95) with a .288 on-base percentage and .551 OPS.

"I was just trying to produce and help us win," Davis said. "That was my main focus at the plate, just trying to get good pitches to hit and just staying with that approach."

Francona said with Brewers starter Chase Anderson on the mound mixing in a good changeup and breaking ball, it was a good day to play Davis in center.

"His first time up, he really hit that ball well and got nothing for it," Francona said. "He had good swings all day."

Davis became the oldest Indians player, at 37 years and 230 days, to steal three bases in a game in the Baseball Reference Play Index era (post 1908). He beat Nap Lajoie's mark of 37 years, four days in 1911 against the St. Louis Browns.

Davis and Jose Ramirez were the last two Indians to steal three bases in a single game, both doing so on Aug. 12, 2016 against the Los Angeles Angels.

Meanwhile, Davis became just the third player in Tribe history to steal 10 or more bases while 37 or older. He joins Omar Vizquel, who had 19 steals in 2004, and Lajoie who did so three times, including 18 steals in 1912.

The Indians are expected to make a roster move Friday or shortly thereafter when Brandon Guyer is ready to come off the 10-day disabled list. With second-year outfielder Greg Allen getting the nod to remain on the big league roster Tuesday over Bradley Zimmer, veterans including Davis and Melky Cabrera could be fighting for a spot by the end of the week.

"I can't focus on that," Davis said. "I can't make that decision. I don't make those decisions. When my name is called, I try to help us win."

TRIBE NOTES Carlos Carrasco finds his groove as Indians complete two-game sweep of Brewers

Chris Assenheimer | **Chris Assenheimer** | **The Chronicle-Telegram** | **Published on June 6, 2018** | **Updated 6:18 a. m.**

CLEVELAND — The Indians didn't do a whole lot offensively, but with Carlos Carrasco refinding his form, it was enough to get a victory Wednesday afternoon at Progressive Field.

Carrasco bounced back from consecutive poor outings and Cleveland scored all its runs in the fifth inning as the Indians completed a two-game interleague sweep of first-place Milwaukee with a 3-1 win.

It appeared Carrasco's recent woes would continue when he allowed six hits and the Brewers' only run in the first three innings, but after working out of a bases-loaded jam in the second, he found his groove.

Carrasco struck out the first two batters in the second inning, then allowed three straight to reach base, bringing up Lorenzo Cain, Milwaukee's dangerous center fielder.

Cain entered the day batting .361 in his career off the right-hander.

"Earlier in the game there were a lot of hits," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "It was the (second) inning, bases loaded, and he had fallen behind (Lorenzo) Cain, fought back into the count and got him to fly out to right. That at the time seemed big and later in the game when you look back, it was big. Cain is a guy that has really given Carlos trouble. He got him out with the bases loaded. That was a huge turn in the game."

"He had to reach back for his best stuff. I think he found his best stuff and then for the rest of the game he was really good. Breaking ball, change-up ... he was crisp. That was a nice bounce-back from the other day."

Carrasco, who struck out 10 over seven innings, allowed only two hits after the third.

"Sometimes you have to be a little more aggressive," he said. "Bases loaded after two outs, it came back to me, what was going on for the last two games. 'It can't happen right here.' I just got him to fly out to right field for the third out."

"It was good, man. I think it was one of the toughest parts of the game, bases loaded. But it's OK. I have to get outs. This is something that I can learn from here and it doesn't happen anymore."

With Carrasco back to his stingy self, the Indians finally broke through against right-hander Chase Anderson in the fifth.

Rajai Davis — making his first start since May 25 — was a catalyst, getting a one-out single and then stealing second.

He was the first of six straight Cleveland hitters to reach, with Michael Brantley driving in the first run of the game with a single up the middle and Jose Ramirez following with an RBI double. Yonder Alonso walked with the bases loaded to force in the final run.

“I just went out there trying to do what I do, be a threat out there and get in scoring position,” Davis said. “Obviously, it’s easier to score when you’re at second as opposed to first. I was just trying to produce and help us win. That was my main focus at the plate, just trying to get good pitches to hit and just staying with that approach.”

“Brant stayed up the middle, but we got a little long and the ball wasn’t carrying,” Francona said. “Josey hit a ball real good, hit a couple balls, just they weren’t going anywhere. But then all of a sudden we got some speed on the bases and it changed the game. That’s the hope when Raj plays, that he can influence the game, and he did.”

