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Expected to pitch again, Farquhar resting at home

White Sox right-hander won't be cleared to pitch competitively this season

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / May 7, 2018

May 7th, 2018

CHICAGO -- White Sox right-hander Danny Farquhar, who sustained a brain hemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm during a home game on April 20, was discharged from RUSH University Medical Center on Monday afternoon and is resting at home with his family, according to a statement released by the White Sox.

Dr. Demetrius Lopes, Farquhar's neurosurgeon, expects the righty to be able to pitch again in the future, but Dr. Lopes will not medically release Farquhar to pitch in a competitive game during the 2018 season in order to allow him to fully recover from the hemorrhage. Fellow White Sox reliever Nate Jones, who visited Farquhar on Saturday at RUSH, mentioned that Farquhar talked during that visit about a desire to come back and pitch soon.

Jones added with a smile that Farquhar's wife, Lexie, encouraged him to focus on his recovery.

"Lexie was like, 'Let's make sure you are a functioning human being, and then we will worry about baseball,'" Jones said. "They were kind of poking at each other back and forth. It was pretty awesome."

According to Monday's release, Farquhar and his family have appreciated the many cards, tweets, texts and well wishes they have received from friends and fans over the past weeks. The White Sox will provide additional updates on Farquhar's health as appropriate, and the team asks that those interested continue to respect the privacy of the Farquhar family as they focus on the pitcher's recovery.

"None of us in here knew what to expect, and to be where he's at today, it's a miracle," Jones said. "It's pretty awesome to see. He's a moving, functional human being. He's Danny."

Inbox: Engel's role to diminish going forward?

Beat reporter Scott Merkin answers questions from White Sox fans

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com / May 7, 2018

May 7th, 2018

How long will the White Sox be sticking with Adam Engel?

-- Mo, Plainfield, Ill., @richland63

Engel still has the capabilities to be a Gold Glove-caliber center fielder and told me Tuesday in St. Louis he's starting to feel better at the plate. General manager Rick Hahn was very forthright when talking about Engel, in that he certainly can help the team defensively but needs to produce more offensively to figure into the long-term plan.

So the 26-year-old really is doing more than trying to keep his spot on the active roster. Like a number of other young veterans in a similar position with the White Sox, he's proving where/if he belongs as part of the rebuild moving forward. Engel will continue to get those chances to find himself as a hitter, even if they might not be everyday opportunities.

- Submit a question to the White Sox Inbox

Do you think we have so many prospects that if the current team comes of age and Tim Anderson, Matt Davidson, and Yolmer Sanchez develop into legit stars, we can offer "rebuild in a can" to the Angels for Mike Trout. Thoughts?

-- David, Munster, Ind.

I'm not even going to try to construct what a deal would look like for Trout. But just as not every prospect will pan out as planned in a rebuild, some highly touted prospects inevitably will end up as parts of trades in the future. Maybe not for Trout, but quite possibly for significant players to help complete the rebuild.

Wasn't Tyler Saladino the emergency catcher? If so, who is now?

-- Phil, Fox River Grove, Ill., @pjduza

The White Sox haven't specified one, but I would go with Leury Garcia or Sanchez. One of my favorite stories this season was Saladino talking about the excitement he had warming up pitchers in between innings, but the slight trepidation creeping in when he almost had to warm up Bruce Rondon and his 100-mph fastball.

Tyler Johnson and Zack Burdi were both some of the best college closers of their time. Which one is most likely to be a closer in the Majors and do you see a future with one as the closer and the other as an eighth-inning setup man?

-- Thomas, Birmingham, Ala.

These two won't be the only options for future White Sox closer, although they should figure in the picture. An even more likely scenario is one of the present starters becoming a late-inning force.

Will Davidson survive the rebuild or be shipped off eventually?

-- John, Chicago

Here's an interesting stat on Davidson: His 17 walks have him tied with Yoan Moncada for the team lead and also leave him two free passes away from matching his 2017 total achieved over 443 plate appearances. Davidson clearly can hit the long ball, but his offensive approach also is evolving. Very few rebuilding teams reach the pinnacle with nothing but young prospects, so Davidson is putting himself in the picture as a "veteran" presence moving forward.

Should the Sox turn Carlos Rodon into an Andrew Miller-type pitcher?

-- Ken, Justice, III.

Rodon, who is working his way back from arthroscopic shoulder surgery as a starter, will be given every opportunity to remain a starter and quite possibly become a top-of-the-rotation performer, as the White Sox envision. But there's no denying the value of the role held by Miller, who has 66 career starts but none since 2011.

Jimenez's hot stretch getting pretty impressive

White Sox top prospect batting .481 during six-game multihit streak

By Max Gelman / MLB.com / May 7, 2018

CHICAGO -- Eloy Jimenez had himself quite the week, shaking off some initial rust after returning from a mild pectoral strain.

The top White Sox prospect and No. 4 overall prospect per MLB Pipeline owns a six-game multihit streak for the Double-A Birmingham Barons, a stretch in which he has posted a .481/.500/.852 slash line with two home runs. Jimenez owns a 10-game overall hit streak and has a hit in 13 of his last 14 games.

Jimenez is showing why he has garnered so much hype, slugging .652 with a .999 OPS on the season entering Monday. He has more home runs (six) than doubles (five) and walks (four) and finished a triple shy of a cycle last Friday.

But Jimenez isn't the only White Sox prospect performing well. Here is a rundown of other notable performances from top Chicago farmhands:

Michael Kopech, RHP, Triple-A Charlotte

The No. 2 White Sox prospect and No. 10 overall prospect had been rolling along through his first five starts, pitching to a 2.67 ERA in 27 innings, striking out 35 against nine walks. But he hit his first speed bump Sunday.

Kopech needed 66 pitches to navigate three innings against the Cleveland Indians-affiliated Columbus Clippers, his shortest outing of the year. He gave up only one hit, but he issued four walks and struck out three while allowing two runs, driving up his pitch count.

Kopech, who turned 22 on April 30, also hit two batters, and he has now hit at least one batter in five of his six starts. In a recent conference call with reporters, Kopech said he didn't mind developing a reputation as someone who pitches aggressively inside.

"I wouldn't say I am a head-hunter," Kopech said. "But if you are leaning over the plate and get hit, that is not my fault."

Zack Collins, C, Double-A Birmingham

The White Sox No. 9 prospect, Collins opened the season in a dreadful 2-for-37 rut. He still walked a ton, however, drawing 13 free passes and resulting in an unusual .054/.294/.135 slash line.

But since April 24, Collins has turned around his season. He recently enjoyed a 10-game hitting streak, going 15-for-35 and drawing another 12 walks, scoring 11 runs and tallying five extra-base hits.

The 23-year-old has quadrupled his batting average to .230 and nearly doubled his OPS to .848 in the process. Collins continues to lead the Southern League in walks, with 28.

Dylan Cease, RHP, Class A Advanced Winston-Salem

Acquired with Jimenez as part of the Jose Quintana trade last season, Cease is mowing down Carolina League hitters for the Winston-Salem Dash.

Cease owns a 1.95 ERA through six starts (32 1/3 innings), striking out 42 against 14 walks. The 22-year-old's best start game last Tuesday, when he pitched seven shutout innings and struck out 12, while giving up just two hits and walking none.

The White Sox No. 5 prospect is already a third of the way toward his 2017 innings total of 93 1/3, a total that also represents a career high.

In My Words: Jose Contreras

By Jose Contreras / MLB.com / May 7, 2018

Every time I have the opportunity to see all the Cuban players for the White Sox, it is a proud feeling for me. I know they are my countrymen. They are the new wave of Cuban superstars in the United States.

Last December, I joined the White Sox as a club ambassador and to assist in working with the Cuban players on the team. During Spring Training, I got to spend time with Jose Abreu, Yoan Moncada and Luis Robert.

When I was introduced to Robert and he stood up, I said, "Wow, that's a big human being." I asked him, "Did you eat all the food in Cuba?"

Moncada is another big, strong human being. Both of them have all the talent in the world to be superstars.

The White Sox have a terrific history with Cuban players, dating back to Minnie Minoso. Minnie was a great example for us. He always was a man with a purpose, on and off the field. He treated everyone the same way -- with respect. That's something I am trying to tell the kids here. Just be the best you can be every day. Follow the lead set by Minnie.

I was fortunate to have Orlando Hernandez when I first came to the United States. "El Duque" was like a god in Cuba. When I signed with the Yankees in 2003, he was with the Expos. But he would call me, and try to take care of me. He always was giving me advice, and not just about baseball.

