

Yandy's big game has Tribe magic number at 10

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Yandy Diaz crossed home plate and strutted back into the Indians' dugout in the fifth inning Tuesday at Progressive Field, high-fiving teammates and coaches with a grin from ear to ear.

The designated hitter hit his first Major League home run in the Indians' 9-3 win over the Royals, a 386-foot two-out solo shot into the seats in front of the Tribe's bullpen in left-center field off reliever Jake Newberry. Diaz's homer, and all-around big night, helped the Indians trim their magic number for clinching the American League Central to 10 after the Twins lost in Houston.

"I thought it was a flyout to center, because I didn't make good contact," Diaz said, smiling, through the team interpreter. "But the ball carried pretty well, so it got out."

It took Diaz, a second-year player, 70 games and 243 plate appearances before rounding the bases. But those around him think it's the first of many from the 27-year-old native of Cuba.

"He's going to grow into that," manager Terry Francona said. "When he barrels up balls and is spraying them all over the field, that's good enough. He's a strong kid and with maturity playing the game, he'll learn how to do that."

Diaz finished 3-for-4 with a walk, two RBIs, three runs and a double shy of the cycle to help break Cleveland's offensive drought and end a three-game losing streak. Diaz capped his career day in the seventh by plating the Tribe's final run with his second triple of the season, a line drive off the right-field wall that scored Rajai Davis from first.

"We've been waiting on that, especially with those biceps," starter Mike Clevinger joked. "I think everybody has. ... It's starting to come around for him. Even that last AB, he almost put another one out."

Clevinger (11-7) let up Alex Gordon's 11th homer to lead off the fourth, but it was the only damage the right-hander allowed. In the seventh inning, Royals center fielder Brian Goodwin scored on a throwing error by Erik Gonzalez, who had entered as a defensive substitution for Jason Kipnis (2-for-4, two RBIs).

The showing upped Diaz's slugging percentage to .476 and his on-base percentage to .364. Of Diaz's 21 hits this season, five have been for extra bases, but teammates think that's bound to change once he adjusts to Major League pitching.

"It's fun watching him," said Francisco Lindor, who finished 1-for-4 with a home run. "We all know he's a good hitter and a patient hitter. We all know he has the strength, as you can see. We were just waiting when he hits the ball, when he's gonna hit it out, when he's gonna start driving the ball, and he's been doing that."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Clevinger's big night: Clevinger earned the win by holding the Royals to one run over six innings, scattering three hits and a walk against 10 strikeouts, marking his fifth outing with double-digit punchouts this season. The right-hander improved to 6-1 in 12 starts against American League Central foes with a 2.15 ERA, and has won four of his last five decisions.

"We had a night where we didn't have to leave him out there, which was really good," Francona said. "It does look to me like he's kind of catching his second wind a little bit, though."

Lindor's leadoff homer: Once again, it was Lindor who got the Indians' offense rolling with a leadoff home run off left-hander Danny Duffy (8-12), who surrendered three runs, four hits and a walk before departing with two outs in the first with a left shoulder impingement and tightness. Duffy threw 26 pitches (14 strikes) before giving way to Burch Smith, who allowed three more runs in 2 1/3 innings. The Tribe's nine runs surpassed its run total of the three games prior to Tuesday.

SOUND SMART

Lindor's leadoff homer marked his 31st home run of the campaign and second in as many days. The switch-hitting shortstop has six leadoff homers in 2018, one shy of Grady Sizemore's 2008 record and tied with the Astros' George Springer for the most in the American League.

"We seem to take our cue from him, so I'd say, for the most part, that's a really good thing," Francona said.

UP NEXT

Right-hander Corey Kluber (17-7, 2.80 ERA) will start the series finale in a 1:10 p.m. ET first pitch at Progressive Field on Wednesday. The Tribe's ace held the Rays to two hits over seven shutout innings Friday, walking two and striking out eight. Righty Brad Keller (7-5, 3.26 ERA) will start the rubber match for the Royals.

Kipnis ready to fight for center field role

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Jason Kipnis isn't happy about the position he's in, but he understands the circumstances.

The Indians second baseman said Tuesday he's begun fielding fly balls in practice to get ready for his upcoming shift to center field brought on by the acquisition of former American League MVP Josh Donaldson. The team revealed after Donaldson was acquired on Friday that Kipnis will be moving to center field, but despite his veteran status, he isn't guaranteed the starting position.

"I've got to prove that I'm the best option out there," said Kipnis, who made his Major League debut with the Indians in 2011 and has been with the club since. "Which is nothing new. I think everybody should be proving every day at every position that they're the best out there, otherwise they shouldn't be there."

Donaldson will become the team's everyday third baseman after returning from a Minor League rehab assignment to test a left calf strain that's kept the three-time All-Star out since May. Jose Ramirez will move to second base, his original position, leaving Kipnis the odd man out.

"I've known Kip for six years now -- he's been a guy that we've depended on," manager Terry Francona said. "Now, all of a sudden, you're having a conversation with him that's not exactly what he wants to hear."

Kipnis' only Major League experience in the outfield came during an 11-game trial at the end of last season, but if Donaldson can help bring about the club's first World Series championship since 1948, Kipnis knows the move will have been worth it.

"I didn't make it about me last year, I'm not going to make it about me this year," Kipnis said. "Everyone knows what kind of player Donaldson can be. If he comes in healthy, then I'm excited. I understand their position, that they've got to put the best team out there to win this thing."

Donaldson reciprocated that sentiment upon his arrival to Cleveland on Sunday, praising Kipnis and Ramirez for sacrificing their spots to accommodate a newcomer.

"I just think it shows you how much this organization and the players in this organization want to win," Donaldson said. "Not just winning the regular season, but winning the postseason."

Kipnis admits his offensive effort hasn't helped his cause -- in 521 plate appearances through 127 games, he was hitting a career-low .226 with a .685 OPS, 14 home runs, 24 doubles and 57 RBIs, compared to his .263/.337/.416 career slash line.

The 31-year-old has turned things around of late, hitting .253/.344/.430 with five doubles and three homers in his last 24 games -- before hitting a pair of RBI singles in Tuesday's 9-3 win over the Royals. One of those homers came in the form of a pinch-hit solo shot on Saturday -- the day after the trade was official.

"I like having that little fire behind me," Kipnis said. "Hopefully it's a good thing. Hopefully it stays."

Other options for center field include Greg Allen, Brandon Guyer and Rajai Davis, all of whom have manned the position longer than Kipnis. Allen has been the team's primary center fielder for most of the season, and has started nearly every game since early August, when trade acquisition Leonys Martin contracted a bacterial infection that ended his season.

"I think we're a better team when Kip's playing well," Francona said. "[But] I told him, I said, 'You have to be our best option out there.' And I told Greg the same thing."

After Tuesday, 24 games remain before the postseason. With the Tribe's magic number down to 10 games, the strong divisional lead at least gives the club the luxury to make the move without fear of missing the playoffs.

Even though Kipnis is the one left out in this decision, neither he -- nor the team -- has time to get hung up with the logistics.

"I don't have time to be frustrated," Kipnis said. "I have a job to do and a position to win. When they said, 'Do you want to go to the outfield?' It's always been I'd rather be on the field than not. So if that means the outfield, then so be it."

Carrasco nominated for 2018 Clemente Award

By Daniel Kramer MLB.com @DKramer_

Throughout his distinguished Hall of Fame career, Roberto Clemente was perhaps just as known for his prowess on the baseball diamond as he was for his philanthropical efforts off it. And today, the award recognizing the player who best represents the game through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions bears Clemente's name.

Every year, each club nominates a player to be considered for the Roberto Clemente Award, and the 30 nominees were announced by Major League Baseball on Tuesday. Many of this year's nominees have been actively involved in their local community and abroad with initiatives that have focused on awareness and fundraising for the fight against childhood cancer and other illnesses, education for young people and Hurricane Maria relief among other efforts.

Each of the 30 nominees will be honored by their respective clubs, including many on Wednesday as part of Roberto Clemente Day ceremonies, a league-wide initiative that has been in place since 2002. As part of the celebrations, the Roberto Clemente Day logo will appear on the bases and official dugout lineup cards, and a special tribute video will play. Clubs that are on the road will recognize their nominee on a subsequent homestand. The league-wide winner of the Clemente Award will be announced during the World Series.

Here are the 30 nominees:	Boston Red Sox -- Brock Holt	Houston Astros -- Charlie Morton
	Chicago Cubs -- Jon Lester	Kansas City Royals -- Danny Duffy
	Chicago White Sox -- Jose Abreu	Los Angeles Angels -- Andrew Heaney
Arizona Diamondbacks -- Paul	Cincinnati Reds -- Tucker Barnhart	Los Angeles Dodgers -- Justin Turner
Goldschmidt	Cleveland Indians -- Carlos Carrasco	Miami Marlins -- Martin Prado
Atlanta Braves -- Kurt Suzuki	Colorado Rockies -- Ian Desmond	Milwaukee Brewers -- Corey Knebel
Baltimore Orioles -- Chris Davis	Detroit Tigers -- Michael Fulmer	Minnesota Twins -- Joe Mauer

New York Mets -- Steven Matz
New York Yankees -- CC Sabathia
Oakland Athletics -- Chad Pinder
Philadelphia Phillies -- Rhys Hoskins
Pittsburgh Pirates -- Jameson Taillon
St. Louis Cardinals -- Yadier Molina

San Diego Padres -- Clayton Richard
San Francisco Giants -- Buster Posey
Seattle Mariners -- Nelson Cruz
Tampa Bay Rays -- Mallex Smith
Texas Rangers -- Cole Hamels*
Toronto Blue Jays -- Kevin Pillar

Washington Nationals -- Ryan Zimmerman

*Hamels remains the Rangers' nominee despite being traded to the Cubs on July 27.

