

J-Ram ties JD with 33rd HR, lifts Tribe to win

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- Jose Ramirez spent the first five pitches of his first-inning at-bat on Sunday afternoon watching what Angels starter Deck McGuire had to offer. On the sixth, the Indians slugger finally swung, and he did damage in the process.

Ramirez crushed a full-count pitch from McGuire out to right field for his 33rd home run of the season, giving the Indians a lead that they would not relinquish in a 4-3 win at Progressive Field. The blast pulled Ramirez even with Boston's J.D. Martinez for the Major League lead in homers and gave him an MLB-leading 12 big flies in the first inning this year.

"He's a special hitter," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Some guys kind of warm into the game. He's dangerous right from the very first pitch."

The three-run shot by Ramirez gave rookie starter Shane Bieber the support he needed in helping guide the American League Central-leading Indians (61-49) to the win column. Cleveland took two out of three in the series against Los Angeles, improving to 34-22 at home in the process.

Ramirez's 12 first-inning home runs are the most in one campaign in Indians history, surpassing the 11 first-inning blasts by Al Rosen in 1953. On the season, Ramirez now has an MLB-high 30 RBIs and a .684 slugging percentage in the first frame for the Indians, whose 81 first-inning runs are the most in the American League.

McGuire -- promoted from Triple-A Salt Lake before Sunday's game as a replacement starter for Tyler Skaggs -- worked to an 0-2 count on Ramirez with a curveball and slider. The Tribe's All-Star third baseman then spit on a pair of curveballs in the dirt and took an inside fastball. McGuire's 3-2 offering was a four-seamer that stayed over the heart of the plate, where it found Ramirez's barrel.

Prior to Ramirez's blast, which had a 103.8-mph exit velocity and traveled a projected 423 feet per Statcast™, McGuire allowed a leadoff single to Francisco Lindor and walked Michael Brantley. Following Ramirez's homer, McGuire hit two batters, allowed a single and recorded one out before being pulled from the game by Angels manager Mike Scioscia.

Cleveland managed one more offensive breakthrough -- Jason Kipnis delivered an RBI double in the sixth -- and Bieber and the bullpen took care of the rest.

"It helps a ton," Bieber said of the early runs. "They've been doing that a lot for me."

Over 5 2/3 innings, Bieber limited the Angels to two runs on seven hits, finishing with seven strikeouts and one walk in the victory. Both runs came in the fifth inning, when Kole Calhoun connected for an RBI triple off the wall in left-center field and came around to score on a single by Shohei Ohtani.

The Cleveland relief corps navigated around some traffic across the seventh and eighth innings, but it halted the Halos at each turn. In the ninth, newly acquired closer Brad Hand allowed one run, but held on to pick up his 27th save (third with the Indians).

"The fact that we got that many guys and put that much pressure on them was good," Scioscia said. "We had some opportunities to get back early in the game and couldn't do it."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Melk man delivers: Tribe right fielder Melky Cabrera had the Cleveland crowd on its feet in the third inning, when he made a pair of impressive catches. First, Cabrera made a lunging grab at his shoetops to rob Jefry Marte of a would-be single. Then, the right fielder used a sliding catch to take a hit away from Calhoun. After that second defensive gem, his home audience offered a rousing standing ovation.

Cabrera wasn't done, either. In the fourth, he chased down a deep drive by Ohtani for a leaping catch on the warning track in right-center.

"He was all over the place," Francona said with a chuckle. "That was kind of cool to hear the way they responded to it, too. He did a good job."

Cabrera said his teammates were joking around with him about how he landed on the catches in the third inning.

"Yeah, they were messing around with me a little bit, because of the way that I fell," Cabrera said via team translator Will Clements. "But they were all congratulating me. We've got a good team makeup in that sense, and we were happy to get the win."

Allen's escape: Cleveland's bullpen slipped into a bases-loaded jam in the seventh, which began with sidearm Adam Cimber hitting Jose Briceno with a pitch. Lefty Andrew Miller took over and recorded an out, but then he allowed a single and hit a batter of his own (Ohtani) to load them up. At that juncture, Francona turned to Cody Allen, who induced an infield flyout (Andreton Simmons) and generated a groundout (David Fletcher) to preserve the Tribe's 4-2 lead.

"It wasn't exactly like we drew it up," Allen said. "But I felt like the way their lineup shook out and the guys we have down there, it fit perfectly to kind of go in that order. I was able to come in, make a couple pitches and get out of that inning and then get through the eighth, set it up perfectly for Brad right there."

SOUND SMART

Bieber improved to 6-2 with the win over the Angels, making him the sixth pitcher in Indians history with at least six victories in his first 10 career appearances. The others on that list include Luis Tiant (seven), Herb Score (six), CC Sabathia (six), Vean Gregg (six) and Gene Bearden (six).

Ramirez's 65 extra-base hits are the most through 110 games for a Cleveland batter since 1995 (Albert Belle, 72). Ramirez's 33 homers are the most through 110 games for a Tribe batter since 2006 (Travis Hafner, 33).

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

With runners on the corners and one out in the second, Edwin Encarnacion drove a pitch from reliever Taylor Cole on a sharp line to center fielder Eric Young Jr. Lindor tagged up at third and tried to score on the play, but Ramirez strayed too far from first. After making the catch, Young fired the ball to first base to double up Ramirez.

Initially, it was ruled that Lindor crossed the plate before the third out was recorded. The Angels challenged that call, which was overturned after a replay review, removing a run from the board for Cleveland.

UP NEXT

Right-hander Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34 ERA) is scheduled to start on Monday, when the Indians host the Twins in the opener of a four-game set at 7:10 p.m. ET at Progressive Field. Bauer has spun a 2.02 ERA in his past 15 turns for the Tribe. Minnesota will counter with righty Kyle Gibson (5-8, 3.47 ERA).

Batting No. 9 a 'very important' job for Martin

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- After spending most of this season as a leadoff hitter for the Tigers, newly acquired center fielder Leonys Martin is being asked to bat out of the No. 9 hole for the Indians. When manager Terry Francona met with Martin upon his arrival, he explained that this was not a demotion, but an opportunity.

In Cleveland's lineup, the hitter in the ninth spot in the lineup can serve as a tablesetter for one of the best one-through-three combinations in the Majors right now. If Martin can get on base, collect some steals or connect on some extra-base hits, that creates more run-scoring chances for Francisco Lindor, Michael Brantley and Jose Ramirez.

"He certainly seems like he's willing to handle that," Francona said of Martin's move to the bottom of the lineup. "And it is important. I don't think he is a nine hitter. But for right now, that's where he's hitting. To be able to turn the lineup over to Frankie and Brant, having a guy that basically is another leadoff hitter, that's going to make our team a lot better."

Entering Sunday, the Indians had produced a .240/.282/.361 slash line out of the No. 9 spot this year. Cleveland's nine-hole hitters had collectively posted a 71 wRC+ (29 percent below the MLB average) with a 4.3-percent walk rate and a 26-percent strikeout rate. For comparison, Martin entered Sunday's game with a 105 wRC+ overall, along with an 8.7-percent walk rate and a 22-percent strikeout rate. Against right-handed pitching, which the lefty-swinging outfielder will face most often, he had a 121 wRC+, a 9.8-percent walk rate and a 21.1-percent strikeout rate.

Given the players at the top of the Tribe's order, Martin had no issues adjusting to batting out of the last lineup spot.

"It's very important," said Martin, who belted a home run on Friday and Saturday against the Angels and went 0-for-3 in Sunday's 4-3 win. "The best hitters on the team are right behind me, so that's very important, as much as I can get on base."

Lindor pointed out that, while Martin was caught stealing in Friday's loss, the center fielder is willing to be aggressive on the bases.

"He's ready to go," Lindor said. "As soon as he gets on base, he's ready to go. He wants to score. And he takes hard swings when he's at the plate."

Worth noting

- Indians catcher Yan Gomes was out of the lineup on Sunday for the second game in a row due to right hamstring tendinitis. Francona noted that Gomes was on the mend, but that he would likely remain out of the starting lineup until Tuesday at the earliest.

Said Francona: "He feels pretty confident that he's going to be OK."

- Right-hander Josh Tomlin (10-day disabled list, right hamstring) is scheduled to make his next Minor League rehab appearance on Wednesday with Double-A Akron. Francona noted that Tomlin is slated for three innings in the outing.