Two years later, we were together with the White Sox. I remember the first day of Spring Training. He was doing an interview and he said the White Sox were going to win the World Series. I was listening and said to him, "Are you crazy?"

"Don't you want to be a world champion?" he said.

"Yes," I said, "But this is Day 1 of Spring Training."

He said, "It doesn't matter. We have the talent here to become a world-champion team."

When we were celebrating after we won Game 4 [of the 2005 World Series] in Houston, he hugged me.

"I told you we were going to do this," he said. It was a special moment.

Orlando was big in helping me make the adjustment. That's why it is very important for Moncada and Robert to have fellow countrymen like Abreu with the Sox. It is important to have someone from your culture to guide you in your first days in the United States.

One of the things I always tell them is don't make the same mistakes I did when I first came here. I wasn't engaged with the language. I say, "Try to learn the language. Try to interact with American players."

At this moment, they are doing great in that regard. They are open to interacting with American players; they are open to learn about this society and culture. When they can handle that, the rest will be easier for them.

I can't play right now, but seeing them play, it feels like I also am playing. It's like a continuation of my career. That's how people in Cuba feel about us here. People in Cuba always ask me about the Cuban players playing here, and I tell them. They also feel like they are living those experiences through these guys.

I know baseball is a business here, but for us in Cuba, it is life. It's passion. It's all the things you can imagine. If you take away baseball, there would be a problem.

That's one of the reasons I'm always telling these young players to be aware of the risks that are around this sport. They have to behave all the time. We as Cubans, we feel everything they do, on and off field. If you get in trouble, maybe get a DUI, we feel that as a Cuban. We feel that pain, that frustration. We don't want that to happen.

That's why I tell them to take care of themselves, do good things, don't cause problems. You're representing our people. You're representing our country.

As told to Ed Sherman

MLB Pipeline's Prospect Team of the Week

By Jim Callis / MLB.com / May 7, 2018

MLB Pipeline's Prospect Team of the Week honors the best performances from the previous seven days. Any Minor Leaguer currently on an organization Top 30 Prospects list on our Prospect Watch is eligible.

One of the best hitters available in the 2015-16 international class, Juan Soto was poised to break out as a prospect in 2017. But ankle, hamate and hamstring injuries combined to limit his full-season debut to 23 games, during which he gave a preview of coming attractions by hitting .360/.427/.523 at Class A Hagerstown.

Those numbers pale in comparison to the onslaught he has wreaked on pitchers this year. He needed just 16 games to earn a promotion from Hagerstown to Class A Advanced Potomac, where he has continued to rake. Last week alone, he batted .522/.607/1.261 with five homers in six games, claiming a spot on MLB Pipeline's Prospect Team of the Week for the third time in a season that's just four weeks old. For perspective, no player has ever made PTOW more than four times in one season.

Soto now leads the Minors in extra-base hits (23), total bases (90), RBIs (39), on-base percentage (.489) and OPS (1.322) while ranking second in homers (11) and slugging percentage (.833). He also has more walks (24) than strikeouts (17) in 133 plate appearances. He's currently No. 28 on our Top 100 Prospects list, and some scouts think he has a higher offensive ceiling than fellow Nationals outfielder Victor Robles, who's No. 6 on the Top 100.

Here's the complete Prospect Team of the Week for games of April 30 through May 6:

C: Evan Skoug, Kannapolis Intimidators (low Class A)
(White Sox No. 22 prospect)

.294/.429/.941, 5 G, 17 AB, 6 R, 5 H, 2 2B, 3 HR, 7 RBI, 4 BB, 7 SO, 1 SB

The 2017 Big 12 Conference player of the year after leading Texas Christian to a third straight College World Series berth, Skoug batted just .154/.263/.308 in low Class A during his pro debut last summer and fared even worse (.150/.268/.233) in April after rejoining Kannapolis. He finally got his bat going last week, hitting safely in all five games and homering in each of his last three.

1B: Jordan Patterson, Albuquerque Isotopes (Triple-A)
(Rockies' No. 21 prospect)
.320/.379/.720, 7 G, 25 AB, 7 R, 8 H, 1 2B, 3 HR, 4 RBI, 1 BB, 8 SO

Though Patterson went 8-for-18 during a September 2016 callup with Rockies, a logjam of outfielders and first basemen in Colorado has prevented him from returning since. He totaled 40 homers in Triple-A during the past two seasons before starting slowly in 2018, but he began to heat up last week. He went deep three times and also had a four-hit game, boosting his season line to .245/.376/.462 with six homers in 30 contests.

2B: David Bote, Iowa Cubs (Triple-A)
(Cubs' No. 14 prospect)
.517/.600/.793, 7 G, 29 AB, 7 R, 15 H, 2 2B, 2 HR, 8 RBI, 6 BB, 6 SO, 1 SB

Bote spent nine days with the Cubs, going 1-for-9 in his first taste of the big leagues, and responded to his April 28 demotion to Triple-A with his best week of the season. He hit safely in all seven games, including five multihit efforts and a five-hit performance on Sunday. He's batting .342/.405/.618 with five homers in 19 games at Iowa.

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3B: J.D. Davis, Fresno Grizzlies (Triple-A)
(Astros' No. 9 prospect)
.593/.613/.963, 7 G, 27 AB, 3 R, 16 H, 7 2B, 1 HR, 13 RBI, 1 BB, 6 SO

Davis shared the Astros' first-base job with Marwin Gonzalez for the first two weeks of the season, then headed to Triple-A after Yuli Gurriel returned from a suspension and a hand injury. He's making an impressive case for another opportunity, riding a 21-game hitting streak and leading the Minors in batting while posting a slash line of .425/.474/.655 with three homers in 22 contests. He had six multihit games in seven tries last week and tops the Triple-A Pacific Coast League in batting, on-base percentage and doubles (11).

SS: Jonathan Arauz, Quad Cities River Bandits (low Class A)
(Astros' No. 22 prospect)
.522/.586/1.043, 6 G, 23 AB, 8 R, 12 H, 3 2B, 3 HR, 11 RBI, 4 BB, 3 SO

Part of the Ken Giles/Vince Velasquez trade in December 2015, Arauz scuffled in his first exposure to full-season ball last year, batting .220/.331/.276 at Quad Cities. He's erasing that memory by hitting .309/.419/.557 and his four homers in 27 games already has doubled his previous career high. All four have come in his last eight games, including one as part of a five-RBI night on Saturday.

OF: Telmito Agustin, Potomac Nationals (high Class A)

(Nationals' No. 27 prospect)

.476/.542/1.000, 6 G, 21 AB, 6 R, 10 H, 1 2B, 2 3B, 2 HR, 6 RBI, 2 BB, 3 SO, 1 CS

A year after batting .206/.257/.275 in 33-game introduction to high Class A, Agustin is back and thriving in the Carolina League. He reached base at least twice in each of his six games last week, giving Potomac two of the three outfielders on the PTOW, and leads the CL in hitting (.397), slugging (.667) and OPS (1.090).

OF: Thomas Jones, Greensboro Grasshoppers (low Class A)

(Marlins' No. 25 prospect)

.350/.409/1.000, 5 G, 20 AB, 8 R, 7 H, 1 2B, 4 HR, 6 RBI, 1 BB, 5 SO, 1 SB

One of the most coveted athletes in the 2016 Draft, Jones turned down college football offers to sign for \$1 million as a third-round pick. The Marlins have brought him along slowly, as he just made his full-season debut last week after spending the first month of this season in extended spring training. So far, so good, as Jones homered four times in his first three games at low Class A, including two on Thursday.

OF: Juan Soto, Potomac Nationals (high Class A)

(Nationals' No. 2 prospect/MLB No. 28)

.522/.607/1.261, 1.868, 6 G, 23 AB, 10 R, 12 H, 2 2B, 5 HR, 10 RBI, 5 BB, 2 SO, 1 CS

Soto opened 2018 by batting .373/.486/.814 with five homers and 24 RBIs in 16 games at low Class A Hagerstown. Since his promotion, he has hit .388/.492/.857 with six homers and 15 RBIs in 12 games, with more than twice as many extra-base hits and walks (10 each) than strikeouts (four).

