



# CHICAGO CUBS DAILY CLIPS

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July 9, 2018

- Daily Herald, **Chicago Cubs get a win and 3 all-stars**  
<http://www.dailyherald.com/sports/20180708/chicago-cubs-get-a-win-and-3-all-stars>
- Daily Herald, **Chicago Cubs' Bryant, Duensing headed for rehab assignments**  
<http://www.dailyherald.com/sports/20180708/chicago-cubs-bryant-duensing-headed-for-rehab-assignments>
- Daily Herald, **Scouting report: Cubs vs. San Francisco Giants**  
<http://www.dailyherald.com/sports/20180708/scouting-report-cubs-vs-san-francisco-giants>
- The Athletic, **Javier Báez and Willson Contreras surging into All-Star Game is another sign this could be a magical year for Cubs**  
<https://theathletic.com/424874/2018/07/08/javier-baez-and-willson-contreras-surging-into-all-star-game-is-another-sign-this-could-be-a-magical-year-for-cubs/>
- The Athletic, **The next steps for Kris Bryant: 'I can't wait to get back out there'**  
<https://theathletic.com/424561/2018/07/08/the-next-steps-for-kris-bryant-i-cant-wait-to-get-back-out-there/>
- Cubs.com, **Baez, Contreras, Lester tabbed NL All-Stars**  
<https://www.mlb.com/cubs/news/baez-contreras-lester-will-rep-cubs-at-asg/c-284874098>
- Cubs.com, **Cubs stroll past Reds with walk-off BB in 10th**  
<https://www.mlb.com/cubs/news/cubs-win-rubber-game-with-bases-loaded-walk/c-284796934>
- Cubs.com, **Bryant set to start rehab stint, nearing return**  
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- NBC Sports Chicago, **Three Cubs heading to 2018 MLB All-Star game**  
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- NBC Sports Chicago, **Kyle Hendricks searching for a fix to his 'definitely mechanical' struggles**  
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- NBC Sports Chicago, **Kris Bryant heading on rehab assignment with Cubs thinking about when he can return**  
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- Chicago Sun-Times, **With All-Star announcement looming, Cubs beat Reds in 10**  
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### Daily Herald

Chicago Cubs get a win and 3 all-stars

By Bruce Miles

Sunday was a day of joy and celebration on more than one front for the Chicago Cubs.

First and foremost, they scored another come-from-behind victory and one in which they also blew a late lead.

Rookie David Bote's bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the 10th inning scored Willson Contreras with the winning run to give the Cubs a 6-5 victory over the Cincinnati Reds at Wrigley Field.

Closer Brandon Morrow blew a save in the ninth when he gave up a home run to Adam Duvall to tie the game at 5-5 as both teams spent the day exchanging leads.

Minutes after scoring the winning run, Contreras talked about not only the thrill of victory, but the elation he felt at being voted in by the fans as a starter for the All-Star Game. He joined second baseman Javier Baez, who also was voted in to start.

It will be the first All-Star Game for each of these two rising young players. Joining them will be Sunday's starting pitcher, Jon Lester, who was named to his fifth all-star team.

The All-Star Game will be played at Nationals Park in Washington on July 17.

"It took me by surprise," Contreras said. "I knew today they were going to tell me something about if, if I made it or not. But I'm so glad, and I'm so happy to be selected by the fans. Being there means a lot to me. I have to be thankful to God for giving me the health throughout the whole year. I thank the fans. I thank my family and friends. They give me the big support to be there.

"My first reaction was, 'I have no words to say,' but I started crying when I went down to the (batting) cage because I worked for it, and I've been working every single game."

Lester sounded more excited for Contreras than he did for himself. For the two, it was a transition going from now-retired veteran David Ross catching Lester in 2015-16 to Contreras getting that job.

"For me personally, just more kind of gratifying for Willson," said Lester, who got a no-decision Sunday as his record held at 11-2 and his ERA went from 2.25 to 2.45. "I know our relationship has grown a lot over the last couple of years.

"I know the whole Rossy thing is kind of always in the back of his mind, I'm sure, every time we take the ball. It's nice for him to get rewarded for his hard work and what he's done. That just doesn't apply to me. It applies to the whole pitching staff."

Contreras has a line of .287/.372/.466 with 7 homers and 34 RBI.

Cubs manager Joe Maddon called Contreras the best catcher in baseball. Baez may be the most exciting player in the game, as he hits, makes plays in the field and runs the bases with daring, skill and intelligence.

His line is .295/.328/.565 with 17 homers and 65 RBI. He shares the team lead in homers with Kyle Schwarber.

"Really excited," Baez said. "Obviously I think everybody plays to be in the All-Star Game. Blessed. Thank you to all the fans that voted for me every day. It really means a lot to me and my family and, obviously, for the team, too."

The Cubs jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the second inning Sunday on Addison Russell's 2-run double.

The Reds got a run in the third and 2 more in the fourth, on Eugenio Suarez's 19th homer. After the teams traded runs, the Cubs went ahead 5-4 in the seventh on alert baserunning.

Baez singled to center with two outs, scoring Albert Almora from third and Jason Heyward all the way from first as Reds center fielder Billy Hamilton took his time getting the ball back into the infield.

The victory moved the Cubs to a season-best 15 games over .500 at 51-36.

"We don't lose hope," Baez said.

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## Daily Herald

Chicago Cubs' Bryant, Duensing headed for rehab assignments

By Bruce Miles

Third baseman Kris Bryant and left-handed reliever Brian Duensing left Chicago on Sunday for the Cubs' Class AA Tennessee affiliate, where each will begin an injury rehab assignment.

Duensing has been on the disabled list effective July 1 with left-shoulder fatigue.

Bryant took more early hitting Sunday at Wrigley Field as he continues his comeback from left-shoulder inflammation.

"I feel good," said Bryant, who has been on the DL effective June 23. "Just took it nice and slow and made sure it's something I manage. Hopefully it doesn't come back again."

Bryant added a lot of that "depends on my stubbornness and if I go up there and take the right amount of swings each day or take too many. It's just managing workload. If I do that, I should be good."

He will begin playing games at Tennessee Monday. The Cubs go to San Francisco for a three-game series beginning Monday night, and they are not ruling out Bryant rejoining them for that part of that series.

Bryant said he couldn't remember the last time he had been away from baseball for so long.

"Maybe like when my mom grounded me as a kid," he said. "Literally, I can't remember a time where I've been forced away from the baseball. I've been really fortunate my whole life up until this point, my whole life playing baseball. But you have bumps along the way, and this is certainly one of them. You learn a lot along the way and I've learned that I need to take a little better care of my body. Thankfully I said something and really go this under control."

More bullpen moves:

The Cubs placed right-handed reliever Anthony Bass on the 10-day because of illness. They selected the contract of right-handed reliever James Norwood from Class AAA Iowa.

The 24-year-old Norwood joins the Cubs after going 1-2 with 2 saves and a 2.13 ERA in 29 relief appearances between Tennessee and Iowa this season.

He was a seventh-round pick of the Cubs in 2014 out of St. Louis University.

Bass has done a good job for the Cubs since coming up from Iowa last month. He is 0-0 with an 0.63 ERA and a WHIP of 1.17 in 14 games.

