

The Boston Red Sox Thursday, September 12, 2019

*** *The Boston Globe***

Here's why the Red Sox aren't playing a game on Friday

Julian McWilliams

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It's becoming more common around the league. The Oakland A's, for example, had an offday on Friday, Aug. 2, and then played the St. Louis Cardinals in a two-game series. The Red Sox did it last year in April.

The Red Sox also had a Friday off on June 28 this season because of the two-game London series June 29-30 vs. the Yankees.

Manager Alex Cora said the scheduling all around this year has been different, to say the least.

"I don't remember having an offday on Friday. I don't remember having an offday on Labor Day. I don't remember having too many offdays in August," Cora said. "I think you should play baseball on Fridays."

Cora said they will take advantage of it.

"I was talking to [executive vice president Brian O'Halloran] and [assistant GM] Eddie Romero and a team dinner sounds good on Friday or a staff meeting," Cora said. "We'll pick a good place in Philadelphia. It's weird. It's just weird."

For Jackie Bradley Jr., all the days look the same and run together during the season.

"It's nothing I really do differently on a weekend that I would do on a weekday. My job is the same, I guess," Bradley said.

Fading Red Sox put 'in a tough spot' after getting shelled by Blue Jays

Julian McWilliams

The Red Sox have 16 games left. They are 10 games out of a wild-card spot. Let's just say something unprecedented would have to happen for them to play beyond Sept. 29.

The Red Sox ran into a buzzsaw Wednesday night against the Toronto Blue Jays.

For the second night in a row, the Sox were outplayed, falling, 8-0, and extending their losing streak to five games.

"Obviously we didn't expect to be in this situation," manager Alex Cora said. "The effort is there, but the results are not. Obviously, everybody's disappointed at what's going on. It hasn't been good the last 10 days, offensively."

In the last five games, the club has scored just nine runs. Four Blue Jays pitchers limited the Sox to two hits Wednesday, both singles, which snapped a 159-game streak with at least one extra-base hit.

“We can’t string along a couple of hits,” Xander Bogaerts said afterward. “We get a lot of guys on base to create opportunities and we haven’t been at our best doing that.”

The Blue Jays, meanwhile, blitzed the Sox’ pitching for 12 runs in the last two games. They jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the fourth inning.

With reliever Trevor Kelley on the mound in a bullpen game for the Sox, the Blue Jays’ Cavan Biggio doubled on a ball that third baseman Rafael Devers botched in left field. Devers was camped under the ball and should have made the play, but had to run back on it. It’s much easier to run in than back, and Andrew Benintendi, the left fielder, had a better angle at it.

“[Rafael] has made that play a lot of times,” Cora explained. “But he was in the shift. It was a long way and I think [Benintendi] should have taken over.”

Biggio then stole third and scored on Vladimir Guerrero Jr.’s sacrifice fly.

Rowdy Tellez then hit his 19th homer of the year — seven coming against the Red Sox.

Ryan Weber yielded four straight one-out singles, which put Toronto up, 4-0. That’s when Cora went to Brian Johnson, who induced Tellez to pop out. Cora then summoned Travis Lakins, who immediately surrendered a double that scored two. Next, Teoscar Hernandez’s two-run shot off Lakins extended the Blue Jays’ lead to 8-0.

“It was just a matter of location,” Lakins said. “I left a couple of pitches up in the zone and they did damage on them.”

The damage to the Sox’ season might have been done after they got swept by the Yankees last month in New York. Or after the injuries to David Price and Chris Sale. At each turn this season, this Red Sox team has been subjected to one disappointment after another.

The recent firing of president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski felt like the white flag.

This is uncharted territory. Unusual circumstances nobody predicted.

“It’s never fun when you’re not winning,” Mitch Moreland said. “We’ve put ourselves in a tough spot.”

Clay Buchholz will be making a pitch for his future against the Red Sox

Peter Abraham

Clay Buchholz has been a professional baseball player for 15 years now. He’s played for two World Series champions, thrown a no-hitter, and twice been an All-Star.

He’s also been stuck on a few last-place teams and dealt with more injuries than he cares to remember.

“Sometimes it feels like I’ve seen all this game has to offer,” the 35-year-old Toronto Blue Jays righthander said.

But Thursday night will be something different for Buchholz. He’ll be pitching against the Red Sox for the first time in his career.

Buchholz spent 10 seasons with the Sox and many of the hitters he faces will be old friends. He lingered on the field after the Blue Jays took batting practice on Wednesday to catch up with a few of them.

Christian Vazquez came over to give his old battery mate a hug. So did Brock Holt and Andrew Benintendi.

Alex Cora, now the manager of the Sox, was the shortstop when Buchholz made his major league debut on Aug. 17, 2007 against the Angels. Cora had an RBI double off John Lackey in the first inning to help Buchholz get the win.

“There’s quite a few guys over there I know,” Buchholz said. “But pitching against them won’t be a big deal. A little weird, but that’s baseball. I’ve been gone from Boston a few years now. My job is to go out there and try to beat them. It’ll be a challenge and should be fun, too.”

Buchholz is 8-7 with a 3.47 earned run average in 26 starts since Dave Dombrowski traded him to the Philadelphia Phillies before the 2017 season.

He has made only eight starts for Toronto this year because of a shoulder injury that kept him out for 3½ months. He has allowed eight earned runs over 17⅔ innings since returning.

“I want to see him pitch. It’s been a while,” Cora said. “I’m glad that he’s still pitching.”

Cora compared Buchholz to Edwin Jackson, the 36-year-old righthander who keeps hanging in there year after year with different teams.

“Those guys, you see them when they were young,” Cora said. “For them to keep performing at this level is a testament to who they are. I’m glad that he’s still around. He’s a good teammate and has had a great career.”

Buchholz is scheduled for three more starts this season and hopes to make a good enough impression on the Jays — or another team — to get a shot for next season.

He’s not ready to give up what he loves doing.

“I definitely wanted to get back before the season ended to pitch a few games and see if I could open a gate to next season,” Buchholz said. “It’s no secret the game is trending toward younger players but I feel good physically and can help a team.”

Buchholz has averaged a modest 90 miles per hour with his four-seam fastball this season but still has a wide array of off-speed and breaking pitches.

At a time when pitchers increasingly rely on high fastballs and breaking balls in the dirt, Buchholz can work side to side and keep hitters off-balance.

“It seems like everybody’s weak point is that chest-high fastball,” Buchholz said. “The game has changed. You used to throw a low fastball to get guys out and if you missed upstairs it was a homer. Now you can’t miss low. But it will change in time; it always does.

“I’ll still take command over velocity. That’s a good way to pitch. Usually hitters come out swinging and that’s good for me because I can manipulate the ball and make it move.”

Buchholz said the biggest difference he has found since leaving Boston is the difference in expectations.

“Even when we didn’t have our best teams in Boston, there was pressure to win and when we didn’t, we heard about it,” he said. “I got to Philadelphia and they were talking about going .500 and that was different. I couldn’t understand that.”

Buchholz enjoys the artistry of pitching and being in a position to help younger teammates. He hopes to play at least another few years.

But there are some conditions to that. He wants a major league contract or at least a legitimate opportunity to make a team out of spring training. His days of pitching in the minors are over.

“I told my agent that,” Buchholz said. “I feel like I’m capable of pitching as well as I did five or six years ago. It’s not about money. It’s about considering myself a major league pitcher.”

If the only opportunity is the minors, Buchholz will go back to Texas and be a full-time dad to his four kids and work on his golf game. But however it plays out, he hopes to get back in the game in some capacity after he retires from playing.

“I still love it,” he said. “I feel like I’d have something to offer with all the different experiences I’ve had.”

Rafael Devers made Red Sox history with 50th double

Julian McWilliams

Rafael Devers is in a class by himself.

Devers’s 50th double on Tuesday night against the Toronto Blue Jays put him in the Red Sox history book. It marked only the ninth time a Sox player has done that in a single season. But for Devers, who turns 23 next month, the double makes him the youngest Red Sox player to accomplish the feat.

The only MLB players to hit 50-plus doubles in a season before turning 23 are Alex Rodriguez (54 in 1996) and Manny Machado (51 in 2013). They were both 20.

Devers’s teammate Xander Bogaerts, 26, is also primed to join the 50-doubles club, needing only one.

“It feels great,” Devers said through team interpreter Bryan Almonte Wednesday prior to the Red Sox’ 8-0 loss to the Blue Jays. “Obviously we’re trying to finish strong, but it feels good to hit that mark.”

Devers grew up idolizing Adrian Beltre. His 50 double places him ahead of Beltre, who tallied 49 doubles with the Sox back in 2010.

“It makes me really happy. I actually didn’t even know that,” Devers said. “Everybody knows how I feel about Adrian Beltre, he’s my favorite third baseman growing up. To be mentioned in the same breath as him in the season that I’m having is really special.”

Devers’s huge leap this season puts him among the best hitting third basemen in the majors. For players with a minimum of 500 plate appearances, Devers’s .314 batting average entering Wednesday ranked third among third basemen behind Anthony Rendon and D.J. LeMahieu. If you exclude LeMahieu, who plays multiple positions for the Yankees, Devers is second. Devers’s OPS, meanwhile, was fourth in the majors, trailing Rendon, Alex Bregman, and Nolan Arenado, who are all All-Stars.

“I know what I have to do and the type of job that I have,” Devers said.

Looking for something to do

The Red Sox will have a rare offday Friday in Philadelphia before playing a two-game set against the Phillies on Saturday and Sunday. Sox vice president of communications, Kevin Gregg, described it as a scheduling quirk with all the two-game interleague series. Some teams requested to play on the weekends even for two-game series. So, the Phillies picked a two-gamer with the Sox on the weekend.

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"It's nothing I really do differently on a weekend that I would do on a weekday. My job is the same, I guess," Bradley said.

Pitching help

David Price (wrist) threw a 20-pitch bullpen session Wednesday afternoon, and Cora said that overall it went well.

"[He threw] all the pitches," Cora said. "He felt good. We'll see how he reacts tomorrow and we'll go from there."

Reliever Heath Hembree (elbow) seems to be making progress, too. Hembree also threw a bullpen and the team is shooting for him to throw a simulated game, most likely Saturday.

"If he can clear that hurdle," Cora said, "his return is getting closer and closer."

Rotation changes

The Red Sox started Bobby Poyner on Wednesday instead of Jhoulys Chacin so they could give Chacin an extra day of rest. Chacin will start Thursday and remain in the rotation for the rest of the season with Chris Sale done for the year and the uncertainty around Price.

"He has a good slider," Cora said. "He obviously knows what he's doing on the mound. The slider plays and we knew that coming into this situation. Fastball location has been better."

More than anything, though, Chacin is an 11-year veteran and has been a resource for some of the younger players.

"In the clubhouse he's been amazing," Cora said. "Talking to Darwinzon [Hernandez] and Eduardo [Rodriguez] that's things that you need, leadership. Guys that can talk the game and help others. In such a short period of time, he's well accepted in the clubhouse."

*** *The Boston Herald***

Red Sox lifeless in 8-0 loss to Blue Jays

Steve Hewitt

The Red Sox' postseason hopes are all but over at this point, but the inevitable may be coming even sooner than expected.

A lackluster month continued its downward spiral with another low note on Wednesday night. A pitching performance led by a cast of September call-ups turned bad quickly, and the offense put on a dismal display at the plate as the Red Sox fell to the Blue Jays with an uninspiring 8-0 loss at Rogers Centre for their fifth consecutive defeat.

