

## ***The Boston Red Sox Friday, September 13, 2019***

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

#### **Cast off by the Brewers, Jhoulys Chacin finds redemption with the Red Sox**

Peter Abraham

Jhoulys Chacin met the Red Sox at Angel Stadium on Aug. 30 so he could throw in the bullpen with manager Alex Cora, pitching coach Dana LeVangie and a few others watching.

With Chris Sale and David Price unavailable because of injuries, the Red Sox needed a starting pitcher and Chacin was available after being released by the Milwaukee Brewers a week earlier.

“I had no guarantees. They wanted to see me pitch and said maybe they would give me an opportunity,” he said. “I had 30 pitches to show them what I could do.”

Now there’s pressure. But two days later, Chacin had a uniform and what amounted to a lottery ticket.

All he cost the Red Sox was the prorated minimum salary for a month. The Brewers were on the hook for the rest of his salary.

Chacin, 31, was Milwaukee’s Opening Day starter and beat St. Louis. But he won only two more games and saw his earned run average soar to 5.79 before Milwaukee let him go after leaving him on the injured list for a month.

But in three games since joining the Sox, two of them starts, Chacin has pitched  $5\frac{2}{3}$  innings without allowing a run. He has given up two hits, walked three and struck out seven.

Chacin got up to 48 pitches on Thursday night against Toronto. He left the game in the third inning with a 3-0 lead and saw the Sox go on to a 7-4 victory that snapped a five-game losing streak.

Chacin didn’t get the victory but he gained plenty of satisfaction.

“He did a good job. He hit the wall in that last inning, but overall another good performance,” manager Alex Cora said. “Fastball command was better; the slider plays. He has a pretty good idea of what to do.”

Chacin is getting stronger each time out. The idea each time is to go as deep as he can.

“I’m getting there,” he said. “Feeling a little more like my old self.”

Chacin has a 3.98 ERA over 252 games and 11 seasons. He also started three playoff games for Milwaukee last season and gave up two runs over  $12\frac{1}{3}$  innings.

This season was a rough one, but he’s been a successful big league starter.

Chacin retired the first five Blue Jays he faced, three by strikeout. It should have been six in a row but Andrew Benintendi lost a fly ball to left field in the lights and it fell in for a double for Randall Grichuck.

Chacin, who was walking toward the dugout, came back to the mound and walked Reese McGuire to continue the inning before Billy McKinney flied out to right field.

He put two on in the third before Darwinson Hernandez came on to strike out Red Sox-killer Rowdy Tellez.

Chacin is one of five players from Venezuela on the roster and he's taken it upon himself to serve as a mentor to Hernandez, Eduardo Rodriguez and the others.

"He understands the things they have to do, not only on the field," Cora said. "He's been great for them."

Chacin enjoys that role.

"I never played with any of these guys before. But I knew Eduardo and Sandy [Leon] from before and [Xander] Bogaerts, too," he said.

"It's fun to talk about pitching and hitting and everything else in baseball. I've been around and I know a little bit more than them. I talk about my experiences and tell them that no matter how much you're down in this game, you have to pick your head up and keep trying because it can change. You can't ever give up."

Chacin will likely get three more starts for the Sox this season, more chances to build a case to find a job for next season.

"I'm just trying to take advantage of this opportunity," he said. "However many times I pitch over the next couple of weeks, I want to finish strong and show that I'm healthy and can be a good pitcher again."

Maybe that could be with the Red Sox. One of the flaws of this season's team was the lack of rotation depth and that will be important to fix next year, especially given the troubling injury history with both David Price and Chris Sale.

Chacin could well be a good, low-cost fit.

"It's Boston. I've been very happy to be here and get to know these guys," he said. "They won the World Series last year and it's a great opportunity to be in an organization like that."

"I'm just trying to help this team now and give myself a chance to pitch next season. I still have a lot of games left."

### **Red Sox avoid sweep in Toronto**

Julian McWilliams

Regardless of where the Red Sox are in the standings, something had to change entering Thursday's game against the Blue Jays. They had won just three of their past 11 games and were on a five-game losing streak.

The Sox' bats had been cold in their previous six games, hitting just .194 since the start of the series against the Yankees Sept. 6.

Xander Bogaerts was 0 for his past 12. His last hit was his 1,000th, against Yankees lefthander J.A. Happ. J.D. Martinez was in a funk, too, slashing .095/.208/.569 in his previous six games. To make matters worse, the Red Sox had lost the first two games of the series against a young Blue Jays team and were shutout in Wednesday night's matchup.

"We for sure didn't expect to come here and lose these first two games against these guys," Bogaerts said after their 8-0 loss Wednesday. The Red Sox are 9½ games out of the second wild-card spot with 15 games to play.

But on Thursday night, finally, the Sox broke through to beat the Blue Jays, 7-3, and avoid the sweep.

“It’s always good to [get the win],” manager Alex Cora said. “It was a tough one yesterday. The at-bats weren’t great. The at-bats were a lot better today. We controlled the strike zone a little bit more.”

Marco Hernandez plated the Sox’ first two runs, doubling off former Red Sox starter Clay Buchholz in the second inning.

Jhoulys Chacin started and worked  $2\frac{2}{3}$  scoreless innings for the Sox.

The Sox added another run in the third. Bogaerts snapped his skid with a two-out double, giving him 50 on the season. Bogaerts and Rafael Devers are the first pair of Sox to record at least 50 doubles in the same season. And Bogaerts became just the second shortstop to have 50-plus doubles and 30-plus homers in a season. The other was Alex Rodriguez in 1996.

“Once I start getting close to those type of numbers, I just take the mentality and approach to go and get it,” Bogaerts said. “I’m happy I did. I’ve been hitting a lot of balls in the infield. Can’t get a double hitting ground balls in the infield.”

Martinez followed Bogaerts’s double with one of his own, scoring Bogaerts for a 3-0 lead. In the fourth, Jackie Bradley Jr. doubled, then Juan Centeno’s single extended the ’ lead to 4-0.

The Blue Jays got a pair of runs in the fifth inning, however. Lefthander Brian Johnson issued a two-out walk to Bo Bichette. Next, Cavan Biggio roped a triple down the right-field line, scoring Bichette. Vladimir Guerrero Jr. then singled in Biggio.

But the Sox added some insurance in the seventh. Mookie Betts stroked his second single of the game, then stole second. Brock Holt then singled in Betts to make it 5-2, Betts scoring his 130th run of the season. He became the first Sox player to score at least 130 runs in a season since Dom DiMaggio scored 131 times in 1950. Betts would tie DiMaggio in the ninth.

Bogaerts then laced his second hit, singling up the middle to bring in Holt.

Matt Barnes couldn’t find the strike zone in the eighth inning, walking Justin Smoak after striking out Rowdy Tellez. Barnes then struck out Randal Grichuk but walked Reese McGuire, putting runners at first and second with two outs. Barnes surrendered an infield single to Anthony Alford before walking Derek Fisher to force in a run and shrink the Blue Jays’ deficit to 6-3.

“The fastball command wasn’t there,” Cora said. “He threw a few breaking balls that were good. Changeup was good today. Just with the fastball he was all over the place.”

That’s when Cora summoned closer Brandon Workman from the bullpen for a four-out save. Workman got out the inning unscathed, and the Red Sox scored in a run in the ninth, giving them a four-run cushion again.

The Blue Jays responded with a run of their own in the bottom of the ninth, but Workman struck out Smoak to end it.

The Sox will face the Philadelphia Phillies, and even though this season probably won’t extend beyond September, this was one they had to get.

“We’ve been in a slump the last five, six games,” Chacin said. “It’s always important to win games. At the end, that’s the most important thing, to win the game and that’s what we did today.”

**Red Sox will have a chance to get extended look at Marco Hernandez**

Julian McWilliams

The standings are what they are. The chances of the Red Sox making it to the postseason are virtually an afterthought, so they will be prudent with players who need rest, while also using this as a time to get an extended look at some others.

One of the players you can expect to get legitimate playing time is 27-year-old Marco Hernandez. After being plagued by a bad shoulder since 2017 he is finally healthy, so this will allow the Sox to assess what they really have in the backup infielder.

“Alex [Cora] brought that to us about getting him in so we can see him and observe him down the stretch,” assistant general manager Eddie Romero said Thursday afternoon before a 7-4 win over the Blue Jays. “He’s been in there a few times the last couple weeks and he’s played well. Getting him as many at-bats as we can for the rest of the season here [is important].”

Entering Thursday, Hernandez had a .286 batting average with two homers in 104 plate appearances. He had been solid up the middle, too, mainly playing second base. Hernandez came into Thursday in a bit of slump, just 3 for his last 23, but he had left an impression this season.

“This year I tried to get my playing time back,” Hernandez said recently. “As soon as I started playing back in May I started getting more comfortable at the plate.”

Hernandez (1 for 4) doubled in his first at-bat Thursday, driving in two runs in the second inning. The Sox had been shut out, 8-0, the night before.

