

## ***The Boston Red Sox Wednesday, April 24, 2019***

### **\* *The Boston Globe***

#### **Tigers sweep away Red Sox in doubleheader**

Nora Princiotti

It was a good thing they showed Bruins highlights on the Fenway Park scoreboard Tuesday night. There wasn't much for fans to cheer about down on the diamond.

The Red Sox lost both games in a day-night doubleheader against the Tigers and fell to 9-15 on the season. The bullpen couldn't hold up after a solid start from Chris Sale in the first game, a 7-4 loss. Then the offense sputtered in the nightcap, going 1 for 12 with runners in scoring position, unable to support a patchwork group of pitchers in a 4-2 loss.

"We haven't had a big offensive output out there where we can enjoy it and breathe and relax, just have fun offensively," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "Hopefully we can get it together and keep working at it and it happens soon."

One silver lining was Chris Sale, who started the early game, struck out 10 batters and looked relatively Sale-like. But Sale left with the score tied after only five innings and the bullpen collapsed over the remaining four.

"I at least gave my team a chance to win when I left the ballgame, but I'm still relying on my bullpen guys too much," Sale said.

Sale gave up two earned runs and five hits, including a game-tying home run to catcher Grayson Greiner in the fifth inning, the sixth Sale has surrendered this season. He threw 97 pitches, 72 for strikes, both season highs. He walked only two batters, but the Tigers fouled off plenty of good pitches, put together long at-bats, and wore down Sale early.

"Give [the Tigers] credit for getting that pitch count up in five innings and then they did what they did with the bullpen," Cora said.

The score was tied, 3-3, in the eighth when Colten Brewer (0-2, 8.31 ERA) came in to pitch for the Sox. He got into trouble quickly, walking Niko Goodrum to start the inning and then giving up a one-out double to Ronny Rodriguez (3 for 4 with two doubles, a home run, and two RBIs) to put runners on second and third.

Josh Harrison put the Tigers ahead to stay with a two-run double, then scored on a Greiner single to make it 6-3. Brewer got out of the inning when JaCoby Jones grounded into a double play, but the damage was done.

"Stuff wasn't really there today," Brewer said. "Walking the first guy isn't the best thing you should do."

Cora agreed that command was a problem for Brewer and said that the bullpen needs to be better.

The Tigers tacked on another run in the ninth against lefthander Bobby Poyner, who was optioned to Triple A Pawtucket after the game, before Xander Bogaerts hit his second solo homer of the game to close out the scoring in the ninth.

The Red Sox took a 2-0 lead in the third inning off Tigers starter and winner Matthew Boyd (7 innings, 3 hits, 3 runs, 2 walks, 3 strikeouts) thanks to a leadoff walk from Christian Vazquez, a double from Tzu-Wei

Lin, and a two-out, two-run single from Mookie Betts. J.D. Martinez struck out swinging to end the inning, part of an 0-for-4 performance that ended his streak of reaching base in his first 22 games this season.

Sale, who started the game auspiciously by striking out the .213-hitting Jeimer Candelario swinging on a 94-mile-per-hour fastball and struck out two Tigers in every inning, gave up solo runs in the fourth and fifth innings. Greiner's home run came on a 92-m.p.h. fastball over the middle of the plate.

Heath Hembree relieved Sale in the sixth, but he hung a one-out breaking ball that Rodriguez hammered 392 feet to left for a solo homer. Bogaerts answered in the bottom of the inning to tie the score again.

Cora said he has talked with Hembree about his offspeed pitches and acknowledged that has been a problem area.

"That's been going on, I think, since the last part of the season last year," Cora said. "You know his fastball plays at this level. We believe that."

Sale remained winless (0-4, 7.43 ERA) in five starts, and the team has lost all five games. Though he was upbeat after the game, Sale said he won't be satisfied until he's pitching deeper into starts and preserving the bullpen.

"It just seems like every time I'm out there we're just leaning on these guys and that's a tough spot to put them in," Sale said.

Hector Velazquez couldn't go deep into the game, either, in the nightcap. The 30-year-old righthander, filling the spot left by the injured Nathan Eovaldi, lasted  $3\frac{2}{3}$  innings. He came out in the fourth, leaving the bases loaded for Marcus Walden. Brandon Dixon promptly cleared them with a double.

The final five innings were handled by lefthander Darwinzon Hernandez ( $2\frac{1}{3}$  innings) and righty Travis Lakins ( $2\frac{2}{3}$  innings), who were each making their major-league debuts.

Hernandez started the fifth inning. The highly touted 22-year-old averaged 94.2-m.p.h. on his fastball and struck out four. He gave up four hits, one walk, and no earned runs on 50 pitches.

"We knew that at one point they were going to contribute and they did today, they helped us out to hopefully accomplish stuff [Wednesday] because of where we were pitching-wise," Cora said of Hernandez and Lakins. "But those two kids, we're going to turn this around and, like I said in spring training, they're going to contribute to what we're trying to accomplish."

The Red Sox pulled within a run in the eighth inning when Michael Chavis crushed his first career home run, a shot over the Monster seats, but Detroit got one back on an RBI double by John Hicks in the ninth.

Chavis got to keep his home run ball because a fan found it outside the park and gave it back in exchange for a ball signed by Dustin Pedroia. Chavis said he knew it would go over the Monster the moment he hit it.

"I felt like I was floating, honestly," Chavis said. "Just kind of tried not to sprint. I've seen a couple videos of guys hitting their first home runs and they sprint because they're so excited. I kind of tried to act like I've hit a home run before."

Boston's only other run came from Bogaerts on an RBI single in the seventh inning. Bogaerts was 3 for 8 with three RBIs in the two games.

### **Still winless, Red Sox ace Chris Sale is still inching along**

Peter Abraham

Chris Sale lasted five innings and allowed two runs against the team with the worst offense in the American League on Tuesday afternoon.

He left a 2-2 game in the hands of the bullpen, then watched from the clubhouse as the Detroit Tigers beat the Red Sox, 7-4.

“A step in the right direction,” Sale said.

“I felt like he was better,” was the analysis of manager Alex Cora.

Is that really where we are with Sale, little steps and hopeful comments?

It used to be easy to evaluate the lefthander. Sale would overwhelm the opposition with three well-above-average pitches, go deep in the game, and the Sox would win. When that didn't happen, it was an anomaly.

Now we're left looking for clues to determine what we're seeing. Sale struck out 10 on Tuesday and induced 14 swing-and-misses. Those were his best marks of the season. That's good.

But the Tigers also fouled off 24 pitches, running up Sale's pitch count in a hurry. His fastball velocity also dropped from an average of 95.4 miles per hour against the Yankees last week to 92.7. That's bad.

The bottom line is this: The Sox are 0-5 in the games Sale has started this season and he has given them 23 innings. The season is almost a month old and his progress is still being measured by inches, not victories.

If this is a product of how the Red Sox conducted spring training, there's nothing to worry about. Sale will build up again to being their ace.

He feels that's the case.

“The stuff is starting to get there but I need to extend these outings a little bit,” he said. “Not exactly where we want to be, but better.”

Sale scoffed at the idea that he needed to build confidence.

“I know who I am. I know what I can do on a baseball field,” he said. “I'm not worried about where I'm at or what I'm doing. I know what I'm capable of doing.

“For me it's getting my stuff back, getting my command back and putting it all together. Harnessing that and carrying it through as many starts as I can.”

Still, it was disturbing to see Sale knocked out of the game early by a rebuilding Detroit team that came into the game averaging 3.05 runs.

Sale allowed three hits after being ahead 0 and 2 in the count. Grayson Greiner, who had one home run in 151 previous major league at-bats, drove a poorly located Sale fastball over the Green Monster to tie the score in the fifth inning.

Sale nearly got lifted a few batters later but struck out Niko Goodrum to leave two runners stranded.

That left the game to the untrustworthy portion of the Red Sox bullpen and it went sour quickly. Heath Hembree allowed one run, Colten Brewer three more, and Bobby Poyner another that got him demoted to Triple A Pawtucket afterward.

“Too many foul balls, too many deep counts. Walked a couple of guys. I need to clean some things up around the edges,” Sale said. “We'll get there.”

“It would be nice to be able to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or finish a game. It seems like every time I’m out there we’re just leaning on [the bullpen] and that’s a tough spot to put them in.”

Cora rightly credited the Tigers with doing a good job of running up Sale’s pitch count. But teams have tried to do that for years with little success. Sale usually combats that by throwing that slider they can’t foul off or blowing a fastball by them.

“Making better quality pitches earlier in the count and putting them away when I have two strikes on them,” he said when asked what the solution was.

Cora’s assessment was an honest one.

“Velocity was OK. We thought the slider was good. The changeup was OK,” he said. “Obviously we’re looking for six or seven [innings]. Hopefully that’s the next step.”

That Sale struck out 10 suggests the pure stuff is there and he will soon find a way to harness it deep into games.

The alternative is that the Sox gave a five-year, \$145 million extension to a pitcher just as he started his decline.

How far off are the Sox away from seeing their ace again?

“Four days?” Cora said, the question mark apparent in the inflection of his voice.

Sale is scheduled to start Sunday against Tampa Bay. Maybe the pitcher the Sox need will finally make his appearance.

### **Yankees doctor performs surgery on Nathan Eovaldi**

Peter Abraham

Nathan Eovaldi had arthroscopic surgery Tuesday to remove a loose body from his elbow. Yankees team doctor Chris Ahmad did the procedure at New York-Presbyterian Hospital in Manhattan.

Yes, the Yankees team physician did surgery on a Red Sox pitcher.

When Eovaldi was with the Yankees, Ahmad handled his Tommy John surgery in 2016 and the righthander came to trust him. Neither team had an issue with the arrangement.

“From what I heard everything went well,” Sox manager Alex Cora said. “He should be fine when he comes back and ready to roll.”

Eovaldi had two loose bodies removed from his elbow last March 30 when he was with the Tampa Bay Rays and made his first minor league rehabilitation start May 4. He was back in the majors May 30.

Eovaldi predicted Saturday that the timetable would be quicker this time around because the Rays were being ultra cautious following his recovery from Tommy John.

“I’ll be back on the mound pretty quick,” Eovaldi said. “The Rays had me make four starts in the minors. I don’t think I’ll need that many. It’s good that I’ll know what to expect.”

The Red Sox will need a replacement starter for at least 5-6 weeks.

Hector Velazquez started in Eovaldi’s place in the second game of Tuesday’s doubleheader against the Detroit Tigers and the plan is for him to stay in that slot.

“We’ll go from there. We’ll make adjustments if we have to,” Cora said.

Because of Monday’s rainout, the Sox will need a starter for Saturday’s game against Tampa Bay.

#### Bullpen shift

Lefthander Bobby Poyner pitched the ninth inning of Game 1 and gave up a run in a hurry. He walked Jeimer Candelario ahead of singles by Nick Castellanos and Miguel Cabrera.

Poyner was optioned back to Triple A Pawtucket after the game replaced by righthander Travis Lakins.

Lakins, 24, was a sixth-round pick out of Ohio State in 2015. He was moved to the bullpen last season, which greatly improved both his strikeout rate and stock as a prospect.

Lakins, who was given No. 65, appeared in six games for Pawtucket and gave up three runs on nine hits over eight innings. He pitched  $2\frac{2}{3}$  innings against the Tigers and allowed one run.

The Sox also called up their top pitching prospect, 22-year-old lefthander Darwinzon Hernandez, to serve as the 26th player for the second game of the doubleheader.

Hernandez pitched  $2\frac{1}{3}$  innings of scoreless relief, working around four hits and a walk by striking out four. He was then returned to Portland.

#### Double duty

In case you were wondering who the emergency catcher is, the task has fallen to infielder Tzu-Wei Lin.

“I didn’t have too many volunteers to say the least,” Cora said.

That issue never came up last season because the Red Sox carried three catchers for the bulk of the year. But when the Sox parted with Blake Swihart last week, that left only Sandy Leon and Christian Vazquez.

The Sox have hit for Leon in two of the three games he has started, so it’s certainly possible an injury to Vazquez could force Lin into the game.

Lin took a few lessons with Jason Varitek in spring training last year. He feels he could do it, but hopes it doesn’t come to that.

“I don’t know if we’re comfortable with it. It’s one I have to get used to,” Cora said. “It’s not the roster we had last year. Last year you had the freedom to do whatever you wanted in that spot early or later because you knew you had two more [catchers].”

#### Holt getting closer

Brock Holt, out since April 6 with a scratched right cornea, has been taking batting practice off a pitching machine and is close to going on another minor league rehab assignment. Holt tried a contact lens over his eye but that did not work. “It’s pretty much healed up on its own,” he said. “I’m seeing the ball well now.” Holt will need a few games in the minors to get his timing back . . . Dustin Pedroia, who is on the injured list with inflammation in his left knee, did some running in the outfield between games . . . Cora was asked if Michael Chavis was the most enthusiastic rookie he has encountered. “Nobody like Pedroia,” he said . . . J.D. Martinez had an 11-game hit streak snapped when he was 0 for 4 in the first game . . . Steve Pearce reached on catcher’s interference in the fourth inning of Game 1. It was the first time in his 13-year career Pearce reached in such a fashion. The last Red Sox player to reach that way was Aaron Hill on Sept. 21, 2016, against Baltimore . . . The scoreboard on the Green Monster included the Leafs-Bruins game across town.

