

The Boston Red Sox Thursday, September 19, 2019

*** *The Boston Globe***

Giants break out the bubbly to toast Bruce Bochy's 2,000th career win

Peter Abraham

About a dozen bottles of champagne were iced down and waiting in the visitors' clubhouse at Fenway Park for the San Francisco Giants after they beat the Red Sox, 11-3, on Wednesday night.

The victory was the 2,000th in the career of manager Bruce Bochy and that was a good reason to celebrate with a toast.

Not that Bochy necessarily agreed.

"It's not like we did anything or clinched anything," he said. "We've got a game tomorrow and we have to keep things in perspective."

How's this for perspective: Bochy is only the 11th manager in history with 2,000 victories. The others — Connie Mack, John McGraw, Tony La Russa, Bobby Cox, Joe Torre, Sparky Anderson, Bucky Harris, Joe McCarthy, Walter Alston, and Leo Durocher — are in the Hall of Fame.

Bochy, 64, is almost certain to join them someday considering his accomplishments also include three World Series championships.

Bochy is 2,000-2,022 in his career. He won 951 games with the San Diego Padres from 1995-06 before joining the Giants a year later. He is 1,049-1,047 with San Francisco.

"It's not a number I ever thought about. I never thought about it this year and I'm being honest," Bochy said. "It's gotten a little attention here recently but that number just represents so many people — more than anybody are those players. It doesn't happen without them."

There were many Giants fans in the Fenway crowd of 35,697 and they chanted "Bochy, Bochy," as the game came to a close.

"I've never had that happen before," Bochy said. "I had some unique emotions going through me during that. Just really overwhelmed by it, to be honest."

Bochy, who is stepping down after the season, also appreciated Red Sox manager Alex Cora and his coaches tipping their caps from across the field.

One of the coaches, Ramon Vazquez, played for Bochy. Another, Ron Roenicke, was his teammate with the 1984 San Diego Padres.

"The way they acknowledged me, that was something I won't forget," Bochy said.

Righthander Jeff Samardzija, who took a no-hitter into the sixth inning, was grateful to have helped out.

"Thrilled to be a part of it. Love that guy," he said. "I'm very appreciative to have had my time with him."

The Giants, 74-78, can sweep the three-games series on Wednesday afternoon. Madison Bumgarner, who has won 119 games for Bochy over 11 years, is the scheduled starter in what would be his first game at Fenway.

After marathon Tuesday, Red Sox go in short order

Julian McWilliams

The Red Sox' offense has been cold for the entire month of September.

Entering Wednesday's game against the Giants, the Sox had hit just .214 with 15 home runs in 533 plate appearances this month. They had scored just 3.7 runs per game, the fourth-lowest average in that span. They also had posted a .646 OPS, the second-worst in baseball.

It continued through this one, as the Sox got walloped, 11-3, with Giants manager Bruce Bochy notching career win No. 2,000. Facing a lineup that was without Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez, Giants starter Jeff Samardzija cruised through 5 $\frac{2}{3}$ no-hit innings.

"We're expanding the [strike] zone," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said afterward. "We've been expanding the zone for a while. You look at the numbers, a lot of strikeouts, not too many walks, that's a sign of an offense that is searching for hits, and you can't do that."

With two outs in the sixth, Rafael Devers's homer off Samardzija provided a brief jolt. The blast put the 22-year-old Devers in the record books, as he became the youngest Sox player to hit 30-plus homers in a season since Tony Conigliaro hit 32 as a 20-year-old in 1965. For all that's gone wrong this season, Devers continues to be a bright spot.

"It's pretty special to know that I've made history in that way," Devers said through interpreter Bryan Almonte. "But obviously this isn't the season that we've envisioned for our team. That's something that sticks with me more as opposed to personal accolades. I'm just glad some of my other teammates are achieving milestones for themselves, as well."

Devers joined teammates Xander Bogaerts and Martinez in the 30-homer club. Bogaerts and Devers are the first teammates in major league history to reach 30-plus homers and 50-plus doubles in the same season. But as Devers pointed out, personal milestones don't erase this down season.

"The most important thing is that he's not pleased with what's going on with us," Cora said of Devers. "And that's who he is. That's the mentality that we have to have as an organization. Be a winner. It's funny because the other day he's like, 'Oh, this is the first time I'm not going to be in the playoffs.' I'm like, 'Dude, you only have 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years in the big leagues, so you'll be OK.'"

Sox starter Jhoulys Chacin, meanwhile, couldn't get out the third inning. The Giants pounded him for three earned runs, including a two-run homer by Stephen Vogt, in the first inning. Chacin fanned six but threw just 72 pitches in just 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings.

"He didn't make a pitch on Vogt," Cora said. "Then he made some adjustments throughout, but early on no fastball command, which actually hurt him with the Brewers, and he relies on the slider, but if you don't respect the fastball then they can sit on it."

The Sox used seven relievers, and sloppy defense, along with not making pitches at critical times, led to the Giants' additional eight runs, including five in the ninth.

Jackie Bradley Jr. homered to left-center off Enderson Franco in the bottom of the ninth, but Marco Hernandez then flied out to center to end the game.

The Sox fell to 79-72. Their five-game home losing streak is their longest since 2014. Bochy, meanwhile, downplayed his milestone win.

“It’s not a number I ever thought about,” Bochy said. “I never thought about it this year, and I’m being honest. It’s gotten a little attention here recently, but that number just represents so many people — more than anybody are those players.”

In the Sox’ lost season, however, they have found their player in Devers, who at 22 has unlocked something the team can look forward to heading into next season.

“He’s put it all together. He’s working hard at it. I do feel like he was actually pressuring himself to hit 30,” said Cora of Devers, who came in hitting just .208 this month. “And now he can breathe and maybe he’ll take off again, but overall you tell me before the season .300, 30, and 100? We’re very happy.”

Wrist surgery, 2020 season next for David Price

Alex Speier and Julian McWilliams

David Price, who has made one start since Aug. 4 while dealing with a cyst on his left wrist, will be shut down for the rest of the 2019 season. The veteran lefthander will have a surgical procedure to address the cyst, and he’ll also be examined to determine if there are any other issues with his wrist that require attention.

“If there’s something else, we’ll take care of that if there’s something going on,” said manager Alex Cora. “I think it’s a head start to next year. It’s the smart thing to do. . . . If we were one game up or in the hunt, he’d probably be pitching out of the bullpen like in ’17. But where we’re at and obviously how important he is, it’s better off moving forward and getting right.”

Cora said that the consideration of additional possibilities beyond the cyst is a reflection of other issues Price has faced with his left wrist in the past. In 2018, for instance, he was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome and circulatory issues.

Price, in the fourth year of a seven-year, \$217 million deal, was limited to 22 starts this year, going 7-5 with a 4.28 ERA in 107⅓ innings — just under five innings a start.

Cora noted that Price’s typical pinpoint command of his two-seamer has been affected by his wrist issues, and in recent bullpen outings, he had been unable to throw his cutter or changeup without discomfort. Given those limitations and where the Sox are in the standings, the decision to end the 34-year-old’s season became straightforward.

“When you can’t perform the way you want to, it’s obviously frustrating,” said Cora. “If it’s up to him he’ll be throwing fastballs out there and trying to compete. But we took it away because we feel that it’s not conducive to something positive to the player. But he’s all in. He knows this is the best way to start off the offseason and get him ready and he’ll be ready.”

A Giant duo

Madison Bumgarner’s first start against the Red Sox was in 2010, which was also the first start of his rookie season after a four-game cameo the prior year. In seven innings, Bumgarner surrendered four earned runs on five hits, losing when two of those hits were homers by Darnell McDonald and Mike Cameron.

The Sox went 89-73 that year and didn’t make the playoffs. The young Bumgarner, the Giants, and manager Bruce Bochy went on to win the World Series.

Bochy and Bumgarner will always be intertwined, including Wednesday, when the latter starts for the first time at Fenway Park in the former’s final game managing there.

“I said this when we got through the trade deadline,” said Bochy, remembering an encounter between him and his ace. “We had a quick hug and, for him to be here for the remainder of my tenure here, that meant a lot to me. We have a special relationship from our time together.”

Bochy admitted he doesn't remember much from when Bumgarner took the ball for the first time in Boston, one of 4,000-plus games he's managed since 1995 . But he did offer this.

“I know he's excited about pitching here. All the players love to play here. They know the history of this ballpark and this organization,” Bochy said. “You look out there and it's a special place. The fans make it special and I know he's looking forward to his start.”

Still hurting

The Sox will stay away from Mookie Betts again on Wednesday, but there's a chance he could play in the series against the Tampa Bay Rays as the designated hitter. “He did some leg work in the weight room,” Cora said. “He feels a lot better. Today was a good day for him” . . . J.D. Martinez left Tuesday night's game with groin tightness, and Cora doesn't have a timetable for his return . . . Sam Travis is still in the concussion protocol, but Cora believes he'll be fine. Travis was trying for a triple Tuesday and his helmet flew off. Brandon Crawford, the shortstop and relay man, hit Travis in the head as he attempted to throw him out at third . . . The Sox announced the winners of their 2019 minor league awards, tabbing 1B/3B Triston Casas (Offensive Player of the Year), infielder Ryan Fitzgerald (Defensive Player of the Year), righthander Thad Ward (Pitcher of the Year), outfielder Jarren Duran (Baserunner of the Year), OF/1B Darel Belen (Latin Program Position Player of the Year), and lefthander Nixson Muñoz (Latin Program Pitcher of the Year). Trevor Kelley was also recognized as the recipient of the Lou Gorman Award, given annually to a Sox minor leaguer who best demonstrates dedication and perseverance in overcoming obstacles while working his way to the major league team . . . The Sox honored Brock Holt, the team's nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award for the second straight year, during a pregame ceremony. The Clemente award salutes sportsmanship and community involvement; Holt is best known for his work with the Jimmy Fund, helping to support the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute . . . Carl Yastrzemski threw out the first pitch to his grandson, Mike Yastrzemski, the rookie who homered Tuesday in his first career Fenway game as a member of the Giants. The two embraced afterward before Carl walked off to a round of cheers.

Will the three-headed rotation monster menace Sox, or opponents, in 2020?

Alex Speier

To review:

The Red Sox rotation entered Wednesday's game against the Giants with a 4.92 ERA, 20th in the majors and worst among teams with a record of at least .500.

As of Wednesday, David Price has been shut down for the rest of 2019 to have a wrist cyst removed, and to have his wrist examined to see if there are any other issues that need to be addressed. He will finish the year having pitched well when healthy enough to take the mound — he went 7-5 with a 4.28 ERA (114 ERA+) — but having logged just 107½ innings in 22 starts, or fewer than five innings per.

The last three seasons, the 34-year-old averaged 119 innings. In addition to the wrist cyst, which cost him almost all of the final eight weeks of this season, he's been sidelined by multiple bouts with elbow discomfort — most recently when he landed on the injured list for a couple weeks in early May, a far cry from the more than half-season he missed in 2017 — while also missing time in 2018 for carpal tunnel and circulatory issues in his wrist. He has three seasons remaining under contract, counting for \$31 million per season for luxury tax purposes.

Lefthander Chris Sale is on the 60-day injured list while recovering from a plasma-rich platelet (PRP) injection to treat what the team describes as elbow inflammation. The elbow issue concluded a 6-11 season

with a career-worst 4.40 ERA, while contributing a career-low 25 starts and 147⅓ innings. It comes on the heels of a 2018 in which he also set a career low for starts (27) and innings (158), workload limits that arose from a shoulder injury. The 30-year-old begins his five-year, \$145 million extension next season.

Righthander Nate Eovaldi, in the first year of his four-year, \$68 million deal, missed roughly three months while recovering first from surgery to remove bone chips, and then biceps tendinitis. In 10 starts this year, the 29-year-old has yet to record a decision while posting a 6.44 ERA and allowing an alarming 2.7 homers per nine innings.

Meanwhile, while the Red Sox have an emerging group of potential big league starters forming at the lower and middle levels of their system — including Bryan Mata (who finished the year in Double A), Thad Ward (High A), and perhaps Tanner Houck (who relieved in Triple A, but is getting ready to start in the Arizona Fall League) — the team's struggles to replace Eovaldi and others in the rotation this year suggest an absence of reliable big league-ready starting depth, at least at the beginning of 2020.