Davis, 37, stole two more bases to become the oldest Indians player to steal three in a game.

Ramirez’s RBI double came off Milwaukee reliever Jeremy Jeffress, who allowed his first inherited runner to score since April 27 and the first to score on a hit since April 6.

Once Carrasco departed, the Indians got effective relief work from right-hander Neil Ramirez, lefty Oliver Perez and closer Cody Allen.

Allen struck out the final batter in the eighth before striking out two of the three hitters he faced in the ninth for his second save in less than 24 hours.

“That’s not as easy as he made it look,” Francona said of Allen’s 11th save in 12 opportunities. “He works hard at it and he works hard to be ready. I’m sure he’ll be glad there’s a day off (today). Cody looks like he kind of found his breaking ball ... that’s a big key for him. It just seems to relax him, and I can see why.”

Indians notes: With a problematic calf injury behind him, Lonnie Chisenhall looking to produce

Chris Assenheimer | **Chris Assenheimer | The Chronicle-Telegram Published on June 6, 2018 | Updated 10:14 a. m.**

CLEVELAND — Indians outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall would like nothing more than to stay healthy and play baseball, so it’s pretty clear he hasn’t been milking a right calf injury that has plagued him for extended periods of time this season and last.

After spending nearly two months on the disabled list, Chisenhall was activated Tuesday, starting for the first time since April 7.

“Yeah, I’ve been touring Northeast Ohio and upstate New York (on a minor league rehab assignment) for the past 10 days, so it’s nice to be back here with the team,” Chisenhall said. “You miss them when you’re gone.”

The calf injury ruined a potentially promising season for Chisenhall last year, sidelining him for nearly the entire second half and rendering him all but useless in the Division Series loss to the Yankees.

At the time of the injury, Chisenhall was batting .305 with a .953 OPS and a team-leading 51 RBIs.

If there’s a silver lining to the recurrence of the calf issue, it’s that it has come early enough for him to recover and, he hopes, contribute the rest of the season.

“It’s tough after you go through it a third time,” said Chisenhall, who was on the verge of returning last season before aggravating the injury during a rehab assignment. “So just err on the side of caution. It took a little longer, but I think we got it right.”

Chisenhall made an immediate impact Tuesday, driving in the first two runs during a 3-2 win over the Brewers with a single in his first at-bat in the second inning.

“It was nice to be in a good situation,” Chisenhall said. “Guys were on base in front of me. (I) always enjoy when guys are on base. We try to be aggressive. Stay up the middle, and it worked out.”

Next up

The Indians are off for the second time in four days today, starting a seven-game Central Division road trip with a three-game series against second-place Detroit that begins Friday at 7:10 p.m.

Trevor Bauer (4-4, 2.77 ERA) opens the set for Cleveland, while Mike Clevinger (4-2, 3.36) starts for the Indians on Saturday at 6:10.

Corey Kluber (9-2, 1.96) goes in the series finale Sunday at 1:10.

The Tigers have yet to name starters for any of the games, but are expected to go with RHP Michael Fulmer (2-5, 4.73) on Friday, RHP Mike Fiers (5-3, 4.33) on Saturday and RHP Artie Lewicki (0-1, 3.86).

Cleveland owns a 14-8 record against division opponents, but is just 3-6 on the road.

X-files

Longtime Indians player Carlos Santana entered Wednesday batting .220 with nine homers and 34 RBIs in 58 games for the Phillies. Longtime reliever Bryan Shaw owned a 2-4 record and 5.46 ERA in 33 appearances (29 1/3 innings) for Colorado through Tuesday. Outfielder Jay Bruce, who joined the Indians at the trading deadline last year before re-signing with the Mets in the offseason, was batting .229 with three homers and 15 RBIs in 55 games through Tuesday.

Minor details

Few are clamoring for catcher Francisco Mejia's promotion to the majors these days. The prized prospect is off to a rough start in his first season on the Triple-A level.

Mejia, 22, entered Wednesday batting .211 with four homers and 22 RBIs, striking out 43 times in 47 games.

Roundin' third

Second baseman Jason Kipnis has produced multihit games in six of his last 11, batting .314 (14-for-44) with two homers, three doubles and four RBIs over the span after going 0-for-3 Wednesday. He entered Wednesday having raised his average 30 points since May 25.