**\* *The Boston Herald***

## **Red Sox fall back to earth in doubleheader sweep to Tigers**

Steve Hewitt

As the Red Sox returned to Fenway Park on Tuesday, they delivered a pair of sobering reminders: Their ace isn't where he needs to be yet, and their league-leading offense from a season ago has yet to reach its potential.

After a statement three-game sweep at division-leading Tampa Bay, the Red Sox came back and fell back down to earth.

Chris Sale was better, but still not where he needed to be in the day game before the bullpen threw it all away in a 7-4 loss. Then the Red Sox offense couldn't capitalize on several opportunities in the nightcap as they fell 4-2 and were swept in the doubleheader by the Detroit Tigers.

"It's disappointing," Cora said. "Obviously you don't want to lose two. That first game, you saw what happens, we had a lot of traffic out there and didn't get the big hit. Offensively we put a few good at-bats, and then we stopped. It's not like we keep the line moving. We hit some balls hard right at people. We had a good game plan against them, and it just didn't work out offensively. ..."

"It felt like the whole game we were one hit away from getting the lead, and then you felt like the line was going to keep moving, but it didn't happen."

Xander Bogaerts came alive with two home runs in Game 1 and an RBI single in Game 2, and Michael Chavis hit his first career home run — a no-doubter that cleared the Monster seats in the eighth of the night game — but the Sox offense otherwise was silent. They went 1-for-12 with runners in scoring position in the second game, leaving 10 runners on base.

The performance was all the more frustrating given the Sox started relief pitcher Hector Velazquez and backed him up with a bullpen that included two pitchers — Darwinzon Hernandez and Travis Lakins — who were making their major league debuts.

Alex Cora said he wanted 15 outs and more realistically 12 from Velazquez, but he didn't get there. The right-hander actually was sharp early, retiring the first nine Tigers he faced in 39 pitches before he ran into trouble in the fourth. A one-out walk to Nico Goodrum loaded the bases, and Cora decided to pull the plug there and go to his bullpen.

That's when he turned to Marcus Walden, who was critical in the Tampa series, and he proceeded to throw it away. Brandon Dixon jumped on a 1-1 slider and roped it down the left field line just outside the reach of Rafael Devers at third, and all three baserunners scored. Though Dixon was thrown out at third, the Tigers took a 3-0 lead.

That's all they ended up needing, thanks to the Red Sox' inability to cash in at the plate. Detroit starter Spencer Turnbull gave them plenty of chances, but the Sox couldn't capitalize.

Their best chance may have come in the fourth, when J.D. Martinez was plunked on his elbow to load the bases. But Bogaerts popped out to shallow left to end the inning.

Again in the fifth, the Sox squandered an opportunity. With runners on first and third with two out, Martinez struck out on a 95 mph heater from Turnbull, who pumped his fist as he escaped another jam. Martinez finished the day 1-for-8 with eight strikeouts.

"I don't think we expand the zone," Cora said. "They make pitches and we just didn't hit the ball in the air. It's one of those, it didn't click. It just didn't click offensively. It's been going on for the first part, this 20, 20-something days offensively. We know we can be better. We haven't had like a big offensive output out

there that we can enjoy it and breathe and relax and just have fun offensively. Hopefully we can get it together and keep working at it, and it happens soon.”

In Game 1, the Red Sox needed more than five innings from Sale, especially at the start of a doubleheader. He had a strong slider working, but his fastball velocity was back down to the low-90s again and he was far too inefficient, needing 97 pitches to get through five innings.

He left with the game tied, then the bullpen coughed up five runs to the worst offense in the league and the Sox took a 7-4 loss to start the doubleheader.

The Red Sox are 0-5 when Sale starts and 9-10 otherwise.

“I know who I am, I know what I can do on a baseball field,” Sale said afterward. “I know it’s y’all’s job to freak out, but I’m not worried about where I’m at or what I’m doing. I know what I’m capable of doing. Check the book. I’ve done it quite a bit. For me, it’s getting my stuff back, getting my command back and putting it all together at one time and harnessing that and carrying it through as many starts as I can.”

The problem, of course, is that this Red Sox bullpen isn’t built for depth. The back-end talent is evident, with Ryan Brasier and Matt Barnes off to excellent starts, and Brandon Workman and Marcus Walden looking like useful pieces.

But Cora was a little strapped in the ‘pen after Barnes pitched all three games in Tampa and there were 18 innings to get through Tuesday.

The manager tried to squeeze some crucial innings out of Heath Hembree, Tyler Thornburg and Colten Brewer after Sale left to a 2-2 tie after five innings and it was a disaster.

The Red Sox will live and die with their starting rotation, which has started to pitch much better and has a 3.25 ERA over their last 10 games. But when they don’t pitch deep, especially on days like Tuesday when the bullpen isn’t fully rested, things get tricky.

Hembree gave up a solo homer to Ronny Rodriguez in the sixth as the Tigers took a 3-2 lead. And though the Red Sox tied it with a solo shot from Bogaerts in the bottom of the inning, his first of two homers on the day, Brewer was knocked around for three runs in the eighth.

On offense, the Red Sox largely were shut down by left-hander Matthew Boyd, who allowed three runs on just three hits over seven innings, needing just 87 pitches.

### **Red Sox prospect Darwinzon Hernandez called up as 26th man**

Jason Mastrodonato

It’s only temporary, but Darwinzon Hernandez is getting a chance.

The talented Red Sox prospect will be added to the active roster as the 26th man for the second game of a doubleheader on Tuesday night against the Tigers.

“I think where we are as far as guys pitching today, rest, all that, he’s rested and we can use him for more than six outs,” manager Alex Cora said.

The 22-year-old lefty had an impressive spring training, when he struck out 12 in 11 innings of one-run ball. His mid-90s heater and wipeout breaking ball appear to be big-league caliber, but his command and composure are focal points for his development in Double-A Portland this year.

He has 15 strikeouts and seven walks in 10 innings while having allowed two earned runs for the Sea Dogs.

He’s been a starter in the minors, but projects as more of a reliever in the big leagues.

“That’s something we’ll talk as an organization,” Cora said. “I love what I saw in spring training when he started and came out of the bullpen. Today is we have to take advantage of the 26th man and he’s the guy here.”

Rookie Travis Lakins is also getting his first big league action, as the right-handed Lakins was called up to replace lefty Bobby Poyner, as first reported by the Pawtucket Times. A sixth-round pick in 2015, Lakins had 10 strikeouts to one walk in eight innings with a 3.38 ERA for Triple-A Pawtucket this year.

#### BOGAERTS GETTING HOT

Bogaerts hit a pair of homers on Tuesday, cranking one off lefty Matthew Boyd and another off righty Drew Verhagen.

“Prior to that, I wasn’t feeling right,” he said. “Just some stuff wasn’t clicking and then out of nowhere you hit one out, and then you hit another one. This game is so weird, man. When you’re not feeling right, all it takes is one swing or just one pitch that you’re looking for and you get it and don’t miss it and can start feeling right again. That’s the weird part of baseball, stuff like that.

“I felt I wasn’t too aggressive on the inside pitch. I was just jamming it into center field or right field or taking it. I just didn’t have that click where I see it there and I can react to it. I was in the video with (hitting coach Tim Hyers). I just came in to check on that, because something wasn’t right, and I got two pitches I was able to hit out.”

Is he feeling a hot streak coming?

“I’d take a winning streak,” Bogaerts said. “I know that hot streak is coming.”

#### **Chris Sale inefficient, bullpen blows it as Red Sox drop opener to Tigers**

Jason Mastrodonato

Chris Sale was a little bit better, but failed in the most important way.

Five innings from Sale on a day when the Red Sox needed to throw at least 18 of them — and are using swingman Hector Velazquez on the mound in the second game — isn’t good enough.

Sale had a strong slider working Tuesday afternoon against the Detroit Tigers, but his fastball velocity was back down to the low-90s again and he was far too inefficient, needing 97 pitches to get through five innings.

He left with the game tied, then the bullpen coughed up five runs to the worst offense in the league and the Sox took a 7-4 loss to start the doubleheader.

The Red Sox are 0-5 when Sale starts and 9-9 otherwise.

“I know who I am, I know what I can do on a baseball field,” Sale said afterward. “I know it’s y’all’s job to freak out, but I’m not worried about where I’m at or what I’m doing. I know what I’m capable of doing. Check the book. I’ve done it quite a bit. For me, it’s getting my stuff back, getting my command back and putting it all together at one time and harnessing that and carrying it through as many starts as I can.”

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The Red Sox will live and die with their starting rotation, which has started to pitch much better and has a 3.25 ERA over their last 10 games. But when they don't pitch deep, especially on days like Tuesday when the bullpen isn't fully rested, things get tricky.

"We've been leaning on those guys down there a lot, myself mostly," Sale said. "It would just be nice to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or finish a game for these guys and give them a day off or give a few of them a day off. It seems like every time I'm out there, I'm just leaning on these guys and that's just a tough spot to put them in."

Brewer and Thornburg have fallen into obscurity lately, having hardly pitched in the last week until Tuesday. On the bright side, Thornburg looked good. But other than the postseason, Hembree hasn't pitched well consistently since early last year.

Hembree gave up a solo homer to Ronny Rodriguez in the sixth as the Tigers took a 3-2 lead. And though the Red Sox tied it with a solo shot from Xander Bogaerts in the bottom of the inning, his first of two homers on the day, Brewer was knocked around for three runs in the eighth.

"Very frustrating," Brewer said. "We've got one job to do and that's to get outs with the game on the line, and that's something obviously I have to get better at."

The 26-year-old right-hander was acquired from the Padres in the offseason for an eight-year minor league veteran, Esteban Quiroz, who wasn't seen as a prospect but more of a minor league depth piece. It seemed like a nondescript trade at the time, but the Sox were particularly excited to get Brewer, who can throw in the mid-90s and has a curveball that generates a lot of spin.

So far, the experiment has been a failure. Brewer has allowed eight runs in 8⅔ innings with seven walks and 11 strikeouts.

"There's a lot of traffic (when Brewer pitches)," Cora said. "He did a good job this past weekend, but whenever it goes like that, and then command with the fastball is off ... His breaking ball is a good one. But at this level, you start looking, there's traffic out there, you're going to get in trouble. That's what's going on."

On offense, the Red Sox largely were shut down by left-hander Matthew Boyd, who allowed three runs on just three hits over seven innings, needing just 87 pitches.

The progress for Sale is evident, but he's far from in mid-season form.

"With Chris, strikeouts and foul balls add up to that pitch count," Cora said. "Velocity was OK. Thought the slider was good, the changeup was OK. But there were a lot of long at-bats. They did that to him last year too in Detroit. ... Give them credit for fouling off and he struck out 10 guys so we had the swings and misses. Obviously we were looking for six or seven. Hopefully that's the next step."

### **Red Sox expect six-week recovery for Nathan Eovaldi**

Jason Mastrodonato

Nathan Eovaldi had a right elbow arthroscopy to have loose bodies removed from his throwing elbow on Tuesday morning.

The typical recovery time for this surgery is four to six weeks. The Red Sox announced they expect Eovaldi to make a full recovery and be back to pitching again in six weeks.

It's the same procedure he had while with the Rays late last March. He then made his season debut on May 30, though he said over the weekend he thinks he could return even quicker this year because he's not simultaneously recovering from Tommy John surgery and didn't expect to lose any strength due to the procedure.

"He should be fine and ready to roll," manager Alex Cora said.

Hector Velazquez will fill in for Eovaldi for at least the first two times through the rotation.

## **\* *The Providence Journal***

### **Tigers 7, Red Sox 4: Boston bullpen buckles**

Bill Koch

BOSTON — This was a performance befitting the soft underbelly of a bullpen derided by so many as a glaring Red Sox weakness over the better part of the last two seasons.

Boston silenced the naysayers last year in part thanks to the unselfishness of its starting rotation. David Price and Nathan Eovaldi made multiple cameos in relief as the Red Sox rampaged their way to a ninth World Series championship in franchise history. But the regular season offers no such option, and the bridge to Matt Barnes and Ryan Brasier collapsed on Tuesday afternoon at Fenway Park.

Heath Hembree, Colten Brewer and Bobby Poyner were the culprits as Boston's modest three-game winning streak was snapped. All three were nicked for at least a single run as the Tigers surged to a 7-4 victory in the opener of a day-night doubleheader.

Josh Harrison ripped a two-run double off the Green Monster in the seventh to snap a 3-3 tie, saddling Brewer with his second loss since an offseason trade from San Diego. The Padres were an abysmal 65-97 while finishing last in the National League West — few would have cared about such outcomes at the right-hander's last stop. That's certainly not the case some 2,500 miles away on the opposite coast.

"You've got one job to do, and that's to get outs with the game on the line," Brewer said. "It's something obviously I've got to get better at."