The Red Sox are clinging to optimism when it comes to the state of their rotation. That their two highest-paid rotation members will finish the year without pitching, and that their third has never in 2019 been able to replicate the dazzling performance he showed at the end of 2018, the team insists — hopes? — is not cause for alarm.

“There are not too many red flags in the situations that will be, like, ‘We’re not going to count on these guys next year,’ ” said manager Alex Cora.

Price, Sale, and Eovaldi served as the rotation anchors of a World Series run in 2018, and the notion of a rebound by all three in 2020 can't be dismissed out of hand.

When healthy in 2019, Price showed elite command that still allowed him to navigate lineups carefully and successfully. The procedure to remove a cyst should address the issue that has sidelined him for the last third of the season.

“We need this guy healthy, ready to go, and I think this is the best move for the player and obviously for the organization,” said Cora.

Sale, who is currently rehabbing in Fort Myers, Fla., is due to be reexamined by Dr. James Andrews in the coming weeks. Cora said that the lefthander “has made strides” in all his rehab work to date that offer initial cause for the team to believe he's on the road back to the rotation for 2020.

The fact that he still struck out batters at one of the highest rates in the big leagues suggests that his inconsistency may have been the sort of one-year aberration that can befall even Hall of Fame-caliber pitchers.

Eovaldi's arm strength remains elite. And so, with a full, healthy offseason, the righthander has a chance to reestablish himself as a solid mid-rotation option.

That, of course, is the glass-half-full view. But there are plenty of precedents to suggest that the Red Sox can't simply rely on best-case scenarios. In Price, Sale, and Eovaldi, the Red Sox have made their most aggressive long-term rotation investments since the beginning of this decade, when they committed hundreds of millions of dollars to Daisuke Matsuzaka, John Lackey, and Josh Beckett.

That trio endured a steady decline in both health and performance while together, resulting in negative returns on investment in 2012 that threatened to choke the roster for years — until the Dodgers ex machina bailout that August, which included taking on the final years of Beckett's deal, gave the Sox a reboot.

Of course, part of that reboot was also achieved in the surprise championship season of 2013 thanks to bouncebacks of Jon Lester, Lackey, and Clay Buchholz — pitchers who were either injured or performed below career norms in 2012.

As much as the Red Sox need to remain mindful of the risks presented by the current state of the rotation, there is also evidence that pitchers with track records of success can bounce back, both individually and as a group.

That, of course, is the Red Sox' desperate hope. Yet the uncertainty surrounding the rotation suggests that the organization is in need of a different rotation depth model than the one it pursued entering 2019.

There is a chance that the team's well-compensated starters reclaim the form that they've shown either for most of their careers (Sale and Price) or in somewhat recent glimpses (Eovaldi). But the Red Sox can ill-afford to bet next season on the presumption of rotation health without preparing for the possibility that the 2019 season represents a flashing red warning light that will extend into the team's future.

Red Sox to shut down David Price

Alex Speier

David Price, who has made one start since Aug. 4 while dealing with a cyst on his left wrist, will be shut down for the rest of the 2019 season. The veteran lefthander will have a surgical procedure to address the cyst, and he'll also be examined to determine if there are any other issues with his wrist that require attention.

"We're going to shut him down. We're going to take care to see what's going on with the cyst and actually check his wrist. If there's something else we'll take care of that if there's something going on," said manager Alex Cora. "I think it's a head start to next year. It's the smart thing to do. . . . If we were one game up or in the hunt he'd probably be pitching out of the bullpen like in '17. But where we're at and obviously how important he is it's better off moving forward and getting right."

Cora said that the consideration of additional possibilities beyond the cyst is a reflection of other issues Price has faced with his wrist in the past. In 2018, for instance, he was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome and circulatory issues with his left wrist.

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"When you can't perform the way you want to it's obviously frustrating," said Cora. "If it's up to him he'll be throwing fastballs out there and trying to compete. But we took it away because we feel that it's not conducive to something positive to the player. But he's all in. He knows this is the best way to start off the offseason and get him ready and he'll be ready."

There's not much life at Fenway these days, but Tuesday had its moments

Chad Finn

It's all over but the accounting.

Maybe you were with me through the summer in believing that the defending champion Red Sox would find their strangely absent mojo, go on a winning streak reminiscent of their 2018 magic, and reward faith by slipping into the postseason and perhaps even sticking around a while.

It's not happening, of course. It never really came close to happening. They never got hot, some important players got hurt, and the slog through the spring and summer will end with a suspense-free September.

There's no more resisting what the math is insisting on telling us. After Tuesday's 7-6, 15-inning loss to the Giants at Fenway Park, there were 12 games left in the season, seven on the road, and they were nine games out in the wild-card race.

These are the last days of the 2019 Red Sox. There will be no postseason, just portmortems. There will be a new World Series champion this year.

I suppose many of you realized this several weeks, ballgames, and degrees on the Fahrenheit scale ago. Maybe you wrote 'em off when Chris Sale went down for the season with an elbow injury a month ago, or the bullpen blew its 20th save (or its 21st, or 22d . . .), or when another Joe Hardy clone came through for the Yankees, or when you'd check the box scores after a Red Sox win and realize the Indians, A's, and Rays all refused to yield in the wild-card chase.

Maybe you came to grips with it when president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski did not add a helpful pitching arm at the July 31 deadline.

You probably came to grips with it before Dombrowski was informed he was no longer the president of baseball operations approximately six weeks later.

There's a little less hustle, a little less bustle around Fenway now, with the kids back in school and the knowledge that the tension of the postseason isn't coming to Jersey Street this fall.

The sausage guy and the program peddlers still compete for your attention and dollars as you head toward the entrance, but it's a quieter experience, even as you encounter moments of denial about the team's status here and there.

The scoreboard still plays a "We were born for this" highlight reel before the anthem that leaves you wondering exactly what "this" is this year. Third place in the AL East?

Even Tuesday night, with Carl Yastrzemski's 29-year-old grandson Mike making his anticipated Fenway Park debut as the leadoff hitter for the Giants, the crowd fell somewhere between late-arriving and non-arriving.

If the actual attendance was within a few thousand of the announced 35,925, it must have been because many of them were masterfully disguised as red seats. By the time the 5-hour-54-minute affair — which featured a major league-record-tying 24 pitchers — was finished, the crowd seemed to consist mostly of Yastrzemski's buddies from Andover and St. John's Prep.

But Tuesday's game, if prolonged, was a nice reminder that small satisfactions can be found at the ballpark even if the outcome takes too long to arrive and carries little consequence.

Jackie Bradley Jr. homered in the fifth — helping the Red Sox rally from a 5-1 deficit — and made a spectacular leaping catch at the wall in the 12th. Juan Centeno — go ahead, Google him, I'll wait — tied it at 6 with a five-pitch, bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the 13th.

Did I mention that there were 24 pitchers, a group that may or may not have included John Montefusco, Greg Minton, and Ed Halicki?

More than anything, it was a nice night for the sentimental and nostalgic. Yastrzemski crushed a Nathan Eovaldi fastball over the center-field fence in the top of the fourth — the first MLB home run at Fenway by a Yastrzemski since his grandfather hit the 451st of his 452 on July 31, 1983. If that didn't make your cynical little heart grow three sizes, you're rather hopeless, Grinch.

If the game had mattered, it would be considered a frustrating defeat for the Red Sox. But it was just one more line in a redundant story, one more loss for a team that has lost 17 more games than it did a season ago, with nearly two weeks still to play. You endure enough tough losses, and eventually they don't seem so tough anymore, as that descent from the fringes of the playoff race refuses to cease.

There are reasons to still watch these Sox in their final days of the season. Rafael Devers, still playing with joy, is seeking his 30th homer to go with 50-something doubles; Xander Bogaerts, the leader of this team for the foreseeable future, has already hit those milestones. There are young bullpen arms to watch; Darwinson Hernandez and Josh Taylor in particular offer hope for next year. Andrew Benintendi, who has had an season inferior to Mike Yastrzemski's, would be well-served by finishing strong and reminding us he can be a cornerstone.

On the bummer side, Mookie Betts's next home run, and J.D. Martinez's too, could be their last in a Red Sox uniform. Let's hope that's not the case, especially in regard to Betts, who in his "down" year is on pace to slash .293/.391/.527 with 30 homers, 85 RBIs, 43 doubles, 183 hits, and 142 runs. He's a generational player, a Red Sox star who has the chance to be the Yaz of his time.

Tuesday night, we were pleasantly reminded of Yaz's time, thanks to his grandson. It's been that kind of season, when the best we can do while waiting until next year is to appreciate a sweet meeting between the present and the past. It almost makes a near-six-hour game in a lost season worth it.

*** *The Boston Herald***

Rafael Devers makes more history with 30th home run of season

Steve Hewitt

Though the Red Sox' season won't end the way they want to, they'll likely look back on 2019 as the year Rafael Devers became a star.

The 22-year-old third baseman has shattered records all season long, and he added even more clout to his historic campaign on Wednesday. In one of the few sources of offense on the night, he hit a milestone 30th home run of the season to break up Jeff Samardzija's no-hit bid in the sixth inning in the Red Sox' eventual 11-3 loss to the Giants.

With the blast — his first in more than two weeks — Devers joined Xander Bogaerts with 30 homers and 50 doubles this season as they became the first teammates in baseball history to hit those marks in the same season.

"I'm extremely happy, especially for him," Devers said. "He's one of my closest friends. To be able to do that with him feels really special for me. Obviously we just have to continue to play the game together and try to break as many records as possible. It's pretty special."

Devers also hit some individual marks with the homer, which was a 384-foot rocket to right. He became the second player in history to hit 30 homers and 50 doubles in the same season before turning 23, joining Alex Rodriguez in 1996. He also became the second third baseman in history to hit those marks, joining Alex Bregman, who did it last year.

"It's pretty special to know that I've made history in that way, but obviously this isn't the season that we've envisioned for our team," Devers said. "That's something that sticks with me more as opposed to personal accolades. I'm just glad some of my other teammates are achieving milestones for themselves as well."

That's also what sticks out to his manager. Like everyone, Alex Cora has been amazed by Devers' growth this season, but he knows he's not nearly satisfied given it hasn't helped them reach October.

After making the playoffs as a rookie in 2017 and then helping key their World Series run last season, Devers won't be playing in the playoffs for the first time in his career.

"The most important thing is that he's not pleased with what's going on with us," Cora said. "That's the most important thing. He can go 0 for 6 and we win and you always see him smiling on that line until the game is over. Or we win and he doesn't make a play, he puts his teammates in a bad spot, he's upset about it. I think it was the game he went 6 for 6 in Cleveland, he was upset because he didn't make a play. And that's who he is and we're very proud of him.

"That's the mentality that we have to have as an organization. Be a winner. It's funny because the other day he's like, 'Oh this is the first time I'm not going to be in the playoffs' I'm like, 'Dude, you only have two and a half years in the big leagues so you'll be OK.' But he made some adjustments in the offseason and it's paying off."

Red Sox one step closer to elimination with 11-3 loss to Giants

Steve Hewitt

Tuesday night's 15-inning loss to the Giants represented a summation of the Red Sox' underwhelming 2019 season in the eyes of Alex Cora: In another long game, they couldn't hit with runners in scoring position, they taxed the bullpen and they couldn't get the job done in a close game.

On Wednesday, they demonstrated another alarming trait of this year's edition. The Sox' offense, which can score at will on any given night, has at times shown the ability to go silent.

With Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez out of the lineup, the Sox were no match for the Giants' pitching. Jeff Samardzija no-hit them through 5 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings and the Giants pulled away late to hand the Red Sox an 11-3 drubbing at Fenway Park.

The Red Sox drew four walks against Samardzija, but could do little else against the 34-year-old right-hander. Rafael Devers finally broke up his no-hit bid with two outs in the sixth, when he blasted a 3-2 slider to right field for his 30th homer of the season, but it couldn't do much to ignite a rally.

"Right now we're not swinging the ball well," Cora said. "It's been going on for a while. ...

"We're expanding the zone, been expanding the zone for a while. You look at the numbers, too many strikeouts, not too many walks, that's a sign of an offense that is searching for hits and you can't do that. We haven't been good for a while now. This whole month has been very inconsistent at what we do."

