



SF Giants Press Clips Monday, June 4, 2018

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants' 5-run inning against red-hot Jake Arrieta seals sweep of Phils Henry Schulman

One of those endless showcases that wannabe ballplayers are encouraged to attend is the World Wood Bat Association Championships, held every October in Jupiter, Fla. In 2010, two South Florida high schoolers who had played against one another since Little League drove up together and shared a room.

Even in the fanciful dreams of their teenaged minds, Andrew Suarez and Dereck Rodriguez could not have envisioned that nearly a decade later they would wear the same big-league uniform and star in back-to-back games to give their team an immaculately timed lift.

A day after Suarez blanked the Phillies for seven innings, Rodriguez became the first Giants pitcher in nearly nine years to win his first big-league start, getting the ritual beer shower in the clubhouse after Sunday's 6-1 victory.

After an 11-16 May that included four losses in Philadelphia, the Giants completed a suffocating payback sweep behind two rookie starters and a third, Chris Stratton, the wizened owner of 22 big-league starts.

The Giants will carry a four-game win streak into a series against the Diamondbacks that will include Madison Bumgarner's 2018 debut Tuesday night.

The Phillies scored one run all weekend at AT&T Park, on pitcher Jake Arrieta's home run off Rodriguez in the third inning Sunday.

"Bumgarner told me he gave one up to him a few years ago, so that made me feel better," Rodriguez said.

Bumgarner failed to mention a teeny detail. Arrieta's three-run homer against the Big Fella happened in Game 3 of the 2016 Division Series against the Cubs.

The Giants came back to win that game, too.

Arrieta was bidding for his third consecutive scoreless start Sunday when the Giants jumped him for five runs in the sixth inning, as many as he surrendered in all of May.

Gorkys Hernandez punched a one-out single to center one pitch after Arrieta sent him diving to the dirt to avoid a scalp-seeking missile. Pinch-hitter Alen Hanson then showed no signs of his hamstring injury when he legged out an infield hit.

Joe Panik, completing a dream comeback weekend, singled home the tying run. Buster Posey hit the go-ahead single and Andrew McCutchen skied a three-run homer just inside the pole in the arcade, a ball that probably would not have left the park on a typically cool and windy day.

Posey added a homer against Hector Neris, who drilled him last year to create some ill will, and the Giants completed their big weekend with two other feel-good moments.

Mark Melancon struck out the side in the seventh, his first inning of the season, and Hunter Pence got a huge ovation before and after he hit a long flyball to center as a pinch-hitter in the eighth.

MORE: Giants' Mark Melancon returns with three-strikeout inning

And though the Phillies won the season series four games to three, the Giants got the last word against a rising team.

“They had their way with us in Philly. They beat us up pretty good,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “You always want to get even. The guys were determined to punch back, and they did it against three really good starters.”

Rodriguez has given every indication he can be one, too. In Little League, he was a catcher like his dad, Ivan. Then he became an outfielder. The Twins turned him into a pitcher.

ALSO: Giants hope to make splash with 2nd overall pick in Monday's draft

He has thrown two big-league games, Tuesday night as a reliever in Denver and Sunday as a starter. Both ended with a comebacker that hit him on his right shin. At least Maikel Franco's bounced a few times before it hit him.

“I'm going to need to pitch with one of those shin guards that soccer players wear,” he joked before heading into the tunnel to meet his mom and other friends and relatives.

Ivan Rodriguez was not here but expects to see his son pitch in Florida next week.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants' Mark Melancon returns with three-strikeout innings Henry Schulman

Players will tell you they can feel like non-people when they are on the disabled list. **Mark Melancon** felt like a ballplayer Sunday when he not only pitched for the first time since forearm surgery in September, but struck out the side in a 6-1 victory.

“I can't tell you how excited I am to just get to contribute instead of sitting on the sidelines cheering the guys on,” Melancon said.

Melancon's arm might never be right again. He might not be the closer again, because Hunter Strickland has nailed down that job. But Melancon's three-strikeout seventh inning suggested he can deepen a bullpen that is gaining the consistency it lacked in 2016, prompting the Giants

to sign him to a four-year, \$62 million deal.

Strickland and setup man **Sam Dyson** were off Sunday. **Tony Watson** was not needed. The Giants still were able to get shutout innings without them from Melancon, **Will Smith** and **Reyes Moronta**.

Melancon did not throw harder than 91 mph, but he struck out **Aaron Altherr**, **Mitch Walding** and **Cesar Hernandez** with good location pitch mix.

“That’s how I envisioned it the whole time,” Melancon said. “Obviously, you don’t want it to be any other way. I guess the power of mental preparation is good.”

Cueto throws: Madison Bumgarner might not be the only Giants starter to return in June. Manager **Bruce Bochy** said **Johnny Cueto** could be back this month. It would have to be the 30th, the first day he is eligible to come off the 60-day DL.

Cueto played catch from 120 feet Sunday and reported no pain

An elbow sprain is much trickier than a fractured pinkie, which cost Bumgarner the first two months of the season. But as long as Cueto’s elbow can withstand an increased workload, he will push it.

“It wasn’t the plan today, but he got up on the mound and played a little catch,” Bochy said. “That shows how anxious he is to get going.”

Johnny Cueto Injured

Johnny Cueto Injured

Media: SFChronicle

Cueto could throw his first formal bullpen session on the upcoming trip.

Resting Crawford: As much as everyone was looking forward to **Pablo Sandoval** getting a few innings at shortstop, Bochy has to be relieved to true middle infielder on his bench in **Allen Hanson**.

Even Hanson has not played short regularly since 2014 in Double-A with the Pirates,. However,

with the Giants starting a 10-game trip and a stretch of 17 games without a day off Friday, Bochy will have to rest Crawford and start Hanson at some point.

“I’ve got to do what’s right,” Bochy said. “I’d be confident putting Hanson out there for a day.”

Crawford has started 54 of the first 59 games. His career high in starts was 137 in 2014.

