

# Cincinnati Reds Press Clippings May 16, 2018

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## THIS DAY IN REDS HISTORY

**1998-Reds pitchers Mike Remlinger, Scott Sullivan, Mark Hutton and Stan Belinda, produce 17 strikeouts in a nine-inning game against the Cubs, for the first time in history**

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## MLB.COM

### **Mahle struggles in 4th and Reds can't recover**

**By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m\_sheldon**

**May 15th, 2018**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Tyler Mahle lost Tuesday night's game for the Reds against the Giants in the fourth inning. But trouble was brewing for Mahle well before, as he labored in the earlier innings.

In the shortest start of Mahle's brief career, San Francisco's four-run fourth inning was the turning point that sent the Reds to a 5-3 loss at AT&T Park. The rookie right-hander was done after 3 1/3 innings with four earned runs, seven hits, one walk and two strikeouts while throwing 86 pitches.

"The Giants were making him throw a lot of pitches," Reds interim manager Jim Riggleman said. "He was getting 2-2, 3-2 counts, foul ball, foul ball. They were making him work really hard. They had some good at-bats, even though he was getting the outs."

Indeed, five Giants batters reached three-ball counts over the first three innings. His fastball -- his bread-and-butter pitch, normally -- was not effective. He used it 63 times in the game, according to Statcast™.

"I think it was because I was missing my spots," said Mahle, who is 3-5 with a 4.34 ERA in nine starts. "I was having trouble, especially on the lefties, going up and in."

The Reds staked Mahle to a 2-0 lead in the third inning against pitcher Ty Blach on a two-run home run by Eugenio Suarez, and it was 3-0 in the top of the fourth after Billy Hamilton's two-out RBI single scored Tony Cruz. But the advantage crumbled quickly for Mahle in the bottom of the fourth.

First, Mahle's 89 mph 1-0 fastball up and over the plate to Brandon Belt was clobbered for a leadoff homer to right field with a splash into McCovey Cove. Mahle missed the spot on that pitch, as well.

"A fastball up and in, it ran over the plate a little bit," Mahle said. "It was up and caught too much of the plate and he turned on it."

Three straight singles followed from Evan Longoria, Brandon Crawford and Austin Jackson to load the bases with no outs. Mahle was able to strike out Kelby Tomlinson before the Giants boldly pulled Blach for pinch-hitter Pablo Sandoval. With a single slashed into left field, Sandoval drove in two runs and finished Mahle's night.

Mahle was sick for a few days leading up to his outing, but said it didn't affect his performance. Riggleman wasn't as sure.

"As the game went on, his velocity was getting better. He assured me he was fine to pitch," Riggleman said. "I was concerned he was 88, 89 [mph]. The second inning, he threw a lot of 88s. Next thing you know -- as he can do -- he revved it up. He didn't get up there to 95, 96 but he was throwing considerably harder when he needs to. His slider didn't have any depth. They were fouling that off."

Amir Garrett took over and first batter Gregor Blanco lined a single off of his glove to reload the bases. Garrett got Andrew McCutchen to ground to third base for a potential inning-ending double play, but Suarez's throw to Scooter Gennett was low, slowing the second baseman's ability to throw to first base. McCutchen was safe, scoring Jackson with the go-ahead run.

Garrett provided 2 2/3 innings of scoreless relief in his latest strong appearance. In the eighth, reliever David Hernandez gave up two hits that included a two-out RBI single by Tomlinson.

Following a six-game winning streak, the Reds dropped the first two games of their three-game series vs. San Francisco. Rough starts for Sal Romano and Mahle have been largely the difference. With three young starters in the rotation, also including Luis Castillo, Rigglesman realized that there will often be inconsistency, but still remained bullish about the pitching.

"I think we're really going to do well with these guys. I really like those three young guys put out there with the veterans, Homer [Bailey] and [Matt] Harvey," Rigglesman said. "Our fans get tired of hearing it. We certainly don't expect our fans to be patient. We're not asking for patience. But we got to believe in these guys. They're very talented. We're going to win ballgames with those guys."

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Suarez goes deep: In the top of the first inning, Suarez jammed his right ankle into second base as he scampered back following a Gennett single. He was looked over by the trainer, but was able to stay in the game. His next time up in the third, Suarez turned on a 2-0 Blach pitch for his seventh homer of the season. In his last 19 games since coming off of the disabled list April 26, Suarez has five homers and 23 RBIs.

#### YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Hamilton did it again on defense. He made a spectacular diving catch to rob Longoria of a hit to begin the bottom of the eighth inning. It was rated as a five-star catch by Statcast™ because it had just a 16 percent catch probability. Hamilton covered 58 feet of ground in 3.6 seconds.

#### HE SAID IT

"I'll tell you what, we had some great performances, period. Amir Garrett was outstanding. Billy made great plays in center field, Suarez swinging the bat. We just really, we had some great performances, we just came up short." -- Rigglesman

#### UP NEXT

Following a superb four-scoreless-inning debut following his trade from the Mets, Harvey will make his second start for Cincinnati when the series vs. the Giants concludes at 3:45 p.m. ET on Wednesday. Andrew Suarez will oppose Harvey for San Francisco. In three previous starts against the Giants, Harvey is 0-2 with a 5.68 ERA.

#### **Hamilton lays out to make spectacular catch**

**By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m\_sheldon**

**1:00 AM ET**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Even Giants fans could appreciate Reds center fielder Billy Hamilton taking a hit away from one of their players on Tuesday night.

Leading off the bottom of the eighth against Reds reliever David Hernandez, Evan Longoria hit a drive toward the gap in right-center field, and Hamilton laid out for a spectacular diving catch.

According to Statcast™, the play was rated as a five-star catch because it had a catch probability of only 16 percent. Hamilton covered 58 feet of ground in 3.6 seconds.

The crowd of 37,609 fans at AT&T Park applauded Hamilton for his grab as he showed the ball in his glove while lying on the grass.

It was Hamilton's second five-star catch of the season. He also had one on May 7 against the Mets at Great American Ball Park.

#### **Votto speaks out on Reds' slow start**

**By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m\_sheldon**

**May 15th, 2018**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Reds first baseman Joey Votto had never participated in a podcast interview before he did one on Friday in Los Angeles with Yahoo Sports. Amid numerous subjects, Votto was very candid and provided honest answers -- including when he was asked about Cincinnati's disappointing start to the 2018 season.

"Not often does a player get to speak the way I'm speaking right now, because my role is to do my job on the field and pretty much zip my lips, which makes sense," Votto told interviewer Tim Brown. "But in the same breath, I've been with this franchise for, I

think, 17 years now. You can say things are business, but to honest with you, I was a kid when I signed with this franchise; I take it personally. This is a personal thing to me. People inside of the organization, in all likelihood, are not going to enjoy my responses. But it's been disappointing."

Votto's interview was conducted in the midst of the Reds' recent six-game winning streak that was snapped on Monday vs. the Giants. Yet, even after nearly doubling their win total with a pair of wins over the Mets and a four-game sweep of the Dodgers, the Reds entered Tuesday 11 games back of first place in the National League Central. Their 3-18 start was the worst in franchise history.

"I genuinely hope that we're trending in the right direction, but this is the worst start I've ever seen," Votto said. "There are so many people that are losing interest in our organization, and deservedly so. It hasn't been a fun time to be a Cincinnati Reds fan."

The podcast dropped Tuesday morning, and the comments Votto made about losing created some national news.

On Tuesday afternoon at AT&T Park, Votto didn't regret the content of what was said, but he felt bad for drawing negative attention to himself and the Reds.

"I never want to be apologetic for anything I say," Votto said. "But, I think I may have been a bit overzealous with some of the things I said because I feel at the time we weren't playing very well, and I was frustrated. Ultimately, I want what's very best for the organization -- everyone throughout.

"I miss the days of playing really good quality baseball. I don't know what to say. I've been with the franchise for a long time now. More often than not, I bite my tongue. Probably, I went a little too far with some of the things I said, just out of frustration."

Votto, 34, has consistently been the Reds' best player since debuting in 2007. He was the 2010 NL Most Valuable Player and nearly won a second MVP Award last season. He also experienced playing for contending Cincinnati teams that won division titles in 2010 and '12 and reached the NL Wild Card Game in '13.

However, the Reds have largely been in rebuilding mode since and have endured four straight losing seasons -- including 94 or more losses in the last three seasons.

