



## SF Giants Press Clips Thursday, September 13, 2018

### San Francisco Chronicle

#### Simple but costly 'mental mistake' helps keep Giants' skid going Henry Schulman

In the seventh inning of a 1-1 game Wednesday, the Giants got the precise break a team needs to win a game and end a long losing streak, but in the bat of an eye, they also made the type of astonishing blunder that keeps losing streaks alive.

Joe Panik singled off Atlanta lefty Jesse Biddle, who then fielded Alen Hanson's bunt and floated the ball over first base toward the visiting bullpen. The Giants should have had runners on the corners and nobody out after the error.

Hanson did the correct thing and ran on the foul side of the line after he crossed first base, but in the instant he thought about going for second, he briefly stepped over to the fair side, which put him "in play."

Right fielder Nick Markakis got the ball back to second baseman Ozzie Albies, who tagged out Hanson.

Panik was at third with one out. After Evan Longoria was intentionally walked, Brandon Belt struck out and Brandon Crawford grounded out keep the game tied.

"Mental mistake," manager Bruce Bochy said. "You can't make a move toward advancing. (Hanson) has one job there, to get back to first base. That was huge, probably the difference in the game."

Holland's opus: Derek Holland has allowed six runs over his past six starts for a 1.59 ERA, but he's also gotten seven runs of support in those games. He has one win in those games. On the other hand, he has not lost since the All-Star Game. In his past 16 games, including four relief appearances, he is 2-1 with a 2.54 ERA and 13 no-decisions.

Briefly: The Giants' 11-game losing streak matches the Tigers for the longest in the majors this season. ... Tony Watson inherited the bases loaded and nobody out from Reyes Moronta in the seventh and stranded the runners. ... Moronta walked his first hitter for the 13th time in 65 appearances.

## **San Francisco Chronicle**

### **Giants' losing streak reaches San Francisco-record 11 games**

**Henry Schulman**

Every second those two umpires stood behind the plate with their headsets on, waiting for their brethren in New York to rule, made the lump in the Giants' throats grow, knowing their losing streak was going to grow as well, to heights unseen in San Francisco since Major League Baseball arrived in 1958.

Little suspense remained when crew chief Mark Wegner removed the headsets. "Safe," he signaled.

The Braves had their ninth-inning run and a 2-1 victory Wednesday. The Giants had their 11th straight loss, establishing a San Francisco record and matching the worst in franchise history since 1951.

Remarkably, a team that not two weeks ago had a .500 record and had not been worse than five games below .500 is 68-79 and two losses shy of matching the longest losing streak since the Giants first played in 1883.

Brandon Belt, whose enormous foot was the object of the video review, can't wait to take the field again with a chance to end the streak. He will have to cool the heels on both of his feet. The Giants are off Thursday before resuming their homestand Friday night.

"We don't like it. We need to win," said Belt, who understands his inability to drive in runs is one reason the Giants lost their 11th in a row, and other games within the streak.

"Who do we play? Colorado? A division game. We want to come out here and do something."

Derek Holland, who pitched brilliantly again (six innings, one run), thought the day off would be a good buffer.

"It will be good to clear our heads," he said. "It's been a tough 11 games. The frustration is definitely built up. We've got to continue to move past that. We can't let something like this slow us down."

Goals remain, aside from the obvious one of winning a single ballgame in September. Forcing good teams to sweat is another.

The losing streak began with two losses against the also-ran Mets. The next nine were against three teams in playoff positions: the Rockies, Brewers and Braves.

“Our goal is to make it tough,” Holland said. “We don’t want people coming in here thinking they can just walk all over us. You could see it today. Yeah, we lost 2-1, but that’s a first-place team and we were right there with them. It’s not like they dominated us. It was a good battle. That’s what we want.

“We don’t want it to be a cakewalk. That’s for sure.”

Somebody on the Giants — anybody — has to start driving in runs. They are hitting .150 with runners in scoring position during the streak and had a week’s worth of chances to blow out Anibal Sanchez on Wednesday.

They had 11 baserunners against Sanchez in six innings, on six hits and five walks, and scored once on an Evan Longoria single. Twice they had the bases loaded and one out. Each time, the inning ended with a double play, first by Brandon Crawford, then Joe Panik, who otherwise had three singles.

Then came the ninth, which began with Charlie Culberson’s leadoff single against Will Smith. Two outs later, Culberson was at third when pinch-hitter Tyler Flowers hit a hard grounder behind third. Longoria went down for a nifty backhand pick and fired the ball on one hop to Belt in enough time to beat the runner, but first-base ump Jeremie Rehak ruled that Belt’s foot came off the bag.

Belt swears it didn’t. He and the Giants started walking off the field, assuming the call would be overturned. Fans cheered the video they saw on the scoreboard.

But no.

“I thought it was going to be overturned,” Belt said. “I think (Rehak) should have been able to make the right call in the first place. If he makes an ‘out’ call there, it’s probably not overturned, either.”

Said manager Bruce Bochy: “There was some tough luck on that last call, but you’ve got to make your own luck. Somebody’s got to knock in a run. You couldn’t have had better opportunities than we did today.”

## **San Jose Mercury News**

### **Why Warriors, A's and Giants on-screen coverage must 'push the envelope'**

**Chuck Barney**

For seven straight years, NBC Sports Bay Area (NBCSBA) has reigned as the No. 1-rated cable network — during primetime — in the local TV market. That's no small feat, considering today's crowded media landscape.

Of course, it helps that the Golden State Warriors and San Francisco Giants have won multiple championships and built massive followings over that run. The Warriors, in fact, averaged 302,000 viewers per game on NBCSBA last season, making them the biggest regional sports network draw in the NBA.

But as the cord-cutting trend continues, cable networks must figure out how to stay ahead of the pack and bolster audiences in an environment where, as NBC Sports Regional Networks chief David Preschlack says, demanding fans "want what they want, when they want it, and on their own terms."

Preschlack oversees NBC's nine regional sports networks, including NBCSBA and NBC Sports California. He believes that, in order to resonate with viewers, his charges must be willing to "push the envelope" and try new things.

Locally, examples include "Warriors Outsiders," an offbeat, scaled-down program in which hosts Drew Schiller and Grant Liffmann interact with fans via Facebook. Also, for Oakland A's telecasts this season, Dallas Braden, a brash and effusive former pitcher, was hired as a "field analyst." In this newly created position, Braden spends games perched just beyond home plate, from where he can provide ground-level perspectives on the action.

Preschlack recently took time to chat about the challenges his industry faces, the need to interact with fans and the impact sports gambling will have on future coverage. This interview has been edited for length and clarity:

**Q:** You're in charge of cable networks all over the country. Are there things that make the Bay Area market different in any way?

**A:** The differences lie in that sense of localism (stemming from) the personalities who have grown up in the area and have become institutions. Jon Miller calling Giants baseball, for example, is an absolute institution. ... Matt Maiocco has been there for a long time covering the 49ers. Greg Papa has been covering the Raiders and now is moving over to our 49ers pre- and post-game coverage. You have Ray Ratto, a long-time journalist in the market. Dave Feldman grew up in the area. ... And with that, people grow up listening to people call games in their own unique way and there's kind of a tone and voice that goes with that. As for the fans themselves, I can assure you they are no more — or less — passionate than any other fans.

Q: What do you see as your biggest challenge?

A: Our challenge, which we see as more of an opportunity, is to figure out the best way to serve fans — and how we serve them has changed dramatically in recent years. ... We now live in much more of a two-way environment. “Warriors Outsiders” is a pretty good example of how we can create content to serve fans in a way they want to be served. ... We launched the (“Outsiders”) brand in Portland, and we’re going to launch it in Philadelphia. That’s a strong endorsement of what was a risk they took in the Bay Area, where people were saying, “Hey, why don’t we try this?”

Q: What about the Dallas Braden experiment? Can you see that working somewhere else?

A: Based on his dynamic personality, his access and his insights, it has been terrific. It doesn’t hurt, either, that the A’s are a great story in baseball. (Ratings for A’s telecasts are up 46 percent over last year as the team finds itself surprisingly in the driver’s seat for a post-season spot). I’m always open to anything. If we could hire someone who would resonate like Dallas, and if we could figure out how to get that person as close to action, we’ll do it. The idea itself is just a good one.

