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Offense falls flat as White Sox drop rubber match

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com

CHICAGO - There wasn't much deep analysis provided by White Sox manager Robin Ventura following Sunday's 5-1 loss to Arizona at U.S. Cellular Field.

Just anger and a promise of something different on the heels of what arguably stands as the team's worst showing out of an encouraging and exciting 39-game start to the 2014 campaign.

The first postgame question to Ventura centered on why Chase Anderson (1-0) was so effective in his Major League debut for the D-backs (15-25). Ventura gave credit to Anderson, but not so much where the White Sox (19-20) were concerned.

"He threw well, but it was pretty uninspired by us all the way through," a direct and agitated Ventura said. "It started from the first play of the game and continued on and it stunk, pretty much the whole thing. Hector [Noesi] pitched a heck of a game to at least give us a chance, and everything else stunk. That's pretty much it."

Noesi (0-3) made his third start with the White Sox and has raised his pitch count from 51 to 81 to a career-high 117 on Sunday. He yielded three runs on eight hits, while striking out four and walking three over six innings.

It was the D-backs' first-inning run allowed by Noesi that seemed to ignite Ventura's fire, basically because it never should have scored.

Gerardo Parra opened with what looked like a routine fly ball to Alejandro De Aza in center. De Aza is admittedly more comfortable defensively in left, and it showed on the play as he originally broke back, stumbled and fell as he made his way in and missed the fly ball as he made an attempt from his knees.

Parra raced all the way around to third and scored on Martin Prado's single. A fifth-inning homer from Parra represented the other two runs against Noesi.

"Change-up, slider. Everything was working today. Just one pitch that I missed up," Noesi said. "I love to start. I think I'm getting better every day."

"You know, he gave us a chance," said Ventura of Noesi. "He was around the zone, threw strikes, all that. It's too bad for him. He pitched a good game and nobody else showed up."

An Arizona starting pitcher faced the minimum nine hitters over three innings for a third straight game in this series. For a second straight game, an Arizona starter faced the minimum over four.

Anderson never topped 12 pitches total in any of the first five innings, which is somewhat out of character with the White Sox patient offensive approach this season. In the sixth inning, Moises Sierra took him deep as the culmination of a 12-pitch at-bat. Tyler Flowers followed with a walk, and Anderson was replaced by Joe Thatcher, who retired Conor Gillaspie on a grounder to second baseman Aaron Hill with the tying runs in scoring position.

"Definitely the key, fastball command early, being able to flip my curveball for strikes when some guys were sitting on the fastball and threw my changeup for a strike and a strikeout," Anderson said. "So command of all three of my pitches was great today."

"Congratulations to him on a great first day. It was a big day for him, I'm sure, so congrats to him. We'll just move on," said White Sox captain Paul Konerko of Anderson. "He was hitting his spots. A good pitch is a good pitch. It doesn't matter who it comes from or if it's his first start or whatever. He threw the ball great."

Miguel Montero's two-run homer in the ninth off of Frank Francisco, who made his White Sox debut, finished off the scoring. Montero connected with Paul Goldschmidt on first, after Goldschmidt reached on first baseman Adam Dunn's fielding error. The drive to right also came on Francisco's 42nd pitch in his second inning of relief with Scott Downs warming up in the bullpen.

Konerko's double play grounder in a pinch-hit role against Oliver Perez ended the game, giving the White Sox three losses in four games and a 1-6 mark in three-game series this season. It also set the stage for Ventura's frustration.

"They were just flat, couldn't get anything going," Ventura said. "Something is going to happen. I don't know what yet, but something."

When asked if that something dealt with lineup changes, Ventura responded with "maybe."

"Just in the way you treat them and everything else," Ventura continued.

Despite Sunday's forgettable performance, the White Sox have survived a run of key injuries and are getting healthier. Both Adam Eaton and Chris Sale figure to leave on Minor League injury rehab assignments this week, and they both could be back in action by the end of May.

Ventura's comments simply might have been a not-so-gentle reminder that what happened last year won't be tolerated with the White Sox in '14, regardless of whether the team wins 75, 85 or 95. And he certainly wasn't trying to take away from Anderson's impressive debut.

Whatever the reasons, after missing Saturday's game to attend his daughter's college graduation from Oklahoma State, Ventura certainly wasn't in a celebratory mood Sunday.

"I don't think it's lack of effort," Flowers said. "We did seem a little, I guess lethargic could be the word. I couldn't tell, I really don't know. The guy did a good job shutting us down.

"Next time I guess we need to pick up a little more rah, rah or something; that ought to keep everybody motivated and going. But again, we didn't quit on that game or anything. That guy did better than we did."

Eaton to begin Triple-A rehab stint Wednesday

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- Adam Eaton was in an even more upbeat mood Sunday morning than his usual go get 'em sort of attitude, and it only had a little to do with Tyler Flowers humorously conducting a morning interview session with Eaton and a couple of reporters.

The White Sox leadoff man and center fielder is close to returning from a strained right hamstring that put him on the disabled list May 3. Eaton will travel with the White Sox to Oakland, but then leave Oakland on Wednesday to join Triple-A Charlotte for an injury rehab assignment.

"We are going to take the next seven days or so and we are going to use them to the best of our ability," Eaton said. "Go to Charlotte the third day in Oakland and hopefully get a couple of rehab starts and meet in Houston on the 18th."

Eaton paused for a moment to figure out that May 18 is just one week away, and the excitement for his near return quickly became evident.

"Really excited to see him back," said White Sox bench coach Mark Parent. "He adds a lot to our lineup, defensively and offensively and running the bases. Just overall energy in the game. He has obviously had a really good year so we want to continue his progress.

"One of the things, when he went down, is [Alejandro] De Aza never really was comfortable [leading off] before. And then we tried [Gordon] Beckham there, he's ... even though you're only leading off one time it makes certain people uncomfortable. Adam just, he just loves that spot and we like him in that spot."

The outfielder's Sunday morning workout went at about 95-to-98 percent effort according to Eaton, who did nothing but treatment during his first three days on the disabled list. He has noticed a marked improvement during the down time.

"It has been a tough run without our big bopper up top," said a smiling Flowers at the end of the interview.

"Everything is going well, and it feels really good," said Eaton, who is hitting .276 with a .363 on-base percentage and 20 runs scored. "Everything is going to plan and we'll continue as such."

White Sox Honorary Bat Girl a fervent fighter

CHICAGO -- If a positive mental outlook counts for anything, then Vanessa Parzatka seems poised to give cancer quite a fight.