"Nobody, for sure, expected us to come here and lose these first two games against these guys," said Xander Bogaerts. "Regardless of where we were in the standings or how much of a chance we still had or didn't have, all the guys on this team are good enough to collectively beat the Blue Jays. It hasn't been that way these last two games. It's been really, really rough."

The Red Sox (76-70) knew they needed a strong September and some help to stay in the wild-card race, but they've failed to even help themselves.

They pulled within five games of the second wild-card spot on Sept. 1 after a win over the Angels, but have taken a deep dive since. The Sox have now lost seven of their last nine and were in danger of falling 10 games back of a playoff spot late Wednesday, with just 16 games remaining.

"We didn't expect to be in this situation," Alex Cora said. "The effort is there but the results are not. Obviously everyone is disappointed with what's going on, and it hasn't been good the last 10 days offensively."

The Sox' MLB-leading offense has scored just nine runs over the five-game losing streak, including being shut out twice. They scratched together just two hits on Wednesday against the Jays, and just one through the first eight innings.

To make matters even worse, both hits were singles, which ended the Red Sox' streak of 159 consecutive games with an extra-base hit, which was the fourth longest in modern league history.

"It's just been a tough couple of days," said Mitch Moreland. "I guess really the last three or so have been kind of tough. Maybe trying to do a little too much, everybody's trying to make something happen and score runs or at least give us some opportunity but we haven't really done it. Got to kind of figure out a way to recover and come back and find a way tomorrow."

In his first career major-league start, Bobby Poyner threw two perfect innings as an opener, but the bullpen imploded behind him. The trio of September call-ups Trevor Kelley, Ryan Weber and Travis Lakins combined to give up all eight runs, and the Sox didn't stand a chance after that.

The knockout punch came in the fifth as the Jays scored six runs. Lakins served up a two-run double to Randal Grichuk and a two-run homer to Teoscar Hernandez that were the daggers.

"I felt the same, I felt great, I just left a couple of pitches up in the zone and they did damage on them," Lakins said.

The Jays opened the scoring in the third when Devers couldn't catch a difficult pop fly down the left-field line from Cavan Biggio, who was credited with a double on the play. He eventually scored on a sac fly from Vladimir Guerrero Jr. before Rowdy Tellez continued his damage against the Red Sox with a solo home run, his seventh homer against them this season.

The Sox offense was then shut down by the combination of Wilmer Font, Trent Thornton, Jason Adam and Ryan Tepera. Thornton pitched five no-hit innings and struck out seven to earn the win.

Though the Red Sox are close to being officially out of the race, Cora said they're coming to the park with the same mindset.

"Play good baseball," he said. "It doesn't matter, nothing changes. Preparation is the same, conviction is the same, we gotta play good. That's what we're here for. We're not going to punt — obviously we're going to take care of players and all that, but we're talented enough to win games, and that's what we're trying to do."

Moreland seemed to think there's still a chance the Sox can miraculously come back.

"We're kind of putting ourselves in a tough spot but it's not done yet," Moreland said. "That's enough motivation as it is right there. We've just got to get back on track. That's the biggest thing."

Rafael Devers savors health as he hits 50-double mark

Steve Hewitt

Rafael Devers always knew he was capable of the type of offensive explosion he's having this season, even if his age might indicate otherwise. Among other things, it took him some more luck with his health to help him reach his goals.

The Red Sox third baseman added to his historic season in Tuesday night's loss to the Blue Jays as he hit his 50th double of the season. At age 22, he became the youngest player in team history to hit that mark, and first to do it since Dustin Pedroia hit 54 in 2008.

For Devers, it was just the latest feat in a special season that's seen him touch the record books alongside the likes of Red Sox legends Ted Williams and David Ortiz. And for him, it all goes back to health. Last season, his first full year in the majors, was disjointed because of multiple injuries that forced him to miss 41 games, but he's hasn't been hurt at all this year, which has allowed him to flourish.

"That's been the biggest thing that's contributed to the success that I've had this season," Devers said. "I haven't had any really real injuries like I've had in past years, so the fact that I'm fully healthy is why I'm having the season that I'm having this season. ...

"If I stay healthy, I know the kind of offensive game that I have, so I'm just really fortunate to be healthy this year."

It might surprise some to see what Devers was doing at his age, but he doesn't think his youth is a factor.

"It feels great, but just because I'm the youngest doesn't really mean much at the same time because we're all grown men," Devers said. "I know what I have to do and the type of job that I have, so I'm just really thankful to be able to have that."

But it does certainly allow those to wonder what could come next. The only other players in MLB history to hit 50 doubles before turning 23 are Alex Rodriguez and Manny Machado. Amidst a lost season for the Red Sox, Devers' performance might be the biggest source of optimism for the future.

"I think I'm just continuing to learn, and there's a lot of room left for me to grow," Devers said. "During the offseason I'll go and check out what it is I need to work on to get better because that's what I love to do, just to learn more about my game and try to get as much knowledge as possible. But obviously if I can stay healthy, I know I can have more successful seasons like I am now."

AN OLD FRIEND

Nearly three years after he was traded, Clay Buchholz will make his first career start against the Red Sox in Thursday's series finale. The 35-year-old Buchholz, who pitched with the Red Sox for 10 seasons, has

again had injuries derail his season with the Blue Jays as he's made just eight starts. But he's returned to make two quality starts in his last three outings.

"I want to see him pitch, yeah," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora, who was teammates with Buchholz in 2007 and 2008. "It's been a while. I'm glad that he's still pitching, kind of like Edwin Jackson. Those guys, you see them when they were young and for them to keep performing at this level, it's a testament to who they are, work ethic and being a good baseball player. You don't keep getting jobs because you need arms. You have to perform and I'm glad that he's still around. He was a good teammate. He threw that no-hitter. When he got called up, that was a special day. He's had a great career."

PRICE PROGRESSES

David Price (wrist) threw a 20-pitch bullpen on Wednesday, and Cora said he used all of his pitches.

"He felt good," Cora said. "We'll see how he reacts (Thursday) and we'll go from there. It was a positive."
...

Heath Hembree (elbow) also pitched a bullpen, and Cora said the reliever could pitch a simulated game this weekend. ... Jhoulys Chacin's Wednesday start was pushed back to Thursday to give him another day after he pitched twice last weekend. Bobby Poyner made his first career start as an opener on Wednesday. ... Mookie Betts had a scheduled day off Wednesday. Brock Holt took his spot as the leadoff hitter and right fielder.

*** *The Providence Journal***

Third straight series defeat represents much more for Red Sox

Bill Koch

The question made Xander Bogaerts grimace in disbelief.

The Red Sox had just been held without an extra-base hit in a game for the first time in almost a full calendar year. Noah Syndergaard and the Mets handcuffed Boston on Sept. 14 of last season, a rare blip on the way to a World Series title.

Both that game and Wednesday night's against the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre ended the same way – an 8-0 shutout defeat. Last year's Boston team had every right to expect a bounceback the following day. This current club sealed its third straight series loss, this one coming against a Toronto club that sits 32 games under .500.

"In a year? I wish we knew that before," Bogaerts said, his face dropping a bit. "They pitched good."

Jackie Bradley Jr. and Brock Holt each doubled the next afternoon against New York, a 5-3 victory at Fenway Park on Sept. 15. Holt managed one of two singles for the Red Sox on this night, and Blue Jays pitching set down 16 straight Boston hitters during one stretch. Trent Thornton faced 16 batters and allowed a lone walk, as the right-hander struck out seven and picked up the victory after being summoned in the top of the third inning.

"It's never fun when you're not winning," Mitch Moreland said. "We've got to start over tomorrow and get back on track."

It's a bit reckless to suggest Bogaerts, Moreland and their teammates have stopped trying. Boston bench coach Ron Roenicke is fond of saying that most teams who can't score runs tend to look flat, and he's right. The Red Sox were about as energetic as the crowd of 14,463 fans under the closed roof.

But it's certainly appropriate to wonder whether or not Boston is finally accepting its reality. The Red Sox will not be playing in October on the sport's grandest stage while all three of their playoff opponents from a season ago – the Yankees, Astros and Dodgers – are cruising towards another shot at a championship. Los Angeles has already clinched the National League West title.

“We didn't expect to be in this situation,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “The effort is there, but the results are not. Obviously everybody is disappointed in what's going on.”

That feeling was a palpable one in a quiet Boston clubhouse late Wednesday night. Players shuffled out of the showers and through the main locker room, some with their heads bowed. Bogaerts was somewhat in disbelief that Toronto – a team the Red Sox blasted, 15-4, in the season series last year – had improved to 8-10 against Boston in 2019.

“Regardless of where we were in the standings, how much of a chance we had or didn't have – all the guys on this team are good enough to collectively beat the Blue Jays,” Bogaerts said. “It hasn't been that way these last two games. It's been really, really rough.”

The Red Sox are now 76-70 and president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski has been fired. Remaining three-game series against the Giants and Orioles at Fenway Park should give Boston ample opportunity to at least finish above .500 for the fourth straight season. That hasn't happened since a run of 14 consecutive years from 1998-2011, one ended by the Bobby Valentine disaster in 2012.

But given the way this season started, with talk of repeating as champions and a roster returning almost intact, so much more was expected. Matching and passing the 164 games with an extra-base hit enjoyed by the Red Sox from 2004-05 was just the start. Attempting to reach that mark ended Wednesday, and it feels like even more will be over soon.

Blue Jays 8, Red Sox 0: Boston shut out for second time in three games

Bill Koch

The Red Sox have rarely looked more helpless in recent seasons than they did Wednesday night.

Mookie Betts was out of the lineup. A bullpen game was on tap from the pitching staff. Boston was effectively playing out the string against the Blue Jays under a closed roof at Rogers Centre.

The result was a dismal one. The Red Sox now appear to be in more of a race to finish the season above .500 than they do to secure one of two American League wildcard spots. Boston has yet to be mathematically eliminated, but this 8-0 defeat suggested acceptance of that eventuality.

Toronto's pitching staff had its way with a Red Sox lineup that couldn't muster anything resembling a threat. A two-out looper to shallow left by Rafael Devers in the top of the first inning was the lone Boston hit of the night for its next 24 plate appearances. The Blue Jays retired 16 straight Red Sox between the last out of the third and Brock Holt's leadoff single to left in the top of the ninth.

“It's been tough the last week, to be honest with you,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “If you start looking at our lines — nine strikeouts, 10 strikeouts, no walks, one walk — we're not controlling the strike zone right now.”

Boston also saw its string of 159 games with an extra-base hit snapped, one that started almost exactly a year ago. The Red Sox were shut out by the Mets, 8-0, on Sept. 14 of last season and followed with the fourth-longest run in modern big league history. Boston's 164 games from 2004-05 remains atop the list, sitting ahead of the Reds (161 games, 1999-2000) and Indians (161, 1995-96).

“Maybe trying to do a little too much,” said Mitch Moreland, who went 0-for-3. “Everybody is trying to make something happen and score runs or give us some opportunity. We haven't really done it.”

Wilmer Font, Trent Thornton, Jason Adam and Ryan Tepera combined to shut out the Red Sox for the second time in their last three games. Boston also came within a lone out of the same conclusion on Saturday before J.D. Martinez drove a solo home run in a 5-1 loss to the Yankees. Checking the scoreboard for results involving the Rays, Athletics and Indians seems like wasted time at this point.