"I made it personal when it probably shouldn't have been. But, again, I can't help it," Votto said. "I think people do things and say things emotionally when they make it personal. I'm going to do my best going forward to stick to playing ball and doing my job, do my part and make sure the things I say going forward are productive and help us move in the right direction."

Votto said he has not received any feedback from the Reds' front office.

"But most importantly, I knew I overstepped my bounds," Votto said. "I think that's something that I haven't done much in my career, so it stood out to me. Even if someone up top said something to me, I think I would have acknowledged and said, 'Yeah, you're right. I need to do my job.' I feel pretty strongly about that."

Votto has five years left on his 10-year contract at \$25 million per season, with a \$20 million team option or \$7 million buyout for 2024. His contract includes a full no-trade clause, and he has again showed no desire to be dealt.

"I'm proud to wear a Reds uniform, and I look forward to doing that until the last day of my Major League Baseball career," Votto said.

### **Votto's tight lower back shows improvement**

**By Mark Sheldon MLB.com @m\_sheldon**

**2:17 AM ET**

SAN FRANCISCO -- The lower back tightness that forced Reds first baseman Joey Votto out of Monday's game showed improvement Tuesday. But the decision was already made by interim manager Jim Riggleman that Votto should rest.

"I talked to Joey after the game. Let's give this thing a chance to calm down," Riggleman said.

Votto departed before the bottom of the fourth inning Monday vs. the Giants. In the third inning, he hit a single to left field and appeared in discomfort as he ran out of the batter's box. Then he advanced to second base when left fielder Gregor Blanco misplayed his hit for an error.

Adam Duvall replaced Votto Monday night and started at first base Tuesday night.

"I'll be playing as soon as possible," Votto said. "I think there was a possible plan of me getting the day off this series preceding the trip back [to Cincinnati]. I think it was convenient I had a little bit of hiccup. Some rest is good."

The Reds have a scheduled off-day Thursday before beginning a homestand Friday against the Cubs.

"If he's ready to go [Wednesday], he'll play," Riggles said.

Votto was able to get treatment during the game and felt good enough to pinch-hit in the ninth inning. He struck out against Hunter Strickland to end the game, however, in a 5-3 loss to the Giants.

Barnhart to play even more

Regular Reds catcher Tucker Barnhart was out of the lineup Tuesday and backup Tony Cruz started in his place. With the trade of former backup Devin Mesoraco to the Mets for pitcher Matt Harvey on May 8, Barnhart will likely be playing more often.

"Probably a little more, yeah," Riggles said. "We're very comfortable with Tony back there. In Spring Training, immediately, we were getting a lot of good feedback from everybody concerning Tony's handling of the pitchers and his communication with the pitchers and everything like that. Probably with Devin's long-term relationship in the organization, we would have been likely to have given him as much work as possible out of respect to him, and see where that would have taken us. "

Barnhart has started 30 of the Reds' 43 games this season. Tuesday marked Cruz's third start since he was called up after the Mesoraco trade.

"If this is how our catching corps remains, Tucker would probably get another 10 percent more action over the course of the season than he would if Devin was here," Riggles said.

## **Tuesday's top prospect performers**

**By Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com**

**2:12 AM ET**

Here's MLB Pipeline's roundup of the top prospect performances in the Minor Leagues on Tuesday.

The ball was flying out of the park across the Minor Leagues on Tuesday as a trio of hitters ranked on MLB Pipeline's Top 100 Prospects list enjoyed multihomer performances for their respective clubs.

Fernando Tatis Jr., San Diego's top-ranked prospect, accomplished the feat for a second this season and the third time in his career as the No. 7 overall prospect connected on a pair of solo shots for Double-A San Antonio. The 19-year-old shortstop hit a leadoff homer to put his team on the board and added another solo blast in the fifth inning before finishing 2-for-4.

After slashing .177/.231/.333 over 24 games during the season's first month, Tatis has looked more like himself in May, posting a .333/.441/.719 batting line and five home runs in 14 games for the Missions.

Ryan McMahon's (No. 38 overall) two home runs for Triple-A Albuquerque were his first of 2018, as the Rockies' No. 2 prospect hit a solo and three-run shot in his first two at-bats, respectively, in a 10-3 victory over Las Vegas. It was an encouraging performance by the 23-year-old, who's now hitting .255/.305/.418 in Triple-A after batting just .180 in 50 at-bat with Colorado to begin the season.