Parzatka actually is in her second bout battling the disease, after being diagnosed with stage four breast cancer in 2006. Yet, as she moved around U.S. Cellular Field on Sunday afternoon as the 2014 White Sox Honorary Bat Girl representative -- always with a smile on her face -- it was hard to tell anything was wrong.

One would have never guessed that Parzatka had just undergone chemotherapy Friday.

"I feel good," Parzatka said. "You know what? I'll be OK. I'll keep doing my therapies and hanging in there. I'll be around a while."

Major League Baseball's Honorary Bat Girl program recognizes fans who have been affected by breast cancer and who demonstrate a commitment to eradicating the disease, with each team represented. Parzatka was nominated by her sister, Michelle, who sent along a moving depiction of Parzatka's life affected by cancer.

After the original diagnosis in '06, Parzatka underwent three major surgeries, radiation and chemotherapy before her life became stable, Michelle wrote. The cancer reappearing in February 2013 has been a struggle for Vanessa, her family and friends, and according to Michelle, the bat girl recognition would be the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

The White Sox provided four tickets for Vanessa, and her father bought 30 tickets for friends and family to attend Sunday's series finale against the D-backs. Vanessa proudly showed off her pink bat with numerous players' autographs before the game, but took even greater pride in the engraving on the bat with her name and nickname, "Slick", from her softball playing days included.

"This is awesome," said Parzatka, who was a left fielder. "It's quite an experience."

Before bringing out the lineup card with White Sox bench coach Mark Parent, the resident of suburban Homer Glen talked about her love for the White Sox since grade school. She has great appreciation for U.S. Cellular Field, but her favorite memories come from games at old Comiskey Park.

There also was a brief discussion concerning the return of her cancer, including praise for Chicago Beverage, the company where she worked, but currently can't because she is unable to drive.

"They are special," said Parzatka of her employers. "They have been terrific."

When Parzatka heard the words about her cancer coming back, her initial reaction was understandable; she couldn't believe it.

Her attitude remains upbeat, especially in her Sunday role with her favorite team.

"It's a little severe but all and all, I feel very good," Parzatka said. "And then stuff like this, it's just fun."

White Sox honored to use pink bats

CHICAGO -- Marcus Semien was not in the White Sox starting lineup for Sunday's Mother's Day contest against the D-backs. But he had a special reason to break out the pink bat in case he got a chance to hit.

Ann Flemer, the mother of his close friend, Matt Flemer, is a breast cancer survivor. Semien and Matt Flemer, who currently plays in the Rockies' organization, played high school ball and were at the University of California, Berkeley together.

"She's real strong," said Semien of Flemer. "She fought through it and she fought through it really quick. That's probably the closest person to me that survived breast cancer."

"It serves as an inspiration to all of us close to her. She worked hard every day. I remember every day I'd be working at the local field, she'd be walking around the field just getting her exercise in. That's inspiring."

Adrian Nieto pointed to his own mother as his reason for reaching the Majors. He was looking forward to honoring her on this special day, as well as bringing awareness in trying to conquer this insidious disease with a small gesture such as using the pink bats.

"I had a couple of people in my family pass away from cancer [not breast cancer], so hopefully there's a day when they find a cure for it and we don't have to worry about that," Nieto said. "A lot of people have gone through that and lost loved ones. That's really the meaning of it, it's motivation, it's really for breast cancer."

"I've even tried to stay on my mom, my parents, my dad to get scans and stuff like that because it's better to catch it early than late. The sooner the better. Hopefully this gets people the heads up and gets people more educated about it."

Jose Abreu was the only White Sox player to get a hit with a pink bat during Sunday's 5-1 loss to Arizona, in which they finished with just four hits.

McCarthy treasures time with Big Hurt

CHICAGO -- When Brandon McCarthy was a young baseball player, his hero was Frank Thomas.

"Big Hurt fan club when I was a kid. Anything Frank Thomas did, I was a part of then," said the D-backs pitcher, who originally came up with the White Sox in 2005. "His cleats, tennis shoes, his video game, fan club, all of that, I did as much as I could with Frank Thomas without meeting him I guess."

McCarthy not only got to meet the Big Hurt, but also played with him in '05. The right-handed hurler thought of those special moments when Thomas became a first-ballot Hall of Famer this past January.

"That will end up being one of the highlights of my career, especially since this is still a kid's game when you are growing up playing it," McCarthy said. "That was dream No. 1 for me: Can I play with Frank Thomas?"

"To be able to do that and cross that one off in my first season is still an awesome accomplishment. It's something I'll be honored by throughout the rest of my life, knowing I got to play with Frank Thomas and fulfill a childhood dream.

"It's weird now because I still remember being a kid and that was your guy and that's when he was a young player and coming through and now he's been done for five years and now he's a Hall of Famer," McCarthy said. "Everybody keeps getting older and young players are now old players, but I think it's awesome for him. I picked a good one growing up at least."

Those McCarthy memories of '05 with the White Sox go deeper than the Big Hurt, as he was part of a World Series championship in his rookie campaign.

"You realize how unbelievably hard it is to win a World Series or even to get to that point," said McCarthy, who had a 4.03 ERA over 12 games and 10 starts in '05. "That first season, it just felt like this is a thing that happens. It was a cool experience to come up with and I still, the city, the fans, everybody was great to me.

"I enjoyed my team. It's weird now that it's that removed. A few years ago it felt like still a fresh thing and still here. Now, it feels like a career ago. It's kind of weird in that regard as you keep getting older."

White Sox striving to eliminate baserunning miscues

CHICAGO -- The most important part of Tyler Flowers getting thrown out going from second to third on Alejandro De Aza's one-out grounder in the hole between shortstop and third base in the eighth inning of Saturday's 4-3 loss to Arizona was that nobody, including Flowers, was accepting of the mistake after the game.

Adam Dunn was thrown out in the same situation during a game in Cleveland last weekend.

"That's why the guy is in the hole, you want to make him make that long throw," White Sox bench coach Mark Parent said. "That's just a Little League play.

"We messed it up last year, we addressed it again this spring numerous times. [Flowers] felt as bad as Dunner felt, as bad as [Josh] Phegley felt last year. I mean it's just embarrassing. That's a play that's embarrassing."

Parent felt the baserunning mistakes would be cleaned up for a team that has played overall good baseball during the first 38 games this season. He also pointed out that the baserunner has to read that sort of play with it out in front of him.