Grayson Greiner added an RBI single up the middle against Brewer and Miguel Cabrera looped a run-scoring single to right against Poyner in the ninth. Detroit finished with 12 hits as Boston allowed at least six runs for the 13th time in just 23 games. Not even a pair of solo home runs by Xander Bogaerts could save the Red Sox from defeat.

"Every game we show up at the park and we try to win," Bogaerts said. "After losing the first one, I think we've got to have a real sense of urgency and win this next one for sure."

Chris Sale snapped his four-start losing streak with a no-decision, striking out 10 in just five innings but requiring 97 pitches to record 15 outs. Six of Sale's punchouts came on his slider, a pitch he threw 49 times on the afternoon. Ronny Rodriguez's solo homer snapped a 2-2 tie, promptly putting Hembree on the hook before a towering Bogaerts homer to left knotted the game again at 3-3 in the sixth.

"It would just be nice to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or finish a game for these guys and give them a day off," Sale said. "It just seems like every time I'm out there we're leaning on these guys, and that's a tough spot to put them in."

The Red Sox nearly squandered their first real chance against Matthew Boyd in the third, putting two men in scoring position on a Christian Vazquez walk and a Tzu-Wei Lin double down the line in right. Boyd retired the next two men he faced before hanging a curveball to Mookie Betts and paying the price. Betts hooked a line drive through the left side for a two-run single, giving Boston a 2-0 lead.

The Tigers plated the next three runs to jump in front, putting up a picket fence in the fourth, fifth and sixth. Rodriguez lined an RBI double to left-center in the fourth, the first dent against Sale to make it 2-1. Greiner tied the game with a deep drive to the Monster Seats in the fifth.

It was the 30th time Sale had struck out as many as 10 batters since his trade to the Red Sox prior to the 2017 season. Only Washington right-hander Max Scherzer has enjoyed more such games than Sale during that time frame. Last year's All-Star Game starter for the National League has put together 34 outings of 10 strikeouts or more.

"They got a piece of it when they needed to and got the runs across when they needed to as well," Sale said. "It's a step in the right direction, but still not satisfied."

#### **Tigers 4, Red Sox 2: Wasteful Boston swept away**

Bill Koch

BOSTON --- The Red Sox were on their way to a rather dismal finish the last time they were swept in a doubleheader of any kind.

The year was 2015 and Boston was in the midst of an eight-game losing streak. The Angels did the honors on July 20 of that season, as the Red Sox continued to sink toward their final destination in the American League East basement.

Only the woeful Orioles keep Boston from occupying the same spot in the standings at the moment. The Red Sox fell in the second half of their day-night engagement with the Tigers, 4-2, at a chilled Fenway Park on Tuesday.

Boston was profligate at the plate with men on base while Detroit came through on the only chance it required in the top of the fourth inning. Brandon Dixon's three-run double to the corner in left field was the kind of key swing the Red Sox failed to produce. Boston was a woeful 1-for-12 with runners in scoring position and stranded a season-worst 13 men.

"We had a lot of traffic out there and we didn't get the big hit," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "I think offensively we put a few good at-bats and then we stopped. It's not like we kept the line moving."

Not even a first career home run for Michael Chavis in the eighth could spark the Red Sox to victory. The rookie blasted a 441-foot solo shot onto Lansdowne Street, drawing one of the loudest cheers of the night from the hearty 30,578 fans on hand. The majority of their applause was saved for manual scoreboard and video updates from TD Garden, as the Bruins vanquished the Maple Leafs in Game 7 of their Stanley Cup playoff series.

The Tigers did the bulk of their scoring in a single frame. Hector Velazquez required just 39 pitches and faced the minimum through his first three innings before hitting the wall, as singles by Jeimer Candelario and Miguel Cabrera were followed by a Niko Goodrum walk. Marcus Walden was summoned and Dixon lashed a liner past the backhand of a diving Rafael Devers, clearing the bases.

"(Velazquez) got to (55) pitches and Walden has been good," Cora said. "He's been getting ground balls. It's a matchup that we recognized that we wanted. Just a hanging slider."

Boston had already set a wasteful tone by that point. J.D. Martinez bounced into a 5-4-3 double play ending the first, Jackie Bradley Jr. grounded into a 6-3 double play to finish the second and Xander Bogaerts

popped to short with the bases loaded to close the third. The Red Sox were 0-for-10 with runners in scoring position when Bogaerts finally parachuted an RBI single into short left center in the seventh, putting the Red Sox on the board.

“I don’t think we expanded the zone,” Cora said. “They made pitches and we just didn’t hit the ball in the air. It’s one of those. Right now it didn’t click offensively.”

Steve Pearce pinch hit for Devers as the go-ahead run in the seventh, with Boston arriving at the matchup it wanted against left-handed reliever Daniel Stumpf. Pearce swung over a slider from Stumpf on 3-and-2 to go down on strikes, his career .845 OPS against southpaws trailing Pearce back to the dugout. John Hicks provided an insurance run and the finishing touch with an RBI double in the ninth.

Detroit finally reached the Red Sox rookie relievers thanks to Hicks, as Darwinzon Hernandez and Travis Lakins combined to allow just one earned run over five innings. It was the big league debut for both the left-hander and the right-hander, a seemingly promising view of the future combined with two hits from Chavis. The present for Boston on this night was nowhere near as rosy.

## **\* *MassLive.com***

### **Boston Red Sox swept in doubleheader but Michael Chavis homers, Darwinzon Hernandez, Travis Lakins pitch well in MLB debuts**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — The Red Sox appeared ready to jump into the AL East race with a sweep of the first-place Rays this past weekend at Tropicana Field.

But Boston took two steps back Tuesday in its return to Fenway Park. The rebuilding Detroit Tigers swept the Red Sox in a day-night doubleheader.

Boston lost 4-2 in the second game.

The Sox lost 7-4 to the Tigers in the earlier game despite Chris Sale’s 10 strikeouts.

On a positive note, rookie Michael Chavis blasted his first major league home run. Darwinzon Hernandez and Travis Lakins also both pitched well in their major league debuts during the second game.

Chavis connected on a changeup from Tigers right-handed reliever Victor Alcántara during the eighth inning to cut the deficit to 3-2. He sent it 441 feet to left field. It had a 110.2 mph exit velocity and 27 degree launch angle, per Baseball Savant.

Hernandez pitched 2.1 scoreless innings. He allowed four hits and one walk but he struck out four, all swinging.

The lefty, who Baseball America ranks the No. 1 pitching prospect in the Red Sox system, threw 31 four-seam fastballs, averaging 94.2 mph and topping out at 96.7 mph, per Baseball Savant. He mixed in 16 sliders and three curveballs.

Lakins allowed one run, four hits and no walks while striking out two in 2.2 innings.

Hernandez allowed a leadoff double to Josh Harrison, the first batter he faced to begin the fifth. But he then retired the next two hitters on pop-outs to first base and struck out Jeimer Candelario swinging on a 96.3 mph four-seam fastball to end the inning.

Hernandez struck out the side, all three swinging, in the sixth while pitching around a walk and double.

Hernandez allowed runners to reach first and third with no outs in the seventh on back-to-back singles. But he and Lakins escaped the jam without allowing a run. Hernandez retired JaCoby Jones on a flyout to shallow right field.

Lakins relieved Hernandez. He struck out Candelario swinging on a 93.9 mph four-seam fastball for the second out. He then retired Nicholas Castellanos on a groundout to first base to end the seventh.

### **Boston Red Sox need Heath Hembree (5.88 ERA since last August) to solve slider/curveball issues**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — Red Sox reliever Heath Hembree allowed a game-tying solo homer to Ronny Rodriguez and recorded just two outs in the Red Sox's 7-4 loss to the Tigers in Game 1 of a day-night doubleheader Tuesday at Fenway Park.

Boston also dropped the second game, 4-2.

Hembree has allowed seven runs in 11.1 innings (5.56 ERA) this season. The righty's issues began during the second half of 2018. He has a 5.88 ERA, 1.50 WHIP and eight home runs allowed in 32 regular season outings dating back to August 2018. He has walked 12 and struck out 25.

His slider and curveball are the problem. He needs to figure out his secondary-pitch issues.

Nine of the 13 hits he has allowed have come against his curveball and slider. Rodriguez homered on an 81 mph curveball.

The opposition is 6-for-12 (.500) with two home runs against his slider, 3-for-6 (.500) with one homer against his curveball and 4-for-28 (.143) against his four-seam fastball.

"We talk about that and that's been going on I think since the last part of the season last year," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "His fastball plays at this level. We believe that. And if you look at the numbers and all that, his fastball, where it has to go, he gets swings-and-misses and weak contact."

Hembree is most successful when he elevates his fastball.

"He hung a breaking ball to Rodriguez right there," Cora said. "The slider hasn't been as consistent as it was last year early in the season. But we're still working. Velocity's OK compared to last year, 94-95. But we need to go with that fastball to some of the spots and obviously with breaking balls we need to make sure we expand the plate."

The Red Sox need Hembree — who threw 4.2 hitless and scoreless innings during the 2018 postseason — to get back on track because the back end of their bullpen has pitched so poorly. Cora needs to be able to rely on more relievers than just Matt Barnes, Brandon Workman and Ryan Brasier to pitch in high-leverage spots.

Cora trusted Hembree as his main reliever with inherited runners for most of last season.

"We need to get better," Cora said, discussing the back end of the bullpen. "We recognize a few guys that they're going to pitch in high-leverage situations. Today's different. Obviously because of the doubleheader. We've got some guys who are throwing the ball well. There's others that have to make adjustments and they have to get better."

### **Travis Lakins can emerge as Boston Red Sox high-leverage reliever as he showed in 'emotional' MLB debut**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — Travis Lakins found out the Red Sox were promoting him right after Triple-A Pawtucket finished its batting practice session before their game against Leigh Valley on Tuesday.

“I called my wife (Alexis) and I was like, ‘Hey, I’m going to the big leagues,’” Lakins said. “And she was like, ‘No way.’”

Lakins asked Alexis how quickly she could make it to Pawtucket’s McCoy Stadium so they could drive to Fenway Park together.

“It took her about 20 minutes,” Lakins said. “Drove here for an hour. Probably only said 10 words to each other because we were just such in shock. Just an awesome experience.”

Lakins made his major league debut Tuesday in the second game of Boston’s day-night doubleheader here at Fenway Park. He allowed one run in 2.2 innings. He gave up four hits and no walks while striking out two.

The Red Sox lost 4-2 to the Tigers.

“My dad, I talked to him for about 20 seconds because I don’t think he wanted me to hear him cry,” Lakins said. “So I talked to him, and my mom was just so emotional. So it was just an emotional experience for all of us.”

The back end of the Red Sox’s bullpen has struggled mightily. Manager Alex Cora has only a few relievers — Matt Barnes, Brandon Workman and Ryan Brasier — who he can trust in high-leverage situations.

Boston Red Sox rookie Michael Chavis belted his first career home run Tuesday. He crushed it 441 feet.

Lakins has the stuff to join Cora’s trusted group of relievers. (Marcus Walden also is showing he belongs).

The 24-year-old Lakins has had intriguing potential since the Red Sox drafted him in the sixth round out of Ohio State in 2015. But he had difficulty staying healthy as a starting pitcher. Lakins’ 2016 and 2017 seasons ended prematurely because of a stress fracture in his elbow.

The Red Sox transitioned the righty to a reliever last May. He posted a 1.21 ERA (five earned runs, 37.1 innings) in 30 relief outings between Double-A Portland and Triple-A Pawtucket. He also pitched more than one inning in 11 outings.

“I have a lot of confidence in myself that when I’m there on the mound that if I throw strikes where I want to, that I can compete,” Lakins said.

Lakins relieved Darwinzon Hernandez who also made his big league debut Tuesday. Hernandez, who pitched 2.1 scoreless innings of relief, left in the seventh with runners at the corners and one out.

Lakins stranded both runners. He struck out Jeimer Candelario swinging on a 93.9 mph four-seam fastball for the second out. He then retired Nicholas Castellanos on a groundout to first base to end the seventh.

“He did an outstanding job,” Cora said. “We pushed him hard. It’s something we needed. ... You saw the fastball up, the cutter, the breaking ball. Slowed the game down, which is good.”

Lakins called his big league debut “a dream come true.”

“I’ve been playing ball since I was 4 years old and never experienced anything like this,” he said. “Never thought of being in this position. It’s just hard to describe.”

## **Nathan Eovaldi's surgery will test Red Sox's starting pitching depth with Brian Johnson also out**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- When Brian Johnson hit the injured list with elbow inflammation in early April, it seemed to be a manageable loss for a Red Sox team that had a bunch of bullpen arms ready to fill his spot. Now, with Nathan Eovaldi likely to miss more than a month after undergoing elbow surgery, the loss of Johnson hurts Boston much more.

Eovaldi underwent successful surgery in New York on Tuesday.

Johnson was effectively Boston's sixth starter throughout 2018, making 13 starts while Drew Pomeranz, Eduardo Rodriguez and Chris Sale were sidelined. He was slated to assume that same role this year before feeling elbow pain during an appearance against the Diamondbacks on April 5 and hitting the injured list the next day.