Top pick flashes power:

Shortstop Nico Hoerner, the Cubs' first-round draft pick this year, hit his first pro home run Saturday for class A Eugene in a 5-1 loss against Hillsboro. Hoerner entered Sunday 7-for-16 at Eugene.

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## Daily Herald

Scouting report: Cubs vs. San Francisco Giants

By Bruce Miles

TV:  
NBC Sports Chicago Monday and Wednesday; ABC 7 Tuesday

Radio  
WSCR 670-AM

Pitching matchups:

The Cubs' Kyle Hendricks (5-8) vs. Andrew Suarez (3-5) Monday at 9:15 p.m.; Jose Quintana (7-6) vs. Johnny Cueto (3-1) Tuesday at 9:15 p.m.; Mike Montgomery (3-3) vs. Dereck Rodriguez (3-1) Wednesday at 2:45 p.m.

At a glance:

The Giants are trying to stay relevant in the wild-card race. They entered Sunday 27-16 at home compared with 19-29 on the road. Their run differential was minus-32, while the Cubs entered Sunday with an NL-best plus-104. The Cubs took two of three from the Giants in May at Wrigley Field. Brandon Crawford paces the Giants' offense. He entered Sunday at .300/.365/.482 with 10 homers and 39 RBI. Brandon Belt led the Giants with 13 homers and 41 RBI. The Cubs went into Sunday leading the NL in runs scored, batting average and on-base percentage.

Next:

San Diego Padres at Petco Park, Friday-Sunday

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### **The Athletic**

Javier Báez and Willson Contreras surging into All-Star Game is another sign this could be a magical year for Cubs

By Patrick Mooney

Context for Jon Lester, Javier Báez and Willson Contreras making the National League All-Star team: The Cubs are a season-high 15 games over .500 while getting one win from Yu Darvish and playing 30 games without Anthony Rizzo and Kris Bryant in the starting lineup together.

Cubs fans complaining about Joe Maddon's boys on Twitter should take a deep breath. The media focus on the trade deadline and what could go wrong in October shouldn't miss the big picture: This is an entertaining, resilient, experienced team that hasn't come close to reaching its full potential.

Where else but Wrigley Field can you hear a crowd of 38,655 chanting "JAVY! JAVY!" and "BOTE! BOTE!" on the same perfect Chicago summer Sunday afternoon. And then watch David Bote draw a walk-off walk in the 10th inning to put the exclamation point on a 6-5 win over the Cincinnati Reds.

The 2018 Cubs now have 28 come-from-behind victories, including nine in their past 11 games. This really could be a magical season when "El Mago" is bringing all of his tricks to Washington as the NL's starting second baseman. And the overanalyzed Lester-Contreras relationship could go to the next level with the All-Star Game's first pitch on July 17 at Nationals Park.

"To watch them blossom over the last couple years," Maddon said, "you see what Javy's gone through from this crazy swinger to a much more controlled game of baseball combined with his instincts.

"Willson, on the other hand, has pretty much fought, fought, fought his way and now he is the best catcher in the National League. I think he's the best catcher in baseball. I know that he has some things

to work through yet. Physically, talent-wise, he's not [realized all of] that yet. But it's going to happen. On a daily basis, it's the energy, what he does stopping a running game, his clutch hitting, his power. It's all there and he really studies the pitchers.

"The two of them as young men to get this first opportunity — I could not be more thrilled."

Báez and Contreras surged in the All-Star fan voting with their name recognition and a late push from a multimedia-savvy, big-market team. Lester (11-2, 2.45 ERA) earned his fifth All-Star selection through the player vote. Albert Almora Jr. — a potential Gold Glove center fielder with a .326 batting average — became a final-vote snub. In the end, this is a marketing event that could mean everything or nothing.

The Cubs took over the 2016 All-Star Game in a way that foreshadowed their World Series run and affirmed their status as one of Major League Baseball's super-teams.

Those Cubs were so deep, talented and popular that their entire infield started at Petco Park. Shortstop Addison Russell was only 22 years old at that point. Ben Zobrist was good enough to be the NL's starting second baseman — and the World Series MVP that November — but not good enough to start ahead of Báez at second base in any of the 17 playoff games that year.

Rizzo had become the face-of-the-franchise first baseman the San Diego Padres envisioned after the Adrián González trade. In the middle of an MVP season, Bryant returned to the picturesque city where he developed into a No. 2 overall draft pick at the University of San Diego. Jake Arrieta, the NL's reigning Cy Young Award winner at the time, earned his first All-Star selection. So did Dexter Fowler, the you-go, we-go leadoff guy who played at sufficient energy and effort levels. Just as it did then, Lester's \$155 million contract looks like a great investment.

The World Series hangover showed up at the 2017 All-Star Game in Miami. Stone-faced closer Wade Davis became the only player representative for the Cubs at Marlins Park, even though he wasn't on their 2016 championship team. Maddon didn't need any more media obligations and could've used more downtime recharging at a Florida resort. The Cubs also brought their coaching staff, a group that would experience sweeping changes after the season, either through firings, reassignment or the pull of new jobs.

This team looks so much more energized and prepared for a second-half battle against the first-place Milwaukee Brewers, who have just as many losses (36) and three more wins (54).

Just listen to Báez, who has 17 homers, 65 RBIs, a .295 batting average, an .893 OPS, 16 stolen bases and 56 runs scored to go along with his Gold Glove-caliber defense at three different infield positions.

"I get loose or warm up during the second half, so hopefully I keep doing what I'm doing," Báez said.

Even Contreras — once the confident rookie who changed the dynamics during the 2016 pennant race and earned respect for the way he did his homework and coexisted with catchers David Ross and Miguel Montero — has room to grow offensively both this season (seven homers, 34 RBIs .287 average, .838 OPS) and beyond as a middle-of-the-order force.

"It took me by surprise," Contreras said. "I'm so happy to be selected by the fans and being there means a lot to me. I have to be thankful to God, first of all, for giving me the help throughout the whole year. Thank the fans, thank my family and friends, they give me that big support to be there."

“My first reaction was no words. I started crying when I went down to the cage. I worked for it. I’ve been working hard every single game — and I play every game like it is my last one.”

In classic Lester fashion, he spent “30 seconds” celebrating before facing a Reds lineup stacked with All-Stars Joey Votto, Eugenio Suarez and Scooter Gennett. Lester pitched into the seventh inning, giving up four runs (his most since May 29) and getting a no-decision that snapped a streak of seven straight starts with a win.

Lester’s consistency is even more impressive when you factor in the timing (Year 4 of his megadeal) and the underwhelming performances from Darvish (eight starts), Kyle Hendricks (4.27 ERA), José Quintana (4.22 ERA) and Tyler Chatwood (70 walks and 71 hits through 79 innings).

Báez might be Lester’s favorite player to watch right now, but “for me personally, it’s a little more gratifying to see Willson go.”

“I know our relationship has grown a lot over the last couple years,” Lester said. “The whole Rossy thing is kind of always in the back of his mind, I’m sure, every time we take the ball. It’s nice for him to get rewarded for his hard work and what he’s done.”