Q: In another interview, you mentioned that your networks can’t be too “television-centric.” Explain that.

Part of what I mean is that I believe “television” is a relative term inasmuch that people can access our networks on any device and it really is a matter of best available screen. You will absolutely watch a Giants or a Sharks game on your TV if you can. But, if you’re not home — or if someone is hogging the TV — you have other options. So we’re not just a television business anymore.

Also, if we were just focused on television — or our live linear network — it’s limiting. People are now spending more time on digital content than they are watching television. So our biggest focus is to continue to evolve our digital product, especially as it relates to our (web)sites. It is a way to resonate with fans 24/7 regardless of where they are. In my view, getting television right and getting digital right is not a mutually exclusive exercise.

Q: You must see the Warriors as a gift sent from Heaven. What has their recent success meant to NBCSBA?

A: It has been incredible from a TV audience perspective, but also nearly 400,000 unique devices streamed the Warriors last season. ... We have a phenomenal partnership with them. They are, by far, the most cooperative NBA team we deal with — especially in terms of access to the players and their willingness to try new things. ... And talk (about resonating with fans): during the playoffs, (NBCSBA personalities) are live on-site. It makes a difference. It gives fans who aren’t at the game an opportunity to feel what it’s like to be there.

Q: Peer into your crystal ball. In what ways might we be watching sports in five-10 years that is different from now?

A: I suspect the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to allow states to legalize sports betting will alter the consumption of live sports on multiple platforms. Network executives will explore integrating sports-betting discussions into their broadcasts and launch gambling-related programming. Legalized sports betting will likely roll out more slowly than people expect, but it will have a massive impact on the regional sports network business.

### **San Jose Mercury News**

#### **Kurtenbach: Why the Giants can't justify another year of Bruce Bochy in charge**

**Dieter Kurtenbach**

The Giants are heading towards a pivotal offseason.

Yes, again.

After a 98-loss season in 2017, the Giants "ran it back" with a few upgrades in 2018, and, clearly, things didn't work out.

Once the Giants' already minuscule chances of making the playoffs this year evaporated at the end of August, San Francisco has been the worst team in baseball, losing 11 straight games with Wednesday's 2-1 loss to the Braves.

This is a team that is unquestionably in need of a big shakeup this upcoming offseason through bold, creative roster moves. This is a team that needs to rebuild its core for the next half decade, on the fly (as to appease ownership).

As such, Madison Bumgarner, Brandon Belt, Brandon Crawford, Joe Panik, and even Buster Posey should all be shopped this winter. In a situation like this, nothing is sacred and no one is untouchable.

Including the Giants' manager.

As the Giants lifelessly limp to the finish line of the season, deference to Bruce Bochy's Hall of Fame legacy needs to be damned — it's time to question if he's is the right man to lead this team into the next decade.

I don't think he his.

Yes, the manager's contract runs for another season, but this isn't a decision the Giants put off until next offseason.

If Bochy's not the man for the job in 2020 and beyond — if the Giants can't commit and give him a contract extension this offseason (an extremely tough sell at the moment) — then there's no reason for him to be in charge in 2019.

What possible good could a lame-duck year do?

Is it Bochy's fault that the Giants have gone 132-177 over the last two seasons? Of course not — just as it isn't the individual fault of Posey, Crawford, Belt, or any single Giants' player. These Giants have had bad rosters and worse luck over the last two years.

But at the same time, I'll ask this: what has Bochy done to appreciably elevate his teams over the last two years?

I can't point to anything.

What I see is an unquestionably old-school manager in a game that's evolving at a rapid rate. If the Giants want to be relevant in the years to come, I don't see how that paradigm can work.

The "Statcast era" features a game that's predicated on power both on the mound and at the plate; a game where strikeouts are acceptable for batters and power-arm-laden bullpens are seemingly more important than starting rotations.

It's an era of baseball that stands in stark contrast to the Bochy-managed teams that won three titles in five years at the beginning of the decade — near-perfect manifestations of the manager's ideals, which he still holds.

Those Giants teams won through workhorse starting pitchers, fundamentally sound lineups that took pride in putting the ball in play (even if they didn't put balls over the fence that often), and crafty bullpens.

But the fundamentals of winning have unquestionably changed. And while San Francisco's dismal roster isn't Bochy's direct responsibility — he can only manage the team Bobby Evans and Brian Sabean give him — he has serious clout and certainly stumps for "his guys" in the roster-building process.

This is an organization in dire need of a new long-term plan. The current one — the one that might as well be called the Bochy Doctrine — has expired.

if they want to catch up to the rest of baseball, they need to adapt — even if they play in a homer-killing ballpark.

Now, that doesn't necessarily mean the Giants need to blow up everything and rebuild the 40-man roster from scratch — ownership wouldn't allow that — but it does mean that there should be wholesale changes this offseason. Last year, Bochy's coaching staff was revamped.

This year, you'd have to imagine that there will be an offloading of several of Bochy's "guys".

And if you're getting rid of all of Bochy's coaches and all of his "guys", why on earth would you keep Bochy?

Yes, managers can change, but forgive me if I don't think the 63-year-old who has been reluctant to adopt new strategies and schemes over the last few years is going to champion and teach a new style of baseball — even if he has a generally newer, younger roster to lead — in the years to come.

The writing is on the wall — the Giants need to read it.

To be fair, managing is an inexact science, and a change at the position is hardly a cure-all for the Giants' prodigious woes.

But that doesn't mean that there wouldn't be value to be found in such a move for San Francisco.

While the role and responsibilities of the job have perhaps never been more nebulous, creating a positive culture — regardless of the circumstances — is undoubtedly a big requirement from the job.

Bochy did that with those Giants teams from the beginning of the decade. They had a near-collegiate energy to them. They had spunk, even when they weren't competing for the World Series.

But these Giants? They have the energy of sixth-year seniors. There's a bitterness to this team.

Losing will get anyone down, but even in losing seasons, there are lessons to be taught and moral victories to be had. You can be a bad team and have a good spirit.

I see professionalism with these Giants — a byproduct of the veterans in that clubhouse — but I don't see spirit or spark. And that was the case well before they were out of the playoff race.

Most teams that are out of it want to build momentum for next season. But since the Giants' front office waived the white flag on 2018 by trading Andrew McCutcheon to the Yankees on Aug. 31, the Giants have lost every single game they've played. This is a team — and a manager — that just wants the season to end.

Yes, the Giants are trotting out a Triple-A lineup because of untimely injuries, but whether it's fair or not, this record-setting September slide is a reflection of Bochy.

There's momentum to this team, alright — the wrong kind.



Bochy is the greatest manager in San Francisco Giants history and he very well could still be a great manager in the big leagues — but the evidence is piling up that he is not the right manager for the Giants if this organization wants to take the correct steps in moving forward.

The Giants climbed the mountain, winning three titles in five years this decade, but this is an organization that started sliding down on the decent and grabbed onto a rock.

At this point, everyone needs to admit that, from this position, there's no getting back to the summit — this team doesn't have the talent to pull itself up, much less to get back to the top.

So as painful as it might be — and as unfair as it might seem to some — these Giants need to let go, slide down, and then attempt to ascend again.

And for that new ascent, they should have a new leader.

### **San Jose Mercury News**

#### **Giants losing streak hits San Francisco-era record after replay goes in Braves favor Kerry Crowley**

SAN FRANCISCO—The white flag went up, signaling surrender.

The Giants alerted their foes they meant no harm, having accepted their fate in late August. But the opposition, which comes in many forms in September, has yet to rest.

Twelve days ago, the Giants were a .500 club that had come to terms with the idea their season would end in disappointment. After suffering a 2-1 loss to the Atlanta Braves Wednesday, the Giants are in the midst of an 11-game losing streak, the longest in the San Francisco era, which has quickly turned disappointment into disaster.

“It is really frustrating,” first baseman Brandon Belt said. “We’re coming to the field and we’re working our butts off every day and we’re doing what we can to win ballgames.”

In Belt's case, doing what he could meant extending out to nab a sinker from shortstop Brandon Crawford in the top of the ninth. Belt nudged his back foot up to the side of the first base bag, reaching his right arm forward to field Crawford's throw before pinch-hitter Tyler Flowers stepped on the base.