Hernandez could leave the Sox with a decision at the end of the year. Brock Holt, who is scheduled to become a free agent, essentially has blocked Hernandez from playing since they are both lefthanded batters who can play multiple positions.

But Hernandez could fill that position going forward, plus he is under team control for three more years. If Hernandez makes an even stronger impression over the coming weeks, it might make it easier for the Sox to part ways with Holt, who will certainly have market value.

“He’s a guy that we’re counting on,” Cora said of Hernandez when the team was in Colorado last month. “He can run. He can put pressure on the defense. We do believe in him and we think that he’s a guy that can contribute.”

Honor for Holt

Major League Baseball announced 30 nominees, one from each team, for the Roberto Clemente Award, and the Sox’ nominee is Holt. The award is given to a player who best represents the game through community, character, philanthropy, and positive contributions both on and off the field.

“It’s always cool to be associated with that award,” Holt said. “I’ve been nominated a few times now. I don’t think anybody who gets nominated does the stuff for the recognition. But it’s nice to see that some of the things you’re doing are noticed.”

Holt came up through the Pirates organization, where Clemente made his mark as a Hall of Famer. For Holt, that makes being nominated even more special.

“He was the guy that everyone talked about,” Holt said. “He was a role model. Everyone knows how good of a baseball player he was. But off the field, one of the best people. It’s a very prestigious award.”

Holt is heavily involved in the Jimmy Fund and makes countless visits to children at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. He and his family also donated \$15,000 to the Jimmy Fund in August during the annual fund-raising drive.

Feeling better

David Price (left wrist) and Heath Hembree (right elbow) are feeling better, and Cora has said the team will map out what they do with pitchers on Saturday. For Price, it will be about getting treatment, and Hembree could throw a simulated game.

“If Saturday fits [for Hembree], based on how he feels, we will do it,” Cora said.

The expectation is for both to pitch again before the season ends.

## **\* *The Boston Herald***

### **Xander Bogaerts makes history as Red Sox snap five-game losing skid**

Steve Hewitt

After his team put up another lifeless performance on Wednesday night, a typically candid Xander Bogaerts revealed the honest truth: The Red Sox shouldn't be dropping those types of games to the Blue Jays, no matter where they are in the standings.

A night later, the Red Sox at least had enough pride to avoid a series sweep, and their shortstop led the charge.

Bogaerts backed up his word, going for 2-for-5 and making history with his 50th double of the season, as the Red Sox offense finally woke up from their offensive slumber against old pal Clay Buchholz to snap a five-game losing streak with a 7-4 win over the Jays at Rogers Centre.

Bogaerts became the second shortstop in baseball history to hit 30 homers and 50 doubles in the same season, joining Alex Rodriguez, who did it in 1996. He also became the second Red Sox player in history to do it after David Ortiz achieved the feat in 2007.

“These weren't goals I set coming into the season,” Bogaerts said. “Once I start getting close to those types of numbers ... I had no idea who did any of this or anything like that, but once I started getting a lot of doubles, getting a lot of homers and then you start hearing stuff, and you're like, oh. It's just a mentality and approach to go and get it, and I'm happy I did it.”

It took some time for Bogaerts to get his 50th double. His 49th came last Friday against the Yankees, and he was getting some pressure from his mom to hit the milestone. He made her proud when he crushed a Buchholz fastball to right in the third inning.

Bogaerts joined Rafael Devers, who hit his 50th double on Tuesday here in Toronto, to become the third duo in the last 72 years to hit 50 doubles in a season. Devers is one homer away from the tandem becoming the first teammates in baseball history with 30 doubles and 50 homers in a season.

Amidst a disappointing season that will very likely end in September, it's been those two who have been the brightest spots. On Thursday, it was Bogaerts' turn to shine again.

“I know this season hasn't been very nice for us in general and it's one of the tough things to go back home and think about in the offseason,” Bogaerts said. But whenever I have time, to myself or my family, that's stuff that they'll definitely be talking about. My mom has been rooting for me to get a double for a while, and I guess she knew more than me how important it was and how hard it was to get something like that.”

Alex Cora has been proud of Bogaerts all season, not only in terms of his production but in his daily approach in what's been a frustrating year for the team.

“I still believe, I think he’s going to be better,” Cora said. “He’s going to understand when to attack a little bit more often just like Mookie (Betts) right now, he’s in a groove swinging at the first pitch, putting good swings. He will do that with time. He’s only 26. We’re very proud of him. It’s not only the numbers. It’s him showing up consistently every day and the routine and being a leader and understanding what he means to the organization. In a quote unquote bad season, he’s been showing up every day and he’s learning a lot this year.”

Well out of the playoff picture, the Red Sox (77-70) now head to Philly for a two-game series with the Phillies as they try to finish the final two weeks of the season on a high note.

“It’s easy just to be sloppy at the end and when things aren’t going your way,” Cora said. “I’m on top of them. It’s a learning period. Whatever happens the upcoming days happens. Whenever we’re out, we’re out and then we start building for whatever is coming. It’s very important to play the game the right way and play good baseball.”

### **Red Sox notes: Brock Holt honored to be nominated for Roberto Clemente Award again**

Steve Hewitt

As he came up through the Pirates organization, Brock Holt remembers seeing the quotes and hearing the stories of Roberto Clemente and the kind of person he was off the field.

It came from everywhere, and it only reaffirmed Holt’s values and his dedication to the community, a responsibility he feels comes with being a baseball player.

All these years later, it’s only gotten stronger, and he’s been recognized appropriately for it, even if that wasn’t the mission. The Red Sox utility man on Thursday was again nominated for the prestigious Roberto Clemente Award, which is given to the player who best represents the game on and off the field. It’s the fourth time in the last five years he’s been nominated.

“It’s always cool to kind of be associated with that award,” Holt said. “I’ve been nominated a few times now and obviously, I don’t think anyone that gets nominated does this stuff for the recognition. But it’s nice to see that some of the things that you’re doing are noticed, and any time you’re involved with something with Roberto Clemente’s name on it is pretty special. ...

“Even though sometimes it’s not warranted, people look up to us. We have a platform to do good, and I feel like that’s just part of being a professional athlete. It’s the way my mom and dad raised me. Just be a good person, be good to people and that’s what we try to do.”

Holt has certainly taken that responsibility seriously, and his efforts off the field have made him beloved in the community. He and his wife, Lakyn, have maintained a strong relationship with the Jimmy Fund and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute throughout his Red Sox tenure — forming deep and personal relationships with kids and their families — and has gone above and beyond with his contributions.

“He’s a guy, he has a great heart,” said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. “He really cares. Even the other day, I was doing something ... I was somewhere, and I went back to the ballpark and he comes in and I was like, where were you? He was like, ‘I was just at the hospital.’ I was like, ‘Scheduled?’ He was like, ‘No, just stopped by and said hi.’ That tells you a lot about who he is. ...

“What he does off the field is amazing and we are very proud of him.”

Holt and his wife have taken their efforts to the next level during September, which is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. In an effort to help raise funds in the fight against childhood cancer, they designed special T-shirts. Many Red Sox players have been wearing the shirts, which are being sold for \$28, with \$12 going to the Jimmy Fund.

At first, Holt said the goal was to sell 400 shirts, which would have raised \$5,000. But they have far surpassed that and have now sold over 1,600 shirts.

“Hopefully those numbers keep climbing and we can do as much good and raise as much money as we can,” Holt said.

Broken record

With the 6,106th home run of the season hit on Wednesday, the major league record was shattered with more than two weeks to go in the season. It broke the previous record set in 2017.

It’s no secret balls are flying out of stadiums at an outrageous rate now, but Cora was taken aback by another statistic.

“I read something else that caught my attention, how many home runs have been robbed this year,” Cora said. “It’s like 64. So yeah, yeah. That’s all I can say.”

Cora also said he read something Justin Verlander, who has been outspoken about the spike in home runs, had to say about how it’s impacted the game.

“One thing he mentioned and I agree, there’s other stuff in the game that you don’t do as often,” Cora said. “Hit and runs, stealing bases, going first to third, that’s part of the game. It’s something we did last year. It helped us out. This year, obviously for certain situations we limit ourselves doing that stuff. It’s part of the game.” . . . . .

Cora said David Price (wrist) felt good after his 20-pitch bullpen Wednesday, but they haven’t mapped out when his return will come.

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

### **Red Sox 7, Blue Jays 4: Boston salvages series finale in Toronto**

Bill Koch

We’ve reached the point in the season where the Red Sox should be searching for silver linings.

Thursday night at Rogers Centre provided several. There were personal milestones for Xander Bogaerts and Mookie Betts, an assurance of at least a .500 road record and the avoidance of what would have been a first sweep here since 2008.

Boston got off to a good start and never relented in a 7-4 victory over the Blue Jays, snapping a five-game losing streak.

