



### **WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF AUGUST 2, 2018**

"Covey can't go deep into start vs. KC in defeat" ... Max Gelman, MLB.com

"Giolito named to board for Hooton Foundation" ... Max Gelman, MLB.com

"Eloy Jimenez and Dylan Cease named White Sox minor leaguers of the month" ... Ben Bokun, NBC Sports Chicago

"What have you done for me lately? How the White Sox top starting-pitching prospects have fared of late" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Is the top of the White Sox lineup the long-term spot for Yoan Moncada — no matter who's pitching?" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Dylan Covey struggles in White Sox's 10-5 loss to Royals as dog days begin" ... Phil Rogers, Chicago Tribune

"Slumping Reynaldo Lopez asserts he's fine physically, but needs better focus" ... Phil Rogers, Chicago Tribune

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### **Covey can't go deep into start vs. KC in defeat**

By Max Gelman / MLB.com / August 2, 2018

CHICAGO -- Dylan Covey's defense didn't do him many favors Wednesday night at Guaranteed Rate Field, as the young right-hander struggled against the Royals.

Covey lasted just 4 1/3 innings, giving up seven runs (four earned) in a 10-5 White Sox loss. Wednesday marked the eighth time in Covey's last nine starts that he's pitched five or fewer innings. In six of those outings, he has not completed the fifth. Kansas City scored five runs in the fifth, four of which were credited to the right-hander.

Though Covey's issues against the Royals could largely be chalked up to defense, according to White Sox manager Rick Renteria, he still grinded through some iffy command.

"If we make a couple plays, he's probably through the fifth," Renteria said. "We were hoping to get him through six innings today. He left a few pitches up that they got to, but there were a couple plays that we didn't help ourselves with."

Covey's frustrations stem from a lack of consistency, saying he doesn't feel "free and easy" on the mound. Relying heavily on his sinker, Covey said he feels at his best when he feels loose rather than trying to be too precise.

"When I try to overthrow things and do too much, then I'm pulling the fastball across the zone, not getting it to the right spots," Covey said. "In games I don't have success in, I noticed I'm really trying to tense up to get that ball where it needs to go."

"If I can be free and easy and let my mechanics take over and not try to muscle up anything and not be tense on the mound, be free and easy and let my pitches work how they should, [I should have success], and that's the mindset I've had in the games I've had success on."

Despite breezing through the first two innings, Covey began to unravel in the third, when the Royals loaded the bases with no outs courtesy of two walks and an error. Covey found some luck when Whit Merrifield grounded into a 1-2-3 double play, but Alex Gordon, who finished with a home run and four RBIs, followed with a two-run double to give Kansas City its first lead of the night.

Covey gave up another run in the fourth after retiring the first two batters of the inning and couldn't rebound in the fifth. He induced a leadoff flyout from Adalberto Mondesi, but the next four batters reached on two singles, a walk and a Yoan Moncada fielding error. Covey was subsequently removed after an RBI single by Lucas Duda.

"I'm thinking going six innings at that point and didn't execute a pitch to Duda," Covey said. "Line-drive base hit, and the game went from there."

Down 10-1, Chicago scored three runs in the sixth. Daniel Palka worked an RBI walk and Leury Garcia drove home two more with a single. Garcia added an RBI single in the eighth and has now driven in at least three in two of his last four contests.

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Moncada gets to Junis again: Moncada got the White Sox going in the first inning with his 14th home run of the season. Oddly, the leadoff homer wasn't his first this season against Junis. Back on April 26, Moncada also hit a similar line-drive shot off the Royals starter in Kansas City.

"I like to be in the leadoff spot because I have the opportunity to do many things," Moncada said through team interpreter Billy Russo. "I can be aggressive first pitch, but also, I can take many pitches to help the guys who are coming up behind me. And I can get on base, and that's one of the strengths of my game. I can definitely take advantage of that spot."

Asked if Moncada, who has struggled against left-handed pitching this season, could become the full-time leadoff hitter, Renteria said, "I think that if he continues to have good right-handed at-bats and it balances out on the whole, yeah. I think at the leadoff spot, he would be a guy that gets on base a lot, obviously takes a lot of pitches. And he's continuing to improve on that side, so as we continue to move forward and he gets more at-bats under his belt, you never know."

#### SOUND SMART

Jose Abreu recorded his 31st double of the season, joining Magglio Ordoñez as the only players in White Sox history to hit at least 30 doubles in five straight seasons. Ordoñez accomplished the feat from 1999-2003.

#### HE SAID IT

"Well today was certainly a better outing, and we saw the velocity that everybody had been talking about. I thought his direction to the plate was a lot better today than his first outing. ... He was behind the ball, I think he got up to 100 [mph] today in one particular pitch, threw a breaking ball looked fine. But today was a much better outing for him in terms of just attacking the strike zone. Didn't look like he was muscling up, just a cleaner delivery." -- Renteria, on the recently called-up Thyago Vieira

#### UP NEXT

The White Sox will look to avoid being swept by the last-place Royals on Thursday at 1:10 p.m. CT. Reynaldo Lopez (4-9, 4.57 ERA) will take the mound for Chicago, aiming to get back on track after a rough patch of recent starts. Lopez has given up 18 runs in his last 17 innings, equating to an unsavory 9.53 ERA. Brad Keller (4-4, 3.43) will oppose Lopez for Kansas City.

