

Indians come up empty in extras vs. Tigers

By Jordan Bastian MLB.com @MLBastian

DETROIT -- Given the extent of the Indians' bullpen issues this season, it would be easy to focus on the final pitch thrown on Saturday night. Jeimer Candelario sent it rattling into the right-field seats at Comerica Park, and Tribe closer Cody Allen made the lonely walk off the field as the party ensued at home plate.

That home run was the decisive moment in Cleveland's 4-2, 12-inning loss to the Tigers, and it came after Allen volunteered for duty, despite it marking his fourth appearance in five days. Prior to that pitch, though, this had been one of the better showings of late by the Tribe's relief corps.

The path to this defeat was paved by missed chances for the Indians' offense.

"Credit to the pitching today," Indians catcher Yan Gomes said. "It stinks that we ended up on that side, but both sides' pitching did a tremendous job, both sides had chances to win a ballgame and both sides escaped."

Detroit just happened to escape with the win.

Gomes' solo homer in the third inning marked the only breakthrough against Tigers starter Mike Fiers, who filled the strike zone with fastballs and confounded Cleveland's order with his array of offspeed offerings over seven innings. At multiple turns, the right-hander found himself in a jam, but sidestepped harm to keep Detroit within striking distance.

In the first, the Indians put runners on the corners with one out, but Lonnie Chisenhall chopped into an inning-ending double play. In the seventh, Chisenhall doubled and Yonder Alonso drew a walk, but Fiers recovered by setting down Jason Kipnis (strikeout), Melky Cabrera (flyout) and Gomes (strikeout) in order.

The Indians finished 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position, and 1-for-12 with runners on base.

"[Fiers] used every quadrant of the plate," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "Up, down, both sides. He doesn't light up the radar gun, but he spins the breaking ball -- a good breaking ball -- and changeup. He just keeps you off balance. We had a lot of off-balance swings."

Tribe starter Mike Clevinger did all he could to keep in step with Fiers, turning in 6 2/3 innings and limiting Detroit to two runs. Clevinger allowed an RBI single to Victor Martinez in the first, retired 17 batters in a row and then issued a bases-loaded walk after slipping into a jam in the seventh.

That 2-1 lead was short-lived for Detroit, which handed the ball to reliever Louis Coleman for the eighth. Indians outfielder Rajai Davis welcomed Coleman by sending his first pitch down the left-field line for a home run that just cleared the wall, pulling the game into a 2-2 tie and putting the game on course for extras.

After going through Oliver Perez, Neil Ramirez, Dan Otero and Zach McAllister -- who combined for 4 1/3 shutout innings -- Francona handed the ball to Allen. After Friday's win, the manager noted that Saturday may have been a day off for the closer, but that plan was scrapped at some point between then and the 12th inning.

Once Francona had Allen warming up, the closer was going to enter the game.

"We got him up and in and it didn't work," Francona said. "I just felt like, where we were in the game, they had gone through most of their relievers, too. That gave us the best chance to keep that game going and hopefully win."

Allen struck out Leonys Martin and then induced a groundout off the bat of Nicholas Castellanos. Miguel Cabrera then delivered a two-out single up the middle, setting the stage for Candelario's walk-off heroics.

"They were awesome tonight," Clevinger said, of the bullpen. "It came down to the nitty-gritty time. One swing of the bat can end the game."

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

Sacrificing a rally: The Indians had another opportunity arise in the 11th inning, when Buck Farmer opened the frame with back-to-back walks against Michael Brantley and Jose Ramirez. With no outs and the game caught in a 2-2 tie, Chisenhall then attempted a sacrifice bunt against Warwick Saupold. The result was a weak popup, which was caught by catcher James McCann for a critical out. Saupold retired the next two hitters to halt the potential rally.

Cleveland has struggled throughout the season to get bunts down successfully. Chisenhall's miscue was the Tribe's American League-leading fourth popup on a bunt attempt. The Indians also entered the night with 27 missed or fouled bunts, per Statcast™.

"I know. Man, I know," Francona said. "It's frustrating, because it directly impacts winning the game. We try not to ask guys that aren't bunters to bunt. It's just, we haven't done a good job of getting them down."

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

With one out in the bottom of the sixth, Castellanos sent a changeup from Clevinger on a line toward left field with an exit velocity of 101.9 mph, per Statcast™. Shortstop Francisco Lindor was positioned underneath the liner and jumped up at the last moment, snaring the baseball from the air as the crowd let out a collective groan. Lindor flashed a smile at Castellanos, who stopped well ahead of first and laughed while throwing his arms up in disbelief.

KIPNIS EXITS EARLY

Utility man Erik Gonzalez took over at second base for the Indians in the 12th inning, replacing Kipnis. Francona indicated after the loss that his starter left due to neck stiffness. Kipnis will be re-evaluated prior to Sunday's game against the Tigers.

UP NEXT

Tribe ace Corey Kluber (9-2, 1.96 ERA) is scheduled to take the mound on Sunday, when the Tigers host the Indians in a 1:10 p.m. ET tilt at Comerica Park to conclude this three-game set. In an April 9 clash with Detroit, Kluber struck out 13 and allowed just two hits over eight shutout innings. The Tigers will counter with right-hander Artie Lewicki (0-1, 3.86).

Guyer battling to gain steam before activation

DETROIT -- During a Minor League rehab assignment, it is luck of the draw in terms of what types of pitchers a batter will face. That has been an issue over the past two weeks for Indians outfielder Brandon Guyer in his attempt to regain a rhythm at the plate.

Cleveland likes to utilize Guyer as a weapon against left-handed pitching, but he has had limited exposure to lefty pitchers during his recent stints with Double-A Akron and Triple-A Columbus. Guyer, who is on the 10-day disabled list due to a neck strain, saw a southpaw on Friday night and launched a pair of home runs in the Clippers' 6-5 win over Buffalo.

"You can't ask the other team, 'Hey, you mind if we see a couple lefties?'" Indians manager Terry Francona said prior to Saturday's game against the Tigers. "He's getting to play every day pretty much, which is kind of a bonus. You just try to take advantage of it -- that's all."

Guyer is a combined 4-for-43 in his stops at Double-A and Triple-A, including a 1-for-30 showing against right-handers and a 3-for-13 performance off lefties.

With no left-handers scheduled for the current series in Detroit, Guyer's potential return from the DL has been pushed back to the following series against the White Sox that begins Monday. During that four-game set, Cleveland could see a pair of left-handers in Hector Santiago and Carlos Rodon.

The ideal scenario would have Guyer return and impact the Indians' lineup on days an opposing lefty is on the hill. Guyer has hit just .150 in 33 games for the Indians this season, but he has an .839 OPS in 56 plate appearances against left-handers vs. a .151 OPS in 34 PAs against righties. For his career, he has an .829 OPS off lefties and a .610 mark off right-handers.

When Guyer does come off the DL, the natural roster fit would be for him to resume his platoon role in right field with Lonnie Chisenhall. At the moment, switch-hitter Melky Cabrera is filling a similar bench role, with veteran Rajai Davis and rookie Greg Allen splitting time in center and offering depth at all three spots.

"Last night is really the first night [Guyer had results]," Francona said. "But, that doesn't really matter to us. If we look up at the end of the year and he hit .120 in Triple-A, but if he got those at-bats out of the way and then came back and helped us, that's what we're looking for. ... Man, when he gets going, he's a force against lefties."

Worth noting

- Designated hitter Edwin Encarnacion was out of the lineup on Saturday against the Tigers due to soreness in his right ankle, which he tweaked while running the bases in the fourth inning of Friday's 4-1 win. With Encarnacion out, Michael Brantley got the nod at DH and Cabrera started in left field.
- Left-hander Andrew Miller's next bullpen session is slated for Monday in Chicago. The relief ace, who is on the 10-day disabled list with a right knee issue, completed a 30-pitch mound workout on Friday at Comerica Park in Detroit.
- Outfielder Tyler Naquin went 0-for-3 while manning right field in a rehab appearance for Triple-A Columbus on Friday night. Naquin (10-day DL, left hamstring) is still roughly a week away from possibly being activated.

Jason Kipnis is fighting the voices in his head (and in the stands) as he attempts an offensive resurrection

Zack Meisel Jun 9, 2018 4

DETROIT — The journey around the bases was therapeutic, a long-awaited reprieve from the constant flood of doubt and pressure that has infiltrated Jason Kipnis' mind the past two months.

At last, he could exhale. The only voices he could hear were cursing Shane Greene's name. Kipnis' three-run shot off Detroit's closer provided the Indians with a 4-1 advantage in the ninth inning Friday night. Before he reached the dugout, Kipnis peered toward the crowd and waved.

Some Tigers fans had pestered him throughout the game. Kipnis got the last laugh.

One momentous swing won't salvage his unsightly stat line, though. Even after his blast to right-center — a hearty homer to a deep part of a spacious outfield — his slash line stands at .206/.285/.318. That .603 OPS? He knows that won't cut it. That 64 wRC+? He knows some have called for Erik González to regularly see the field.

Kipnis has entertained plenty of reminders, from social media notifications to reporter inquiries to hecklers in the seats. He even recently snapped back at an Indians fan in Cleveland who lit his fuse.

"That wasn't my brightest moment," Kipnis said, "but there are a lot of people who feel the need to remind me how my season's going, like I don't already know."

From Terry Francona to Ty Van Burkleo to Kipnis himself, the Indians contend that the second baseman has been gradually emerging from his season-long funk. Kipnis said he made an in-game adjustment with his lower half during the team's home series against the Astros in late May. In six of the ensuing 10 games, he notched multiple hits.

But he entered the ninth inning Friday with two strikeouts and a groundout to his name. The thoughts seeped back into his mind. As he stood in the on-deck circle before his fourth trip to the batter's box, his inner monologue grew louder.

Hey, whatever's happened so far this game, forget it. Meet the challenge head-on.

"Mentally, you have to keep doing that for every at-bat," Kipnis said, "no matter what the last one was."

Greene spun an 82-mph slider over the plate, and Kipnis launched it 410 feet, with an exit velocity of 102.2 mph.