Briefly: Brandon Belt came to AT&T Park to check with the medical staff two days after an appendectomy. Head athletic trainer **Dave Groeschner** said Belt “looked good.” Belt is expected to miss about three weeks. ... **Jake Arrieta**’s homer is the only run the Giants have allowed in their past 34 innings. ... According to Stats Inc., the Giants are the first team ever to hold an opponent to one run in a three-game series on a pitcher’s home run.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants hope to make splash with 2nd overall pick in Monday’s draft

John Shea

Mock drafts tend to be more fun than reliable, especially in baseball.

It’s a sport that usually requires years for drafted players to reach the majors if they get there at all, unlike football and basketball that can promise top picks an immediate spot on the team — even a starting job.

-

Baseball’s three-day draft begins at 4 p.m. Monday, and the Giants pick second overall for the first time since selecting Will Clark in 1985.

Several media-generated mock drafts have the Giants picking a college catcher, Joey Bart of Georgia Tech. Perhaps they’ll take Florida pitcher Brady Singer or Wichita State third baseman Alex Bohm or a high school pitcher such as Cole Winn of Orange County or Matthew Liberatore of Arizona.

Or someone not anticipated.

Like last year. The Giants had the 19th pick, and mock drafts had them taking Kentucky first baseman Evan White, who went 17th to Seattle. The Giants pulled a surprise, taking a high school outfielder from Puerto Rico, Heliot Ramos.

Or, the Giants could take a discounted player with their first pick — for whom their slot value is \$7.494 million — to save some of their allotted \$11.748 million overall pool (for the top 10 rounds) for later selections if, say, they want to use a pick on a high schooler who's leveraging a college scholarship.

“Mock drafts are interesting,” Giants general manager Bobby Evans said, “because the writers do a lot of research and work to try to understand what's out there, but ultimately it's who's going to be available and who the clubs are targeting. Everyone has different opinions because it's not clear cut.”

The Tigers have the first pick and are expected to draft Auburn pitcher Casey Mize, though Detroit hasn't confirmed it. There's a chance Mize could fall to the Giants. It's not like the 2009 and 2010 drafts when Stephen Strasburg and Bryce Harper were clearly ahead of the pack; the Nationals picked first both years and took both players.

If the Giants pick Bart, the first thought in their fans' minds will be Buster Posey, a National League MVP, five-time All-Star and a common denominator in three World Series titles. Posey is 31, and his greatest value to the team remains at catcher, though it eventually could be first base.

Teams generally don't draft for need — it's more about choosing the best player available. But any conversation involving Bart would include Posey's future and how long the Giants anticipate their franchise player will stay behind the plate.

The Giants' second pick is 45th overall and their third is 80th, and those are far greater unknowns for the franchise. They can only hope they succeed as they did in 2008 when drafting

Brandon Crawford in the fourth round and 2009 when Brandon Belt was a fifth-rounder.

“Look where the Angels took (Mike) Trout, a franchise-changing player,” Evans said of the 25th overall pick in 2009. “You can get a game-changing guy in any number of places, but your odds increase when you select as high, as we will. While the probability might change, even when not picking this high, your goal is still to get an impact player.”

For the record, MLB.com, Baseball America and FanGraphs are among the outlets predicting the Tigers will draft Mize and the Giants will take Bart. ESPN has the Giants picking Winn.

San Jose Mercury News
Bochy updates outlook on Cueto, details next step for Giants pitcher
Kerry Crawley

SAN FRANCISCO — Johnny Cueto was preparing for the worst.

The Giants starter felt terrible pain in his right elbow and after a dominant start to his 2018 season, Cueto felt he was destined to undergo Tommy John surgery.

But an early May visit to Dr. James Andrews, a leading sports orthopedic surgeon, confirmed Cueto suffered a sprain and not a tear in his elbow, allowing the pitcher to rehab and rest.

San Francisco placed the right-hander on the 60-day disabled list, which means he’s not eligible to return to the club until June 30 at the earliest. Though it remains uncertain exactly when Cueto will begin a rehab assignment and when the Giants will target a specific return date for the starter, manager Bruce Bochy offered an optimistic outlook on Cueto’s progress Sunday.

Get San Francisco Giants news in your inbox. Sign up now for the free Giants HQ newsletter.

“Cueto threw out to 120 feet today and it’s possible he could take his first pen in Washington,” Bochy said.

Cueto didn’t begin throwing until Monday, but Bochy reported the right-hander is pain-free and attempting to make a quick return to the Giants rotation.

“Johnny is anxious to get going,” Bochy said. “It wasn’t the plan today but he had the catcher get up and he just got on the mound and played a little catch. It was not a bullpen but just an example of how anxious he is to get going.”

Cueto allowed just three runs in 32 innings to start the season, posting a 0.84 ERA through his first five starts of the year. Despite missing a start due to a sprained ankle, Cueto regained his form and appeared an early favorite to garner All-Star consideration in the National League.

However, the Dominican Republic native said he experienced discomfort toward the end of April that forced the Giants to send him to the disabled list, robbing the team of its No. 2 starter while ace Madison Bumgarner remained on the shelf.

Cueto was so certain he was headed for the operating table that he asked Bochy if he could make one final start in Atlanta at the beginning of May, but the Giants insisted that Cueto receive an evaluation from their own medical team and Dr. Andrews.

Though the health of Cueto’s elbow will remain a concern for the rest of the season and throughout his tenure with the Giants, the time off from throwing has clearly benefitted Cueto.

Before Cueto returns to the rotation, he’ll need to throw a handful of bullpens and make at least a few rehab starts in the minor leagues. With four weeks to go before Cueto is eligible to come off the disabled list, the Giants and the pitcher do have time on their side and can afford to be cautious at each step of the rehab process.

Hanson an option at shortstop

The Giants optioned Kelby Tomlinson to Single-A San Jose to create a roster space for Joe Panik on Friday and called up infielder Alen Hanson to replace Brandon Belt Saturday after Belt needed an emergency appendectomy.

Tomlinson was the club’s primary backup middle infielder and Hanson has yet to play an inning at shortstop this season for the Giants, but Bochy said Sunday he would have no problem using Hanson at shortstop if starter Brandon Crawford needed a breather.

“I’ve got to do what’s right, if (Crawford) needs a day, he’s getting a day,” Bochy said. “Hanson can go there. We’re in early June here, we have a lot of baseball left.”

