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San Francisco Chronicle

Giants' Bumgarner ready to fast-track final rehab stages

Henry Schulman

PITTSBURGH — The Giants are gearing up for a Bum rush.

Madison Bumgarner will throw off a mound Monday for the first time since his hand was broken by a line drive in Arizona on March 23, setting off what sounds like a fast-track conclusion to his rehab as he closes in on his May 25 eligible date to return.

“It could be close,” manager Bruce Bochy said in an optimistic assessment.

Bumgarner is scheduled to throw to hitters when the Giants are in Houston next week. He will have one minor-league start at least, but with the rotation foundering and Bumgarner already throwing hard and from long distances on flat ground, the staff thinks he can return as soon as he builds enough arm strength to throw 70 pitches.

“Now,” Bochy said, “we’re on schedule to get things rolling.”

The San Francisco Giants greatly improved their roster during the offseason, but an injury to Madison Bumgarner could be too much to overcome.

The key is the nature of his injury. The fractured pinkie did not preclude Bumgarner from keeping his shoulder and elbow in shape.

The win: Reminded that losing streaks usually end when one player dons a cape and plays hero, Derek Holland said, “Go with Batman. I’m a Batman guy.”

The Giants needed what Holland gave them in Sunday’s 5-0 victory, which ended the team’s six-game slide. Holland four-hit the Pirates over 6 1/3 innings, giving the offense a chance to fight

through a week's worth of 100-mph outs and finally get to Pittsburgh starter Ivan Nova in a five-run sixth inning.

Gorkys Hernandez hit a leadoff homer. Brandon Crawford's two-out RBI double was an equally big hit for an offense that was 5-for-42 with runners in scoring position during the six-game losing streak. Nick Hundley then sent the first pitch from reliever Richard Rodriguez over the short, angled fence in the left-field corner for a three-run homer.

Hundley would have flied out elsewhere, but that is the quirk at PNC Park, just like the cartoon cars that rise above the fence in left field at AT&T Park.

"Buster (Posey) and I have talked about it," Hundley said. "If one of us hits the top of a car and loses a home run we're going out there with a chainsaw, and Chevron can hang with it."

Briefly: Alen Hanson, who injured his left hamstring Saturday night, was available to pinch-hit. The Giants will not bring in another middle infielder. ... Holland threw 104 pitches. He also had the best start during the losing streak (three runs allowed in five innings Tuesday in Philadelphia).

MLB.com

Hanson day to day; Bumgarner to throw BP

Bob Cohn

PITTSBURGH -- As if the Giants could afford another injury (they can't), second baseman Alen Hanson was out of the lineup for Sunday's series finale against the Pirates at PNC Park.

Hanson slightly strained his left hamstring during Saturday's 6-5 loss. Manager Bruce Bochy said Hanson is "day to day," pending further examination.

Signed as a free agent before the season, Hanson, who played for the White Sox and Pirates, has looked good at the plate and in the field for the struggling Giants since replacing injured second baseman Joe Panik in late April. He has a .984 OPS with four home runs in 52 plate appearances this season.

"He's put a charge in some balls," Bochy said. "But also, he's had some good at-bats. He's grinded out some real nice at-bats against tough pitching. He shows a lot of range at second. I knew he was playing very well down at [Triple-A] Sacramento. He was swinging the bat well, hitting over .400. But this is a different level here. He's continued that kind of play up here. It's nice to see."

On schedule

Bochy said Madison Bumgarner will throw his first bullpen session Monday, a sign that the ace left-hander's 2018 debut is drawing close.

Bumgarner, who underwent surgery after fracturing his pinkie on his pitching hand during a Cactus League game in late March, is set to face hitters on May 22, do a brief Minor League rehab and come off the 60-day disabled list on or shortly after the May 25 eligible date.

"He could be ready right when his date's up," Bochy said. "It's gonna be close ... He's got to be excited about it. We have no issues with that finger. We're on schedule to get things rolling."

MLB.com

Hundley slugs 3-run HR, backs Holland's 7 K's

Bob Cohn

PITTSBURGH -- Throughout the game, the Giants produced long, loud outs, hard-hit balls that led to nothing. So it was somewhat ironic, and a great relief to the Giants, that Nick Hundley's fly ball off reliever Richard Rodriguez in the sixth inning turned into a game-breaking home run that barely made the left-field seats, fair by only a few feet.

The blast, measured at 338-feet, capped a five-run inning -- ignited by Gorkys Hernandez's lead-off homer -- that helped the Giants beat the Pirates, 5-0, at PNC Park on Sunday and head home with a much needed ego boost after ending a six-game losing streak.

"We hit probably nine, 10 balls right on the screws that their outfielders made plays on, so it was nice to get a couple over the wall and open up the game a little bit," said Hundley, the Giants' back-up catcher who was giving starter Buster Posey a rest.

Hundley said he was grateful to get a mistake slider from the hard-throwing Rodriguez, a pitch that makes it mandatory to do "damage."

He did just enough. Hundley said he was confident the ball would stay fair. "I just didn't know if it would be caught or not," he said.

Just as encouraging for San Francisco was the work of starter Derek Holland, who pitched 6 1/3 scoreless innings and gave up four hits. He walked five, one intentionally, and struck out seven. The win snapped a streak of nine road losses for Holland going back to last May 21 when he pitched for Seattle. The outing also was his longest since then.

Relievers Reyes Moronta, Will Smith and Hunter Strickland preserved the shutout.

