

Inbox: Could Salazar replace Miller and Allen?

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

Indians Inbox will return on Monday. Got a Tribe Q in the wake of the ALDS exit and as this important offseason begins? Submit here with #IndiansInbox or send to jordan.bastian@mlb.com with name & hometown.

This will be an interesting storyline to follow throughout this offseason and during Spring Training. Right now, the Indians' goal is to get Danny Salazar healthy, while weighing whether it makes sense to tender him a contract through the arbitration process.

Salazar avoided arbitration with a \$5 million contract last season and -- considering he did not throw a pitch in the Majors in 2018 -- it stands to reason that his '19 salary would be in the same range. If the Indians think Salazar can contribute next season, then I would think that would be a worthwhile gamble, especially given the cost of pitching on the open market.

If Cleveland returns with its rotation intact, the cast is five strong between Corey Kluber, Carlos Carrasco, Trevor Bauer, Mike Clevinger and Shane Bieber. Adam Plutko is next in line at the moment. The depth behind that group is thin, making Salazar and fellow righty Cody Anderson potentially important alternatives. Anderson is coming back from Tommy John surgery (March 2017), but should be unrestricted come Spring Training.

During a season-end sit-down with reporters, manager Terry Francona noted that both Salazar and Anderson would head into the preseason with the plan of being built up as starting pitchers. Then, if there is a need in the bullpen, both right-handers could then be considered for that type of role. It is worth noting that Salazar has no Minor League options remaining, while Anderson has one.

Salazar underwent an arthroscopic debridement and bursectomy on his right shoulder on July 2 and, barring any further setbacks, could resume throwing by November. When he's been healthy, Salazar has boasted an elite fastball and split-change combination, making the righty one of baseball's best in terms of missing bats. If Cody Allen and Andrew Miller indeed leave via free agency, a healthy Salazar would be a very intriguing bullpen weapon.

@nathan_carder

#IndiansInbox What are the realistic chances Michael Brantley is back next year? He was a steady force in a shakey outfield. Michael Brantley, Allen and Miller are the free agents that Cleveland will need to mull extending a one-year Qualifying Offer (\$17.9 million for 2019) to this offseason. Given the season Brantley just turned in, I could see the Indians floating that one-year deal for the left fielder. The Indians rolled the dice on his \$12 million club option last winter and Brantley posted 3.5 WAR (per Fangraphs). In terms of free-agent dollars, that showing was valued at \$28 million, according to Fangraphs. The Indians have question marks at all three outfield spots, so trying to retain Brantley, who has been with Cleveland for parts of 10 seasons, makes a lot of sense.

@oldwriter1

Any thoughts on an outfield of Brantley, Martin and Andrew McCutchen with Greg Allen as fourth outfielder? Greg Allen can switch-hit, play all three outfield spots and offers speed, so I do think he fits the roster well as a fourth outfielder. As noted in the previous question, I also think it makes sense to try to retain Brantley. As for Leonys Martin, Cleveland needs to weigh whether going to arbitration with him makes sense, considering the serious health scare he had in the second half.

If Martin continues to recover well this winter, then keeping him in the fold via arbitration would seem like a logical decision. The extra year of control, after all, was a part of what made Martin an attractive acquisition for the Tribe. Bradley Zimmer (recovering from right shoulder surgery) might not be ready until mid-season and Tyler Naquin might be sliding to right field now that Lonnie Chisenhall is hitting free agency.

As for Andrew McCutchen, I like where your head's at, Tim. It's not a given that Cleveland will pick up Brandon Guyer's \$3 million club option. If he is not retained, the Indians should target a right-handed complement for their outfield. McCutchen fits the mold, can offer depth at all three positions (while best utilized in the corners) and his 128 OPS+ against lefties indicates that he was 28 percent better than league average against left-handed pitching.

Any chance Indians keep Miller/Allen? #IndiansInbox

Given the subpar season he just had, Allen does not seem like a candidate for the one-year Qualifying Offer. It could also be risky to extend that offer to Miller, even though he seems like a safer bet to have teams overlook his health issues of '18 when considering a multi-year contract. Either way, I seems very unlikely either is back with Cleveland in 2019.