With the loss, the Red Sox (79-72) were a loss in Thursday's finale against the Giants combined with one more Rays victory away from being officially eliminated from postseason contention.

As the Giants pulled away with a five-run ninth to put the game away, few fans remained at Fenway besides a contingent of Giants fans, who chanted "Bochy! Bochy!" for Giants manager Bruce Bochy, who won his 2,000th career game. He became the 11th manager in history to reach that mark.

"That's kinda like unreal," Cora said. "I think everybody that gets to this job wishes they can last that long and be able to do what he has done throughout his career. I know people focus on other stuff, whatever, but he's a winner, 2,000 and the rings. The way he's gone about the business, it has been amazing. So congratulations."

Jhoulys Chacin set the Red Sox behind with a three-run first that took 34 pitches to complete, though he didn't get much help from Fenway's dimensions. Stephen Vogt hit a line drive off the bottom of Pesky's Pole in right — a 307-foot two-run shot — put the Giants ahead early.

It was all they really needed. The Sox got something going in the seventh against Fernando Abad, but Sandy Leon's two-out RBI double that pulled the Sox back to a 4-2 deficit was all they could show for it.

The Giants (74-79) then went on to score seven runs in the eighth and nine innings — including five in the ninth — to put the Sox away for good, but the way they were swinging the bat, it didn't matter anyway.

With the Sox out of contention, Cora denied there was a lack of focus at the plate.

"I mean, guys go through slumps," Cora said. "Raffy is going through a slump and there are other guys going through slumps. I don't think they go out there not concentrating on what's going on, just sometimes you get beat and right now we've been getting beat a lot from the mound."

Red Sox officially shut down David Price for rest of season

Steve Hewitt

The Red Sox have come to their senses with David Price.

Alex Cora confirmed Wednesday that the left-hander is being shut down for the rest of the season as he continues to deal with a cyst in his throwing wrist that's kept him out for the majority of the last six weeks.

Cora was hoping as early as last week that Price might be able to pitch again this season. But with the Sox out of playoff contention with less than two weeks left on the schedule, it wasn't worth bringing back the 34-year-old who has three years and \$96 million remaining on his contract.

"I think it's a head-start to next year," Cora said. "It's the smart thing to do. Like I said earlier on the radio, if we were one game up or in the hunt he'd probably be pitching out of the bullpen like in '17. But where we're at and obviously how important he is, it's better off moving forward and getting right."

Cora said doctors will not only look at the cyst, but the wrist as well. Surgery is a possibility as they try to figure out how to get Price, who had carpal tunnel syndrome in the same wrist last season, right for 2020. Every option seems to be on the table.

"We know about the cyst," Cora said. "We know about the carpal tunnel syndrome last year. So they'll check. They'll talk about it. How he feels. And whatever they have to do to get him right, they'll do it I guess. ..."

"We have the opportunity now that we have the situation with the cyst that why not check everything out? If it's something that the doctors feel that can avoid certain situations, why not? It's just, we need this guy healthy, ready to go, and I think this is the best move for the player and obviously for the organization."

Cora said Price was willing to pitch out of the bullpen just throwing fastballs for the rest of the season, but they don't want him doing that. He'll finish his fourth season with the Sox with a 7-5 record in just 22 starts, with a 4.28 ERA.

"He's all in," Cora said. "When you can't perform the way you want to it's obviously frustrating. And for a while there, not having his changeup and the cutter and trying to pitch at this level is hard to do. Like I've been saying all along, if it's up to him he'll be throwing fastballs out there and trying to compete. But we took it away because we feel that it's not conducive to something positive to the player. But he's all in. He knows this is the best way to start off the offseason and get him ready and he'll be ready."

Betts could return this weekend

Mookie Betts was out for a fourth consecutive game with inflammation in his left foot that he suffered last week in Toronto, but Cora said he could play this weekend vs. Tampa Bay as the designated hitter. The right fielder did leg work in the weight room on Wednesday and felt better, Cora said.

“Today was a good day for him,” the manager said.

J.D. Martinez was out of the lineup Wednesday after leaving Tuesday’s loss with left groin tightness. Cora said he’d also stay out Thursday and see how he reacts to treatment before determining if he’s available to play this weekend.

Travis in concussion protocol

Sam Travis is going through the concussion protocol after a scary play Tuesday in which he was hit in the head (after losing his helmet rounding the bases) with a relay throw while he was sliding into third base. Travis went through some tests — which included answering a question that he got wrong — but Cora was encouraged about his health for something else he said that made him laugh.

“He actually said, ‘Finally I barreled a ball after a month,’” Cora said.

Cora said Travis went through some light exercises Wednesday and anticipates he’ll be cleared to play again this weekend. ...

The Red Sox announced the winners of their 2019 minor league awards. Top prospect Triston Casas took home offensive player of the year, infielder Ryan Fitzgerald won defensive player of the year, and right-hander Thad Ward was named pitcher of the year.

All of the award winners will be honored prior to Thursday’s 1:05 p.m. game against the Giants at Fenway. ...

In a cool Fenway moment, Carl Yastrzemski threw out Wednesday’s ceremonial first pitch to his grandson and Giants outfielder Mike. The younger Yaz hit a homer in his Fenway debut on Tuesday.

*** *The Providence Journal***

Personal milestones, team disappointment make an odd mix for Red Sox third baseman Rafael Devers

Bill Koch, *The Providence Journal*

There will be a time during the offseason where Rafael Devers will look back and appreciate all the milestones he’s piled up through this 2019 campaign.

The latest came Wednesday in an 11-3 shellacking by the Giants at Fenway Park. Devers broke up a no-hit bid by Jeff Samardzija when he drove a solo home run to right field in the bottom of the sixth inning. San Francisco’s right-handed veteran had flummoxed the Boston bats to that point.

Devers and Xander Bogaerts are the first teammates in baseball history to reach 30 homers and 50 doubles in the same season. They’re also about to miss out on October – the first time for Devers since his 2017 debut, the third time for Bogaerts since his 2013 rookie season – barely 11 months after rolling to a World Series title.

It’s not sitting well.

“This isn’t the season we envisioned for our team, and that’s something that sticks with me more than personal accolades,” Devers said through translator Bryan Almonte. “I’m just glad that some of my other teammates are achieving milestones for themselves as well.”

Devers has the market cornered on most of the scrapbook pages. Only 11 big league players have posted at least 30 homers, 100 RBI and 100 runs scored in a season before turning 23. Only eight big league players have piled up as many as 84 extra-base hits in a season before turning 23.

That's not even getting into the Red Sox history Devers is making. Butch Hobson is the only other third baseman to reach 30 home runs, closing at that number exactly in 1977. Tony Conigliaro was the last Boston player this young to reach 30 homers, smacking 32 in 1965. David Ortiz had the only other 30-homer/50-double season, reaching both marks in 2007 – he now has company through a pair of current roster cornerstones.

“The most important thing is (Devers is) not pleased with what is going on with us,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “That’s the most important thing. He could go 0-for-6 and we win and you always see him smiling on that line when the game is over.”

There were no smiles late Wednesday. The only seats occupied in the bottom of the ninth were those belonging to San Francisco fans. ‘Bochy, Bochy, Bochy’ chanted what remained of the crowd, a tribute to manager Bruce Bochy – he picked up career win No. 2,000 at the Red Sox expense.

“He’s a winner – 2,000 and the (three championship) rings and the way he’s gone about the business,” Cora said. “He’s been amazing, so congratulations.”

Cora was gracious and genuine, beginning his press conference by offering unprompted praise for Bochy. It was almost exactly a year ago when the Boston manager was standing in an office at Yankee Stadium, his clothes drenched in champagne after the Red Sox clinched a third straight American League East title on Sept. 20.

Devers, Bogaerts and the rest of the roster were celebrating just across the hall in the visiting clubhouse’s main room. Neither player could have expected the home stretch of this season to mean so little. Boston requires a four-game winning streak at home just to avoid a losing record in the Back Bay, something unthinkable for a club that was 33 games over .500 at this venue alone last season.

“That’s the mentality we have to have as an organization,” Cora said. “Be a winner. The other day (Devers) was like, ‘This is the first time I’m not going to be in the playoffs.’ You only have two and a half years in the big leagues – he’ll be okay.”

Devers celebrates his birthday on Oct. 24. The Red Sox downed the Dodgers, 4-2, in Game 2 of the World Series on that day last year. Devers and his teammates will be forced to watch this edition of the Fall Classic, and all the personal achievements in the world can’t compensate for that.

Giants 11, Red Sox 3: San Francisco manager Bruce Bochy wins his 2,000th career game

Bill Koch

There are now 11 managers in baseball history with 2,000 career victories.

Bruce Bochy is retiring at the conclusion of the 2019 season, and his Giants will not be taking part on the October stage he knows so well. Six times he has guided teams to the National League West title since getting his start with the Padres in 1995, and more than two decades on the bench will soon come to a close.

The four World Series appearances, three championships and 1996 N.L. Manager of the Year award will all be displayed on Bochy’s plaque when he eventually enters the Hall of Fame. His new peers include titans of the game like Connie Mack, John McGraw, Tony La Russa, Joe Torre and Sparky Anderson.

Wednesday's milestone came at the expense of the Red Sox. Jeff Samardzija carried a no-hitter for 5 2/3 innings and a fatigued relief corps had just enough to record the final 10 outs. Boston was powerless to stop an 11-3 defeat at Fenway Park, one that played out on a cool Wednesday night.

"I want to congratulate Bruce Bochy – 2,000 wins at this level," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "That's kind of unreal. I think everybody gets to this job wishes they can last that long and to be able to do what he's done throughout his career."

The Red Sox required eight pitchers to record 27 outs, a familiar sight in what has become a lost September. Eduardo Rodriguez could well save Boston from having to go bullpening during the series finale Thursday afternoon, locking up with Madison Bumgarner. But the decided lack of healthy, quality starting pitching showed up yet again for the Red Sox in this one.

Mike Yastrzemski went from catching an emotional first pitch thrown by his grandfather, Carl, to drawing a leadoff walk in the top of the first. The Boston legend's grandson sparked a three-run rally against Jhoulys Chacin that left the Red Sox running uphill all night. Kevin Pillar's RBI groundout and a two-run homer off the Pesky Pole by Stephen Vogt made it a 3-0 game.

"Early on, no fastball command – which actually hurt him with the Brewers," Cora said. "He relies on the slider, but if you don't respect the fastball they can sit on it and stay back and battle. Then you get him up in the zone and put good swings on it."

Chacin departed after being nicked for another run in the third, lasting just 2 2/3 frames. Brandon Crawford's sharp grounder to first went wide of Mitch Moreland's backhand and into the corner for an RBI double. Chacin's career 3.06 earned-run average in 23 appearances against took a bit of a battering, as San Francisco built a 4-0 lead.

Samardzija was far superior, making his own bid for history that was eventually stopped with two outs in the bottom of the sixth. Rafael Devers crushed a solo home run to the boxes in right, securing a host of personal milestones. The most prominent among them was this – Devers and Xander Bogaerts became the first pair of teammates in big league history with at least 30 home runs and 50 doubles in the same season.

"To be able to do that with (Bogaerts), it feels really special for me," Devers said through translator Bryan Almonte. "Obviously we have to continue to play the game together and try to break as many records as possible."

Samardzija lasted just two more batters while working into the seventh, but the Giants never stopped adding on. Vogt's sacrifice fly and an infield single by Cristhian Adames accounted for two more runs in the eighth and the floodgates opened in the ninth. San Francisco capped a five-run onslaught with a two-run single to right by former Boston farmhand Mauricio Dubon.

Sandy Leon's RBI single and Jackie Bradley Jr.'s 20th home run of the season couldn't stop the Red Sox from dropping to 36-39 at this venue this season, and a four-game winning streak will be required – Thursday against San Francisco and all three against Baltimore Sept. 27-29 – to finish with a winning record. Boston was a dominant 152-91 here over the previous three seasons, but this ballpark has been anything but friendly in 2019. Most of the announced 35,697 fans on hand were long gone by the time the final out was recorded.

Sam Travis (concussion protocol) unavailable for Red Sox through the weekend

Bill Koch

Sam Travis (concussion protocol) was in good spirits after a scary moment the previous night.

