



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF AUGUST 7, 2018

"South Siders' win streak halted by Yanks' Lynn"... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Engel soars to rob Bird of homer" ... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"TA follows LeBron's example off the court"... Scott Merkin, MLB.com

"Season-best four-game winning streak could be teaching White Sox some valuable lessons"... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Matt Davidson pulls a Babe Ruth, continues to be poster child for baseball's position player pitching trend" ... Vinnie Duber, NBC Sports Chicago

"Matt Davidson throws another shutout inning — and he struck out Giancarlo Stanton" ... Phil Rogers, Chicago Tribune

"White Sox's Kevan Smith names his son after Daniel Webb, his former teammate who died in October" ... Phil Rogers, Chicago Tribune

"White Sox get a look at baseball's heavyweight division, fall to Yankees 7-0" ... Phil Rogers, Chicago Tribune

"Yankees, Lynn blank White Sox, halt winning streak at four"... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"White Sox put Leury Garcia on disabled list" ... Daryl Van Schouwen, Sun-Times

"Rozner: 7 years of Jimenez, Kopech is more than 6 for the White Sox" ... Barry Rozner, Daily Herald

"Yankees snap Chicago White Sox winning streak"... Scot Gregor, Daily Herald

"Dylan Covey's second-turn struggles, Matt Davidson's expanding role on display against Yankees" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

"Memo to White Sox fans: Root for the prospects, not their service time" ... James Fegan, The Athletic

South Siders' win streak halted by Yanks' Lynn

Engel makes amazing catch; Davidson impresses on mound

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / August 6, 2018

CHICAGO -- A season-high four-game winning streak came to an end for the White Sox on Monday night courtesy of a 7-0 loss to the Yankees, who snapped a five-game losing skid, in the opener of a three-game series at Guaranteed Rate Field.

But it wasn't so much about things not done by the White Sox, who were coming off their first sweep of the season, over the Rays at Tropicana Field. It was a credit to Yankees starter Lance Lynn.

Lynn held the White Sox to two hits over 7 1/3 innings. That first hit came in the first when shortstop Didi Gregorius couldn't corral Daniel Palka's slow roller with two outs. It left the White Sox with runners on first and third, but Lynn struck out Avisail Garcia. That strikeout marked the first of 19 straight retired by the right-hander until Nicky Delmonico singled opening the eighth.

"We weren't actually able to do a whole lot against Lynn today. He turned it up a notch," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "Looked like his velocity was up a little bit, got him thru quite a bit of the game. We weren't ever really able to get anything going, connecting the dots to kind of give us some life."

Dylan Covey fell to 1-7 over his last nine starts, allowing four runs on seven hits over 6 1/3 innings. He struck out five, walked one and yielded two runs apiece in the fourth and the fifth. Gleyber Torres had two RBIs, with a single against Covey and a solo home run in the eighth against Thyago Vieira.

Covey carried a no-hitter into the fourth before a Gregorius double to right following a Stanton walk ended a stretch of 10 straight Yankees retired. It marked the third time in Covey's last six starts that he held the opponent hitless for the first three innings, but that also speaks to the right-hander's difficulty sustaining success as he faces hitters multiple times.

"It's something that I've had to think about a lot because I feel like the first time through a lineup is usually pretty quick for me," Covey said. "It's that second time through the lineup where I start relying on my secondary pitches, and today I just didn't have them going as early as I would have liked."

"My second time through the lineup was a little bumpy for me, but if I can just find those offspeed pitches earlier for strikes, I think it will make it a little bit easier to get through that lineup a second or third time."

Much like Renteria, Covey thought he threw the ball fairly decent regardless of the results.

"I felt good," Covey said. "Felt like I wasn't overthrowing anything. Everything was coming easily to me. Grinded through those fourth and fifth innings, didn't have the changeup quite as well as I wanted to. They were able to kind of sit on that fastball a little bit."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Engel saves a blowout -- temporarily: White Sox center fielder Adam Engel kept a 2-0 deficit in the fourth from becoming a 5-0 chasm when he took away a three-run homer from Greg Bird. Bird's blast to center had an exit velocity of 103.4 mph and carried 405 feet for a hit percentage of 86, according to Statcast™. But Engel raced back to the center-field wall and pulled the ball back with a leaping grab.

"Obviously a big play by Engy out there to save some runs, the pitch count," Covey said. "Just an awesome play to keep it close for us."

Davidson's mound work: For the third time this season, Matt Davidson pitched. The third baseman/designated hitter walked Gregorius with two outs in the ninth and gave up a single to Aaron Hicks, as they became the first two baserunners allowed by Davidson in three innings pitched. He also broke Brett Gardner's bat before retiring him on a grounder back to the mound and struck out Giancarlo Stanton while recording another scoreless frame.

"Not bad," said Yankees manager Aaron Boone of Davidson. "I mean, spinning that breaking ball up there, popping the low 90s, that's a little bit of an asset to have that. Preserved people, and he made it tough on our guys."

According to STATS, Davidson joined Doug Dascenzo (5 IP over four appearances), Jim Morrison (3 2/3 IP over three appearances) and John Cangelosi (4 IP over three appearances) as the only position players to start their pitching careers with three or more scoreless innings since 1973. Davidson also became the first White Sox position player to make three appearances in one season since the inception of the designated hitter in '73.

"I'm enjoying it, it's fun. I've said before that really it was a passion of mine growing up. It's something that I did all the way through high school," Davidson said. "I don't know how many days we've had off recently, but [White Sox pitching coach Don Cooper] said, 'If this game gets a little bit more out of hand, we probably want to send you to the bullpen for these two days before the off-day.'"