The league-wide winner of the Clemente Award will be selected by a blue ribbon panel that includes Commissioner Rob Manfred, Clemente's late wife and current MLB Goodwill Ambassador, Vera Clemente, as well as representatives from MLB-affiliated networks and MLB.com. Fans can also vote for the winner at mlb.com/clemente21, with the winner of that tally counting as one vote among those cast by the blue-ribbon panel.

"I am very proud of the great philanthropic efforts of our players," Manfred said in a statement. "Through wide-ranging work and actions, these 30 nominees honor Roberto Clemente's legacy of being exemplary community ambassadors. Roberto's unwavering humanitarian spirit continues to inspire our players and fans and serves as a positive example for future generations."

The Clemente Award was renamed in 1973 to honor the 15-time All-Star shortly after his tragic death on New Year's Eve months prior during a plane crash while attempting to deliver supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. The award was previously called the "Commissioner's Award" and was established in 1971.

Tribe adds Barnes, Rosales to expanded roster

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Two more players will be joining the Indians' push to clinch their third straight American League Central championship.

The team announced Tuesday it selected the contracts of outfielder Brandon Barnes and infielder Adam Rosales from Triple-A Columbus, bringing the Major League roster to 31 players. It's the second wave of moves the organization has made since the roster expanded on Sept. 1, when the club called up catching prospect Eric Haase (the Indians' No. 24 prospect, per MLB Pipeline) and pitcher Jon Edwards.

None of the callups were in the Tribe's starting lineup Tuesday against the Royals, but manager Terry Francona said the move provides a chance to bolster the team's depth through the grind of September.

"We looked kind of dead in the water," said Francona, who also held out Michael Brantley on Tuesday and plans to rest Jose Ramirez for the series finale Wednesday. "We're going to keep an eye on the other guys, and that doesn't change how you play the game. The object is whoever plays, we're supposed to win and do whatever we can and we will, but I'm also going to make sure we keep guys, guys that have a lot of at-bats, make sure we're keeping them [fresh]."

Barnes, 32, spent the entire season with Columbus, and he batted .273 with a .791 OPS, 39 doubles -- which led the International League -- two triples, 14 home runs and 81 RBIs in 132 games. The midseason and postseason International League All-Star appeared at all three outfield positions and specialized against left-handed pitching, finishing the regular season hitting .310 with a .951 OPS. Barnes last appeared in the Majors with the Rockies in 2016.

With Jason Kipnis converting to center field, Francona said Barnes won't likely play much unless the Tribe is in a pinch. But given Barnes' season, Francona felt he was worthy of the callup.

"He's a kid that never got a callup this year and he was very deserving, more than once," Francona said of Barnes. "[He] just put his head down and did the right thing and hopefully it just gives us a chance to keep him for next year, because all of a sudden when guys maybe aren't here, he fits a heck of a lot better."

Rosales, a 35-year-old utility infielder, also spent the whole season with Columbus, and he hit .239 in 114 games, also appearing in games at all four infield positions. The Chicago native was released by the Phillies after Spring Training concluded, and he signed with the Tribe on March 27.

Francona praised the versatility Rosales brings to provide flexibility until the end of the season, allowing his everyday players to rest up in time for the postseason.

"Rosales is kind of a guy who can play anywhere," Francona said. "He's a really good callup as far as a guy that has five different gloves, he's enthusiastic to do anything and a good guy to have on the ballclub for this month."

The Indians also recalled right-hander James Hoyt from Triple-A and placed him on the 60-day disabled list. To free up space on the 40-man roster, outfielder Tyler Naquin was transferred from the 10-day DL to the 60-day DL.

The Clippers (73-67) finished the season Monday with an 8-1 win over Triple-A Toledo, sparked by a grand slam from recently acquired third baseman Josh Donaldson. Donaldson finished 1-for-2 with a walk in his first rehab game with the Tribe since arriving with the team Saturday. The 32-year-old 2015 AL MVP Award winner is expected to be at Progressive Field to work out before continuing his rehab stint with Double-A Akron, which will begin its playoff series with Double-A Altoona, on Tuesday.

Heading into Tuesday, the Tribe's magic number to clinch the division is 12 games.

Worth noting

- Update on Miller: Francona said relief ace Andrew Miller will likely throw a bullpen session Thursday when the team travels to Toronto to begin a three-game series with the Blue Jays. The left-hander was placed on the 10-day DL on Aug. 27 with a left shoulder impingement, but isn't expected to miss more than the minimum time.

- Carrasco nominated for award: Major League Baseball announced Tuesday that Carlos Carrasco was named the Indians nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award, which recognizes a player from each MLB club who best represents baseball through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions on and off the field.

Carrasco received the nomination in part because of the two charitable foundations -- the Carlos Carrasco Children's Foundation in the U.S., and Fundacion Carlos Carrasco in Venezuela -- within the last year. Further, Carrasco has participated in baseball clinics and donated supplies for low-income kids in the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, India and Tampa Bay, Fla. Carrasco has also provided funds and supplies to communities in Puerto Rico after the island was struck by Hurricane Maria last fall.

30 prospects who went off -- 1 for each team

By Jonathan Mayo and Jim Callis and Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com @JonathanMayo and @JimCallisMLB and @GoldenSombbrero

Indians: Nolan Jones, 3B

After hitting four home runs over his first 94 pro games, Jones answered questions about his power potential in 2018 by erupting to hit a career-high 19 home runs across two levels including the Carolina League. The 20-year-old third baseman also made strides with his defense at the hot corner, and did so while finishing first in the Indians system in slugging (.466) and OPS (.871), ranked second in on-base percentage (.405) and third in average (.283).

I've got to get out of here': Cody Anderson happy to finally escape the clutches of the Arizona desert

T.J. Zuppe Sep 4, 2018 1

Terry Francona couldn't physically see Cody Anderson walking down the lengthy corridor outside the manager's office. Then again, he didn't need to.

"I heard him coming down the hall," Francona said. "I started laughing."

Anderson's warm personality seems to have that effect on people. And, as expected, the strong right-handed pitcher was equally as pleased to take that stroll.

After months of being stranded at the team's facility in Goodyear, Arizona, he had successfully escaped the complex. He was back in Cleveland to continue his rehab progression, throw a bullpen session and get reacquainted with the team he'd been fanatically watching each night from across the country.

"I got butterflies pulling into the parking lot and walking through the hallway," Anderson told The Athletic. "I'm just honored to be able to come here and throw a bullpen, you know? I'm pretty excited."

And thankfully, despite being away for the better part of two seasons, he hadn't forgotten his way around the Progressive Field clubhouse. He still remembered his way out to the field and how to navigate the blades of grass beyond the infield dirt. He had no issues making his way to the bullpen rubber and firing the ball toward his waiting target.

But most important, nearing the potential end of a trying, difficult road, he remembered why he endured the mentally and physically taxing path that led him back to Cleveland.

"A week ago," Anderson said, "I was sitting there in Arizona thinking, 'Damn, I've got to get out of here.' "

Returning to Progressive Field, "it's almost like a dream."

Anderson, looking the part of a burly, imposing lumberjack, burst onto the scene and posted an impressive 3.05 ERA in 15 starts in 2015, seemingly forcing his way into their future rotation plans. But the next year was anything but brilliant, posting a 6.68 ERA in just more than 60 innings.

Continued arm issues the next spring eventually led him to a difficult crossroads. After careful consideration, Anderson elected to undergo Tommy John surgery before the start of the 2017 season.

Outside of a few brief trips to Cleveland for the occasional checkup and mental reprieve, the 6-foot-4 pitcher has since been stuck in rehab purgatory under the hot, unforgiving desert sun. When the team broke camp at the end of March, Anderson waved goodbye to the big-league club and continued his throwing program, all in the hope of eventually rejoining that group at some point this season. But the progress didn't come as quickly as he'd desired.

"I got shut down twice," Anderson said. "And every time I got there, it was like, 'How did I get here. Why is this happening?' "

By June, Anderson had been shifted to a no-throw regimen.

The elbow was structurally sound, but the dead arm period forced him to pump the brakes. That news would be enough to dampen anyone's spirits, but he was able to lean on some good advice at various points this year.

Jon Edwards, who was recently promoted to the majors at the start of September, underwent the surgery last year. He was able to share his experiences with Anderson while the pair were stuck in Goodyear.

Anderson was no longer in this alone.

"It seems like everybody's experience is a little different," he said.

And that downtime didn't last forever.

Eventually, he was permitted to restart his program. Light throwing became aggressive throwing. Aggressive throws became long toss. Long toss became mound work. Mound work became bullpen sessions. And bullpen sessions became the potential for the start of a minor-league rehab stint.

Through that process, he was taught some valuable lessons.

"I've gone out there and tried to pitch myself into Cy Young the first outing," Anderson said. "That's not the way to approach it.