We’ve already heard enough about the Comeback Cubs after they’ve played the rebuilding Reds or going-nowhere teams like the Detroit Tigers or Minnesota Twins. But the Cubs do have a lot of ways to win games and enough depth and experience to survive injuries and underperformance. Even if this isn’t how Theo Epstein’s baseball operations department drew it up in the winter: Brandon Morrow blowing a ninth-inning save and Votto bobbling the ball as he stepped on first base in the 10th inning, leading to a replay review and setting up Bote’s bases-loaded, six-pitch walk against Reds reliever Jackson Stephens. The Cubs left for a West Coast trip knowing this is just a sneak preview of what the rest of this season could be.

“Javy Being Javy” ... coming soon to a Home Run Derby near you?

“If I got the opportunity, I would probably do it because it’s my first All-Star Game,” Báez said. “We’ll see. I haven’t heard anything about it. But, sure, I would love to.”

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## **The Athletic**

The next steps for Kris Bryant: ‘I can’t wait to get back out there’

By Patrick Mooney

After packing a blue Cubs duffel bag for his rehab assignment with Double-A Tennessee, Kris Bryant turned around to take questions from the reporters loitering near his Wrigley Field locker.

As a franchise player who could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars when he becomes a free agent after the 2021 season, Bryant believes it’s his responsibility to be on the field every day, completely focused the moment before each pitch and available to the media.

If it’s weird to check Twitter and not see Bryant’s name in the lineup — or look out and see someone else crouching at third base — imagine how he feels being on the disabled list for the first time in his career. Bryant — who’s been sidelined with a sore left shoulder since June 22 — can’t remember ever being away from the game this long.

“Shoot, no, maybe like when my mom grounded me as a kid,” Bryant said Sunday morning inside the clubhouse. “Literally I can’t remember a time where I’ve been forced away from the baseball field. I’ve been really fortunate up until this point — my whole life playing baseball — but you’re going to hit bumps in the road along the way. This is certainly one of them.

“But you learn [from it]. I’ve learned that I need to take a little bit better care of my body. I’m thankful that I said something and really got this under control.”

So how do you feel now?

“Good. Great. Grand,” Bryant said. “Just took it nice and slow to make sure that it’s something I [can] manage and hopefully it doesn’t come back again.”

But Bryant can’t guarantee that the inflammation that may have sapped his power in June — one homer in 84 plate appearances — will stay away this time. It could be an issue that he will have to monitor and play through the rest of the season.

“I don’t know,” Bryant said. “It just kind of depends on my stubbornness and if I go out there and take the right amount of swings each day. Or take too many. That’s kind of what it is. It’s just managing the workload. And if I do that, then I should be good.”

Bryant said he hasn’t felt any discomfort while fielding or throwing the ball. The issue is the extension and finish to the powerful right-handed swing that’s generated 103 homers, 310 RBIs and a .908 OPS since his big-league debut in 2015.

After getting some at-bats with the Smokies, Bryant hasn’t ruled out the idea of rejoining the Cubs for the first part of this week’s West Coast road trip through San Francisco and San Diego: “I just kind of want to get in a game, see how I feel and kind of go from there.”

“We have missed him,” manager Joe Maddon said. “We’ve kept our head above water [without] an MVP/perennial All-Star kind of player. We do want and need him back, so get out and play a little bit. We’re looking forward to possibly having him back in San Francisco.

“He is feeling better. How does it play out? Does it get re-aggravated? Can he play with some method of discomfort? We’re going to find all of that out.”

On the day the Cubs officially announced Bryant’s DL move [June 26], hitting coach Chili Davis organized a meeting in Dodger Stadium’s visiting clubhouse for a group on a five-game losing streak. The Cubs have since won nine of 11 games, each a come-from-behind victory, showcasing the team’s depth, flexibility and chemistry.

“Thankfully, we’ve been playing really well, so I guess it’s taken a little pressure off me,” Bryant said. “But at the same time, you want to be out there and enjoying it with them, so it’s just been really boring for me to sit back and not be out there. I guess it’s refueled some of that excitement [and I] can’t wait to get back out there and enjoy it.

“The guys have been playing awesome. As boring as it has been, it’s been fun to watch them go out and win a lot of games.”

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## **Cubs.com**

Baez, Contreras, Lester tabbed NL All-Stars

By Carrie Muskat

CHICAGO -- Cubs starter Jon Lester was named to his fifth All-Star team on Sunday night and it's fitting that the left-hander will be taking his favorite player to watch in Javier Baez and his personal catcher, Willson Contreras.

Lester, Baez and Contreras were named to the National League team for the All-Star Game presented by Mastercard on July 17 at Nationals Park. This will be the first trips for Baez and Contreras; they were selected by the fans votes.

"To watch them blossom over the last couple of years, to see what Javy's gone through from this crazy swinger to a much more controlled game of baseball, and Willson, on the other hand, he's pretty much fought, fought, fought his way," manager Joe Maddon said. "Now he is the best catcher in the National League. I think he's the best catcher in baseball."

Maddon added that Contreras still has some aspects of his game to work on, but the physical talent is there as well as the energy.

"The two of them, as young men to get their first opportunity, I could not be more thrilled," Maddon said.

Lester was excited, too, about the pair, especially Contreras.

"I know our relationship has grown a lot over the last couple years," Lester said of Contreras, who took over for David Ross after he retired. "I know the whole 'Rossy' thing is kind of always in the back of his mind, I'm sure, every time we take the ball. It's nice for him to get rewarded for his hard work and what he's done.

"Both those guys deserve it," Lester said of Contreras and Baez.

Baez has dazzled on the basepaths and with his glove work, but this season, he's impressed at the plate as well. He's the fourth player to reach 20 doubles, 15 homers, five triples, 60 RBIs and 15 stolen bases prior to the All-Star break, joining the Giants' Willie Mays (1960), the Rockies' Carlos Gonzalez (2013) and the Pirates' Andrew McCutchen (2014). Mays, Gonzalez and McCutchen all made the NL All-Star team in those respective seasons.

Baez, who stole home on Wednesday for the fourth time in his career, is the first Cubs middle infielder to hit 17 home runs before the All-Star break since Hall of Famer Ryne Sandberg, who had 24 at the midway point in 1990.

In the previously released fan balloting, Baez was third among NL second basemen.

"I know we have a lot of fans and they dedicate a lot of time to us, and to what we do outside the field," Baez said. "I just feel blessed to be here and in this spot."

Baez has played second, short and third, and now has 65 RBIs, which ranks among the top three in the NL. He is the first Cubs infielder to reach 65 RBIs before the break since Ernie Banks had 76 in 1960.

Contreras, 26, has hit safely in 12 of his past 13 games, and is batting .287 overall. He drove in a career-high seven runs on May 11, hitting two home runs, including a grand slam. The catcher has seven home runs and 34 RBIs this season.

"It took me by surprise," said Contreras, who got the news before Sunday's game. "I'm so glad and so happy to be selected by the fans. Being there means a lot to me. I have to be thankful to God for giving me the health. Thank the fans, thank my family for giving me support to be there. My first reaction -- I had no words to say, and I started crying when I went down to the cage. That's what I worked for. I've been working hard every single game and I play like it's my last one."