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## **Giolito named to board for Hooton Foundation**

By Max Gelman / MLB.com / August 1, 2018

CHICAGO -- The Taylor Hooton Foundation, a non-profit organization aiming to raise awareness about the dangers of performance-enhancing drugs and anabolic steroids in youth sports, announced that White Sox pitcher Lucas Giolito has been named to the foundation's advisory board.

Giolito became involved because he wants to do his part to "help keep the game clean," he said. The foundation reached out to him in Spring Training, and though he said the board hasn't convened yet, he's looking forward to the first meeting.

"Just the unfair advantage it causes and how that can hurt baseball," Giolito said. "Then on top of that, just trying to set a good example for the younger generation of baseball players and athletes beyond that to know the risks involved in anabolic steroids, HGH, things like that."

A total of 38 players from around the Majors are on the advisory board, including members from 28 of the 30 MLB teams (the other two teams' representatives were traded). Members of the board participate in the foundation's "It's All Me" campaign and help educate local youth communities about steroids and performance-enhancing drugs in the best ways they see fit.

After the death of Taylor Hooton in 2004 following his use of anabolic steroids, Hooton's family created the foundation in memory of the 17-year-old.

"A lot of times, people focus on the reward gained from those and they don't worry so much about the long-term damage it can cause to your body," Giolito said, adding he wants to, as a role model, "bring awareness to all those things."

Lopez continuing to work on focus

Following Reynaldo Lopez's last start on Friday against the Blue Jays, the right-hander acknowledged he wasn't keeping his focus on the mound.

Lopez allowed a career-high eight runs in the 10-5 loss, giving up five home runs in the process. While some had speculated fatigue could be a factor, manager Rick Renteria ruled that out before Wednesday's game with the Royals.

Renteria said he sat down with Lopez, pitching coach Don Cooper and bullpen coach Curt Hasler to try to hammer out a plan going forward to help Lopez hone his focus.

"We had a conversation with him to see how he was doing," Renteria said. "He said that physically he feels great, there's nothing wrong with him from a physical aspect. He truly felt like he wasn't focused on doing his job. We wanted to make sure that we made an adjustment if we needed to if there was a fatigue factor involved.

"It has nothing to do with the physical depletion on his ability to do things," Renteria continued. "He just felt that he wasn't giving us a commitment, focally, when he was pitching and he was going to try to make the adjustment."

Young players adjusting to dog days

It's no secret that the White Sox have young talent developing throughout their Minor League system. But Renteria noted that at the Major League level, it can sometimes be challenging for young players to adjust to the 162-game season.

Now that the calendar has turned to August, players are learning to overcome the "hump on your way to the finish line" that comes with the dog days of summer.

"These guys are now seeing a little bit of what it is to still have two months of the regular season," Renteria said. "They have to consider that hopefully in the near future they're not looking to just finish at the end of September but continue to push.

"They've got to find ways to put themselves in a position to continue to finish. I think they're learning about that, something some of the guys that have been here since last year have been through already."

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### **Eloy Jimenez and Dylan Cease named White Sox minor leaguers of the month**

By Ben Bokun / NBC Sports Chicago / August 1, 2018

Fans may have heard this already, but White Sox prospects Eloy Jimenez and Dylan Cease were utterly dominant throughout July.

That's why they've deservedly been named the organization's minor leaguers of the month after a vote by a panel of Chicago area media members.

Jimenez, the White Sox Minor League Player of the Month, hit .435 with six home runs and 13 RBIs last month with Triple-A Charlotte. His power was virtually unparalleled in the minors during that time, when he obtained an .839 slugging percentage and a monstrous 1.293 OPS in 16 games.

Since his June 21 promotion to play with the Knights, Jimenez sits with a .376/.423/1.116 slash line in 27 games at the highest minor-league level. His batting average is the best in the International League and he's also tallied eight home runs and 17 RBIs in 101 at-bats.

The 21-year-old outfielder received the same honor as Minor League Player of the Month back in May. He was even named a 2018 Southern League midseason All-Star for his performance with Double-A Birmingham.

This year between two minor-league levels, his statistics have combined for a .337 batting average, 18 dingers, 59 RBIs and a .601 slugging percentage in 2018. He's hit the ball extremely hard this season, causing many to question when he will be called up to play for the White Sox.

"As I like to say there's patience and then there's patience. We're exercising the double patience now," White Sox executive vice-president Ken Williams said about the club's prospects in a recent interview with NBC Sports Chicago.

Cease's season on the mound hasn't been anything less than stellar. Last month's Minor League Pitcher of the Month went 2-0 with a 1.20 ERA in 30 innings of work at the Double-A level. He struck out 42 batters and held opponents to a .165 batting average over five July starts with Birmingham.

On the year in both Single-A (Winston-Salem) and Double-A, the right-hander is a combined 11-2 with a 2.71 ERA over 19 starts. He has 131 strikeouts in 106 2/3 innings in 2018. These numbers give Cease a tie for the fifth-most wins out of any minor-league pitcher this season.

The 22-year-old prospect even threw 2/3 innings of scoreless baseball in the All-Star Futures Game on July 15, and was a Carolina League midseason All-Star for his play with Single-A Winston-Salem.

Williams even thinks Cease has the stuff to play in the major leagues today.