Travis was smiling and bantering easily with reporters in the Red Sox clubhouse Wednesday afternoon. He also left Tuesday in the bottom of the sixth inning after notching a first career triple to right field. Travis lost his helmet rounding second and was hit in the back of the head by Brandon Crawford's relay throw.

"He did some light exercises today," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "He should be okay. It's scary, but (assistant athletic trainer Paul Buchheit) asked him a few questions. It wasn't the right answer, so we had to take him out."

Specifically, Travis was asked the count when he sent a liner past the dive of right fielder Austin Slater – it was 1-and-2. Travis made another statement that had Cora laughing on the field, a somewhat odd look for a manager tending to an injured player.

"He said, 'Finally, a barreled ball after a month,'" Cora said. "That's why I laughed.

"Sometimes I feel bad, because they make these jokes and I'm laughing and people are watching them. 'This guy is lying down on the ground and Alex is laughing at him.' I can't help it."

David Price (left wrist) shut down by Red Sox

Bill Koch

David Price's fourth season with the Red Sox is over.

The left-handed pitcher has officially been shut down. Boston manager Alex Cora made the announcement prior to Wednesday night's game with the Giants at Fenway Park.

"I think it's a head start to next year," Cora said. "It's the smart thing to do.

"If we were 1 game up or in the hunt he'd probably be pitching out of the bullpen like in '17. Where we're at and how important he is, it's better off moving forward and getting him right."

Price finishes 7-5 with a 4.28 earned-run average in 2019. That last number swelled over his final five starts, as Price stood at 3.16 after a 7-4 home loss to the Dodgers on July 14. His 107 2/3 innings of work are the second-fewest in a full season in his career.

"We need this guy healthy and ready to go," Cora said. "I think it's the best move for the player and for the organization."

Price was on the injured list twice this season, suffering from left elbow tendinitis and the left wrist cyst that ultimately ended his campaign. He made just one start after an Aug. 4 defeat against the Yankees, a 45-pitch cameo against the Angels on Sept. 1. Price offered to pitch out of the bullpen down the stretch, but the Red Sox had already slipped from American League wild card contention.

"We've been talking about it," Cora said. "He even mentioned, 'I'll go to the bullpen and do it.' I'm like, 'No.' We're not going to do that for the benefit of him and for the benefit of the organization."

Left elbow troubles limited Price to 11 starts and a career-low 74 2/3 innings in 2017, and a diagnosis of carpal tunnel syndrome bothered him at times early in 2018. He'll be 34 years old on Opening Day next season and has logged 2029 2/3 innings over 12 seasons. This marks the first time since Price's first full season in 2009 that he'll finish with an ERA above 4.00, as he posted a career-worst 4.42 in 23 starts.

"When you can't perform the way you want to it's obviously frustrating," Cora said. "For a while there, not having his changeup and the cutter and trying to pitch at this level, it's hard to do."

Price could opt to have exploratory surgery on the wrist, a procedure that would clear any remnants of the cyst and check on its structural integrity. It would be the first operation he's undergone of any kind since

his 2008 debut with the Rays. Price was limited to 27 starts in 2013 due to a left triceps strain and made just 16 appearances in 2017.

“We do feel that this situation with David is something minor,” Cora said. “There are always question marks or seeing how it goes, but at the same time there are a lot of positives that we feel.”

Boston still owes Price three years and an average annual value of \$31 million on the contract he signed as a free agent prior to 2016. He smashed a personal postseason curse in 2018 while helping lead the Red Sox to a fourth World Series title this century, but his deal makes him virtually untradeable should Boston seek a fresh start in its rotation. Price, Chris Sale and Nathan Eovaldi have accounted for just 14 victories this season, and the Red Sox have staggered to a combined 26-31 record when they take the mound.

“There aren’t too many red flags in the situations where we’ll be like, ‘Oh, we’re not going to count on these guys next year,’” Cora said.

*** *MassLive.com***

How Boston Red Sox’s Rick Porcello, Giants’ Madison Bumgarner almost came together to form the greatest starting rotation in college baseball history

Chris Cotillo

Long before they were established major-league veterans, Red Sox starter Rick Porcello and Giants ace Madison Bumgarner came close to forming two-thirds of what might have gone down as one of the best starting rotations in the history of college baseball.

Porcello, a Cy Young award winner, and Bumgarner, a 4-time All-Star and World Series MVP, both committed to the University of North Carolina in the same 2008 class as former Mets All-Star Matt Harvey. But instead of getting a triple-headed monster of talented freshmen, the Tar Heels only got Harvey to come to campus after both Bumgarner (10th) and Porcello (27th) were taken in the first round of the 2007 draft.

Even without Porcello and Bumgarner, the Heels reached the College World Series in 2008 and 2009. They fell short with a roster that included future big-leaguers Kyle Seager, Adam Warren, Dustin Ackley, Alex White, Tim Federowicz, Rob Wooten and Brian Moran.

Porcello still wonders what would have happened if the big three had all gone to school.

“I don’t think about the greatest college rotation ever but you think about the possibility of winning a couple College World Series and things like that,” Porcello said with a laugh. “You never know what would have happened.”

Porcello, whose first jersey was a Michael Jordan UNC basketball jersey he received when he was around five years old, always considered Carolina to be his dream school, even growing up as an out-of-stater from New Jersey. Bumgarner, from Hudson, North Carolina, was a natural fit. Harvey followed the lead of fellow Connecticut native and ex-Athletics righty Andrew Carignan, who pitched at UNC from 2005 to 2007.

Though the three talented pitchers were from different backgrounds, they became fast friends on the showcase circuit and all ended up committing to the same school. For Porcello, seeing Bumgarner pitch Thursday afternoon at Fenway Park will likely stir up some memories from more than a decade ago.

“I remember him being a really down-to-earth guy. I remember him being a big guy who threw hard,” Porcello said. “Nice guy... A lot of what you see now. A great competitor.”

As head coach Mike Fox and pitching coach Scott Forbes dreamed of what they could have coming to campus in the fall, they stayed in contact with the trio of pitchers as the June draft approached. Bumgarner, who received a \$2 million signing bonus from the Giants, was considered the most likely to turn pro. Harvey, who slipped to the third round, was thought to be most likely to stay. Porcello, the Gatorade National High School Player of the Year in 2007, came very close to going to school before receiving a record-setting four-year, \$7.28 million major-league contract from the Tigers to sway him otherwise.

"I had a laptop, had classes picked out. It was pretty much down to the wire," Porcello said. "That last week before the signing cutoff period, I was in my head going to college. Things kind of changed quickly. I was definitely close.

"My parents were really big on getting an education," he said. "It's so hard to make it to the big leagues and be successful that at that age, my family... my parents were trying to prepare me for the rest of my life and what would be the most valuable. A college education was extremely important. My mom was an English teacher so she obviously valued it a lot."

Porcello's decision to turn pro ended up paying off, as he was in the majors as a 20-year-old in 2009 and won a Cy Young award seven seasons later. Bumgarner-- one of the most dominant lefties of the last decade-- and Harvey-- whose larger-than-life persona made him a superstar in New York in 2012 and 2013-- will not soon be forgotten for his short period of big-league dominance.

With how successful each of the three pitchers has been, UNC's 2008 baseball recruiting class will go down as one of the ultimate what-could-have-been scenarios in the history of college baseball.

"You make decisions and things happen for a reason," Porcello said. "It's fun to think about what we would have been able to do if we all went there together. I joke about it. I would have been lucky to be starting mid-week games with the guys who were going in there."

10 observations from the last week in baseball

1. This weekend's four-game series against the Rays looked like a make-or-break set for the Red Sox about a month ago. Now, it'll be a garbage time series for Boston and Giants-Buccaneers looks like the better show in the Tampa area this weekend.
2. The Athletics sure aren't making it easy for their wild-card competitors. Entering Thursday, they've won eight of nine and are 13-4 since Sept. 1.
3. The disturbing Felipe Vazquez case marks a dark moment in the history of the Pirates. It's been an all-around bad year for that organization, which will surely undergo change once the season is over.
4. Shutting down David Price for the rest of the season is the right move for the Red Sox, who have major question marks in their rotation heading into 2020.
5. Has any trade in the last few years worked out better than the Astros' acquisition of Gerrit Cole? Oh, maybe their trade for Justin Verlander. Two major wins.
6. The Cavan Biggio cycle for the Blue Jays flew under-the-radar but was a cool moment. Toronto's young core should scare the hell out of the Red Sox and Yankees.
7. Rick Porcello is lined up to start on the final day of the season for the Red Sox at home. He may not be back, so that might be his final sendoff.
8. The way people talk about the Cubs, you'd think they were 10 games out of the wild-card hunt like the Red Sox are. Big series coming up with the Cardinals over the weekend.

9. The Mike Yastrzemski moments have been some of the best at Fenway Park this season. Lots of Giants fans in town to make it special.

10. Best wishes to good friend Christian Abbonizio, who was diagnosed with leukemia over the weekend. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Boston Red Sox's Rafael Devers, Xander Bogaerts become first MLB teammates ever with 30 homers, 50 doubles: 'We have to continue to play together and break as many records as possible'

Chris Cotillo

What Rafael Devers and Xander Bogaerts have done offensively for the Red Sox this year has been more than impressive. On Wednesday night, it officially became historic.

Devers and Bogaerts are the first teammates in MLB history to each have 30 home runs and 50 doubles in a single season. Devers' 30th homer, which broke up Giants starter Jeff Samardzija's no-hit bid in the sixth inning of Wednesday's 11-3 loss, secured the milestone for the two teammates.

Devers now has exactly 30 homers and 50 doubles; Bogaerts has 31 home runs and 50 doubles. Devers became the youngest Red Sox player to hit 30 homers in a season since Tony Conigliaro in 1965.

"I do feel he was actually pressuring himself to hit 30," manager Alex Cora said. "Now, he can breathe and maybe he's going to take off again."

Devers and Bogaerts have led a disappointing Sox team all season, hitting for average and power in a lineup that has been one of the most potent in baseball. The infielders are good friends and both figure to be major pieces in Boston's order for years to come.

"To be able to do that with him, it feels really special," Devers said (through translator Bryan Almonte). "Obviously, we have to continue to play the game together and break as many records as possible. It's pretty special."

Both infielders will celebrate birthdays next month-- Devers' 23rd and Bogaerts' 27th-- and are each under team control for at least four more seasons. Cora believes there's a higher gear for both players to reach in the years to come.

"They're a part of the future. We're going to keep getting better," Cora said "They're part of what we're going to try to accomplish in the upcoming years. There are a few things, we will get better. They have to work on (things) and they know it.

"They're going to keep improving. That's the cool thing about it. We talk about what they're doing, this is the first time in the history of the game. 30 homers and 50 doubles. There is still room for improvement."

If the Red Sox get the same kind of production as they have from the duo this season, they'll be more than happy. Both players have hit over .300 with at least 30 homers, 50 doubles and 100 RBIs so far this year.

Devers is disappointed he won't be playing in October for the first time in his three-year big-league career. Still, he's happy that some of his teammates can take some personal positives away from 2019.

"I didn't know about that but it's pretty special to know that I made history," he said. "Obviously, this isn't the season we envisioned for our team. That's something that sticks with me more as opposed to personal accolades. I'm just glad some of my other teammates are achieving milestones for themselves as well."

Bruce Bochy gets 2,000th career win at Fenway Park; Boston Red Sox's Alex Cora congratulates him

Chris Cotillo

Giants manager Bruce Bochy joined an exclusive club Wednesday night at Fenway Park, earning his 2,000th career win with San Francisco's 11-3 defeat of the Red Sox. Bochy became just the 11th manager in major-league history to reach the mark and the first since Joe Torre in 2007.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora started his postgame press conference by acknowledging the accomplishment.

"First thing's first. I want to congratulate Bruce Bochy," Cora said. "2,000 wins at this level, that's kind of unreal. I think everyone who gets to this job wishes they could last that long and be able to do what he has done throughout his career."

As the Giants finished off their blowout win, a loud "Bochy! Bochy!" chant emerged from the stands from the thousands of Giants fans in attendance. Bochy, who has managed San Francisco since 2007, is retiring after the season.

Cora, who is finishing up his second year as a big-league manager, has 187 wins under his belt. He said he admires Bochy's longevity and success.

"He's a winner," Cora said. "2,000 and the rings and the way he's gone about the business, he has been amazing. So congratulations."