A journeyman left-hander who lugged a 1-4 record and 5.66 ERA into the game, the 31-year-old Holland gave up a lead-off double in the second inning, a one-out double in the third and a two-out double in the fifth. He began the fourth with none out and two on. He escaped each time.

"That's what it's all about," Holland said. "Any time these guys get on base you've to keep the damage down. I give credit to [Hundley] for really pushing me. 'Hey, let's get this guy, let's

focus on this one, try to get the double play.' I thought we did a good job of that today."

Pirates manager Clint Hurdle, the Rangers' hitting coach in 2010 when Holland was a youngster trying to find himself, said, "You've got to tip your hat to Derek Holland ... He's a completely different pitcher. He beat us with the kitchen sink. Any pitch, any time."

Right-hander Ivan Nova, the Bucs' starter, matched Holland's zeros until Hernandez, starting in center field for a resting Austin Jackson, unloaded on a 1-0 fastball leading off the sixth for his second homer of the season to put the Giants up, 1-0.

They weren't finished. Brandon Belt singled, and after Evan Longoria struck out, Pablo Sandoval ripped an infield single off first baseman Josh Bell's glove. That put runners on first and second for Brandon Crawford, who singled in his first two at-bats. Crawford doubled to right-center field, scoring Belt to make it 2-0.

That was it for Nova. Rodriguez came in and Hundley came up with Gregor Blanco -- running for Sandoval -- on third and Crawford on second. He swung at Rodriguez's first pitch and the ball eased up and away. Unlike the solid outs off Giants' bats, no one caught it.

Giants manager Bruce Bochy was asked if he thought "it was a matter of time" before those hard-hit outs would become hits.

"Well, you'd like to think so," he said. "You're hoping it's not one of those games where, oh no, you're having buzzard luck. We did make some hard outs. We had some really good at-bats and finally broke through."

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

Holland consistently worked out of trouble, but his biggest jam might have been in the fourth inning of a scoreless game. David Freese led off with a single and Sean Rodriguez walked. Jordy Mercer, a dangerous No. 8 hitter, came up. Holland got him to ground sharply to Longoria at third, starting a double play and the next hitter, Nova, flied out.

"The main thing was [Hundley] continued to keep pushing me," Holland said. "I didn't make the right pitches when I needed to, and it put me in that little hole. I had to continue to keep fighting, and I thought that was the best part about Hundley, keeping me focused, keeping me right where I needed to be. We made a big pitch right there, got the double play, and went after the next guy.

HE SAID IT

"He had all his pitches. A better breaking ball, I thought. It was sharp, located well, he used his changeup, worked the fastball on both sides [of the plate]. Really did a nice job out there. We needed that in the worst way. I said it would take a really good pitching effort to get us out of this. Give him credit. He took over and did a great job." -- Bochy, on Holland's outstanding performance that helped end the club's six-game losing streak

UP NEXT

The Giants return to AT&T Park on Monday for a seven-game homestand starting with three games against the Reds. Right-hander Chris Stratton (3-3, 4.60), coming off a loss to Philadelphia on Wednesday (4 2/3 IP, 5 ER) has yielded four home runs in his last three starts after allowing none in his first six. Righty Sal Romano (3-3, 3.83) gets the start for Cincinnati at 7:15 p.m. PT.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Holland turns luck around for slumping Giants: 'We needed that in the worst way'

Alex Pavlovic

PITTSBURGH — On the first day in Philadelphia, Derek Holland walked up to a beat writer -- this one -- who had missed the Atlanta sweep and jokingly reintroduced himself. That turned into a running gag through a week in Pennsylvania that ended up being a nightmare for the Giants.

After three straight losses, evening the record on the road trip, Holland asked if I planned to follow the team to Pittsburgh. Told yes, he laughed and suggested I take my bad luck elsewhere. Anywhere else. After the first loss in Pittsburgh on Friday, he called me over, smiling as he asked why I was still around the team.

“You’ve got to change something, man, change it up, change up the luck,” he joked. “Wear a different shirt or something. Do something.”

There is luck involved in this game, as the Giants found out early on Sunday. They hit six balls at least 100 mph in the first four innings and didn’t see any of them fall for hits. But for the most part, a team will make its own luck.

It was pretty simple Sunday. It didn’t matter who was sitting in the press box or what shirt he was wearing or what kind of magic beans the Giants might have hidden in their dugout. All they needed was a strong start, and Holland finally provided one. He took a shutout into the seventh and the Giants won 5-0, snapping a six-game losing streak to the Phillies and Pirates.

“We needed that in the worst way,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “I said it would take a good pitching effort to get over this. Give him credit — he took over.”

Bochy wasn’t the only one giving that message. As Holland warmed up, he was approached by pitching coach Curt Young.

“We need you today,” Young told him. “We’ve got to step up.”

Against the Pirates, that meant pitching through plenty of traffic. Holland walked five and gave up four hits, but he made pitches when he had to. He repeatedly busted the Pirates inside with fastballs and catcher Nick Hundley said Holland’s command was the best it has been all season.

Pirates manager Clint Hurdle, the Rangers' hitting coach when Holland was a youngster in 2010, said his team simply had to tip its themed caps.

"He beat us with the kitchen sink," Hurdle said. "The ball was around the zone. We pushed to get out there, and we couldn't come away with really even hard contact in those situations."

The Giants had plenty of hard contact early, and for a while, Bochy thought this would be one of his buzzard's luck games. That changed when Gorkys Hernandez found the seats in the sixth. An extended rally was capped by Hundley's three-run bomb into the same seats. Richard Rodriguez hung a first-pitch curveball and Hundley skied it.