"Dylan Cease, he could pitch in the big leagues right now, but what we want is people to be able to compete at a championship level when they get here, not have so much of a growth curve to get on," Williams said.

According to MLB Pipeline, Jimenez is the No. 1 prospect in Chicago's farm system, while Cease is No. 5.

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## **What have you done for me lately? How the White Sox top starting-pitching prospects have fared of late**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago/ August 1, 2018

With the exception of the outfield, no position in the White Sox loaded farm system seems to have more depth than starting pitching — and potentially big-time starting pitching, at that.

Michael Kopech is still one of the top 15 prospects in baseball, and Dylan Cease and Dane Dunning are not far behind in the top 100. Recent shuffling in MLB Pipeline's rankings dropped Alec Hansen out of the top 100, but it hasn't been long since he was in that group, too.

A look at all those names along with the young guys currently pitching at the major league level — Carlos Rodon, Lucas Giolito and Reynaldo Lopez — sets up a pretty appealing rotation of the future, a crowded one where competition will be needed to find the five best guys. So how are these candidates for those future spots on the starting staff faring of late?

Kopech's up-and-down season is most definitely in an upswing at the moment. His last four starts have been pretty fantastic from a results perspective. He's got a 2.25 ERA and 32 strikeouts in that span, which has lasted 24 innings. He's also walked only four hitters in those four games, an important note for someone who struggled with his command at points during this season. In fact, in the seven starts prior to this four-game stretch, he walked 31 batters in 31 innings. Four in 24 innings is, obviously, much better.

Kopech is the lone pitcher mentioned to this point pitching at the Triple-A level, which means the White Sox could opt to promote him to the big leagues at some point before this season is over. Consistency has been a bit of an issue during much of the season for Kopech, though if this recent success can keep going, he could answer questions about that inconsistency. It's important to note, too, that as general manager Rick Hahn has mentioned repeatedly throughout the season, there are things that the player-development folks in the organization are looking for that aren't easily found in a box score. So good results and big league readiness don't always line up.

While outfielder Eloy Jimenez has been tearing it up at the plate at multiple levels and has created his own conversation about when a promotion to the bigs will happen, Cease — who was acquired in the same trade as Jimenez last summer — has arguably been the best news to come out of the White Sox system this season.

Cease earned a spot in the Futures Game as part of All-Star festivities last month, and boy did he deserve it. He's got a 2.71 ERA in 19 starts this season between Class A Winston-Salem and Double-A Birmingham, and he's actually put up better numbers since his promotion to the Double-A level, with a 2.34 ERA in six starts. He's got a 1.20 ERA in his last five starts, he's struck out at least seven batters in each of his six starts at Birmingham, and he's turned in back-to-back scoreless outings, with no runs allowed in his last 17.2 innings.

Dunning is hard to place in this conversation because of an elbow injury that's had him on the shelf for weeks. His last start came in late June, and he was in the midst of a strong campaign, with a 2.71 ERA in 15 starts between Class A Winston-Salem and Double-A Birmingham. But this long layoff has provided only one answer to the oft-asked question, "what have you done for me lately?"

Hansen is the only one of the highest rated of the starting-pitching prospects to not provide something worth getting excited about this season. After a forearm injury delayed his season debut until mid June, the numbers have not been good: He's got a 6.56 ERA in nine starts and has walked 42 batters compared to 35 strikeouts.

Hansen just made his shortest start of the year, a 1.1-inning outing over the weekend that featured four runs and seven walks. That after he walked a season-high nine hitters in his previous start.

All this is, of course, without mentioning the successes of prospects who aren't ranked quite as highly. Jordan Stephens gave up six runs in a brief outing last week, but prior to that he posted a 3.44 ERA over his previous six starts. Jimmy Lambert and Blake Battenfield have put up some good numbers at the lower levels of the system. And recently drafted Konor Pilkington and recently acquired Kodi Medeiros are highly thought of enough to slide into the organization's top 20 prospects.

With Rodon pitching very well at the major league level and Giolito and Lopez continuing to go through their own developments and showing sporadic flashes of brilliance, the rotation of the future looks promising. Of course, there's still plenty of time before it completely falls into place. But what's happened lately with the highest-rated pitchers in the system has been a very positive development.

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### **Is the top of the White Sox lineup the long-term spot for Yoan Moncada — no matter who's pitching?**

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / August 1, 2018

From the get-go, one of the biggest stories of this developmental season on the South Side has been the progression of Yoan Moncada.

And while there's plenty to talk about when it comes to where the young second baseman stands through the first four months of his first full season in the major leagues, one set of numbers continue to jump off the page. Specifically, it's his lefty-righty splits, and with that comes the set of splits showing how he fares batting leadoff and how he fares in all other positions in the White Sox lineup.

Those two are tied directly to one another, obviously, because manager Rick Renteria bats Moncada leadoff against right-handed starters and further down in the lineup against left-handed starters.

Among the other areas the still-developing Moncada is trying to improve — his 145 strikeouts are the most in the majors, and he committed his 15th error of the season in Tuesday night's loss to the visiting Kansas City Royals — he's still trying to find success against left-handed hurlers.