Quotable

"Yeah, it is really amazing. From my own personal experience, I worry about shelf life. Not worried because you're losing your job -- I don't think I've ever worried about that. I worry, because you want your message to be [fresh]. If your message stops getting listened to, that's not good. And you can't change who you are. So that's something that I think about a lot." -- Francona, on Mike Scioscia managing the Angels for 19 years

Indians 4, Angels 3: Jose Ramirez blasts 33rd home run, Indians bullpen locks down win over Angels

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: Jose Ramirez continued to feast on pitchers in the first inning, Cody Allen escaped a seventh-inning jam and the Indians topped the Los Angeles Angels 4-3 Sunday afternoon at Progressive Field.

On a hot and humid day, Angels starter Deck McGuire didn't have to stay out in the sun very long. The Indians pounced on McGuire in the first inning, forcing the Angels bullpen to become active only a few batters into the game.

Francisco Lindor led off with a single and Michael Brantley drew a walk. On a full-count pitch, Jose Ramirez got a fastball right down the middle of the plate, and he crushed it over the wall in right field for a three-run home run that traveled an estimated 423 feet.

It was Ramirez's 33rd home run of the season, which tied him with Boston Red Sox outfielder J.D. Martinez for the major-league lead. It was also Ramirez's 12th home run in the first inning this season, which leads the majors and set a franchise record, breaking Al Rosen's mark of 11 first-inning homers in his MVP season of 1953.

"I just think he's a special hitter," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Some guys kind of warm into the game. He's dangerous right from the very first pitch."

Indians starter Shane Bieber cruised for much of the day against a depleted Angels lineup that was without Mike Trout and Justin Upton. Bieber allowed two runs on seven hits and a walk to go with seven strikeouts in 5 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings.

Bieber was aided by a couple of nice defensive plays by right fielder Melky Cabrera, who certainly isn't known for his defense. In the third, Jefry Marte blooped a ball into shallow right field that Cabrera hauled in with a shoestring catch, taking away a hit. Two batters later, Kole Calhoun lined a ball into right field that Cabrera again caught low to the ground before tumbling onto his side.

Those two plays didn't require Cabrera to cover as much ground as several of the Indians' other highlight-reel grabs, but the home crowd gave him a standing ovation for his help in keeping the Angels scoreless.

And Cabrera wasn't done. Shohei Ohtani led off the fourth with a towering fly ball that Cabrera caught leaping at the wall, again aiding Bieber, who could only chuckle as he walked back to the mound.

"Yeah, they were messing around with me a little bit because of the way that I fell, but they were all congratulating me," Cabrera said of the ribbing he received from teammates when the inning was over. "We've got a good team makeup in that sense and we were happy to get the win."

The Indians' new-look bullpen went to work to preserve the lead. Adam Cimber relieved Bieber in the sixth and ended that inning before hitting Jose Briceno to open the seventh. Manager Terry Francona turned to Andrew Miller, who recorded an out, allowed a single to Eric Young Jr. and then hit Ohtani to load the bases with one out.

Cody Allen entered with two right-handers due up. He induced a weak pop-up by Andrelton Simmons on his first pitch and then ended the threat by getting David Fletcher to ground out to third base.

Allen then pitched a scoreless eighth before Brad Hand entered for the ninth. Kole Calhoun singled to open the inning, advanced to third on a groundout and a wild pitch and, with two outs, scored on an infield single by Simmons to cut the Indians' lead to 4-3.

Hand then struck out Fletcher to end the game for his 27th save of the season and third since joining the Indians.

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 08.06.2018

notebook: Corey Kluber getting back on track to Cy Young-level self; Leonys Martin adding another gear to No. 9 spot in lineup

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: There was a time in the not-so-distant past that Corey Kluber clearly wasn't himself.

His mechanics were off. He was being roughed up, allowing six earned runs twice in a four-start stretch. He eventually needed a gel injection in his knee that forced him to miss the All-Star Game. The Indians' ace instead needed to use the break for some maintenance. He looked, well, human.

It was all pretty short lived, if recent performances are any indication. Kluber delivered one of the best outings of his already decorated career on Saturday night to the tune of three hits allowed and seven strikeouts in a shutout. In his previous outing, he allowed only one run in 7 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings against the Detroit Tigers.

At the very least, Kluber is well on his way to correcting his course. Call it, perhaps, self analysis and a downloaded software update.

Kluber said after the game he feels closer to where he wants to be. The main issue is repeating his delivery, which was a challenge while battling the knee issue.

"The sense of confidence probably comes from being able to repeat your delivery, make adjustments and reel things back in when they do get a little bit out of whack," Kluber said. "Results aside, that's where I want to feel like I can repeat my delivery. The rest of the stuff, release point and all that kind of falls in place and allows you to execute pitches if you're able to repeat all that stuff beforehand."

Teams are often aggressive with Kluber, not wanting to get deeper into counts, when his breaking ball becomes even more dangerous. On Saturday night, Kluber recorded his second career "Maddux," in reference to Greg Maddux, as he notched a shutout while throwing fewer than 100 pitches. He needed only 98 pitches to put away the Los Angeles Angels. In 2014, he recorded an 85-pitch "Maddux" against the Seattle Mariners. For an opposing lineup, Kluber lasting deeper into games is a bad scenario. But in the moment, it's better than falling behind 0-2 and letting him pick hitters apart.

And as much as Kluber's high strikeout totals look great, Indians manager Terry Francona would prefer to see his ace still on the mound in the ninth with a chance to close it out himself.

"I love the five-pitch innings," Francona said. "To me, good pitching is getting early contact but keeping them off the barrel. And that's exactly what he was doing. My guess is if he set out to get 10 strikeouts, he would, [but he] might be at 120 pitches in seven. I'd rather him be out there in the ninth. I think he's able to make adjustments as needed and it's not just stuff, he's smart."

Turn it over

The new guy seems comfortable in this lineup. Leonys Martin belted two home runs in his first two games in Cleveland as member of the Indians, including the go-ahead shot in the sixth Saturday night that broke up a no-hit-bid.

Martin was brought in — at the cost of prospect Willi Castro — to stabilize center field. He's also stabilizing the No. 9 spot in the Indians' lineup as one who can serve as a de-facto leadoff man, with some power and the ability to steal some bases. Batting in front of Francisco Lindor, Michael Brantley and Jose Ramirez, Martin can give the Indians another gear later in games as a spark ahead of the three All-Stars.

"It makes a difference," Francona said. "It gives us — it kind of thickens out the lineup a little bit and he can run, so if he hits ninth, and I don't think he's a 9-hole hitter, it's where he's sitting at the moment. But it's a good way to turn the lineup over to Frankie."

Martin has hit in the leadoff spot before, which is essentially what his spot in the order becomes as the lineup turns over to the top.

"It doesn't matter where you hit, man," Martin said. "You hit ninth in the first inning, but as long as the ballgame keeps going, you can be a lead-off guy two or three times. I just keep doing my game, try to get on base and create rallies."

Next step

Josh Tomlin's next rehab appearance will be Wednesday with the RubberDucks, according to Francona. The likely plan is for Tomlin to be extended to three innings pitched after he threw two innings in his first rehab start Friday night.

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 08.06.2018

Indians 3, Angels 0: 14 Walk-Off Thoughts on Corey Kluber's Maddux and Leonys Martin creating his own warm welcome to Cleveland (and no longer having to hate Francisco Lindor)

By Ryan Lewis

Here are 14 Walk-Off Thoughts after the Indians' 3-0 win against the Los Angeles Angels on Saturday night.