"It seems like when we're down, we have guys -- just like last year -- trying to do too much instead of just do what you're supposed to do. Let the scoreboard dictate," Parent said. "We don't need to give up outs on the bases. It's one base at a time.

"That was different in terms of being down last night and being around [Addison] Reed, we knew we could steal a base, so I let Alexei [Ramirez] run [in the ninth]. But other than that, when you're down like that, you really don't want to give up, you just want to have a lot of baserunners and then drive guys in."

Third to first

- Chris Sale will meet with manager Robin Ventura, head athletic trainer Herm Schneider and general manager Rick Hahn to decide his next course of action on the comeback trail. But being out of action retroactive to April 18 with a flexor strain in his left arm means Sale will almost certainly have one Minor League rehab start, and quite possibly two, even if he feels ready to start for the White Sox.

"He's not going to win, I don't think he's going to win this one," said Parent of Sale. "He's a huge commodity for us and for our future and we've got to make sure he's healthy."

Sale is next scheduled to throw on Thursday.

- Ventura, who missed Saturday's game to attend his daughter's college graduation from Oklahoma St., was not present for his pregame media session Sunday, but made it in time for the series finale.

- Ramirez recorded his 51st hit of the season last night, becoming the first White Sox player since Paul Konerko (2002) to collect 51 or more hits in the club's first 38 games.

White Sox look for more success in Oakland

By Joe Popely / MLB.com

Now in his 16th season with the White Sox, captain Paul Konerko has seen it all -- especially when it comes to playing the Oakland Athletics.

"Yea, I mean they've had a lot of good teams," Konerko said. "But honestly there were years where we went there and they weren't very good and we'd get swept. I mean, we lost every kind of way you could lose there. But that was a long time ago. I think recently we've been OK."

Konerko is right. O.co Coliseum was long a house of horrors for his team, which is 19-41 in Oakland since 2000, but has gone a respectable 9-12 since '08. The White Sox will look to continue the positive trend when they visit the A's for a three game set starting Monday night.

And, As Konerko pointed out, many of his young teammates will be making their first trip to Oakland with the new-look White Sox and will have "no idea, probably" of the team's recent history in the Bay Area.

"Every team's got those ballparks that even when the team changes and the roster changes, you seem to have trouble there," Konerko said. "But hopefully, we've got kind of a new thing going with the group here and it would be great if we could just go in there and have a good series, so they don't have to

know the pain that most of us have had there. Let's just go there and get it going in the right direction, start a new trend."

One player making his first trip to Oakland is Cuban sensation Jose Abreu, who leads the Majors in home runs (13) and is second in RBIs (37).

We've watched some tape already and that seems to be quite a challenge, the way he's swinging the bat," said A's manager Bob Melvin. "He's dangerous to any part of the field."

The A's will look to keep their momentum at home going as they wrap up a 10-game home stand that started poorly, but has since turned around. The two-time defending AL West champs lost three of four to Seattle before sweeping a three-game series from Washington.

They'll throw righty Jesse Chavez (2-1, 2.47 ERA in seven starts) opposite left-hander John Danks (3-2, 4.93 in seven starts). Chavez has a 2.92 ERA in seven relief appearances against the White Sox -- the most recent on July 8, 2012, when he was a member of the Blue Jays -- and will make his first start against Chicago. Danks posted his fifth quality start by allowing three runs in six innings his last time out Wednesday against the Cubs.

White Sox: Eaton nearing rehab assignment

Leadoff man Adam Eaton, who is recovering from a strained left hamstring, will travel with the team to Oakland for at least the first two games of the series before meeting up with Triple-A Charlotte to start his rehab assignment.

Bench coach Mark Parent, who spoke with the media prior to Sunday's game, while Robin Ventura was en route from his daughter's college graduation, said Eaton will "probably" rejoin the White Sox next Sunday in Houston.

"Really excited to see him back," Parent said of Eaton. "He adds a lot to our lineup, defensively and offensively and running the bases. Just overall energy in the game. He's obviously had a really good year so we want to continue his progress."

Oakland: Jaso to sit out back-to-back games

John Jaso hit a walk-off double in the 10th inning of Saturday's 4-3 win over the Nationals as part of his 3-for-5, two-RBI day. But he will sit out Monday for the second straight game.

It's a simple matchup platoon strategy for Melvin, who plays the right-handed hitting Derek Norris -- who had two three-run homers on Sunday -- behind the plate against left-handed starters.

"With Coco [Crisp] out, we have two left-handers in there instead of one," Melvin said. "Believe me, if I could get another right-hander in there, I would. [Brandon] Moss doesn't normally play against left-handers."

Worth noting

- Chicago's three-game set in Oakland begins a three city road trip that moves to Houston (Friday-

Sunday) and Kansas City (5/19-21). The White Sox have two more three-city road trips this season (6/19-29 and 9/15-24).

- The White Sox went 0-3 at O.Co Colliseum and 2-5 overall last season against the A's, with all seven games decided by three runs or less.
 - In Sunday's 5-1 loss to the to the D-backs, the White Sox were held to four hits, the third time this season they've picked up four or fewer hits in a season.
 - White Sox relievers own a 1.96 ERA over their last 15 games.
 - Brandon Moss has 18 home runs and 61 RBIs in 71 games dating back to Aug. 19 of last year. Both figures are the most in the AL and second most in the Majors to Giancarlo Stanton (21 HR and 65 RBIs in 75 games).
 - Derek Norris is batting .385, which is second in the Majors to Troy Tulowitzki's .405 average among players with 60 or more plate appearances
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Ventura unhappy with Sox's effort in loss to D'backs

'It stunk, pretty much the whole thing'

By [Fred Mitchell](#), Chicago Tribune

White Sox manager Robin Ventura didn't like the smell of Sunday's 5-1 loss to the Diamondbacks.

"It stunk," Ventura said after the Sox dropped two out of three at home to the last-place team in the National League West.

Diamondbacks right-hander Chase Anderson won his major-league debut, limiting the Sox to one run on two hits over 5 1/3 innings. Two-run homers by Gerardo Parra and Miguel Montero did most of the damage for the visitors as Hector Noesi (0-3) took the loss.

Parra led off the game with a drive that was misplayed in center field by Alejandro De Aza that was ruled a triple. De Aza had a bad break on the ball and then got his feet tangled up. Martin Prado then drove in Parra with a base hit.

"It started from the first play of the game and continued on and it stunk, pretty much the whole thing," Ventura said in a rare instance of public criticism of his players.