Angels' top prospect Jo Adell (No. 57 overall) belted a solo homer followed by a two-run shot in his first two at-bats as he filled out the box score in Class A Burlington's 9-2 win against Kane County. The 19-year-old outfielder would later add a two-run double to finish 4-for-5 with five RBIs as he improved his average from .292 to .325 with his third four-hit game this season.

The rest of the best performances from top prospects Tuesday

- No. 11 overall prospect Bo Bichette (Blue Jays' No. 2) connected on his first homer with Double-A New Hampshire, a game-tying solo shot in the seventh inning that he punctuated with an equally impressive bat flip. The 20-year-old shortstop finished 2-for-6 with two RBIs at the plate, helping the Fisher Cats edge Hartford, 7-6, in 11 innings.
- No. 14 overall prospect Mitch Keller (Pirates' No. 1) logged his third seven-inning start of the season, all victories, for Double-A Altoona. The 22-year-old righty yielded one earned run on four hits, walking two and striking out seven in the performance. He also

generated eight ground-ball outs and threw 63 of his 95 pitches for strikes. Will Craig (No. 17) powered the Curve's offense with a team-high two hits including a three-run blast, his second homer in as many games.

- Brewers' No. 6 prospect Corey Ray homered twice and collected a career-high four hits, going 4-for-5 with three RBIs, three runs scored and a stolen base as Double-A Biloxi fell to Pensacola, 10-8. It also marked the first career multihomer game for the 23-year-old, who's now gone deep three times in his past three games, giving him five homers through 38 games in his first Double-A campaign. He's slashing .269/.349/.481, with 20 extra-base hits and seven steals, on the season.

- Zac Gallen received more run support than he needed, as the Marlins' No. 12 prospect scattered seven hits over six scoreless innings in Triple-A New Orleans' 16-0 rout of Omaha. Throwing 60 of his 91 pitches for strikes, Gallen issued one walk, struck out a pair and induced nine ground-ball outs. Having completed at least five innings in each of his eight starts en route to a 2.25 ERA in 48 innings in the Pacific Coast League, the 22-year-old right-hander has little left to prove in the Minor Leagues.

- Indians' No. 8 prospect Shane Bieber's overall ERA sits at 1.43 after the 22-year-old posted 6 2/3 innings of one-run ball in a no-decision for Triple-A Columbus. He allowed five hits in the outing while striking out seven and throwing 76 of his 103 pitches for strikes. He's compiled 46 strikeouts and three walks over 50 1/3 innings between Columbus and Double-A Akron, giving the right-hander a 229-to-15 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 247 2/3 career innings.

- Mets' No. 4 prospect Peter Alonso put a bow on his third career two-homer game with a walk-off blast, powering Double-A Binghamton past Erie, 6-5. He hit a pair of solo shots, as well as a single, in the contest to finish 3-for-5 with three RBIs. The 2015 second-rounder's hit 11 homers this season, good for a share of first place in the Eastern League, a circuit that he also paces in OPS (1.173) and total bases (89). Altogether, Alonso has produced a robust .367/.478/.695 batting line with 47 hits and 33 RBIs in 36 games.

- Red Sox No. 24 prospect Chad De La Guerra had plated five of Double-A Portland's seven runs when the game was suspended due to rain after the top of the ninth inning, with the Sea Dogs trailing Reading, 9-7. He did much of his damage with a second-inning grand slam, his second homer of the year. Due up fourth for Portland in the bottom of the ninth when the game resumes, De La Guerra will be seeking a triple to complete his cycle. The two clubs will finish the game Wednesday morning before playing the regularly schedule game.

- Reds' No. 12 prospect Aristides Aquino's two homers were key in helping Pensacola outslug Biloxi, 10-8. He went 2-for-5 in the contest, finishing with three RBIs. The 24-year-old outfielder has hit six home runs in 38 games this season after a 17-homer 2017 campaign over 131 games in the Southern League.

- Twins' No. 6 prospect Alex Kirilloff extended his extra-base-hit streak to 13 games with his sixth home run before finishing 3-for-4 with a triple and three runs scored for Class A Cedar Rapids. With an extra-base hit in his next contest, the 20-year-old outfielder will tie the Major League record shared by Paul Waner (1927) and Chipper Jones (2006). Kirilloff's streak has done wonders for his slash line, too, pushing it from .254/.289/.451 to .317/.356/.618.