Rafael Devers hits 30th homer, but Red Sox lose, 11-3, to Giants as Bruce Bochy records 2,000th win

Chris Cotillo

The Red Sox made major-league history Wednesday night in an 11-2 blowout loss to the Giants.

Rafael Devers' solo homer in the sixth inning-- which broke up Jeff Samardzija's no-hit bid-- gave him 30 on the season, giving the Sox the first teammates in baseball history to each have 30 home runs and 50 doubles in a season. Xander Bogaerts currently has 31 homers and 50 doubles; Devers has exactly 30 and 50.

Devers' shot was one of only six hits for the Sox, who struggled to get anything going in 6+ innings against the veteran righty Samardzija. San Francisco hit Sox righty Jhoulys Chacin hard early, jumping out to a 4-0 lead as Samardzija cruised.

The Giants plated three runs in the first on a Kevin Pillar RBI groundout and Stephen Vogt two-run homer before tacking on another on a Brandon Crawford RBI double in the fourth. Boston cut the lead to 4-1 on Devers' homer and then 4-2 when Sandy Leon hit an RBI single in the seven but was unable to hold the Giants' offense in the eighth.

After Mike Shawaryn allowed back-to-back singles to start the inning, Vogt hit a sacrifice fly to put the Giants up, 5-2. Cristhian Adames tacked on an RBI single later in the eighth.

San Francisco broke things open with a five-run ninth against relievers Hector Velazquez and Ryan Weber. The Giants had five hits in the frame, including a Mike Yastrzemski RBI single and two-run double from Cristhian Adames.

Jackie Bradley Jr. hit his 20th homer of the year with two outs in the ninth.

Boston dropped its second game in a row and fell to 79-72. Their elimination number is now at two games but could drop to one if the Rays beat the Dodgers later in the night.

Bochy earns 2,000th win

Giants manager Bruce Bochy, who is retiring after the season, earned his 2,000th career win. He is the 11th manager in major-league history to reach that mark.

Yastrzemski goes 1-for-4, scores 2 runs

Yastrzemski, who caught an emotional ceremonial first pitch from his grandfather, Hall of Famer Carl Yastrzemski before the game, was 1-for-4 with a walk, RBI and two runs. He plated San Francisco's first run of the evening on Pillar's groundout.

Rodriguez, Bumgarner in series finale

Thursday's series finale will put two solid lefties against each other as Eduardo Rodriguez starts against Madison Bumgarner. Bumgarner has never before pitched at Fenway Park.

Price injury: Red Sox starter shut down for rest of season, will visit with doctors in coming days

Christopher Smith

The Red Sox have decided to shut down starting pitcher David Price for the remainder of the 2019 season.

He spent from Aug. 8-Sept. 1 on the injured list because of a cyst on his left wrist. He then made one start before feeling wrist tightness during a bullpen session Sept. 4. He hasn't pitched since.

"We're going to see what's going on with his cyst and actually check his wrist," Cora said. "If there's something else, we'll take care of that. If there's something going on. I think it's a head start to next year. It's a smart thing to do. If we were one game up or in the hunt, he'd probably be pitching out of the bullpen like in '17. But where we're at and obviously how important he is, it's better off moving forward and get him right."

Price went 7-2 with a 3.24 ERA in 16 starts before the All-Star break. He then went 0-3 with a 7.88 ERA in six starts during the second half.

"We know about the cyst. We know about the carpal tunnel syndrome last year," Cora said. "So they'll talk about it, how he feels. And whatever they need to do to get him right, they'll do it."

He'll visit the doctors in the coming days.

"Whenever they decide if they have to do that (a procedure), probably they'll do it before the season ends," Cora said.

*** *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune***

Five Red Sox Takes: Bruce Bochy makes history at Fenway Park

Chris Mason

The Red Sox may be playing uninspired baseball, but history was still made at Fenway Park last night.

Bruce Bochy notched his 2000th career win as a manager in the Giants' 11-3 victory, joining quite an exclusive club. On the Sox side, there wasn't a whole lot going on; they looked very much like a team playing out the string.

Here are five takes from a brisk night at the ballpark:

1. Quite a swan song

Bochy is in his final weeks managing the Giants — he's retiring at season's end — and was earnest in saying he doesn't know what he'll do when he moves on from baseball.

"I guess I'll cross that bridge when I come to it," Bochy mused. "Right now I have no plans."

He'll certainly have some in Cooperstown soon. Bochy became the 11th skipper to join the 2000-win club, and the others all already have busts in the Hall of Fame.

2. No offense

Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez were missing from the lineup card last night, and the Sox hit accordingly.

Giants starter Jeff Samardzija carried a no-hit bid into the sixth inning, and the bats didn't really do anything against the San Francisco relievers either. The box score pretty much tells the story in this one.

3. Devers hits No. 30

Rafael Devers was the one to finally get a hit off Samardzija — you knew it'd either be him or Xander Bogaerts, right? — and it left the ballpark, touching down in the front row of the right field bleachers for his 30th homer of the season.

There's no greater silver lining to this third-place season than Devers growing into an absolute monster at the plate.

4. Chacin gets roughed up

Spot starter Jhoulys Chacin put the Red Sox in a 3-0 hole before they even came to the plate in the first, granted a 307-foot Pesky pole home run played a part in it.

Still, Chacin couldn't get out of the third inning, and was tagged for four runs in 2 2/3. His line could have been uglier had Bobby Poyner not bailed him out of a two-on, two-out jam.

5. Yaz throws a strike

He may be 80 years old, but Carl Yastrzemski can still wing it like a ballplayer.

In a touching moment before the game, the Hall of Famer was a surprise for the first pitch, and he fired a strike right into grandson Mike's mitt. The two Yastrzemskis shared an embrace, Grandpa "Yaz" was given the ball, and after a few words of encouragement, walked off to a loud ovation.

David Price shutdown a white flag on lost season for Red Sox starters

Chris Mason

Two hours before Jhoulys Chacin gave up a first-inning home run at Fenway Park, Alex Cora confirmed something that was growing increasingly obvious.

"We're going to shut (David Price) down," Cora said. "We're going to take care to see what's going on with the cyst and actually check his wrist. If there's something else, we'll take care of that. I think it's a head start to next year. It's the smart thing to do."

At this point, it is the smart thing to do, but what a lost season for the Red Sox rotation. (Anyone not named Eduardo Rodriguez, anyway).

The four veteran starters the Red Sox were supposed to rely on couldn't deliver with any semblance of consistency in 2019.

Price will finish with a 4.28 ERA, 107 1/3 innings pitched, and no meaningful second half contributions. He'll join Chris Sale on the shelved-for-the-season list, another injured ace who endured the worst season of his career.

Of the 56 qualified starters in the majors, Rick Porcello's 5.77 ERA ranks dead last by a significant margin, as Seattle's Yusei Kikuchi is closest at 5.46. Last offseason's big ticket re-signing, Nathan Eovaldi, has yet to pick up a win in any of his 10 starts this season.

The rotation was supposed to be the strength of this team. If anything, they've been a heel befitting Achilles.

Hey, it's a bad season. It happens. The Red Sox aren't going to win it every year and there's a reason nobody has gone back-to-back since the 2000 Yankees.

But fans should be alarmed by the number of question marks moving forward. This doesn't feel like a simple World Series hangover that's bound to be cured by Gatorade and bed rest.

Sale, whose five-year extension starts in 2020, still has a follow-up visit scheduled with Dr. James Andrews to get another look at his inflamed elbow. He's not out of the woods yet.

The 34-year-old Price has given the Red Sox less than 110 innings in two of the last three seasons, and a procedure on his wrist may be coming sooner rather than later.

"We know about the cyst. We knew about the carpal tunnel syndrome last year," Cora said. "So they'll check. They'll talk about it. How he feels. And whatever they have to do to get him right, they'll do it I guess."

Injuries have long dogged Eovaldi, and after two Tommy Johns, he's needed additional elbow surgeries in each of the last two seasons.

The Red Sox will be paying those three \$79 million in 2020 base salaries.

With no young arms knocking on the door in Pawtucket, who is going to eat all those innings if Options A, B, and C — or all of the above — aren't ready to roll again in 2020?

Porcello has been durable if nothing else, he's averaged almost 200 innings per season in Boston, but he's set to be a free agent at season's end. Ownership seems content to slash the game's highest payroll, but would they consider bringing him back to simply fill a rotational spot? Rodriguez is due a hefty raise in arbitration. Can they really invest any more in starting pitching?

The more you read into the future, the easier it is to see why Dave Dombrowski was let go.

Shutting Price down is the official white flag on a lost season for the rotation, but as the battle turns to 2020, there's little assurance the Red Sox will return to higher ground.

*** *RedSox.com***

Devers joins rare 50 doubles, 30 homers club

Craig Forde

Though Boston did not get a hit until the sixth inning on Wednesday night, Rafael Devers made it a special one, sending a 3-2 offering from Jeff Samardzija over the right-field wall for his 30th home run of the season -- and with it, achieving a lengthy list of milestones.

Playing without the services of Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez, Devers' stroke knocked zeros off of the scoreboard in one swing, breaking up both a no-hitter and shutout, though the Red Sox would ultimately fall to the Giants, 11-3, at Fenway Park.

With his first home run in 12 games, Devers joins David Ortiz (2007) and Xander Bogaerts ('19) as the lone Red Sox to collect 30-plus home runs and 50-plus doubles in a season, while Devers and Bogaerts (who reached that milestone last Friday in Toronto) also became the first MLB teammates to accomplish the feat.

"I'm extremely happy, especially for him; he's one of my closest friends," Devers said. "To be able to do that with him feels really special to me. We have to continue to play the game together and try to break as many records as possible. It's pretty special."

Added Red Sox manager Alex Cora: "They're part of the future, and we're going to keep getting better. They're a part of what we're going to try and accomplish in the upcoming years. There's a few things where they will get better; they have to work on it, and they know it. That's the cool thing about it, with what they've done. It's the first time in the history of the game, 30 homers and 50 doubles, and there's still room for improvement. One's 22, the other is 26, and they take pride in their craft. I do believe that they are going to keep getting better."

The 22-year-old Devers is the third Red Sox player in 2019 to hit 30-plus home runs, joining Martinez (35) and Bogaerts (31), and in the process tying Butch Hobson (1977) for most home runs by a Boston third baseman in a season.

"I was just trying to make contact on the ball as usual," Devers said. "It wasn't something that was really on my mind. I just made the adjustments that I needed to make because I know it's been a while since I've hit one. Just watching film and seeing the adjustments I needed to make to do that. I had to just control the strike zone more, figure out my pitch selection. I was still confident at the plate, more so what I was swinging at caused the issues."

In the under-23 department, Devers became only the second player in MLB history to hit 30-plus home runs and 50-plus doubles, joining Alex Rodriguez, who accomplished the feat in 1996 (36 HR, 54 2B). He is also just the 11th player to tally 30-plus home runs, 100-plus RBIs and 100-plus runs in a season.

Devers leads the American League with 84 extra-base hits, the most by a Red Sox third baseman in a season and second most by a Boston player under age 23, just two shy of Ted Williams' 86 in 1939.

"It's special to know that I've made history in that sense," Devers said. "Obviously, this isn't the season we've envisioned as a team, and that's something that sticks with me, opposed to personal accolades. I'm glad my other teammates are achieving milestones as well."

Jackie Bradley Jr. also got in on the milestone act, hitting a solo home run to the Monster Seats in the ninth for his 20th long ball of the season. That gives the Red Sox six players with 20-plus home runs on the year, tying a team record (2003).

Red Sox starter Jhoulys Chacin entered the fray having not allowed a run in the 5 2/3 innings he had pitched since joining the club, but that quickly went by the wayside when he allowed a three-spot in the first, highlighted by a 307-foot chip shot off of the Pesky Pole in right field by Stephen Vogt.

With the loss, the defending World Series champions dropped to 36-41 at Fenway Park this season and could be eliminated from postseason contention as early as Thursday.

Carl Yastrzemski throws first pitch to grandson

Jessica Camerato

The historical moments continued on Wednesday night when baseball legend Carl Yastrzemski threw out the ceremonial first pitch to his grandson, Giants outfielder Mike Yastrzemski, in front of a captivated crowd at Fenway Park.