Marco Hernandez lined a two-run double to right-center in the top of the second inning and the Red Sox held that lead to the finish. Boston bullpenned its way through 27 outs -- the first eight from Jhoulys Chacin -- by using nine different pitchers. RBI singles by Brock Holt and Bogaerts in the seventh gave the Red Sox all the breathing room they required.

“Being in a slump the last five or six games, it’s always important to win games,” Chacin said. “We’re trying to play hard every game.”

Boston jumped over one final hurdle in the bottom of the eighth when Matt Barnes walked in a run to make it a 6-3 game. Bo Bichette could have put Toronto ahead with a grand slam, and Bradon Workman was

summoned to record a four-out save. Workman retired Bichette on a harmless fly to right and allowed a lone unearned run in the ninth.

Bogaerts became just the ninth player in Boston history to reach 50 doubles in a season, lining a two-out drive up the right-center field gap in the third. He's only the second shortstop in baseball history to post a 50-double/30-homer season (Alex Rodriguez, Mariners, 1996) and only the second Red Sox player (David Ortiz, 2007). Bogaerts eventually scored when J.D. Martinez sent an RBI double down the line in right, making it 3-0.

"These weren't goals I set coming into the season," Bogaerts said. "Once I started getting close to those types of numbers, I had no idea who did any of this or anything like that."

"We're very proud of him," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "It's not only the numbers. It's him showing up consistently every day and the routine and being a leader and understanding what he means to the organization."

Rafael Devers hit his 50th double of the season on Tuesday, and Bogaerts joined him among the only pair of Red Sox players to do it in the same season. Only Seattle in 1996 (Rodriguez, Edgar Martinez) and Colorado in 2000 (Todd Helton, Jeff Cirillo) have boasted at least two players with as many as 50 doubles in a season. No other team has accomplished the feat in the last 70 years, and no team in the history of the game has included a pair of 50-double/30-homer players – Devers is at 29 round-trippers.

"Hopefully he gets it soon," Bogaerts said. "As soon as I came into the dugout I told him I'm waiting for him. The pressure's on him now, and he'll come through."

Boston also improved to 41-31 in road games, including a 38-21 mark since April 17. The Red Sox opened just 3-10 away from home, sitting there after a two-game sweep at Yankee Stadium during the season's first full month. Boston had captured four consecutive road series before dropping the first two games here this week.

"It was a tough one yesterday," Cora said. "The at-bats weren't great. The effort is still there. They're working. I think the at-bats were a lot better today."

The Red Sox made it a 4-0 lead in the fourth on a Juan Centeno RBI single to right. Cavan Biggio's RBI triple to right and a run-scoring single to left by Vladimir Guerrero Jr. cut that cushion in half in the fifth, but the Blue Jays came no closer. Josh Taylor was credited with the victory after working a 1-2-3 fourth.

Boston's rally in the seventh included singles by Betts, Holt and Bogaerts. Betts came around to score on the base knock by Holt, his 130th run of the season. He's the first Red Sox player to cross the plate that many times since Dom DiMaggio scored 131 runs in 1950.

### **Red Sox utility man Brock Holt nominated for Roberto Clemente Award**

Bill Koch

For the fourth time in the last five seasons, Red Sox utility man Brock Holt has been selected as the club's nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award.

Per Boston's game notes, the award "recognizes a player who best represents the game of baseball through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions both on and off the field." Holt will be honored at Fenway Park prior to Wednesday's first pitch against the Giants.

"I don't think anyone who's nominated does this stuff for the recognition," Holt said. "It's nice to see that some of the things you're doing are noticed. Any time you're involved in something with Roberto Clemente's name on it, it's pretty special."



Holt has served as the Red Sox Jimmy Fund captain for the past five seasons, leading the fundraising efforts undertaken by the club on behalf of its charity partner. His latest venture is selling t-shirts through September to promote Childhood Cancer Awareness. Holt and his wife, Lakyn, priced the shirts at \$12 apiece and have sold more than 1,700 to date.

“We set out wanting to sell about 400 shirts, which would have raised about \$5,000 for the Jimmy Fund,” Holt said. “Lakyn texted me today and said we’re about 300 items away from selling 2,000 – that’s about \$25,000.”

Holt was acquired via trade from the Pirates – Clemente’s organization – in December 2012. The Hall of Fame outfielder’s influence was an obvious one in Pittsburgh, as Clemente broke barriers for baseball’s Hispanic players and devoted a significant amount of time to charity. His death in a 1972 plane crash came while attempting to deliver supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

“Quotes from him all over the place,” Holt said. “We learned a lot about the kind of person he was. Obviously everyone knows what kind of a baseball player he was, but off the field one of the best people ever in this game.”

Tim Wakefield and David Ortiz were back-to-back winners of the award for the Red Sox in 2010 and 2011. Fan voting at MLB.com ends Sept. 29, and the award will be presented during the World Series in October.

“What they do on a daily basis and how they go about it, it’s impressive,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “Very likeable guy, and he’s also a good player. What he does off the field is amazing, and we are very proud of him.”

### **Red Sox owner John Henry’s past, principles were too often ignored by Dave Dombrowski**

Bill Koch

John Henry couldn’t fire himself.

That’s not the way it works when you’re the principal owner. Your subordinates are the ones to pay the price when there’s failure on the field and questionable contracts signed. Dave Dombrowski, now the former Red Sox president of baseball operations, was always going to be the one to take the fall.

Boston management hasn’t offered a specific reason for the decision, but a look at Henry’s past – both recent and before he acquired a majority stake in the club in 2002 – offers some clues.

First, the immediate. Henry told WEEI.com in an interview earlier this season he generally didn’t believe in bringing managers or baseball operations personnel like Dombrowski into the final year of a contract. It was either extend Dombrowski beyond 2020 or cut bait – Henry chose the latter.

Second – and this is certainly the more revealing aspect of the equation – are Henry’s fundamental business practices. He made his fortune trading corn and soybean futures, navigating the markets with tremendous skill to amass his significant financial portfolio. John W. Henry & Company discarded human emotion and price trends to focus on future value.

Henry used that accumulated wealth to venture into sports franchise ownership. His two primary properties, the Red Sox and Liverpool Football Club, were legacy brands operating far from their potential peaks. Henry spent a combined \$1.15 billion to complete their purchases – the two franchises were valued at a combined \$5.38 billion in July by Forbes Magazine.

Boston’s roster construction in 2019 paid little attention to that basic principle. Three contracts in particular – David Price, Chris Sale and Nathan Eovaldi – are untradeable, and all were negotiated by Dombrowski. No opposing executive would consummate any deal with those three players involved unless there was a

significant asset attached. Price, Sale and Eovaldi are on the Red Sox books for \$73.6 million in each of the next three seasons.

That lack of flexibility comes prior to what could be an offseason of considerable transition. The next hire for Dombrowski's old position faces serious questions that will shape the Red Sox roster for years to come. Resolving the immediate futures of Mookie Betts, Jackie Bradley Jr., Rick Porcello and Brock Holt is bound to cause some headaches.

Boston has what feels like unlimited financial resources, but spending through the final threshold of the Competitive Balance Tax every season isn't the answer. The Red Sox can pay the fines to Major League Baseball, but losing draft position is something the organization can't afford. Boston's farm system is improving but remains ranked in the bottom third among 30 franchises.

What must make this particularly vexing for Henry is how perfectly his Liverpool machine is humming along at the moment. Their roster management culminated in a sixth UEFA Champions League title in June, the world's premier competition in club soccer. Liverpool's players on average are younger, cheaper and were more prudently acquired than the current Red Sox group by light years.

Trent Alexander-Arnold is the lone product of the club's academy system who is a regular contributor, a brilliant 20-year-old fullback who is now an England national team regular. The other 10 starters against Tottenham in the final were acquired at an average age of 24 years old – each of them still had considerable room to grow and improve. The three players Liverpool brought off the bench included two purchased as teenagers and a third, James Milner, who was a 29-year-old free transfer from Manchester City.

Liverpool's two most expensive players, defender Virgil van Dijk and goalkeeper Alisson Becker, were acquired to address specific areas of need. The Reds spent a combined \$175 million to shore up their leaky back line, adding the final missing pieces to a club that was ready to contend for titles. The Red Sox signing J.D. Martinez the year after finishing last in the American League in home runs is an appropriate comparison.

The difference here is how the available funds were generated. The Red Sox took another significant chunk out of their CBT allotment – Martinez's salary last season counted for about 9% of the \$237 million available, which Boston plowed through to win a championship. Liverpool reinvested the \$130 million they took in by selling disgruntled midfielder Philippe Coutinho to Barcelona.

The Reds had purchased Coutinho from Inter Milan for just \$10.5 million as a 20-year-old and cashed in for two reasons – his value had reached its maximum, and more help was needed elsewhere on the roster. The emergence of Rafael Devers and Xander Bogaerts as potential offensive cornerstones could do the same to Martinez should he opt out of his contract. Boston could also demand a significant return and paper over some cracks by looking into trading Betts.