Johnson just resumed baseball activities this week, playing catch on flat ground as he begins building himself back up. Though his progress has been encouraging after initial fears his injury could be season-ending, Johnson still appears to be far away from returning to action.

Manager Alex Cora said throughout the winter that the Red Sox were very comfortable with their starting depth, given Johnson and Hector Velazquez remaining healthy. But Johnson's injury, along with Steven Wright's health issues and 80-game PED suspension, have put Boston in a tenuous spot much earlier than anticipated.

The Red Sox had five non-regular starters make at least one start last year, with Johnson, Velazquez, Wright, Jalen Beeks and William Cuevas each filling in. Johnson and Wright are currently unavailable and Beeks and Cuevas are out of the organization, so Velazquez will be heavily relied upon until Eovaldi returns.

Velazquez has been much better as a reliever throughout his career and was expected to play an important role in the bullpen as the rare Sox pitcher who has options remaining. Instead, he'll be Eovaldi's direct replacement, at least for the next two times through the rotation.

"Hector will start today and start the next one and we'll go from there," Cora said. "We'll make adjustments if we have to. He should be fine. He's throwing the ball well, actually."

Beyond Johnson and Velazquez, the Sox have virtually nothing in terms of rotation depth, so they're suddenly one injury away from potentially needing to look outside the organization. Assuming they're unwilling to slot top prospect Darwinzon Hernandez in temporarily, the best options available in the minors are Erasmo Ramirez, Chandler Shepherd and Mike Shawaryn.

Boston's depth was crucial a season ago, with Johnson, Velazquez and Wright filling in admirably and establishing one of the deepest staffs in the American League. Suddenly, with two of those options no longer available, the Sox are putting a lot of trust in Velazquez with virtually no one ready to step up behind him.

The expectations are measured for Velazquez, who has shown value as a versatile piece over the last two years but is not viewed as a full-time starting pitcher. The Sox will need him to outperform those expectations considering the lack of options behind him.

## **Boston Red Sox's Brock Holt progressing, needs more rehab games before returning from eye injury**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- Red Sox utility player Brock Holt seems to have finally turned the corner in his return from a scratched cornea in his right eye.

After trying a series of different contact lenses over the last week, Holt has given up on eyewear and is letting the eye heal on its own. He'll stand in on Rick Porcello's bullpen between games of Boston's doubleheader against the Tigers on Tuesday after hitting off a machine over the weekend.

Holt, who was placed on the injured list on April 6 after being poked in the eye by his 2-year-old son, Griff, played one rehab game for Pawtucket last week but stopped his assignment due to issues with contact lenses. He was returned from his rehab assignment Saturday and has been in limbo since.

The Red Sox have returned Brock Holt (scratched cornea) from his rehab assignment but they did not activate him. That means he can't start another rehab assignment for five days.

Returning Holt from his rehab assignment means he has to wait at least five days before playing another minor-league game. Cora said there is no scenario in which Holt returns to the Sox without going to the minors first and that Holt could head back to Pawtucket either Wednesday or Thursday.

"We'll see how he feels (Tuesday) and if everything goes well, we'll send him," Cora said. "He needs to play. He needs to get at-bats."

Boston is currently without its top three second basemen as Holt, Dustin Pedroia and Eduardo Nunez are all on the 10-day injured list. Holt's absence, which is longer than anyone anticipated, might be the most frustrating.

"It has been a work in progress. I think finally they got it right," Cora said. "He feels better about it. He hit off the machine during the weekend and he'll do that today. I talked to him yesterday. He feels a lot better. Hopefully that's the case and he can go into games."

### **Darwinzon Hernandez, Boston Red Sox top pitching prospect, promoted as 26th man; Alex Cora explains why he was selected**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — The Boston Red Sox have promoted top pitching prospect Darwinzon Hernandez from Double-A Portland to be their 26th man on the roster for the second game of Tuesday's doubleheader. The Red Sox lost the first game to the Tigers 7-4.

Manager Alex Cora said Hernandez isn't here to piggy back Game 2 starter Hector Velazquez, a long reliever who has pitched only three innings in each of his two starts.

"Hopefully Hector goes 6 (innings) and we go to the other three guys," said Cora, referring to relievers Brandon Workman, Matt Barnes and Ryan Brasier.

But Hernandez will be used as a long reliever if Velazquez struggles.

"He's rested and we can use him for more than six outs," Cora said.

Darwinzon Hernandez recorded a 1.88 ERA (52.2 innings, 11 earned runs), 1.22 WHIP, .209 batting average against, 74 strikeouts and 25 walks in his final 10 starts for High-A Salem during 2018.

The 22-year-old is 1-1 with a 1.80 ERA (10 innings, two earned runs) in his two starts for Portland. He has struck out 15 but he has walked seven.

Hernandez — a 6-foot-2 lefty, who has upper-90s heat with a nasty slider — needs to improve his command. He averaged 5.6 walks per nine innings last year.



He's only here for today. But would the Red Sox eventually prefer to break him in as a reliever rather than a starter this year?

"That's something we'll talk as an organization (about)," Cora said. "I love what I saw in spring training when he started and when he came out of the bullpen. Today we've just got to take advantage of the 26th man and he's the guy here."

### **Red Sox's Chris Sale not pitching like himself yet, but 10-strikeout performance shows he's close**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- Alex Cora might be right. We might just get to see "the real Chris Sale" very soon.

Though the Red Sox lost their fifth straight Sale start Tuesday afternoon, there were some signs that point to Cora's prediction coming true. Even Sale, who is notoriously hard on himself and offered a brutal assessment of his season a week ago in the Bronx, admitted that he saw flashes of encouragement against Detroit.

Sale allowed four runs in five innings in Boston's 8-0 loss Tuesday night.

"I'd definitely say this is a step in the right direction," Sale said after striking out ten Tigers in five innings. "Not exactly where we want to be, but better."

Sale allowed two runs on five hits against the Tigers, inducing 14 swings-and-misses and exiting after 97 pitches with the game tied, 2-2. The bullpen allowed five runs over the next four innings in an eventual 7-3 loss, causing Sale to lament how he wasn't able to go deeper into the game.

"We've been leaning on those guys down there a lot. Myself, mostly," Sale said. "It'd just be nice to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or even finish a game off for these guys and give them a day off. It seems like every time I'm out there, we're just leaning on these guys. That's a tough spot to put them in."

Detroit battled against Sale all day, working long at-bats and driving up his pitch count with 26 foul balls. Those fouls aside, Cora was happy with the performance.

"I thought he was better than the last one as far as command," Cora said. "The changeup was okay. Besides that, we got swings and misses today. That was a good sign."

Sale's fastball velocity is no longer an issue of debate, as he flashed 95 mph Tuesday and hit 98 mph in the loss to the Yankees. Same with his command, which was much improved in a game where he threw 72 of his 97 pitches for strikes. Now it's just a matter of Sale having everything in sync and going deep into a ballgame for the first time all year.

"Just putting it all together. Having everything working at one time," Sale said. "Command, the stuff... I need to clean some things up around the edges, but we'll get there."

Sale's first month of the season has been nothing but unpleasant, as he was blown out on Opening Day in Seattle, too sick to throw hard in Oakland, chased after four innings in the home opener and, in his own words, "flat-out embarrassed" last week in New York. His confidence has never wavered despite those struggles.

"I know who I am. I know what I can do on a baseball field," Sale said. "I know it's (the media's) job to freak out. I'm not worried about where I'm at or what I'm doing. I know what I'm capable of doing. Check the book, I've done it quite a bit. For me, it's getting my stuff back, getting my command back and putting it all together at one time... then harnessing that and carrying it through as many starts as I can."

## **Is Alex Cora concerned with back half of Boston Red Sox bullpen? ‘We need to get better’**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — Four Red Sox relievers combined to allow five runs in four innings Tuesday. The Red Sox lost 7-4 to the Tigers in the first game of a day-night doubleheader.

Heath Hembree allowed a solo homer to Ronny Rodriguez in the sixth, tying the game 3-3. Colten Brewer allowed three runs on three hits (two doubles) in the eighth inning. The Tigers pulled ahead 6-3.

Bobby Poyner allowed a run on two hits and a walk in the ninth. Detroit took a 7-3 lead.

Tyler Thornburg — who pitched 1.1 scoreless and hitless innings — was the lone member of the 'pen to pitch well. Still, Thornburg's ERA dropped to only 5.59 in 9.2 innings this season.

Hembree has a 5.56 ERA in 11.1 innings. Brewer has an 8.31 ERA in 8.2 innings.

The back half of the bullpen behind Matt Barnes (2.89 ERA), Brandon Workman (2.61 ERA) and Ryan Brasier (1.59 ERA) has struggled for the most part so far in 2019.

Manager Alex Cora was asked his overall level of concern with the back half of his bullpen.

“We need to get better,” Cora said. “We recognize a few guys that they’re going to pitch in high-leverage situations. Today’s different. Obviously because of the doubleheader. We’ve got some guys who are throwing the ball well. There’s others that have to make adjustments and they have to get better.”

Marcus Walden has pitched well (2.53 ERA, 10.2 innings). Cora used him in two high-leverage spots this past weekend in Tampa Bay after Boston recalled him Thursday.

Bullpen depth is an issue right now. Cora needs to be able to trust more than just Barnes, Brasier, Workman (and maybe Walden) to pitch in high-leverage spots (and not just on days like this with doubleheaders).

Brewer and Hembree certainly didn't instill any confidence or make a strong case for more high-leverage opportunities.

## **Michael Chavis, Boston Red Sox traded Dustin Pedroia's autograph to fan in exchange for rookie's first home run ball**

Christopher Smith

BOSTON — Michael Chavis' first major league home run went 441 feet, clearing the Green Monster and traveling completely out of Fenway Park during the eighth inning here Tuesday night.

But the Red Sox still retrieved the baseball for Chavis. A father and son leaving the game found the home run ball and asked for Dustin Pedroia's autograph in exchange for it.

Easy trade.

“I need to thank Dustin because apparently he signed (another) ball so that whoever found it would give me the ball,” Chavis said. “And they were very gracious. So if they see this, thank you so much. I really appreciate it. It's not going to happen again. So it's really special.”

The Red Sox lost 4-2 to the Tigers who swept the day-night doubleheader. Detroit won the first game 7-4.

Chavis plans to give the baseball to his mother, who attended both games here Tuesday after watching Chavis debut at Tropicana Field on Saturday.

“She earned it,” Chavis said.

Wrapped in a blanket, Chavis’ mother put both her hands over her mouth as her son rounded the bases.

“I’m sure she was going crazy,” Chavis said. “After the game I gave her a big hug. Any time she can come out to a game, it’s special. Obviously we travel a lot and she doesn’t get to come out as often as she’d like. So her being here, it might have been the biggest part, honestly.”

Chavis paced himself around the bases.

“I feel like I was floating, honestly,” Chavis said. “Just kind of tried not to sprint. I’ve seen a couple videos of guys hitting their first home run and they sprint because they’re so excited. Kind of tried to act like I’ve hit a home run before and stay calm. Or calm in that kind of moment. It was special for sure.”

He felt he kept his emotions under control after his first home run more than he did after his first major league hit Saturday.

“Starting to get more comfortable, more settled in,” Chavis said. “Not to downplay it at all. It was without a doubt a special, unbelievable moment I’ll remember for the rest of my life. But that first hit was next level.”

Chavis, who Boston drafted in the first round in 2014, played both games of the doubleheader, making his Fenway Park debut.

“When I first signed they actually brought me up here (to the clubhouse),” Chavis said. “I was actually in that locker next to David Ross and (Mike) Napoli when I first signed. So I got a little glimpse of what it is like in here and what the morale was in the clubhouse. I’m actually really looking forward to taking BP. Because the last time I took BP (at Fenway) was that time after I got drafted. So that’s going to be a cool little flashback.”

## **\* *RedSox.com***

### **Chavis' 1st homer goes 441 feet, out of Fenway**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- With his mother, Dorothy Nugent, wrapped up in a blanket in the grandstands on a chilly Tuesday night at Fenway Park, Michael Chavis warmed her right up with a majestic homer that soared over the Green Monster and on to Lansdowne Street.

Boston's No. 1 prospect did not get cheated with his first homer in the Major Leagues. Chavis raked it at an exit velocity of 110.2 mph and a projected distance of 441 feet, according to Statcast. It was the longest home run hit by a Red Sox player this season.

"Oh, man, I'm sure she was going crazy," Chavis said of his mom, who traveled from Atlanta. "After the game, I gave her a big hug. Any time she can come out to a game it's special. Obviously we travel a lot and she doesn't get to come out as often as she likes, but her being here might have been the biggest part, honestly."

The certified missile by Chavis was the biggest highlight of a frustration-filled day for the Red Sox, who followed their three-game sweep of the Rays at Tropicana Field by getting swept in a day-night doubleheader by the Tigers.

After a 7-4 loss in Game 1, the Sox were edged out, 4-2, in the nightcap, leaving 13 runners on base in the process.