"We won four straight, we were using matchups a lot, and the guys were working hard in getting outs and getting big outs in those situations. It's cool to give them a break."

HE SAID IT

"That'd be cool. That'd be really cool." -- Davidson, on the thought of getting a save and hitting a home run in the same game

UP NEXT

Right-hander Reynaldo Lopez (4-9, 4.57 ERA) is scheduled to make his first career start against the Yankees at 7:10 p.m. CT on Tuesday at Guaranteed Rate Field. CC Sabathia, who has a 19-6 career record against the White Sox, starts for the Yankees. Lopez is 1-2 with a 6.32 ERA over his last five home starts.

Engel soars to rob Bird of homer

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / August 6, 2018

CHICAGO -- Adam Engel kept a two-run deficit from turning into a five-run chasm when the White Sox center fielder robbed the Yankees' Greg Bird of a three-run homer with a spectacular catch in the fourth inning on Monday night at Guaranteed Rate Field. It was a game eventually won by the Yankees, 7-0, ending a four-game White Sox winning streak and a five-game Yankees losing streak.

Engel raced back to the wall in center and reached over the fence to make the grab on Bird's drive off White Sox starter Dylan Covey. The 405-foot, 103.4-mph blast had a hit percentage of 86, according to Statcast™.

Aaron Hicks, who was on second at the time of the play, advanced to third, while Gleyber Torres made it back to first. Covey struck out Miguel Andujar to end the inning.

"Obviously a big play by Engy out there to save some runs, the pitch count," Covey said. "Just an awesome play to keep it close for us."

On the Outs Above Average leaderboard, Engel entered Monday ranked fourth with 13. Engel took home runs away from Brian McCann and Austin Jackson in '17.

"That's a great catch," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "When he went out and he's going back and you could see he was measuring the wall.

"It's funny because he's made a lot of those catches for us before. I didn't think he was going to be able to get up there and get it. Again, Engy is one of those guys that can pull out some plays for you in center field and that was one of them."

TA follows LeBron's example off the court

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / August 6, 2018

CHICAGO -- Tim Anderson and LeBron James play different sports and rate at different levels of professional stardom.

But it's not the newest Lakers star's crossover dribble or knack for game-winning shots that impresses the White Sox shortstop.

"I've been following him forever, and I'm just more impressed with what he does off the field than what he does on the court," Anderson said. "He's winning on both ends. He's doing a great job. I'm just proud to watch.

"Definitely a role model. Somebody I look up to and go about my business the way he does. Helping people is big, especially when you have that platform that he does. He's doing a great job with it. It's cool to watch, and helping kids get their education is big because they are our future."

James recently opened his "I Promise" school to 240 at-risk third and fourth-graders in Akron, Ohio. According to numerous reports concerning the school, James also will provide free tuition, free uniforms, free breakfast, lunch and snacks, free transportation within two miles, a free bicycle and helmet, access to a food pantry for their family and guaranteed tuition for all graduates to the University of Akron.

Anderson's League of Leaders foundation -- which he runs with his wife, Bria, and assistance from the White Sox -- isn't quite at that grandiose level. But through the Andersons' goal of giving back, they hope to get there someday.

On Sunday, 124 kids received haircuts, backpacks and school supplies at the League's Cuts for Kids at Hillcrest High School, Anderson's old school in Alabama. Helping others drives the Andersons, but it's also the meaning behind it, which is the memory of Branden Moss, Anderson's close friend who was tragically murdered last year, really driving them.

"We like to put smiles on people's faces, but he's the one that drives us," Anderson said. "It's all for him and I know he would want it this way. It's going good so far. Kind of excited for the next couple of events that we are planning. It's going to be great."

At some point, Anderson also would like to meet his charitable role model in James.

"He's been a great example to the community, and he's giving back," Anderson said "He's done a great job."

When will Eloy arrive?

Eloy Jimenez did not play in Sunday's game for Triple-A Charlotte due to flu-like symptoms, per the White Sox. But with Leury Garcia going on the disabled list Monday due to a left hamstring strain, the thought was that MLB Pipeline's No. 1 White Sox prospect could be on his way to Chicago for Monday's nationally televised contest against the Yankees.

But as of pregame Monday, Jimenez was nowhere to be found in Chicago and outfielder Ryan LaMarre had joined the team.

"Ultimately, it's when the organization at the top says, 'Let's make this move,'" said White Sox manager Rick Renteria of Jimenez's arrival. "He's continuing to have a nice run, continuing to show he's capable of performing."

"He'll be here in due time. I'm sure everybody will be happy to see him. Now we'll continue to work with the guys who are here and what they're doing. They deserve that. It's important. They don't need any secondary obstacles or influences invading their space."

Lucas Giolito got to know Jimenez and right-handed pitcher Michael Kopech, the organization's No. 2 prospect, during Spring Training. He knows they possess special talent.

"But as far as like getting into it, I'm not going to sit here and analyze Twitter and what people are saying, 'When's this guy coming up? What's this guy doing?'" Giolito said. "It's not really my position on the team. I'm a starting pitcher, so I just take the ball every fifth day and compete to the best of my ability."

Proud father returns

Catcher Kevan Smith returned from paternity leave on Monday after his wife, Jessica, gave birth to their son, Wyatt Daniel, on Thursday night. Their son was named after Daniel Webb, Smith's close friend and former White Sox teammate, who tragically passed in an ATV accident this offseason.

"Kind of funny, he has two webbed toes," said Smith of his son. "I kind of laughed when we saw those because that was Webby kind of putting his stamp on him a little bit."

