



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF APRIL 15, 2018

White Sox games Saturday, Sunday postponed

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com Apr. 14, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The White Sox were "swept" by the Twins this weekend at Target Field.

Of course, that sweep consisted of a 4-0 loss to Minnesota on Thursday night and then three consecutive postponements due to a spring blizzard not expected to end until early Monday morning. Sunday's game was postponed before dinner Saturday night, with the rescheduled games to be announced at a later date.

"Well, you know, they didn't miss on the forecast," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said on Saturday night. "Everybody knew it was coming."

Renteria could not remember a stretch where three straight games were postponed due to this sort of severe inclement weather, although he did bring up a Minor League Opening Day when he was managing in Portland, Maine, where they brought in helicopters and tried to use fuel to burn away the snow and play the game. Those options certainly weren't happening at the Major League level.

Reynaldo Lopez was scheduled to start Friday night's game for the White Sox, with Miguel Gonzalez set for Saturday's start. The White Sox announced Gonzalez as their starter for Saturday early in the morning, only to have the game postponed one hour later.

With the team hopefully moving on to Oakland Sunday for night games Monday and Tuesday and a day game Wednesday, it will return to its regular rotation with Lopez, Gonzalez and Carson Fulmer facing the A's in that order. The White Sox got their work in at the ballpark on Friday and Saturday, despite the weather, throwing necessary side sessions, hitting in the cages and doing their regular conditioning.

Renteria added Sunday will be used as an off-day/travel day, with the team leaving from the hotel and not going to the ballpark.

"I'm sure they are doing everything they can to make sure that they can get in and out safely and we can get in and out safely," Renteria said of flying out Sunday. "I'm not too concerned. Like I said, the storm was kind of forecast so it didn't hit us by surprise.

"Honestly we couldn't play in this. It's as cold as all get out, and it wouldn't be safe to do. That would be ridiculous. We got a blizzard in Minnesota and we'll deal with it."

Wellington Castillo's return on Monday in Oakland becomes one benefit of the three days off. The team's starting catcher, who has not played since April 10 due to right knee soreness, received extensive treatment and told Renteria he was ready to go Saturday.

Minnesota plays host to the White Sox from June 5-7 and Sept. 28-30, which are their last three games of the season. The two teams have a mutual off-day this Thursday, but the Twins are returning from Puerto Rico after a two-game set with the Indians and the White Sox will be returning from Oakland. They also have a mutual off-day on June 4, before that next series in Minnesota, and on June 25, Aug. 20, and on Sept. 6.

Some of the White Sox players tweeted pictures of the snow and sent live video via Instagram. But now the focus returns to actual baseball games.

"It's freezing out there," Renteria said. "Now it's just let's get on a plane and get to Oakland safely and get ready for that series."

UP NEXT

After a lost, snowy weekend in which three of four games against the Twins were postponed at Target Field, the White Sox go west to take on the A's with a first pitch of 9:05 p.m. CT Monday night. Lopez, who has not pitched since losing a 1-0 decision to Detroit on April 8, will get the White Sox start facing right-hander Daniel Mengden (1-2, 6.19 ERA). Catcher Castillo, bothered by a sore right knee and out of action since April 10, also is expected to return to the lineup.

Saturday's best: Rays trio fuels Charlotte victory

By Mike Rosenbaum / MLB.com / Apr. 14, 2018

Here's MLB Pipeline's roundup of the top prospect performances in the Minor Leagues on Saturday.

Jesus Sanchez put his early struggles behind him on Saturday as he delivered his first home run this season along with a pair of doubles to help power Class A Advanced Charlotte past Lakeland, 7-4.

Sanchez, MLB Pipeline's No. 57 overall prospect (Rays' No. 4), hit a ground-rule double in his first at-bat, connected on a solo shot in his next trip to the plate and added his second double in the top of the eighth inning to finish 3-for-4 with two runs.