Hanson played more than 300 games at shortstop between 2012 and 2014 in the Pittsburgh

Pirates' farm system, but has spent most of the last few seasons as a second baseman.

He appeared in two games at shortstop with Single-A San Jose during a rehab assignment this week and turned a pair of unassisted 6-3 double plays in a game on Wednesday.

San Jose Mercury News

Dereck Rodríguez powers Giants to series sweep with first career win

Kerry Crawley

SAN FRANCISCO—Against a Phillies team that swept the Giants in May, facing a nine-year major league veteran with a Cy Young Award under his belt, rookie Dereck Rodríguez could have looked out of place.

He might have been overwhelmed or uncertain. Unprepared or undisciplined.

Instead, Rodríguez owned the moment. The Giants owned the game and in the end, they owned the series.

With a 6-1 takedown of Philadelphia, San Francisco secured its second series sweep of the season behind a pitcher making his first career major league start.

“It’s awesome, it’s a great feeling,” Rodríguez said. “We battled out there and in that sixth inning, the guys really pulled together and put up a five spot.”

Rodríguez exited after six innings trailing 1-0, but a five-run outburst by his offense in the bottom of the sixth helped him become the first Giants pitcher to win in his debut as a starter since Joe Martinez beat the Astros on August 5, 2009.

“He’s got a nice feel out there for pitching,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “He’s not afraid to throw secondary pitches at any time. Commands the ball well. He does the little things.”

Welcome to the big leagues, Dereck. The Giants might have you stay awhile.

Get San Francisco Giants news in your inbox. Sign up now for the free Giants HQ newsletter.

With their fourth straight victory Sunday, the Giants matched their longest win streak of the season and pulled within a game of .500 ahead of their series against the first-place D’Backs

beginning Monday.

Phillies starter Jake Arrieta navigated through five dominant, scoreless innings to start Sunday's contest, facing the minimum and opening up a 1-0 edge on Rodríguez with a solo home run to lead off the third inning.

But after Arrieta struck out left fielder Mac Williamson to kick off the sixth, the Giants started a station-to-station operation and didn't miss a stop.

After throwing an eye-level fastball that sent center fielder Gorkys Hernandez diving to the ground, Arrieta was the one who went tumbling. Hernandez regrouped with a one-out single and reached second on an infield hit by pinch hitter Alen Hanson.

RBI base hits from Joe Panik and Buster Posey pushed the Giants ahead 2-1, allowing Andrew McCutchen to step to the plate with a chance to break the game open. With a high, arching flyball down the right field line, McCutchen snapped a 159 at-bat homer-less streak, delivering a three-run shot to help the Giants take a commanding 5-1 lead.

With his club searching for its second sweep of the year, manager Bruce Bochy turned to Mark Melancon in the seventh inning. The Giants closer made his 2018 debut and enjoyed immediate success, fanning all three hitters he faced before turning the game over to Will Smith in the eighth and Reyes Moronta in the ninth.

"It's been a long time," Melancon said. "So it's a really good feeling to be back and help these guys out and it was fun. A lot of fun."

In the bottom of the eighth, catcher Buster Posey hit his fourth home run of the year, slamming a Hector Neris offering into the first row of the left field bleachers a season after Posey accused Neris of hitting him with a pitch on purpose.

"I don't know, I was just trying to go about the at-bat and fortunately, it turned out in my favor," Posey said.

After allowing 32 runs over a four-game stretch against the Phillies in early May, the Giants staff tossed two shutouts to secure a series victory and helped Rodríguez become the fifth different rookie to win a game for the club this year.

As starter Jeff Samardzija deals with shoulder tightness, Rodríguez took the right-hander's spot

in the Giants rotation following his major league debut Tuesday in Colorado.

Samardzija left that game after one inning due to injury and Rodríguez was also forced to exit ahead of schedule as he was drilled by a 108-mile per hour line drive in the shin. Rodríguez sported a wrap around his shin in the clubhouse before Sunday's game, but didn't show any lingering effects from the pain against Philadelphia.

The son of Hall of Fame catcher Ivan "Pudge" Rodríguez signed with the Giants as a minor league free agent this offseason and began the year with Triple-A Sacramento despite never having thrown an inning above the Double-A level. After nine starts in the hitter-friendly Pacific Coast League, Rodríguez's strong performance coupled with a rash of injuries to their pitching staff compelled the Giants to call up the rookie.

Despite allowing four doubles at Coors Field in 3 2/3 innings Tuesday, Rodríguez's sharp command and hard fastball convinced the Giants to insert him into Samardzija's spot in the rotation against the Phillies.

With 14 swinging strikes on 85 pitches against the Phillies, Rodríguez proved he belongs.

"I think his fastball has got a ton of life to it, it seems to come out pretty easy," Posey said. "He's done a nice job of pitching up and down and moving the ball to both sides of the plate."

Though the Giants will welcome back Madison Bumgarner to their rotation Tuesday against Arizona and anticipate Johnny Cueto could be available to rejoin the staff at the end of the month, Rodríguez has a major league-caliber arsenal and the confidence to back it up.

Defeating Arrieta should only add to it.

"All these guys up here are studs," Rodríguez said. "Everybody knows him. He's established himself up here for the past couple of years and beating him, it makes it that much sweeter."

With six strikeouts and an unwavering effort Sunday, Rodríguez gave himself a chance to stick around and earn a few more opportunities

MLB.com

Giants pick No. 2 for 1st time since Will the Thrill Chris Haft

The 2018 Draft begins today with the Draft preview show on MLB Network and MLB.com at 3 p.m. PT. MLB Network will broadcast the first 43 picks (Round 1 and Competitive Balance Round A), while MLB.com will stream all 78 picks on Day 1. MLB.com will also provide live pick-by-pick coverage of Rounds 3-10 on Day 2, with a preview show beginning at 9:30 a.m. PT. Then, Rounds 11-40 can be heard live on MLB.com on Day 3, beginning at 9 a.m. PT.