Toronto broke open what was a 2-0 game by batting around in the bottom of the fifth. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. grounded a two-run single through the left side, the last of four straight hits against Ryan Weber. Randal Grichuk's two-run double off the wall in right and Teoscar Hernandez's two-run homer to left roughed up Travis Lakins and gave the Blue Jays an eight-run cushion.

"Just a matter of location," Lakins said. "I felt the same — I felt great. I just left a couple pitches up in the zone and they did damage on them."

The hosts took the lead for good in the fourth thanks to some shaky Red Sox defense. Cavan Biggio's looper down the line in left was generously scored a double, as Devers ranged behind the bag at third and failed to make the catch. Biggio stole third standing up and trotted in on a sacrifice fly to left by Guerrero.

"Raffy has made that play a lot of times, but he was in the shift," Cora said. "It was a long way. It was a long way for [left fielder Andrew Benintendi], too, but I think he should have taken over."

That gave Toronto a 1-0 lead and its second run came from a familiar source. Rowdy Tellez crushed a solo homer to deep right, his second in as many nights and seventh against Boston this season. Tellez and White Sox outfielder Ron Kittle — the 1983 American League Rookie of the Year — are the only first-year players with that many home runs against the Red Sox.

Boston's third instance this month using the opener was a success yet again. Bobby Poyner retired all six men he faced, including a pair of strikeouts in the bottom of the second. Lakins and Thursday starter Jhoulys Chacin each threw two scoreless frames in games Friday and Saturday against the Yankees.

"The fastball stayed elevated, which is usually where I have success," Poyner said. "I was able to work below the zone with off-speed."

Red Sox pitchers David Price, Heath Hembree throw Wednesday bullpen sessions

Bill Koch

David Price and Heath Hembree both threw bullpen sessions prior to Wednesday's game against Toronto.

Price (left wrist) mixed fastballs and changeups while attempting to make just his second start since Aug. 4. He was scratched from a possible Friday outing against the Yankees and won't appear again until next week at the earliest.

"He threw a bullpen today — 20 pitches," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "All the pitches. He felt good. We'll see how he reacts tomorrow and we'll go from there. It was a positive."

Hembree has been out of action since a platelet-rich plasma injection in his right elbow in early August. He posted an even 9.00 earned-run average in his previous 12 outings before being shut down.

"We're going to try to set up a simulated game over the weekend — probably Saturday," Cora said. "If he feels good tomorrow we'll see that up. If he can clear that hurdle then his return is getting closer and closer."

Former Red Sox pitcher Clay Buchholz starting for the Blue Jays on Thursday

Bill Koch

Toronto's starter in the Thursday series finale will be a familiar face.

Clay Buchholz will make his first appearance against a Red Sox club that handed him his big league debut in 2007. Buchholz is 35 now and with his fourth organization in as many years, including stints with the Phillies and Diamondbacks.

"I'm glad that he's still pitching and getting his action," Boston manager Alex Cora said. "This guy, we've seen him when he was young. For him to keep performing at this level is a testament to who he is."

Buchholz made 206 appearances for Boston from 2007-16 and was a two-time American League All-Star. The right-hander worked to a 3.96 earned-run average and totaled 899 strikeouts in 1167 2/3 innings. Cora was a teammate when Buchholz fired a no-hitter in his second career start against the Orioles, a 10-0 spanking in which he fanned a looking Nick Markakis with a curveball to end it.

"He's been a good baseball player," Cora said. "You don't just keep getting jobs because you need arms. You have to perform. I'm glad he's still around."

Jhoulys Chacin to remain in Red Sox rotation

Bill Koch

Jhoulys Chacin will remain in the Red Sox starting rotation following his Thursday outing against the Blue Jays.

The right-hander has turned in a pair of scoreless appearances since being signed as a free agent in late August. Chacin was released by the Brewers and hadn't pitched since July 24 before making his debut Friday against the Yankees.

"He knows what he's doing on the mound," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "Obviously it's only two games, but the slider plays. We knew that coming into the situation."

The 31-year-old Chacin posted a 5.79 earned-run average in 19 starts with Milwaukee before being released. This will be just the second time in his career where he's topped 20 starts and finished with more than a 4.00 ERA. Chacin posted back-to-back seasons of 3.89 and 3.50 with the Padres and Brewers, respectively, before the wheels came off in 2019.

A native of Venezuela, Chacin has wasted little time making an impact in the Boston clubhouse. Eduardo Rodriguez and Darwinzon Hernandez have been spotted following him to the training room and team dining. Chacin's influence on the pair of younger pitchers hasn't gone unnoticed by Cora.

"Those are things that you need – leadership and guys who can talk the game and help others," Cora said. "In such a short period of time he's been well accepted in the clubhouse."

Bobby Poyner served as the opener for the Red Sox on Wednesday. Eduardo Rodriguez and Rick Porcello will be in line to make starts over the weekend against Philadelphia.

Milestones keep piling up for Red Sox third baseman Rafael Devers

Bill Koch

The last Red Sox player to threaten 50 doubles in a single season was his childhood idol.

Rafael Devers grew up as a young third baseman in the Dominican Republic wanting to be Adrian Beltre. That he's now being mentioned in the same sentence with a potential Hall of Famer brings a smile to his face, but Devers is hungry for more milestones, both in this 2019 season and in the future with Boston.

Devers legged out his 50th double of the season in Tuesday's 4-3 loss to the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre. It was a hot grounder through the right side and into the corner in right field, one that allowed Devers to turn first and slide into second. He's just the eighth Red Sox player to reach the mark — the first since Dustin Pedroia collected 54 in 2008 and, at 22, the youngest to do so.

"Everyone knows how I feel about Adrian Beltre — he was my favorite third baseman growing up," Devers said through translator Bryan Almonte. "To be mentioned in the same breath as him with the season that I'm having is very special."

That 2010 campaign was one in which Boston and Beltre used one another for mutual benefit. Beltre was coming off an underwhelming stretch with the Mariners and hoping to secure his long-term future. The Red Sox had Kevin Youkilis in his prime, Will Middlebrooks on the way and handed Beltre a one-year, \$10-million deal.

Devers is more of a long-term proposition, appearing to have lineup cornerstone potential. He entered Wednesday leading the big leagues with 83 extra-base hits and needed one more home run to become the 10th player in history with 30 or more homers, 100 or more RBI and 100 or more runs scored in a season before turning 23.

"I haven't had any real injuries this year like in past years," Devers said. "The fact that I'm fully healthy is why I'm having the season I'm having this year."

Devers was on the injured list three different times in 2018, battling left shoulder inflammation and a pair of left hamstring strains. He responded by hiring a nutritionist and working out hard over the offseason, returning noticeably slimmer and more durable. Devers has also made significant strides on defense, overcoming what was a rash of errors through the first six weeks of the season to become generally reliable.

"He's been so consistent at what he does," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "There are a lot of those like [the 50th double]. It's a hard ground ball and he takes off from the plate thinking two, and he gets to it. He's been amazing for us."

Devers beat shortstop Xander Bogaerts to the milestone, and the two teammates could soon make history together. Bogaerts entered Wednesday with 49 doubles of his own and no two Boston players have ever collected 50 in the same season. The 2000 Rockies (Todd Helton, Jeff Cirillo) and 1996 Mariners (Alex Rodriguez, Edgar Martinez) are the only two clubs in big league history to boast two players with 50 doubles or more, and no team has ever counted three.

"If he would have got it first, I would have been really happy for him, too," Devers said. "It's not that big of a deal. We're just trying to finish strong as a club."

*** *MassLive.com***

Dave Dombrowski's firing leaves many unanswered questions for Boston Red Sox; here are 15

Chris Cotillo

The refusal from Red Sox ownership to answer any questions related to the firing of president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski was unprecedented and surprising. Instead of publicly addressing one of the biggest stories in the last decade of the franchise, principal owner John Henry and his group left the media (and the public) with plenty of unanswered questions.

Here are some of them:

What led to Dombrowski's firing? Was there anything other than the obvious (underperformance)?

It's the basic, boilerplate question that would lead off the press conference. Just the nuts and bolts of the big move and where things went wrong. Simple.

Why now? Why couldn't this wait until the end of the season?

This is where things get a little more interesting. Why on Sept. 7 instead of after the season? When was the final decision made? Most importantly, why near midnight after a game in the middle of a series? The timing of the firing was the most shocking part.

Who made the ultimate decision? How long had it been building?

The answer here may be obvious (Henry) but might not be. Did Henry, chairman Tom Werner and president/CEO Sam Kennedy collaborate in the days and weeks leading up to the decision? Also, it would be useful to get an understanding of how far back the move was under consideration.

Less than a year ago, John Henry stood on the field and said Dombrowski deserved a contract extension? Why such the quick change of heart?

Missing the playoffs after winning 108 regular season games and a World Series title is brutal, but it doesn't always cost someone his job. Henry was probably sincere in his comments last October, but it might have just been posturing. Was there something behind the scenes?

Was this move more about Dombrowski's past performance or the future?

Dombrowski won three division titles and a World Series in his three full seasons at the helm. There's not much more he could have done. So was the decision more about finding someone better suited for the future? What matters more to the organization?

What are you looking for in the next baseball operations head? Will that person hold the president of baseball operations title?

Once the attention shifted from Dombrowski to the search, the ownership group likely would have opened up. Providing qualities that the new baseball operations leader should have would help with identifying potential candidates. Knowing what's important to the Red Sox in their search would be useful.

Is anyone in the organization a candidate?

There are always internal candidates, and assistant GMs Eddie Romero, Brian O'Halloran and Zack Scott (the interim leadership group) seem like obvious candidates. The Sox have elevated someone in the front office in two of their last three transitions (Theo Epstein and Ben Cherington).

Is it possible you'll hire a first-time candidate? How important is experience?

This is where the Red Sox could really tip their hat as to who could replace Dombrowski. There are plenty of good candidates with experience as well as potential first-time GMs. After having someone with so much experience in Dombrowski, would the Sox be willing to hand it over to someone who had never been the top person in a front office?

Are you looking to keep it within the Red Sox family? There are a lot of good candidates with Theo Epstein connections.

Mike Hazen, Jed Hoyer, Jared Porter, Amiel Sawdaye and Jason McLeod are some of the top candidates linked to the position. The Sox may be looking to go back to the family after going way outside of it for the Dombrowski hire.

How much input will manager Alex Cora have in the process?

Kennedy gave Cora a vote of confidence on the radio Tuesday and the ownership thinks very highly of the manager. Will Cora, who is very well-connected around baseball, have a say in the process? Or will it go completely over his head?

What's the timeframe of the search? When will interviews start? When do you hope to have someone in place?

More nuts and bolts questions that ownership would likely answer. The search could start immediately, or at the end of the season. Having someone in place by the GM meetings (Nov. 11) would make sense.

Is anyone else in the front office being let go? Promoted?

Obviously, most of the front office is probably safe. But Dombrowski associates Tony La Russa and Frank Wren could depart soon. La Russa was spotted at Fenway Park on Monday but may depart the organization soon.

What's the first order of business for Dombrowski's replacement?

This is a question that's extremely important to the organization's future. Will it involve Mookie Betts? Rick Porcello? Brock Holt? The bullpen?

Will Kennedy have any say in baseball operations?

He didn't with Dombrowski but could have an increased role with someone he knows better.

Are you afraid potential candidates may be hesitant because of the turnover rate in the last eight years? Is the standard for success too high?