"Thankfully he made a mistake with the breaking ball," he said. "You get something like that, you've got to do damage on it."

The homer, Hundley's fourth of the year, capped an all-around day for the catcher. Holland credited his guidance, and that was true in more ways than just pitch-calling. Holland lost track of the outs in the second inning and started walking off the mound after the second one. Hundley held his hands up and yelled back at the striding pitcher.

"Hey," he said. "We've gotta get the third one."

Holland got plenty more, pitching so effectively that Bochy sent him back out for the seventh to get past 100 pitches. When he came out for the ball, Holland tried to talk his way into more. That was enough on this day, though. The Giants needed a big performance and the left-hander gave it to them. He clinched a happy flight home, which allowed for one last joke on the way out of Pennsylvania.

"You're off the hook," he whispered as reporters walked away from his locker.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Behind Derek Holland and two home runs, Giants snap six-game losing streak

Alex Pavlovic

PITTSBURGH — It wasn't a surprise that a former Pirates outfielder came up big in his return to PNC Park. It was kind of a surprise that it wasn't Andrew McCutchen, though.

Gorkys Hernandez smoked a leadoff shot in the sixth to break a scoreless tie and the Giants poured it on from there, scoring five runs in the inning and winning 5-0. Derek Holland made sure the lineup had plenty of time to get into gear, throwing 6 1/3 shutout innings and getting his second win in orange and black.

The win snapped a six-game losing streak and gave the Giants a 4-6 road trip. It wasn't what they envisioned, but given how poorly they played for the last week, they'll probably take it. Here's what else you need to know ...

— Holland had his best day as a Giant. He became the first starter since last Saturday to pitch at least six innings, and despite the fact that he was at 99 pitches, he came back out for the seventh. After getting the first out, he was replaced by Reyes Moronta. Holland gave up four hits and walked five, but did an excellent job of pitching through traffic. He struck out seven.

— Through four innings, the Giants had hit six balls at least 100 mph. None of those balls resulted in base hits. Hernandez found a better way, driving one into the first row of seats in left while leading off the sixth. He now has more homers against the Pirates than he did in 33 games for them.

— With two on and two outs in the sixth, the Pirates called on Richard Rodriguez. He threw Nick Hundley a first-pitch curveball and it was skied right down the left field line for a game-breaking three-run shot. The homer was Hundley's fourth of the season. That's twice as many as the team's starting catcher has.

— Adam Frazier of the Pirates uses "Pony" as his walk-up song. Feels like that should be acknowledged far and wide, so here it is.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Madison Bumgarner could be back sooner than expected

Alex Pavlovic

PITTSBURGH -- Madison Bumgarner needed four rehab starts last season before a return to the big leagues. The Giants have already discussed cutting that way back this time, with him possibly needing just one or two.

Manager Bruce Bochy said Bumgarner's flat-ground work has been so impressive that he won't need as much minor league time as a year ago. But there's something else at play here, something left unsaid.

The standard for the rotation right now is not very high. The Giants haven't had a starter complete six innings since last Saturday, and too many starts are ending after the fourth. Couldn't Bumgarner do that as he works to build arm strength? Yes, yes he could, and those innings would likely be crisper than the ones Bochy is getting now.

Bumgarner will throw a bullpen session Monday in San Francisco. He will face hitters when the Giants are in Houston the next week. He is eligible to return on May 26, and Bochy said he won't need much more time than that.

"It's going to be close," he said. "That's how well he's throwing the ball. If his pitch count is around 75 in that (rehab start) he could make a start here, similar to what we did with Shark. We'll fill in with the bullpen instead of taking another (rehab) start to get up to 100 pitches. We'll see where we're at and how he's feeling."

--- Alen Hanson isn't feeling great. His tight left hamstring is still sore, and he's day to day (like all of us, technically). Bochy wasn't sure if Hanson would be available off the bench today. Evan Longoria is the choice to move to short or second if the Giants are in a jam.

--- Derek Law walked into the clubhouse Sunday morning in a walking boot, which was interesting because he was optioned to the minors while the Giants were still in Philadelphia. Law tweaked his ankle while hitting the bag on a grounder against the Phillies. It's not considered serious, but it made sense to keep him around. He's from Pittsburgh, so he spent the weekend here and he'll fly back to San Francisco with the team before driving to Sacramento.

The Athletic

Down on the farm: Dereck Rodríguez the Giants' next rotation option?

Melissa Lockard

His father spent just two-and-a-half seasons in the minor leagues before embarking on a Hall of Fame career. Now in his eighth minor league season, Dereck Rodríguez, son of Pudge, appears to be knocking on the door of the big leagues.

The Giants broke a six-game losing streak on Sunday, but they still have to feel far from assured about their starting rotation after the up-and-down road trip. Although Madison Bumgarner may return sooner than expected, the Giants will still be without Johnny Cueto for several more weeks at least, and Jeff Samardzija continues to struggle. With the Giants looking for a spark in their rotation, they could turn to Rodríguez, who has been terrific for Sacramento over the past month.

Armed with a low-90s fastball, a swing-and-miss curveball and an average changeup and slider, Rodríguez has held Pacific Coast League batters to a .233 average this season.

Rodríguez has had an interesting career trajectory. He began as an outfielder in the Minnesota Twins system, but after three seasons, he was converted to the mound. A minor league free agent this offseason, Rodríguez left the Twins to sign with the Giants. Before this season, he'd never pitched above the Double-A level. Now he's worked his way into a legitimate big league conversation.