After recording just one extra-base hit in his first eight games, Sanchez, a 20-year-old outfielder, raised his average from .179 to .250 with his second multi-hit effort in three games for the Stone Crabs. In 2017, Sanchez slashed .305/.348/.478 with 15 home runs and 29 doubles in 117 games with Class A Bowling Green.

Also standing out in the victory were shortstop Lucius Fox (No. 7) and center fielder Josh Lowe (No. 11), as the 20-year-old duo combined for four hits, four RBIs, three runs and three steals from the top of Charlotte's order.

Fox went 2-for-3 with a double, two RBIs and two runs out of the leadoff spot, also reaching twice via a walk and notching a pair of steals in the contest. Lowe, meanwhile, showcased his impressive power-speed combo as he connected on his second home run and stole his fourth base before finishing 2-for-5. The 2016 first-rounder has been on a tear to open the season, recording hits in eight of nine games while slashing .364/.436/.667.

The rest of the best performances from top prospects Saturday:

- No. 3 overall prospect Vladimir Guerrero Jr. (Blue Jays' No. 1) posted his third straight two-hit game with at least one RBI and Bo Bichette (Blue Jays' No. 2, No. 13 overall) extended his hitting streak to eight games as Double-A New Hampshire beat Hartford, 5-2. Guerrero, 19, went 2-for-3 with two RBIs to improve his average to .361. Bichette, meanwhile, owns a .350 average after finishing 1-for-3 with two runs and two walks. On the mound, Sean Reid-Foley (Blue Jays' No. 10) carried a no-hit bid into the sixth inning en route to completing 6 1/3 frames of two-run ball. The 22-year-old righty permitted five hits and one walk with three strikeouts as he recorded his second straight victory over the Yard Goats.

- No. 5 overall prospect Gleyber Torres (Yankees' No. 1) hit a pair of doubles and finished with a season-high three RBIs as Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre rallied to defeat Charlotte, 10-5. The 21-year-old infielder pushed across the go-ahead run with his first two-bagger in the sixth inning, while his two-run double in the eighth provided the RailRiders with key insurance runs. He's batting .389 on the young season and has multiple hits in four of his past five games.

- No. 10 overall prospect Michael Kopech (White Sox No. 2) worked six strong innings, scattering five hits and allowing one earned run in a no-decision for Triple-A Charlotte. The hard-throwing righty netted just three strikeouts but recorded 11 ground-ball outs in his second start for the Knights. Daniel Palka (No. 30) hit a two-run shot in the loss, marking his third home run in as many games.

- No. 11 overall prospect Francisco Mejia picked a good time to hit his first home run, as the (Indians' No. 1) prospect's sixth-inning solo shot tied the game and ultimately set up walk-off victory for Triple-A Columbus. The 22-year-old switch-hitter also doubled in the contest to finish 2-for-4 in his third multi-hit game this season. He's plated a run in three straight for the Clippers.

- No. 33 overall prospect Alex Verdugo (Dodgers' No. 2) collected three of Triple-A Oklahoma City's six hits, though none were bigger than his game-tying home run in the bottom of the eighth inning. The homer, a two-run shot, was the first of the season for the 21-year-old outfielder, who also doubled in the contest before finishing 3-for-4.

- No. 43 overall prospect Taylor Trammell (Reds' No. 3) hit his first home run of the season, connecting on a solo shot in the eighth inning of Class A Advanced Daytona's 18-13 loss to Jupiter. The two teams combined to hit 11 home runs in the contest to establish a new Florida State League record. Catcher Tyler Stephenson (No. 9) didn't leave the yard but still had

a strong all-around game, going 3-for-3 with two doubles, two RBIs and three runs, while also reaching twice via a walk. He's slashing .448/.568/.724 with six extra-base hits through nine games, while Trammell checks in with a .314 average so far after finishing Saturday's contest 2-for-4 with three runs.