"I've only got four this year, but that one, I knew," Kipnis said.

Kipnis is making more hard contact this season (36.9 percent) than he ever has. His BABIP stands at a career-low .250. His walk rate (9.2 percent) is at a five-year high. His strikeout rate (20.7 percent) falls in line with his career norms. There are signs that suggest he's due for better fortune at the plate.

"Early in the year, that's a long fly out and the guy probably climbs the wall and catches it or something," Bauer joked.

At the same time, more than one-third of the season has elapsed. While Kipnis' performance has trended in the right direction the past couple of weeks, he can't afford to follow up the encouraging stretch with another extended slumber.

In a way, Kipnis is chasing the ghosts of seasons past, seeking to reclaim the mojo that made him a versatile threat at the plate. In his heyday, he could slap together 50 hits in a month. He could stick one into the outfield seats, yank one down the line or poke one up the middle.

Perhaps that exact hitter no longer exists. Kipnis is 31, with parts of eight big-league seasons under his belt and a handful of noteworthy injuries on his résumé.

Defensively, he has performed at an average level this season, according to defensive runs saved and ultimate zone rating metrics. Offensively, he has been a shell of his former self.

"I'm trying to stick with what's working a little bit right now," Kipnis said. "I'm starting to come out of things, but at the same time, every day, I'm trying to get that 2015-16 feeling back, so I fight myself all the time on what I'm doing at the plate. It's a grind. I'll put it that way."

Van Burkleo referred to it as "having a conference call when you're trying to hit," as he described the overflow of skepticism and self-assurances that have diluted Kipnis' stream of consciousness. There's a fine line between making tweaks and obsessing, mentally, over said tweaks.

"The next thing you know," Van Burkleo said, "you're swinging at balls and taking strikes."

Kipnis listened to the proper voice Friday, the one imploring him to brush aside his early-game results. He only acknowledged the one originating from the stands when he crossed home plate with the Indians' fourth run, having offered up some evidence of the swing that earned him two All-Star nods.

"I've put a lot of pressure on myself," Kipnis said. "This game can piss you off with the best things in life.

"Little swings like that definitely help the process and pick your chin up a little bit and take a little weight off the shoulders. It's been tough so far. I'm happy to keep plugging away. This team needs me to keep plugging away."

Almost heaven: Trevor Bauer is pitching deeper and deep into games for the Cleveland Indians

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

DETROIT - Trevor Bauer has a curious nature. He's always moving on to the next thing be it drones, music, social media, charities and who knows what else.

What lies beyond the next mountain intrigues him.

Except when it comes to pitching. That has held his attention for years. He's pursued it, broken it down frame by frame in an attempt to understand it and make himself better at it.

And right now, at age 27 and in his fourth season in the big leagues, Bauer couldn't be in a better spot when it comes to throwing a baseball.

He has a manager who trusts him and a team that needs him to do two things - pitch and consume innings. He's made 13 starts this year and thrown 100 or more pitches in all of them. It is the longest such streak by an Indians' pitcher since Bartolo Colon made 14 straight starts at 100 or more pitches in 2002.

Bauer, following his eight-inning start against the Tigers on Friday, has thrown the second most pitches in the big leagues. Houston's Justin Verlander leads with 1,432. Bauer is second with 1,421 followed by Chris Sale at 1,408 and Max Scherzer at 1,381.

He is averaging more pitches per start, 109.3, than any pitcher in the big leagues. Verlander is at 103 and Sale 101.

Kipnis plays hero with three-run homer in 9th: 6/8/18

Asked if this was his perfect scenario, Bauer said, "Yes, definitely. . . I feel great. I recover really well and I'm glad I can get deep in the game for the team."

There's more. In the AL, Bauer ranks fourth in strikeouts with 109 and is tied for fifth in innings pitched with 86. His 2.62 ERA ranks sixth.

A couple of years ago Bauer came to spring training in Goodyear, Ariz., and after his first exhibition start said he could throw an endless number of pitches if needed. Was it bluster? Maybe a little, but not that much.

"When we were first getting to know him, even Chris (Antonetti, president of baseball operations) told me me, 'Hey, if you're going to have some rope with anybody, it's probably him just because of the way he's conditioned,'" said manager Terry Francona.

Over time, the bluster has faded and reality has set in. Not only is Bauer getting a chance to throw more pitches this year, but he's getting deeper into games. He's averaging just under seven innings per start this year compared to 5.2 after 13 starts last year. Last year his average number of pitches per start was 99 compared to 109.3 this year.

The concept of pitch counts has always frustrated Bauer. He does not believe in them.

Now he's getting a chance, within reason, to stay on the mound longer. It certainly has something to do with the Indians' shaky bullpen, but Bauer is involved in the equation as well.

"I think Trevor has earned that," said Francona. "It's actually a good feeling. . .When you don't have (good starting pitching) it's a bad feeling. When you have it, it's a good feeling. He's going to compete, he's durable. But I think he's earned that."

Bauer threw 113 pitches in Friday's 4-1 win. He struck out 12 and retired the heart of Detroit lineup in order in the eighth.

"I wanted to go back out for the ninth," said Bauer. "My velo stays consistent or it gets better as I find a feel for all my pitches as the game goes along."

After Jason Kipnis homered in the ninth to break a 1-1 tie, Francona sent closer Cody Allen out for the ninth. He earned his 12th save.

Francona said it is not always strictly a matter of pitch counts, but what has gone into those pitches. How much effort has a pitcher used in delivering those pitches?

"If a pitcher is at a high number early in the game, that means how many hitters have seen how many pitches?" said Francona. "When you start facing some pretty good hitters and they've seen 18 to 20 pitches, you've got to have really good stuff because if you make any kind of mistake, man, they've seen everything you have.

"So that's part of the reason early on (with the Indians) why Trevor got taken out. Now, he's holding his stuff. I just don't see a reason (to pull him early). . . I just feel he deserves to stay out there."

Friday, at the end of the seventh, Bauer was at 106 pitches. He had plenty left to finish the eighth because he'd been efficient in the early innings. It is a good way to pitch and something that is becoming a habit with Bauer.

Cleveland Indians' Jason Kipnis finally hits one that can't be caught and isn't coming back

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

DETROIT - Jason Kipnis has hit a lot of balls hard this season.

To Kipnis' way of thinking, most have been caught by opposing players, which is another way of explaining why he's still hitting .206 eight weeks into the season.

But in the ninth inning Friday night at Comerica Park, Kipnis knew the curve he hit from Shawn Greene wasn't going to be caught -- or if it was, it would be by a fan sitting in the bleachers in right center.

"I've only hit four this year, but that one. . . I know when it's gone," said Kipnis after the Indians' 4-1 win over Detroit. "I caught that one flush. It was a curveball that he was trying to get ahead with. It felt good."

Good for Kipnis, good for the Indians who have won eight of their last 11 and really, really good for Trevor Bauer. The right-hander from UCLA, an All-Star candidate despite his 5-4 record, was in the dugout after eight innings, 12 strikeouts, 113 pitches and one run allowed. He was done for the night, but the score was still tied 1-1 at the start of the ninth.

The homer by Kipnis, delivered with Jose Ramirez on third and Yonder Alonso on second, made Bauer a winner.

"That was big," said Kipnis. "We knew he was there, probably pacing, back and forth in the dugout. It was a good pitching matchup with him and (Michael) Fulmer. Trevor has been on his game lately and when a guy wants the ball (to go) back out there for the eighth inning. ... You could tell he was in it and really wanted it and I'm really happy to get him the W tonight."

Kipnis hit .178 (19-for-107) in March and April. He hit .221 (29-for-104) in May. He's hitting .273 (6-for-22) in June.

"We're getting there," said Kipnis. "It's a mentally tough game, a mentally challenging game that tests your patience, tests everything."

"This has been a grind for me early on. I'm slowly coming out of it, but little swings like that definitely help the process. They get your head up and pick your chin up a little bit and take the weight off your shoulders."

Manager Terry Francona has kept Kipnis in the lineup despite his offensive problems. The only concession he made was taking Kipnis out of the second spot in the batting order.

"You hope something like this really get him going," said Francona. "Like I said with Edwin (Encarnacion), when Kip hits we've got a little different gear. He's shown some really good signs lately. Hopefully something like this really gets him going."

The first 61 games have knocked some points off Kipnis' batting average, but it hasn't budged the chip on his shoulder. The Indians tried to trade him over the winter after he played just 90 games in 2017 because of shoulder and hamstring problems. The fans have been on him hard.

As he crossed the plate Friday night after the homer, he gave a sarcastic wave to some fans sitting in the lower seats near the plate.

"They were Detroit fans," said Kipnis. "I heard some Cleveland fans at home that I had a word with. That wasn't my brightest moment, but there are a lot of people who feel the need to remind me how my season's going, like I don't know. It was good to actually get one on my side."

Bauer has been pulling for Kipnis.

"Shoot, early in the year, that's a long flyout and the guy probably climbs the wall and catches it or something," said Bauer. "I'm pumped for him, that's he's having more success. It's got to be good for his mental state."

If one can find peace on a baseball field, while trying to untangle himself from a prolonged slump, well, that's what Kipnis found on his way around the bases.

"It's therapeutic," he said. "I'm not going to tell you what was going through my head before that in the other at-bats. I've put a ton of pressure on myself. This game can frustrate you with the best of things in life."

"I'm in the on-deck circle trying to prepare myself for the last at-bat saying, 'Hey, whatever has happened so far in this game, forget it. Meet the challenge head on.' The results paid dividends, right there."

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.10.2018

Cleveland Indians lose to Detroit Tigers, 4-2, in 12 innings on walk-off homer by Jeimer Candelario

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

DETROIT -- In May the Indians couldn't stop scoring runs. On Saturday night they were mostly silent and Mike Clevinger and the rest of the pitching staff suffered for it.

The Indians managed to score two runs -- both on homers -- as the Tigers beat them, 4-2, on a walk-off homer by Jeimer Candelario in the 12th inning. The late loss was payback for the Tigers, who lost on Friday when Jason Kipnis hit a three-run homer in the ninth.