All stats good through May 13.

Sacramento River Cats (Triple-A, Pacific Coast League)

Current Record: 20-18

Thanks to a doubleheader on Sunday, the River Cats played eight games this week. They survived the heavy workload just fine, going 5-3 to move above the .500 mark. Sacramento is in second place in the Pacific Northern division, three games back of first-place Fresno. Despite

almost daily roster changes, the River Cats have won seven of 10 overall.

Transactions

C Hector Sanchez: Activated off the 7-day disabled list on 5/12. Sanchez's recovery from a concussion was a relatively short one. He played back-to-back days on Saturday and Sunday and went 2 for 8 with an RBI.

LHP Caleb Baragar: Assigned to Sacramento from extended spring training on 5/11. With so many pitchers shuttling between Sacramento and San Francisco, the Giants called on Baragar to fill in from extended spring training. The 2016 ninth-round pick has allowed a run in 3 2/3 innings in two outings for the River Cats thus far.

RHP Derek Law: Recalled to San Francisco on 5/8, optioned to Sacramento on 5/10. After their pitching staff took a beating in the first three games of the Phillies' series, the Giants needed a fresh arm and Law was the odd-man out after throwing 2 2/3 innings on Wednesday. He remained in his hometown of Pittsburgh over the weekend and has yet to report to Sacramento. Law visited the Giants' clubhouse on Sunday and was seen by several reporters wearing a walking boot.

RHP Jose Valdez: Contract purchased by the Giants on 5/10. The veteran Valdez was selected to replace Law in the Giants bullpen as the long man. He had 3.71 ERA in 17 innings for the River Cats, striking out 26 and walking 11. Valdez has 50 1/3 innings of major league experience. He made 14 appearances in the big leagues last season with the Padres and Angels. Valdez allowed two runs in an inning on Friday in his Giants debut.

LHP Josh Osich: Optioned to Sacramento on 5/10. Osich had been on the 10-day disabled list with right hip tightness since 4/27. He was reinstated and optioned to Sacramento.

RHP Ray Black: Assigned to Sacramento from Richmond on 5/10. Black reaches the Triple-A level for the first time in his career after he thoroughly dominated the Eastern League for the first month of the season. With Richmond, he allowed one earned run on four hits and four walks in 10 innings. He struck out 20. Black has struggled in his first two appearances for the River Cats, allowing five runs in 2 1/3 innings. Command has been the issue in those two outings, as he's walked three and has given up two home runs.

LHP D.J. Snelten: Optioned to Sacramento from San Francisco on 5/9. Snelten returned to Sacramento after allowing five earned runs in 4 1/3 innings during his big league stint. He has allowed two runs in two innings over two appearances since he was sent down.

Notable Performances

OF Chris Shaw: Shaw homered on Sunday in the second game of the doubleheader and had three hits to cap off a big week. He went 9 for 28 with two home runs and seven RBI. Shaw has

10 home runs in 140 at-bats for Sacramento this season, although his K:BB remains troubling (currently 56:6). That ratio is likely the only thing keeping him from the Giants roster at this point.

OF/1B Austin Slater: Slater has hit safely in all 10 games since he was optioned back to Sacramento on May 2. He officially has a 12-game hitting streak, dating back to April 25. Slater went 8 for 21 with a home run and three walks this week. He's still mostly seeing time in the outfield, although he has logged two games at first base since returning to Triple-A.

Dereck Rodríguez: Rodríguez had two outstanding six-inning starts this week. In the first, he didn't allow a run and he struck out six. In the second, he allowed a run on two hits and a walk and he struck out 11. Rodríguez has a 3.13 ERA and a team-best 40:10 K:BB.

RHP Dusten Knight: Knight has been terrific in relief for Double-A Richmond and Sacramento this season, but he may be heading to the disabled list after he was pulled from a scheduled start in Game 2 of the Sunday doubleheader after feeling discomfort when warming up. Knight has allowed just one unearned run in 5 2/3 innings for the River Cats since his promotion from Richmond.

RHP Casey Kelly: Kelly had two strong starts this week, allowing only a run in eight innings against Salt Lake on Tuesday and following that with a six-inning, three-run performance on Sunday against Tacoma. Kelly has allowed six runs in 20 innings over his last three starts after allowing 22 runs in 9 1/3 innings over the three starts before that.

OF Eury Pérez: The veteran Pérez had 10 hits in 26 at-bats this week. He's batting .323 since joining Sacramento on April 18.

Richmond Flying Squirrels (Double-A, Eastern League)
Current Record: 19-16

The Flying Squirrels are locked in a tight race with the Altoona Curve and the Akron RubberDucks for first place in the Western division. Akron currently leads Altoona and Richmond by 1 1/2 games. The Flying Squirrels dropped two of three from Akron to start the week and then split a four-game series with the Trenton Thunder to finish. They'll battle Altoona for three games to start this week, with the aim of gaining some separation from the Curve in the division.

Transactions

C Jeff Arnold: Assigned to Richmond from Sacramento on 5/12. Arnold had six hits in 23 at-bats in Sacramento while filling in for Sanchez.

RHP Will LaMarche: Assigned to extended spring training from Richmond on 5/9; assigned to Richmond from extended spring training on 5/11. LaMarche was moved off the roster for two

days in a paper transaction to free up a roster spot.

RHP Dillon McNamara: Assigned to Richmond from Sacramento on 5/10. With Black joining the River Cats roster, McNamara was sent to Richmond to make room in the bullpen. He had allowed eight earned runs in eight innings with the River Cats.

