

## **Bullpen unravels in 7th after Indians' hot start**

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

DETROIT -- The Indians know they need to do something about their laboring bullpen. Over the next weeks and coming months, examining how the situation can be resolved will be a top priority for the team's front office.

In the meantime, Cleveland is trying to overcome an extremely trying period due to the inconsistency coming through the bullpen door. On Tuesday night against the Tigers, the issues persisted in a 9-8 loss, which featured a five-run outburst by Detroit in the seventh against Andrew Miller and Dan Otero.

"We want to do better. I think we have the ability," Miller said. "I haven't done my job the last few times out. We're working on it. We're looking for whatever it is that makes us tick and makes us get through it, because we need to be a big part of this team."

For most of the season's first month, Cleveland's bullpen rated as one of the best in baseball, ranking fourth in the Majors with a 2.55 ERA on April 23. Over the 21 games that followed, the relief corps turned in a 9.16 ERA (59 earned runs in 58 innings), dropping the group's overall ERA to an MLB-high 5.79.

Over the offseason, the Indians saw setup men Bryan Shaw and Joe Smith depart via free agency, and they both found lucrative contracts. Working with financial constraints, Cleveland focused on collecting arms via Minor League contracts and trusting that the bullpen pieces in place could build on last year's success (MLB-best 2.89 ERA).

Now, the team is sorting through how it can solve the current crisis.

"In terms of doing things in the near term, the likelihood of that is low," said Chris Antonetti, the Indians' president of baseball operations, prior to Tuesday's game. "Any trade of consequence, it's very rare that those happen in May or June. The bulk of our solutions are going to come from guys within the organization already."

"But, we are actively in the process of planning for those next few months and trying to assess which players might be available and could potentially help our team. Part of that, those needs can change over time. That's why we try to be pretty comprehensive looking at what options might be out there for us to improve."

In the latest setback for the 'pen, Miller took over for Otero with a runner on first, one out and Cleveland clinging to an 8-6 lead in the seventh. The Tribe's relief ace -- still working to regain his rhythm after a recent stint on the disabled list -- immediately allowed back-to-back RBI doubles to JaCoby Jones and Pete Kozma, pulling the game into an 8-8 deadlock.

Following a flyout, Miller then issued three consecutive walks, bringing in the go-ahead run and sinking Cleveland to a 20-21 record.

"It looked like he was trying to find his arm slot," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He was scattering fastballs. He left some breaking balls up. We knew he wouldn't be in midseason form. It's easier to say that before the game. But, down deep, we knew he was going to have to pitch to be the Andrew Miller [we know]. And he'll get there. It's just, on nights like this, it hurts."

### **MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

A costly choice: With one out and a runner on third base in the seventh, Dixon Machado sent a grounder to shortstop Francisco Lindor. James McCann broke for home from third and Lindor opted to throw to catcher Yan Gomes instead of taking the out at first. The throw one-hopped Gomes and skipped away, allowing the run to score and Machado to reach safely on the fielder's choice. That cut Cleveland's lead to 8-6, led to Miller's entrance and contributed to the inning's unraveling.

"I don't think he had a [good angle to throw to first]," Francona said. "The play's at first, but the way his momentum was going, that [throwing home] might've been the only play he had."

Bookend blasts: Indians starter Josh Tomlin's outing began in the first with a leadoff homer from Jones and ended with a solo shot by Nicholas Castellanos with one out in the sixth. Between those shots, giving Tomlin 15 home runs allowed in 31 innings, the righty was effective enough and exited in line for a win.

"I made a few mistakes early in the game and then one late in the game," Tomlin said. "It ended up costing me some extra pitches to get deeper into the game. For the most part, I felt pretty good."

Comeback grounded: After the Tigers took a one-run lead in the seventh, the Indians had a great scoring chance in the top of the eighth. Jose Ramirez led off with a double and lefty Daniel Stumpf followed with back-to-back walks to load the bases with no outs. Following a mound visit, Stumpf struck out Brandon Guyer and generated an inning-ending 4-6-3 double play from Jason Kipnis to escape unscathed.

### **YOU GOTTA SEE THIS**

One silver lining for the Tribe was a strong showing from the offense, which chased Tigers lefty Francisco Liriano after 4 1/3 innings. The biggest blow came off the bat of Guyer, who launched his first career grand slam in the first inning against the left-hander. It marked the fourth slam of the season for the Indians.

## HE SAID IT

"We've got to get better, No. 1. And then No. 2 is, the teams that come out of adversity, like we're facing right now, usually end up being better for it in the long run. We understand it takes 25 men to try to get to where we want to go. That's not going to change." --Tomlin, on the Indians' struggles

## UP NEXT

Right-hander Trevor Bauer (2-3, 3.00 ERA) is scheduled to take the mound for the Tribe on Wednesday, when the Tigers host the Indians in a 1:10 p.m. ET tilt at Comerica Park. Bauer is 5-5 with a 7.26 ERA in 13 career games against Detroit and has a 6.38 ERA in four career appearances in the Motor City. The Tigers will counter with rookie lefty Ryan Carpenter.

## Rib injury sends Zimmer to disabled list

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

DETROIT -- Wearing a large ice pack across his chest, Indians center fielder Bradley Zimmer made his way to manager Terry Francona's office in Comerica Park on Monday night. The time had come to decide whether a trip to the disabled list was in the best interest of Zimmer and the team.

Prior to Tuesday's game against the Tigers, Zimmer was placed on the 10-day DL due to a left rib contusion, joining Tyler Naquin (left hamstring) and Lonnie Chisenhall (right calf) on the shelf for Cleveland. Zimmer's injury is the result of lingering effects of a violent crash into the center-field wall at Yankee Stadium on May 5.

"It's something I was obviously trying to avoid," Zimmer said. "Every day, I was doing what I can, doing what I can. It just got to a point where it's tough for me to go out there and be myself. So, I talked to [Francona and Chris Antonetti, the Indians' president of baseball operations], our medical staff, everyone, and we feel like the best decision was to get healthy just so I can be back shortly and be at 100 percent."

The Indians selected the contract of reliever Neil Ramirez from Triple-A Columbus to take Zimmer's spot on the active roster. In order to vacate a spot on the 40-man roster for Ramirez, Cleveland transferred lefty Ryan Merritt (left knee and left shoulder) to the 60-day DL.

Zimmer dealt with a sore left shoulder in the immediate wake of his hard meeting with the wall in the Bronx, but it has been the bruised ribs creating the most persistent problem in recent days. Francona has noted that Zimmer mostly has experienced discomfort while swinging a bat, and the outfielder's trip to the DL indicates that was still an issue as he went through a pregame workout on Monday.

The Indians have the ability to make Zimmer's DL stay retroactive by three days, meaning he would be eligible for activation at the earliest next Tuesday, when the Tribe opens a two-game series on the road against the Cubs.

"We felt like the best way to go about it was to kind of give him some time," Francona said of delaying Zimmer's trip to the DL, "because there was a decent chance he was going to turn a corner and actually play. Well, that didn't happen. We kind of said [Monday] would kind of be like the cutoff day."

Zimmer has hit .224 with two home runs, nine RBIs, 14 runs scored, four steals and a 36.8-percent strikeout rate through 32 games. While his offense has lagged, Zimmer has provided value on the bases (1.1 Baserunning, per Fangraphs) and on defense. Among qualified center fielders, Zimmer ranks first with a 26.4 UZR/150 and was tied for the league lead with four assists.

With Zimmer sidelined, the Indians will likely continue to lean on Greg Allen in center field, with veteran Rajai Davis offering an alternative. Michael Brantley has left field locked down, while the slew of injuries have boosted Brandon Guyer's playing time in right field.

Chisenhall is with the team on the current road trip, but it's unclear when he will be ready for a Minor League rehab assignment. He has resumed regular batting practice, but still has several steps left to clear in his running program. Naquin remains in Cleveland and is in the early stages of his rehab.

The Indians have veteran Melky Cabrera, who was signed to a Minor League contract last month, at Columbus, but he had only logged 30 at-bats through seven games as of Monday. In those appearances, the outfielder has hit .233 with three doubles, no walks and a .567 OPS.

Ramirez is the latest reinforcement to join the Indians bullpen, which headed into Tuesday's play ranked 28th in the Majors with a 5.45 ERA as a unit. Through 13 appearances at Triple-A, the right-hander posted a 2.55 ERA with 31 strikeouts against three walks in 17 2/3 innings. Ramirez has a 4.22 ERA with 10.8 strikeouts per nine innings in 116 career Major League games in stints with five teams.

## Worth noting

- The Indians selected the contract of reliever Neil Ramirez from Triple-A Columbus to take Zimmer's spot on the active roster. To vacate a spot on the 40-man roster, Cleveland transferred lefty Ryan Merritt (left knee and left shoulder) to the 60-day DL.