LHP: Stephen Gonsalves, Rochester Red Wings (Triple-A)

(Twins' No. 3 prospect/MLB No. 77)

2-0, 0.63 ERA, 2 GS, 14 1/3 IP, 4 H, 1 R, 1 ER, 1 HR, 2 BB, 14 SO, 0.42 WHIP

Gonsalves might have the most impressive numbers of any left-hander in the Minors in the previous three seasons (35-13, 2.39 ERA, 405 strikeouts in 384 1/3 innings), so it's no surprise he's rolling again this year. After getting knocked around in five Triple-A outings at the end of 2017, he returned to Rochester last week and won both his starts while surrendering a total of one run. He's tied for the Minor League lead with five victories and has a 1.30 ERA with 39 whiffs in 34 2/3 innings.

RHP: Dylan Cease, Winston-Salem Dash (high Class A)

(White Sox No. 5 prospect/MLB No. 59)

2-0, 0.69 ERA, 2 GS, 13 IP, 10 H, 2 R, 1 ER, 2 BB, 18 SO, 0.92 WHIP

Cease is one of two Top 100 Prospects whom the White Sox acquired from the Cubs in the Jose Quintana trade last July, along with outfielder Eloy Jimenez (No. 4 on the list) -- who just missed joining him on this PTOW. He has allowed one earned run or fewer in four of his six starts this year, including two outings last week that included a 12-strikeout gem on Tuesday. He's now 4-1 with a 1.95 ERA and a Minor League-leading 42 whiffs in 32 1/3 innings.

RP: Jimmie Sherfy, Reno Aces (Triple-A)

(D-backs' No. 15 prospect)

0-0, 0.00 ERA, 3 G, 3 SV, 3 2/3 IP, 1 H, 0 R, 0 ER, 4 BB, 10 SO

Sherfy didn't allow a run in 11 regular-season appearances with the D-backs last summer, though the Dodgers did get to him in both of his National League Division Series outings. He converted all three of his save opportunities last week, recording 10 of his 11 outs via strikeouts, and is 6-for-6 in 2018. He has a 2.45 ERA in 10 games, holding opponents to a .154 opponents' batting average while recording a 33 percent whiff rate.

Excellent news: Danny Farquhar discharged from medical center, now resting at home

By Tim Stebbins / NBC Sports Chicago / May 7, 2018

White Sox pitcher Danny Farquhar was discharged from RUSH University Medical Center Monday and is resting at home with his family, according to a team press release.

Farquhar collapsed during the White Sox April 20 home game against the Houston Astros. It was revealed that he suffered a brain hemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm.

According to the press release, Farquhar's neurosurgeon, Dr. Demetrius Lopes, expects Farquhar to pitch again in the future. However, he will not medically release him to pitch in a competitive game this season, allowing Farquhar time to recover from the brain hemorrhage.

"Farquhar and his family have appreciated the many cards, tweets, texts and well wishes they have received from friends and fans over the past weeks," the team press release said. "The White Sox organization continues to wish Danny a speedy and full recovery.

"The White Sox will provide additional updates on Farquhar's health as appropriate, and the team asks that everyone continue to respect the privacy of the Farquhar family as they focus on Danny's recovery."

White Sox's Danny Farquhar released from hospital; doctor says he could pitch again

By Teddy Greenstein / Chicago Tribune / May 7, 2018

Good news continues to surface regarding Danny Farquhar, the White Sox reliever who suffered a brain hemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm April 20 at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Farquhar, 31, was discharged from Rush University Medical Center on Monday and is resting at home with his family, Sox officials said in a news release.

Not only that, Farquhar's neurosurgeon expects him to be able to pitch again, though not in 2018. Dr. Demetrius Lopes is ordering Farquhar to use the rest of this season to fully recover from the brain hemorrhage.

The Farquhar family said it has appreciated the many cards, tweets and texts received from friends and fans since he collapsed in the Sox dugout after pitching against the Astros.

Sox players have been wearing T-shirts that read, "PRAY FOR 43," with "FOR DANNY" on the left sleeve. Fellow relievers have hung his No. 43 jersey in the bullpen.

"It will be out there until he walks back in here," Nate Jones said recently. "He's a brother of ours and we care about him. He's still part of this team and we want to show our support."

White Sox zeroing in on group of seven prospects for No. 4 draft pick

By Chicago Tribune Staff / May 7, 2018

While the beatdown goes on at Guaranteed Rate Field, the White Sox front office is focused on a group of seven players it's considering for the fourth pick in the amateur draft, which begins June 4.

"We feel pretty confident that within the group of seven, we're going to get a special player," scouting director Nick Hostetler said. "While there may not be a Bryce Harper, Kris Bryant or Stephen Strasburg in this draft, it's a deep draft. We think we could also wind up with first-round talent with our second pick and maybe even in the third round. It's a really interesting draft."

Within the organization and among the cult of fans who follow scouting and player development, this draft has elicited great anticipation since Chris Sale was traded to the Red Sox during the 2016 winter meetings.

The biggest names in college baseball then were advanced hitters Seth Beer of Clemson and Luken Baker of TCU, who were coming off monster freshman seasons. Their stock has fallen in the last two seasons, putting them among the crowd of players the Sox might consider with the 46th or 81st pick, and the decision at No. 4 has become much more intriguing.

The Sox haven't taken a high school player in the first round since Courtney Hawkins in 2012, and it would be surprising if the trend toward college players ends this year. The debate is more likely on whether the Sox will add to their deep stable of pitching prospects with an advanced arm or select a hitter who, like recent Cubs picks Bryant and Kyle Schwarber, could contribute soon.

Beyond the likelihood the Tigers will pick Auburn right-hander Casey Mize first, there's little consensus about the top of the draft. The Sox are sure to see the Giants and Phillies take players they like at Nos. 2 and 3, but here's an early look at the best players who could be on the table:

— Florida right-hander Brady Singer was the favorite to go first entering the season and might be the only pitcher whose availability would trump the desire to add an advanced hitter. Singer started slowly but is picking up steam — he threw a six-hit shutout of Texas A&M on Friday — and could be gone before the Sox pick.

— Oregon State second baseman Nick Madrigal. Think Dustin Pedroia and you have a good idea about Madrigal. He stands 5-foot-8 but can really crush the ball. He has had a great college career, batting .370 for one of the best programs in the country with more walks than strikeouts every season. Madrigal also can play shortstop. He broke his wrist earlier this season but looks like himself again heading toward the Pac-12 tournament.

— South Alabama center fielder Travis Swaggerty, a standout for Team USA last summer, has seen his stock soar this spring. He's an on-base machine (career .460 OBP with a .966 OPS in college) with speed, profiling as a leadoff man. He's the lone left-handed hitter among the top college hitters, no small thing given the organizational need for left-handed hitting.

— Georgia Tech catcher Joey Bart is about as safe of a pick as you get with catchers. Like Georgia Tech products Jason Varitek and Matt Wieters, he can hit for average and power and possesses both a strong arm and a knack for handling pitchers. One downside is the Sox used their 2016 first-round pick on catcher Zack Collins, who has advanced to Double-A Birmingham.

It's unclear who else is among the seven finalists Hostetler referred to, but other top names include South Florida lefty Shane McClellan (who draws comparisons to Sale), Oregon State outfielder Trevor Larnach, Florida third baseman Jonathan India and a group of high school players headed by right-hander Carter Stewart and lefty Matthew Liberatore.

Hostetler confirmed the Sox's interest in Mount Carmel center fielder Alek Thomas, the son of Sox conditioning coach Allen Thomas, but he's likely a consideration in the second or third round. Thomas has committed to TCU.

ESPN's Mike Greenberg calls Yadier Molina video scary ... while showing it repeatedly

Phil Rosenthal / Chicago Tribune / May 7, 2018

Nine sports media things worth noting from ESPN's "baseball in groin" obsession to Shaquille O'Neal's latest endorsement deal:

1. Friendly tip to ESPN's Mike Greenberg and others: It's fine to tell viewers how disturbing and frightening it is to see a replay of Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina getting struck in the groin by a foul tip Saturday against the Cubs.

But that message comes off as more a tout than a warning accompanied by repeated replays of the Cubs' Kris Bryant fouling off Jordan Hicks' 102-mph fastball, leaving Molina in agony.

What does a viewer get from the fourth showing of the incident that wasn't readily apparent the first time except a heightened awareness of how unnecessary it is to repeat?

2. A lot of Cubs fans fell asleep to so-called "Sunday Night Baseball" in St. Louis probably woke up Monday to Greenberg and company's "Get Up," finding a program still in search of its footing, audience and reason to exist.