Cody Allen (2-3) took the loss. He opened the 12th with two quick outs, but Miguel Cabrera singled through the middle. Candelario hit a 2-0 pitch deep into the right field seats to end matters.

Allen was making his fifth appearance in as many games for the Tribe. The streak was interrupted by off days on Monday and Thursday.

In those five games, Allen is 0-2 with three saves and a 12.27 ERA (five earned runs in 3 2/3 innings). Three of the four hits he's allowed have been homers, including game-winning two-run shots by Candelario and Minnesota's Eddie Rosario.

Manager Terry Francona said Allen told him before the game that he could pitch. The stipulation was that once Allen warmed up, he was going to go into the game.

"So, that's why we brought him in, as opposed to on the road, warming a guy up, sitting him, and warming him up," said Francona. "We got him up and in and it didn't work."

"I just felt like, where we were in the game, they had gone through most of their relievers, too. That gave us the best chance to keep that game going and hopefully win."

The loss ended a three-game winning streak by the Indians. It was just their fourth loss in the last 12 games.

It was a night of escapes for the Tribe bullpen until Allen arrived.

Zach McAllister started the 11th with two strikeouts, but gave up a triple to Jose Iglesias. He retired Dixon Machado on a fly ball to center to strand the winning run.

Dan Otero escaped a bases-loaded jam in the 10th with some help from Francisco Lindor to keep the game going. First, Candelario lined out to Lindor for the second out. Then Victor Reyes sent a grounder to Lindor, who threw to Jose Ramirez at third for the force to end the inning.

The Indians missed a great chance in the 11th to take the lead when Michael Brantley and Ramirez walked to start the inning. Warwick Saupold relieved and popped up Lonnie Chisenhall on a botched bunt attempt and retired Alonso Yonder and Jason Kipnis on fly balls.

"It's frustrating, because it directly impacts winning the game," said Francona. "We try not to ask guys that aren't bunters to bunt. It's just, we haven't done a good job of getting them down."

When Clevinger struck out Candelario to start the seventh, he'd retired 17 straight Tigers. He was rolling.

Clevinger allowed a run in the first, but seized control of the game after that. But then things changed. That hiccup Clevinger has been trying to cure all season returned.

Victor Martinez, with one out in the seventh, singled. James McCann followed with another single as pinch-runner Victor Reyes took second. JaCoby Jones sent a grounder to the hole at short. Lindor gloved it, but Kipnis couldn't handle a bounced toss for a forceout, loading the bases.

Clevinger went to a 3-2 count on Iglesias before walking him to give Detroit a 2-1 lead. Clevinger went from 17 straight outs to allowing four straight Tigers to reach base before retiring Machado on a fly ball to right.

Lefty Oliver Perez relieved to get the final out of the inning.

"I just pulled a couple of fastball on the walk," said Clevinger.

The Indians did not trail long. Rajai Davis opened the eighth with a homer down the left field line to make it 2-2. Davis hit the first pitch he saw from Louis Coleman for his first homer of the season.

The Tigers took a 1-0 lead in the first on a two-out single by Martinez. Clevinger started the game by walking Leonys Martin, who stole second and third base. Martinez delivered him with a single for his 73rd RBI against the Indians.

Yan Gomes pulled the Indians into a 1-1 tie with a leadoff homer in the third. Gomes hit Mike Fiers' first pitch into the left field seats for his seventh homer and first since May 19.

What it means

The Indians are 1-5 in extra innings.

The pitches

Clevinger threw 104 pitches, 68 (65 percent) for strikes. Fiers threw 108 pitches, 72 (67 percent) for strikes.

Thanks for coming

The Indians and Tigers drew 27,038 fans to Comerica Park on Saturday evening. First pitch was a 6:01 with a temperature of 67 degrees. The start of the game was delayed by 1 hour and 51 minutes because of rain.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 06.10.2018

Cleveland Indians: Talking draft prospects -- Terry Pluto

By Terry Pluto, The Plain Dealer terrypluto2003@yahoo.com

ABOUT MLB DRAFT

With the No. 29 pick in the 2018 Major League draft, the Tribe took catcher Noah Naylor.

There are always great expectations for a first-round pick, no matter where he's selected. I recently had a casual conversation with Tribe president Chris Antonetti. The subject was the draft, and I mentioned that Lonnie Chisenhall was the 29th pick in 2008, the most recent time the Indians drafted in that slot.

"Lonnie is one of the best players picked there," he said. "Only about half even make the majors."

With that in mind, I did some research - looking at all the players picked 29th between 1995-2015.

Here we go:

1. Only nine of 20 selections have even played in the big leagues.
2. Only four have played in at least 100 MLB games. The best is Cardinals pitcher Adam Wainwright, who has a career 147-84 record and 3.30 ERA. He was picked in 2000.
3. Then comes Joe Panik (drafted 2011), who has made an All-Star team and won a gold glove at second base for the Giants. He has played in 467 games, batting .281 (.716 OPS).
4. Next is Carlos Quentin (drafted 2003), who played in 834 games between 2006-14. He hit 154 HR, batting .251 (.831 OPS). From 2008-12, he averaged 26 HR and 80 RBI for the White Sox. Then his career fell apart because of injuries.
5. Chisenhall (drafted 2008) has played in 668 games. He's a career .265 hitter (.741 OPS) with 63 HR for the Tribe.

6. A Fangraphs story reported that only 32 of 55 players drafted between 26-30 from 2000-10 made the majors. By contrast, 48 of 55 players drafted in the top five between 2000-10 reached the bigs.

7. Wainwright made three All-Star teams, Quentin two and Panik has been an All-Star once.

8. If Noah Naylor becomes a regular catcher for the Tribe - or has a big league career of several seasons - he's defying the odds of where he was picked.

9. Who is the best 29th pick in baseball history? According to ESPN, it's George Brett. The Hall of Famer was taken by Kansas City in 1971.

ABOUT TRIBE'S PICKS

1. Naylor was rated the No. 27 prospect in the draft by MLB.com. Baseball America had him at No. 41. The Indians believe the 18-year-old can be an elite hitter from the left side of the plate. He is from the Toronto suburb of Mississauga and played for the Canadian National team.

2. Naylor comes from a baseball family. His brother (Josh Naylor) was the 12th pick in the 2015 draft. Josh is batting .313 (.885 OPS) with 9 HR and 46 RBI for San Antonio, a Class AA farm team for the San Diego Padres.

3. The Indians saw Naylor using wooden bats in competition against some minor league teams in the spring, when he toured with Team Canada. He has some skills behind the plate and the Indians will start him out as a catcher, but he could end up playing somewhere else.

4. The Indians took pitcher Ethan Hankins at No. 35. MLB.com had him ranked as the No. 2 pitching prospect in the draft. He consistently threw in the high 90s. But the high school right-hander had some shoulder problems in the spring, and that scared some teams.

5. The Tribe had Hankins in Cleveland to be examined by their medical people. The 6-foot-6, 215-pounder pitched late in the season for his Forsyth Central High team in Cumming, Georgia. Hankins became a hot prospect in 2017 when he struck out 27 in 12 innings pitching for the Team USA 18-under team in the World Cup.

6. ESPN's Keith Law wrote: "Hankins came into the spring as my No. 1 prospect in the draft. He was seen within the industry as a consensus top-five pick, bringing the best combination of stuff (fastball and curve) and command in the draft class. He left his first start of the season when his velocity suddenly fell off ... missed a month with shoulder tightness ... returned to make a few starts. ... I saw him on April 9. He was OK, but not what he was last summer. Hankins hit 95 mph on his fastball, and showed a bunch of 94 mph ... although the pitch didn't have the same life as last year. The curve has backed up, more of a slow roller 71-75 mph."

7. The Indians know Hankins is a bit of a gamble. They plan to go slowly with him, building up his arm. He's a high school pitcher, and those are often high risk/high reward picks high in the draft.

8. My favorite (purely on paper) is Nick Sandlin, a right-hander from Southern Mississippi. He was a reliever in his first two seasons. He moved into the starting rotation to help his team, and had a stunning 10-0 record and 1.05 ERA. He fanned 144 in 102 innings, walking 18.

9. Sandlin was the No. 67 pick. The Indians will move him to the bullpen. He throws sidearm. He averaged seven innings per start, so the Indians will work him slowly this summer because of his heavy pitch load in college.

10. From Baseball America: "Keep an eye on Sandlin. He could be a quick mover to the majors to help a struggling Indians bullpen."

11. It's unrealistic to look for Sandlin in Cleveland this season. But next year? Who knows? The Tribe took Cody Allen 698th in the 2011 draft. By the middle of the 2012 season, Allen was in the majors. A reliever can advance swiftly through the farm system.

12. An intriguing pick is Cody Morris, a seventh-rounder who is starting for South Carolina in the NCAA playoffs. The right-hander is a sophomore eligible for the draft. That means he could return to school.

13. Morris was the 2014 Maryland High School Player of the Year. But he had Tommy John elbow surgery before enrolling in South Carolina. Despite the surgery, he was a 32nd round pick by Baltimore when he graduated from high school.

14. Morris has an 8-3 record and 3.68 ERA for the Gamecocks, who play a big time schedule. His fastball is in the middle 90s. He was one of 10 players drafted from South Carolina's roster this season.

15. I'll be curious to watch the career of 10th rounder Robert Broom. He pitched for Mercer College in Georgia, a Division I program. He's a sidearm who had a 10-4 record, 1.71 ERA with 111 strikeouts in 74 innings. He'll also go to the bullpen.

Andrew Miller might need brace on right knee

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

Left-handed reliever Andrew Miller, a cornerstone of the Indians bullpen, might have to wear a brace on his chronically sore right knee once he returns to the lineup. Manager Terry Francona isn't precisely sure when that will be.

Miller made 11 appearances totaling 10 innings without allowing a run until a hamstring injury suffered April 25 landed him on the disabled list. He returned to the lineup on May 11 and pitched six more games before a knee injury forced the Indians to place him on the DL again. He gave up a total of seven runs, all earned, in three of those six games.

Francona told reporters in Detroit that Miller threw 30 pitches in a bullpen session on June 8. That's a heavy load, more than in any of the 17 games he has pitched this season.