A successful stretch would have sent the Giants to the dugout with a chance to walk off as winners. But as Belt collected the throw, first base umpire Jeremie Rehak declared that Belt did not maintain contact with the base as Crawford's toss rattled into his glove.

“It looks like it's on the bag,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “I just took a brief look, that's why it's one of those plays where the call on the field bears a lot of weight. They stood with it.”

A two-plus minute replay review could not confirm Rehak's call, but it did uphold his initial ruling. Flowers was awarded an infield single and the game-winning RBI as former Giant Charlie Culberson crossed home plate.

"They feel like they've got to be 1,000 percent sure on it and if they're not, they don't overturn it," Belt said. "I had one of them describe it to me as they have to be able to bet their house on it."

An overturned replay review would not have halted the Giants' longest losing streak since April 19-29, 1951, the year Bobby Thomson hit the "Shot Heard 'Round the World." To do that, the club needed to muster a hit with a runner on third and just one out.

Three chances. Three missed opportunities.

"There's bad luck, probably tough luck on the last call, but you make your luck," manager Bruce Bochy said.

Veterans Brandon Crawford and Joe Panik both stepped up with the bases loaded and one out against Braves starter Aníbal Sánchez and both hit into inning-ending double plays.

In the seventh, Panik led off with a hit and advanced to third on an Alen Hanson single. But Hanson committed a costly mental mistake, turning inside the baseline at first instead of remaining in foul territory after reaching the bag.

"You know as a runner that you did that, you get back to first," Bochy said. "That was probably the difference in the game."

Braves second baseman Ozzie Albies tagged Hanson out and with one out and Panik standing on third, Belt struck out.

"I had a chance to win the game for us and I didn't get the job done," Belt said.

Starter Derek Holland did his job Wednesday, tossing six innings of one-run ball against a potent offense that's pushed the Braves to the top of the National League East.

Since June 4, Holland has posted a 2.58 ERA and proven he deserves a major league contract this offseason, an honor he didn't receive after being released from a lowly White Sox team last September.

Though Holland has pitched like a starter deserving of a playoff spotlight, his improved numbers have gone to waste of late for a Giants club that hasn't won since August.

"I'm never going to get down on my teammates or anything like that," Holland said. "I know

these guys are trying every single time and I know they're doing what they can to try to get me the 'W'."

After Holland limited the Braves to one run, reliever Tony Watson entered with the bases loaded and no outs in the seventh and recorded a popout, strikeout and groundout to preserve a 1-1 tie. Watson's performance looked like the gutsy effort that could propel the Giants toward a victory, but the offense appeared to take the white flag memo too seriously.

San Francisco finished 1-for-10 with runners in scoring position Wednesday and scored just one run for the third straight game. During the club's 11-game losing streak, the Giants have scored a combined 26 runs.

"Your guys have got to come through," Bochy said. "It's pretty simple. This game is not that complicated. Somebody has got to knock in a run."

### **San Jose Mercury News**

#### **What the Giants must do to avoid their worst September ever**

**Kerry Crowley**

SAN FRANCISCO—It's September 12 and the Giants haven't won a game since August.

Even as the club stumbled to a 98-loss season in 2017, the Giants still found a way to collect 10 September victories, but this year a double-digit win total in the final month of the year is practically out of the question.

Though the Giants have already won four more games in 2018 than they did a season ago, a 10-game losing streak to open the month has the team in danger of suffering through its worst September since the franchise moved west in 1958.

With 16 games left to play, the Giants must go 7-9 to match a 1980 team that went 7-19 in the final month of the regular season. The 2007 Giants and 1985 Giants won just nine games each in September, but the worst record for a San Francisco era squad belongs to the 1980 club that scored one run or fewer in seven of their 19 losses.

The losing streak will eventually end, but the Giants are no longer focused on climbing the standings or padding stats. According to manager Bruce Bochy, the final days of the regular season are about taking pride in on-field performance, which is easier said than done after a team falls out of playoff contention.

"There's nothing tougher as a manager I think than to tell your group, 'We're out of it,'" Bochy said. "Still, we have a job to do. Times like this, it does reveal character and we've got to show character now. That's our job, that's our obligation."

The Giants had a chance to pull within 5.5 games of the National League West lead on August

29, but a narrow 3-1 loss to the Diamondbacks convinced the front office to wave a white flag.

The offense lost Andrew McCutchen, Buster Posey and Steven Duggar in the final week of August, while an overworked bullpen has struggled to keep a slew of contenders off the board late in games.

The team understood what trading McCutchen meant, but it's hard to imagine anyone in the clubhouse expected such a rapid, disastrous decline.

While a half dozen of the team's top contributors are out for the season and other regulars like Brandon Belt and Brandon Crawford are playing through injuries, the front office is still evaluating the nine starters who take the field on a daily basis.

Because the Giants are suddenly in danger of losing 90 games for the second straight season, a catastrophic September may drive the franchise's decision-makers to consider more drastic changes in the offseason.

"That's something you evaluate too, how guys are handling this," Bochy said. "We want guys with character in that clubhouse."

The 10-game losing streak is the first the Giants have endured since 1996, and if Derek Holland can't lead San Francisco to a win Wednesday, it will mark the first 11-game skid since April 19-29, 1951. No club that has called Candlestick Park or AT&T Park home has ever experienced such a dismal stretch in September, and it's clearly weighing on all parties involved.

Still, the schedule hasn't exactly been kind to the Giants this month, as they've traveled to Colorado and Milwaukee to take on playoff contenders before returning home to host the first-place Atlanta Braves. However, they'll play six games against the Padres and end the season with three against a Dodgers team that will be looking to secure a playoff spot, so there are opportunities to reverse course before lockers are cleaned out.

"It's not a great position to be in," Bochy said of playing a 'spoiler' role. "But it is a motivating thing for the players at this time of year when you're not in it. You can impact what happens."

**MLB.com**

**Giants fall late as close call goes Braves' way**

**Chris Haft**

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Giants felt certain that the breaks would fall in their favor Wednesday. But they briefly forgot that this is 2018, a season in which very little has gone their way.

A replay review that stirred debate well after the fact helped the Atlanta Braves snap a ninth-inning tie and secure a 2-1 victory over the Giants, who set a San Francisco-era record with their 11th consecutive defeat. The Giants set the club standard of 13 in 1902 and matched it in '44, long before the franchise moved West in '58.

The last time any Giants team dropped 11 in a row was April 19-29, 1951, a year which featured Bobby Thomson's home run. Nothing remotely that dramatic awaits these 68-79 Giants.

"It's never fun," Giants first baseman Brandon Belt said of the incessant disappointment. "Everybody puts in the work, grinding daily, trying to do everything we can to win ballgames. We just haven't been doing good enough. So we've got to change something."

The Giants were powerless to change their fate. With Charlie Culberson on third base, two outs and the score tied 1-1 in Atlanta's ninth, pinch-hitter Tyler Flowers grounded to third baseman Evan Longoria, whose low throw pulled Belt off the bag. Umpire Jeremie Rehak called Flowers safe. The Giants contended that Belt kept his foot on the bag long enough to record the out, but the review determined that the call stood, enabling Culberson's run to count.

Belt believed that the "out" ruling was obvious enough to be made on the field.

"It's just unfortunate that they didn't see it that way," Belt said.

Giants manager Bruce Bochy pointed out that the call on the field "bears a lot of weight, and they stood with it. I haven't looked at [the replay] real close, but our guys are pretty confident that [Belt] stayed with the bag."

Bochy also noted that this defeat bore the stains that have soiled previous games. Once again, the near-total lack of clutch hitting stung the Giants. They went 1-for-10 with runners in scoring position, failing to score on three occasions with runners on third and less than two outs. Two of those occasions were bases-loaded, one-out opportunities that evaporated when Brandon Crawford and Joe Panik grounded into double plays in the first and fourth innings, respectively.

Alen Hanson ran the Giants out of a rally in the seventh when he turned toward second base after reliever Jesse Biddle fielded his sacrifice-bunt attempt and overthrew first base. Had Hanson followed the rules, San Francisco would have had runners at the corners with nobody out.