"Hector pitched a heck of a game (three runs on eight hits over six innings) to at least give us a chance. Everything else stunk."

Ventura suggested changes may be made soon as the Sox embark on a 9-game trip beginning Monday night in Oakland.

"I don't know, they were just flat (Sunday), couldn't get anything going," he said. "Something is going to happen. I don't know what yet, but something."

The Sox have dropped three of their last four. Perhaps lineup changes are in order?

"Nah ... maybe ... just in the way you treat them and everything else," Ventura said.

Baserunning gaffes in Saturday night's 4-3 loss irked bench coach Mark Parent, who was the acting manager while Ventura attended the graduation of his daughter at Oklahoma State.

"We've got a pretty good group of guys. Our leadership, as far as (Adam Dunn) and (Paul) Konerko and the pitching side, (John) Danks and (Chris Sale) ... they know how to keep guys in check," Parent said before the game.

"We just need to cut out some little bitty mistakes. Not little bitty mistakes, but big mistakes on the bases and stuff like that ... things in the outfield. We cleaned some stuff up. We've been playing pretty good. As long as we keep swinging it, it doesn't matter who's on the mound, although (Jose) Quintana threw very well (Saturday) night. He didn't get that (run) support."

The Sox were checked on just four hits Sunday.

"I don't think it's lack of effort," catcher Tyler Flowers said. "I guess lethargic could be the word. I can't tell you why, I really don't know. The guy (Anderson) did a good job shutting us down. I guess next time we need to pick up a little more 'rah-rah' or something to keep everybody motivated. But we didn't quit on that game or anything. It's just that they did better than we did."

Noesi, who is 0-8 with a 6.27 ERA over his last 11 starts, says he wants to continue in that role. He threw 117 pitches.

"He threw strikes. You know, he gave us a chance," Ventura said. "It's too bad for him. He pitched a good game and nobody else showed up."

Sox hit road on down note

Konerko stresses taking it one day at a time after third loss in four days

By [Fred Mitchell](#), Chicago Tribune

The White Sox are hitting the road on a sour note, having dropped three of their last four at home.

They travel to Oakland, Houston and Kansas City over the next 10 days.

"All the games count the same, like it or not. So it's a matter of just taking it one at a time," veteran **Paul Konerko** said. "We'll get on the plane, we'll get off the plane and then we'll try to win the first one (Monday night) in Oakland. And that's all you can really control. This day's over. You can't get to Tuesday until we play (Monday) night's game."

Smashing debut: **Chase Anderson** is the first Diamondbacks pitcher to win his major league debut since **Tyler Skaggs** on Aug. 22, 2012, against the Marlins.

"He threw well," Konerko said. "A week ago or two weeks ago, **Scott Carroll** came up and threw a great game (for the Sox) against Tampa Bay, and we didn't sit and say Tampa Bay sucked. We said that he was really good. So that happens. Guys make good pitches, a lot of these guys make good pitches. I didn't face him (Sunday) so I don't know, but he looked good. I was watching him on TV. He was hitting his spots. A good pitch is a good pitch. It doesn't matter who it comes from or if it's his first start or whatever. He threw the ball great. Congratulations to him on a great first day. It was a big day for him, I'm sure."

Feeling better: Injured center fielder **Adam Eaton** is expected to rejoin his teammates soon. Eaton has been on the disabled list since May 3 with a strained right hamstring.

"He's going to go out to Oakland with us for a couple days and then he's going to head off to (Triple-A) Charlotte for a couple and then probably join us the last day in Houston," Sox bench coach **Mark Parent** said.

"He adds a lot to our lineup, defensively and offensively and running the bases ... just overall energy in the game."

For starters: Catcher **Tyler Flowers** was impressed with the outing of losing pitcher **Hector Noesi**.

"Other than that pitch to (**Gerardo**) **Parra** (home run), I thought he did a pretty good job using his changeup and mixing the fastballs in and out," Flowers said. "All in all, it wasn't good enough, but he did very well."

Extra innings: **Frank Francisco** made his White Sox debut Sunday, allowing one earned run in 12/3 innings. ... The Sox are 1-7 in three-game series this season.

White Sox catcher Tyler Flowers adjusting to changing rotation

By Toni Ginnetti / Chicago Sun-Times

White Sox catcher Tyler Flowers deals with curveballs every day — from the mound and from baseball in general.

Dealing with the curves of baseball is always the greater challenge, as it has been with a Sox starting rotation that has been beset by injuries.

"The biggest challenge is the first or second time catching a guy," Flowers said. "Honestly, the challenge catching them the first time is just catching the ball — recognizing the action on their pitches, recognizing their tendencies on when they miss pitches, helping them get back on track or just being prepared to block pitches. That's something that becomes a level of comfort over time."

The Sox expected their starting pitching to be a strength this season, anchored by left-handers Chris Sale, John Danks and Jose Quintana. But Sale has been out since mid-April with a flexor strain in his left arm, and Danks and Quintana have struggled at times.

The Sox have used six other pitchers in the rotation, including Hector Noesi, who took the loss in a 5-1 defeat Sunday against the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Flowers has had to learn the tendencies of each.

"After catching Sale for all these years, I can pretty much tell you where it's going to be if it's going to be in the dirt," he said. "That helps with the anticipation, being able to focus on that one thing in particular. That's the challenge early on [with new pitchers]. You just try to learn as quickly as you can on the fly within the game. It's not ideal, but we felt these guys could help us, and they definitely can. I'm just the last piece to figure it all out."

Bench coach Mark Parent, a former catcher, understands the dynamics.

"That's a lot of work," he said of learning the changing rotation. "Usually at this level, in my experience, you had a certain number of guys that you were used to catching. You knew what they did. You knew what to expect. If you needed a strike or needed a punchout, you knew where to go.

"[Flowers] is certainly trying to find it. And then going to bat and doing all that stuff. Hell, he's a .300 hitter. He's just got a lot of things going. But Tyler is a very smart kid, and he's handled it really well."

Flowers has become an offensive threat, with his .324 average ranking second on the team. His bat has come around with the aid of a simplified routine worked out in spring training with hitting coach Todd Steverson. It couldn't have come at a better time, given the demands of catching the changing rotation.

"I don't feel I need to spend a whole lot of time on hitting," Flowers said. "We developed a routine for me in spring training that we've stuck with. It's not super time-consuming. It's just something to kind of get me doing the same thing day in and day out in hopes of being consistent day in and day out.