A good number of Indians players planned on attending

Game 3 of the NBA Finals at Quicken Loans Arena on Wednesday night. It marked the 15th time the Indians had a home game on the same day as a Cavaliers home playoff game, with the Tribe going 7-7 and the Cavs posting a 13-1 record in the first 14.

Recording artist Jack White was in attendance in a dugout suite prior to his concert at Jacobs Pavilion at Nautica.

Clippers 3, Tides 2, 10 innings | Francisco Mejia's clutch hit delivers win

By Mark Znidar

Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred shook up purists when he announced during the offseason that the minor leagues would experiment putting a runner on second base to start each inning in extra-inning games to save pitchers' arms and to excite fans.

Count Clippers manager Chris Tremie as one of those purists, but his mind went to work immediately on ways in which to make the rules work for his team when bonus baseball is being played.

The Clippers loaded the bases with none out in the 10th and, after two batters struck out, Francisco Mejia hit the first pitch from Matt Wotherspoon into center field for a single in a 3-2 victory over the Norfolk Tides before 7,130 at Huntington Park on Wednesday night.

The Clippers (28-28), who have won four straight games, are 4-1 in extra-inning games.

"I was trying to put the ball into play," Mejia said through teammate Nellie Rodriguez. "I was looking for a good pitch to drive the ball."

Mejia ended May batting .189 — next to last in the International League — before he began looking like Cleveland's No. 1 prospect. He is 8 for 21 this month and 12 for 33 in his last nine games.

He drove in a run in the second inning Wednesday with a line drive to left with the bases loaded that was hit so hard Mike Yastrzemski fielded on one hop and threw to second for the force-out.

"I'm feeling a lot better — a lot better every day — and I'm playing with more confidence," Mejia said.

Tremie fooled the opposition in one extra-inning game by having the batter bunt up the third base line and having the runner on second break for third. No one was covering the base, the runner went in standing and eventually scored the winning run.

"We're lucky," Tremie said. "But the players do a great job of executing, and the team that executes in a lot of cases is going to win that game. We've been getting the bunt down, getting the runner over by swinging the bat, driving the runner in, playing defense, making pitches and getting outs when they give them to us."

The Tides took advantage of a rare off start by Shane Bieber when Steve Wilkerson homered to center in the first. Bieber gave up four hits, two walks and two runs and struck out six in four innings.

Ben Taylor (2-1) pitched two scoreless innings with three strikeouts to get the victory.

Tigers can't overcome 4-run third inning, take another beating in Boston

Chris McCosky, June 7, 2018

Boston — Whatever happened Wednesday night, good or bad, Blaine Hardy was going to have to wear it.

The Tigers, without any available long relievers in the bullpen after using both Drew VerHagen and Artie Lewicki in spot starts, and Warwick Saupold threw 35 pitches Tuesday, needed to get six innings out of Hardy. Minimum. Regardless.

So there was nobody warming up in the bullpen in the third inning when the first five hitters reached and four runs scored. There was nobody up when Andrew Benintendi blasted the second pitch of the fifth inning 405 feet into the Red Sox bullpen and Xander Bogaerts followed with a single.

To his credit, Hardy kept battling. He soldiered on and got through six innings — the only win of the night for the Tigers, who were beaten by the Red Sox for the second straight game, 7-1.

"He hung in," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "He knew what was going on. But we have to back them up, too. We have to score. If we can score, we can maybe take some pressure off these pitchers. That might help, too.

The Tigers have scored one run 18 innings in Boston.

"That's why they have one of the best records in baseball, because they have the whole package," Gardenhire said. "Even with some injuries, this is a really good baseball team and you can't make mistakes against them."

Hardy had allowed two runs or less in his four previous starts. And as potent as the Red Sox offense is, they haven't done much damage against left-handed pitching, ranking 10th in the American League in average (.239) and last in slugging (.375) and OPS (.675).

He got the first six batters in order. The first inning ended with JaCoby Jones throwing out J.D. Martinez at second on a ball that banged off the Green Monster in left field. But things went crooked in the third.

"That's a really good hitting team and that third caught up to me really quick," Hardy said. "They put some good swings on some good pitches. I was happy with my command. I was happy with my pitch selection.

