

Ramirez hits 19th HR in another Kluber gem

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

CLEVELAND -- Three times on Tuesday night, Corey Kluber slipped into a three-ball count. The last occurrence was in the fourth inning, when Brewers third baseman Travis Shaw then received a cutter over the heart of the plate, but flied out to left.

Kluber carved up Milwaukee's lineup from there, turning in the type of overpowering outing that has become like clockwork every five days for the Indians. The ace of Cleveland's staff has earned a reputation as one of the game's elite strike throwers, and he keeps finding ways to take things to another level. Lately, it has been by avoiding walks entirely.

"Kluber being Kluber," Brewers center fielder Lorenzo Cain said in the wake of the Tribe's 3-2 victory at Progressive Field.

Once again, Kluber took the mound and fired strike after strike after strike into catcher Yan Gomes' glove against a red-hot Brewers club that sits atop the National League Central. Backed by Jose Ramirez's 19th home run of the season, Kluber cruised through Milwaukee's order, finishing with zero walks for a fifth consecutive start.

Kluber has faced 139 batters in a row without issuing a free pass and -- including the seven dominant frames logged against the Brewers -- has not walked a hitter in 35 1/3 straight innings. That is the longest such streak for a Cleveland pitcher since 2007, when control artist Paul Byrd went 48 innings without a walk.

"He's such a pro," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He and Gomer have a great rapport together and, my goodness, I'm sure he's fun to catch, because he's just in such command of what he's doing."

During his five walk-free starts, Kluber has posted a 0.81 ERA with 38 strikeouts in 33 1/3 innings. Against the Brewers, the right-hander only flinched once. In the third inning, Kluber allowed a double to Manny Pina, who came around to score on a single by Cain. That was all Kluber would relinquish, improving to 9-2 with a 1.96 ERA.

All season long, opposing lineups have adopted a more aggressive approach against Kluber. Through the first two months, the ace has leaned more on his sinker than he did a year ago, exploiting that line of attack via early-count contact.

"If it's a two-pitch at-bat, you can't walk a guy," Kluber said. "I think that regardless of whether a team is aggressive or not, my approach is still to pound the strike zone and put the pressure on them and make them put the ball in play."

The Indians' order provided just enough support for Kluber with three runs off Milwaukee starter Junior Guerra.

Lonnie Chisenhall delivered a two-run single in the second inning and Ramirez crushed a pitch out to right field for a solo blast in the third. The homer was the fifth in the past nine games for Ramirez, who currently sits one behind Red Sox slugger J.D. Martinez (20 home runs) for the Major League lead. Angels superstar Mike Trout also has 19 shots on the year.

Following Kluber's exit, Tribe reliever Neil Ramirez did his part in keeping the Brewers in check, setting down Cain, Christian Yelich and Jesus Aguilar in order. In the ninth, closer Cody Allen surrendered a leadoff blast to Shaw, who sent the pitch off the top of the foul pole down the right-field line to trim Cleveland's lead to one run.

That is where Milwaukee's late push ended, sealing another win for Kluber.

"I've seen him over the years," said Cain, who faced Kluber often during the outfielder's days with Kansas City. "He's as solid as any pitcher I know. He goes in there and gets the job done. Keeps you off balance the entire at-bat. That's why he's so consistent. He has great stuff."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Welcome back, Lon: The Indians first broke through against Guerra in the second inning, when the righty issued a walk to Edwin Encarnacion and then allowed singles to Yonder Alonso and Gomes to load the bases. That set the table for Chisenhall, who was activated from the disabled list prior to the game. In his first at-bat since April 4, the veteran outfielder drilled a pitch up the middle for a two-run single to give the Tribe a 2-0 lead.

"It was nice to be in a good situation," Chisenhall said. "Guys were on base in front of me. I always enjoy when guys are on base. We try to be aggressive, stay up the middle, and it worked out."

HE SAID IT

"We thought about starting to match up and we're like, 'No, let's give him three hitters, let him settle in.' And he didn't need any more than that, so that was really welcome. Everybody sees the stuff, but his breaking ball is starting to get some depth to it, which gives him a little different look. It's making him [better], you can tell a difference." --Francona, on Neil Ramirez

"A lot of guys, I think when they first come up, you want to make an impression, you want to try to make a name for yourself, so to speak. And I think he's in the spot now where he's comfortable with himself, he knows what type of player he is." --Kluber, on Jose Ramirez

UP NEXT

Right-hander Carlos Carrasco (6-4, 4.50 ERA) is scheduled to take the ball for the Tribe on Wednesday, when the Indians host the Brewers at 1:10 p.m. ET at Progressive Field. Carrasco will be looking to tighten up his performance with two outs, having allowed 10 two-out runs in his past two starts. Milwaukee will counter with righty Chase Anderson (4-4, 4.85 ERA).

SS Palacios headlines Day 2 of Indians Draft

By Casey Harrison MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- It's not every day a family is blessed with a call from a Major League team during the Draft.

But for the Richard Palacios and his family, Tuesday afternoon marked the fourth time such a family member has received a Draft call, as the Indians selected the Towson University shortstop in the third round (103rd overall).

"It was just everything that I've worked for when I was younger it all paid off," Palacios said. "All my hard work and dedication, you see it in first-person and it pans out the way you want it to and it's always a great thing."

The Indians grabbed four prospects on Monday during the first day of the Draft -- catcher Noah Naylor (pick No. 29) from St. Joan of Arc Catholic Secondary School in Ontario, Canada. The Tribe also picked prep school right-handers Ethan Hankins (pick No. 35) and Lenny Torres (pick No. 41) as well as Southern Mississippi righty Nick Sandlin (pick No. 67) on the first night of the Draft. The Draft concludes on Wednesday, with exclusive coverage of Rounds 11-40 beginning on MLB.com at noon ET.

Richard will join brother Josh, dad Richard and uncle Rey Palacios to get the call on Draft day. Richard's brother was a 2016 fourth-round pick by the Blue Jays and currently plays in their farm system, while Richard made it to Triple-A with the Tigers and Rey spent parts of three seasons playing for Kansas City.

Knowing Palacios comes from such a background certainly helps the Indians, too. But the Tribe also sees plenty of upside with the young infielder.

"It helps, but it starts with the player -- it starts with the tools and the ability on the field," said Scott Barnsby, the Indians' director of amateur scouting. "He controls the strike zone, he's got quick hands, and we feel like this guy is going to hit.

"He's shown instincts the whole time."

Richard has made a name for himself as a three-year starter at Towson, and one of the better performers in the Colonial Athletic Association -- so much so, he was ranked 134th in MLB Pipeline's Top 200 Draft Prospects. He led the Tigers with a .301/.457/.515 slash line and also lead his team in runs (56), extra-base hits (26), home runs (eight), and RBIs (31).

To complement the 21-year-old's college stats, evaluators could see Palacios having outstanding on-base skills and a consistent bat with a keen eye in the batter's box, with the ability to be a potential big league tablesetter. With plus speed, evaluators could also see the Brooklyn, N.Y., native playing at second base or perhaps center field.

And with years of pro ball expertise to tap into, it goes without saying the prospect's family became the muse for his big league dreams.

"Just to have parents, my father, my uncle and my brother accomplish so much it made me look up to it even more than look up to a certain person," Richard said. "And just being able to continue the family tradition is always a great feeling."

Palacios told MLB.com he intends to sign with the Tribe. After all, it's a unique opportunity says is too great to pass up.

If Richard's learned anything from the family that's come before him, it's to trust the process and enjoy the little things it takes to make it to the show.

"They taught me to not get caught up in everything happening around you," Palacios said. "Just worry about yourself, worry about enjoying life and enjoying the game of baseball and enjoying all the hard work and the dedication that separates you from the people around you."

Round 4 (133rd overall): LHP Adam Scott, Wofford College

The Indians grabbed their first left-handed arm of the Draft in Scott, who posted a 3.14 ERA in 103 1/3 innings as a senior with the Terriers this spring. Scott made 15 starts and appeared in 18 games, and he showed versatility with two saves and two complete games. The southpaw ended the year with an 8-5 record, and he struck out 137 batters -- which ranked eighth among all Division I pitchers -- while walking 18.

"This guy is physical -- average stuff from the left side, up to 93 [mph], throws strikes and really deceptive," Barnsby said. "We actually took him last year and he went back to school. We took him again this year and are looking forward to getting him in the system."

Round 5 (163rd overall): OF Steven Kwan, Oregon State

Kwan represented the first outfield prospect selected by the Tribe in the 2018 Draft. The junior left-handed hitter posted a slash line of .349/.462/.460 this season for the Beavers and owns a .324 batting average in three collegiate seasons. Along with 2018 Pac-12 All-Conference honors, Kwan has also started all 58 games this season, and he hit a team-leading six triples to go with 14 stolen bases.

"Another good athlete," said Barnsby. "He can play center field, he can run and another guy that has instincts on the bases, that really recognizes pitches, understands the strike zone and has an idea of what he's doing at the plate."

Round 6 (193rd overall): 3B Raynel Delgado, Cavalry Christian Academy (FL) HS

Delgado, a switch-hitting prep standout, was ranked No. 124 in MLB Pipeline's Top 200 rankings, and he made some noise last summer on the showcase circuit as a member of the U-18 Team USA squad that won gold in the 2017 World Cup. He posted a .364 average in high school ball this spring, and he showed some power promise with a pair of home runs, seven doubles and 26 RBIs.

Evaluators say Delgado has showed ability to hit effectively from both sides of the plate, and he boasts bat speed that could give him a chance to hit for average and power as he develops. Though some doubt his fielding ability, the Florida International commit has shown good arm strength to play the hot corner and even shows promise at second base.

"He's versatile and he can move around the infield," Barnsby said. "He's got arm strength, but he's got instincts. He can read the ball and he recognizes hops. Offensively, he's got a nice swing from both sides of the plate. We feel not only good about the bat, but he's got a lean, athletic frame. Once that fills out, we feel like there's going to be some power in there as well."

Round 7 (223rd overall): RHP Cody Morris, University of South Carolina

Morris posted an 8-3 record with a 3.68 ERA in 15 starts for the Gamecocks this spring -- he struck out 83 batters while walking 30 through 78 1/3 innings. Morris was a 2015 Perfect Game Second Team All-American and Atlantic All-Region First Team selection. The 6-foot-5 right-hander had Tommy John surgery in high school, but his fastball can still touch 97 mph and he features a plus changeup.

"He's got life to his fastball," Barnsby said. "He also gets a swing-and-miss on his fastball. The changeup is actually his best secondary pitch. He's got a feel for the changeup and mixes in a little bit of a slider."

Round 8 (253rd overall): RHP Alex Royalty, UNC Wilmington

Royalty has compiled a 23-10 record with a 4.16 ERA in three seasons for the Seahawks. The 6-foot-4 right-hander earned 2018 Colonial Athletic Association All-Tournament honors following a complete game against Northeastern on May 24. He was named CAA Pitcher of the Year and earned First-Team All-CAA honors in '17 as a sophomore, when he went 9-2 with a 3.20 ERA and 106 strikeouts in 98 1/3 innings.

"This is a guy that has a really good feel for the mound," Barnsby said. "This guy knows how to pitch with his stuff -- it's average stuff across the board, but he can work both sides of the plate. ... He could potentially be a back-end starter."

Round 9 (283rd overall): RHP Brian Eichhorn, Georgia Southern

Eichhorn was a First-Team All-Sun Belt selection after striking out 106 batters in 88 2/3 innings with a 3.15 ERA. The 6-foot-1 junior can reach between 92-93 mph as a starter with an above-average slider and an average changeup, with evaluators saying there's a chance Eichhorn has potential to be an back-of-the-rotation-type arm.

"This guy has a strong, durable body," said Barnsby. "Goes up to 94, and [he] is another guy that can really pitch with his fastball. ... One of the things that really stands out with him, as well as everybody else, is just how competitive he is and how aggressive he is on the mound."

Round 10 (313rd overall): RHP Robert Broom, Mercer

Broom's biggest 2018 highlight came on April 24, when the sidwinding right-hander struck out 12 batters in six relief innings against No. 1 Florida to lead Mercer past the Gators. Broom was named a Third Team All-American by Baseball America after recording a 1.70 ERA and 111 strikeouts in 74 innings this season. He features a fastball that sits between 89-92 mph, a slicing breaking ball and a good changeup.

"Submarine style makes him unique," said Barnsby. "He's deceptive, he gets that breaking ball to both sides of the plate and he's got a real feel for his changeup."

Bauer wraps up '69 Days of Giving' campaign

CLEVELAND -- It's no secret Indians right-hander Trevor Bauer is a noted drone fanatic.

But the former UCLA standout now is also known as a philanthropist looking to make a difference through unconventional means.

Bauer's two-month run of charitable contributions officially came to an end Tuesday, finalized by a nearly \$70,000 donation to Max S. Hayes High School -- a public school that specializes in technical and trade education that's just minutes away from Progressive Field in Cleveland. Bauer said the donation will be used for the school's general scholarship fund.

"It gets hard here sometimes, but for him to come and give this donation, we must be doing something right," joked Frank Austin, a junior studying automotive tech at Hayes. "It's making my time worth it here."

Students also were given official MLB baseballs autographed by Bauer, a former engineering major, after he went around and shook the hand of each student in the room.

Bauer took aside Austin, a multisport athlete and second baseman for the Lakers, and invited the youngster to watch batting practice before an upcoming home game.

"I was like, 'Is he for real?'" Austin said. "I'll get to wear my official Indians gear like I'm an actual player. It's awesome."

Bauer's idea for the campaign of giving was formulated shortly after winning an arbitration case during the offseason, in which he received about \$100,00 more than he expected.

Naturally, Bauer felt he should donate the difference of what he received and what he wanted.

"It was kind of a joke with some of my friends," Bauer said. "Just to be obnoxious with obnoxious numbers, but mostly it was I just wanted to give back."

