

Indians' offense stuck in familiar funk

By Jordan Bastian / MLB.com | @MLBastian | 1:40 AM ET + 2 COMMENTS

OAKLAND -- Michael Brantley flexed his arms in frustration, let out a quick shout and then tossed his bat away in disgust. The Indians left fielder has been one of the exceptions to Cleveland's offensive woes this season, but even Brantley is not immune from an occasional missed chance.

Brantley's boiling point came in the eighth inning of a 5-1 loss to the A's on Saturday, when he swung through a 92-mph fastball from Drew Pomeranz, striking out and stranding a pair of baserunners. It was one of only a handful of scoring chances on the night for a Cleveland club that has been coming up short in the batter's box too often.

In July, the Indians posted a .683 OPS, which ranked 13th in the American League. On the season, Cleveland has hit .226 with a .692 OPS with runners in scoring position and a jaw-dropping .128 with a .382 OPS with the bases loaded. Against Oakland, the chances were few, as the Tribe ended only 0-for-2 with runners in scoring position.

Three months are in the books. It is what comes next that matters most now.

"You can use August and September to win some ballgames," Indians utility man Lonnie Chisenhall said. "I know we're not statistically out of it, so you win as many as you can, finish the season with a good taste in your mouth. That's kind of what you want to do."

That's really all the Indians can do.

Runs have been at a premium for most of the year -- especially across June and July -- and the Indians just parted ways with two veteran hitters by trading David Murphy (Angels) and Brandon Moss (Cardinals). That has opened the door for players like Chisenhall (a former third baseman now trying his hand as an outfielder) and Jerry Sands (a career journeyman who has flashed power potential) to get more at-bats down the stretch.

Following his Trade Deadline deals, Indians general manager Chris Antonetti said offensive improvement would have to come from the inside for the remainder of this season. At the end of the year, Cleveland will then evaluate its needs and head into the winter in search of ways to breathe life into its lineup.

Indians manager Terry Francona does not want to look too far ahead, though.

"I don't ever want to get lost that every time we play a game, we need to try to win," Francona said. "Certainly, moving forward, we do want to evaluate who we think can help us win going forward. That's important. But, every game, you play to win and the evaluation can come later. We never want to lose sight of that."

During Saturday's defeat, Cleveland took on rookie right-hander Aaron Brooks, who made his A's debut after being acquired in the trade that sent Ben Zobrist to Kansas City. Brooks handcuffed the run-starved Tribe over 7 1/3 innings, limiting the Indians to one run on a Chisenhall home run to center field in the fifth inning. Chisenhall now has four hits in his past two games.

"When he gets balls he can handle, he has that ability," Francona said. "He can be a good hitter."

Tribe falls to A's as bats can't break through

By Jordan Bastian and Jane Lee / MLB.com | 2:42 AM ET + 17 COMMENTS

OAKLAND -- Aaron Brooks dazzled in his A's debut, holding the Indians to one run across 7 1/3 innings to help his new club snap a three-game losing streak with a 5-1 victory at the Coliseum on Saturday night.

Lonnie Chisenhall hit Brooks' lone mistake for a solo home run in the fifth inning. The right-hander, acquired from Kansas City this week in the Ben Zobrist trade, allowed just four other hits, striking out five and walking none for his first career win.

"What a night for him," catcher Stephen Vogt said. "He pitched his tail off. Any time you come into a new team, you want to make your first appearance count, and he did that and then some. He took a good lineup over there and shut them down tonight."

Indians starter Cody Anderson -- pitching in front of roughly 100 family and friends from his hometown of Quincy, Calif. -- took the loss after yielding four runs (three earned) in 6 2/3 innings. He gave up six hits, including Marcus Semien's solo shot to left field in the seventh.

Anderson joked that Quincy "might've shut down" on Saturday.

"It was fun. It was almost like making a debut again," Anderson said. "There were a lot of people that are from northern Bay Area, from my hometown, family. It was definitely exciting to get to pitch in front of them."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Breaking through: After Cleveland's lineup was silenced for the first four innings, Chisenhall got the Tribe on the board with his fifth home run of the year. Chisenhall (recalled from Triple-A on Thursday) drilled a 3-2 offering from Brooks to center field for a solo shot, pulling the game into a 1-1 tie. The blast came one game after Chisenhall had a three-hit showing. More >

"Just hitting the ball hard is encouraging," Chisenhall said. "I felt I took some healthy swings today. I'm swinging at good pitches and I took some borderline pitches, which I was happy with. I'm moving in the right direction."

Don't run on Lon: Chisenhall, who is getting a trial run as an outfielder after a career spent mostly as a third baseman, showed off his arm in right field in the fifth inning. Eric Sogard singled to right and Max Muncy tried to score from second on the play. Chisenhall gloved the roller and came up firing, sending a pinpoint throw to the plate to nab Muncy. It was Chisenhall's first career outfield assist.

"It looked like he had been out there for a while," Indians manager Terry Francona said of Chisenhall. "He came in and threw that ball better than most right fielders. That was a really nice play."

Gift-wrapped: The A's sent one right back to Chisenhall courtesy of a Sam Fuld single. This time, Semien easily made it home from second base, and Sogard was right behind him after cutoff man Carlos Santana made an errant throw to third, giving an offensively starved A's team an extra run.

"He did the right play," said Francona, referring to Santana. "We had him out at third. That was the right play. He just didn't move his feet and, because of that, the ball sailed on him."

Long gone: After mustering just three hits total in the first two games of this series, the A's collected eight in the third matchup. Semien's seventh-inning solo shot to left field made the most noise, as the shortstop put a career-long streak of 17 games without an RBI to rest. It was Semien's ninth home run of the season.

"We had huge, clutch hits," Vogt said. "Everybody contributed tonight to the win. It was a huge, huge team win for us, especially after the last couple games and last week really. This week's over. We kind of talked about that today. It's August 1, trade deadline's over, now we go. This is a good team in this clubhouse, and that was a great win for us tonight to come out and make a push these last two months. Let's have some fun."

QUOTABLE

"I think there were 14, not including the stadium, making me feel like a family." -- Brooks, on friends and family members in attendance

Brooks leaves to an ovation

Brooks leaves to an ovation

8/1/15: Following a fly out in the 8th inning, Aaron Brooks exits the game and receives a great ovation after his first start with the A's

REPLAY REVIEW

In the eighth inning, Fuld singled and then stole second base. Francona was quick to challenge the bang-bang play on the steal attempt, though. After an replay review lasting one minute and 38 seconds, the safe ruling on the stolen base was confirmed by the crew in New York.

WHAT'S NEXT

Indians: The Tribe will hand the ball to righty Trevor Bauer (8-8, 4.13 ERA) at 4:05 p.m. ET for the finale of this four-game road set by the Bay. Bauer has gone 5-3 with a 2.47 ERA in nine road starts this season and is coming off a complete game against the Royals. In that Tuesday start, though, he took a loss despite allowing two runs in nine innings.

A's: Sonny Gray, who is coming off his second shutout of the season -- a three-hit gem against the Dodgers -- will be back on the mound at 1:05 p.m. PT Sunday at the Coliseum. The right-hander's other shutout came against the Indians, who managed just two hits against him July 12 in Cleveland.

Kipnis, dealing with sore shoulder, back at DH

By Jordan Bastian / MLB.com | August 1st, 2015 + 0 COMMENTS

OAKLAND -- For the third time in the past five games, Indians second baseman Jason Kipnis was slotted into the lineup as the designated hitter in the Indians' 5-1 loss on Friday. Manager Terry Francona noted that Kipnis, who went 0-for-4, has recently dealt with soreness in his right shoulder.

Francona was quick to add that the issue was not serious.

"His throwing shoulder is just a little bit sore," Francona said. "I don't think it's anything we need to worry about, but I just would rather stay out ahead of it. It doesn't hurt him one lick hitting, so I'll just let him DH another night. I don't think that'll hurt him."

Francona said the only drawback was that utility man Jerry Sands wound up on the bench for another game. The Indians want to take a look at Sands, who was called up from Triple-A Columbus on Friday. Besides DH, Sands plays right field and first base, but those spots were occupied by Lonnie Chisenhall and Carlos Santana, respectively, for Saturday's game. Giovanny Urshela got the start at second base.

Francona was hopeful that Kipnis would return to second base on Sunday.

"Hopefully he'll bounce back tomorrow and be OK," Francona said. "It just kind of crept back up, so I just want to make sure we stay ahead of it."

Worth noting

- Veteran outfielder Nick Swisher, on the 15-day disabled list due to knee issues, has been rehabbing with Low Class A Lake County and is set to move up to Triple-A Columbus on Tuesday. The Indians hope Swisher can play right field, and not only serve as a DH, when he returns.

"That's what our whole goal was for this," Francona said. "We want him to be a baseball player. That was part of the reason of why we tried to not take the shortcut on this. He hasn't really been hitting that much, so he hasn't been pushed on the bases, but he's kind of answered everything that's been thrown at him."

- Heading into Saturday's action, the Indians had minus-four Defense Runs Saved this season. That is a drastic improvement over last year, when Cleveland was last in the Majors with minus-75 DRS. The Tribe's defense has also received a lift since shortstop Francisco Lindor (two DRS) and third baseman Giovanny Urshela (one DRS) were called up from Triple-A in June.

"That needs to stay, or get better," Francona said of the improved defense. "It's just so hard to win the other way. I've said it a lot, it's not that you can't win, but, man, it's harder. ... It's something we really have been aware of and we're trying to continue to make it better."

Urshela's fine catch starts DP

Urshela's fine catch starts DP

7/30/15: Giovanny Urshela makes a fine over-the-shoulder catch and throws back to first to double off Brett Lawrie

- Left-hander TJ House remains on the Minor League disabled list due to a left shoulder issue and is back in Arizona rehabbing his arm at Cleveland's complex.

- The Indians are hopeful outfielder Tyler Naquin (Minor League DL due to concussion symptoms) will be able to be activated when he's eligible to come off the DL.

- Recently acquired outfielder Abraham Almonte is scheduled to report to Triple-A Columbus on Monday. The switch-hitting outfielder came to Cleveland from the Padres in the Friday trade that shipped lefty Marc Rzepczynski to San Diego.

Bauer looks to lock down series win vs. A's

By Trevor Hass / MLB.com | 12:27 AM ET + 1 COMMENT

Last time he pitched, Sonny Gray shut out the Dodgers in a 2-0 A's win on Tuesday. His next start is Sunday, when the A's host the Indians in the final game of a four-game series.