Ramirez posted a 2.55 ERA with 31 strikeouts against three walks in 17 2/3 innings in 13 outings at Triple-A. The righty has a 4.22 ERA with 10.8 strikeouts per nine innings in 116 Major League games with five teams.

"We'll try to get a feel for where he fits the best we can, and we'll do it quickly," Francona said.

- Designated hitter Edwin Encarnacion was out of the starting lineup Tuesday night against the Tigers due to upper-back and neck stiffness. Francona said the issue is not believed to be serious.

### **Tito to be honored by MLBPA in November**

By Deesha Thosar MLB.com

The Major League Baseball Players Alumni Association announced that Cleveland Indians manager Terry Francona will be honored with the Brooks Robinson Community Service Award at the 19th Annual Legends for Youth Dinner in New York City on Nov. 8 at Capitale.

The Brooks Robinson Community Service Award is given annually by the MLBPA to a current or former Major League Baseball player, coach or manager. The recipient's community service exemplifies the unselfish and humble attitude of Brooks Robinson, bettering the lives of the youth in his community. The award is given in honor of the dedication Robinson has shown to young people across the country through his support of the Legends for Youth Clinic Series and the MLBPA since its inception in 1982. Previous winners include Clint Hurdle, Adam Jones, Jamie Moyer, Jim Thome, Tim Wakefield and Manny Acta.

"Terry is one of the most fantastic guys I've ever met before," said Robinson, the MLBPA president and a Hall of Famer. "He's active in the community, and he's just an all-around guy. He's been a real success."

Francona is extremely active in his community, raising money for cancer research and creating a pasta sauce to help fund inner-city participation in sports and education. The pasta sauce, called Tito Francona & Son Pasta Sauce, was created by Terry and his late father, John "Tito" Francona, and is sold at grocery stores across Ohio, with a portion of proceeds going to Cleveland Indians Charities. Francona also spearheaded the creation of the Larry Doby Youth Fund in 2016, when he made a donation of \$1 million to provide grants for underserved youth in Cleveland on behalf of the Indians, calling it the proudest moment in his baseball career.

After a 10-year playing career, Francona held various coaching positions with the White Sox, Tigers, Rangers and Athletics. From 1997-2000, Francona managed the Philadelphia Phillies, and he went on to manage Team USA in the 2001 Baseball World Cup. In '04, Francona became the manager of the Red Sox and led the club to two World Series titles, including their first in 86 years.

After his managerial career with the Red Sox ended in 2011, Francona spent the '12 season as an ESPN analyst until he was named manager of the Cleveland Indians for the '13 season, leading the Indians to a postseason berth in his first season en route to his first American League Manager of the Year Award. Francona led the Indians to the World Series in '16 and received praise for his effective use of relief pitchers, earning him his second AL Manager of the Year Award.

The Legends for Youth Dinner aims to recognize former Major League Baseball players for their accomplishments on the diamond coupled with their off-the-field contributions to communities across the nation. The 14th annual Heart and Hustle Award will be handed out as well.

The MLBPA allocates proceeds from the event to the Legends for Youth Baseball Clinic Series. The Legends for Youth program is a series of free baseball clinics designed to provide children with positive role models, teach young players baseball fundamentals and promote the game of baseball.

### **Bieber spins another strong start**

By Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com

- Indians' No. 8 prospect Shane Bieber's overall ERA sits at 1.43 after the 22-year-old posted 6 2/3 innings of one-run ball in a no-decision for Triple-A Columbus. He allowed five hits in the outing while striking out seven and throwing 76 of his 103 pitches for strikes. He's compiled 46 strikeouts and three walks over 50 1/3 innings between Columbus and Double-A Akron, giving the right-hander a 229-to-15 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 247 2/3 career innings.

Tigers 9, Indians 8: 12 Walk-Off Thoughts on a disaster in the bullpen that only seems to be spiraling further downward

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By Ryan Lewis

Here are 12 Walk-Off Thoughts after the Indians' 9-8 loss to the Detroit Tigers.

1. That was a complete meltdown, save only for the lack of nuclear scientists running out of a facility with sirens blaring and a reactor billowing with smoke. The disaster that is the Indians bullpen right now doesn't seem to yet be headed for the dawn despite the the night getting darker and darker.
2. Collectively, the bullpen has a 5.79 ERA, now the worst mark in the majors. And really, much of the issues have come down to the Indians not having enough viable options to avoid putting everyone else in a tough spot. Dan Otero couldn't get through the seventh, which led Andrew Miller to coming into the game sooner than manager Terry Francona wanted.
3. What happened next is something Indians fans probably never thought they'd see. Miller allowed back-to-back doubles, and then walked three consecutive batters, including the go-ahead run with the bases loaded. Otero. Miller. Zach McAllister. On and on, there has been virtually zero consistency over the last several weeks. Ben Taylor and Oliver Drake and Neil Ramirez and Evan Marshall and Nick Goody and Matt

Belisle and on and on. The Indians have tried more than a dozen relievers this season, and getting through nine innings right now feels like pulling teeth with a pair of rusty pliers.

4. This has been harped on to a great extent, but that was part of the value of Bryan Shaw. A reliever of his caliber being able to throw that often allowed the Indians to throw everyone before or after him in idyllic situations much more often. This season, one reliever hasn't been able to finish an inning, which leads to another having to be extended, which has led to another reliever struggling, and nobody prior to Cody Allen has been able to pick up the slack. It has been a slippery slope, and that group right now is tumbling with no stop-gap in sight.

5. After the game, Francona was asked about the bullpen. He started to say, 'Oh man, I mean' and then stopped. He paused for 6-7 seconds, collecting his thoughts and thinking his answer through. He then started again, saying, "I didn't want to go to Andrew until the eighth. With the way the inning was going with Otero, it felt like we better get him out there. And then he came in and gave up a couple of those hits down the left-field line and then it looked like he was trying to find his arm slot. He was scattering fastballs. He left some breaking balls up. We knew he wouldn't be in mid-season form. It's easier to say that before the game. But, down deep, we knew he was going to have to pitch to be the Andrew Miller [we know]. And he'll get there. It's just on night's like this it hurts."

6. The Indians desperately need Andrew Miller to be 2016 postseason Andrew Miller. After he strained his hamstring, he had reached the point where he needed to face live hitters and really let it go. The Indians activated him and put him on a more regulated schedule, figuring, why not allow him to do that in the big leagues? Perhaps he takes this route either way, but if the bullpen was collectively throwing well, it at least lessens the burden put on Miller's shoulders. Especially when they knew he'd still be searching for his form on the fly.

7. Said Miller: "I'm just not sharp at all. I'm really hurting us. It's not a lot of fun. I need to figure a way out of it. ... "Honestly, I thought up until Hicks, it was pretty good. I wasn't going to let Victor hurt me. He did a pretty good job of not going out of the zone, but that was fine. That's the game plan there. You don't do that. Got ahead of him 1-2, he fouled off a fastball up and laid off two breaking balls that I tend to get swings on. You tip your cap. [The Hicks at-bat] was just horrible. There's no excuse for that. I've got to be better."

8. It'd be one thing if the bullpen was operating at a league-average rate, which would still be well below where it has been since the trade deadline in 2016 The Indians have somehow managed to stay afloat despite one of the league's worst units. They can't tread water like this for long simply on the heels of Francisco Lindor, Jose Ramirez, Corey Kluber and the rest of the rotation save for Josh Tomlin, who was serviceable Tuesday night.

9. Miller: "We want to do better. I think we have the ability. I haven't done my job the last few times out. We're working on it. We're looking for whatever it is that makes us tick and makes us get through it. Because we need to be a big part of this team."

10. And late in the game on Tuesday, the bullpen received zero help from the lineup and defense. Francisco Lindor fielded a grounder and instead of taking the easy out, went to home, though his throw ended up several feet short of the plate and it got away. It was ruled a fielder's choice, but it was certainly a poor play by Lindor. Francona after the game mentioned his momentum was carrying him that way, but it was costly.

11. Then, in the eighth, it looked like the offense was going to bail out the bullpen, down one run with the bases loaded and nobody out. Brandon Guyer, facing a lefty, struck out, and Jason Kipnis' rough stretch continued when he grounded out into an inning-ending double play. Another disaster inning, this time at the plate. Forty one games in, and the Indians are having to do some soul searching.

12. Said Tomlin: "We view it as we gotta get better, number one. And then number two is the teams that come out of adversity like we're facing right now usually end up being better for it in the long run. We understand it takes 25 men to try to get to where we want to go. That's not going to change. Tomorrow we've got to show up, be prepared to try to win a game and maybe not overthink it and maybe not try to do too much, just go out and play as solid baseball as we're capable of playing, and it should be enough."