Throughout most of the campaign, Bauer made 68 donations in the amount of about \$400 to various nonprofit organizations based on recommendations sent to him via Twitter, and his website, baueroutage.com.

The process of giving began on Opening Day with a donation to the Lone Survivor Foundation, which supports wounded veterans, and led to a different donation every day.

Bauer first learned about Hayes two years ago, when he had the chance to tour the school, meet with faculty and speak to students. After learning about what students were learning and how they were learning it, Bauer knew that's where he wanted to make his most impactful donation.

"I'm really passionate about technology and this type of education," Bauer said. "I think in general that the education in the country -- you come to school, you learn what you need to know for the test, memorize it for the test, then a lot of times you forget it -- or you don't know how to apply the principles you've learned in real-world scenarios.

"I think Max Hayes does a great job at giving you real-world scenarios and practical experience so that you have a way to apply the concepts that you're learning to what you're going to be doing later in life once you get out of school."

Charities supported by Bauer include foundations from other Major Leaguers, such as Carlos Carrasco Foundation, which aims to provide impactful resources for disadvantaged youth in the United States and Latin America -- and the Lance McCullers Jr. foundation, which provides funding and awareness to no-kill animal shelters.

To see the full list of charities Bauer donated to, [click here](#).

Covering the Bases: Game 59

by Jordan Bastian

FIRST: The best way for the Indians to try to maximize the production of its currently-flimsy bullpen is to reduce the window in which the relievers are required to work.

With Bryan Shaw no longer forming the bridge, and Andrew Miller spending much of his time on the DL these days, things have been unstable from the seventh inning on for Cleveland. So, if the starter can go a little bit longer, in theory, it would allow manager Terry Francona to better utilize his relief options.

Example A arrived on Tuesday night.

Corey Kluber stayed on the mound for 112 pitches, making it through seven innings with relative ease against the Brewers. That limited the bridge to one inning—the eighth—leading up to closer Cody Allen's entrance. Neil Ramirez got the call this time and answered with a three-up, three-down performance.

Now, there were a couple other factors that played into Francona's willingness to leave Kluber in that long. First, the ace only logged 90 pitches last time out, getting an early hook thanks to a blowout win against the White Sox. When Francona sees a chance to offer rest right now, he will take it. Second, Kluber was working with an extra day of rest.

So, this was not a case of over-extending Kluber when those circumstances are considered. But, there have been cases of that over the past month or so. Leaving Clevinger in to start the seventh on Sunday backfired. Having Trevor Bauer start the eighth on May 27 contributed to the game spiraling into a 14-inning marathon. There are other examples, too.

Since May 1, the Indians have three of the top four starters in MLB when it comes to average pitches per game:

108.8: Trevor Bauer

108.7: Mike Clevinger

106.0: Gerrit Cole

104.5: Carlos Carrasco

For March/April, Cleveland's rotation averaged 96.3 pitches per game. As the bullpen problems piled up—Tribe relievers posted an 8.01 ERA in May—so did the pitches for the starters. Since May 1, the per-game rate has climbed to 102.5 for the rotation. Kluber has averaged 102.8 since April 27. That's not a huge jump overall, but it's a batter or two per game, and that adds up over time.

Including Kluber's latest outing, the Indians now have 35 starts with at least 100-plus pitches this year. That is tied with Houston for the most in the Majors. Cleveland is tied with the Nationals for the MLB-high in outings with at least 110 pitches at 14. The Indians are the only team in MLB with two games in which the starter logged at least 120.

Consider that the Indians have averaged 99.7 pitches per start this season, compared to 93.8 in the entire 2017 campaign.

Francona hasn't asked any of his arms to do anything they are not capable of doing. And, as far as anyone can tell right now, none of these 100-plus outings have put any of the pitchers at risk of injury. The question at hand, however, is whether this heavy early-season workload will wind up coming back to bite the Tribe in late August, September or, heaven forbid, on the October stage.

There's no way to know that right now. All Indians fans can do is trust that Francona, pitching coach Carl Willis and the starting pitchers truly have an honest line of communication when making late-game decisions about the pitch counts.

"It goes back to working in-between starts," Kluber said, "and being able to put yourself in a position to handle that. I think that just because [Francona] is sending guys back out there, he's still checking with us and making sure we're good and things like that. It's not just a throwing guys out there and see what they can do kind of thing.

"There's been times when I've been at a lower pitch count and you kind of feel gassed and we talk to him and you've got to be honest about it. Sometimes, it's hard to swallow your pride, so to speak, and take a step back and realize that, 'Maybe I'm out of gas at this point.'

"Because, obviously everybody wants to keep pitching. You only get to throw once every fifth day. You want to stay out there as long as you can. So, I think a lot of it is just going back to having trust in him and him having trust in us to be honest with each other."

SECOND: Speaking of the number 112, Kluber headed into Tuesday night's start with no walks issued to 112 consecutive batters. You can tack 27 more onto that total after this performance.

The last batter Kluber walked was Domingo Santana—way back on May 8 in Milwaukee. In five walk-less starts since that day, the Indians ace has a 0.81 ERA with 38 strikeouts in 33.1 innings. That includes his seven-strikeout, no-walk, seven-inning performance on Tuesday.

One thing that has played a role in this run—the longest walk-free streak by an Indians hurler since a 48-inning stretch by Paul Byrd in 20017—has been Kluber increasingly tempting early-count contact vs. more aggressive lineups.

"If it's a two-pitch at-bat, you can't walk a guy," Kluber said. "I think that regardless of whether a team is aggressive or not, my approach is still to pound the strike zone and put the pressure on them and make them put the ball in play."

Lineups are being more aggressive early on and Kluber has fed them a steady stream of sinkers and cutters. Last year, fueled by a heavy second-half emphasis on his breaking ball, the ace's slurve became his highest-percentage pitch. It's consistently been third this year: There may come a point this year when Kluber flips the script and again leans on his curveball more, but why switch now? Yes, his strikeouts per nine have dipped to 9.3 this year compared to 11.7 in his second Cy campaign in '17. But, the results haven't taken a hit.

Here are the pitching fWAR leaders right now:

3.8: Max Scherzer

3.5: Justin Verlander

3.2: Luis Severino

3.0: Jacob deGrom

2.8: Gerrit Cole

2.5: Corey Kluber

Of those six, Kluber ranks first in innings (91.2), BB/9 (0.98) and groundball rate (48.1 percent). His 2.9 percent walk rate is the third-lowest mark in MLB. His 45 ERA- trails only Verlander (30!) and deGrom (40). He's fourth in MLB in WHIP (0.85) and seventh in K-BB% (24.6).

THIRD: Miller is scheduled to throw off a mound on Wednesday, but it is still unclear when the lefty will return to the relief mix. The Indians not only want him healthy, but also mentally confident that he can fully trust that balky right knee in order to keep his mechanics consistent.

In the meantime, the Indians keep waiting for someone—anyone—to emerge as a reliable setup option. Lately, Neil Ramirez has been getting a chance and the right-hander has looked—in flashes—like a possible solution.

After Kluber was done, the top of the Brewers' order was due up with the Indians holding a 3–1 lead. The manager could have gone in a few directions—or planned on making multiple trips to the mound in the eighth—but he opted to see how Ramirez handled the situation.

Lorenzo Cain: Popout

Christian Yelich: Groundout

Jesus Aguilar: Strikeout

Ramirez can hit 97 mph with his fastball and then shave off 10 mph for his slider. The righty has an intriguing arm and—for a few appearances in a row, which is something given how ugly it's been for the bullpen—he's earned a little trust from the manager.

"We thought about starting to match up," Francona said. "And we're like, 'No, let's give him three hitters, let him settle in.' And he didn't need any more than that, so that was really welcome.

"Everybody sees the stuff, but his breaking ball is starting to get some depth to it, which gives him a little different look. It's making him [better]. You can tell a difference."

HOME: When the Indians are going through a rough patch and you see Kluber's name on the schedule, that is a comforting feeling for the ballclub.

"And he's earned that," Francona said.

Right now, the same can essentially be said for seeing Jose Ramirez's name in the third spot of the lineup. In the third inning, Ramirez smacked a solo homer that proved to be the decisive run. And with that blast, here is your updated MLB leaderboard:

20: J.D. Martinez

19: Mike Trout, Jose Ramirez

At this point, no one is surprised by Ramirez's power.

"More than anything," Kluber said, "he's just that comfortable here now that he's able to just go out there and not really try to do too much. And I think that [consistent power] is the result of it. A lot of guys, I think when they first come up, you want to make an impression, you want to try to make a name for yourself, so to speak.

"And I think he's in the spot now where he's comfortable with himself, he knows what type of player he is and he can just go out there and play the game every day. It sounds simple, but I think that's when guys are most successful, when you just go out there and you let your ability take over."

EXTRAS: Tonight, let's leave you with a great quote from Cain on Kluber, who he saw for plenty of seasons as a part of the Royals' lineup...

"Kluber being Kluber. Throwing that damn frisbee slurve, whatever the hell he calls it. It's pretty impressive, because he stands all the way to the far right side of the rubber and throws a cutter that looks like it's coming at you, but it ends up on the outside part of the plate or off the plate. He keeps it shin-high, which you can't just do anything with. It's impressive. But, it's Kluber being Kluber. I've seen him over the years. He's as solid as any pitcher I know. He goes in there and gets the job done. Keeps you off-balance the entire at-bat. That's why he's so consistent. He has great stuff."

Stay tuned for more...

Tito's pregame minutiae: June 5 by Jordan Bastian

Q: Can you walk us through the decision to send Bradley Zimmer to Triple-A after activating Lonnie Chisenhall?

TF: "Chris [Antonetti] and I talked to him today. Offensively, it's been a struggle for him. The strikeouts. We talked to him about that. We wanted to talk to him together. A lot of guys have gone back to Triple-A and worked on their game and then come back. We fully believe that will happen with Zim. We want that. He's our best center fielder. Trying to make some of the adjustments at the Major League level can be hard. If you're striking out 40 percent of the time, you've got to really be doing some damage when you hit the ball. And he understood that. He said he knows he needs to make some adjustments. We didn't want to send him down and have him feel like he's on an island. Wanted to talk to him."

Q: How much did Greg Allen's recent play factor into the decision?

TF: "When a guy plays like he has, it allows you to do something that maybe you weren't sure that you could."

Q: What's the latest on Brandon Guyer?

TF: "He's doing fine. Chris talked to him yesterday or the day before. The plan is for him to come back on Friday. They have two right-handers going the next two nights. So, the plan will be for him to play a little more and then he can come back on Friday."

Q: With Lonnie being a lefty hitter and Melky Cabrera being a switch-hitter, how do you plan on mixing and matching them in right field?

TF: "I don't really know. 'Mixing and matching' is probably the right word. Melky certainly fills a spot pinch-hitting because he is a switch-hitter. We usually try to work two to three days ahead [with the lineup]. We'll look at it like we always do. I don't have the exact answer in front of me, though."

Q: How's Tyler Naquin doing?

TF: "He's doing OK. He's going to play again tomorrow [in his Minor League rehab assignment]. I ran into him in [the clubhouse]. He was getting worked on by the trainers. He said he feels really good and he's excited about playing. And we'll have him play a little center field on his rehab."

Q: What were the reports on how Chisenhall was playing?

TF: "He's fine. He's healthy. We really care about his health. And he played the two games in a row. The last thing you want is a question mark when somebody comes back, and he did all the things he was supposed to do, so he's ready to go."

Q: Did Andrew Miller get through his bullpen session on Sunday OK?

TF: "He is going to throw a side again tomorrow. I think he's kind of champing at the bit a little bit, which is good."

Q: Miller didn't have a rehab assignment before he came off the DL last time. Will he pitch in the Minors this time around?

TF: "I don't know. Some of it may depend on how long it is, how he feels, the amount of unknowns, if there are some. We'll see. We'll work through it together."

Q: What have you thought about the success Jesus Aguilar has enjoyed with the Brewers?

TF: "You know what, I hope he doesn't beat us, but good for him. He got his chance and he's making the most of it. We're really happy for him. Obviously you want to get him out. But we're also happy for him. He didn't really get a chance here, and I admit that. And he got a chance somewhere else and he took advantage of it. That's why we talk to guys or we take them off rosters, we never tell them that they can't play. We just tell them that we've made a decision that somebody at the moment's ahead of them."

Q: So much was made of how you used Miller during the 2016 run. We've now seen other teams try out pitchers in similar ways. Josh Hader with the Brewers is another example. Do you see that as a trend?

TF: "You know, I think it's different for [different teams]. I know it's a copycat league, but there's not too many teams that have a Hader. Maybe they have haters, but not [Hader]. You know what I mean? You get a kid like that, you can pretty much do what you want. Same thing with Andrew, when Andrew's going good. Everybody would like to have that. You don't. It's not the role, it's the person."

Clippers 7, Tides 4 | Clippers stay strong at Huntington Park

By Mark Znidar

Analytics are dominating baseball at the professional level like never before, but not even the father of detailed statistics, Bill James, could begin to explain why some teams play well according to the ballpark in a given season.

In 2017, the Clippers were a contender for a playoff spot in the International League until the final week, yet were 34-37 at Huntington Park.

So far this season, few teams want to play them in Columbus.

Brandon Barnes went 3 for 4, including a two-run double, and Eric Stamets and Nellie Rodriguez hit home runs to power the Clippers to a 7-4 victory over Norfolk on a damp, chilly Tuesday night.

The Clippers (27-28) have a 15-9 record at home.

"Other guys will say this too, but we really enjoy playing here," Barnes said. "It's a great city, a great ballpark and we have amenities like cages and a weight room. We have a lot of fun when we're at home because it's a close group of guys. On our off day, we hung out together."