"[Hanson] made a mental mistake," Bochy said. "You cannot make a move toward advancing. That was huge. That was probably the difference in the game."

Bochy concluded that the Giants' shortcomings, not anything the umpires did, forged the team's defeat.

"That was probably tough luck on the [Flowers] call. But you make your luck," Bochy said.

"Somebody has to knock in a run. You can't be in a better position to win a ballgame or score some runs than we were today. Somebody's got to come through. If not, this is what happens."

The Giants, who scored 25 runs in their previous 10 defeats, scored their token run in the third inning. Panik led off with one of his three singles, advanced to second base on a groundout and came across on Longoria's single.

Ozzie Albies doubled and raced home on Freddie Freeman's single to tie the score in the sixth.

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Giants pitchers distinguished themselves, as they have done more often than not.

"That kind of goes unnoticed in a game like this," Bochy said.

Derek Holland displayed his usual efficiency, allowing one run and five hits in six innings. He struck out seven and walked one.

Tony Watson contributed a scoreless seventh inning, which proved to be one of the finer escape acts of the season by a Giants reliever. Watson took over after Reyes Moronta loaded the bases with nobody out. Given essentially no margin for error, Watson delivered a flawless effort. He coaxed Adam Duvall's foul popup near first base, struck out the dangerous Ronald Acuna Jr. on three 94-mph fastballs and induced Albies' fielder's-choice grounder to end the threat.

#### MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

Flowers' single was a challenging play for Longoria, whose momentum carried him away from first base and prompted the low throw to Belt. Nevertheless, Bochy believed that the "safe" call would be overturned.

"I just don't get how that call was not overturned, [based on] the brief look I had at it," Bochy said. "That shows you how much the call on the field [means]."

#### UP NEXT

Following Thursday's scheduled off-day, the Giants will resume running the gauntlet of postseason contenders at AT&T Park when they open a three-game weekend series against the Colorado Rockies on Friday night at 7:15 PT. Chris Stratton (9-9), the Giants' leading winner, will oppose Rockies left-hander Tyler Anderson (6-8). San Francisco is 5-11 against Colorado this season overall but 4-3 at home.

## **NBC Sports Bay Area**

### **Giants' 11 straight loss comes with controversy, blown opportunities**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — The outfielders had already made it back to the infield dirt. The infielders were gathered at third, ready to cross over to the grass and head to the dugout. The man who thought he had ended the top of the ninth inning was already standing alongside the dugout rail.

And then a nameless umpire in New York ruled that the Giants were seeing everything wrong.

The Giants' 11th straight loss came with controversy, a call in the ninth that brought the game-winning run across for the Braves. With the go-ahead run on third and two outs, Tyler Flowers hit a grounder to deep third and was ruled safe at first, with umpire Jeremie Rehak telling Brandon Belt that he took his toe off the bag. Belt disagreed, but it didn't matter. The Giants lost the run and the game, 2-1.

"I was pretty confident," Belt said. "I'm pretty good at keeping that toe on there. Usually if I come off it's pretty obvious. It's just unfortunate they didn't see it that way."

Manager Bruce Bochy saw it the way Belt did. So, too, did the pitcher. Will Smith turned and yelled at the umpires after ending the inning. But it didn't matter, and Bochy was clear after the game that it was not the reason the Giants lost an 11th straight game for the first time since 1951.

"You make your luck," he said. "Somebody has got to knock in a run. You can't be in a better position to score some runs and win a ballgame. Somebody has got to come through."

The Giants loaded the bases in the first but Brandon Crawford bounced into a double play. Joe Panik hit into a bases-loaded double play two innings later. Evan Longoria's double in the fifth led to nothing. Nick Hundley reached third in the sixth but was not brought home. The biggest mistake came in the seventh, when Alen Hanson made a move towards second on a throw down the right field line. The Giants would have had runners at the corners with no outs and Longoria at the plate. Instead they had one out, and they did not score.

"Your guys have got to come through," Bochy reiterated. "It's pretty simple. This game is not that complicated. Somebody has got to knock in a run."

The Giants have not done so for most of the season. They have been especially inept the last two weeks. They scored three runs in three games against the Braves, wasting three quality starts.

When the 11th consecutive loss was over, the Giants could look forward to just one thing. They are off Thursday, so they cannot lose. Perhaps they can clear their heads enough to end this streak over the weekend.

"It's never fun," Belt said of the losing streak. "We're trying to do everything we can to win a ballgame. We just haven't been doing enough."

### **NBC Sports Bay Area**

#### **Giants' 11-game losing streak hasn't hurt Derek Holland's hope of return**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — About half an hour after the Giants lost for an 11th straight time, starting pitcher Derek Holland was asked if he has ever experienced something like this. Holland, as politely as he could, reminded a reporter that he played for the 2017 White Sox.

You can understand, then, why he has managed to keep a positive attitude through a season that has taken a sharp turn. The Giants might look lifeless right now, but he was still there in the dugout, ready to grab an Alhambra jug if they could walk the Braves off and end the skid. While this month has taken on a very 2017 Giants feel for most, it has an entirely different meaning to Holland. One year and one week ago, he was released by a 95-loss team.

"It's night and day right now," he said. "I was gone already. I was released."

A year later, Holland is enjoying a renaissance. He ranks 12th in the National League with a 3.46 ERA. He is 13th in strikeouts. He has thrown his most innings since 2013. The Giants brought Holland in as a non-roster invitee making \$2 million and he has turned into a pillar of the rotation.

You could understand if a player had a year like that, looked around at a fourth-place team suffering its worst losing streak in 68 years, and started planning to cash in elsewhere as a free agent. Holland feels the opposite way.

"I love it here," he said after Wednesday's 2-1 loss to the Braves.

He hopes to stay, too, although he won't let any discussions get in the way of a goal to finish strong. Holland said he has no plans to march into the front office and remind decision-makers that he would like to return. He doesn't feel it's necessary.

"I think they know. I definitely think they know," Holland said. "But I'd rather focus on trying to



finish strong. If they come to me, they come to me. If they don't, they don't. We'll wait and see once the season ends, but right now I need to focus on continuing to finish strong."

He certainly is doing so. Holland allowed one run in six innings Wednesday, continuing a run that's been going for the entire second half. In his last 10 starts, he has allowed more than two runs just twice. He credits Curt Young and Matt Herges for helping him push past a so-so start to the season, making constant adjustments that he has tried to take to the mound.

Wednesday was a continuation of that work, and you don't have to squint to see a strong rotation forming. If the Giants can bring Holland back with Madison Bumgarner, Dereck Rodriguez and Andrew Suarez, they'll get a quality start far more often than not. The offense is a disaster zone, and that's where the front office's attention will be, but team officials would be smart to first lock up a quality left-hander who has not given up hope despite everything going on around him.

"The thing that I feel is frustrating is we've got a damn good team, that's how I see it," Holland said. "We are a really good team. Some things just didn't go our way. If you look at a lot of the games, we were in every one of them. It's not like somebody just blew us out. There might be a few games here and there, but at the end of the day we were in every game. These guys give everything they've got every time out and that's huge."

## **NBC Sports Bay Area**

### **Giants drop San Francisco-record 11th straight game**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — The latest loss came with some controversy.

The Braves scored the go-ahead run in the top of the ninth inning when Brandon Belt was ruled to have inched off first base on what would have been the third out of the inning. Belt was adamant that he stayed on the bag and a replay appeared to show that he did, but after two minutes and four seconds of looking, the umpires in New York upheld the original call.

The 2-1 loss to the Braves was the 11th in a row, the franchise's longest streak since 1951. The Giants are still looking for their first victory of September. It is as bad as it sounds. Anyway, here's what else happened Wednesday at AT&T Park ...

— Derek Holland has quietly been one of the best lefties in the National League. He gave up fewer than three runs for the sixth consecutive start, lowering his ERA to 3.46. That ranks 12th among qualified NL starters and third among lefties. Holland had a shutout going until the sixth, when Ozzie Albies doubled with one out and cruised home on Freddie Freeman's bouncer up the middle.

— The Giants had a shot to hand a lead over to the bullpen in the sixth. Nick Hundley singled, took second on a grounder and third on a wild pitch. But Hunter Pence popped up to first,

ending the inning.

