



# CHICAGO CUBS DAILY CLIPS

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May 15, 2018

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- NBC Sports Chicago, **Legalized sports betting doesn't 'move the needle' for Cubs**  
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### Daily Herald

Mental mistakes allow Braves to get the jump on Cubs

By Bruce Miles

The Cubs are going to get an eyeful of the Atlanta Braves this week, and they'll need to sharpen their vision.

One thing for sure: They'll need to be more ready to play the Braves this week than they were Monday.

Once again, the Cubs' execution and alertness weren't what they should have been during a 6-5 loss in a makeup game at Wrigley Field.

The two teams will play three more games in Atlanta beginning Tuesday night.

While the Cubs are one of the glamour teams of baseball, the Braves are one of its "surprise" teams. The two teams split a pair of games last month in a rain-shortened series, and the Braves got the jump on the Cubs Monday.

"It's one of those things because the names aren't big," said Cubs manager Joe Maddon, whose team dropped its second straight to fall to 21-17. "They're going to be big names in a couple years. They'll be more easily identifiable in a couple. They have some really great talent there. I'm a big fan."

He should be. The Braves improved to 25-15, and they lead the National League East.

Center fielder Albert Almora Jr., one of the few bright spots for the Cubs with 3 hits and a homer, also paid homage to the Braves.

"They're a great team, young guys that are hungry, and they're playing well," Almora said.

The Cubs are in a busy stretch of games, and they're going to need better than what they got from starting pitcher Jose Quintana if the bullpen is going to continue its good season-opening run.

Quintana lacked command early, as he threw 33 of his 99 pitches for the game in the first inning. The Braves got a leadoff homer from Ozzie Albies and no other runs in the first, but Quintana walked three in the inning. He lasted just 4⅓ innings, making it four times this year he has not been able to get to 6.

"Things were really bad," said Quintana, who is 4-3 with a 5.23 ERA. "My command early in the game, the first inning was (33) pitches. That's so bad. I feel really bad with that. These guys are fighting. It's so frustrating."

The day began with the wind blowing out before things changed later. Almora gave the Cubs a 2-1 lead in the second with a 2-run homer. Quintana allowed a 2-run shot to Tyler Flowers in the third before Kris Bryant made it 4-3 Cubs in the bottom of the inning with a 2-run homer. But it came apart for Quintana in the fifth, when Jose Bautista got a flyball up into the wind and it carried out for a 3-run homer.

Cubs first baseman Anthony Rizzo made 1 fielding error. He also was picked off second base in the third. Ben Zobrist was doubled off first base on a liner to center to end the sixth. The Cubs loaded the bases with one out in the ninth inning and came within 1 when pinch hitter Ian Happ was hit by a pitch, but Bryant lined out to left to end the game.

"We made too many mistakes early, and that also contributes to the starting pitcher having to throw more pitches, plays that we should have made," Maddon said. "Today we made a lot of mistakes. I consider them more mental than physical today, and I never mind the physical mistakes. I just thought maybe we weren't on top of our mental game early on."

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### **Daily Herald**

Zobrist wears black shoes again, as do two Cubs teammates

By Bruce Miles

You might say Ben Zobrist got some support from his sole mates Monday.

A day after news came out that Zobrist could be facing a fine for wearing black baseball shoes during games -- a violation Major League Baseball's uniform regulations -- Zobrist came right back with the

black shoes for Monday's 6-5 loss to the Atlanta Braves at Wrigley Field. He was joined by teammates Kyle Schwarber and Steve Cishek.

"Obviously I'll always support Zobrist," said Cishek, a relief pitcher. "I didn't realize it would make that much of a stir. I was going to wear those on this day (Jackie Robinson Day) anyway. It wasn't, like, firing people up. I was wearing those because I was going to wear them the last time we played Atlanta."

Jackie Robinson Day was April 15, but the Cubs and Braves were rained out. In addition to wearing Robinson's No. 42, players were given black socks. MLB says shoes must be 51 percent of the team's primary color, which with the Cubs is blue.

Schwarber also was asked about the shoes.

"I see all the points of players who are frustrated because no one's been making a big deal until now," he said. "I don't see the point there of why you would try to make a big deal of a jersey or a pair of shoes because it's not at the requirements. Rules are rules but I see all the points for our players."

Zobrist said he hoped he could talk to Joe Torre as early as Monday night. Torre is MLB's chief baseball officer.

"My question's going to be 'why,'" Zobrist said. "We'll see what kind of answer I get to, 'Why now?' I think all players are kind of wondering that. I've heard nothing but positive stuff from fans and players. That's the direction the game needs to go, is more freedom with expression in certain ways, which are small compared to arm sleeves and things like that if you want to go square inches of color."

A sure bet:

Cubs manager Joe Maddon took a pragmatic view of the Supreme Court ruling that struck down a law banning commercial sports betting in most states.

"It's already allowed," he said. "As far as I'm concerned, it's already legal. It's already been legal. If it's been going on as long as it has in Vegas and in every barroom in the backroom of many bars, whether it's been in Chicago or in Hazleton (Pennsylvania, Maddon's hometown), it's been part of our culture. So I think it's out front right now."

Kyle Schwarber was asked about the ruling. He had a somewhat humorous response.

"My guess is it will be good for people outside of the game of baseball," he said. "Obviously, we're not going to do that, we're not going to be betting on baseball. We also know what happened to good old Pete Rose there. That's a good example of just not to do it, for us."

Rose, baseball's all-time hits leader, was banned for life in 1989 for betting on baseball.

Even if sports gambling is legalized across the country, Major League Baseball will not rescind its prohibition on its people betting on baseball.

Trying to line up Montgomery:

It's possible left-hander Mike Montgomery will start one of the games of Saturday's doubleheader at Cincinnati.

"I need to watch him carefully and see if we can stretch him out appropriately to get him lined up," said Joe Maddon. "We've already talked to him about it. He's aware of that. If we can, you could see him in

that doubleheader. If I cannot, you may not. We're not just going to sacrifice a game because I'm holding him back. I won't do that."

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## **The Athletic**

Viewer's guide to Shoegate, starring Ben Zobrist and MLB's fun police

By Patrick Mooney

"Shoegate," starring Ben Zobrist and Major League Baseball's fun police is a completely avoidable controversy that shows the deepening distrust between the players' union and commissioner Rob Manfred.

As the Cubs packed for their trip to Atlanta after Monday afternoon's 6-5 loss to the Braves, Zobrist said he planned to call Joe Torre, MLB's chief baseball officer, for clarity about the warning letter he received — and circulated through his Instagram and Twitter accounts — for wearing all-black spikes.

"My question's going to be: Why?" Zobrist said, surrounded by reporters at his Wrigley Field locker. "We'll see what kind of answer I get. Why now? I think all players are kind of wondering that. Hopefully, I get an answer and we can move forward."

Meaning this three-day story isn't over yet and Zobrist's partners at New Balance and PF Flyers will keep getting great exposure. Since using his social-media clout to make sure the letter from the commissioner's office went viral on Saturday, Zobrist wore promotional pink New Balance cleats on Mother's Day and then used the black New Balance spikes with "18 ZO" flaps as part of Monday's tribute to Jackie Robinson breaking the game's color barrier.

All players wore No. 42 jerseys for this rescheduled game after a rainout on April 15, which marked the 71st anniversary of Robinson's major-league debut. Zobrist explained he wanted an old-school look to his shoes as a way to honor the game's history and pay respect to players like Ernie Banks and Stan Musial.