- Yankees' No. 14 prospect Trevor Stephan racked up a career-high 11 strikeouts in a seven-inning complete game, the first of his career, as Class A Advanced Tampa defeated Dunedin in Game 1 of a doubleheader. The 6-foot-5, 225-pound righty allowed two earned runs on five hits and also hit one batter in the outing. He matched his season high by throwing 91 pitches, including a season-best 70 strikes. In his first full season, Stephan leads the Florida State League in WHIP (0.78) and strikeouts (49) and ranks fifth in ERA (1.98).

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## CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

**Cincinnati Reds can't get big hit in 5-3 loss; rookie Tyler Mahle only lasts 3 1/3 innings**

**John Fay, [jfay@enquirer.com](mailto:jfay@enquirer.com)**

**Published 1:08 a.m. ET May 16, 2018 | Updated 10:14 a.m. ET May 16, 2018**

SAN FRANCISCO – It was just the kind of game the Reds were winning on the six-game winning streak. The bullpen kept it close enough that some late-inning runs would have been the difference.

But the Reds could not get that big hit.

The result was a 5-3 loss to the San Francisco Giants Tuesday before a crowd of 37,809 at AT&T Park on a typical chilly night beside the bay. The Reds were 1-for-6 with runners in scoring position.

Rookie right-hander Tyler Mahle (3-5) had the shortest outing of his big league career. He went 3 1/3 innings and allowed four runs on seven hits. He walked one and struck out two.

Mahle's been dealing with a cold, but he didn't use that as an excuse.

"I'm feeling fine," he said. "I still have some stuff in my chest. But, as far as how I feel, I felt better today than I have in the last week. It had nothing to do with performing."

It was the first time in five starts that Mahle allowed more than three runs. Mahle's rough night came after Sal Romano struggled the night before. Mahle, Romano and Luis Castillo, give the Reds a young rotation.

They'll be nights like Monday and Tuesday.

"(But) I think we're really going to do well with these guys," Reds manager Jim Riggleman said. "I really like those three young guys put out there with the veterans Homer (Bailey) and (Matt) Harvey.

"Our fans get tired of hearing it. We certainly don't our fans to be patient. We're not asking for patience. But we've got to believe in these guys. They're very talented. We're going to win ballgames with those guys. I love having the addition of Harvey. Our lineup is potent. It's going to turn around."

All the damage against Mahle came in the fourth after the Reds had built a 3-0 lead.

The Reds took the lead on the third inning. Jesse Winker is not the fleetest of foot, but he was running as hard as he can when second baseman Kelby Tomlinson mishandled his ground ball. Winker beat the throw by half a step. That turned out to be big.

Three pitches later, Ty Blach threw a 79-mph curveball right down the middle. Eugenio Suarez lifted it out to left field for his seventh home run of the year, and the Reds had a 2-0 lead.

The Reds added a run in the fourth. Tony Cruz singled with one out. Mahle sacrificed Cruz to second. Billy Hamilton singled to get Cruz in.

Mahle put up zeros in the first three, but it was battle.

"The Giants were making him throw a lot of pitches," Riggleman said. "He was getting 2-2, 3-2 counts, foul ball, foul ball. They were making him work really hard. They had some good at-bats, even though he was getting the outs.

"He was getting up to 75, 80 pitches. He was laboring."

Said Mahle: "I think it was because I was missing my spots. I had three balls on a lot of the hitters. I was having trouble, especially on the lefties, going up and in."

Things went wrong quickly for Mahle in the bottom of the fourth. Brandon Belt led off with a towering shot that ended up in McCovey Cove behind the right-wall for his eighth home run of the year.

Evan Longoria, Brandon Crawford and Austin Jackson followed with singles to load the bases. Mahle struck out Tomlinson.

San Francisco manager Bruce Boche sent up Pablo Sandoval to hit for pitcher Ty Blach. Sandoval delivered with a hard ground ball just beyond the reach of third baseman Suarez.

Reds manager Jim Riggleman then made his early move, bringing in left-hander Amir Garrett for Mahle. Gregor Blanco greeted Garrett with an infield single to reload the bases.