— An inning later, they had one of their more creative failures. With a runner on first, Alen Hanson bunted and pitcher Jesse Biddle threw the ball down the right field line. But Hanson was out after the umpire ruled he attempted to advance to second, Belt struck out, and Brandon Crawford was robbed of the go-ahead single by Albies.

— Tony Watson had one of the best escape acts of the season in the top of the seventh. Reyes Moronta, pitching for the first time in eight days, loaded the bases with no outs. Watson entered and got Adam Duvall to pop up before striking out Ronald Acuña Jr. Albies grounded out to short and Watson walked off to a standing ovation.

### **NBC Sports Bay Area**

#### **The biggest fear of Giants' frighteningly bad offense is their future**

**Ray Ratto**

When the San Francisco Giants run silent, you can hear gnats mating at a thousand yards, but at least the lack of sound they are producing is happening faster.

With Wednesday's 2-1 loss to Atlanta, the local Wiffle Ball team has amassed 40 runs in 16 games, an average of 2.5 that is so preposterous that the San Diego Padres would bully them in the schoolyard. In fact, in those 16 games, they had two games in which they scored 15 runs, making the real number 25 runs in 14 games.

Extend the season back further and you get barely more than the same – 111 runs since July 31, an average of 3.3 runs. Since the MLB average per team per game is 4.45, the Giants are losing by a run every day.

This, however, is not news to those of you who have followed this team as it barrel-rolls into Lake Oblivion. These are the same numbers they caked up in 2011 when the Buster Posey injury obliterated their collective will and sent them careening into much the same position they are in today.

Bereft of hitters and at a complete loss as where to find others.

The positive here is that they are playing faster games. At a neat 3:00 per game, they have shaved four minutes of their average time from 2017 and a full 10 off 2016. Commissioner Rob Manfred would be proud – if he was watching, which he probably isn't.

What is more distressing though to those who find the Giants irresistible despite all their attempts to be repellent, their offense has gotten worse as their minor leaguers have come to display their wares. That may seem logical based on the fact that minor leaguers don't tend to thrive against big league pitching the first they are confronted by it, but dropping from 3.3 runs to 2.5 is borderline frightening for the future.

Therein lies the problem with optimism for the future. It has to be manufactured out of scorecards that are littered with routine grounders to short. There is no phenom lingering at the edge of promotion, no Ronald Acuna just waiting to break. Indeed, the names that have been offered you by the Giants over the years have almost uniformly failed to stick, especially if they play the outfield.

The trick for Brian Sabean, Et. Al., thus becomes having to (a) develop their way out by doing something they haven't done in a quarter-century – create a homegrown outfielder or two. Indeed, the most accomplished outfielder the Giants have drafted in this decade plays for the Detroit Lions – wide receiver Golden Tate.

And we only restate the problem because the lack of an answer is years old. They have struck a variety of valuable ores in the infield, true, but the issue of age is now a profound one from Buster Posey to Evan Longoria and all points inbetween, and the outfield production is essentially an unfounded rumor.

Compared to the A's, who are winning with everything but starting pitching, the Giants are losing with nothing but starting pitching. The comparison will gall Giants fans who regard the A's as unworthy of notice, but people notice. They notice now.

And if this isn't true, then the only other explanation as to why the Giants have become such an easy collective out is that they have given up on the season and are going to take their 75 wins and 3.8 runs per game and call it improvement – which it won't really be.

Unless you really do have a fetish for time of game, in which case you may want to take up bowling. That goes by very quickly, and you can drink during the game.

### **The Athletic**

#### **Real consequences: Giants lose their 11th in a row for the first time in the San Francisco era Andrew Baggarly**

Brandon Belt slowly stepped into a pair of workout shorts and lifted them over the massive icepack on his right knee, careful not to snag the waistband on the digital timer that stuck out from the bulge of elastic bandages.

He finished addressing reporters following the Giants' 2-1 loss Wednesday afternoon, a defeat even more galling and painful than the 10 that preceded it, and not only because this one clinched the worst losing streak in the franchise's six-decade history in San Francisco.

Then he waddled barefoot into the manager's office.

Back in 2011, when Belt was a rookie and made the Opening Day roster, and he broke down in tears upon receiving the good news, Bochy welcomed him to the team with a basso profundo

invitation: "Need a beer? Grab a beer."

Now Belt sat down in that same office. It was his turn to offer something.

His ailing knee aside, the team's misfortunes aside, those runners he stranded in scoring position aside, that controversial play in the ninth inning aside, the umpires aside, a wasted second half aside, Belt told his manager that he wants to be out there. He is doing everything he can to help turn this thing around. He cares and he will continue to care. And he isn't the only one.

"These games matter to us," Belt had said moments earlier, when the cameras were on him. "We do care whether we win or lose. I'm never going to regret going out there and playing. (The knee) is not affecting how I play. That's what matters."

Belt is likely heading for arthroscopic surgery after the season. Where he heads beyond that is anyone's guess. Executive vice president Brian Sabean has put his roster on notice, even the core players, while saying the organization will have to be more open minded to trading some people who had until now been viewed as building blocks. Buster Posey, Madison Bumgarner and Brandon Crawford are not going anywhere. They are the cornerstones. Belt might be less of a load-bearing piece, and clearly, this renovation might require knocking out a wall or two.

What is the real consequence of an 11-game losing streak, the longest by any Giants team since April of 1951? It's not that this rotten run torpedoed their playoff aspirations. The front office already had scuttled the season when it traded Andrew McCutchen.

It's that losing 11 games in a row makes for bad optics. If you are a season-ticket holder, it erodes consumer confidence. And when it happens in September, it can form a final impression that could lead to more impulsive decisions.

Like trading key players who want to stay here. Like firing loyal personnel.

Last year's 98-loss season resulted in a gutting of Bochy's coaching staff. Not even longtime pitching coach Dave Righetti and bullpen coach Mark Gardner, two institutional faces, were safe. The worse this gets in September, the more public pressure the front office and ownership will feel to make more statement changes and send off more scapegoats.

So there is more than pride and professionalism at stake here.

The Giants officially lost this game with two outs in the top of the ninth inning, when the Braves scored the tiebreaking run on Tyler Flowers' infield single. Third baseman Evan Longoria speared the hard grounder and made the long throw on a bounce to first base, where Belt stretched to receive it while attempting to keep a toe on the edge of the base.

Belt wears size 15 cleats. He was confident he maintained contact with the bag. First base

umpire Jeremie Rehak saw otherwise, and called Flowers safe. The call withstood a replay review because officials determined that video evidence was inconclusive.

“It looks like it was on the bag,” Bochy said. “I took a brief look. It was one of those plays where the call on the field bears a lot of weight, and they stood with it. I haven’t looked at it real close, but our guys were pretty confident he stayed on the bag.”

Said Belt: “Yeah, I was pretty confident. I’m pretty good at keeping that toe on there. It’s usually pretty obvious. It’s just unfortunate they didn’t see it that way. ... I thought it was going to be overturned. But any time they take forever, it usually means the call’s gonna stand.

“He should have been able to make the right call in the first place. If he makes the out call, it’s not going to be overturned, either. I’m not saying it’s easy. But they should call that out on the field.”

Left-hander Will Smith shouted at crew chief Mark Wegner once the inning ended. Three outs later, the Giants plodded back to the clubhouse having lost an 11th consecutive game for the first time in 67 years. The last time they made that walk, it was down the tunnel at Ebbets Field after Duke Snider hit two home runs and the Brooklyn Dodgers beat them on April 29, 1951.

“It’s never fun,” Belt said. “We come out here and everybody puts in the work. We’re grinding daily, doing everything we can to win ballgames. We aren’t doing enough. So ... gotta change something.”

There’s no mistaking where the change must come. The Giants scored exactly one run for the fifth consecutive home game and they have been held to three runs or fewer in 14 of their past 16 games. They are hitting .150 with runners in scoring position while going 0 for September.

And to watch them squander chances Wednesday afternoon at AT&T Park, with thousands of no-shows in the stands and collapsed secondary market pricing seats for the cost of a latte, you’d almost think the baseball gods were piling on.

They loaded the bases with one out in the first inning. Brandon Crawford bounced into a double play. They loaded the bases with one out in the third inning. Joe Panik bounced into a double play. They had a runner at second base with one out in the sixth. Gorkys Hernández struck out.