What exactly does it do that's unique — or at least better than what any other show does — in its ultra-competitive time slot?

And, no, the view out the studio window doesn't count.

The "Get Up" staff probably has nine more months or so to get its act (or resumes) together.

3. The Athletic reports Booger McFarland will be named to ESPN's "Monday Night Football" crew as an on-field analyst.

Joe Tessitore is replacing Sean McDonough on Monday NFL play-by-play. Newly retired Cowboys tight end Jason Witten replaces commentator Jon Gruden, newly unretired as coach of the Raiders. Lisa Salters will continue as sideline reporter, asking coaches what adjustments they'll make at halftime.

4. Ratings for the 5 p.m. edition of "SportsCenter" have gone up since co-hosts Michael Smith and Jemele Hill moved off the program. An estimated average of 526,000 viewers watched in April, 9 percent better than April 2017. Make of that what you will.

5. People who knock NBC's coverage of the Kentucky Derby obviously watched too much of NBC's coverage of the Kentucky Derby.

It's a two-minute race. Tune in at post time and you eliminate the risk of sitting through a segment with Tara Lipinski, Johnny Weir or Megyn Kelly.

6. This item was going to advise reporters that getting caught on camera high-fiving the people you cover is a bad idea. It brings unwanted attention, as Alanna Rizzo, who reports on Dodgers telecasts, found out Friday after a high-five with manager Dave Roberts after the Dodgers' no-hitter that night.

But near the top of an online search under Rizzo's name is video of her onfield "date" with the Phillie Phanatic mascot, so clearly that ship already sailed.

7. The White Sox are mashing up retiring announcer Hawk Harrelson and Han Solo of "Star Wars" to offer a Hawk Solo bobblehead to as many as 20,000 fans attending the May 19 game against the Rangers.

While it's entirely believable Hawk would use the term "parsec" to reference speed rather than distance as Solo does, is that really the best "Star Wars" character fit for Harrelson?

How about Obi-Wan Kenobi ("Use the inside of the plate!") or Chewbacca ("Awwww!")? Yoda might not be a bad option, either, as in "Gone, he" or "Ovah, it is."

Maybe there should be a whole set. R2D-Hawk, anyone?

8. The World Video Game Hall of Fame, launched in 2015 in Rochester, N.Y., has named John Madden Football as one of this year's inductees.

This raises two questions.

The second is: "How did it take the World Video Game Hall of Fame so long to honor Madden Football?"

The first is: "Wait, there's a World Video Game Hall of Fame?"

9. Shaquille O'Neal is going to do ads for JCPenney's big-and-tall menswear department and later this year will introduce his own line of big-and-tall clothing.

To paraphrase an old line about Chevy Chase and movie roles, one suspects Shaq's outgoing voicemail message says: "I can't answer your call right now, please leave a message at the tone. And if this is a sponsor, I'll do it!"

Series preview: Pirates at White Sox

By Phil Rogers / Chicago Tribune / May 7, 2018

11 games on WGN-AM 720.

Tuesday: 7:10 p.m., WGN-9.

RH Ivan Nova (2-2, 4.01) vs. RH Lucas Giolito (1-4, 7.03).

Wednesday: 1:10 p.m., NBCSCH.

RH Trevor Williams (4-2, 2.63) vs. RH Reynaldo Lopez (0-2, 2.43).

Just like old times for Hawk & Wimpy in their White Sox swan song

By Jeff Agrest / Sun-Times / May 7, 2018

Hawk walked into the elevator that would bring him to the broadcast level at Guaranteed Rate Field. A White Sox security guard faced him and, with a smile, said, "Big day."

Hawk put his right hand on the man's left shoulder and said, "Last game with the Wimperoo."

How he said it was different than how he has said most things during a TV broadcast. There was a hint of melancholy in his tone.

Ken Harrelson had had a last broadcast with Tom Paciorek before, but he didn't know it at the time. This time he did, and everyone else in the park knew it, too.

With Steve Stone off for the weekend series against the Twins, the analyst chair was open Sunday for Wimpy to rejoin his partner from 1990 to '99. Hawk will call about 20 games in his last season on the air, mostly Sunday home games.

Hawk and Wimpy closed out old Comiskey Park, sat ringside for Robin Ventura vs. Nolan Ryan and were on the call for the 1993 American League West champs. More important, they left an indelible mark on Sox fans.

"I still get a ton of fan mail, and I'll guarantee you maybe 75 percent of them always mention him," Hawk said, pointing at Wimpy. "He's unforgettable, you know?"

Both of them are, actually. As they sat and talked in the booth before the game, it was as though they were riffing before a show.

* * * * *

Hawk's expressions are legendary. In this game, a 5-3 loss, fans couldn't "cancel the postgame show" until the seventh inning, when James Shields allowed his first hit. Sox outfielders caught a "can o' corn" a handful of times, and a Twins batter "got a cookie there."

But Wimpy — who was given the nickname by his minor-league manager Tommy Lasorda after ordering a hamburger, like the character in “Popeye,” when all his teammates ordered steak — had an underrated repertoire.

“It’s just sayings that I’ve heard from some of my teammates,” Wimpy said. “[When] Aurelio Rodriguez would shank one down the right-field line, he’d say, ‘I take dah one.’ That was where that came from.

“And I learned from Hawk that every left-hander had a different delivery. And I’m just, ‘Wow, that really is true,’ because you never see two of the same. So they became ‘funky left-handers.’ You might throw a little Lawrence Welk voice in there, too.”

That wasn’t all Wimpy learned from Hawk. Wimpy joined John Rooney in the Sox’ TV booth in 1988, one year removed from playing. By then, Hawk had called Red Sox games for seven years, White Sox games for four and Yankees games for two. That followed a nine-year playing career that included an All-Star appearance in 1968, when he finished third in American League MVP voting.

“Hawk was very informative for me,” Wimpy said. “He really taught me a lot of things about announcing. He had so much background in it.”

Wimpy also credits Lasorda, his first manager in pro baseball. Wimpy said Lasorda, who went on to have a Hall of Fame career managing the Dodgers, would take his minor-leaguers out to meet the public — to a church breakfast, for example.

“He’d make us speak every time,” Wimpy said. “None of us wanted to, but he forced us to.

“That kind of evolved into the days that I was in Seattle [1978-81], where they would make these funny baseball commercials, and that kind of set the stage for speaking in public where you weren’t too embarrassed about what you were going to do.”

Such as jokingly promoting Mariners funny-nose-glasses night when it was actually jacket night.

“What am I going to do with 30,000 pairs of funny-nose glasses?” he asked in the bit.

“Visiting teams coming in, that’s one thing we wanted to always watch was his commercials,” Hawk said. “I’m telling you, probably the greatest team commercials produced in the history of baseball.”

Hawk said Lasorda taught Wimpy more than public speaking and baseball.

“You couldn’t learn the game of baseball from anybody better than Tommy Lasorda,” Hawk said. “He taught Wimpy well. Wimpy’s mantra is, if you pay for it, it cost too much.”

“That’s right,” Wimpy said, laughing. “He’s the leader ... the cheapest guy.”

“He was AG1,” Hawk said. “America’s Guest 1, Lasorda was. And Wimpy was AG2.”

* * * * *

Hawk’s place in Sox lore is secure. The broadcast area is named the Hawk Harrelson Broadcast Level. But he makes it crystal clear just how important Wimpy is to him.

“Vin [Scully] is Vin. You have so many good announcers. To me, the best comprehensive baseball announcer I’ve ever heard was Don Drysdale,” Hawk said of his late TV partner with the Sox from 1982 to ‘85. “Don was my all-time favorite guy to work with, and Wimpy was second.”

Which is why Hawk was saddened when he learned Wimpy wouldn't return in 2000 because of personal reasons. That was a difficult day for Hawk. First, golfer Payne Stewart, a close friend, died in an airplane accident. Later that night, he received a call from Wimpy.

"He said, 'I'm quitting.' I said, 'What?' He said, 'I want to be around my grandkids more,'" Hawk said. "So in one day I lose a good buddy, and then I lose a partner of 10 years. That was really a tough day." But Sunday was a celebratory day, and the broadcast on NBC Sports Chicago reflected that. Before the game, viewers saw clips of Hawk and Wimpy throughout their time together. And during the game, the partners reminisced and discussed baseball.