Last year, the Cubs had one All-Star in closer Wade Davis.

Lester, 34, also was named to the All-Star team in 2010, '11, '14 and '16. On Sunday, he gave up four runs over 6 1/3 innings against the Reds, and his ERA is now 2.45. He began Sunday ranked among the top three in ERA in the NL and he had the best ERA at home in the NL. The lefty has had to make some adjustments over the course of his career, now in its 13th season.

"The guy pitches," Maddon said. "He knows what he's doing out there. He has this calm way. I think a big part of the ascendance has been based on his fielding and ability to control the running game better. I think that's taken a little bit of a burden off him and he can just pitch now. He's a pitch-maker. He's old school.

"Jonny doesn't have that mid-90s stuff that he used to have but he knows what he's doing out there," Maddon said. "I think that's what you're seeing is a guy who really understands his craft."

And who recognizes talent. After Baez made a heads-up defensive play in a game against the Dodgers, which drew praise from Lester.

"He's probably my favorite player to watch," Lester said of Baez. "I've got to play with and in front of some really good infielders in my career and I think Javy has surpassed all those guys."

And now they're All-Stars.

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 3 p.m. CT.

Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans can submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 All-Star Game MLB.com 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, visit [AllStarGame.com](http://AllStarGame.com) and follow @MLB and @AllStarGame on social media.

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## **Cubs.com**

Cubs stroll past Reds with walk-off BB in 10th

By Matthew Martell

CHICAGO -- David Bote took a moment to process what was happening.

"OK, it's the same game," Bote said to himself. "You've envisioned this. You've planned for this. You have an approach for this. Now it's time to go execute."

With the bases loaded and one out in the 10th inning, the rookie third baseman didn't try to do too much. He watched ball four sail high and inside. Game over. The Cubs had completed a comeback win for the eighth time in nine games, this time a 6-5 walk-off victory over the Reds in the rubber game on Sunday afternoon at Wrigley Field.

"He's got a very mature way about him," Cubs manager Joe Maddon said. "On the field, he plays very calmly with open eyes. He sees things."

Perhaps the most consequential and bizarre play came one batter earlier as Addison Russell reached on Joey Votto's error with runners already on first and second. The veteran Reds first baseman fielded a soft grounder, but he bobbled the ball as he stepped on the bag. Originally ruled an out, the call was overturned after a crew-chief review.

Votto's blunder may have changed the situation, but for Bote, the moment was the same one he'd been preparing for his whole life.

"As soon as it happened, I was already thinking about the situation, open base, guy behind me," Bote said. "Once I saw the replay and realized he was going to be safe, I had to change my plan."

The Cubs led, 5-4, to start the ninth, but Adam Duvall tied it with a leadoff homer that traveled a projected 418 feet, according to Statcast™, off closer Brandon Morrow. It was Morrow's second blown save of the season.

Chicago has now won the last eight games started by Jon Lester. However, the veteran left-hander was credited with a no-decision, which snapped his personal winning streak in consecutive starts at seven.

Lester labored through the early innings, but he was removed with one out in the seventh and the Reds leading, 4-3. Pedro Strop recorded the final two outs in the inning before the Cubs took the lead in the bottom half.

The walk-off win was the Cubs' 28th comeback victory of the season, which is tied with the Phillies for the most in Major League Baseball.

"We don't lose hope," Javier Baez said.

### **MOMENT THAT MATTERED**

Trailing by a run in the seventh with runners on the corners, Baez ripped a two-run single to center to put the Cubs ahead, 5-4. Jason Heyward, who was running on the pitch, caught the Reds' defense off guard and scored from first base on the play.

Center fielder Billy Hamilton didn't think Heyward was going to try to score, so he lobbed the ball back in to Scooter Gennett. By the time Gennett could turn and throw home, it was too late.

"I was telling [Ben Zobrist] that it's hard to get two hits with two outs, especially in the same inning. So right there, I was looking for any opportunity I had," Heyward said. "[Hamilton] didn't do anything wrong necessarily, it was just a hustle play."

#### YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Hamilton badgered the Cubs all weekend, and the fifth inning on Sunday epitomized why he can be such a headache for opposing teams. He walked with two outs, then stole second. Willson Contreras' throw sailed into center field, allowing Hamilton to go to third.

But Hamilton didn't stop there as he rounded the bag and headed for home when Albert Almora Jr. bobbled the ball. His acrobatic leap over Contreras at the plate put the Reds ahead, 4-3. The center fielder reached base in nine of his 12 plate appearances in the three-game series.

#### UP NEXT

Right-hander Kyle Hendricks will be looking for his first win since June 16 when the Cubs open a three-game series against the Giants at 9:15 p.m. CT on Monday at AT&T Park. Hendricks is 1-5 in his past seven starts. He's struggled with his fastball command although he felt a little better after his last start against the Tigers, when he gave up three runs over five innings. The Giants will counter with Andrew Suarez.

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#### **Cubs.com**

Bryant set to start rehab stint, nearing return  
By Carrie Muskat

CHICAGO -- Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant said the last time he missed this many baseball games was when his mother grounded him after he was ejected for arguing with an umpire. Bryant is close to returning from the disabled list and will begin a rehab assignment with Double-A Tennessee on Monday. He could rejoin the Cubs in San Francisco this week.

"It's just a feel thing," Bryant said about how much time he'll need in the Minors. "I don't think it'll be anything long. Honestly, just hitting in [batting practice] and in the cages, I feel my timing is pretty good. Just for comfort and for the team, you don't want to go out there and not have the timing right."

Bryant has been sidelined since June 23 because of inflammation in his left shoulder, which he has only felt when batting. Can he deal with the discomfort the rest of the season?

"I don't know," Bryant said. "It'll depend on my stubbornness, and if I go out there and take the right amount of swings each day or take too many. It's just managing the workload. If I do that, I'll be good."

It's been difficult for Bryant to be on the sidelines and watch, but the Cubs have done well in his absence, posting an 8-2 record heading into Sunday's series finale against the Reds.

"You see the guys out there, and thankfully, they've been playing really well," Bryant said. "I guess that's taken some pressure off me. At the same time, you want to be out there enjoying it with them. It's just been really boring, really boring for me to sit back and not be out there. I guess it's refueled some of the excitement for getting out there on the field. I can't wait to get out there."

"We have missed him," manager Joe Maddon said. "We've kept our heads above water. An MVP, All-Star player, we do need him back."

The Cubs open a three-game series against the Giants on Monday at AT&T Park, and they have not ruled out having Bryant join the team there.

"Like all the guys on rehab, I tell them, 'Tell me how you feel,'" Maddon said. "'This is what we're planning, but if you need more time, take more time. If not, we can possibly work you into San Francisco.'"

Bryant said he will avoid aggravating the shoulder injury if he can avoid sliding head first.

"Sometimes you're diving for balls at third base, and you can't control that," Bryant said. "Fielding the ball and throwing the ball, I never felt it there."

When was the last time he missed this much baseball?