And they obliterated one other chance in the seventh because one of their players apparently didn’t know the rules of the game.

Alen Hanson followed Panik’s leadoff single with a bunt and the Giants appeared to catch a break when pitcher Jesse Biddle threw a lollipop over first base and toward the Braves bullpen. Hanson turned his shoulder toward second base before walking back to first. The Braves tagged him out.

“He made a mental mistake,” Bochy said. “(The umpire) had the call right. You cannot make a move toward advancing there. He’s got one job at that point. He has to realize he did that. You know as a runner that you did that, and you get back to first.”

It did not reflect well on Hanson, or on first base coach José Alguacil.

“That was huge,” Bochy said. “That was probably the difference in the game. We had nobody out, first and third, (Longoria) up there. It looked like he was trying to play like he didn’t make an attempt, but he did.”

Hanson will turn 26 next month. Maybe he should celebrate his birthday from instructional league.

The Giants were swept in the three-game series even though they received quality starts in each of them. Derek Holland yielded one run in six innings to lower his ERA to 3.46. Tony Watson inherited a bases-loaded, no-out situation created by Reyes Moronta in the seventh and somehow got out of it – even though he had to thread his way through Ronald Acuña Jr. and Ozzie Albies.

To watch those two young Braves dynamos blitz around the bases at AT&T Park is to pine for more youth and athleticism on this Giants roster next season. That will be difficult to create in the span of one winter. But the Giants offense did not need to dazzle anyone on Wednesday to prevent the longest losing streak in 67 years. It merely needed one more slapped single or double to the gap with runners on base.

It needed Chris Shaw to not look overmatched as a pinch hitter off the bench. It needed Austin Slater to try to do more than fillet pitches to right field when he represented the tying run at the plate. It needed the Crawford who was the hottest hitter in the league for six weeks in an otherwise disappointing season. It needed McCutchen, who is not here, or even Steven Duggar, who is recovering from shoulder surgery.

“I mean, you make your luck,” Bochy said. “Somebody’s got to knock in a run. You can’t be in a better position to win a ballgame or score a run than we were today. Somebody’s got to come through. If not, this is what happens. We had a man on third, what, three times with less than two outs?”

“Your guys have got to come through. It’s pretty simple. This game’s not that complicated. Somebody’s got to knock in a run.”

The Giants will take a day off before they return on Friday to begin a series with the Colorado Rockies. They will try to avoid losing their 12th consecutive — something they have not done since a 13-game skid Aug. 9-20, 1944.

They will send Chris Stratton to the mound. At least, they think they will. Stratton was leaning

against the dugout rail in the sixth inning when he got smoked on the back by a foul liner off Freddie Freeman's bat.

Damn those torpedoes.

**Santa Rosa Press Democrat**  
**11th loss in row cements Giants' worst streak in 67 years**  
**Gideon Rubin**

SAN FRANCISCO — On a day when Anibal Sanchez didn't have his best command, he found a way to help the Atlanta Braves on their march toward the postseason.

Sanchez kept the Braves close with six strong innings, pinch-hitter Tyler Flowers drove in the go-ahead run in the ninth, and the Braves moved closer to clinching the NL East with a 2-1 victory over the San Francisco Giants on Wednesday.

The Giants lost their 11th straight, the worst skid since the team moved to San Francisco and the longest for the franchise since 1951.

The Braves reduced their magic number for winning the division to 11 with their fifth straight win, matching their best streak of the season, and clinched their first winning record since their last division crown in 2013. Going into Wednesday, Atlanta led second-place Philadelphia by 6½ games.

"We've worked hard to get to this point," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "We've grinded through things to get to that position. We can look to bigger things now."

Sanchez remains winless in his last seven starts. He gave up one run on six hits and five walks. He induced double-play grounders to escape bases-loaded, one-out situations in the first and the fourth.

"I didn't have the same command I've had before," Sanchez said. "The defense has helped me so much and they got me out of that inning."

The Giants scored just three runs in the series. They were swept by the Braves in a series of three games or more for the first time since 2011.

"It's never fun, obviously. Everybody comes out here and puts in the work, grinding daily, trying to do everything we can to win ballgames," Giants first baseman Brandon Belt said. "These games do matter to us."

Flowers beat out an infield hit that scored Charlie Culberson from third base with two outs in the ninth to put the Giants ahead. A replay review confirmed first base umpire Jeremie Rehak's ruling that Belt's foot was off the bag when Flowers reached first.

“I just don’t get that call was not overturned based on the brief look I had at it,” Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. “It shows you how much the call on the field plays.”

Culberson singled leading off the inning against Will Smith (2-3). He advanced to second on Ender Inciarte’s sacrifice bunt and took third on Dansby Swanson’s grounder.

Dan Winkler (3-0) pitched a scoreless eighth, and Jonny Venters worked a scoreless ninth for his second save.

Derek Holland matched Sanchez, giving up one run in six innings of five-hit ball. He struck out seven and walked one. Over his last six starts, Holland is 2-0 with a 1.59 ERA and 34 strikeouts in 34 innings.

Evan Longoria put the Giants ahead with an RBI single in the third. The Braves drew even in the sixth on Freddie Freeman’s run-scoring single.

#### SPIKED

Sanchez stayed in the game after Gregor Blanco stepped on his heel when Sanchez was covering first for the first out in the sixth.

“It scared me as soon as it happened, the pain ... but I wanted to finish the inning,” Sanchez said.

#### DISRUPTERS

Asked about his team’s potential role as a spoiler, a term he’s bristled at in the past, Bochy said, “I probably prefer ‘disrupters.’”

The Giants, who are four years removed from winning their third World Series title in a five-year span, play nine of their 15 remaining games against contending teams.

“It’s not a great position to be in, but it is a motivating thing for the players this time of year when they’re not in it,” Bochy said.

#### TRAINER’S ROOM

Braves: Culberson was in Wednesday’s starting lineup at third base in place of Johan Camargo, who left Tuesday’s game with left groin tightness.

Giants: Belt was back in the lineup a day after being held out with a sore right knee, an injury



that may require offseason surgery.

UP NEXT

Braves: RHP Kevin Gausman (9-10, 3.89 ERA) will pitch Friday at home against Washington. Gausman is 3-1 with a 4.34 ERA in five career starts against the Nationals.

Giants: RHP Chris Stratton (9-9, 4.99) will pitch Friday's series opener at AT&T Park against the Colorado Rockies. The team's winningest pitcher is 1-2 with a 2.84 ERA in four starts since his most recent callup from Triple-A Sacramento on Aug. 21.

**San Francisco Examiner**

**San Francisco Giants lose 11th straight, the most since moving to the West Coast**

**Ryan Gorcey**

AT&T PARK — Derek Holland is fond of graphic t-shirts. He wears a different one to every postgame. Sometimes they have a message — he's fond of puns — and other times, they're just pop culture shoutouts, like his pitching-day South Park character Butters cutoff, or his Marty McFly costume shirt.

"Disposable income," catcher Nick Hundley said, by way of offering an explanation.

As much of a plus as Holland has been both in the clubhouse and on the mound — be it stumping for Brandon Belt to make the All-Star game in a wrestling belt and baby oil, or experiencing a career renaissance after a dismal season in Chicago — he couldn't halt a losing streak of historic proportions. Not even Doc Brown's DeLorean can save the Giants from what's been a Deadball Era offense.

Holland went six innings and allowed just one run while striking out seven on Wednesday, but it wasn't enough as San Francisco suffered its 11th straight loss with a 2-1 defeat at the hands of the Atlanta Braves. It's the franchise's longest losing streak since the 1951 New York Giants lost 11 straight.

"Somebody's got to knock in a run," said manager Bruce Bochy, whose team has averaged 2.36 runs per game during the streak. "You can't be in a better position to win a ballgame and to score some runs than we were today. Somebody's got to come through. If not, this is what happens. We had a man on third with less than two outs three times. We've got to get it done."

Holland — as has been the case in four of his last five starts — had nothing to do with the decision. Twice, the Giants (68-79) hit into double plays with the bases loaded, and they went 1-for-10 with men in scoring position. Over the 11-game streak, they're hitting .150 in those situations.