"One of the biggest things I've learned is that over my career, I've either pushed it too quick or too hard. So, this time it was more get to the next day, not try to look too far in advance. If you can progress a little bit each day, that's a win. If you put enough of those days together, eventually, you start feeling better. You start seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

That light eventually became an appearance with the club's rookie squad in Arizona on Aug. 25. Anderson then transitioned to Mahoning Valley, where he struck out a pair Aug. 30. That winding road eventually brought him to Cleveland over the weekend for a quick mound session and teammate visit before he was eventually shipped to Double-A Akron, where he fired a scoreless inning Monday.

In the short term, he's expected to remain with the RubberDucks as they begin the postseason. As for any chance he makes it back to the majors before the end of September, the Indians have taken a similar day-by-day, noncommittal approach.

"I think we're trying to figure out what's best for him, not necessarily what's best for us," Francona said. "The guy's coming off of Tommy John and, knowing Cody, he goes 100 in a 50 mph zone. We want to do this right."

And it would certainly be a shame to fumble this close to the goal line.

Anderson's ultimate hope was to eventually help the Indians win games at some point this season. There were legitimate obstacles throughout the summer that seemed to put that goal in jeopardy.

To be on the verge of contributing — not to mention setting himself up for a somewhat normal offseason — certainly beats the alternative.

"You never know how long it's going to take," Anderson said. "It's really a test of patience. You can take everything the bad way or the good way. You try to learn from everything."

Anderson retreated to his newly created locker Saturday afternoon, sweat dripping from each side of his face, forearms glistening with proof of the just-completed workout at Progressive Field.

That visual hasn't been all that uncommon for Anderson, who has fired bullpen after bullpen after bullpen this summer while surrounded by a thick layer of desert heat.

Anderson was asked what he did when he wasn't logging pitches on a Goodyear mound.

"You've got to run from air conditioning to air conditioning," he joked.

But seriously ...

"Just do everything you can," he added. "Just lift or do training room stuff or find stuff to do. Anything you can do to be productive and help you get back a little quicker."

More of his free time was spent torturing entertaining himself by watching his teammates on TV nearly every day. At times, that can be just as much painful as it is exciting.

"The emotion, you go through it with them," Anderson said. "You've got to take it one day at a time and hope you can progress just a little bit. If you try to take too big of a step, that's where you take steps backwards. Spending two seasons out there watching from the sidelines, it's pretty tough. It makes it that much more special when you get to see it again."

In the meantime, Anderson got to know, as he estimated, nearly every single minor leaguer in the Tribe's lower levels. He laughed when it was suggested he could serve as a part-time scout based on his knowledge of the young players who have come through the team's complex in Goodyear.

"I know how everybody plays now," Anderson said with a giant smile. "It's nice that everywhere I go, I know the catcher, I know the outfielders or shortstops or whatever. It's pretty funny."

In the time Anderson has been away from the MLB club, Rajai Davis, the man sitting directly to his left over the weekend, has departed, signed with another team, been traded, then rejoined the Indians. José Ramírez has blossomed into a legitimate MVP candidate. Trevor Bauer and Mike Clevinger have taken significant strides to help form one of baseball's deepest starting staffs.

Edwin Encarnacion has taken over cleanup duties, they dealt away a top hitting prospect for Brad Hand, and Josh Donaldson tossed a Tribe cap on his head.

The team looks a little different since Anderson tossed his last big-league pitch Sept. 28, 2016.

"Somebody said the other day," he explained, "since the last time I threw a pitch, (Shane) Bieber has already got drafted and made it to the big leagues before I've thrown in a game."

OK, that's not quite accurate (Bieber was drafted in June 2016).

"That just puts things in perspective," Anderson said. "You've just got to take every day and enjoy it. I sat in the bullpen in Mahoning Valley just to feel part of a team. That's what I am, a team guy. (I just enjoy) being around them."

Indians 9, Royals 3: 11 Walk-Off Thoughts on finally muscling one out, a baseball headed to Cuba, a hot streak while venting and some pop at the top of the lineup

By Ryan Lewis

Here are 11 Walk-Off Thoughts after the Indians' 9-3 win over the Kansas City Royals Tuesday night.

1. Everyone in the clubhouse knew it eventually had to happen. It had to, right? The guy with the biggest biceps in baseball hadn't muscled one out in 69 games. It wasn't nice. His exit velocities were terrific. He was pounding the ball, just not in the air. But, at some point, it just had to happen. Right? Right!? It had to, one would think.
2. It finally did Tuesday night. Yandy Diaz went yard. He slugged his first career home run, a solo shot to center field off Royals reliever Jake Newberry. As it sailed toward its destination over the wall, someone in the press box quipped, 'Is this it!?' Diaz didn't think it was out until it was, in fact, out, and he had home run No. 1. Finally.
3. "Not really, I didn't think [it felt good off the bat]. I thought it was a flyout to center because I really didn't make good contact," Diaz said through a team translator. "But the ball carried pretty well, so it got out."
4. Diaz smiled nearly the entire time he rounded the bases. He couldn't help it. Everyone was waiting for the guy who looks like he could bench press half the stadium to hit one out. He just hadn't elevated the right ball until now. Missiles were sent all around Progressive Field, but they all landed in the outfield grass.
5. "We've been waiting on that, especially with those biceps," Mike Clevinger said. "I think everybody has. He's been hitting the ball, even in BP, 120 miles an hour in the air. So it's the same thing for him. Progressing. Getting through the ball better. Getting that lift, that backspin. It's starting to come around for him. Even that last AB, he almost put another one out."
6. Now with a home run under his belt, Diaz thought he had a second later on, but that turned into an RBI triple and left him a double shy of the cycle. Said Diaz: "When I was running around, I said, 'Oh, wow. I got it again,' but then when I saw the ball fall. When I saw the ball hit the ground I didn't know what to do, so I just kept running."
7. Diaz in the past has worked to make sure his mother, who is in Cuba, could watch him play on TV. It hasn't always been exactly easy. Now, he said he'll be trying to send her a very special baseball.
8. Diaz is trying to make his case to be on the postseason roster and is doing a pretty solid job. He's now hitting .333 this season and has at least one hit in 11 of his 14 starts. When configuring the postseason roster, Diaz would be one of the last guys named among the 25, with candidates Rajai Davis, Greg Allen (technically even Jason Kipnis, to be thorough, but it would be extremely hard to imagine him being left off entirely even in the middle of a slump) as outfielders or for speed purposes off the bench and Erik Gonzalez as a utility infielder. He's built a solid case thus far, even while on having a clear path to much beyond pinch-hitting duties.
9. Speaking of making their cases, Jason Kipnis went 2-for-4 with two RBI and is now hitting .400 over his past nine games with six extra-base hits, 10 RBI and six runs scored. That's the right way to vent about a frustrating situation.
10. Francisco Lindor belted HR No. 31 for the season to lead off the first inning Tuesday night. It was his sixth lead-off homer, which has him tied with Houston's George Springer for the most in the American League this year. It also puts him one off the franchise record for lead-off home runs in a single season, when Grady Sizemore hit seven in 2008. (Remember when Grady Sizemore was in the Home Run Derby?) Ramirez has been the most productive hitter on the team. Lindor has set the tone at the top of the lineup. It's how the Indians have drawn it up, and Lindor has continued to deliver.
11. "It gives us 1-0. I actually think, not just the homers, a lot times his at-bats kinda take on—sometimes he'll go up there and he'll chase a breaking ball in the dirt or something and it seems like other guys start to, too," manager Terry Francona said. "We seem to take our cue from him, so I'd say for the most part, that's a really good thing."

Indians 9, Royals 3: Indians lineup awakes from slumber to pound Royals

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The Indians followed a string of lackluster performances with an offensive barrage Tuesday night, easily downing the Kansas City Royals 9-3 at Progressive Field.

The Indians (78-60) entered Tuesday riding a three-game losing streak with eight runs in those games, much of them coming in ninth-inning rallies that still came up short. It prompted Francisco Lindor to note on Monday that his own energy might be lacking, although he added he didn't need a day off.

Lindor proved the latter notion his first time up to bat Tuesday night. Facing Danny Duffy, Lindor lined a solo home run over the 19-foot wall in left field to lead off the first inning. The Indians ended up with dual three-run innings in the first and second.

Yandy Diaz followed Lindor's home run with a single and Jose Ramirez walked. With one out, Brandon Guyer singled to load the bases. The Indians made it 2-0 on a groundout by Melky Cabrera and then added another run with Jason Kipnis' RBI single to right field, ending Duffy's night.

Burch Smith entered for the Royals (46-92) in place of Duffy, who left the game in the first with a shoulder injury, but the onslaught continued. With two on and one out in the second, Ramirez doubled in a run. Edwin Encarnacion followed with a sacrifice fly to center field to score Diaz, who had walked, and Guyer singled to left to score Ramirez and extend the Indians' lead to 6-0.

In the bottom of the fourth, Kipnis added an RBI single. An inning later, Diaz finally did it. In his 70th career major-league game, Diaz hit his first career home run, a solo shot to center field off Royals reliever Jake Newberry. It was Diaz's 244th plate appearance, making him the slowest to his first home run with the Indians since John McDonald needed 275 plate appearances to hit his first homer in 2002.

Diaz added an RBI triple in the bottom of the seventh to extend the Indians' lead to 9-2. He finished a double shy of the cycle, collecting a three-hit game with a walk.