#IndiansInbox

I'll play devil's advocate: trading for Machado would have been better than Hand/Cimber in light and hindsight of, the DS results. Agree or disagree?

Disagree. Part of the reasoning behind acquiring Brad Hand and Adam Cimber was to guard against Allen and Miller leaving via free agency this offseason. It was not only with the 2018 postseason in mind. On top of that, Cleveland acquired Josh Donaldson for the stretch run and playoffs. That was the Tribe's "Machado," so to speak. Now, did Donaldson hit in October? No, he went 1-for-11, but the Tribe's lineup as a whole went ice cold against Houston's overpowering pitching. I liked how the Indians went about those trades. Alas, results do not always align with process.

Detective Allen Gamble

@HattMuml

With all due respect to him, why is VanBo still around? Cubs fired their hitting coach. It seems a shakeup is necessary after our offense collapsed in back to back playoffs. #indiansinbox

First, let's run "VanBo" through the Terry Francona translator. That's the manager's nickname for hitting coach Ty Van Burkleo, who has held that role since Francona came to Cleveland in 2013. After the playoffs, Francona said Van Burkleo, along with the rest of the coaching staff, were in the plans for 2019, barring anyone leaving for jobs with another team.

Francona's reasoning for standing pat and standing by Van Burkleo was looking at the season's body of work -- not just three October losses. In the regular season, the Indians ranked third in the Majors with 818 runs scored, while ranking fourth overall in weighted on-base average (.330), fourth in OPS (.766), sixth in home runs (216) and tied for sixth in weighted runs created plus (105). Cleveland's strikeout rate as an offense (18.9 percent) was also the best in baseball in the regular season.

@GODEVLS

#IndiansInbox What do you think the future holds for Jason Kipnis? - Ryan in Tempe, AZ

Well, as things currently stand, Jason Kipnis is set to earn \$14.7 million in 2019 with Cleveland. If the Indians are unable to trade him this offseason -- the team nearly had a deal with the Mets last winter -- then the question will be how to handle Kipnis' place on the field. If Kipnis is in the plans for center, maybe the Indians won't tender a contract to Martin. If Brantley isn't in the plans, maybe Kipnis will slide over to left field.

Francona made a point in his season-end gathering to mention that the team needs to find a way to get a good look at Yandy Diaz in 2019. The easiest way to do that would be to hand him the keys to third base, meaning Jose Ramirez would stay put at second. That would seal Kipnis' fate as an outfielder, if he stays.

Siri tosses scoreless inning in Fall League

AL Central

Indians (Glendale)

Indians No. 6 prospect Yu Chang went 1-for-4 with a single for Glendale. Connor Marabell went 0-for-4. Dalbert Siri pitched a scoreless inning of relief, issuing one walk.

Milwaukee's Craig Counsell, right or wrong, makes the move that works: NLCS Take

By Paul Hoynes

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Nothing against Craig Counsell, manager of the Milwaukee Brewers. Yes, he kept the Indians from winning the 1997 World Series, not once, but twice in Game 7. First there was the game-tying sacrifice fly in the ninth inning off Jose Mesa. Then he scored the series-winning run when Edgar Renteria's soft single barely cleared Charlie Nagy's glove on its way to center field in the 11th.

It does the soul little good, however, to dwell too long on such memories. Let bygones be bygones.

Still, I wondered what Counsell was doing in Game 3 of the NLCS at Dodger Stadium on Monday night. He had a 4-0 lead with one out in the eighth inning when he called lefty Josh Hader out of the bullpen. Hader struck out David Freese and Matt Kemp on eight pitches that rubbed shoulders with 100 mph.

For most of the world it appeared Hader was in the game to get the last five outs. A 4-0 lead isn't a save situation, but managers such as Terry Francona will often commit to their closers in the late innings with such a lead. The thinking being --- why not let your closer start with a clean inning because if someone gets on base, you're going to use him anyway.

But after dispatching Freese and Kemp, Counsell gave Hader the rest of the night off and called for Jeremy Jeffress to start the ninth. Jeffress, like Hader, had a great regular season. But he lost Game 2 of the NLCS when he gave up two runs on three hits in the seventh inning.