Andrew McCutchen followed with a ground ball to Suarez, who flipped to second baseman Scooter Gennett for the force, but McCutchen beat Gennett's throw to first, allowing Jackson to score the go-ahead run.

The Reds had chances to tie it. Alex Blandino and Suarez doubled with one out in the seventh and eighth. Both never left second.

The Giants added a run off David Hernandez in the eighth on Tomlinson's two-out RBI single.

**With Mesoraco gone, Barnhart will get more playing time with Cincinnati Reds, but Riggleman is confident in Cruz**

**John Fay, [jfay@enquirer.com](mailto:jfay@enquirer.com)**

**Published 9:09 p.m. ET May 15, 2018**

SAN FRANCISCO – Tony Cruz got his third start at catcher Tuesday night. He's going to play like all backup catchers do.

But the playing-time breakdown between Cruz and Tucker Barnhart won't be the same as it was with Devin Mesoraco and Barnhart. Barnhart will get more time.

“(But) we’re very comfortable with Tony back there,” Reds manager Jim Riggleman said. “In spring training immediately, we were getting a lot of good feedback from everybody concerning Tony’s handling of the pitchers and his communication with the pitchers and everything like that. Probably with Devin’s long-term relationship in the organization, we would have been likely to have given him as much work as possible out of respect to him and see where that would have taken us.

If I said there was a percentage on it – if this is how our catching corps remains – Tucker would probably get another 10 percent more action over the course of the season than he would if Devin was here.”

Offense, of course, plays into that. Cruz went into Tuesday 1-for-9 as a Red after hitting .170 at Triple-A. Barnhart is hitting .286 with a .383 on-base percentage with three home runs and 14 RBI.

REST FOR VOTTO: If it were up to Joey Votto, he would have been in the lineup Tuesday night.

But Riggleman’s call. Riggleman decided to keep Votto out after he left Monday’s game with lower back tightness.

“I’m going to give him (Tuesday) off,” Riggleman said. “That decision was made (Monday) night after the game. I talked to Joey after the game. Let’s give this thing a chance to calm down.

Votto was going to get an off day in three-game series in San Francisco. The back thing just changed it from Wednesday to Tuesday.

“I had originally planned him taking the last day here,” Riggleman said. “I was going to take him out of the lineup, then he would have two days off (with Thursday’s off day)

“If he’s ready to go (Wednesday), he’ll play. I’ll get more information from the trainer as we go through batting practice. See how Joey feels.”

Said Votto: “I’ll be playing as soon as possible. I think there was a possible plan for me getting the day off this series preceding the trip back. I think it was convenient I had a little bit of hiccup. Some rest is good. I look forward to getting back on the field.”

This isn’t a new issue for Votto.

“This is something Joey has dealt with a little bit in the past,” Riggleman said. “That’s why he wanted to play through it last night. He felt the more the game went He would be able to get it going. It was more so than the other times, so we got him out of there.

“Hopefully it’s a one-day thing.”

REHAB REPORT: Right-hander Anthony DeSclafani (oblique) and Michael Lorenzen (shoulder) were impressive in their first rehabs outing in Double-A Pensacola.

DeSclafani went three perfect innings and struck out four. Lorenzen threw a scoreless inning and struck out one.

“We got a good report on both,” Riggleman said. “There was a little rain delay in DeSclafani’s outing. I think he had three innings and threw in the bullpen some more. Clean line score, clean report with what took place. The next day, a lot of times is the determining thing after sleeping on it. We were encouraged by the report we got.”

Both will make at least one more outing in Pensacola.

**Joey Votto: 'I'm proud to wear a Reds uniform, and I look forward to doing that until the last day of my career'**

**John Fay, [jfay@enquirer.com](mailto:jfay@enquirer.com)**

**Published 8:14 p.m. ET May 15, 2018 | Updated 8:22 p.m. ET May 15, 2018**

SAN FRANCISCO — The comments Joey Votto made on a podcast over the weekend were out of frustration, he said. He added that he's happy as a Red, and he in no way wants out.

“I’m proud to wear a Reds uniform, and I look forward to doing that until the last day of my Major League Baseball career,” Votto said.

Votto told Yahoo Sports' Tim Brown on Friday among other things the following:

"I genuinely hope that we're trending in the right direction, but this is the worst start I've ever seen. If I'm not mistaken, it's been noted in the past that this was historically one of the worst starts for this franchise. There are so many people that are losing interest in our organization — and deservedly so."