"Maybe when my mom grounded me as a kid," Bryant said. "I can't remember a time when I've been forced to be away from the baseball field. I've been really fortunate. You're going to hit bumps in the road and this is certainly one of them. You learn a lot along the way. You learn to take better care of your body."

Duensing heading to Tennessee

Left-hander Brian Duensing, on the disabled list since July 1 because of fatigue in his shoulder, will join Bryant at Tennessee for his rehab outings. With Bryant, Duensing expected back and Yu Darvish (right triceps tendinitis) to return, the Cubs may not need to make a big move at the non-waiver Trade Deadline.

"[Darvish] really has not had a chance to blossom here, and what he's capable of doing is so high end, it's hard to find any of those out there anywhere," Maddon said. "If we get Yu back clicking like he's capable, that truly is a wonderful Deadline kind of acquisition."

The players who have filled in, such as Randy Rosario, David Bote and Mike Montgomery, have done well, Maddon said.

Bass lands on DL

The Cubs placed right-handed pitcher Anthony Bass on the 10-day disabled list, retroactive to Wednesday, because of an illness, and selected the contract of right-handed pitcher James Norwood from Triple-A Iowa.

Norwood, 24, was 1-2 with two saves and a 2.13 ERA in 29 relief appearances between Tennessee and Iowa this season. He struck out 44 and walked 12 over 38 innings.

Bass, 30, has given up one earned run over 14 1/3 innings in 14 relief appearances for the Cubs.

With the addition of Norwood, the 40-man roster is at 38.

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## **NBC Sports Chicago**

Three Cubs heading to 2018 MLB All-Star game

By Chris Kuc

Willson Contreras broke down in tears by the batting cage.

Javier Baez couldn't contain his excitement.

Jon Lester gave himself 30 seconds to celebrate before turning his attention to facing the Reds.

The reactions of three Cubs varied when they got the news prior to Sunday's 6-5 victory over the Reds in 10 innings that they had been selected to the 2018 MLB All-Star Game. Contreras and Baez—each voted in by the fans to start at catcher and second base, respectively—will make their first All-Star appearances while Lester his fifth in the game played later this month in Washington D.C.

"It took me by surprise," said the 26-year-old Contreras, who is batting .287 with seven home runs and 34 RBIs this season. "I'm so glad and I'm so happy to be selected by the fans. Being there means a lot to me. I have to be thankful to the Cubs for giving me the help throughout the whole year, thank the fans (and) thank my family and friends who give me the big support to be there. I started crying when I went down to the cage because I worked for it. I've been working hard every single game and I play every game like it is my last one."

Like Contreras, Baez had to rally in the voting conducted by the fans to earn the spot but his play this season certainly made him deserving. Baez, who was 2-for-5 with two RBIs on Sunday, is hitting .431 with 11 doubles, three homers, 19 RBIs and 17 runs scored in his last 19 games. For the season, the 25-year-old has a .295 average with 17 homers and 65 RBIs.

"(I'm) really excited," Baez said. "I think everybody wants to play in the All-Star Game. (I'm) blessed. Thank you to all the fans who voted for me every day. It really means a lot to me and my family and for the team too."

Among the league leaders in homers, Baez said he would participate in the Home Run Derby if asked.

"If I get the opportunity I'll do it because it's my first All-Star Game," Baez said. "I haven't heard anything about it, but sure, I would love to."

Lester was more low-key about his selection to the National League roster but said it was that much more gratifying because pitchers are chosen by a combination of player ballots, the Commissioner's Office and fans.

"It's always an honor," said Lester, who did not get a decision Sunday after going 6 1/3 innings and yielding four runs on six hits with three walks and three strikeouts. "You're part of the best players in the game right now. Anytime your peers select you and think that you're doing well and one of the best in the game right now then that's always gratifying."

At 34, Lester realizes he may not have many more opportunities to be an All-Star.

"I'll take it as it comes," said Lester, who is 11-2 with a 2.45 earned-run average this season. "It's dwindling down as far as time and all of that stuff so I'll take as many as I can."

Said manager Joe Maddon of the Cubs' All-Stars: "(Contreras and Baez) as young men getting this first opportunity I can not be more thrilled. Jon has been there before but he's still very excited about it. I know he's earned it. It's kind of cool to have three guys representing."

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## **NBC Sports Chicago**

Kyle Hendricks searching for a fix to his 'definitely mechanical' struggles

By Chris Kuc

Kyle Hendricks' mind and body are sound.

His mechanics are a different story.

The Cubs pitcher has identified the issue that has led to his struggles of late and Hendricks has been working diligently on a fix that will help the right-hander regain the form that made him one of the National League's top pitchers the last four seasons.

In his last seven starts, Hendricks is 1-5 with a 6.29 earned-run average, begging the question: What the heck is going on?

"It's definitely mechanical," said Hendricks, one of the more cerebral players in baseball. "My stuff, especially my fastball command overall, hasn't been good and that's really where everything stems for me. My changeup works off that and my curveball works off that. Even more specific than that, (with) my glove-side sinker I haven't had the right movement. Everything has been kind of running back to the middle and on kind of an up shoot. I'm not getting any sync or depth on that two-seam. We found out I wasn't being strong on my backside and you can't get out front as well. That's really where I'm at."

That about covers it, but Cubs President Theo Epstein also took a run at explaining the problem.

"When he's in a mechanical rut not everything is synced up, he's not over the rubber the proper amount of time and it affects his release point and the shape of his pitches and obviously the command of his pitches, too," Epstein said. "Sinker down and away to the righty is a pretty big bread-and-butter pitch for him and when it's leaking over the plate it changes the whole dynamic of how his stuff works."

The fact that Hendricks' struggles stem from a mechanical flaw in his delivery rather from an injury gives the Cubs confidence he can right the ship. The 28-year-old will get an opportunity to do so when he pitches the opener of the Cubs' three game series against the Giants on Monday in San Francisco.

"When a ... really good player struggles, is he hurt? That's my question," manager Joe Maddon said. "He's not hurt. He's fine, he's physically well. There's something about the feel of what he's doing that's a little bit off and he's so about that. As long as he's healthy, which he is, that's why I'm very confident that he's going to be fine. I just think it's a matter of time."

Also not lacking in confidence that Hendricks will return to form is the veteran himself. This is not the first time adversity has come on the baseball field.

"I've been through it a lot and not just in the big-leagues," Hendricks said. "(My) whole career, high school, college I've been through struggles at all different levels so you know what you've been through and you know things that have helped you get out of it. You get back to the process. You just have to stick with the work and trust that you'll come through it."

To that end, Hendricks has been watching video and tweaking his delivery during bullpen sessions.

“You have to take advantage of every side, every throwing session and just try to build those good habits,” he said. “It’s at the point where you feel the good ones ... and you have a chance now whereas early in the process, I was kind of lost, still searching for it. It makes the work a little more exciting but by the same token you’re here to get outs and to perform and that’s what’s really fun. Eventually, I know that will come and I just have to trust it.”

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### **NBC Sports Chicago**

Kris Bryant heading on rehab assignment with Cubs thinking about when he can return

By Chris Kuc

Kris Bryant had to think long and hard to remember the last time he had missed so much time playing baseball.