"It's disappointing," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Obviously you don't want to lose two. I don't know how many we left on base, but it felt like the whole game we were one hit away from getting the lead, and then you felt like the line was going to keep moving, but it didn't happen."

But at least Chavis happened.

In his first work day at Fenway Park, Chavis started both ends of the doubleheader. He was called up to the Majors last weekend in St. Petersburg, and he smoked a double on Saturday night in his first Major League at-bat.

Then came the events of Tuesday. The homer by Chavis led off the bottom of the eighth, as the right-handed hitter mashed an 85.4-mph changeup from Victor Alcántara to trim what was once a 3-0 deficit down to one.

"I felt like I was floating, honestly," said Chavis. "Just kind of tried not to sprint. I've seen a couple of other guys hitting their first home runs and they sprint because they're so excited. I kind of tried to act like I had hit a home run before and stayed calm in that kind of moment. It was special for sure."

That was as close as Boston got, as the Tigers tacked on an insurance run in the ninth.

While the present state of affairs wasn't so uplifting for the Red Sox on a day they fell to 9-15, some glimpses of the future -- which could be coming sooner than you think -- presented some encouraging developments.

Before Chavis livened up the crowd with his towering shot, the Red Sox welcomed two of their top pitching prospects to the Major Leagues.

Of particular interest was the debut of Darwinzon Hernandez, who was called up between games as the 26th man. The lefty with electric stuff struck out four and didn't allow a run over 2 1/3 innings. He also showed poise weaving out of traffic.

"The ball moves all over the place," said Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire. "Another guy that has good stuff. He's got a short arm. We haven't seen that much of him, so we're trying to gauge ourselves and try to pick it up and see what he's got. But he threw well."

And when Hernandez (Boston's No. 4 prospect) walked off the mound with runners at the corners and one out in the seventh to a nice ovation, the other prospect came in for his debut. That was righty Travis Lakins, and he got Hernandez out of that jam with no runs across. Lakins went 2 2/3 innings, giving up a run and striking out two.

"It's just the dream come true, you know?" Lakins said. "I've been playing ball since I was 4 years old and never experienced anything like this, never thought of being in this position, and it's just hard to describe."

The start the Red Sox are off to is equally hard to describe. The defending World Series champions didn't lose their 15th game until May 18 last year, at which time they were 30-15. This time the 15th defeat comes on April 23, just 24 games into the season.

"We know we can be better," said Cora. "We haven't had like a big offensive output out there that we can enjoy it and breathe and relax and just have fun offensively. Hopefully we can get it together and keep working at it, and it happens soon."

While the Red Sox work feverishly to cure what ails them, the Chavis family relished their memorable moment.

"It was very exciting. I'm humbled," said Nugent. "There truly aren't enough words to describe this when you think about a little kid at the age of 3 and 4 saying he wants to be a baseball player, which is every little kid's dream. It's amazing I'm sitting here at Fenway and the organization has been phenomenal. It's been incredible and I'm very, very blessed to be a part of it."

### **Hernandez notches 4 K's in big league debut**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- Top Red Sox pitching prospect Darwinzon Hernandez thought he was holding his emotions in check rather well in his Major League debut on Tuesday night.

But then came the moment he had to face Miguel Cabrera. Just like the future Hall of Famer who has spent most of his career with the Tigers, Hernandez is also from Venezuela.

To any aspiring baseball player from that country, Cabrera is the one to be awed by.

Facing Cabrera with one out in the sixth of an eventual 4-2 loss for the Red Sox, the 22-year-old Hernandez issued the only walk of an impressive first appearance.

"I got emotional," Hernandez said through interpreter Ramon Vazquez. "I'm a fan of his, but at the same time, I wanted to get the job done."

Called up to be Boston's 26th man for the second game of a day-night doubleheader, Hernandez did get the job done, holding the Tigers to no runs while striking out four over 2 1/3 innings of relief.

Hernandez -- ranked No. 4 by MLB Pipeline in Boston's farm system -- was returned to Double-A Portland after the game, where he will continue in the starting rotation until the Red Sox need him again.

The Red Sox had another intriguing prospect make his debut on Tuesday in righty Travis Lakins, who fired 2 2/3 innings and gave up four hits and one run, walking none and striking out two.

"It's just the dream come true, you know?" Lakins said. "I've been playing ball since I was 4 years old and never experienced anything like this, never thought of being in this position, and it's just hard to describe."

To make room for Lakins on the roster, the Sox optioned lefty Bobby Poyner to Triple-A Pawtucket.

"It was really good. It was fun to watch. You can see the stuff from Darwinzon," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Lakins did an outstanding job. We pushed him hard, because it was something that we needed. You saw fastball up, the cutter and the breaking ball. He slowed the game down, which was good."

Fenway could spark JBJ

With Jackie Bradley Jr. off to another slow start at the plate (.141/.200/.172, two extra-base hits), Red Sox manager Alex Cora thinks that the team's 10-game homestand could provide the spark the left-handed hitter needs.

According to Cora, it isn't just playing at Fenway that will benefit Bradley. It's more about all the batting practice.

"A lot of chases [so far]," Cora said. "A lot of swings and misses. I think coming here and being here, what, 11 days, 12 days, whatever it is, I think it's going to help him out. Just hit a few balls the other way, hit the wall and get them going. Even in batting practice, just get that path and start flipping balls the other way and be like, 'OK, I can do that.' Stay on the fastball left-center and whenever they hang a breaking ball, just pull it with power. Hopefully it starts in the upcoming days."

After sitting in Game 1 against lefty Matthew Boyd, Bradley went 0-for-3 with a walk in Game 2.

Emergency catcher is ...

Last year, the Red Sox didn't need an emergency catcher because they carried three on the roster nearly all season.

This year is a different story. And with Christian Vázquez serving as the designated hitter in Game 1 on Tuesday (0-for-2, run, walk) and Sandy Leon (0-for-2) behind the plate, it was worth asking Cora who he would use in the case of an emergency.

"We have [Tzu-Wei] Lin now, so he can be our third catcher. Early in the season, there was a game in ... Oakland. I was like, 'Who's going to be catcher?' I didn't have too many volunteers, to say the least. So Lin will be the third catcher."

Does Lin (1-for-3, double, run) have enough training to be able to catch in a Major League game?

"Enough that he can do it. He's worked with [Jason Varitek] before. So he'll be OK," Cora said.

### **Sale reaches 10-K mark for first time in '19**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- This time, Red Sox ace Chris Sale didn't say that he was embarrassed for his family, his team and the city of Boston.

Though Tuesday's performance against the Tigers hardly represented Sale's end goal, he at last felt some progress amid the most disappointing start to a season he has ever had.

Sale allowed two runs and two walks while notching a season-high 10 strikeouts. He took a no-decision as the Red Sox lost Game 1 of a day-night doubleheader, 7-4.

"I'd definitely say this is a step in the right direction," Sale said. "Not exactly where we want to be but better."

Making his fifth start of the season, Sale had mixed results. But he also had a body of work to build on heading into his next start, which will likely be on Sunday at Fenway against the Rays.

The good? Sale had 10 strikeouts in a start for the first time since Aug. 12, 2018, and his team was right in the game (tied at 2) when he departed. He lowered his ERA from 8.50 to 7.43.

"Yeah, I mean, I at least gave my team a chance to win when I left the ballgame," Sale said.

The bad? Sale lasted just five innings and threw 97 pitches while giving up six batted balls of 100 mph or more for the third time this season. For context, Sale had just one start last season when he gave up that much hard contact, and it was in Game 1 of the American League Division Series against the Yankees, when he was still building back up after spending most of the second half on the injured list.

"Stuff is starting to get there, but I need to extend these outings a little bit," Sale said. "It would just be nice to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or finish a game for these guys and give them a day off or give a few of them a day off. It seems like every time I'm out there, I'm just leaning on these guys and that's just a tough spot to put them in."

The Tigers were pesky in this one, hitting a ton of foul balls on two-strike counts. How can Sale prevent that?

"Just putting it all together," Sale said. "Kind of having everything working at one time. With the command, with the stuff. They were swinging the bats a lot today and that obviously helped me in some ways, but too many foul balls, too many deep counts, walked a couple guys. I need to clean some things up around the edges. But we'll get there."

The good? Sale's slider looked mostly electric, and he generated seven swinging strikes and 14 called strikes out of the 49 that he threw.

"He's tough," said Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire. "He's throwing mid-90s and he's got that big, looping back-door breaking ball and he's got one that goes down and in at your back foot. So he's tough and he's going to punch out guys. That's what he's known for and that's what he does. But he had a good day. Punched out a whole bunch of us. Believe me, I'm writing them down so I knew it better than anybody."

The bad? After averaging 95.4 mph with his fastball in his last start at Yankee Stadium, Sale was down to 92.7 mph in this one.

"With Chris, strikeouts and foul balls add up to that pitch count," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Velocity was OK. Thought the slider was good, the changeup was OK. But there were a lot of long at-bats. They did that to him last year, too, in Detroit. Give them credit for fouling off, and he struck out 10 guys so we had the swings and misses. Obviously we were looking for six or seven [innings]. Hopefully that's the next step."

Bogaerts belts a pair

If not for Xander Bogaerts, the final score of Game 1 would not have been competitive. But the shortstop belted a pair of solo shots over the Green Monster. The first one tied the game at 3 in the bottom of the sixth.

In so doing, Bogaerts emerged from a recent slump in which he had just five hits and one extra-base hit in 24 at-bats.

"Prior to that [first homer], I wasn't feeling right," Bogaerts said. "Just some stuff wasn't clicking and then out of nowhere you hit one out, and then you hit another one. This game is so weird, man. When you're not feeling right, all it takes is one swing or just one pitch that you're looking for and you get it and don't miss it and can start feeling right again. That's the weird part of baseball, stuff like that."

What had been bothering Bogaerts?

"I felt I wasn't too aggressive on the inside pitch," Bogaerts said. "I was just jamming it into center field or right field or taking it. I just didn't have that click where I see it there and I can react to it. I was in the video [room] with [hitting coach] Tim [Hyers]. I just came in to check on that, because something wasn't right, and I got two pitches I was able to hit out."

### **Eovaldi has elbow surgery, out 6 weeks**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- Red Sox right-hander Nathan Eovaldi underwent arthroscopic surgery to address loose bodies in his right elbow on Tuesday. He's expected to return to action within six weeks, the team said.

The surgery was the same procedure Eovaldi had in March 2018, when he was a member of the Rays.

In that circumstance, Eovaldi pitched for Tampa Bay two months after having the procedure, but he was also returning from Tommy John surgery.

This time, the recovery should be a little swifter, and Eovaldi could slot back into Boston's rotation by late May or early June, depending on the length of a likely Minor League rehab assignment.

Eovaldi has made four starts this season, going 0-0 with a 6.00 ERA. His most recent outing was his best, as he held the Yankees to three hits and zero earned runs over six innings on Wednesday, but the next day, the 29-year-old righty felt discomfort in his right elbow and received a familiar diagnosis.

Eovaldi was placed on the 10-day injured list prior to Saturday's game against the Rays.

Eovaldi had a visit in New York on Monday with Dr. Christopher Ahmad. Shortly after that, the decision was made to schedule surgery.

"I went right into the surgery [in 2018], and it worked out really well for me," Eovaldi told reporters on Saturday. "It's one of those things where we're at in the year, too. It's so early in the season, we have a lot of time left, we don't want anything to get worse toward the end of the season. I felt like the procedure went really smoothly last year and the recovery was fast. It's two weeks until you have your range of motion back."

Spot starter Hector Velazquez will fill Eovaldi's spot in the rotation for at least the next couple of turns, Red Sox manager Alex Cora said on Monday.

In fact, Velazquez will start Game 2 of Tuesday night's day-night doubleheader against the Tigers.

After starring for the Red Sox throughout last year's postseason, Eovaldi signed a four-year, \$68 million contract to remain with Boston.

## **\* *WEEI.com***

### **Michael Chavis ready for challenge of balancing baseball, beliefs**

Rob Bradford

It was one of Michael Chavis' welcome to the big leagues moments.

The rookie already had his first major league hit -- managed one day before at Tropicana Field -- when the spotlight of being a member of the Red Sox hit home in a completely different manner.

Chavis' religious beliefs and approach toward discussing them on social media had started a buzz on social media. It was the kind of conversation that jumps up a level once a player hits the top level of their craft, as the 23-year-old found out.

While Chavis clearly just wanted to fit into the Red Sox' clubhouse, while contributing on the field for his new team (which he did once again with a solo homer in the Sox' Game 2 loss to the Tigers Tuesday night), he wasn't about to back off his approach and beliefs he feels built his foundation for success.

That much was clear when talking about his balance of living life as a rookie big leaguer and Christian with WEEI.com Tuesday morning.

"It can upset some people which personally I don't really understand," Chavis said. "I think somebody's faith is their personal thing, obviously. Given the platform that I have been given, this opportunity, I think it would be a waste if I didn't use it to try and spread the word. I'm not going to be some kind of missionary where I'm pushing it on everybody and shoving it in their face. But I think the way I carry myself and the way I go about my business in praising the Lord I think I just focus on it. It's not something that I'm trying to push. Like I said, I'm not trying to force it on people. I think it's something I try and show in how I do my stuff. I'm not trying to be John the Baptist or anything like that. I just want to show



that if I'm in this position if I can bring one or two people to Christ and show there is a different light in me I think that would be a big difference."