1. There was a time in the not-so-distant past that Corey Kluber clearly wasn't himself. His mechanics were off. He was being roughed up and allowed six earned runs twice in a four-start stretch. He eventually needed a knee injection that forced him to miss the All-Star Game, as the Indians' ace instead needed to use the break for some maintenance. He looked, well, human.
2. It was all pretty short lived. Kluber delivered one of the best outings of his already decorated career on Saturday night to the tune of three hits allowed and seven strikeouts in a shutout. In his previous outing, he allowed only one run in 7 1/3 innings against the Tigers. At the very least, Kluber is well on his way to correcting his course. Call it, perhaps, self analysis and a downloaded software update.
3. Kluber said after the game he feels closer to where he wants to be. The main issue is repeating his delivery, something that was a challenge while battling the knee issue.
4. "The sense of confidence probably comes from being able to repeat your delivery, make adjustments and reel things back in when they do get a little bit out of whack," Kluber said. "Results aside, that's where I want to feel like I can repeat my delivery. The rest of the stuff, release point and all that kind of falls in place and allows you to execute pitches if you're able to repeat all that stuff beforehand."
5. Added Indians manager Terry Francona, when asked about Kluber's outing: "It's wonderful. I mean, you could tell they were trying to hit early in the count because of that. What, did he have a five-pitch inning? And when you look up and he's approaching 100 [pitches] in the ninth, that means a lot of things are going well. But he had one walk, they squared up a couple balls, fortunately that went right to Yonder, but it seemed like he was in command the entire night, and early we weren't doing anything offensively, so it wasn't like he had a cushion to pitch with."
6. Teams are often aggressive with Kluber, not wanting to get deeper into counts, when his breaking ball becomes even more dangerous. On Saturday night, Kluber recored his second career Maddux, in reference to Greg Maddux, as he notched a shutout while throwing fewer than 100 pitches. He needed only 98 to put away the Angels. In 2014, he recored an 85-pitch Maddux against against the Seattle Mariners. For an opposing lineup, Kluber lasting deeper into games is a bad scenario. But, in the moment, it's better than falling behind 0-2 and letting him pick hitters apart.
7. Said Kluber on countering that aggressiveness: "I wouldn't necessarily say I try to take advantage of it, so to speak. When you know a team's game plan is to be aggressive, if anything, you can maybe start off the count a little bit more on the corners as opposed to a third or something like that. Instead of trying so much to get ahead, you're more so trying to execute a pitch and if they are going to be aggressive, miss in the right spot. That's maybe the only difference in our approach."
8. Kluber was also able to limit Shohei Ohtani, who has destroyed Indians pitching this season. He's also hit a home run off of Kluber. He belted two off Mike Clevinger Friday night. On Saturday night, he was silent, going 0-for-4 against Kluber. Francona said before the game that they didn't need to change their plan of attack against Ohtani, it just needed to be better executed.
9. Said Kluber: "It wasn't a whole lot different than what we had been, or at least I tried to do the last time I pitched against him. Last time he hit the home run off me, I made a mistake up and out over the plate. I just didn't make that mistake tonight."
10. The new guy seems comfortable in this lineup. Leonys Martin has played two games in Cleveland, and he's belted two home runs, including the go-ahead shot in the sixth that broke up a no-hit-bid Saturday night. Martin was brought in—at the cost of prospect Willi Castro—to stabilize center field. He's also stabilizing the No. 9 spot in the Indians' lineup who can serve as a de facto leadoff man, one with some power and who can steal bases, in front of Francisco Lindor and Michael Brantley. Martin can give the Indians another gear later in games if he can be a spark ahead of the three All-Stars.
11. "It makes a difference," Francona said. "It gives us—it kind of thickens out the lineup a little bit and he can run, so if he hits ninth, and I don't think he's a 9-hole hitter, it's where he's sitting at the moment. but it's a good way to turn the lineup over to Frankie."
12. Said Martin on hitting ninth: "Yeah, when I was in Texas my first couple years in the big leagues. it doesn't matter where you hit, man. You hit ninth in the first inning, but as long as the ballgame keeps going, you can be a leadoff guy two or three times. I just keep doing my game, try to get on base and create rallies."
13. It's safe to say Martin liked the view from center field, being able to watch Kluber work—instead of worrying about trying to face him—and watching Lindor make a highlight-reel, bare-handed play in the mold of Omar Vizquel rather than seeing a hit of his own taken away.
14. Said Martin: "Yeah, man. I used to hate that guy. I used to hate him. He's pretty good. He's really good. He's one of the best in the game. He made that play look so easy."

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 08.06.2018

Newcomer Leonys Martin continues to help Cleveland Indians from bottom of the lineup

By Paul Hoynes,

CLEVELAND, Ohio - It's always nice for contenders to add a new guy at the trade deadline. It lets the players in the clubhouse know the front office not only believes in them, but is serious about what lies ahead.

It helps even more when the new guy comes in and pays immediate dividends. If he's a pitcher, he provides big outs in tight situations. If he's a hitter, he breaks a few seats behind the outfield fence.

In other words he contributes like Leonys Martin did Saturday night in the Indians' 3-0 victory over the Angels at Progressive Field. Martin not only ended a potential no-hitter by Felix Pena, but he provided Corey Kluber and the Indians with the only run they needed with a leadoff homer in the sixth inning.

The Indians sent minor league shortstop Willi Castro to the Tigers on Tuesday for Martin. He's appeared in three games, hitting home runs from the No. 9 spot on Friday and Saturday. The last time Martin hit ninth with any regularity was between 2011 and 2013 with Texas when he first came to the big leagues from Cuba.

Manager Terry Francona says Martin isn't a No. 9 hitter, but he likes hitting him there because he can get on base and run, which helps turn the lineup over so Francisco Lindor, Michael Brantley, Jose Ramirez and Edwin Encarnacion can get more chances to hit with runners on base.

"It doesn't matter where you hit, man," said Martin. "You hit ninth in the first inning, but as long as the ballgame keeps going, you can be a leadoff guy two or three times. I just keep doing my game, try to get on base and create rallies."

Martin, 30, knows who is hitting behind him.

"I try to get on base because the best hitters on the team are right behind me," he said. "So that's very important. . . as much as I can get on base."

Leonys Martin making good early impression with Indians

After Martin homered, Lindor, the leadoff hitter, doubled and scoring on Brantley's single for a 2-0 lead. Those were the first hits of the game for the Indians.

Martin's contribution has not been lost on Lindor.

"It's fun because I can hit third, Brantley can hit third, Josey does hit third, Martin can probably hit third and Encarnacion can hit third, too," said Lindor. "You look at our lineup and one through four and the last guy (Martin), we can all be the No.3 hitter. I'll take that any day of the week."

Martin has spent parts of the last seven years in the American League. Along the way he's watched Kluber and Lindor do their jobs, but always from the opposing dugout.

In the top of the sixth inning, Lindor charged a soft pop up over the mound by Justin Upton. The ball took an unexpected hop away from Lindor's glove hand at the last moment so he grabbed it with his barehand and threw Upton out at first.

Martin had a good view of the play from center field.

"I use to hate that guy," said Martin with a laugh. "I use to hate him. He's pretty good. He's really good. He's one of the best in the game. He made that play look so easy."

Said Lindor, "(If) I'm not getting any hits, I don't try to give any hits away. I'm doing whatever it takes to get all the hits that you'll take from me, I'll try to take them, too."

We ...

This ...

Guys ...

... Wow. pic.twitter.com/X0i1vawZ7u

-- Cleveland Indians (@Indians) August 5, 2018

Lindor felt his defensive play may have stirred some momentum not only with his teammates, but in the sellout crowd. After Kluber ended the sixth, Martin started the bottom of the inning with his homer.

"I think that changed the momentum," said Lindor. "Every time we have Kluber on the mound, we have the momentum. But it gets the fans going. I think that's when Martin came out and hit the home run right after that. You start looking at the scoreboard and like, 'All right, boys, we don't have any hits. We need to get on base and stop getting thrown out.'"

Martin had a good view of Kluber's three-hitter as well.

"He's been here for a long time, man," said Martin. "He's one of the best. He's difficult to hit. . .difficult to hit. Now I'm on his side."

Martin hit a 3-1 pitch off Pena for the homer. Three batters later Pena was out of the game after holding the Indians hitless for five innings.

"I'm really happy," said Martin. "I came here to help. And I want to do my best to help this team get where we want (to go). We've got a long way to go still."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.06.2018

Cleveland Indians, Minnesota Twins series preview, pitching matchups

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Here is the preview and pitching matchups for the Indians' series against the Twins.

Where/when: Progressive Field, Monday through Thursday.

TV/radio: SportsTime Ohio, WTAM/1100 and WMMS/FM 100.7 will carry the series.

Pitching matchups and starting times: RHP Kyle Gibson (5-8, 3.47) vs. RHP Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34) on Monday at 7:10 p.m.; RHP Adalberto Mejia (1-0, 2.60) vs. RHP Carlos Carrasco (13-5, 3.66) Tuesday at 7:10 p.m.; RHP Jake Odorizzi (4-7, 4.60) vs. RHP Mike Clevinger (7-7, 3.48) at 7:10 p.m. and RHP Jose Berrios (11-8, 3.51) vs. RHP Corey Kluber (14-6, 2.643) Thursday at 1:10 p.m.