- No. 51 overall prospect Ian Anderson (Braves' No. 5) fired five scoreless innings but took a no-decision as Class A Advanced Florida fell to Palm Beach, 6-5, in 10 innings. The 2017 first-rounder (No. 3 overall) permitted one hit, walked three and notched five strikeouts before departing the game after 78 pitches (48 strikes). Brett Cumberland (No. 24), Anderson's battery-mate, continued his hot start by going 3-for-4 with a pair of doubles.

- No. 53 overall prospect Willie Calhoun (Rangers' No. 2) went 3-for-5 with three RBIs in his first multi-hit game this season. All three of his hits were singles, while Calhoun's three RBIs proved the difference in Triple-A Round Rock's 8-6 win over Colorado Springs. The 23-year-old slugger has tallied hits in eight of nine games for the Express.

- After connecting on his third home run for Class A Advanced Potomac, No. 90 overall prospect Carter Kieboom (Nationals' No. 3) is now one-third of the way towards his 2016 total through just 10 games. The 20-year-old shortstop was plagued by injuries last season but still managed to hit nine homers in 61 games. 2017 second-rounder Wil Crowe (No. 8) picked up his second win in as many starts, tossing five innings of one-run ball to lead the P-Nats past Frederick, 6-2. The big right-hander fanned four and generated another seven outs via ground balls while throwing 40 of his 56 offerings for strikes.

- Padres No. 20 prospect Edward Olivares hit a leadoff homer and then collected three more hits to finish 4-for-5 in Class A Advanced Lake Elsinore's win over Lancaster. The home run was the second this season for the 22-year-old outfielder, who also paced the Storm's offense with three runs. Right-hander Pedro Avila (No. 26) was lights-out in his second 2018 start, yielding just one hit in seven scoreless innings. He compiled four strikeouts against three walks while throwing 51 of 82 pitches for strikes.

- After failing to escape the second inning in his season debut, Cardinals No. 21 prospect Conner Greene fired on all cylinders for Double-A Springfield en route to his first 2018 win. Starting game one of a doubleheader, the 23-year-old right-hander allowed one hit over six scoreless innings to lead the Cardinals past Midland, 5-0. He posted eight strikeouts against one walk in the stellar performance, throwing 52 of his 83 pitches for strikes.

- Pirates No. 28 prospect Brandon Waddell allowed one unearned run on two hits in six innings as Double-A Altoona edged Erie, 5-4, in 11 innings. The 23-year-old recorded six strikeouts and 11 ground-ball outs, throwing 48 of his 80 pitches for strikes in the walk-less performance. He's permitted just one earned run and six hits while compiling 13 strikeouts and one walk in 11 2/3 innings (two starts) for the Curve.

Michael Kopech strong again, but he's still looking for first win in 2018

By Vinne Duber / NBC Sports Chicago / Apr. 14, 2018

Michael Kopech is still without a win at Triple-A Charlotte, but he was once again strong in his second outing of the season.

Kopech allowed just one run over six innings Saturday night, though he didn't get the "W" as the Knights' bullpen — including Juan Minaya, who the White Sox sent down just last weekend — imploded and allowed nine runs in a 10-5 loss to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

Kopech struck out three to up his K total to 11, while giving up five hits and walking a pair of hitters. After four shutout innings in his first start of the regular season, Kopech's ERA sits at 0.90.

The White Sox top-ranked pitching prospect and the No. 10 prospect in baseball, Kopech's every start is of great interest to rebuild-loving White Sox fans who are hoping to see Kopech and his 100 mph fastball on the South Side as soon as possible.

General manager Rick Hahn has indicated on numerous occasions that Kopech won't be brought up until he is ready and that the White Sox pitching situation at the big league level will have no bearing on when Kopech gets promoted. That could include Kopech staying at Triple-A all season after making just three starts at that level at the end of last season. Or, Kopech could force his way to the majors by dominating at Triple-A.

He has plenty to work on after an up-and-down spring training that saw him finish his Cactus League schedule with an ERA north of 11.00. But certainly he's off to a great start in the regular season.