This is a tough question that needs to be asked. The Sox have fired two baseball ops leaders within two years of winning a World Series. Does the prestige of the job outweigh that potential risk? Can ownership give any assurances that the same thing won't happen again?

10 observations from the last week in baseball:

1. The Dombrowski firing, at 12:07 a.m. Monday morning, was truly shocking. A sleepy night at the ballpark in which everyone was focused on the Patriots turned into a sleepless night for everyone.
2. If the Red Sox really want Mike Hazen (and they should), they'll find a way to get him. Remains to be seen if that will happen.
3. The talk at the beginning of the homestand was that the Sox could make a statement with a good week against the Twins and Yankees. By the end of it, the season was over.
4. The loss of Christian Yelich is brutal for the Brewers and baseball. Milwaukee will be dangerous in the postseason, if it gets there. The Brewers have won six in a row.
5. The Craig Kimbrel news in Chicago is ominous. That's one move Dombrowski got right.
6. Wouldn't rule out Andrew Cashner or Jhoulys Chacin coming back on a low-money deal. Those guys have shown flashes.

7. The American League is so much worse than the National League. The A.L. could have as many as three 100-loss team and looks destined for about seven 90-loss clubs, as well.

8. The overall home run record was broken again. That'll keep happening, I'm sure.

9. A three-way tie at the top of the A.L. wild-card race is possible and would be fun. The Sox could play the role of spoiler in St. Petersburg next weekend.

10. The Red Sox should shut down David Price, Heath Hembree and anyone else who's hurt or overworked. It's over.

Boston Red Sox tally 2 hits in 8-0 rout at hands of Blue Jays on Wednesday night

Chris Cotillo

All but eliminated from the postseason hunt at this point, the Red Sox looked about as lifeless as they have all season in an 8-0 loss to the Blue Jays on Wednesday night.

Boston had just two hit (singles by Rafael Devers and Brock Holt) in the team's fifth loss in a row. The Sox clinched their third consecutive series loss by dropping the first two games to the Jays in Toronto.

Toronto's offense pounded the Sox in a bullpen game, tallying 11 hits (including two homers) in the rout. Rowdy Tellez hit his second homer in as many nights (and his seventh of the year against Boston) before Teoscar Hernandez punctuated the win with a shot of his own in the fifth.

Sox opener Bobby Poyner and reliever Trevor Kelley combined for three scoreless innings before the Jays got to Kelley in the fourth. After Cavan Biggio doubled and stole third base, Vladimir Guerrero Jr. drove him in with a sacrifice fly before Tellez made it 2-0 with a homer.

Righty Ryan Weber had a disastrous fifth for the Sox, allowing four consecutive singles as the Jays went up, 4-0. Randal Grichuk hit a two-run double and Hernandez hit a two-run blast off Travis Lakins to cap the six-run inning.

Toronto's pitching shut down the Sox all night, with righty Trent Thornton striking out seven hitters in five hitless innings. Boston didn't have a hit between the first and ninth innings.

Hector Velazquez (one inning) and Mike Shawaryn (two) combined for three scoreless innings to end the game. The Sox fell to 76-70.

Boston will try to avoid a sweep Thursday night at 7:07 p.m. Righty Jhoulys Chacin will start opposite former Sox righty Clay Buchholz.

Red Sox GM search: Tim Naehring, Yankees VP, says he'd 'think about' opening if team interested

Chris Cotillo

Yankees VP of baseball operations Tim Naehring said he'd "think about" interviewing for the Red Sox' general manager opening if Boston was interested, according to a report from Randy Miller of NJ.com.

Naehring, 52, played for the Red Sox from 1990 to 1997. He has previously rebuffed interest from other clubs but appears open to the idea of returning to Boston to replace ousted president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski if there's interest.

"You'd think about it," Naehring told Miller. "Obviously, there are premier organizations out there and that's one of them."

Naehring, who was worked for the Yankees since 2007, was in Boston with the team when Dombrowski was fired over the weekend. He told Miller he has not yet heard anything from the Red Sox about potential interest.

Naehring has been hesitant to take a top baseball operations job in the past due to the family commitment it would require. He told Miller he's unsure if he would be willing to make the time commitment at this point.

"I don't know," he said. "I still have kids at home. My daughter just turned 15 on Tuesday and my son is going to turn 12. Over the years there have been other organizations that have called to see if I wanted to interview for that top seat, and I have not pursued that not because of the personal commitment but because it would be a huge family commitment."

Naehring became one of the top lieutenants to New York general manager Brian Cashman in 2015, when Billy Eppler left to become the GM of the Angels.

Boston Red Sox GM search: Diamondbacks not worried about Mike Hazen leaving to take job

Chris Cotillo

The Diamondbacks don't appeared worried about the Red Sox trying to poach general manager Mike Hazen as Dave Dombrowski's replacement, according to Nick Piccoro of the Arizona Republic.

Piccoro quotes team CEO Derrick Hall, who isn't anticipating hearing from the Sox because Hazen is under contract as the head of the team's baseball operations department.

"I have no reason to think they are going to ask," Hall said in a text to Piccoro. "He is under contract."

Hazen has been mentioned as a top candidate to succeed Dombrowski, who was fired early Monday. Hazen was a member of Boston's front office for 11 seasons before taking over the Diamondbacks in 2016, serving as the team's general manager under Dombrowski in his most recent role.

Hazen's offered a non-answer when asked by Piccoro about the Sox job. Hazen was similarly evasive in an earlier interview with 98.7 FM, Arizona's Sports Station.

"My focus is 100 percent on the Arizona Diamondbacks," Hazen said, "and that's where it's going to remain."

Because Hazen is the head of the baseball operations department, the Diamondbacks can deny permission if the Sox attempt to speak with him. If Hazen-- a Weymouth native who grew up in Abington-- has strong enough interest in returning home to run the Sox, Arizona may grant permission to fuel a potential reunion. At this point, that does not seem likely.

Diamondbacks assistant GMs Amiel Sawdaye and Jared Porter both spent many years in the Sox front office and have been listed as speculative candidates as well. The Diamondbacks would have no control over Boston wishing to speak to them about an elevated position.

How the Red Sox plan to approach the search for Dombrowski's replacement is unclear as ownership did not hold a press conference to address the move this week. A full search is expected to begin soon.

*** *RedSox.com***

Sox losing WC pace after being shut out by Jays

Ian Browne

It was just one week ago that Eduardo Rodriguez led the Red Sox to victory against the playoff-bound Twins, and it wasn't out of the question that the defending World Series champions could make one last push to play baseball in October.

At that point, they were 5 1/2 games back in the Wild Card fight.

As the Sox were getting belted around Rogers Centre by the Blue Jays on Wednesday -- the final score 8-0 -- a week ago felt like a month ago.

Boston has now lost five in a row, and six out of its last seven. The Sox are still mathematically alive, but no longer in any sort of realistic contention.

With 16 games left, the 76-60 Red Sox are 10 games behind the A's for the second American League Wild Card spot.

The situation is almost unfathomable for a team that came into the season thinking it had a real shot to become MLB's first repeat champions since the 2000 Yankees.

"We didn't expect to be in this situation. The effort is there but the results are not," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Obviously everyone is disappointed with what's going on, and it hasn't been good the last 10 days offensively."

The bottom is falling out at a time the offense -- the team's strength all season -- has gone ice-cold.

"Maybe trying to do a little too much, everybody's trying to make something happen and score runs or at least give us some opportunity but we haven't really done it," said first baseman Mitch Moreland.

The Sox mustered just two hits (singles by Rafael Devers and Brock Holt) in Wednesday's loss. The team's streak of at least one extra-base hit in 159 consecutive games -- the fourth longest in MLB history -- came to an end. The Sox were five games away from matching their own MLB record set in 2004-05.

"Aw, I wish I knew that before," said shortstop Xander Bogaerts. "It sucks [to have it end]."

Regardless of their place in the standings, the Red Sox are finding it hard to accept the way they've played of late, including two straight defeats to the 57-89 Blue Jays.

"I mean, nobody, for sure, expected us to come here and lose these first two games against these guys," said Bogaerts. "Regardless of where we were in the standings or how much of a chance we still had or didn't have, all the guys on this team are good enough to collectively beat the Blue Jays. It hasn't been that way these last two games. It's been really, really rough."

Cora sees clear reasons for the recent struggles of his offense.

"It's been tough the last week, to be honest with you," Cora said. "If you start looking at our lines, it's nine strikeouts, 10 strikeouts, no walks, one walk. We're not controlling the strike zone right now. Today it was fastball up, breaking ball down, and we didn't make adjustments. We didn't get on top of the fastball, swung and missed at the breaking ball and it was an easy game for their pitching staff."

There was also a defensive breakdown.

With one out in the bottom of the fourth, the Sox hadn't allowed a baserunner yet when Cavan Biggio hit a popup into short left field. Devers raced back and whiffed on it, but didn't seem to be in good position to make the play. Fundamental breakdowns are a pet peeve for Cora.

"That's kind of like the play the other day with Brock and J.D. [Martinez]," Cora said. "Popup priority, it's the shortstop or the third baseman, the second baseman or the first baseman, the corner outfielder or the

infielder. Raffy has made that play a lot of times but he was in the shift. It was a long ways, it was a long ways to [Andrew Benintendi], but I think Benny should have taken over.”

Without question, the last few days have been settling for the Red Sox, as president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski was let go after Sunday night’s loss to the Yankees.

Still, Cora wants to see his team go down fighting these next couple of weeks.

“Play good baseball. It doesn’t matter, nothing changes,” Cora said. “Preparation is the same, conviction is the same, we gotta play good. That’s what we’re here for. We’re not going to punt -- obviously we’re going to take care of players [with rest] and all that, but we’re talented enough to win games, and that’s what we’re trying to do.”

For a team that won the AL East the last three seasons, playing out the string has to be a hollow feeling.

“It’s not tough, you just have to do it,” said Benintendi. “Obviously we know where we’re at and a limited amount of games left but you still want to go out there and win. It’s not like we’re trying to lose. Just have to show up and play.”

What everyone got wrong about the AL East

Joe Trezza

One of the few things you can expect about baseball is that it won’t often transpire the way you might have anticipated. The summer comes and goes, and by the end, things rarely look the way we thought they would. That’s the beauty of it. That’s what keeps us coming back.

2019 was no different, which is why we’re taking this opportunity to look across the sport and celebrate what we got wrong this season. What conventional wisdom thought to be true before the year started, turned out not to be true at all.

Maybe doing so will help our predictive powers next year, but don’t count on it. That’s baseball -- always throwing curveballs, always keeping us on our toes. Here is what we got wrong in the American League East.

BLUE JAYS

What we thought: They would have enough pitching depth.
What actually happened: It eroded quickly.

The Blue Jays began the season with a veteran rotation of Marcus Stroman, Aaron Sanchez, Matt Shoemaker, Clayton Richard and Clay Buchholz. Flash forward five months, and they’ve been traded, traded, injured (since April), injured (July-September) and injured (early May-late August). What it’s done is force Toronto to use 20 starters, by far the most in franchise history.

In this transition year that saw the Blue Jays promote three elite position-player prospects, the plan was always to get late-season looks at youngsters like Trent Thornton, Jacob Waguespack and T.J. Zeuch, like what’s happening now. But several of those timelines were bumped up due to the turnover.

ORIOLES

What we thought: The youngsters would make the most of their MLB opportunity.
What actually happened: Several did, just not who we expected.