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## **Tigers 9, Indians 8: Bullpen continues meltdown, blows four-run lead in loss to Tigers**

By Ryan Lewis

DETROIT: A multi-run lead used to feel like a sure thing for the Indians. Lately, it feels more like a coin-flip.

The disastrous, train-wreck of a stretch for the Indians' bullpen reached a new low on Tuesday night in a 9-8 loss to the Detroit Tigers at Comerica Park.

The Indians got a grand slam from Brandon Guyer in the first inning and led 8-3 in the sixth. In the past, that game situation was all but in the books as a win. Not for this bullpen, which wasn't helped in the later innings by the Indians' defense or offense.

After Indians starting pitcher Josh Tomlin gave up a solo home run to Nick Castellanos to lead off the bottom of the sixth and make it 8-4, thus ending his night on the mound, the bullpen took over, and a seventh-inning horror show ensued.

Dan Otero was knocked around, giving up a single to John Hicks to open the inning and then a double to James McCann, cutting the Indians' advantage to 8-5. With one out and a runner on third, Dixon Machado grounded a ball to the left side. Shortstop Francisco Lindor fielded it and threw home instead of taking the easy out. His throw was low and got away from catcher Yan Gomes and the lead was down to 8-6.

The Indians turned to Andrew Miller, but they received anything but a vintage outing from their dynamic lefty. JaCoby Jones and Pete Kozma hit back-to-back doubles off Miller to tie it 8-8. Then Miller couldn't find the strike zone, walking three consecutive hitters, forcing in the go-ahead run to complete the bullpen's meltdown and give the Tigers a 9-8 lead with a five-run seventh.

The lineup was in a position to bail them out in the top of the eighth, but it was all for naught. The Indians loaded the bases with nobody out. Facing Tigers left-hander Daniel Stumpf, Guyer struck out and Jason Kipnis' nightmarish stretch continued when he grounded into an inning-ending 4-6-3 double play.

The latest meltdown raised the Indians' bullpen ERA to 5.79, the worst mark in the majors.

After Guyer's grand slam in the first, Erik Gonzalez added a solo home run in the second inning off Tigers starter Francisco Liriano, putting the Indians ahead 5-1. The Tigers chipped away against Tomlin, who gave up a lead-off home run to Jones in the first but settled down until the

fifth, when an RBI single by Hicks and a fielder's choice made it 5-3. A two-run double by Rajai Davis and an RBI double by Jose Ramirez gave the Indians what used to be a comfortable 8-3 lead, but it quickly evaporated.

Still, the Indians had a chance in the top of the ninth. With two outs, Tigers reliever Shane Greene committed a throwing error that allowed Davis to reach second base. A wild pitch put Davis 90 feet away, but Michael Brantley grounded out to end the Indians' calamitous night.

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### **Indians report: Struggling bullpen welcomes another new face as Bradley Zimmer hits the disabled list**

By Ryan Lewis

DETROIT: The Indians could use a guardian angel for the number of injuries in the outfield they've sustained in the past year and a half. That trend hasn't lost steam and claimed another outfielder on Tuesday.

Bradley Zimmer, who has been dealing with a left rib chest contusion since crashing into the wall at Yankee Stadium on May 5, was placed on the 10-day disabled list Tuesday, retroactive to May 12. He joins Tyler Naquin, who was placed on the 10-day DL on May 12 with a strained hamstring, and Lonnie Chisenhall, who has been sidelined with a strained calf since April 8.

"It's something I was obviously trying to avoid," Zimmer said. "Every day, I was doing what I can, doing what I can. It just got to a point where it's tough for me to go out there and be myself. So, I talked to [manager Terry Francona and president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti], our medical staff, everyone, and we feel like the best decision was to get healthy just so I can be back shortly and be at 100 percent."

With a lack of viable options within their 40-man roster constraints, the Indians were patient with Zimmer, hoping he could turn a corner. He played in one game last week but was unable to make the progress they had hoped. The Indians viewed Monday, when they had Zimmer go through some baseball activities, as a deadline since he can only be backdated on the DL for three days.

"I think we felt like the best way to go about it was to kind of give him some time, because there was a decent chance he was going to turn a corner and actually play," Francona said. "Well, that didn't happen. We kind of said [Monday] would kind of be like the cut-off day."

Due to the injuries and Greg Allen's recent promotion, the Indians didn't have a healthy outfielder on the 40-man roster who wasn't already on the big-league club. The Indians recently brought in free-agent Melky Cabrera on a minor-league deal, but he hasn't yet received enough at-bats to be promoted.

"And the other thing is, OK, when you replace him, what do you replace him with?" Francona said. "Melky's not ready. He's not a center fielder, but... Nake got hurt. ... I just think we got to a point where we're like, with four months to go, there's a lot of, I don't want to say unknowns, but that's probably the right word."

The Indians also selected the contract of relief pitcher Neil Ramirez from Triple-A Columbus. Ryan Merritt, who was recently shut down from throwing with shoulder inflammation, was transferred from the 10-day disabled list to the 60-day DL to make room on the 40-man roster for Ramirez.

Ramirez has posted a 4.22 ERA across four seasons in the majors. At Triple-A this season, he has a 2.55 ERA and 15.8 K/9 rate. That latter figure is an indication of the growth the Indians were hoping to see.

"[Ramirez] had a little bit of trouble this spring putting hitters away," Francona said. "He'd get ahead and then he couldn't quite put them away. He went to Triple-A and he's really been striking out, like [45.6] percent. A lot. Pretty damn good. But, until you see him here — now, he has major-league experience — but we'll try to get a feel for where he fits the best we can and we'll do it quickly."

### **Forty games into 2018 and the bullpen isn't the only concern for the Cleveland Indians**

By Paul Hoynes, [cleveland.com.phoynes@cleveland.com](mailto:cleveland.com.phoynes@cleveland.com)

DETROIT - A bullpen not only has to protect leads, but deficits as well.

The Indians didn't do that Monday night against the Tigers and it meant their rally fell short in a 6-3 loss at Comerica Park.

Evan Marshall started the eighth inning by walking James McCann and John Hicks with the Indians trailing, 3-2. That is not the way to protect a one-run deficit.

Zach McAllister, who has been pitching well in these situations, relieved. On May 8 against Milwaukee, McAllister came on in the eighth facing a 3-2 deficit with two out and the bases loaded. It took him 15 pitches, but he struck out Manny Pina to end the inning.

The Indians still lost, 3-2, but McAllister gave his team a chance.

On Friday against Kansas City, McAllister relieved in the seventh after Andrew Miller allowed a two-run homer to put the Royals ahead, 10-9. McAllister closed the game with seven straight outs. The Indians still lost, 10-9, but McAllister's pitching gave them six outs to try and regain the lead.

Monday night, McAllister relieved Marshall and struck out JaCoby Jones. Niko Goodrum, Detroit's next batter, turned around McAllister full-count 95 mph fastball for a three-run homer and a 6-2 lead. The Indians scored one run in the ninth, and managed to bring Michael Brantley to the plate representing the tying run, but Detroit's three runs in the eighth were too much to overcome.

So the Indians' bullpen problems continue, especially when they aren't masked by a good performance from the offense. In taking two out of three from the Royals over the weekend, the Indians scored 26 runs on 32 hits, including eight homers. They were held to three runs on seven hits Monday.

"We've got to figure it out. There's no getting around it," said manager Terry Francona, when asked about the pen. "We've got to figure it out. We will. I always believe that.

"It hasn't been the prettiest as times, but we'll figure it out."

Terry Francona on bullpen woes, "We've got to figure it out."

Monday was the Indians' 40th game of the season. One fourth of the season is gone and it's usually a good time to get a feel for what kind of team an organization has put on the field.

With the Indians, considered to be one of the game's elite teams when the season started, more time is needed. Still, a few things are clear.

No. 1: The bullpen needs help

What good does it do a team to have Miller and Cody Allen to pitch the late innings, if there are no reliable middle relievers to get them the ball?

Dan Otero (5.87 ERA), Tyler Olson (6.75), injured Nick Goody (6.94) and McAllister (7.47) were the relievers who were supposed to step in and replace departed set-up man Bryan Shaw. No one has taken that step.

No. 2: Starters workload increasing

The bullpen is 3-10 with a 5.54 ERA and has pitched the fewest innings in the AL. It means the rotation is going to have to carry a heavier load.

The innings and pitches for Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco, Mike Clevinger and Trevor Bauer have increased compared to last year. Clevinger's workload, especially, has jumped from last year following his first eight starts - 42 innings to 53 1/3 and 724 pitches to 820.

All that will bear watching as the Indians get deeper into the season.

No. 3: The consistently inconsistent Indians

This team, except for the rotation, has been inconsistent. They're 20-20 with a 1 1/2 game lead in the AL Central. In any other division, they'd be at least 3 1/2 games out of first place.