Go to MLB.com/draft to see the Top 200 Prospects list, projected top picks from MLB Pipeline analysts Jim Callis and Jonathan Mayo, the complete order of selection and more. And follow [@MLBDraft on Twitter](https://twitter.com/MLBDraft) to see what Draft hopefuls, clubs and experts are saying. Here's how the Draft is shaping up for the Giants, whose first pick is second overall.

In about 50 words

More attention than usual is focused on this year's Draft, largely due to history. The last time the Giants had the No. 2 overall choice was 1985, when they selected Mississippi State first baseman Will Clark. The left-handed batter with the sweet stroke made a lasting impact on the franchise, on and off the field. The Giants yearn to pick somebody who can demonstrate a

•

The scoop

It will be intriguing to see whether the Giants maintain an emphasis on taking younger prospects with higher talent ceilings. Last year they departed from selecting a large percentage of mostly polished collegins and took "toolsy" high school prospects with their first three picks.

First-round buzz

Due to their lofty draft position, the Giants should be able to add a player with legitimate talent. Speculation has surrounded Georgia Tech catcher Joey Bart, Auburn right-hander Casey Mize and Orange (Calif.) Lutheran High School right-hander Cole Winn.

Money matters

Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, each team has an allotted bonus pool equal to the sum of the values of that club's selections in the first 10 rounds of the Draft. The more picks a team has, and the earlier it picks, the larger the pool. The signing bonuses for a team's selections in the first 10 rounds, plus any bonus greater than \$125,000 for a player taken in rounds 11-40 will apply toward the bonus-pool total.

The assigned slots are 4.2 percent higher than last year, reflecting the increase in MLB's annual revenues. The Giants (\$11,747,500) are among seven clubs with eight-figure bonus pools.

Shopping list

The Giants always find a way to address their pitching needs. But what they really could use are some big bats. They reinforced themselves in this category last year by drafting outfielder **Heliot Ramos** and third baseman **Jacob Gonzalez** in the first two rounds. But the Giants' cupboard of offensive prospects is anything but overstocked, requiring them to seek more hitting prowess.

Trend watch

As mentioned earlier, the Giants abandoned their modus operandi last year by using their first two picks on high school position players Ramos and Gonzalez. It's anybody's guess whether this is San Francisco's new trend or just an aberration.

Rising fast

At this time last year, first baseman-outfielder **Chris Shaw** was making a home with the Giants' Double-A Richmond affiliate. By season's end, he had progressed to Triple-A Sacramento. Shaw, considered the organization's leading power-hitting prospect, likely will be in San Francisco by the end of the season.

Cinderella story

Shortstop **Kelby Tomlinson** was an afterthought when the Giants selected him in the 12th round of the 2011 Draft. They took two other shortstops ahead of him, including first-round choice **Joe Panik**. But as observers now know, Tomlinson has derived as much as possible from his ability and has established himself as a valuable reserve.

In the show

The Giants' current contingent, including top performers currently on the disabled list, features 11 players either originally signed or drafted by the organization.

Pitchers on that list include **Ty Blach** (fifth round, 2012), **Madison Bumgarner** (first round, 2007), **Chris Stratton** (first round, 2012) and **Andrew Suarez** (second round, 2016).

Position players in this category include catcher **Buster Posey** (first round, 2008), first baseman **Brandon Belt** (fifth round, 2009), shortstop **Brandon Crawford** (fourth round, 2008) and outfielder **Mac Williamson** (third round, 2012).

The Giants also signed infielder **Miguel Gomez** as a non-drafted free agent in 2011, right-hander **Reyes Moronta** as a Minor League free agent in 2010 and infielder **Pablo Sandoval** as

an international free agent in 2008.

MLB.com

5-run 6th hands Rodriguez win in 1st MLB start

Michael Wagaman

SAN FRANCISCO -- With three consecutive solid outings by their starting pitchers, including **Dereck Rodriguez**'s six-inning gem in Sunday's 6-1 win over the Phillies, things are finally starting to look up for the Giants.

Manager Bruce Bochy's ballclub is also set to welcome back ace **Madison Bumgarner** next week and **two other starters** could be back in the rotation soon as well.

View Full Game Coverage

Joe Panik and **Buster Posey** hit back-to-back RBI singles in the sixth and **Andrew**

McCutchen followed with a three-run home run, lifting the Giants past the Phillies at AT&T Park to complete a three-game sweep.

"When you get your guys to get you somewhat deep in the game -- sixth, seventh inning -- it allows you to use the guys that you want to use and keeps the bullpen fresher," Bochy said. "It couldn't have worked out better. It's nice to have these starters taking us where they're getting us right now."

Rodriguez gave up one run over six innings to win his first Major League start. Rodriguez, son of Hall of Famer Ivan Rodriguez, gave up a solo home run to Philadelphia starter **Jake Arrieta**, but struck out six, walked two and deftly pitched through traffic most of the afternoon.

That came on the heels of similar starts by **Chris Stratton** on Friday and **Andrew Suarez** on Saturday.

"It's awesome," Rodriguez said of his first career win. "It's a great feeling. We battled out there and that sixth inning the guys really pulled together and put up a five-spot against Arrieta. He's been dealing the past month, so that was huge. It was just a fun day out there."

The Giants outscored the Phillies 11-1 in the series, including shutouts in the first two games.

"They say pitching and defense wins championships for a reason," shortstop **Brandon Crawford** said. "If [our starters] go out there and throw like they did this series, in a way, it kind

of takes the pressure off of us. We only need to score a few runs. It's not like we have to go out there and put up eight, nine runs every game. They're holding it down. No runs the first couple games and then one today."

San Francisco couldn't get much going early against Arrieta. The Giants managed only two singles through the first five innings, while Philadelphia turned three double plays.

It all changed in the sixth.

After Arrieta struck out **Mac Williamson** to open the inning, **Gorkys Hernandez** and pinch-hitter **Alen Hanson** both singled. Panik, who returned to the lineup Friday after missing a month due to a left thumb injury, singled in Hernandez with the tying run.