We didn’t know John Means would emerge into an All-Star, that Hanser Alberto would turn into a batting-title contender, if Hunter Harvey could stay healthy or what Anthony Santander’s ceiling was, and the

Orioles didn't, either. In truth, we didn't know much about how the first year of the O's rebuild under executive vice president and general manager Mike Elias, vice president and assistant general manager of analytics Sig Mejdal and manager Brandon Hyde would go, other than that there would be rough moments and significant philosophical changes.

We knew the Orioles would look for in-house options to build around, we just didn't know who they'd be. A full season in, we have a better idea. Now the question is: Who cements that status with a strong showing in 2020?

RAYS

What we thought: Tampa Bay's pitching would crumble without Blake Snell.

What actually happened: The opposite.

Snell was the savior of the Rays' rotation last year, emerging into the AL Cy Young Award winner over a season Tampa Bay largely spent with just two full-time starters in its rotation. It added Charlie Morton last offseason, and it hoped for a breakout from Tyler Glasnow, but it was banking heavily on a repeat performance from Snell to keep the rotation afloat.

Instead, injuries and inconsistency defined Snell's season, which could be over after undergoing surgery to remove loose bodies in his left elbow in late July. Yet the Rays are 30-13 since Snell landed on the injured list, having climbed to the top spot in the AL Wild Card race in that time. Much of that is thanks to Morton and Ryan Yarbrough, but don't sniff at the impact Tampa Bay's bullpen has had, either. Rays relievers lead AL units in ERA since Snell went down.

RED SOX

What we thought: The defending champs could repeat.

What actually happened: Boston will likely miss the playoffs.

By almost any measure, the 2018 Red Sox were one of the best teams ever assembled, winning 108 regular-season games before breezing through the postseason with an 11-3 record. With their entire core returning and playoff heroes Nathan Eovaldi and Steve Pearce re-signed, most expected the Sox to at least make a run at another pennant.

Perhaps those expectations were outsized. No team has won back-to-back championships since the start of this century. Still, the Red Sox becoming the first defending champs to miss the postseason since the Royals in 2016 -- a distinction that's all but assured -- registers as a shock.

Injuries to Chris Sale, David Price and Eovaldi certainly contributed, and slow starts from some of the Red Sox's best hitters didn't help. Without Craig Kimbrel, the bullpen never found its footing. The Sox were seven games out in the AL East by the end of April, faced an 11-game hole by the end of June and dismissed president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski this week when they were mathematically eliminated from division play.

YANKEES

What we thought: Aaron Judge and Giancarlo Stanton would lead the home run charge.

What actually happened: Despite all the injuries, the Yankees mashed anyway.

After combining to slug 65 homers in their first year as teammates, Judge and Stanton entered 2019 expected by many to surpass that mark. Hitting 80-100 between them didn't seem unreasonable.

Instead, the Yankees have a chance to set a new Major League record for homers despite limited production from their two former home run champs. Judge and Stanton have combined to go deep just 22 times, in large part because Stanton has been limited to nine games -- and just one big fly -- by knee and

biceps injuries. Judge has been productive when healthy, but he missed two months with a left oblique strain.

Yet the Yankees' lineup keeps rolling. They are shoe-ins for October, thanks to countless surprise contributors that helped weather injuries up and down the roster, from Gio Urshela to Luke Voit to Mike Tauchman to Cameron Maybin. If 2019 proved anything, it's that the Yanks are more than two slugging superstars. They are deep in ways few teams are.

For CT native Barnes, 9/11 hits close to home

Ian Browne

Among Red Sox players, 9/11 probably hits closest to home for reliever Matt Barnes, who lived just over an hour from the tragic attack on the World Trade Center in New York.

With Wednesday marking the 18th anniversary, the setup reliever who hails from Bethel, Conn., recalled his recollections in vivid detail.

"I was in Ms. Davidson's sixth grade math when I found out," said Barnes. "I'll never forget it. I'll always remember exactly where I was when it happened. It struck the country and the world as something you never thought was possible to happen. So when it happens an hour and 10 minutes from where you grew up, from where you live, it was crazy."

It didn't take long for Barnes to start worrying about family and friends.

"I remember, my uncle was a pilot flying for American Airlines. He flew out of the New Jersey/New York area and I didn't know if he was a pilot on one of the planes," said Barnes. "I have friends who had family members who worked in the city. There's a ton of uncertainty and chaos and just when the dust finally settled and you saw everything and realized how tragic it was, then you start to feel for all the families and everybody who lost somebody that day."

Adding to the massive mixture of emotions, Barnes also remembers how grateful he was for the heroes.

"You start to thank the men and women who risked their lives going back in to try and save people," said Barnes. "It's something you'll never forget and I'll never forget."

The scene at the middle school Barnes attended was unsettling and chaotic.

"You have parents rushing into the schools to pull kids out," said Barnes. "It was, I don't know, man, it was crazy."

Devers appreciates latest milestone

Rafael Devers has done many remarkable things in his two-plus seasons with the Red Sox. The latest was on Tuesday night, when he belted his 50th double of the season, making him just the eighth Red Sox player to reach the feat and also the youngest at 22 years old.

"Yeah, it feels great," Devers said. "Obviously I'm just thankful to be able to play this game and obviously just trying to finish strong. But it feels good to get that mark."

Shortstop Xander Bogaerts, who happens to be the best friend Devers has on the Red Sox, is one away from reaching 50 doubles, which would mark the first time two Red Sox players have done so in the same season.

"I mean, if he would have got it first, I would have been really happy for him too, so it's not that big of a deal," Devers said.

As special a season as this is for Devers, he knows the key will be to maintain or even surpass it in future years.

“I think I’m just continuing to learn, and there’s a lot of room left for me to grow,” said Devers. “During the offseason I’ll go and check out what it is I need to work on to get better because that’s what I love to do, just to learn more about my game and try to get as much knowledge as possible, but obviously if I can stay healthy, I know I can have more successful seasons like I am now.”

Price, Hembree throw ‘pens

Lefty David Price and righty Heath Hembree both made progress in their quests to return to action by throwing bullpen sessions on Wednesday.

Price, who has thrown two innings since Aug. 4 due to left wrist issues, threw 20 pitches in his session. He could start by next week.

Hembree, who has been out since Aug. 2 due to elbow problems, hopes to throw a simulated game in Philadelphia this weekend.

Familiar foe

Veteran righty Clay Buchholz has faced 27 teams in his career. The Red Sox are one of the three he’s never pitched against. That will change Thursday night when he starts the finale of this three-game series at Rogers Centre.

Buchholz had a solid career for the Red Sox, going 81-61 with a 3.96 ERA over 10 seasons.

Manager Alex Cora was a player for Boston in 2007, when Buchholz fired a no-hitter at Fenway Park in his second Major League start.

“I want to see him pitch, yeah, it’s been a while,” said Cora. “I’m glad that he’s still pitching, kind of like Edwin Jackson. Those guys, you see them when they were young and for them to keep performing at this level, it’s a testament to who they are, work ethic and being a good baseball player.

“You don’t keep getting jobs because [teams] need arms. You have to perform and I’m glad that he’s still around. He was a good teammate. He threw that no-hitter when he got called up, that was a special day. He’s had a great career.”

*** *WEEI.com***

Red Sox GM search is already starting to get interesting

Rob Bradford

You might be able to cross one familiar name off the list of potential candidates to replace Dave Dombrowski. Then again ...

Arizona Diamondbacks CEO Derrick Hall threw cold water on the idea of former Red Sox assistant GM Mike Hazen returning to Boston, telling the Arizona Republic via text, "I have no reason to think they are going to ask. He is under contract."

Hazen is the third year of a five-year deal as the general manager of the Diamondbacks, who have the right to deny the Red Sox permission to talk to the Massachusetts native if Boston requests an interview. Arizona

denied San Francisco's overtures toward Hazen last offseason during the Giants' GM search. But this isn't San Francisco. This is Hazen's hometown.

There might still be a chance Hazen enters the fray regarding the Red Sox' search if he expresses a strong desire to return to the organization he spent 11 years with prior to his move to Arizona.

There are other potential candidates besides Hazen working with the Diamondbacks, with former Red Sox front office employees Amiel Sawdaye and Jared Porter both occupying assistant general manager positions with Arizona.

Another interesting name that has (and should) be surfaced is former Red Sox infielder Tim Lincecum, who has served as Yankees' GM Brian Cashman's right-hand man for years.

Lincecum has repeatedly turned down requests to be interviewed for general manager positions, declining the Mets' overtures last offseason. But when talking to NJ.com about the Red Sox' potential interest his reaction suggested a different approach.

"You'd think about it," Lincecum told NJ.com. "Obviously, there are premier organizations out there and that's one of them."

Part of the previous hesitation from the 52-year-old Lincecum -- who said he hasn't heard of any formal overtures from the Red Sox as of yet -- when it has come to moving on from the Yankees is altering his current arrangement which allows him to keep his family in the Cincinnati area.

"I still have kids at home," he said. "My daughter just turned 15 on Tuesday and my son is going to turn 12. Over the years there have been other organizations that have called to see if I wanted to interview for that top seat, and I have not pursued that not because of the personal commitment but because it would be a huge family commitment."

As for what the title of the Red Sox' position might be, a team source told WEEI.com there has been no definitive decision by the organization regarding whether or not it will keep Dombrowski's President of Baseball Operations role.

Red Sox unsure if President of Baseball Operations title will carry over

Rob Bradford

It was a significant shift when the Red Sox gave Dave Dombrowski the title of President of Baseball Operations. The organization had never designated such a responsibility, one where all decisions regarding things related to the baseball-playing element of the organization definitively fell to one person.

The move was a logical one considering the perceived ambiguity when it came who was responsible for some of the organization's bigger moves.

But now there may be the possibility that titles are juggled once again.

According to a team source, the Red Sox are unsure if the person to replace Dombrowski will carry the President of Baseball Operations title, with the possibility that the team goes back to the previous chain of command of a team president -- which would continue to be Sam Kennedy -- along with a conventional general manager.

The direction might hinge on the experience and availability of Dombrowski's successor. In many cases, a candidate would only entertain a move to the Red Sox if a president's title (or something similar) was part of the deal.

For now, assistant general managers Eddie Romero, Zack Scott and Brian O'Halloran are joined by senior vice-president of major and minor league operations Raquel Ferreira in sharing the responsibility of executing all baseball decisions until a new hire is made.

*** *NBC Sports Boston***

Say goodbye to J.D. and Mookie? Red Sox payroll decisions are about to get ugly

John Tomase

If Red Sox ownership really wants to reset the luxury-tax clock, then the new GM should expect the following item to be missing from his new office: a checkbook.

For the Red Sox actually to drop below the \$208 million threshold that returns their penalty structure to zero will require not so much pruning shears as a chainsaw, with two high-profile victims -- Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez -- on the chopping block.

The Red Sox spent more than \$240 million last year and will be in that range again this year. If they spend beyond the tax threshold again in 2020, they'll trigger the most onerous penalties, with a tax of 50 percent on every dollar spent over \$208 million, 95 percent on every dollar over \$248 million, and a sliding scale in between. They could end up making a tax payment of more than \$20 million.

The problem with dropping below that \$208 million figure is the Red Sox are already well over it for 2020 if they do nothing except keep their signed and arbitration-eligible players. By just a simple back-of-the-envelope calculation, they have more than \$220 million already committed to next year's team, which is why Dave Dombrowski's successor will inherit such a challenge.