What could have prompted Counsell to make that move? Hader had thrown three innings in Milwaukee's Game 1 win, just the second time he's done that this year, a year which saw him go 6-1 with a 2.43 ERA with 143 strikeouts in 81 1/3 innings.

Counsell was obviously thinking about Games 4 and 5 against the Dodgers. He wanted to have Hader available, but don't you have to win the game at hand? If you look too far down the road in the postseason, sometimes you end up going home before you get there.

Jeffress loaded the bases with one out in the ninth before striking out Yasmani Grandall and Brian Dozier. During the inning Counsell made at least two calls to the bullpen while pacing the dugout like a man who had just out-thought himself.

I'm still not convinced Jeffress for Hader was the right move, but it was the move that worked for the Brewers. They're up 2-1 because of it.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 10.17.2018

Cleveland Indians file complaint to MLB about Astros trying to film inside their dugout during ALDS

By Paul Hoynes

CLEVELAND, Ohio - The Indians have filed a complaint with MLB about the Houston Astros trying to film inside their dugout during the Game 3 of the ALDS at Progressive Field.

An employee of the Astros, holding a cellphone camera, was removed twice by security from the photographer's pit next to the Indians' dugout during Game 3 on Oct. 8. The Astros completed a three-game sweep of the Indians with an 11-3 win that day.

On Oct. 9, the day after Houston's sweep, Boston officials called the Indians to find out what happened. Four days later a similar incident took place at Fenway Park during Game 1 of the ALCS on Saturday between the Astros and Red Sox, according to Metro News.

In the third inning, Fenway Park security removed an Astros employee from a media-credentialed area near the Red Sox's dugout. The man, according to Metro News, had a small camera and was texting frequently. He did not have a media credential.

Boston security was on the alert because of what happened in the ALDS between the Indians and Astros. MLB told Metro News that the matter is being handled internally.

For almost two weeks before the ALDS, the Indians worked hard to protect their signs because of Houston's reputation for stealing signs. The Astros reportedly try to train cameras on the opposing catcher, manager and bench coach in an effort to steal signs and pick up tendencies.

The Indians' preparation was so intense that those close to the situation said it bordered on paranoia. After the sweep Jason Kipnis talked about being out-played, out-scouted and out-coached by the Astros. Mike Clevinger said the Indians had their backs against the wall analytically before the series started. They may have been referring to the Tribe's preparation to prevent Houston's sign stealing. To say nothing of dealing with Justin Verlander, Gerrit Cole and Dallas Keuchel.

The Astros, according to one school of thought, may have just planted the man in the photographer's pit next to the Tribe's dugout as a smokescreen. Manager Terry Francona, bench coach Brad Mills and other coaches are located at the other end of a crowded dugout. So what exactly could he decipher from the camera pit?

If that's true, it would indicate an elaborate scheme.

Complaining about sign stealing is always a two-edged sword in the big leagues because so many teams do it. Boston manager Alex Cora was Houston's bench coach last year when the Astros won the World Series. So if the Astros have any tricks up their sleeve he would know about them.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 10.17.2018

Indians file complaint over man with Astros credentials filming during ALDS By Tom Withers Associated Press 8 hrs ago Comments

The Astros may be defending more than their World Series title.

The champions are under scrutiny after Cleveland filed a complaint to Major League Baseball about a man associated with Houston attempting to film in the Indians' dugout during Game 3 of the AL Division Series last week.

During the Astros' series-clinching win on Oct. 8 at Progressive Field in Cleveland, a man with a cellphone standing by the photographer's pit was removed "several times" by security personnel, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday night. The man's credential was requested by Houston, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

MLB also says it is aware of a report by Metro Boston that a man claiming to be an Astros employee was removed from a credentialed area near the Boston Red Sox dugout during the AL Championship Series opener at Fenway Park. The Red Sox dropped the series opener but have won the past two to take a 2-1 lead.

In a statement, MLB said the matter "will be handled internally" and offered no other details.

While it's yet to be proven if the Astros were doing anything illegal, the two incidents have raised further questions about the use of electronic equipment during games and whether Houston has been cheating.