After a great night at the plate Tuesday (he hit a homer on the first pitch in the bottom of the first and reached base three more times), he's slashing .248/.330/.459 against righties versus .168/.250/.263 against lefties. The batting-position numbers aren't dissimilar: .254/.337/.467 when leading off, just nine hits in 74 at-bats everywhere else in the order.

This is Moncada's first full season in the bigs, so drawing conclusions about what kind of hitter he'll be for the remainder of his career is ill advised and near impossible. But it's valid to be curious over what kind of benefits Moncada is receiving from being moved around in the order, especially when you see something like Tuesday night's homer. A leadoff man that can do something like that can be mighty valuable for any team.

"I think it's more that it benefits the whole team," Renteria said of dropping Moncada in the lineup against lefties. "He's still going to get his at-bats, he's still gonna get his opportunities. The leadoff hitter in a ballgame is a leadoff hitter once in the ballgame. That's it. As the game progresses, the game dictates what you are. You may lead off the inning later on in the ballgame, so at that particular point he's a leadoff hitter."

It's a perfectly sensible response that many a manager has given when asked about that leadoff spot.

But while the White Sox are going through this stage of their rebuilding effort, they're trying to figure out exactly what they have in so many young players. And, while Moncada is far more advanced than some of the prospects still developing in the lower levels of the minor league system, he's still just 23 years old and not yet a finished product. So is Moncada a long-term leadoff man no matter who's pitching? It's certainly where he likes hitting the most.

"I like to be in the leadoff spot because I have the opportunity to do many things. I can be aggressive first pitch, but also I can take many pitches to help the guys who are coming up behind me. And I can get on base, and that's one of the strengths of my game," Moncada said through a translator. "I can definitely take advantage of that spot."

"I feel good batting anywhere. But I feel more comfortable and I like it most being a leadoff hitter. In any spot of the lineup that the manager writes your name down, you have to do your job. It's not like if I'm hitting sixth or seventh, I think, 'I can do this because I'm not the leadoff guy.' No. It doesn't matter in which spot of the lineup you are hitting, you need to do your job."

Renteria is using this strategy of moving Moncada back and forth depending on the hand of the pitcher because of what the numbers look like. But if the numbers were equal, would he be there all the time?

"I think that if he continues to have good right-handed at-bats and it balances out on the whole, yeah," Renteria said. "I think at the leadoff spot he would be a guy that gets on base a lot, obviously takes a lot of pitches. And he's continuing to improve on that side, so as we continue to move forward and he gets more at-bats under his belt, you never know."

"I still think that in general, no matter who we have, we're still trying to give them the best matchups to try to strike as much as we can early and then build from that."

Moncada is working with hitting coach Todd Steverson to improving his results against left-handers on a daily basis. Until he's able to have more success against lefties, Renteria's lineup strategy will likely stay the same. But that's what this developmental season is about, young players working toward the kinds of players they'll be the next time the White Sox are ready to contend for a championship.

"I've been doing some drills in the cage and even in BP. I've been talking a lot with Trick, and as a hitting coach he knows the things that we need to do in order to get better," Moncada said. "I think all the advice I've been getting from him have been very helpful."

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### **Dylan Covey struggles in White Sox's 10-5 loss to Royals as dog days begin**

By Phil Rogers/ Chicago Tribune / August 1, 2018

August has arrived, yet there's still no end in sight for major-league teams, especially one like the White Sox.

It's a young mix, and players know the only race they'll have is the one to avoid setting a franchise record for losses. But it's an important time for development and evaluation, which is why Dylan Covey was so disappointed after allowing seven runs in 4 1/3 innings on Wednesday night, why Yoan Moncada was bummed to follow his 14th homer with his 16th error.

The 10-5 loss to the Royals was the 107th game for the Sox, which means they have 55 left. They're on pace to go 56-106, matching their 162-game low-water mark from 1970, and they'll play 13 of their next 30 games against the Yankees, Red Sox and Indians.

Yikes.

Covey said the problem against the Royals was his lack of command, not the time of the year.

"I feel like at this level it's tough all throughout the year," said the right-hander, who is 4-7 with a 5.57 ERA. "I feel good physically. I feel strong mentally. I've just had an up and down last few outings."

"You're getting to a point in the season where you've been driving and working, doing everything you can to put yourself in a good position," manager Rick Renteria said. "As a club, (you're) always pushing to try to contend. We're not in that situation. We're in a 'continuing-to-develop' mode. These guys now are seeing a little bit of what it is to still have two months of the regular season (left)."

Twelve White Sox players have yet to spend a full season in the major leagues. They are in uncharted territory, gaining experience that should help them when top prospects and free-agent additions arrive and rebuilding ideally turns into contending.

“Hopefully in the near future they’re not looking to just finish at the end of September but continue to push,” Renteria said. “They’ve got to find ways to put themselves in a position to continue to finish. I think they’re learning about that.”

Tim Anderson was back in the lineup after being yanked in the sixth inning Tuesday when he didn’t leave the batter’s box on a ball that turned into a bizarre fielder’s choice (third base to second base to first base for one out). He made a great play to start the game, ranging far to his right and firing a long, accurate throw to retire the Royals’ Whit Merrifield — but that was one of very few Sox highlights.

Yoan Moncada’s leadoff home run provided some false hope. The story of the game was the 10 runs the Royals put on the board between the third and sixth innings, making fans wonder if Renteria would bring in Matt Davidson for another save-the-bullpen appearance.