The clearest way to slip below that threshold requires a pair of unthinkable moves -- letting Martinez opt out of his contract and walk, and trading Betts. And even that might not be enough, given the rest of the team's needs.

Those two should count for roughly \$50 million against next year's cap, assuming Betts earns about \$28 million in arbitration and Martinez carries his \$22 million luxury-tax hit (on an actual salary closer to \$24 million). Renouncing Martinez would still cost \$6 million for cap purposes in 2020, since it's the difference between his tax hit (\$44 million) and his actual earnings (\$47.5 million in salary, \$2.5 million buyout) over two years in Boston.

If that's where ownership wants to maroon its new GM, John Henry and Co. might as well hire Harry Sinden, who took arrows for the Jacobs family while holding a death grip on the Bruins' purse strings in the 1980s and early '90s.

How did the Red Sox find themselves in such dire financial shape following a season that will see them miss the playoffs and finish around .500? It's not pretty.

Consider the following 2020 salaries, totaling nearly \$135 million, for luxury tax purposes:

David Price (\$31 million), Martinez (\$22 million), Chris Sale (\$25.6 million), Nathan Eovaldi (\$17 million), Dustin Pedroia (\$13.75 million), Xander Bogaerts (\$20 million), Christian Vazquez (\$4.5 million).

If we estimate \$60 million in arbitration (which requires saying goodbye to backup catcher Sandy Leon and knuckleballer Steven Wright), we're already pushing \$200 million with just the following players: Betts, Jackie Bradley, Eduardo Rodriguez, Andrew Benintendi, Brandon Workman, Heath Hembree, Matt Barnes.

Add young, pre-arb players like Rafael Devers (whom we'll get to in a second) and Michael Chavis, plus \$15 million for medical expenses and benefits, and we're already in the \$220 million range without addressing free agent losses such as Rick Porcello, Mitch Moreland, and Brock Holt, or depth for a rotation that doesn't know if it can trust Sale, Price, and/or Eovaldi to stay healthy, even though they'll be earning \$79 million in real money.

Removing Betts and Martinez from the equation drops that commitment to the \$175 million range, but also creates holes at DH and right field that can't be filled for free.

It also calls into question whether it makes much business sense, in 2020, to extend Devers, since doing so will jump his tax number from about \$800,000 to \$12 million to \$15 million if he were to receive a contract in line with the eight-year, \$100 million extension Ronald Acuna Jr. signed with the Braves.

This is all assuming that ownership has designs on dropping below \$208 million. If it does, there's no way the Red Sox will pay Betts \$35 million a year, and you can kiss him goodbye. There's also no realistic path to squeezing in Martinez at \$25 million annually. That's what happens when an unreliable Big Three is soaking up a third of the payroll. The prospects of moving Sale, Price, or Eovaldi without eating most of the money range from dim to hopeless.

With payroll and winning no longer strongly correlated -- if the season ended today, two of the game's six lowest payrolls would face off in the AL wild-card game (Tampa vs. Oakland) -- the Red Sox can't simply buy their way to a title.

So, good luck to the new guy if he's ordered to shed payroll, because that's going to cost him some serious talent and leave the Red Sox in a position that might benefit their bottom line and long-range plans, but could make 2020 every bit as painful as 2019.

*** *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

A look at the Red Sox' GM search

Sean McAdam

Soon, the Red Sox will be hiring their fourth (full-time) chief baseball executive in the last eight years.

On paper, it should be an attractive job. In reality, it may be somewhat less.

Any interested candidates will know that the position offers little in the way of job security — at least if recent past history is any indication. The last two to fill the position — Ben Cherington and Dave Dombrowski — were each fired less than two years after winning a World Series. In Dombrowski's case, the honeymoon lasted a mere 11 months.

The perception around the game is that the Red Sox are beset with dysfunction at the ownership level, and that, too, will have to be overcome.

But there are, undeniably, positives. The franchise offers great resources, even as this search begins with the knowledge that the team must get its payroll under control in the near future.

The job comes with expectations and pressures, yes, but also plenty of money to spend, a strong baseball infrastructure, tradition and a devoted, passionate following.

One baseball source predicted that the team's search will begin with an effort to lure some of the biggest names in the game.

"They've got a wish list," said a baseball source,

“and they’re going to aim high. If none of those work out, they’ll start working their way down.”

According to someone familiar with the team’s plans, team president and CEO Sam Kennedy will be in charge of the search process and will vet candidates before making his final recommendation to ownership.

According to one industry source, the structure of the new front office will likely depend on who comes aboard. If the team succeeds in landing one of its “big fish,” that person will, by necessity, be given the title of president of baseball operations, the title given to Dombrowski when he came on board in August of 2015. A lesser experienced executive could then be brought in — or possibly promoted from within — to serve as GM.

If, on the other hand, the Sox fail to land one of the marquee names, they may just appoint the new hire to the role of general manager.

One baseball source believes the Sox may have trouble attracting a younger candidate “because the way the game is now, everyone is so risk averse. But these jobs don’t become available when everything is going well, so they have to accept that.”

Because the clear goal of the organization is to hire a proven executive from outside the organization, a number of otherwise viable in-house candidates will not be listed here.

THE BIG FISH

1-Theo Epstein.

This has virtually no chance of succeeding, but it won’t stop the Red Sox from trying. Epstein has two years remaining on his deal with the Cubs, so merely extricating him from that would be a task in itself. Moreover, Epstein feels a loyalty to the Cubs to finish the job he began. But there’s no harm in trying to lure back the GM who ended the Sox’ 86-year World Series drought, then ended a longer one in Chicago. Perhaps enticing him with an ownership stake? Still, this feels like a very, very long shot.

2-Jeff Luhnow

Luhnow is regarded as one of the game’s best executives and given his slavish devotion to data, perhaps the modern face of the front office. After overseeing the Houston Astros rebuild, he’s won a World Series and taken his team to the ALCS over the last two seasons. He’s also regarded as one of the foremost executives when it comes to incorporating analytics into the job. He’s seen as somewhat totalitarian at a time when the Sox want someone to be more collaborative, and almost certainly wouldn’t be allowed to leave by the Astros.

3-Andrew Friedman.

Friedman has unfinished business with the Dodgers, who have won the last seven division titles, gone to the last two World Series, but have yet to win it all. Surely, Friedman will want to finish what he started. He’s been successful with the ultimate small-market franchise (Tampa Bay) and the ultimate big market team (Dodgers), too. But even if he could be pried loose, are the Red Sox willing to make one of top two highest-paid executives (earning \$7.5 million annually) even richer?

NEXT-LEVEL STAR QUALITY

4-Chris Antonetti

Antonetti recently signed an extension with the Indians, an organization he has been with for 20 years. Beyond the contractual issues and the Indians’ desire to retain him, there’s the matter of his interest. He does have New England roots, growing up in Connecticut and attending UMass. There’s little doubting his

qualifications. The Red Sox would be impressed with the fact that he's helped build an organization that has enjoyed sustained success, and more specifically, that the Indians have had a knack for developing homegrown starting pitching, or at the very least, uncovering it elsewhere (Trevor Bauer, Corey Kluber).

5-Jed Hoyer

Forever linked to Epstein, with whom he's worked for all but two seasons since 2002. His title of general manager in Chicago could offer the Red Sox an opening to pry him away from the Cubs, by making him the Sox' President of Baseball Operations. Philosophically aligned with Epstein, he would bring a more "macro" view of the organization and there are those current holdovers in Baseball Ops who would welcome his return. But by some accounts, Hoyer might be reluctant to rejoin an organization that has churned through three chief baseball executives in the last nine years. He's settled in Chicago with a young family and may want to see that assignment through.

6-Mike Hazen

Other than Epstein, he's the only one who has already been GM of the Red Sox, though, under Dombrowski, the position didn't hold much power. He's earned plaudits for the job he's done in Arizona, where he's managed an on-the-fly rebuild (dealing away cornerstones Paul Goldschmidt and Zack Greinke) while still remaining in contention for a playoff spot. According to a source, Hazen would be "torn" about the prospect of returning. On one hand, the challenge is enticing and both he and his wife are from Massachusetts. On the other hand, Hazen feels some loyalty to his hand-picked manager, Torey Lovullo, and to the D'backs for giving him his big opportunity. What's more, Arizona ownership has already signaled that it won't allow Hazen to leave.

RISING YOUNG EXECUTIVES WITH (SOME) NEW ENGLAND ROOTS

7. Chaim Bloom

Bloom has spent 15 years with the Rays, fulfilling every role imaginable. Together with Eric Neander, he's put together a highly competitive club which has is on its way to a second straight 90-win season, in a division dominated by two financial behemoths. He's consistently demonstrated an ability to do less with more and has had plenty of experience on the player development side. Like Epstein, he's a graduate of Yale University, though he grew up in Philadelphia.

8. Derek Falvey

A native of Lynn, Ma. and a graduate of Trinity College in Hartford, Falvey, like many modern baseball executives, got his start in the Indians organization, working under Antonetti and Mark Shapiro. He's in his third year as GM of the Minnesota Twins, who have executed a dramatic turnaround and appear on their way to an AL Central division title. As GM, he could be potentially be lured with the President of Baseball Operations title, but like others, he may not be ready to move on from his current challenge, even if it does offer a chance to return home.

9. Tim Lincecum

Lincecum, who played eight seasons with the Red Sox, has served as the most trusted advisor in the Yankees organization to GM Brian Cashman and Cashman has labeled Lincecum the best talent evaluator he's ever known. That's something, considering that Cashman cut his teeth with Gene Michael, another expert evaluator. There are two obstacles, however: Lincecum has a heavy scouting background at a time when executive leadership is highly valued. Secondly, he has young teenage children who live in Cincinnati and may not be ready to commit the time, travel and energy needed.

FORMER SOX EMPLOYEES WHO'VE GONE ELSEWHERE:

10-11 Amiel Sawdaye, Jared Porter

Sawdaye was the Red Sox' scouting director, on whose watch the Red Sox drafted Mookie Betts, Jackie Bradley Jr., Matt Barnes, Travis Shaw and others, is Hazen's assistant GM in Arizona. Like so many others on the list, he's part of the Epstein Tree, and as such, would have the same organizational and philosophical beliefs. He would require no re-introduction to Boston or the organization. Porter has more of a pro scouting background, but in recent seasons, has also had front office experience, named, like Sawdaye, as an assistant GM.

The question is, however, would the Sox hire someone who hadn't run a front office before? Yes, both Sawdaye and Porter are well known to Sox ownership and Porter, in particular, is said to be very highly thought of by Kennedy.

Still, it would represent a risk at a time when the team may want more of a sure thing.

"And if they do that," predicted someone in the industry, "they'll lose Eddie (Romero, current assistant GM, who would feel passed over in favor of someone without much — if any — more experience than he has)."

BSJ Game Report: Blue Jays 8, Red Sox 0 — Held to two hits, Sox drop fifth straight

Sean McAdam

Lineup rolls over: The Blue Jays don't have a great pitching staff by any means, but you wouldn't know it from watching the game. The Sox got a single with two outs in the first inning from Rafael Devers and then didn't produce another base hit until Brock Holt led off the ninth with an opposite-field single to left. In between, the Sox managed just two baserunners in innings two through eight, with an error allowing Christian Vazquez to reach in the second and Xander Bogaerts drawing a one-out walk in the third. From there, the Jays retired the next 16 hitters in succession. Trent Thornton, who entered the game with a 5.23 ERA, posted four consecutive 1-2-3 innings. The shutout was the second in the last three games. The Sox have managed just four runs in their last 31 innings and have only 10 hits over the last two nights.