Snowstorm wipes out rest of White Sox-Twins series

By Colleen Kane / Chicago Tribune / Apr. 14, 2018

White Sox players had more fun with the weather Saturday, posting videos on social media around snow-covered Minneapolis and Target Field.

But baseball is still nowhere in sight.

The Twins postponed their Saturday and Sunday games against the Sox because of a snowstorm that began Friday night and was expected to last at least 24 hours.

The Twins and Sox didn't play Friday, either, because of rain and snow. The teams opened the series Thursday with a chilly but dry 4-0 Twins victory.

Four of the Sox's first 16 scheduled games have been postponed. They went to Target Field on Saturday but stayed indoors to do strength and conditioning work and hit and throw side sessions in the batting cages.

Manager Rick Renteria said the Sox will take Sunday off as they travel to Oakland, Calif., for a three-game series against the Athletics beginning Monday.

"We've been trying to cover and stay on top of it to the best of our ability," Renteria said by phone Saturday night. "(Sunday) is a matter of going ahead and giving them a break. It's freezing out there. Now it's just let's get on a plane and get to Oakland safely and get ready for that series."

The Twins didn't announce makeup dates for any of the games. The Sox return to Minneapolis for series June 5-7 and Sept. 28-30, their final three games of the season. They share an off day June 4 that could be used to turn the next series into a four-game meeting. They also have mutual off days June 25, Aug. 20 and Sept. 6.

Sox right-handers Reynaldo Lopez, Miguel Gonzalez and Carson Fulmer were scheduled to pitch the last three games, respectively, and instead will be bumped in order to the Athletics series. Now the Sox's biggest concern is getting their flight out of Minnesota safely.

"To say that I'm not concerned about that, I would be lying," Renteria said.

Minors watch: Sox No. 6 prospect Dane Dunning is off to a great start with high Class A Winston-Salem. The right-hander has given up one earned run over 11 1/3 innings with 16 strikeouts in two starts.

He took a no-hitter into the seventh inning Wednesday against Myrtle Beach, and in an interview with Milb.com afterward, he credited James Shields with helping him establish a new grip on his curveball.

"He was struggling with it a little bit in spring training, and sometimes you don't realize you're changing your grip midseason or even year to year," Shields, 36, said. "Sometimes you go into spring training naturally thinking you're going to have a good curveball, and it's just a grip adjustment from the year before. I just showed him what I do, and he ended up throwing a bullpen and feeling really good with it. I'm glad he's doing well with it."

Shields is the veteran of the Sox staff and said he has been in an advisory role since 2009, when a young Rays team called him the graybeard of the staff at 27. He simply likes talking with other pitchers about their craft.

"I don't think of it as I'm older than them," Shields said. "I just think of it as I'm their teammate, and I'm going to help them out. That's what I've done my whole career."

Just asking: Will the White Sox ever get out of Minnesota and play ball again?

By Steve Greenberg / Sun-Times / Apr. 14, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — A heavy snowstorm hit Hennepin County on the second weekend of January, blanketing the Kentucky bluegrass of Target Field in white.

Oops, did I say January? I meant April. As in Friday, Saturday and now Sunday — three days in a row that scheduled games between the White Sox and Twins were undone in a hail of snowflakes. Not to mention hail itself. And some really cold rain.

"They didn't miss their forecast, let's put it that way," Sox manager Rick Renteria said.

The news about Sunday's postponement came late Saturday afternoon, which should tell you how nasty conditions were. Will the Sox ever play again? The answer to that pressing question is nowhere to be found in this "One Through Nine":

1. Out of order: The Sox are planning to start Reynaldo Lopez — who originally was scheduled to pitch here on Friday — in Monday's opener in Oakland. That is, assuming they can get out of Minneapolis.

"To say I'm not concerned about that, I would be lying," manager Rick Renteria said early Saturday evening.

Would it be easier at this point to simply cancel the season?