"I've just heard nothing but positive stuff from fans and players," Zobrist said. "That's the direction that the game needs to go, more freedom with expression in certain ways like that, which are small compared to arm sleeves and other things if you want to go square inches of color. I mean, if we want to get that specific with it, there's definitely some things that we can talk about.

"There's a lot of accessories. But obviously players like to represent themselves — and something that's important to them — with their shoes."

In Zobrist, MLB is targeting a three-time All-Star with two World Series rings and more than a decade of service time in the big leagues.

This feels like a petty dispute — the uniform code requires cleats to feature at least 51 percent of the team's designated primary shoe color — and totally in line with the state of labor relations after management won the last round of collective bargaining and froze the free-agent market.

"It's just been interesting," veteran reliever Steve Cishek said. "If they want us to work together with them on a lot of situations — and then they crunch down on something as small as this — it's just really confusing. I don't know where they're trying to build trust."

Cishek initially seemed surprised when reporters gathered around his locker after Monday's loss. He wore Zobrist-style all-black PF Flyers while getting one out in the fifth inning, but said he already planned that throwback look for last month's Robinson celebration.

"Obviously, I will always support Zobrist, but I didn't realize it would make that much of a stir," Cishek said. "It wasn't like to fire people up. I [also] wasn't going to change my mind on it. But if they send me a letter, then so be it."

Cishek, who has been active in the union for years, thought back to "Players Weekend" last August, when MLB created new uniforms and allowed nicknames on the backs of jerseys, hoping it might spur interest in the game and showcase individual personalities. That was before the glacial offseason that left Jake Arrieta unemployed until the middle of March and so many other high-profile free agents disappointed.

"There's something definitely going on," Cishek said. "Last year, when we had all the nicknames and stuff like that, guys wore whatever they wanted on their shoes and it turned out awesome. MLB gave us full rein to wear whatever we wanted. They didn't really put any restrictions on us."

"No one said anything to us this year. A lot of guys ordered their custom spikes — what they wanted to wear to [help] grow the game — and now all of sudden just out of nowhere they're dropping warnings and fines on people."

Kyle Schwarber also wore black Nike cleats, though, again, that fashion choice went with the black No. 42 socks MLB issued for the salute to Robinson.

"Listen, you know I am about individuality," manager Joe Maddon said. "I'm sure the boys may have gotten together and talked about it. I'm anticipating some adjustments to the rule at some point. Whenever the guys hang together, I'm always behind them."

There are almost four full seasons left until the collective bargaining agreement expires on Dec. 1, 2021. If the two sides are already this disconnected and picking fights over footwear, imagine how easy it will be to find common ground on core economic issues and overall financial systems.

"We just want to have the conversation," Zobrist said. "Hopefully, we can have that conversation and we don't all continue to get warned and fined when that hasn't happened for a while."

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## **The Athletic**

Cubs should be worried if José Quintana doesn't pitch up to expectations

By Patrick Mooney

When the Cubs traded for José Quintana last year, his track record of durability and profile as a left-handed pitcher compared favorably to Jon Lester. Escaping the White Sox rebuild meant pitching in the easier National League with more run support and in front of an elite defensive unit.

The idea of untapped potential — and glaring pitching needs — led the Cubs to give up elite prospect Eloy Jiménez last summer and sign Yu Darvish this offseason to a six-year, \$126 million deal made possible, in part, by Quintana's club-friendly contract. But Darvish's adjustment issues and "parainfluenza virus" combined with Quintana's underperformance have created questions about the underlying assumptions for the 2018 team.

The sky isn't falling, though the Cubs might be looking at close to a week straight of thunderstorms in Atlanta and Cincinnati, beginning with the pouring rain that soaked Wrigley Field before and after Monday's 6-5 loss to the Braves. But Quintana understands his responsibilities and manager Joe Maddon knows this isn't sustainable, getting four-plus innings here and there from All-Star-caliber pitchers.

"I got to do better," Quintana said. "It's really frustrating."

On what started out as a nice 75-degree afternoon, Quintana watched Atlanta's leadoff hitter Ozzie Albies drill the second pitch of the game into the right-field bleachers. Quintana walked the next two batters, leading to scattered boos from the crowd of 35,946 and forcing pitching coach Jim Hickey to walk out to the mound.

The fans cheered sarcastically when Quintana threw a first-pitch strike to Ender Inciarte. Quintana burned through 33 pitches in the first inning and escaped a bases-loaded jam – keeping it a one-run game – when he struck out Jose Bautista on a check swing at a 92-mph fastball.

Quintana (4-3, 5.23 ERA) – and the rest of the rotation – can't keep walking this tightrope. Atlanta's Tyler Flowers – who knows Quintana from their time together with the White Sox – erased a 2-1 deficit in the third inning with a two-run homer. Bautista delivered the knockout punch in the fifth inning, lifting Quintana's 91-mph fastball into the left-field bleachers for a three-run homer that had a 6.5-second hang time (thanks, Statcast).

To be fair, the Cubs (21-17) didn't look sharp playing defense or running the bases, either. But the offense scored four runs against Julio Teheran, the kind of talented starter they hope to face in October. And this would also be a different story if Kris Bryant hadn't lined out with the bases loaded to end the game against Atlanta power lefty A.J. Minter.

After a weekend spent dissecting the White Sox rebuild, and wasting a chance to sweep the worst team in baseball, the Cubs needed more from the pitcher who cost them Jiménez, the monster hitter who could become a star on the South Side.

Quintana's presence helped get rid of the World Series hangover – and he essentially battled Max Scherzer and Clayton Kershaw to a draw during two of his playoff starts – so the talent is obviously in there.

"To this point, Q's just not been on top of his game with his command," Maddon said. "Honestly, his delivery is good. He's got a clean line to the plate. His ball spins well. I just think it's a matter of trusting himself. That's it. He's going to pitch well. He has pitched well.

"We didn't help him with the defense. We caused him to throw more pitches and more stressful pitches. That's part of the gig, too, and he got out of it [at times]. But the overall command isn't as good as we normally see with him."

Quintana hasn't finished the fifth inning in three of his last six starts, giving up 45 hits and 21 walks through 41 1/3 innings so far this season. Any sense of momentum begins with the next game's starting pitcher and the Cubs don't know what to expect from Darvish (0-3, 6.00 ERA) on Tuesday night at SunTrust Park.

Steve Cishek and Brian Duensing have pitched in half of the team's 38 games this year. Carl Edwards Jr., Pedro Strop and Justin Wilson each have 17 appearances so far. Closer Brandon Morrow is already being carefully monitored because of his injury history. Lefty swingman Mike Montgomery might be needed for Saturday's doubleheader at Great American Ball Park.

The Cubs don't want to think about where they will be if Quintana and Darvish don't pitch up to expectations.

"It's tough to continually try to piece together without wearing guys out," Maddon said. "We need to get our starters more deeply into the games."

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### **The Athletic**

What's next for Yu Darvish, Adbert Alzolay and Jason Heyward?

By Patrick Mooney

Bob Marley's "One Love" played in the never-worry clubhouse after Monday's 6-5 loss to the new-and-improved Braves at Wrigley Field. The streaky Cubs are 21-17 and having issues with their rotation and uncharacteristic issues on defense and mental mistakes on the bases. Here are three more questions as they begin a seven-games-in-six-days road trip through Atlanta and Cincinnati and approach the season's quarter pole:

Are you worried about Yu Darvish's mental state?