“Hmm,” Bryant said before the Cubs faced the Reds on Sunday at Wrigley Field. “Maybe like when my mom grounded me as a kid. Literally, I can’t remember a time when I’ve been forced away from the baseball field. I’ve been really fortunate up until this point my whole life playing baseball. But you’re going to hit bumps in the road along the way and this is certainly one of them.”

The bump has been a sore left shoulder that has kept Bryant out of the lineup since June 22. The 26-year-old is nearing a return but first will head to Tennessee for a rehab stint with the Cubs’ Double-A affiliate. Bryant is expected to play for the Smokies on Monday but said his stay with them could be short.

“I don’t think it’s going to be anything long,” Bryant said. “Honestly, just hitting in BP in the cage I feel the timing is still pretty good but ... it’s not going to help me to go out there and not have timing right or just go out there and be thrown right into the fire. I think a couple of games will be great.”

Bryant did not rule out at some point joining the Cubs during their three-game series in San Francisco that begins Monday.

“I’m just trying to take it day-by day but I don’t think San Francisco is ruled out either,” Bryant said. “I just want to kind of get in a game and see how I feel and kind of go from there.”

During Bryant’s absence, the Cubs had gone 8-5 entering Sunday’s series finale against the Reds. Still they have missed his bat in the middle of the lineup. Bryant is hitting .280 with nine home runs and 36 RBIs in 66 games this season.

“We have missed him, we’ve kept our heads above water,” manager Joe Maddon said. “We do want and need him back so get out and play a little bit. We’re looking forward possibly to have him back in San Francisco. We’ll see how it plays out the next couple of days. Once he gets out and gets playing he’ll know exactly how he feels.”

The toughest part of the recovery process has been being forced to watch his teammates play without him, Bryant said.



“Thankfully, we’ve kind of been playing really well so I guess it’s taken a little pressure off me but at the same time you want to be out there enjoying it with them,” Bryant said. “It’s just been really boring for me to kind of sit back and not be out there. I guess it’s kind of re-fueled some of that excitement for me getting out there on the field and seeing guys have a whole lot of fun. I just can’t wait to get back out there and enjoy it with them.”

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## **Chicago Tribune**

Willson Contreras and Javier Baez join Jon Lester on NL All-Star team

By Phil Rogers

Jon Lester knew he was in line to be named to the National League All-Star team. The surprise came when fans voted catcher Willson Contreras and second baseman Javier Baez into the starting lineup.

Contreras had entered the final round of voting second to the Giants’ Buster Posey by 144,499 votes. Baez had been behind the Braves’ Ozzie Albies and the Reds’ Scooter Gennett among second basemen but closed a gap of 270,297 to grab the starting job for the NL.

Both Baez and Contreras are thrilled to be first-time All-Stars.

“I wasn’t really following (voting),” Baez said Sunday after the Cubs’ 6-5, 10-inning victory over the Reds. “I know we have a lot of fans and they dedicate a lot of time to us, to what we do outside the field. I feel blessed to be here in this spot.”

Lester (11-2, 2.85 ERA) was voted onto the team by his fellow NL players. He’ll make his fifth trip to the All-Star Game and said he hasn’t thought about whether he wants to pitch or use the three-day break to recharge for the second half.

He’s especially happy to have Contreras accompanying him. When David Ross retired after 2016, some wondered how Lester would do without his favorite catcher behind the plate.

“For me personally, the most gratifying thing is Willson,” said Lester, who gave up four runs in 6 1/3 innings Sunday. “Our relationship has grown a lot over the last two years. I know the whole Rossy thing is always kind of in the back of his mind every time we take the mound. It’s nice for him to get rewarded for his hard work.”

Cubs manager Joe Maddon has said he considers Contreras the best catcher in the major leagues, and reiterated that Sunday.

Baez has 17 homers, 16 stolen bases and is second in the NL with 65 RBIs. He said he will consider participating in the Home Run Derby if he’s asked. Maddon said he has no objections because the format has been adjusted to minimize the total of swings by each player.

Extra innings: Left-hander Brian Duensing, on the disabled list with shoulder fatigue, threw a bullpen session at Wrigley Field on Sunday and accompanied Bryant to Knoxville, Tenn., for a rehab assignment. ... The Cubs placed right-hander Anthony Bass on the disabled list with an illness and added right-hander James Norwood in his place. Norwood, a seventh-round pick in 2014 from Saint Louis University, had a 2.13 ERA in 29 appearances between Triple-A Iowa and Tennessee.

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## Chicago Tribune

Cubs third baseman Kris Bryant to begin rehab stint Monday

By Phil Rogers

Kris Bryant took batting practice at Wrigley Field early on Sunday morning and then headed to Knoxville, Tenn., where he's expected to play in Double-A games on Monday and Tuesday.

His rehab stint with the Tennessee Smokies could end in time for him to join the Cubs while they're in San Francisco, according to manager Joe Maddon.

Bryant, who has been out since June 23 with a strained left shoulder, said he is feeling good. He said he's been bored while dealing with the first significant injury of his career.

"I took it nice and slow," Bryant said. "Hopefully it's something I've managed and it doesn't come back again."

When was the last time he couldn't play baseball for two weeks?

"Maybe when my mom grounded me as a kid?" Bryant said. "Literally I can't remember a time when I've been forced away from the baseball field. I've been really fortunate in baseball my whole life. But you're going to hit bumps in the road along the way. This is one of them."

The Cubs entered Sunday's game against the Reds 8-5 since Bryant was sidelined.

"You see the guys out there playing really well," Bryant said. "I guess it's taken a little pressure off me but at the same time you want to be out there enjoying it with them."

Maddon said Bryant's shoulder could have contributed to his drop in power this season (nine home runs in 264 at-bats). He's hopeful that he'll provide a lift when he returns.

"We have missed him," Maddon said. "We've kept our head above the water with an MVP, All-Star type of player. We do want him back. Let him play a little bit, looking forward to possibly having him back in San Francisco. We'll see how it plays out the next couple of days. Once he gets out on the field, he'll know exactly how that shoulder feels."

Tennessee plays a day game Tuesday, which would allow Bryant to easily rejoin the Cubs in time for Wednesday's day game in San Francisco. The team is off Thursday before playing three games in San Diego.

Left-hander Brian Duensing, who has been on the disabled list with shoulder fatigue since July 1, threw a bullpen session at Wrigley and will accompany Bryant to Tennessee to begin a rehab stint.

The Cubs made a roster move on Sunday, adding right-hander James Norwood (1-2, 2.13 ERA in 29 games between Tennessee and Triple-A Iowa) to replace Anthony Bass, who went on the disabled list retroactive to July 5. The Cubs said that Bass is ill.

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## Chicago Tribune

New-look Giants present different look for Cubs

By Mark Gonzales

With the returns of pitchers Johnny Cueto and Jeff Samardzija, the Giants regained a semblance of the team that nearly prevented the Cubs from reaching the 2016 National League Championship Series.

“But it’s like a revolving door,” manager Bruce Bochy said Sunday, one day after second baseman Joe Panik was placed on the 10-day disabled list for the second time — this time with a strained left groin.

The Cubs open a three-game series Monday night at AT&T Park against only a few of the Giants players who came within three outs of forcing a decisive Game 5 of the NLDS with the formidable Cueto scheduled to face them.