RHP Chase Johnson: Assigned to Richmond from extended spring training on 5/8. Johnson, the Giants' third-round pick in 2013, returns to an active roster after missing most of last season recovering from Tommy John surgery. A member of the 40-man roster, Johnson will look to get back in position physically to help the Giants either as a long man in the bullpen or as a backend starter. He had a strong 2018 debut, throwing three scoreless innings, striking out two and allowing just one hit, but he failed to get out of the first inning in his second outing. In that start, Johnson allowed three runs on four hits and a walk in two-thirds of an inning. A high pitch count cut his start short.

Notable Performances

RHP Jordan Johnson: Johnson allowed a run in seven innings in his start this week. He struck out eight and didn't walk a batter. Johnson lowered his ERA to 2.43 and he has a 36:11 K:BB in 40 2/3 innings. The 2014 23rd-round pick has also been good with the bat this season. He has two home runs in five at-bats.

RHP Shaun Anderson: Anderson lowered his team-leading ERA to 2.31 with five innings of one-run ball on Thursday against Trenton. He struck out eight in the outing. Anderson has 39 strikeouts in 39 innings and has to be considered a strong candidate to move up to Triple-A soon.

IF Miguel Gómez: Gómez had seven hits in 23 at-bats this week and is batting .308 over his last 10 games.

RHP Mike Connolly: When Johnson could only go two-thirds of an inning on Sunday, the Flying Squirrels turned to Connolly, who saved the bullpen with a strong 5 1/3-inning outing. He allowed just one hit and he struck out five. Connolly has a 1.23 ERA and a 22:8 K:BB in 22 innings this season.

RHP Dan Slania: Slania was busy this week, racking up 4 2/3 innings pitched over three appearances. He allowed a run on five hits and he struck out two. He has a 2.60 ERA and has walked only two in 17 1/3 innings this season.

San Jose Giants (High-A, California League)
Current Record: 22-15

A Giants' win on Sunday coupled with a Stockton Ports' loss put the Giants in a tie with the Ports atop the California League's North division, one game ahead of the Visalia Rawhide. The

Giants finish up a four-game series against Lancaster on Monday before hosting Modesto for three. This weekend, San Jose heads to Stockton for a three-game commuter series that could decide who is in first place at this time next week.

Transactions

RHP CJ Gettman: Placed on the 7-day disabled list on 5/13. Gettman joined San Jose's bullpen from Augusta on May 5 and had allowed two runs in 5 2/3 innings before he landed on the DL on Sunday. He missed all of last season dealing with back and shoulder injuries.

C Tanner Murphy: Assigned to San Jose on 5/11. As I detailed last week, Murphy was acquired from the Braves to help bolster the Giants' catching depth. The 2013 fourth-round pick was in extended spring training to start the year for the Braves, but he made his 2018 debut with San Jose on Sunday and went 1 for 3 with an RBI.

RHP Nolan Riggs: Assigned to Sacramento from San Jose on 5/8 and to San Jose from Sacramento on 5/11. Riggs filled in when the River Cats were short on arms this week. He made one appearance for the River Cats, allowing a run in 3 1/3 innings.

IF John Polonius: Assigned to San Jose from extended spring training on 5/9. The versatile Polonius joins the San Jose roster for the first time this season. He's played for San Jose in parts of three different seasons, dating back to 2013. Polonius hit .265 with a .700 OPS in 36 games for San Jose last season.

OF Heath Quinn: Placed on the 7-day disabled list on 5/9. Quinn left Tuesday's game with a lower body injury and was placed on the DL the next day. Quinn's 2017 season was ruined by injuries, and he was off to a great start before Tuesday's mishap. In 28 games, he was batting .315/.370/.491.

RHP Jeff Burke: Assigned to San Jose from extended spring training on 5/8. Burke made his 2018 debut in a relief appearance with the Giants on Tuesday. He struck out the only batter he faced. Burke spent last season with Augusta. He had a 4.56 ERA in 51 1/3 innings.

Notable Performances

C Matt Winn: Winn extended his hitting streak to 15 games on Saturday and he hit his fourth home run of the season. The VMI alum has a .923 OPS in 24 games this season and he's thrown out 38 percent of would-be basestealers.

RHP DJ Myers: Myers has been a scheduled long reliever for the Giants this season, and he had two strong relief appearances this week. On Tuesday, he struck out 10 in five scoreless innings. The 10 Ks were the most by a San Jose reliever since Chase Johnson struck out 14 in August 2015. Myers followed that performance by throwing six scoreless innings on Sunday. He allowed only one hit and he struck out four. After allowing runs in each of his first five outings,

Myers is working on three straight scoreless outings (15 innings).

RHP Melvin Adon: Adon battled his command some in his outing on Saturday, but he managed to get through five innings. He allowed three runs while walking four and striking out three. The hard-throwing Adon has a 5.40 ERA in 40 innings this year.

OF Sandro Fabian: The youngest player on the Giants roster has struggled at the outset of the season. Fabian went 4 for 19 with a walk this week, but he did drive in four.

2B Jalen Miller: Miller went 6 for 22 this week with a home run and a walk. He continues to put together what looks like a breakout season. In 34 games, he's batting .286/.346/.443 with four home runs.

OF/1B Gio Brusa: Brusa had 10 hits and five walks in 23 at-bats this week. One of those hits was his fifth home run of the season. Brusa's ISO is .218 and he's got a .278/.343/.492 line in 32 games. Although he's batting .211 as a right-handed batter and .290 as a left-handed hitter, his OPSs are relatively even from both sides of the plate (.822 to .837, respectively). He looks on pace for a midseason promotion to Double-A.