Gray (11-4, 2.16) is 7-2 with a 1.79 ERA when pitching on four days' rest, which he'll do against Cleveland. He has a 5-1 record and 0.92 ERA in seven starts during the day. The right-hander tossed a two-hit shutout in his only start against Cleveland this season. Right-hander Trevor Bauer (8-8, 4.13) will pitch for the Indians, fresh off the first complete game of his career. Despite allowing just two earned runs on five hits, Bauer was charged with the loss. He became the first Indians pitcher to lose a complete game at home since Justin Masterson in 2009.

Things to know about this game

- Bauer is 5-3 with a 2.47 ERA in nine road starts this season -- holding opponents to a .181 average -- compared to 3-5 with a 5.59 ERA in 11 starts at home.
- Before the All-Star break, Bauer went 8-5 with a 3.76 ERA. In three starts since, he's 0-3 with a 6.16 ERA.
- Gray had a winning record in April, May, June and July and will look to start August off with a win.

**Month in review: July
by Jordan Bastian**

Like it or not, the Indians have now entered into a two-month evaluation period. Things have not as planned or expected — just ask the people who planned Sports Illustrated's season preview during the spring — and now Cleveland has to begin thinking about its future.

In the final days of July, which resulted in a .500 record for the Tribe, the Indians dealt away Brandon Moss (Cardinals), David Murphy (Angels) and Marc Rzepczynski (Padres). That sheds some potential salary for 2016, and it also opens the door for the Indians to test out some of its internal options down the stretch this year.

"We want to make sure that we learn something about ourselves in the second half," Indians GM Chris Antonetti said on Thursday. "We have to look at it as an opportunity for us to go into the offseason and next year in a better position."

The pitching continued to rank as one of the American League's best groups throughout July, and the foundation in place for the rotation is what should provide some optimism about Cleveland's ability to make this a quick turnaround. That said, this team needs offense in a bad way. July was a perfect example. While the pitchers rated as arguably the best staff in the AL, the offense was in the cellar, making it hard to scratch out wins.

The lineup also had a solid core group, but there will be holes to fill this coming winter.

<p>First, the Indians need to fight through the final two months of this year.</p> <p>Here is a look back at the month that was for the Tribe...</p> <p>Overall: 13-13 Record at home: 5-9 Record on road: 8-4</p> <p>Offense (AL rank)</p> <p>.245 AVG (12) .311 OBP (11) .371 SLG (14) .683 OPS (13) 93 R (12) 211 H (10) 18 HR (t-13) 68 XBH (12) 90 RBI (12) 15 SB (2) 76 BB (4) 187 K (9) 320 TB (13) 2.6 WAR (10)</p> <p>Pitching (AL rank)</p> <p>13 wins (5) 3.52 ERA (4) 3.64 rot. ERA (5) 3.12 rel. ERA (6) 9 saves (t-1)</p>	<p>233 IP (5) 23 HR (t-6) 53 BB (2) 217 K (2) .231 AVG (1) 1.08 WHIP (1) 3.26 FIP (1) 4.1 WAR (2)</p> <p>Notes: This was one of the best overall pitching months in franchise history. It's the first time that Cleveland had 215-plus strikeouts with no more than 55 walks in a single month. If you tweak the criteria to 200-plus strikeouts and no more than 60 walks, it's happened three times: July 2015, July 2014 and September 2014. This was also the first month a Cleveland staff had a 1.08 WHIP or better since May 1968 (0.93).</p> <p>Player of the Month: OF Michael Brantley Stats: .299/.389/.495/.884, 4 HR, 7 2B, 18 RBI, 14 BB, 8 K, 12 R, 26 games</p> <p>Previous winners: Brantley (April), 2B Jason Kipnis (May, June)</p> <p>Notes: Brantley became the first Indians batter to have at least 18 RBI and 14 walks with no more than eight strikeouts since August 2000, when Kenny Lofton achieved the feat.</p> <p>Pitcher of the Month: RHP Danny Salazar Stats: 2-3, 2.65 ERA, 34 IP, 35 K, 9 BB, .175 AVG, 0.88 WHIP, 5 starts</p>	<p>Notes: Salazar joins teammate Corey Kluber, along with Gaylord Perry, Sam McDowell, Luis Tiant, Herb Score and Bob Feller as the only pitchers in team history to have a month with at least 34 innings and 35 strikeouts, plus an opponents' average of .175 or lower. Kluber accomplished the feat in July '14. Before that, Perry was the last to do it for Cleveland (June 1974).</p> <p>Previous winners: RHP Trevor Bauer (April), Kluber (May), Salazar (June)</p> <p>Reliever of the Month: RHP Bryan Shaw Stats: 1.00 ERA, 9 IP, 7 K, 1 BB, .167 AVG, 0.67 WHIP, 9 games</p> <p>Previous winners: LHP Nick Hagadone (April), RHP Cody Allen (May), RHP Zach McAllister (June)</p> <p>Notes: Shaw now has three months in his Cleveland career with no more than one walk, at least nine appearances and an ERA of 1.00 or better. While that has been done 17 times in team history, only Paul Assenmacher also did it three times (once each in the 1996-98 seasons).</p> <p>Game of the Month (hitter): Brantley July 22 at Brewers: 4-for-5, 1 HR, 1 2B, 2 R, 4 RBI, 8 TB</p>
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Previous winners: OF Brandon Moss (April 24), Kipnis (May 3), 1B Carlos Santana (June 16)

Game of the Month (pitcher): RHP Carlos Carrasco
July 1 at Rays: 8.2 IP, 1 H, 1 R/ER, 2 BB, 13 K, 89 Game Score

Previous winners: Bauer (April 9), Kluber (May 13), RHP Cody Anderson (June 21)

Minor League standouts for July

Triple-A Columbus

Player of the Month: 1B/OF Jerry Sands
Stats: .333/.465/.603/1.063, 5 HR, 6 2B, 20 RBI, 18 BB, 19 R, 25 games

Previous winners: OF Tyler Holt (April), OF James Ramsey (May), 1B Jesus Aguilar (June)

Pitcher of the Month: RHP Shawn Armstrong
Stats: 1.86 ERA, 9.2 IP, 15 K, 3 BB, .216 AVG, 1.14 WHIP, 2 saves, 10 games

Previous winners: LHP Bruce Chen (April), RHP C.C. Lee (May), Armstrong (June)

Double-A Akron

Player of the Month: OF Bryson Myles

Stats: .316/.398/.487/.885, 2 HR, 8 XBH, 15 RBI, 10 BB, 10 R, 5 SB, 22 games

Previous winners: OF Ollie Linton (April), SS Erik Gonzalez (May), OF Anthony Gallas (June)

Pitcher of the Month: RHP Jeff Johnson
Stats: 0.00 ERA, 9 IP, 10 K, 4 BB, .103 AVG, 0.78 WHIP, 6 saves, 9 starts

Previous winners: RHP Cody Anderson (April), RHP Josh Martin (May), RHP Mike Clevinger (June)

Class A (high) Lynchburg

Player of the Month: OF Clint Frazier
Stats: .363/.442/.559/1.000, 3 HR, 12 XBH, 17 RBI, 16 BB, 21 R, 6 SB, 28 games

Previous winners: OF Brad Zimmer (April, May), 1B Nellie Rodriguez (June)

Pitcher of the Month: RHP D.J. Brown
Stats: 4-0, 2.91 ERA, 34 IP, 22 K, 4 BB, .246 AVG, 1.06 WHIP, 5 starts

Previous winners: RHP Adam Plutko (April, May), RHP Justin Brantley (June)

Class A (low) Lake County

Player of the Month: 3B Taylor Murphy
Stats: .290/.396/.441/.837, 3 HR, 5 2B, 12 RBI, 16 BB, 22 R, 27 games

Previous winners: None (April), 2B Claudio Bautista (May), 1B Bobby Bradley (June)

Pitcher of the Month: RHP Luke Eubank
Stats: 0.96 ERA, 9.1 IP, 14 K, 2 BB, .129 AVG, 0.64 WHIP, 8 games

Previous winners: RHP Dace Kime (April), RHP Nick Pasquale (May), RHP Cameron Hill (June)

Class A (short-season) Mahoning Valley

Player of the Month: 2B Mark Mathias
Stats: .320/.361/.454/.815, 1 HR, 9 XBH, 11 RBI, 7 BB, 11 R, 23 games

Previous winners: OF Anthony Santander (June)

Pitcher of the Month: RHP Cortland Cox
Stats: 1.46 ERA, 12.1 IP, 15 K, 2 BB, .143 AVG, 0.65 WHIP, 5 games

Previous winners: RHP Shao-Ching Chang (June)

Arizona (Rookie) League

Player of the Month: OF Gabriel Mejia
Stats: .354/.463/.418/.881, 5 2B, 10 RBI, 15 BB, 22 SB, 18 R, 22 games

Pitcher of the Month: LHP Sam Hentges
Stats: 3.13 ERA, 23 IP, 31 K, 10 BB, .250 AVG, 1.39 WHIP, 5 games

Oakland Athletics 5, Cleveland Indians 1: A's end Tribe's three-game winning streak

By Rick Eymer, Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — Cody Anderson pitched in front of family and friends for the first time. He enjoyed the experience despite coming out on the losing end.

Anderson tossed 6 2/3 strong innings, but the Cleveland Indians dropped a 5-1 decision to the Oakland Athletics on Saturday night, ending their three-game winning streak.

Indians-A's photo gallery

Lonnie Chisenhall homered for the Indians' lone run and has gone 4 for 11 since his recall from Triple-A Columbus on Thursday.

Anderson (2-3) allowed four runs — three earned — on six hits. He walked two and struck out four.

It was a nice rebound effort after giving up 11 runs on 18 hits over his previous two starts, a span of just a little over eight innings.

"I had a little more downhill tilt to my fastball and I was able to locate it," Anderson said.

Anderson, from Quincy, a small town in northern California closer to Reno than Oakland, was supported by a large, vocal contingent of family and friends.

"It was fun, almost like making my debut again," he said. "It was exciting to pitch in front of them."

Anderson did a good job of limiting the damage early. Billy Butler singled to lead off the second and Ike Davis followed with a double. The A's scored on an infield groundout and that was it. Anderson retired 10 straight before running into trouble in the fifth.

Chisenhall threw out one runner trying to score and made another good throw on the next play that was cut off by Carlos Santana, who threw it away at third, giving the A's an extra run.

"He deserved better," Indians manager Terry Francona said. "He gave up a couple. Lonnie made a nice throw to get the one out and then made another nice throw that was up the baseline a few feet. Carlos made the right play but he didn't move his feet. Cody pitched pretty darn well. He got us pretty deep into the game."

Marcus Semien homered with two outs in the seventh, ending Anderson's day.