"Just kind of something unique to him, and I love it. [Webb] just keeps showing me ways he's watching over him and keeping his eye on all of us down here."

Season-best four-game winning streak could be teaching White Sox some valuable lessons

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / August 6, 2018

The White Sox first four-game winning streak of the season isn't likely to end up vaulting the South Siders into the playoff race.

At least, not this playoff race.

Not to make too big a deal out of four consecutive wins against the Kansas City Royals and Tampa Bay Rays, but this season is all about development for the White Sox, about young players learning how to become, one day, a perennial contender in the big leagues. Many of the faces who figure to make up that next contending White Sox team aren't here yet, still developing in the minor leagues. But the manner in which this current group has won these last four contests could serve as an important lesson.

Rick Renteria has talked about "learning moments" all season long, and the last four games could be an important one of those. The White Sox won four straight close contests — the first by two runs, each of the next three by one run — and often had to do it after surrendering a lead. Each of the four games was won in the White Sox final at-bat.

"Most games are going to be won with that type of game, that closer game, and especially as you get to the playoffs and stuff like that, you're not going to win by a huge amount," designated hitter Matt Davidson said before Monday's game. "It's important to be in those games and to win and pull those games out.

"The experience of those games is something that you've got to go through and be in those situations, playing defense and taking those at-bats, taking those pitching scenarios of being in those situations. You can't really just think about them, you've got to actually play in them. And that's something that we're going through right now. So it will definitely be good for us."

This is just the third time this season the White Sox have won three consecutive games, an indication of where this team sits in the standings and how development at all levels of the organization has been the priority in 2018. But there's plenty to accomplish at the major league level as the regular season wraps over the next two months.

Players like Yoan Moncada, Tim Anderson, Lucas Giolito, Carlos Rodon and Reynaldo Lopez are expected to be big parts of the future. Plenty of other young players could play their way into discussions about the team's long-term plans. And so, for that group of players — which could certainly get bigger with any promotions that might occur over the next two months — gaining the ability to win games like this adds an important tool to the tool box, one that could come in handy when the place in the standings is different and when the August and September games get more meaningful.

"When you win close games, at the end of the day they're looking at how they did it. They didn't quit, they didn't give up," Renteria said. "We had a couple leads change hands. We had some really big at-bats, coming through in order to score some runs. Is it good for them to experience that, yes. Just feeling confident about themselves, knowing what they're doing, having an idea of what they want to do, ultimately just giving themselves a chance. There's never a guarantee that they're going to do it, but they put themselves in a good position."

With a contending Yankees team in town, this win streak might end up being just a four-game blip in the middle of a 162-game season. But the "learning moments" Renteria talks about come in all shapes and sizes. Who's to say what Davidson or Moncada or Anderson learn during an August weekend during this developmental campaign won't come into play a year or two from now, when the situation is a lot more important?

Isn't learning how to win games like this part of development?

"That's the most valuable thing is the experience and actually doing it," Davidson said. "And it's good to see us doing it, going through those scenarios and succeeding with them."

Matt Davidson pulls a Babe Ruth, continues to be poster child for baseball's position player pitching trend

By Vinnie Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / August 6, 2018

Matt Davidson pulled a Babe Ruth on Monday night.

Generally, when you do something only The Bambino has done on a baseball field, that's a good thing. At least it's noteworthy.

Davidson made his third pitching appearance of the 2018 season in the White Sox loss to the visiting New York Yankees, a fulfillment of the desire he expressed after his previous outing not two weeks ago, when he said he hoped to explore an expansion of his pitching role.

He recorded his third scoreless inning in as many outings. His career ERA is still an unblemished 0.00. He struck out Giancarlo Stanton, who launched a major league best 59 home runs in 2017.

Oh, and he joined The Babe.

Position players taking the mound has historically been a humorous affair, but it's becoming more and more common as teams routinely exhaust their bullpen pitchers. It means throwing a position player out there is a more strategic option than straining another inning of relief out of an arm that might be needed in a high-leverage situation in a future game.

During the White Sox now-concluded four-game winning streak, Rick Renteria used a lot of relief pitchers in close games. He used five Thursday against the Kansas City Royals, then five, three and five in a weekend sweep of the Tampa Bay Rays. That's a lot of work for those arms. So, down seven runs in the ninth inning Monday, Davidson became a way to buy an extra day of rest for at least one of those pitchers.

"I don't know how many days we've had on recently, but (pitching coach Don Cooper) said, 'If this game gets a little bit more out of hand, we probably want to send you to the bullpen for these two days before the off day.' Like we said, we won four straight, we were using matchups a lot, and the guys were working hard in getting outs and getting big outs in those situations," Davidson said. "It's cool to give them a break."

Renteria is far from the only manager doing this. Just prior to Davidson's third appearance of the campaign, Major League Baseball saw its 50th outing by a position player this season. Davidson only raised that number.

And while this is a strategy almost exclusively employed in games with lopsided scores, it's not something only sub-.500 teams like the White Sox are doing. You don't have to go back too far in July to get to the first-place Cubs using four different position players to pitch in one weekend.

Renteria stopped short of calling this baseball's new normal, but it sure is a popular trend at this point. And having a player like Davidson on the roster, a position player who can do more than just throw batting practice — and now one of four position players since 1973 to start their pitching careers with three scoreless outings (per STATS LLC) — can be a valuable piece.