This isn't exactly a wow moment. The Indians, under Francona, have always been a better second-half team. They have a .603 winning percentage (215-141) after the All-Star break compared to a .529 (239-213) percentage before the break through his first five seasons.

After 40 games last season, they were 21-19 and in second place.

No. 4: Fire down below needed

Francisco Lindor and Jose Ramirez are two of the most dangerous hitters on the planet. Michael Brantley has bounced back nicely as well. Last season, at about this time, Edwin Encarnacion started to turn his season around and Yonder Alonso has had some good moments.

But after that, with the exception of Yan Gomes, the bottom of the lineup has been a ghost town.

No. 5: When does the Melk Man Cometh

As well as Brantley has played (.331, five homers, 27 RBI, .915 OPS), the overall offensive contribution from the rest of the outfield has been lukewarm. Plus they've had a tough time staying healthy. Tyler Naquin and Lonnie Chisenhall are on the disabled list and center fielder Bradley Zimmer could be headed there.

Melky Cabrera Returns to Royals!

Naquin was doing a good job of re-establishing himself in the big leagues by hitting .333 (25-for-75) with 11 RBI when he strained his left hamstring on Friday. Brandon Guyer and Rajai Davis are struggling, while rookie Greg Allen is filling in for Zimmer.

All of which leads to the question -- when does Melky Cabrera get here?

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**Cleveland Indians put Bradley Zimmer on DL; promote RHP Neil Ramirez**

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com [phoynes@cleveland.com](mailto:phoynes@cleveland.com)

DETROIT -- The Indians have placed outfielder Bradley Zimmer on the 10-day disabled list with a bruised chest/left rib. Zimmer hit the center field wall on May 5 at Yankee Stadium while chasing a fly ball and has played just one game since.

The Indians can make the move retroactive to Saturday.

Veteran right-hander Neil Ramirez had his contract selected from Class AAA Columbus and will join the Indians. To make room for Ramirez on the 40-man, left-hander Ryan Merritt was moved to the 60-day disabled list.

Zimmer is hitting .224 (22-for-98) in 32 games. He's scored 14 runs, but has a contact problem. The left-handed hitting Zimmer struck out 39 times, while walking just seven times. This will be Zimmer's second time on the DL. He went on the DL last September with a broken left hand.

Ramirez, 28, pitched for the Giants and Mets last year. He went 0-1 with a 7.18 ERA in 29 appearances. He struck out 44 and walked 21 in 31 1/3 innings.

The Indians brought Ramirez to spring training on a minor league deal. He went 2-0 with three saves and a 2.55 at Class AAA Columbus. Ramirez struck out 31, walked three and allowed five earned runs in 17 2/3 innings.

Ramirez was the No.1 pick of the Texas Rangers in 2007.

**Clean it up: Cleveland Indians, Detroit Tigers lineups for Tuesday night, Game No. 41**

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com [phoynes@cleveland.com](mailto:phoynes@cleveland.com)

DETROIT -- Manager Terry Francona moved leadoff hitter Francisco Lindor into the cleanup spot for Tuesday night's game with Edwin Encarnacion was unavailable because of a stiff neck.

"Edwin is OK," said Francona. "On one of his swings Tuesday night, he got real stiff in his upper back or neck. You could tell he was kind of fighting it.

"I give him credit, man. He's a tough guy. He wanted to try to play today. He never wants to be out of there. It's just one of those good old fashion stiff necks. We've all been there. It doesn't make it any easier to hit."

Francona feels he has several hitters who can hit anywhere in the lineup, including Lindor, Michael Brantley and Jose Ramirez.

"Frankie and Rammer (Ramirez) they're just good hitters," said Francona. "That's what we tell them. We tell them that if we move you around, just do what you normally do. Usually, if you hit, it will fit."

Lindor entered Tuesday's game with a 15-game hitting streak. It's the longest streak by an Indians' shortstop since Omar Vizquel hit in 18 straight from July 14 through Aug. 1, 2002.

The switch-hitting Lindor is hitting .456 (31-for-66) with 19 runs, eight homers and 16 RBI during the streak.

Rajai Davis replaced Lindor in the leadoff spot. Davis is hitting .333 (12-for-36) against Detroit starter Francisco Liriano.

### **Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 05.16.2018**

#### **Cleveland Indians' bullpen nightmare continues as Detroit Tigers rally for 9-8 win**

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

DETROIT -- The bullpen nightmares continue to haunt the Indians. No one is safe.

Not Josh Tomlin, not Andrew Miller. And certainly not the front office who put this bullpen together.

Tomlin, in line for his first win of the season, left Tuesday night's game with an 8-4 lead in the sixth inning after opening and ending his start by allowing homers to JaCoby Jones and Nicholas Castellanos, respectively.

Detroit, which rallied from 5-1 and 8-3 deficits, rallied one more time with five runs in the seventh to steal a 9-8 victory from the Indians, who have lost seven of their last 10 games.

Miller (1-2) relieved Dan Otero with one out, one on and a 8-6 lead in the seventh. He allowed consecutive RBI doubles past third base to Jones and Pete Kozma to tie the score, 8-8.

After Castellanos flied out to left field, Miller walked Victor Martinez, Niko Goodrum and John Hicks to break the tie. Neil Ramirez, just promoted from Class AAA Buffalo, relieved Miller to strike out James McCann to end the inning.

"I'm just not sharp at all," said Miller, who came off the disabled list on Friday, "and I'm really hurting us. I've just got to figure my way out of it."

Miller felt he was still in control of the inning until he walked Hicks.

"I wasn't going to let Victor hurt me," said Miller. "He did a pretty good job of not going out of the zone. Goodrum we got ahead of 1-2, he fouled off a fastball up and laid off two breaking balls that I tend to get swings on so you tip your cap.

"Hicks was just horrible. No excuse for that. I've got to do better."

Otero and Miller allowed five earned runs on four hits and three walks in two-thirds of an inning. On Monday night, the bullpen turned a 3-2 Tiger lead into a 6-2 runaway when Evan Marshall opened the eighth with two walks and Zach McAllister gave up a three-run homer.

"We want to do better," said Miller. "Obviously, I feel we have the ability. I haven't done my part the last few times out. We're looking for whatever it is that makes us tick and helps us get through it. We need to be a big part of this team."

The Indians tried to come back in the eighth. They loaded the bases with no one out on a double by Jose Ramirez and walks by Francisco Lindor and Yan Gomes against lefty Daniel Stumpf. But Stumpf escaped by striking out Brandon Guyer and getting Jason Kipnis to hit into a 4-6-3 double play.

Guyer gave the Indians a 4-0 lead with a grand slam off Francisco Liriano in the first inning. Guyer hit Liriano's first pitch over the left field wall after Rajai Davis opened the game with a single and Michael Brantley and Lindor walked.

It was Guyer's first career slam and it came with two out.

The Indians made it 5-1 in the second when Erik Gonzalez hit a leadoff homer off Liriano. It was his first homer of the year.

The early offense served Tomlin well, even though he gave up a leadoff homer to Jones in the first. He didn't allow another run until Detroit scored twice in the fifth to make it a 5-3 game.

The Indians came back to take a 8-3 lead in the sixth. Davis hit a two-run double past third to score Yonder Alonso and Greg Allen. Ramirez added the third run with a double past first base.

Tomlin allowed four runs on six hits in 5 1/3 innings. He has allowed 15 homers in 31 innings.

"No.1, we've got to get better," said Tomlin. "The teams that come out of the kind of adversity we're facing now are usually better for it. We understand it takes 25 men to try and get to where we want to go.

"That's not going to change. So tomorrow we've got to show up and try to win a game."

Liriano allowed five runs on seven hits in 4 1/3 innings. He struck out three and walked three.

Lindor, batting cleanup for injured DH Edwin Encarnacion, saw his 15-game hitting streak end as he went 0-for-2 with three walks. He helped fueled the Tigers' final rally when he made a poor throw home that allowed McCann to score on Dixon Machado's grounder to short in the seventh for Detroit's second run in the inning.

Manager Terry Francona was asked if Lindor should have gone to first base on the play.

"From the angle he was at, I think the only play he had was to go home," said Francona.

Today's lineup scored 4 runs in the 1st, which is good.

The Indians and Tigers drew 20,997 to Comerica Park on Tuesday night. First pitch was at 7:10 p.m. with a temperature of 70 degrees.

Indians right-hander Trevor Bauer (2-3, 3.00) concludes this three-game series on Wednesday when he faces the Tigers and left-hander Ryan Carpenter (0-0, 7.36) at 1:10 p.m. SportsTime Ohio, WTAM/1100 and WMMS/FM 100.7 will carry the game.