"I promised myself I'm going to stick to that routine because I haven't really done that in the past. I think it helps . . . to do the same thing, so you don't really think about it. It's kind of a way to hit the reset button for that day and not think about what happened yesterday or last week."

Robin Ventura uphappy after White Sox' lackluster defeat

By Toni Ginnetti / Chicago Sun-Times

Unhappy White Sox manager **Robin Ventura** vowed "something is going to happen" to jump-start what he said was a team that "didn't show up" to play in a 5-1 loss Sunday to the Arizona Diamondbacks.

"It started from the first play of the game [a ball that fell for a triple under tumbling outfielder **Alejandro De Aza**] and continued on, and it stunk, pretty much the whole thing," said Ventura, who returned to the dugout after attending his daughter's college graduation Saturday. "[Sox right-hander] **Hector [Noesi]** pitched a heck of a game to at least give us a chance. Everything else stunk.

"Something is going to happen. I don't know what yet, but something. Maybe just in the way you treat them and everything else."

The Sox had only one hit through five innings against Diamondbacks rookie **Chase Anderson** (1-0), who was making his major-league debut. Anderson allowed one run — a home run by **Moises Sierra** — and two hits and struck out six in 5 1/3 innings as the Diamondbacks won the rubber game of the series.

Noesi (0-3) yielded three runs and eight hits in six innings.

"He pitched a great game, and no one else showed up," Ventura said.

Captain **Paul Konerko**, who pinch-hit in the ninth, was less critical.

"A week or two ago, [Sox right-hander] **Scott Carroll** came up and threw a great game against Tampa Bay, and we didn't say Tampa Bay [stunk]; we said [Carroll] was really good," Konerko said. "Guys make good pitches. I didn't face him, but I was watching him on TV, and he was hitting his spots. A good pitch is a good pitch. It doesn't matter who it comes from or if it's his first start. He threw the ball great. Congratulations to him on a great first day. We'll just move on."

Catcher **Tyler Flowers** said the Sox didn't quit.

"I guess 'lethargic' could be the word, I really don't know," Flowers said. "[Anderson] did a good job shutting us down. I guess next time we need to pick up a little more rah-rah . . . to keep everybody motivated and going. [Anderson] just did better than we did."

Lead the way

Leadoff man **Adam Eaton**, who is on the disabled list with a strained hamstring, will accompany the Sox to Oakland, California, before going to Class AAA Charlotte for a rehab session. He might rejoin the team Sunday in Houston.

Sale update

Left-hander **Chris Sale**, who has been on the disabled list with a strained flexor tendon in his left arm since mid-April, will throw again Thursday. The Sox haven't decided, though, whether it will be in a rehab start or just on the side.

Chase Anderson wins MLB debut as White Sox fall 5-1

By Toni Ginnetti / Chicago Sun-Times

Arizona starter Chase Anderson made his major league debut Sunday against the White Sox — and pitched like a veteran for his first victory.

Anderson, 26, faced the minimum 15 batters through five innings, though he had given up a single in the second to Jose Abreu. Abreu was out trying to stretch the hit to a double.

The Sox didn't get another hit until Moises Sierra homered in the sixth, their only run in the 5-1 loss.

Anderson worked 5 1/3 innings, walking one and striking out six.

Anderson had faced the Sox Class AA affiliate in Birmingham, Ala., on May 1 while pitching for the Diamondbacks Class AA affiliate. In that game, he worked 7 1/3 shutout innings and limited Birmingham to three hits. That was his last start before Sunday.

The victory gave the visiting Diamondbacks their second win over the Sox as well as the three-game interleague series.

Sox starter Hector Noesi (0-3) worked six innings, giving up a first inning run and two more in the fifth when Gerardo Parra homered with A.J. Pollock on base. The Diamondbacks added two runs in the ninth when Miguel Montero homered off Frank Francisco with Paul Goldschmidt on base, reaching on an error by first baseman Adam Dunn.

A Mother's Day crowd of 18,612 at U.S. Cellular Field saw the Sox manage only four hits in the game. Arizona relievers Joe Thatcher, Evan Marshall, Brad Ziegler and Oliver Perez shut out the Sox in the last three innings.

White Sox' issues not insurmountable

By Chris Rongey / Daily Herald

They call it the "O' Sixty-Game Mark" -- and we're two-thirds of the way there.

It's a baseball axiom suggesting you don't really know what kind of team you have until after about 60 games.

I'm not sure how accurate that really is, but I'm certain it doesn't apply equally to every team every year. The amount of early-season injuries, for example, might force a club to wait another 20 games before it can precisely make that determination.

The reason we even talk about those magical 60 games is so we can start to think about whether a given organization will be a seller, a buyer or do nothing before the July 31 trading deadline.

Still, we're not there yet, and it's far too early to start talking trades. But we can examine a few of the White Sox' needs at this point, and they're not necessarily about the acquisition of new personnel:

Starters must go deeper:

The White Sox are one of the bottom five teams in baseball in innings pitched per games started.

While the bullpen has improved dramatically since the initial couple of weeks -- they've actually been one of the best bullpens in baseball since the last week of April -- the burden of work they've been asked to handle can't be sustained for the entire campaign.

Even if the bullpen remains as strong as it has been these last 2½ weeks, the innings and appearances will take a toll and the relievers will be worn out by mid-August.

By the way, let me take this time to praise Hector Noesi, who started this season as a reliever and has been asked to stretch out to take a starter's innings. On Sunday, Noesi gave the White Sox 6 innings in a quality start.

They'll need much more of that from now on.

Baserunning mistakes:

Just last week, Sox runners were picked off four times, and on two separate occasions a runner at second has been thrown out at third on grounder to the shortstop (neither were force plays). A big-leaguer shouldn't have to be told to stay put at second on a groundball hit in front of him.

It hasn't cost the White Sox that often considering they've been able to cover the mistakes with a lot of runs, but it's a habit that eventually might kill them.

Relentless offense must continue:

Just in case the two items above don't improve, a healthy serving of runs every night wouldn't hurt.

I disagreed with a caller Saturday who said that the White Sox don't need Adam Dunn now because the rest of the lineup is doing so well.

No, they do. Because as good as Alexei Ramirez, Jose Abreu, Tyler Flowers and Dayan Viciedo have been hitting this year, it's unrealistic to expect them all to perform at the same level all season.