"It just didn't go my way in that third inning."

Rafael Devers started it with an infield single. Christian Vazquez doubled in the first run. Hardy hit Jackie Bradley, Jr., square in the back, then gave up RBI doubles to Benintendi and Bogaerts.

There were no outs at that point, but Hardy regrouped and got three ground ball outs to end the inning.

"That's the thing; the third caught up to me, but after that it was pretty much smooth sailing," Hardy said. "I got a ground ball double-play (in the fifth) that helped lengthen my outing, but for the most part, take away the third and I could have gone deeper."

Benintendi's home run was the last of the damage Hardy incurred. He went six full innings, allowing the five runs on eight hits. And when the Tigers loaded the bases with two outs in the seventh, James McCann walked to the plate as the tying run.

It wasn't a quality start for Hardy, but it was an important one.

But, as Gardenhire said, there was no push-back from the Tigers' offense.

JaCoby Jones was an exception to that. He had a pair of hits off Red Sox starter Eduardo Rodriguez and scored the lone Tigers' run. In the second inning, he did something that is very hard to do at Fenway Park — he hit a triple into the short corner in left field.

"I don't think I've ever seen that," Gardenhire said. "A roller over the bag. JaCoby can fly, yes, but I've never seen that. It was pretty amazing."

Left fielder Martinez was shaded toward left center and was slow to retrieve the ball. He didn't bobble it but had no shot at throwing out the speedy Jones at third. Jones scored on a single by Jose Iglesias.

The Tigers loaded the bases in the sixth inning and the seventh without scoring.

A strange occurrence in the Tigers' half of the seventh inning: Red Sox fans, seemingly in unison, turned on their cell phone flashlights, as happens during a concert.

It created an almost strobe-like effect around the stadium, but most distracting were flashes in center field.

"Have you ever tried to hit with lights like that in your face," Gardenhire said. "That's not supposed to happen and the umpire should have, in my opinion, stopped it right away."

Niko Goodrum struck out with the lights flashing. With Nick Castellanos stepping in to hit, Miguel Cabrera and Gardenhire started yelling at home plate umpire Mike DiMuro.

"I was digging in and heard Miggy yelling in the dugout," Castellanos said. "He was telling me to tell the umpire to make it stop. And it was handled from there."

Gardenhire came out, pleaded his case and an announcement was made. The flashes, at least those in center field subsided.

"The fans are just having fun, I get it," Gardenhire said. "But when it's in dead center field, the hitter is looking right into it. It's very dangerous. These fans have a ball here and it's a great ballpark. Still, that's dangerous when you are standing in that box and they are flashing lights."

Castellanos and Cabrera singled, and Victor Martinez walked with two outs in that seventh inning. Reliever Ricky Barnes, throwing 96-mph heat, got out of the inning, getting McCann to hit a hard ground ball to shortstop after a seven-pitch battle.

Buck Farmer took over in the seventh. Vazquez, who came in hitting .188, hit his first pitch over the Monster, his second homer of the season. Vasquez was a triple shy of hitting for the cycle.

Detroit News LOADED: 06.07.2018

Tigers' Miguel Cabrera takes awkward fall; Alex Wilson activated

Chris McCosky, June 7, 2018

Boston — Jackie Bradley, Jr. hit a slow bouncing ball toward Miguel Cabrera at first base at the end of the fourth inning Wednesday night.

It was a routine play, but Cabrera slipped and fell, twisting his body awkwardly. He got up quickly and made the throw to Niko Goodrum covering the base, though Bradley had already run out of the base path and was out.

The more important concern was Cabrera — who jogged off the field slowly. He was moving around, seemingly in some discomfort later in the game, as well. This was his sixth game back off the disabled list (hamstring strain).

"He's working his way through it," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "His ankle is all wrapped up. He's always had that (from his ankle surgery three years ago). He spun out there and I was worried he might have sprained his ankle.

"But he's just stiff right now. We are letting him work his way through it."

Cabrera rapped two singles in the game, but made a couple of uncharacteristic defensive mistakes. He made a superb backhand stop of a hard-hit ball by Rafael Devers in the third inning, but his throw to pitcher Blaine Hardy covering first was too hard and too low.

It was scored a single, the first of five straight base runners in a four-run inning for the Red Sox.