In his last start, Bauer allowed five runs on 11 hits in 4 2/3 innings against Kansas City. He beat the Tigers on April 12 at Progressive Field.

Carpenter, who was pitching at Class AAA Toledo, has made two appearances for the Tigers this season, including one start. He was 1-3 with a 5.01 ERA in seven starts at Toledo.

## **Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 05.16.2018**

### **On Crash Zimmer and 4 other things we learned about the Cleveland Indians on Tuesday**

By Paul Hoynes, [cleveland.com.phoynes@cleveland.com](mailto:cleveland.com.phoynes@cleveland.com)

DETROIT - Center fielder Bradley Zimmer, placed on the 10-day disabled list Tuesday for the second time since September, says he's not going to change his style of play.

Zimmer went on the DL with a bruised chest and left rib cage. He came out second best in a collision with the center-field wall at Yankee Stadium on May 5. Zimmer tried to avoid the DL, but when he was still feeling pain Monday swinging the bat and throwing, the Indians decided to make the move.

Last season he missed most of September and the postseason after suffering a broken left hand on a headfirst dive into first base.

"People looking from the outside say, 'Hey, he's out of control and blah, blah, blah,'" said Zimmer. "That's the way I play the game. I'm going to go out there and do everything I can to save our pitchers. I want to do everything I can to help us save runs.

"If that means going through a wall for someone, on a play that is makeable in a close game, that's what I'm going to do. There are times when you hold off, but I'm going to continue to play my game and play hard."

The Indians selected the contract of right-hander Neil Ramirez from Class AAA Columbus to take Zimmer's spot on the 25-man roster.

Yankee Stadium's center field wall wasn't the first and won't be the last that Zimmer challenges. Asked what made it so unforgiving, Zimmer said, "I was going full speed. I had it timed up. I knew the wall was coming up. I gave it my best effort and ended up hitting it in a weird way.

"The wall didn't have much give. There was plexiglass and it wasn't really padded. I ended up hitting it in an awkward spot. There wasn't much I could do."

The move was retroactive to Saturday, meaning if all goes well, Zimmer could be back in the lineup in seven days.

No. 1: Another day, another reliever

Ramirez, 28, was used in a variety of roles in Columbus. He pitched as early as the sixth inning and late enough to earn three saves. He also pitched multiple innings.

"I was used anywhere from the sixth inning on ... a lot of different roles," said Ramirez. "I was used for multiple innings, I closed ... all that stuff. I'm built up to do whatever they need me to do."

Ramirez went 2-0 with three saves and a 2.55 ERA in 13 appearances with Columbus. He struck out 31 batters in 17 2/3 innings. The Indians invited him to spring training on a minor-league deal. He said he had trouble finishing hitters off in spring games.

"I left a few sliders up in the zone and they got hit out of the park," he said. "When I got to Columbus, I worked on pitching ahead and finishing hitters off."

Said Francona, "He's got a real good arm. He had a little trouble putting hitters away this spring. He went to Triple-A and really struck out a lot of hitters. Pretty darn good."

Speed kills on both ends of the diamond. Greg Allen knows.

Web gem

First career triple

No. 2: Opportunity knocks

Rookie Greg Allen, with Zimmer and Tyler Naquin on the disabled list, is going to get a chance to play center field. Allen went 3-for-4 with two infield hits and a triple in Monday's 6-3 loss to Detroit.

Allen, in his second tour with the Tribe this year, was 0-for-14 before finding his stroke. He entered Tuesday's game 5-for-9 with two runs and an RBI in the last two games.

"He's learning on the fly and that's OK," said Francona. "He's an interesting young player. He can run, he's a switch-hitter, his hitting is still a work in progress. But he hustles and he's a smart kid.

"I just think it's OK to recognize that he's still young and learning."

No. 3: Legalized sports gambling

On Monday the Supreme Court cleared the way for states to legalize sports gambling. MLB and MLBPA issued statements in the wake of the ruling that they want to be involved in any future decisions regarding the ruling.

"It sounds like integrity of the game is a big thing for the players association and MLB," said Andrew Miller, player rep for the Indians. "I think we want to be sure that all issues are raised and thought through before every state says, 'All right, let's gamble away.'"



Tony Clark, executive director of the players association, said players have concerns about the game's intellectual properties and player safety.

No. 4: In closing

Francona, in discussing Zimmer's move to the DL, said the fact that Naquin was injured and Melky Cabrera still isn't ready at Columbus played a part in the decision. ... Michael Brantley turned 31 on Tuesday. Brantley went into Tuesday's game tied for second in the big leagues with 17 RBI in May. ... The Tigers ended their 11-game losing streak to the Indians on Monday night, but they had scored three or fewer runs in 13 of their last 15 games against the Tribe. They easily passed that number on Tuesday. ... Jose Ramirez entered Tuesday tied for the MLB lead in homers with 13. The last Indians player to hold a share of the MLB home run lead through 40 games was Albert Belle in 1996. Belle and Barry Bonds were tied with 17 each.

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### **Meisel: The Indians' train wreck of a bullpen and the ever-elusive rock bottom**

Zack Meisel 2h ago 6

DETROIT — Andrew Miller sauntered toward the Indians' dugout, his head down, and Neil Ramirez — the knight-in-navy-armor du jour — emerged from the visitor's bullpen.

One night, it's Ramirez, added to the roster mere hours earlier, tasked with mopping up the gruesome mess on the mound. Another night, it's Evan Marshall or Dan Otero or Tyler Olson or Alexi Ogando or Jeff Beliveau. Soon, it'll be the kid who impresses on the ballpark speed pitch game.

The revolving door of tattered arms needs some WD-40.

Ramirez deserves a medal, a key to the city, a statue, something. The lanky right-hander retired all four batters he faced on Tuesday night. That's a breath of fresh air for a bullpen that has resembled a train wreck. And not just any train wreck, but one in which the locomotive plows head-on into a blazing dumpster.

In their past 21 games, the Indians have averaged 6.2 runs per contest. That has secured an 8-13 record, a reflection of a bruised and battered bullpen that has posted a 9.16 ERA during that stretch. Three weeks ago, the Indians ranked fourth in the majors in bullpen ERA. Last season, the Indians ranked first.

Now, they rank dead last.

No one is immune from the plague. Miller sputtered in the worst way at the worst time on Tuesday night against a lineup spearheaded by JaCoby Jones and Pete Kozma. (Links included to prove that those are real people.) The night before, Marshall and Zach McAllister removed all doubt from what previously was a close game.

The faces can change. The results have not. Rock bottom seems so close, yet so elusive.

And, as Chris Antonetti cautions, don't hold your breath in anticipation of a headline-snatching trade or your lungs will tap out.

"In terms of doing things in the near-term, the likelihood of that is low," the club's president of baseball operations said Tuesday afternoon in the visitor's dugout at Comerica Park. "Any trade of consequence, it's very rare that those happen in May or June. The bulk of our solutions are going to come from guys within the organization already."

That was the strategy over the winter, too. Bryan Shaw and Joe Smith signed elsewhere and, instead of replacing that lost production, the Indians resorted to the likes of Otero, McAllister and Nick Goody, three guys the club omitted from its postseason roster. The front office lured a handful of non-roster invitees (lottery tickets) to spring camp, but it refrained from signing anyone worth guaranteed money.

"We just had very finite resources that we had available to allocate," he said. "And we have to make choices on where to allocate those elements."

So, that meant no Hector Rondon (two years, \$8.5 million), no Brandon Kintzler (two years, \$10 million), no Tony Watson (two years, \$7 million), no Luke Gregerson (two years, \$11 million). It meant no true replacement for a hell of a lot of lost production. It meant a ton of hoping and praying. And now, the Indians are paying for their sins of winter.

Other teams know the Indians are desperate. They smell blood. It isn't the Indians' modus operandi to overpay or to act on emotion. They're intent on sorting out the cards already in-hand and delaying their inevitable draw from the trade pile.

The Indians have essentially exhausted their minor-league options. Antonetti wouldn't reveal whether Danny Salazar's winding path to the big-league roster will come as a starter or reliever, but Salazar, Cody Anderson and Ryan Merritt aren't immediate solutions. They're summer flings.

That means more trial and error with newcomers Marshall, Ramirez and Oliver Drake. It means more summon-and-shield-your-eyes with Otero, Olson and McAllister. It means more requests of Miller and Cody Allen to cover multiple innings and more strain on the starting rotation.

It has become clear to see how a faulty bullpen can derail a season. Just ask the team that has feasted on the Indians' relievers the last two nights. A shaky group constantly hindered the Tigers during their recent decade-long bid for a championship.

Some cited Miller's absence as a convenient excuse for Cleveland's bullpen troubles, but the issues run deeper than one sidelined slider-slinger. Miller helps, obviously — well, perhaps "obviously" is poor diction in this case, given his meltdown on Tuesday — but there's such little dependable depth that, on any occasion in which he or Allen falter, the levees break.