The Clippers trailed 1-0 and 4-1, but took a 5-4 lead on Barnes' double in the fifth inning and put the game away on Rodriguez's two-run shot in the eighth.

"We don't feel like we're ever out of it, and that's the biggest thing," Barnes said. "You play nine games for a reason. You take it one at-bat at a time and grind and play baseball like it should be played. You need to get a guy over, you get a guy over."

The bullpen was clutch with Luke Eubank, Louis Head, Matt Belisle and Cam Hill giving up four hits and no runs in 5 2/3 innings. Hill pitched a perfect ninth with two strikeouts to get his second save.

The way catcher and left fielder Francisco Mejia is batting, the venue makes no difference. Since late May, he is 11 for 28 in eight games and 7 for 16 in June.

Tuesday night, he drove in a run with a single to right in the first inning and beat out a single to deep short in the eighth.

Rodriguez went 7 for 27 during the road trip and raised his average to .201 with the home run in three at-bats. He flew out to the warning track in the second inning.

"He has been good lately," manager Chris Tremie said. "You look at his last two or three weeks the kind of at-bats he's putting together, he's giving himself more opportunity to have success. The intent is to do it on a regular basis. He has been working hard at it. His at-bats are so much better than they've been in the past. He's in a good spot right now."

**Indians 3, Brewers 2: 13 Walk-Off Thoughts on more of the (elite) same from Jose Ramirez and Corey Kluber and Lonnie Chisenhall coming through in his return (and getting a free meal in right field)
by Ryan Lewis**

Here are 13 Walk-Off Thoughts after the Indians' 3-2 win against the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday night.

1. Since the beginning of the 2017 season, Jose Ramirez has more fWAR than the following names: Jose Altuve, Mookie Betts, Francisco Lindor, Kris Bryant, Giancarlo Stanton, Nolan Arenado and Joey Votto. Ramirez is one of four position players to amass at least 10 fWAR. The only two players with more in that time period: Mike Trout, the greatest player in the universe, and Aaron Judge, who has Ramirez beat by 0.2 WAR.
2. Ramirez slugged his 19th home run of the season, only one shy of the major-league leading pace of 20 set by J.D. Martinez (Trout also has 19). With his solo shot in the third inning, Ramirez now has the third-most home runs through 59 games in franchise history, behind only Albert Belle (23 in 1996) and Rocky Colavito (20 in 1959). According to the club, Ramirez is also the fastest switch-hitter to reach 19 home runs in a season since Mark Teixeira had 19 in the same time frame. Ramirez is unquestionably one of the 10 best position players in the game today, and there's as solid argument that he's in the top-5. It isn't news, but the fact remains that he's torn through every pitcher the league has thrown at him.
3. Said Corey Kluber on Ramirez: "I think more than anything he's just that comfortable here now that he's able to just go out there and not really try to do too much. And I think that's the result of it. A lot of guys, I think when they first come up, you want to make an impression, you want to try to make a name for yourself, so to speak. And I think he's in the spot now where he's comfortable with himself, he knows what type of player he is and he can just go out there and play the game every day. It sounds simple, but I think that's when guys are most successful, when you just go out there and you let your ability take over."
4. Kluber delivered seven strong innings, allowing one run and striking out seven. He also didn't walk anyone for the fifth consecutive start, a stretch that now spans 35 1/3 innings. He owns a sub-2.00 ERA this season and, using the same timeframe as Ramirez, has the best ERA among qualified pitchers since the beginning of 2017 at 2.18. He's second in fWAR in that stretch behind only Chris Sale.
5. The Indians and Kluber for quite some time have discussed how lineups can become aggressive against him, not wanting to get deep into counts and allow him to go to his breaking pitches more often. It's been said 1,000 times by Terry Francona and Mickey Callaway and Chris Antonetti, but Kluber's consistency in his between-starts routine continues to be legendary. It feels like that has been typed 300 times, but, to this day it's something on which the Indians harp and utilize in their player development.
6. Said Kluber on how he's maintained his consistency: "My guess would be just going back to day-to-day routines, things like that. Having a purpose, so to speak, playing catch every day, and say you want to get better every day. Trying to, not necessarily—I don't have a goal in mind every day playing catch—but I think I want to feel good about that day, by the end of it, that I got something out of it. Not that I'm just out there aimlessly throwing, things like that. So, I guess my assumption would be the work in-between starts probably contributes to consistency when you're actually in the game."
7. Francona was asked post-game about how comfortable he feels knowing Kluber will throw every fifth day. He added that he feels, to a degree, that same way with Carlos Carrasco, Trevor Bauer and Mike Clevinger, saying they've all earned that. That's a good thing for the Indians, considering this rotation has been and likely will be worked harder than they have in the past—they have averaged 99.7 pitches per outing, up from 93.1 last season. This bullpen can't be trusted right now.
8. Said Kluber on the rotation handling the workload: "Yeah, I think again, it goes back to working in-between starts and being able to put yourself in a position to handle that. I think that just because he's sending guys back out there, he's still checking with us and making sure we're good and things like that. It's not just a throwing guys out there and see what they can do kind of thing. There's been times when I've been at a lower pitch count and you kind of feel gassed and we talk to him and you've got to be honest about it. Sometimes, it's hard to swallow your pride, so to speak, and take a step back and realize that maybe I'm out of gas at this point. Because, obviously everybody wants to keep pitching. You only get to throw once every fifth day. You want to stay out there as long as you can. So, I think a lot of it is just going back to having trust in him and him having trust in us to be honest with each other."
9. Lonnie Chisenhall's saga with his temperamental calf has been akin to that friend in a toxic relationship. It's on. It's off. He's almost completely over it, he's moved on, and then it comes back all the same. Chisenhall hadn't logged a major-league at-bat since April 7 and quipped in the clubhouse a few weeks ago that it was like *deja vu*. He finally returned on Tuesday and immediately drove in two runs with a single.
10. Said Francona: "Yeah, how 'bout that? That was very welcome. Guerra for them has got good stuff and he's got good numbers too to match it. It was nice to give Kluber a lead."
11. The Indians could use the offensive production he brought last season prior being injured. He's just glad to no longer be traveling between minor-league stadiums.

12. Said Chisenhall: "I've been touring northeast Ohio and upstate New York for the past 10 days, so it's nice to be back here with the team. You miss them when you're gone."

13. The annual midge takeover hit Cleveland Tuesday night. As this is being typed, the press box windows are caked in them (also, three cheers for the press box having windows). Any camera view between innings made it look like some apocalyptic scene. Francona joked that, "Yeah, especially to some greasy-skinned Italians, it was real bad." And Chisenhall had a free meal, saying, I swallowed a few of them so I'm going to skip dinner. But it was nice to just be out there."

The post Indians 3, Brewers 2: 13 Walk-Off Thoughts on more of the (elite) same from Jose Ramirez and Corey Kluber and Lonnie Chisenhall coming through in his return (and getting a free meal in right field) appeared first on Ohio.com.

Indians notebook: Lonnie Chisenhall activated, Bradley Zimmer sent down as turnover in outfield continues

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: The Indians on Tuesday activated outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall from the disabled list and optioned Bradley Zimmer to Triple-A, affording Zimmer a chance to make some offensive adjustments in Columbus now that the outfield is collectively getting healthier and giving the club some additional options.

Zimmer's slash line has dipped to .226/.281/.330, and he's struck out 44 times in only 114 plate-appearances. Since coming back from the disabled list with a chest contusion, he's struck out five times in his past eight at-bats.

"Offensively, it's been a struggle for him," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "The strikeouts — we talked to him about that. ... A lot of guys have gone back to Triple-A and worked on their game and came back. We fully believe that will happen with Zim."

Zimmer and Chisenhall were recently on the disabled list along with Brandon Guyer and Tyler Naquin, creating a logjam of rehab assignments in the minor leagues as the Indians tried to find at-bats for everybody. The Indians could also have Guyer back soon. Francona said the plan is for him to be activated on Friday prior to the club's series in Detroit, which will require another roster move.

The health in the outfield, along with how well Greg Allen has been playing, allowed the club to send Zimmer down and let him make any necessary adjustment against Triple-A pitching. Allen had a slow start the plate but is now hitting .263 and has offered the Indians a speed element as a switch-hitter in center field.

"When a guy plays like [Allen] has, it allows you to do something that maybe you weren't sure you could," Francona said.

Draft recap

Rounds 3-10 of the MLB Draft took place on Tuesday. The Indians selected shortstop Richard Palacios in the third round (No. 103 overall) and went on to take four consecutive right-handed pitchers in rounds 7-10.

The selection of college pitchers takes away some of the guesswork because they have progressed farther along than high schoolers, and potentially affords them the chance to move up the organizational ladder more quickly.

"We want to be mindful of how many innings they've thrown and the workload," director of amateur scouting Scott Barnsby said. "We'll monitor that. But when there's not as much projection of the stuff, showing more now stuff or showing they can throw strikes and command the ball, that could certainly give them a chance to move quicker through the system."

Those four college pitchers are Cody Morris of South Carolina, Alex Royalty of UNC-Wilmington, Brian Eichhorn of Georgia Southern and Robert Broom, who throws submarine style, of Mercer.

The Indians also drafted left-handed pitcher Adam Scott (fourth round, No. 133 overall) for the second consecutive year.

Rounds 11-40 of the MLB Draft will take place on Wednesday.

Ryan Lewis can be reached at rlewis@thebeaconjournal.com. Read the Indians blog at <http://www.ohio.com/indians>. Follow him on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/RyanLewisABJ>.

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 06.06.2018

Indians 3, Brewers 2: Corey Kluber, Jose Ramirez lift Indians to win over Brewers

By Ryan Lewis

CLEVELAND: Jose Ramirez has terrorized American League pitching this season. Tuesday night at Progressive Field, it was time to terrify a National League team.

Ramirez continued his torrid season and power surge since rumors hit the internet about him failing a test for performance-enhancing drugs, belting a home run in the Indians' 3-2 win over the Milwaukee Brewers.

With the Indians leading 2-1 in the third inning, Ramirez launched a solo shot to right field off Brewers starting pitcher Junior Guerra (3-4). It was Ramirez's 19th home run of the season, one off the major-league-leading pace set by Boston Red Sox outfielder J.D. Martinez with 20.

Ramirez is hitting .298 with a .395 on-base percentage with those 19 home runs, 18 doubles and 42 RBI. His 4.2 fWAR stands second in the game among qualified position players, trailing only Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout, who is at 5.1.

The Indians (31-28) took a 2-0 lead in the bottom of the second inning thanks to the return of one of their ailing outfielders, Lonnie Chisenhall, who was activated off the disabled list on Tuesday. In his first at-bat in the majors since April 7, and with the bases loaded and one out following a walk and singles by Yonder Alonso and Yan Gomes, Chisenhall ripped a single that scored two and gave the Indians a 2-0 lead.

Edwin Encarnacion went 1-for-3, extending his hitting streak to 11 games with a double to left field in the bottom of the eighth.

While Ramirez bolstered his case as a Most Valuable Player candidate, Corey Kluber (9-2) continued his Cy Young campaign, pitching seven strong innings and allowing one run on seven hits to go with seven strikeouts. He lowered his ERA to 1.96.

Kluber also didn't issue a walk, extending his walk-less streak to 35½ innings, the longest stretch of his career and the longest for an Indians pitcher since Paul Byrd avoided a walk for 48 innings in 2007. The Brewers' lone run off Kluber was brought home by Lorenzo Cain with an RBI single in the third to score Manny Pina, who doubled with one out.

The Indians' beleaguered bullpen preserved a quality start by Kluber, but they made it interesting. Neil Ramirez pitched a scoreless eighth with a strikeout, which led to closer Cody Allen in the ninth.

Allen gave up a solo home run to Brewers third baseman and former Kent State standout Travis Shaw that clanked off the right-field foul pole, bringing the Brewers to within 3-2. From that point, Allen retired three consecutive Brewers (37-24) to earn his 10th save of the season.

Akron Beacon Journal LOADED: 06.06.2018

Babe Ruth home-run ball goes on display in Cleveland

By Marc Bona, cleveland.com mbona@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - On a temperate June day in 1928, Babe Ruth took a mighty swing in League Park and sent a ball over the right-field screen.

As Ruth strode to the plate with two out in the ninth inning, Clevelander Connie Long was walking home from work on Lexington Avenue. Serendipitous timing being what it can be, he grabbed the ball outside the park.

The ball - Ruth's 436th home run - has remained in Cleveland.

The ball will be the focus of a free program Thursday, June 7, at the Baseball Heritage Museum at the site of the stadium, at E. 66th Street and Lexington on Cleveland's east side. Thursday is the 90th anniversary of the home run.

Ruth's home-run ball, his 20th of the season, will begin a three-year stint at the museum. The ball has stayed in the Long family all these years, according to the museum.

"My father liked baseball," Bill Long said. "My guess is he finished work and wanted to see how the Indians were doing against the Yankees. He was outside the 40-foot screen and he hears a roar."

Kids rushed as the ball sailed over the fence 290 feet from home plate, smacked the curb, and bounced to where Connie Long was standing. He soon found out it was one of Ruth's prodigious blasts. The ricochet off the curb left a scuff, Bill Long said.

The 20-year-old Long, who worked in sales, made his way into the clubhouse. Ruth signed the ball that he had pounded out of League Park.

It wasn't the only memorable thing Ruth did on the road trip in Cleveland.

The slugger, known for his child-like affinity to enjoy time with kids, attended a Cathedral Latin High School fundraiser carnival. He bought ice cream for a few girls, signed about 50 autographs, and played a game where you tried to toss a rope hoop around the head of a live duck.

Ruth tossed, won the duck, and gave it to a boy.

The folks at the carnival were probably the only Clevelanders happy with Ruth that week; the Yankees swept the Indians in a three-game series.