There are going to be a lot more of these nights between now and 2020 or 2021 — whenever the White Sox become a threat to the American League’s better teams — so Renteria will monitor the team’s approach as much as anything. He sent a message when he benched Anderson on Tuesday but remains pleased that his players do a good job of pushing themselves and each other.

He said he’ll make a concession to the time of the season by backing off on some drills and side work but expects players to seek more work, not less.

“A lot of these guys are still pushing,” Renteria said. “They’re still wanting to come out to do some extra stuff. So we’ll do what we need to do to accommodate them but also let them know they still need to get their rest and make sure they can finish the season.”

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### **Slumping Reynaldo Lopez asserts he's fine physically, but needs better focus**

By Phil Rogers/ Chicago Tribune / August 1, 2018

Reynaldo Lopez insists he's feeling fine physically but the White Sox are monitoring him closely after a recent downturn in his results.

Rick Renteria said he, pitching coach Don Cooper and bullpen coach Curt Hasler met with Lopez after he gave up eight runs in 4 1/3 innings to the Blue Jays on Friday.

“He said that physically he feels great, there’s nothing wrong with him from a physical aspect,” Renteria said. “It has nothing to do with the physical depletion of his ability to do things. He just felt that he wasn’t giving us a commitment, (in terms of his focus), when he was pitching and he was going to try to make the adjustment.”

Lopez starts against the Royals in Thursday’s series finale. He’s 2-5 with a 7.22 ERA in his last seven starts after compiling a 3.35 ERA in his first 14. He has thrown 122 innings, second to James Shields on the Sox staff.

According to Brooks Baseball, Lopez’s fastball averaged 97 mph in three consecutive starts in May but was down to an average of 94 against the Blue Jays. Lopez believes he’s just making too many bad pitches.

“When you’re not focused enough on the game you can’t command, you can’t control your pitches and you can’t execute,” Lopez said. “That’s the most important part for a pitcher, the focus. If you don’t have focus, it’s impossible for you to have control and have success.”



The 24-year-old is on pace to throw 186 innings in his first full major-league season. He has thrown 150-plus innings each of the last two seasons, including 168 2/3 last year between the majors and Triple-A Charlotte.

Turning the page: Tim Anderson was back in the Sox lineup Wednesday after being pulled midgame in a 4-2 loss to the Royals. He failed to run to first base on a low liner that appeared to have been caught by third baseman Rosell Herrera but was ruled a trap by umpire Lance Barksdale.

“That was a unique situation that developed,” Renteria said. “Obviously we had our conversation last night and that was it. It was over.”

Extra innings: Yoan Moncada’s leadoff home run off Jake Junis was his fifth career leadoff homer, the first since June 12. ... Shields is excited he will get to participate in a reunion of the Rays’ 2008 AL pennant-winning team when the Sox play in St. Petersburg, Fla., this weekend. He earned the team’s only victory in a World Series game. ... Leury Garcia, who has started at six positions this season, made his 16th in center field. The defensive metrics say he’s at least average at all three outfield spots, with his best ratings in left field (plus-4 Defensive Runs Saved) and right field (plus-3).

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### **Eloy Jimenez, Dylan Cease named top White Sox minor-leaguers for July**

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun Times / August 1, 2018

The White Sox honor a top position player and pitcher from their minor-league system every month, and for July, they happen to be the two key pieces from the Jose Quintana trade with the Cubs.

Outfielder Eloy Jimenez, who tore up the International League during a 16-game run in July, batting .435/.455/.839 with six home runs and 13 RBI for Class AAA Charlotte, and right-hander Dylan Cease, who went 2-0 with a 1.20 ERA in five starts for Class AA Birmingham, were named Minor League Player and Pitcher of the Month as voted by a panel of Chicago-area media members.

The Sox acquired Jimenez, Cease, corner infielder Matt Rose and middle infielder Bryant Flete last July 13 for Quintana. Jimenez is ranked No. 3 and Cease No. 45 among all prospects by MLB Pipeline.

Speculation as to whether Jimenez finally will get called up after mashing minor-league pitching at every level — with no letup at the highest level — picked up because general manager Rick Hahn was in Charlotte on Wednesday while Jimenez was getting a day off.

Dylan Cease pitches for the U.S. Team in the ninth inning against the World Team during the All-Star Futures Game at Nationals Park on July 15, 2018 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Rob Carr/Getty Images)

Sox officials said there was nothing to read into Hahn being there, and director of player development Chris Getz said Jimenez was getting a standard day off, joking that he needed one after going 0-for-4 Tuesday.

Jimenez, 21, leads the International League in batting average (.376) and ranks second in on-base percentage (.423) since his promotion from Birmingham on June 21. He’s hitting .337/.386/.601 with 18 homers, 23 doubles and 59 RBI in 80 games between Birmingham and Charlotte this season.

Cease, 22, had 42 strikeouts in 30 innings in July and is riding a 17-inning scoreless streak since July 20. He’s 11-2 with a 2.71 ERA and 131 strikeouts in 19 starts between Class A Winston-Salem and Birmingham.

While none of the four prospects fetched for Quintana, 9-7 with a 4.26 ERA after going 7-3 with a 3.74 ERA for the Cubs in the last 2½ months of 2017, has reached the majors yet, the Sox are feeling good right now about the trade.