When the Indians score eight or more runs this season, they're only 4-3. That should be an automatic victory every time, especially against a rebuilding divisional foe that Brandon Guyer and Erik Gonzalez, of all people, appear to bury early. The bullpen relinquished a five-run advantage on Tuesday. It created that blueprint four days earlier in a gut-punching 10-9 loss to the Royals.

There doesn't seem to be a soul in the Indians' bullpen who can enter a game and offer fans a sigh of relief. Instead, every time the bullpen door swings open, blood-pressure levels skyrocket in Cleveland. Marlboro sales have soared downtown, which is good news for the sin tax, I guess.

This isn't an unfixable flaw, especially given the state of the calendar. This isn't a death sentence.

But this is a glaring problem, as detrimental of a deficiency as a team can divulge seven weeks into a season.

On Tuesday, a new guy was left to clean up the carnage. The revolving door continues to beg for mercy. Someone grab the oil can.

### **Q&A: Chris Antonetti dissects the good, bad and 'inconsistent' from Indians' first 40 games**

By T.J. Zuppe 18m ago 2

DETROIT — Moments after reporters began to shuffle out of Terry Francona's office Monday night, Chris Antonetti quietly slipped past the group of scribes and into the manager's space.

A late-night chat between the two isn't out of the norm, but those dissections have become a lot more frequent since the Indians began to spin their revolving door of relievers a few weeks ago.

This particular conversation led to a pair of roster moves Tuesday, the placement of Bradley Zimmer on the 10-day disabled list with a left rib contusion and the promotion of reliever Neil Ramirez from Columbus.

Wait, who?

Ahh, yes. It's become more and more difficult to track these maneuvers over the past few weeks. Ramirez joins names like Alexi Ogando, Evan Marshall, Jeff Beliveau, Oliver Drake and Ben Taylor — all pitchers who have been summoned from the minors at some point to help provide innings (and maybe a few answers) in an uncharacteristically turbulent bullpen.

The 28-year-old became the 14th arm to log relief work for the Tribe this season. And surprisingly, he was the one to put out a five-run fire in a disastrous seventh inning Tuesday night.

The uncertainty surrounding that group is one of the biggest clouds hanging over their 20-21 start. Following the late-game meltdown against the Tigers, their relief ERA climbed to the worst in baseball (5.79).

"Inconsistent" is one word Antonetti used to describe it, but somehow, that word doesn't seem quite right.

Worrisome? Frustrating? Disjointed? Maddening? Unacceptable?

Maybe those descriptions lean too heavily in the other direction. But they come with the territory. They accompany hefty expectations.

Granted, the club experienced similar struggles last year — they were 31-31 through 62 games last year — but to excuse this year's issues by simply pointing to last season's strong finish really isn't a fair connection.

"We won 22 games in a row last year," Antonetti said. "I'm not sure we're counting on that again."

Antonetti discussed several of the issues that surround the club prior to the loss Tuesday night, chatting with The Athletic, MLB.com and the Akron Beacon Journal in the visitors dugout, touching on the good, bad and ugly from the first 40 games.

How do you assess your struggling bullpen?

"It's a really hard thing to do. I feel for Tito — to mix and match and figure out the best guys to get in the best situations. It was especially difficult in the time where Andrew (Miller) was out because bridging those innings, especially in those tight games or games where we have a lead, is a tough thing for us to do. It's something we're still in the process of trying to figure out."

It's easy to point to the departure of Bryan Shaw and Joe Smith and wonder why more wasn't done to fill those holes. Why did things play out the way they did this winter?

"I think in terms of minor-league free agents, opportunity is difficult. They're looking at our bullpen thinking, 'Hey, if I've got to go in and compete for a spot, those guys have got pretty good track records.' On the major-league free agent front, we just had very finite resources that we had

available to allocate. And we have to make choices on where to allocate those elements. We are in a season where we have a franchise record payroll. It's not a lack of resources. It's just that every team has a finite amount that they can spend. For us, we chose to do that by keeping a lot of our guys in place. We returned our entire starting rotation, we got the bulk of our position players back and some of our high-leverage and best relievers. Again, that necessitated we needed to make some choices."

You have a need now, but other teams might not be ready to make a deal. When do you start mapping out a potential plan for the upcoming trade market?

"A couple of things. In terms of doing things in the near-term, the likelihood of that is low. Any trade of consequence, it's very rare that those happen in May or June. The bulk of our solutions are going to come from guys within the organization already. If there are opportunities to acquire guys like Oliver Drake, other guys that may be available on waiver wires or get designated, that's more the type of move that will happen over the course of the next few months. But we are actively in the process of planning for those next few months and trying to assess which players might be available and could potentially help our team. Part of that, those needs can change over time. That's why we try to be pretty comprehensive, looking at what options might be out there for us to improve, so we have the information we need to make the decisions we do."

In the past, when Jason Kipnis has struggled, there have been tangibles reasons. What have you seen within his struggles this year?

"Early on, I thought he was having good at-bats, like a handful of other guys, and wasn't having a lot to show for it. As that accumulates over time, everyone's human. You look up at the scoreboard and see what your batting average is and other numbers. You inevitably want to change that. That's not always the best thought process to have. I think that can lead you to get out of your approach and be a little less consistent than you've been in the past. With Kip, there have just been times where he's been caught in-between."

Four of five years ago, as an organization, could you have envisioned José Ramírez and Francisco Lindor someday leading Major League Baseball in homers — even in May?

"Of course. We had Corey Kluber winning multiple Cy Youngs when we traded for him. Yeah. We have all of the answers. Of course not, no. The one thing we try to be purposeful about organizationally — and I know you guys hate this answer — but we never put ceilings on players. I think we have enough humility to know that we can't predict the future. Ultimately, players can go out and change what path they might be on. As you highlighted, I'm not sure anyone who sat here and, looking at Jose in the minor leagues, said, 'Hey, on May 15, 2018, he's going to have the major-league lead for home runs.' But we wouldn't rule it out. That's not smart to do, either. Our job is to try to provide the best environment, tools, resources, culture, coaching for guys to be the best guys they can be. Where that leads, sometimes it's pretty cool to see Jose Ramirez or Francisco Lindor, Corey Kluber or a host of other guys."

How impressed are you by their ability to continue improving?

"It's a really hard thing to do, especially to remain that consistent at the major-league level, because there's all sorts of information and resources out there for teams to try to exploit your weaknesses. The fact they've been able to perform at such a high level for a long period of time is a credit to them and their continued growth and development."

Given all the recent injuries to Bradley Zimmer (rib contusion), Tyler Naquin (hamstring strain), Lonnie Chisenhall (calf strain), what have you thought of your current collection of remaining outfielders?

"It's been a group that's been beset by injuries again. That affects not only our depth but the situations that other guys are asked to play. We've seen (Rajai Davis) and Brandon (Guyer), specifically, maybe get more at-bats against right-handed pitching than we would've drawn up at the start of the year. But for teams to be successful, we have to rely upon, not only a handful of guys, but the totality of our roster. We're really hopeful that not only Raj and Brandon and some of those other guys who are now getting opportunities can find a way to (produce)."

After everything he's been through, what's it like to see Michael Brantley thrive again?

"I'm really happy for Michael, because we had the benefit of seeing all of his hard work and how dedicated he was throughout the rehab process and how determined he was to get back being healthy and being the player we all know he's capable of being. I didn't really have a lot of anxiety about Michael's performance when he was healthy. He's demonstrated, for the bulk of his major-league career, that when he's healthy, he's a really great player. It's great now that he's healthy and able to perform. We're lucky to have witnessed it."

With Adam Plutko and Shane Bieber pitching well in the minors, how have your feelings on organizational starting pitching depth evolved?

"Starting with the guys at the major-league level, I'm thankful they've pitched as well as they have because that's afforded us to weather some of those earlier offensive struggles. They've pitched really effectively and kept us in some of those games. It's encouraging to see some of that depth that we might have behind it, but at the same time, we recognize how fragile that might be and how quickly that could change. Think back to a couple years ago, everybody was like, 'Hey, what are you gonna do with all these starting pitchers?' And then we had one and a half starters by the end of the year, or two and a half. So, you won't find me complaining about starting pitching depth. And it's something, quite honestly, we're still looking to build."

Danny Salazar recently receiving a PRP injection in his shoulder. What's the frustration level over his recent shutdown in Arizona?

"I think everybody would like (his recovery) to happen more quickly, for him to get back healthy and pitching the way he's capable of. It just hasn't happened. We're hopeful that after the injection Danny received, and now that he's ramping up his throwing, this will be that time where he's actually able to clear that hurdle and ramp up to the intensity he needs to pitch in a major league game. It just hasn't happened yet. But he could be a big part of our team in the second half."