"Listen I don't know if it's a new normal," Renteria said. "I've done it before, not as often as we've done it this year already. I think that the way and depending on how bullpens are used and how many you end up riding for a period of time, sometimes you need a respite, and you hope you can put someone in there who will be able to throw the ball over the plate. You don't want to make it an embarrassing type of situation. Matty is able to at least throw strikes and has a couple of secondary pitches that seem to be fairly effective.

“When the need calls, if you happen to have a guy like Matty who can do that, then it’s worth doing it because you know he’s going to at least throw the ball over the plate. They have a chance of putting the ball in play, we have a chance to make plays. Sometimes you may not have that luxury, and as much as you want to keep it from becoming an embarrassing situation, you do it because it’s what needed at the particular time.”

Davidson’s talked before — he’s had two other opportunities — about his boyhood dreams of being a big league pitcher, and his experience pitching in high school is paying off big time now as he helps save the White Sox bullpen.

Monday, he didn’t exactly throw a no-hitter or get a big save. But he did toss a scoreless inning against the New York Yankees, something that probably didn’t seem too likely to happen just a couple of years ago.

“I’m enjoying it, it’s fun. I’ve said before that really it was a passion of mine growing up. It’s something that I did all the way through high school,” Davidson said. “I’ve said before, that was the dream for me, was pitching in the big leagues, growing up. Every kid dreams about hitting that walk-off home run, and I was dreaming about sticking that guy out. That’s how I first loved the game. So it is a dream.”

The dream is now a reality for Davidson. And if baseball keeps going in this direction, it will be a reality for plenty of other position players, too.

Matt Davidson throws another shutout inning — and he struck out Giancarlo Stanton

By Phil Rogers / Chicago Tribune / August 6, 2018

Matt Davidson is becoming a human consolation prize for the White Sox, entering at the end of lopsided losses to lighten the load on the bullpen. He’s doing it well too, working a third consecutive scoreless inning as an emergency reliever Monday against the Yankees.

“I’m enjoying it,” said Davidson, who is splitting time at designated hitter with Daniel Palka. “It’s fun. It was a passion of mine growing up. It’s something that I did all the way through high school.”

In the ninth inning, Davidson broke Brett Gardner’s bat on a foul ball before getting him to ground back to the mound. He struck out Giancarlo Stanton on a 71 mph curve in the dirt, then walked Didi Gregorius and allowed a single to Aaron Hicks, who Davidson said was an old friend from showcase circuit days. He got out of the jam by retiring Gleyber Torres on a flyout to right.

According to STATS LLC, Davidson is only the fourth position player to start his pitching career with at least three scoreless innings since the DH was introduced in 1973. The others were Doug Dascenzo (five innings over four outings for the Cubs in 1990-91), Jim Morrison (3 2/3 over three for the 1988 Braves) and John Cangelosi (three over three for three teams from 1988-97).

He laughed when he was asked about maybe hitting a home run and earning a save in the same game.

“That’d be cool,” he said. “That’d be really cool.”

White Sox’s Kevan Smith names his son after Daniel Webb, his former teammate who died in October

By Phil Rogers / Chicago Tribune / August 6, 2018

Daniel Webb hasn’t been forgotten by his old friends in the White Sox system. The relief pitcher who died in an ATV accident in October in Tennessee provided catcher Kevan Smith and his wife, Jessica, with a name for their son, who was born Friday.

They named their child Wyatt Daniel Smith, switching around Webb’s given name: Robert Wyatt McDaniel. The Smiths’ son was born with two webbed toes, which Smith feels is more than a coincidence.

"I kind of laughed when we saw those because that was Webby kind of putting his stamp on him a little bit," said Smith, who first played with Webb at Class A Kannapolis in 2012. "The doctor said he's going to be fine, won't hurt him at all, just something unique to him, and I love it. (Webb) just keeps showing me ways he's watching over him and keeping his eye on all of us down here."

Smith was on paternity leave over the weekend but returned to the lineup for Monday night's game against the Yankees. Dustin Garneau, who was promoted to replace Smith, returned to Triple-A Charlotte.

The Sox made a second roster move Monday, placing Leury Garcia on the 10-day disabled list and adding Ryan LaMarre to replace him. Garcia suffered a strained left hamstring Sunday.

Eloy watch: Despite some Internet hysteria when Eloy Jimenez was scratched from the lineup Sunday night, the Sox's top prospect remains at Charlotte. Nicky Delmonico got the start in left field with Daniel Palka as the designated hitter.

Manager Rick Renteria is focused on furthering the development of players like them, not worrying about Jimenez's timetable.

"He'll be here in due time," Renteria said. "I'm sure everybody will be happy to see him. Now we'll continue to work with the guys who are here and what they're doing. They deserve that. It's important. They don't need any secondary obstacles or influences invading their space."

Extra innings: Wellington Castillo, suspended 80 games for a positive PED test, is eligible to begin a 15-game rehab assignment in the minors this week. He could rejoin the Sox on Aug. 23. ... The Yankees have Aaron Judge and Gary Sanchez on the DL. They're 7-15 without Judge since the start of last season, averaging 4.0 runs in those games and 5.3 runs with him. ... Avisail Garcia entered Monday's game with 12 homers in 33 games since returning from the DL in late June. Matt Carpenter (16) and Nolan Arenado (13) are the only major-leaguers with more home runs since June 22.

White Sox get a look at baseball's heavyweight division, fall to Yankees 7-0

By Phil Rogers / Chicago Tribune / August 6, 2018

At least Rick Renteria didn't get ahead of himself.

There was a lot of talk about the White Sox's four-game winning streak early Monday, and why not? But the manager's focus was on the three-game series against the powerful Yankees.

"Those four days are gone," Renteria said. "You just worry about today now."