"Honestly, I'm not," manager Joe Maddon said.

This is what Maddon does best, trying to build up a player's confidence through his public messaging and deflect heat away from a pitcher with a 6.00 ERA six starts into a six-year, \$126 million contract.

"The guy's been really good for so many years," Maddon said. "He's got an outstanding arm. I think sometimes he gets a little bit speeded up in what he's doing. He and I have talked about that. But there's too much success there for me to be worried about that. He would not be in [this position] if that were, in fact, true. He just needs to slow things down.

"It's just having the skill set in-game to control moments better."

Going on the 10-day disabled list with the flu didn't exactly enhance Darvish's reputation, but maybe the extra time off gave him the chance to refocus, sharpen his pitches and organize his game plan. This is still a four-time All-Star with off-the-charts talent who dominated the Cubs during last year's NLCS.

Maddon insisted the Cubs didn't hold Darvish back 29 hours so he could avoid an anxious crowd on Monday afternoon at Wrigley Field and instead face the Braves on Tuesday night at SunTrust Park.

"We just took advantage of the schedule," Maddon said. "I know that's going to be easy to look at and say that we did do that. But just trying to gather as much time as we can coming off him being ill — and the fact that we could — we just decided to go ahead and do that. That was it."

Darvish has worked with pitching coach Jim Hickey on streamlining his mechanics and scrapping the hesitation move/extra leg pump within his delivery.



"I still think it makes him cleaner," Maddon said. "I think he has a better chance of being a strike-thrower with his fastball by doing that. I also think there's a fatigue factor. Just think about lifting your leg twice as you go ahead and pitch. I don't know how [Juan] Marichal did it for so many years. But it's got to be more difficult just physically to do it that way."

When will Adbert Alzolay make his big-league debut?

A farm system thinned out by graduating players to the big leagues and flipping prospects in trade-deadline deals doesn't have many midseason answers or internal sparks outside of Alzolay.

The Cubs rearranged Alzolay's schedule so he could be available for Saturday's doubleheader at Great American Ball Park, but no final decision has been made yet and the timing might not be right for him to face Joey Votto and the Reds.

Alzolay is probably the most advanced homegrown pitcher the Theo Epstein regime has developed in six-plus years, but he has only 12 career starts above the A-ball level. The right-hander took a no-hitter into the sixth inning during two April starts for Triple-A Iowa, though he didn't pitch well on Monday in Des Moines (five runs on nine hits in 4 2/3 innings) if the Cubs were looking for another sign.

Eddie Butler (strained groin) is not in the doubleheader conversation, because he hasn't faced real action since April 19 and would have to ramp up from throwing bullpens in Arizona to a minor-league rehab assignment before getting activated from the disabled list.

Six straight days of projected thunderstorms in Atlanta and Cincinnati might give the entire staff extra rest and open up some new possibilities. Another 17-inning game could also scramble these plans. But lefty swingman Mike Montgomery wants to be a starter and could get his chance if everything aligns.

"There's all kinds of potentialities," Maddon said. "I need to watch him carefully and see if we can stretch him out appropriately to get him lined up. We've already talked to him about it. He's aware of that. So if we can, you could see him in that doubleheader. And if I cannot, you may not. It depends. We're not just going to sacrifice a game because I'm holding him back. I won't do that."

Alzolay is already on the 40-man roster and has to be on the radar if the injuries pile up or if the bullpen needs a different look at some point this season.

What's the plan for Jason Heyward?

There are no clear signs when Heyward will be activated from the seven-day concussion disabled list, but he is expected to travel with the team to Atlanta, the area where he grew up, became an All-Star for the Braves and keeps an offseason home. The Gold Glove outfielder has been sidelined since crashing into the Busch Stadium wall on Dexter Fowler's walk-off homer, just missing the ball that ended a May 6 loss to the Cardinals in the 14th inning.

"The doc feels that he should go with us," Maddon said. "That's it. I had no input in this whatsoever. So this was just something that — talking to [athletic trainer] PJ [Mainville] and Doc [Stephen] Adams — they feel it's good for him to come with us and see if we can get him re-engaged and really keep a close eye on him."

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## The Athletic

Here's Looking At You Kid: Theo Epstein's connection to the movie "Casablanca"

By Jim Caple

In 2004, at age 30, Theo Epstein was the Red Sox's wunderkind general manager when Boston ended its 86-year World Series drought. He was the Cubs' president of baseball operations (and still is) in 2016 when Chicago ended its 108-year World Series dry spell.

That's why Sports Illustrated named Epstein general manager of the decade, Fortune magazine declared him one of the world's greatest leaders in 2017 and Time listed him among the world's 100 most influential people. But I'm still more dazzled that Theo is the grandson and grandnephew of Philip and Julius Epstein, the writers of the screenplay for my favorite movie, "Casablanca."

"I've probably seen 'Casablanca' half a dozen times straight through, and countless times I'll stumble upon it in progress on TV and watch the rest," Theo says. "It's an amazing movie, but I'd be lying if I said the film itself has some great impact on me. When I see a reference to 'Casablanca,' it generates fond memories of my Uncle Julie and makes me daydream about my grandfather — that is its greatest impact on me.

"Also, it's fun to see people who couldn't care less about the Red Sox or the Cubs go bananas when they find out my familial connection to their favorite film of all time."

Considered by many to be the best movie ever made, "Casablanca" starred Ingrid Bergman and Humphrey Bogart and opened nationally 75 years ago in 1943. It went on to win the Academy Award for Best Picture in 1944. (Unsurprisingly, neither the Cubs nor the Red Sox had winning records those years).

Not only did it win Best Picture, the Epstein brothers also won the Oscar for best screenplay, along with Howard Koch. Casey Robinson and Lenore Coffee also helped on the "Casablanca" script. As in baseball, sometimes you need a deep starting rotation to win. But the most important figures are always the primary starters, and that almost certainly was the Epstein brothers.

The identical twins — born August 22, 1909 (Red Sox icon Carl Yastrzemski was born the same day, albeit 30 years later) — were always close. In addition to their writing skills, they boxed at Penn State, with Julius the captain of the team that won the 1929 intercollegiate boxing tournament; he won the bantamweight championship. He also boxed professionally in one fight, which ended in a draw. Then he retired.

Leslie Epstein, Theo's father as well as Philip's son and Julius' nephew, says he once asked his uncle why he quit pro boxing after that initial bout that ended in a draw. He responded: "I wanted to retire undefeated."

Julius reportedly also wanted to be a sportswriter — imagine what he might have written about the Bucky Dent home run — but he and Philip went into screenwriting, writing movies such as "The Man Who Came to Dinner" and "Arsenic and Old Lace."

"One of us would start a line of dialogue and the other would finish it," Julius told Aljean Harmetz in her excellent 1992 book on the movie, "Round Up the Usual Suspects: The Making of Casablanca."

The movie was inspired by the play, "Everybody Comes to Rick's," the rights of which were purchased by the Warner brothers. (The play was not done on stage until decades later.) Working for the Warners, the Epstein's were assigned the story. They had to work on a documentary about WWII first though, so

Howard Koch did some initial writing on “Casablanca.” According to Harmetz’s book, the Epsteins were paid more than any of the other writers, one sign that they wrote more of the screenplay.