Augusta GreenJackets (Low-A, South Atlantic League)
Current Record: 22-14

Despite a 2-5 week, the GreenJackets sit tied for first place atop the Southern division with the Rome Braves. Augusta is halfway through a four-game series against Greensboro and then they finish the week with a four-game series at Greenville.

Transactions

RHP Peter Lannoo: Assigned to Richmond from Augusta on 5/9 and to Augusta from Richmond on 5/11. A 28th-round pick last season, Lannoo became the first in his Giants draft class to reach Double-A when he filled in briefly for Richmond this week. He worked 1 2/3 scoreless innings in his one appearance with the Flying Squirrels. The reliever has a 3.24 ERA in 16 2/3 innings for Augusta.

RHP Carlos Sano: Assigned to Augusta from extended spring training on 5/9. Sano earned a three-inning save in his Augusta debut on Wednesday. The 25-year-old reliever signed with the Giants as a free agent this November. The native of the Dominican Republic starred in a Nicaraguan baseball league and was noticed by Giants scouts. The 6-2, 200-pound right-hander has a lively fastball. He should be an interesting project for the player development department.

1B José Vizcaino, Jr.: Placed on the 7-day disabled list on 5/8. Vizcaino appeared in only one game before landing on the DL.

2B T.J. Bennett: Assigned to Augusta from extended spring training on 5/8. With Vizcaino on the disabled list, Bennett got the call from extended spring. Bennett has moved up and down the Giants system since signing with the organization before the 2016 season. A Utah alum, Bennett went undrafted and played independent ball for two years before joining the Giants. He is 3 for 10 with Augusta thus far.

Notable Performances

OF Logan Baldwin: Baldwin is the hottest hitter in the Sally League at the moment. He has an 11-game hitting streak and is 23 for 44 over that stretch. The streak has erased what was a slow start for Baldwin, who is now batting .286 on the year. The athletic outfielder is a plus defender with good speed. He already has 13 stolen bases on the year.

3B Jacob Gonzalez: Gonzalez hit a grand slam on Thursday, his third home run of the season. He has a six-game hitting streak and he went 8 for 25 with three walks and seven RBIs. Gonzalez has nudged his OPS up to .702 on the year.

OF Heliot Ramos: Ramos had seven hits in 27 at-bats this week, including his third home run of the season. He also walked twice, giving him 10 on the year. Although his slashline is only .216/.300/.344, his walk and strikeout ratios are almost identical to the rates he put up in the Arizona Rookie League last year, but his BABIP has fallen from .500 in 2017 to .300 this year.

RHP Aaron Phillips: Phillips allowed a run on six hits in five innings in his third start of the season for Augusta. He's worked exactly five innings in each of those outings and he's yet to walk a batter, while he's struck out 17.

The Athletic

Giants Analytics: Hanson's breakout, diagnosing Suarez and Samardzija, and looking at Posey's homer totals
By Owen Poindexter

Despite being a veteran team, the Giants seem like a perpetual work in progress. As the older players figure out life as an athlete over 30, they are getting needed contributions from the next generation.

Does Suárez have a home run problem?

Andrew Suárez has been stellar as long as hitters don't elevate the ball. His flyball rate is normal, the problem is that almost a quarter of the flies he's given up have left the park. For some reason, his exit velocity on fly balls has been nearly 6 mph higher than league average at 98.2.

We're still talking about very small samples, so it's possible that this is a fluke, and that Suárez's home run rate will drop without his changing anything. The grounders he's induced only travel at 85.7 mph, so it's not like he has a generalized exit velocity problem. He's kept his curve and

changeup at the bottom of the zone or just below, and hitters haven't done much with those, but they occasionally get a fastball or slider they can jump on.

Suárez didn't have a home run issue in the minors, and he hasn't thrown too many pitches in the middle of the zone so far. Power numbers also take a long time to stabilize, and I'd bet his HR/FB percentage settles down from 23.8 percent to somewhere in the teens, taking his ERA down with it.

Shark's lefty problem

Jeff Samardzija's return to the rotation has stabilized the Giants pitching the way that pulling out all of the side blocks stabilizes a Jenga tower. Samardzija can be an effective pitcher, even something close to an ace, when he's missing by inches, but right now he's missing by feet.

Normally, five runs in 5 2/3 innings is nothing to celebrate, but Samardzija was a bit better in his last start. His swinging strike rate was up to 11.9 percent, after lingering at 9.3 percent in his previous four starts. His velocity has been up in his last two starts, so perhaps he's shaking off some rust.

But for Samardzija to really come back, he's going to need to solve this problem. These are small samples, but, well, just look:

Righties against Samardzija (58 PAs): .180/.298/.245.

Lefties against Samardzija (52 PAs): .364/.462/.721.

Notice the plate appearances — this isn't a secret, and managers are stacking their lineups with lefties. He's throwing a lot of pitches away, and lefties are mostly just waiting for stuff in the middle of the zone. Here are his full pitch distribution (left) and swing rates (right) against lefties.

He needs to stop wasting pitches up and away. Even if he can just bring those outside pitches down to be level with the zone, he could get some low power contact off of those, which would be a big improvement on what he's doing now.

Where are Posey's home runs?