There will be a certain ruthlessness required by the next

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

### **Xander Bogaerts makes history with 50th double to lead Boston Red Sox to win over Blue Jays**

Christopher Smith

Xander Bogaerts ripped his 50th double in the third inning, then added an RBI single in the seventh. He helped the Red Sox win 7-4 over the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre on Thursday.

Bogaerts made history. He became only the second shortstop along with Alex Rodriguez in MLB history to reach 30 homers and 50 doubles in a single season. He also joined David Ortiz (2007) as the only two hitters in Red Sox history with a 30-homer, 50-double season.

Rodriguez belted 36 homers and 54 doubles as a 20-year-old in 1996 for the Mariners.

The Red Sox ended their five-game losing streak. They have a rare day off Friday, then play in Philadelphia on Saturday and Sunday before returning to Fenway Park to host the San Francisco Giants on Tuesday.

Marco Hernandez gave Boston a 2-0 lead in the second with a two-run double against Buchholz, the former Red Sox pitcher.

J.D. Martinez had an RBI double and Brock Holt stroked two RBI singles.

Nine Red Sox pitchers, including opener Jhoulys Chacin, combined to hold the Blue Jays to four runs.

### **Brock Holt named Red Sox's Roberto Clemente Award nominee; utility man wins for fourth time**

Christopher Smith

Utility player Brock Holt is the Red Sox nominee for the league-wide Roberto Clemente Award, Major League Baseball announced Thursday. Holt is one of 30 finalists for the award.

Holt has previously represented the Red Sox on three occasions, in 2015, 2016 and 2018. The Roberto Clemente Award, given each year to the player "who best represents the game of Baseball through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions, both on and off the field," is considered the "most prestigious individual" award given out by the league.

Holt, who has served as Boston's Jimmy Fund Captain for five straight seasons, will be recognized on Sept. 18, which is Roberto Clemente Day. The league-wide winner will be selected from a panel comprised of commissioner Rob Manfred, representatives from MLB-affiliated networks, Vera Clemente and a fan vote.

Former Red Sox to win the league-wide award include Tim Wakefield (2010) and David Ortiz (2011). Holt will compete against the 29 other nominees, including ex-Red Sox Jon Lester (Cubs) and Pablo Sandoval (Giants) for this year's honors.

## **\* *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune***

### **6 candidates for the Red Sox GM gig**

Chris Mason

With Dave Dombrowski dumped in mid-September, the search for his successor is already underway.

So who might be sitting in the general manager's box when the Red Sox open play next season? Here are six candidates to replace Dombrowski:

Eddie Romero, Red Sox

Of the four acting general managers, Romero would seem most likely to be elevated into the full-time gig.

Romero's been with the Red Sox since 2006, and as such, has seen Theo Epstein, Ben Cherington, and Dombrowski's processes firsthand. As the director of international scouting, Romero spotted Rafael Devers as a 14-year-old and was instrumental in bringing him to Boston.

He's a bright guy — Romero has a doctorate degree — and as a native of Puerto Rico, he meshes well with manager Alex Cora, too.

Mike Hazen, Diamondbacks

The exec who got away.

Hazen served as general manager under Dombrowski for a year, but then left for the Diamondbacks, where he's turned a bargain-basement team into a contender.

Because Hazen is under contract, the Diamondbacks can deny him permission to talk to the Red Sox. But on 98.7 FM, Arizona's Sports Station, CEO Derrick Hall didn't seem ready to stand in the way.

"I'm human and I realize he's from there," Hall said. "His family is from there, it was his childhood team — what a dream to work for them for over a decade. There's a part of him that has a strong appeal toward that franchise. That's human nature, I get it.

"If he were to come to me with that kind of a statement, that would mean first and foremost, that they have reached out, that they have expressed interest and he has an interest in pursuing it," Hall said. "But at this point, I have not heard that from either side. I know he is so focused at the job at hand and the task at hand."

Tim Naehring, Yankees

Brian Cashman's right-hand man, Naehring defecting to Boston could add a little more spice to baseball's most storied rivalry.

The longtime Red Sox infielder has been New York's Vice President of Baseball Operations since 2015, and he admitted he'd answer if Boston came calling.

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

Josh Byrnes, Dodgers

Another familiar face.

Long before Byrnes was helping to craft a juggernaut in Los Angeles, he served as Epstein's assistant GM from 2003-2006, pretty substantial years in Red Sox history.

He then joined the Diamondbacks, Padres, and landed with the Dodgers, where he's been Vice President of Baseball Operations since 2014 and has won six straight NL West titles.

Erik Neander, Rays

The Sox have certainly taken chances on whiz kids before, and the 36-year-old Rays general manager has impressed during his time in Tampa Bay.

John Henry has made it clear he's looking for somebody with a long-term vision for sustainable success. Nobody has done more with less than the Rays.

The Tampa Bay front office has been particularly adept at identifying young talent. Their who-is-that trade deadline acquisition, Nick Anderson, has struck out 31 of the 52 batters he's faced since joining Tampa.

Chris Mason, Eagle-Tribune

Well, if you take J.D. Martinez's word, anyway. Remember this exchange from July?

“You’ve got to think of it like this: Writers want to be what?” Martinez asked.

Good question. What do writers want to be?

“They want to work where? They want to work in the front office,” Martinez opined. “They want to get jobs with teams

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

### **Bogaerts, A-Rod only SS with 50 2Bs, 30 HRs**

Ian Browne

Xander Bogaerts has become the milestone man for the Red Sox this season. The one he reached on Thursday at Rogers Centre is the most impressive yet.

By roping his 50th double of the season against former teammate Clay Buchholz in the third inning of his team’s 7-4 victory, Bogaerts joined Alex Rodriguez (1996) as the only shortstops in Major League history to have 50 doubles and 30 homers in the same season. David Ortiz (2007) is the only other Red Sox player to reach that club, which Rafael Devers is one homer away from joining.

“Hopefully he hits it soon,” Bogaerts said of Devers. “As soon as I came into the dugout, I saw him waiting for me, so the pressure’s on him now, and he’ll come through.”

Bogaerts notched his 50th double just two days after his teammate and close friend Devers reached that mark. They are the first duo in Red Sox history to have 50 doubles in the same season. In fact, Bogaerts became just the ninth Boston player ever to hit that many doubles.

“These weren’t goals I set coming into the season,” said Bogaerts. “I mean, I had no idea who did any of this or anything like that. But once I started getting a lot of doubles, getting a lot of homers and then you start hearing stuff, and you’re like, ‘Oh.’ It’s just a mentality and approach to go and get it, and I’m happy I did it. It’s been a while since I had a double. I’ve been hitting a lot of balls in the infield, and you can’t get a double hitting ground balls in the infield, so it was good.”

Bogaerts hit the mark just five days after getting his 1,000th career hit on his mother’s birthday. He was only the fourth player in Sox history to hit the mark before his 27th birthday.

And just like on that day, when Sandra Brown [Bogaerts’ mom] sent him a pre-game text of encouragement, Bogaerts got another one on Thursday.

“My mom has been rooting for me to get a double for a while, and I guess she knew more than me how important it was and how hard it was to get something like that,” said Bogaerts.

It was particularly gratifying for Red Sox manager Alex Cora to see Bogaerts hit the 50-30 mark. At his opening press conference the day he was named manager of the Red Sox in November of 2017, Cora challenged Bogaerts to become a more productive hitter. Bogaerts has responded with his two best seasons.

“That’s pretty cool for a line-drive hitter [who went the] other way, he wanted to shoot the hole the whole time before,” said Cora. “And for him to buy into the concept of driving the ball has been great. Also, he’s hitting over .300.”

Though Buchholz, who took the loss, didn’t enjoy giving up that particular double, he is proud to see what his friend has accomplished.

“He knows what he wants to do. He does everything the right way. He's a good teammate. He's prepared for every at-bat and rightfully so,” said Buchholz. “I think everybody in Major League Baseball is mad whenever they don't have success in whatever they're doing, batting, pitching or fielding.

“That's a way of life over there, and that's how I was brought up as well. You're expected to be the best and, if you're not, then you've got to go to work the next day and figure out why not. That's Xander. He's a pro.”

Bogaerts is getting a lot to show for his hard work this season.

Last month in Denver, Bogaerts got his 30th homer and 100th RBI on the same swing, making him Boston's first 30-100 shortstop since Nomar Garciaparra in 1998. And in Cleveland on Aug. 14, he hammered the 100th homer of his career.

The performance of Bogaerts, who also had an RBI single, helped fuel the Red Sox to the end of a five-game losing streak.

“I still believe, I think he's going to be better,” said Cora. “He's going to understand when to attack a little bit more often just like Mookie [Betts] right now, he's in a groove swinging at the first pitch, putting good swings. He will do that with time. He's only 26. We're very proud of him.