According to the Metro report, which cited multiple security sources who were on the scene, a man was removed during the third inning of Game 1 on Saturday night at Fenway Park but allowed to stay in the ballpark after another Astros staffer intervened. The report said the man had a small camera and was texting frequently, but did not have a media credential.

Houston manager AJ Hinch and Red Sox manager Alex Cora both said after Boston's 8-2 win Tuesday night in Houston they had heard about the alleged incident.

"I'm aware of something going on, but I haven't been briefed," Hinch said. "I'm worried about the game."

Cora said he has been concerned throughout the season about Red Sox signs being stolen.

"So I mean we do a good job changing sequences and paying attention to details. And we don't get caught up on the whole paranoia thing of the signs," he said. "We try to slow it down. If we feel there's something going on we switch the signs."

When asked if he felt like anything was going on the first two ALCS games at Fenway Park, Cora responded, "No, I don't."

This isn't the first time the Astros have been suspected of cheating.

Earlier this season, Indians pitcher Trevor Bauer intimated on Twitter that Houston's pitchers may have been using banned substances to improve the spin on their pitches. Bauer didn't provide any specifics but his insinuations triggered a social-media storm, which included responses from several Astros players, including pitchers Lance McCullers Jr. and Collin McHugh.

The Indians were swept by the Astros, who after winning twice at home, rolled to an 11-3 win in Game 3. Cleveland was eliminated in the first round for the second year in a row as the AL Central champions batted just .144 as a team and some of the club's top hitters, including All-Star second baseman Jose Ramirez, had brutal series. Ramirez went hitless in 11 at-bats.

Following the game, center fielder Jason Kipnis was critical of his team's performance and said he felt the Indians were overmatched.

"We were just outplayed," Kipnis said. "I wish it weren't that simple. It just seems from top to bottom we were out-scouted, out-pitched, out-coached a little bit. They really did just a fantastic job over there of being ready and prepared before the series. I don't think we were underprepared, they just went out and executed and played the way you need to play to win."

Indians know answer to whether easy division affected them is hidden

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND — The "magic recipe," as Andrew Miller put it, to entering the postseason firing on all cylinders remains the ingredient-by-ingredient formula that every contender hopes to find each October.

The Indians weren't able to locate it before their three-game sweep by the Houston Astros. Corey Kluber was knocked around. Nobody in the lineup outside of Francisco Lindor looked comfortable at the plate. The bullpen faltered. On and on.

There are a number of variables to consider when looking at how a team is performing entering a short, postseason series and trying to predict how they might fare. And most of them are of the unquantifiable variety.

There's the question of rest versus rust down the stretch for a team that has already clinched, as the Indians did with a couple of weeks left in the regular season. There are always timing and rhythm concerns. There's the unknown of how the several off days between the season and the series might affect each player.

The Indians also experienced one variable that isn't often a factor: They had absolutely no pressure from any other team in their division. For virtually the entire season, the Indians knew they'd clinch their third consecutive American League Central crown. They knew they'd have a place in October. They knew they'd avoid the dreaded wild-card game and a possible one-night exit. They even, for the most part, knew they'd be the No. 3 seed.

Everything was locked into place. There was no fear of any team in the division catching up. Did it become a burden? It's something the Indians have to ask themselves, but there's no clear answer. It's difficult in baseball to simply flip the switch. That doesn't necessarily mean the Indians were cruising, but it's true that there was no real need for a sense of urgency until Oct. 5 in Houston. By that time, Justin Verlander was painting the corners at 97 mph, and the Indians were soon bounced from the postseason.

"We tried. It's tough. You can't control who you play or how intense your games are running down the stretch," reliever Andrew Miller said. "Maybe that would've been nice, I don't know. There's probably a million things you can point to why we didn't win three games. It's tough. It's one of those things. You take the hand you're dealt and make the most out of it. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough for us."

Miller was one of a group of players who, thanks to the Indians having such a commanding lead in the division, were able to treat September as essentially a second spring training. The only goal was to be ready by early October. Trevor Bauer also fit into that category. As did Josh Donaldson. Jason Kipnis used the month to get his bearings in center field.