The movie tells the tale of Rick Blaine (played by Humphrey Bogart) who runs Rick’s Café in Casablanca, which is then part of Vichy, France where many people are trying to flee to America. His former lover from Paris, Ilsa Lund (played by Ingrid Bergman), arrives there with her husband, Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), a Czech resistance fighter who escaped from a concentration camp. He is being hunted down by the Nazis, including Major Strasser (Conrad Veidt, who himself left Germany to escape the Nazi regime). Captain Louis Renault (Claude Rains) is the local police chief who is a friend of Rick.

The Epsteins had a great sense of humor and provided most of the film’s funny lines. They almost certainly wrote the classic line when Capt. Renault closes down Rick’s Café due to “gambling” even though he always gambled there.

“I’m shocked, shocked to find that gambling is going on in here!” he shouts, then immediately is interrupted by the croupier who hands him a wad of money and says, “Your winnings, sir.”

“Oh, thank you very much,” Capt. Renault responds.

That line is so well known and beloved that Theo says, “When the moment is right, I’ll occasionally drop a ‘shocked, shocked’ into conversation.” He also notes that he made a play on Bogart’s famous “We’ll always have Paris,” line when he hired Joe Maddon to manage the Cubs. He told Maddon, “‘We’ll always have Navarre Beach,’ the shithole RV park in Pensacola where we met for six hours to sell him on the Cubs job.”

Casablanca’s famous ending was reconsidered many times by the writers and director Michael Curtiz and producer Hal Wallis. There were questions as to whether Ilsa should stay with Rick or leave with Lazlo. The Epsteins discussed it on a drive on Sunset Boulevard, with the two coming to a stop sign and then saying, “Round up the usual suspects!”

In the end, Rick overcomes the Germans, sends Ilsa and Lazlo on a flight to Lisbon and shoots Major Strasser. Rather than have Rick arrested, Renault instructs his officers to “round up the usual suspects.” Then he and Bogart walk off together to join a Free French garrison at Brazzaville. “Louis,” Rick says, “I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.” (Wallis is believed to be the person who wrote that line.)

Leslie says the Epstein twins rarely talked about the movie when he was growing up – “I didn’t know the word ‘Casablanca’ at all” – and that when he and Julius went to the 50th anniversary screening in Boston, his uncle leaned over, grabbed his arm and said they needed to leave the theater and go get some frozen yogurt. They returned after the movie ended.

Sadly, Philip was gone by then, having died from cancer in 1952 at just 42 years old when Leslie was just 12.

“(My father dying) was made easier because his identical twin stepped in and obviously smoothed it over,” Leslie says. “Julie was like a father to me after that. And very much like a grandfather to my kids, no question about it.”

Adds Theo: “I am incredibly proud of his legacy and my grandfather’s legacy and to be connected to their accomplishments. But, looking back, the thing I respect the most is how he became a surrogate

father to my father after Phil's death when my father was 12, and of course a wonderful grandfather figure to me and my siblings."

Julius sometimes attended Theo and his brother's baseball and soccer games, including the game where they are shown together here:

"He would visit a few times a year and it was always an occasion when Uncle Julie was in town," Theo said. "My Dad absolutely revered him and that feeling spread throughout the family. Uncle Julie would watch our baseball and soccer games with great intensity and interest.

"He was always proud after the games — regardless of the outcome — but especially so when we showed toughness, perhaps because he was a bantamweight boxing champion at Penn State. Uncle Julie was an avid fan of Penn State football and sports in general, so he was thrilled when I went into baseball."

The Epstein brothers' careers helped lead Leslie to a career in writing; she directs the creative writing program at Boston University. Leslie's daughter, Anya, became a screenwriter and producer known for the television show "Homicide: Life on the Street."

And, of course, there is Theo, who became the youngest general manager in major league history (at age 28) less than two years after Julius died at age 91.

"That's what Theo is really good at," said Maddon, who watched "Casablanca" a lot in college. "All this informational stuff, that's where the acquisitional component comes in. When you are aware of that and able to recognize talent, and look under the hood a little bit and unearth players that have never been found yet, just by doing due diligence. I think it's a combination of data and good old horse sense too. All that matters to being as successful as he's been."

And Cubs fans would certainly like that success to continue. If Bogart was a Cubs supporter, he might say, "Play it again, Theo."

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### **Cubs.com**

Quintana unable to keep ball in yard vs. Braves

By Jeff Arnold

CHICAGO -- On two occasions, a timely two-run homer provided the Cubs with a lead Monday vs. the Braves. But both times, Jose Quintana's inability to keep the ball in the ballpark proved costly.

Albert Almora Jr. and Kris Bryant each homered, but on a day when home runs accounted for all the scoring until the ninth inning, the three blasts that Quintana surrendered were the difference in the Cubs' 6-5 loss at Wrigley Field. The game was played to make up for a rainout on April 15 that fell on Jackie Robinson Day.

Quintana gave up six runs on the three homers -- including a prodigious go-ahead three-run blast to Jose Bautista in the fifth inning -- in the Cubs' second straight loss following five straight wins. Quintana gave up nine hits, struck out six and walked three in 4 2/3 innings.

"I'm really [ticked] off," Quintana said of giving up the home run to Bautista.

Trailing by two runs in the ninth inning, the Cubs loaded the bases with one out. Victor Caratini singled and advanced to second on a passed ball before Kyle Schwarber walked and Almora singled. After striking out pinch-hitter David Bote, Braves reliever A.J. Minter hit Ian Happ to get the Cubs to within a run. But with the bases still loaded, Minter got Bryant to fly out to end the game.

"We easily could have been, 'Whatever -- we'll get them in Atlanta,'" Almora said. "They're up by two, they've got [Minter] going -- we could have easily given up there. But we fight and we keep fighting."

Bautista's monster shot into the left-field bleachers came after Bryant's two-run homer -- and fourth long ball of the homestand -- gave the Cubs a 4-3 lead. Almora also delivered a two-run shot in the second inning that put the Cubs on top, 2-1.

The deciding blow was Bautista's first at Wrigley Field. It proved to be a big one.

"Anytime you can do something positive for the team -- especially if it's a game-winning hit -- you're going to enjoy it," Bautista said. "I'm glad I got it done."

Almora's homer momentarily put the Cubs on top after Quintana gave up a solo shot to Ozzie Albies to lead off the game. Quintana's short outing forced the Cubs' bullpen to log long innings, but five Cubs relievers finished off the game without giving up any further damage. Both Quintana and manager Joe Maddon acknowledged that the left-hander has to be better.

"To this point, Q just hasn't been on top of his game with his command," Maddon said.

Added Quintana: "It's really frustrating."

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Inciarte snuffs out rally: Trailing, 6-4, in the sixth inning, Ben Zobrist singled with one out. When Javier Baez lifted a fly ball to center field, Zobrist broke immediately for second, but Braves center fielder Ender Inciarte made a tremendous 5-star catch before doubling off Zobrist, who was unable to get back to first base.

"The guy made a great catch," Maddon said. "I think [Zobrist] was confused whether it hit [the grass] or not. ... But again, that's a great play."

#### HE SAID IT

""Today we made a lot of mistakes -- I consider them more mental than physical ... just a mentally lethargic game early on."

-- Maddon, on the fielding and baserunning miscues that proved costly

#### UP NEXT

Right-hander Yu Darvish will open a three-game series against the Braves in Atlanta on Tuesday in his first start since being placed on the 10-day disabled list with the flu. Darvish will make his first start since May 2, when he allowed six runs (five earned) in just 4 1/3 innings against the Rockies. Darvish will face the Braves' Mike Foltynewicz and first pitch is set for 6:35 p.m. CT.