Series: The Twins lead the Indians, 7-5, this year. The Indians lead, 1,144-1,004, overall.

Hot pitchers: Kluber has won his last two starts, allowing one run in 16 1/3 innings. Twins reliever Trevor Hildenberger has not allowed a run in 26 of his last 31 appearances, posting 14 holds in the process.

Hot hitters: Indians third baseman Jose Ramirez leads the big leagues with 12 homers and 30 RBI in the first inning this season. Minnesota CF Jake Cave is hitting .305 (25-for-82) with 15 RBI over his last 30 games.

Team updates: The Indians have won their last three series, going 6-3 against Detroit, the Twins and Angels. The Twins are coming off a three-game sweep of the Royals after losing two of three last week to the Indians at Target Field.

Disabled list: Twins - C Jason Castro (right knee), RHP Michael Pineda (right elbow) and RHP Aaron Siegers. Indians - CF Tyler Naquin (right hip), RHP Josh Tomlin (right hamstring), OF Lonnie Chisenhall (left calf), RHP Evan Marshall (right elbow), RHP Nick Goody (right elbow), RHP Danny Salazar (right shoulder) and RHP Cody Anderson (right elbow) are on the disabled list. C Yan Gomes (right hamstring) is day to day.

Next: The Indians open a six-game trip with a three-game series against the White Sox on Friday night at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.06.2018

Akron RubberDucks have little punch in loss to Altoona

By Cliff Pinckard,

ALTOONA, Pennsylvania -- Mark Mathias gave the RubberDucks their only run with a solo homer Sunday as Akron was held to five hits against Curve left-hander Cam Vieaux in a 4-1 loss.

Akron right-hander Triston McKenzie (6-3, 2.96 ERA) gave up just four hits in 5 1/3 innings, but two were costly.

In the second inning, Ke'Bryan Hayes gave Altoona a 2-0 lead with a two-run shot to left field. In the sixth inning, Bryan Reynolds tripled, then scored on an error by shortstop Sam Haggerty.

Akron was little threat for the rest of the game as Altoona relievers Sean Keselica and Matt Eckelman each pitched a scoreless, hitless inning to close out the Curve's win.

Mathias finished 2-for-3 with the homer.

Notes: Sunday's loss was the first for McKenzie since June 23. ... Despite losing two of three over the weekend, the RubberDucks (66-47) still lead the Curve by five games in the Western Division of the Eastern League with 27 games to play.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.06.2018

Jose Ramirez, Cleveland Indians jump all over Los Angeles Angels early in 4-3 victory

By Joe Noga,

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Jose Ramirez and the Indians' offense jumped all over Los Angeles Angels starter Deck McGuire in the first inning Sunday, and the Tribe's bullpen held on for a 4-3 win at Progressive Field.

Cleveland rocked McGuire (0-2, 7.11) for three runs from the first three batters, forcing the Angels rookie from the game after just 25 pitches. Francisco Lindor delivered a leadoff single and Michael Brantley walked before Ramirez slugged a 3-2 fastball 423 feet to the seats in right. It was his 33rd home run of the year.

Brad Hand pitched the ninth inning for his 27th save, allowing a run on two hits, retiring L.A.'s dangerous designated hitter, Shohei Ohtani, on a grounder before striking out David Fletcher to end the game.

Ramirez again is tied with Boston's J.D. Martinez for the major league lead in homers, and upped his team-leading RBI total to 82. His 12 first-inning home runs this season are an Indians franchise record, breaking a tie with Al Rosen (11 in 1953).

"Some guys kind of warm into the game," manager Terry Francona said. "He's dangerous right from the very first pitch."

Ramirez's 156 extra-base hits since the start of 2017 lead the majors. Lindor, who doubled in the second inning, has 145 extra-base hits to rank second in that span.

"That guy's a competitor," reliever Cody Allen said of Ramirez. "He wants to be great and he wants to win just as bad or worse than anybody."

The Indians loaded the bases after Ramirez's home run, but failed to add any more runs in the first, as Los Angeles reliever Taylor Cole struck out Melky Cabrera and retired Roberto Perez and Leonys Martin on grounders. Cole worked 3 2/3 shutout innings of relief, allowing a hit and striking out three. His effort kept the Angels in the game, and allowed manager Mike Scioscia's offense time to get on track.

"We did a good job early, then we left some runners on from there," Francona said. "We had a chance to spread it out early and we didn't. We had a couple other chances to tack on and we didn't. But we held on."

Allen worked 1 2/3 innings of scoreless relief, entering in the seventh with the bases loaded and one out. He retired Andrelton Simmons on a pop out and got Fletcher on a grounder to third. Allen then worked around a Kaleb Cowart single to get out of the eighth unscathed.

"That's really good to see," Francona said. "Get him in that mode where he just comes in and competes and we got five outs. And he didn't throw a ton of pitches. That was exciting to watch."

Indians starter Shane Bieber (6-2, 4.58) tossed 5 2/3 innings, allowing two earned runs on seven hits with a walk and seven strikeouts. He pitched out of a jam in the fourth after allowing back-to-back hits by Andrelton Simmons and Fletcher with one out. Bieber struck out Francisco Arcia and Cowart to end the frame.

Bieber said once he realized that he did not have a good feel for his breaking ball, he and catcher Roberto Perez decided to move his fastball around.

"Especially late in the counts, and try to make good pitches down in the zone and up in the zone when I needed to," Bieber said. "My slider was the worst it's been in a little while. So, I was depending on the breaking ball a little bit more and really needed to command the fastball better."

Bieber also got some help defensively from right fielder Cabrera, who made a pair of diving catches in the third inning and opened the fourth by snagging a blast off the bat of Ohtani before crashing up against the outfield wall. Indians fans in right field rose to their feet after each grab, giving Cabrera a standing ovation for his effort.

"He was all over the place," Francona said. "That was kind of cool to hear the way (the fans) responded to it, too. He did a good job."

Cabrera went 1-for-3 at the plate with a base hit in the sixth inning. Pinch-runner Brandon Guyer turned that hit into an insurance run by scoring from first base when Jason Kipnis doubled to the gap in left center off L.A.'s Cam Bedrosian.

Close call

The Indians thought they had added a run in the second inning when Lindor tagged and scored from third on a line drive to center field by Edwin Encarnacion. With Ramirez running from first base on the play, Encarnacion smoked a ball to center that Eric Young Jr. caught. Ramirez was not able to get back to first base in time to avoid the inning-ending double play, but home plate umpire Nic Lentz originally ruled that Lindor crossed the plate with Cleveland's fourth run before the out at first took place. Scioscia challenged the ruling, and replay showed that Ramirez was retired before Lindor scored, negating the run.

.@Angels challenge call that runner scores in the 2nd; call overturned, runner does not score.

Powered by @Mitel. pic.twitter.com/vIUYA9JTRz

-- MLB Replay (@MLBReplays) August 5, 2018

What it means

Cleveland evened the season series at 3-3 against Los Angeles and has won 14 of its last 17 games against the Angels. The Indians have won six consecutive series finales, including five straight at home. Tribe starting pitchers are 24-4 in series finales this year.

The pitches

McGuire threw 25 pitches, 13 (52 percent) for strikes. Bieber threw 94 pitches, 62 (66 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Indians and Angels drew a crowd of 28,993 to Progressive Field. First pitch was at 1:11 p.m. with a temperature of 84 degrees.

Next

The Indians welcome Minnesota for a four-game series at Progressive Field, as Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34 ERA) takes the mound against Twins starter Kyle Gibson (5-8, 3.47). Bauer is 1-1 with a 3.75 ERA in two starts against Minnesota this season.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.06.2018

Terry Francona marvels at Mike Scioscia's 19-year run and 5 things we learned Sunday about the Cleveland Indians

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- When reports surfaced late Saturday that Los Angeles manager Mike Scioscia might be parting ways with the Angels after 19 years at the end of this season, Cleveland Indians manager Terry Francona reached out to the longtime L.A. skipper.

"I just wanted to let him know that I was thinking about him," Francona said. "Because he's going to have to deal with that now."

On Sunday, Scioscia firmly denied the report, saying he still loves what he's doing.