Has this taken longer than you expected?

"We didn't really have a sense. I know it was probably frustrating for you guys that we didn't really have a great timetable, but that was as honest as we could be. This is just how it's played out. When you're dealing with shoulders, especially, it can be really complicated to try to guess what it is."

When he's finally healthy, will he prepare as a starter?

"I think right now, we're looking at how we get Danny healthy. Let's get him healthy. Let's get him throwing regular bullpens. Let's get his intensity up to the point that he's at a spot, competitively, where he can pitch at the major-league level. Once we start clearing some of those hurdles, we can assess if that's going to be more likely in the rotation or more likely in the bullpen. Some of that's going to be dependent upon what's happening with the major-league team."

With Mike Clevinger continuing to improve and emerging as an impact arm, does his development feel like a big organizational victory?

"I think we're at our best when we try to identify those indicators. Our scouts and evaluators identify the indicators we think might lead to success, and our development staff does an extraordinary job at making individualized plans for each guy and working with the player — most importantly, to try to shape that path forward. Clev deserves a ton of credit, a guy who came over to a new organization after a trade and was really wide open, saying, 'Hey, all I care about is being the best pitcher I can be, whatever tools, resources, suggestions, coaching ideas you guys have, I'm wide open to trying them.' He deserves a lot of credit for the work he's put in and his development to this point."

#### **Clippers 5, Stripers 4 | Shane Bieber, Melky Cabrera help in extra-inning win**

By Mark Znidar

The Clippers have endured 50 roster moves since breaking spring-training camp, which for triple-A is about the average number at this point in the season.

The move that might drive people to the ticket window, though, could be outfielder Melky Cabrera playing in his first Huntington Park homestand. Cleveland brought up the free agent from extended spring training to begin his final push for a return to the major leagues.

Cabrera didn't disappoint in his Clippers debut Tuesday night, lining a two-run double to the wall in left-center in the first inning.

The Clippers went on to a 5-4 victory in 10 innings over the Gwinnett Stripers in a game in which the first pitch was delayed 1 hour, 41 minutes by rain.

The Stripers tied the game 4-4 in the eighth on a three-run double to the wall in left by Carlos Franco off reliever Cameron Hill, but the Clippers won two innings later when Gwinnett pitcher Josh Ravin threw wildly past the first baseman after fielding a bunt by Yu Chang, allowing Brandon Barnes to score from second.

The man whom Clippers fans have to be excited about is right-hander Shane Bieber. He turned in his third-straight quality start, giving up five hits, one run and no walks while striking out seven in 6 2/3 innings

Bieber gave up a single to Austin Riley in the first inning that brought home Danny Santana, but that was the only damage the Stripers could manage against him. He retired eight of the final nine batters he faced.

Cleveland chose Bieber, 22, in the fourth round of the 2016 draft out of Orange, California. He was the 122nd player taken overall.

Bieber earned the promotion by going 3-0 with a 1.16 ERA in five starts for Akron. His start Tuesday night was similar to his first two with the Clippers. He gave up two hits and one run in six innings in his triple-A debut against Charlotte in a 4-2 victory on May 3, then followed that up by giving up seven hits and two runs in 6 2/3 innings in a 2-0 loss to Toledo.

The last time Clippers fans had seen their team in action, it appeared this collection of prized prospects and wise veterans was going places when it left on a seven-day trip. The Clippers had powered to three victories in four games against Charlotte and had taken two of three games in winning series against Louisville and Indianapolis to bump their record to 15-13.

The players were going places, all right, with 14 roster moves being made in a span of nine days before Tuesday night's game. But the Clippers were in a free fall beginning the three-game series, having lost six of seven games, including two by shutout and two others in which they scored only one run.

#### **Indians bullpen coughs up another lead in 9-8 loss to Tigers**

By Dave Hogg, The Associated Press

DETROIT >> John Hicks expected to be challenged by shutdown reliever Andrew Miller in a tight spot May 15.

Instead, he got an easy bases-loaded walk to cap an unexpected comeback.

JaCoby Jones homered and doubled, and the Detroit Tigers rallied against Miller during a five-run seventh inning to beat the Indians, 9-8. The Indians led 4-0 and 8-4 before Detroit's breakthrough seventh for its third straight win. Miller (1-2) allowed two inherited runners to score, then allowed two runs of his own. He faced six batters, giving up two doubles and three walks while getting one out.

Louis Coleman (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh inning, and Shane Greene, pitching for the fourth straight day, worked the ninth for his ninth save. Nicholas Castellanos also homered for Detroit.

After Dan Otero gave up a run and left two on for Miller in the seventh, Jones and Pete Kozma hit back-to-back RBI doubles before walks by Victor Martinez and Niko Goodrum loaded the bases with two outs. Miller then walked John Hicks to force in the go-ahead run.

"I was looking for a good pitch to hit, but he wasn't even coming close," Hicks said. "He threw a strike on 3-0, when I was taking all the way, but nothing else was near the strike zone."

Miller wasn't sure what went wrong.

"I wasn't going to let Victor hurt me, and I had to tip my cap to Goodrum for a great at-bat," Miller said. "Hicks, though, was just horrible. There is no excuse for that."

The Indians loaded the bases with no one out in the eighth against Daniel Stumpf, but Brandon Guyer struck out and Jason Kipnis hit into an inning-ending double play.

Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire planned to stick with Stumpf regardless — he didn't have a choice, since he was out of usable relief pitchers. He did try to bluff Indians manager Terry Francona, though.

"We told Buck (Farmer) to stand there but not throw a pitch," Gardenhire said. "But Stumpf was a live arm and we needed him to get himself out of the mess he had created."

Gardenhire ended up using Greene in the ninth despite wanting to rest him.

Guyer hit a first-pitch fastball into the Tigers bullpen for his first career grand slam in the first inning off starter Francisco Liriano.

Jones led off the bottom of the inning with his third homer, the 14th hit off Josh Tomlin this season, but Erik Gonzalez made it 5-1 with a home run in the second.

Liriano left with runners on the corners and one out in the fifth, and Zac Reininger got Guyer to hit into a double play.

Hicks pulled the Tigers within 5-2 with an RBI single in the fifth, and Jose Iglesias' run-scoring groundout made it a two-run game.

Davis, though, hit a two-run double off Reininger in the sixth to give Cleveland a 7-3 lead, and he scored on Ramirez's double off Hicks' glove at first.

Castellanos homered in the sixth to make it 8-4 and end Tomlin's night.

Indians >> Cleveland placed CF Bradley Zimmer (rib) on the 10-day disabled list, retroactive to May 12, and selected the contract of RHP Neil Ramirez from Triple-A Columbus. To make room for Ramirez on the 40-man roster, LHP Ryan Merritt (knee) was moved to the 60-day disabled list.

Tigers >> 1B Miguel Cabrera (hamstring) is expected to miss at least another week, due to stiffness in his back and hip during rehab. ... LHP Chad Bell was claimed off waivers by the Atlanta Braves.

The teams finish a three-game series May 16 with Trevor Bauer (2-3, 3.00) facing a Tigers pitcher to be named. Detroit will need to use a spot starter because of a May 19 doubleheader and Jordan Zimmermann's shoulder injury.

### **Juan Hillman better, but still takes the loss against Cubs**

*By [David Glasier](#), The News-Herald*

It wasn't the 21st birthday present Captains pitcher Juan Hillman wanted.

Making his eighth start of the season on May 15 against the South Bend (Ind.) Cubs at Classic Park, Hillman surrendered four runs on six hits in 6 2/3 innings. He took the loss in what ended as a 4-3 victory for the visitors.

The left-hander from Texas, now 0-6 with a 5.86 ERA, had two bad innings and four-plus good innings. He gave up two runs in the top of the first inning and two more in the top of the seventh. In between scoring outbursts, he posted seven strikeouts, did not issue a walk and showed better than his won-lost record and ERA would suggest.

"This felt like my best outing of the season," Hill said. "I was able to throw all three pitches for strikes. It's my first start this year with no walks, and that's good," Hillman said.

Hillman might have eked out his first win of the season had the Captains not run into South Bend left-hander Ricky Tyler Thomas on a night when the 22-year-old left-hander from Texas was dealing.

Thomas (2-3, 2.86 ERA) was nicked for two runs on one hit, a leadoff single in the bottom of the fourth inning by Captains shortstop Ernie Clement. Later in the frame, Clement scored on an RBI fly by Jorma Rodrigues. The Captains scratched out another run in the bottom of the seventh. Beyond that, Thomas dominated Lake County batters and finished with seven strikeouts.

What's happening to Hill this season is similar to what happened to him last season at Lake County when he finished 7-10 with a 6.08 ERA. He has one or two innings in every start where he gets into trouble.