In the bottom of the eighth, Cabrera cut off a throw to the plate from center fielder Leonys Martin. Bad decision. There would have been a play on the runner, Mitch Moreland, trying to score from second.

"No one feels worse than he does about the defense," Gardenhire said. "Because he is a really good defender. He cut that ball and we probably had the guy out at home if he lets it go. And that play at first, his throw was too hard.

"But we have to let him play through it. He didn't go on a rehab assignment, so now this is his rehab, in the big leagues."

Wilson activated

The fact that reliever Louis Coleman had to throw 26 pitches in the eighth inning Wednesday prompted the Tigers to activate reliever Alex Wilson off the disabled list a day earlier than general manager Al Avila would have preferred to.

"It's disappointing we missed a couple of plays in that inning and Coleman had to throw nearly 30 pitches," Gardenhire said. "We had to make a roster move. We just can't continue this. We need more pitching than we need anything else."

To make room for Wilson, utility man Ronny Rodriguez was sent back to Triple-A Toledo. And the Tigers are back to having only three bench players.

Detroit News LOADED: 06.07.2018

Gardenhire: If you want players to heal quickly, send them to Florida for rehab

Chris McCosky, June 7, 2018

Boston — The visitor's clubhouse at Fenway Park has been renovated, somewhat. There is an illusion of it being more spacious. Still, only the clubhouse at Wrigley Field is smaller.

Which meant one of Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire's pet peeves got solved. The players who are on the disabled list did not travel with the club to Boston.

"Could you imagine if all those guys were in this clubhouse," he said. "My coaches are already in the hallway. There aren't enough lockers as it is. It's really tight in here. But it's better anyway. The trainers here need to take care of the guys who are playing.

"The rehab guys should be getting their work done in Detroit."

Pitchers Alex Wilson, who did join the team here Wednesday, and Jordan Zimmermann both pitched rehab outings at Triple-A Toledo. Ryan Carpenter, Francisco Liriano and Daniel Stumpf also stayed back.

When Gardenhire managed the Twins, they would send injured players back to their spring training facility in Florida.

"Sending them down there, they get better real quick, I will tell you that," he said. "They hated being down there. It was hot. They actually had to go on those fields. They got better. We sent Jim Thome down there and he called me after about a week and said, 'Gardy, I feel great. Can you get me out of here?'"

Wilson on hold?

Wilson threw 26 pitches in his rehab outing on Tuesday. The Tigers wanted to give him one day to recover and test his foot (plantar fasciitis).

Gardenhire thought maybe he could be activated on Thursday.

"We'll see," he said. "Talking to the bosses, they think Friday will be better. We'll see what happens. We have to see how tonight goes. That could dictate a lot."

The Tigers went into the game Wednesday without a long reliever. Neither Artie Lewicki nor Drew VerHagen were available. Warwick Saupold threw 35 pitches Tuesday and Buck Farmer pitched an inning.

"We've missed Willie," Gardenhire said. "He's got a rubber arm and can eat up multiple innings. Plus, he's been there and done it. He's a big arm for us. He's one of those guys I have trust in. I trust he's going to throw it over the plate."

Daniel Norris update

Gardenhire reported that left-hander Daniel Norris, who had surgery on his groin in April, began doing some light throwing Tuesday.

"He was really sore at first after the surgery but he's starting to feel good," Gardenhire said. "He's able to move around a little bit and play catch. So, he's moving forward and that's good. He's got that initial soreness out. Now we have to let the scar heal and then it's let him do what he can."

Norris was moved to the 60-day disabled list at the end of April.

Around the horn

Third baseman Jeimer Candelario (finger) was available to pinch-hit Wednesday, but Gardenhire wanted to give him one more day to heal. "I can't put him out there and have him come out of the ballgame," he said. A ground ball hit with an exit velocity of 104 mph by J.D. Martinez jammed the middle finger on Candelario's throwing hand.

...The Tigers signed two veteran pitchers to minor-league contracts Wednesday — right-hander Jacob Turner, the Tigers first-round pick in 2009, and left-hander Hunter Cervenka, who was pitching with the independent league Sugar Land (Texas) of the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball. Turner has been through five organizations since he was traded by the Tigers in the Anibal Sanchez deal. Cervenka has big-league time with the Red Sox, Braves, Cubs and Marlins.