Mistakes costly in the fourth: When a team isn't going well, sometimes the smallest miscue can make a big difference. So it was in the third inning. Rafael Devers chased after a ball in shallow left near the foul line, and after positioning himself for the catch, had it roll off his glove for a generously-scored double for Cavan Biggio. Then, reliever Trevor Kelley didn't hold the baserunner and Biggio stole third without a throw, then scored on a sacrifice fly. So instead of having the bases empty and two out, the Sox had allowed a run. The inning unraveled further when Rowdy Tellez homered to right. The runs weren't unearned because Devers wasn't assessed an error — though he should have been — but the effect was the same.

Poyner effective in short start: You have to dig deep to find a bright spot for the Sox, but the two innings tossed from Bobby Poyner qualifies for lack of anything else. Poyner retired all six hitters he faced, including two by strikeout. He labored in the first inning, needing 22 pitches to get the first three hitters out, but ultimately did the job. In the second, Poyner was more efficient, retiring the side in order on just 13 pitches. Making it especially impressive was the fact that this was his first "start" at the big league level. Then again, the Sox have been getting good performances in that quasi-opener role in their many bullpen games. Travis Lakins had two perfect innings against the Yankees last weekend and so did Jhoulys Chacin, striking out four in just two innings of work.

TURNING POINT: The way the Red Sox' offense is slumping, it wasn't going to take much for the Jays to put this one away. So when they started teeing off Ryan Weber in the fifth inning — collecting four straight hits on just five pitches — the game was effectively over.

ONE UP:

Mike Shawaryn: After Poyner's two frames, Shawaryn was the only effective reliever of the night, tossing two scoreless innings at the end and not allowing a hit.

ONE DOWN

J.D. Martinez: Martinez has done a lot of damage in Toronto this season, but not this night — he was hitless in four plate appearances with two strikeouts.

QUOTE OF NOTE:

“We're not controlling the strike zone right now...It was an easy game for the (Toronto) pitching staff.”
Alex Cora.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

The loss ended a stretch that saw the Red Sox win eight consecutive series in Toronto.

The Red Sox used seven pitchers in defeat.

After winning eight of their previous 10 road games before this series, the Sox have now dropped two in a row.

Red Sox pitchers have allowed seven homers to Rowdy Tellez in 11 games.

UP NEXT: The Red Sox close out their series in Toronto Thursday at 7:07 p.m. with Jhoulys Chacin (3-10, 5.60) vs. RHP Clay Buchholz (1-4, 5.31)

* *The Athletic*

Playoffs are a fantasy, but Red Sox still can reach several historic milestones this season

Chad Jennings

The only number that really matters is wins, and the Red Sox don't have nearly enough this season. But the history books might also remember this disappointing year as one dotted with individual Red Sox numbers ranking among the best in franchise history, and indeed a few that rank among the best ever in the game. The playoffs are almost certainly out of reach, but these individual milestones just might be attainable.

150 runs by Mookie Betts

Betts, entering Wednesday's games, led all of baseball with 129 runs. It's the same number he had last year, when he also led the league. With one more, he'll have a top-10 individual run-scoring season in Red Sox history. Betts is scoring runs at an incredible pace, which can happen when a player gets on base a ton, runs the bases well and has two MVP candidates hitting behind him.

But the franchise record for runs remains a bit of a longshot.

Ted Williams set the record with 150 runs in 1949, and it's proven an almost impossible standard to match. The only player since 1950 to score that many runs was Jeff Bagwell, who scored 152 for the Astros in 2000. Rickey Henderson is the career runs scored leader, and even he never scored more than 146 in a season. No Red Sox player has scored more than 130 in almost 70 years (Williams, of course, scored at least 130 six times and is the only player in franchise history to score 140).

Betts is on pace to fall six runs shy of Williams' record, but he has a better chance of getting there than anyone we've seen in a long time.

93 extra-base hits by Rafael Devers

Devers leads the majors with 83 extra-base hits (50 doubles, 29 home runs, four triples). It's already the second-most ever by a Red Sox player before his 23rd birthday (Williams had 86 extra-base hits as a rookie in 1939). But Devers is chasing a milestone that requires no age restriction.

He's on pace for not-quite 93 extra-base hits this season – technically on pace for 92.7 – but if he can get there, Devers will break Jimmie Foxx's franchise record of 92 extra-base hits set in 1938 (when Foxx won the league MVP). David Ortiz came close to breaking Foxx's record four times – he had 87 extra-base hits once, 88 extra-base hits twice and topped out at 91 extra-base hits in 2004 – but he never quite got there. Devers could do it in his second full season. According to Baseball-Reference.com, it would be one of the 50 best extra-base hit seasons of all time.

On a related note: Devers is also on pace for roughly 364 total bases, which would be a top 10 single-season total in Red Sox history. With 368, he'd crack the top seven and match the most total bases of Williams' career.

200 hits by Xander Bogaerts

Devers actually leads the Red Sox in hits and is on pace for only the 25th 200-hit season in franchise history, but it's Bogaerts whose hit total recently took on historic context.

On Saturday, Bogaerts became only the third Red Sox player to record his 1,000th career hit before the age of 27. The other two were Tris Speaker and Bobby Doerr, both Hall of Famers. Bogaerts has 168 hits this season – 14 fewer than Devers, but still sixth-most in the American League – and he's on pace for a little less than 190, a mark he's reached twice in his career.

If he can get to 191, he'll have one of the 50 highest single-season hit totals in Red Sox history. If he can get to 194, Bogaerts will have as many hits as Williams ever collected in a year. If he can get to 196, Bogaerts will match his single-season career high. Getting to 200 seems out of reach, but it would be a fitting achievement to cap such a tremendous season.

At his current pace, Bogaerts should finish the season with roughly 1,020 career hits, already the 32nd most in franchise history. Most likely, he is a little more than a season away from cracking the franchise top 20. Manny Ramirez ranks 20th with 1,232 Red Sox hits. Give Bogaerts just two more seasons of 190 hits, and he'll move ahead of Mike Greenwell for 12th on the franchise's all-time hits list well before his 30th birthday.

57 doubles by Bogaerts and Devers

With 50 and 49 apiece, Devers and Bogaerts rank first and second in doubles this season. Only two other players entered Wednesday with as many as 40 – one of them was Betts – so it's basically a two-teammate race for the doubles crown, and the question is: How high can they go?

No major leaguer has reached 60 doubles since the 1930s, and the all-time record of 67 belongs to former Red Sox right fielder Earl Webb. Let's assume that's out of reach. The second-most doubles in Red Sox history is 56, by Nomar Garciaparra in 2002. Dustin Pedroia is third with 54 in 2008. Right now, Bogaerts and Devers are on pace for roughly 55 doubles – give or take a half of a double – meaning Garciaparra's 56 is within reach. If one of them could get to 57, he'd have a top 10 doubles total in MLB history, according to Baseball-Reference.

The only teams since 1947 to have multiple players with 50-plus doubles were the 2000 Rockies and 1996 Mariners. There had been only eight 50-double seasons in Red Sox history.

30 home runs, 50 doubles by Bogaerts

This one is basically a given, but it's still worth pointing out. With one more double, Bogaerts will become the second shortstop ever to have 30 home runs and 50 doubles in a single season. Only Alex Rodriguez in 1996 reached both milestones in a season while playing shortstop. Only Ortiz in 2007 reached both milestones in a season while playing for the Red Sox. Bogaerts already has career highs with 31 homers and 49 doubles.

Assuming Bogaerts hits one more double and Devers hits one more home run, they will be the first set of teammates – for any organization – to each finish with 30 home runs and 50 doubles.

30 home runs, 100 RBIs, 100 runs by Devers

Another accomplishment that's basically a given, but again, still worth pointing out. With one more home run, Devers will become the 10th player in MLB history to achieve 30 home runs, 100 RBIs and 100 runs in a season before turning 23 years old. The most recent to do it was Miguel Cabrera in his second full season with the Marlins in 2005. Devers already has 107 RBIs and 116 runs.

Oddly enough, if it takes him a few days to hit that 30th home run, Devers could become the 11th or 12th player to reach 30-100-100 before his 23rd birthday. Juan Soto of the Nationals and Ronald Acuña Jr. of the Braves are also on pace to reach those totals.

30 home runs, .300 average. by J.D Martinez, Bogaerts, Devers

Martinez leads the Red Sox with 35 homers, Bogaerts is second with 31, Devers is third with 29. If Devers hits one more, they will become just the third Red Sox trio to each hit 30 home runs in a season (Betts, Ortiz and Hanley Ramirez did it in 2016; Jim Rice, George Scott and Butch Hobson did it in 1977).

But that's not all.

Martinez, Bogaerts and Devers are also each hitting above .300 this season. If they can maintain those batting averages, they'll become the first set of three Red Sox teammates to hit 30 and .300 in a single season. Only nine teams have ever done that, most recent being the 2004 Cardinals with Albert Pujols, Jim Edmonds and Scott Rolen (all three of whom finished top five in MVP voting that season).

There's an outside chance the Red Sox could go beyond just three players reaching those milestones. Betts ranks fourth on the team with 28 homers, and he's batting .290.

100 strikeouts by Matt Barnes and Brandon Workman

As you might assume, it's a lot easier to find offensive milestones than pitching milestones for this team, but both Barnes and Workman have a good chance of reaching 100 strikeouts this season, which would make them the first pair of Red Sox relievers to hit the century mark in the same season. Barnes has 97, which has already broken his career high set last year. Workman has 90, breaking his previous career high by 20. Dick Radatz achieved 100 strikeouts four times as a multi-inning Red Sox reliever in the 1960s, but the most recent to hit the mark are Craig Kimbrel (126 in 2017) and Koji Uehara (101 in 2013). At 15.5 K's per nine innings, Barnes has the best strikeout rate in the majors this season.

238 home runs as a team

This is another season of massive home run totals, and the Red Sox are on pace to obliterate their franchise record for home runs. They currently have 226, which is only the eighth-most this season, but it's already the second-most in franchise history behind the 2003 team, which hit 238 home runs thanks to a roster with nine players who reached double digits, including six who hit at least 25 (Jason Varitek, Kevin Millar, Garciaparra, Ramirez, Trot Nixon, Ortiz). This year's Red Sox also have nine players with double-digit home run totals, and if not for injuries, they would have eight with a shot at 20 homers (Martinez, Bogaerts, Devers, Betts, Christian Vazquez, Michael Chavis, Jackie Bradley, Mitch Moreland).

*** *The Toronto Sun***

Tellez, Hernandez, Guerrero Jr. power Jays in rout of Boston

Ryan Wolstat

A little home cooking appears to be just what the doctor ordered for the Toronto Blue Jays.

After losing six straight away from Rogers Centre and a season-worst seven in a row overall, Toronto has rebounded to take a pair from the Boston Red Sox, including a one-sided 8-0 drubbing on Wednesday night.

Rowdy Tellez and Teoscar Hernandez hit no-doubt home runs, Wilmer Font and Trent Thornton did stellar work on the mound and the 57-89 Jays pushed the spectre of 100 losses a little further out of the picture.