"Where it goes from here, I don't think we know," Francona said. "Obviously, he's going to have to throw more.

"One, we just want to see how he bounces back, first of all, because that's one of the huge challenges. And then, if he's bouncing back, then you can start to think, OK, working on his pitches, locating, things like that that are kind of fun to talk about, as opposed to just health."

Francona is hoping Miller can succeed without the brace. But the trainers are experimenting with the notion if they think it will help.

"I know that they were talking about getting some braces in," Francona said "I don't know if they've come yet or if he's worn them, but the fact that he's throwing the bullpen without it, I think, is a good sign.

"Long-term, they've talked about a few different things. I don't think they've gotten to that yet. They're trying to feel like he can do it without it, which is a good thing."

Francona isn't certain if Miller will need a minor league rehab assignment before being activated.

TRIBE NOTES Tigers 4, Indians 2: Tribe wastes chances, falls in 12th inning when Cody Allen gives up walk-off homer

Dave Hogg | The Associated Press Published on June 9, 2018 | Updated 1:33 a. m.

DETROIT — The Indians couldn't get a bunt down, couldn't rest their closer and couldn't finish off the Tigers.

Given a second chance, Detroit's Jeimer Candelario didn't miss.

A bit of bad luck ended Candelario's first chance to end the game in extra innings. On his second opportunity, he made sure luck wouldn't be a factor.

Candelario hit a 2-0 fastball from Cody Allen deep into the right-field stands in the 12th inning, giving the Detroit Tigers a 4-2 victory over the Cleveland Indians on Saturday.

"When the ball hit my barrel, all I could think was, 'Wow!'" Candelario said. "I knew it was gone."

In the 10th, Candelario came up with one out and the bases loaded and hit a line drive right at shortstop Francisco Lindor with the infield drawn in.

"That was frustrating, because I knew that was a huge chance, and I hit it right at Lindor," Candelario said. "I was hoping I'd get another chance."

Indians manager Terry Francona didn't want to use Allen — who took a grounder off his foot while getting the save Friday — but the closer told his manager he could pitch.

"He just got behind in the count and had to come in with a fastball," Francona said.

Cleveland's best chance in extra innings came in the 11th. Buck Farmer walked the first two hitters, bringing Saupold out of the dugout. Lonnie Chisenhall popped up a bunt, and the next two batters couldn't advance the runners.

Chisenhall has 14 sacrifice bunts in his eight years in the majors.

"That was frustrating, because it directly impacted winning the game," Francona said. "We try not to ask guys who aren't bunters to bunt, but we haven't been getting them down."

Miguel Cabrera singled off Allen (2-3) with two outs, and Candelario followed with the first game-ending homer of his career.

"That's huge, because he's been struggling a bit — the first time he's really done that — and then he missed that shot in the 10th," Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire said. "That was a great swing, a loud noise and a big smile."

Warwick Saupold (4-1) worked two scoreless innings of relief. He entered in the 11th with two on and nobody out, got out of the jam and then pitched a perfect 12th.

"We put him in a really bad situation, and he saved us," Gardenhire said.

Tigers starter Mike Fiers allowed one run on five hits in seven innings.

"Our offense has been in a bit of a slump, and their starter was really firing, so I knew I had to be good to keep us in the game," Fiers said.

Mike Clevinger gave up two runs on four hits in 6 2/3 innings for Cleveland.

Detroit took a 1-0 lead in the first on Victor Martinez's two-out RBI single.

Yan Gomes tied the game with a homer on the first pitch of the third inning, the 13th home run hit off Fiers in 12 starts.

Clevinger retired 17 straight batters after Martinez's hit, but the Tigers loaded the bases with three straight singles with one out in the seventh. Iglesias took a 3-2 fastball down and away to give the Tigers a 2-1 lead.

"Iglesias put together a good at-bat, especially that late in the game," Clevinger said of the walk. "I just pulled the last two fastballs."

Rajai Davis hit reliever Louis Coleman's first pitch of the eighth for his first homer of the season, tying the game at 2.

The start of the game was delayed 1 hour, 51 minutes by rain, finishing nearly six hours after the scheduled start.

The Tigers played in Detroit Stars jerseys, while the Indians wore Cleveland Buckeyes uniforms to honor Negro Leagues Weekend.

Double Triple Crown winners

As Justify was hitting the backstretch at Belmont Park en route to his Triple Crown victory, Cabrera, winner of baseball's Triple Crown in 2012, stepped to the plate in the third inning. He grounded out as his equine counterpart reached the far turn.

Trainer's room

INDIANS: 1B Edwin Encarnacion sat out after injuring his ankle while running the bases Friday. He is not expected to miss much time.

... OF Brandon Guyer (neck strain) could be activated when the Indians travel to Chicago on Monday.

TIGERS: RHP Jordan Zimmermann will make a rehab start with Class-A West Michigan on Monday. He has been on the disabled list since May 5 with shoulder problems. He has already made two rehab starts with Triple-A Toledo.

Up next

The teams finish the three-game series today, with Cleveland's Corey Kluber (9-2, 1.96 ERA) facing Detroit's Artie Lewicki (0-1, 3.86).

Tito's pregame minutiae: June 9 by Jordan Bastian

[Tony Amato, Indians' home clubhouse and equipment manager sits down in Francona's office, where reporters have gathered with the Tribe manager.]

Francona: "Let's talk about our team equipment stuff. Ask me some questions."

Q: You've put Tony through a lot of uniform number changes...

TF: "Once!"

Amato: "No. No. Four times: 47 to 33 to 17 to 77."

TF: "No, no, no, man. I was gonna be 33 when I came here and then Swish came, so he took it."

Amato: "We gave you 47 at first, because that was your number with the Red Sox, and then you switched it..."

TF: "But, the last one I did for you. I just put a '7' on it, so you could put a little [line to easily switch the 17 to 77]."

Q: Why'd you pick 77?

TF: "I didn't want to change my shower shoes. You put the little tilde or whatever that thing is called [on top of the 1] and you're good to go."

[Back to baseball...]

Q: Did you catch what Brandon Guyer did in his rehab game with Triple-A Columbus on Friday?

TF: "Guyer hit two home runs last night. I think he finally faced a lefty."

Q: There's obviously no way to control when he gets to face a lefty...

TF: "We can't. You can't ask the other team, 'Hey, you mind if we see a couple lefties?'"

Q: So, the goal then would be to try to just put him in as good a position to succeed as possible leading up to the day he comes off the DL?

TF: “Yeah, it’s almost how we say at the end of Spring Training, the guys that aren’t playing—like in the past, Aviles or Gonzy—man, the last week of Spring Training, you make sure those guys play, because you want them to have something in the tank, because you know they’re not going to play for a little, so you want them to get as many at-bats as they can have. Right now, this is like he’s getting to play every day pretty much, which is kind of a bonus. You just try to take advantage of it—that’s all. It’s hard to imagine a guy sitting around, finding his swing. So, this way, he went back and started playing and, like last night is really the first night [he had results]. But, that doesn’t really matter to us. If we look up at the end of the year and he hit .120 in Triple-A, but if he got those at-bats out of the way and then came back and helped us, that’s what we’re looking for.”

Q: How much of a battle has it been for Guyer to find his rhythm at the plate, given all the setbacks over the past two seasons?

TF: “Yeah, and it’s been a couple things. It’s been the wrist. I don’t think people realize he’s a tough kid. When he didn’t go for surgery, man, I saw him some days where that thing looked like somebody beat on it. And then he’s had the hamstring. So, stuff has interrupted his at-bats. Besides the fact that I don’t think having a bad wrist helps anybody. But, it’s just hard, because he has, I think by his own admission, he’s got some moving parts in that swing. It’s not the picture-book swing like Brantley, but man, when he gets going, he’s a force against lefties. I’m not trying to put pressure on him. That’s just what we... when he came over that second half, man, that was huge. Nobody talked about it a lot, but it was really big for us.”

Q: When you brought Melky Cabrera up, it really filled a hole with how many outfielders went down with injury. Lately, has it been harder to find the right time to get him in the lineup?

TF: “That’s why we’re playing him today, because yeah. And you know what? It’s rarely roster perfect. We went from having no outfielders and we wanted to get him up here, but I think we wanted to wait until we thought he was ready, especially with the pitching we were facing. Now, it gives us that pinch-hitter on the bench or a guy that can play, so today’s a perfect day. Since Edwin’s ankle’s a little bit bothering him, we get Melky in there and we can get Brant off his feet and let him DH.”

Q: Which ankle is sore for Encarnacion?

TF: “It was the left or the right.”

[laughter]

TF: “I think it was the right. Because he hit the base on that one when he scored, when he was galloping around the bases.”

Q: When Jose Ramirez ran around third in the ninth inning on Friday, was he trying to draw a throw to the plate? That allowed Yonder Alonso to move up to second base...

TF: “No, he was thinking about scoring. That was... Sarby [third-base coach Mike Sarbaugh] is getting really good at that. And Josey, there’s none better, because of the way he comes flying around there. Sarby sees it possibly coming, so he gets as deep as he can and, as long as that runner’s coming, he waited until the last possible second, because they hit the cut-off man. So, he’s going to be out. But, if that ball happens to short-hop that guy, he can keep him coming.”

Q: It looked like Sarby got really low to the ground to make sure Ramirez saw him put the stop sign on...

TF: “Yeah. I just think he was trying to make sure he gets [his attention]. Sarby’s become much more animated, which for him isn’t really a lot, but it’s by design. I think he felt like maybe he paid the price a couple times when you assume. And he’s really gotten more, animated is the right word. And I think there’s been several plays where guys have come in and said, ‘Hey, what about,’ and it’s right on Sarby.”

Q: Trevor Bauer has said that he could show up to Spring Training and be ready to throw 200 pitches...

TF: “I don’t think he could throw 200. I bet he could throw a lot.”

Q: He’s thrown 100+ in every start this season. When did you reach the point in having trust and confidence in allowing him to do that?