"We don't like this at all, and we know the fans are frustrated, too," Holland said.

In the third straight quality start turned in by San Francisco pitchers in the three-game sweep by Atlanta (82-64) it was Belt pulling his foot off the first base bag — according to replay review — in the top of the ninth that made the difference.

Both Belt and the Giants coaching staff felt he kept his foot on the bag — “Usually, if I come off, it’s pretty obvious,” Belt said — on a grounder to third by pinch hitter Tyler Flowers.

“That wasn’t the game,” Bochy said. “Obviously, it was, they scored the winning run, but we had our chances.”

Twice in the first four innings, the Giants had the bases loaded with one out — the second coming after Holland worked a full-count walk after falling behind 0-2 — and twice, they grounded into inning-ending double plays. After a one-out double by Evan Longoria in the fifth, Belt — hitting third — popped out on the first pitch he saw, and then Brandon Crawford grounded out weakly to second to end the inning.

“I was in that situation too,” Belt said. “I had a chance to win the game for us, and I didn’t get the job done.”

In between, San Francisco scored when a one-out bloop single to right by Longoria cashed in a leadoff single by Joe Panik in the bottom of the third.

After Panik’s third hit of the day in the seventh, he moved over to third when reliever Jesse Biddle fielded an Alen Hanson bunt and lolipopped a throw to first. Hanson made a slight turn with his hips at the edge of the dirt, and was tagged out by second baseman Ozzie Albies when he tarried in getting back to first. With Panik at third on the throw, Belt struck out, and Crawford grounded out to second, into the shift, to end the inning.

“You cannot make a move towards advancing there,” Bochy said. “He’s got one job there. At that point, he has to realize that. You know if, as a runner, you did that, you get back to first. That was huge. That’s probably the difference in the game, a mental mistake on his part.”

Like the rest of the staff, Holland has suffered through the doldrums of an offense stuck in neutral.

While the Giants knocked out seven hits on Wednesday, they’re hitting .193 in the month of September, but the offensive struggles are nothing new. Only three teams are averaging fewer runs per game in all of Major League Baseball.

“I know for a fact that these guys are not happy,” Holland said. “We’re not happy with what’s going on. We don’t want to be doing this. We should be winning.”

Holland has thrown the most innings he has since 2013. Since he made a shift from the first-

base side of the rubber to the third base side on June 20, has become as effective as he was at his peak with the Texas Rangers, going 3-1 with a 2.61 ERA.

San Francisco, though, is 3-6 in starts in which Holland goes six or more innings and allows two or fewer runs. Since he made the swap and turned into a late-season ace of sorts, they're 2-5.

"It's not frustrating," Holland said. "I'm never going to get down on my teammates or anything like that. I know these guys are trying, every single time. I know they're doing what they can to try to get me the W."

Of the 38 games San Francisco has played in which the Giants' starter has gone six innings or more, and allowed two runs or fewer, they have won precisely 11 games. Dereck Rodriguez has gone six and allowed two or fewer runs 13 times. The Giants have lost five of those. Madison Bumgarner has seen San Francisco go 1-5 in such games he's pitched.

The only run Holland allowed was in the sixth, when he gave up a one-out double to Albies and an RBI single to Freddy Freeman.

"These games do matter to us," Belt said. "We do care if we win or lose. We do care that we come out here and win ballgames. We're definitely going to be working our butts off to do that."

### **San Francisco Examiner**

#### **Bruce Bochy prefers calling the San Francisco Giants disruptors to spoilers**

**Ryan Gorcey**

AT&T PARK — Bruce Bochy said several weeks ago that he didn't like the word "spoiler." Of course, at that point, his San Francisco Giants were at least nominally in the hunt for the postseason, less than seven games back with more than 30 to play. The 1951 Giants, after all, trailed the Brooklyn Dodgers by 13 1/2 games in the standings on Aug. 11. Crazy things had happened.

On Tuesday, the 2018 Giants lost their 10th game in a row (the last team to lose 11 was, in fact, that 1951 club, but they did it early), falling 20 games under .500. For the first time, Bochy said that it was no secret: They were out of it. He told them as much in a pregame meeting.

"There's nothing tougher on a manager, I think, then having to tell your group, 'Hey, we're out of it,'" Bochy said Wednesday, before the series finale against the Atlanta Braves. "Still, we have a job to do."

No, the Giants aren't spoilers, as far as Bochy is concerned. He prefers the word "disruptor." Of San Francisco's 16 games remaining, 10 come against Atlanta, Colorado, St. Louis and the Dodgers — all teams that are either leading their division (Rockies, Braves), would make the playoffs (Cardinals) or are within 1 1/2 games of a playoff spot (Los Angeles).

“It’s not a great position to be in, but it is a motivating thing for the players,” Bochy said. “When you’re not in it, you can compete and impact what happens.”

While the prospects San Francisco would probably like to be playing right now — Steven Duggar and Mac Williamson — are both injured (along with recent walking-wounded addition Ryder Jones), San Francisco’s other youngsters like Chris Shaw, Aramis Garcia, Dereck Rodriguez, Andrew Suarez, Alen Hanson and Austin Slater are seeing the best that the best in the NL have to offer.

“That’s been great for them,” Bochy said. “That gives them an idea of what they’re going to see in the major leagues, especially with those elite pitchers. As they go into the winter, they’ve seen some of the best, and not just call-ups. The unknown factor’s gone. They saw 98, 99 last night.”

In the second game against the Braves — the Giants’ 10th straight loss — they saw Mike Foltynewicz throw 98 mph into the ninth inning in his second complete game of the season. Hanson grounded out to first, and Slater grounded out to short. Shaw — one of San Francisco’s top five prospects — went 0-for-3 and saw nine pitches.

“It’s good for them,” Bochy said. “Now, they have a visual of what they could be facing next year.”

During the streak, the Giants offense has wilted, hitting just .190 in the month of September. Bochy reluctantly admitted that a losing streak this long and this late tends to exacerbate what was already a struggling offense — the third-fewest runs per game in all of major league baseball.

“We actually talked about that yesterday, about the importance of these games, even though we’re not in it,” Bochy said. “Times like this, that’s where you build character, and we’ve got to show character now. That’s our job. That’s our obligation, to come out here and play well. That’s something you evaluate, too, how guys are handling that. We want guys with character in that clubhouse.”

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Brandon Belt — who has been battling knee soreness and may get surgery in the offseason — started at first after a day off. Bochy had thought about putting Joe Panik there in the recent past, in order to keep his bat in the lineup.

Bochy did manage to keep Panik on the field Wednesday, opting to start infielder-by-trade Alen Hanson — someone else he wants to keep in the lineup — in left field instead of Shaw. Panik got San Francisco’s first two hits — a single in the first and another single in the third — and scored the Giants’ first run on a third-inning single by Evan Longoria.

Panik had his first three-hit game since April 24, singleing up the middle in the first, to right in the third and to left in the seventh.

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Belt said after the game that he has not yet had any tests on his knee, preferring to wait until after the season to get it taken care of. Stepping on the bag last week while running to first exacerbated some discomfort he's had for quite some time. It feels, he said, a lot like 2015, when he underwent arthroscopic meniscus surgery on Sept. 30 of that year. He postulated that there may be a fraying of the meniscus.

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**Belt says he plans to finish season despite knee injury**

**Jacob Hutchinson**

Don't expect Brandon Belt to have surgery any time soon. The longtime Giants first baseman – while donning a massive ice pack wrapped around his right knee following the Giants' 11th-straight loss – said that he intends to finish out the season.

Belt spent time on the 10-day disabled list earlier this season from July 27 to August 14 for a bone bruise in his right knee. Yesterday, Bruce Bochy said yesterday that would likely require offseason surgery for what could be a meniscus problem. Today, Belt said that remains the case.

"I want to play through," Belt said. "I'm never going to regret going out there and playing. It's not affecting how I play, so that's all that matters."

He said he wasn't sure exactly what the issue is and has not had tests on the knee, leaving the door open to potentially clean it out arthroscopically in the offseason.

"I think we'll probably take a closer look at it at the end of the season, figure that out," Belt said.