Rose, 24, and Flete, 25, both at Birmingham, were extras in the trade and are not ranked among the Sox' top prospects. Rose is batting .198/.267/.367 with 14 homers, and Flete is batting .244/.351/.333 with two homers and 24 RBI.

Lopez seeks focus

Right-hander Reynaldo Lopez, who closes out the Royals series Thursday and has an 0-4 record with an 8.47 ERA in his last four starts, met with manager Rick Renteria, pitching coach Don Cooper and bullpen coach Curt Hasler recently. Renteria said they wanted to make sure Lopez was OK physically.

"He said that physically he feels great; there's nothing wrong with him," Renteria said. "He truly felt like he wasn't focused on doing his job."

Lopez has said more than once that problems he encounters on the mound are related to an occasional lack of focus.

"The way they have to find the focus, that has to come from within," Renteria said.

"The best ones always find a way to get it done, and if we're going to continue to develop as an organization and as individuals, if we want to be elite, we've got to find a way to do it."

Broadcast news

The Sox' home game against the Yankees on Monday has been selected by ESPN for a national broadcast, although it will be blacked out on ESPN in the Chicago viewing area. It will air locally at 7:10 p.m. on NBC Sports Chicago.

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### **White Sox on board with Renteria's hustle rule**

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun Times/ August 1, 2018

Shortstop Tim Anderson was back in the lineup Wednesday — just like manager Rick Renteria said he would be after benching him for not running on a low line drive that appeared to be caught but was ruled otherwise the night before.

Renteria always has made it clear that getting pulled would be a consequence for not hustling, and he has — including spring-training games — put Avisail Garcia, Leury Garcia, Welington Castillo and Anderson on the pine for breaking that rule this season.

Those players owned up to it and expressed their respect for a manager who won't look the other way as many do when it happens. It probably helps, Renteria's players say, that he doesn't bog them down with too many rules.

"Ricky's the manager, he set the rule in place from the very first day and he has the right to make that call," Matt Davidson said. "We listen to it, and we all respect the decisions he makes."

Rick Renteria, right, talks with Jose Abreu in the dugout. (AP)

Anderson came back ready to move. He went to his backhand deep in the hole to retire leadoff man Whit Merrifield to start the game and reached on an infield single his first time up. That, and Yoan Moncada's leadoff home run, made for a good start to a game that went south in the third inning when the Royals started piling on runs against Dylan Covey (4,, innings, seven runs, four earned) and the bullpen in the White Sox' 10-5 loss that dropped their record to 37-70.

Anderson said he was surprised he got pulled in that situation because he was sure the ball was caught. But Renteria, who slammed his hand on the bench when it happened, said the coaching staff preaches to

"never assume the out," and after an impassioned explanation for why he demands hustle, he stood his ground the next day.

"I'll be real clear," Renteria said. "I don't care if you're an older player or a younger player. I've done it with everybody I've had from [Jose] Abreu to Avisail Garcia to Welington Castillo. And every single one of them has accepted that this is the way we play the game here."

It's not unusual for big-leaguers to conserve energy on routine ground balls and pop-ups, but being programmed to always go all out has its advantages. Abreu reached first on a dropped third strike Tuesday in part because he got out of the batter's box quickly. Davidson has seen several instances "where our players with speed have benefitted from running every ball out."

"I like how it looks when we hustle out balls," Davidson said. "We play teams when guys don't run, and we're like, 'Man, that does look bad.' We enjoy how we look when we run hard down the line and when it looks like we're hustling. The fans deserve that. Players deserve that."

The manager might run a risk of losing his players if they're embarrassed or feel shown up, especially with veterans, but there appears to be none of that in the Sox' clubhouse.

"I can't speak for others, but in Cuba I was taken out of a game for not giving my best effort," Abreu said, "and I learned from it. That's why I always try to give my best effort and hustle."

"I respect [Renteria's] decisions. He's here for a reason, and that's to make us play hard."

As long as mutual respect exists, Renteria will carry on without issue. Davidson said players respect him because he's transparent, has a relationship "with everyone in the clubhouse, tells it how it is, doesn't have too many rules" and always keeps his office door open to talk.

Said Abreu: "He played baseball, he understands the things we as players go through. He treats us with respect and puts us in the best possible situations to succeed. You have to respect that. But the biggest thing is he's just a good person. You always respect a good person and want to be around people like him."

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### **New day for Anderson, another loss for Chicago White Sox**

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / August 1, 2018

There is one thing about Chicago White Sox manager Rick Renteria -- he doesn't dwell on yesterday's disappointments.

In Tuesday night's 4-2 loss to the Royals at Guaranteed Rate Field, Tim Anderson lined to third baseman Rosell Herrera in the sixth inning and assumed the ball was caught.

It wasn't, and Anderson was an easy out at first base after failing to leave the batter's box.

Renteria immediately benched Anderson, but the Sox's shortstop was back in the lineup Wednesday night in a 10-5 loss to Kansas City.

While he was initially upset with Anderson's lack of action, Renteria didn't let it linger.

"Yesterday was yesterday," he said. "That was a unique situation that developed. Obviously, we had our conversation last night and that was it. It was over."

In his second full season, the 25-year-old Anderson is still learning the game. But Renteria also has benched veterans Avisail Garcia, catcher Welington Castillo (now suspended) and Leury Garcia for failing to run hard this season.