Gordon Cobbledick, writing in the Cleveland Plain Dealer, described Ruth's late-inning heroics: "For eight innings Babe Ruth, the terrible man of the Yankees, and his stout young understudy, Lou Gehrig, had been as putty in the hands of our Mr. Shaute."

Until the ninth inning, that is. Joe Shaute surrendered the home run to Ruth - who the paper describes as "Gotham's rotund sultan of swat" - as well as one to Gehrig in the same inning, and one in the eighth to Tony Lazzeri. The Yankees exploded for all of their runs in the final two innings, winning 8-2.

The day Ruth hit his 436th homer - one of 46 he would hit in League Park in his 22-year career - Amelia Earhart was getting ready to fly from Fiji to Australia. Herbert Hoover was running for president in light of Calvin Coolidge's announcement he would not seek a second term. And Ruth's Yankees were on their way to a second straight World Series title.

Much of that game's history revolves around Ruth.

Shaute was in the middle of a 13-year career and would earn 99 victories. In his Major League debut in 1922, just shy of his 23rd birthday, the lefthander entered a game at the Polo Grounds. The first batter he faced? Ruth. He struck him out on four pitches. Indians outfielder Charlie Jamieson was good pals with Ruth for years. And Cleveland's George Uhle, who entered the game as pinch-hitter, had rare success against the Yankees star.

According to his Society for American Baseball Research biography, Uhle - a native Clevelander - faced Ruth more than any pitcher. In 110 at-bats, Ruth managed just four home runs off Uhle. The Cleveland hurler tallied the second most strikeouts against Ruth, with 25. (Hall-of-Famer Lefty Grove had 27.)

There were a couple of other footnotes from the game, which took a lightning-quick 1 hour, 46 minutes, before 8,000 fans.

Outfielder Homer Wayne Summa, who despite his name had only 18 home runs in his 10-year career, much of it spent in Cleveland, has his own trivial record-book notches. In 1918, two years before he broke into the Majors, Summa landed a job with Goodyear in Akron and played for the company's baseball team. In 1927, he became the first Major Leaguer to hit into a game-ending unassisted triple play. To this day, he is one of only two players to do so on a game's final swing.

And one of the game's umpires, Red Ormsby, would have his own notorious footnote less than a year later at League Park. After a call went against Cleveland, fans tossed soda bottles onto the diamond. One bottle, aimed for the umpire who made the call, instead hit Ormsby near third base. He suffered a concussion.

In 1928, Cleveland would finish in seventh place in the eight-team American League, 39 games behind New York. Ruth would go on, of course, to hit almost 300 more home runs, winding up with 714.

Ruth - not surprisingly - hit the first ball out of the previous Yankee Stadium, in 1923. That ball sold at auction in 1998 for \$126,500.

But it was Ruth's 436th home run in Cleveland that will be part of a holographic exhibit just a few feet from where he belted it.

"I really don't want to part with it," Long said. "It seemed like a good thing to do."

About the program and the ball

The Baseball Heritage Museum is at League Park, E. 66th Street and Lexington Avenue. Street parking. The Ruth Home Run Ball Exhibit Debut is 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, June 7. Bob DiBiasio, the Indians senior vice president of public affairs, will lead a discussion with Bill Long, son of Connie Long, who retrieved the ball 90 years ago. Bill Long had the ball signed over the years:

Bob Feller, 1955 (his 266 wins are the best among Indians hurlers).

Herb Score, 1956 (won 49 games with Cleveland before becoming a broadcaster).

Vic Wertz, 1957 (played 17 years, and was with Cleveland in '57).

Gary Bell, 1958 (was a rookie that season with the Indians).

Henry Aaron, 1976 (two years after he broke Ruth's record; Aaron's mark stood for 33 years).

Willie Mays, 1982 (the Hall of Famer is in fifth place among home-run leaders, with 660).

In the 1954 World Series, Mays' catch - one of baseball's greatest - came off Wertz' bat.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Cleveland Indians draft 2018: Let's take a closer look at the Tribe's first four picks

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com.phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - It's been a while since the Indians selected a catcher in the first round of the draft as they did Monday night with Noah Naylor.

They took Tim Glass in 1976, but he stalled at Class AA ball. In 1973, they took Rick Cerone and he played 18 years in the big leagues. But there's a catch - excuse the pun - he spent only 14 of his 1,329 big-league games with the Indians.

No, you have to go back even farther to find a catcher selected in the first round of the draft that left a sizeable footprint with the Indians. All the way back to the maiden voyage of the draft in 1965 when the Indians selected Ray Fosse with the seventh overall pick. So to say it's been a while, well, it certainly has.

The Indians went north of the border -- to Mississauga, Ontario -- to select Naylor, 18, with the 29th pick in the first round. Scott Barnsby, in his first year as director of scouting for the Tribe, said the left-handed hitting Naylor came to their attention because of the way he swings the bat.

"We're excited about Noah's bat," said Barnsby late Monday night after the completion of the first two rounds. "He controls the strike zone. He has really good hand-eye coordination. He can drive the ball to all fields and there's power there.

"Defensively, he's a stay-behind-the-plate catcher with arm strength. He's athletic enough to move around the field and play other positions also."

With such a heavenly description for a catcher is it any surprise that Naylor attended St. Joan of Arc Catholic School?

Barnsby believes Naylor's best position is catcher and that he has the ability to stay there as he progresses through the minors. He was a member of the Canadian National team that toured spring training this spring and played against the Red Sox and Blue Jays.

Josh Naylor, Noah's older brother, was a first-round pick of the Miami Marlins in 2015. He's now a top first-base prospect with San Diego.

What have other teams done with the 29th, 35th, 41st and 67th picks?

The Indians had four picks in the first two rounds Monday night. After Naylor they selected high school right-handers Ethan Hankins and Lenny Torres with the 35th and 41st picks. The 35th pick was compensation for losing Carlos Santana over the winter to the Phillies. The 41st pick came the Indians way as part of Round A of the Competitive Balance phase of the draft.

In the second round, they took college right-hander Nick Sandlin from Southern Mississippi with the 67th overall pick.

2018 RHP Ethan Hankins, Forsyth Central HS (GA), Vanderbilt Commit -- 5/14/18

Hankins, 6-6 and 215 pounds, probably would have gone in the first round, but he injured his right shoulder early this spring at Forsyth Central High School in Cumming, Ga. He missed nearly five weeks, but he came back at the end of the season and the Indians believe he's healthy.

"Ethan was shut down this spring," said Barnsby. "He had an issue with the back of his shoulder and was shut down four to five weeks. He came back healthy. It's going to take a little time for him to get back to full strength, but we spent an awful lot of time with him. We had him with our medical staff making sure that we felt really comfortable with his health, and we do."

Hankins showed well last summer on the showcase circuit. Last fall he helped Team USA's 18-and-under club win the gold medal at the World Cup. He went 1-0 with a 0.75 ERA with 27 strikeouts in two starts covering 12 innings.

"We're looking at him as a starter," said Barnsby. "He has a four-pitch mix. We've spent a lot of time with him the last few years. He's been up to 97 mph with life to the fastball. He has two different breaking balls and he can spin both of them. He has an advance feel for the changeup and throws a lot of strikes."

One scouting report said Hankins, when healthy, had the best fastball in the draft.

The Indians see the 6-2, 185-pound Torres, 17, as a starter as well. They drafted him out of Beacon High School in Beacon, N.Y. This year he posted a 0.68 ERA, striking out 85 batters in 41 innings.

Lenny Torres Jr USA 18u 80 man tryouts

"He's an athletic right-hander," said Barnsby. "We saw him quite a few times last summer and met with him during the offseason. Lenny has been up to 96 mph with life to the fastball. He has a really quick arm and his slider has really progressed. He has a developing feel for the changeup."

Naylor has committed to Texas A&M, Hankins to Vanderbilt and Torres to St. John's. Barnsby feels good about the chances of the Indians signing them. Here are their slot values: Naylor \$2,332,700, Hankins \$2,016,400 and Torres \$1,744,800.

"We're working through that," said Barnsby. "Our area scouts have done a great job building relationships with the players and their families. We're confident these guys want to go out and play."

Sandlin, 21, is one of the more interesting stories in the draft. He's a right-hander who changes arm slots and angles and moved into the starting rotation this year after two years of being a reliever.

USM survives CUSA elimination game against Louisiana Tech

The 5-11, 180-pound Sandlin went 10-0 with a 1.06 ERA in 15 starts for Southern Mississippi. He struck out 144 and walked only 18 batters in 102 1/3 innings.

If the Indians get him signed, manager Terry Francona might be pleading with the front office to bring him to the big leagues as soon as possible to help his struggling bullpen.

"He had an incredible year," said Barnsby. "He had the lowest ERA of any pitcher in the NCAA and the 10th-best strikeout-to-walk ratio. As far as stuff, he's 90 to 94 mph. He has a slider that he can throw to both sides of the plate."

Right-handers in the big leagues are usually bigger than Sandlin. But that didn't stop the Indians from drafting him.

"He's not a really big guy, but he's got now stuff out of the pen," said Barnsby.

Barnsby said the Indians would probably look at Sandlin as a reliever. In his first two years with Southern Mississippi he saved 20 games. He has good spin rates on his pitches and throws from three different arm angles which adds to his deception. His slot value is \$939,700.

If Sandlin signs, Barnsby said he'll need some rest before pitching in the minors because he threw so many innings with Southern Mississippi this season.

The draft continues today and Wednesday.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Cleveland Indians activate Lonnie Chisenhall, option Bradley Zimmer to Class AAA Columbus

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- In a surprising move, the Indians activated outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall and optioned Bradley Zimmer, another outfielder, to Class AAA Columbus on Tuesday afternoon before opening a two-game series against the Brewers at Progressive Field.

Zimmer just came off the disabled list on Friday.

Chisenhall has been on the disabled list since April 8 with a right calf injury. Zimmer, who was activated on Friday and started Saturday and Sunday against the Twins, lost ground to rookie Greg Allen.

The switch-hitting Allen has flourished with outfielders Zimmer, Chisenhall, Tyler Naquin and Brandon Guyer on the disabled list. He's shown good defensive skills in center and right field and with the exception of being unable to bunt has held his own offensively.

He's hitting .263 (20-for-76) with three doubles, one homer and three RBI. Allen recently had a seven-game hitting streak in which he batted .407 (11-for-27). It included a game-winning, walk-off homer against the Astros in the 14th inning.

Zimmer, the opening day center fielder, is hitting .226 (24-for-106) with five doubles, two homers and nine RBI. The left-handed hitting Zimmer has struck out 44 times (42 percent strikeout rate), while drawing just seven walks.

He was on the disabled list with a bruised chest and left rib cage after hitting the center field wall at Yankee Stadium on May 5.

Chisenhall hit .286 (8-for-28) during his rehab assignment at Class AA Akron and Columbus. He hit three doubles and two homers with six RBI.

The former No.1 pick has played in just seven games for the Indians this season. He injured his right calf on April 7. It is the same injury that sidelined him for much of the second half last year.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Jesus Aguilar finds a home and an opportunity in Milwaukee instead of Cleveland

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Jesus Aguilar is finally hitting home runs in the big leagues. But he's doing it in Milwaukee instead of Cleveland.

Aguilar spent nine years with the Indians from 2008 through 2016. He hit 140 homers in the minors, and another 41 while playing winter ball. What he didn't do was hit one for the Tribe in the big leagues.

It's not like he received a lot of chances. Aguilar spent 35 games in the big leagues with the Indians in parts of the 2014, 2015 and 2016 seasons. He hit .172 (10-for-58) with no homers and five RBI.

"I don't remember playing two games in a row here," said Aguilar, who is at Progressive Field for a two-game series between the Indians and Brewers. "When I got picked up by the Brewers I got an opportunity to show what I can do."

In the spring of 2017 Aguilar was out of options and the Indians designated him for assignment. When they put him on waivers, the Brewers claimed him. It's safe to say he's found a home.

Jesus Aguilar Walkoff Home Run vs. Marlins

Aguilar entered Tuesday night's game hitting .309 (46-for-149) with 10 homers, 32 RBI and a .942 OPS (.564 slugging percentage+.379 on base percentage). Last year he hit .265 (74-for-279) with 16 homers and 52 RBI.

When asked what went wrong with the Indians, Aguilar said, "I don't really know. For me it was like they already had their team. They wanted to win games. Maybe he (manager Terry Francona) didn't feel like I could be part of a winning team. But I have to say thank you to them for helping prepare me mentally to be who I am right now.

"When you go to Triple-A and you do things the right way, and put numbers up, and nothing happens, you have to do something good. So I took it in a good way. I kept going. I kept pushing and telling myself good things will happen. Now I'm here and showing what I can do."

When manager Terry Francona was asked about Aguilar on Tuesday, he said, "He didn't really get a chance here and I admit that. He got a chance somewhere else and he took advantage of it. We're happy for him. I hope he doesn't beat us, and we want to get him out, but we're happy for him."

Aguilar said it was all a matter of playing time with the Indians. Playing time as in he didn't get enough of it.

"They didn't give me those at-bats," he said. "They didn't give me the opportunity to show what I can do. When they called me up, I didn't get playing time. He had his team and their guys. But like I said before I took it in a good way. It prepared me mentally and I said thank you anyways."

Asked if he would like to hit a homer into the left field bleachers to help the Brewers win Tuesday night, Aguilar said, "I just want to win. I don't think about homers. We're playing really good right now. If it happens, that would be perfect for me."

Milwaukee is in first place in the NL Central with a 37-23 record. They've won six of their last 10 games.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Here's how Corey Kluber consistently produces for the Cleveland Indians in a no-walk zone

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - Corey Kluber has not walked a batter since the fourth inning of his May 8th start against Milwaukee at Miller Park. The man he walked, Domingo Santana, was erased on a fielder's choice.