Slated to follow Lopez in the three-game series against the A's are Miguel Gonzalez and Carson Fulmer, with James Shields and Lucas Giolito lined up behind them. In other words, though everyone has been pushed back a few days, the rotation order remains unchanged.

2. On his grind: Lucas Giolito was the losing pitcher in Thursday's series opener, but he's in a positive frame of mind after fighting his way out of a few gnarly jams and working into the seventh inning.

"I'm just going out there and the main word is 'grind,' " he said. "Just grinding as much as I can. I'm looking forward to my next start. I'm constantly looking to the future. That's the biggest thing is looking to get that opportunity to go back out there and put it all together."

3. Snow, thank you: Has fifth-year veteran Jose Abreu grown to appreciate the little things about a cold Midwestern day like seeing his breath or, say, going numb in his extremities? Has the Cuban slugger at least gotten used to playing in crummy weather?

"No, not at all," he said through an interpreter. "It's really difficult to get used to this weather. All the people who are involved in this business are trying to grind these first two weeks because the weather has been really bad. It's something that we have to deal with."

4. The truth, uncovered: And now, let's all shake our fists at the Populous architectural firm for building a baseball stadium without a roof in Minnesota. Or maybe we should blame the Twins, the county and the state legislature for choosing not to pony up the estimated \$100 million it would've cost to furnish the joint with a retractable roof.

Then again, we could just chill. Target Field is nice a ballpark as there is when it's, you know, open for business.

5. Just asking: Anybody know if the Vikings are playing at home this weekend?

6. No gear fear here: Welington Castillo probably will be back in the lineup Monday, but don't tell that to emergency catcher Tyler Saladino. Since Tuesday, when Castillo left a game with soreness in his knee, the infielder has been catching side sessions and even warming up pitchers before innings.

Saladino, who hasn't caught in a game since before high school, was lounging around in the visitors' clubhouse at Target Field while clad in full catcher's gear — an unusual sight, indeed.

"I just haven't put it on in so long that it feels good," he said. "I like it."

7. Come to think of it: Why is it bad weather is always referred to as "inclement," yet never in the history of mankind has a nice day been described as "clement"? It's a word. Look it up. (I had to.) Am I the only one who's suddenly reminiscing about former Cubs pitcher Matt Clement? This is how the mind of a madman works.

8. Now that's a groundskeeper: Getting snowed out for a weekend is an in-season first for Renteria, though he recalls a minor-league field in Portland, Maine, that was covered in snow, costing the teams there a game. So what did the hometown Sea Dogs do?

"They brought in helicopters, put fuel out there and tried to burn it all off," he said.

God bless America.

"This is the big leagues," he said. "We don't do that here."

9. Let's make up: According to the Twins, more information will come early in the week on when and where the three postponed games against the Sox will be made up. The teams do have a mutual day off June 4 before their series at Target Field, so that day almost certainly will be in the mix. Unless, of course, it's still snowing.

Snow joke: White Sox-Twins postponed due to wintry weather for second day in row

By Steve Greenberg / Sun-Times / Apr. 14, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — On January 14, a heavy snowstorm hit Hennepin County, blanketing the Kentucky bluegrass of Target Field in white.

Oops, did we say January? We meant April. As in today, Saturday, April 14, the second day in a row a game between the White Sox and Twins has been postponed.

With more nasty weather in the forecast and Sunday's game scheduled for a 1:10 p.m. start, will a third straight day of baseball go down in a hail of snowflakes?

No word yet on how all this affects the Sox' pitching rotation. Reynaldo Lopez was due to start Friday and Miguel Gonzalez on Saturday, and we await word from pitching coach Don Cooper and manager Rick Renteria on how things will shake out. Of course, it's hard for them to say when they don't know if or when the team will play.

And now, let's all shake our fists at the Populous architectural firm for building a baseball stadium without a roof in Minnesota. Or maybe we should blame the Twins, the county and the state legislature for choosing not to pony up the estimated \$100 million it would've cost to furnish the joint with a retractable roof.