Indians starting pitcher Mike Clevinger (11-7) cruised while protecting a six-run lead after the second inning. He finished with one earned run on three hits and a walk to go with 10 strikeouts in six innings. It was the fifth double-digit strikeout game for Clevinger both this season and in his career.

Both Adam Rosales and Brandon Barnes, who joined the club on Tuesday, made their 2018 Indians debuts, replacing Encarnacion at first base and Cabrera in right field, respectively.

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Indians notebook: Jason Kipnis told he needs to be the best option in center field

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: Jason Kipnis started taking fly balls in center field on Tuesday in anticipation of his eventual move to the outfield. But even after that happens, there's no guarantee the position will be his and his alone.

The acquisition of Josh Donaldson will eventually move Jose Ramirez to second base and Kipnis to center field for the rest of the season and postseason, once the latter two are ready. Kipnis also made this transition last September, but that was under different circumstances.

Last year, the Indians had several key injuries — namely to Bradley Zimmer and Lonnie Chisenhall — that eventually led to the club believing its best lineup included Ramirez at second, Kipnis in the outfield and, primarily, Giovanny Urshela at third base. This time, it's slightly different. The outfield has been ravaged by injuries, but the Indians have Greg Allen and Rajai Davis as healthy center-field options, along with Michael Brantley, Melky Cabrera and Brandon Guyer (who also started a game in center field recently).

For the next month, each candidate will be aiming to show he has earned whatever playing time he can get.

"I told [Kipnis], I said, 'You have to be our best option out there.' And I told Greg the same thing," manager Terry Francona said. "It's a little — I think I used the word unsettling. It's a guy — I've known Kip for six years now — it's been a guy that we've depended on. Now, all of a sudden you're having a conversation with him that's probably not exactly what he wants to hear, so it's not the funnest thing in the world. But I think the best way to start those is by being honest."

Kipnis, who added that he's using Austin Jackson's old glove, was blunt in saying he wasn't exactly excited that he was told he'd be switching positions and had a month to essentially show that he needed to remain in the lineup. This conversation was different than the one from a year ago in that it, to a greater degree at least, also included the potential that Kipnis was losing playing time.

"If [Donaldson] comes in healthy, then I'm excited," Kipnis said. "I understand their position that they've got to put the best team out there to win this thing. Listen, anytime somebody comes to you and says 'Hey, your playing time is about to diminish,' you're obviously not going to be jumping for joy. As a professional, I'm going to handle it."

"It was a short convo on my end. I didn't make it about me last year, I'm not going to make it about me this year. I understand what he can bring to the table and I'm hoping he does it. I am excited. I'm excited for this team and this organization I understand where they're coming from and I understand that I probably put us in this situation with not having the year I'm capable of having. It's a little bit of cause and effect."

As the Indians searched for ways to improve the team, Kipnis said he was told a week ago that he would be staying at second base. That was before Donaldson was placed on and then cleared waivers, making a deal possible. That was also around the time Kipnis began to find his swing at the plate. This position change has thus come at a poor time, but it's the path he must take.

"Does it take a little wind out of my sails? It did, a little bit," Kipnis said. "But not enough to get me to stop working, stop competing. Like I said, I've got a job to do. I've got teammates that are looking for me to step up as well. And it's my own career. I have a lot of pride in it. That's why I was a little frustrated and hurt by it. But that's why I'm still going to be meeting the challenge every time out."

Roster moves

The Indians also made a series of roster moves Tuesday to add some positional depth, selecting the contracts of both outfielder Brandon Barnes and infielder Adam Rosales. To make room on the 40-man roster, outfielder Tyler Naquin (right hip) and pitcher James Hoyt (right knee) were transferred to the 60-day disabled list.

Jason Kipnis will have to show Cleveland Indians he is the team's best option in center field

By Joe Noga

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- If Jason Kipnis is going to play center field for the Cleveland Indians, the eight-year veteran must demonstrate that he is the club's best possible choice for the position.

That's what manager Terry Francona and president of baseball operations Chris Antonetti told Kipnis this week after the Tribe traded for third baseman Josh Donaldson from Toronto. The move will bump All-Star Jose Ramirez from third to second and put Kipnis in competition with rookie Greg Allen for playing time in center once Donaldson is ready to come off the disabled list next week.

"They said I've got to prove that I'm the best option out there, which is nothing new," Kipnis said. "Everybody should have to prove every day at every position that they're the best out there, otherwise they shouldn't be there."

Donaldson hit a grand slam in his first rehab game Monday with Triple-A Columbus. He is eligible to return from the DL when the team is in Tampa Bay next week. "If he comes in healthy, then I'm excited," Kipnis said. "I understand their position that they've got to put the best team out there to win this thing."

Kip remains willing to do whatever the @Indians ask of him.#RallyTogether pic.twitter.com/kKYPPx68SO

-- SportsTime Ohio (@SportsTimeOhio) September 4, 2018

A September switch is nothing new for Kipnis. He started 11 of the team's final 12 games last season and all five playoff games against New York in center field after coming off the disabled list in mid-September. This time around, though, he's making the transition from a better starting point.

"I'm not told 'hey you're going to the outfield' when I'm on the DL," Kipnis said. "I actually have some legs under me. But it helps that I can run more and I'm more free in that sense. Having some kind of starting point to fall back on now is nice."

But the move is nonetheless frustrating for the two-time All-Star at second base who had started to swing the bat with more success in recent months. After struggling for most of the season at the plate, on Sept. 1, Kipnis had reached season highs in batting average (.229), on-base percentage (.316), slugging percentage (.379) and OPS (.695).

"They just came out a week ago saying I was going to stay at second," Kipnis said. "Then this happens and then I get it going a little bit. Does it take a little wind out of my sails? It did, a little bit. But not enough to get me to stop working, stop competing."

Kipnis delivered a pinch-hit home run in the ninth inning on Saturday in a loss to Tampa Bay, one day after the Donaldson trade was announced.

"I like having that little fire behind me," he said. "Hopefully it's a good thing. Hopefully it stays."

In the meantime, Kipnis said he does not have time to be frustrated. He has a job and a position to win.

"I didn't make it about me last year, I'm not going to make it about me this year," Kipnis said. "I probably put us in this situation with not having the year I'm capable of having. It's a little bit of cause and effect."

Kipnis worked in the outfield during batting practice on Tuesday for the first time this season. He used ex-teammate Austin Jackson's glove while shagging fly balls. Last year, Kipnis used an outfield glove from Josh Tomlin on the first day he moved to the outfield.

Francona said Kipnis will continue to work in center before night games, rather than squeezing workouts in before day games.

"We're a better team when Kip's playing well," Francona said.

Francona said he recognizes that hearing the news can be a little "unsettling" for a veteran player. But the hope is he can balance that by being transparent with his intentions.

"I've known Kip for six years now, it's been a guy that we've depended on," Francona said. "Now, all of a sudden you're having a conversation with him that's probably not exactly what he wants to hear, so it's not the funnest thing in the world. The best way to start those is by being honest."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 09.05.2018

Cleveland Indians select contracts of outfielder Brandon Barnes, utility man Adam Rosales

By Paul Hoynes

CLEVELAND, Ohio - The Indians have selected the contracts of outfielder Brandon Barnes and utility man Adam Rosales for the big-league roster.

To make room for Barnes and Rosales, Tyler Naquin was moved from the 10-day to the 60-day disabled list and James Hoyt was recalled from Class AAA Columbus and placed on the 60-day disabled list.

Barnes and Rosales spent this season at Columbus.

The 32-year-old Barnes hit .273 (136-for-498) with 38 doubles, 14 homers and 18 RBI for the Clippers. He played 132 games, leading the International League with 39 doubles, while tying for the league lead in runs with 75.

Barnes finished second in RBI, third in total bases (221) and fourth in steals (19). He played all three outfield positions, hit .310 (39-for-126) and .312 (68-for-218) with runners in scoring position.

This will be his first appearance in the big leagues since July 24, 2016 with the Rockies.

Rosales, 35, hit .239 (91-for-380) with 22 doubles, 18 home runs and 61 RBI in 114 games at Columbus. He scored 52 runs and played all four infield positions -- 36 games at second base, 32 at first base, 28 at third base and nine at shortstop. He finished tied for seventh in the IL in homers and ninth in slugging pct. (.445).

He's spent parts of 10 seasons in the big leagues. Last year he split time with Oakland and Arizona.

The major-league roster consists of 31 players.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 09.05.2018

Cleveland Indians' Yandy Diaz hits first big-league homer; How many more are in those bulging biceps?

By Paul Hoynes

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Yandy Diaz and Francisco Lindor have their lockers next to each other in a corner of the Indians' clubhouse.

Lindor looks like what he is - a lean, muscular shortstop. Diaz looks like he's getting ready for a body building competition. His biceps bulge, he waist is narrow, shoulders broad. As manager Terry Francona once said, "He looks like he could use his bat for a tooth pick."

So guess who hit their 31st homer Tuesday night in a 9-3 win against Kansas City? And guess who hit their first?

If you hadn't watched the Indians play one game this season, or read a word written or spoken about them, it would be easy to pick Diaz as the owner of the 31 homers and Lindor as the one celebrating his baptismal long ball. But this is baseball, a game where size and weight are hardly the end all and be all.