Kluber has made five starts and thrown 35 1/3 innings since then without issuing a free pass. On Tuesday night, he made amends for those four offline pitches with seven scoreless innings against the Milwaukee at Progressive Field. After losing 3-2 on May 8, Kluber and the Indians emerged a winner Tuesday night by the same score.

It is the longest stretch by a Tribe pitcher without allowing a walk since Paul Byrd threw 48 walkless innings in 2007. So how does one pitch so long without walking a batter?

"It's about command," said manager Terry Francona.

To Kluber it's about filling the strike zone with pitches and forcing the hitter to make early contact with the baseball.

"If it's a two-pitch at-bat, you can't walk a guy," said Kluber with a smile.

No walks for Cleveland Indians Corey Kluber

Kluber leads the big leagues with 91 2/3 innings, but he's walked only 10 batters. Could the 10 walks be a product of batters being aggressive against Kluber early in the count and Kluber being equally aggressive against them?

The Tribe's two-time Cy Young winner didn't disagree with that theory.

"I think that regardless of whether a team is aggressive or not," said Kluber, "my approach is still to pound the strike zone and put pressure on them and make them put the ball in play."

Kluber (9-2, 1.96) has started the season with 13 straight quality starts - six or more innings, with three or fewer earned runs allowed. His two losses have been by one run - 2-1 to Seattle and 3-2 to the Brewers.

It is the second longest streak of quality starts in franchise history next to Hall of Famer Stan Coveleski, who opened the 1918 season with 16 straight quality starts. Coveleski crawled out of the coal mines in Pennsylvania to pitch the Indians to the 1920 World Series championship.

So Kluber has the quality start streak going. But there's more.

Just your average dose of #KluberDay filth.

Catch @Indians baseball on STO & FSGO: <https://t.co/JN7TzrJmsX> pic.twitter.com/hsoBJIsMuZ

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

He's allowed three or fewer runs in his last 25 starts going back to Aug. 3, 2017. It's the longest streak by an Indians' starter in the Baseball-Reference Index Era starting in 1908.

One more thing, since the start of last season, Kluber has allowed one or fewer runs in 22 of his 42 starts. What is the root of Kluber's consistency on the mound?

"My guess would be just going back to the day-to-day routines, things like that," said Kluber. "Having a purpose, so to speak, about playing catch every day and saying you want to get better. I don't have a goal in mind every day playing catch, but I think I want to feel good about that day, by the end of it, that I got something out of it."

"Not that I'm just out there aimlessly throwing, things like that. So, I guess my assumption would be that the work in-between starts contributes to the consistency when you're actually in the game."

Kluber said his routines between starts are especially helpful when things aren't going well.

"It's good to have that routine to fall back on, so you can kind of stay on track," he said. "It's pretty easy when you're struggling to kind of abandon ship. Then all of a sudden you start searching and you're pulling things from all over the place. I think that's when a lot of times guys get into a slump or kind of get into their own head."

At the moment things couldn't be going better for Kluber. His routines are working, he's throwing strikes and his head clear.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Lonnie Chisenhall wastes no time getting back into the swing of things with Cleveland Indians

By Joe Noga, cleveland.com jnoga@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- It's been nearly two months since Cleveland Indians outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall has had an opportunity to come through at the plate for his teammates, so when one was presented in the bottom of the second inning on Tuesday, the Tribe right fielder grabbed it.

In his first at-bat, Chisenhall lashed a bases-loaded single up the middle off Milwaukee starter Junior Guerra that scored Edwin Encarnacion and Yonder Alonso to give the Tribe a 2-0 lead. The Indians went on to win, 3-2, thanks in part to Chisenhall's first two RBI of the season.

"It was nice to be in a good situation," Chisenhall said. "Guys were on base in front of me. I always enjoy when guys are on base. We try to be aggressive and stay up the middle and it worked out."

Lonnie Chisenhall came up big in his first at-bat back with the @Indians!#RallyTogether pic.twitter.com/GFZ8dOf496

-- SportsTime Ohio (@SportsTimeOhio) June 6, 2018

Manager Terry Francona said he appreciated Chisenhall's timely contribution.

"That was very welcome," Francona said. "Guerra for them has got good stuff and he's got good numbers too to match it. It was nice to give (Cory) Kluber a lead."

Chisenhall had been on the disabled list since April 8. He's hit .235 (4-for-17) in seven games with Cleveland this season, and hit .286 (8--for-28) with two homers and six RBI across nine minor league rehab appearances.

He was activated Tuesday afternoon and Bradley Zimmer was optioned back to Columbus to make room on the 25-man roster.

For Chisenhall, the road back to Progressive Field included multiple stops in Columbus and Akron. He appeared for Columbus on Saturday in Adam Plutko's Triple-A no-hitter against Syracuse.

"I've been touring northeast Ohio and upstate New York for the past 10 days, so it's nice to be back here with the team," Chisenhall said. "You miss them when you're gone."

After injuring his calf for a third time in the last two seasons, Chisenhall said getting his recovery right was the most important factor in his return.

"It's tough after you go through it a third time," he said. "So, we just err on the side of caution. It took a little longer, but I think we got it right."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Bullpen buckles, but doesn't break as Cleveland Indians beat Milwaukee Brewers, 3-2

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Corey Kluber and Jose Ramirez did what they do best on Tuesday night at Progressive Field.

But the Indians needed a little more help to beat the Brewers, 3-2, and end a three-game losing streak.

The help was delivered by a long-lost member of the Tribe, Lonnie Chisenhall. The Indians activated Chisenhall from the disabled list before the game and in the second inning he lined a two-run single into center field for a 2-0 lead.

It was Chisenhall's first start since April 7, a game in which he suffered a right calf injury that put him on the disabled list for almost two months. Chisenhall's hit was his first since his seventh-inning single on April 2.

Kluber (9-2, 1.96) went seven innings, allowing one run on seven hits with seven strikeouts. Kluber has not walked a batter in the last 35 1/3 innings. It is the longest such streak by an Tribe pitcher since Paul Byrd pitched 48 walkless innings in 2007.

"I think he's got 10 walks on the year," said manager Terry Francona. "He's just such a pro. He and Gomer (catcher Yan Gomes) have a great rapport. I'm sure he's fun to catch because he's in such command of what he's doing."

It was Kluber's 13th straight quality start and 25th straight start in which he's allowed three or fewer runs.

"I thought Kluber was good," said Francona. "That's kind of the easy question. In the third they bunched three hits together, but other than that - no walks, seven strikeouts."

"Early in the game in fell behind 3-1 a couple of times, but worked himself back into the count. As the game went on, he just kept throwing strikes."

Ramirez gave the Indians a 3-1 lead with a two-out homer in the third inning. It was his 19th homer of the season. He entered the game tied for second in the AL home run race with Manny Machado with 18.

The Indians didn't do much damage against right-hander Junior Guerra, but they did enough to beat him for the second time this year. Guerra (3-4, 2.83) allowed three runs on seven hits in six innings.

Edwin Encarnacion started the second inning with a walk. Singles by Yonder Alonso and Yan Gomes loaded the bases for Chisenhall. He lined a single into center field to give Kluber and the Tribe the lead.

Lonnie Chisenhall rejoins Cleveland Indians, gets big hit

The Brewers came back with a run in the third on Lorenzo Cain's single to right. A double by Manny Pina and a single by Orlando Arcia set the table.

"They're a good lineup," said Kluber. "There's a reason they're in first place. There were times when I got ahead of them, they still battled, wasted some pitches and got hits when they were behind in the count."

Ramirez gave Kluber some room to work in the third with his 347-foot drive into the right field seats. He hit a 2-0 pitch from Guerra.

After that pitching ruled on both sides in this meeting between the AL and NL Central Division leaders. Yes, that means the Tribe's bullpen, leaking oil, leads and homers, saved the game. But not without drama.

Neil Ramirez relieved Kluber and pitched a scoreless eighth. Ramirez, in his last four appearances, has not allowed a run in 4 1/3 innings.

Closer Cody Allen earned his 10th save, but he started the ninth by allowing a towering homer by Travis Shaw off the right field foul pole to make it a one-run game.

After the homer, Allen retired the Brewers in order. He is eight saves shy of passing Bob Wickman's franchise record of 139.

No walks for Cleveland Indians Corey Kluber

What it means

The Indians are 194-196 since interleague play began in 1997.

The pitches

Guerra threw 92 pitches, 62 (67 percent) for strikes. Kluber threw 112 pitches, 74 (66 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Brewers and Indians drew 22,330 fans to Progressive Field on Tuesday night. First pitch was at 7:10 p.m. with a temperature of 59 degrees.

Next

The Indians and Brewers end their four-game interleague series on Wednesday at 1:10 p.m. when Carlos Carrasco (6-4, 4.50) faces Milwaukee right-hander Chase Anderson (4-4, 4.85). SportsTime Ohio and WTAM will carry the game.

Carrasco on May 9 struck out 14 as he threw a five-hitter against the Brewers at Miller Park. Anderson has made one start against the Indians when he was with Arizona. He lost a 6-1 decision on June 25, 2014.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Bradley Zimmer's contact problem and 4 other things we learned about the Cleveland Indians

By Paul Hoynes, cleveland.com phoynes@cleveland.com

CLEVELAND, Ohio - In an era when hitters are given a blank check when it comes to the amount of times they can strike out, Bradley Zimmer was optioned to Class AAA Columbus on Tuesday because of his strikeouts.

Yeah, he was striking out that much.

"Offensively it's been a struggle for him," said manager Terry Francona. "The strikeouts ... we talked to him about that."

That would be we as in Francona and Chris Antonetti, Indians president of baseball operations.

"We wanted to talk to him together," said Francona. "A lot of guys have gone back to Triple-A and worked on their game and then come back. We believe that will happen with Zim."

Zimmer was optioned to make room for Lonnie Chisenhall, who came off the disabled list and started in right field Tuesday night at Progressive Field against Milwaukee. It was Chisenhall's first start since he strained his right calf on April 7.

The 6-5 Zimmer, the Tribe's opening day center fielder, was hitting .226 (24-for-106) with two homers and nine RBI in 34 games when he was sent down. He's struck out 44 times in 106 at-bats (42 percent strikeout rate), while drawing just seven walks.

"If you're striking out 40 percent of the time, you've got to really be doing some damage when you hit the ball," said Francona. "And he understood that. He said he knows he needs to make some adjustments. We didn't want to send him down and have him feel like he's on an island. We wanted to talk to him."

Francona says Zimmer is the team's best center fielder, but it's difficult to make the necessary adjustments in his swing at the big-league level.

The emergence of rookie Greg Allen will make Zimmer's absence in center easier to handle.

"When a guy plays like he has, it allows you to do something you weren't sure that you could," said Francona.

Cleveland Indians vs. Chicago Cubs, April 25, 2018 Indians outfielder Brandon Guyer is expected to come off the disabled list on Friday. Chuck Crow, The Plain Dealer

No. 1: Another move coming

The Indians will have to make another roster move, probably with an outfielder, when Brandon Guyer comes off the disabled list on Friday.

Guyer, recovering from a strained neck, is ready to play, but the Indians wanted to give him a few more at-bats on his rehab assignment. "The plan is for him to come back Friday," said Francona. "Milwaukee has right-handers going both games so the plan is for him to play a little more and come back Friday."

Guyer plays mostly against left-handers.

The Indians are carrying five outfielders in Michael Brantley, Allen, Chisenhall, Rajai Davis and Melky Cabrera.

Melky Cabrera happy to join Indians, glad he doesn't have to face Corey Kluber

No. 2: Who is going to play right?

Right now the Francona has two options in right - the left-handed hitting Chisenhall and the switch-hitting Cabrera. So who plays when?

Francona says he's going to do some "mixing and matching."

"Melky certainly fills a spot pinch-hitting because he's a switch hitter," said Francona. "We usually work two to three days ahead. We'll look at it like we always do. I don't have the exact answer in front of me, though."

Chisenhall returned from his rehab assignment at Class AA Akron and Columbus, and drove in two runs with a second-inning single on Tuesday.

"He's fine. He's healthy," said Francona, referring to Chisenhall's calf injury. "The last thing you want is a question mark when somebody comes back from the DL. And he did all the things he was supposed to do."

Andrew Miller on what it means to have Michael Brantley back for Indians

No. 3: Testing, testing

Left-hander Andrew Miller will throw a bullpen session on Wednesday as he continues to test his right knee. Miller went on the DL on May 26.

Asked if Miller would go on a rehab assignment before being activated, Francona said, "Some of it may depend on how long it is and how he feels. We'll work through it together."

Miller has been on the DL twice this year.

5/9/18: Carrasco goes the distance in Indians win

No. 4: In closing

Outfielder Tyler Naquin will continue his rehab assignment Wednesday at Columbus as he recovers from a strained left hamstring. Francona said Naquin will spend some time in center during his rehab. He's played mostly right field with the Tribe this year. ... The Indians entered Tuesday night's game with an MLB-leading 189 runs since May 1.

Edwin Encarnacion has three multi-homer games this season. In his career, he has 31, tying him for third among active players with Giancarlo Stanton. Albert Pujols has 57 and Adrian Beltre 32. ... Cody Allen has moved into second place on the Tribe's all-time save list with 131. Bob Wickman leads with 139.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.06.2018

Indians 3, Brewers 2: A rare instance of consecutive losses

Todd Rosiak, June 5, 2018

CLEVELAND - For the first time since late April, the Milwaukee Brewers find themselves in the midst of a losing streak.

The Brewers fell behind Corey Kluber early, and the reigning American League Cy Young Award winner never let them get back into the game as they fell to the Cleveland Indians, 3-2, Tuesday night at Progressive Field.

The Brewers came in having not lost consecutive games since being swept in a four-game series against the Chicago Cubs at Wrigley Field from April 26-29 but have now lost two straight after losing to the Chicago White Sox on Sunday.

The Indians put together the game-clinching rally against Junior Guerra in the second.