“It's not only the numbers. It's him showing up consistently every day and the routine and being a leader and understanding what he means to the organization. In a quote-unquote bad season [for the Red Sox], he's been showing up every day and he's learning a lot this year.”

### **Holt nominated for Roberto Clemente Award**

Ian Browne

As a player who came up through the Pirates farm system, being named in the same sentence as Roberto Clemente will never get even a little bit old for Red Sox veteran Brock Holt.

And on Thursday, Holt was nominated for the prestigious Roberto Clemente Award for the fourth time in the last five years.

The award recognizes a player who best represents the game through extraordinary character, community involvement and positive contributions both on and off the field.

It's hard to imagine any Major League player combining all of those traits better than Holt, who is a frequent and inspirational presence at the cancer-fighting Jimmy Fund.

“He's been great. He's a guy, he has a great heart,” said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. “He really cares. Even the other day, I was doing something and I went back to the ballpark and he comes in and I was like, ‘Where were you?’ He was like, ‘I was just at the hospital.’ I was like, ‘Scheduled?’ He was like, ‘No, just stopped by and said hi.’ That tells you a lot about who he is.”

Anyone who has ever seen Holt interact with kids around the ballpark or at local charity events can tell he isn't in it for the publicity.

“It's always cool to kind of be associated with that award,” Holt said. “I've been nominated a few times now, and obviously I don't think anyone that gets nominated does this stuff for the recognition. But it's nice to see that some of the things that you're doing are noticed, and any time you're involved with something with Roberto Clemente's name on it is pretty special.”

It didn't take Holt very long as a Pirates prospect to realize Clemente's impact on baseball and people.

“Coming up through the Pirates organization, obviously he was the guy that everyone talked about, and everyone in the organization wanted to kind of [emulate],” Holt said. “He was kind of a role model type of guy. There were quotes from him all over the place, and we learned a lot about the kind of person he was. Obviously, everyone knows how good of a baseball player he was. Off the field, though, one of the best people ever in this game. It’s a very prestigious award that’s such an honor to be nominated for.”

Holt and his wife Lakyn cherish the many relationships they’ve formed with Jimmy Fund patients, looking at them like extended family members.

“The kids I’ve been able to form a relationship with, the families I’ve been able to form relationships with, they’re a huge part of my life, and Lakyn’s also,” said Holt. “We keep in contact with a lot of kids that we’ve met over the years, and just seeing them and having them out to games and FaceTiming and all that other stuff, they’ve become like family to us. It’s a special place that we’re very, very fortunate to be a small part of it.”

Plans in motion for Price, Hembree

Lefty David Price felt no ill effects a day after throwing a bullpen session. Signs continue to be encouraging that Price can at least make an abbreviated start next week. Price has pitched just two innings since Aug. 4 due to a left wrist injury.

Righty reliever Heath Hembree, who has been out for more than a month with elbow woes, also hopes to pitch again this season. Hembree hopes to throw a simulated game in Philadelphia on Saturday. There’s a chance that Price will join him.

This day in Red Sox history

Thursday marked the 40th anniversary of one of the most special days in the history of Fenway Park. It was Sept. 12, 1979 when the legendary Carl Yastrzemski belted hit No. 3,000 in his career.

It was a dramatic moment, as it was Yaz’s final at-bat before the Red Sox would go on a six-game road trip. Yastrzemski had gone hitless in 10 straight at-bats before finding a hole through the infield and just out of the reach of Yankees second baseman Willie Randolph.

On Tuesday, another special thing will happen for Yastrzemski, as his grandson Mike will play at Fenway for the first time when the Giants come to town.

Yaz plans to attend the series, marking the first time he will see his grandson play in a Major League game.

**\* *WEEL.com***

**In appreciation of Xander Bogaerts and his contract**

Rob Bradford

Let's give Dave Dombrowski credit on this one.

The former Red Sox President of Baseball Operations prioritized two players when talking contract extensions this past spring training: Chris Sale and Xander Bogaerts.

There is plenty of criticism to go around when it comes to the idea of targeting Sale, particularly since the Red Sox hadn't seen him pitch since an injury-impacted 2018 (and he had no intention of leaving the Red Sox). Also, a case could be made that at least talking to Scott Boras about sweetening J.D. Martinez's contract to eliminate the idea of opting out should have been at the top of the list, as well.

But the notion to target Bogaerts? That, as it turned out, was vital.

The Red Sox are staring at a financial future that is appearing more and more uncomfortable, in large part because of the money allocated to three-fifths of their rotation -- Sale, David Price and Nathan Eovaldi. There is also the uncertainty that Mookie Betts' contract brings, with the outfielder eligible for free agency after the 2020 season. There are going to be a lot of difficult decisions. But thanks to Bogaerts' deal there is one fewer.

The Red Sox inked Bogaerts to a six-year, \$120 million deal that allows for an opt-out after the 2022 season. For a player who has been arguably the best shortstop in baseball this season, that is a steal. And after night's like Wednesday -- when Bogaerts joined Alex Rodriguez as the only two shortstops to total 30 or more homers and 50 or more doubles in a single season -- the importance of the 28-year-old's existence becomes even clearer.

"I still believe, I think he's going to be better," Red Sox manager Alex Cora told reporters after his team's 7-4 win over the Blue Jays. "He's going to understand when to attack a little bit more often just like Mookie [Betts] right now, he's in a groove swinging at the first pitch, putting good swings. He will do that with time ... We're very proud of him.

"It's not only the numbers. It's him showing up consistently every day and the routine and being a leader and understanding what he means to the organization. In a quote-unquote bad season [for the Red Sox], he's been showing up every day and he's learning a lot this year."

This "quote-unquote bad season" would be a ton worse -- and uncomfortable -- if not for Bogaerts and his new lot in life.

It's hard to define if Bogaerts' breakout season would have been possible with the pressures of a contract year, as he pointed out when appearing on the Brad Sho podcast. "I don't know," said Bogaerts when asked about how he would feel these days if the shortstop was living life in a contract year. "I don't know how I would have dealt with all the ..."

He added during the early Aug. conversation, "I don't know. Especially the way our team was playing. We had a lot of ups and downs and that can affect you sometimes because you might want to try and do too much for the team and you start getting into a bigger hole. I wouldn't know.

"I was more happy with being here and knowing everyone that's here for all these years and all the guys I came up with, such a special year last year with our coaching staff. I think just knowing everyone from front office down was ... These guys always want to win. They're always going to put out the best team they can possibly put out."

If there was no deal then the new general manager's task would have gotten appreciably more challenging this offseason. There would have been a very good chance the Red Sox might have to face an either-or scenario when it came to Bogaerts and Betts, with the shortstop in line to match up with whatever enormous payday soon-to-be free agent Anthony Rendon is about to reel in. And while prospect C.J. Chatham did turn in a solid year between Double- and Triple-A, starting over on the field and in the clubhouse without Bogaerts would have been a gigantic step back.

And for those toying with the idea of potentially replacing him with a free agent such as Elvis Andrus, Didi Gregorius, Freddy Galvis or Jose Iglesias? That wasn't going to work.

But Bogaerts is here and will be for at least three more seasons. And that is something Dombrowski can take pride in and the ownership group can rest easy about.

"These weren't goals I set coming into the season," Bogaerts told reporters after raising his batting average to .304 and OPS to .940. "I mean, I had no idea who did any of this or anything like that. But once I started getting a lot of doubles, getting a lot of homers and then you start hearing stuff, and you're like, 'Oh.' It's



just a mentality and approach to go and get it, and I'm happy I did it. It's been a while since I had a double. I've been hitting a lot of balls in the infield, and you can't get a double hitting ground balls in the infield, so it was good."

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

### **Rafael Devers contract a conundrum, especially if Red Sox want to cut costs in 2020**

John Tomase

Signing Rafael Devers to a long-term extension would give the Red Sox some peace of mind that they've locked in another young star alongside Xander Bogaerts for the long haul.

Too bad the coming offseason doesn't look like the best time to do it. As we laid out on Wednesday, if the Red Sox have designs on getting under the \$208 million luxury tax threshold and resetting their penalty clock, then they'd be best served paying Devers about \$800,000 as a pre-arbitration player. That's a more manageable 2020 salary than the \$12 million-plus a new deal would count for tax purposes.

If there's a deal to be had and the Red Sox can't make it for budgetary reasons, that would be a shame, because Devers continues pushing to greater heights during his breakout campaign.

On Wednesday, Devers smashed his 50th double of the season. He needs just one more homer to reach 30, at which point he'd have a good shot at becoming just the second player in Red Sox history to bat over .300 with 30 homers, 50 doubles, and 100 RBIs. The other was David Ortiz in 2007.

His teammates let him know about double No. 50, which made him the youngest player in franchise history to reach that mark.

"Of course, they all congratulated me, but it's one of those things, if I stay healthy, I know the kind of offensive game that I have," Devers told reporters in Toronto. "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, and I know what I have to do and the type of job that I have, I'm just really thankful to be able to have that."