"I needed to stay focused and locate instead of trying to rear back and throw," Anderson said.

Oakland newcomer Aaron Brooks (1-0) allowed one run and five hits over seven-plus innings for his first career win. The right-hander, who joined Oakland as part of the June 28 trade that sent Ben Zobrist to Kansas City, struck out five and didn't walk a batter in his first start in more than 14 months.

Brooks retired 17 of the first 19 batters and only allowed two runners past first base. He left to a standing ovation in the seventh after getting Mike Aviles, hitless in his past 24 at bats, to fly out with a runner on first.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians: Manager Terry Francona decided to keep leadoff hitter Jason Kipnis in the designated hitter slot to give him a chance to rest his sore shoulder.

Athletics: LHP Eric O'Flaherty was designated for assignment to make room on the roster for Brooks. O'Flaherty had struggled in his second season with Oakland, going 1-2 with a 5.91 ERA in 25 games. ... Closer Sean Doolittle (shoulder strain) threw 31 pitches during a bullpen session. ... Newly acquired pitcher Felix Dubrout could be activated Sunday.

UP NEXT

Indians: RHP Trevor Bauer (8-8) tries to get back on the winning track after becoming the first Cleveland pitcher since 2009 to throw a complete game at home and lose.

Athletics: RHP Sonny Gray (11-4) pitches the series finale going for his second win against the Indians this season. He blanked Cleveland with a two-hit shutout on July 12.

Ryan Lewis: American League landscape shifted at trade deadline

Salazar gives up 1 hit in 8 innings as Indians win third consecutive game

Even for a trade deadline, the 2015 edition that concluded at 4 p.m. Friday was particularly jam-packed. The American League playoff race, especially, saw a major tilt in favor of three franchises that see an open window in front of them and are diving head-first through it.

Here's the craziest of the craziness that went down this week.

The Toronto Blue Jays, Kansas City Royals and Houston Astros want to win now — right now.

The Blue Jays are marred in a 22-year playoff drought and are looking to end it. The Royals came within one game of winning the World Series last year and are hoping to correct it. The Astros weren't supposed to be in this position in the first place and are trying to take advantage of it. But they're all going for it, all the same.

The Blue Jays in particular made two wave-making deals, sending away many of their top prospects to Colorado and Detroit for Troy Tulowitzki and David Price (a free agent after this season), perhaps the game's best shortstop and one of its best pitchers, respectively. An argument could be made that the two best players moved at the deadline both went north of the border.

The Royals, meanwhile, essentially planted their flag atop the American League Central and declared the race over on July 26. They held a double-digit lead on every other team in the division except the Minnesota Twins (now at eight games entering Saturday) and then acquired Cincinnati Reds ace Johnny Cueto, one of the most talked-about targets heading into the deadline. The American League's best team simply added one of baseball's top starting pitchers. Then, it traded for ultra-utility man Ben Zobrist from Oakland.

It'll take nothing short of a hurricane in Kansas for them to falter now. The catch for the Royals, though, is that Cueto is a free agent after this season and will demand top dollar on the open market, something that will probably push him to the likes of New York and Los Angeles. Price could leave Toronto as well, but the odds are greater Cueto isn't a Royal for long.

The Astros, a team that wasn't supposed to contend this season, has called up its top prospects (such as shortstop Carlos Correa) to win now and then added two major pieces at the deadline — Oakland pitcher Scott Kazmir and Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Carlos Gomez, who at one point was tied to talks with the Indians. One of baseball's best stories this year got even better.

Speaking of the Indians, they dealt a couple of pieces while also watching their road to October become much steeper. There were already seven or eight teams vying for those two spots ahead of the Indians, and three made significant improvements.

The Blue Jays (53-51), of course, went from contending in the wild card race to being its probable favorite and a threat to even catch the New York Yankees in the AL East.

That leaves the Los Angeles Angels (55-47, seven games ahead of the Indians), Twins (53-49), Baltimore Orioles (52-50), Tampa Bay Rays (51-53), Texas Rangers (50-52) and Chicago White Sox (49-52) all ahead of the Indians and vying for, potentially, one spot if Toronto's gamble does pan out.

The Angels added a few outfield bats, one of them being David Murphy, courtesy of the Indians. The Rangers, meanwhile, made one of the more surprising moves by dealing for Philadelphia Phillies ace Cole Hamels to bolster their starting pitching. The American League is brimming with parity, and a few teams tried to give themselves a head start in the push over the final two months.

The Indians dealt Murphy, outfielder Brandon Moss to the St. Louis Cardinals and relief pitcher Marc Rzepczynski to the San Diego Padres. All three players were eligible for free agency after the 2016 season. Those trades didn't signify a complete sell mode, but they did show the Indians realized their predicament in the AL playoff race was shaky at best.

One final revelation as it pertains to the Indians this trade deadline season was the tipping over of the Detroit Tigers' castle. The Tigers (50-53) entered this season as a talent-heavy team but one that, looking at the financial burden for the next few seasons, wasn't sustainable. They remained on the outskirts of contention until Miguel Cabrera hit the disabled list, perhaps forcing their hand.

Similar to the Indians, the Tigers saw a long road ahead and sold off two of their major trade assets. First, it was Price to the Blue Jays. Then, it was outfielder Yoenis Cespedes to the New York Mets. Both Cespedes and Price are eligible for free agency after this season and will demand a hefty price tag, one even the spending-spree-happy Tigers couldn't pay.

The Tigers entered the season with an aging roster and, by some accounts, the worst farm system in baseball. The latter got much better this past week, though 2015 will go down as a bust to their fans.

The last week, though, was anything but a bust. It'll be difficult for the game's general managers to top this trade deadline a year from now. Especially since the Blue Jays, Royals and Astros — not the Yankees, Boston Red Sox and Tigers — were its winners.

The end of July is always fun. This one was outstanding.

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Frustrated Brandon Moss epitomizes Cleveland Indians' season: Rant of the week

Paul Hoynes

OAKLAND, Calif. — It was Tuesday night in the home team's locker room at Progressive Field.

The Indians had just lost to Kansas City, 2-1, when Eric Hosmer hit a two-out, 3-2 curve from Trevor Bauer in the ninth inning for a game-winning homer. During the game, the Indians traded veteran outfielder David Murphy to the Angels for a minor-league shortstop.

A season that started with Corey Kluber and Michael Brantley gracing the cover of Sports Illustrated had just taken a stake through the heart. The Indians were 16 games behind the front-running Royals in the AL Central with a traffic jam of teams between them and the second wild-card spot.

After the game GM Chris Antonetti gave a concession speech, saying the second half would be dedicated to trying to win as many games as possible, while extending big-league opportunities to the organization's top prospects.

The Indians have done this before, but they've rarely as blunt about it.

In the locker room reporters gathered around Brandon Moss, a man Murphy called his best friend in baseball. Moss didn't know it then, but he would be the next to go. On Thursday, the Indians traded him to St. Louis for pitching prospect, Rob Kaminsky.

Moss said he was happy that Murphy was getting a chance to play for the Angels, a contender in the AL West. He said the Angels were having the kind of season that the Indians thought they'd have.

Then Moss turned to his own season, a disappointment of big proportions. The Indians acquired him from Oakland in December to add power to the middle of their lineup. He led them in homers with 15, but there were so many long stretches of poor at-bats and strikeouts between the homers that they didn't mean much.

The more Moss talked about the season, the more his frustration showed. He talked about taking two steps forward and one step back. He talked about making adjustment after adjustment and none of them working. He said he didn't blame the front office for raising the white flag because the team had given it little other choice.

All the while I was thinking, "Does this guy know there are still two months of the season left?"

Moss sounded like he wanted to go home. He sounded defeated. It was a look into the bubbling frustration that a day-in and day-out sport like baseball can produce in a player.

A wise old baseball writer once told me that teams should give certain players two weeks off during the season to go home and do nothing but sit in a lawn chair while staring out across a still lake. If ever a player needed those two weeks, it was Moss.

Instead the Indians traded him to the Cardinals, who own the best record in baseball. Maybe that will revive him, but probably not as much as a two-week vacation.

The Indians, meanwhile, are looking at their first wave of newbies and semi-newbies — Tyler Holt, Jerry Sands and Lonnie Chisenhall. Terry Francona, as detailed a manager as you'll find, is winging it. He has a third baseman (Chisenhall) playing right field, two rookies on the left side of the infield and a bullpen with no lefties. Left-hander Michael Roth is here, but he's basically a long man.

Can you imagine Francona, the bullpen guru, without a matchup lefty? That will change soon, but in the Indians' brave new world everyone has to make concessions.

One more thing, the Indians went into Saturday night's game against Oakland on a three-game winning streak. There's nothing quite like baseball — endlessly frustrating and mysterious.

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.02.2015

Cleveland Indians have Terry Talkin' about trades, prospects, money and second chances

Terry Pluto

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- I was surprised that the Indians were able to receive prime pitching prospect Rob Kaminsky in exchange for Brandon Moss. The Cardinals and Tribe had been talking trade for more than week. St. Louis wanted Moss, but wanted to keep Kaminsky.

Then Matt Holliday re-injured his right quad muscle. He missed five weeks with the same injury earlier in the year. At the time of Holliday's second injury, the Cards were 41-21 when he played, 23-16 when he was out.

The Cards said they were "hopeful" Holliday would be back this season, but it's too soon to know. That put the Indians in a stronger position to grab Kaminsky, a left-hander who was one of their favorites in the 2013 draft.

The Tribe had the No. 5 pick in that draft, and took Clint Frazier, who is batting .277 (.804 OPS) with 11 HR and 52 RBI at Class A Lynchburg. In 98 July at-bats, he's hitting .357 as the 20-year-old outfielder is finding his swing.

Kaminsky went No. 28 to the Cardinals. He would have been a higher selection, but scouts are always worried about pitching prospects who are not taller than 6-feet. Kaminsky is 5-foot-11, 191 pounds.

In his 2 1/2 minor-league seasons, he is 14-10 with a 2.15 ERA at the Class A level. He is averaging 7.9 strikeouts and 2.7 walks per nine innings. In 217 pro innings, he has allowed only three homers.

THE SCOUTING REPORTS

MLB's Jim Callis wrote:

"Getting Moss at the cost of Kaminsky seems like an overpay. The Cardinals shouldn't have had to surrender the No. 88 player on MLB Pipeline.com's Top 100 Prospects list for Moss. If they were willing to part with Kaminsky, they should have been able to get a better bat.

"Kaminsky has an outstanding curveball, a sharp downer in the upper 70s. He also has two other pitches that project to become at least solid big-league offerings -- a fastball that tops out at 95 mph and a change up with some fade. Kaminsky throws lots of strikes and has earned kudos for his competitiveness.