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#### **Cubs.com**

Cubs, Braves honor Jackie before makeup

By Jeff Arnold

CHICAGO -- Tucked among a storage unit that houses some of Cubs manager Joe Maddon's personal belongings is a framed poster bearing the image of Jackie Robinson.

For years, the poster hung in the visiting manager's office at old Yankee Stadium. Then the manager of the Rays, who played in the final game at the famed park, Maddon asked clubhouse manager Lou Cucuzza Jr. if he could purchase the poster. It wasn't for sale, Maddon was told. But he could have it and the poster immediately became one of Maddon's prized baseball collectibles.

The quote, attributed to Robinson, "Courage is the one quality that ensures all others," is among Maddon's favorites.

"If you have [courage], if that's part of your makeup, you can be a lot of different things," Maddon said before Monday's Braves-Cubs game, a makeup from April 15 when Jackie Robinson Day was celebrated around the Major Leagues. "But if you're lacking that one quality, it's very difficult to include the rest of the better qualities in life. [Robinson] is all of that -- he speaks to courage and I've always respected that about him."

Players from both teams wore jerseys bearing No. 42 to honor Robinson, and jerseys and caps alike had a "42" patch stitched onto them. While baseball sets a day aside each season to honor Robinson, players acknowledge that the tradition never gets old.

"[Robinson] changed baseball for a great reason," Cubs left fielder Kyle Schwarber said. "Just the way that he handled it and faced adversity, it's a great example for all of us to learn from. You can't thank that guy enough for what he did for the game of baseball, because he changed it positively for everyone."

Braves catcher Tyler Flowers was on the disabled list on April 15 and would have missed Jackie Robinson Day had the weather cooperated in Chicago. Back in the lineup on Monday, Flowers said he is grateful to have the chance to wear No. 42.

"I've always thought it's a very special day to reflect and remember the people that kind of set the stage before us and what they had to go through, specifically Jackie and other players who broke ground to give opportunities to players behind them," Flowers said.

Braves shortstop Charlie Culberson was glad to see the game rescheduled, allowing Robinson to be honored in Chicago.

"We're a month late on it, but there's a reason why Jackie has his own day," Culberson said. "What he did for this game and more than just the game of baseball."

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### **NBC Sports Chicago**

Cubs band together to fight back against 'confusing' MLB sanctions

By Tony Andracki

Power in numbers.

When the usually mild-mannered Ben Zobrist fired a shot at Major League Baseball in an Instagram post Saturday afternoon, Joe Maddon supported his longtime player and pointed to the power of people rallying together to enact change.

The "change" hasn't occurred yet, but Zobrist certainly has people rallying together.

Zobrist defied the league and continued to wear his P.F. Flyers and black cleats over the weekend and then again on Monday as the Cubs and Braves made up the game from Jackie Robinson Day on April 15.

Steve Cishek and Kyle Schwarber joined Zobrist in wearing the black cleats Monday afternoon, though that was more for the throwback day and to pay homage to Robinson and the era than specifically trying to make a statement toward the league.

That being said, the players are standing behind Zobrist.

"There's definitely something going on," Cishek said. "Last year, when we had all the nicknames and stuff like that [during Player's Weekend], guys wore whatever they wanted on their shoes and it turned out awesome. MLB gave us full reign to wear whatever we wanted, so they didn't really put any restrictions on us.

"Nobody said anything to us this year. A lot of guys ordered their custom spikes, what they wanted to wear and go out there and show on the field and grow the game. Now all of a sudden, just out of nowhere, they're dropping warnings and fines on people.

"It's just been interesting. If they want us to work together in a lot of situations, then they crunch down on something as small as this, it's just really confusing.

"...It's like, where did this all come from? From what I understand, MLB was telling their companies — New Balance, Nike — 'like hey, they can do whatever they want.' I think the big word here is just confusion amongst the players."

Zobrist echoed those thoughts and said he planned on calling MLB executive Joe Torre Monday evening to try to have a discussion about this particular issue.

His main point of contention is that he's worn the P.F. Flyers at various points the last couple years at Wrigley Field and never heard anything from the league.

"My question's gonna be 'why?'" Zobrist said. "We'll see what kind of answer I get. Why now? I think all players are kinda wondering that. Hopefully I get an answer and we can move forward."

Willson Contreras has also been told by the league he's not allowed to wear his arm sleeve depicting the flag of his home country of Venezuela.

The sanctions from MLB are confusing to fans, too, who don't understand why their favorite players can't show their individuality and express themselves with their accessories.

"I just heard nothing but positive stuff from fans and players," Zobrist said. "I think that's the direction the game needs to go — more freedom with expression in certain ways like that which are small compared to arm sleeves and other things."

Maddon has very few rules in his clubhouse, famously choosing to let his players be themselves and express themselves however they choose.

So of course he hasn't backed down and still stands behind Zobrist and Co.

"Listen, you know how I am about individuality," Maddon said. "I'm sure the boys may have gotten together and talked about it. I'm anticipating some adjustments to the rule at some point. Whenever the guys hang together, I'm always behind them."

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### **NBC Sports Chicago**

Panic deepens as Jose Quintana's struggles return in full force

By Tony Andracki

As Cubs fans anxiously await Tuesday night's game in Atlanta to see how Yu Darvish responds after a stint on the disabled list, they were "gifted" even more anxiety and stress watching Jose Quintana pitch in Monday's rain makeup between the two teams at Wrigley Field.

Quintana couldn't make it out of the fifth inning, surrendering 6 runs on 3 homers, 3 walks and 9 hits in 4.2 innings. That raised his season ERA to 5.23 and WHIP to 1.57.

This after he had actually seemed to be turning a corner the last three times out, allowing only 1 earned run in the last 17 innings despite still working around control issues (7 walks in that span).

"Things were really bad with command early in the game," Quintana said. "Almost 30 pitches [in the first inning], that's so bad. I feel really bad with that. ... It's so frustrating. I'm really pissed off."

Given the White Sox just left Wrigley Field, Quintana's rough start became a hot-button topic with Cubs fans as they watch Eloy Jimenez absolutely tear up the minor leagues for the team on the other side of town:

Those questions are even being asked on the other side of town.

Obviously that doesn't include everybody in the Cubs fanbase, but Quintana will always be linked to Jimenez and flamethrowing right-hander Dylan Cease.

These comments will only become more frequent the closer Jimenez and Cease get to success in the big leagues.

But there's also nothing the Cubs can do about that now or ever. They made this trade and it was a very good one at the time and can't possibly be judged less than a year into the deal.

The 2017 Cubs received a major jolt the second Quintana walked through the door after the All-Star Break and it helped lead the charge toward the top of the National League Central and a third straight trip into the NLCS. Theo Epstein and Joe Maddon have both said several times they don't believe last year's team would've reached that level of success without the Quintana trade.

Quintana is still only 29 years old and has team options for the 2019 and 2020 seasons at a very affordable rate.



This is a guy who posted a career 3.53 ERA and 1.24 WHIP in his career prior to 2018. Chances are very high he will figure it out at some point and get back to being a top-of-the-rotation starter for the Cubs.

However, in the first 8 starts of 2018, it's not hard to empathize with the Cubs fans that are panicking. Eight starts is hardly a small sample size, especially when Quintana is averaging merely 5 innings per outing.