What's scary is how much better Devers could be in a couple of years when he adds even more strength, not to mention experience.

"I think I'm just continuing to learn, and there's a lot of room left for me to grow," Devers told reporters. "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."

Bogaerts joked at the All-Star Game that he's glad he got his six-year, \$120 million extension when he did, because Devers suddenly looks like someone who's going to command a sizable chunk of the payroll. Devers' emergence could make defending MVP Mookie Betts expendable, especially if the Red Sox decide \$30 million annually is an unwise investment, because with pitchers David Price and Chris Sale on the books for over \$30 million apiece next year, the Red Sox must ask themselves how many \$30M players is too many.

Devers is taking a more grounded approach.

"Overall, my health, that's been the biggest thing that's contributed to the success that I've had this season, because 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," Devers told reporters.

Devers went 1-for-4 in Thursday's listless loss to the Blue Jays. He has scuffled a bit recently, but hopes to finish strong.

"It's just part of the game," he told reporters. "Obviously, during the season you're going to have ups and downs and I've had a lot of ups this season, so obviously at some point I knew I was going to have some struggles at the plate, but I'm just trying to grind it out and go through it so I can finish strong."

In a parallel universe, a strong finish could land Devers a long-term contract offer. In this one, that's a much dicier proposition. At the very least, the Red Sox might have to structure an offer that doesn't kick in until 2021, which will only raise his price.

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

### **Clay Buchholz serves as important reminder as Sox begin to look for a new GM**

Sean McAdam

It's easy to forget that Clay Buchholz is still pitching in the big leagues. And yet, there he was, on the mound at Rogers Centre Thursday night, pitching against the Red Sox for the first time in his career.

At this point, Buchholz is barely hanging on. He made his ninth start of the season Thursday and gave up four runs in four innings in the Red Sox' 7-4 win, resulting in a 5.63 ERA and a 1-5 record. The Blue Jays are his fourth organization in the last four seasons, following the Sox, Philadelphia and Arizona.

But he's relevant not because at 35 he would seem to be coming to an end, but because of what he symbolizes for his former team. Three years after he threw his last pitch in Boston and a dozen years removed from his major league debut, Buchholz remains the last starting pitcher of note the Red Sox have developed for their own rotation.

Buchholz displayed some inconsistency, was prone to injuries and probably didn't meet expectations. But he did win in double figures three times, exceeded 170 innings three times and twice posted an ERA below 2.35.

From a position player standpoint, the Red Sox could hardly have been more successful in the last decade. With the exception of J.D. Martinez at DH, the Red Sox can — and have — regularly fielded position players who are homegrown, a group that includes Mookie Betts, Rafael Devers and Xander Bogaerts.

But as fertile as their developmental system has been when it comes to churning out hitters and even a number of quality bullpen arms (Matt Barnes, Brandon Workman and Darwinzon Hernandez), they've been inept in scouting and graduating starters to the big league team.

A number of prospects were supposed to make it: Michael Bowden, Barnes, Felix Doubront, Henry Owens. Brian Johnson...

The list of candidates is lengthy. The list of those who succeeded is non-existent.

Some showed brief flashes. But because of command issues, or inconsistency, or lack of stuff at the major league level, each one eventually flamed out.

Even this season, the two pitchers in the minors thought to be closest to contributing at the big league level — Darwinzon Hernandez and former first-round pick Tanner Houck — were, like Barnes before them, converted to the bullpen. It's possible that one or both could revert to starting, but they're far from assured of making that transition.

Without any homegrown starters, the Red Sox have had to fill their rotation either through free agency (David Price, Nathan Eovaldi) or trade (Rick Porcello, Chris Sale). Eduardo Rodriguez was still a prospect when he arrived in a deal for Andrew Miller, but was signed and mostly developed by the Baltimore Orioles.

In signing or dealing for established pitchers, the Red Sox have paid a steep price — either in prospects or salary, or both.

This season, the quartet of Sale, Price, Eovaldi and Porcello combined to make \$84 million, or more than a third of the team's entire payroll. Even with Porcello expected to leave via free agency this winter, Sale, Price and Eovaldi will make \$74 million in 2020 as Sale's contract extension kicks in and sees his base salary jump by \$10 million (from \$15 million this season to \$25 million next).

That sort of allocation for three or four pitchers isn't sustainable, especially if the Red Sox, as speculated, have designs on reducing their payroll substantially over the next couple of years in order to re-set their luxury tax levels.

Moreover, by relying on pitchers signed through free agency, a team is, by definition, acquiring older pitchers. And as Price and Eovaldi demonstrated this season, that can be a sucker's bet. Price has had three IL stints this season and Eovaldi missed three months with yet another surgical procedure on his elbow.

Shopping in the free-agent aisle is risky business and usually not efficient — and that goes double when the target is starting pitching.

All of which makes it incumbent upon the Red Sox to hire a new GM/President of Baseball Operations who has a track record of developing young pitching. And no matter who runs the franchise, the scouts and minor league development people have to do a better job of identifying young arms and guiding them to the big leagues.

Otherwise, the Sox will find themselves stuck in the vicious circle of having to sacrifice their best prospects to trade for pitching elsewhere, or continue to overspend for the few quality starters who make it to the free-agent market.

### **BSJ Game Report: Red Sox 7, Blue Jays 4 – Offense awakens, losing streak ends**

Sean McAdam

Bogaerts makes history: It's been obvious for some time that Xander Bogaerts was going to reach 50 doubles this season. But this month, the two-base hit pace had slowed some. Before Thursday, Bogaerts had gone four straight games without one and had only one in his last eight games. Finally, however, Bogaerts took care of business in the third inning, smacking a double to right for No. 50. That gave the Red Sox two players with 50 doubles in a single season for the first time in history. The Sox are just the second American League team since 1947 to have two players reach that milestone. And Bogaerts becomes the second shortstop in baseball history to hit 30 or more homers and collect 50 or more doubles; Alex Rodriguez is the other. "For him to buy into the concept of driving the ball has been great," said Alex Cora. "We're very proud of him. It's not only the numbers; it's the consistency of showing every day."

Struggles continue for Brasier: It's the end of the year and the bullpen has been worked far more than it expected with two starters out of the rotation and on the IL. Undoubtedly, some of the relievers are fatigued and not at peak efficiency. But at this point of the season, with almost 20 relievers available on a nightly basis in the bullpen, it's something of a mystery why the Sox continue to go to Ryan Brasier. When Brasier first returned from his stint in Pawtucket, it appeared as though he had made some mechanical adjustments and had figured some things out. But lately, Brasier has seen a downturn. Coming into Thursday, Brasier's last eight appearances had seen him throw six innings while allowing 10 earned runs on 10 hits. It didn't get any better Thursday, either — Brasier entered in the fifth inning with a man on third and on the first pitch he threw, he allowed a run-scoring single to Vladimir Guerrero Jr..

Nine pitchers ties record: Going with their second straight bullpen game, the Red Sox tied a franchise record for a nine-inning game, using nine pitchers. After opener Jhoulys Chacin, the Sox paraded eight relievers to the mound, with only closer Brandon Workman pitching more than a full inning. Other than Brian Johnson (two runs in a third of an inning) and Matt Barnes (three walks, including one with the bases loaded, in two-thirds of an inning), most of the relievers pitched pretty well. Many of the relievers will get some much-needed rest soon. The Sox have two days off in the next four — Friday and Monday — and in their two-game series in Philadelphia, the Sox will start Eduardo Rodriguez and Rick Porcello. If they at least get the Sox into the middle innings, that will cut down on the wear-and-tear to a considerable degree.

TURNING POINT: The Sox led by just two after six innings, but in the top of the seventh, they made things more comfortable for themselves with three straight hits from the top three spots in the lineup — Mookie Betts, Brock Holt and Xander Bogaerts. And with a stolen base from Betts and an error from the Jays, Boston tacked on two more runs.

ONE UP:

Jhoulys Chacin: Signed on the final day of August, Chacin has taken well to the opener's role. After two perfect innings last time out, Chacin gave the Sox 2.2 scoreless innings with three strikeouts.

ONE DOWN:

Andrew Benintendi: The left fielder has been slumping of late and was 0-for-4 with a strikeout and a double play, making him the only member of the starting lineup to go without a hit.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"It was kind of their turn to get beat up a little bit (Wednesday night), but they bounced back nicely today and kept us in the game." Xander Bogaerts on the bullpen.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING:

The Sox finished 11-8 against Toronto this season.

Mookie Betts scored two runs, giving him 131 for the season and the most for a Red Sox player since Dom DiMaggio also scored 131 in 1950.

J.D. Martinez has 19 RBI in 22 career games at Rogers Centre.

UP NEXT:

The Red Sox have a rare Friday off, but will begin a two-game series Saturday at 7:05 p.m. against Philadelphia with LHP Eduardo Rodriguez (17-6, 3.73) vs. RHP Aaron Nola (12-5, 3.70).