Or we could just chill. Target Field is a beautiful ballpark — as good as it gets — when it's, you know, open for business.

Anybody know if the Vikings are playing at home this weekend?

And with the No. 4 overall pick, White Sox draft ...

By Scot Gregor / The Daily Herald / Apr. 14, 2018

We interrupt NFL mock draft versions 57.0, or wherever they're at now, for some baseball projections. Specifically, Chicago White Sox first-round draft pick projections.

Based on their 67-95 record last season, the Sox hold the No. 4 overall pick in this year's draft, which begins on June 4.

The Detroit Tigers have the No. 1 pick, followed by the San Francisco Giants and Philadelphia Phillies.

This year's draft pool has been described as very deep, with few or no can't-miss prospects at the top.

That's good and bad for the White Sox.

Good because a solid player should be on the board in the second round, where the Sox get the No. 46 overall pick.

It could be bad at No. 4 overall, but the White Sox should be able to get a premium college pitcher or promising high school position player.

Let's take a look at potential Sox picks at No. 4:

Jackson Kowar

A collegiate starting pitcher at Florida, Kowar is moving out of the shadow of heralded rotation mate Brady Singer this season.

Kowar, a 6-foot-6, 185-pound righty, was 12-1 for the Gators as a sophomore last season, but he gave up 115 hits in 106⅓ innings and had a 4.15 ERA and .270 batting average against.

This year, Kowar is off to a 5-1 start with a 2.72 ERA and .220 average against.

Nander De Sedas

He attends the same Florida high school (Montverde Academy) as Francisco Lindor, and De Sedas is frequently compared to the Cleveland Indians' star shortstop.

De Sedas has shown he can hit for power from both sides of the plate, and he's a good enough athlete to play third and second base in addition to shortstop.

Brice Turang

Another high school shortstop, Turang is a four-year starter at Santiago in California and he's been closely followed by major-league scouts for most of the prep run.

The son of Brian Turang, who played parts of two seasons (1993-94) with the Seattle Mariners, Brice comes from an athletic family and he's also made a big impression playing for USA Baseball's U18 team.

A solid hitter and defender, Turang's one question mark is hitting for power with a 6-foot, 165-pound frame.

Brady Singer

The White Sox have kept close tabs on the Florida starter, but the biggest issue is Singer is likely going to the Tigers, Giants or Phillies with one of the first three draft picks.

If he's still on the board at No. 4, the Sox are likely to pounce.

Singer broke out in 2016, when he dominated the competitive Cape Cod summer league.

The 6-foot-5 righty is 7-1 with a 2.79 ERA in 9 starts with the Gators this season and he has 63 strikeouts in 58 innings.

Nick Madrigal

He's been out since late February with a fractured hand, but Madrigal's draft stock remains incredibly high.

In 6 games with Oregon State before the injury, Madrigal batted .560 with 2 home runs and 8 RBI. As a sophomore last year, the infielder hit .380 with 20 doubles, 4 homers and 40 RBI in 60 games with the Beavers.

A natural second baseman, the 5-foot-8, 160-pounder has been compared to a pair of pretty good players -- Jose Altuve and Dustin Pedroia.

Five more to watch:

Casey Mize, starting pitcher, Auburn; Travis Swaggerty, outfielder, South Alabama; Shane McClanahan, starting pitcher, South Florida; Matthew Liberatore, starting pitcher, Mountain Ridge (Ariz.) High School; Jarred Kelenic, outfielder, Waukesha West (Wis.) High School.

Forget the new study — the real change in the ball White Sox players see is from Triple-A to the majors

By James Fegan / The Athletic / Apr. 14, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — On Thursday, word came down to The Athletic MLB that we were going to be privileged to run a new study from Rob Arthur about a noticeable shift in how the major league baseball was carrying early this season. The gist of it was this: the air resistance of the ball has increased, resulting in the lowest home run per fly ball rate since 2014. Yes, Arthur accounted for the fact that it's been cold.