"Nothing has changed since we talked in October," Scioscia said. "There's always chatter out there. That's it. Nothing's changed. The only word I have is poppycock. That's all it is."

Francona said from his own personal experience in Philadelphia and Boston, he worries about how players will react to Scioscia after the rumors became public.

"I worry about shelf life," Francona said. "Not worried because you're losing your job. I don't think I've ever worried about that. But if your message stops getting listened to, that's not good. And you can't change who you are. So, that's something that I think about a lot."

Francona praised Scioscia's ability to keep his message fresh for so long in the L.A. clubhouse, creating a winning culture that has included a World Series championship and six division titles.

#Angels manager Mike Scioscia expected to step down at the end of the season, sources tell The Athletic. Story: <https://t.co/OeF1zOZiAG> \$

-- Ken Rosenthal (@Ken_Rosenthal) August 5, 2018

The characteristic of a Scioscia-managed team that most stands out to Francona from his time managing in Boston and facing the Angels in the postseason from 2007-09 is aggressiveness on the bases.

"The ball better end up where it's supposed to," Francona said. "They're so aggressive on the bases. They had Vlad (Guerrero) hitting third and they were putting runners in motion and he's swinging at everything. They were a hard team to play."

Gomes getting treatment: Catcher Yan Gomes continues to receive treatment on his sore right hamstring after leaving Friday's game in the fourth inning. Francona said Gomes stayed in the trainers' room Saturday during the game and emerged around the sixth inning, and that he would probably receive the same treatment Sunday.

With Trevor Bauer starting Monday, Roberto Perez will likely get the start, but Francona left open the possibility that Gomes could return as early as Tuesday, avoiding a trip to the disabled list.

"I think he feels pretty confident that he's going to be OK," Francona said.

Spring training all over: Francona said he is approaching reliever Andrew Miller's return to the club like spring training for the ace lefty. Miller pitched one inning Friday allowing a walk and striking out one batter.

"Andrew is like at April 3 right now," he said. "He had his spring training, had his first outing, and the repetition is going to be the best thing for him. And there's no way to replace that."

Same room? Same room: Outfielder Tyler Naquin continues to recover from hip surgery to stabilize a stress reaction in his right hip area. Doctors inserted three screws in Naquin's femur on Thursday and he is expected to miss 6-10 weeks.

But it's where Naquin is recovering from the surgery that's most interesting. Francona said Naquin is in the same Cleveland Clinic room that the manager himself convalesced in during his 216 hip replacement surgery and his 2017 cardiac ablation procedure.

"When I texted with him he was still at the hospital because he was in the room I was," Francona said. "He was taking pictures. It's a nice room. I've been in that thing three times."

Next for Tomlin: Francona said starting pitcher Josh Tomlin, recovering from a hamstring injury, is scheduled to pitch three innings in Akron this week. "He threw a side session (Sunday) morning and then he'll pitch Wednesday"

Top man at the bottom: Center fielder Leonys Martin is hitting ninth right now in Francona's batting order, but the Tribe manager does not necessarily think of the ex-Tiger's leadoff man as a No. 9 hitter.

"He's hitting first on another team and now we're asking him to hit ninth and maybe sit against some left-handers," Francona said. "He certainly seems like he's willing to handle that. And it is important. I don't think he is a nine hitter. But, for right now, that's where he's hitting."

Martin entered Sunday's game batting .500 (4-for-8) with two homers, three RBI and three runs scored. He's provided some punch to the bottom of Cleveland's batting order and has helped turn things over to Francisco Lindor and Michael Brantley at the top of the order on a more consistent basis.

"Having a guy that basically is another leadoff hitter, that's going to make our team a lot better," Francona said.

Francona compared acquiring Martin to getting Brandon Guyer at the 2016 trade deadline.

"It's quietly really going to help us," he said. "Right now our roster seems to complement each other. You've got Raj with (Martin). With Melky playing, we're able to use Guyer right when we want to. It's a good fit right now."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.06.2018

Trades for Leonys Martin, Brad Hand paying off for Indians | Jeff Schudel

By Jeff Schudel, The News-Herald & The Morning Journal

Fans hoping for fireworks at the July 31 trade deadline must have been disappointed when all Indians president Chris Antonetti could come up with Leonys Martin from the Detroit Tigers.

Well, how do you like the trade now? The Tribe also got minor league pitcher Kyle Dowdy in the deal for Double-A shortstop Willi Castro.

The game against the Los Angeles Angels on Aug. 5 at Progressive Field was Martin's fourth with the Indians. It is a small sample size, to be sure, but so far Martin (pronounced marTEEN) has been exactly what the Indians need — a reliable glove in center field and a bat opposing pitchers must respect.

Martin had four hits in his first eight at-bats in his first three games with the Indians — two for home runs. His homer in the bottom of the sixth inning Aug. 4 broke up a scoreless game and sparked the Indians' 3-0 shutout of the Angels.

Manager Terry Francona's biggest challenge was figuring out where to insert Martin in the batting order. Francona wasn't about to mess with Francisco Lindor and Michael Brantley hitting 1-2 and it made no sense to insert Martin into the meat of the order where Jose Ramirez (he hit his 33rd home run Aug. 5), Edwin Encarnacion (24 homers) and Yonder Alonso (18) are capable of clearing the bases any time they step to the plate. So Francona has Martin hitting ninth.

"You try to put yourself in other people's shoes," Francona said on Aug. 5. "He's hitting first on another team. Now we're asking him to hit ninth and sit against some left-handers."

"He certainly seems like he's willing to handle that. I don't think he is a ninth hitter, but for right now, that's where he's hitting. To be able to turn the lineup over to Frankie and Brant, to have a guy that's basically another leadoff hitter, is going to make our team a lot better."

Martin says he is fine with his role with the Indians (61-49). He is also thrilled to suddenly be on a potential playoff team and appreciates the way Indians fans have welcomed him. But before he got too far along talking about his new job, he went out of his way to thank the Tigers (47-64) for giving him the opportunity to play regularly; he played 78 games with Detroit.

Martin missed time with the Tigers in May and again in July with a left hamstring injury. He is healthy now. The Indians need him to stay that way with outfielders Lonnie Chisenhall (calf), Tyler Naquin (hip) and Bradley Zimmer (shoulder) all out of action.

"It doesn't matter where you hit, man," Martin said in the Indians' clubhouse after the Aug. 4 game. "You hit ninth in the first inning, but as long as the ballgame keeps going, you can be a leadoff guy two or three times.

"I just keep doing my game, try to get on base and create rallies. I try to get on base because the best hitters on the team are right behind me, so that's very important. As much as I can, I get on base."

Martin was 0-for-3 on Aug. 5. The Indians got all the runs they needed on a three-run home run by Jose Ramirez in the bottom of the first inning. A double by Jason Kipnis in the sixth inning drove in Brandon Guyer to give the Indians a 4-2 edge.

Brad Hand gave up a run in the top of the ninth but nailed down his third save with the Indians after being acquired in a trade with the Padres on July 19 in a deal that cost the Indians catching prospect Francisco Mejia.

Adam Cimber, also acquired in the Mejia trade, pitched one-third of a scoreless inning on Aug. 5.

Martin, Hand and Cimber will be key players for the Indians in October when the importance of every at-bat and every pitch is magnified.

Former Indians player, coach Scott Radinsky is jack of all trades

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

With all due respect to the debonair, bearded gentlemen in the Dos Equis commercials, the title of "most interesting man in the world" might have to be shared with Scott Radinsky.

The 50-year-old native of Southern California is a baseball survivor, cancer survivor, lead singer and songwriter for the punk rock band Pulley, husband, father, world traveler and founder of Skatelab, a popular skateboard park in his hometown of Simi Valley, Calif. The park is home to the Skateboard Museum and Skateboarding Hall of Fame.

Radinsky, now in his third season as bullpen coach of the Los Angeles Angels, was a accomplished relief pitcher in the major leagues for 11 seasons. He made his big-league debut in April 1990 with the Chicago White Sox and his final appearance with the Indians in October 2001. He missed all of the 1994 season after being diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease.

In 557 games, Radinsky was 42-25 with a 3.40 ERA and 52 saves. He retired after the 2001 season.