"Obviously, in hindsight, we wish we would have gone a different way because maybe that would have helped us out," Miller said. "You can't pick your division. In a lot of ways, we didn't play as well as we thought we were capable of all year. Maybe it was a good thing we were able to get into the playoffs the way we did because we had guys hurt, we never felt like we maybe tapped our full potential, maybe because we didn't have to."

"If we were in a pennant race, fighting in games in September, maybe that helps us. I don't know. Unfortunately there's no way to go back and get a do-over and set things up the way you want it. You gotta show up when the games start."

There's no way to really know how much of a mental factor the Indians' easy division was on them as they tried to turn it on in the American League Division Series. Last year, it was the opposite case. The Indians went on their historic, 22-game winning streak in August and September and were catapulted to the top of the power rankings by most measures entering the playoffs. They won the first two games of the 2017 ALDS against the New York Yankees and looked to be the hottest team in baseball. Then it collapsed, and the Yankees were celebrating at Progressive Field a few days later after their win in Game 5.

The Indians have been on both ends of the spectrum.

"Yeah, we've asked ourselves similar questions," president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti said. "It's funny because if I were to replay the conversation from last year, it would be the opposite. 'Did you guys push too hard for too long,' right? I'm not sure there's a magic answer there. I think there might be a perception that our guys didn't compete or weren't as intense, but I'm not sure that was actually the case. We went out and competed and tried to win."

MLB looking into alleged suspicious activity from Astros at Fenway Park, Progressive Field

By Ryan Lewis

Major League Baseball is handling multiple incidents of alleged, suspicious activity from the Houston Astros both during the American League Division Series against the Indians and in the American League Championship Series against the Boston Red Sox.

As first detailed by the Metro Times, ballpark security removed a man claiming to be an Astros employee from the camera pit near the Red Sox dugout during Game 1 of the ALCS at Fenway Park, claiming he was frequently texting and using a small camera. The Indians, prior to all of this, had reportedly warned the Astros of similar, suspicious activity during the ALDS.

MLB chief communications officer Pat Courtney acknowledged the incident in Boston, telling the Metro Times, "We are aware of the matter and it will be handled internally."

Yahoo Sports identified the man as Kyle McLaughlin, adding that he was seen aiming a cell phone into the Indians' dugout during their Game 3 loss to the Astros at Progressive Field. According to multiple reports, McLaughlin was removed from the credentialed area near the dugout in Cleveland as well, allegedly prompting the Indians to warn the Red Sox.

The allegations against the Astros don't stop there. According to the same Yahoo Sports report, at least one other team has accused the Astros of cheating this season, citing allegations from the Oakland A's that stemmed from a late-August game in which they believed signs were being stolen and then relayed. Two sources were also cited indicating the Los Angeles Dodgers believed the Astros were stealing signs during last year's World Series.

The three teams involved, officially, have either not commented or said there would be no comment.

Red Sox notebook: Suspicious Astros 'employee' removed from Fenway media area

Jason Mastrodonato, Red Sox Notebook Tuesday, October 16, 2018

HOUSTON -- During Game 1 of the American League Championship Series at Fenway Park on Saturday, the Red Sox learned of possible attempt by the Houston Astros to acquire an unfair advantage, Dave Dombrowski confirmed after the Sox' 8-2 win in Game 3 last night.

Questions stemmed from yesterday's report in the Metro, which said Fenway security guards removed a man with a small camera who was "claiming to be an Astros employee from the media-credentialed area next to the Boston Red Sox dugout."

The security team had been warned to be on the lookout for such a situation after "suspicious activity" in the Astros' Division Series win against the Cleveland Indians, and the man was removed from the area but allowed to stay in the park, according to the report.

Dombrowski said he was aware of the situation on the day of Game 1, when the Red Sox took a 7-2 loss to the Astros.

"It did not affect our first game, what took place," said Dombrowski, the president of baseball operations. "The person was removed much earlier in the game."

Major League Baseball did not respond to request for comment, but Yahoo Sports reported late Tuesday night that multiple teams have accused the Astros of cheating this season, and the Los Angeles Dodgers also believed the Astros were stealing signs during the 2017 World Series, which the Astros won in seven games.

A similar story was written by 92.3 The Fan, a radio station in Cleveland that reported the Indians removed a man wearing a Houston Astros media credential from the camera bay in Game 3 of the Division Series at Progressive Field.