TF: “Well, I think from the very beginning. I remember, like when we were first getting to know him, even Chris [Antonetti] was telling me, he goes, ‘Hey, if you’re going to have some rope with anybody, it’s probably him, just because of the way he’s conditioned.’ It’s not so much, to me, it never really was [a question]. I know Trevor has a way of saying things maybe that he doesn’t always want to agree with what you say, but it’s not about pitch count. A pitch count, it’s what it signifies. Like, if a guy’s at a high number early in the game, that means how many hitters have seen how many pitches. Like, you can start getting some pretty good hitters and when they’ve seen 18–20 pitches, you’ve got to really have your good [stuff], because if you make any kind of mistake, man, they’ve seen everything you have. So, that’s part of early on why he got taken out. Now, he’s holding his stuff. I just don’t see a reason [to pull him early]. And it’s later in the game, so it’s not like they’re turning the lineup over so many times. I just feel like he deserves to stay out there.”

Q: What does it say about his progress that you trusted him to face Miguel Cabrera for a fourth time last night?

TF: “Well, if there would’ve been a runner in scoring position, we weren’t going to do that, just because of the fact that Miggy had seen him. That was the eighth inning. If it was the seventh, he wasn’t going to face him. And I know Trevor would’ve come kicking and screaming, but you can’t let Miggy face you for the fourth time when you can’t walk him.”

Q: In Bauer’s ideal world, someone along the line would allow him to start every three days. Do you think there could ever be a point where a team gives him that chance?

TF: “No, because I don’t know how you do it. One, there’s a lot of unknowns there. I mean, a lot of unknowns. But, I also don’t know how you set up the rest of your rotation. I do think, I believe a lot of what he says. Like, I think he really does [believe he can do it]. He can throw all the time. He’s conditioned himself. Some guys can just do that. Bryan Shaw, I was talking to Bud Black yesterday, because we were talking about him. I said, ‘Pitch him every day for four days.’ He goes, ‘He already leads the league.’ I go, ‘Keep pitching him, man. That’s what he likes.’ He’s just kind of a freak of nature. I know Trevor trains, but I mean, also, and I don’t know if I want to say in my defense—because I don’t feel like I need to be defended—but we have to look out for his career, our organization. So, if we pitched him every three days and he got hurt, that would be a hard thing to explain.”

Q: I didn’t necessarily mean letting him do that here, given how your rotation is set up...

TF: “No, I just mean, I’m just talking. It’s a valid [question]. He might be able to do it. But, if he got hurt doing it, we’d be like, ‘Why’d we ever think of doing something like that?’ He seems to be in a pretty good place right now, because I think he leads the league in pitches and having normal rest is going to be good.”

Q: And he’s been more efficient, throwing fewer pitches per inning...

TF: “And that’s, to me, that’s way more important. Getting some early outs, I know he wants to strike people out—I get it. There’s a time and place for that. That’s great. But, if you’re at 100 after five innings, it just makes it hard.”

Q: Along those lines, Corey Kluber’s strikeouts are down, but he’s still been very effective...

TF: “And I don’t have any doubt that, as he gets into the season, you’re going to see games where his strikeout numbers hop up. He might pitch shorter in the game because of it, but I just think Major League hitters, they kind of choose a way to attack and, with Kluber, it’s obvious. They’re trying to hit the first straight one they see. To me, if you can get guys to swing early and kind of stay off the barrel, you’re going to have success.”

Q: What’s been the biggest difference for Mike Clevinger’s development this season?

TF: “I think the experience has helped him. He understands that when he picks, he gets himself in trouble. When he attacks, he’s got good enough stuff to be successful.”

Q: You’ve let Clevinger log some high pitch counts, too. Is he kind of a bulldog out there—able to handle that kind of workload?

TF: “Yeah, I’d say he’s a strong kid. I mean, the idea, to be perfectly honest, when you go to the bullpen, you want to have a better alternative. In the past, we haven’t hesitated to go to the bullpen. We had Andrew, Shaw and then matchup guys ahead of that. We’ve had our issues at times this year, so we’ve given some guys a rope. As long as they’re not tired, we’ve let them pitch. When you’ve got a starter that’s really busting their [butt]—and I know that in today’s game, it’s popular to go to the ‘pen, I get it—but also, when you have a pitcher that’s busting his [butt], and you’ve got his runners out there, and you go out and get him and then the inherited runners score... You’d like to have a good guy to go to when you do that, you know what I mean? Or, what you feel like is the right answer.”

Q: Your patience as a manager, where does that come from? Is that just part of your personality?

TF: “It’s not who I am. I’m not patient. You can ask anybody. I might be the most impatient person ever. Like, the coaches all [know]. Millsie, he [can tell you]. If I’m in a cab, man. [Expletive]. But, I think to do the job right you have to be, so I make myself be patient. Because, I think if you’re not, you miss out on what could come. And, when you’re not sure, you better be patient. If you’re sure... Like I remember, [expletive], one time like when we took Foulke out of the closer’s role. I remember Schilling came to me that day and he said, ‘That took some [guts]. I’m not sure I’d want to do that.’ And then I said, ‘Well, wait ‘til you see this kid.’ It was Papelbon. Because I knew in my mind, this kid was ready. But, when you have veterans, you better [expletive] be sure. So, until I’m sure, I’ll [expletive] be a little patient.”

Q: Carlos Carrasco is a great example of that here...

TF: “And to be honest, I didn’t know. [Expletive], man, I put him in the bullpen. But, and again, Cashy and Mickey were, [expletive], they beat on me for that. And look what happens. There’s a lot of times where it doesn’t work out, but man, if you cut the cord too quick, you’d never have a team.”

Nick Cafardo / SUNDAY BASEBALL NOTES / Clay Buchholz, staff savior? The Diamondbacks think so

By Nick Cafardo

Clay Buchholz saving a staff?

Yep, that's right. Diamondbacks general manager Mike Hazen and manager Torey Lovullo certainly remember the good times with Buchholz in Boston, though they also remember the bad ones. Yet, when they were searching for a starter, with Robbie Ray on the disabled list with an oblique issue, Shelby Miller on rehab after Tommy John surgery, and Taijuan Walker out for the year following Tommy John surgery, the D-Backs decided to get creative and sign Buchholz to a minor league contract after the veteran opted out of his deal with the Royals.

"Mike and [assistant GM] Amiel [Sawdaye] and I got together and we said, 'Why not Clay?'" Lovullo said. "The reports on him were very good and so we said, 'Let's do it.' And he's been outstanding for us.

"He's pounding the zone, following the game plan, with a four-pitch mix. It's been perfect timing for us and a great job by him. Clay is making a statement every time he goes out there. I remember in 2013 and parts of '14, he was hitting 92-95 miles per hour. But now it's mostly 90 and 91 and an occasional 92. It's been very effective."

With Ray starting to throw off a mound and Miller getting closer to returning, Lovullo didn't flinch when asked whether Buchholz will remain in the rotation. As long as Buchholz is getting people out, he'll have a spot.

Everything baseball every Monday-Friday during baseball season, and weekly in the offseason.

Buchholz will likely knock Zack Godley out of the rotation.

In his fourth start for Arizona last Wednesday, he gave up a pair of early runs but gave the D-Backs six strong innings, allowing seven hits and a walk while striking out seven.

"I want to be cautious about the things that I say, but he's done a tremendous job," Lovullo said after Buchholz's last outing. "He deserves to get the ball in five days, and that's what we'll continue to focus on. When decisions have to be made, we'll weigh out all the consequences and see what the best options are. But Clay has been outstanding for us."

Buchholz is 1-1 with a 1.88 ERA, 21 strikeouts, and just 3 walks in 24 innings, with a 0.83 WHIP.

The Red Sox traded Buchholz to the Phillies before the 2017 season for infielder Josh Tobias, who is with Double A Portland. Buchholz made only two starts for the Phillies before being shut down with a strain in his forearm.

Buchholz was often injured during his time with the Red Sox. When he was good, he was very good. When he was bad, he was very bad. Buchholz never really harnessed his talent. He never truly understood his importance to the Red Sox pitching staff and seemed content to be the No. 3 or 4 starter rather than striving to be the No. 1, because he had that type of ability.

Buchholz declined to be interviewed for this story. He didn't seem to like how he was covered and characterized while with the Red Sox. Though he's good friends with John Lackey and Jon Lester, he never adopted their gutsiness.

Buchholz, 33, had surgery on his flexor tendon in April 2017 and underwent a long and arduous rehab. He finally felt well enough to sign a minor league deal with the Royals in March, and pitched well in three starts at Double and Triple A before exercising an opt out. He immediately signed with the Diamondbacks, even though the Royals were contemplating calling him up.

Buck up A	year-by-year	look at	Buchholz's	stats.	Year	Team	W-L	G	GS	IP	ERA	WHIP	SO9
2007	BOS	3-1	4	3	22.2	1.59	1.059	8.7					
2008	BOS	2-9	16	15	76	6.75	1.763	8.5					
2009	BOS	7-4	16	16	92	4.21	1.38	6.7					
2010	BOS	17-7	28	28	173.2	2.33	1.203	6.2					
2011	BOS	6-3	14	14	82.2	3.48	1.294	6.5					
2012	BOS	11-8	29	29	189.1	4.56	1.326	6.1					
2013	BOS	12-1	16	16	108.1	1.74	1.025	8					
2014	BOS	8-11	28	28	170.1	5.34	1.386	7					
2015	BOS	7-7	18	18	113.1	3.26	1.209	8.5					
2016	BOS	8-10	37	21	139.1	4.78	1.328	6					
2017	PHI	0-1	2	2	7.1	12.27	2.591	6.1					
2018	ARI	1-1	4	4	24	1.88	0.833	7.9					
Career		82-63	212	194	1199	3.97	1.301	6.9					

SOURCE: baseball-reference.com

With Buchholz pitching well and Paul Goldschmidt starting to hit like the All-Star that he is, Lovullo sees better times ahead for the D-Backs in the underachieving National League West.

Lovullo, the NL Manager of the Year last season, has had Arizona in first place for most of the season despite losing a big bat in J.D. Martinez.