Hawk had his usual superlatives. Of Sox Hall of Famer Frank Thomas, he said: "For the first seven years he played in the league, he was probably the best right-handed hitter I ever saw." Of Tigers first baseman Miguel Cabrera, he said: "If he was healthy his whole career, he may have turned out to be the best hitter we've ever seen." Of Rickey Henderson, he said: "I played against Mantle, Maris, Mays, McCovey, Musial. Rickey Henderson was the greatest offensive player I ever saw."

And Wimpy brought his usual sense of humor. When Twins reliever Zach Duke began to warm up in the seventh inning, Wimpy broke into his John Wayne impersonation.

"I'll tell you one thing," Wimpy said in the Duke's voice, drawing a chuckle from Hawk. "He's warming up down there in that bullpen."

Hawk and Wimpy had tons of laughs in their 10 years together, and Sox fans laughed along with them. But Sunday was the last time they all would laugh together.

Unless . . .

Hopeful of having another chance to call a game with his dear friend, Wimpy said he was going to take a mulligan with the Sox down to their last batter.

"You're used to mulligans, all the time we played golf," Hawk said.

One last laugh, for old times' sake.

White Sox' Danny Farquhar out of hospital, won't be cleared to play this season

By Madeline Kenney / Sun-Times / May 7, 2018

White Sox reliever Danny Farquhar was released Monday from Rush University Medical Center after progressing in his recovery from a brain hemorrhage that left him fighting for his life, the team announced. He's at home resting with his family and won't return to competitive baseball this season.

Farquhar suffered a ruptured brain aneurysm during a home game April 20 against the Astros.

Demetrius Lopes, Farquhar's neurologist, was optimistic that he would make his way back to the mound eventually. Lopes said he won't medically clear the right-hander this season to allow Farquhar to fully recover.

"Farquhar and his family have appreciated the many cards, tweets, texts and well-wishes they have received from friends and fans over the past weeks," the team said in a statement. "The White Sox organization continues to wish Danny a speedy and full recovery."

Farquhar collapsed in the dugout at Guaranteed Rate Field after pitching two-thirds of an inning against Houston. Team medical personnel and on-site emergency medical technicians immediately attended to him, and Farquhar was taken to Rush for further treatment and testing. He spent some time in the intensive care unit after he suffered the ruptured aneurysm, which caused bleeding in his brain.

Farquhar, 31, is in his seventh major-league season and second with the Sox. The Sox signed him last season, four days after the Rays released him in July. The Blue Jays originally selected Farquhar in the 10th round in 2008. He only pitched three games for them, all in 2011.

A little levity can help struggling White Sox

By Brian Sandalow / Sun-times / May 7, 2018

It was only a few minutes and a couple of tunes. But when manager Rick Renteria compelled injured pitcher and talented vocalist Miguel Gonzalez to sing with a rehearsing mariachi band before the game Saturday at Guaranteed Rate Field, the moment might have had some actual value.

"It's a long season," Renteria said. "There has to be some levity in it."

Whether it's Gonzalez singing or Yolmer Sanchez drenching himself with a Gatorade bucket after Trayce Thompson's walk-off home run Thursday, funny and positive moments will be embraced by a struggling White Sox team. At 9-23 and in last place in the worst division in baseball, the 2018 season already has been a trying one for many reasons.

So some fun and heartening moments could go a long way for a team that still has almost five months to go.

"It loosens guys up," Gonzalez said. "We have a lot of young guys and a lot of young talent, but they enjoy the older guys going out and doing stuff like that."

Of course, those young guys are the priority this season. Whether it's the next positive outing from Lucas Giolito or Reynaldo Lopez or the latest impressive effort by Yoan Moncada or Tim Anderson, any and all growth will be embraced.

On Saturday, Anderson hit two home runs, albeit in an 8-4 loss to the Twins. But those homers were seen as more growth for Anderson, who's showing signs of improvement after a difficult 2017 season.

"You're not going to expect to see him hit two homers every night," Renteria said. "[Saturday] was one of those days where he got a couple of pitches he could handle. Certainly having the approaches that he's having, the swings he puts on the baseball allow him to be able to do many things, whether it's drive the ball in the gap, hit the ball to right-center field earlier in the ballgame. He's got the type of ability to manage the barrel."

Before Saturday, Anderson had one hit in his last 18 at-bats but recovered for three hits and two homers.

"It's baseball," Anderson said. "You've got to learn from it. I learned a lot from it last year. It's just a game. I just go out and have fun, and if it's not going well, I've just got to continue to go."

That attitude is going to be one of the keys for the Sox to get anything out of this season at the major-league level while they wait for Michael Kopech, Eloy Jimenez and the other prospects to develop. They don't want the losses and lack of success to burden them and turn coming to the park into a grind.

The occasional bit of laughter or fun won't hurt.

"You can't dwell on a lot of different things because you have to be ready and prepared for the moment that's coming," Renteria said. "I think you have to use every experience that occurs in the past to learn, and I think that as these guys continue to get more and more comfortable, the expectation or the hope is that they'll be able to take advantage of those situations."

"Having some levity alongside of it makes it a little easier."

Gonzalez provided plenty of that with his singing. He also has an eye on the bigger picture.

"It's fun to be around all these guys," Gonzalez said. "At the end of the day, we have to perform no matter what when it's time to go out and play."

Sanchez making most of opportunity with Chicago White Sox

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / May 7, 2018

It was a sleepy morning Sunday at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Inside the Chicago White Sox's clubhouse, most players sat quietly in front of their lockers and undoubtedly pondered a stretch of 15 losses in 20 games that left them with the third-worst record (9-22) in baseball.

Yolmer Sanchez is not most players.

"Every day is a new day," he said. "I wake up every day and say thanks to God for giving me the opportunity to feel happy, to have a beautiful family, a beautiful son, a beautiful wife, my mom and my dad.

"I just say thanks for everything I have and I come here and have fun."

A few minutes later, Sanchez located a football helmet in the clubhouse. He strapped it on and started ramming trash cans and luggage.

It sure beats past seasons, when the versatile infielder was figuratively banging his head against the wall trying to stick with the Sox.

"I played with him at Triple-A (Charlotte) and knew how good he was," shortstop Tim Anderson said. "He can play everywhere, hit from both sides; he brings a lot of energy. It's just a matter of getting your chance and showing you can stick.

"He got his chance and now he's showing everyone he's a good player. A great player and a great person."

Signing with the Sox out of Venezuela at the age of 17 in 2009, the former Carlos Sanchez (he changed to his first name of Yolmer last year) made steady progress through the system and reached the majors in 2014.

From 2014-16, Sanchez bounced between the White Sox and Charlotte but never lost faith.

"My first three years here, I was up and down, but I always kept working," he said. "I feel really proud of myself for becoming the player I am right now. I know how hard I've worked to get to this point, so I want to enjoy every second."

Sanchez spent his first full season with the Sox last year, and he posted a .267/.319/.413 hitting line with 12 home runs and 59 RBI in 141 games. The 5-foot-11, 185-pounder also ranked second in the American League with 8 triples.

"I believe in my talent," Sanchez said. "I believe I can do a lot of things to help us win games. I'm really confident in my abilities, and I just want to show what I can do and that I can play every day."

A natural shortstop, Sanchez is playing every day again this season, splitting time between third base, second and designated hitter.

In addition to leading the White Sox with a .293 batting average, Sanchez is tied for the league lead with 3 triples.

Considering he also is the most capable defensive player on the roster, a strong case can be made for Sanchez being the Sox's best all-around player.

His penchant for having fun on the field and in the clubhouse overshadow his pure ability, but the White Sox finally know what they have in Sanchez.

Even though he is still a young player at 25, Sanchez's offensive and defensive skills figure to be attractive to contending teams at the July 31 nonwaiver trade deadline. Having seen Sox general manager Rick Hahn make 11 trades since the 2016 winter meetings, Sanchez is ready for anything.

"You can't control that," he said. "Maybe I'm here today, maybe I'm not. I have really good friends that have been traded, (Jose) Quintana, (Todd) Frazier, Melky (Cabrera), Tommy Kahnle, (David) Robertson. We can't focus on that. We focus on who's coming and who's going to help us win games.

"We're really happy with all of the young talent we have. We know that we're going to be one of the best teams in the league because we have a lot of talent. It's hard at the moment, but we're happy with what we've got."