Get healthy and stay there:

Chris Sale might be back during the Yankees series at home, and Adam Eaton should return during this road trip. And like Conor Gillaspie and Gordon Beckham, once they're back they need to stick around awhile.

Ventura's frustration shows after White Sox loss

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald

Nobody affiliated with the White Sox wants to go through another miserable season like last year, and Robin Ventura's name is at or near the top of that list.

So, after the Sox looked very 2013-ish in a 5-1 loss to the Diamondbacks in front of 18,6212 bored fans Sunday at U.S. Cellular Field, Ventura didn't brush it off or talk about going out and getting them tomorrow.

Nope. He got mad. Uncharacteristically mad.

Ventura gave a quick cap tip to Arizona starter Chase Anderson, who allowed 1 run on 2 hits over 5½ innings in his major-league debut, and then shifted the focus to his players.

"(Anderson) threw well, but it was pretty uninspired by us all the way through," said Ventura, who was a late arrival Sunday after missing Saturday's 4-3 loss to be at his daughter's Oklahoma State graduation. "It started from the first play of the game and continued on, and it stunk, pretty much the whole thing."

Actually, Ventura gave another quick cap tip to White Sox starter Hector Noesi, who gave up 3 runs on 8 hits over 6 innings while throwing a career-high 117 pitches, then quickly wrapped up his postgame media session.

"Hector pitched a heck of a game to at least give us a chance," Ventura said. "Everything else stunk. That's pretty much it. That sum it up for you? That's what it was."

Even at 19-20, the White Sox have seemingly had more ups than downs over the first quarter of the season, especially considering last year's 99 losses.

But they obviously are not meeting Ventura's expectations, especially all of the recent ragged baserunning and poor defensive play in the outfield.

After Moises Sierra and Dayan Viciedo both made gaffes in right field Saturday night, center fielder Alejandro De Aza completely misjudged Gerardo Parra's flyball leading off the game Sunday.

De Aza broke in, broke back, bumbled, stumbled and the next thing you know Parra was standing on third base with a triple that easily could have been scored an error. That set the tone for a sleepy effort, and sparked a rare Ventura tantrum.

"I don't know," Ventura said when asked why the Sox played such a poor all-around game. "They were just flat, couldn't get anything going. Something is going to happen. I don't know what yet, but something."

Lineup changes?

"Nah ... maybe," Ventura said. "Just in the way you treat them and everything else."

Looking a lot like last season's offense -- the American League's worst -- the Sox scratched out just 4 hits and struck out nine times.

"You know, (Noesi) gave us a chance," Ventura said. "He was around the zone, threw strikes, all that. It's too bad for him. He pitched a good game and nobody else showed up."

Tyler Flowers said the White Sox tried to play a competitive game.

"I don't think it's lack of effort," he said. "We did seem a little, I guess lethargic could be the word. I couldn't tell, I really don't know."

"The guy (Anderson) did a good job shutting us down. I guess next time we need to pick up a little more rah-rah or something; that ought to keep everybody motivated and going. But again we didn't quit on that game or anything. That guy did better than we did."

Paul Konerko, who pinch hit in the ninth inning, agreed with Flowers.

"(Anderson) threw well," Konerko said. "Two weeks ago, Scott Carroll came up and threw a great game against Tampa Bay, and we didn't sit and say Tampa Bay (was bad), We said that he was really good."

"So that happens. Guys make good pitches, a lot of these guys make good pitches. I didn't face (Anderson), so I don't know, but he looked good."

"He was hitting his spots. A good pitch is a good pitch. It doesn't matter who it comes from or if it's his first start or whatever. He threw the ball great. Congratulations to him on a great first day. It was a big day for him, I'm sure, so congrats to him. We'll just move on."

Eaton eager to get back in White Sox lineup

By Scot Gregor / Daily Herald

Another key White Sox player is on the comeback trail.

A day after ailing ace starter Chris Sale breezed through a 60-pitch simulated game, center fielder Adam Eaton said his strained right hamstring has responded positively to three days of complete rest followed by intensive treatment.

Eaton said he will be ready to come off the disabled list Sunday and play at Houston.

"It felt good today, it really did," Eaton said after going through a morning workout. "I'd say 95 or 98 percent effort. We are right where we want to be. I'm no doctor, but I would say that it's definitely on its way. Talking to (trainer) Herm (Schneider) and talking to the guys, the feeling that I have within the legs is normal."

Eaton is tentatively scheduled to play three rehab games with Class AAA Charlotte beginning Thursday before coming off the DL.

The Sox have missed Eaton's bat in the leadoff spot, and they've really missed his outfield defense.

"Really excited to see him back," bench coach Mark Parent said. "He adds a lot to our lineup, defensively and offensively and running the bases, just overall energy in the game. He's obviously had a really good year, so we want to continue his progress."

Gordon Beckham, Alejandro De Aza and Marcus Semien have hit first since Eaton went down, but they are more effective lower in the order.

"De Aza never really was comfortable doing it before," Parent said. "And then we tried Beckham there, he's ... even though you're only leading off one time it makes certain people uncomfortable. Adam, he just loves that spot, and we like him in that spot."

Parent sounds off:

On the subject of poor baserunning, which the White Sox were guilty of all last week, bench coach Mark Parent said it's basically common sense.

"It seems like when we're down we have guys, just like last year, trying to do too much instead of just do what you're supposed to do," Parent said. "Let the scoreboard dictate. We don't need to give up outs on the bases. It's one base at a time."

Noesi comes through:

Even though he got only 1 run of support Sunday, Hector Noesi fared pretty well in his third start for the White Sox in place of the injured Chris Sale.

Noesi tried to keep the Sox in the game while allowing 3 runs on 8 hits in 6 innings.

"Well, I love to start," said Noesi, a reliever with Texas at the start of the season before being released. "I think I'm getting better every day. The changeup, slider, everything was working today."

Anderson, Diamondbacks beat White Sox 5-1

Associated Press

CHICAGO -- Chase Anderson needed one pitch to remind himself it was still the same game he's been playing all his life. After that, his major league debut became thoroughly enjoyable. Anderson pitched impressively into the sixth inning, Gerardo Parra and Miguel Montero homered, and the Arizona Diamondbacks beat the Chicago White Sox 5-1.

Recalled Tuesday from Double-A Mobile, Anderson (1-0) hadn't seen any action until getting the start Sunday. He retired 12 consecutive batters at one point and yielded one run and only two hits in 5 1/3 innings while striking out six, helping Arizona win for the fourth time in five games and secure its third consecutive series for the first time since June 2012.