Votto didn't back off that so much as explain why he said it. The Reds were 10-27 at the time.

“I never want to be apologetic for anything I say,” he said. “But I think I may have been a bit overzealous with some of the things I said because I feel at the time we weren’t playing very well, and I was frustrated. Ultimately, I want what’s very best for the organization.

“I miss the days of playing really good quality baseball. I don’t know what to say. I’ve been with the franchise for a long time now. More often than not, I bite my tongue. Probably, probably, I went a little too far with some of the things I said just out of frustration.

“Ultimately, I do feel we’re headed in the right direction. I think that winning baseball is coming around the bend. At the time, whatever our record was, one of the poorer performers ... I was frustrated. I expect good things for this franchise.

“I made it personal when it probably shouldn’t have been. But, again, I can’t help it. I think people do things and say things emotionally when they make it personal. I’m going to do my best going forward to stick to playing ball and doing my job, do my part and make sure the things I say going forward are productive and help us move in the right direction.”

Votto, 34, is signed through the 2023 season. He has a full no-trade clause. He did not hear from anyone from the front office.

“No, but most importantly, I knew I overstepped my bounds,” he said. “I think that’s something that I haven’t done much in my career, so it stood out to me. Even if someone up top said something to me, I think I would have acknowledged and said, ‘yeah, you’re right. I need to do my job.’ I feel pretty strongly about that.”

Votto left Monday's game with lower back tightness. He was not in the lineup Tuesday.

“I’ll be playing as soon as possible,” he said. “I think there was a possible plan for me getting the day off this series preceding the trip back. I think it was convenient I had a little bit of hiccup. Some rest is good. I look forward to getting back on the field. I hope it’s (Tuesday) night.”

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## THE ATHLETIC

### Reds sticking with young starters through struggles

By C. Trent Rosecrans May 16, 2018

SAN FRANCISCO — It’s easy to check in at times and see just what the Reds hope they will get from the three young pitchers in their rotation, Tyler Mahle, Luis Castillo and Sal Romano.

In just about every game one of the three start in 2018, there’s a point where you can dream. But with just 63 starts between them and an average age of just more than 24-and-a-half years, the trio have made the majority of the team’s starts. Like the Reds themselves, they’ve produced a mixed bag, with a slow start, encouraging recent performances and a step back in the last two days.

Mahle, the youngest of the three, had the shortest start of his young career on Tuesday, going just 3 1/3 innings in a 5-3 loss to the Giants.

Known for his outstanding command, Mahle was having trouble hitting his spots on Tuesday.

He gave up hits in three of the four innings he started and walked a batter in a 23-pitch first inning. He worked around a leadoff double in the second before cruising to a 13-pitch inning in the third.

But that command wasn’t there on a 1-0 fastball to Brandon Belt in the fourth.



“A fastball up and in, it ran over the plate a little bit,” Mahle said afterward. “It was up and caught too much of the plate and he turned on it.”

Belt put a ball in the water for the second straight day, cutting an early Reds’ lead to 3-1. That was followed by three hits, a strikeout and then a two-run single to pinch-hitter Pablo Sandoval.

Sandoval’s hit ended Mahle’s night, as Reds interim manager Jim Riggleman turned it over to a bullpen that allowed just one run in 4 2/3 innings.

It was the second abbreviated start for Mahle, who had 63 pitches in two innings Thursday in Los Angeles before turning it around and finishing with 109 pitches in five innings in a victory over the Dodgers.

Tuesday, he threw 30 pitches to get one out in the fourth, finishing with 86 pitches in 3 1/3 innings.

“He was getting 2-2, 3-2 counts, foul ball, foul ball. They were making him work really hard. They had some good at-bats, even though he was getting the outs,” Riggleman said. “He was getting up to 78, 80 pitches. He was laboring.”

In the minors, Mahle was known for his efficiency. He’d pitched at least six innings in three starts from April 24 to May 5, keeping his pitch count below 100 in each of his first three starts for Riggleman. In the April 29 victory in Minnesota and the May 5 loss to the Marlins, Mahle didn’t throw more than 20 pitches in any inning.