Manager Charlie Montoyo had talked up Rowdy Tellez before the game, indicating he thinks the big man could have an expanded role in 2020. Montoyo said he wants Tellez to be “my first baseman next year” with an “OPS of .800 to .900.” Tellez took a .720 OPS into Wednesday’s game in 353 at-bats. Last year Tellez made a sizzling debut, hitting four home runs, nine doubles and registering a .943 OPS in 70 at-bats. Veteran first baseman Justin Smoak is a free agent after the season, though he could return. Perhaps buoyed by the vote of confidence from his manager, Tellez crushed a solo home run in the fourth after Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had opened the scoring with a sacrifice fly, scoring Cavan Biggio, who had doubled.

The bats kept going in the fifth, when three straight Jays singled and Guerrero Jr. knocked in two with a single. Randal Grichuk plated a couple more with a two-out double off of the wall and Hernandez added another two for good measure by crushing a 2-2 pitch into the left field stands.

On the pitching side, the Jays elected to use an opener in front of Thornton for the first time and once again Font was solid. Font, who had been an opener 10 straight times before coming in relief against Tampa Bay on Sunday, gave up only a single hit and struck out a pair in two innings. Thornton was even better, striking out seven without surrendering a hit over five innings.

The series concludes on Thursday with the Jays looking to finish 9-10 against Boston this season.

SWITCHING SPOTS

Hernandez started in left field, instead of his customary centre-field spot for the first time since May 15. Hernandez had been 0-for-8 before sitting on Tuesday in the series opener, and when he came in later in the game he played left field.

Hernandez had spent March-May exclusively in left field, and then split time at both positions when he was demoted to triple-A Buffalo.

Manager Charlie Montoyo said Jonathan Davis will play centre field when he is in the lineup since he is an elite fielder at that spot.

“It’s just because J.D. Davis is our best outfielder, so whenever he plays he should play centre field. It has nothing to do with Teoscar,” Montoyo said.

So, while Hernandez has struggled mightily in centre, it doesn’t appear that the experiment has come to an end, just that there’s a better option at the moment.

NO GURRIEL YET

The Jays had been hopeful that Lourdes Gurriel Jr., one of the club's top hitters this season, would be back last weekend in Tampa Bay. However, his left quad isn't responding as well as anticipated and is still a bit sore.

Montoyo said there are no plans to activate him right now, but shutting him down for the rest of the year also isn't imminent.

THE NUMBERS, THEY BURN YOUR EYES

Colleague Scott (Wild Mitch) Mitchell of TSN dug up some less than ideal stats before the game, noting on Wednesday how poor many in this crop of players are at getting on base.

Of 140 qualified hitters, Randal Grichuk had the lowest on-base percentage of anybody, at just .282.

If you drop the requirements to 350 plate appearances, Brandon Drury would rank second-from-the-bottom, Danny Jansen third-worse, Grichuk fifth, Tellez eighth-worst.

One Jay very much not like some of the others is Cavan Biggio, who came into Wednesday's game with the second-highest walk rate in the Majors and the fourth-highest walk rate by a rookie ever.

As a whole though, Toronto ranks 28th in baseball in home on-base percentage.

AROUND THE BASES

Like Tampa Bay's Austin Meadows against the Jays, Tellez feasts on the Red Sox. Tellez has seven home runs in 11 games against Boston this season, including in each game of this series, and 12 home runs against every other team combined. Hernandez has found similar success against Boston, with four home runs now in 10 games this season. Hernandez now has 12 homers and 28 RBI vs. Boston, his most in both categories against any opponent ... Bo Bichette had a hit for the 30th time in 39 games and has reached base in all but five of those games ... Toronto had gone 6-24 at home against Boston over the past three seasons before winning two straight.

*** *The Toronto Star***

Blue Jays break out and shut out Red Sox

Gregor Chisholm

There have been some low points for the Blue Jays' offence of late. Far too much swing and miss, lowly on-base percentages and runs which have been coming at a premium. Wednesday night was not one of those games.

Toronto's lineup finally broke out in a big way as Rowdy Tellez and Teoscar Hernandez each homered while Cavan Biggio, Danny Jansen and Randal Grichuk were among those with multiple hits in an 8-0 victory over the Red Sox at the Rogers Centre.

The eight runs were the most they have scored since a 19-4 victory over the Rangers on Aug. 12. This month, the struggles have become even more pronounced, as the club entered Wednesday with four runs or fewer in each of their last eight games.

"That was really good to see because over the last two weeks, three weeks, we haven't really hit like we did in August," Blue Jays manager Charlie Montoyo said. "It was good to see the guys hitting the ball, everybody. I always say hitting is contagious and it was tonight. Everybody had good at-bats."

The offensive outburst came on a night when the Red Sox were attempting to piece together nine innings from their bullpen. Lefty Bobby Poyner got the start and tossed two scoreless innings, but the Jays scored two in fourth off Trevor Kelley and six more in the fifth off multiple relievers to break the game wide open.

The Jays finished 5-for-9 with runners in scoring position and, despite 11 hits and three walks, left just four men on base. Not bad at all for a team that entered the day with a .226 average at home, which ranked last in the major leagues. Tellez, who homered for a second consecutive game, continues to be a thorn in Boston's side with seven home runs in 11 games this year.

"I think it's just a coincidence," said Tellez, batting .410 vs. Boston. "I wish it was against every team. Just being able to put good swings on pitches I can handle is key."

Right-hander Trent Thornton was flawless out of the bullpen. The Jays used right-hander Wilmer Font as an opener and then turned things over to Thornton, who didn't allow a hit over five scoreless innings. The 25-year-old walked one and struck out seven as he became the second pitcher in franchise history to toss at least five-plus innings in relief without giving up a hit. Roy Lee Jackson also did it on Sept. 28, 1982 against the Twins.

"I've come out of the bullpen before (in the minors) in my career," Thornton said. "I was just hoping to get deep into the game as possible. It felt like I was doing a pretty good job of executing my pitches when I needed to. I felt pretty good tonight."

The only thing that stopped Thornton from going even deeper into the game is that the Jays are keeping a close eye on his workload over the final few weeks of the season. Thornton has tossed 139 1/3 innings so far and it's believed Toronto wanted to keep him around the 150 mark.

Elvis drafted: Blue Jays rookie right-hander Elvis Luciano was among those selected during the Dominican Winter League's annual draft on Wednesday night. Luciano was taken in the fourth round by Tigres del Licey. Toronto would have to sign off on Luciano's participation, but it could be one way to get him some extra work after being limited to 27 2/3 innings so far this season. Luciano is expected to be activated from the injured list on Thursday.

The century mark: The Jays need to win at least six of their final 16 games to avoid reaching the 100-loss plateau for the first time since 1979. Toronto has a pair of three-game series remaining with the last-place Orioles, plus two series against the Yankees and one vs. the Rays.

Up next: Right-hander Clay Buchholz (1-4, 5.31) will get the call when the Jays close out their three-game series against the Red Sox on Thursday with first pitch scheduled for 7:07 p.m. Boston will counter with right-hander Jhoulys Chacin (3-10, 5.60) in the final meeting between the teams this season.

*** *Associated Press***

Thornton, Blue Jays 2-hit slumping Red Sox in 8-0 win

Boston veteran Mitch Moreland said it's been "a tough couple of days" for the Red Sox offense. Doesn't get much more rugged than this.

Trent Thornton and three others combined on a two-hitter, Teoscar Hernandez and Rowdy Tellez homered, and the Toronto Blue Jays beat the Red Sox 8-0 Wednesday night.

"It's never fun when you're not winning," Moreland said. "We've got to start over tomorrow and get back on track."

The slumping Red Sox were shut out for the sixth time and have lost five straight. They had just four baserunners, and none advanced past second base.

"We're not controlling the strike zone right now," manager Alex Cora said. "Today was fastballs up, breaking balls down. We didn't make an adjustment, we didn't get on top of the fastball, we swung and missed at the breaking ball and it was an easy game for the pitching staff."

Thornton (5-9) followed an opener with five hitless innings, walking one and striking out seven in his first career relief appearance.

"He mixed it up," Moreland said. "He was throwing everything for strikes, both sides of the plate, elevated his heater. He threw a good game, or half a game."

Thornton is the second pitcher in Blue Jays history to pitch five hitless innings of relief. Right-hander Roy Lee Jackson did it against Minnesota on Sept. 28, 1982.

Thornton said Toronto teammate and former Red Sox starter Clay Buchholz taught him a new curveball grip earlier this week, and he put it to good use against Boston.

"I was throwing it in my last side (session) and it just kind of clicked," Thornton said. "I brought it into the game and that was probably the most effective my curveball has been all year."

Thornton leads all AL rookies with 134 strikeouts.

"The main thing was he was throwing strike one," Blue Jays manager Charlie Montoyo said. "He was ahead in the count for most of his five innings."

Blue Jays opener Wilmer Font allowed a hit during the first two innings, and Jason Adam and Ryan Tepera finished with an inning apiece as Toronto blanked an opponent for the seventh time.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had three RBI and Cavan Biggio had two hits and scored twice as the Blue Jays won their second straight following a season-long seven game losing streak.

Rafael Devers and Brock Holt each had singles for the Red Sox, who were blanked for the second time in three games. Boston also failed to get an extra-base hit, ending a 159-game streak that was the fourth longest in baseball history.

Toronto first baseman Brandon Drury made a diving play on Devers' hard grounder down the line in the ninth, throwing to second to force out Chris Owings.

The defending World Series champions have endured a rough stretch in which president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski was fired and a three-year run of AL East titles came to an end.

"We didn't expect to be in this situation," Cora said. "The effort is there, but the results are not. Obviously everybody is disappointed in what's going on."

Held hitless through the first three innings, the Blue Jays scored twice in the fourth against right-hander Trevor Kelley (0-1). Biggio reached on a bloop double and stole third before scoring on Guerrero's sacrifice fly. Tellez followed with a drive to right, his 19th and seventh in 11 games against the Red Sox. Tellez hit a go-ahead two-run homer in Toronto's 4-3 win Tuesday.

Toronto scored six more in a bat-around fifth against a trio of relievers, with six of seven batters getting hits at one stretch. Guerrero hit a two-run single off Ryan Weber, Randal Grichuk hit a two-run double off Travis Lakins, and Hernandez capped it with a drive to left, his 22nd, also off Lakins

Left-hander Bobby Poyner opened for the Red Sox, the first start of his big league career and just his fourth as a professional. Poyner struck out two in two perfect innings.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Red Sox: LHP David Price (left wrist) threw a 20-pitch bullpen before the game. Price was scratched from Friday's start against the Yankees. ... RHP Heath Hembree (right elbow) also threw a bullpen session before the game. ... OF Mookie Betts got the day off.

Blue Jays: OF Lourdes Gurriel Jr. (left quadriceps) felt sore after running before Tuesday's game. Gurriel has been out since Aug. 9

CRIME SPREE

Biggio is 11 for 11 in stolen base attempts, the most successful streak to begin a career in Blue Jays history. Former Blue Jays outfielder Shannon Stewart stole 10 straight to start his Toronto tenure.

UP NEXT

Red Sox: RHP Jhoulys Chacin (3-10, 5.66) was pushed back a day to open Thursday's series finale. Chacin made his Boston debut as an opener against the Yankees on Sept. 6, striking out four in two scoreless innings.

Blue Jays: RHP Buchholz (1-4, 5.31) faces his former team for the first time Thursday. Buchholz went 81-61 over 206 games in 10 seasons with the Red Sox.