Buster Posey has been excellent as usual, batting .306/.370/.430, but the formula has quietly changed over the years. Here are his HR/FB percentage rates each year from 2015-2018: 11.0 percent, 9.8 percent, 8.4 percent, 6.5 percent. In the last few years, some of his home runs have become doubles and some have become outs. The change isn't particularly visible in his year-by-year exit velocities or launch angles, even when we isolate fly balls. That suggests that a bounce back is possible, but it's not easy to reverse a trend that's gone on this long. By xwOBA, he's been a bit better, and his xwOBA has actually been relatively steady over the years.

It's peculiar that the batted ball indicators don't suggest a power decrease, but it's hard to

argue with over three years of data. At the same time, I wouldn't be shocked if a tweak in his swing or a little bit of luck propelled his home run total back up into the teens. Until further notice, I'd expect low home run totals, but a typically strong offensive output.

Alen Hanson has been awesome

Is Alen Hanson this good? Probably not, but he's been an incredibly fun player, combining power and speed with a perfectly serviceable average and OBP. Through 52 plate appearances, he's hitting .298/.346/.638. The average and OBP are close enough to what he did in the minors, it's the power that is brand new. After taking Chad Kuhl deep on Saturday, Hansen has as many home runs this year as he did in 234 plate appearances last year.

By exit velocity (88.3 mph) and launch angle (12.1), Hanson is unexceptional, yet his HR/FB rate of 18.8 percent is significantly above average. How's he doing that? By swinging to pull. He's pulling 55 percent of his batted balls with just 10 percent being hit the other way. The trend is even more extreme for ground balls — he pulls over 70 percent — which is how you get shifted. That's already started to happen, and will likely suppress his batting average going forward.

The stats that estimate performance based on the velocity and angle of his batted balls — namely xwOBA* and xBA (expected batting average) think he's overperforming.

So, he's unlikely to keep the magic going, but all that's really saying is he is going to settle down from being an out-of-nowhere star. An average hitter with his speed at a premium position (or even in the outfield when Joe Panik comes back) is a great player to have. If his offensive production going forward is that of his xwOBA (.346) instead of his wOBA (.402), the Giants would take that in a heartbeat. Also, while I haven't seen any research on this, it stands to reason that fast players would reach base and take extra bases when xwOBA thinks they "shouldn't" based on velocity and angle.

His performance in a small sample this year has produced flashy, unsustainable results, but there is plenty of room to fall while still being a great surprise value on a team that could use some of that.

*As a reminder, wOBA calculates a player's total offensive output on a scale that matches OBP. League average is currently .312. xwOBA estimates a player's wOBA from exit velocity and launch angle.

The Athletic

Derek Holland receives a huge compliment after serving as Giants' stopper in Pittsburgh Andrew Baggarly

PITTSBURGH — It couldn't have been easy for Derek Holland to take the mound Sunday afternoon, with wet clay sticking in his spikes and a burden on his shoulders.

The Giants had lost six consecutive games, most of them in bruising fashion at Philadelphia and

then here in Steel City, and this was their last chance at sipping a victory in the Keystone State. Holland towed a personal winless streak of 12 road starts dating to his rough finish with the Chicago White Sox last season, and knew he couldn't keep following mediocre results with promises of better times ahead.

There was also this: because it was Mother's Day, and catcher Nick Hundley was awash in pink accoutrements, Holland had to maintain his focus while throwing to what resembled a giant wad of Hubba Bubba.

Hundley's glove was black. The edges of the strike zone were black. That's where Holland kept his mind trained.

"That's all I was doing," Holland said. "If you noticed, he kept pointing to his glove, and telling me to go there."

Holland pointed the Giants back in the right direction while giving them what they most needed, spinning 6 1/3 scoreless innings, and a lineup that kept making hard outs against Pirates right-hander Ivan Nova finally broke through in the sixth inning as the Giants took a 5-0 victory at PNC Park.

Andrew McCutchen received loud ovations in every at-bat during his three-game return here, but another former Pirate delivered the breakthrough hit of the game. Gorkys Hernández's solo shot, his second of the year, gave the Giants the lead in the sixth. Brandon Crawford hustled out an RBI double to conclude a spirited at-bat. Then Hundley followed with a three-run shot, placing his fly ball so it would land in the second row where the left field fence juts at a favorable angle.

"We needed that in the worst way," said Giants manager Bruce Bochy, after his team finished a 4-6 trip that began with a flourish, lurched into total disaster and ended respectably. "I said it'd take a good pitching effort to get us out of this."

Holland, a non-roster invitee this spring who made the rotation after injuries to Madison Bumgarner and Jeff Samardzija, knows that the proving ground extends beyond Opening Day. He entered 1-4 with a 5.66 ERA and hadn't won a road start since May 21 of last year for the White Sox at Seattle. He had a 10.53 ERA over his past 12 road outings.

When he walked to the mound, he was only thinking of what pitching coach Curt Young told him in the bullpen: "Hey, we need you today. We've got to really step it up."

"I made sure I didn't do anything different than I have in any other start," Holland said. "I continue to keep plugging away and trust the stuff I've been working on is going to show up. The young guys, they watch how we work. They feed off it. That's what we're looking for — for them to keep pushing as well."

Holland's afternoon began with an eight-pitch battle with Francisco Cervelli that ended with a near miss and a walk. The left-hander was able to establish both his curve and slider, though, getting Starling Marte to swing over the top of one breaking ball before overpowering him with high heat. Then he froze Josh Bell with a fastball inside.

The Pirates made some hard contact — Jose Osuna and Marte both doubled off the wall — but Holland did his best work in high-traffic areas. And he kept the ball in the yard, which was also badly needed after the Giants had allowed 15 home runs over their six-game losing streak.