"I'll be real clear, I don't care if you're an older player or a younger player, I've done it with everybody," Renteria said. "And every single one of them has accepted that this is the way we play the game here. Will that change? There are going to be unique situations in which you have to have a conversation."

"Will I always yank somebody, probably, as we continue to move forward? Not necessarily, but there always be a conversation to deal with the particular situation."

Dylan Covey (4-7) started for the Sox on Wednesday and had another rough outing, allowing 7 runs (4 earned) on 5 hits and 3 walks in 4½ innings. Over his last 7 starts, Covey is 1-5 with an 8.90 ERA.

When he was on a roll in late May and early June, Covey was relaxed on the mound and his sinker was an effective pitch. That hasn't been the case over the last six weeks.

"The sinker is moving best when I'm free and easy and don't tense up," Covey said. "My command was a little off tonight and my strike percentage was not where I needed it to be. I need to be free and easy and let my mechanics take over."

Physically fit:

Fatigue is commonplace for starting pitchers at this stage of the season, especially for ones in their first full major-league seasons.

Reynaldo Lopez fits that profile, and the White Sox's right-hander has looked a little ragged while going 0-4 with an 8.72 ERA over his last 4 starts.

Lopez gets the ball against the Royals on Thursday afternoon, and he is not complaining of a dead arm.

"We had a conversation with him to see how he was doing," manager Rick Renteria said. "He said that physically he feels great, there's nothing wrong with him from a physical aspect. He truly felt like he wasn't focused on doing his job."

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### **Rick Renteria defends benching Tim Anderson after baserunning mistake**

By James Fegan / The Athletic / August 1, 2018

On replay, it sure looked like Royals third baseman Rosell Herrera snagged Tim Anderson's sinking liner out of the air to secure the third out of the sixth inning Tuesday night. That certainly appeared to be the case to Anderson, who froze in his tracks, a couple steps out of the batter's box, at the sight of his fourth decently struck ball of the night being converted into an out for the third time in a dreary 4-2 loss to the last-place Royals.

"I thought he caught it," Anderson said. "It was one of those weird plays."

But one of the few dissenting opinions in the matter was that of third base umpire Lance Barksdale, who spread his arms to indicate there was no catch. That signal, which Anderson said afterward he never saw, proved to be the flashpoint of the night in the White Sox dugout. What briefly appeared like a lifeline to keep the Sox's half of the sixth inning on life support — the time Herrera spent thinking he had a catch allowed Omar Narváez to beat out his throw to second, which by that point surely would have given the speedy Anderson time to race to first base — meant nothing, because Anderson was still watching the play from home plate. Anderson said that if at any moment he saw that he should have started running, he would have, but his manager, Rick Renteria, could not abide this slip.

"It didn't look very good to have him standing at the plate and having the ball going around the diamond," Renteria said. "It's as simple as that, and he understands it. He knows it. We've talked about it. He comes out of the box, he doesn't stand there. But we just reiterated to make sure that you allow the umpires to make the calls and you allow the other clubs to go ahead and ask for reviews. We run."

Anderson was immediately benched by Renteria, who switched Leury García from left field to shortstop, and ended Nicky Delmonico's night off against a left-handed starter, sending him into the outfield. While Renteria's displeasure was visible from the press box, before he paced down the tunnel, Anderson stood seemingly stunned at the helmet rack for a second before retreating to the bench.

"Yeah, I was surprised," Anderson said. "What'd Ricky say? 'It can't happen. It don't look good.' He's the manager. It's his call on the players. I have to respect his decision. Come tomorrow and be ready to play."

It has not been a season of spotless baseball for Anderson, nor was the last one. He's noted without prompting in interviews that his defensive error count is too high, and his early-season stolen-base binge has led to a few pickoffs, but he's notably avoided what at this point has become Renteria's well-known and well-established high standards for consistent effort.

In contrast, Renteria was been quick to absolve Anderson when he came under scrutiny last July for not beating out a grounder that he seemed capable of outracing against these same Royals, identifying it as a matter of execution — Anderson not having enough of a direct path out of the box, he said at the time — rather than effort. And when a crucial Anderson throwing error shifted a game in late April this season — it always seems to be against the Royals — bench coach Joe McEwing gave a memorable line that seemed to define how the coaching staff viewed Anderson: "his accountability is unbelievable."

"That's not indicative of Timmy — it isn't," Renteria said of the play. "If we're going to win and move forward as a championship organization, we need fighters. And Timmy's a fighter. He had a lapse in that particular instance because he recognized something that he thought was clearly an out. But we know how we're supposed to go about it and we're going to continue to do it and it's not going to change. As long as I'm here it's not going to change. Sometimes you have to react a certain way. With all due respect to Timmy and all my guys — I love all of my guys. Don't get me wrong, I love every single one of those guys in there — but we're going to continue to do it because it's important for us to do it here, all the way through the system. Because anybody that comes to play for us, that's the way we're going to play."

Renteria, who pointed out that he's benched more experienced players like Wellington Castillo and Leury García, and even Avisail García in spring training, cannot be accused of surprising anyone with harsh standards. But on such a strange play, for such a willing devotee of the 'Ricky's Boys Don't Quit' mantra, it seemed like a moment undeserving of a break from his more frequent choice to teach players while keeping them in the game. And one oddity, spurred by the bad appearances of a wasted opportunity in a dispiriting loss, can undermine the foundation of a policy that will certainly require the buy-in of franchise cornerstones like Anderson to successfully function.