"Of course not having a hitter like J.D. certainly reminds you of how good he was last season," Lovullo said. "We knew he would do for Boston what he did for us. He's in a great situation. This was a conscious decision made by everybody. We knew he would be good there and we wish him well because he's a great hitter and a great person."

The D-Backs, like most of the NL West teams, have had to deal with injuries.

"We've been without [Steven] Souza and [Jake] Lamb the majority of the season," Lovullo said. "We lost two-fifths of our rotation and then we lost A.J. [Pollock]. There's going to be a couple of teams surging and I feel we're in a good spot. Goldie has started to hit like he can. I think he's gained 35-40 points on his average the last two weeks. He's a proven hitter with a great track record. I feel once he started moving in a good direction, we're going to take off."

In the past, if you had to rely on Buchholz to save your rotation, you'd sink. But that was then and this is now. Buchholz is healthy again and the D-Backs made a good pickup that cost them only the minimum salary. Buchholz is motivated to resurrect his career (82-63 record, 3.97 ERA), and the early results have been encouraging.

UNSINKABLE IN LA

Dodgers have stayed afloat

Another NL West manager with Red Sox ties, Dave Roberts, has also been encouraged by the Dodgers' resurgence amid significant injuries.

He's lost Corey Seager for the season, and was without Justin Turner until mid-May. Others to spend time on the DL: Rich Hill (blister), Clayton Kershaw (biceps tendinitis, back strain), Kenta Maeda (hip strain), Julio Urias (shoulder surgery), Hyun-Jin Ryu (groin strain), Tom Koehler (shoulder capsule strain), Tony Cingrani (shoulder strain), Yasiel Puig (bruised hip), Logan Forsythe (shoulder inflammation), and Chase Utley (sprained thumb).

Get the picture?

"A lot of challenges, but you know me, I'm positive and optimistic," Roberts said. "We've had a next-man-up philosophy. Guys are getting opportunities and we have to hold it down until we get healthy."

Roberts has been super complimentary of veteran outfielder Matt Kemp, who entered Friday leading the NL with a .349 batting average.

"It is a revival," Roberts said. "It's a classic case of a superstar with a chip on his shoulder, understanding it's not greener on the other side. He wanted to be here. He's going to do everything he can to stay here. He's done that from Day 1. His professionalism is contagious. I might be surprised he's leading the league in hitting, but he really gets it. He's a great example for the younger players."

With the pitching staff decimated by injuries, Roberts said, "We're leaning on [Ross] Stripling and [Walker] Buehler," Roberts said. "Buehler is special with a four-pitch mix. He commands the fastball. Stripling has a little bit different mix, but he can execute a game plan. [Pitching coach] Rick Honeycutt does a great job with those two guys."

You can sense the frustration in Roberts's voice when he talks about Hill, since nobody has been able to solve his blister problems.

"He's going half of the time covered and half uncovered," Roberts said. "I would say he'll be activated in about a week."

Last season's NL Rookie of the Year, Cody Bellinger, struggled out of the gate, but "he's changed his stance giving him a wider base to eliminate some of the movement. He's trying to use the whole field now," Roberts said.

Roberts feels for Kershaw, who is on the DL for the second time this season. When healthy, he's still the best pitcher in the game.

"This is the third year he's had to deal with [a back injury]," Roberts said. "We expect him back the beginning of next month."

The Dodgers are in the hunt because the other teams in the division have gone through similar trials and tribulations.

"That's the thing. The whole division hasn't clicked," Roberts said. "We've all been hit by injuries. They had their chance to put us away but we survived, and considering all the circumstances, we're pretty happy to be where we are."

Apropos of nothing

1. Book plugs: Evan Drellich's "Big 50: Boston Red Sox: The Men and Moments that Made the Boston Red Sox." Also, Mike Shalin and Steve Babineau — "The Hometown Team: Four Decades of Boston Red Sox Photography."

2. The Worcester Telegram's Bill Ballou put together a great trivia question: Name the nine players who hit 30 homers in their first season with the Red Sox (excluding players who had at-bats with the team the year before; Walt Dropo, for instance). Answer below.

3. Since President Trump is in a pardoning mood, whom should he pardon in baseball? Pete Rose, Joe Jackson, Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Mark McGwire, Al Campanis? What's your choice?

4. Dan Jennings is a special adviser to Nationals president of baseball operations Mike Rizzo. Jennings was GM of the Marlins and also served as manager in 2015 after he fired Mike Redmond. Jennings still has aspirations of being a GM. "I miss both jobs and miss the field," Jennings said. "I would love to be able to take what I learned on the field as a manager and apply it to being a GM. I enjoyed both roles. Learned so much."

5. Red Sox groundskeeper Dave Mellor recalled recently a letter his grandfather received, asking him to participate in a VFW Major League Baseball Old Timers game at Fenway on July 12, 1939. The format was AL vs. NL, and the rosters included Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Cy Young, Tris Speaker, Honus Wagner, Nap Lajoie, Walter Johnson, George Sisler, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Eddie Collins, and manager Bill Carrigan. Now that's an Old Timers game!

6. If Lance Berkman becomes the head coach at Rice University — his alma mater — could Andy Pettitte become the pitching coach? Very possible.

Updates on nine

1. Fernando Abad, LHP, free agent — The former Red Sox tested positive for a PED and is serving an 80-game suspension, even though he's not with a team. Abad's career seemed to go downhill after the Sox acquired him in 2016 from the Twins, with whom he had an excellent first half of the season. He spent a year and a half with Boston, and didn't stick with the Phillies or Mets this year.

2. Manny Machado, SS, Orioles — The inquiries have begun. The Phillies, Cardinals, Braves, Dodgers, Brewers, Mets, Angels, and Mariners are all expected to dip their toes in the water to see what it would take. If the Orioles had a wish list, they'd probably want to do something with the Cardinals and extract a couple of pitching prospects.
3. Miles Mikolas, RHP, Cardinals — Probably the best bargain free agent signing of the year. Mikolas, a native of Jupiter, Fla. (where the Cardinals have spring training), was the pitcher scouts noticed as they were scouting Shohei Ohtani in Japan. The Cardinals beat out the Twins, Padres, and Rangers for Mikolas, who landed a two-year, \$15.5 million deal. Mikolas, 29, was released by the Rangers in 2014 and then pitched three successful seasons for the Yomiuri Giants (31-13, 2.18 ERA, impressive for an American pitcher). He is 7-1 with a 2.27 ERA and is likely going to be an All-Star.
4. Edwin Jackson, RHP, Athletics — Jackson recently signed a minor league deal with the A's, who will be his 13th team if he gets to the majors. Jackson has played for the Dodgers, Rays, Tigers, Diamondbacks, White Sox, Cardinals, Nationals, Cubs, Braves, Marlins, Padres, and Orioles. And he's still only 34. "A solid guy," said Tony La Russa, who managed Jackson in St. Louis. "We wouldn't have gotten into the playoffs without him [in 2011]. He comes from a military family, great teammate. Happy that he hooked on." The 2011 Cardinals won 90 games, finished second in the NL Central, and won the World Series. Jackson went 5-2 after a being acquired from Toronto at the trade deadline. He never pitched for the Blue Jays, who flipped Jackson after picking him up from the White Sox.
5. J.A. Happ, LHP, Blue Jays — Happ may become one of the most popular targets on the trade market. He will be a free agent at the end of the season, and he'll be owed about \$5 million for the rest of the year if he's dealt in July. This is seen as a bargain. You could see a few NL West teams (Dodgers, Diamondbacks, and Rockies) being interested as well as the Yankees, Braves, and Phillies.
6. Matt Harvey, RHP, Reds — The thought that the Reds might be able to flip Harvey at the deadline isn't based in reality. Harvey is 0-2 with a 6.97 ERA in his last two starts. He was 1-0 with a 2.57 ERA in his first three starts with Cincinnati, but his inconsistency is what may turn teams off. "You just don't know what you're going to get," said one NL scout who is looking for a starting pitcher.
"If you're going to acquire someone, you have to see consistency over a period of time to pull the trigger."
7. Ken Giles, RHP, Astros — As Giles's struggles continue, the Astros keep searching for a potential closer. Giles entered the weekend with a 13.50 ERA and .455 opponents' average in his past five appearances. His season ERA is 5.40. The Astros have the trade pieces to go get the Royals' Kelvin Herrera or Orioles' Zach Britton.
8. Pablo Sandoval, INF, Giants — The Giants have managed to turn Panda into a super-utility guy, playing some first, second, and third base. "We've been pleasantly surprised," said Giants executive vice president Brian Sabean. Sandoval is hitting .282 with a .777 OPS in 103 at-bats. The Red Sox are paying \$18.05 million of his contract this season while the Giants are paying the minimum of \$555,000.
9. Allen Craig, 1B/OF, Padres — Craig is hitting .265 with eight homers, 24 RBIs, and an .844 OPS for the Padres' Triple A affiliate. Craig never could get untracked in Boston, which paid him more than \$28 million after acquiring him from the Cardinals in 2014. The Red Sox bought out his 2018 option for \$1 million.

Extra innings

From the Bill Chuck files — "Through Wednesday, three interesting batting averages at home: Carlos Correa and Giancarlo Stanton each at .207 and Rafael Devers at .206." . . . Also, "The Yankees' 7-8-9 batters have the majors' highest batting average at .272; Houston's 7-8-9 are hitting .226, while Boston's back three are hitting .227. The Yankees and Astros lead the majors with 24 homers each, Boston has 10." . . . Trivia answer: Carl Everett, Don Baylor, Tony Armas, Jimmie Foxx, Nick Esasky, Manny Ramirez, David Ortiz, Ted Williams, and Dick Stuart . . . Happy birthday, Pokey Reese (45).

Boston Globe LOADED: 06.10.2018

Ken Rosenthal / Reeling Mets face a big decision — tear the team down or re-tool on the fly

By Ken Rosenthal

Here is the New York Mets' reality: They had losing records for six straight seasons before reaching the World Series in 2015 and the National League wild-card game in '16. That's right, their window of contention lasted all of two years before they started losing again.

Their farm system is down. Their draft record is mixed. Their major league payroll does not reflect their market size. Oh, and their first-year manager, Mickey Callaway, already is talking about how his players face extra pressure in New York.