Scouting report: Chicago White Sox vs. Pittsburgh Pirates

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / May 7, 2018

White Sox vs. Pittsburgh Pirates at Guaranteed Rate Field
TV

WGN Tuesday; NBC Sports Chicago Wednesday

Radio
WGN 720-AM

Pitching matchups

The Sox's Lucas Giolito (1-4) vs. Ivan Nova (2-2) Tuesday at 7:10 p.m.; Reynaldo Lopez (0-2) vs. Trevor Williams (4-2) Wednesday at 1:10 p.m.

At a glance

The White Sox (9-23) have lost 7 of 8 and are a season-high 14 games under .500. Their 3-13 record at home is the worst in the majors. The Sox last played the Pirates in 2015 and were 0-4 (0-2 at home). Giolito is 1-2 with a 9.00 ERA in his last 3 starts. The Pirates have lost 5 of 7 but are still 3 games over .500 at 19-16. Left fielder Corey Dickerson leads Pittsburgh in batting (.315) and RBI (24). Matt Davidson leads the White Sox with 9 home runs and 19 RBI. He has 1 homer and 5 RBI at home.

Next:

Cubs, Friday-Sunday at Wrigley Field

White Sox pitcher Farquhar returns home after hospital discharge

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / May 7, 2018

After spending two and a half weeks in the hospital following a brain hemorrhage, White Sox pitcher Danny Farquhar has been discharged and is resting comfortably at home, team officials announced Monday.

Farquhar, 31, suffered a brain hemorrhage from a ruptured aneurysm during a game at Guarantee Rate Field on April 20 against the Houston Astros. He was discharged Monday afternoon from Rush University Medical Center, where he underwent surgery on April 21.

Here is a statement from White Sox officials:

"Dr. Demetrius Lopes, Farquhar's neurosurgeon, expects Danny to be able to pitch again in the future, but Dr. Lopes will not medically release Farquhar to pitch in a competitive game during the 2018 season in order to allow him to fully recover from the brain hemorrhage.

"Farquhar and his family have appreciated the many cards, tweets, texts and well wishes they have received from friends and fans over the past weeks. The White Sox organization continues to wish Danny a speedy and full recovery."

One final Chicago White Sox game together for Hawk and Wimpy

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald / May 7, 2018

Throughout the season, Sunday is going to be fun day at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Maybe not on the field for the Chicago White Sox, but definitely in the TV broadcast booth.

In his 33rd and final year, Ken "Hawk" Harrelson has scaled back to working Sunday home games, and he often will be paired with a special guest.

Former Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski is scheduled for an August game, and the guess here is Paul Konerko, Frank Thomas, Ozzie Guillen and Mark Buehrle also claim a game with Hawk.

For Sunday's White Sox-Twins matchup, Harrelson reunited with longtime broadcast partner Tom "Wimpy" Paciorek.

The duo called Sox games from 1990-99 and were incredibly popular.

"I get a ton of fan mail," Harrelson said. "With social media, everybody can get your address. The last couple of weeks, I finished two big boxes. I've got two more to go yet, which I'll get to, and 70-75 percent of all the mail I get, they mention Wimpy.

"People say we have so much fun."

They always did, and the trend continued on Sunday's call.

But the final game together for Harrelson and Paciorek also stirred emotions.

"I'm going to say I might want a mulligan on this whole thing," Paciorek said. "Never say never, because I might be back at some point and we'll have this again. I'm not ruling out the possibility because if I did that would make it kind of a sad day for me. So I don't want to rule out the possibility we'll do this again."

If they don't, Harrelson is not going to lose any sleep.

"I love Wimpy like a little brother and always will," Hawk said. "We've had a great time, 10 years we were together, and what's not to like about it? That's the way it is. It really is. It's not a sad thing, it's just another moment in our lives."

Harrelson was in the White Sox's TV booth from 1982-85 before becoming general manager for one year.

After that, Hawk broadcast New York Yankees games for two seasons, and he returned to the White Sox's booth in 1990 and started working with Paciorek.

In 1988-89, Paciorek called Sox games with John Rooney and Gary Thorne.

"Working with Hawk, it was wonderful," Paciorek said. "I learned everything I know about broadcasting from Hawk, how to ask a question in an interview, how to do play-by-play and how to analyze.

"Nothing against John Rooney or Gary Thorne, but they were stereotypical broadcasters who really weren't affluent in the game of baseball. With the Hawk, we're having a conversation about a baseball game, which is more appealing to me.

"Working with Hawk was great; he made it so easy for me to kind of develop into whatever I became."

The way Harrelson hears it, Paciorek became a great broadcaster for the White Sox.

"It's easy to do a good ballgame," Hawk said. "If you've got Mark Buehrle out there against Jake Arrieta in a 2-1 game, it's going fast, those games are easy to do. You've got people in the stands that can do those games.

"The tough ones are the 13-1, 9-0 games. That's where Wimpy was absolutely the best announcer I have ever heard. He can handle those games. That's the secret of broadcasting, handling the bad games."

Through a difficult 2018, Reynaldo López and Lucas Giolito are mastering a new pitch together

By James Fegan / The Athletic / May 7, 2018

When Lucas Giolito racked up a season-high seven strikeouts last Wednesday in St. Louis, showing off his wipeout stuff consistently through an entire start for seemingly the first time all season, he leaned on his still relatively new slider (eight swinging strikes off the 21 times he threw it) to success. And as Giolito rode his slider, a pitch that has evolved from being casually mentioned as a project last spring to possibly his primary breaking ball now, Reynaldo López was admiring it from the clubhouse as he charted Giolito's outing, just as he's charted Giolito on the road all season.

"From the first inning, when I saw him throw the slider, I thought, 'That slider is nasty today.'" López said through team interpreter Billy Russo. "You could see the hitters couldn't recognize that pitch the whole game. That's what we like."

The 2018 season has not been any kind of cakewalk for Giolito nor López. Even after the Cardinals game, which ended in disappointment after two late home runs, Giolito has an ERA of 7.03 and more walks than strikeouts on the year. And despite a cosmetically pleasing 2.43 ERA, López has struck out just four batters over his last 18 innings and was visibly frustrated on the mound after his last start. Still, there have been positive moments, and they've largely been thanks to their sliders, a pitch both of them added upon coming to Chicago at the suggestion of pitching coach Don Cooper.

Giolito spent spring training trying to reclaim his dominant curveball, which he mostly shelved during his White Sox debut in 2017. While he still regarded his slider as important, he didn't think it was a wipeout pitch that could replace his curve. But now through six starts, the 20.7 percent swing-and-miss rate Giolito has on his slider makes it the most compelling weapon in his arsenal. He's still using it more than his curveball, and he's pretty open to its potential as a finishing option now.

"When I throw my slider right, it can have really good vertical break on it," Giolito said. "When it's coming out like that, it's a really good two-strike pitch, especially to right-handed hitters. Because it will stay on that plane of looking like a fastball in the zone and then take off kind of late, straight down as opposed to side-to-side."

You can imagine Danny Farquhar smiling in approval when Giolito talks about vertical break being more valuable than horizontal, but you can also see López's excitement, because Giolito's success with the pitch encouraged him to break new ground.

"That gave me courage to try it, and I said well maybe I can try this," López said. "Coop last year told me to [add a slider] and I was like yeah, I feel like I can do it. Then I started doing it more consistently and then that was my goal during spring training, just to improve my slider and just get that feeling and that confidence to throw that pitch in every count. Then [Giolito] asked me, 'Hey, how are you doing it with that

pitch? What is your grip? How are you feeling with it? How confident are you in that pitch? How do you like to throw that pitch?' And we'll start comparing."

The way the young Sox starters lean on each other was perhaps never more evident than during Carson Fulmer's last start of spring training. Having finally got himself back on track with a positive outing at Salt River Fields against the Diamondbacks, Fulmer concluded his spring with a low-pressure minor league game on the backfields with few scrutinizing eyes in attendance. Few beyond Giolito and López, of course, who acted as de-facto pitching coaches for their rotation mate.

That dynamic has been present from the spring throughout what has been, for the most part, a very difficult season for three young starters trying to stick in a major league rotation for the first time. Any major development in their games, like López's slider going from just a rumor to something he throws 21 percent of the time, has had one of their teammate's fingerprints on it.

"[López] started throwing that slider I guess in spring training, or he had been working on it," Giolito said. "We played catch a few times and I was like, 'That thing is nasty,' and I just said keep throwing it. That's about it. It's a really good pitch for him. It plays off his velocity really well, plays off his fastball really well. You can see the results, it's been great for him."