Unless of course the lesson is really as well-received, immediately intoned, and quickly buried as both sides made it sound afterward.

An animated Rick Renteria sends another message with Tim Anderson benching: "We don't give in" [https://www.nbcsports.com/chicago/white-sox/animated-rick-renteria-sends-another-message-tim-anderson-benching-we-dont-give ...](https://www.nbcsports.com/chicago/white-sox/animated-rick-renteria-sends-another-message-tim-anderson-benching-we-dont-give...)

"It's done, it's over," Renteria said, managing a smile. "You're going to see Timmy back in there tomorrow."

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### **The seemingly simple fix to Reynaldo López's recent struggles**

By James Fegan / The Athletic / August 1, 2018

There's a list of analytical points that seemed like possible avenues to exposing the root of Reynaldo López's recent struggles, which have caused his ERA to rise from 3.35 to 4.57 over the course of his past seven starts heading into his outing in Thursday's series finale against Kansas City. He's improved the carry on his four-seam fastball a bit since last year, but the swing-and-miss rate on it remains below average despite truly top-shelf velocity. His strikeout and walk rates remain too similar, and while the

development of his slider has been tremendous, one can't help but wonder whether his once prominent changeup would help get some ground balls amid a stretch that has seen him allow 11 home runs in 38 2/3 innings.

López pushed aside all that.

"I feel good, my body is strong, my arm is loose," López said through team interpreter Billy Russo. "I think that the reason of my struggles, like I said before, is because of my focus. I think as a pitcher and as a ballplayer, if you want to have success, you have to focus. I don't know why, but for whatever reason, during my last two or three outings, I've been losing my focus in part of games. When I lose my focus, I'm not able to execute, I'm not able to be as effective as I want to be. That has been the root of the problems. It's just a matter of focus. I've been working on it to fix it and we'll see how it goes next time."

He's certainly right that he's said it before, blaming the general issue of focus after his last start, in which he allowed five home runs to the Toronto Blue Jays. He also cited it when manager Rick Renteria, pitching coach Don Cooper and bullpen coach Curt Hasler sat him down for a meeting after that outing to try to suss out the cause of his struggles. Renteria said after the loss to the Jays that fatigue was something to consider with López, but that during their meeting, the pitcher shot that notion down, as he did again to me on Wednesday.

"He truly felt like he wasn't focused on doing his job," Renteria said. "We wanted to make sure that we made an adjustment if we needed to, if there was a fatigue factor involved. It has nothing to do with the physical depletion on his ability to do things. He just felt that he wasn't giving us a commitment, focally, when he was pitching and he was going to try to make the adjustment."

What's prompting the lapses in focus? How can they be stopped? Such a difficult-to-pin-down explanation rightfully inspires a lot of questions. López became a father for the first time in the last month, and is working through his first full season in the majors, but just said this is "something every ballplayer passes through."

But whereas the Sox coaching staff has repeatedly cited focus and attentiveness on every play as something their young infielders are learning the necessity of through experience, or something that can be enforced through benchings for not running, it seems harder to reinforce in starting pitchers, who are by nature engaged in every pitch they throw. Renteria described it in terms of "commitment to the task," on the mound and an unwillingness to accept bad results that is necessary to become elite. Whatever it is, it's well beyond what a simple mound meeting can offer, at least for now.

"It's all dependent on him, because sometimes we try to help, but if he doesn't listen to us ..." said Omar Narváez, who caught López's previous start. "You know, when he gets locked in, he's usually not listening to anybody, so it's kind of hard to help him when [he doesn't] have an open mind. We try to have a conversation right after the game. Sometimes during the game it's not a good time to do it because everything is happening too fast. Sometimes I would rather go after the game than during the game."

If Narváez's assessment sounds harsh, recall that López essentially blamed his own stubbornness and refusal to take Kevan Smith's suggestion to throw off-speed to Salvador Perez before a backbreaking three-run home run in the eighth inning of a game earlier this month. If anything it sounds like a real-world description of how a phenomenon that is hard to understand manifests itself in games, and Narváez, who praised how much progress Carlos Rodón has made in keeping his cool on the mound, says what López is going through can happen to anyone.

For a team that began the season with a troika of starting pitchers in their first full year in the majors, and now has Carson Fulmer working as a reliever in Triple-A and Lucas Giolito improving but still saddled with the highest ERA of any qualified starter, this left turn in López's promising season is a dispiriting development for the first wave of the Sox's pitching youth movement.

These struggles in focus have rendered López to as downbeat as he has been all year, but for a lauded piece of the future of the franchise, it's a problem that sounds more coachable than insufficient stuff, mechanical flaws or a major injury. And in terms of how much this stretch has thrown off López mentally, there are limits to its effect.

"I never lost confidence in myself," López said. "I never lost the desire to want the ball, to want to go out there and pitch and compete. That's something that is in me. I'm never going to lose that. It doesn't matter what's the circumstance. I always want to pitch. I always want to compete and show what I'm able to do. I know that right now the situation hasn't been as good as we want it. But the desire to go out there and to pitch and perform is intact."