Carl, who played his entire 23-year Hall of Fame career in Boston, emerged from the Red Sox's dugout to an eruption of cheers; Mike made his way to the field from the visiting dugout. They embraced between the pitcher's mound and home plate, where Carl had hit 237 homers over his career and Mike hit his first in Tuesday night's 7-6, 15-inning Giants win.

"Special," Mike said. "It was something that you say you want to be able to play catch with your dad and your grandfather in the backyard usually. To be able to get one in at Fenway Park was really cool."

With eyes around the ballpark eagerly locked in on this moment, Carl tossed a pitch perfectly into his grandson's glove. The interaction gave Mike, 29, a flashback.

"Honestly, I was thinking about the last time we had played catch," Mike said. "I remembered a time probably during Thanksgiving when I must have been 7 or 8 at his house. Being able to relive that and to go through that again on this type of scale and to have such a warm welcome from everyone was really awesome."

They met again for another hug and spoke shortly before Mike headed back to grab his bat to hit leadoff for the Giants.

"It's history," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said before the game in which he recorded his 2,000th managerial win with an 11-3 victory. "Grandfather, grandson. Hall of Famer. I said you couldn't script it out better for Mike, what happened to him yesterday, hitting a home run here. It's good to see Carl out there. ... It's going to bring back a lot of good memories for a lot of people here."

Mike started in right field Wednesday after manning left, where Carl had played, in the series opener. He went 1-for-4 with one RBI, one walk and two runs. Mike is the first Giants rookie to hit 20-plus home runs since Dave Kingman reached the mark in 1972.

Price out for rest of season with cyst in wrist

Craig Forde

The Red Sox rotation took another blow on Wednesday, as manager Alex Cora announced prior to his club's game against the Giants that David Price would be shut down for the remainder of the season due to a cyst in his left wrist.

"We're going to see what's going on with the cyst and actually check his wrist; if there's something else, we'll take care of that," Cora said. "It's a head start to next year. It's the smart thing to do. If we were one game up or in the hunt, he'd probably be pitching out of the bullpen like in '17. It's better off moving forward and getting right."

The left-hander, whose last outing came on Sept. 1 following a near-month's layoff due to the same issue, is the second starter, alongside Chris Sale, to have his season cut short.

Price is scheduled to see doctors in the coming days to determine the severity of the issue, as well as what steps he will need to take to get back, including any possible surgery that may be required. Additional testing could also reveal whether or not the current injury has anything to do with the hurler's carpal tunnel syndrome diagnosis last season.

"We know about the cyst, we know about the carpal tunnel syndrome last year," Cora said. "So, they'll talk about it, see how he feels. Whatever they have to do to get him right, they'll do it. He'll see the doctors in the upcoming days, and whenever they decide if they have to do [surgery], probably they'll do it before the season ends."

Price, who missed a large portion of 2017 with elbow issues, finishes this season with a 7-5 record and 4.28 ERA in 22 starts.

J.D., Mookie still on the mend

While the news for his pitching staff was grim, Cora was hopeful in providing updates on J.D. Martinez (left groin tightness) and Mookie Betts (left foot inflammation).

"You always think about the health of the team," Cora said. "With J.D. right now with the groin and Mookie with the foot, it's not the best-case scenario, but at the same time, we do feel that everything we have information-wise, we should be OK."

Cora noted that Betts did well in going through some light weight work on Wednesday, and though he doesn't expect him to play on Thursday, he was hopeful that the outfielder could at least serve as the designated hitter when the team begins a series with the Rays on Friday.

Martinez was still feeling tightness and continues to receive treatments that will have him out through the remainder of the homestand, which ends on Thursday.

Wrong answer, right answer

Sam Travis will not be available as he enters concussion protocol after being hit in the head by a relay throw in Tuesday night's 7-6, 15-inning loss.

Cora explained that trainers had asked him what the count was prior to the play at third base and Travis could not recall, prompting the Red Sox to remove him from the game.

However, Travis did add a moment of levity to the situation on the walk back to the dugout, giving hope for a quick return.

Cora, who anticipated that Travis may be cleared by the weekend, explained that, "On the way to the dugout, he said something that I was like, 'He should be OK.' He actually said, 'Finally, I barreled a ball, after a month.' That's why I laughed."

*** *ESPN.com***

'I love it here, but it's still a business': Mookie Betts' future looms large in Boston

Joon Lee

When Mookie Betts was growing up, his father, Willie, drilled a lesson into his head.

"You ain't gonna get nothing you don't deserve," he'd tell the young Betts.

So far in his career, Betts has lived out his father's words.

That advice -- to never sell yourself short -- is a major reason Betts' contract situation will be among Boston's most speculated topics in 2020, with no resolution guaranteed until after next season. But the noise will be heard this offseason, too, as Boston faces several franchise-shifting decisions, including whether to trade Betts instead of risking losing him in free agency.

After team president Dave Dombrowski was abruptly fired in the midst of a playoff-less season, the Red Sox elevated senior vice president Raquel Ferreira and assistant general managers Eddie Romero, Brian O'Halloran and Zack Scott to lead the team's front office -- but that's only on an interim basis. It will be up to the new general manager -- once he or she is named -- to figure out how to navigate it all, and to do a job where public criticism always exceeds acclaim, regardless of the team's relative success compared to the rest of the league.

Betts has stated publicly on numerous occasions that he enjoys playing in Boston, and has reiterated that sentiment throughout the course of this season. But he won't sign an extension. Before 2018, Betts took the Red Sox to arbitration, prevailing in his case to the tune of a \$10.5 million salary, the largest deal ever for a first-year arbitration-eligible player. The Red Sox and Betts agreed to a one-year, \$20 million deal before this season to avoid arbitration, the largest amount given to a second-time arbitration-eligible player. Betts turned down an eight-year, \$200 million offer before his first arbitration case two offseasons ago and told reporters in spring training that he doesn't expect anything to happen until he's a free agent.

"It's just been a blessing to be a part of such a great franchise with all of the history and all of the guys who have come through and they still come through," Betts told ESPN in May, before the Red Sox title defense fell apart. "You meet a lot of people. A lot of eyes are on you here, and I've learned if you don't embrace it, it may eat you up.

"You have the opportunity to win every year," Betts said. "Nobody is trying to take a season off. You can't ask for anything more than that. Winning every year, winning is obviously the reason why we play and we've been able to do it every year. It's definitely something I want to be a part of."

Betts says it's his obligation to maximize his value -- and help raise the bar for the next generation of players -- by hitting the free-agent market. Still, Betts and his inner circle of friends from Nashville have maintained for years that the 2018 MVP loves playing for the only franchise he's ever known.

"I'm a confident person in knowing my abilities, but also know, I'm kind of a realist, I know when I suck," Betts said. "I'm confident in my abilities and confident to know what kind of player I am. I've also been educated on the business side of it, getting your value.

"You just have to be able to stand up for yourself. And that's OK," Betts said. "Some people kind of get lost in what everyone else is doing and not pay attention to themselves, and I think I'm one where I pay attention to myself and can set the example for the people coming up. Somebody's gotta do it. I'm more than happy to be the person to do it. I stand on principle."

The Red Sox now face a decision: Is Betts worth more to them as a trade asset than he is in Fenway's right field with one year left on his contract and no promises for anything more? The Red Sox need to decide this offseason how they will handle the lack of contract security around their best and most nationally prominent player. Boston will listen to trade offers for Betts, according to front office sources, but the price will be high: multiple highly regarded prospects, enough to help kick-start a farm system rebuild. Alex Speier of The Boston Globe recently reported that Boston is unlikely to retain both Betts and J.D. Martinez this offseason.

The number of teams that might fit the criteria for the Red Sox, but also make sense as a fit for Betts, is low. Teams would need to be willing to take on what will likely be another record-setting arbitration salary with no guarantee beyond the one year. On top of any salary concerns, teams would need to be in a championship window and willing to part with multiple top-tier prospects, a description that fits few teams at a time when the sport faces a tanking problem.

It's not like the Red Sox are short of money. Boston ranks fifth in attendance in 2019 and Forbes estimates the team is worth \$3.2 billion, \$2.5 billion more than Henry and his partners paid for it in 2002. Boston, however, is financially motivated to get under the luxury tax threshold, which is subject to harsher penalties for repeat high-spenders -- a threshold they've eclipsed the past two years. The threshold will be \$208

million in 2020. The team's least creative solution would be to unload either Betts or Martinez, who own two of the team's biggest salaries.

From the perspective of any potential trade partner, Betts would need to represent a valuable enough upgrade in the outfield to justify the high price required to make a deal. Among the teams who merely fit the description of being in a championship window with prospect capital, without considering on-field or financial fit, are the Dodgers, Braves, Nationals, Cubs, Indians, Cardinals, Angels and Padres. Red Sox president and CEO Sam Kennedy has stated on multiple occasions that he hopes Betts remains in Boston for the rest of his career.

"He's the exact type of player you want to have on your team," Kennedy said in January. "Not just from what he does on the field, but off the field. He's such a great person. We'd love to have him be a Red Sox for his entire career. Certainly understand, you try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. He's going to want to see what the market looks like. Understand that. But we've made it crystal clear to Mookie that we want him to be a part of the Red Sox organization long term."

Much of Boston's championship core, from Betts to Xander Bogaerts to Jackie Bradley Jr. to Andrew Benintendi to Rafael Devers, came up from the farm system. Boston continues working toward the ultimate big-market dream: to build a perennial contender by endlessly developing cheap, affordable young stars, and supplementing that with exceptional financial resources -- a goal much easier to achieve on paper than in practice.

Henry brought in Dombrowski in August 2015 to push the Red Sox roster over the top, and the 2018 World Series was his mission accomplished. At the time, the team boasted one of the most highly regarded farm systems in the league, highlighted by Yoan Moncada, Devers, Benintendi, Anderson Espinoza and Michael Kopech, all considered at one point among the best prospects in the sport.

Two of the five have gone on to become franchise cornerstones in Boston. Espinoza quickly flamed out as an elite prospect upon arrival in San Diego via the Drew Pomeranz trade. As for the two biggest names shipped to Chicago for Chris Sale, Kopech is still highly regarded (though recovering from Tommy John surgery) while Moncada has put together a strong season at the plate for the White Sox, hitting .312/.365/.540. When Dombrowski was hired, Baseball Prospectus ranked the Red Sox farm system as the sixth best in baseball. By 2019, it was last.

Two last-place finishes in 2014 and 2015 did help procure a high draft position. But while Benintendi was taken near the top of the first round in 2015, that spot is no guarantee for a successful prospect. Top pitching prospect Bryan Mata struggled adjusting to Double-A, posting a 5.03 ERA in 11 starts. Some in the Boston front office think 2017 first-round pick Tanner Houck could factor into the major league mix next season, after finishing his season in Triple-A Pawtucket. Fourth-round pick Noah Song, who some teams around baseball viewed as the top pitching prospect in the 2019 draft, has impressed in Single-A Lowell, posting a 1.06 ERA in 17 innings over seven starts, though his future Naval commitments are clouding his future in baseball.

The organization's top prospect, first/third baseman Triston Casas, finished 2019 as a South Atlantic League Season-End All-Star for Single-A Salem, but the organization boasts no top-50 prospect, according to ESPN's Keith Law.

The lack of pitching depth exposed itself in 2019, as Boston struggled to recover from Eovaldi's early-season surgery, which meant heavy reliance on a taxed bullpen. Dombrowski's replacement will need to figure out a long-term vision for the rotation, which has \$237 million tied up through 2022 among three pitchers with injury histories in Sale, Eovaldi and David Price. Sale missed significant chunks of 2018 with shoulder issues, while a visit to James Andrews to check his elbow ended his 2019 season. Eovaldi's health will continue to be under microscopic focus after arm issues derailed his 2019 on top of his two Tommy John surgeries. Price has made 30 starts just twice in four seasons in Boston and Wednesday was shut down for the remainder of the season with a cyst in his wrist.

The Red Sox will have money to spend on the rotation as Rick Porcello's return to Boston looks unlikely, with his \$21 million salary coming off the books. Eduardo Rodriguez, off a career-best 2019 season, doesn't become a free agent until after the 2021 season. With so much already tied up in the rotation, Boston could look to sign a starter on a short-term contract, perhaps getting good value on a bounce-back candidate.