Anderson, 26, was Arizona's ninth-round selection in the 2009 draft and made it to Triple-A last season before going back to Double-A this year, where he was 4-2 with an 0.69 ERA.

"After I threw the first pitches, I was like, OK, this is the same game and it calmed me down right there," Anderson said. "I just tried to attack the hitters. It was fun."

Arizona manager Kirk Gibson was also full of praise for Anderson.

"He had all his pitches working," Gibson said. "He just hit his spots."

Anderson wasn't the only positive development for Arizona, which improved to 6-3 in May after a dreadful 9-19 in April.

Brad Ziegler threw a perfect eighth to extend his scoreless-outings streak to 18 over 17 1/3 innings.

Anderson was backed by homers from Parra and Montero. Parra's fifth-inning drive off Hector Noesi (0-3) gave Arizona a 3-0 lead, and Montero's with one out in the ninth off Frank Francisco pushed the Diamondbacks' advantage to 5-1.

Parra also started the game with a triple before scoring, extending his streak of getting on base to 18 games. Montero reached five times with two hits, two walks and getting hit by a pitch.

"We knew we were a better team than what we showed," Montero said.

During a brief postgame session with reporters, White Sox manager Robin Ventura, on the other hand, blasted his team.

"(Anderson) threw well but it was pretty uninspired by us all the way through," Ventura said. "It started from the first play of the game and continued on and it stunk, pretty much the whole thing. Hector pitched a heck of a game to at least give us a chance, everything else stunk."

Noesi was solid but needed more help, going six innings and allowing three runs and eight hits while throwing 117 pitches. The White Sox were also limited to just four hits.

"There is a lot of guys you've never seen before that come out there, and see ball, hit ball. You just recognize pitches. After you see it once, you really don't have an excuse," White Sox catcher [Tyler Flowers](#) said. "Tip your hat a little bit. (Anderson) made some pitches, hit some spots, and when you hit spots and change speeds it's pretty challenging."

Noesi also fell behind 1-0 in the first thanks in part to shaky defense, which Ventura referenced.

Parra led off the game with what appeared to be a routine fly to center, but [Alejandro De Aza](#) misjudged it and stumbled before missing the ball, allowing Parra to get to third on what was ruled a triple. [Martin Prado](#)'s sharp single to right then drove in Parra to give the Diamondbacks an early lead.

"I don't know. They were just flat, couldn't get anything going," Ventura said. "Something is going to happen. I don't know what yet, but something."

Game notes

Gibson appreciates how baseball recognizes Mother's Day. Gibson's sister-in-law, Lori Sklarski, died of breast cancer in 2011. He wears a white wristband with the numbers 11-11 written on it in honor of Sklarski's birthday. ... White Sox LHP [Chris Sale](#) (left arm) will throw again Thursday. Chicago hasn't decided whether it will be a bullpen session, simulated game or rehab assignment. ... White Sox bench coach Mark Parent said OF [Adam Eaton](#) (strained right hamstring) will begin a rehab assignment later this week with Triple-A Charlotte and then would "probably" return to the White Sox on Sunday in Houston. Eaton was placed on the disabled list May 3. ... Ventura returned to the White Sox for Sunday's game after attending his daughter Rachel's graduation Saturday from Oklahoma State.

Hector Noesi's outing 'wasn't good enough' for White Sox

By Vinnie Duber / CSN Chicago

Hector Noesi pitched what might have been his best outing as a White Sox starter so far this season.

But as his catcher said after the game, it wasn't good enough.

Noesi was hardly the reason the Sox fell, 5-1, to the D-backs on Sunday. Opposing pitcher Chase Anderson, making his major league debut, was excellent for Arizona, all but silencing the Sox offense. Noesi's line was a pretty good one, as the righty allowed three runs on eight hits and three walks in six innings. He repeatedly worked out of jams and said he felt good after throwing a career-high 117 pitches.

It was likely Noesi's finest start since joining the Sox, though he's now 0-2 in three starts with the South Siders and 0-3 on the season as a whole.

"You know, he gave us a chance," Sox manager Robin Ventura said. "He was around the zone, threw strikes, all that. It's too bad for him. He pitched a good game, and nobody else showed up."

That's not to say Noesi was unhittable — as Anderson often seemed to be. He allowed a lot of hits, and one in particular was pretty damaging: a fifth-inning, two-run homer off the bat of Gerardo Parra. But other than that, by all those evaluating the start, it was a solid outing.

"He was pretty good," Flowers said. "With the exception of a fastball that ended up over the middle and a little bad luck to start the game out, he did a good job of not letting that turn into more than one run at that point, other than that just the pitch to Parra, I thought he did a pretty good job using his changeup and mixing the fastballs in and out. All in all, it wasn't good enough (to get a win), but he did very well."

"Everything was working today," Noesi said. "Just one pitch that I missed up."

White Sox bats can't solve D-Backs' rookie Anderson in loss

By Vinnie Duber / CSN Chicago

Robin Ventura was pretty blunt in his assessment of Sunday's White Sox loss:

"It stunk."

The manager wasn't too happy with the effort his team showed in a 5-1 defeat Sunday at U.S. Cellular Field, and perhaps he had good reason. The Sox offense did practically nothing, getting shut down by D-backs starting pitcher Chase Anderson, who was making his major league debut.

Here's a stat that says it all: In only one inning did the Sox send more than three hitters to the plate.

"(Anderson) threw well, but it was pretty uninspired by us all the way through," Ventura said after the game. "It started from the first play of the game and continued on, and it stunk, pretty much the whole thing. (Sox starter) Hector (Noesi) pitched a heck of a game to at least give us a chance, everything else stunk."

There's no doubting the lifelessness of the Sox bats Sunday, but Ventura might have placed a little too much of the blame on his team's shoulders. After all, Anderson was excellent. The rookie tossed 5 1/3 innings, facing the minimum until a sixth-inning home run by Moises Sierra, which accounted for the only Sox run. Tyler Flowers followed the long ball with a walk to chase Anderson, despite the hurler's low pitch count of 74.

Still, Anderson's outing was terrific.

"He had good command, he got ahead of guys, good change up, used it effectively," Flowers said. "It seemed like his change up was an effective pitch for him in fastball counts. He did a good job mixing it up, mixing in the occasional breaking ball."

Adding insult to the Sox one-run, four-hit day was what happened back on April 15, when Anderson, then pitching with Double-A Mobile, was a loser against the Sox Double-A affiliate in Birmingham. Anderson pitched well that day, allowing just one earned run, but he took the loss. Not so much against the Barons' big league counterparts.