"The biggest knock on Kaminsky is his lack of size (5-foot-11, 191 pounds), but he has been durable so far. He projects as a potential No. 3 starter, and his curve alone would make him a dynamic lefty specialist at worst."

ESPN's Keith Law wrote:

"I can't get over the Cards giving up Kaminsky, a former first-round pick who has performed very well throughout his pro career to date, with no loss of projection. He's a command left-hander who'll sit mostly average with his fastball but will show a plus curveball and has great deception in his delivery.

"He's been an extreme ground ball guy this year, with 64 percent of his balls in play on the ground ... and only 12 percent characterized as line drives. ... Scouts don't love the lack of velocity or projection, as Kaminsky is 5-foot-11 and already filled out, but this is a formula that can work."

Baseball America wrote:

"Kaminsky is a short but well-built left-hander who impresses because of an advanced understanding of how to pitch and the potential to have three average or better pitches. The questions with Kaminsky revolve largely around how much fastball he is going to have.

"Scouts love his combination of feel, control and confident, bulldog demeanor and believe he is someone who will figure out how to get the most out of his ability. He projects as a No. 4 starter with a solid fallback as a lefty reliever who would generate bushels of groundball outs."

HIGH SCHOOL LEGEND

Kaminsky was a two-time New Jersey High School Player of the Year. In his last two seasons at Montvale High, Kaminsky was 18-2 with an ERA of 0.15. That's no misprint!

He struck out 229 in 117 innings. He also played center field and hit .455 as a senior. Kaminsky was set to go to North Carolina on a scholarship before signing a \$1.8 million bonus deal with the Cardinals.

The Tar Heels liked Kaminsky so much as an athlete, they also planned to use him some in the outfield when he wasn't pitching.

I can't get over the Cards giving up Kaminsky, a former first-round pick who has performed very well throughout his pro career to date.

Tribe scouts love his determination and the fact that he has excelled everywhere, be it in high school or in his first exposure to pro ball.

MARKET FOR MURPHY, THE MONEY BALL

The Indians thought there would be a better market David Murphy, but the veteran didn't attract many bidders.

Murphy was batting .296 (.781 OPS) with 5 HR and 27 RBI as a left-handed hitter playing primarily against right-handed pitching. The Angels sent marginal shortstop prospect Eric Stamets to the Tribe for Murphy.

The Angels will pay the rest of Murphy's \$6 million salary -- about \$3 million. Murphy has a \$7 million contract for 2016, with \$500,000 guaranteed. The Cardinals are paying the remainder of the \$6.5 million contract for Moss, who won't be a free agent until after the 2016 season.

So the Indians cut about \$6 million from their payroll with these moves.

Here's what Baseball America had to say about the 24-year-old Stamets:

"Stamets has sure hands, good range and an accurate average arm. But his swing is not conducive to doing more than putting the ball in play. ... Stamets ranked 23rd among the Angels' Top 30 Prospects coming into the season. He did not come close to cracking the midseason Top 10. With bottom-of-the-scale power and not enough pop to shoot balls consistently through the infield, Stamets projects more as a potential utility infielder than an everyday regular."

Here's what I heard:

1. Stamets is a big-league caliber shortstop with the glove. He is only 24. He obviously can also help at second base, something that is true of virtually every talented shortstop.

2. Stamets just doesn't hit. He was in his second season at Class AA Arkansas. In the Texas League, he has 623 plate appearances, batting .240 (.630 OPS) with 7 HR and 46 RBI. He has stolen 16 bases.
3. The Tribe seems to be loading up on shortstop prospects. Francisco Lindor has taken over in Cleveland at 21. There's 22-year-old Jose Ramirez, batting .298 (.775 OPS) at Class AAA Columbus.
4. Erik Gonzalez has split the season between Class AA Akron and Class AAA Columbus, batting .261 (.663 OPS). He has 21 errors in 98 games. He is only 23, and the Indians do like him. The rest of the Tribe shortstop prospects are in the low Class A levels. Stamets brings depth. There often is a minor market for a shortstop who can catch the ball.

ABOUT THE TRIBE

1. The Indians had no intention of trading Carlos Carrasco or any of their young starters. They were deluged with calls. "They even called about Corey Kluber," said General Manager Chris Antonetti. "We were not looking to move any of our starters."
2. The trade of Marc Rzepczynski to San Diego for minor league outfielder Abraham Almonte is of little interest except to the parties involved. Almonte has bounced in and out of the majors, never hitting much. This was a rough year for Rzepczynski (2-3, 4.43 ERA), who is on a \$2.4 million contract.
3. The Tribe called up Jerry Sands, and I'm intrigued to see him as a platoon player against left-handed pitchers. The 27-year-old Sands was batting .287 (.948 OPS) with 14 HR and 46 RBI for Class AAA Columbus. I thought they would promote Sands last weekend, when they turned to Jesus Aguilar. Sands has played in 102 big-league games, batting .312 (.906 OPS) against lefties. He is .210 vs. righties. Sands opened the season with the Indians and was 9-of-24 (.375).
4. A pitcher who is on the radar for a promotion is Shawn Armstrong, who is 1-2 with a 2.48 ERA at Columbus. He has struck out 61 in 40 innings. Armstrong was 6-2 with a 2.12 ERA at Akron in 2014. The 24-year-old righty has a career 2.44 ERA in the minors.
5. Lonnie Chisenhall was hitting .280 (.750 OPS) with 3 HR and 21 RBI in 157 at-bats for the Clippers. This may be his last shot to prove he can help the Tribe. To his credit, Chisenhall has been learning to play the outfield and first base, trying to recreate himself as a utility player. Reviews of his outfield play in Columbus were promising.
6. The issue for Chisenhall is hitting. He seemed to break out last season, hitting .332 with 9 HR and 41 RBI at the 2014 All-Star break. But since then, he was .216 with 8 HR and 37 RBI in 385 at-bats when sent back to the minors in June. He's 26, and this is his fifth season attempting to stick.
7. I will be talking Tribe, Cavs, Browns and everything else at two libraries this month. I will be at the North Royalton Library on Wednesday, Aug. 19, at 7 p.m. And I will be at Akron's Ellet Library on Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 7 p.m. Both programs are free! You do need to register on-line.
8. Lindor will appear at the Wahoo Club on Saturday, Aug. 8 at 11 a.m. It will be held at the Terrace Club. Call Bob Rosen (440-724-8350) for more information.

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Cleveland Indians lose quietly to Oakland Athletics: DMan's Report, Game 103

Dennis Manoloff

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Aaron Brooks gave up one run in 7 1/3 innings as the Oakland Athletics defeated the Cleveland Indians, 5-1, Saturday night at O.co Coliseum in Oakland, Calif. Athletics shortstop Marcus Semien homered and scored twice.

Here is a pocket-sized look at the game. No DVR review of the Fox SportsTime Ohio telecast was necessary.

One word: Dud.

Streaks ended: The Indians (48-55) had won three in a row.

The Athletics (46-59) had lost three straight.

Cold again: The Tribe offense has resumed being offensive.

On Wednesday afternoon in Cleveland, the Indians defeated the Royals, 12-1. In three games since, all against the Athletics in Oakland, they have scored a total of six.

They won the first two games of the series only because of their fantastic pitching and the Athletics' offensive slump. The finals were 3-1 and 2-1.

And it is not as if the Tribe faced clones of Catfish Hunter, Dave Stewart and Bob Welch. The Oakland starters -- right-handers Chris Bassitt, Kendall Graveman and Brooks -- combined to allow four earned runs in 21 innings.

In the series finale Sunday afternoon, the Indians will, indeed, encounter a beast in All-Star righty Sonny Gray (11-4, 2.16 ERA). On July 12 in Cleveland, Gray threw a two-hitter in a 2-0 victory.

Fast fact: The Indians lead the American League with 26 games of one or zero runs. (courtesy of Fox SportsTime Ohio postgame show.)

Lonnie to the rescue: In each of the past two games, right fielder Lonnie Chisenhall has shown the way offensively for the Tribe.

Chisenhall was promoted from Class AAA Columbus on Thursday and went 0-for-3. But he was 3-for-4 with a double Friday and 1-for-4 with a homer Saturday. He smoked a Brooks fastball deep to right in the fifth to tie the score, 1-1.

In the bottom of the fifth, Chisenhall threw out Max Muncy attempting to score from second on a single.

Chisenhall's teammates the past two games have gone a combined 9-for-59 (.153) with eight singles, one double and three walks.

Stellar first impression: Brooks, acquired from Kansas City in the Ben Zobrist trade earlier in the week, made his Oakland debut. He allowed five hits, struck out five and walked none in his first MLB start since May 31, 2014.

Brooks went to school on Graveman, who held the Tribe to one unearned run in 6 2/3 innings Friday by using primarily a fastball and changeup. Once again, Tribe batters swung as if they were allergic to the changeup.

Oakland relievers Drew Pomeranz and Edward Mujica, each of whom was once employed by the Indians, combined for three strikeouts and zero hits allowed.

Solid work: Indians right-hander and California native Cody Anderson allowed four runs (three earned) on six hits in 6 2/3 innings. He walked two and struck out four.

Anderson's changeup was good, on balance, but Oakland did damage against the fastball.

Bitter pills: One player on each team remained in a long hitless slide.

Mike Aviles, once again subbing for Jason Kipnis at second base, went 0-for-3 in nine pitches. He is in an 0-for-24.

Oakland All-Star catcher Stephen Vogt was 0-for-4 and is in an 0-for-25.

(Kipnis was the designated hitter Saturday and went 0-for-4. He is 1-for-12 with one single and one walk in the series.)

Cleveland Plain Dealer LOADED: 08.02.2015

Cleveland Indians fall, 5-1, to Aaron Brooks and Oakland Athletics

Paul Hoynes

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Cody Anderson pitched well Saturday night in front of a large group of family and friends at O.co. Coliseum. Unfortunately, two elements of the Indians' game did not offer the rookie right-hander adequate support.

One of the elements has become all too familiar this season. The second was not as Anderson and the Indians fell to Oakland, 5-1, to end their three-game winning streak.

The Indians season-long flaw, a lack of offense, was in full view once again. The Indians were rendered defenseless by right-hander Aaron Brooks, who was making just his second start in the big leagues and first appearance with the A's.

The A's received Brooks from Kansas City as part of the recent Ben Zobrist trade. The Indians and Brooks were seeing each other for the first time and the right-handed owned a decided edge in winning his first game in the big leagues.

The Indians are 11-42 when they score three or fewer runs.

The second element that hurt Anderson was defense. First baseman Carlos Santana's throwing error in the fifth inning led to Oakland's second run.