When asked if López's bad luck of being winless despite his sparkling ERA reminds him of José Quintana, Cooper retorted that it's actually López's quiet humility and his willingness to adopt any suggested additions to his game without hesitation that reminds him of Quintana. And when asked about whether he's concerned about his starters' struggles in a year that many hoped the Sox would take a step closer to contention rather than threaten to post a worse mark than last year's 67-95 campaign, Cooper reiterated how early in the process it is for a group of pitchers still finding their primary breaking balls.

"The rebuild's been two fucking months," Cooper said. "If you want to backtrack to [Yoán] Moncada, but that's not my area, the rebuild started when we brought up Giolito, Fulmer and López. That's when it started. So it's been two months into it. Listen, I'm impatient for many things in life in the real world. If I'm patient anywhere it's here, pitching, because I know it doesn't happen right away all the time. I can point out Roger Clemens, Nolan Ryan and Randy Johnson, Hall of Fame guys that did not get it right away. Shouldn't everybody else be afforded the patience?"

"I'm looking at the good in everything. On the sideline, when they make a bad pitch on the sideline, I'm not thinking bad. 'That might be a good chase pitch for a righty, a good chase pitch for a lefty.' I'm thinking the exact opposite."

That attitude probably won't extend past the White Sox clubhouse, at least not until the gifts possessed by the young Sox starters translate into better results than the most walk-ridden and strikeout-starved staff in baseball. But it's extended to how López and Giolito interact with each other about their new sliders, as they try to share with each other the tools to their success.

López prefers to interview with an interpreter so he can be more detailed and articulate in his answers, but his English bleeds through when he talks about his conversations with Giolito. Perhaps because the direct Spanish translation doesn't carry the same connotation of "nasty," and "filthy," and the other compliments they give each other about their pitching.

The standout game of any of the young members of the Sox staff was López's 10-strikeout night in Oakland on April 16, and when he stepped off the mound, Giolito was there to chime in on the progress he showed.

"When I came in he told me, 'Ooh, that slider is working really good today,' and I told him 'Yeah, it's working really, really good,'" López said. "And we can still get better with that pitch."

TA30: The Mets fall, the Mariners climb, the Orioles are trying to move into the Reds' basement

By James Fegan / The Athletic / May 7, 2018

There's an old baseball axiom that says you won't really know what your team is until the first of June. There are certainly a few teams for which that holds true this season, but it feels like there are at least a half-dozen about which you can safely buzz in prematurely, put your lips too close to the microphone and mumble "...a bad team. They're a bad— they're a team that's going to lose a lot of games this season." The judges will confirm, and they will say "We would have also accepted 'they're in rebuild mode', but that is correct!"

For the rest, there's still all the intrigue that comes along with trying to graph out where your team lands on the surprise/disappointment chart. High expectations and low performance? Sorry, Cubs. Low expectations and high performance? Hello, Braves!

Let's dig in and see where our team of writers have your favorite team this week. Welcome to TA30!

1. Boston Red Sox

Last week: 1

They were one Jurickson Profar nightmare away from splitting a series with the Rangers, which might have been enough to knock them out of the top spot. Instead, they manage to hold off the charging Yankees and hold on to first place for the third consecutive week. Mookie Betts seems to have discovered a baseball cheat code, so hopefully Sunday's shoulder contusion won't keep him out of action for long.

2. New York Yankees

Last week: 4

Gleyber Torres is doing just fine at the big-league level, hitting .327 since his call-up, including a walk-off against Cleveland on Sunday to complete a sweep. Before that, New York took three of four (and the No. 2 ranking here) from the Astros. Before that, they swept the Angels. They're not just 9-1 in their last ten games, they're 9-1 against good teams.

3. Houston Astros

Last week: 2

Facing the Yankees and Diamondbacks is a tough week, but really — facing the Astros should make for a tough week also, and this week, it didn't really. Ken Giles punched himself in the face. They're still number three here, based at least in part on the fact that their World Series team is still mostly intact, and they added Gerrit Cole, who just keeps striking people out. It's not time to panic. Yet.

4. Arizona Diamondbacks

Last week: 3

Went 6-4 against the Dodgers and Astros, and dropped a spot to No. 4. But that has more to do with the Yankees than it does the Diamondbacks. Fun Arizona fact, courtesy of Jayson Stark: A.J. Pollock is the first MLB player named A.J., B.J., C.J., D.J., J.J., P.J., or R.J. to ever hit three home runs in a game (not counting B.J. Upton, since he is now Melvin). He's also rocking a 1.031 OPS.

5. Los Angeles Angels

Last week: 7

This rotation wasn't supposed to be very good, but thanks to strong starts by Garrett Richards, Tyler Skaggs, and Shohei Ohtani, they've been good enough for first place in the AL West. Meanwhile, Mike Trout is having a great season (even by Mike Trout standards), Albert Pujols got his 3,000th hit, and "defense-first" shortstop Andrelton Simmons is hitting .350. If this keeps up, expect the Angels to be in the market for another starter in July.

6. St. Louis Cardinals

Last week: 9

Swept the Cubs in dramatic fashion, but Yadi Molina is going to require surgery for a “Pelvic injury with a traumatic hematoma” that he incurred on a foul tip. Don’t watch the replay if you don’t want to cringe in sympathy. Some videos don’t need blood to be gruesome.

7. Atlanta Braves

Last week: 11

Me, two weeks ago: “The 15th-ranked Braves are winning and no one knows why because it was a surprise?!” Me, today: The Braves have had more superheroes this season than Infinity War. Seemingly every new prospect they call up is outperforming the last, and their old guys are catching the fever as well. I know “slash lines” are so 2013, but check out this 1-4 from Sunday’s game against the Giants:

1. Ozzie Albies .285 / .323 / .597
2. Ronald Acuña, Jr. .326 / .367 / .565
3. Freddie Freeman .307 / .414 / .535
4. Nick Markakis .344 / .428 / .550

Yeah. Nick Markakis is hitting a career-high .344 at 34 years of age. Meanwhile, they just called up José Bautista to play third base, because why not push your luck at this point? (He’s hitting .300.)

8. Chicago Cubs

Last week: 5

It was funny when Alex Rodriguez spent about two minutes in the 14th inning explaining why the new-school, launch-angle-driven revolution of swinging for the fences was actually bad, because he stopped just in time for Javy Báez to uppercut an absolute volcano-shot to Mars. Probably less funny for Cubs fans when Dexter Fowler clouted a two-run blast to walk it off a half-inning later, wrapping up the sweep.

9. Cleveland Indians

Last week: 8

Trevor Bauer implied the Houston Astros were cheating, and it turns out maybe he went a little far to prove his point? Cleveland still leads the AL Central, and—barring some sad miracle, they will all season—but their run differential is only +5 this season.

10. Milwaukee Brewers

Last week: 16

Went 4-6 in their last ten games. Three of the four wins were against the Reds, and the fourth was against the Pirates. Jumped six spots. “_(?)_”

11. Philadelphia Phillies

Last week: 10

They’re 3-7 in their last ten games, and haven’t won a single one of their four series (Arizona, Atlanta, Miami, Washington) since sweeping the Pirates on April 19-21. If some teams have beaten the June 1st deadline, maybe the Phillies will work on averaging things out by being a roller coaster all season long.

12. Seattle Mariners

Last week: 15

Keep plugging away, and keep climbing the charts. They’re up three spots this week, thanks in part to James Paxton’s 16-strikeout performance against the A’s, and Mitch Haniger, who is tied for 4th in the AL in home runs (10) and has an OPS of 1.007.

13. Washington Nationals
Last week: 17

Bill James said this week that Bryce Harper wasn't a superstar, so Harper went out and hit two home runs that night. He has 12, which ties him with old friend Joey Gallo for second in baseball behind Mookie "cheat code" Betts, and it looks like moving Harper to the leadoff spot has been a revelation. Max Scherzer continues to strike out everyone who dares approach the plate.

14. Toronto Blue Jays
Last week: 13

Continue to slip a little each week. They still belong in the top 50 percent, at least according to record and run differential, but the Red Sox and Yankees appear to be leaving them in the AL East dust. Here's why baseball is weird: Toronto still has a better record (19-16) than Cleveland (17-17) but Cleveland seems nearly assured of going to the postseason and Toronto is... well, let's give it til June 1st.

15. Colorado Rockies
Last week: 19

Last week, we mentioned that Ian Desmond had not hit a ball in the air to left field all season. He finally broke that streak in pretty magnificent fashion, as the Rockies swept the Mets.