Betts turns 27 in October, and ranks fourth among American League players in on-base percentage and fWAR this year, trailing Mike Trout, Alex Bregman and Marcus Semien. His .293/.391/.527 doesn't live up to his .346/.438/.640 from his 2018 MVP campaign, when he posted the second-highest fWAR total (higher than any Trout season) since Barry Bonds' 11.9 fWAR in 2004, according to FanGraphs.

Still, since 2014, Trout is the only player to post more WAR than Betts.

Many baseball insiders believe Betts will exceed the average annual value of this past offseason's Bryce Harper and Manny Machado megadeals when he hits the open market, and he could surpass Trout's record \$36 million AAV considering the always-steady climb of contract values and inflation.

Betts has given little indication what he'll value more, length or money, once in free agency. Boston wants its star outfielder long term, but along with luxury tax considerations and current salary commitments, its front office is again in flux.

Leading the baseball operations department in Boston has ended with unceremonious departures ever since Henry bought the team in 2002, and for a reason. Expectations start high and never come down. Theo Epstein quit twice (in 2005 on Halloween, leaving Fenway in a gorilla costume, and in 2011 for the Cubs job). Ben Cherington helped bring a World Series to Boston in 2013. Two years later, Boston hired Dombrowski as president of baseball operations during the middle of a game while Cherington still held the GM position. Cherington quit. Dombrowski's Red Sox tenure ended earlier this month when a team spokesman walked into the Fenway Park interview room a few ticks after midnight following a Sunday Night Baseball game against the Yankees and told media members the team was "parting ways" with Dombrowski.

The standard of winning and excellence in Boston keeps rising. National headlines lamented surprise regarding the Red Sox letting go of Dombrowski less than a year after Boston won 108 games, earned buzz as one of the best teams in franchise history and won a World Series title. But 12 championships in 18 years, across all four major sports, changes things, and really quickly.

Winning a World Series isn't enough in Boston anymore. Under previous leadership, largely a remnant of Epstein's time running the organization, the Red Sox melded business and baseball operations. Kennedy, the executive-level face of the franchise, helped build a collaborative culture with Epstein, his childhood friend from the Boston suburb of Brookline. It was a culture that didn't exist under Dombrowski, who by the end of his Red Sox tenure had siloed himself off from much of the front office, mostly receiving advice from senior vice president Frank Wren and special assistant/vice president Tony La Russa.

Boston is now led on an interim basis by the assistant GM trio of O'Halloran, Romero and Scott with senior vice president Ferreira taking on an expanded role -- making her the highest-ranking woman in an MLB front office. Under Dombrowski, O'Halloran focused on player negotiation and day-to-day management in baseball operations, while Romero led international scouting and player development efforts, and Scott oversaw the analytics department. Beyond O'Halloran, Romero, Scott and Ferreira, Boston could look to other familiar faces like Jared Porter and Amiel Sawdaye, who are assistant GMs in Arizona and previously worked in Boston. Their boss, Mike Hazen, ruled himself out of the running by signing an extension to stay with the Diamondbacks.

The tone in Boston brings unique challenges for executives, managers and players.

"Last year, when I came here, I knew what I was getting into obviously," Red Sox skipper Alex Cora said. "The expectations here are to win a championship every year. Is it realistic? No. But as a fan, that's who we

are. I'm a fan of other teams and that's what I want for my teams. I don't think it's unfair. It is what it is. We live in a city where the standards are set very, very high since 2002 or right around that. This is what makes it enjoyable, that on a daily basis, you show up and do your best because if not, they're going to let you know that you didn't. That's what pushes me."

Dombrowski's firing amid such an atmosphere didn't change anything for Betts, which shouldn't surprise anyone.

"It doesn't really matter who's there. It's going to be the same answer," Betts said after the Dombrowski news broke. "Nothing's going to change. This is proof that this is a business. I love it here, but definitely it's still a business."

The general manager of the Red Sox, historically, has been among the most scrutinized public figures in the city. Lou Gorman's trade of Jeff Bagwell in 1990 to Houston still intermittently comes up in Fenway Park conversations among fans, writers, security guards and ushers. People still talk about Carl Crawford's and Pablo Sandoval's disastrous tenures in Boston. And the next GM could decide, among many other things, the fate of the team's biggest star.

No pressure.

*** *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

Uncertainty surrounds rotation as season winds down

Sean McAdam

Things can always get worse.

That, it would seem, is the lesson to be learned from the news Wednesday afternoon that the Red Sox, who already are without Chris Sale, were officially shutting down David Price for the remainder of the season.

It seemed bad enough that the Red Sox have committed \$241 million to two pitchers coming off disappointing seasons.

So what could be worse?

How about owing \$241 million to two pitchers who ended the season physically unable to pitch at the end of the season?

That's how.

Technically, that might not be entirely accurate since Alex Cora noted yesterday that the Sox contemplated having Price pitch out of the bullpen in the final 10 days — the way he did for the final month of the 2017 season, when there was insufficient time to build back arm strength for starting assignments.

"But where we're at and obviously how important he is, it's better off (to be) moving forward and getting ready," said Cora. "When you can't perform that way you want to, it's obviously frustrating. If it's up to him, he'd be throwing fastballs out there and trying to complete. But we took it away because we feel that it's not conducive to something positive for the player. And he knows that this is the best way to start the offseason and then get him ready. And he'll be ready (in spring training).

"Talking to David, he could pitch. But what's the point of using him right now?"

But Cora went on to note that he didn't believe that Price could suitably throw his changeup or cutter due to the wrist cyst that has now sidelined Price twice in the final two months. So, yes, Price could have pitched; but no, he wasn't going to be effective.

Further, Cora wouldn't rule out the doctors looking to see if Price's carpal tunnel issues might also require some attention this off-season.

"If there's something else, we'll take care of that," Cora said. "Whatever they have to do to get him right, they'll do it. We (already) have the situation with the cyst, why not check everything out?"

Sale, meanwhile, continues to rehab in Fort Myers at the team's spring training complex and will meet the team in St. Petersburg when they begin a four-game series at Tropicana Field Friday.

Cora said that is showing positive signs in his rehab and the Sox are confident about his health going forward.

But no matter what the Red Sox say, he's the unavoidable facts: they're going to pay \$57 million combined to two pitchers next year who, combined, will have pitched two innings (both by Price) after Aug. 13 of this season.

If that's not unsettling, then what is?

"I mean, it always is," acknowledged Cora. "But we feel like in Chris's situation, there's a lot of positives going on with his rehab as far as testing and all that. The throwing program will start whenever the throwing program starts, but we do feel like he's made strides with all the testing that he's been going through in Fort Myers.

"We do feel this situation with David is something minor. Yeah, there's always question marks and let's see how he goes. But at the same time, there's a lot of positives that we feel. There's not too many red flags, or (a feeling that), 'Oh, we're not going to be able to count on these guys next year.'

"It's not the best-case scenario. But at the same time, we do feel, with everything we have information-wise, we should be OK."

And perhaps they will be. But should be OK is far from any sort of guarantee. That's just the nature of attempting to keep pitchers 30 years of age and older healthy and productive.

The Red Sox can be positive about their current paths and say that all the tests and side sessions are encouraging. But the real test will come next spring when Sale and Price have to face hitters — even if it's just a Grapefruit League setting.

How will they bounce back from throwing every five days? And more tellingly, how will they do once the grind of the regular season gets underway. Recall that the big issue with Sale last year was not his elbow, but rather, his shoulder, which sidelined him for much of the final two months.

It's the same with Price, who's had elbow and forearm concerns in past seasons, but was sidelined by wrist troubles in the second half.

That's a reminder of the pitfalls that come with aging pitchers.

Expensive aging pitchers at that.

The same team which came into 2019 banking on its starting rotation heads toward 2020 with more — not fewer — question marks surrounding that rotation.

Giants 11, Red Sox 3 — Three things we learned: Sox not competitive

Sean McAdam

The Red Sox dropped their second straight to the San Francisco Giants, 11-2. Here are three takeaways:

1. Red Sox weren't competitive

Losses — like the one the Red Sox suffered Tuesday night, over 15 innings and nearly six hours — are one thing. But Wednesday's loss was one-sided to the point of being embarrassing as the Giants, already leading comfortably, tacked on seven runs over the final two innings, including five in the ninth in an inning that saw them bat around, sending 10 hitters to the plate. For the game, the Giants were 7-for-14 with runners in scoring position. Hector Velazquez, a shadow of himself from a year ago, couldn't get the inning to end as the first six hitters reached base. In the field, the Sox committed only one error, but couldn't seem to complete several double plays, extending innings. At the plate, the Sox appeared to be going through the motions at times, going down in order on just four pitches in the fourth inning. The loss means the Red Sox will lose a series for the fourth time in the last five and no matter the outcome in the series finale Thursday, will not emerge with a winning record in interleague play. More than anything, the Red Sox seemed like pawns in a game that was seemingly designed to get San Francisco manager Bruce Bochy his 2,000th career win, becoming just the 11th manager to reach that milestone.

2. Offense has been quieted of late.

Wednesday's lineup didn't include two of the Red Sox' most potent weapons, J.D. Martinez and Mookie Betts, each nursing injuries. Betts has missed the last four games with a foot injury and Martinez left Tuesday's game with a groin strain. Then again, even with Martinez and Betts healthy and in the lineup, the Sox have struggled to score runs this month. After averaging close to six runs per game for most of the season, the Sox have scored just 55 in 15 games this month, an average of 3.6 runs per game. On Wednesday, they were no-hit by Giants starter Jeff Samardzija until Rafael Devers homered with two outs in the sixth. "Right now, we're not swinging the bat well," conceded Cora. "It's been going on for a while now. We've been expanding the zone for a while. You look at the numbers and it's a lot of strikeouts and not too many walks. It's an offense that's searching for hits and you can't do that. We haven't been good for a while. This whole month has been inconsistent with what we do."

3. Devers reaches milestone

Rafael Devers, who hadn't homered since Sept. 3, finally connected for his 30th homer of the season. That made Devers the youngest player since 1965 to hit 30 homers and tied him with Butch Hobson for the most homers in a season by a Red Sox third baseman. It also meant that the Sox are the first team to ever have two players with 30 homers and 50 doubles in a season. His 84 extra-base hits are the most for a third baseman in franchise history and the most for any Sox player in a season before turning 23 since Ted Williams had 86 in 1939. "He's put it all together," said Cora. "He made some adjustments in the off-season and it's paying off. He's been working hard at it. Overall, if you had told me before the season (that he would get) .300, 30 (homers) and 100 (RBI), yeah, I would have signed the paper. We're very happy with him." Said Devers: "It wasn't something that's been on the mind. I just made the adjustments that I needed to make because I know it's been a while since I have hit one. I just had to control the strike zone more. It was more what I was swinging at that caused all the issues."

* ***The Athletic***

Brock Holt has carved a unique niche in Boston, but will Red Sox re-invest in him?

Chad Jennings, *The Athletic*

Just minutes before first pitch on Sept. 7, Brock Holt stood next to Red Sox president Sam Kennedy in the middle of the Fenway Park infield. It was familiar territory in every sense. The middle infield is where Holt built his career. Singular outreach is the way he created distinction.

For this particular pregame ceremony, Holt wore his usual high socks but with a thick new stripe of yellowish gold, the color of the American Childhood Cancer Organization. For days, Holt's teammates had been wearing his "Brocking Out Cancer" t-shirt around the clubhouse. It was dark blue with the image of a gold ribbon on the front, and the ribbon was made up of letters and symbols including Holt's name and No. 12, with the words "Childhood Cancer Awareness" in the very center.

In recognizing Childhood Cancer Awareness Month that afternoon, with patients and families on the field, the Red Sox tapped Holt to participate not for his fame or status, but because there could be no other choice. No Red Sox player is more synonymous with the cause — or more synonymous with any cause for that matter.

When the ceremony ended, Holt rushed to join his teammates for one last bit of stretching and calisthenics, but he'd barely started jogging when a kid caught his eye. Holt stopped, kneeled to the ground, picked up the kid and smiled as the parents took a picture. Then he posed for a selfie with another family. It was only at 3:58 before a 4:05 first pitch that Holt at last played catch briefly. He had to pause for the national anthem, then jogged some more at 4, and with no time left, he put a glove on his left hand, tossed a ball into the stands with his right, and finally went to play second base sporting the second-highest batting average on the team.