Radinsky returned to baseball in 2005 as pitching coach of the Lake County Captains. He worked his way up the ladder in the Indians' minor-league system to the Double-A Akron Aeros and Triple-A Buffalo Bisons and Columbus Clippers before taking over as Indians bullpen coach in 2010. He was promoted to pitching coach of the Indians in 2012, but was fired on Aug. 9 that season as the Indians stumbled to a 68-94 finish.

He was hired by the Los Angeles Dodgers as a minor-league pitching coach in 2013. Three years later, he was back in the big leagues with the Angels.

Radinsky's offseason agenda includes plenty of time spent with his wife, Darlene, and their three children, running Skatelab and playing weekend concert dates with Pulley. The band released its eighth studio album, "No Change in the Weather," in 2016.

We caught up with Radinsky in the visitors dugout at Progressive Field on Aug. 5, before the finale of a three-game series between the Angels and Indians.

Question >> Do you deserve at least equal billing with the Dos Equis guy?

Radinsky >> No (laugh). He looks interesting, doesn't he? I like the commercials.

Q >> Before we get to baseball, let's talk music. What comes first for you as a songwriter, the lyric or the lick?

A >> A lot of times, the lyric. I scribble a lot of stuff down on long rides in planes or the bus, I have a bag stuffed with notebooks, binders, napkins, anything I've written on. When I come up with the riff, I have that book to go to. I'll pick out a riff and put lyrics to it. The music inspires what lyric I'm going to use.

Q >> You've pitched in front of 30,000 fans in the big leagues and played live with Pulley in front of thousands of fans. Which is more nerve-racking?

A >> Oh, man, it's the band. You stand on stage with a microphone in your hand in front of some (expletive). yelling at you. On stage with the band, there's not a lot of banter back and forth. It's a wall of music, the best of what we have, beginning to end. There are nerves and anxiety in baseball, for sure, but I feel much more comfortable here (points toward the pitcher's mound).

Q >> Describe the feeling of being on stage, fronting the band

A >> I'm totally in another place. I'm reluctant to look at video, but when I do, I'm almost embarrassed by what I see. There is this 50-year-old man on the stage, bouncing around and acting like a 15-year old. It makes me realize I don't now what I'm doing. As soon as we start, it's a different world.

Q >> They say with age comes wisdom. Did you feel wiser when you turned 50 in March?

A >> When I was young, I thought 50 was black balloons and you are over the hill. All of a sudden, I'm 50 and realize I'm not even close to that. Wisdom is gained every day along the way if you are willing to absorb it. The trials and tribulations of life make you a stronger person. I've gone through speed bumps and setbacks, whatever you want to call them. I hurdled right over them and kept charging through. The future is wide open.

Q >> Speaking of speed bumps and setbacks, is it bittersweet to come back to this place given the way it ended for you with the Indians?

A >> I was bitter at first, probably that whole first year after the firing. I could have brought some of it on myself. I had my beliefs. I don't think the organization was in as strong of a spot then at the major-league level. They want to blame me. I'm accountable. It's fine. The players are the ones I worked for. I still received texts. I still get handshakes. Guys go out of their way, come across the field and say "Hi." That makes me realize I did something right. I impacted them in a positive way at a point on their lives when they needed help. That's the definition of a coach.

Q >> What memories do you have of your coaching debut in 2005 at Lake County?

A >> I remember everything. (Indians third base coach Mike Sarbaugh) was the manager. Jim Rickon was the hitting coach. We had some good players on that team. Chris Gimenez and Tony Sipp come to mind.

Q >> Angels manager Mike Scioscia just denied a report he won't seek a new contract and step away after 19 years in this job. What kind of a guy is he?

A >> He truly cares about his players and gets to know you as an individual. The Tony LaRussas, Terry Franconas and Mike Scioscias of the world are really secure in their spots. They know who they are and are confident in what they do. They set the tone for the team.

Q >> You're a punk rocker from way back When in Cleveland, do you visit the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum?

A >> Been there many times. I like that it changes, that there is always new stuff to read. People who I've respected and idolized in my life on the musical side of things, I can sit and learn things about them I didn't know.

Q >> Are your three kids most impressed by dad the baseball guy, dad the punk rock guy or dad the skateboard park guy?

A >> Zero, none of that (laugh). I hope they are impressed that when I can be around, it's 100 percent of me for them.

Clippers 9, Bats 8 | Diaz's RBI in eighth rallies Clippers

After Louisville scored five runs in the seventh inning to tie the score at 8, Yandy Diaz delivered a two-out RBI single in the eighth and the Clippers held on to win 9-8 on Sunday afternoon before 8,750 at Huntington Park.

Greg Allen opened the eighth inning with a single off Brandon Finnegan (2-9) and took second on a sacrifice bunt by Drew Maggi. After Brandon Barnes lined out, Diaz cracked an 0-and-1 pitch to center, scoring Allen with the winning run.

Tyler Olson and Jon Edwards combined to pitch a scoreless ninth for Columbus. Edwards allowed a one-out single to Louisville's D.J. Peterson, but he struck out Hernan Iribarren and got Tim Federowicz on a popout to end it and notch his third save.

The Clippers appeared to be cruising with an 8-3 lead entering the seventh. But the Bats struck for a walk, three singles and a two-run double off reliever Henry Martinez, trimming their deficit to 8-7. Cole Sulser replaced Martinez with one out and gave up the tying RBI double before escaping the inning. Sulser (3-3) got the win.

Maggi homered in the first inning as the Clippers took a 2-0 lead. After Louisville tied it a 2 in the third, Bobby Bradley had an RBI double and Yu Chang a two-run single in the bottom of the inning to push Columbus ahead 5-2. Barnes belted a three-run homer in the fourth — following singles by Allen and Maggi — for an 8-3 advantage.

Clippers starter Adam Wilk allowed three runs (one earned) on five hits over six innings, striking out three and walking one. Diaz finished with three hits, and Maggi, Barnes, Bradley and Allen had two each as the Clippers totaled 14 in all.

Columbus torched Louisville starter Justin Nicolino for eight runs (seven earned) on 11 hits in just three innings. He struck out two and walked none.

Tomlin update

After struggling in his previous rehab start with the Clippers on Friday, starter Josh Tomlin's next appearance will come on Wednesday with the double-A Akron RubberDucks, Indians manager Terry Francona said. The likely plan is for Tomlin to be extended to three innings; he pitched two innings in Friday's start with Columbus.

The right-hander, on the 10-day disabled list with a right hamstring strain, gave up three earned runs on six hits in his two innings with the Clippers, which included surrendering two home runs.

What it's like for a front office leading up to (and after) the July 31 trade deadline

By Zack Meisel 2h ago 3

Mike Chernoff fell asleep at 2:30 a.m. last Tuesday, a mere 13.5 hours before the non-waiver trade deadline.

Chernoff woke up at 6 a.m., with some help from his 1-year-old daughter. In advance of one of the more chaotic days of the year for a major-league general manager, 3.5 hours of sleep must suffice.

Trade season has its peaks and valleys. Teams tend to start their homework after the conclusion of the amateur draft in early June. They spend six weeks gathering intel on potential targets and on their own prospects, while monitoring which teams might wind up as buyers, sellers or neither.

The Indians and Padres completed the Brad Hand swap July 19, which allowed the Indians to focus on addressing their outfield as the trade deadline approached. When July 31 arrived, a group of Tribe front-office members sat in a war room, called opposing teams' decision-makers, negotiated the terms of potential deals and evaluated their options.

There are lulls throughout the process, but it all set up for a frantic Tuesday as the clock ticked toward 4 p.m. ET.

In the end, the Indians swung three trades: the one for Hand and Adam Cimber, one for Leonys Martín and one for outfield prospect Oscar Mercado. Chernoff recently spoke with The Athletic about the process of preparing for the trade deadline, what the day is like and how teams can still complete trades in August.

ZM: You guys completed the trade with the Padres on July 19. How much did that simplify things at the deadline?

MC: I wouldn't say simpler is the right word, but we were able to address a need early in the process, so we could shift our focus on our needs. There have been times at the deadline where we've had multiple needs and you're juggling a lot of different things at the same time. Things can be really complicated, just because your mind is on a thousand things at the same time. Because we addressed the bullpen much earlier in the process, we could really shift our focus to, "How do we help the outfield?"

ZM: Is deadline day as chaotic as one would think?