The Indians' second-round pick in the 2015 draft out of high school is especially vulnerable in the first inning.

"That is something I need to take care of and will take care of," Hillman said.

Captains manager Luke Carlin was asked for a read on Hillman's first-inning issues.

"I wish we had the answer," Carlin said.

Hillman said his spirit hasn't been weakened by all the losses.

"I've been a positive guy my whole life," he said. "I'm still out there competing, giving my team a chance to win. My confidence is still through the roof.

"Yes, I get a little frustrated when I have a bad inning," Hillman added. "But I don't let that affect me going to the next start. I try to overcome the negatives with positives."

### **Tigers' Alex Wilson will need rehab assignment before returning**

Alex Wilson

Detroit — The way he was peppering throws at Jordan Zimmermann before the game Tuesday, it looked like Tigers' reliever Alex Wilson might be ready to come off the disabled list when his 10-day stint expires on Friday.

Alas, that's not happening.

"No, I won't be ready, but this was a big step," said Wilson, who is out with a ruptured plantar fasciitis in his left foot. "Being able to throw and really land on my front side, with my cleats on — it was a good step. I can still feel it in my heel.

"It feels like a bad stone bruise."

Wilson expects to go on the two-city road trip with the Tigers to continue his rehab and throwing program. Manager Ron Gardenhire, though, said there needed to be a discussion about the travel roster.

"We have to talk to Al (Avila, general manager)," Gardenhire said. "If you have too many guys injured, it complicates the whole situation in the clubhouse. You got guys needing treatment who are playing and you have the guys who are hurt.

"If you got guys who might come off the DL during the trip, you take them. If they can get on the field and do their work while we are out there, then I'd say yeah, bring them. But if not, if they can do their treatment here, then they can stay."

It might not be the best medicine for Wilson to leave him back.

"I'm itching to get back," Wilson said. "I'm freakin' miserable right now, like a caged animal."

Wilson said he hopes to throw a bullpen session or two this week and then most likely go on a minor-league rehab assignment.

"Every day has been a big step forward," he said. "I just want to keep progressing."

Gardenhire was asked for his opinion about Mariners star Robinson Cano, who was suspended 80 games Tuesday for violating baseball's policy against performance-enhancing drugs.

"No one in baseball likes to hear these things," he said. "He's one of the better players in the game and it's unfortunate. It's always something — you take something you think has no issues and it does. That's sad.

"The game needs these players. The game needs him playing in games. Now he has to sit out a while. And he's got a broken hand on top of it. I am sure this isn't an easy time for him."

Gardenhire made it clear he had no inside information regarding the suspension, but he is willing to give Cano the benefit of the doubt.

"He will pay the price for something I don't really believe he had intention of doing," Gardenhire said. "That's just my opinion, not knowing anything really deep about it. I just know him and I think he just got caught up in something — he got a shot of something that screwed him up a little.

"That's me talking. No depth to it whatsoever. It's just my feelings for him because I really like him ... I read his statement and I believe the guy. I believe it just happened and he feels really bad about it."

Center fielder Leonys Martin (hamstring) has been taking batting practice and doing baseball activity on the field the last two days. He is eligible to come off the disabled list Friday and he has set his sights on doing just that.

But Gardenhire pumped the brakes on that Tuesday.

"He had his MRI and there were things in there that we'd seen from a previous injury," he said. "He probably stretched out an old injury, that's what the strain was about. But going forward, we've got to slow him down a lot.

"He's anxious and he wants to get back in there. But we have to get all the swelling out. He's better now, but he's still got some work to do."

The Tigers will call up left-hander Ryan Carpenter from Toledo Wednesday to make his second spot start of the season for the Tigers. He was 1-3 with a 5.01 ERA in seven starts at Toledo. He went three innings and allowed three runs in his Major-League debut against the Pirates back in April.

... The Tigers will announce a corresponding move after the game.

... Right fielder Nick Castellanos (finger) returned to the lineup Tuesday. Just in time to face Indians' starter Josh Tomlin, who he's hit .323 (10 for 31) against, with three doubles, a home run and five RBIs.

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### **Resilient Tigers rally, bullpen holds on in thriller**

Detroit — You can't overreact to a win in May, even one as improbable and impressive as the one here Tuesday night.

"Today is over, go get 'em tomorrow," Nick Castellanos said. "Don't get too high. Don't get too low."

Right. But at the same time, you can't deny there might be something special percolating with this young Tigers baseball team.

"Absolutely," said Castellanos, who returned from a two-game absence (finger) and delivered his fourth home run of the year. "Anytime we have a win like this, it continues to build and to reassure us that we can do it. We can do it. Just keep feeding the beast."

The Tigers looked dead in the water a couple of times, trailing 5-1 early and then 8-3 in the sixth inning.

But they kept punching and kicking and clawing and with a five-run outburst in the bottom of the seventh — much of it against elite Indians reliever Andrew Miller — they found a way to beat the Central Division-leading Indians for a second straight game, 9-8.

"I've said this from Day 1, we aren't quitting," said lefty reliever Daniel Stumpf, who worked a Houdini-like escape in the eighth inning. "We are going to battle to the very last out."

This has been a rough stretch for Stumpf, who had allowed five runs in his last 1 2/3 innings entering play Tuesday. But he was one of the few rested arms left in the bullpen.

So, when he took the mound in the eighth inning, there was nobody getting up to bail him out. The one-run lead was his alone to protect.

"We told him, 'You got it,'" manager Ron Gardenhire said. "He needed to pitch. He needed to give us an inning. We honestly talked about him maybe giving us two innings. He hadn't pitched in a while and he's a live arm. A lot of guys down there were beat up from the doubleheader (Saturday) and the other games."

Stumpf promptly loaded the bases with no out — a double, and back-to-back walks. Pitching coach Chris Bosio went to the mound to reinforce to Stumpf, it was up to him, sink or swim.

Nobody was warming up in the bullpen.

"Stumpf got himself in trouble and he had to get himself out," Gardenhire said. "He created the stinking mess, clean it up."

Bosio, who went out to give Stumpf a breather and get him refocused, told him to attack the next hitter, right-handed hitting Brendan Guyer. Two left-handed hitters were up after him.

"My main deal was, there's two guys I wasn't going to let beat me," Stumpf said. "Just stay composed and attack that guy."

Guyer had hit a grand slam in the first inning off starter Francisco Liriano, but Stumpf struck him out on four pitches. Then he got left-handed swinging Jason Kipnis to bounce into an inning-ending, 4-6-3 double-play.

"After I struck Guyer out, I had a lefty coming up and I just said, it's time to get back to my element," Stumpf said. "Got him to hit the ground ball and I got great defense behind me. My team really picked me up."

And vice-versa.

There was drama in the ninth, too. Closer Shane Greene worked his fourth straight game.

"He's the one guy who comes in every day and walks up to me right before the game and says, 'I'm good,'" Gardenhire said. "'Closing situation, I got it.' He's one of those rubber-armed guys who knows what he's doing. I don't worry about him as much as some others.

"But there is a breaking point and there will be a day when somebody else is going to have to close."

Greene got the first two outs quickly, and had the third out in his hand — a tapper by Rajai Davis back to the mound. But he threw it wild and Davis, the tying run, was on second base.

"He made a mess for himself right there," Gardenhire said. "He had to collect himself and get a big out, and he did."

Greene regrouped and got the dangerous Michael Brantley to ground out to end the game.

"That was some kind of ballgame, all the way around," Gardenhire said. "Guys kept competing. And we had a big inning against a guy not too many teams get big innings against."

About that five-run seventh inning: The Tigers sent 11 batters to the plate.

First against reliever Dan Otero, John Hicks got his second single of the game and scored on James McCann's second double of the game.

After Jose Iglesias moved McCann to third by hitting a ground ball to the right side of the infield, Dixon Machado brought him home with a ground ball to shortstop Francisco Lindor, whose throw bounced off catcher Yan Gomes.

It was 8-6 at that point and manager Terry Francona summoned Miller, who had recently come off the disabled list.

JaCoby Jones, who homered in the first inning, greeted Miller with a double, scoring Machado. Pete Kozma singled to score Jones and tie the score.

Then, with one out, Miller shockingly walked three straight hitters — Victor Martinez and Niko Goodrum to load the bases, then Hicks to bring in the winning run.

“The first pitch was a heater away that wasn’t close,” Hicks said. “Then a slider close to me that was kind of an easy take. Then I got to 3-0. I was taking the whole way. He threw a strike, then throws me another slider that was down and in that wasn’t (tempting). I was looking small spot at that point.

“He threw me pitches that I wasn’t looking for, so it worked out.”

The Tigers will be up against it in the series finale Wednesday afternoon. Lefty Ryan Carpenter was called up from Toledo to make his second spot start of the season. And the bullpen is taxed.

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