The Indians were a dreadful defensive team last year. They finished last in the big leagues in errors.

The Tribe worked hard on its defense in spring training. They also changed the left side of their infield, going with rookies Giovanny Ursela and Francisco Lindor at third and shortstop, respectively, in June. The improvement has been easy to see.

They came into Saturday's game tied for fourth in the AL in fielding percentage with Seattle. But they did not look sharp in the fifth when Oakland scored twice to take a 3-1 lead.

Anderson (2-3, 3.38) started the inning with a strikeout, but Max Muncy bounced a double against the wall in right field. Anderson walked Marcus Semien and Eric Sogard lined a single to right.

Lonnie Chisenhall, playing just his second game ever in right field, threw out Muncy at the plate for the second out. With Anderson's cheering section from Quincy, Calif., screaming behind the visitors' dugout, it looked like the Tribe would escape.

Sam Fuld, however, singled again to right field. Chisenhall threw home, but Santana cut off the throw as Semien scored for a 2-1 lead. Santana threw wildly to third to try and get Sogard, who scored easily on the error for a 3-1 lead.

Chisenhall, recalled Thursday from Class AAA Columbus, tied the score 1-1 with a homer off Brooks (1-0, 3.09) in the fifth. It was his fifth of the season and first since May 27 against Texas.

In Friday's 2-1 win over the A's, Chisenhall had three hits, stole second and scored the winning run on Michael Bourn's double in the ninth inning.

The A's stretched the lead to 4-1 on Semien's two-out homer in the seventh. The homer ended Anderson's night.

What it means

The Indians (48-55) dropped to 28-23 on the road. They are 15-11 against the AL West.

It was just their fifth loss in the last 15 road games.

The A's (46-59) snapped a three-game losing streak. It was just their third win in the last 11 games.

Young arms

Anderson allowed three earned runs in 6 2/3 innings. He struck out four, walked two and allowed six hits on 100 pitches.

In his previous two starts, Anderson allowed 11 runs on 18 hits in 8 1/3 innings. In those starts, he had trouble getting his fastball down in the zone. That was not a problem Saturday night as the A's spent a lot of time swinging and missing at his diving fastball.

Brooks, who made two relief appearances with the Royals before the trade, allowed one run on five hits in 7 1/3 innings. He struck out five and didn't walk a batter in 94 pitches.

What's next?

The Indians and A's end this four-game series Sunday when Trevor Bauer (8-8, 4.13) faces Oakland ace Sonny Gray (11-4, 2.16) at 4:05 p.m. ET. SportsTime Ohio, WTAM and WMMS will carry the game.

Bauer is coming off a complete-game, 2-1, loss to Kansas City. It was his first complete game in the big leagues. This will be his first start against the A's.

Gray, Oakland's Cy Young candidate, threw a two-hit shutout against the Tribes on July 12 at Progressive Field. He is 2-0 with a 0.43 ERA against the Indians in his career.

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Lonnie Chisenhall looking good in return engagement: Cleveland Indians notes

Paul Hoynes

OAKLAND, Calif. – Friday night was a good one for Lonnie Chisenhall.

He had three hits, stole a base and scored the winning run in a 2-1 victory by the Indians over Oakland. And the best ball he hit all night was an out.

In his first at-bat, Chisenhall lined out to the fence in center field as Billy Burns made a nice running catch in the second inning.

"That might have been the best ball I hit," said Chisenhall. "It's encouraging when you have four quality at-bats. It's what I've been moving toward."

Chisenhall was making his second start since being recalled from Class AAA Columbus on Thursday. He was optioned on June 7 and some felt he'd burned through all his chances with the Tribe. The Indians, however, needed a bat following the trades of David Murphy and Brandon Moss.

"It's nice to see him have a little success early when he comes back," said manger Terry Francona. "Hopefully, that will help his confidence."

Chisenhall, who hit .280 (44-for-157) at Columbus, singled to start the ninth with the score tied, 1-1. He stole second and scored on Michael Bourn's ground-rule double to the gap in right center. It was Chisenhall's first steal of the year.

Chisenhall rejoined the Indians as a utility man. Rookie Giovanny Urshela has taken his old job at third base.

He made his second straight start in right field Saturday night, homering in the fifth inning.

"Each time out there I'm feeling a little better," said Chisenhall.

Bourn, like Chisenhall, has spent much of this season lost at the plate. It looks like he's found something as of late. He's hitting .389 (14-for-36) in 11 games since the All-Star break.

"I just keep playing baseball," said Bourn. "That's all I can really do. Keep playing and taking one at-bat and one-game at a time."

Easy does it: For the third time in the last five games, All-Star second baseman Jason Kipnis was in the starting lineup as the Tribe's DH.

"His throwing (right) shoulder is a little bit sore," said Francona. "I don't think it's anything we need to worry about. We're just trying to stay out ahead of it."

"It doesn't hurt him hitting. I just wanted to let him DH another night. I don't think that will hurt him."

Francona was going to DH Jerry Sands on Saturday night, but decided to go with Kipnis at DH.

"We hope Kip can bounce back Sunday and be OK," said Francona.

Sickbay: Ryan Raburn has lost about seven pounds while dealing with a stomach issue for the last four weeks.

"I'm taking medication from the trainers and I feel OK," said Raburn.

Say goodbye: Closer Cody Allen said this time of year is tough on friendships. In the span of four days, the Indians traded Murphy, Moss and reliever Marc Rzepczynski. The Rzepczynski trade happened just before Friday's deadline.

"You don't want to see anyone go," said Allen. "It was tough to see Zep go. He's a bullpen mate and I really enjoyed my time here with him the last couple of years."

"He came over in 2013 and gave us a big boost out of that bullpen. Good guy, good friend. You hate to see anybody leave."

The Indians went through the same thing last year with the trades of Justin Masterson and Asdrubal Cabrera.

"It's part of the business," said Allen. "It's always tough, but everybody deals with it."

Finally: Nick Swisher will report to Class AAA Columbus on Tuesday to continue his rehab assignment He's currently player at Class A Lake County. ... Switch-hitting outfielder Abraham Almonte, acquired from San Diego for Rzepczynski, will report to Columbus on Monday.

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Why didn't Cleveland Indians keep David Murphy? Hey, Hoynsie!

Print Email Paul Hoynes, Northeast Ohio Media Group By Paul Hoynes, Northeast Ohio Media Group

Hey, Hoynsie: David Murphy was having a decent year, had a club friendly contract and all the Indians get for him is a minor-league shortstop who can't hit? Wouldn't they have been better off just keeping him? – Tom Goodsite, Washington, Iowa.

Hey, Tom: Yes, Murphy was having a good season for the Indians, but when the Indians decided they were out of contention, it was time to look at Tyler Holt and Jerry Sands and give Lonnie Chisenhall one more chance.

The Indians had a club option on Murphy for 2016, but I don't think they were going to exercise it. If the Angels don't pick up the club option, the Indians are on the hook for at least a portion of his \$500,000 buyout.

Hey, Hoynsie: Do you know if the Blue Jays' acquisition of Troy Tulowitzki derailed the Carlos Carrasco negotiations? The rumored haul of Jeff Hoffman, Daniel Norris and Dalton Pompey would have been a nice return, but Hoffman was ultimately include in the deal for Tulo. -- David Bruno, Chicago.

Hey David: I know you probably wrote this before the Blue Jays acquired David Price so I'd have to say no. It's evident that the Jays opened their roster to make these deals. I think they could have found another group of players to interest the Indians. I just think the Indians weren't offered the right kind of package for Carrasco.

Hey, Hoynsie: I read online that the Indians were offered Toronto prospects Daniel Norris, Jeff Hoffman and Dalton Pompey for Carlos Carrasco. If a team offers its top three prospects for player that is not currently your ace, would it not be prudent to accept? – Christopher Zanon, Miami.

Hey, Christopher: Not sure if those were the three players the Indians were offered. But I am sure that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

The Indians were window shopping for future reference. They have Carrasco signed through 2018. There was no need to rush.

Hey, Hoynsie: I know the Indians are dying a slow death, but it would sure make me feel better if they had a right-handed hitter in the lineup. Why don't they go for Wilin Rosario? The Rockies just sent him to the minors. He has 70 career homers, has always hit lefties and is only 26. He could DH and play some first base. What do you think? – K.O., Brook Park.

Hey K.O.: Why are you writing me? Write the Indians.

I like that idea. But isn't Rosario mostly a catcher? The Indians have two good ones in Yan Gomes and Roberto Perez and they both hit right-handed. But I like the way you're thinking.

Hey Hoynsie: Someone told me that the Indians have more walks than hits with the bases loaded. Is this true? -- Greg Roeper, Medina.

Hey, Greg: Buy whoever told you that a drink. After that light a candle for the Indians. They have 10 hits and 12 walks with the bases loaded this year.

The 10 hits are the fewest in the AL. The 12 walks are the most.

Hey, Hoynsie: With Giovanny Urshela performing well at third base, what will Lonnie Chisenhall's role with the Indians be? Could he be traded to a team looking for left-hand power? – Julio Sylvester, Solon.

Hey, Julio: Good timing with your question because Chisenhall was just recalled from Class AAA Columbus on Thursday. He'll be used at first base, DH, right field and third base.

Should he keep hitting like he did Friday night, he might not be traded anywhere.

Hey, Hoynsie: What would Corey Kluber's record be this year if he had the same run support that Carlos Carrasco has received? – Ed Gard, Berea.

Hey, Ed: If you've been reading me for any length of time, you know numbers sometimes befuddle me. So let's keep this simple.

In Kluber's 22 starts, the Indians have been shut out four times, scored one run three times and two runs seven times. That means they've scored two or fewer runs in 14 of his 22 starts. So I'd have to say if Kluber received Carrasco's 5.42 runs support average, his record would be a lot better than 6-11.

OK, now for the theory of relativity.

Quincy shows hometown pride in Cleveland Indians rookie Cody Anderson

Print Email Paul Hoynes, Northeast Ohio Media Group By Paul Hoynes, Northeast Ohio Media Group

OAKLAND, Calif. – Cody Anderson didn't know how many people made the trip from Quincy, Calif. on Saturday night to watch him pitch at O.co Coliseum against the A's.

"They might have shut the town down," said Anderson, whose hometown is about a five-hour drive away from Oakland.

No matter how many there were – Anderson said he figured there was close to 100 – they were loud and had a good time despite the Indians losing 5-1 to Oakland.

Anderson took the loss, but he pitched better than in his last two starts when he allowed 11 runs on 18 hits in 8 1/3 innings. On Saturday, Anderson allowed three earned runs on six hits in 6 2/3 innings.