Asked about the allegations after the Sox' Game 3 win, Astros manager A.J. Hinch said, "I'm aware of something going on, but I haven't been briefed. I'm worried about the game."

According to the Yahoo report, the Astros have not been disciplined for anything related to cheating.

Do the Sox' think the Astros will be disciplined this time?

"You've got to ask the commissioner that one," Dombrowski said. "It's one of those that they will handle however they feel is appropriate."

Red Sox manager Alex Cora is known for begin an astute observer of the game, but said he did not think the Astros gained any advantage in Game 1.

Both the Red Sox and Astros have been going with multiple signs with nobody on base during this series.

"I'm always concerned about that throughout the season," Cora said. "So I mean we do a good job changing sequences and paying attention to details. And we don't get caught up on the whole paranoia thing of the signs. We try to slow it down. If we feel there's something going on we switch the signs."

Nunez banged up

Eduardo Nunez is hurt again.

He was removed from the game for pinch-runner Rafael Devers in the fourth inning because of a sore ankle.

"I twisted it on that foul ball down the third base line (by Yuli Gurriel in the first inning)," he said. "It was my ankle. Right ankle. Same ankle I hurt in the last game of the season against the Yankees. That was the same ankle."

After Nunez departed, Devers failed to come up with a hard grounder that cost the Red Sox a run in the fifth inning. Nunez had made a few solid plays before leaving.

With left-handed starter Dallas Keuchel unlikely to face Nunez' spot in the order again and Houston carrying just one lefty in the bullpen, Cora made the decision to pull Nunez and get the left-handed hitting Devers into the game after Nunez' single.

"I really wanted him to get one more at-bat against Dallas, because that's why he was in the lineup," Cora said. "But at that point I wanted to go take him out of the game, get some treatment and put (Devers) in the game."

Sale iffy for Game 5

Chris Sale's status for Game 5 is up in the air.

Sale, who spent most of Sunday at Mass General Hospital with a stomach illness, rejoined the team yesterday. Sale will throw a bullpen session today.

Sale told Cora, "I'm good enough" to pitch in Game 5 tomorrow, though Cora said before the game that the Sox are considering a contingency plan.

"Yeah we're thinking about it," Cora said. "We still think he can do it but obviously we have to wait. Like I said yesterday, this is more than us, it's about him and how he feels. I'm not going to put him in a situation where he gets hurt because he's not ready to pitch."

If Sale can't go, Eduardo Rodriguez and/or the bullpen will handle the game.

Price in relief?

The Sox are hoping David Price can continue the trend of starters pitching out of relief during these games in Houston.

"Maybe (tonight in Game 4), all depends how he feels," Cora said.

Price was in the bullpen last night and the TBS cameras spotted him raking the bullpen mound during the game.

"I was just fixin' the left mound," Price told the Eagle Tribune. "When we scored, it turned into 'the rally rake.'" . . .

Mitch Moreland's injured hamstring is still improving, but the Red Sox are uncertain if he'll be able to start tonight against right-hander Charlie Morton in Game 4.

Steve Pearce started at first base again last night. Moreland pinch-hit for the catcher with the bases loaded in the eighth inning and was plunked by Roberto Osuna to drive in the fourth Sox run of the game, just before Jackie Bradley Jr. hit a grand slam. Moreland has reached safely in all three of his pinch-hitting appearances this series.

Boston Herald LOADED: 10.17.2018\

Astros employee removed from photo pit near Red Sox dugout in Game 1 of ALCS

By Alex Speier

HOUSTON — Major League Baseball confirmed on Tuesday it investigated the suspicious actions of a Houston Astros team employee at Fenway Park during Game 1 of the American League Championship Series.

Fenway Park security identified an unauthorized Astros representative monitoring the Red Sox dugout with a cellphone camera from the first-base photographer's well during the early innings of Game 1 of the ALCS.

"We are aware of the matter, and it will be handled internally," MLB said in a statement.

As first reported by Metro Boston, the Astros were described as initially uncooperative when the security team questioned the employee.

An industry source told the Globe that MLB's investigation concluded the Astros employee was trying to determine if the Red Sox were using dugout video monitors to steal signs from the Astros.