As a beat reporter, it was an opportunity to take the research and get some anecdotal evidence to confirm or controvert it. James Shields provided some observations on changes in the ball last year, but this season's set of anecdotes certainly didn't have him buying into the idea that the playing field was shifting away from home runs.

"We hit six home runs Opening Day in Kansas City, so I don't know what they're talking about," Shields said with a laugh. "I've never seen that happen in my career, in that stadium, that early, or that cold."

Treating the Sox Opening Day home run barrage as evidence alone that there's been no increase in air resistance is said with a wink, but the main point was that Shields hadn't noticed anything, after he did mention a difference just last year. The man mostly responsible for that early home run barrage, Matt Davidson, also said there was nothing notable to report, though he has the sort of power that his philosophy on baseballs is fairly succinct.

"If you hit it good, it's going to go out; it's as simple as that," Davidson said. "It's been cold. I think the balls fly good all the time."

With a team full of guys, both prospects and veterans, who were very recently playing in the minors, the White Sox clubhouse is dealing with a prominent difference in the performance of the baseball. But it doesn't have anything to do with an apparent, near-imperceptible change in the big league ball.

"I'm not one of the guys that even noticed the difference between what was it, the All-Star break at '15? — that was the theory that they ended up changing it," said Danny Farquhar, who spent time in Triple-A last season. "I did notice that there's a big difference between major league balls and Triple-A balls. I think that's a big problem that needs to be fixed, especially

if you're trying to get pitchers in Triple-A ready for the big leagues. That's a bigger difference. That's the biggest difference I've noticed."

Among the highly anecdotal sample of players I was able to ask about the ball on the only Thursday of open clubhouse the White Sox had during the Twins series (thanks to a massive snowstorm), all of them responded to questions about the major league ball in the same way. They denied noticing anything, and quickly pivoted, without prompting, about how undeniable the Triple-A-to-major league difference was.

"You notice the huge difference especially from the minor leagues to the major leagues," Davidson said. "You always hear about minor leaguers in their first big league camp or second big league camp or whatever, even that jump, the major league baseball flies better than the minor league baseball. I think everybody knows that."

It's telling that everyone brought it up, but this is not a revelation of any sort. In their earlier research on the topic, Arthur and Ben Lindbergh observed that minor league baseballs are made in completely separate parts of the world and have "distinctly different behavior characteristics." While there's always been more power in the majors than the minors, when home runs rocketed to record highs the last few years in the majors, it was simultaneously declining in Triple-A. The net effect of a widening gap in conditions seems to be a Triple-A game that dictates fundamental differences in approach compared to the major leagues.

"Oh yeah, huge difference," Farquhar said. "Huge difference. Big league balls sink more. Let's say you have a sinking changeup, like I do, or a sinker. Big league balls, I think they calculated it at an inch and a half more sink in the big leagues. But then the minor league balls break more, like on breaking balls or curveballs, they have more bite. It's a completely different game from Triple-A to big leagues."

"I think the minor league balls probably have more [fastball] carry than the big league balls. Or maybe it was the hitters, but I noticed that my high fastball plays a lot in the minors, and my changeup doesn't play as well, because I don't think it has the drop that it has in the big leagues."

Coincidentally, the White Sox have three young starters in Lucas Giolito, Reynaldo López and Carson Fulmer who are still searching for the consistency they had with their curveballs at points of the minor league career. López and Giolito specifically have found much more success with their changeups, despite it being their third pitch earlier in their career as prospects. Like with mentioning the cold weather, there's a risk that bringing up that something might be a factor will be interpreted as an excuse, and none of those three would blame the ball for not having their curve every night. But it's something to chew on during three days without White Sox baseball, and during what has been an unquestionably difficult start for a pitching staff struggling to establish itself in the majors.

After all, when James Shields hit the disabled list for the first time in his career last season, and had rehab starts in Charlotte to get through, he says they brought major league baseballs in for him to use, rather than have him deal with the adjustment.