"It was fun," said Anderson. "It was almost like making my debut again. The energy was fun."

Anderson struck out four walked walk two in 100 pitchers.

Here's what manager Terry Francona thought.

"He pitched pretty damn good. He was down more. He threw his change up. He actually threw some pretty good breaking balls. He let some balls in the middle of the plate that really hurt him.

"He fell behind (Marcus) Semien and you can't throw him a fastball in the middle because that's what he does. He made some mistakes to the bottom of the order to set-up innings, but he did OK."

Explanation: Marcus Semien, with two out in the seventh and Oakland leading, 4-1, homered on a 2-1 pitch."

Brooks, who beat the Indians for his first big-league victory.

On Oakland rookie Aaron Brooks, who held the Indians to one run in 7 1/3 innings to win his first game in the big leagues.

"He threw a lot of strikes. He established his fastball for strike one and then just started throwing off-speed stuff down . . . We pulled a lot of ball and that was just playing into what he wanted us to do."

Explanation: Brooks was making just his second big-league start. The A's acquired him from Kansas City in the Ben Zobrist trade just before Friday's deadline.

On Lonnie Chisenhall's throw from right field that erased Max Muncy at the plate in the fifth inning.

"I thought it was good. I looked like he'd been out there for a while. On the ball before (Muncy's double) I thought he might have given up on it too soon. But then he came in and threw the ball better than most right fielders.

Explanation: Chisenhall, the Indians opening day third baseman, played just his second game in right field Saturday. He fielded a single by Eric Sogard and threw out Muncy at the plate to keep the score tied, 1-1.

What happened on Chisenhall's second throw in the inning?

"There was a lot on that throw, but it's up the line maybe three or four feet. So we're not going to get the guy at the plate, but it was still a very good throw."

Explanation: Sam Fuld followed Sogard with another single to right that scored Semien from second base. Chisenhall fielded Fuld's single and threw home, but first baseman Carlos Santana cut it off. He tried to get Sogard going to third and threw the ball away as Sogard scored on the error for a 3-1 lead.

On Santana cutting off Chisenhall's throw.

"He did the right play. He just didn't move his feet and threw the ball away. We had him (Sogard) at third. He just didn't move his feet and because of that the ball sailed on him?"

Lonnie Chisenhall.

On the throw from right field.

"Fortunately, I've been able to work on it. I made a few while I was in Columbus. You try to keep the ball down, keep it through the cut-off me. It was a good time and good situation for it."

Explanation: Chisenhall, optioned to Columbus on June 7, was recalled Thursday.

On hitting a home run in the fifth for the Indians only run Saturday.

"Just hitting the ball hard is encouraging. I felt I took some healthy swings today. I'm swinging at good pitches and I took some borderline pitches. I'm moving in the right direction."

Explanation: Chisenhall, in Friday's 2-1 victory, went 3-for-4 and scored the winning run in the ninth. On Saturday, he homered in four at-bats.

Clippers 5, RailRiders 4: Clippers take early lead, hang on to win

The Clippers took advantage early of first-time Scranton/Wilkes-Barre starter Kyle Haynes and made the lead stand up in a 5-4 victory over the RailRiders on Saturday night in Moosic, Pa.

Zach Walters had a two-run single in the first inning, and Adam Moore, Jose Ramirez and Michael Martinez drove in runs in the second for a 5-0 Clippers lead. They were facing Haynes (0-1), who had a 3.20 ERA in 11 starts for double-A Trenton before being promoted by the New York Yankees organization. He allowed 10 hits, struck out six and walked one in five innings.

Toru Murata (10-4) picked up the win for the Clippers despite allowing four runs in six innings. He gave up five hits, struck out three and walked one.

The RailRiders also tagged Murata for two home runs. After Rob Refsnyder scored on a wild pitch in the third inning, Gary Sanchez homered in the fourth to close the gap to 5-2. Aaron Judge homered in the sixth with two outs, scoring Slade Heathcott, who had reached base on a triple. Murata got the third out before exiting the game.

Shawn Armstrong pitched the ninth for his 13th save for the Clippers, who snapped a three-game losing streak.

Home runs power Captains on Cleveland sports night, highlighted by Bernie Kosar

By David Glasier, The News-Herald

It was quite the eventful morning, afternoon and evening at Classic Park.

The red-hot Captains, winners of three straight games in walkoff fashion, were set to face the Great Lakes (Michigan) Loons Aug. 1 at Classic Park.

Photo gallery from the Lake County Captains Cleveland Sports History Night

Wildly popular Jobu bobbleheads would be given to the first 1,500 fans through the gates.

Once on the concourse, those fans could take advantage of the award-winning Cleveland Sports History Night promotion.

Among the local sports celebrity guests signing autographs and posing for pictures were former Browns standouts Bernie Kosar, Kevin Mack and Earnest Byner, former Cavaliers Campy Russell and Elmore Smith, promising boxer Antonio Nieves and former Negro League player Ted Toles Sr.

Former Indians slugger Joe Charboneau was scheduled to make an appearance, too, but had to beg off because of illness.

Many of the 6,428 who passed through the turnstiles were quite determined to be among the 1,500 recipients of the Jobu bobblehead inspired by the voodoo doll mascot in the movie "Major League."

Last year, the Jobu bobblehead giveaway on Cleveland Sports History Night generated a huge line that wrapped around the ballpark's perimeter.

Many of the folks in that line went home Jobu-less.

Frank Koballa of Richmond Heights, was determined to be first in line or close to it and got to the ballpark at 11:30 a.m. The gates would open at 5:30 p.m.

"I got a Jobu last year, but I was really lucky. This year, I didn't want to take any chances so I got here early, maybe too early," Koballa said.

He was joined at 11:40 a.m. by James Watson of Erie, Pa. His story mirrored Koballa's.

A huge fan of "Major League" and its fanciful tale of a downtrodden Indians team rising to make the playoffs, Watson got a Jobu last year, too.

He also remembered the long lines and the disappointed looks on the faces of fellow fans who weren't so fortunate.

"We figured if we got here early, we'd be assured of getting a bobblehead and spend some time with all the other people who thought like us," said Watson, who was joined on the trip to Eastlake by his father, Bill Watson.

With visions of Jobu in his head, Roman Pilkington came all the way from Aberdeen, Maryland, with his wife and three children.

Brothers Alan Lasher and Robert Lasher, both from Northwest Pennsylvania communities near the Ohio border, also were early arrivals.

Joe Godfrey of Wickliffe wanted to make sure he got a bobblehead to be the centerpiece of what he called "a Jobu shrine" in his backyard.

Koballa, Watson and all the early arrivals snapped up their bobbleheads as they passed through the gates.

At 5:54 p.m., Mark Peterson of Chambersburg, Pa., was handed the final Jobu bobblehead.

"It's a four-hour ride here from Chambersburg, so I'm relieved to get my Jobu and have the chance to meet all these Cleveland sports heroes," Peterson said.

There was traffic at all of the tables where the sports notables were stationed. The lines were especially long leading to the table occupied by Kosar and the one shared by Mack and Byner.

The fans gave warm ovations to all the sports stars when they threw ceremonial first pitches.

Kosar faded back off the mound, true to his quarterback roots, and threw the ball to his intended receiver, U.S. Rep. David Joyce, halfway to home plate.

The pass was true, but the ball slipped through Joyce's fingers to the ground. Joyce fed the ball back to Kosar, who made a one-bounce throw to Captains player Grant Fink at home plate.

Video: Bernie Kosar throws out a ceremonial first pitch

Ending the day on a high note, the Captains used the long ball to craft a 9-6 victory over the Loons.

Round tripping

Seven of the nine Lake County runs came courtesy of home runs, two by first baseman Bobby Bradley and one by shortstop Yu-Cheng Chang.

Bradley got the Captains rolling with a three-run, 405-foot blast to straightaway center field in the bottom of the first inning.

With a 415-foot, opposite field blast to left-center field in the bottom of the seventh, Bradley increased his Midwest League-leading home run total to 18.

Bradley also drove in a run with a sacrifice fly. He was 2-for-3 with five RBI and two runs scored.

Chang slammed his eighth home run, a three-run blast, in the bottom of the third.

Lake County starter and eventual winner Anderson Polanco (7-6, 4.19 ERA) gave up four runs on five hits in five innings. Julian Merryweather earned his first save, giving up two runs in four innings.

The Captains improved to 17-18 in the second half and 53-50 overall.

Nick Cafardo / SUNDAY BASEBALL NOTES Assessing the go-getters and do-nothings of the trade deadline

We'll have to see what the Red Sox come up with for an ace, but if they whiff this offseason, you wonder whether failing to acquire Cole Hamels will come back to bite them.

The Phillies and Red Sox danced the dance for about a year and a half, spending thousands of travel dollars, as well as manpower, scouting each other's organizations.

There were all sorts of names spewed out. At one point, the Phillies were asking for Blake Swihart and Mookie Betts, but the Red Sox were never interested. The price eventually lowered, but the Red Sox never seemed fully engaged, falling back on Hamels's losing interleague record as a guide.

The Rangers, who did acquire Hamels last week, didn't agree with the Red Sox. While they knew Hamels wouldn't put them over the top in 2015, they looked to him for 2016, hoping to team him with a healthy Yu Darvish at the top of the rotation.

Hamels would have solved the Red Sox' problems immediately, and given the five-prospect package the Rangers used to land him, the Sox could easily have made a similar deal.

The Red Sox also didn't obtain a controllable starter, such as Tyson Ross or Carlos Carrasco. They're both good pitchers, but the Red Sox must pick up an ace. And by not obtaining Hamels they will be forced to enter the pricey free agent market for Johnny Cueto, David Price, Jeff Samardzija, or Jordan Zimmermann, etc. It'll cost them far more than it would have if they'd re-signed Jon Lester.

In the end, the Red Sox didn't even compete for Hamels. There were bogus stories put out that the Phillies wouldn't deal with teams on Hamels's no-trade list. But the Giants nearly obtained him, with Hamels waiving his no-trade to San Francisco. The Astros were also in it, and Hamels declined to waive his no-trade for them.