A walk of Edwin Encarnacion started it and then singles by three of the next four batters made it 2-0, with Lonnie Chisenhall's two-RBI liner to center the big hit.

The Brewers' lone best chance of getting to Kluber came in the next inning, but they failed to take full advantage.

Manny Piña doubled with one out, then Orlando Arcia and Lorenzo Cain each singled to narrow the gap to 2-1. Christian Yelich, up next, hit a smash but right at second baseman Jason Kipnis and Jesús Aguilar struck out.

José Ramírez hit a two-out, solo homer in the third to push Cleveland's cushion back to two runs.

Milwaukee put runners on in the fourth, fifth and sixth but each time, Kluber halted the prospective rallies before they could begin.

Guerra (3-4) pitched six innings for his third straight start, allowing seven hits and a walk with five strikeouts. Kluber, meanwhile, allowed seven hits without a walk and struck out seven in his seven-inning stint.

Travis Shaw homered off the foul pole in right to start the ninth, but Cody Allen shut the door from there.

FIVE TAKEAWAYS

SOLVING KLUBER: The Brewers got to Kluber for five hits, three runs and a walk over six innings in a 3-2 victory on May 8 at Miller Park. Pitcher Brent Suter provided some unexpected offense when he hit a 433-foot homer off the scoreboard in the third inning that wound up proving to be the decisive run. Manager Craig Counsell laughed when it was jokingly suggested he should have started Suter at DH on Tuesday but acknowledged runs would again be at a premium.

"He's obviously a tough customer, and you've got to get some pitches to hit," Counsell said. "He doesn't give you many, so the ones you do get you've got to take advantage of."

JUDGING ARCIA: Arcia came into Tuesday hitting .273 with one RBI in four games since being recalled from Class AAA Colorado Springs. Does he look any different at the plate after his brief four-game stay there?

"I don't have any big conclusion," Counsell said. "The biggest thing with any hitter is if he stays in the strike zone, there'll be good results. If you chase out of the strike zone, then there's going to be problems. One of the things Orlando's struggled with at times is the chase part."

RESTING UP: With the Brewers enjoying three days off in a 10-day span, including one on each end of the Cleveland series, Counsell was asked if it was a needed breather for his bullpen.

"I would point to this for the position players as much as anybody," he said. "This is a really nice stretch. I feel good about what we're doing with our bullpen, I really do. I don't see any cause for concern, really. I think we're in a good place with a lot of guys, and frankly, I've got some guys that I need to pitch."

"Off days help the team in general."

FIFTH SPOT: The Brewers will play a stretch of six straight games beginning Friday in Philadelphia, meaning they'll need a fifth starter Tuesday against the Chicago Cubs at Miller Park. Zach Davies (right shoulder) is eligible to be reinstated from the disabled list on Saturday, but that might be too optimistic at this point.

"That's up for debate right now," Counsell said of the fifth starter. "We're talking about some different ideas for that. We've got to make a decision on that at some point this weekend as far as mapping the next couple weeks out."

HOW'S IT GOING: Shaw is a huge Cleveland sports fan but it was Yelich who went out to dinner Monday night with Baker Mayfield, Cleveland Browns quarterback and No. 1 pick in April's NFL draft. The two became friendly over the winter after meeting at a workout facility in California, with Mayfield becoming a Brewers fan not long thereafter.

"It was cool to kind of reconnect a little bit, hang out and talk about all the stuff that's been happening," said Yelich, who had a Mayfield jersey hanging in his locker. "I definitely know he follows the Brewers pretty closely. We were talking about that."

Journal Sentinel LOADED: 06.06.2018

"Kluber being Kluber." Indians starter shuts down Brewers' offense.

Todd Rosiak June 5, 2018

CLEVELAND -- Having seen Corey Kluber plenty during his time with the Kansas City Royals, Lorenzo Cain was succinct in describing the reigning American League Cy Young Award winner's performance on Tuesday night.

"Kluber being Kluber," said Cain, who went 2 for 4 and drove in a run in what wound up being the Brewers' last, best chance at getting to the right-hander in the third inning.

Kluber went seven overall, allowing seven hits and one run while striking out seven in dispatching the Milwaukee Brewers, 3-2, at Progressive Field.

"I've seen him over the years," Cain continued. "He's as solid as any pitcher I know. He goes in there and gets the job done. Keeps you off-balance the entire at-bat. That's why he's so consistent."

"He has great stuff."

The Brewers beat Kluber the first time they saw him, on May 8 in Milwaukee, thanks to a two-run home run in the first inning by Travis Shaw and then an improbable solo shot by Brent Suter in the third that held up the rest of the way.

It was one of just two losses on the season to this point for the eight-year veteran, who has won four of five since then and once again ranks near the top of many of the key pitching categories in the American League.

The Indians staked him to a 2-0 lead in the second inning thanks to a walk and three singles against Junior Guerra, who pitched six innings for the third straight time with nothing to show for it.

Milwaukee came right back in the third with a one-out double by Manny Piña starting things against Kluber. Orlando Arcia followed by chopping a single off the plate to put runners on the corners, then Cain fouled off four straight pitches before singling to right to cut the deficit to 2-1.

That brought up Christian Yelich, who also made hard contact. But his line drive was right at second baseman Jason Kipnis, who gloved it. Jesús Aguilar then worked a seven-pitch at-bat against Kluber, only to strike out and leave the Brewers wishing they'd made more of a golden opportunity.

"You've got to jump on him, and when you get a chance to tack on you've got to take advantage of it," said Cain. "If you don't and allow him to get out of situations, then it's like you're almost starting over again with him."

Which was pretty much what happened over Kluber's final four innings.

He allowed singles in the fourth, fifth and sixth, but all three came with two outs and Milwaukee couldn't capitalize further. Its best shot came in the sixth after Braun singled to center and Ji-Man Choi lined a shot to left, only to see it settle into the glove of Michael Brantley for the third out.

"Kluber being Kluber," Cain, who came in a career .229 hitter in 35 at-bats against him, said again.

"Throwing that damn frisbee slurve, whatever the hell he calls it. It's pretty impressive because he stands all the way to the far right side of the rubber and throws a cutter that looks like it's coming at you, but it ends up on the outside part of the plate or off the plate. He keeps it shin-high, which you can't just do anything with.

"It's impressive."

The Brewers went down in order in the seventh with Kluber ultimately giving way to one-time Milwaukee reliever Neil Ramirez. He pitched a 1-2-3 eighth before Travis Shaw provided a last gasp by homering high off the foul pole to start the ninth against closer Cody Allen.

But Allen recovered, and the Brewers fell to 1-3 on their current road trip. In the three losses -- the first two to the lowly Chicago White Sox -- they've scored three, one and now two runs, with the continued inability to generate offense beyond the homer a continuing concern.

"Another tough outing for the offense," Cain said.

What was notable about the loss was it marked the first time since the Brewers have dropped consecutive games since losing four straight to the Chicago Cubs at Wrigley Field from April 26-29.

Keeping it from becoming a three-game losing streak won't be easy, as the Indians start right-hander Carlos Carrasco in the matinee on Wednesday. Carrasco confounded the Brewers on May 9, striking out 14 in a complete-game, 117-pitch gem.

"We've been pretty consistent this last month," Cain said. "But it's a long season and we've got to continue to be consistent throughout the entire season to get to where we want to be, which is in the playoffs.

"A little hiccup, losing two back to back, but we've got to find a way to bounce back. We've got another tough outing tomorrow in Carrasco, so it definitely doesn't get any easier. We've got to be ready to go and hopefully we can go out and put up a lot of runs tomorrow."

Journal Sentinel LOADED: 06.06.2018

Kluber gets 9th win, Indians beat Brewers 3-2

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) -- Corey Kluber is looking like a Cy Young Award winner again.

Cleveland's ace scattered seven hits in seven strong innings and moved into a tie for the American League lead with his ninth win, and the Indians beat the Milwaukee Brewers 3-2 on Tuesday night.

"He's such a pro," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "I'm sure he's fun to catch because he's in such command of what he's doing."

Kluber (9-2) gave up a run, struck out seven and didn't walk a batter for the fifth straight start, a stretch of 35 1/3 innings. The right-hander is tied with New York's Luis Severino for the league lead in wins.

Kluber has a simple explanation for his ability to avoid walking hitters.

"My goal is to go out there and pound the strike zone," he said. "At times it helps me get some quick at-bats. Regardless of whether a team is aggressive or not my approach is to put the pressure on them and make them put the ball in play."

Lorenzo Cain's third-inning single scored Milwaukee's only run off Kluber, who was pulled after throwing 112 pitches.

"It's both sides of the plate when you go against him because he commands his fastball and curveball to both sides," Brewers third baseman Travis Shaw said. "A lot of guys, you can kind of ignore one of them to some degree, but not with Kluber."

Kluber won the AL Cy Young award in 2014 and again last season. He went 4-1 with a 1.83 ERA in May with the only loss coming to the Brewers on May 8 when he allowed two home runs, including one hit by pitcher Brent Suter that carried 433 feet.

Jose Ramirez hit his 19th home run, a solo shot in the third. Lonnie Chisenhall, in his first at-bat in two months, drove in two runs with a bases-loaded single in the second.

Cody Allen gave up a leadoff homer to Shaw in the ninth, but retired the next three hitters for his 10th save.

Junior Guerra (3-4) allowed three runs in six innings for the Brewers, who have lost two straight for the first time since April 26-29 when they lost four in a row.

The annoying midges from Lake Erie descended on the ballpark causing fielders to wave their gloves in front of their faces, although play continued without interruption. The bugs usually make their first appearance of the season in early June.

Cleveland loaded the bases in the second with one out on a walk and two singles. Chisenhall, activated from the 10-day disabled list before the game, was out since April 7 because of a strained right calf.

Chisenhall was glad to contribute in his return, but admitted dealing with the bugs was a challenge.

"I swallowed a few of them so I'm going to skip dinner," he said with a laugh.

The Indians won six straight before losing the final three games of a weekend series in Minnesota.

SUPPORT THE HOME TEAM

Indians players wore "Whatever It Takes" T-shirts during batting practice, the slogan the Cleveland Cavaliers have used during this season's playoffs. Francona and several players plan to attend Game 3 of the NBA Finals on Wednesday night when the Cavaliers play Golden State at Quicken Loans Arena.

Shaw, who was born in Ohio and attended Kent State, wore a LeBron James jersey in the Milwaukee clubhouse before the game.

Batting practice also had a football touch as former Browns offensive tackle Joe Thomas, a Wisconsin native, took some swings in the batting cage. Thomas, who retired following last season, hit a few pitches into the outfield.

NOT EXACTLY A SLUMP

The Brewers have lost three of four on their current road trip, but still have the best record in the NL.

"We pitched well enough to keep us in the game," manager Craig Counsell said. "Junior did a nice job after leaving a couple of balls over the plate in the second inning. He's showing nice progress."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Brewers: 1B Eric Thames (torn left thumb ligament) will join Triple-A Colorado Springs on Wednesday for a minor league rehab assignment. He has been on the disabled list since April 25.

Indians: LHP Andrew Miller (inflammation in right knee) will throw off the mound Wednesday. He's been on the DL since May 26. It hasn't been determined if Miller will go on a minor league rehab assignment before being activated.

UP NEXT

Brewers RHP Chase Anderson (4-4, 4.85 ERA) takes on Indians RHP Carlos Carrasco (6-4, 4.50 ERA) in the two-game series finale. Carrasco earned a complete game victory at Milwaukee on May 9, striking out 14.

Not only does José Ramírez want to participate in the Home Run Derby, but 'I would win it'

Zack Meisel Jun 5, 2018

On June 6, 2015, the Indians reached their breaking point with José Ramírez. They optioned the struggling infielder to Class AAA Columbus.

Ramírez had produced an unsightly stat line — including a .180 average and a .487 OPS — while tasked with one assignment: Hold down the shortstop position until the club was ready to promote Francisco Lindor to the majors.

Ramírez fell about one month short. Lindor joined the team in July. In 46 games to start the season, Ramírez hit only one home run. He registered a sky-high ground-ball rate and a low rate of hard contact.

Three years later, Ramírez ranks among the league leaders in a host of offensive categories, including home runs. Only J.D. Martinez (20) has clubbed more homers than Ramírez, who belted his 19th on Tuesday night. Only Mike Trout and Mookie Betts have registered a higher wRC+. Only Trout has recorded more WAR.

Last season, Ramírez led the league with 91 extra-base hits. Twenty-nine of those were home runs. This season, he became one of two hitters in franchise history to reach the 18-homer mark by the end of May (Albert Belle, 1996).

So, the idea that the once-light-hitting infielder could potentially participate in the Home Run Derby, alongside the sport's most powerful sluggers? It seems unfathomable. And it's something Ramírez has considered.

The Athletic asked Ramírez if he would want to compete in the event this summer. His eyes widened to a cartoonish size.

"Yeah, I would do it," he told The Athletic through the team interpreter. "I want to do it."

Ramírez has dreamed about earning a chance to showcase his skills before his peers, a lively crowd and a national audience. And, if the opportunity presents itself, he likes his chances.

"I've wanted to do it," he said. "If they put me there, I would win it."

No Tribe player has competed in the Home Run Derby since Grady Sizemore in 2008.

Related: The evolution of José Ramírez, baseball's best-kept secret

Comings and goings: Bradley Zimmer's strikeout rate cost him his big-league roster spot. Greg Allen's recent performance contributed to the Indians' decision, too.

Zimmer was the odd man out Tuesday, when the club activated Lonnie Chisenhall from the disabled list. Allen, who has turned heads with his recent stretch both at the plate and in the field, will receive regular playing time in center for the near future.

Zimmer returns to Columbus, where he'll attempt to pinpoint a way to reduce his strikeout rate, which sat at 38.6 percent through 114 plate appearances.