"This isn't sign-relaying," the source said of the activities by the Houston employee.

The man, identified by Yahoo! Sports as Kyle McLaughlin, was discovered during the first three innings of the game. He was removed by security and told not to return.

The behavior that was stopped, according to the source, didn't provide a competitive advantage for the Astros.

Houston manager A.J. Hinch claimed he was unclear of the details of the incident.

"I'm aware of something going on, but I haven't been briefed," he said. "I'm worried about the game."

Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski was informed of the situation during Game 1 and later briefed by MLB.

Dombrowski dismissed the idea that McLaughlin influenced the outcome of the game, a 7-2 Houston victory.

"It really is in Major League Baseball's hands. I'm not concerned about it, though," Dombrowski said. "That was taken care of very early in the game. That didn't have anything to do with the game."

"Really, all I can say is it's in Major League Baseball's hands. It was done early in the game, caught early in the game . . . it did not cost us anything."

Yahoo! Sports reported that the Indians caught McLaughlin taking photographs of their dugout during Game 3 of their Division Series against Houston and had him removed.

The Indians are believed to have warned the Red Sox.

"I'm always concerned about [sign-stealing] throughout the season," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said Tuesday.

"We do a good job changing sequences and paying attention to details. And we don't get caught up on the whole paranoia thing of the signs. . . . If we feel there's something going on, we switch the signs."

Since August, the Red Sox have been using multiple signs even with the bases empty. They did the same during the AL Division Series against the Yankees.

The Red Sox aren't alone in taking extra precautions.

"If you watched [the Astros] series before with the Indians, Cleveland was doing multiple signs, too," catcher Blake Swihart said.

"We were doing it in New York. You just don't know what's going to happen, and now it's crunch time. You want to give yourself the best chance to win."

Added catcher Sandy Leon: "You've got to be careful. You've got to be one step ahead of everybody. That's why we're doing that kind of stuff."

In 2017, MLB fined the Red Sox for the wireless relaying of signals to the dugout via a device worn by a team trainer.

At the same time, the league fined the Yankees for violating a rule related to the use of a dugout phone.

Such events contribute to the sense that the use of technology to steal signs is widely practiced.

"It's part of the game now. . . . And if you know a fastball is coming you have a better chance of hitting it than if you don't know it's coming," Swihart said. "The game is changing. It's making it tougher. You see a lot of pitchers and catchers get crossed up now — it's crazy.

"The game sequences, the signals that you come up with are crazy. You've just got to stay in tune with everything."

Boston Globe LOADED: 10.17.2018

What Alex Cora said about the MLB investigation into an Astros employee near the Red Sox dugout in Game 1

By Mark Dunphy October 16, 2018

Red Sox manager Alex Cora does not think there was any funny business going on during the first two games of the American League Championship Series.

On Tuesday, Metro's Danny Picard reported Fenway Park security removed a man claiming to be an Astros employee from the photo well near the Red Sox dugout during the third inning of Game 1. The man had a "small camera" and was "texting frequently," according to Picard.

The Boston Globe's Alex Speier confirmed an Astros employee was removed from the well, adding that an MLB investigation into the matter concluded the employee was on a "spy-vs-spy mission" to determine whether the Red Sox were using dugout video monitors to steal Houston's signs. Speier reported the Astros were not seeking to steal signs of their own.

Cora was asked about the situation after Boston's 8-2 win in Game 3. The manager noted he had just recently heard the news, but maintained the matter is an issue for the league office.

"They'll do what they have to do," he said.

Cora served as the bench coach for the Astros last season before taking over the top job in Boston. When asked if he thought there was anything going on in those first two games at Fenway Park against his old club, Cora responded, "No, I don't."

However, that doesn't mean the Red Sox aren't taking precautions to ensure their signs stay safe. Cora told reporters he is always concerned about potential sign-stealing throughout the season, adding Boston does a "good job" changing sequences and paying attention to details.

It doesn't sound like the Sox will be sending a spy into the Minute Maid Park photo well any time soon.

"We don't get caught up on the whole paranoia thing of the signs," Cora said. "We try to slow it down. If we feel there's something going on we switch the signs.