Chavis' approach to spreading the world of Christianity isn't anything new, as is evident by the tweet he has pinned on the top of his account since March 1, 2015.

But considering the delicate balance that is a baseball clubhouse, and all the personalities and background that inhabit it, Chavis understands this won't all be simply about what he wants.

While there are other players on the Red Sox deeply rooted in faith - such as Sandy Leon, Nathan Eovaldi and Jackie Bradley Jr. - the Major League Baseball environment isn't always conducive to prioritizing religious beliefs. (For an excellent article on that dynamic, [click here](#).) It's a balance, one which Chavis is ready to embrace.

"It's kind of a tough area for me right now being the new guy and trying to find my spot in the clubhouse. I don't want to be a distraction for anybody," Chavis said. "I'm still going to use my platform to praise God and it's going to be part of my life. That's not going to change. I just have to make sure this doesn't become a distraction that shows up in the clubhouse. Obviously, there are other Christian guys in the organization and in the clubhouse as well. I think the focus should be on baseball and winning ballgames."

There are, of course, Christian athletes who have come before Chavis who the infielder can lean on. Most notably, Tim Lincecum.

Chavis was barely a teenager when Lincecum was winning a National Championship as the quarterback for the Florida Gators. He was well aware of Lincecum's faith, which was routinely surfaced due to the "3:16" he was putting on his eye black (the Bible verse was subsequently searched for on the internet more than ever before) and Lincecum's propensity to kneel in prayer after each touchdown.

So when Chavis got a chance to meet Lincecum this year while their respective Triple-A clubs were playing it only buoyed the Red Sox' prospects beliefs.

"He's a role model of mine," Chavis said. "It's kind of cool I got a chance to play against him. I know there are some people who aren't fans of him but I'm a fan of him, I'm not going to lie. I think the way he handles himself, it's not only professional but is a great example of a Christian man. A lot of people hear about him they don't want to believe or say it's fake, but while I won't say he's my best friend being around him I think he's a pretty genuine person.

"(Meeting Lincecum) was honestly a big moment for me. He's a role model for me as a Christian. He handles his business and he goes about it the right way. He praises God in everything he does and he doesn't let anything else deter him."

Now Chavis views it as his turn.

### **Red Sox bullpen is officially becoming a concern**

Rob Bradford

Chris Sale wasn't the story in his team's 7-4 loss to the Tigers Tuesday afternoon. That was unfortunate for the Red Sox.

While the Red Sox ace still didn't display his dominant self throughout a five-inning, two-run outing, he was good enough to suggest some optimism. There were the 10 strikeouts and a fastball that was somewhere in between good and uncomfortable (averaging 92 mph, maxing out at 94 mph).

No, Game 1 of the doubleheader between the Red Sox and Tigers was won and lost at the feet of the hosts' bullpen. This time it was Heath Hembree and Colten Brewer who paved the way for what is becoming a growing concern regarding a good chunk of these relievers.

"We need to get better," said Cora, whose team dropped to 9-14. "We recognize a few guys that they're going to pitch in high-leverage situations. Today's different with the doubleheader. We've got some guys throwing the ball well, there are others that need to make adjustments and get better."

Hembree's job was to keep things close after Sale's departure. It didn't work out. The righty reliever continued his struggles, having now allowed eight runs over his 11 1/3 innings after giving up a run on two hits with a walk in just 2/3 innings.

Then after the Red Sox crawled back into a tie with Xander Bogaerts' sixth-inning solo homer, (the first of two on the day for the shortstop) Brewer was called upon to get some high-leverage outs in the eighth inning. That didn't work out either.

The righty put runners on second and third with one out before allowing a two-run double to Josh Harrison. Harrison was, by the way, hitting just .130 at the time of the extra-base hit. A Grayson Grenier RBI single tacked on another run to boost Brewer's ERA to 8.31 and batting average against to .316.

Bobby Poyner punctuated the relief-pitching situation by allowing another run on a pair of hits in the ninth.

Since April 13 the Red Sox relievers carry an ERA of 7.20.

As Sale pointed out after the loss, the amount of innings the bullpen continues to be needed for doesn't help matters either.

"We've been leaning on those guys down there a lot, myself mostly," Sale said. "It would just be nice to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or finish a game for these guys and give them a day off or give a few of them a day off. It seems like every time I'm out there, I'm just leaning on these guys and that's just a tough spot to put them in."

## **\* *NBC Sports Boston***

### **Remember the Rays series that saved the Red Sox season? It was a mirage**

John Tomase

BOSTON - You know what they say about momentum -- it's only good until the Tigers come to town for a doubleheader.

So much for Tampa Bay. The Red Sox swept the Rays over the weekend in a taut series that featured solid starting pitching, timely offense, and just enough relief to make the Red Sox finally feel like defending champions after three rocky weeks.

We viewed that result with appropriate restraint, however. The lethargy afflicting the Red Sox wouldn't just disappear over a weekend in St. Pete. Come back to Fenway and keep it rolling. Then we could talk.

One doubleheader sweep later, we mourn the loss of their momentum, which slightly outlived the common housefly.

Serious question: Can someone explain what the hell's going on? The Red Sox returned the core of the greatest team in franchise history, virtually everyone's in their prime and healthy, and yet they're still somehow on pace to follow last year's 108-win machine with a 61-win shipwreck.

No one expects them to finish that poorly, of course, but 15 percent of the season is over and the Red Sox have dug themselves a nice little hole.

They visited Tampa last week trailing in the AL East by eight games, left on Sunday trailing by five with renewed life, and two days later find themselves seven back again. That's called two steps forward, one step into traffic.

"It's disappointing," manager Alex Cora admitted. "Obviously you don't want to lose two."

Problems abound. Ace Chris Sale may have struck out 10 in the opener Tuesday, but still struggled to put people away. The Tigers fouled off a staggering 26 pitches, extending at-bats and limiting Sale to five innings as the Red Sox dropped to 0-5 when he starts.

He didn't take the loss because the bullpen took that responsibility off his hands with four horrible innings of five-run ball, the pivotal blow a go-ahead homer off of right-hander Heath Hembree.

The nightcap told a different story, this one featuring offensive futility. The Red Sox went 1-for-12 with runners in scoring position, and 3-4 hitters Mitch Moreland and J.D. Martinez combined to leave 12 runners on base by themselves (Martinez hit into a double play for good measure).

Rookie Michael Chavis at least provided some life in the eighth with the first home run of his career, a 441-foot shot over everything in left, but rookie reliever Travis Lakins gave it right back in the bottom of the frame and the Red Sox went quietly in the ninth.

Such diversity of despair has been the story of their season. As many different ways as the Red Sox won last season, that's how varied their modes of defeat are now. Each night brings a new spin on the wheel of misfortune.

The postgame clubhouse offered a truly jarring juxtaposition, with veterans who perhaps already feel their season slipping away quietly packing up and getting the bleep out while rookies Chavis, Lakins, and Darwinson Hernandez held press conferences in varying degrees of exuberance -- Chavis over his first homer, and the other two celebrating their major-league debuts.

Maybe an infusion of youthful enthusiasm is exactly what the team needs. The Red Sox clubhouse is an understandably grim place right now. Shortstop Xander Bogaerts, one of the only all-around standouts at the moment, admitted between games that the team would need to play the nightcap with urgency.

The Red Sox played hard, but it didn't matter. That's what happens when you think you have momentum, at least until the Tigers show up for two.

### **Forget about Chris Sale, Red Sox bullpen is becoming the real problem**

John Tomase

BOSTON - If every Red Sox deficiency this season were to spring from the Green Monster like leaks in a dike, the team would run out of fingers before it jabbed the hole marked "bullpen."

Chris Sale is only throwing 88! Nathan Eovaldi needs surgery! Mookie Betts is hitting .200! Jackie Bradley's not hitting at all! Ramon Laureano keeps throwing everyone out! Rick Porcello can't throw a strike! Etc. ...

With such high-profile targets to bemoan, we understandably lost track of the setup corps, which also escaped notice by virtue of the Red Sox trailing for most of their first 10 games. Relievers can't protect leads that never existed.

The last week has retrained our focus, though, and not in a good way.

It started in Yankee Stadium on Wednesday with two of the supposed reliables -- setup man Brandon Workman and co-closer Ryan Brasier -- combining to spit up Brett Gardner's go-ahead grand slam. It continued at Tropicana Field with another stalwart, veteran right-hander Matt Barnes, surrendering a pair of eighth-inning home runs in games the Red Sox eventually won.

And it revealed itself in particularly ugly fashion in the first game of a doubleheader Tuesday vs. the Tigers, when the trio of Heath Hembree, Colten Brewer, and Bobby Poyner allowed seven hits and five runs in just 2.2 innings, turning a 3-3 game into a 7-4 loss.

It continued a miserable pattern. The quartet of Brasier, Barnes, Workman, and Marcus Walden is 6-1 with a 2.38 ERA in 41.2 innings. The rest of the bullpen has been a mess, however, going 1-2 with a 7.47 ERA in 47 innings, which includes a mop-up frame from infielder Eduardo Nunez, but ignores a pair of three-inning spot starts from Hector Velazquez.

"We need to get better," acknowledged manager Alex Cora. "We recognize a few guys that they're going to pitch in high-leverage situations. Today's different with the doubleheader. We've got some guys throwing the ball well, there are others that need to make adjustments and get better."

The bulk of that failure belongs to Hembree, Brewer, and Tyler Thornburg, at least two of whom were expected to pitch meaningful innings this season, and a third -- Brewer -- considered one of the most intriguing players in camp.

Eovaldi expected to miss six weeks after elbow surgery>>>>

Brewer's problem is strikes. He has walked seven, including a leadoff free pass to Niko Goodrum that kick-started a three-run seventh. He then served up the kill shot, a two-run double halfway up the Monster by Josh Harrison with the Red Sox optimistically playing the infield in. His command is MIA.

"Very frustrating," Brewer said. "We've got one job to do and that's to get outs with the game on the line, and that's something obviously I have to get better at."

"It is early in the year, but [command] could definitely be better than it has been, and that's something I'm going to work on, for sure."

For Hembree, the issue is secondary offerings. The home run he allowed to Ronny Rodriguez came on a curveball, continuing a trend that has seen a pitcher nicknamed "Heater" get beaten by his second and third pitches despite owning a 95 mph fastball.

"We've been talking about that, and that's been going on, I think, since the last part of the season last year," Cora said. "His fastball plays at this level. We believe that, and if you look at the numbers and all that, his fastball where it has to go, he gets swings and misses and weak contact."

"He hung a breaking ball to Rodriguez right there. The slider hasn't been as consistent as it was last year or the early part of the season, but we're still working. Velocity is OK compared to last year -- 94, 95 -- but we need him to go with that fastball to some of the spots and obviously with breaking balls, we need to make sure we expand the plate."

Cora praised Thornburg on Tuesday morning for pitching better than his numbers, and he responded with the only effective relief outing of the afternoon, striking out two over 1.1 perfect innings.

The Red Sox will need more of that as they attempt to overcome a mediocre 9-14 start that leaves them only 2.5 games ahead of the Marlins for the worst record in baseball.

That's a far cry from where we expected them to be nearly a month into the defense of their World Series title, but then again, the bullpen is just one of many leaks in need of plugging.

## **How a quick-thinking Dustin Pedroia made sure Michael Chavis wouldn't lose out on memento of a lifetime**

John Tomase

BOSTON - As Michael Chavis approached a small group of cameras awaiting his thoughts on the first home run of his career, a reporter accidentally stepped in his way.

Chavis sidestepped, spun, and tossed a Kobe-esque finger roll at an imaginary rim. We can only assume it swished.

On an otherwise lost night for the Red Sox, who swept in a doubleheader at the hands of the Tigers, Chavis provided one of the few highlights -- a mammoth 441-foot home run over everything in left field that allowed him to fulfill a childhood dream and circle the bases as a big leaguer.

"I felt like I was floating, honestly," Chavis said after a 4-2 defeat in the nightcap. "Just kind of tried not to sprint. I've seen a couple of other guys hitting their first home runs and they sprint because they're so excited. I kind of tried to act like I had hit a home run before and stayed calm in that kind of moment. It was special for sure."

Even more special was the way he retrieved the ball. Whoever corralled it on Lansdowne Street -- a father and son leaving the park, per NESN's Guerin Austin -- gladly turned it over when injured Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia signed a ball and offered it in exchange.

"I need to thank Dustin," Chavis said. "Apparently, he signed a ball so whoever found it would give me the ball and they were very gracious so if they see this, thank you very much. I really appreciate it. It's not going to happen again, so it's really special."

Chavis had the ball in a sock to keep it from being damaged and planned to hand it over to his mom, Dorothy, who led an emotional, enthusiastic cheering section of three or four in the family seats at Fenway.