16. New York Mets
Last week: 6

They were fifth and sixth in the first two iterations of the poll, and now they are 16th. They have lost six games in a row, and now Yoenis Céspedes has a tight right quad and Jacob DeGrom is on the DL. New York media won't have Harvey to kick around anymore, because gentlemen, this is his last week as a Met.

Or maybe they will?

17. San Francisco Giants
Last week: 20

Just kidding, this is my guess as to where Matt Harvey will end up, especially with Johnny Cueto joining Madison Bumgarner on the DL this week.

18. Los Angeles Dodgers
Last week: 15

Just kidding to my just kidding: The Dodgers put Clayton Kershaw and Hyun-Jin Ryu on the DL this week, and their record is worse than the Giants', so if it comes down to a waiver claim, the Dodgers will get the chance to rehabilitate the Dark Knight. This concludes the Matt Harvey portion of this article.

19. Pittsburgh Pirates
Last week: 12

Their +13 run differential is better than 18 other teams in baseball, including the entire AL Central. Their record is better than 16 other teams, including the entire AL Central. But part of the poll is projecting how long the writers think they can keep this up. Pirates fans: Embrace the underdog role!

20. Oakland Athletics
Last week: 18

Jed Lowrie is still hitting .353, which is one of the bigger surprise stories in baseball. Not that he was bad last year: He hit 49 doubles! But you just don't expect Jed Lowrie to roll into mid-May with a 1.008 OPS and 8 home runs (his career high is 16).

21. Tampa Bay Rays

Last week: 21

In a division with this year's versions of the Red Sox and Yankees, the Rays need to just focus on having as much fun as possible. Johnny Venters hadn't pitched in the big leagues since 2012, but made his post-third-Tommy-John-surgery debut this week, and hasn't allowed a run in three appearances.

22.5 Detroit Tigers

Last week: 23

Ranked 22nd and 23rd in the first two weeks of the TA:30. Finished 22nd this week, but they went 3-4 against the Rays and the Royals, so I'm moving them to 22.5 just on principle.

23. Minnesota Twins

Last week: 22

Have won four out of their last five, thanks in large part to Eddie Rosario's renewed opposite-field approach. Will have to win a few more to move up, apparently.

24. Texas Rangers

Last week: 24

Joey Gallo is going to break a wall someday with a home run. He's just going to hit the ball into a stadium wall, and the wall will explode. Nomar Mazara is coming into his own this season, vastly improving his results against left-handed pitching. And uh... Isiah Kiner-Falefa is fun to say (it's pronounced fa-LEFF-ah, by the way).

25. San Diego Padres

Last week: 25

Still at 25th. Let's check in with Dennis Lin to see what's going on with the Padres this y— [puts finger to ear] — IT'S STILL FRANCHY, EVERYONE!

26. Miami Marlins

Last week: 28

Went 7-3 in their last ten games, and have won four straight series. Part of that is Mattingly's lineup shuffle, part of it is Jarlin García's hot start, but they're still 13-20, so unless Mattingly can shuffle his lineup into the opposing team's dugout, they're not likely to climb out of the NL East cellar.

27. Kansas City Royals

Last week: 29

Maybe the dumb bickering with the White Sox helped: The Royals took three of four from the Tigers.

28. Chicago White Sox

Last week: 26

Maybe the dumb bickering with the Royals was a distraction: The White Sox dropped both games against the Cardinals, and three of four against the Twins.

29. Baltimore Orioles

Last week: 27

Have as many pitchers with an ERA over 5.00 (8) as wins. What's going on?

30. Cincinnati Reds

Last week: 30

Look, I could rip on the Reds again, or I could give you a link to a good story about Bronson Arroyo. It's not like I'll have any shortage of opportunities to do the former this year, so— whoops, I did both.

Sox is singular: We're not in Kansas (City) anymore

By Jim Margalus / The Athletic / May 7, 2018

"The White Sox can only beat the Kansas City Royals" was a cute subplot to the season when Ricky's Boys lost a bunch of games to cold weather and nothing about April baseball felt quite valid.

Now a week of May is in the books, the temperatures have warmed up, the White Sox have played 20 consecutive games without postponement, and the White Sox still can't beat anybody besides the Kansas City Royals. It's a phenomenon that's remarkable, troubling and/or infuriating, depending on your vantage point. I'm going with the first. This is my 13th season writing about the White Sox. They can't hurt me anymore.

They're 0-9 in series against non-KC teams, and they've lost them in all sorts of ways. They've lost a one-game series, if such a thing exists. They've lost a two-game series. On two occasions, they've lost a three-game series where they took the first game.

They broke new ground this weekend by failing to even split a four-game set against the Twins when Minnesota spotted the Sox the first game and let James Shields start the finale with 6 1/3 no-hit innings.

From here, they can either end the charade or take it to new heights. Odd scheduling gives the White Sox a golden opportunity to avoid losing a series over the next two weeks. They can go 1-3 against the Pirates over this stretch and still split a series because the four games are divided between Guaranteed Rate Field and PNC Park. They're idle over three of the next eight days, after which they play 17 games over 18 days.

This is their chance.

Out of morbid curiosity, I looked at the schedule to see what would happen if the White Sox went the entire season winning every series against Kansas City and losing every series to everybody else. Giving the White Sox the minimum number of victories over the Royals and minimum number of losses to everybody else while meeting the conditions:

April: 8-18

May: 6-21

June: 9-20

July: 8-16

August: 11-18

September: 9-18

Total: 51-111

Which seems sad until you realize the White Sox are only playing at a 46-win pace as is. I guess you can knock them down to 50 if you think the Astros will grind them to a pulp at Minute Maid Park the way they [past tense of mortgage-related verb] the Sox at Guaranteed Rate Field.

How the White Sox lost this week:

Tuesday: Joakim Soria blown save.

Wednesday: Lucas Giolito allows a homer to the winning pitcher of record.

Friday: Carson Fulmer allows four homers over 3 2/3 innings.

Saturday: Hector Santiago walks six batters over 3 1/3 innings.

Sunday: Three different infielders mess up in the eighth.

“Stranded a ton of runners” is getting loose in the on-deck circle.

Starting pitcher of the week: Mark Buehrle.

Stars — they're just like us!

Honorable mention: James Shields. Say what you will about the staff elder, but he's gone at least five innings in all seven of his starts this season, forcing Reynaldo López to keep pace when he takes the mound against Pittsburgh. Shields looks a lot more like veteran ballast when he's using his changeup as his primary off-speed pitch, instead of trying to fly below the radar with an assortment of slow curves. It's a shame he couldn't finish the no-hitter against the Twins, not just for obvious reasons, but also to watch all the emotions from the fan base run headlong into each other.

Injury of the Week: Wellington Castillo.

This is the second straight year that Beef's tender parts have been the subject of a news cycle. He had to go on the disabled list last May under similar circumstances with Baltimore. “Groin contusion” was the official description the Orioles gave for the DL stint, as well as a frequent opening act at the Fireside Bowl.

If you want to know why Rick Renteria is considered a player's manager, compare his handling of the delicate matter...

...to Buck Showalter just throwing the whole thing out there: “Castillo spent a lot of time in the emergency room last night, postgame, with the obvious contusion, whatever you want to call it, that he had last night that everybody knows about.

“He's got a hematoma there in his groin that we're going to monitor and see how it progresses.”

Honorable mention: Yoán Moncada's hamstring. Sure, a bothersome hamstring cost the White Sox their most dynamic player, but baseball to the groin had a baseball to the groin. Also, at least Moncada's injury makes it easier for Renteria to give Leury García the everyday at-bats he deserves. Omar Narváez seems to be fighting everything coming at him behind the plate.

Hawk superlative of the week: The Pacioreks

I'm not old enough to remember Hawk Harrelson with Don Drysdale, but “Hawk and Wimpy” was the first broadcast team I can clearly recall, and they shaped a lot of my baseball experience. They were popular at the time, and they became even more venerated after Tom Paciorek's awkward departure in 1999, because the subsequent partnerships with Darrin Jackson and Steve Stone showed what Harrelson needed in a co-pilot: a defined broadcast personality and a willingness to talk when Harrelson wouldn't.

In that sense, it's more fitting than disappointing that the potential final Hawk and Wimpy game was a dispiriting loss to the Twins. As much as it would've been nice to hear one more shared “YES!” for the road, their broadcasts were just as much about limited Rodney Dangerfield imitations when things didn't go as hoped.