Here's a look at how all 30 teams did during trade week:

Go-getters

1. Toronto Blue Jays — When you obtain the best available hitter (Troy Tulowitzki) and starting pitcher (Price) before the deadline, you're trying hard. The Blue Jays acquired those players while at .500, but only a couple of games out of the wild card. They should have started much sooner, but once they got into it, they blew everyone away, willing to give up their top prospects, such as lefthander Daniel Norris. Big gamble, but a good one with the best offense in baseball. The Jays acquired Mark Lowe from the Mariners for three minor leaguers. Lowe has had a very good year but isn't really considered a closer. They also received veteran reliever LaTroy Hawkins in the Tulowitzki deal.
2. Kansas City Royals — Cueto and Ben Zobrist were outstanding pickups, and the Royals paid dearly, sending the Reds three lefthanded pitching prospects. The Royals lost to the Giants in the World Series and now given the weakness of the AL they have a chance to emerge once again. Zobrist certainly helps with the Alex Gordon injury and the fact he can be moved around the diamond.
3. Houston Astros — They were newcomers in terms of being buyers. They were also the team everyone wanted to trade with because they were so deep in prospects. So, they acquired local boy Scott Kazmir, and traded for Carlos Gomez and Mike Fiers from the Brewers. They gave up six prospects in the deals and still have the best farm system in baseball.
4. Pittsburgh Pirates — They got a bat (Aramis Ramirez) and a late-game reliever (Joakim Soria), who will pitch in front of Mark Melancon to give the Pirates a tough end of the bullpen. They also got a lefthanded starter in J.A. Happ from the Mariners to top off a pretty good trade deadline.

5. New York Mets — It took them a while to get going, but once they did the results weren't bad. They added offense in Yoenis Cespedes, Kelly Johnson, and Juan Uribe. They added Tyler Clippard as a bullpen piece. They went through a bizarre episode with Gomez before walking away from a deal. They never got a shortstop.

6. Texas Rangers — The Rangers set themselves up for 2016 with the Hamels deal. They failed to deal Yovani Gallardo, who will be a free agent, but they just may try to sign him long term and have a really good starting rotation with a returning Darvish.

7. Philadelphia Phillies — All eyes were on the Phillies to see how they'd make out rebuilding. The consensus was they did OK. They were able to move Hamels, Jonathan Papelbon, and Ben Revere, ate some money, but got a good haul of prospects, including catcher Jorge Alfaro, outfielder Nick Williams, and righthander Jake Thompson from Texas. According to one team evaluator, "From where they started in their demands to where they wound up, it's quite a fall. But if you look around at other deals, nobody was giving up No. 1 or 2 prospects. They settled for quantity in some cases, but they got a fair share of quality, as well."

8. Detroit Tigers — The Tigers dealt Price to the Blue Jays for Norris (the prize), Matt Boyd, and Jairo Labourt; traded Cespedes to the Mets for Michael Fulmer and Luis Cessa; traded Soria to Pittsburgh for JaCoby Jones. The Tigers, with one of the worst farm systems in baseball, replenished big time. They likely had no chance of re-signing Price. Cespedes is moody and not a long-term answer. The one surprise was Soria, as relievers of this ilk are hard to come by and the Tigers have a history of being unable to identify them. They finally did with Soria and yet they traded him.

9. Oakland Athletics — Billy Beane retooled, first getting two good prospects from the Astros (he loved catcher Jacob Nottingham) for Kazmir, then sending Clippard to the Mets and Zobrist to the Royals. Plenty of teams came at Beane for Sonny Gray, but that's the one guy he didn't budge on.

10. San Francisco Giants — The Giants are a team that always seems to do the right thing, and going after Mike Leake after they lost out on Hamels was a good move. Leake is a winner and a tough guy who will fit right in in San Francisco. Another good job by Brian Sabean, Bobby Evans, and pitching guru Dick Tidrow.

11. Cincinnati Reds — The Reds got rid of Cueto for three good arms, and sent Leake to the Giants. They failed to deal right fielder Jay Bruce or closer Aroldis Chapman, as had been speculated. They needed to be blown away on Chapman, and it never developed.

12. Baltimore Orioles — They dealt Tommy Hunter, one of their top three relievers, for Cubs outfielder Junior Lake. The Orioles also acquired Gerardo Parra from the Brewers for Zach Davies. Curious move trading Hunter. Lake had become extraneous for the Cubs but still has a world of potential. The best thing the Orioles did was acquire Parra, a Gold Glove outfielder who has been one of the hottest hitters in baseball — .435 in July.

13. Los Angeles Angels — They needed outfielders and landed three of them — Shane Victorino from the right side and David Murphy and David DeJesus from the left. Could have used a bullpen piece but didn't get it.

14. Washington Nationals — The Nationals got their prize in Papelbon and gave up a decent pitching prospect in Nick Pivetta. They failed to get another hitter, at one point considering Cespedes or Justin Upton.

15. Colorado Rockies — They made the big splash, dealing their franchise player (Tulowitzki) to Toronto and getting back Jose Reyes and prospects. Give the Rockies credit for finally doing what many thought they should have done a couple of years ago. They got a real good pitcher in righthander Jeff Hoffman from the Jays.

16. Milwaukee Brewers — They did some serious dumping of Ramirez, Parra, Fiers, and Jonathan Broxton, but failed to move Francisco Rodriguez or Adam Lind, where they could have received a haul. They did get quality prospects back in all of the deals and added some depth to their farm system. Getting outfield prospect Brett Phillips from the Astros could pay dividends down the road.

17. Cleveland Indians — Entertained a lot of talk on Carrasco but never pulled the trigger. The Indians were in need of a positional overhaul in their minor league system and Carrasco appeared to be the vehicle to do that. They did move Brandon Moss to the Cardinals and got a pretty good lefty in Rob Kaminsky. They also moved Murphy to the Angels.

18. St. Louis Cardinals — The Cardinals knew what they wanted once they lost Matt Holliday to an injury, so they replenished with Moss, who helps them at first base and in the outfield, and bolstered their bullpen with Steve Cishek and Broxton.

Mezza, Mezza

1. Minnesota Twins — Got Kevin Jepsen from the Rays, precisely the bullpen piece they needed.

2. Tampa Bay Rays — Thought they'd do more dumping, but there's still a feeling they might be in the wild-card hunt, so Jepsen to the Twins and DeJesus to the Angels was about it. Many teams inquired about their pitchers, but the Rays held on to them. There was some interest in James Loney, but they were not wowed enough to do it.

3. Chicago Cubs — Theo Epstein didn't pull off the blockbuster we thought he might, but he added good pieces in Hunter and the gutsy Dan Haren. The Cubs are on the fringe of playoff contention. Not sure if these moves put them closer to their goal.

4. Los Angeles Dodgers — They have the most resources, a good prospect list, and yet they failed to net Price or Hamels. Instead, they got Mat Latos from the Marlins and Alex Wood from the Braves. Latos has pitched well lately and that's perhaps what the Dodgers are going by, but they're taking a chance on a very emotional pitcher after Clayton Kershaw and Zack Greinke. They did get a terrific second base prospect from Atlanta in Jose Peraza.

5. Atlanta Braves — The Braves were all over the map. They dumped Johnson and Uribe to the Mets, and sent Wood, Bronson Arroyo, and Jim Johnson to the Dodgers. The Braves stayed competitive for a while but now go into full rebuilding mode. They got Cuban Hector Olivera and they have high hopes for him as a building block.

6. Miami Marlins — They traded Haren and Latos but didn't get a great return. These were two highly sought veteran pitchers and they needed to come away with a better talent haul.

7. Seattle Mariners — They reluctantly sold off some pieces. Lowe, an excellent reliever, went to the Jays, Happ to the Pirates, and Dustin Ackley to the Yankees. Teams came after Hisashi Iwakuma, but the Mariners wouldn't deal him, figuring they can sign the free agent-to-be for another season or two.

Do-nothings

1. San Diego Padres — Big talk, no action. Kept Upton, Craig Kimbrel, Ian Kennedy, Ross, and Andrew Cashner. CEO Mike Dee said the Padres will win with this team. Doubt it.
2. Boston Red Sox — The Sox didn't help themselves for 2016 one bit. Traded Victorino for Josh Rutledge, and dealt for Ryan Cook, described by one scout as a "good arm but has trouble with strikes."
3. Arizona Diamondbacks — Tried for Chapman but nothing else. Tony La Russa told me he was only going to do something if it was a move toward the future. Nothing really stood out.
4. Chicago White Sox — They were on a roll, got back in the wild-card race, and should have enhanced the team. But they got nothing.
5. New York Yankees — Surprisingly didn't add to their starting rotation or bullpen, which could come back to bite them, particularly with Michael Pineda out with forearm tightness. They did add lefthanded-hitting utilityman Ackley, who is hitting just .215 but is made for Yankee Stadium.

Updates on nine

1. Dave Dombrowski, president and GM, Tigers — Dombrowski is in the final year of his contract. Could the fact that he was entrusted with dealing off David Price, Joakim Soria, and Yoenis Cespedes mean he's likely to sign an extension soon? Dombrowski would have some appeal in Los Angeles, where the Angels are looking for a president/GM.
2. Mike Napoli, 1B, Red Sox — Napoli figures to be a waiver deal in August. One GM said Napoli "is a guy teams want to see a little bit more of. He's hitting better but not for a long enough stretch."

Waking up Nap

Napoli is trying to get back on track after a tough few months.

Split	G	BA	OBP	SLG	OPS	XBH	RBI	BB	SO
April	19	.162	.269	.250	.519	3	4	10	16
May	27	.242	.361	.516	.878	11	18	17	27
June	26	.190	.274	.321	.595	7	8	9	28
July	21	.239	.329	.463	.792	9	9	8	19

Source: baseball-reference.com

3. James Shields, RHP, Padres — Shields is a guy the Padres might be able to slip through waivers because of his hefty salary. It's hard to imagine a team putting a claim in, so Shields could be an August acquisition for a team such as the Yankees, who didn't solve any pitching needs.
4. Pablo Sandoval, 3B, Red Sox — There was speculation Friday morning that Sandoval might be of interest to the Padres, who went after him in the offseason. The Red Sox were probably hoping for something like that, but it never happened. The Padres still need a third baseman after the Will Middlebrooks experiment failed.
5. Felix Doubront, LHP, Athletics — Doubront has moved around a lot — Red Sox, Cubs, Blue Jays — but now seems to be in a place where he could find himself. He'll be in a big ballpark, which tends to build confidence in pitchers, and with a good pitching coach in Curt Young. Doubront has a world of talent but has never made the commitment to be good consistently.
6. Kenta Maeda, RHP, Hiroshima Carp — The Carp weren't willing to post Maeda last winter but he could be in play this offseason. What will he demand and where would he fit? Most scouts think he's a No. 3 starter at best, and likely a No. 4. Maeda is 8-6 with a 2.03 ERA in 17 starts this season. Also in the Carp rotation is former Dodger and Yankee Hiroki Kuroda, who is 7-4 with a 2.58 ERA.
7. Dustin Ackley, INF/OF, Yankees — GM Brian Cashman had a funny line about Ackley and why the Yankees got him. "We're trying to load up with lefties against [David] Price," Cashman said, tongue in cheek. Lefthanded batters have hit Price at a .267 clip this season, righthanded batters .233.
8. Justin Upton, OF, Padres — The Padres still think they're in the hunt? Upton again could be a waiver deal if the Padres feel they're out of it at some point. The Padres shocked baseball by not trading anyone, but at a minimum teams seeking hitters thought Upton would go.
9. Jason Varitek, special assistant, Red Sox — There's the feeling that Varitek could be a managerial candidate for the Padres should they bypass interim skipper Pat Murphy for the job. Varitek is a favorite of former Red Sox chief operating officer Mike Dee, who is now president of the Padres. Varitek has not wanted a full-time role in baseball, preferring to spend more time with his family.