The Mets bring to mind an old Dave Matthews lyric: Where are you going? Where do you go? The team need not choose a direction immediately — the non-waiver deadline is more than seven weeks away, and club officials want to see if their moribund offense will revive once injured left fielder Yoenis Céspedes rejoins third baseman Todd Frazier on the active roster. The starting pitching actually is trending upward, with a 2.36 ERA in the last 18 games. But as the Mets face 7 1/2-game deficits in both the NL East and wild-card races, they know they need to get younger. In that race, too, they're already playing from behind.

The Washington Nationals, the most powerful team in the East, never seem to lack young talent. The Atlanta Braves and Philadelphia Phillies are ascending rapidly in their rebuilds. Yet the average age of the players on the Mets' current 25-man roster and disabled list is 29.9, the third oldest in the majors behind the Toronto Blue Jays (30.7) and Cleveland Indians (30). Two veterans getting significant playing time — outfielder José Bautista, 37, and first baseman Adrián González, 36 — were released by other clubs. The lingering presence of infielder José Reyes, 34, is another damning commentary on the Mets' lack of depth; Reyes, a bench player, is batting .141 with a .405 OPS.

Mets fans frequently blame ownership's lack of spending for the team's troubles. The club has not ranked higher than 15th in end-of-season, 40-man roster payroll since 2012, according to Cot's Baseball Contracts, and its Opening Day payroll of \$150.6 million — a decrease coming off a 92-loss season — ranked 12th. The Mets also have generally avoided financial penalties by staying within the prescribed limits for domestic and international amateurs (the rules in both markets have become more restrictive in recent years). The team's analytics department, consisting of three full-timers and six interns, is "as big as most," according to one club official, but not among the biggest in the game.

End of season 40-man roster payrolls, per Cot's Baseball Contracts:

YEAR	PAYROLL	RANK
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2017	\$164.7M	15th
2016	\$156.8M	15th
2015	\$109.8M	19th
2014	\$92.9M	21st
2013	\$95.1M	17th
2012	\$103.7M	11th
2011	\$142.2M	5th

Fred Wilpon, the team's chief executive officer, and his son Jeff, the team's chief operating officer, can rightly claim only the Chicago Cubs have spent more than the Mets in free agency the past two off-seasons. Mets fans can rightly counter that the team benefits from collecting insurance on injured third baseman David Wright's \$20 million salary, which reduces to \$15 million in 2019 and \$12 million in '20. The discussion serves no useful purpose. Fans cannot stage a palace coup to overthrow ownership, and the commissioner's office cannot — and would not — force the Wilpons to sell.

Free agent spending, last two years:

Team	Amount
Cubs	\$235.9M
Mets	\$224.7M
Rockies	\$211.5M
Phillies	\$205.9M
Dodgers	\$203.6M

The current debate around the Mets — whether they should trade one or both of their ace right-handers, Jacob deGrom and Noah Syndergaard — should be one part of a larger discussion. The Mets are highly unlikely to tear down completely, sources say. But if they intend to retool on the fly, they will need to engage in some serious self-evaluation, and determine whether their current efforts to develop talent are good enough.

The job of general manager Sandy Alderson, difficult as it might be, is to work within the framework established by the Wilpons. Alderson took over after the 2010 season, restored credibility to the organization and helped guide the team to its first World Series appearance in 15 years. But he also was the architect of last year's club, which won 70 games, matching the Mets' lowest total since 2003. This year's team — under Callaway, Alderson's choice to replace Terry Collins — has gone 16-31 since its 11-1 start.

Both Alderson and Jeff Wilpon declined to comment for this story, but Alderson said at the end of last season he was “disappointed” in the progressions of some of the team's younger players, adding, “Some of them just didn't appear as ready as we've seen other players when they arrived here in New York.” His reference, according to a source, was to only two players, and not meant as an indictment of the player-development staff. Still, the Mets fired their manager and retained only one coach at Triple A. And some new members of the on-field staff have voiced similar concerns this season, taken aback by the amount of teaching required with homegrown products such as shortstop Amed Rosario, sources say.

The problem is not unique to the Mets; the emphasis within the sport on power hitting and power pitching has created a generation of players who are slow to master the finer points of the game, if they do at all. Rosario, 22, also suffers in comparisons to young infielders such as the New York Yankees' Gleyber Torres and Atlanta Braves' Ozzie Albies, who have made a more immediate impact. Mets officials, though, always thought Rosario would be slower to develop due to his swing-and-miss tendencies, and still expect him to become a solid player.

Two former first-round picks — Michael Conforto and Brandon Nimmo — should be long-term fixtures along with Rosario. Another, Dominic Smith, flopped in his first crack at the majors last season, and is now playing outfield as well as first base at Triple A. The Mets also could accelerate two infielders at Double A, first baseman Peter Alonso and second baseman Jeff McNeil, if they want to move out veterans and get younger.

The team's farm system, depleted in part by trades to keep the major league club competitive, ranked 27th in the majors entering the season, according to Baseball America. Club officials believe the system is again on the rise, with several top prospects in the lower minors on the verge of promotions. A major trade or two obviously would make the group that much stronger.

Mets' organizational rankings, per Baseball America:

2018	27
2017	15
2016	15
2015	4
2014	10
2013	26

Such an idea is not necessarily unappealing, particularly with Steven Matz and Zack Wheeler showing improvement in the rotation. But the Mets essentially tried such an approach this season, exercising the option of second baseman Asdrúbal Cabrera and signing a number of modestly priced free agents, including third baseman Frazier, outfielder Jay Bruce, reliever Anthony Swarzak and left-hander Jason Vargas. To this point, the plan hasn't worked. And if the Mets continue to engage in such patchwork, a crash likely is inevitable.

DeGrom, the National League leader with a 1.49 ERA, is under control through 2020; Syndergaard, who is scheduled to face the Yankees on Sunday after spending 15 days on the disabled list with a strained ligament in his right index finger, is under control through 2021. The Mets could trade one for a massive return and sign the other to an extension, signaling they still want to compete short-term. Or, they could keep both and then spend on a catcher, second baseman and center fielder, sticking Conforto and Nimmo on the corners and possibly moving Céspedes to first base.

Trades alone, however, cannot fix the Mets. A youth movement also would require better drafting, better player development. The Mets are capable of it — it wasn't long ago when they were lauded for churning out one young arm after another. But for starters, they need to be more aggressive and adept at procuring young talent.

The team's recent drafts have produced numerous major leaguers but in most cases not major impact — the combined Wins Above Replacement of the Mets' draftees from Alderson's first season in 2011 through 2015 ranks 17th in the majors, according to data from Baseball-Reference.com (the list includes players no longer in the organization such as Detroit Tigers right-hander Michael Fulmer, whom the Mets traded for Céspedes).

According to additional data obtained by The Athletic, the Mets spent the second-lowest of any club in the draft from 2007 to '11, when bonuses remained unrestricted (they still landed deGrom, Matt Harvey and Matz, among others, during that period). From 2012 to '15, when new rules allowed teams to exceed their allotted bonus pools by five percent without losing a pick, the Mets ranked 26th in spending, in part because they lost two high picks — and the accompanying bonus money — for the free-agent signings of outfielders Michael Cuddyer and Curtis Granderson (they also gained a high pick for losing Reyes).

Teams are capped in what they can spend internationally under the current collective bargaining agreement, but the Mets did not exceed their bonus pool from 2012 to '16, when the rules allowed them to go past the limit at the cost of dollar-for-dollar penalties and future restrictions on signings. Still, it wasn't as if they were inactive. The Mets signed Rosario in '12, and their No. 1 prospect is Andres Gimenez, a Class A shortstop from Venezuela whom they signed in '15. They also made a splash in '17, signing shortstop Ronny Mauricio and outfielder Adrian Hernandez, two of the top 30 international free agents according to MLB Pipeline.com. The return last December of former GM Omar Minaya — a former scout born in the Dominican Republic — should help in their international pursuits.

The situation is not as hopeless as some defeatist fans believe. Yet, no matter what happens after Céspedes returns, the Mets need to stop chasing their tails and recognize they are at a crossroads.

Callaway, in the first year of a three-year contract, at times looks overmatched, but part of that is due to the deficiencies on the Mets' roster. If he fails, after emerging as one of the hottest managerial candidates last off-season, it will be as much a reflection on the organization as it is on him.

Alderson is working under a two-year deal that pays him \$4 million per season through '19, according to Jon Heyman of FRSSBaseball.com. Any change before then might result in an internal power struggle; assistant GM John Ricco is the likely heir apparent, while Minaya, fired by the Mets once before, and special assistant J.P. Ricciardi, an Alderson loyalist, are former GMs. The Wilpons also could seek a clean slate by making an outside hire, but they cannot judge Alderson harshly without giving him a chance to repair the mess for which they all are responsible.

Time for the Mets to answer the questions: Where are you going? Where do you go?

The Athletic LOADED: 06.10.2018

Peter Gammons / Gammons: Looking back on 50 glorious years in the business, and how it all got started

By Peter Gammons

I remember awakening at 5:30 the morning of June 6, 1968, turning the radio to WBZ Boston, and hearing of Bobby Kennedy's assassination. At first, the news was numbing, as it had been on Nov. 22, 1963, when while waiting for Geography 41 in Chapel Hill, Professor Mondale walked in and said, "President Kennedy has been shot and this class is canceled." Or on April 4 of '68, when a friend walked into a record store in which I worked and told me, "They killed Martin Luther King"; I dropped the "Mr. Fantasy" Traffic album I had been trying to sell and asked to go back to St. Anthony Hall.

That June morning I was thinking about growing up, and the fact that in a few days I was going to begin an internship that a mentor named Dean Smith insisted was "important, because you can be good, and you can be a voice." So, beyond shock, and the low spark of the vacuum of my own life at the age 23, it took me hours to realize that R.F.K. seemingly was the one man who could take the thousands of pieces of the Sixties jigsaw puzzle scattered around the playroom floor, complete the puzzle, and bond the past and the hope that had frayed.