SMILE WIDE, YANDY! FIRST MAJOR LEAGUE HOME RUN! #RALLYTOGETHER

STREAM: <https://t.co/5M5mBtZ4XF> pic.twitter.com/bKAZPgCWPw

-- SportsTime Ohio (@SportsTimeOhio) September 5, 2018

So it's Lindor with the 31 homers, two fewer than the 33 he hit last year, and Diaz with one. But one is better than none and that's what Diaz had in the first 234 plate appearances of his career dating back to last year.

What this is, is a start. A first step toward the Indians finding out just what kind of hitter Diaz really is. He's 27 and he's never hit more than nine homers in a minor league season. So a big part of the die may already have been cast, but things are not always what they appear to be.

Yandy Diaz, Francisco Lindor talk about Diaz's first big-league homer

Lindor never hit more than 11 homers in a minor league season, but he's 24 and has been eating, sleeping and playing baseball since leaving his native Puerto Rico for Florida when he was still in grade school. When Diaz defected from Cuba, he was 21. He escaped on his third try. On the first two attempts he was arrested and jailed 21 days each time. So he had a few more things on his mind than working on his launch angle.

It doesn't seem that way right now, but baseball doesn't live and die by the home run. That is the thing that has kept Diaz and the Indians on the same path. In Tuesday's 9-3 win, Diaz followed Lindor's leadoff homer in the first inning with a single to left. He walked and struck out in his next two plate appearances, but homered to center in the fifth and tripled high off the right field wall in the seventh.

Three hits to all three fields. If Diaz does that often enough his Hulk Hogan biceps will be put to good use.

To get nine, you gotta get one first.

Frankie's 31st dinger got the @Indians' offense started right. #RallyTogether pic.twitter.com/Qofxdej9VX

-- SportsTime Ohio (@SportsTimeOhio) September 5, 2018

"He's got one homer," said Francona. "He'll grown into that. But when he barrels up balls and sprays them all over the field, that's good enough. He's a strong kid and with maturity and playing the game he'll learn how to do that (hit home runs). But for the time being it's fun to watch him."

The Indians retrieved the home run ball for Diaz. He said he's going to try and get it to his mother who is still in Cuba.

Diaz smiled all the way around the bases after homering off rookie Jake Newberry. There had to be a big sense of relief.

"I was really, really happy," said Diaz, through team interpreter Will Clements. "Imagine going so many games without a home run. To finally get one, to have it go out tonight, it was great."

There are times when a player's teammates will give him the silent treatment when he gets back to the dugout after ending a long home-run drought. But that was not the case Tuesday night.

"Everyone was really happy," said Diaz. "I mean, imagine, my first home run here in the big leagues. Everyone was very happy for me."

Diaz, like Francona, believes as he gets more experience in the big leagues, he'll hit more home runs. But somewhere along the line Diaz learned what smart players know regardless of their spots - know thyself.

"The strength is there," said Diaz, hitting .333 (21-for-63) with 11 RBI. "I'm still missing a few things. I still need to work on a few things on the hitting side, but I think I can be the type of player who doesn't hit a ton of home runs, but can definitely hit some."

Lindor, however, thinks his locker mate is under selling himself.

"We all know he's a really good hitter and a patient hitter," said Lindor. "We all know he has the strength as you can see. People are waiting and waiting, 'When are you going to hit it out, when are you going to start driving the ball?' He's been doing that. He's been hitting the ball a lot harder lately. He'll probably hit between 25 and 30 (homers) every year."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 09.05.2018

Francisco Lindor puts pep in Cleveland Indians' step with leadoff homer in 9-3 win over Royals

By Paul Hoynes

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Francisco Lindor said the Indians' feet have been dragging as they hit the home stretch of the regular season. He included his feet among those that have lacked a little pep in their step.

He made that statement Monday after the Indians lost their third straight game, 5-1 to the Royals.

Well, if he intended to put a charge into his teammates on Tuesday night, he did it the right way by starting the game with his 31st homer as the Indians went on to beat the Royals, 9-3, at Progressive Field. The victory reduced the Tribe's magic number to 10 and ended Kansas City's six-game winning streak.

Danny Duffy (8-12, 4.88) left with two out in the first with tightness in his left shoulder after the Indians reached him for three runs on three hits. Duffy has never had much luck against the Indians and the trend continued. He's 0-4 against them this year and 2-10 in his career.

After the game Duffy told reporters he was done for the season because of the condition of his left shoulder.

Mike Clevinger (11-7, 3.11) allowed one run on three hits in six innings. He tied a career-high with 11 strikeouts. It was the fifth double-digit strikeout game in his career, all coming this season. Clevinger is one win shy of matching his career best 12 wins from last year.

The game was a coming out party for Yandy Diaz, who is built like The Hulk, but until Tuesday night had not hit a big-league homer. That streak came to an end as Diaz drove a ball over the wall in center field in the fifth. He just missed his second homer as he tripled high off the right field wall in the seventh. On the night, Diaz finished a double shy of the cycle.

Yandy Diaz, Francisco Lindor talk about Diaz's first big-league homer

Diaz, through interpreter Will Clements, said he was going to try and send the ball back to his mother in Cuba.

"I'm really happy," said Diaz, who snapped a streak of 243 homerless plate appearances to start his career. "Imagine going so many games without a home run, to finally hit one, it was great."

Following Lindor's sixth leadoff homer of the season, the Indians made it 3-0 in the first as Melky Cabrera and Jason Kipnis delivered runs. The Indians sent eight men to the plate in the first.

Lindor, who is tied with Houston's George Springer for the most leadoff homers in the AL this season, was a definite step in the right direction for him teammates.

"We seem to take our cue from him, so I'd say for the most part, that's a really good thing," said manager Terry Francona.

Lindor was asked if he felt any pressure to get the team off to a fast start after his comments on Monday.

"No pressure. If I get on base immediately, guys are going to try to drive me in," said Lindor. "It just so happened the ball went out and everybody says, 'All right, let's put up some runs.' It's part of the game. That's why I wanted to hit leadoff. . . to get things going."

The Indians made it 6-0 in the second as Jose Ramirez doubled home Lindor, who was hit by a pitch from Burch Smith with one out. Smith went up and in against Lindor and hit him on the forearm as the Tribe's shortstop spun out of the way.

Francisco Lindor says Indians and Royals weren't throwing at each other

Diaz followed with a walk and Jose Ramirez doubled home Lindor with a drive off the wall in right center. Right fielder Brett Phillips hit the wall hard in pursuit of the ball. He finished the inning, but left shortly after that with a bruised right shoulder.

It did not appear the Indians took kindly to Lindor getting hit. Oliver Perez hit Kansas City's Brian Goodwin in the seventh. Rajai Davis was hit by Brandon Mauer in the seventh and Brad Hand hit Royals shortstop Adalberto Mondesi in the eighth. It drew a stare into the Indians' dugout from crew chief Joe West, but Francona said no warning was issued.

When asked if he felt the Royals knocked down Lindor intentionally, Clevinger said, "I don't think so. I think that would be very unwise for the whole Royals' organization. Especially as much as we see them and the arms we have over here. So, I hope not and for their sake they better hope not either."

Lindor did not think there was any ill intent behind Burch's pitch.

"I don't think so," said Lindor. "There were two strikes. I think they were just trying to get me off the plate. I don't he was trying to hit me. If he was trying to hit me, it's OK, he hit me in the right spot."

As for the three other players who were hit by pitches -- Rajai Davis, Brian Goodwin and Mondesi -- Lindor said, "Rajai got hit by a curveball, pfft. Goodwin got hit on a curveball, pfft. We weren't throwing at each other, if that's what you guys are trying to get to. I didn't even think about it. If you throw at somebody and get hit with a curveball, (you say), 'Thank, you.'"

What it means

In the race to host the ALDS on Oct. 5, the Indians (78-60) trail AL West-leading Houston (86-53) by 7 1/2 games. While the Tribe beat the Royals, the Astros beat the Twins, 5-2, Tuesday night.

The Astros have won four straight and eight of their last 11 games. They are 21-7 against the AL Central this year, taking four out of seven from the Indians.

The pitches

Duffy threw 26 pitches, 14 (54 percent) for strikes. Clevinger threw 96 pitches, 68 (71 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Royals and Indians drew a crowd of 17,041 to Progressive Field night. First pitch was at 7:10 with a temperature of 85 degrees.

Next

Right-hander Corey Kluber (17-7, 2.80) will face the Royals and rookie right-hander Brad Keller (7-5, 3.26) on Wednesday at 1:10 p.m. SportsTime Ohio and WTAM will carry the game.

The Royals beat Kluber, 7-1, on Aug. 25 at Kauffman Stadium. This will be his fourth start against them this year. He's 2-1 with a 3.93 ERA. Keller faced the Indians on Aug. 24, allowing two runs on six hits in five innings in a no-decision. He struck out five and walked one.

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Cleveland Indians' Francisco Lindor helps Make A Wish foundation grant a special request

By Hayden Grove, cleveland.com hgrove@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Once upon a time, Francisco Lindor was a boy on a baseball field, dreaming of playing ball with his idol, Roberto Alomar.

On Tuesday, Lindor was the one playing ball with a youngster who yearned to meet the young Major League Baseball star.

Christopher Petiton of Queens, N.Y., visited Progressive Field on Tuesday and spent time with Lindor and the Indians thanks to the Make A Wish foundation.

The high school infielder received an orthotopic heart transplant two years ago and, when offered the opportunity to have a wish granted, his heart was set on Cleveland.