There's plenty to worry about with the Yankees in town, and they demonstrated that with a 7-0 victory behind Lance Lynn, who made his first start replacing Sonny Gray in the rotation. He was backed by long homers from Gleyber Torres and Neil Walker.

Welcome to the heavyweight division.

The White Sox will play the Yankees, Red Sox and Indians 13 times in a 26-game stretch that takes them into September.

Those three teams are on track to win 113 (Red Sox), 101 (Yankees) and 91 (Indians) games. But at least the Sox did enter this stretch having gone 8-8 since the All-Star break, which counts as progress when you're trying not to break the franchise record for losses in a season.

"They feel good about themselves right now," Renteria said. "Obviously they've done some good things. They've bounced back, they've taken some leads, regained some leads, continued to grind. We've seem

some guys make nice defensive plays, we've seen some guys have nice at-bats, we've seen some guys step up in different roles. I know we've been using our (relief) pitching a lot but they've been doing a nice job keeping us in games."

Dylan Covey matched his 142 career innings against Lynn's 1,084 and, well, experience proved to matter. Covey was perfect the first time around the order but then couldn't use his changeup to keep the Yankees off his fastball, which was why he allowed four runs in 6 1/3 innings.

His line score would have looked a lot worse had center fielder Adam Engel not made the play of the night, robbing Greg Bird of a homer with a leaping catch.

"They were able to kind of sit on that fastball a little bit," Covey (4-8) said. "Obviously a big play by Engy out there to save some runs, the pitch count. Just an awesome play to keep it close for us."

The Yankees will start CC Sabathia and ace Luis Severino against Reynaldo Lopez and Lucas Giolito the next two nights. And there will be similarly daunting matchups when the White Sox play the Indians this weekend and later the Red Sox in a four-game series here at the end of the month.

Perhaps that's why General Manager Rick Hahn opted to promote outfielder Ryan LaMarre from Triple-A Charlotte instead of Eloy Jimenez. This doesn't exactly seem like the time to showcase your young talent.

Lynn retired 19 in a row between an infield single by Daniel Palka in the first and a grounder through the right side by Nicky Delmonico in the eighth. He struck out nine, including Yoan Moncada three times. Moncada's total climbed to 157 Ks, putting him on a pace for a record 227.

Yankees, Lynn blank White Sox, halt winning streak at four

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / August 6, 2018

In 2017, the White Sox finished 22-22 down the stretch to avoid losing 100 games, so it stands to reason that maybe this year's team can build on the momentum of a season-best four-game winning streak at the outset of August, stay under triple-digit losses and carry something useful into next season.

A respectable finish would be a good thing.

"There's big value in that," veteran right-hander James Shields said. "We've gone through a lot of ups and downs — more downs than ups — and it's very important for them to have the confidence in their own ability to compete in this league and go into spring training knowing they belong here and can have success."

By "them," Shields, looking around the Sox' clubhouse Monday before their 7-0 loss to the Yankees at Guaranteed Rate Field, is speaking of the young Sox who might be part of the future core.

Lance Lynn of the New York Yankees delivers the ball against the White Sox at Guaranteed Rate Field on August 6, 2018 in Chicago, Illinois. (Photo by Jonathan Daniel/Getty Images)

"A winning culture is the No. 1 thing," Shields said. "You never want to get used to losing. You want to get better, not make the mistakes we've made all season long, and finish strong."

Returning home after winning three one-run games against the Rays, the Sox didn't put up much of a fight against Yankees right-hander Lance Lynn, who retired 19 batters in a row over 7, scoreless innings.

The Sox' highlight was a leaping catch by center fielder Adam Engel to take a home run away from Greg Bird in the fourth. The consolation prize was designated hitter Matt Davidson pitching a scoreless inning for the third time in as many outings. Davidson became the first position player in Sox history to make at

least three pitching appearances in a season since the inception of the DH in 1973. He's the 12th position player to have at least three pitching appearances in a single season.

Those things are all well and good, but even in a lost season, they're not what a team wants to be stuck putting on the season review highlight page.

The Sox need to win games, Shields said.

"You want to win ballgames, and you want to create a winning culture around here," he said. "Even though we're not in the hunt, you need that culture in the clubhouse and to understand how to win ballgames."

Shields, though, was thoroughly enjoying watching Davidson, who struck out slugger Giancarlo Stanton on a slow curve ball in the dirt.

"[Pitching coach Don Cooper] said, 'If this game gets a little bit more out of hand, we probably want to send you to the bullpen,'" Davidson said. "We won four straight, we were using matchups a lot, and the guys were working hard getting outs and getting big outs in those situations. It's cool to give them a break."

Davidson is serious about his pitching, but he knows it has its right place.

"It's also not the coolest thing to come in when you're losing by a huge landslide like that," he said. "Tonight was only 7-0, not like a huge blowout. But I guess they're kind of used to it now. The first time, everybody was laughing in Texas, but now it's a little more normal."

Sox starter Dylan Covey opened with three perfect innings but finished with four runs allowed over 6 1/3 innings. The defense behind him was mixed. Engel had his made-for-ESPN catch, but he and right fielder Avisail Garcia both checked up on a deep drive that fell between them. Shortstop Tim Anderson mistimed a dive on Aaron Hicks' soft liner, and Covey threw a wild pitch that looked blockable for catcher Kevan Smith but instead scored a run.

Covey got even less support from the lineup, which mustered three hits and struck out 11 times, including three by Yoan Moncada (0-for-4), who went down looking twice. He has fanned 157 times.