The Giants roster changed considerably Sunday when reliever Cory Gearrin and outfielder Austin Jackson were dealt to the Rangers in part to clear the way for center fielder/leadoff batter Steven Dugger, who doubled for his first major-league hit, and reliever Ray Black, whose fastball was clocked at 100 mph in the eighth inning of Sunday’s 13-8 win over the Cardinals.

These are crucial times for the Giants, who are four years removed from their third World Series title since 2010 but have committed to winning despite playing in a competitive NL West with the defending league champion Dodgers and 2017 NL wild-card teams the Diamondbacks and Rockies.

“I think they did a great job of assessing what we needed in the offseason, filling some holes and made some great moves,” said Samardzija, a former Cub who referred to the additions of outfielder Andrew McCutchen and left-handed reliever Tony Watson. “Ever since day one of spring training it’s been a different vibe of a professional team that has a goal in mind and is looking to achieve it.”

There still are some hurdles to clear. Third baseman Evan Longoria remains sidelined with a fractured left hand. Outfielder Gorkys Hernandez, who moves to left field with the addition of Dugger, probably will miss Monday’s game with a calf injury.

And an invigorated Pablo Sandoval, who drove in five runs Sunday with a three-run homer and a two-run single, injured his left thumb while making a diving stop at third base.

There are some growing pains as well. Dugger failed to execute a sacrifice bunt in the third inning with runners at first and second before striking out. After hitting the century mark in velocity, Black surrendered a three-run homer to Matt Carpenter on a 99-mph fastball.

And the Giants were last in the NL with runners in scoring position and two outs with a .189 mark entering Sunday’s game.

It’s quite a contrast from the Giants’ last postseason lineup that featured Denard Span in center field (now occupied by Dugger), Hunter Pence in right (where McCutchen starts), Panik at second base (where Alen Hanson now plays) — and Conor Gillaspie at third (where Sandoval plays after a disastrous 2½ seasons with the Red Sox).

“Pablo is a different guy,” said Bochy, taking note of Sandoval’s ability to swing at pitches out of the strike zone for hits but improve his plate discipline. “He brings it every day. He wants to play.”

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## Chicago Tribune

Cubs hit the road flying high after yet another comeback victory

By Phil Rogers

Joe Maddon flashed a smile that speaks of the homestand his Cubs had just experienced, going 7-1 despite trailing in every game. Nothing has been easy, which was partly why it was so sweet to watch Jason Heyward score from first base on a single in the seventh inning Sunday.

The memory of that play was fresh after the Cubs beat the Reds 6-5 on a bases-loaded walk in the 10th inning. It was sure to be often discussed on the flight to San Francisco.

Heyward seemed certain to just stop at third base on the Javier Baez single but kept motoring after a casual throw from Billy Hamilton to second baseman Scooter Gennett, who seemed flat-footed taking the lob.

Hamilton used his speed to bedevil the Cubs throughout the weekend series, and two innings earlier had scored from first on a stolen-base try that caused errors by catcher Willson Contreras and center fielder Albert Almora Jr.

Did Heyward get payback?

"It kind of looked that way, didn't it?" Maddon said. "I had a great read of it. (Heyward) was watching the middle infielders. He saw when the ball got to Gennett's hands that he really was not paying attention. Scooter's got kind of an awkward throwing stroke, so it's hard for him to right himself to make that throw. That was a great play. Up and down we did so many good things today."

The Cubs and Reds traded punches all weekend, with Sunday's game not decided until David Bote was walked by rookie Jackson Stephens with the bases loaded in the 10th inning. Adam Duvall had tied it in the ninth with a blast into the left-field seats off Brandon Morrow.

Because they had trailed 3-2 in the fourth inning, after Eugenio Suarez's homer against Jon Lester, this marked the ninth time in 11 games that the Cubs have come back to win. They remained 1 1/2 games behind the Brewers in the National League Central but have gone 15-5 in their last 20 games at Wrigley Field, putting a spring in their step a week before the All-Star break.

The Cubs battled Hamilton all weekend. The Reds center fielder was 7-for-10 with five stolen bases and four runs scored from the No. 9 spot in Jim Riggleman's lineup. The cherry on top was his dashing from center field to grab a ball lost in the sun by right fielder Scott Schebler in Saturday's game.

"That was outstanding," Maddon said. "I'm a big Billy Hamilton fan. I really am. Defensively he's as good as it gets out there. He throws well, plays with a lot of energy. Not a lot of guys would have gotten over there to protect his (teammate) like he did. I'm a big fan."

Using a five-man infield at one point, the Reds escaped a bases-loaded, one-out situation in the ninth. But Stephens got himself into trouble by walking Contreras to start the 10th. He followed it with a wild pitch, then struck out Victor Caratini.

Riggleman intentionally walked Ian Happ. Addison Russell appeared to ground to Joey Votto for the second out, but the Cubs successfully appealed that Votto had lost control of the ball before stepping on first as he reached into his glove for the ball.

Bote took a high, inside fastball with a 3-2 count to score Contreras and set off a celebration from the crowd of 38,655.

“We don’t lose hope,” Baez said. “It doesn’t matter what the score is — you’ve got to play the game.”

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Joe Maddon's comments a 'breath of fresh air' to former Cub Dexter Fowler  
By Mark Gonzales

Dexter Fowler didn’t get a chance Sunday to thank Joe Maddon in person for his support, but the embattled Cardinals outfielder expressed his appreciation for the kind words expressed Tuesday by the Cubs manager.

“It was awesome to see that,” Fowler said Sunday at AT&T Park, where the Cardinals concluded a four-game series against the Giants – the Cubs’ next opponent. “I thank him very much. It’s a breath of fresh air.”

Fowler wouldn’t expand on his feelings about blunt comments Cardinals President John Mozeliak made on a podcast regarding Fowler’s effort and energy level and the lack of frequent communication with manager Mike Matheny.

Mozeliak later spoke with Fowler and said his comments weren’t directed solely at him.

Nevertheless, “it is what it is,” said Fowler, who defended his effort level to Cardinals writers earlier this week, as well as his desire to play more than he has in the past three weeks.

Unfortunately for Fowler, his struggles and lack of playing time continued Sunday when he struck out as a pinch-hitter in the fifth inning against the Giants as his batting average dipped to .167. Fowler started in right field Saturday and hit a sacrifice fly for his first RBI since May 31.

Maddon’s appreciation, meanwhile, wasn’t lost on Fowler – especially during a whirlwind of events ranging from his wife’s delivery of the couple’s second girl to Mozeliak’s comments.

“I’ve always respected Joe for that,” Fowler said. “I didn’t even know he was going to say anything. Out of nowhere, I heard about it.”

Fowler’s second child, named Ivy Noor, arrived on July 4 and will allow Fowler to catch up with former teammate Anthony Rizzo when the Cardinals travel to Wrigley Field for a five-game series starting July 19.

“Rizz already has seen photos of the baby,” Fowler said. “Rizz is excited. But Naya (Fowler’s older daughter) is his favorite. She’s going to be a flower girl in his wedding.”