He's walking batters at a rate nearly double his career mark and has admitted he's falling behind hitters way too often and is something he's been working hard to correct. He did throw a first-pitch strike to 20 of the 28 batters he faced Monday, a slight tick up in percentage from his past two starts (15-of-24 and 11-of-20).

"To this point, Q's just not been on top of his game with his command and he's normally a really good command guy, knowing where his fastball is going," Joe Maddon said. "But it wasn't happening today."

The main issue Monday was actually how hard Quintana was getting hit when he did throw pitches in the zone. The Braves recorded 11 different batted balls of 95+ mph exit velocity off Quintana, including 8 balls hit 101.9 mph or higher.

But hey, at least Quintana didn't walk a batter after the first inning, so maybe that's a silver lining to build on for the next start?

What does Quintana have to do in his next outing to get back to the pitcher he usually is?

"Just trust himself," Maddon said. "His delivery is good, he's got a clean line to the plate, his ball spins well. I just think it's a matter of trusting himself. That's it. He's gonna pitch well. He's very good. He has pitched well, but when he's off like that — when the walks start popping up on him early, that's the unusual part.

"We didn't help him with the defense. We caused him to throw more pitches and more stressful pitches. That's part of the gig, too, and he got out of it. Overall, command isn't as good as we normally see with him."

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### **NBC Sports Chicago**

Legalized sports betting doesn't 'move the needle' for Cubs

By Tony Andracki

Kyle Schwarber joked that he's not a big history buff, but he sure knows all about Pete Rose's lifetime ban from baseball.

How could you play in the majors and not know at least a little bit about that story? Rose is baseball's all-time hits leader yet is shunned by the sport and not in the Hall of Fame because of his history of gambling on the game.

It's a cautionary tale for all athletes, but particularly baseball players.

That's part of the reason why the new Supreme Court ruling that legalized sports gambling Monday morning did not register on the Richter Scale in the Cubs locker room.

"I haven't really thought of it," Schwarber said. "I guess it could be good for people outside the game of baseball. Obviously we're not gonna do that. We're not gonna be betting on baseball.

"We know what happened to good ole Pete Rose there. I think that's a good example of just not to do it for us. That's where I stand."

Joe Maddon shared a similar sentiment, pointing to how prevalent sports betting has already been among fans, whether via Bovada or off-shore sites or physically going to Las Vegas to put down wagers.

Anybody who has truly wanted to gamble has already been figuring out ways to do so, including playing in Fantasy Sports, which is just a different form of gambling that has never been slapped with the "illegal" label.

"It's already allowed," Maddon said before Monday's game. "As far as I'm concerned, it's already legal. It's already BEEN legal. If it's been going on as long as it has in Vegas and in the back of every bar — whether it's in Chicago or in Hazelton — it's been part of our culture.

"So I just think it's out in front right now regarding all the potential manifestations in a negative way. I don't really see that. I think it will be controlled properly. It's one of those things where, just take the blanket off. I've been there. It's true, it happened.

"Now you permit more states to benefit. I don't see anything different, actually. It didn't move the needle for me at all. I get why it was done. Why should one state hold exclusive ability to do something like that over the other ones?"

Maddon admitted it may change how people act around the game, opening the door for more people like his cab driver in another city asking about the status of an injured player or the next game's starting pitcher.

But then again, they already could've done that and phoned/logged in to place a bet either in Vegas or off shore somewhere.

"It might become more convenient right now, but I think all of that stuff is already in place," Maddon said. "It's been in place. Like anything else new, it might spike a little bit in the beginning, but it will settle in, I'm sure.

"For me, it doesn't move the needle. I don't think it's gonna impact. If you talk to our guys, they're probably not even aware of it or even care about it. I just think it's more pertinent to people that live in different states that they can now do what they may like to do, which is gamble."

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Cubs prospect Adbert Alzolay in mix to pitch Saturday

By Mark Gonzales

Left-hander Mike Montgomery remains a candidate to start one of the games of the Cubs' split doubleheader Saturday against the Reds.

But there are some intriguing options if Montgomery can't pitch.

Adbert Alzolay, the organization's top prospect, is lined up to make his next start Saturday. Alzolay, 23, is 2-2 with a 4.10 ERA after he allowed five runs on nine hits in 4 2/3 innings in Triple-A Iowa's 11-4 loss to Round Rock on Monday. .

Alzolay has made only five starts in Triple A, but he's already on the 40-man roster, so the Cubs wouldn't risk losing a player for the sake of having him start one game.

The other candidate is Jen-Ho Tseng, who lasted only two innings in a spot start May 8. Tseng won his first game of the season for Iowa in the second game of a doubleheader Monday but is 1-4 with a 7.85 ERA.

Montgomery has made no secret of his desire to be a starter, but his longest outing this season has been only three innings on two occasions.

"I need to watch him carefully and see if we can stretch him out appropriately to get him lined up (for Saturday)," manager Joe Maddon said. "We talked to him about it. He's aware of that. If we can, you could see him in that doubleheader. If I cannot, you may not.

"We're not going to sacrifice a game just because we're holding him back," Maddon said. "I won't do that."

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Yu Darvish on the spot for Tuesday start in Atlanta after mistake-prone Cubs lose to Braves at Wrigley  
By Mark Gonzales

With more than 75 percent of the regular season remaining, it would be too early to label Yu Darvish's start Tuesday night against the Braves extremely important.

But the struggling pitcher rejoins a team in need of a lift after the Cubs displayed an array of deficiencies Monday in a 6-5 loss to the feisty Braves at Wrigley Field.

A short outing by Jose Quintana further taxed the bullpen and the Cubs made mistakes on defense and on the basepaths.

"It's tough to continually try to piece together without wearing guys out," said manager Joe Maddon, aware that the Cubs begin a seven-game trip Tuesday that includes a Saturday doubleheader in Cincinnati.

"We need to get our starters (deeper) into games."

That may be a tall order Tuesday night, considering Darvish hasn't pitched since May 2 because of a bout with the flu and that he has failed to pitch at least five innings in four of his six starts.

But Quintana placed more stress on the bullpen Monday. He lasted only 4 2/3 innings, allowing nine hits, and he walked three during a 33-pitch first that started with a leadoff homer by Ozzie Albies.

Surprisingly, Quintana didn't issue another walk, but Tyler Flowers belted a two-run homer in the third that wiped out a 2-1 lead, and Jose Bautista hit a wind-aided three-run homer in the fifth that gave the Braves the lead for good.

"I feel very frustrated with this outing," said Quintana, who was pulled after Albies collected his third hit in the fifth.

The Cubs bullpen, which entered the game with the third-best ERA in baseball, dropped that number to 2.69. The problem is, relievers have accounted for 41 percent of the staff's innings.

"The bullpen was very spectacular, very good, but then you start counting the pitches and the guys having to possibly pitch (Tuesday) and the next day, etc.," Maddon said.

Brian Duensing and Steve Cishek have appeared in half of the Cubs' 38 games, with Carl Edwards Jr., Pedro Strop and Justin Wilson (17) close behind.

"I don't look much at stats, but I thought I'd be close," said Cishek, who got the final out of the fifth.

Quintana was victimized by two defensive lapses in the second that raised his pitch count. And Anthony Rizzo was picked off second base after Kris Bryant hit a two-run homer that gave the Cubs a 2-1 lead in the third.