Posey drove in Hanson with the go-ahead run, before McCutchen's towering drive landed in the stands in right field, just inside the foul pole. The homer went 336 feet with an exit velocity of 94.9 mph and a launch angle of 34 degrees, according to **Statcast™**. It was McCutchen's fourth home run this season. "Just really good at-bats, guys battling up there," Bochy said. "We had our hands full because [Arrieta] was throwing well."

Posey homered in the eighth off **Hector Neris**. Posey's home run had an exit velocity of 100.4 mph with an angle of 24 degrees and went 365 feet.

Rodriguez and three relievers did the rest.

Mark Melancon made **his 2018 debut** and struck out the side on 14 pitches in the seventh. **Will Smith** pitched the eighth and **Reyes Moronta** worked the ninth.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Rodriguez keeps calm: The Phillies had runners on first and second not long after Arrieta's home run and were threatening to break the game open with cleanup hitter **Nick Williams** up in the third. But Rodriguez got Williams to ground into a 4-6-3 double play to end the threat. "This kid's calm," Bochy said. "He's got a lot of confidence. He's really focused, too. For someone that's converted, he's got a nice feel for pitching."

SOUND SMART

This marked the first time in Major League Baseball history that a team held an opponent to one run in a three-game series, with the one run coming on a home run by the opposing team's pitcher.

HE SAID IT

"They had their way with us in Philly. We got beat up pretty good. You always want to get back and get even, and the guys did. They were determined to punch back, I guess you could say, and they did with a nice three-game sweep." -- *Bochy, whose Giants were swept in a four-game series by the Phillies in May*

UP NEXT

Left-hander **Derek Holland** (3-6, 4.94 ERA) goes for his second consecutive victory when the Giants open a three-game series against the Diamondbacks on Monday at 7:10 p.m. PT at AT&T Park. Holland faced the D-backs on April 9 and struck out a season-high eight batters. Arizona counters with right-hander **Zack Godley** (5-4, 4.38).

MLB.com

Melancon K's side in season debut Michael Wagaman

SAN FRANCISCO -- Giants reliever **Mark Melancon** made his long-awaited 2018 debut Sunday at AT&T Park and struck out the side against Philadelphia on 14 pitches.

The 33-year-old Melancon replaced starter **Dereck Rodriguez** and swiftly worked through the seventh to maintain San Francisco's four-run lead en route to their **6-1 win**.

View Full Game Coverage

"This is what he's going to be doing, the sixth or seventh inning, helping out," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "At that point, before he came in, it was a one-run ballgame. I thought he showed good command. Really had his pitches going. That's always good to see, too. Pretty nice debut on his comeback."

Sidelined since Spring Training with a right elbow flexor strain, Melancon spent the first two months on the disabled list before being activated after Friday night's game.

Melancon, the one-time closer who has 179 career saves, is having to adjust to the role of setup man in the Giants bullpen. **Hunter Strickland** replaced Melancon as San Francisco's closer and has 12 saves this season.

MLB.com

**Positives steps forward for Cueto, Samardzija
Michael Wagaman**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Giants right-hander **Johnny Cueto** played catch from 120 feet. **Jeff Samardzija** will begin throwing Monday. Both are encouraging signs for manager Bruce Bochy's injury-ravaged pitching staff.

Cueto, San Francisco's No. 2 starter behind ace **Madison Bumgarner**, has been out since April 29 with inflammation in his right elbow. There was initial concern that the injury could be worse, and Cueto met with elbow specialist Dr. James Andrews, who diagnosed an elbow sprain and recommended rest, rather than surgery.

View Full Game Coverage

Since then, Cueto has made slow, but steady progress. He extended his throwing to 120 feet before Sunday's series finale against the Philadelphia Phillies and Cueto could pitch a bullpen session next week in Washington when the Giants play a three-game series against the Nationals.

Bochy said Cueto remains on target for a return this month. He is eligible to come off the disabled list June 30.

"Johnny's anxious to get going," Bochy said. "In fact, it wasn't in the plan today, but he had the catcher get up and he just got on the mound and played a little catch. It was not a bullpen. It just an example of how anxious he is to get going."

Samardzija might not be far behind, although the Giants might be tempted to take a more cautious approach. Samardzija is on the disabled list for a second time after aggravating a pectoral injury he suffered late in Spring Training.

Although Bochy didn't put a timetable on Samardzija's situation, he will begin playing catch on Monday. From there, if all goes well, Samardzija could begin throwing bullpen sessions possibly by the end of next week.

Injury update

- First baseman **Brandon Belt** was expected to attend Sunday's game and will be seen by team doctors. Belt, who underwent an appendectomy late Friday night, could miss up to three weeks while he recovers from surgery.

"He seems to be doing well post-surgery," Bochy said.

NBCbayareasports.com

What you need to know as Giants prepare to pick second in 2018 MLB Draft

Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO — The most important thing you need to know about what the Giants are thinking ahead of tonight's draft is this: Nobody ever knows what they're thinking.

Brian Sabean, Bobby Evans, John Barr and the rest guard their draft preferences more closely than anything else. For better or worse, the Giants tend to surprise on draft night.

They have not, generally, had that much success with prospects in recent years. But sometimes they surprise the industry and it turns out they were right on the mark. Seven years ago, with the 29th overall pick, they selected a shortstop out of St. John's who wasn't considered even a second-rounder by most draft experts. One prominent draft writer tweeted that the kid would be a utility infielder.

It turns out Joe Panik is pretty good.

Last year, the Giants surprised everyone by taking Heliot Ramos in the middle of the first round, and they feel they got a steal there, too. There's a decent chance tonight will be unpredictable. But there's a lot we do know. Here's a rundown...

When is the draft? MLB Network and **MLB.com** will start pre-draft coverage at 3 p.m. and the actual draft will begin at 4 p.m. Round 1 and Competitive Balance Round A (this is a real thing) will air live and coverage will move online for Round 2. The second day of the draft (Tuesday) will feature Round 3-10. The next day will be rapid-fire from Round 11-40. There are four minutes between picks in Round 1, so the Giants should have their top selection well before manager Bruce Bochy does his daily media session at 4:30.