White Sox put Leury Garcia on disabled list

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / August 6, 2018

The White Sox brought up an outfielder from Class AAA Charlotte on Monday, but it wasn't prized prospect Eloy Jimenez.

Ryan LaMarre was the Sox' chosen call-up after they put infielder-outfielder Leury Garcia on the 10-day disabled list with a strained left hamstring. The Sox also reinstated catcher Kevan Smith, the proud father of a new son, from a three-day paternity leave and optioned catcher Dustin Garneau to Charlotte.

Garcia left Sunday's game against the Rays in the eighth inning. The switch-hitting 27-year-old was batting .303 over his last 20 games, raising his hitting line to .280/.310/.394. This is Garcia's second trip on the DL this season after missing a little over three weeks in late May and early June with a sprained knee.

LaMarre, who was acquired off waivers from the Twins earlier this season, returns to the big leagues after a 10-game stint with Charlotte in which he batted .220/.273/.366. Adam Engel started in center field Monday against the Yankees after Garcia had started there in four of the Sox' previous five games.

Leury Garcia watches his solo home run off Houston Astros relief pitcher Chris Devenski during the eighth inning of a baseball game Thursday, July 5, 2018, in Houston. (AP Photo/Eric Christian Smith)

Anticipation of the Sox calling up Jimenez continues. Asked about speculation that a possible promotion could come as soon as Monday, manager Rick Renteria gave a puzzled look.

By Keep Reinventing — HP Spectre x360 with built-in fingerprint reader

“Ultimately it’s when the organization at the top says, ‘Let’s make this move,’ ” Renteria said. “He’s having a nice run, continuing to show he’s capable of performing. Ultimately when we believe as an organization it’s the right time, we’ll make that decision. He’ll be here in due time. I’m sure everybody will be happy to see him.

“Now we’ll continue to work with the guys who are here and what they’re doing. They deserve that. It’s important. They don’t need any secondary obstacles or influences invading their space.”

Palka power

Through Sunday, Daniel Palka ranked among American League rookie leaders in home runs (tied for first with 17), slugging percentage (second, .504), RBI (third, 44) and total bases (fifth, 128). Palka’s three pinch homers are tied with Oscar Gamble (1977), John Romano (1959) and Ron Northey (1956) for the franchise record.

His nine RBI are the most by a Sox pinch hitter since Jerry Hairston had 10 in 1987.

Palka batted fourth as the designated hitter Monday, going 1-for-4.

Fatherhood

Smith’s wife, Jessica, gave birth to the couple’s first child, Wyatt Daniel Smith, on Thursday night.

“Unbelievable. Greatest day of my life,” said Smith, whose son is named after former Sox pitcher Daniel Webb. Webb died in an ATV accident last year.

“Kind of funny — he has two webbed toes,” Smith said. “I kind of laughed when we saw those because that was Webby kind of putting his stamp on him a little bit. . . . He just keeps showing me ways he’s watching over him and keeping his eye on all of us down here.”

Loaiza expected to plead guilty

Former White Sox All-Star right-hander Esteban Loaiza is expected to change his plea from not guilty to guilty in a felony cocaine distribution case, according to an ABC7 report.

A month after attending Sox Fest in Chicago, Loaiza, 46, was arrested in San Diego in February and charged with possession with intent to distribute 44 pounds of cocaine.

Loaiza would face a 10-year mandatory minimum sentence on the felony charge, according to the report.

Rozner: 7 years of Jimenez, Kopech is more than 6 for the White Sox

By Barry Rozner / Daily Herald / August 6, 2018

Similarly, Michael Kopech seems to have reached the point where the case for keeping him in the minors is not very easy to make.

"It's been an interesting season," Getz said. "It hasn't been completely smooth (for Kopech), but that's a good thing. He's in a good spot right now.

"He's commanding his fastball the best he has. He's differentiating his breaking pitches. He's getting more consistent with those. He's getting more confident with his changeup.

"Michael is a very confident player and we feel that he's going to be an impactful-type starter in the major leagues, and there's a chance that it happens fairly soon."

Fairly soon is a relative phrase that in baseball terms could mean 10 days from now or it could mean 10 days into the 2019 season, which is precisely what it should be for Jimenez and Kopech.

Sorry, White Sox fans, but GM Rick Hahn would not be properly looking out for you or the organization long term if he allowed for some short-term pleasure, promoting players that would give you something to enjoy in August and September of a season in which the Sox have no chance to compete.

Yes, it would be fun. And, yes, it would sell some tickets. But it would be wrong, and as steward of the franchise he must think beyond today.

To give away a year of team control would be irresponsible, just as it would have been for Theo Epstein, even though there was a pretty soft case for keeping Bryant at Iowa that first week of the season.

But Bryant arrived in the fourth year of a rebuild. This is only the second year for the Sox, and if the Sox are able to craft a roster with a chance to win the World Series every season by the fifth year -- as did the Cubs -- that would be 2021.

And by keeping Jimenez and Kopech down for the first week or two of 2019, the free-agent clock wouldn't start on them until 2020 and they are guaranteed to be here through at least 2025.

It may not feel like it right now, but it will feel a whole lot better if these guys become superstars and you have them for that seventh year.

Instead of only six.

Yankees snap Chicago White Sox winning streak

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / August 6, 2018

The Chicago White Sox were back at Guaranteed Rate Field on Monday night, and they were feeling pretty good about themselves.

"Obviously, they've done some good things," manager Rick Renteria said. "They've bounced back, they've taken some leads, regained some leads, continued to grind. We've seen some guys make nice defensive plays; we've seen some guys have nice at-bats; we've seen some guys step up in different roles."