Maddon has defended the work put into his team's defensive play and baserunning but admitted that Monday was "mentally a lethargic game."

"We made a lot of mistakes," Maddon said. "I consider them more mental than physical. I never mind the physical mistakes. I thought maybe we weren't on top of our mental game early on."

The Cubs will need no extra motivation from Maddon for the upcoming three-game series at SunTrust Park as the Braves, a National League-best 25-15, have taken two of three games at Wrigley.

"They're going to be big names in a couple years," Maddon said. "They will be more easily identifiable. They have some really great talent there. I'm a big fan. Even the guys on the bench are good players."

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Ben Zobrist has one question for MLB on rule governing cleat color: 'Why?'

By Mark Gonzales

Cubs veteran Ben Zobrist planned to call Joe Torre, Major League Baseball's chief baseball officer, to receive some clarity on rules governing attire such as his black hightop cleats.

Zobrist expressed on his Instagram account Saturday his objection to MLB's threat to penalize him for not abiding by uniform regulations that state at least 51 percent of the shoe must be the team's primary color.

"My question is going to be why, and we'll see what kind of answer we get," Zobrist said. "Why now? I think all players are kind of wondering that. Hopefully I get an answer and we move forward."

Zobrist said he has received positive reaction from fans and players and said the sport could benefit from more freedom for players in "certain ways like that, which are small in comparison to arm sleeves and other things."

Reliever Steve Cishek expressed suspicion that this warning might be the latest salvo in tension between owners and players that escalated during a slow winter for free-agent signings.

“There’s definitely something going on,” said Cishek, who wore black cleats, along with Kyle Schwarber and Zobrist, during Monday’s game that honored Jackie Robinson for breaking baseball’s color barrier. “Last year when we had (Players Weekend), guys wore whatever they wanted on their shoes and it turned out awesome.

“MLB gave us full reign to wear whatever we wanted, so they didn’t put any restrictions on us. No one said anything to us this year. A lot of guys ordered their custom spikes, what they wanted to wear, to go out there and show on the field and grow the game. Now all of a sudden (they) go just out of nowhere to drop warnings and fines on people.”

Cishek plans to wear the black spikes again when the Cubs wear throwback uniforms later this season.

Said manager Joe Maddon: “I’m anticipating some adjustments to the rule at some point.”

Extra innings: Kris Bryant has hit six home runs in his last 11 games. ... Both of Albert Almora Jr.’s homers came against the Braves. ... Reliever Pedro Strop extended his scoreless streak to nine appearances covering 9 2/3 innings.

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Joe Maddon on sports gambling in U.S.: 'It's been part of our culture'

By Mark Gonzales

Cubs manager Joe Maddon was hardly stunned to learn the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a federal law that had forbidden state-authorized sports gambling with few exceptions.

“It’s already allowed,” Maddon said Monday, a few hours after a 6-3 vote overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Act of 1992. “As far as I’m concerned, it’s already legal. And if it’s been going on as long as it’s been in Vegas, and in every barroom and in the back room of every barroom, whether it’s been in Chicago or Hazleton (Penn.), it’s been part of our culture.

“It’s out front right now.”

Before the Supreme Court’s ruling, Nevada was the only state where a person could bet on the results of a game.

“Regarding all the potential manifestations in a negative way, I don’t see that,” Maddon said. “I think it will be controlled properly.”

Maddon admits “you have to be careful” when a person with specific interests may ask about an injury or a specific player.

“I’ve often thought about that,” Maddon said. “I know people who do that regardless.”

Left fielder Kyle Schwarber, who grew up in a Cincinnati suburb, is aware of the pitfalls of gambling.

“We’re not going to be betting on baseball,” Schwarber said. “We also know what happened to good old Pete Rose there. That’s a good example of not to do it for us. So that’s where I stand.”

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### **Chicago Tribune**

Jackie Robinson leaves imprint on Cubs manager Joe Maddon

By Mark Gonzales

Among many of Joe Maddon’s prized possessions is a framed poster of Jackie Robinson.

The poster currently is in storage, but for many years it caught the attention of Maddon when he visited the once-renovated Yankee Stadium as manager of the Rays.

For Maddon, Robinson represented courage for the responsibility he took in breaking Major League Baseball’s color barrier in 1947.

So when the Rays played the last series at the former Yankee Stadium in 2008, he asked visiting clubhouse manager Lou Cucuzza Jr. if he could buy the poster.

Cucuzza declined Maddon’s offer but said he could have the poster.

“It’s probably not worth a lot off the shelf, but worth a lot based on where it’s been,” said Maddon, who has a photo of Robinson in his Cubs manager’s office.

“You can be a lot of different things, but if you’re lacking that one quality, it can be very difficult to include the rest of the better qualities in life. He is all of that. He speaks to courage and respected all that about him.”

Robinson died in 1972, but the Cubs and Braves honored his legacy by wearing Robinson’s No. 42 during Monday’s game at Wrigley Field. They had been set to wear the jerseys on April 15 – the 71st anniversary of Robinson’s major-league debut – but the game was postponed due to inclement weather and rescheduled for Monday.

“It’s definitely an honor every time I get to put the 42 on,” Kyle Schwarber said. “(For) a guy who changed baseball for a great reason. There’s the way he handled it, and the way he faced adversity. It’s a great example for all of us to learn from. You can’t thank that guy enough for what he did for the game of baseball because he changed it positively for everyone.”

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

‘Q’ isn’t for ‘quality’: Cubs’ Jose Quintana ‘pissed’ after latest poor start

By Steve Greenberg

The Cubs’ 6-5 loss to the Braves in a Monday makeup of an April 15 rainout was frustrating in a lot of ways.

There was ham-handed defense. There were base-running gaffes. A second seven-game homestand in a row closed with back-to-back defeats after a highly promising 5-0 start.

Worst of all was another poor start by pitcher Jose Quintana, who never had a handle on the young, talented Braves lineup. The “Q” hasn’t stood for “quality” with a lefty who has only three quality starts in eight outings. Quintana gave up six runs, all earned, and failed to make it out of the fifth inning.

“Too many pitches,” he said. “Three homers. I’m really frustrated with this outing.”

The normally even-keeled Quintana flashed an ornery side after falling to 4-3 with a 5.23 ERA in his first full season with the Cubs.

“I’m really pissed off,” he said.

Five relievers pitched on what was supposed to be an off day before the Cubs and Braves head to Atlanta for a three-game series. The Cubs will then play four games in three days over the weekend in Cincinnati.

“To this point, ‘Q’ has just not been on top of his game with his command,” manager Joe Maddon said. “And he normally is a really good command guy, knowing where his fastball is going. But it wasn’t happening today. It’s tough to continually try to piece it together without wearing these [relievers] out.”

First baseman Anthony Rizzo had a puzzling afternoon, missing the bag with his foot on a second-inning error and getting picked off second base an inning later. Right fielder Ben Zobrist got doubled off first base on a diving catch by center fielder Ender Inciarte. Third baseman Kris Bryant, who made the final out with the bases loaded in the ninth, also missed a couple of makeable plays in the field.

Yet Quintana did the most damage to his own cause. That included a grooved 3-0 pitch to Braves catcher Tyler Flowers, who turned it into a two-run homer for a 3-2 lead in the third. Ozzie Albies and Jose Bautista also took Quintana deep.

“It’s really bad,” the pitcher said. “I want to do better. I want to come back good.”