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

**When a milestone happens in a Red Sox game, the authenticators are ready to pounce**

Jen McCaffrey

Xander Bogaerts slapped a hit up the middle at Fenway Park in the fourth inning of a Saturday afternoon game this month against the Yankees. It bounced around the field like a hot potato as Brett Gardner tossed it to Luke Voit who flipped to Didi Gregorius then on to pitcher J.A. Happ. The ball was being tracked closely with every toss.

None of the Yankees knew, of course, that it was Bogaerts' 1,000th career hit, that the milestone had to be documented by MLB or that Bogaerts wanted the ball to give to his mother, whose birthday was that day. Finally, home plate umpire Ron Kulpa alerted Happ to toss the ball to the side.

Happ flipped it to the Yankees dugout where coach Carlos Mendoza caught it and passed it off to Red Sox third base coach Carlos Febles, who fed it to Sox bat boy Chris Cundiff, who finally — finally — got it to the most important person, Aaron Blocker, the MLB authenticator who'd been intensely following the ball's path while waiting at the bottom of the Red Sox dugout steps. He planted a small hologram sticker on the ball, which deemed it officially official and passed it off to Red Sox clubhouse manager Tommy McLaughlin, who put it in Bogaerts' locker.

Mission complete.

Blocker is one of 220 practitioners from Authenticators Inc., a company that works with MLB to ensure the legitimacy of milestone and game-used items as well as any player-autographed items. At least two authenticators are present at all 2,430 regular season games, with more at postseason games and special events like the All-Star Game and Home Run Derby.

"We're really, really involved in protecting the history, better than any sport in my opinion. And obviously I'm biased, but this is a sport about its history," said Michael Posner, MLB's director of authentication. "We're always celebrating and measuring the players (from) era to era and this is a way to kind of save that from going who knows where."

The authentication program began in 2001 after an FBI investigation called Operation Bullpen deemed that roughly 75 percent of all autographed items on the market were forgeries.

"With eBay and all these other auction sites popping up, we realized we needed to do something to protect the players, the fans, and the clubs from this growing forgery business," Posner said. "So the idea of authentication at that point was born. And it became a system that was based solely on direct witnessing and the elimination of certifications of authenticity because if someone is going to take the time to forge Tony Gwynn's autograph, you better believe they're going to take the time to forge a certificate that says it's real."

Prior to each game, authenticators, all of whom are active or retired law enforcement officials, are updated with a list of upcoming milestones or items that a club wants authenticated, such as game-used items that will be auctioned for charity or sold in their team stores. Day after day, they also wait vigilantly at ballparks for historic events that occur without warning, like a perfect game or a player hitting for the cycle, prepared to validate the hardware from those moments.

According to Posner, roughly 150,000 items are authenticated every year. Each item, like Bogaerts' 1,000th hit, is stamped with a tamper-proof, sequentially numbered hologram. The number on the sticker can be punched into MLB.com's authentication website and a detailed report will pop up. If it's a career milestone for a player, the report will provide the pitcher, pitch type, pitch count, batter, game score, inning, etc.

"It's not just a game-used ball," Posner said. "It's really something that has a lot of depth to the detail."

Bogaerts in the field. (Billie Weiss/Boston Red Sox/Getty Images)

Not every milestone can be authenticated, though. If Bogaerts' 1,000th hit had been a home run that went into the stands, and the authenticator lost direct sight of the ball, he would not have been able to deem it official. However, for major milestones like a 3,000th hit or 500th home run, there is a protocol followed to ensure the ball is retrieved.

That was the case when David Ortiz hit his 500th homer in 2015. In order to guarantee that the historic ball would be found, MLB went through an elaborate process of numbering a series of baseballs so that when the ball went into the stands, it could be identified. Every time Ortiz came to the plate as he neared his

500th homer that season, a bat boy passed off the numbered balls to the umpire who tossed them to the pitcher to use.

As it turned out, Ortiz hit his 499th and 500th homers in the same game on the road against Tampa on Sept. 12, 2015.

“When David hit No. 499 and 500 that day, they knew exactly what number it was so when a fan brings the ball back it matches the photo they had taken of the baseball,” said McLaughlin. “That’s the only way they’ll (validate) a home run ball.”

Even for games or plays that are not noteworthy enough for the record books, items can still be authenticated at the request of the player and team. A player’s bat, jersey, cleats or gloves, lineup cards — even dirt from the field — are all in play. Authenticators Inc. also has its staff attend official player signings so attendees can prove they have an athlete’s real signature.

But not all sports have such a precise system.

“I was talking to an NHL team recently and they do not know where the game-winning puck from the Stanley Cup is from the year that they won,” Posner said. “And it’s part of the process for Major League Baseball that when the last out of the World Series happens an authenticator and someone from our group will run out on the field and find that ball and authenticate it right there on the field because we don’t want something like that to happen.”

A return trip to the World Series isn’t likely for the Red Sox, who will probably miss the playoffs. But milestones still are coming down the pike for the team, including Bogaerts’ 500th RBI and Andrew Benintendi’s 500th career hit. And, of course, something historic and unexpected could always happen in the meantime.

If that’s the case, the authenticators will be ready.

## **\* *The Toronto Sun***

### **Anguish in the outfield as Jays get sloppy in loss to Red Sox**

Rob Longley

With meaningful September baseball long removed as a possibility, expecting much more than what unfolded Thursday night at the Rogers Centre was likely wishful thinking.

The kind view would be to declare that Game 147 of 162 for the Blue Jays was an adventurous display of defensive ineptitude, essentially handing a sweep-avoiding 7-4 win to the Red Sox.

Whatever you want to call it, to the eternal frustration of Toronto manager Charlie Montoyo it was another night of anguish in the outfield as sloppy play staked the Red Sox to an early lead in what would be a long, tedious night of baseball.

Misplayed balls by Billy McKinney (in right), Derek Fisher (two separate times in left) and Anthony Alford (in centre) were all costly and indicative of the Jays muddled outfield.

It has to be frustrating to Montoyo, who essentially began his tenure with the Jays by declaring that the team would be better defensively. Work in progress, yes, but plenty more progress to be made.

“The overall play of the outfield needs to get better,” Montoyo said. “(Fisher) had a rough game. I’m not going to make excuses for Fish. He has the tools to be better.”

He wasn't alone.

McKinney had time to play a sharp liner by Boston's Marco Hernandez in the second inning, but an awkward sliding attempt resulted in the ball scooting by him for a two-run double. The right fielder was well aware of it too, twice trying to apologize to starter Clay Buchholz, who lasted just four innings in part because of the struggles defensively.

In the fourth, Fisher got turned around on a Jackie Bradley Jr. fly to left and the ball bounced off the wall for another run-scoring double. And his shenanigans weren't done, either. Moving on to the ninth, Fisher handed the Sox another run by completely misplaying a Mookie Betts fly ball, with the two-base error setting up another insurance run.

"Keep pushing forward, keep going," said Fisher, who was acquired from Houston in the July 31 trade for Aaron Sanchez and Joe Biagini. "Mistakes are going to happen and you learn from them. Good plays in the future turn out to be the reason why."

Clay Buchholz of the Toronto Blue Jays delivers a pitch in the first inning during a MLB game against the Boston Red Sox at Rogers Centre on September 12, 2019 in Toronto, Canada. Vaughn Ridley / Getty Images

## GAME ON

The Jays made it interesting in the eighth after Fisher drew a bases-loaded walk with two out to trim the Boston lead to 6-3. But when Bo Bichette flied out to right, that was that.

— Bichette showed his speed earlier in the game when he blazed around the bases in the fifth to score on Cavan Biggio's first career triple. Vlad Guerrero Jr. followed with a single and his 65th RBI of the season putting him in third all-time among Jays rookies. Vlad trails only Eric Hinske (84 in 2002) and J.P. Arencibia (78 in 2011).

— Besides his triple, Biggio had two more hits marking his third three-hit effort of the season.

— It was a long tedious night of mostly meaningless September baseball at the dome. Over the three hours and 32 minutes it took to complete, the teams combined to use 15 pitchers — nine for the Sox (and six in the first six innings) and six for the Jays.

— Facing his former team for the first time, Buchholz lasted four innings and allowed four runs on seven hits.

## BIRTHDAY BYE-BYE

Clayton Richard's day started with the Blue Jays wishing him a happy 36th birthday on the team's official Twitter account.

It ended with the veteran and injury-riddled left-hander being released by the team.

Acquired from San Diego last December, Richard was pegged to be part of the Jays rotation and did make 10 mostly struggling starts. He missed the first 48 games of the season due to what the team called a "knee stress reaction" and then missed 45 more from July 14 to Sept. 1 with a lat strain.

"He was great at the beginning, helping everybody here and was good in the clubhouse," Jays manager Charlie Montoyo said of Richard, whose brief workload with the team clocked in at 45.1 innings and an ERA of 5.96. "He just got hurt."