Why are the Giants picking second? Because 2017 was a slow, lifeless march to 98 losses, during which the lineup failed to hit for power, the bullpen piled up blown saves, the ace crashed on an off day, the other ace had the worst year of his career, and every call-up got hurt. Oh, and on the final day, Pablo Sandoval hit a walk-off to avoid a 99th loss. So the Detroit Tigers will pick first. The Phillies, White Sox and Reds round out the top five. The Giants will make their second round selection at No. 45 after the compensatory rounds.

Have the Giants picked this high before? Yes, and it worked out! This is their highest pick since

1985, when they chose Will Clark second overall. Clark hit .299 in eight years with the Giants, with 176 homers and 709 RBI, and changed the outlook of the franchise. The last time they picked in the top five the Giants took Buster Posey out of Florida State.

What's the success rate for No. 2 picks? Justin Verlander, Alex Gordon, Mike Moustakas, Kris Bryant and Alex Bregman are among the players selected second overall in the past two decades. So are Dustin Ackley, Danny Hultzen and Greg Reynolds. It's a bit of a crapshoot. But if you choose the right guy, **there's a very good chance he will move up through the minors quickly.**

Who do the experts think the Giants will take? The consensus is that the Giants are leaning toward Joey Bart, a right-handed catcher from Georgia Tech. He hit .359 this season with a .471 on-base percentage and 16 homers in 57 starts.

But will they take him? As mentioned above, it's foolish to connect the Giants to a specific player. Did you see a Giants scout right behind the plate at a college game? Well, Dick Tidrow was hiding behind a tree at a high school game somewhere else and that's what really matters.

A few draft experts have written that Bart can be the succession plan to Buster Posey, but that's flawed thinking. Posey is signed through 2021 and the Giants are in no rush to move him to first, in part because he still is elite behind the plate and in part because the team's actual best hitter plays first base. Also, remember this: The top of the draft is generally about "best player available," but the men making this selection might not have much time to turn this mess around, and it seems unlikely that they would select someone who would be blocked at the big league level for years.

So, what's the prediction? The front office has gone dark in recent weeks, but some sources believe the Giants are leaning toward a college pitcher. Casey Mize is expected to go first overall, so the pick here is Brady Singer, a right-hander from Florida.

Will Ryan Vogelsong be involved? Of course. Vogey and Mike Murphy, the legend, will represent the Giants at the MLB Network Studio in New Jersey. Vogelsong, selected in the fifth round of the 1998 draft, has been doing some work for the front office recently.

NBCbayareasports.com

**With Mark Melancon back, Giants show off newfound bullpen depth
Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO -- After the Giants took the lead in the bottom of the sixth inning Sunday, Bruce Bochy turned to three relievers.

The former All-Star who got the third-biggest contract ever handed out to a reliever.

The versatile lefty who cost the Giants a top prospect at the deadline two years ago.

The young right-hander with a 98 mph fastball and 1.38 ERA.

This sounds like the norm, but for the Giants, it was technically -- with apologies to these three - the B Team. Hunter Strickland, the closer, and Tony Watson, the setup man, were in need of a day off. Bochy also did not use Sam Dyson, who has pitched a lot recently and worked his way back into some eighth innings. But he still had plenty in reserve.

Mark Melancon made his season debut and struck out the side. Will Smith pitched the eighth and worked around some traffic for a scoreless frame. Reyes Moronta needed just seven pitches to put the finishing touches on a 6-1 win over the Phillies.

Yes, that was technically the second level of depth for the bullpen. But if Melancon is your sixth-inning guy, Smith is your second lefty, and Moronta is your fourth right-handed reliever on the depth chart ... well, you might have a pretty damn good bullpen.

"We've talked about how nice a job the back end of the bullpen has done," catcher Buster Posey said. "You have Smith and Melancon back, it could be pretty formidable now."

After two years of Death By Bullpen, the Giants are back to their old ways. Those six form a very good group, one that should be finalized on Tuesday when Madison Bumgarner returns. The Giants will likely have to pick two of Ty Blach, Cory Gearrin and Pierce Johnson, and again, that shows their newfound depth. Blach started on opening day and now could be an overqualified long reliever. Gearrin is at his best when he's a right-handed specialist and Bochy can now use him that way. Johnson has struggled recently, but he's more talented than many of the pitchers who have sat in the bullpen the last couple of years.

The key going forward could be Melancon. Bochy spoke to him and told him he would not return as the closer, or even the next man up. He'll pitch in the sixth and seventh for now. His return from a pronator injection was as good as you could hope. Melancon was only 89-91 mph with his cutter but his curve was a wipeout pitch. He threw it three times and finished off three strikeouts.

"It's been a long time," he said. "It was a really good feeling to be back and be able to help these guys out. It was fun. It was a lot of fun."

--- Posey felt Hector Neris, the Philadelphia closer, hit him on purpose last year. He said so publicly, and a day later, Bochy called Neris an idiot. It's rare the Giants go that far.

Neris pitched the eighth on Sunday and Posey was due up third. The first two fastballs were far inside. Posey appeared to stare into the visiting dugout after the second one. Then he hit a solo homer to left.

Posey took the high road, both around the bases and later. He didn't stare back at the mound at all.

"Just trying to go about the at-bat and fortunately it turned in my favor," he said when asked about it in the clubhouse.

--- Andrew McCutchen had the big blow Sunday, a three-run homer in the sixth. It was his first in 159 plate appearances, the longest homer-less streak of his career.

The Athletic

His mother's son: Dereck Rodríguez achieves his first major league victory as Giants sweep Phillies

Andrew Baggarly

Maribel Rivera's oldest child started growing out his hair last season, just to be different.

His jet black locks spill out from behind his baseball cap and flow freely every time he whips his body down the mound, framing a face with that familiar square jaw line.

Baseball has never belonged to Ivan Dereck Rodríguez in the sense it belongs to most who play. It is the hardest thing in this game, to make a name for yourself. When that name has been made already, and is etched in bronze in Cooperstown, it is harder still.

So there is a reason why the son, who answers to Dereck, did not follow his Hall of Fame father and settle into a squat. He became a professional ballplayer first as an outfielder, the better to let his spirit run free, and then as a pitcher with a career conversion in the Minnesota Twins' system in 2013.