MC: It is. The days leading up to it, it gets more and more chaotic. The volume of phone calls increases. On Tuesday, the morning was actually relatively quiet. Once you get to around noon, the teams that you're locked in with — actually, Monday night got super busy. Things started to speed up for us. It slowed down again Tuesday morning. And then Tuesday between 12 and 4, it's just a constant, chaotic, phone call after phone call with teams and GMs to see if there's that last push you can make to potentially get a deal done.

ZM: There are likely multiple teams in on every player and then your team is in on multiple players, so how do you sort through all of that — where you stand in each negotiation and what option best suits your needs?

MC: At a base level, you have needs and you want to improve your team, but you want to give up as little as you possibly can. You have to constantly balance the, "When are you ready to strike?" kind of deal, versus, "Can you get that guy for lesser value?" At some point, in order to do a deal, you have to give up some level of value, so you have to be willing to strike somewhere. But the tradeoff you're always making is, "Based on our other alternatives, should we push it a little bit further to try to get the value to be a little lower?"

ZM: Do you go in with a hierarchy or a weighted list of the players you want and the cost for each?

MC: If you were to compare a trade on the pro side versus the draft, it's way more complex on the pro side. In the draft, you stack your board and try to take the best player and you can just put that value equation on there. On the pro side, there are always other things you can do and no two players are the same in how they impact your major-league team. So it's more complex. You can't just compare the left-handed center fielder to the right-handed-hitting right fielder as apples to apples. They have different impacts on your team. Or, the right-handed reliever versus the left-handed reliever, it's harder to compare those in which guy you want. You may potentially want both of them, and on the pro side, you can get both of them. It's not like you just have one pick in the draft. It's sort of a juggling, balancing act. How do we make all the pieces fit and get these guys at the right price?

ZM: Typically, you have a front-office member on each road trip. That wasn't the case for the series in Minnesota last week. Did you pack everyone into one conference room and evaluate everything as the deadline approached?

MC: There are about 10 or 12 of the people on the fourth floor in our baseball ops department, between analytics and scouting and our player development guys who are locked in on trades and are all in a room, hashing things out or reaching out to scouts out in the field and analyzing stuff for us. Then we have a network of 10 or 12 pro scouts who are out in the field, gathering information that we're constantly hearing from. And a group of other people in our organization who we're reaching out to, whether it's Tito or ownership or some of our other scouts who are out there.

ZM: Does it reach a point in which you feel you have the trade in the bag, or do you always have the thought in the back of your mind that some other team might top you at the last minute?

MC: Yeah, you always have that thought. Until the deal is done, nothing is done. In almost every case, you agree to the deal and then you review the medicals and the other team reviews the medicals and you don't know what's going to happen. There's sort of a gentlemen's agreement that, if you're in the medical review process, you're not going to negotiate other deals. But if something were to happen during that medical review process on either side and the deal collapses, you then have to shift gears really quickly. Nothing's done until it's done.

ZM: You guys made two major-league trades and a minor-league one, pretty standard in terms of quantity. Does it ever feel like, given all of the work you put in and the players you consider and the stress and chaos involved, that making two or three deals isn't enough to be worthwhile?

MC: It's an interesting thing. We write, organizationally, 7,000 scouting reports a year. And we acquire, like, 70 players a year. So you're talking about 1 percent of the things you do. One percent. We probably had 300 phone calls in negotiations with teams and we made three trades. But that's just the work you have to put in to make a trade. It's not as easy as fantasy football, where you send two emails and you have a trade. It's a long, drawn-out process, but anything you can do to help your major-league team or your organization, it's worth that effort.

ZM: And, at least, you have that knowledge for down the line.

MC: Brad Hand is the perfect case. We had negotiated in the past with San Diego and talked about a lot of their players. And, specifically, about Hand in the past. So we had done a lot of legwork on guys that they liked and we had done a lot of the work in digging into him and having our scouts watched him, we were much more prepared and in a position to act quickly on him because of the work we had done.

ZM: How much more difficult is it to complete a trade in August?

MC: The easiest way to get a guy in August is to have him clear waivers, which, guys on big contracts often clear waivers. Jay Bruce, Coco Crisp. And then you just make an unrestricted trade for them later. When guys clear waivers, it's as if there's no trade deadline. We can get them at any time up until Aug. 31 and then still have them on the postseason roster.

ZM: How much of an advantage, then, is it to be sitting ahead of your American League postseason competition in terms of waiver priority?

MC: The place where it's an advantage is that, if you claim a guy, you can block all of those other teams. As soon as we claim a guy, no other team ahead of us in the standings in the American League has access to that player. Ninety-nine percent of the time, we wouldn't trade for a guy. You put Lindor on waivers. We're not going to trade him. But some team is going to claim him, potentially. The balancing act is that guys on big contracts who might not be a fit for us but are for the other contenders, we're in a position to potentially block those teams from getting them, yet we could also get stuck with a guy who isn't a fit for us, making a big salary. If that team just doesn't pull him back and we get him, you potentially get stuck. And you see that happen every once in a while, where the other team lets him go and you're stuck with a guy.

ZM: And then you have to report to the owner's office ...

MC: And explain to Paul Dolan why we're spending all of his money. It doesn't mean we're always going to claim those guys. Sometimes we have to make the choice and live with the fact that a team ahead of us in the standings could potentially get that guy.

ZM: Do you think it will be an active August? Is that something you can tell ahead of time?

MC: It felt like there was a big flurry of deals that happened this year. Last year, it seemed like there were fewer impact deals and then there was a lot of August action. I don't know if that will mean there's less action in August this year, because there was that big flurry of impact deals. I couldn't predict what's going to happen. I think there's a lot of action behind the scenes in August on the waiver wire. What that will actually translate to in terms of trades, I have no idea.

ZM: So when there's a report that a marquee player is on waivers, that isn't a big deal.

MC: It's meaningless. Almost every player will go through waivers, just because, why wouldn't you put the guy on and just revoke the claim? For the best players in the game, some of those guys will clear waivers and no one will claim them because they know there's no chance that the team will trade them. So it's hard to read into it when you start hearing whether guys are claimed or not, because it's happening with basically every player.

ZM: How long do you have to work something out if you do claim a player?

MC: Seventy-two hours. Ninety-nine percent of the time you claim a guy, there's not even a conversation. You can claim as many guys as you want. You have to be locked in, just because you could get stuck with a guy. You can't take any claim you make for granted.

ZM: It does buy time for teams that can't decide whether to buy or sell.

MC: Yeah. A guy like Jay Bruce, who's on a somewhat big contract, but is in the last year of that contract, he didn't get traded at the deadline. Often, that's a player who — him or Coco Crisp the year before — will clear waivers, and if that team falls out of contention at some point in August, is a guy who would've been traded earlier, potentially, at the deadline if that team knew it would be in that position. But they can wait until August in that case. Jay Bruce cleared waivers and they could trade him in an unrestricted way. So it almost made no difference that there was a trade deadline.

Ramirez homers, Bieber wins again as Indians top Angels 4-3

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) -- Jose Ramirez finished third in the AL Most Valuable Player race last season.

Cleveland's All-Star third baseman is making another run to finish high in the voting again.

Ramirez moved into a tie for the major league lead with his 33rd home run - a three-run shot in the first inning - and the Cleveland Indians defeated the Los Angeles Angels 4-3 on Sunday.

Ramirez is batting .300 and is third in the AL with 82 RBIs. He's also near the top of the league in slugging percentage, on-base percentage and total bases.

"He's a special hitter," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Some guys kind of warm into the game. He's dangerous right from the very first pitch."

Ramirez homer traveled an estimated 423 feet and barely missed landing in the upper deck in right field. He also walked twice and has three homers and eight RBIs in his last six games.

Ramirez's home run came against Deck McGuire, called up from Triple-A Salt Lake to start in place of the injured Tyler Skaggs.

McGuire (0-2) retired only one batter, allowed three runs and was pulled with the bases loaded in the first. While McGuire had never any of Cleveland's hitters, he knew what he was getting into with Ramirez at the plate.

"I threw a fastball down the middle, and a really good hitter put a really good swing on it," he said.

Rookie Shane Bieber (6-2) allowed two runs in 5 2/3 innings. Brad Hand - the Indians fourth reliever - allowed a run in the ninth but got his third save with Cleveland and 27th of the season.

Before the game Angels manager Mike Scioscia dismissed a report that he's stepping down after this season. Scioscia, who has managed the Angels since 2000, said before Sunday's game that he won't talk about his future with the club until the season ends.