"It's awesome. It might be a dream for them, but it's a dream for me too," Lindor said of Petiton's wish. "I want to impact kids' lives. That's what I'm here to do: play the game and impact people's lives. Being able to share half of my day with him, it's extremely special."

Before they took the field for some grounders, Petiton visited the clubhouse with Lindor and the two took batting practice with the Indians in the cages.

When it was time to hit the field, Indians third base coach Mike Sarbaugh hit grounders to the duo, with Lindor giving the youngster pointers along the way.

As the workout ended, Petiton and his family took photos with several Indians players, while the high schooler received a signed Lindor jersey and plenty of autographs from the many players on the field.

To top it all off, with Petiton and his family watching intently, Lindor started the game with a home run.

"It's a blessing," Lindor said of Petiton's wish to spend time with him. "It shows that we're not only touching people's lives here, but we're touching people's lives nationally and globally as well. It's a beautiful thing."

'Do I love it? No. But I don't have to love it': Jason Kipnis, a position switch and a venting session

Zack Meisel 1h ago

This isn't Jason Kipnis' first migration to the outfield. When summer fades into fall, Kipnis tends to fly north on the baseball diamond. The last time the Indians shifted Kipnis to center field, he required a venting session over a couple of beers in Josh Tomlin's garage.

Kipnis was working his way back from the disabled list last September when Bradley Zimmer suffered a broken hand. With two weeks remaining in the regular season, Kipnis switched to a spot on the field he hadn't regularly traversed since he sported a maroon No. 28 Arizona State uniform.

The Indians were satisfied with their infield alignment, with Gio Urshela and Yandy Díaz handling the hot corner, Francisco Lindor covering shortstop and José Ramírez manning second base. That left Kipnis as the odd man out. Tomlin encouraged his longtime teammate (and neighbor) to visit.

"If you need to vent, vent," Tomlin told him. "I get it. There are things that happen that might not be what you planned or what you thought was going to happen."

Tomlin might want to clean out the garage. Kipnis is heading back to center field.

Only, this time, Kipnis isn't guaranteed daily playing duties. Kipnis has been a fixture in the Indians' batting order for seven years. For the first time, he'll have to prove to his superiors that he belongs in the batter's box and not on the bench.

And, this time, the move is somewhat self-inflicted. Kipnis' performance at the plate didn't discourage the Indians' brain trust from pursuing an infielder on the trade market. Chris Antonetti chatted with Kipnis in July in case the team entered the bidding for Manny Machado. When Josh Donaldson fell into their lap minutes before the Aug. 31 waiver trade deadline, it spelled the end of Kipnis' grip on the starting second base gig.

"You can't fault an organization for wanting to make the team better," Cody Allen told The Athletic. "If that involves you adjusting your role, then you really don't have a choice."

Allen noted that, had he and his comrades in the bullpen offered reliable relief in April, May and June, the team might never have swung a trade for All-Star southpaw Brad Hand and submariner Adam Cimber.

So, though Kipnis is far from thrilled with the fallout from the last-gasp swap with Toronto, he understands the motivation behind it. He knows he can't allow his frustration to interfere with the team's journey. Not to mention, he needs to get acclimated to his new surroundings in the vast grasslands, and he doesn't have time on his side.

The ALDS begins in one month.

"I've pitched really well for three months of a season and the fourth month I pitch like absolute shit and you get put in the bullpen," Tomlin told The Athletic. "It doesn't mean I'm happy about it, but it doesn't mean I don't understand it, also. Sometimes you look at it and you're like, 'What the hell?' And next thing you know, you look up and you're going, 'All right, maybe this was the best route.'

"He may, short-term, be a little bit caught off guard, but I don't think, in the grand scheme of things, he's that type of person to hold grudges and to quit on teammates because of what happened. I think he's probably one who's going to carry a little chip on his shoulder now and go out there and try to prove himself."

Well, there's no question about that.

"I like having that little fire behind me," Kipnis said.

It's a bit closer to an untamed blaze than a harmless flame.

Using Austin Jackson's old glove, Kipnis started taking fly balls in center field during batting practice Tuesday afternoon. He'll maintain that schedule ahead of night games. Ramírez will do the same at second base.

Each player met with Terry Francona and Chris Antonetti over the weekend to discuss the new roles. Ramírez requested that he stick at second and not bounce back and forth across the infield. Given his stat line (.228/.313/.374 clip, 87 wRC+), Kipnis wasn't about to make any demands.

"Listen, anytime somebody comes to you and says 'Hey, your playing time is about to diminish,' you're obviously not going to be jumping for joy," Kipnis said. "As a professional, I'm going to handle it. I'm going to go out there wherever they need me.

"I'm not going to say I can't go back and forth. I don't have enough home runs to say I can't go back and forth, I guess. It happened last year. It was a short conversation on my end. I didn't make it about me last year; I'm not going to make it about me this year. I understand what (Donaldson) can bring to the table and I'm hoping he does it."

No, Kipnis isn't initiating a turf war with Ramírez. His displeasure stems from his own struggles at the plate, his ongoing search for answers, his new homework assignment. He's candid. He's sarcastic. He's self-deprecating. He's frustrated. He also was under the impression that he wouldn't have to make a move. After all, a week and a half ago, his manager stressed that Kipnis wouldn't stray from second base.

Of course, that was before the Indians acquired the 2015 AL MVP.

"Does it take a little wind out of my sails? It did, a little bit," Kipnis said. "But not enough to get me to stop working, stop competing. Like I said, I've got a job to do. I've got teammates that are looking for me to step up as well. And it's my own career. I have a lot of pride in it. That's why I was a little frustrated and hurt by it. But that's why I'm still going to be meeting the challenge every time out. Nothing else to do except to go try to play whatever position they tell me to go to."

Whenever Donaldson returns to the active roster, the defensive shuffle will commence. Ramírez will slide over to his natural position. Kipnis will return to center, where he played in college and where he made a brief cameo late last season.

It's not his ideal setup, but he's been through this before. This time, he might even forge ahead without a venting session.

"I understand where they're coming from," Kipnis said, "and I understand that I probably put us in this situation with not having the year I'm capable of having. It's a little bit of cause and effect.

"Do I love it? No. But I don't have to love it. I've got a job to do. It's OK, as long as all of our goals are the same and that's to win a World Series for this city."

Indians notes: Kipnis has to be Tribe's best option in CF to earn spot in the lineup

Chris Assenheimer | **Chris Assenheimer** | **The Chronicle-Telegram** | **Published on Sept. 4, 2018** | **Updated 6:20 a. m.**

CLEVELAND -- When he made the move to center field at the end of last year, Jason Kipnis was pretty much the Indians' only option. This time around, he has to be their best.

After Cleveland acquired 2015 AL MVP Josh Donaldson, team president Chris Antonetti and manager Terry Francona told Kipnis he would have to win a competition against rookie Greg Allen to ensure himself of a regular spot in the lineup.

"They said I've got to prove that I'm the best option out there, which is nothing new," said Kipnis, a two-time all-star who was batting only .226 with 14 home runs and 57 RBIs through Monday. "I think everybody should be proving every day at every position that they're the best out there, otherwise they shouldn't be there. I don't have time to be frustrated. I have a job to do and a position to win. It's tough because you're trying to switch positions this late in the year and also work on fixing what's going on at the plate. It's a lot of things. But it's what we signed up for and it's what we're being paid to do.

"Everyone knows what kind of player Donaldson can be. If he comes in healthy, then I'm excited. I understand their position that they've got to put the best team out there to win this thing. Anytime somebody comes to you and says 'hey, your playing time is about to diminish,' you're obviously not going to be jumping for joy. As a professional, I'm going to handle it. I'm going to go out there wherever they need me."

Francona had been reluctant to move third baseman Jose Ramirez to second and Kipnis to the outfield, but that changed with the acquisition of Donaldson.

"The one thing I never want to do is not be honest with everybody," he said. "I think we feel like we're a better team when Kip's playing well. So we kinda explained things to Kip, what the possibilities could be, and he said he wanted it to be center. But I told him, I said, 'You have to be our best option out there. And I told Greg the same thing.

"It's a little unsettling. I've known Kip for six years now. It's been a guy that we've depended on. Now, all of a sudden you're having a conversation with him that's probably not exactly what he wants to hear, so it's not the funnest thing in the world. But I think the best way to start those is by being honest."

It comes at an inopportune time for Kipnis, who has swung the bat better as of late, entering Tuesday hitting .385 (10-for-26) with three home runs and eight RBIs over his last eight games.

"They just came out a week ago saying I was going to stay at second," Kipnis said. "And then this happens and then I get it going a little bit. Does it take a little wind out of my sails? It did, a little bit, but not enough to get me to stop working, stop competing. I've got teammates that are looking for me to step up as well. And it's my own career. I have a lot of pride in it. That's why I was a little frustrated and hurt by it. But that's why I'm still going to be meeting the challenge every time out. Nothing else to do except to go try to play whatever position they tell me to go to."

Unlike last year, when Kipnis was forced to switch to center due to multiple injuries in the outfield, he won't be making the move for the first time in his career.

"Having some kind of starting point to fall back on now is nice," said Kipnis, who was Cleveland's starter in center in each of the five games of the ALDS against the Yankees. "We're not just starting from eight years scratch or something like that. Do I love it? No. But I don't have to love it. I've got a job to do. It's OK as long as all of our goals are the same and that's to win a World Series for this city and this organization. You're not really going to hear too many problems from me."