We look back today and wonder where we might be had he not been carried away on that train of murdered dreams — dreams of hope and inclusion and purpose so brilliantly captured in Thurston Clarke's clever *The Last Campaign*. As much as Bobby Kennedy seemingly understood the inherent good of an America arm in arm, that understanding may well have died with him, beyond the resurrective powers of humans like his grandson Joe.

Four days later, I drove from Hingham to Dorchester to begin that summer internship at *The Boston Globe*. On that first morning, I met a fellow intern named Bob Ryan, and we were assigned a task. Because of one of the greatest figures in newspaper history, Tom Winship, *Globe* sports interns were thrown into the fire. In those days, the *Globe* had a morning paper and an evening paper, and the editors wanted a piece for the 3:30 late edition—which was an important paper for the thousands who rode the trains and buses home after work—that detailed what teams did and what columnists wrote about baseball's response to the latest Kennedy murder. Bob was given the National League, I the American. We sat down at phones, were told to dial 8 for outgoing service, and went to work.

They gave us an assignment. We attacked it. And at 3:30 that day, there on the page was the dual byline, in alphabetic order. We left the building and went to the Eire Pub in Dorchester—later made famous by Ronald Reagan—for what I seem to remember was a 20-cent draft and a 25-cent dog, over the same kind of feeling that Eddie Pellagrini and Jason Heyward must have had when they homered in their first major league at-bats.

"It never again occurred to me that I would do anything else," Bob says. I knew.

The next day, Bob was off to Longwood to the US Pro doubles, and to meet the great Bud Collins. Twenty-nine days later I covered Pelé, the Boston Beacons against Santos of Brazil, at Fenway Park, before 18,431, the largest soccer crowd in Boston history. Later in that building, I covered Yaz and El Tiante; Pedro Martínez and Roger Clemens and the Gold Dust Twins, Jim Rice and Fred Lynn; Wade Boggs, David Ortiz, Dustin Pedroia, Dennis Eckersley, Mookie Betts... and on and on and on... but I was a college intern 29 days into my professional journalism career and covered Pelé. Final score: 7-1, Santos over Boston Beacons. They let me do Patriots training camp and learn from Leigh Montville, the best columnist I ever read.

Bob was right. I wasn't going to do anything else. No one after Dean Smith had to tell me that this was who I am. When I was still in high school and Peter Magowan was at Stanford, we had our own rotisserie game, by mail; he had the 1960s Giants, my best power hitter was Gary Geiger. Peter was off to Oxford. I was off to Somerset, Mass., to watch Jerry Remy, who was a great high school player and became a lifetime friend.

We were two kids from Lawrenceville and Groton who, as a few of my Groton classmates at our 50th reunion in 2013 said, "did what they wanted to do." In the process, were able to stick to our core beliefs—never slow down, never grow old, and, in the words of friend Randy Galloway, "know you can only be young once, but you can always be immature."

Which is why, in this 50th ink-stained wretch reunion, MLB Network allowed me to cover the baseball draft, which has fascinated me from the first time I covered one, in 1969. That year the Red Sox drafted Noel Jenke, an outfielder from the University of Minnesota who was also drafted by the NHL and NFL. Jenke eventually retired from baseball and went on to play in four Super Bowls, but didn't kill the buzz.

Days before this year's draft opened, I called Reggie Harris, whom the Red Sox took in the first round in 1997 and bought out of a scholarship to play point guard with his cousin and best friend Dell Curry at Virginia Tech. Harris is currently looking for a pitching coach job, which he will find. He stays in constant touch with Dell, who was off watching his son Steph in the NBA finals. Reggie, who pitched for the A's, Red Sox and four other teams over six seasons, watches every Golden State game. Dell was drafted by the Orioles but opted for an NBA career. I will admit that Harris, who threw 98 mph, was the reason I first watched Steph Curry, long before he became one of my favorite athletes in any sport. "Dell and I were very close," said Harris. "We played baseball and basketball together growing up, and now to watch his great boys is a joy to our entire family."

This week of the draft is Billy Beane Week. I was staying in a small hotel in Farmington, Conn., the week of the 2002 draft. My phone rang at 6:30 a.m. It was Billy. And it was 3:30 Pacific time.

That was, of course, the famous "Moneyball Draft," which Michael Lewis turned into a financial success. Nick Swisher was the A's first pick at 17. He had a good career, on and off the field. Joe Blanton had a solid run. "The idea we had was right—it was an information-based draft, which was ahead of its time," said Beane. "The problem was we didn't have the information yet. We tried to merge scouting with information. It was just hard to get the information."

Beane had scout Matt Keough following players like Swisher and Blanton and Mark Teahen. "We had concepts for the information," said Beane. We understood spin rate. We knew there was a distinct difference between contact and hard contact. Rafael Bournival is one of my favorite people of all time, and he had contact, he just made contact that didn't result in balls going very far. Now we have an incredible amount of information available. We all have PITCHf/x data and video available."

Swisher represented the Yankees on the first night of the draft on Monday. "I was just excited when Billy called me and told me that if I were there at 17 they were going to take me," he said. Did he get some extra cash out of the movie? "Of course not," said Swisher. "Once I heard Brad Pitt was playing Billy, I knew no one but Scott Hatteberg would get paid."

Representing the Royals at this year's draft was Bo Jackson. "I'm here as a pinch hitter for Art Stewart," Bo said. "He was the heart and soul of this part of baseball. I'm honored to take his place."

Arthur Lee Stewart spent his life in baseball. He loved the game, he loved the draft; he still does, but his knee doesn't allow him to travel. When Jackson visited Kansas City a couple of years ago, he went to the Royals offices, looking for Stewart. Dayton Moore told him Stewart had knee problems and was living in Milwaukee. "I'll go visit him," Bo told Moore. The following weekend Jackson was in Milwaukee, visiting Stewart.

One year Zack Greinke, who was with the Royals at the time, went to a college doubleheader in Surprise, Ariz., and scouted Arkansas pitcher Ryne Stanek. "I love doing that," Greinke said. "But it also was an excuse to spend the game with Art Stewart."

The game evolves, and it remains the same. A lot has happened for Bob Ryan and me in these 50 years. When he speaks at colleges, he doesn't ask for a fee; the requirement is the school must have a home basketball game. I still love going to Cape League games, as 49 years ago I loved going to Somerset, Mass., to watch a really good high school player named Jerry Remy.

Following that first day, a dual byline, a beer and a dog at the Eire Pub, I've worked at the Globe, Sports Illustrated, ESPN and The MLB Network, and everywhere I've worked, I have been treated well.

Fifty years on, MLB let me work the draft again and, essentially, do the same things I wanted to do the day I first walked into The Boston Globe, before I had any idea what I would do.

The Athletic LOADED: 06.10.2018

Jeimer Candelario smacks walk-off homer in 12th, Tigers outlast Indians

Ted Kulfan

Detroit — There were several positives the Detroit Tigers could take from Saturday's dramatic, 4-2, 12-inning victory over the Cleveland Indians, but one really stood out.

Jeimer Candelario's two-run home run in the 12th inning, his 10th homer this season, won the game.

Warwick Saupold (4-1) earned the win with two innings of shutout relief, capping a fine effort from the bullpen, after starter Mike Fiers was excellent over seventh innings.

But none of that was the historic aspect of this game.

That would be reliever Alex Wilson coming into the game in the seventh inning on the bullpen cart.

For the first time this season, a Tigers' relief pitcher took the ride from the bullpen to the mound — actually dropped off near third base — with plenty of smiles all the way around.

Wilson hadn't heard grief from his bullpen mates, or anyone, after the game ended.

"I haven't yet," said Wilson, who just returned to the lineup after missing several weeks with a left plantar fascia strain. "But I have no doubt it's coming. For all the grief I hand out in this clubhouse, I have no doubt stuff is coming."

Wilson needs to stay off his foot as much as possible, so that was the reason for the ride.

"I've said I'd never take it and then I blow my foot out," Wilson said. "I just have to stay off the foot a little bit. But it was an awkward experience to say the least.

"I got to the mound and Gardy (manager Ron Gardenhire), Miggy (Miguel Cabrera) and Mache (James McCann) were giggling at me. It was hard enough to try to lock into the situation."

Gardenhire, a Texas Longhorn alum, wasn't surprised Wilson, a former Texas A&M Aggie, would be the first to take the cart.

"The one guy I knew would do that would be Alex Wilson, I tip my hat to him," Gardenhire said. "He had the courage to do it. Good for him."

Wilson's cart ride notwithstanding, it was another hard-fought, dogged win for the Tigers (31-35), who have had more than a few of them.

"We persevered and hung in there," Gardenhire said. "Our bullpen did a great job, Mike Fiers was unbelievable, a heck of a performance, and a nice win for us, on a long night."

Candelario's first hit of the game, off Indians closer Cody Allen, ended a 3 hour, 46 minute marathon that was delayed 1 hour, 51 minutes at the start because of rain.

The Tigers had a golden opportunity to end the game in the bottom of the 10th inning.

Leonys Martin and Nicholas Castellanos singled, and Miguel Cabrera was walked to load the bases with one out. But Candelario lined out, and Victor Reyes grounded into a force out, ending the threat.

In the 11th, Jose Iglesias tripled to right-center with two out. But Dixon Machado's looping fly ball to center field was snagged by former Tiger Rajai Davis, extending the game.

Candelario didn't miss in the 12th, though.

"I was better and better each at bat and I just wanted to be in good position to be ahead in the count and try to drive the ball," Candelario said. "Just be aggressive in the zone and try to hit the ball on the barrel."

What seemed like multiple hours ago — and maybe it was — the Tigers received another admirable start from Fiers.

Battling through seven innings, Fiers only allowed one run on five hits, while walking one and striking out eight, frustrating the Indians.

"Everything is coming out of my hand great," Fiers said. "I'm healthy, that's No. 1, and I'm throwing the pitches I can throw, pitching the way I can pitch.

"It was kind of scuffle there in April, kind of a rough go, I didn't feel the ball coming out of my hand, but this part of the season ... it's kind of where I want to be."

Detroit News LOADED: 06.10.2018