The Angels were missing outfielder Mike Trout for the fourth straight game with a lingering right wrist injury. He hasn't played since injuring his wrist while sliding on a steal attempt Wednesday in Tampa.

Trout is still having issues swinging the bat and is considered day to day. Albert Pujols was also out of the lineup for a planned day off.

The Angels scored twice in the fifth on Kole Calhoun's RBI double and Shohei Ohtani's run-scoring single.

Calhoun started the ninth with a single. Pinch-hitter Justin Upton hit into a force play and Ohtani grounded out, but Andrelton Simmons' infield hit made it a one-run game. Hand struck out David Fletcher to end the game.

Skaggs was scheduled to start Sunday, but went on the 10-day disabled list with a left adductor strain. McGuire joined the team Saturday and was activated before the game. He allowed a home run, two singles, hit two batters, walked one and threw a wild pitch.

McGuire loaded the bases on two hit batters and a single, but Taylor Cole retired the next two hitters and pitched 3 2/3 scoreless innings.

Jason Kipnis had an RBI double in the sixth.

Right fielder Melky Cabrera helped Bieber with three outstanding defensive plays. He made a head-first diving catch of balls hit by Jefry Marte and Calhoun in the third. Cabrera hung on to Ohtani's drive to right field after crashing into the wall in the fourth.

"He was all over the place," Francona said. "That was kind of cool to hear the way the fans responded to it too. He did a good job."

MAKESHIFT LINEUP

Trout and Pujols were out of the lineup and Upton wasn't used until the ninth. Eric Young Jr. started in center again while Simmons batted cleanup and Francisco Arcia played first base.

"We had a lot of guys out but the guys that were in there played hard and we hit the ball harder than they did, we just couldn't get that extra hit with guys in scoring position," Scioscia said.

MILLER'S OUTING

Andrew Miller made his second appearance since spending two months on the DL with right knee inflammation, entering in the seventh with a runner on first. He retired Calhoun on a lineout to center, but allowed Young's single and hit Ohtani with a pitch.

Miller was relieved by Cody Allen, who threw 1 2/3 scoreless innings.

"It wasn't exactly like we drew it up, but with the way their lineup shook out it fit kind of perfectly to go in that order," Allen said.

ROSTER NEWS

Infielder Luis Valbuena was designated for assignment to make room for McGuire. Valbuena batted .199 with nine home runs and 33 RBIs in 96 games.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians: C Yan Gomes (right hamstring tendinitis) missed his second straight game.

UP NEXT

Angels: Los Angeles returns home to open a three-game series Monday against Detroit. RHP Nick Tropeano (4-6, 4.94 ERA) will start for the Angels.

Indians: Cleveland begins a three-game series Monday against Minnesota at Progressive Field. RHP Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34) will start for the Indians.

Jake Cave leads offensive explosion as Twins complete sweep of Royals

By DANE MIZUTANI | PUBLISHED: August 5, 2018 at 4:06 pm | UPDATED: August 5, 2018 at 7:28 PM

Twins outfielder Jake Cave stood in the batter's box with the bases loaded in the second inning Sunday afternoon at Target Field, looking for the perfect pitch to hit. He was cautious in his approach against Royals starter Danny Duffy, who entered the game with a 0.95 earned-run average in three starts against the Twins this season.

Cave battled his way to a full count and finally got a pitch he liked, turning on a fastball and roping a grand slam to right field to give the Twins a 4-2 lead.

"I just wanted to compete up there," Cave said, adding that he was looking for a fastball. "I got it and just stayed short and didn't try to do too much. I was rewarded with something happening."

It was the first grand slam of his professional career, and yes, Cave knew it was gone as soon as he made contact.

"I knew I had it pretty good," Cave said with a smile. "I never had one in the minor leagues. Maybe in high school or something like that. It was pretty neat."

That got the ball rolling, and in the end, the Twins' offense did just enough in a 6-5 win to complete the sweep of the Royals. It was the third straight game in which the Twins scored at least a half-dozen runs, a good sign as they try to make up ground in the AL Central.

"Sometimes when a team gets onto a little bit of a roll, offensively in this case, it frees guys up to go up there and not feel too much pressure about having to do something special," manager Paul Molitor said before the game. "We all know that when the lineup is going with contributions from top to bottom we get a lot better offensive production."

That proved to be the case, with Cave shining as the unlikely star.

After making his major league debut 2 1/2 months ago, Cave has become an everyday player for the Twins, spending most of his time in center field with Byron Buxton battling a host of injuries.

"He's gotten after it," Molitor said, adding that Cave has "moxie" to his game. "He's taken advantage of it so far. Hopefully it's good a step for him as he tries to get himself established up here."

Besides the grand slam from Cave, the Twins also got timely hits from third baseman Ehire Adrianza and outfielder Robbie Grossman.

Meanwhile, reliever Gabriel Moya recorded his second win of the weekend, taking over after a subpar outing from starter Ervin Santana. Closer Fernando Rodney made things interesting in the ninth inning before slamming the door shut.

"It was a little tenuous out there," Molitor said of Rodney, who allowed three base runners. "I don't know. He figures out a way to get it done."

Now the Twins will shift their focus to trying to chase down the Cleveland Indians, doing so without guys like second baseman Brian Dozier and third baseman Eduardo Escobar, who were jettisoned last week at the trade deadline.

That means players like Cave will need to continue to step up. He promises he's up for the challenge.

"This is my dream," Cave said. "I'm going out there and I'm starting every day for a big-league baseball club. I wouldn't have it any other way."

BRIEFLY

After the game, Grossman was placed on the 10-day disabled list with a strained hamstring. Although he came out of the game in the seventh inning, Grossman suffered the injury earlier.

"I felt it grab on my third at-bat, when I hit the double," Grossman said. "I got to second, and I could feel it right away. I tried to play through it."

Pioneer Press LOADED: 08.06.2018

Meet Oliver Drake, the new Twins reliever who now holds an MLB record

By DANE MIZUTANI PUBLISHED: August 5, 2018 at 5:08 pm | UPDATED: August 5, 2018 at 6:28 PM

Oliver Drake barreled into the Twins clubhouse Saturday afternoon, an iced coffee from Starbucks serving as his lifeblood amid a crazy 24 hours after being claimed off waivers. He handed his suitcase over to a Twins official and spent the next 15 minutes or so introducing himself to his new teammates, something he's become quite good at this season.

"We landed around 2:30-ish," Drake said. "I just came straight here to the ballpark to get ready and meet everyone and get prepared for the game."

A few hours later, Drake exited the bullpen in center field, trotted to the mound and mowed down all three batters he faced as the Twins earned an 8-2 win over the Kansas City Royals. In doing so, the 31-year-old set a major league record, becoming the first player to play for five teams in a single season.

"I don't know if this is something I'll brag about," Drake said with a laugh. "It's definitely cool having all the jerseys. That's going to be something that, looking back, is going to be a cool collection. It'll definitely be a neat story, especially down the line after the baseball career is over."

Yes, someday Drake will tell his kids and grandkids about this season, one that started with the Milwaukee Brewers before stints with the Cleveland Indians, Los Angeles Angels, Toronto Blue Jays, and now the Twins.

"It's not easy," Drake said, crediting his wife, Shannon, with keeping him level-headed. "She's been the savior of this whole thing. There's been times she's had to pack up apartments, line up car shipping, everything, because we've been bouncing all over the place. She's really made this a lot easier."

As chaotic as things have been, Drake finds solace on the mound, the 60 feet, 6 inches between him and a batter serving as his personal oasis. He looked in his element Saturday night at Target Field, using his full repertoire of pitches, which includes a cut fastball that sits in the low-90s, a splitter that has become his out pitch and a curveball he taught himself last offseason.

"I'm just trying to get guys out as quickly as I can," Drake said, adding that he's hoping for some stability with the Twins. "I've had so much time just kind of in limbo where I can't do anything. My catch partner for the whole time has been a fence back home. It's just nice to get back out there and playing."

Drake called his scoreless frame a "good first step" as he tries to stick around in the Twin Cities for the rest of this season at least.

"My agent keeps telling me it's always good to be wanted," Drake said. "I keep getting good opportunities, so I'm just going to try take advantage of this."

Pioneer Press LOADED: 08.06.2018