Five years after that conversion, and five days after making his major-league debut with a relief appearance at Colorado, he received his first major-league start on a sun-drenched Sunday afternoon at AT&T Park. He held the Phillies to a run in six innings, walked off the mound trailing 1-0, tapped catcher Buster Posey on the hip with his glove and received a two-hands-on-shoulders affirmation in the dugout from manager Bruce Bochy.

And when the Giants stormed for five runs in the bottom of the sixth against former Cy Young winner Jake Arrieta, Rodríguez came away the most drenched. The Giants won 6-1 to complete a three-game sweep, and Rodríguez received the postgame clubhouse beer shower that is compulsory for any pitcher upon achieving his first major-league victory.

Rodríguez became the first Giants pitcher to win his initial big-league start since Joe Martinez in 2009.

The win belonged to him alone. The day, he shared.

“When I left the room this morning, they were sleeping,” Rodríguez said of his mother and his fiancée, Ashley. “But I know they’ll jump on me now. It means tons to have them here. My mom, there were so many times she canceled what she had planned to do and she took me to my showcases, getting on planes, going wherever. She knew it was very important to me and my development.

“I know she had a couple tears up there.”

He knows because he’d already seen the video highlights in the clubhouse, including shots of her in the stands. Minutes after the final out, Dereck texted his mom.

“You looked good on TV,” he told her.

There is no such thing as an unflattering camera angle when you are projecting pure joy.

“Oh, emotional, proud ...” she said. “It’s different than being at the ballpark watching my ex-husband. I’m seeing my son. It’s a dream come true. The sacrifices I did for Dereck, you know, it all paid off, from Little League to here. There are so many emotions seeing him and watching him. I’m just so proud.”

Maribel Rivera is no stranger to a meaningful major-league debut. She met her ex-husband when she was 15 years old, long before he broke in with the Texas Rangers, and there is a famous story about their wedding day in 1991. They were supposed to hold the ceremony in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in between games of a Texas League doubleheader against Shreveport. Their families flew in from Puerto Rico for the day. His teammates would hold bats aloft like gleaming swords for the couple to walk underneath. They would say their vows at home plate.

But between the dress rehearsal and the wedding, the Rangers decided it was time for their promising, 19-year-old catcher to join the major-league team in Chicago. So the meticulously planned baseball wedding became a hurried affair at the courthouse in Tulsa. Maribel left her wedding gown hanging in a closet and met the justice of the peace while wearing a blouse and shorts. Then it was off to Chicago. And because Maribel didn’t know how to get to the ballpark, she watched her husband’s debut on TV from her hotel room.

This time, the emotions were just as rushed and yet so different. There is duty, and there is devotion.

“It is Dereck’s day because he has worked so hard for this,” she said. “He’s trying to make a name for himself. His dad hasn’t been around much, so we want him to be either Dereck Rodríguez or D-Rod. Not just Pudge’s son. Pudge ain’t pitching out there. He’s not working hard out there. His time came. His dad had his chapter. It’s closed, and he’s in the Hall of Fame; that’s it. Now it’s Dereck’s time.

“And this, today, is an amazing chapter.”

The Giants swept the series while holding the Phillies to one run over three games, a feat that bordered on credulity with Madison Bumgarner, Johnny Cueto and Jeff Samardzija all residing on the disabled list. First, Chris Stratton and Andrew Suárez shut down a team that had bossed the Giants in a four-game sweep in Philadelphia a month ago. Then Rodríguez, whom the Giants signed as a minor-league free agent over the winter, carried over the momentum.

As it turns out, there is a connection between the Giants' two rookie pitchers who completed this weekend sweep. Suárez and Rodríguez were well acquainted while growing up in the Miami area, competing against each other since Little League, and they even roomed together while playing on the same side — Texas Scout Team Yankees — for a showcase up the coast in Jupiter.

"I always knew who he was," Suárez said.

And, of course, he knew who his father was.

Dereck was born in Texas but grew up in a lavishly decorated Miami Beach mansion. He couldn't bound into his backyard to play without seeing the one-ton bronze statue of his father in full catching gear. During some summers, he saw the statue more often than he saw the man.

Much of that was unavoidable because of baseball's demanding travel and unrelenting schedule. But there were many other times when Dereck would accompany his father into major-league clubhouses.

He and his two sisters would play keep-away with their father — they called it "Monkey in the Middle" — and a story published in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in 2000 described Dereck bouncing a basketball in the clubhouse or taking advantage of the bottomless bubblegum supply or testing his limits.

"I like being in the clubhouse," a 7-year-old Dereck was quoted as saying, "because I get to take stuff out of guys' lockers and hide it."

Nearly two decades later, Dereck has his own major-league locker.

He is not the first son of a Hall of Famer to reach the major leagues. He is believed to be the 12th, in fact. Tony Gwynn Jr. carved out a nice career for himself, and remains involved with San Diego Padres broadcasts. Tim Lincecum Jr. played parts of three seasons with the Orioles. Eduardo Perez, whose father, Tony, was a Hall of Fame member of the Big Red Machine, enjoyed a 13-year career with six teams. There was George Sisler's son, Dick, and Yogi Berra's son, Dale, among others.

Last summer, Dereck started a game for the Double-A Chattanooga Lookouts and took leave from the team to travel to Cooperstown for his father's induction. He wore a white linen shirt, fanned himself while listening to the speeches under the late July sunshine, and three days later, he threw a pair of scoreless relief innings in Montgomery, Alabama.

Dereck is here in the big leagues now because he held fast to his path on the mound, worked to refine his four-pitch repertoire and averaged better than a strikeout per inning while posting a 3.40 ERA in nine starts for Triple-A Sacramento.

“They always used to tell me he was going to be a pitcher, and I didn’t believe it,” said Maribel, who will stop in Sacramento with Ashley to pack up Dereck’s apartment before returning home to Miami. “When he was pitching in high school, that always seemed more nerve racking to me. But hey, he made it as a pitcher.”

He only paid for one mistake in six innings – a fastball that Arrieta swatted into the left-field seats in the third inning. (The Phillies became the first team in major-league history to be held to one run in a three-game series, with a pitcher’s homer accounting for the lone run.)