Such is the unmistakable role of a singular role player, and as Holt plays the final two weeks of what might be his final season with the Red Sox, he represents a singular choice for both organization and player. How much are his intangibles worth on both sides?

Holt's tangible abilities are, themselves, objectively valuable. He's played six different positions while generating a career-best .800 OPS this season. Even with time lost to injury, he's played to a 1.5 fWAR. Given anything close to a healthy season, he's always graded well above replacement level despite a utility role that can seem infinitely replaceable. Holt's been an All-Star, last year he hit for the cycle in the division series, and last month the Red Sox finally made him into a bobblehead.

The low-end financial value of such a player is roughly the one-year, \$3-million deal signed by Chris Owings last offseason (Holt himself earned \$3.58 million in his final year of arbitration). The high-end is more like the three-year, \$21-million deal signed by Arizona's Eduardo Escobar. With career-best numbers in his walk year, Holt has positioned himself as a solid free agent target who could fit most teams one way or another.

The question is, how badly do Holt and the Red Sox want to keep their unique relationship intact?

Holt could chase more money elsewhere, but it would mean leaving a team and a city that's become home. Holt and his wife Lakyn's commitment to the Jimmy Fund has become legendary within the clinic, and his passion for kids fighting cancer goes beyond what other local athletes have shown. His "Brock Stars" ticket program brings Jimmy Fund patients and their families to every Tuesday home game.

"I think everybody knows that I love it here and would love to stay," Holt said last month.

The Red Sox have recognized Holt's passion, and so even on a roster of bigger names, Holt is often front-and-center for team events and pregame ceremonies. On Wednesday, he was recognized as the team's nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award, which recognizes sportsmanship and community service. He was the Red Sox nominee last year, as well. Holt's also been the BoSox Club's Man of the Year, and he's received the Tim Wakefield Community Service Award. When Andrew Benintendi was a final ballot candidate for last year's All-Star Game, it was Holt who campaigned for him through social media and video message. There might be no current Red Sox player — at least no Red Sox position player — who's more comfortable on camera, which has particular value in a market like Boston.

But the Red Sox have been vocal about payroll concerns, and the emergence of Marco Hernandez and Michael Chavis has provided two young, cheap alternatives in the infield. Money earmarked for Holt may be better spent on a reliever, or put toward a starting pitcher, or used to sweeten the pot for Mookie Betts. The emotionless business of baseball might leave another franchise in a better position to pay for Holt's services.

But it was hard to look at the Fenway Park infield last Saturday and take emotion out of the equation. Holt has been a unique ambassador for the Red Sox, and Boston has become a real home for Holt. He's a good player, and the Red Sox expect to be a good team. We'll find out this winter whether all of that is enough to keep them together.

*** *USA Today***

Carl Yastrzemski throws out first pitch at Fenway Park to grandson Mike Yastrzemski

Steve Gardner

What had already been memorable series between the Boston Red Sox and San Francisco Giants got even better Wednesday night.

One night earlier, Giants outfielder Mike Yastrzemski hit a home run in his first game at Fenway Park -- where his grandfather, Carl Yastrzemski, played for all 23 of his major league seasons.

The elder Yaz, 80, watched from the stands on Tuesday, but was front and center this night. Wearing his familiar No. 8 Red Sox jersey, the Hall of Famer took the mound for the first pitch ceremony ... and his 29-year-old grandson was behind the plate to catch it.

It was an incredible moment for the Yastrzemski family, and one for the Red Sox memory books as well.

The standing ovation from the crowd at Fenway lingered as grandfather and grandson embraced and walked toward their respective dugouts.

In the Giants' lineup on Tuesday in left field -- Carl's primary position for the Red Sox -- Mike shifted to right field for Wednesday's game.

He walked and scored in the first inning and hit a ninth-inning RBI single and scored on a forceout during the Giants' 11-3 win.

*** *The San Francisco Chronicle***

Giants blast Red Sox for Bruce Bochy's 2,000th win, take series from defending Series champs

Henry Schulman

Maybe Bruce Bochy was joking about how he envisioned his 2,000th managerial win. Maybe he was serious.

"This is not the way I thought it would happen if it did happen," Bochy said. "I thought it would be like last night's game, but it would be the last game of the year — complete torture."

A night after a 15-inning win against the Red Sox, the Giants gave their retiring leader the gift of an 11-3 rout of the Red Sox, making him the 11th manager to reach 2,000 victories. The other 10 are in the Hall of Fame.

So much about this historic night veered from the road that Bochy rode to this milestone.

He accomplished it at a ballpark where he has managed just 10 of his 4,022 games, and Fenway Park has become an odd, ghostly venue in the final days of a disappointing season for the defending World Series champs.

The place largely was devoid of Boston fans when Enderson Franco, in his major-league debut, got the final three outs. That helped forge a moment that Bochy will not forget.

During the bottom of the ninth, the large contingent of Giants fans began a chant of “Bo-chy! Bo-chy!” that rang through the 107-year-old park.

When he heard it, he admitted, “The emotions got to me. I was overwhelmed by that.”

As he walked out of the dugout for the handshake line — more of a hug line — Red Sox manager Alex Cora and several Boston players and coaches emerged from their dugout to acknowledge Bochy.

The 64-year-old has maintained throughout the season that 2,000 was not a meaningful number, merely reflecting the faith his superiors have shown in him over 25 seasons.

To that end, the Champagne-dumping celebration in the clubhouse was short. Winning pitcher Jeff Samardzija called it “Bochy-esque,” meaning not much fanfare and Bochy using the occasion to thank his players.

“It’s not like we clinched anything,” Bochy later said. “We’ve got a day game tomorrow. We’ve got to keep this in perspective.”

Stephen Vogt, who hit a 307-foot homer that glanced off the Pesky Pole as part of a four-RBI night, had the proper perspective.

“This is something you want to do for a manager who’s been around and given so much time to his players over the last 25 years,” Vogt said. “If you know anything about this game, it’s every day. It’s sacrifice. It’s giving time away from your family in order to achieve greatness, and he’s one of 11 at the top of the list.

“There’s a lot more than just winning baseball games that went into tonight.”

This series has oozed history. It began with Mike Yastrzemski’s home run on the turf that his Hall of Fame grandfather roamed for 23 seasons. Carl Yastrzemski tossed the ceremonial first pitch before Wednesday’s game. Mike was his catcher.

Samardzija even flirted with history, taking a no-hitter into the sixth that ended with Rafael Devers’ two-out home run. Samardzija had reached 92 pitches, so on the night that Bochy was shooting for his 2,000th win, the manager was thinking about a game six years ago, when he let Tim Lincecum throw 148 pitches to no-hit the Padres.

Bochy fretted through the last few innings of that game. Not with Samardzija, who correctly said, “Boch wouldn’t take me out of a game with a no-hitter going.”

“It was a fun night out there, at Fenway Park, with the circumstance that was happening. It was pretty cool to be a part of.”

The Giants gave Samardzija a 4-0 lead by the third inning. Brandon Belt, Bochy’s most tenured player in the lineup, hit a double off the Green Monster, and Vogt homered as part of a three-run first. Brandon Crawford, next in tenure, hit an RBI double in the third.

The Giants made it a rare rout with two runs in the eighth and five in the ninth, a rally that began with an Aramis Garcia double and included a two-run Mauricio Dubon single.

Bench coach Hensley Meulens said a few words to start the clubhouse ceremony. Bochy then spoke about his 2,000th win.

"I told them that I hope when they hear that number they realize how much they had to do with it," Bochy said.

Assuming Bochy really won't manage again, he reached the big round number with 10 games to spare. The Giants achieved another milestone Wednesday, clinching a winning road record for 2019. They go for the sweep behind Madison Bumgarner on Thursday.

*** *Associated Press***

S.F.'s Bochy 11th to 2,000 wins: 'I've been lucky'

The San Francisco Giants helped manager Bruce Bochy reach yet another milestone before his retirement at the end of the season.

San Francisco's 11-3 rout of the Boston Red Sox on Wednesday night was Bochy's 2,000th career victory as a manager in the majors.

"I've been lucky. I've been blessed to have been doing this this long. That's what it means," Bochy said.

Fans who stuck around Fenway Park were chanting Bochy's name at the end and Boston manager Alex Cora saluted from the opposite dugout, knowing the significance of what Bochy has achieved in 25 years of managing.

"That number just represents so many people, more than anybody are those players. Hopefully when they hear that number, they realize what a big part they had to do with it. It doesn't happen without them."

The Giants broke out champagne in the clubhouse for a postgame celebration, which included a few understated remarks from their beloved skipper.

"It was actually pretty relaxed and very Boch-esque. Just gave a little speech and said what he always says - how much he appreciates the guys. And we know that, so that's why we play so hard for him," said Jeff Samardzija, who took a no-hitter into the sixth on Bochy's big night. "You don't want to let him down. When you have that respect for a manager, the team shows up every night and is always competing."

Bochy won 951 games while managing the San Diego Padres over 12 seasons and is 1,049-1,047 in 13 years with San Francisco, which won three World Series titles with Bochy at the helm.

Cora opened his postgame remarks by congratulating Bochy.

"At this level that's kind of like unreal. I think everybody that gets to do this job wish they could last that long and be able to do what he has done throughout his career," Cora, who is wrapping up just his second season as a manager in the majors. "The way he's gone about the business. I mean, he's been amazing, so congratulations."

The Giants helped Bochy reach 2,000 with just 10 games remaining in the season. The 10 other managers to win 2,000 are all Hall of Famers, and Bochy is sure to follow.

"He's just a players' coach, which I think is the ultimate compliment," Samardzija said. "He understands the sacrifices we make. He understands the grind we go through. He hasn't forgotten that."

Samardzija didn't allow a hit until the sixth inning and the Giants gave him plenty of offense, tagging eight Boston pitchers for 15 hits while winning for the second consecutive night at Fenway Park. San Francisco blew the game open with two runs in the eighth and five more in the ninth and will try and complete a three-game sweep of the interleague series Thursday afternoon.

Rafael Devers hit his 30th home run and Jackie Bradley Jr. homered for the second straight night for the Red Sox.

Stephen Vogt hit a two-run homer in the first and finished with four RBIs for the Giants. Samardzija (11-12) pitched six innings, holding Boston to one run on two hits and four walks. He struck out two.

WILD NIGHT

The Giants capitalized quickly on control issues by Boston starter Jhoulys Chacin, who was tagged for three runs in the first inning and didn't make it through the third despite striking out six.

Chacin (3-11) was in trouble from the start with a walk to leadoff batter Mike Yastrzemski, followed by a Brandon Belt's double to left-center. Kevin Pillar drove in Yastrzemski on a fielder's choice and Vogt lined a two-out homer off the Pesky Pole to give the Giants a 3-0 lead.

Brandon Crawford's RBI double in the third put San Francisco up 4-0, which was plenty of cushion for Samardzija, who didn't allow a hit until Devers' homer with two out in the sixth.

Enderson Franco made his major league debut when he started the ninth for San Francisco. He allowed Bradley's homer, which bounced off the top of the Green Monster and was initially ruled a triple before being overturned after a video review.

MORE YAZ

Yastrzemski hit an RBI single in the ninth, one night after homering in his first game at Fenway, where his Hall of Fame grandfather, Carl, played 23 seasons with the Red Sox. Carl Yastrzemski, Boston's beloved "Yaz," threw out the ceremonial first pitch Wednesday night.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Giants: C Buster Posey (back, hip) could return to the lineup Thursday, Bochy said. Red Sox: Cora said LHP David Price (cyst left wrist), who hasn't pitched since Sept. 1, will have surgery on his left wrist and is done for the season. "We're going to shut him down," Cora said. "It's a head start to next year and a smart thing to do." ... OF Mookie Betts missed his fourth straight game with inflammation in his left foot. Cora said Betts could return as designated hitter this weekend when the Red Sox visit Tampa Bay. ... IF Sam Travis was under the concussion protocol after getting hit in the head by a throw while sliding into third Tuesday night.

UP NEXT

LHP Madison Bumgarner (9-8, 3.73 ERA) starts for the Giants in the series finale Thursday afternoon against Red Sox LHP Eduardo Rodriguez (17-6, 3.64).