“I’ve been focusing on really throwing my fastball,” he said. “These hitters are better, one. Two, I’m missing a lot more of my spots. I don’t know what to tell you.”

Like Mahle, Romano has had his own roller coaster in the Red rotation, earning a win on May 4 and throwing six innings and allowing one run in his next start before struggling in San Francisco on Monday.

Against the Giants, he gave up six runs and didn’t make it out of the third.

Castillo is on a more upward trajectory, going 1-3 with a 7.85 ERA in his first six starts and 2-1 with a 3.06 ERA in his last three.

For now, at least, the Reds are likely to keep the trio together and weather the fluctuations.

“Our fans get tired of hearing it — we certainly don’t want our fans to be patient, we’re not asking for patience — but we got to believe in these guys,” Riggleman said. “They’re very talented. We’re going to win ballgames with those guys. I love having the addition of (Matt) Harvey. Our lineup is potent. It’s going to turn around.”

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## **Transactions**

05/16/18

Cleveland Indians signed free agent RHP Matt Belisle to a minor league contract.

05/15/18

Arizona Diamondbacks traded LHP Josh Taylor to Boston Red Sox.

Tampa Bay Rays optioned RHP Hunter Wood to Durham Bulls.

Texas Rangers placed 3B Adrian Beltre on the 10-day disabled list retroactive to May 14, 2018. Left hamstring strain.

Texas Rangers selected the contract of SS Hanser Alberto from Round Rock Express.

Tampa Bay Rays recalled LHP Anthony Banda from Durham Bulls.

San Francisco Giants optioned RF Austin Slater to Sacramento River Cats.

San Francisco Giants recalled 2B Miguel Gomez from Richmond Flying Squirrels.

Chicago Cubs optioned RF Mark Zagunis to Iowa Cubs.

Chicago Cubs activated RHP Yu Darvish from the 10-day disabled list.

Toronto Blue Jays recalled LF Dwight Smith Jr. from Buffalo Bisons.

New York Yankees recalled LF Clint Frazier from Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders.

New York Yankees designated RHP David Hale for assignment.

Atlanta Braves optioned LHP Chad Bell to Gwinnett Stripers.

Atlanta Braves claimed LHP Chad Bell off waivers from Detroit Tigers.

Cleveland Indians transferred LHP Ryan Merritt from the 10-day disabled list to the 60-day disabled list. Left knee sprain.

Cleveland Indians placed CF Bradley Zimmer on the 10-day disabled list retroactive to May 12, 2018. Left rib contusion.

Cleveland Indians selected the contract of RHP Neil Ramirez from Columbus Clippers.

Arizona Diamondbacks placed CF A.J. Pollock on the 10-day disabled list. Left thumb avulsion fracture.

Boston Red Sox placed RHP Carson Smith on the 10-day disabled list. Right shoulder subluxation.  
Boston Red Sox recalled LHP Bobby Poyner from Pawtucket Red Sox.  
New York Mets recalled LHP Buddy Baumann from Las Vegas 51s.  
New York Mets recalled RHP Jacob Rhame from Las Vegas 51s.  
New York Mets optioned RHP Corey Oswalt to Las Vegas 51s.  
New York Mets placed LHP Jerry Blevins on the paternity list.  
Baltimore Orioles sent 3B Renato Nunez outright to Norfolk Tides.  
Oakland Athletics activated RF Stephen Piscotty from the bereavement list.  
Oakland Athletics optioned RHP Kendall Graveman to Nashville Sounds.  
Seattle Mariners placed 2B Robinson Cano on the restricted list.  
San Diego Padres recalled Carlos Asuaje from El Paso Chihuahuas.  
San Diego Padres placed LHP Joey Lucchesi on the 10-day disabled list. Strained hip  
St. Louis Cardinals placed RHP Adam Wainwright on the 10-day disabled list retroactive to May 14, 2018. Right elbow inflammation.  
St. Louis Cardinals recalled RHP Jack Flaherty from Memphis Redbirds.  
Chicago White Sox activated 2B Yoan Moncada from the 10-day disabled list.  
Philadelphia Phillies sent RHP Jerad Eickhoff on a rehab assignment to Reading Fightin Phils.  
Arizona Diamondbacks recalled 1B Christian Walker from Reno Aces.  
Los Angeles Dodgers activated 3B Justin Turner from the 10-day disabled list.

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