"Without a doubt," he said. "She earned that ball."

Added Chavis: "Oh, man, I'm sure she was going crazy. After the game, I gave her a big hug and it's always, just, any time she can come out to a game, it's special. Obviously, we travel a lot and she doesn't get to come out as often as she likes but her being here might have been the biggest part, honestly."

Four games into his career, Chavis owns a crucial double vs. the Rays for his first hit, and now a homer. He's floating all right, like Kobe soaring to the rim.

**WATCH:** Michael Chavis hits his first major-league home run>>>>

"I'm starting to get more comfortable, more settled in, not to downplay it at all, it was, without a doubt, a special, unbelievable moment I'll remember for the rest of my life, but that first hit was next level," Chavis said. "The moment in the game and me not really being aware, it was just wild. It was a notch below that one, but it's still a life-long memory for sure."

## **\* *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

### **Long, unproductive day at ballpark sees Red Sox take a step backward**

Sean McAdam

The emotional highlight of a day at Fenway that featured 18 innings and nearly six a half hours of baseball for the Red Sox? You could make the argument that it came late in Game 2 when the center field scoreboard showed the Bruins' final score.

Beyond that, there was the first major league homer for Michael Chavis, and the back-to-back debuts of Darwinzon Hernandez and Travis Lakins who combined to throw four innings in Game 2 and limit the Detroit Tigers to a single run. So, good for them.

Otherwise, there wasn't much. In the afternoon, the Sox suffered a drab 7-4 loss to the Tigers, and hours later, they were stifled 4-2. In the two defeats combined, they were a horrific 2-for-15 with runners in scoring position.

In neither game did the starter go far enough to help the Sox. Chris Sale was dominant at times with 10 strikeouts in Game 1 but thanks to an inflated pitch count, he was done after five innings. The Red Sox bullpen then was tagged for five runs in his wake.

In Game 2, Hector Velazquez got them into the fourth before getting the hook, but at least he had the excuse of being a spot starter. The real issue in the night game was the team's complete inability to deliver a hit — any hit — when in counted. It's not easy to strand 13 baserunners, but the Sox somehow managed.

Sure, there were the personal highs for two pitchers making their major league debuts, with each acquitting themselves well. And there was the Chavis, clubbing a no-doubter over everything in left in the eighth.

But the focus on the newbies gave the day a feel of a September game, with expanded rosters, individual highlights and not much left for which to play.

Which, of course, isn't the case. Yet, that is.

After their weekend sweep of the streaking Rays in St. Petersburg, the Red Sox had reason to think they had turned the corner. They were, at last, getting (mostly) strong performances from their starting rotation. They were producing quality at-bats against hard-throwing opposing pitchers. And they were finding ways to win close games in the late innings — all positive signs.

But whatever momentum the Red Sox seized at Tropicana Field seemed to evaporate on a dreary, overcast marathon day at Fenway. One reliever after another failed them in the afternoon. Then, as if striving to spread the blame, the lineup came up empty in the nightcap.

"It's disappointing," acknowledged Alex Cora. "Obviously, you don't want to lose two."

All of this came against a thoroughly mediocre Detroit Tigers bunch ticketed for the lower half of a mediocre A.L. Central, probably pleasantly surprised to be at the .500 mark when the day began, and very likely secretly ecstatic to be two games over at the end of the second game.

A return to Fenway and the start of a 10-game homestand offered the Red Sox a path back to respectability and contention. All they needed to do was continue what they had started at the end of their road trip.

Instead, the Sox took two big steps backward.

Now that the starting rotation has stabilized and begun to pitch to expectations, the Sox can next turn their focus on a bullpen that is distinctly hit-and-miss. For the most part, Matt Barnes, Ryan Brasier and Brandon Workman had been dependable and at times dominant — and everyone else has been an adventure.

Then there's the lineup which, while featuring some hitters with impressive slash lines, can't seem to collectively get it in gear.

"Right now, we're not clicking offensively," said Cora. "It's been going on for the first part (of the season). We know we can be better. Hopefully, we can get it together, keep working at it and it happens."

For a team with considerable offensive firepower and potential, the Sox have yet to have a laugh 24 games into the season. Not once have they erupted for, say, six or seven runs in the first few innings, putting the pitching staff at ease and suggesting a true breakout is in store for the lineup, top to bottom.

Having fixed their most obvious problem (the rotation), there are others that remain unresolved.

And just when it seems like they've turned a corner, they run smack into another wall.

### **BSJ Game Report: (Game 2) Tigers 4, Red Sox 2 – Rookies can't help Sox earn split**

Sean McAdam

Offense fails again: The Red Sox managed baserunners in every inning but one against Detroit, but couldn't get much accomplished. They stranded a staggering 13 men on base and were a woeful 1-for-12 with runners in scoring position. They put the leadoff man on in five different innings and had multiple baserunners in seven of the nine innings, but could never seem to get the big hit they needed. "I don't think we expanded the zone," said Alex Cora. "But they made pitches and we didn't hit the ball in the air. It's one of those things. Right now, we're not clicking offensively. It's been going on for these 20-something games. We know we can be better." The Sox haven't put together a blowout win, really, all season and over the last 11 games, haven't scored more than six runs in a game. Numerous times, the Sox had the hitters they wanted at the plate. But in 20 plate appearances from Mookie Betts, Mitch Moreland, J.D. Martinez and Xander Bogaerts, they got just three hits — all of them singles.

Chavis has another milestone: On Saturday night, Michael Chavis collected his big league hit. On Sunday, he made his first major league start. On Tuesday afternoon, he made his first start at Fenway. And in the nightcap, he cranked his first homer and collected his first RBI. It was not cheap — measured at 441 feet, it cleared everything in left and was the longest home run hit by a Red Sox hitter this season. "It was special for sure," said Chavis. "I was a little more controlled (than I was with the first hit). I'm starting to feel more comfortable and settled in. Not to downplay it at all, because I'll remember it for the rest of my life, but that first hit (in Tampa) was next level." Chavis's mom was at the game and was shown on NESN celebrating the homer. Chavis got the ball from someone who retrieved it and said he would give the keepsake to his mother.

Two Red Sox pitchers make their debut: From the fifth inning on, the Red Sox used two rookie pitchers to record the final 16 outs of the game. First came lefty Darwinzon Hernandez, who was added to the roster from Double A Portland as the Red Sox' 26th man for the day-night doubleheader. In both the fifth and sixth innings, Hernandez bailed himself out of trouble, stranding a leadoff man on second with no outs in the fifth, then escaping a first-and-third, two out mess in the sixth. "He was fun to watch," said Alex Cora. In all, Hernandez pitched 2.1 scoreless innings with four strikeouts. Next came Travis Lakins, who wasn't told he was being called up until mid-afternoon in Pawtucket. He pitched 2.2 innings and allowed a run on four hits. "Dream come true," said Lakins. "I've been playing ball since I was four years old and never dreamed I'd be in this position."

#### **TURNING POINT**

In the fifth inning, trailing 3-0, the Red Sox had baserunners at first and second and one out with their 3-4-5 hitters coming up, but Moreland hit into a force out and Martinez went down swinging, ending the threat.

#### **ONE UP**

Andrew Benintendi: A rare bright spot at the top of the order, Benintendi was on base four times (hit-by-pitch, three singles) in an ultimately futile effort to kickstart the Red Sox' offense.

#### **TWO DOWN**

J.D. Martinez: Before managing a one-out single in the ninth, Martinez had a horrendous day, grounding into a double play and then twice striking out with two runners on both times.

Jackie Bradley Jr.: The struggle continues for Bradley who was 0-for-3 with a walk and is hitting .134 for the season.

#### STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

The doubleheader sweep against the Sox was their first since July 20, 2015 against the Angels.

The Sox were 1-for-12 with RISP and stranded 13 on base.

Andrew Benintendi had his seventh multi-hit game of the season.

Christian Vazquez has thrown out his last four would-be basestealers.

#### QUOTE OF NOTE

“I kind of tried to act like I’d hit a home run before and stayed calm.” Michael Chavis on his first major league homer.

#### UP NEXT

The Red Sox and Tigers continue their series at 7:10 Wednesday night LHP Eduardo Rodriguez (1-2, 7.20) vs. RHP Tyson Ross (1-2, 3.38)

#### **BSJ Game Report: Game 1 – Tigers 7, Red Sox 4 – Bullpen comes up short after Sale provides only 5 IP**

Sean McAdam

#### HEADLINES

**Bullpen trips up:** The Red Sox ran out four relief pitchers, but only one was effective. The big culprit was Colten Brewer, who entered a tie game in the eighth but issued a leadoff walk and allowed three more hits to lead to a three-run inning for the Tigers. Over his last four outings, Brewer has pitched three innings and allowed seven runs on eight hits and three walks. Alex Cora didn’t want to go one of his high-leverage relievers in a tie game, with another game coming up tonight, and paid the price. “I didn’t have great command and started finding it toward the end (of the inning), but it wasn’t early enough,” said Brewer. “Very frustrating. We’ve got one job to do and that’s to get outs with the game on the line. That’s something I obviously I’ve got to get better at.” Earlier, Heath Hembree wasn’t much better, yielding a one-out solo homer in the sixth to hand the Tigers a lead. The game marked the fourth time in the last six games that the Red Sox bullpen has given up multiple runs.

**Sale improved, but out early:** In terms of results, this was easily the best outing Chris Sale has had in the first month, as he fanned 10 Tigers and allowed just two runs. But because the Tigers ran up his pitch count early (44 pitches in the first two innings alone), Sale only gave the Red Sox five innings, during which he threw 97 pitches. A number of Tigers forced eight- and nine-pitch at-bats with a lot of foul balls, extending Sale more than he would have liked. “The stuff is starting to get there,” said Sale, who for the first time this year did not absorb a loss, “but I need to extend these outings a little bit. I’d definitely say this is a step in the right direction; not exactly where we want to be, but better.” Sale said a key would be throwing more strikes, but also, putting hitters away sooner after he gets ahead early. It was interesting to note that Sale threw sliders for almost exactly half his pitches (48 of 97).

**Bogaerts carries the offense:** In general, the lineup was pretty quiet, managing just five hits. Two of them came from Xander Bogaerts, who produced a pair of solo homers. He has four RBI in his last two games and again demonstrated how he makes Fenway work for him. In clearing the Monster Seats twice with homers, Bogaerts now has 71 RBI in his last 74 home games. Bogaerts has been one of the Red Sox’ most consistent hitters in the lineup this season, having reached base in 18 of his last 19 games while posting a



slash line of .309/.392/.515. Other than Bogaerts, the Sox offense produced little – in five of their nine innings, they sent just three hitters to the plate and had just three at-bats with runners in scoring position.

#### TURNING POINT:

With the game tied at 3-3, Colten Brewer entered in the eighth...and promptly issued a leadoff walk to Niko Goodrum, opening the way for a three-run inning for the Tigers as three of the next four Detroit hitters who came to the plate reached on base hits.

#### ONE UP:

Tyler Thornburg: After going unused over the weekend in St. Petersburg, Thornburg was the lone effective reliever of the afternoon, retiring all four hitters he faced, including two by strikeout.

#### TWO DOWN:

Michael Chavis: After blasting a double in his first major league at-bat Saturday, Chavis is hitless in his next nine plate appearances, going 0-for-4 in Game 1.

Bobby Poyner: The lefty gave up a run on two hits and a walk in the ninth, and after the game was optioned to Pawtucket.

#### QUOTE OF NOTE:

“Step in the right direction, but still not satisfied.” — Chris Sale.

#### STATISTICALLY SPEAKING:

Red Sox pitchers have recorded 40 strikeouts in the last three games.

Mookie Betts, who knocked in two runs with a third-inning single, is hitting .364 with RISP this season.

JD Martinez saw his 11 game-hitting streak come to an end. The game also marked the first time this season that he failed to reach base.

Steve Pearce became the first Red Sox hitters since Aaron Hill in 2016 to reach base via catcher's interference.

UP NEXT: The Red Sox and Tigers resume their day-night doubleheader tonight at 7:10 with RHP Hector Velazquez (0-1 2.84) vs. RHP Spencer Turnbull (0-2, 3.43)

## \* ***The Athletic***

### **The kids are all right — but little else is, as doubleheader sweep marks a low for Red Sox**

Chad Jennings

As it turns out, Alex Cora's best opportunity to win Tuesday came in the first game of this day-night doubleheader. But even after the rainout on Monday, even with Chris Sale starting Game 1, even though bullpen reinforcements were on their way, the Red Sox manager decided not to put his best relievers into a tied game. He went with his lesser arms and lost.

“Not with the doubleheader and not with the usage over the weekend,” Cora said. “It had to be (with) the lead in the eighth.”

The Red Sox never got a lead in the nightcap, and at that point, bullpen management became pointless. The ensuing doubleheader sweep at home — against the lowest-scoring team in the American League — was a low point in this season full of them.

One of the many Red Sox problems is the dilemma Cora faced on Tuesday: Half of his bullpen has pitched well, half has not, and when the good half is overworked — as it was over the weekend — Cora has to either push his best guys beyond his comfort zone or roll the dice with relievers who have been allowing runs at an alarming rate. It's hard to know when this offense might actually string some hits together, so Cora has to pick his battles, and it's not always clear which battles are worth fighting.