The Jays opted to release Richard to activate rookie Elvis Luciano. Given the lefty's ongoing health issues, club management clearly felt he was dispensable.

## ELVIS IN THE BUILDING

Luciano, meanwhile, returned after missing 79 games with an elbow strain. His presence on the roster for the final 16 games of the season fulfills Rule 5 requirements to keep him with the team next season.

Acquiring such a young pitcher was essentially of little risk for a Jays team that wasn't going anywhere this season. That big arm may take him places but Luciano acknowledges that the key to becoming a legit big leaguer rather than taking a roster spot as an administrative loophole will be to refine his craft.

"Since the moment I got here to right now, the key is I've learned how to control my pitches," Luciano said through Jays interpreter, Hector Lebron. "Hit the spots and location. That's what I've been working on with (Jays pitching coach Pete Walker.)"

Luciano, who has appeared in 20 games for 27.2 innings of work, says he wants to be a starter, which is what management would prefer should he continue to develop.

"I feel better as a starter," Luciano said. "Based on the experience I gained this year my goal is 100% to be back on this team. I want to come back and have a strong spring training and see what happens."

## MAKING THEIR PITCH

Some significant starts for a trio of young pitchers in a three-game series vs. the Yankees. Each of Anthony Kay (Friday), Jacob Waguespack (Saturday) and T.J. Zeuch (Sunday).

Of note: Montoyo said none of those three will have an opener. Also, the manager is keen to see how Kay does against the AL East leaders.

"Let's see what the kid can do," Montoyo said of the Rogers Centre debut for Kay, who came to the Jays from the Mets in the Marcus Stroman deal. "He's got a good arm I can't wait to see him against the Yankees."

## **\* *The Toronto Star***

### **Blue Jays defence helps give series finale to Red Sox**

Gregor Chisholm

The Blue Jays' outfield made a comedy of errors against the Boston Red Sox on Thursday night and it cost them a shot at their first series sweep since the end of July.

All three of Toronto's starting outfielders — and even one of the reserves — were responsible for key misplays in a 7-4 loss to the Red Sox at Rogers Centre. Beleaguered left-fielder Derek Fisher made three of them on his own. Veteran starter Clay Buchholz was charged with four runs, but he might not have surrendered more than one if it wasn't for a series of early defensive miscues.

The first culprit was Billy McKinney when he took a bad route in the top of the second inning and had a ball bounce off his glove, which cost the Blue Jays a run. Another run scored on that same play when centre-fielder Randal Grichuk failed to back up his teammate and didn't run over to help until it was too late.

In the fourth, Fisher got all twisted around on a fly ball to deep left field. He had plenty of time to get to the warning track, but the awkward path and some trepidation around the wall meant he never came close. Instead of the Jays making the second out, Jackie Bradley Jr. made it to second and later scored on a single by Juan Centeno.



Neither of the botched plays were ruled errors because they technically didn't fall into the routine catch territory, but both should have been caught. So should have another fly ball to Fisher in the seventh and a sharp grounder to right that was booted by Anthony Alford, who came off the bench for McKinney. In the end, the lack of execution led to an increased pitch count for Buchholz, who was charged with four runs on seven hits and a walk over four innings.

Toronto's offence broke out in a big way with eight runs on Wednesday night, but most of that production dried up until the game was out of hand Thursday. Cavan Biggio finished with a three-hit night, while Grichuk and Bichette each chipped in with doubles on Boston's second bullpen day this series.

Luciano returns: Rule 5 pick Elvis Luciano was activated from the 60-day injured list on Thursday after missing the previous three months because of soreness in his right elbow. The timing of Luciano's return meant he will still be able to accrue 90 days of service on the active roster this season, which is the bare minimum a Rule 5 pick must have to remain with his current organization.

Luciano will pitch out of the bullpen for the final two weeks and will likely resume his starting career in the minors next year. The 19-year-old would appear to be an ideal fit for either class-A Dunedin or double-A New Hampshire and Toronto will have three option years to evaluate his development.

Richard departs: To make room on the 40-man roster for Luciano, the Jays released veteran lefty Clayton Richard. Toronto acquired Richard from the Padres during the off-season in a deal for Canadian outfielder Conar Panas. Richard, released on his 36th birthday, made 10 starts for Toronto this season while posting a 5.96 ERA.

Up next: The Blue Jays open a three-game series against the Yankees, with rookie left-hander Anthony Kay (0-0, 3.18) facing right-hander Masahiro Tanaka (10-8, 4.53). Game time is 7:07 p.m. at Rogers Centre.

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

### **Bogaerts reaches 50 doubles, Red Sox beat Blue Jays 7-4**

Xander Bogaerts doesn't expect to be the only Boston Red Sox slugger with 30 homers and 50 doubles.

Teammate Rafael Devers is a home run away from joining him.

Bogaerts hit his 50th double and drove in a run, Marco Hernandez had two RBI and Boston beat the Toronto Blue Jays 7-4 Thursday to avoid a three-game sweep.

Mookie Betts had three hits and J.D. Martinez reached base three times as the Red Sox won for the first time in six games.

Bogaerts and Alex Rodriguez (1996) are the only shortstops in major league history to record 30 home runs and 50 doubles in a single season.

"We're very proud of him," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said of Bogaerts. "It's not only the numbers, it's the consistency of him showing up every day and the routine and being a leader and understanding what he means to the organization. In a quote-unquote bad season, he's been showing up every day."

Devers, who got the day off Thursday, needs one more homer to make Boston the first team ever to have two players with 30 homers and 50 doubles.

"The pressure is on him now and he'll come through," Bogaerts said.

One night after their 159-game streak with at least one extra-base hit was snapped in an 8-0, two-hit defeat, the Red Sox racked up four doubles and 12 total hits.

"It was a tough one yesterday, the at-bats weren't great," Cora said. "The effort is still there, they're still working. The at-bats were a lot better today, we controlled the strike zone a little bit more."

Left-hander Josh Taylor (2-2), one of nine Red Sox pitchers, worked one inning for the win. Brandon Workman got the final four outs for his 12th save in 18 opportunities.

Right-hander Jhoulys Chacin opened for the Red Sox, allowing two hits in 2 1/3 scoreless innings.

Toronto made three errors, two of them by outfielders, and endured several misplays on a sloppy night. Left fielder Derek Fisher made a two-base error on Betts' single in the ninth.

"He had a tough one today, for sure," manager Charlie Montoyo said of Fisher.

Blue Jays right-hander Clay Buchholz (1-5) took the loss in his first career outing against his former team, allowing four runs and seven hits in four innings.

"I did a little bit of my job today," Buchholz said. "I didn't do it all. It's tough to navigate lineups like that."

Buchholz went 81-61 over 206 games in 10 seasons with the Red Sox, pitching a no-hitter in his second career start in 2007. He was traded to Philadelphia in December, 2016.

Bogaerts doubled off Buchholz in the third, joining Devers as the only pair of Red Sox teammates with 50 in the same season.

Hernandez opened the scoring with a two-out, two-run double in the second. Martinez doubled home Bogaerts in the third, and Juan Centeno hit an RBI single in the fourth.

Toronto's Cavan Biggio chased left-hander Brian Johnson with an RBI double in the fifth and Vladimir Guerrero Jr. greeted right-hander Ryan Brasier with an RBI single.

Brock Holt and Bogaerts made it 6-2 with RBI singles off right-hander Jordan Romano in the seventh.

Workman came on after Matt Barnes issued a bases-loaded walk to Fisher in the eighth and got Bo Bichette to fly out.

Biggio had three of Toronto's seven hits and reached base four times.

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Blue Jays: Toronto activated RHP Elvis Luciano (right elbow) from the 60-day injured list. Luciano, 19, became the first big leaguer born in the 2000s to appear in a game when he debuted against Detroit on March 31. Luciano has been out since June 12.

#### BIRTHDAY BUMP

To make room for Luciano on the 40-man roster, the Blue Jays released left-hander Clayton Richard. The move came on Richard's 36th birthday. Richard went 1-5 with a 5.96 ERA in 10 starts.

#### GOING NORTH

Boston is 20-8 in Toronto over the past three seasons.

#### BATTERED

Guerrero slammed his bat on the ground in disgust after striking out on three pitches to end the seventh, leaving runners at second and third.

#### UP NEXT

Red Sox: Boston is off Friday. LHP Eduardo Rodriguez (17-6, 3.73) starts Saturday in the opener of a two-game series at Philadelphia. Rodriguez lost to the Yankees Monday, snapping a four-start winning streak. RHP Aaron Nola (12-5, 3.70) starts for the Phillies.

Blue Jays: LHP Anthony Kay (0-0, 3.18) makes his second career start Friday as the Blue Jays begin a three-game series against the Yankees. Kay struck out eight batters and allowed two runs in 5 2/3 innings in his debut at Tampa Bay last Saturday. RHP Masahiro Tanaka (10-8, 4.53) starts for New York.