"He's our best center fielder," Terry Francona said. "Trying to make some of the adjustments at the major-league level can be hard. If you're striking out 40 percent of the time, you have to really be doing some damage when you hit the ball. And he understood that. He said he knows he needs to make some adjustments."

In the past three weeks, while filling in for Zimmer, Allen has posted a .313/.371/.469 slash line.

"When a guy plays like he has," Francona said, "it allows you to do something that maybe you weren't sure that you could."

The Indians expect to activate Brandon Guyer from the disabled list Friday. The team will have another decision to make at that time. One would think there's only enough roster space for one of Guyer and Melky Cabrera, with Chisenhall back to receive the bulk of the playing time in right field against right-handed pitching.

Tyler Naquin also continues his minor-league rehab assignment. Francona said he'll spend some time in center field as he works his way back into game shape.

Indians notes: Lonnie Chisenhall activated from DL, takes Bradley Zimmer's roster spot

Chris Assenheimer | **Chris Assenheimer** | **The Chronicle-Telegram** | **Published on June 5, 2018** | **Updated 6:30 a. m.**

CLEVELAND — Outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall was activated from the disabled list prior to Tuesday night's series opener against the Brewers. But instead of Greg Allen, it was Bradley Zimmer who was optioned to Triple-A Columbus to clear a spot on the 25-man roster for Chisenhall.

"Offensively it's been a struggle for him. The strikeouts. We talked to him about that," manager Terry Francona said of Zimmer, who is batting .226 with two home runs and nine RBIs in 34 games, striking out 44 times over 106 at-bats. "A lot of guys have gone back to Triple-A and worked on their game and then come back. We fully believe that will happen with Zim. We want that. He's our best center fielder.

"Trying to make some of the adjustments at the major league level can be hard. If you're striking out 40 percent of the time, you've got to really be doing some damage when you hit the ball. And he understood that. He said he knows he needs to make some adjustments."

Since an 0-for-14 start to his big league career, Allen had raised his batting average to .263 — hitting .345 (10-for-29) with three doubles, a triple, a homer, two RBIs and eight runs over his last eight games through Monday.

"When a guy plays like (Allen) has, it allows you to do something that maybe you weren't sure that you could," Francona said of sending Zimmer down.

The Indians have more looming decisions in the outfield with Brandon Guyer (neck strain) set to leave the disabled list Friday and Tyler Naquin (left hamstring strain) in the midst of a minor league rehab assignment.

For the time being, Francona will try to find playing time for Chisenhall and Melky Cabrera in right field. Chisenhall started Tuesday, while Cabrera was out of the lineup for the third straight game.

"Mixing and matching is probably the right word," Francona said. "Melky certainly fills a spot pinch-hitting because he's a switch-hitter. We usually try to work two to three days ahead. We'll look at it like we always do. I don't have the exact answer in front of me, though."

Chisenhall played seven rehab games for Columbus and Double-A Akron, batting .286 (8-for-28) with three doubles, two homers and six RBIs.

"He's fine. He's healthy," Francona said. "The last thing you want is a question mark when somebody comes back. And he did all the things he was supposed to do, so he's ready to go."

Miller moment

Left-hander Andrew Miller (right knee inflammation) is scheduled to throw a side session today at Progressive Field.

There is still no timetable for Miller's return and it is uncertain whether he will pitch on a rehab assignment before leaving the injured list.

"Some of it may depend on how long it is, how he feels, the amount of unknowns, if there are some. We'll see," Francona said. "We'll work through it together."

Familiar face

Former Indians prospect Jesus Aguilar was in the lineup for the first-place Brewers, batting third and playing first base.

Aguilar, 27, was claimed off waivers by Milwaukee from Cleveland prior to last year, batting .265 with 16 homers and 52 RBIs in 133 games for the Brewers.

"You know what, I hope he doesn't beat us, but good for him," Francona said of Aguilar, who was hitting .309 with 10 homers and 32 RBIs in 52 games through Monday. "He got his chance and he's making the most of it. We're really happy for him."

With Mike Napoli and Carlos Santana filling the first base role, there was no room for Aguilar on Cleveland's big league roster.

"He didn't really get a chance here, and I admit that. And he got a chance somewhere else and he took advantage of it," Francona said. "That's why we talk to guys when we take them off rosters. We never tell them that they can't play. We just tell them that we've made a decision that somebody at the moment's ahead of them."

Cleveland strong

A number of Indians players, including shortstop Francisco Lindor, third baseman Jose Ramirez and Brad Mills, wore Cavaliers "Whatever it Takes" shirts during pregame activities.

Former Browns players Joe Thomas and Andrew Hawkins recorded their "ThomaHawk," podcast at Progressive Field prior to the game.

Thomas took batting practice and swung it pretty well, lacing a number of line drives into right-center field, before throwing out a ceremonial first pitch to a standing ovation.

Minor detail

Right-hander Adam Plutko was named International League player of the week after tossing a no-hitter in Columbus' 9-1 victory at Syracuse on Saturday.

Plutko, who has made three starts for the Indians (3-0, 3.93 ERA) this season and is expected to return to the rotation Tuesday, struck out eight and missed a perfect game by walking one.

Draft days

First-round draft pick (29th overall) Noah Naylor is just the fourth catcher ever taken by the Indians in the first round, joining Tim Glass (1977), Rick Cerrone (1976) and Ray Fosse, who was chosen in the first MLB Draft in 1965. Naylor was selected out of St. Joan of Arc Catholic High School in Mississauga, Ontario.

Cleveland made three other selections on the first day of the draft Monday — RHP Ethan Hankins (Forsyth Central High School in Georgia) with the 35th overall pick, RHP Lenny Torres Jr. (Beacon High School in New York) with the 41st overall pick and RHP Nick Sandlin (Southern Mississippi University) with the 67th overall pick (second round).

Rounds 3-10 took place Tuesday, with the draft wrapping up today with rounds 11-40.

Roundin' third

The Indians are one of two teams (Yankees) in the majors with five players who have hit at least 10 homers and one of two teams (Red Sox) with five players who have collected at least 30 RBIs — Ramirez (18 homers, 41 RBIs), Edwin Encarnacion (16, 40), Lindor (14, 35), Yonder Alonso (11, 33) and Michael Brantley (10, 38). It is the fastest (58 games) that five Cleveland players accomplished as much since Eddie Murray, Manny Ramirez, Albert Belle, Paul Sorrento and Jim Thome (56 games in 1995).

SPORTS Corey Kluber in complete control, has no walks for fifth straight game as Indians down Brewers

Chris Assenheimer ByChris Assenheimer | The Chronicle-TelegramPublished on June 5, 2018 | Updated 2:58 a. m.

CLEVELAND — After a less than fruitful series against Central Division rival Minnesota, the Indians returned to Progressive Field on Tuesday night and got back on track.

There was no surprise that ace Corey Kluber was on the mound to reverse their fortunes.

Kluber turned in another stifling performance and Cleveland opened a two-game interleague series against first-place Milwaukee with a 3-2 victory.

Kluber allowed a run in the third inning, but nothing more, limiting the Brewers to seven hits, while striking out seven over seven innings.

"Oh, I thought he was good," manager Terry Francona said of Kluber, who notched his American League-leading ninth win. "In the third, they bunched three hits together, but other than that ... no walks, seven strikeouts. Early in the game he fell behind a few times 3-1, then fought his way back into the count. And then as the game went on, he just started throwing strikes."

That's about all Kluber threw.

For the fifth consecutive start (35¹/₃ innings), Kluber did not walk a batter. It is the longest streak by a Cleveland pitcher since Paul Byrd went 48 innings in 2007.

"I think he's got 10 all year," Francona said of Kluber's walk total over 13 starts and 91²/₃ innings. "He's such a pro. He and (catcher Yan Gomes) have a great rapport together. My goodness, I'm sure he's fun to catch because he is just in such command of what he's doing. His command is tremendous."

"My goal is to go out there and pound the strike zone, regardless of what their approach is," Kluber said. "Regardless of whether a team is aggressive or not, my approach is still to pound the strike zone and put the pressure on them and make them put the ball in play."

Kluber's consistency has reached elite levels. He has begun the season with 13 straight quality starts and has allowed three or fewer runs in each of his last 25 regular-season starts dating back to 2017.

"My guess would be just going back to the day-to-day routines," said Kluber, who since the beginning of last year has allowed one or fewer runs in 22 of his 42 outings. "My assumption would be that work in between starts probably contributes to consistency more than when you're in the game.

"When a start doesn't go well, it's good to have that routine to fall back on so that you can kind of stay on track, so to speak. It's pretty easy when you're struggling or things don't go your way to kind of abandon ship and then all of the sudden you start searching and pulling things from all over the place."

The Indians struck early against right-hander Junior Guerra, who entered the night with a 2.65 ERA over 10 starts.

Cleveland loaded the bases with one out in the second inning and Lonnie Chisenhall, in his first at-bat since leaving the disabled list, delivered a two-run single.

"How bout that?" Francona said of Chisenhall's immediate impact. "That was very welcome. The kid Guerra for them has good stuff. He's got good numbers to match it. It was nice to get Kluber a lead."

Jose Ramirez put the Indians up 3-1 with his 19th home run in the third inning. Only Boston's J.D. Martinez has more homers in the majors.

Cleveland got a scoreless inning of relief work from Neil Ramirez in the eighth, but not from closer Cody Allen in the ninth.

Allen allowed a leadoff homer to Travis Shaw on his third pitch, but retired the next three hitters to earn his 10th save.

"We thought about starting to match up and we're like, 'No, let's give (Ramirez) three hitters to let him settle in,' and he didn't need any more than that. So that was really welcome," Francona said. "Everybody sees the stuff, but his breaking ball is starting to get some depth to it, which gives him a little different look. You can tell the difference.

"(The homer) affected his ERA. It didn't affect the win and I think (Allen's) smart enough to know that."

Edwin Encarnacion, the reigning AL player of the week, extended his hitting streak to 11 games with a two-out double in the eighth inning. Encarnacion is batting .419 (18-for-43) with six homers, four doubles and 15 RBIs during the streak.

"For whatever (reason), it takes him a while," Francona said. "But once he gets going, it's fun to watch."

Q&A: Learn about the Indians' first-day draft picks with Scott Barnsby, director of amateur scouting

By T.J. Zuppe Jun 5, 2018 2

Before Scott Barnsby could take a well-deserved deep breath — maybe even grab a few hours of sleep, if he's lucky — he had one more thing to do.

Explain himself.

But that part was easy.

The Indians' director of amateur scouting picked up the phone and eagerly chatted with reporters Monday night, all while the final minutes of his first day running the draft war room dwindled like the final pieces of sand passing through an hour glass.

Barnsby, who took the draft reins from the promoted Brad Grant before the season, felt comfortable trusting the process they built leading into Day 1, and a talk with the media just before midnight provided an opportunity to display his confidence in their selections and brag about the group that made it possible.

"The one thing we talked to the staff about ahead of time was just how prepared we were," said Barnsby, a member of the amateur scouting department since 2002. "It felt good going into it, that we had done so much work. Obviously, that's thanks to every one of our area scouts and our cross-checkers. They've done an incredible job so far."

But most important?

"We're really excited about the four guys we took," he said.

With four of the top 67 picks in the 2018 MLB Draft, this is how Monday played out for the Indians:

- 29th pick: Noah Naylor, Catcher, St. Joan of Arc Catholic HS, Ontario, Canada
- 35th pick: Ethan Hankins, RHP, Forsyth Central HS, Georgia
- 41st pick: Lenny Torres Jr., RHP, Beacon HS, New York
- 67th pick: Nick Sandlin, RHP, University of Southern Mississippi

Before starting preparation for Day 2 — and just before finding a well-deserved soft space to rest his head — Barnsby offered insight into each of their selections. Here are the highlights of his late-night conference call with reporters.

On Noah Naylor:

SB: He's a left-handed hitting catcher. ... A member of the Canadian national team. We're excited about Noah, that he can really hit, controls the strike zone, really good hand-eye (coordination), can drive the ball to all fields. There's power there. Defensively, he's a stay-behind-the-plate catcher. Arm strength, and he's actually athletic enough to move around the field and have some defensive versatility as well. Mike Kanen is the signing scout for Noah. We're pretty excited about the work Mike has done to put us in the position to take Noah. He knew him incredibly well, developed a relationship with Noah and the family, so we're very excited to have Noah.

Is the plan with him to have him catch exclusively? Or, you mentioned versatility, would you want to move him to third or bounce around? What would be the plan?

SB: The plan would be to catch him. Obviously, how many days behind the plate, we're not sure. But we'll continue to get him some at-bats, maybe move him around the field. But the plan would be to catch him.

On Ethan Hankins:

SB: He's a 6-6, high school right-hander. ... Ethan is an impressive young man. We've spent a lot of time (monitoring him) over the last few years, Team USA. He's been up to 97 (mph), life to the fastball, two different breaking balls. He can spin both of them. He's got an advanced feel for his changeup, and he throws a lot of strikes. Ethan's a good athlete. A really impressive kid. CT Bradford is our scout in Georgia. Once again, I could say this about every one of our scouts, CT did an incredible job of getting to know Ethan and the family. We're really excited to add Ethan to the organization.

How is the health of his shoulder?

SB: Ethan was shut down this spring. He had an issue in the back of his shoulder. He missed four to five weeks. He came back healthy. Obviously, it's going to take him a little time to get back to full strength, but we've spent a lot of time with him, having him with our medical staff, making sure that we feel really comfortable with the health, and we do. He did have an issue, but we feel he's back to full health and ready to go. Excited to get him out.

Do you view him as a starter?

SB: Absolutely. We're looking at him as a starter. It's a four-pitch mix. He throws a lot of strikes. He's an athletic kid. The arm works well. We're absolutely looking at him as a starter.