Enter Darwinzon Hernandez and Travis Lakins.

Added to the roster between games, those two pitching prospects made their big-league debuts in the nightcap. Hernandez went 2 1/3 scoreless innings, providing much-needed long relief while pitching around a leadoff double and striking out four. Lakins was brought into a jam in the seventh and got out of it, then he pitched a scoreless eighth before allowing a run in the ninth. Those two ultimately gave the Red Sox a chance.

“We saw what they had in spring training, both of them,” Cora said. “Obviously, when you see it on this stage and the game on the line, quote unquote, it's fun to see. We knew at one point they were going to contribute, and they did today. They helped us out to hopefully accomplish stuff tomorrow because of where we were pitching-wise. But, those two kids — we're going to turn this around, and like I said in spring training, they're going to contribute to what we're trying to accomplish.”

As Blake Swihart learned last week, the Red Sox can hardly turn away from incremental upgrades at this point. The old guard of the bullpen turned a winnable game into a loss. The new kids turned a losing effort into a potential win — with an assist from recent call-up Michael Chavis, who hit his first career home run in the nightcap. Given the state of this team, it's hard to ignore things like that.

Lakins will stick around for now. Hernandez has been sent back to Double A — he was the 26th man added strictly for the doubleheader — but the Red Sox can't ignore his potential as either a long man or a fifth starter. One game doesn't mean much in the grand scheme of things, but it's something. And the Red Sox have to be on the lookout for anything that can help.

The back end of the bullpen has not been a problem. When leading after six innings, the Red Sox are 4-1. When leading after seven innings, they're 5-0. Leading after eight innings, they're 4-0. Tuesday's opener was the Red Sox first loss when tied after six and only their second loss when tied after seven. When the Red Sox have put their best relievers into winnable situations, those relievers have done the job. But there are three problems with the Red Sox bullpen.

#### 1. It's carrying too much of the workload

Even with Cora limiting the rotation's innings last season, the 2018 Red Sox ranked 13th in the majors in relief innings. So far this season, they rank sixth. There have been only two series when the difference between the rotation's workload and the bullpen's workload was more than three innings. The rotation has averaged just 4 2/3 innings per start.

“We've been leaning on those guys down there a lot, myself mostly,” Sale said. “It would just be nice to go out there and fill up seven or eight innings or finish a game for these guys and give them a day off, or give a few of them a day off. It seems like every time I'm out there, I'm just leaning on these guys, and that's just a tough spot to put them in.”

#### 2. The middle-inning alternatives haven't pitched well

Matt Barnes, Ryan Brasier, Brandon Workman and Marcus Walden have combined for a 2.38 ERA. Those four pitched a combined 10 1/3 innings over the weekend to sweep the Rays, but Cora can't use them like that all year. Heath Hembree, Tyler Thornburg, Colten Brewer and Bobby Poyner — the four relievers Cora used in Tuesday's first game — have a combined 6.75 ERA. Poyner was optioned back to the minors between games. Brewer has allowed at least three runs in two of his past four appearances. He has options remaining.

“We’ve got one job to do,” Brewer said, “and that’s to get outs with the game on the line, and that’s something obviously I have to get better at.”

3. There haven’t been enough late-inning leads to protect

A third of Brasier’s appearances have been with a score tied or the Red Sox losing. Workman has pitched with a lead only three times. Walden’s entered with a lead only once. Barnes has twice gone four days without pitching.

“We recognize a few guys that they’re going to pitch in high-leverage situations,” Cora said. “We’ve got some guys throwing the ball well, there are others that need to make adjustments and get better.”

There’s nothing Hernandez and Lakins can do about giving the Red Sox a lead, but they can ease the workload and they can give Cora alternatives when a game is close and the team’s waiting for the offense to break out.

Hernandez said he got emotional when he faced Miguel Cabrera, who’s an icon in his native Venezuela. It was Hernandez’s only walk of the night, but he followed it with a strikeout, then another to strand runners at second and third.

Lakins said he hardly said a word to his wife during the hourlong drive from Pawtucket to Boston. When he called his father to tell him he’d been called up, “I talked to him for about 20 seconds because I don’t think he wanted me to hear him cry,” Lakins said. Riding all that emotion, he entered with one out and runners at the corners and got out of the jam.

It was a hefty first impression. If the Red Sox were six games over .500, it might have been little more than a silver lining on a bad day, but six games below .500, the Red Sox don’t need silver linings. They need anyone who can make them better, and through 18 innings on Tuesday, the two new guys were the best thing the Red Sox had going.

## **\* *The Detroit Free Press***

### **Detroit Tigers sweep Boston Red Sox in doubleheader: 3 observations from win**

Anthony Fenech

BOSTON – It doesn’t matter how they did it. It matters that they did it.

Spencer Turnbull was wild but didn’t allow any runs, the Detroit Tigers’ offense missed opportunities but not the big hit, and their bullpen did just enough to sweep the defending World Series champions in a doubleheader at Fenway Park.

In the nightcap, they won, 4-2, thanks to another unlikely contributor.

This time, it was Brandon Dixon, who was recalled from Triple-A Toledo over the weekend and hit a three-run double into the left field corner.

Despite Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire needing to call on nearly every reliever in his bullpen – a couple of whom pitched in the first game, a couple others who arrived sometime after the game – Dixon’s double stood as the game-winner and the Tigers won both games.

It was their first doubleheader sweep at Fenway Park since Aug. 20, 1965, according to Baseball-Reference.com.

Turnbull’s movement worked both for and against him; he walked four batters and hit three others, but he never allowed Boston to capitalize on their threats.

He pitched five innings, allowing no runs on three hits.

Dixon's double, just inside the third base line and into left field, was the biggest hit. On the play, Niko Goodrum scored from first base.

The Tigers' bullpen allowed two runs in four innings – Joe Jimenez struggled again, unable to escape the seventh – and Shane Greene picked up his 11th save.

The Tigers are 12-10.

Here are three observations from the Tigers' win over Boston:

1. The offense: Dixon's double was the big hit, but the Tigers totaled double-digit hits in both games of the doubleheader, and perhaps most importantly, added on to their leads. In this win, it was John Hicks doubling home Ronny Rodriguez in the ninth. Rodriguez doubled; he hit three doubles total on the day. Another potential run – Hicks – was thrown out at home plate after a Jeimer Candelario single. But the biggest run is a run that increases a team's lead to two.

2. The bullpen: I'm not sure how Gardenhire did it, but somehow he mixed and matched for the final three innings to keep the Red Sox from tying the game. In the seventh, Jimenez was given another opportunity to right the ship, but he allowed three hits. With two outs and runners on first and third base, Daniel Stumpf recorded a big strikeout of Steve Pearce. In the eighth, Gardenhire got an out from Victor Alcantara and two from Zac Reininger. The game felt like it would slip away, but never did.

3. A flashback: The closest the Tigers came to relinquishing the lead came with one out in the eighth, two batters after Alcantara allowed a solo home run to Michael Chavis. On the play, Christian Vazquez hit a lofting line drive to right-center field. Nicholas Castellanos, on the warning track, made a jumping catch. The play was eerily reminiscent of David Ortiz's grand slam in the eighth inning of Game 2 of the 2013 American League Championship Series, sending Torii Hunter over the fence in what proved to be a fateful blow to the Tigers that year. This time, the outcome was different, and they won.

## **\* *Associated Press***

### **Sale remains winless as Tigers beat Red Sox in DH opener**

BOSTON -- Chris Sale remained winless and frustrated, but at least he saw a slight improvement. That was about the closest thing to good news for the Boston Red Sox on Tuesday.

Sale struck out 10, but it wasn't enough as Detroit beat Boston 7-4 to start the Tigers' first doubleheader sweep at Fenway Park since August 1965. Spencer Turnbull (1-2) pitched five shutout innings for his first major league win, leading the Tigers to a 4-2 victory in the nightcap that left the Red Sox at 9-15.

"It's a long day. Fortunately for us, we came out on top and healthy," Detroit manager Ron Gardenhire said.

The Red Sox, meanwhile, came out of it confused and wondering what it will take to turn around what has been a dismal month for the World Series champions.

Brandon Dixon greeted Marcus Walden with a three-run double after the Tigers loaded the bases against Game Two starter Hector Velazquez (0-2), and the Red Sox were swept in a twin-bill for the first time since the Los Angeles Angels accomplished the feat on July 20, 2015.

"Obviously, you don't want to lose two," manager Alex Cora said. "We had a lot of traffic out there and we just didn't get the big hit."

About all Boston had to celebrate at the end of the day was Sale avoiding another loss (he didn't figure in the decision) and the Bruins' 5-1 win over Toronto in Game 7 of the opening round of the NHL playoffs.

Sale gave up two runs, five hits and two walks, lowering his ERA from 8.50 to 7.43. The 30-year-old, who signed a \$160 million, six-year contract late in spring training, had never gone his first five starts in a big league season without a victory.

"A step in the right direction, but I'm still not satisfied," said Sale, who managed not to take a loss for the first time this year.

Sale clearly felt better than after an 8-0 loss last week at the New York Yankees, which he called "flat-out embarrassing."

Sale said his velocity continued to improve, but had some command issues again.

"I need to clean some things up around the edges, but we'll get there," Sale said. "I can't make them put the ball in play, but I can fill up the strike zone and throw strikes."

Sale, who won his first nine starts with the Chicago White Sox in 2016, left after 97 pitches with the score 2-2.

"I felt that he was better than the last one as far as like command," Boston manager Alex Cora said. "Give them credit for getting the pitch count up in five innings, then they did what they did with the bullpen."

Matthew Boyd (2-1) combined with three relievers on a five-hitter against Boston, starting a 10-game homestand after a three-game sweep at Tampa Bay. Josh Harrison hit a tiebreaking, two-run double in the eighth off Colten Brewer (0-2) and scored two pitches later on a single by Grayson Greiner.

In the second game, Shane Greene struck out two in a one-hit ninth for his 11th save in as many tries. The opener was Detroit's first win that Greene did not save.

Boston stranded seven runners against Turnbull and 13 in all.

Bogaerts blooped an RBI single in the seventh off Joe Jimenez and Mike Chavis cut the deficit to 3-2 in the eighth against Victor Alcantara with his first big league homer. John Hicks hit an RBI double in the ninth against Travis Lakins, who made his big league debut and allowed four hits in 2 2/3 innings.

Detroit has won four of five and swept a doubleheader for the first time since Sept. 22, 2016, at Minnesota.

## MOVES

Boston recalled Lakins from Pawtucket and LHP Darwinson Hernandez from Double-A Portland ahead of the nightcap. Hernandez made his debut when he started the fifth inning Tuesday night. He was replaced with one out and two on in the seventh by Lakins, who struck out Jeimer Candelario and retired Nicholas Castellanos on a groundout. Hernandez allowed four hits, walked one and struck out four in 2 1/3 innings.

## TRAINER'S ROOM

Tigers: SS Jordy Mercer, placed on the 10-day IL last week with a right quadriceps strain, will continue his rehab at extended spring training in Lakeland, Florida. Gardenhire said Mercer could be back in four or five days. ... Gardenhire dropped Harrison from leadoff to seventh in the batting order and hit Candelario first. Harrison had a pair of hits in the opener and two more in the nightcap to raise his average from .122 to .159.

Red Sox: RHP Nathan Eovaldi had surgery Tuesday to remove a loose body in his right elbow and is expected to miss about six weeks. Eovaldi had similar surgery on March 30 last year while with Tampa Bay and made his season debut May 30. He also has had two Tommy John operations.

UP NEXT

Detroit RHP Tyson Ross (1-2, 3.38 ERA) takes on Boston LHP Eduardo Rodriguez (1-2, 7.20) on Wednesday night.

### **Boston's Eovaldi out 6 weeks after elbow surgery**

BOSTON (AP) — Red Sox starter Nathan Eovaldi had surgery Tuesday to remove a loose body in his right elbow.

The arthroscopic procedure was performed by Yankees head team physician Dr. Christopher Ahmad at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. Boston said Eovaldi is expected to return to pitching within six weeks.

"I don't want to give a timetable, but I think everybody knows around what it's going to take," Boston manager Alex Cora said before Tuesday's doubleheader with the Detroit Tigers. "He should be fine when he comes back and ready to roll."

A 29-year-old right-hander, Eovaldi had similar surgery on March 30 last year while with Tampa Bay and made his season debut May 30. He also has had two Tommy John operations.

Acquired by the Red Sox on July 25, Eovaldi went 3-3 with a 3.33 ERA in 12 games. He became a postseason star when he pitched six-plus innings of relief and threw 97 pitches in Game 3 of the World Series, an 18-inning loss to the Los Angeles Dodgers. That preserved the rest of the bullpen for the Red Sox, who beat the Dodgers in five games.

The 29-year-old agreed to a \$68 million, four-year contract and was 0-0 with a 6.00 ERA in four starts this season. He pitched for the Yankees in 2015 and '16.