Comeback trail

Donaldson began a rehab assignment with Triple-A Columbus on Monday, going 1-for-2 with a grand slam and a walk in an 8-1 win over Toledo.

He worked out with the Indians at Progressive Field prior to Tuesday night's game and is expected to join Double-A Akron tonight for its first-round postseason series against Altoona.

The earliest Donaldson can be activated from the injured list is Tuesday in Tampa Bay.

Miller moment

Left-hander Andrew Miller (left shoulder bursitis) has been playing catch and is expected to throw his first bullpen session since being placed on the DL, Thursday in Toronto.

Miller, who is in the midst of his third stint on the DL and has made only 27 appearances this year, is eligible to leave the injured list Thursday, but is not expected to be activated.

New faces

Cleveland added two players to its expanded roster, selecting the contracts of outfielder Brandon Barnes and infielder Adam Rosales from Columbus.

Rosales, 35, hit .239 with 18 homers and 61 RBIs in 114 games. He's a veteran of 10 MLB seasons with Cincinnati, Oakland, Texas, San Diego and Arizona.

Barnes, 32, was a midseason and postseason International League all-star, batting .273 with 14 homers, 39 doubles (led IL) and 81 RBIs (second) in 132 games.

Roundin' third

Michael Brantley got the night off and Ramirez is expected to sit in the series finale against KC today. ... The Indians rotation's 4.32 strikeout/walk ratio led MLB and stood as the best in franchise history through Monday. The starting staff's 903 strikeouts through Monday ranked second in the majors behind Houston's 959. ... Brad Hand entered Tuesday with a 1.53 ERA and seven saves in 17 appearances since joining the Indians. The save total is the most by a Cleveland left-hander since Derek Lilliquist had 10 in 1993. ... Tuesday was the 27th anniversary of Hall of Famer Jim Thome's MLB debut in Minnesota. Wearing No. 59 for the only time in his career, Thome went 2-for-4 with an RBI in an 8-4 victory. ... Today, 1:10, STO; WEOL 930-AM, WTAM 1100-AM. Kluber (17-7, 2.80) vs. Keller (7-5, 3.26).

TRIBE NOTES Indians 9, Royals 3: Mike Clevinger dominates another division opponent, Tribe offense starts fast **Chris Assenheimer** By **Chris Assenheimer** | **The Chronicle-Telegram** Published on **Sept. 4, 2018** | Updated **6:23 a. m.**

CLEVELAND -- Right-hander Mike Clevinger was in his comfort zone Tuesday night at Progressive Field, which meant he was pitching against a Central Division opponent.

Clevinger continued his division dominance and the Indians' offense went to work early to help Cleveland even its three-game series against last-place Kansas City with a 9-3 victory in front of 17,041 fans.

The win -- just the Indians' fifth in the last 13 games -- snapped a three-game losing streak.

Clevinger, who allowed just a run on three hits and struck out 10 over six innings, improved to 6-1 with a 2.15 ERA (19 earned runs over 79 2/3 innings) within the division -- 12 of his 28 starts this season.

"I thought Clev was good," manager Terry Francona said of the right-hander, who improved to 11-7 with a 3.11 ERA. "We had a night where we didn't have to leave him out there, which was really good. It does look to me like he's kinda catching his second wind a little bit, though."

Clevinger allowed a leadoff double followed by a walk to start the second inning, then proceeded to strike out five of the next six batters before surrendering his only run on a leadoff homer from Alex Gordon in the fourth.

"Now it's almost like second nature in what we were trying to do," Clevinger said. "Now we're accomplishing it and seeing the results and I'm able to pitch more than I am, just kind of like get in sync and make sure that's there. I can just stay solid and just keep the competitive nature versus thinking internally."

The Indians scored three times in the opening inning off Royals starter Danny Duffy, who left the game with an injury after allowing an RBI single to Jason Kipnis that put Cleveland in front 3-0.

Francisco Lindor sparked the offense, opening the first with his sixth leadoff home run and 31st overall.

"I actually think, not just the homers, a lot times his at-bats kinda take on ... sometimes he'll go up there and he'll chase a breaking ball in the dirt or something and it seems like other guys start to, too," Francona said of Lindor. "We seem to take our cue from him, so I'd say for the most part, that's a really good thing. He's pretty damn good."

The Indians matched the output in the second, taking a 6-0 lead on a double from Jose Ramirez, followed by a sacrifice fly from Edwin Encarnacion and a single from Brandon Guyer.

Lindor was hit by a pitch in his next at-bat after the homer in the second, then KC hit Rajai Davis in the seventh before Brad Hand hit Adalberto Mondesi in the eighth.

Following the game, Lindor dispelled the notion that the teams were throwing at each other.

"I think that would be very unwise of the whole Royals organization," Clevinger said. "Especially as much as we see them and the arms we have over here. I hope not. And I think for their sake, they'd better hope not either."

Kipnis, who continued his hot streak with a 2-for-4 performance drove in another run with a two-out single in the fourth. He's hitting .400 (12-for-30) with three homers and 10 RBIs over his last nine games.

Designated hitter Yandy Diaz joined Kipnis with a multihit effort -- more notably hitting the first homer of his big league career to put the Indians in front 8-1 in the fifth.

Diaz, who tripled in the seventh to fall a double short of the cycle, failed to go deep in his first 69 games and 217 at-bats/243 plate appearances.

"Imagine going so many games without a home run," Diaz said through an interpreter. "To finally get one, to have it go out today, it was great. I think I knew, everybody knew at some point it was going to happen. One day it was going to happen. It just happened to be that day, and thank God it happened today."

"He's going to grow into that," Francona said of Diaz's power potential. "But when he barrels up balls and is spraying them all over the field, that's good enough. He's a strong kid and with maturity playing the game, he'll learn how to do that."

Cleveland got RBIs from seven players, with Diaz and Kipnis each driving in a pair.

Lindor homers leading off again, Indians roll Royals 9-3

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) -- With one swing, Francisco Lindor shook the Indians from their early September slumber.

The All-Star shortstop homered leading off the first again, Mike Clevinger struck out 10 and Cleveland moved closer to its third straight AL Central title with a 9-3 win over the Kansas City Royals on Tuesday night.

The Indians ended a three-game losing streak and reduced their magic number for clinching another division title to 10 following Minnesota's 5-2 loss to Houston.

After a 5-1 loss Monday night, Lindor, who sets the tone for Cleveland with everything he does, talked about the team being flat and needing a spark.

He provided an early one with his sixth leadoff homer - one shy of the club record set by Grady Sizemore in 2008 - as the Indians jumped to a 3-0 lead on Danny Duffy (8-12), whose season is over because of a sore left shoulder.

"That's one of the reasons I wanted to be a leadoff hitter," said Lindor, who has 31 homers. "To get things going."

Yandy Diaz hit his first major league homer and Jason Kipnis added two RBIs for Cleveland, which has the most commanding lead of any first-place team in the majors.

Not only did the Royals have their season-high winning streak stopped at six, Duffy's season came to an end rookie right fielder Brett Phillips bruised his right shoulder on a scary collision into the wall.

Duffy was on the disabled list from Aug. 13-23 with shoulder issues.

"I'm crushed about it," Duffy said. "I get paid to play baseball. I take pride that if you have an able body you should go. My body just said it was enough today."

Staked to a 6-0 lead after two innings, Clevinger (11-7) allowed just three hits in six innings and remained unbeaten in his last seven starts. The right-hander, who could have a big role for the Indians in October, had a little more velocity on his fastball and struck out six of nine in one dominant stretch.

Diaz picked up an RBI on a fielder's choice and Kipnis, who is moving from second base to center field, singled home a run in the inning before Duffy was removed after 26 pitches. The left-hander underwent Tommy John surgery in 2012.

The Indians added three runs in the second off Burch Smith on Jose Ramirez's double, Edwin Encarnacion's sacrifice fly and Brandon Guyer's RBI single.

DON'T DO THAT

Lindor got hit on the right forearm in his second at-bat by Smith, but didn't think the Royals were throwing at him.

"If he was trying to hit me, it's OK," Lindor said. "He hit me in the right spot. We weren't throwing at each other, if that's what you guys are trying to get to."

Clevinger wasn't so sure, and sent a warning to Kansas City.

"I think that would be very unwise of the whole Royals organization," he said. "Especially as much as we see them and the arms we have over here. I hope not. And I think for their sake, they'd better hope not either."

The Royals also hit Rajai Davis and the Indians plunked Brian Goodwin and Adalberto Mondesi.

CRASH TEST

Phillips was fortunate he wasn't more seriously hurt after banging hard into the wall in the second inning.

Breaking back on Ramirez's drive, Phillips just missed making a catch before barreling full-speed into the wall. His torso twisted awkwardly and he crumpled onto the warning track. His teammates and a trainer rushed to Phillips, who got to his feet and remained in the game after being examined.

Phillips was removed the next inning. He had a sling on his arm following the game.

Manager Ned Yost did not provide any further details on Phillips' injury.

MOVING TIME

Kipnis isn't thrilled about having to change positions, but he's willing to do it as long as Josh Donaldson is healthy.

The Indians acquired Donaldson - the 2015 AL MVP - in a trade with Toronto, and once activated from the disabled list, he'll take over at third with Ramirez going to second and Kipnis heading to the outfield.