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

Cubs’ Javy Baez, Jon Lester, Willson Contreras named All-Stars  
By Brian Sandalow

When the Cubs signed left-hander Jon Lester to a six-year, \$155 million contract in December 2014, they banked on him being the piece to take them from a team on the rise to a true National League contender. At the same time, they hoped their deep pool of prospects would learn how to win and become stars.

The Cubs have gotten what they wanted from Lester and many of their young players, making three consecutive appearances in the National League Championship Series and winning the 2016 World Series. On Sunday, there was more affirmation as Lester, second baseman Javy Baez and catcher Willson Contreras were named NL All-Stars to give the Cubs 10 selections over the last three seasons.

Baez and Contreras came from behind in the final days of fan voting to earn their first appearances and win starting spots in the game July 17 in Washington.

“The two of them, as young men getting this first opportunity, I cannot be more thrilled, and it definitely is going to give me a reason to watch the game on Tuesday night,” manager Joe Maddon said after the Cubs’ 6-5, 10-inning victory over the Reds. “And I will.”

Baez has blossomed into one of baseball’s most dynamic and exciting figures, becoming a fan favorite at Wrigley Field and evolving from a wild presence to a more controlled player. That continued Sunday, when Baez had two hits and drove in two runs in the seventh inning to give the Cubs a 5-4 lead and draw more chants of “Javy! Javy! Javy!” from the crowd.

Baez, who would seem like an obvious candidate to compete in the Home Run Derby, sounded like a player who still could offer more down the stretch.

“I think I get loose, or I warm up [well] in the second half,” said Baez, who in 2011 was Jim Hendry’s final first-round selection. “Hopefully, I keep doing what I’m doing and seeing the ball good.”

Contreras has emerged as one of the top catchers in the league and, to Maddon, the best in baseball. He also has developed a bond with Lester, who was famous for his connection with David Ross.

Lester said it was gratifying to see Contreras earn his first All-Star nod.

“I know our relationship has grown a lot over the last couple of years, and I know the whole Rossy thing is kind of always in the back of his mind, I’m sure, every time we take the ball,” Lester said. “It’s nice for him to get rewarded for his hard work and what he’s done.”

The gravity of what Contreras has done hit him when he was informed he made the All-Star Game.

“My first reaction was like, ‘I have no words to say,’ but I started crying when I went down to the cage because I hoped for it and I’ve been working hard every single game that I’ve played and played it like it was my last one,” Contreras said.

Lester will make his fifth appearance and second for the Cubs. Getting voted in by his peers was meaningful for Lester, who is 11-2 with a 2.45 ERA and could be a candidate to start the game.

And being 34, Lester was savoring another chance to be honored.

“I’ll take it as it comes,” said -Lester, who hoped there was a way for Albert Almora Jr. to earn a nod. “It’s dwindling down as far as time and all that stuff, so I’ll take as many as I can.”

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## **Chicago Sun-Times**

Bored Kris Bryant confident return to Cubs' lineup will come soon

By Brian Sandalow

Sitting out bores Kris Bryant. Fortunately for him and the Cubs, it sounds as if Bryant won't have to deal with boredom for much longer.

The Cubs announced Sunday that Bryant and reliever Brian Duensing will go to Class AA Tennessee on rehab assignments. On the disabled list since June 23 with left shoulder inflammation, Bryant once again took swings before Sunday's game and is optimistic he'll be back soon, perhaps as quickly as this week in San Francisco.

"You're going to hit bumps in the road along the way, and this is certainly one of them," Bryant said. "You learn a lot along the way. I've learned that I need to take a little better care of my body. I'm thankful that I said something and really got this under control when it did."

Bryant said he doesn't feel pain when he swings and hasn't lost any timing, but he believes a brief rehab assignment can help him make sure he's good to go. The Cubs and Bryant also hope this issue doesn't crop up again. He said that depends on his "stubbornness and if I kind of go out there and take the right amount of swings each day or take too many."

The Cubs haven't lost too many games in Bryant's absence, but that doesn't mean sitting and watching has been entertaining.

"It's been really boring. Really boring for me to kind of sit back and not be out there," Bryant said. "I guess it's kind of refueled some of that excitement for me, getting on the field and seeing the guys have a whole lot of fun."

Comeback kids

With their 6-5, 10-inning victory, the Cubs have come from behind in their last nine wins. David Bote's bases-loaded walk against Jackson Stephens decided it and gave the Cubs another dramatic victory.

Manager Joe Maddon sees the energy for rallies as a good sign.

"The dugout's alive the whole time," Maddon said. "When we get a little bit behind, the guys are still very much alive. The dynamic is good, meaning we're a week away from the break. You talk about '16, at this point we were limping into the break. For the most part, we're getting guys back. The guys that are playing are playing with a lot of energy"

A matter of time

Kyle Hendricks will start Monday in San Francisco, and Maddon believes it won't be long until Hendricks finds the form that made him one of the cornerstones of the rotation.

One of the reasons for Maddon's confidence? Hendricks is healthy.

“Then there’s something about the feel of what he’s doing that’s a little bit off, and he’s so about that,” Maddon said. “As long as he’s healthy, which he is, that’s why I’m very confident that he’s going to be fine.”

Up and down

The Cubs put reliever Anthony Bass (illness) on the 10-day disabled list and called up Class AAA Iowa pitcher James Norwood.

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

With All-Star announcement looming, Cubs beat Reds in 10

By Brian Sandalow

The Cubs will know soon who’s representing them at this month’s all-star game in Washington, D.C. And that announcement might not be the most dramatic part of the day.

David Bote drew a walk-off walk in the 10th from Jackson Stephens and the Cubs ended a wild day with a 6-5 win over the Reds. Sunday was the Cubs’ ninth straight win that came after trailing, and allowed them to take two of three from Cincinnati.

Jon Lester went 6 1/3 innings and allowed four runs, walking three and allowing Eugenio Suarez’s two-run homer. Entering Sunday, Lester was a legitimate candidate to start the July 17 exhibition for the NL, beginning the day with an 11-2 record and 2.25 ERA and wins in his last seven starts, before seeing that streak end against Cincinnati.

It was Javy Baez who delivered another all-star moment in the seventh, driving in two with a single to center off David Hernandez to give the Cubs a 5-4 lead. Albert Almora scored from third, and when Billy Hamilton was slow to get the ball back in, Jason Heyward, who started the play at first, scrambled home to give the Cubs the lead.

After the play, the 38,655 in attendance began yet another Javy! Javy! Javy! chant, which has become almost a daily occurrence at Wrigley.

That didn’t go down as the game-winning hit because of Adam Duvall’s leadoff homer in the ninth off Morrow that tied the game. For Morrow, it was just his second blown save in 22 tries.

The Cubs also didn’t help themselves in the fifth.

Tied at 3, the Reds’ Hamilton stole a run for Cincinnati. After walking, Hamilton stole second and reached third when Willson Contreras’ throw eluded Addison Russell and bounded into center. Albert Almora then bobbled the ball and took an extra second to get the ball into the infield, giving Hamilton a chance to come home and score, which he did when Almora’s throw short-hopped Contreras at home to give Cincinnati a 4-3 lead.

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