When asked how the Sox could have such a poor offensive showing, Paul Konerko offered some perspective, likening Anderson's performance to the one of Sox pitcher Scott Carroll exactly two weeks ago. Carroll shut down the Tampa Bay Rays that day in his major league debut.

"(Anderson) threw well," the captain said. "A week ago or two weeks ago, Scott Carroll came up and threw a great game against Tampa Bay, and we didn't sit and say Tampa Bay sucked, we said that he was really good. So that happens. Guys make good pitches, a lot of these guys make good pitches. I didn't face him so I don't know, but he looked good. I was watching him on TV. He was hitting his spots. A good pitch is a good pitch. It doesn't matter who it comes from or if it's his first start or whatever. He threw the ball great. Congratulations to him on a great first day. It was a big day for him, I'm sure, so congrats to him. We'll just move on."

Flowers agreed that the evaluation of the team not trying — Ventura said nobody showed up aside from Noesi — wasn't necessarily accurate.

"I don't think it's lack of effort," Flowers said. "We did seem a little, I guess lethargic could be the word. I couldn't tell, I really don't know. The guy did a good job shutting us down. I guess next time we need to pick up a little more 'rah-rah' or something, that ought to keep everybody motivated and going. But again, we didn't quit on that game or anything. That guy did better than we did."

Still, Ventura wasn't pleased, and he made it sound like there would be ramifications other than just a game in the loss column.

"They were just flat, couldn't get anything going," he said. "Something is going to happen. I don't know what yet but something."

White Sox notes: Adam Eaton nears return to top of lineup

By Vinnie Duber / CSN Chicago

It's lonely at the top of the White Sox batting order.

Or at least it has been ever since leadoff man Adam Eaton went to the disabled list with a strained right hamstring on May 3.

But Eaton's return to the team might be right around the corner, according to Sox coach Mark Parent, and that could be a huge boost for the club.

"He's going to go out to Oakland with us for a couple days, and then he's going to head off to (Triple-A) Charlotte for a couple (of rehab games) and then probably join us the last day in Houston," Parent, who was filling in for manager Robin Ventura on pregame media duties, said before Sunday's series finale against the Diamondbacks. "Really excited to see him back. He adds a lot to our lineup, defensively and offensively and running the bases. Just overall energy in the game. He's obviously had a really good year so we want to continue his progress."

The last day in Houston is Sunday, May 18, the third of three games against the Astros. It means another week without Eaton leading things off, and despite a solid stretch that has seen the Sox win five of their last seven games, they could use Eaton back. While runs haven't necessarily been too hard to come by, the guys plugged into the No. 1 spot haven't quite had the same impact Eaton has, according to Parent.

"That's one of the things, when he went down, is (Alejandro) De Aza never really was comfortable doing it before. And then we tried (Gordon) Beckham there. Even though you're only leading off one time it makes certain people uncomfortable," Parent said. "Adam, he just loves that spot, and we like him in that spot."

The morning after, Sale still feels good

A day after throwing a simulated game at U.S. Cellular Field, injured pitcher Chris Sale still feels good, according to White Sox coach Mark Parent.

"He's doing good. He's happy," Parent said. "He feels brand new, he feels really good. We're excited to see him back, as well. ... He's a huge commodity for us, for our future, and we've got to make sure he's healthy."

The Sox hope to get Sale back soon, but the pitcher and the team have stressed it's about him getting healthy so things like this don't happen again.

His next scheduled throw day is Thursday. The team has yet to decide whether it will be a bullpen session or a rehab appearance.

Sox get big league scouting help from Double-A

Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Chase Anderson makes his major league debut Sunday against the White Sox, and while there's quite a bit of unknown, the Sox can lean on their Double-A affiliate, the Birmingham Barons, for some scouting assistance.

Anderson made a start against Birmingham earlier this season for Arizona's Double-A affiliate in Mobile. Anderson took the loss in that game, allowing two runs (one earned) on five hits and a walk over six innings. He struck out a season-high eight hitters in that game.

"Our Double-A team saw him this year, so we have a little bit of tape and a little bit of a scouting report on him," Sox coach Mark Parent said before Sunday's game. "He comes right after guys — fastballs and changeups. See what happens."

Anderson's Double-A numbers were very good. He posted a 0.69 ERA in 39 innings over six starts.

Marcus Semien looking forward to special Mother's Day

By Vinnie Duber / CSN Chicago

Marcus Semien sat at his locker in the White Sox clubhouse before Sunday's series finale against the Diamondbacks getting a new batch of bats ready.

It's a normal exercise for big leaguers, meticulously taping and getting a feel for a new set of sticks. But Sunday, things were a little different for Semien, as the bats he was breaking in were pink. Bright pink.

It's become an annual baseball tradition, players swinging pink bats on Mother's Day. Unfortunately, though, a tradition that's been around much longer in the game is the lifestyle, one that typically keeps mothers and sons separated on the holiday celebrating their relationship.

Thankfully for Semien, Mother's Day 2014 will be different. After Sunday's game, the Sox head to Oakland for a three-game set with the A's. It means Semien gets to go home to the Bay Area, and it means Sunday night he'll get to spend at least part of Mother's Day with his mom.

"It's usually hard. Being a baseball player, you usually don't see your mom on Mother's Day unless she comes to see you," Semien said. "But it's a blessing to be able to go home."

Semien will be playing his first games in the Bay Area as a big leaguer this week, something he's truly excited about.

"Just seeing a lot of friends and family and being able to play in front of them," he said. "It's a dream come true to be in the big leagues, so it will be nice to share that with them."

Semien's Bay Area baseball roots run deep. He grew up a Giants fan but attended plenty of games at the Coliseum, too — "closer to home and a little easier to go to, little cheaper tickets" — plus he played high school ball in Berkeley and spent his college career at the University of California-Berkeley.

It's the fusing of two aspects, college ball and the major leagues, that gave Semien one of his best memories.

"When I was in college, we went to the College World Series and got honored at an A's game," he said. "Our manager threw out the first pitch, but we were all out on the field during that at the Coliseum. So that was a pretty cool moment.

"It's where you want to be, it's the stage you want to be on," he said of standing on a major league field. "Just from that perspective, it was about three, four years ago, but I was thinking, 'That's where I want to be one day.'"

This week, he'll get to experience just that, and his family and friends will be on hand to experience it with him.