“We were fortunate because of Dereck and the job he did,” Bochy said. “He mixed it up and hit his spots. This kid, he’s calm. He’s got a lot of confidence. He looks pretty focused for a kid that’s converted (to pitching). Just a good overall job. He even holds runners.”

Some attributes might be hereditary, then.

Dereck’s parents divorced in 2006 and his stepmother, Claudia, is from Colombia. That is where his father was when Dereck debuted at Coors Field last week. He expects to see his father next week when the Giants travel to Washington and Miami. It’s possible that Dereck’s start was a one-off, since Samardzija could be activated after missing one turn. After such a solid first start, though, it’s expected that Bochy and the Giants will want to see more.

The chance to witness his first major-league victory? That came but once.

“It’s awesome. It’s very special,” Dereck said. “First to be an outfielder, spending three years in rookie ball, it wasn’t ideal. But switching over (to pitch) and just taking it from there, it’s been all about confidence.

“Finally all that hard work paid off, and I’ll just work harder to stay here.”

USAtoday.com

A victory all his own: Giants' Dereck Rodriguez, son of Pudge, beats Phillies in first start Jorge Ortiz

SAN FRANCISCO — As the son of a longtime player, Dereck Rodriguez had the advantage of growing up around major league clubhouses and constantly being exposed to baseball at its highest level.

But Ivan Rodriguez wasn’t the one throwing fastballs past the Philadelphia Phillies on Sunday, or catching them, for that matter. The Hall of Famer isn’t even in the country, instead visiting his current wife’s native Colombia.

The elder Rodriguez did call with some words of encouragement before the game, and Dereck took it from there in his first big league start, holding the Phillies to one run on five hits over six innings to notch the victory as the San Francisco Giants completed a weekend sweep by winning 6-1.

Matched up against former Cy Young Award winner Jake Arrieta, Rodriguez displayed great composure along with a four-pitch assortment highlighted by a 95-mph fastball. Making his second major league appearance after debuting with a relief stint Tuesday, he became the first San Francisco pitcher to win his initial start since Joe Martinez in 2009.

“I feel good to be here for myself, with my name on the locker, not for what my dad did,” said Rodriguez, whose given name is Ivan Dereck. “He played a lot of years and I was with him in the clubhouse a lot of times, but I’m really happy to be playing on (my own merits).”

Rodriguez was drafted out of high school by the Minnesota Twins in 2011, taken in the sixth round as an outfielder. He didn’t advance past Rookie League in that role, and was converted to pitcher in 2014. After going 23-25 with a 3.56 ERA in 81 games (61 starts) over four seasons, never rising beyond Class AA, he became a free agent in November and signed with San Francisco.

With veteran starters Madison Bumgarner, Johnny Cueto and Jeff Samardzija on the disabled list, the Giants have had to dip into their farm system and were rewarded with outstanding performances over the weekend. After second-year starter Chris Stratton pitched six scoreless innings Friday, rookie lefty Andrew Suarez did him one better with seven innings of shutout ball Saturday.

Overall, Giants pitchers allowed the Phillies one run in 27 innings, that one coming on Arrieta’s homer off Rodriguez in the third, Philadelphia’s only extra-base hit of the game. Arrieta held that 1-0 lead until the sixth, when a five-run Giants outburst highlighted by Andrew McCutchen’s three-run homer paved the way for Rodriguez’s first career victory.

It also marked the first time in major league history a team held an opponent to one run in a three-game series with the one run coming on a home run from a pitcher, according to STATS, LLC.

Rodriguez had plenty to do with that.

“This kid’s calm, he’s got a lot of confidence,” Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. “He looks really focused too. For someone who’s converted, he’s got a nice feel out there for pitching. He’s not afraid to throw his secondary pitches at any time, commands the ball well, and he does the little things: fields his position, holds runners. He’s come pretty fast here on the pitching side considering he signed as a hitter.”

Rodriguez kept the struggling Phillies hitters off balance by mixing his pitches, getting his first two strikeouts on 95 mph heaters and the next two on curveballs in the mid-70s.

“I always had a good arm as an outfielder and threw to the bases accurately,” said Rodriguez. “They switched me to pitching I feel comfortable on the mound.”

Just as comfortable as he is making a name for himself, not living off his father’s.

USAtoday.com

Yankees threaten to boycott ESPN as team, MLB, union negotiate schedule solution

Bob Nightengale

Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association are in negotiations with ESPN to reschedule a New York Yankees game that would require them to start three games within 24 hours in two different cities, officials informed USA TODAY Sports.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity since talks are ongoing.

The Yankees are so furious that ESPN scheduled a July 8 Sunday Night Baseball game in Toronto, which precedes a doubleheader the next day in Baltimore, that they have threatened to boycott ESPN reporters the rest of the season, according to a person familiar with their protest.

The Yankees reached out to the Commissioner’s office after learning of ESPN’s plans while the players requested assistance last week from the union to intervene on their behalf.

The sides are cautiously optimistic that a resolution can be reached, with the Yankees saying it would be a health, safety and integrity issue.

The Yankees, who agreed Thursday to make up a rainout game against the Orioles on July 9 by playing a doubleheader beginning at 4 p.m., said they never would have

chosen the option if they had known ESPN was switching their July 8 game from 1 p.m. in Toronto to 8 p.m.

The Yankees, in first place in the AL East, would likely not arrive to their Baltimore hotel until about 5 a.m., and then have to play a doubleheader at Camden Yards that has now been switched to 5 p.m. ET.

If the July 8 game is not moved back to its original time, the Yankees say they would no longer cooperate with ESPN, which certainly would be uncomfortable for manager Aaron Boone, who was the Sunday Night Baseball analyst before accepting the Yankees' managerial job.

“Anytime you have the potential of a night game traveling into a doubleheader,” Boone told reporters, “the first thing I worry about is player safety and the product on the field. Hopefully those things go into the decision-making process. ...

“Hopefully there’s something that can be done that maybe changes that situation.”

The Yankees have already had seven games rained out this season, and have three doubleheaders scheduled in the next month.

“Hopefully, Major League Baseball and everybody involved,” Boone said, “is looking at this smartly.”