Riding a four-game winning streak and looking to make it five straight for the first time since April of last season, the Sox were stymied by New York Yankees starting pitcher Lance Lynn in a 7-0 loss.

Acquired in a July 30 trade with the Minnesota Twins, Lynn held the White Sox to 2 hits in 7½ innings, singles from Daniel Palka and Nicky Delmonico. Yolmer Sanchez doubled against reliever A.J. Cole in the ninth.

White Sox starter Dylan Cease (4-8) was perfect through the first three innings before allowing 2 runs on 3 hits and a walk in the fourth. The inning would have been worse, but White Sox center fielder Adam Engel scaled the wall and robbed Greg Bird of a 3-run homer.

"Just an awesome play to keep it close for us," Covey said. The right-hander pitched 6½ innings and allowed 4 runs on 7 hits and 1 walk.

For the third time since June 29, Matt Davidson pitched 1 scoreless inning of relief. The Sox's designated hitter/infielder worked the ninth inning against the Yankees and pitched over a two-out walk and single.

"I'm enjoying it," Davidson said. "It's fun. It was really a passion of mine growing up and something I did all through high school."

Webb tribute:

Catcher Kevan Smith and his wife, Jessica, became parents for the first time Thursday, welcoming son Wyatt Daniel Smith.

He was named after Smith's former teammate Daniel Webb, who was killed in an ATV accident in October 2017.

"Yeah, Webby," Smith said. "His name was Robert Wyatt McDaniel Webb, so we named him Wyatt Daniel Smith. Kind of funny, he has two webbed toes. I kind of laughed when we saw those because that was Webby kind of putting his stamp on him a little bit.

"But the doctor said he's going to be fine, won't hurt him at all, just kind of something unique to him and I love it. (Webb) just keep showing me ways he's watching over him and keeping his eye on all of us down here."

Roster move:

After recalling Kevan Smith from the paternity list Monday, the White Sox optioned catcher Dustin Garneau to Class AAA Charlotte.

Claimed off waivers from Oakland on May 24, Garneau debuted with the Sox on Sunday and was 1-for-2 with a walk and 1 RBI.

Dylan Covey's second-turn struggles, Matt Davidson's expanding role on display against Yankees
By James Fegan / The Athletic / August 6, 2018

Like nearly every starting pitcher on the face of this vast planet, Dylan Covey is better on his first trip through the batting order than on his second. But whereas starting pitchers across the major leagues have seen opposing hitters go from .237/.305/.394 the first time through to .250/.318/.413, Covey is seeing something more extreme. Going into Monday night, Covey was holding hitters to a .207/.296/.333 line in his first trip through the order, only to see that spike to .321/.395/.468 on the second go-round.

With the previously reeling Yankees in town Monday, that trend grew more extreme. Covey reeled off a perfect first three innings, only to see the Bronx Bombers go 4-for-8 with a walk in their second look as they broke open an eventual 7-0 win, which could have been worse if not for an Adam Engel home run robbery of Greg Bird.

"Grinded through those fourth and fifth innings," Covey said. "Didn't have the changeup quite as well as I wanted to. They were able to kind of sit on that fastball a little bit."

Covey living and dying with his two-seamer got him back to the majors and helped him stay here, but commanding his changeup frequently, as well as his other off-speed offerings, is the barrier between an easy first three innings and getting deeper into games. When he finds the feel for it, he cruises, and opposing hitters actually do worse against him the third time through the lineup.

He stabilized again Monday night when he found it and pitched into the seventh, but the consequences of him lacking a primary swing-and-miss pitch after hitters have seen his sinker is enough that the 26-year-old is now running a 5.58 ERA and looking like the weakest link in a rotation that has a big-league-ready Michael Kopech lurking in Triple-A.

"I see them taking my pitches, I see them getting my timing down and was trying to get that changeup working early and just didn't quite find it enough," Covey said. "If I can just find those off-speed pitches earlier for strikes, I think it will make it a little bit easier to get through that lineup a second or third time because they can't eliminate a pitch. If the hitter can eliminate a pitch then it makes it that much easier for them."

Covey can throw 95 mph with nutty movement at times, and it's pretty clear he can get major league hitters out when he's at the height of his powers. It's just at some point soon — and Carson Fulmer's development would show it's already happening — the White Sox rotation is going to start parsing down from everyone who has the potential to start, to the guys who show consistent effectiveness out of the rotation every five days. With Kopech's ascension looking increasingly inevitable, if not specifically imminent, it does put these kinds of acute struggles to turn over a lineup a second time into an unforgiving light.

Meanwhile, in the name of larger pitching roles rather than smaller ones, Matt Davidson is centering around something more regular, if not actually becoming a full-blown reliever after his third pitching appearance of the season (another scoreless frame, of course).

"I don't know how many days we've had on recently, but [pitching coach Don Cooper] said, 'If this game gets a little bit more out of hand, we probably want to send you to the bullpen for these two days before the off day.'" Davidson said. "Like we said, we won four straight, we were using matchups a lot, and the guys were working hard in getting outs and getting big outs in those situations. It's cool to give them a break."

The White Sox, 41-71, lose more than most teams. With Joakim Soria traded and Nate Jones on the disabled list, they have also started matching up pitcher-to-batter with their bullpen down the stretch of close games more than most teams, as Jim Margalus detailed recently. No one in particular has laid claim to the eighth or ninth, so instead everybody has, and just about everyone winds up getting used over the same period of time.