While Belt is understated and denied that the injury has affected his play, his numbers have dropped dramatically from earlier in the season when he was nearly an All-Star and batted consistently over .300 from late April through mid-July. After Wednesday's loss, his average is down to .255, a decline that is likely attributable, at least in part, to his knee injury.

**KNBR.com**

**Bochy, Belt, Holland break down controversial calls, wasted chances**

**Jacob Hutchinson**

There's no good way to lose a game, especially when it's your 11th-straight loss. Today, the

Giants set their consecutive loss record in San Francisco, a streak which last occurred for the franchise in 1951, when the Giants were in New York.

The loss stung for a number of reasons, and the number 11 was involved in most of them. With this nightmarish downslide, all the Giants have left to play for is pride and the opportunity to keep other teams out of the playoffs. The loss saw the Giants strand 11 baserunners and turned the Atlanta Braves' magic number to 11.

"We're basically kind of out of it," said Derek Holland, who threw six innings of one-run baseball today. "But at the same time, we can still ruin other teams from getting into the playoffs, so that's what our goal is."

Wasted scoring chances and a pair of controversial calls defined the game. Twice, the Giants hit into double plays with the bases loaded and one out.

"Somebody has to knock in a run," said manager Bruce Bochy. "You can't be in a better position to win a ball game or score some runs than what we were today. Somebody has to come through. If not, this is what happens. You get bases loaded. We had a man on third, what three times with less than two outs. We have to get it done and we don't. Double plays killed us today."

The other time the Giants had a man on third was after a sacrifice bunt and mental error combination from Alen Hanson in the eighth inning with the game tied 1-1. Braves pitcher Jesse Biddle picked up Hanson's bunt and threw it well over first base, which allowed Joe Panik to move to third.

Hanson realized the mistake too late, but made a brief attempt to head to second. First base umpire Jeremie Rehak and first baseman Freddie Freeman saw it and Freeman motioned to second baseman Ozzie Albies to tag Hanson out. Albies tagged him and a halfhearted attempt by Bochy to argue the call proved unfruitful. Bochy made no attempt to blame the play on Rehak.

"(Hanson) made a mental mistake," Bochy said. "(Rehak) had the call right. You cannot make a move toward advancing there and (Hanson) has got one job there at that point. He has to realize he did that. You know as a runner that you did that. You get back to first. That was huge. That was probably the difference in the game. Nobody out, first and third, Longo up there. That's just a mental mistake on his part. He was trying to play like he didn't make an attempt, but he did."

After Hanson's mental error, the Braves intentionally walked Evan Longoria to leave Brandon Belt at the plate with runners at the corners and one out. Belt struck out next and Brandon Crawford grounded out to end the inning. Belt did not hold back on himself after the game.

"I had a chance to win the game for us and I didn't get the job done," Belt said. "It is really

frustrating because like I said, we're coming to the field and we're working our butts off every day and we're doing what we can to win ballgames."

The next inning, the Braves scored the game-winning run on a pinch-hit infield single from Tyler Flowers. Evan Longoria had to field the ball on a high hop and turned to throw the ball to Belt. Umpire Rehak said Belt was off the bag when he caught it, allowing the run to score. The Giants challenged the play, but the call held without enough evidence to overturn it.

Neither Bochy or Belt were too pleased with the initial call.

"I thought it was going to be overturned," Belt said. "Any time they take forever like they did, it usually doesn't mean an overturn is coming. It usually means the call is going to stand. But I think he should have been able to make the right call in the first place. If he makes the out call right there, it's definitely not getting overturned. Like I said, it's just unfortunate."

Bochy said he was confident the play would be overturned.

"It looks like (Belt's foot) is on the bag," Bochy said. "I was just doing a brief look and it's one of those plays where the call on the field bears a lot of weight and they stood with it. I just don't get how that call was not overturned with the real brief look I had at it. It shows you how much the call on the field plays."

Belt said he understood why the call wasn't overturned after discussions earlier in the season with a replay official. His and Bochy's gripes lay with Rehak and his initial call on the field.

"They feel like they have to be 1000 percent sure on it and if they're not, they won't overturn it," Belt said. "I had one of them describe it to me as they had to be able to bet their house on it to be able to overturn something like that. I just thought it should have been called out on the field. I thought it was one of those plays where I stayed on (the bag) long enough that he should've been able to call that out."

The loss leaves the Giants reeling ahead of an off day tomorrow and a three-game homestand against the first-place Colorado Rockies.

"I know for a fact these guys are not happy," Holland said. "We're not happy with what's going on, we don't want to be doing this, we should be winning. We're trying to do everything we can. Sometimes when you go through slumps like this, it's a little tough to get out. But we're plugging away, doing everything we're supposed to do."

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**Giants lose 11th-straight game after controversial call in ninth**

**Jacob Hutchinson**

It continues. With a 2-1 loss to the Atlanta Braves, the Giants have lost their 11th-straight

game, the longest-ever streak since the team has been in San Francisco. The last time the franchise lost 11 consecutive games was in 1951 – as the New York Giants. The game ultimately came down to one play in the ninth inning.

With the score knotted at 1-1 and Charlie Culberson at third, a pinch-hitting Tyler Flowers stepped up with two outs. Flowers hit a difficult ground ball to Evan Longoria who spun to pick it before wheeling and throwing to first. The throw bounced high off the ground and caused Brandon Belt to come off first base, according to first base umpire Jeremie Rehak.

After a more than two-minute-long review, the call stood and a chorus of boos roared throughout AT&T Park. The Giants (68-79) failed to mount a comeback in the ninth and remained 0-for-September.

The matinee was unbilled as a battle between two veteran starters in the midst of career-reviving seasons. Braves starter Anibal Sanchez and Giants starter Derek Holland have mirrored each other's trajectory closely over the last four seasons.

Both pitchers have mirrored each other in a number of stats over the last four years. While Holland has had ERAs of 4.91, 4.95, 6.2 and now 3.54, Sanchez has been at 4.99, 5.87, 6.41 and now 3.09.

They have both changed teams this year and found immense success in their new homes. Sanchez moved from the Detroit Tigers to Atlanta and Holland moving from the Chicago White Sox to San Francisco.

In the fashion you might expect based on the imitation game they've been playing, both Holland and Sanchez had incredibly similar nights aside from Sanchez's five walks to Holland's one. Their lines below tell most of the story of the first six innings.

Holland: 6 IP, 5 H, 7 SO, 1 ER

Sanchez: 6 IP, 6 H, 4 SO, 1 ER

The Giants' run came from a single by Evan Longoria to score Joe Panik in the third inning. The lead held from the third to the top of the sixth inning, the longest lead the Giants have had since the start of the losing streak on September 1. First baseman Freddie Freeman tied the game for the Braves by singling home second baseman Ozzie Albies.

What those lines don't tell you is how the Giants wasted two pairs of bases-loaded, one-out situations to come away with nothing in both the first and fourth innings.

In the first, Brandon Crawford grounded into a 4-6-3 double play to end the inning. In the fourth, Panik did the exact same in an otherwise brilliant game. He went 3-for-5, with his first out coming when he had runners on base.



The Giants got a small taste of revenge in the seventh, when Tony Watson relieved Reyes Moronta, who allowed a double between a pair of walks. Watson entered the game with the bases loaded and no outs before securing an infield popup, a strikeout, and a ground out to shortstop.

That moment was soured in the bottom half of the inning after Panik led off with one of his three singles in the game. Alen Hanson laid down a bunt that Braves pitcher Jesse Biddle picked up and sailed well over first base. It allowed Panik to move to third and Hanson to reach base momentarily.

What Hanson failed to realize is that he crossed into fair ground – at least according to first base umpire Jeremie Rehak, who was made his first controversial call of the night when he called Hanson out after Albies tagged him. Hanson was walking slowly back to first base in foul ground.

Replays were unclear, but it warranted an argument from Bruce Bochy and first base coach Jose Alguacil, who had motioned to Hanson unsuccessfully to get back to first. Freeman and Albies realized immediately that Hanson had potentially become an active baserunner as Freeman motioned to Albies behind second, who quickly tagged Hanson after picking up the ball.

After the debacle, Evan Longoria was intentionally walked, leaving Brandon Belt up with runners at the corners and one out. Belt struck out and Crawford grounded out to second to end the inning, leaving the game knotted at 1-1.