Pirates manager Clint Hurdle praised Holland's effort, saying he didn't recognize the left-hander he knew from their season together in 2010 when he was the hitting coach with the Texas Rangers. And that's not because Holland happened to shave off his mustache prior to Sunday's start.

"He's a completely different pitcher now," Hurdle said. "He beat us with the kitchen sink. Any pitch, any time, 80 mph to 92 mph, and they were strikes and the ball was around the zone. We pushed to get out there, but we couldn't come away with even hard contact in situations. Our team has been swinging the bats pretty well. Today, the matchup went his way when the at-bats counted."

"Then, he was a power arm with a hammer curveball," Hurdle continued. "Now, there's a lot of Mark Buehrle in that delivery. The fastball is real at 92. It's not like he's throwing an 85 mph fastball. The fastball can beat you when you're looking soft. And then the slider played, the cutter. The changeup was a very effective pitch for him today. Everything is coming out of the same window, the same arm slot, so there is good deception."

Hundley said Holland had his best command of the year, but the left-hander remained irked by his five walks (one intentional). Even though he pitched into the seventh inning for the first time, and knew it was hopeless to try to lobby Bochy to go any further, he tried it anyway.

He did more than enough while delivering the Giants their first quality start in eight games.

"I've got to give credit to Hundo for really pushing me," Holland said. "He's like, 'Hey let's focus on this guy, let's get the double play, focus on situations.' That was the best thing about Hundley, keeping me in that edge, keeping my focus where it needed to be."

And what did Hundley say when Holland started walking off the mound with two out in the second inning?

"Hey, we've got to get the third one."

The sixth inning was a wellspring for the Giants after a whole bunch of hard contact against Nova went unrewarded. The Giants hit 10 balls with exit velocities of at least 100 mph and the eight hardest of those were outs.

Hundley's home run was not hit as hard. He lofted a mistake slider from strikeout machine Richard Rodriguez that had a 40-degree launch angle and just a 5 percent probability of being a hit, according to Statcast.

At AT&T Park, the ball might have hit the gas advertisement with its cartoon cars that are in play and whose humped roofs jut above the top of the fence. And if that had happened, Hundley and Buster Posey might have found themselves renting power tools.

"Me and Buster talked about it," said Hundley, "and if either he or I do it, we'll chainsaw that thing and Chevron can hang with it."

The Giants' hard contact against Nova was a good sign for a team that was facing its 10th consecutive right-handed starter and had an 8-14 record in games started by them. Three more matchups against right-handers await them when they return home for a three-game series against Cincinnati — including newest Reds pitcher Matt Harvey on Wednesday.

They will attempt to do damage, and not to the ballpark.

The Athletic

Giants optimistic that Madison Bumgarner will return sooner than anticipated Andrew Baggarly

PITTSBURGH — The Giants are desperate for Madison Bumgarner. And the left-handed ace is just as motivated to return to a reeling rotation.

Bumgarner will return to a practice mound on Monday, and both he and the Giants anticipate him to move at warp speed as he rebuilds the needed arm strength to return to the rotation.

Last year, Bumgarner needed four rehab starts before he returned from a separated left shoulder. This time, he might make just one or two before deeming himself ready to come back from a fractured fifth metacarpal in his pitching hand.

Bumgarner is eligible to be activated from the 60-day disabled list on May 25, and manager Bruce Bochy said it's possible "he could be ready right when his date is up. It's going to be close. That's how well he's throwing the ball."

The calendar would appear to point Bumgarner toward a mid-June return, given that he is scheduled to throw twice off a mound on the next homestand and face hitters under simulated game conditions when the Giants arrive in Houston on May 22 before heading to what was expected to be multiple minor league rehab starts.

But the Giants brought back Jeff Samardzija after one rehab start of 60 pitches last month, and Bochy suggested the club could do the same with Bumgarner — a schedule that could put him

on track to start a homestand opener against the Philadelphia Phillies on June 1.

“It’s similar to what we did with Shark,” said Bochy, indicating Bumgarner only needed to be ready to throw 75 pitches. “We’ll fill it in with the bullpen instead of taking another start trying to get up to that 100-pitch area.”

Such is the state of affairs in the Giants rotation, which ranks 12th out of 15 National League teams with a 4.50 ERA. The club hasn’t received a quality start while struggling through a six-game losing streak.

Their young and unestablished rotation performed well for a stretch but is starting to show the stress cracks of performing without Bumgarner, Johnny Cueto or an effective Samardzija. The team is desperate for Bumgarner’s leadership and swagger, too.

And Bumgarner, from what I’ve been told, has been as active as anyone could be while seeking ways to shave days off his rehab calendar. He has worn out doctors and trainers, peppering them with constant questions about every aspect of the fracture he sustained when hit by a line drive off the bat of Kansas City’s Whit Merrifield in the final Cactus League exhibition March 23.

He has sought to understand not just how to maintain his arm strength while his hand was in a cast, but also the science behind how fractures heal. He has been intensely invested in every part of the medical process, which included surgery to insert three stabilizing pins.

Even when he couldn’t pick up a weight in his left hand, he did shoulder resistance exercises with trainers pushing against his left arm. It was no surprise, then, that his flat-ground sessions have looked so promising.

Bumgarner acknowledged he probably needed more than four rehab starts last year, but that was when he was coming back from a separated shoulder he sustained in a dirt bike accident. This current injury involved a more straightforward rehab process.

“He has no issues with the finger,” Bochy said. “We’re on schedule to get things rolling.”