Extra innings

From the Bill Chuck files — "In 2012, in 90 games, David Ortiz grounded out 79 times; this season, in 92 games, he has grounded out 99 times." . . . Happy birthday, Grady Sizemore (33), Scott Taylor (48), Tim Wakefield (49), Danny Sheaffer (54), Roger LaFrancois (59), Jim Dorsey (60), and Tom Burgmeier (72).

Power of Angels

Angels sluggers Mike Trout and Albert Pujols took over the major league lead for home runs last week. If they were to finish the season 1-2 they would be the first teammates since the Giants' Willie Mays and Willie McCovey in 1965 to accomplish that feat. Here's a look at the others, since 1920: Boston Globe LOADED: 08.02.2015

Aaron Brooks earns 1st win, rotation spot with A's

By Susan Slusser

Four days after being traded to a new organization and with his mom, Holly, teary-eyed in the stands, Aaron Brooks earned his first big-league win along with a spot in the A's rotation.

The 24-year-old, who came over from Kansas City in the Ben Zobrist deal Tuesday, was terrific in his Oakland debut, going 7 1/3 innings and allowing one run in the A's 5-1 victory over the Indians on Saturday evening at the Coliseum.

Brooks, who is from San Bernardino, had 14 friends and family members on hand, "not including the whole stadium," he added. "They made me feel like family. It was amazing. ... They made me feel so at home, so welcome. I can't thank them enough."

Brooks, with a whole nine previous days' worth of service time, gave up five hits, didn't walk a batter and struck out five. When he departed in the eighth, he signaled at his family in the crowd. "They were absolutely going nuts," he said. "So I wanted to give them a little something."

He, too, got something: a Gatorade bath from catcher Stephen Vogt and outfielder Jake Smolinski, the authenticated scorecard, a sack of game balls — and continued work in Oakland.

"He's going to stay in the rotation," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He deserves to."

"We were going to take a look and see, we had our options open, but after an outing like that ... it would have been pretty tough to send him down after that."

In his only other big-league start, for Kansas City on May 31, 2014, at Toronto, Brooks faced 11 men and allowed five hits, three walks and seven runs while recording just two outs. On Saturday, Brooks, wielding a low to mid-90s fastball, a nasty changeup and a sinker and slider, retired 13 of the first 14 batters he faced until Lonnie Chisenhall's solo homer in the fifth.

Brooks said he also got a warm reception from the crowd in that first big-league start, in the wrong way.

"Coming off the field in Toronto, they were clapping for me because I gave them so many runs in the first," Brooks said with a smile. "Being on the other side, in the eighth at home was phenomenal."

"What a night for him. He pitched his tail off, did a great job," Vogt said. "Any time you come to a new team, you want to make your first appearance count, and he did that and then some."

Held to three hits in the first two games of the series, Oakland got eight Saturday, and one even went over the fence.

Billy Butler started things with a single off Cody Anderson in the second, Ike Davis doubled, and Max Muncy sent Butler in with a groundout. Butler and Davis both ended 0-for-10 streaks, and Butler added an RBI single in the eighth.

Muncy got the A's going in the fifth with a double, but after Marcus Semien walked, Muncy was thrown out at the plate by right fielder Chisenhall while trying to score on Eric Sogard's single. With two outs, Sam Fuld also singled to right, scoring Semien, and when cutoff man Carlos Santana made a wild throw toward third trying to get Sogard, it allowed Sogard to race home, too.

Semien added to the lead in the seventh with a homer off Anderson. That ended a string of 17 games without an RBI, the longest of Semien's career.

San Francisco Chronicle LOADED: 08.02.2015

Crisp's return highlights A's upcoming moves

By Susan Slusser

Coco Crisp will return to the A's on Sunday, and pitcher Felix Doubront, acquired Friday, is also expected to be added to the roster.

That means some potentially interesting corresponding moves — and with Jake Smolinski learning to play first base ASAP, the outfielder might not be headed out. Instead, Max Muncy might be back on the Nashville shuttle. Here's another potential clue that that's the case: Muncy was at third Saturday, giving Brett Lawrie a break, which especially would make sense if it was his last day off for a while.

If this is indeed the move, Muncy out and Crisp in, the A's bench will consist of almost entirely outfielders, and it will be next to impossible to get any time off for Lawrie, shortstop Marcus Semien and second baseman Eric Sogard. Although Mark Canha can play third base, he's gotten all of two innings there this season.

Smolinski, though, has been valuable since coming up July 7. For one thing, he's batting .353 against left-handers, and he's also played well defensively. He has options left, unlike Sam Fuld, and the team would prefer not to lose Fuld.

Doubront's arrival had suggested a short stint in Oakland for Saturday starter Aaron Brooks — until Brooks put together a strong outing against the Indians, winning a rotation spot. A reliever is now likely to be optioned to make room for Doubront.

The A's designated left-handed reliever Eric O'Flaherty for assignment Saturday in order to create a roster spot for Brooks. Much like Ryan Cook, dealt to Boston one day earlier, a change of scenery might be good for O'Flaherty, who never quite got on track after being signed after his 2013 Tommy John surgery.

"Probably for the best," O'Flaherty said.

The A's might find a waiver-trade partner for O'Flaherty if a contender were to need a strictly left-on-left reliever. Lefties are batting .186 against him this season — right-handers .420.

Crisp, who has missed almost the entire season after elbow surgery and a chronic neck problem, went 0-for-5 with two strikeouts Saturday night with Class-A Stockton.

Medical watch: Sean Doolittle threw a 31-pitch bullpen session and could throw to hitters or in a simulated game next, usually the final step before a rehab assignment, which would keep him on track for a return to Oakland in mid- to late August. San Francisco Chronicle LOADED: 08.02.2015

Oakland A's with plenty of reasons to play on following trades for prospects

By Matt Kawahara

OAKLAND -- For the A's, Friday's trade deadline passed quietly compared with the drama of last July 31, when their blockbuster deal for Jon Lester signaled they were going all-in on the 2014 season.

As this year's deadline approached, the A's had already made their big moves, trading Scott Kazmir, Tyler Clippard and Ben Zobrist in three separate deals, all for prospects. Those trades made a different statement: That, in the words of general manager Billy Beane, "the future was probably more in our focus than the current present."

In the immediate future, the A's still have two months' of games left to play -- nearly a third of their season. Friday's deadline found the A's tied for the American League's worst record at 13 games under .500, last in the A.L. West, and with a fourth consecutive postseason appearance unlikely. Yet a sampling of the A's clubhouse indicated current players are not yet ready to renounce their season.

"You're kind of down on it, with the guys we lost, especially considering we were in a spot to kind of remodel but still win (in 2015)," right fielder Josh Reddick said Friday. "It just didn't work out that way. We had the team to do it, and fate wasn't on our side. We didn't execute when we needed to.

"If (Beane) feels he wants to build for the future, that's one way you've got to look at it. But every night, we've got to come in here with the idea still to win a ballgame. We're not giving up, 100 percent. We're never going to give up here in the clubhouse."

For A's players who have been in Oakland in recent years, this is an unfamiliar position. The A's last missed the postseason in 2011. Only Eric Sogard and Coco Crisp (currently on the disabled list) remain on the team from that season, and Bob Melvin took over as manager partway through that year.

"I can't even remember what it was like not being in (a playoff race)," Sogard said. "Obviously you want to be in it. But I think the young guys here are going to continue to come out and play every day. It's a good opportunity for them. And I think we can still win some games and be a bit of a spoiler."

With Kazmir traded and Jesse Hahn injured, the A's are exploring options in the starting rotation. Chris Bassitt, who spent most of this season at Triple-A, is getting an extended look in Oakland, and the A's on Saturday night started prospect Aaron Brooks, acquired from Kansas City in the Zobrist trade.

It isn't only rookies with something to prove. Crisp and closer Sean Doolittle have both missed the majority of the season with injuries but are likely to return -- Crisp maybe as early as next week -- and can use the remaining games to show they're healthy and build toward more productive seasons in 2016.

"For me, I'm trying to get healthy and set myself up for being in the mix to possibly be the closer again next year," Doolittle said. "We've got five or six outfielders on the roster right now; if those guys finish strong, they set themselves up for a good spot next season. You still have to go about your business, and that's going to be the biggest challenge, is even though we're out of it, going about your business in a professional way."

For rookie Billy Burns, the departures of Kazmir and Zobrist hit especially hard. Burns said he and Zobrist had grown close through team Bible study sessions that Zobrist led, and he credited Kazmir with giving him an influential pep talk shortly after Burns was called up in early May.

Burns said that after he'd made "some boneheaded mistake" in a game, Kazmir sat him down in the dugout and told him, "'Hey man, nobody's going to get mad at you if you make a mistake being aggressive -- but people are going to get on you if you make a mistake being passive.'

"Just knowing his veteran status and the leadership quality he had," Burns said, "hearing that from him was huge for me."

Burns has since emerged as a legitimate Rookie of the Year contender -- albeit for a team that, by trading some its key players, ceded it's likely out of contention.

"This year being in the big leagues, it's a whole new business that I'm not accustomed to," Burns said. "I'm just trying to learn and listen to the older guys and stay positive."

Veteran outfielder Sam Fuld said he believes the A's clubhouse is "well-suited, in terms of how we get along in here and the atmosphere in here, to keep plugging."

Ironically, it was at a clubhouse table near Fuld's locker that Beane addressed reporters in the wake of the Kazmir trade -- the symbolic beginning of the A's sell-off -- and said the A's "had to be realistic where we are as a club" in shaping their deadline strategy.

"The way I look at that stuff, when we lose key guys and they're saying, 'We're going to invest in the future,' I feel like we forced them to do it," catcher Josh Phegley said. "We win more games, we play a lot better, we don't make them make those kinds of decisions.

"So it's essentially, we failed. But there's still a lot to play for. There's still fans in the stands. I think the objective now is to play for the future, try to get better, show them that you want to be a part of this organization for years to come."