As a result, the Sox wind up not only having plenty of opportunities when they might use a position player to aid a frequently fatigued relief corps, but now have found themselves a uniquely competent position player pitching option. In sum, it seems to have made manager Rick Renteria, naturally hesitant and cautious about giving in to the winking absurdity of having his designated hitter toe the rubber, a little less hesitant and cautious.

"Listen, I don't know if it's a new normal," Renteria said. "I've done it before, not as often as we've done it this year already. I think that the way and depending on how bullpens are used and how many you end up riding for a period of time, sometimes you need a respite and you hope you can put someone in there who will be able to throw the ball over the plate. You don't want to make it an embarrassing type of situation. Matty is able to at least throw strikes and has a couple of secondary pitches that seem to be fairly effective."

Davidson still isn't doing anything more than the occasional flat-ground throwing session between outings to keep his arm loose for low-90s heat and making sure he can still spin his surprisingly sharp curveball. And he noted that Giancarlo Stanton barely missed launching a hanger Monday night before he struck out, lest anyone get carried away by the dominance he's shown in a small, compromised sample. That and plenty of other reasons point to Davidson's bullpen role not advancing beyond the occasional dalliance. But the White Sox are very likely to use a position player again this season, and at this point, it would be pretty surprising if they used someone other than Davidson.

Memo to White Sox fans: Root for the prospects, not their service time

By James Fegan / The Athletic / August 6, 2018

White Sox manager Rick Renteria didn't come to his Monday afternoon media session with a travel itinerary for Eloy Jiménez's eventual voyage to Chicago in tow.

“Ultimately it’s when the organization at the top says, ‘Let’s make this move,’” Renteria said. “[Jiménez]’s continuing to have a nice run, continuing to show he’s capable of performing. Ultimately when we believe as an organization it’s the right time we’ll make that decision. He’ll be here in due time.”

Rather than lament being asked to speak in advance of what will inevitably be a very coordinated team announcement for whenever Jiménez arrives, one that will lead to the demotion or release of a player currently in his clubhouse, Renteria quickly pivoted on the topic to a much warmer interpretation.

“Believe me, I appreciate the questions and I get it,” Renteria said. “Fortunately for me you guys are asking me questions about talent — talent in the system and when they’re capable of coming up, and that’s a good thing.”

As much as Eloy Fever has underlying causes, like a 41-71 record and an outfield near the bottom of the league in WAR, it also has root in some of the fundamental reasons anyone bothers to come out to the ballpark. There’s a great, transcendent talent that people have either seen flashes of, read about or heard about, and they want to be able to see it on a regular basis. Sometime before team sports became the designated outlet for tribalism, this was the whole appeal of the enterprise.

This is why it was fairly dispiriting to see an NBC Sports Chicago fan poll the other day asking the audience what they would like the White Sox to do with Jiménez and Michael Kopech, with the option of keeping them both at Triple-A Charlotte until next season clearly taking a majority of the vote. The reason is obvious enough: a fan base that has been sold on the merits forsaking the major league product in the name of stacking young talent for the future, which — judging by page view numbers — gleefully enjoyed their team picking near the top of the draft, is taking that mentality to the next logical endpoint of blatant service time manipulation.

Chicago sports fans were introduced to this concept when Kris Bryant raked to the tune of a 1.098 OPS (43 homers and 34 doubles out of 160 total hits) in the Cubs’ minor leagues in 2014 and still didn’t open the season with the 2015 team.

There are ethical objections to be made about denying players deserved promotions, breaking from the White Sox’s established and admirable practice of giving mid-season bumps to prospects who have hit the necessary points in their development plans. There are strategic objections about transparently keeping future cornerstones in the minors for the sake of stalling their service time accumulation, and how that will be received by players who would theoretically be pre-arbitration extension candidates. Trying to guarantee just shy of seven years of Kopech and Jiménez rather than merely a little more than six, and prioritizing that over every other factor, ultimately comes with a bit of a dim view of how their White Sox careers will progress, and how long they will last.

But mostly it’s a bummer that the fetishization of optimal human asset management has trumped the interest in seeing great players do their thing. It’s one thing when general managers and teams do it because it serves their best interests, because ultimately they’re being rewarded or fired based on how they achieve specific goals. It’s another thing when fans intone it, dismiss the idea of seeing entertaining players and winning baseball as “pointless” until it correlates immediately with a potential World Series-winning team, and value hoarding team control more than the front offices of teams themselves.

The White Sox have given no indication that they would ever do something as brazen as hold Kopech and Jiménez down until April. It runs counter to general manager Rick Hahn’s repeated assertions that their major league arrival dates are not determined by service time, and runs counter to even the handling of Yoán Moncada, Lucas Giolito and Reynaldo López from a year ago. Their slow burns with Jiménez and Kopech read more clearly as the choices of a franchise fresh off over a decade of treating prospects as a means to the end of patching holes on the big league roster, with plenty of regrettable outcomes to show for it. Now, they understandably are erring on the side of extreme caution, and are willing to take the arrows for having a slow trigger in the short-term. As it has somehow turned out, their fans are either eager for them to move faster, or pushing them to be more ruthless.

As the sage Paul Konerko said the other day, albeit about a totally different topic, “the game is never wrong” even when “it doesn’t agree with my mind.” He was talking about the comfort and value hitters find now with all-or-nothing approaches at the plate, but all-or-nothing attitudes to contending is receiving the same level of traction among teams and their fans.

Just like holding back stud prospects to snag another year of service time, I can see the cold, unassailable logic to it, just not the romance. And while the White Sox, deep in the darkest stages of an unblinking rebuild, might seem like the ideal team to carry out such a bloodless approach, it doesn’t seem like their way of doing business either.