On Lenny Torres:

SB: Once again, an impressive kid. We saw him several times last summer with Tournament of Stars, Team USA, the 40-Man Trials. Lenny's been up to 96 (mph). There's life to the fastball, really quick arm. His slider has really progressed. We feel he has the chance to have a really solid average-to-plus slider. Developing feel for the changeup, throws strikes, looking to develop him as a starter as well. Mike Kanen is the area scout for Lenny. We spent a lot of time with Lenny, not only at some offseason meetings, but we also spent a lot of time with Lenny and his family this spring. We feel really comfortable and excited to add Lenny to the organization.

With Torres being 17 years old, what kind of read do you have on his maturity level?

SB: Lenny has a strong support system at home, a great family. We've spent a lot of time with the family. We're certainly aware that he's young, but not only from time with Lenny and his family, but also talking to his coaches and a lot of sources around Lenny, we are very comfortable with his maturity level. We would certainly like to think that we're set up to handle, whether it's high school or college, our player development is well prepared to have Lenny in the organization. We have no concerns with his maturity.

When you take players this early, is there a high confidence that you'll be able to sign them?

SB: Yeah. Absolutely. We're working through that. Our area scouts have done a great job of building a relationship with them. We're confident that these guys want to go out and play. Noah Naylor had signed with Texas A&M, Ethan Hankins with Vanderbilt, and Lenny Torres with St. John's.

On Nick Sandlin:

SB: He is a unique right-hander, in the fact that he throws with a little lower slot. He's been a reliever in his career, and this year, he ended up as the Friday night starter for Southern Miss. He had an incredible year: 102 innings, only allowed 55 hits, 18 walks and 144 strikeouts. He had the lowest ERA of any pitcher in the NCAA — 1.06 — and he's got the 10th-best strikeout-to-walk ratio. As far as his stuff, he's 90-94 with life to his fastball, a slider that he can locate to both sides of the plate from his slot, and a feel for a changeup. He throws a lot of strikes.

He's got now stuff out of the pen.

He throws with multiple arm slots?

SB: Yes. He does. He works off of feel. There are times, he tells us, where he works just a tick below three-quarter, and then side-armed. He varies his slots. He's unique, deceptive, and he's able to throw strikes from all variations.

Has Terry Francona called yet to ask if he's ready to pitch out of his bullpen?

SB: That's a great question (laughs). I think we're about to get that phone call tonight.

Do you look at Sandlin as a reliever?

SB: He had a heavy workload this year, 102 innings, compared to what he did in the past. We need to sit down with player development. I think, obviously, in terms of development, that would be with player development, but I would say that we would lean toward him being a bullpen arm for us.

We've done our homework to make sure he's strong and durable. He's got great routines. He's really focused. He works extremely hard in the offseason. He's had some nice progress over the last few years with his stuff. We're confident, even though he's not the biggest guy, that he's extremely durable, and we're even more confident with how tough Nick is.

Sandlin also had some brief shoulder issues. Would you look to limit his amount of work the rest of the season?

SB: Nick missed one start this year. He's been typically a Friday starter. He came back the following weekend on a Sunday. He ended up throwing close to 100 pitches. We've been at the majority of his outings. There hasn't been a drop-off in stuff. We know that he's healthy. But obviously, our most important thing is to protect these guys, make sure they're healthy and develop them the best we can. We're certainly going to monitor his workload moving forward.

Todd Isaacs' single lifts Captains to walkoff win

By Nate Barnes, The News-Herald

The Captains lost an early three-run lead, fell behind by four runs, walked seven batters, committed three errors, hit two batters, pushed home three Dayton runs on wild pitches and still left Classic Park as winners, 10-9, against the Dragons on June 5.

Todd Isaacs' two-run single to left-center field with two outs in the ninth inning scored Mike Rivera and Will Benson to complete the Captains' sixth walkoff win at home this season. Isaacs finished 3-for-5 out of the ninth spot of Manager Luke Carlin's lineup in a performance emblematic of the team's spirit.

"They fight," Carlin said. "They battle. I think, obviously, we'd love to not have the inning like that, that we did, but it shows the character of this team when they can come back and fight like that, for sure."

The Captains took advantage of two Dayton errors to go up, 3-0, in the first inning. The Dragons tied the game in the third, then scored five runs in the fifth. Three runs scored on consecutive wild pitches by reliever Jordan Scheftz.

Jose Vicente halved the Captains' deficit in the eighth with a two-run home run to left field.

After Oscar Gonzalez struck out to start the ninth, Jose Medina drew a walk to spark the Captains' game-winning rally. Will Benson and Mike Rivera followed with walks against right-hander John Ghyzel.

Medina scored on a wild pitch by Ghyzel that also moved Benson and Rivera into scoring position. Cory Thompson relieved Ghyzel and retired Vicente on a pop-up to foul territory by first base.

Isaacs turned a 1-0 offering into a soft liner in between the Dragons' outfielders to end the game.

"He's been coming on strong lately," Carlin said. "It's been nice to see him get some of the fruit, that he's been working hard. It couldn't happen to a better guy, a better teammate."

Before Isaacs' game-winning hit, Carlin credited the Captains hitters' plate discipline to stack quality at-bats. Medina, Benson and Rivera laid off pitches out of the strike zone and kept the line moving.

"Some of the better hitters in this league are really good at that," Carlin said. "We've got a fairly young group of guys, and being able to make those adjustments, stay in the zone and have an idea of how they're going to be pitched is a sign of growth, for sure."

Jonathan Teaney (1-3) struck out two in a scoreless ninth inning to earn his first victory of the year. The Captains improved to 23-35.

Ghyzel (2-3) was charged with all three runs scored in the ninth inning.

Although the Captains have come back to win at home in the past, their walkoff win June 5 had an extra layer of significance.

"To come back after a momentum shift like that, when they put up a five-spot like that, is difficult, really difficult," Carlin said. "Games that we've come back and won in the past usually haven't surmounted that kind of blow. We've always been in the game and been within a striking distance of two, three runs or whatever."

Jesus Aguilar returns to Cleveland without resentment

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

Jesus Aguilar spent nine seasons in the Indians' minor-league system.

He got to the big leagues with the Indians in May 2014 for the first of what turned out to be three brief stints with the team that initially signed him in November 2007 as an undrafted free agent.

Now, the 27-year-old native of Venezuela is turning heads as the starting first baseman for the Brewers.

He signed with the Brewers in February 2017 after the Indians designated him for assignment and removed him from their 40-man roster to make room for utility infielder Richie Shaffer.

Shaffer is in his second season with Triple-A Columbus. He's batting .164 with four RBI in 32 games.

Going into the opener of a two-game series against the Indians on June 5 at Progressive Field, Aguilar was batting .309 with 10 home runs and 32 RBI in 52 games for the Brewers.

Speaking to reporters in the Milwaukee dugout before the game, Aguilar said he bears no grudge against the Indians for cutting him loose despite the fact he hit 140 home runs and drove in 650 runs during those nine minor-league seasons. In three stints with the Indians, covering 35 games, he batted .172 with five RBI.

"It was kind of tough because I'd spent all my career with the Indians, but it was better to come to the Brewers because I got my opportunity to show what I could do and help this team get wins," Aguilar said.

After making the Brewers out of spring training in 2016, Aguilar last season batted .265 with 16 home runs and 52 RBI in 133 games.

Aguilar was asked if he had a sense of why the Indians' front office and Manager Terry Francona felt he was expendable.

"I don't really know," he said. "For me it was like they already had their team. They wanted to win games. Maybe he (Francona) didn't feel like I could be part of a winning team. But I have to say thank you to them for helping prepare me mentally to be who I am right now."

Aguilar did admit to being "kind of disappointed" with how his nine-year run with the Indians tracked, especially in its final three seasons.

"For sure, you want to play in the show (major leagues) and you see somebody go over you in spring training," Aguilar said. "Or, they sign somebody new for first base in spring training and it's like they don't need you. But you can't control those things. What you can control is the way you work and playing the right way. That's what I did for nine years all the way to Triple-A."

Once he got to the big leagues with the Indians, Aguilar said, the lack of playing time did not help his cause.

"They didn't give me enough at-bats, enough opportunities to show what I can do," Aguilar said. "I don't remember playing two games in a row here."

Aguilar said he never lost confidence in himself.

"If it wasn't going to happen here, it was going to happen somewhere else," he said.

Somewhere was Milwaukee.

"It's a good city to play baseball in," Aguilar said. "Not too big. Not too small. Nice people. Nice fans. I'm happy there."

Francona was asked about Aguilar's emergence as an everyday player with the Brewers before the series opener.

"You know what? I hope he doesn't beat us, but good for him," Francona said. "He got his chance and he's making the most of it, so we're really happy for him. Obviously, we want to get him out, but we're also happy for him."

"He didn't really get a chance here, and I admit that," Francona added. "He got a chance somewhere else and he took advantage of it. That's why when we talk to guys or take them off rosters, we never tell them they can't play. We just tell them we made a decision that somebody at the moment is ahead of them."

Indians add five pitchers in Day 2 of MLB draft

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

The Indians on June 5 used five of eight picks in the second day of the amateur draft on pitchers.

Here is a look at the picks the Indians made, starting with shortstop Richard Palacios of Towson University in Maryland in the third round:

- Palacios, pick 103 overall >> bats left, throws right-handed. He hit .301, hit 18 doubles, homered eight times, drove in 31 runs and scored 56 times in 2018.

"Richard's a left-handed hitting middle infielder that's really good with bat-to-ball," Indians director of amateur scouting Scott Barnsby said. "He controls the strike zone. He's got quick hands. We feel like this guy is going to hit. He's playing shortstop right now. We can see him at shortstop or second base. He's athletic enough to move around. He's a plus runner."

- Round 4, Pick 133: LHP Adam Scott, Wolford College (South Carolina) >> Scott was 8-5 with a 3.14 ERA as a senior in 2018.

"Average stuff from the left side up to 93 (mph)," Barnsby said. "Throws strikes, really deceptive. This guy can pitch with his fastball. Two secondary pitches, a little slider and change-up that complement the fastball well. He's gotten a lot of swing and miss. Extremely competitive kid. We actually took him last year and he went back to school. We took him again this year and are looking forward to getting him in the system."

- Round 5, pick 163: Outfielder Steve Kwan, Oregon State >> Bats left, throws left-handed. Batted .353 as a junior in 2018 with eight doubles, five triples, 13 stolen bases and 34 RBI.

- Round 6, pick 193: Infielder Rayel Delgado, Calvary Christian Academy (Fla.) >> Switch-hitter, throws right-handed. Hit .364 as a senior in 2018 with two home runs, seven doubles, 28 runs and 26 RBI.

- Round 7, pick 223: RHP Cody Morris, South Carolina >> Morris was 8-3 with a 3.68 ERA in 2018.

- Round 8, pick 253 RHP Alex Royalty, UNC Wilmington >> Royalty was 23-9 with a 4.14 ERA over three college seasons.

- Round 9, pick 283: RHP Brian Eichhorn, Georgia Southern >> Eichhorn was 4-3 with a 3.15 ERA in 14 starts in 2018. He was a first-team All-Sun Belt Conference pitcher.

Round 10, pick 313: RHP Robert Broom, Mercer University >> Pitching mostly in relief, Broom was 22-9 with a 2.40 ERA over 103 appearances in three seasons at Mercer. He started one game.

Indians demote strikeout machine Bradley Zimmer to Columbus

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

Bradley Zimmer, the top prospect in the Indians' farm system 13 months ago, is back in the minor leagues.

The Indians demoted Zimmer to AAA Columbus on June 5 to clear a roster spot for outfielder Lonnie Chisenhall, who had been on the disabled list with a calf injury since April 8.

The more Zimmer played since being called up from Columbus in May 2017, the easier it became for opposing pitchers to find a hole in his swing.

Zimmer hit .285 and struck out 43 times in 151 at-bats in the first half of 2017. He batted 148 times in the second half of the season and hit an anemic .196 while striking out 56 times.

The black hole in the swing of the 6-foot-5 center fielder got even bigger in 2018. He has batted 106 times in 34 games. He has 24 hits and nearly twice as many strikeouts — 44. The strikeouts became too big a liability, despite Zimmer being a superb defensive player.

Manager Terry Francona and Indians president Chris Antonetti delivered the news to Zimmer before the Indians hosted the Milwaukee Brewers in the first of a two-game series at Progressive Field.

"Offensively, it's been a struggle for him, especially the strikeouts," Francona said. "We wanted to talk to him together."

"A lot of guys have gone to AAA and worked on their game and then came back. We fully believe that will happen with Zim. We want that. He's our best center fielder."

Greg Allen made the decision to send down Zimmer easier for Antonetti and Francona. Allen was called up from Columbus on May 6, one day after Zimmer was injured crashing into the center field wall in Yankee Stadium chasing down a fly ball.

Allen entered the game June 5 hitting .263 with 20 hits in 76 at-bats. He has struck out 22 times. Allen has only three RBI, but he covers center field well.

"When a guy plays like (Allen) has, it allows you to do something that maybe you weren't sure you could," Francona said. "(Zimmer) understood. He said he knows he needs to make adjustments.

"Trying to make some of the adjustments at the major league level can be hard. If you're striking out 40 percent of the time, you better really be doing some damage when you hit the ball."

Zimmer is hitting only .226 with two home runs and nine RBI.

The good news for the Indians is Zimmer should get all the time he needs repairing his swing.

Five days ago four outfielders — Zimmer, Chisenhall, Brandon Guyer (neck) and Tyler Naquin (hamstring) — were on the disabled list.

Zimmer was activated on May 3. He played in two games after being activated, got two hits and struck out five times in eight at-bats.

Chisenhall was activated on June 5 and started in right field against the Brewers. Francona said Guyer "is doing fine." The plan is to activate Guyer June 8.

Naquin also is getting close to returning. He will play some center field when he returns to the active roster, Francona said.