Kipnis did the same thing a year ago.

"Does it take a little wind out of my sails?" he said. "A little bit. But not enough to get me to stop working, stop competing."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Royals: C Salvador Perez (sprained left thumb) was out of the lineup for the sixth straight game. The six-time All-Star was injured Aug. 28.

Indians: LHP Andrew Miller is expected to throw a bullpen session on Thursday in Toronto as he recovers from shoulder soreness that landed him on the disabled list. Miller has been on the DL three times this season, but the reliever isn't concerned about his latest issue which he has previously dealt with in spring training. The former All-Star left-hander has also been out with hamstring and knee injuries.

UP NEXT

Corey Kluber tries to become the majors' first 18-game winner as the Indians conclude their three-game series with the Royals, who will start Brad Keller.

Indians' Kipnis on move to outfield: 'I've got a job to do'

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) -- Jason Kipnis has been in this position before. That's the positive.

That doesn't mean he's happy about it.

Kipnis took fly balls in center field on Tuesday as he transitioned from playing second base after the Indians acquired third baseman Josh Donaldson in a trade last week from the Toronto Blue Jays.

Donaldson's arrival - he's currently on the disabled list with a calf injury - has caused an infield shift. Jose Ramirez is moving from third to second, dispatching Kipnis into the outfield. The former All-Star made a similar move last September, but those were different circumstances as Kipnis was coming off the disabled list and the Indians were thin in the outfield because of injuries.

This time, Kipnis is being moved to accommodate a star who may help the Indians reach the World Series. And Kipnis has struggled all season.

"I'm not going to make it about me this year," Kipnis said before starting Tuesday's game against Kansas City at second. "I understand what he can bring to the table and I'm hoping he does it. I'm excited for this team and this organization. I understand where they're coming from and I understand that I probably put us in this situation with not having the year I'm capable of having.

"It's a little bit of cause and effect. But I've got a job to do. I show up every day and work hard and if that means switching positions, I'm switching positions. I look forward to most challenges. I'm excited to get going."

Donaldson worked out with the Indians after playing one game for Triple-A Columbus. Donaldson was placed on the disabled list Monday so he could rehab in the minors, and he hit a grand slam in the Clippers' final game.

Donaldson will resume his rehab stint with Double-A Akron. The 2015 AL MVP is eligible to be activated on Sept. 11.

Kipnis could get some playing time in center before Donaldson is ready. He played 11 of Cleveland's final 12 regular-season games there last year and started all five playoff games in the outfield.

"I actually have some legs under me," said Kipnis, who is batting .226 with 14 homers and 57 RBIs. "Having some kind of starting point to fall back on now is nice. We're not just starting from eight years scratch or something like that. Do I love it? No. But I don't have to love it. That's the part. I've got a job to do. It's OK as long as all of our goals are the same and that's to win a World Series for this city and this organization, then you're not really going to hear too many problems from me."

But unlike last year, Kipnis has to earn any playing time. Greg Allen has played in 70 games, and he's better defensively than Kipnis.

Indians manager Terry Francona explained to Kipnis that nothing will be given to him.

"We feel like we're a better team when Kip's playing well," Francona said. "I told him, 'You have to be our best option out there. And I told Greg the same thing.' It's a little unsettling. It's a guy - I've known Kip for six years now. He's been a guy that we've depended on. Now, all of a sudden you're having a conversation with him that's probably not exactly what he wants to hear, so it's not the funnest thing in the world.

"But I think the best way to start those is by being honest."

As baseball prioritizes the home run, Royals are moving in a different direction

BY SAM MCDOWELL

The home run is a landmark of baseball history, responsible for the sport's most iconic moments. Yet more than ever, it is a characteristic of the present game, even to the detriment of contact at the plate and elite defense in the field. And still, it remains the unequivocal way of the future.

Well, maybe not for the Royals.

Kansas City appears to be trending in a different direction. Away from the long ball. Away from its competitors.

Back to athleticism. Back to the makeup of the 2014 and 2015 teams.

The reasoning? It's simple, manager Ned Yost says.

"Every park should be a home-field advantage to the home team," Yost said. "So it was a home-field advantage for us in '14 and '15 when we had speed and athleticism and we could steal bases, we could manufacture runs, we could drive the gap, we could cover the gaps defensively. That's what we have to get back to."

The Royals didn't win a World Series by out-slugging teams. In fact, in 2015, only one American League team hit fewer home runs than the Royals' 139.

Their formula was tailored to the ballpark. In a stadium that swallows home runs but demands its fielders roam acres of space, the Royals prioritized Gold Glove defense in the outfield. At the plate, they put the ball in play at a better rate than anyone in baseball and pressured the defense to cover that ground. They ran. They stole. They took extra bases.

It all falls into Yost's definition of manufacturing runs. And it falls into what he envisions the future of the young group he manages now.

"We're going to have to be guys that can hit and run, that can bunt, that can steal bases, that can drive the gaps with doubles and manufacture runs," Yost said. "We're going to have to be able to get a runner from second base with nobody out to third base. We're going to have to be able to sacrifice fly. We're going to have to manufacture runs if we're going to be successful."

The home run is the way the rest of the league is moving. Actually, it's already there. The 2017 season saw more homers hit than any year in baseball history. The consequence: The 2018 season is on pace to be the 11th straight year that MLB sets a new record for league-wide strikeouts.

For a couple of years, the Royals began to implement that trend. They traded Wade Davis for Jorge Soler, a power-hitting outfielder whose defense needed improvement. They signed Brandon Moss and Lucas Duda. They traded Jarrod Dyson and watched Lorenzo Cain depart via free agency. Moss and Duda proved awkward fits for the ballpark, power hitters who offer little in the way of speed, athleticism or defense.

The Royals would obviously love to hit more home runs, but they appear to be taking a step toward emphasizing the core values that propelled them to the playoff runs. The strengths of those teams — outfield speed, contact hitters — fit the home field.

Some recent moves display a preference to return to that. Moss was traded after just one year in Kansas City. Duda was dealt last week.

As part of the trade this summer that sent third baseman Mike Moustakas to Milwaukee, they requested outfielder Brett Phillips, who remains a work in progress at the plate but whose defense is MLB-ready. He's fast and a pest on the bases. He's athletic, which reverts to Yost's original point. He's a potential fit for Kauffman Stadium.

"I love the outfield here," Phillips said. "More room for me to cover and make plays. As an outfielder, you want those plays. You want the ball in the gap to go run down. I'm happy it's big enough for me to help our pitchers out."

On Friday, Phillips caught a ball at the right-field fence, a drive that would have easily cleared the wall at most major-league stadiums. But Kauffman Stadium routinely ranks in the bottom third or fourth of home-run parks. It's 22nd this year.

"You gotta really get into a ball here for it to be a homer," second baseman Whit Merrifield said.

But Merrifield cautioned that a player can't adjust his swing just to suit that difficulty. The adjustment, it seems, needs to come in the makeup of the roster.

The next wave of youth has the potential to provide that home field advantage. Shortstop Adalberto Mondesi is a menace on the base paths the same way Dyson was once. Mondesi swiped nine bases over the last month, tied for the major-league lead. Top hitting prospect Khalil Lee has speed, too.

That's a start. But the best Royals teams in a generation were built on several more players like them — more players who could impact the game with more than sheer power.

It's a sticking point with Yost that the next generation gets there, too.

"We've struggled to manufacture runs this year," Yost said. "But if we're going to be successful moving forward, this young group's gonna have to learn how to manufacture runs again. Because we're not going to be able to sit back and just look to hit home runs."

The Kansas City Star LOADED: 09.05.2018

Royals' Danny Duffy leaves start at Cleveland because of an injury

BY PETE GRATHOFF

Less than two weeks after coming off the disabled list, Royals left-hander Danny Duffy departed his start in the first inning Tuesday night because of the same ailment: a left shoulder impingement.

Indians shortstop Francisco Lindor led off the home half of the first inning Tuesday and lined an 89 mph Duffy change-up into the stands in left field.

Yandy Diaz followed with a single and Jose Ramirez walked. After Duffy got Edwin Encarnacion to fly to left, Brandon Guyer singled. Melky Cabrera grounded into a force out and Kipnis singled, making it 3-0.

Pitching coach Cal Eldred, manager Ned Yost and trainer Nick Kenney emerged from the dugout. After a short conversation, Duffy patted Yost on the shoulder and left the game. Burch Smith relieved.

Duffy exits this game with athletic trainer Nick Kenney after recording just two outs. Burch Smith will take over on the mound. #Royals

Duffy allowed four hits, a walk and three runs in two-thirds of an inning. His fastball was clocked mostly between 89 mph and 91 mph.

The Royals officially announced Duffy left because of "left shoulder impingement/tightness." That's what landed Duffy on the disabled list on Aug. 13 following a start against the Cardinals in which the velocity on Duffy's fastball had dropped considerably.

Duffy returned from the disabled list on Aug. 23 and had allowed three runs in 11 innings over two starts heading into Tuesday's game.

An inning after Duffy's departure on Tuesday, Royals right-fielder Brett Phillips crashed into the wall attempting to make a catch. Phillips stayed down for a short time and was attended to by Kenney, but Phillips stayed in the game. However, an inning later, Jorge Bonifacio replaced Phillips.

The Royals said Phillips had a bruised right shoulder.

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