Weekend warrior

Veteran reliever Mike Montgomery could get a start in one of the games of Saturday’s Cubs-Reds doubleheader. Another strong candidate, according to a Des Moines Register report, is Adbert Alzolay, the Cubs’ No. 1-ranked prospect by MLB Pipeline. The 23-year-old right-hander is 2-2 with a 4.10 ERA at Class AAA Iowa.

Place your bets

Count Maddon as being skeptical that the Supreme Court’s landmark ruling Monday that legal sports betting can be allowed in all states poses a threat in any way to baseball.

“[Sports wagering] has been part of our culture, so I just think it’s out front right now,” he said. “Regarding all the potential manifestations in a negative way, I don’t really see that. I think it’ll be controlled properly. Just take the blanket off — it has been there. It’s true.”

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**Chicago Sun-Times**

The perception of the Cubs’ Yu Darvish as mentally soft is common. Is it fair?

By Rick Morrissey

One of the worst things that can be said about a professional athlete is that he's mentally soft, that he caves in under pressure. If it is said, it's usually said in hushed tones.

Just two months into Yu Darvish's career as a Cub, it's being talked about matter-of-factly.

The idea that the team's big offseason signing lacks mental toughness is widespread in Chicago now. In almost every conversation I've had with fans or media members, it has come up. In a column about the Cubs' first 30 games this season, I wrote that "there is already open talk about his 'soft' mental makeup." No one contacted me to disagree.

Is the perception of Darvish fair? How do we know that the Cubs right-hander buckles at the first hint of trouble? How would we even measure that?

I don't have the answers to any of those questions. It doesn't reflect well on anyone that he's being judged so harshly after only six starts in a Cubs uniform. But that's almost beside the point now. Once the perception of mental weakness is out there, especially in as macho a sport as baseball, it's extremely difficult to make it go away.

Darvish has a massive salvage operation in front of him. He has to rescue his reputation. The only way for him to do that is to win. Not just now but in October.

Until last year's World Series, he had a reputation for being a hugely talented, hugely sensitive pitcher. Looking back on it, those were the good, old days. "Hugely sensitive" has given way to "incredibly soft."

How did we get from there to here?

Darvish pitched poorly in the World Series last season, losing two starts while lasting a total of 3 1/3 innings for the Dodgers. He is 0-3 with a 6.00 earned-run average this season. His Waterloo so far has been the fifth inning, in which he has a cartoonish 31.50 ERA. That has led to the soft label. One minute, he's cruising; the next, he's walking someone in the fifth and falling apart.

Cubs fans booed him at Wrigley Field in his most recent start, a May 2 loss in which he gave up five earned runs and three homers. He was pulled in, yes, the fifth inning. Five days later, the team put him on the 10-day disabled list with the flu. He was eligible to pitch Monday in a makeup game at Wrigley against the Braves, but the Cubs chose to wait a day and start him Tuesday in Atlanta. Manager Joe Maddon denied that the team was holding him so the embattled pitcher wouldn't have to face Cubs fans in his return from the DL.

The Cubs signed Darvish to a six-year, \$126 million contract in the offseason, all but choosing him over Jake Arrieta, who had helped them win a World Series in 2016. Oh, and Arrieta has been great for the Phillies.

In other words, everything that could have gone wrong for the four-time All-Star has.

On Sunday, a reporter asked Maddon if he was worried about his pitcher's mental state.

"I'm not," he said. "I mean, honestly, I'm not. The guy's been really good for so many years. He's got an outstanding arm. I think sometimes he gets a little bit speeded up in what he's doing. He and I have talked about that. But there's too much success there for me to be worried about that. He would not be in the position he is if that were in fact true."



We're always looking for deeper meaning. Why wasn't Maddon offended by that question? Why didn't he defend Darvish more vociferously? By even answering the question, was there tacit agreement that the topic of mental toughness is a legitimate one? Maybe we're analyzing things too much these days.

(It's interesting that a sport beholden to analytics, a sport overrun by number crunchers, would turn so quickly to a player's mental makeup, something that can't be quantified, when looking to explain his struggles.)

Darvish hasn't been here long, yet he's already elbowing his way into the rogue's gallery of unpopular Cubs, a group that includes Todd Hundley, Corey Patterson and Milton Bradley.

That says as much about us as it does about him. It speaks to the immediacy of our times, to the need for instant gratification. It very well could speak to his emotional shortcomings. But perhaps we should give this a little more time before we chalk it up to a weak mental constitution.

We have to leave open the possibility that Darvish will find himself again. If he does, whom does he contact about getting his reputation back?

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### **Chicago Sun-Times**

Cubs' Ben Zobrist back in black — cleats, that is — in defiance of MLB rule

By Steve Greenberg

They are foot soldiers in a war against Major League Baseball. On second thought, that's probably a tad too dramatic.

Let's just say Ben Zobrist and at least some of his Cubs teammates aren't going to give up on wearing black baseball shoes without a fight.

The exterior of a Cubs player's cleats must be at least 51 percent blue, according to MLB. Does a detail so small really matter? Is the rule "ridiculous," as Zobrist charged in a weekend post on his Instagram?

Either way, Zobrist — even after receiving a letter of warning from the league threatening "further discipline, including assessment of a fine" — was back in black Monday in a 6-5 loss to the Braves, and he wasn't the only one. Teammates Kyle Schwarber and Steve Cishek also donned all-black spikes.

"That was a Jackie Robinson Day thing," Schwarber said.

It's true, the Cubs and Braves all wore No. 42 at Wrigley Field for a makeup of an April 15 game between the teams that was rained out. About four weeks later, their celebration of Robinson's day included some old-school-looking shoes.

There might've been a bit of a message to the league's head honchos in there, too.

"I'm sure the boys may have gotten together and talked about it," manager Joe Maddon said. "I'm anticipating some adjustments to the rule at some point. Whenever the guys hang together, I'm always behind them."

Before the game, Schwarber was asked for his thoughts on a big leaguer — specifically, a 37-year-old, highly respected one such as Zobrist — being told what he can and can't wear on his feet.

"It is what it is," he said. "I see all the points of our players who are frustrated, because no one's been making a big deal out of it until now. I don't see the point there of why you would try to make a big deal of a jersey or a pair of shoes."

What Schwarber didn't divulge was that he had a pair of black Nikes in his locker ready to go. Zobrist and Cishek wore black P.F. Flyers.

Zobrist wears black cleats during day games at home to "pay homage to the history of our great game," he explained on his Instagram. He planned to call Joe Torre, the league's chief baseball officer, Monday evening with a simple question in mind: Why?

"We'll see what kind of answer I get," he said. "But why now? I think all players are kind of wondering that. Hopefully, I can get an answer and we can move forward."

An offseason that seemed to mark a turn in the relationship between players and management could be seeping into this issue.

"Now, all of the sudden, just out of nowhere they're dropping warnings and fines on people," Cishek said. "It's just been interesting. If they want us to work together with them in a lot of situations, and then they crunch down on something as small as this, it's just really confusing. Like, I don't know where they're trying to build trust."

P.F. Flyers tweeted a photo over the weekend of Zobrist standing at the plate on a public diamond, wearing black cleats and rolled-up jeans. The image instantly called to mind the character Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez of "The Sandlot" fame.

"Proud to have someone with as much love for the history and spirit of the game as @benzobrist18 rep the [shoes]," the tweet said.

Zobrist replied: "I knew you'd understand."

But will MLB?

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