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*** *The Boston Globe***

The AL MVP debate begins with J.D. Martinez and Mookie Betts

Nick Cafardo

TORONTO — When Mookie Betts steps to the plate at Fenway Park, the crowd often chants, “MVP! MVP!”

Well, did they forget about J.D. Martinez?

As great as Betts’s season has been, how can you ignore the numbers Martinez has put up? He belted a three-run homer (his 34th of the season) and knocked in four runs (pushing his total to an ungodly 97 RBIs) in Boston’s 10-7 win Tuesday night over the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre.

The Red Sox were trailing, 3-1, entering the eighth inning. They closed it to 3-2 before Martinez uncorked a vicious homer to left field on a two-ball, no-strike pitch from reliever Ryan Tepera to make it 5-3.

The Red Sox bullpen relinquished the lead in the ninth inning, but Mitch Moreland’s three-run homer in the 10th broke the 5-5 tie and Jackie Bradley Jr. added a two-run homer for insurance.

Betts tripled with one out in the 10th when his long drive to center eluded a diving Kevin Pillar. That got the ball rolling for Boston’s five-run 10th. This back-and-forth offensive duel between Betts and Martinez has been fun to watch all season.

You can certainly show DH bias when considering the MVP award, and the fact that Betts is a premier defender in right field and has 21 stolen bases in 24 attempts adds more dimensions to his game. You can argue Betts is hitting leadoff and therefore doesn’t have access to the RBI opportunities (he has 58) that Martinez does as the No. 3 or No. 4 hitter in the lineup.

Already, Martinez is one of the most prolific first-year players in Red Sox history. Dick Stuart has the most first-year homers (42) in a season for the franchise, and if Martinez stays healthy he’ll shatter that. His 34 homers tie Carl Everett for fifth-most by a first-year player and we’re only in the first week of August.

Related: Rotation has carried the Red Sox since the All-Star break

Martinez has 41 starts in the outfield and 67 at DH, so you can’t say he’s more of a DH. He entered Tuesday’s game with a 4.8 WAR while Betts was at 7.1. There’s no doubt that Martinez has transformed the Red Sox offense. He has turned Betts, Xander Bogaerts, and Andrew Benintendi into better hitters. His off-the-field contributions to teammates as a teacher of hitting is off the charts. No number can measure that. And so it is a debate — Mookie or J.D.

You might say this is a tremendous problem to have.

Both players have been the heart and soul of Boston’s phenomenal start (Tuesday’s win pushed the Red Sox to 80-34). And please don’t tell me the MVP leader in the clubhouse is the Angels’ Mike Trout. There has to be some consideration for leading a team to the postseason. The Red Sox almost have wrapped that up and the Angels won’t sniff games in October.

Entering the game, Martinez had 58 homers and 147 RBIs in his last 162 games. At this pace, he’ll shatter last season’s career high of 45 homers with Detroit and Arizona. Betts had a 1.080 OPS, second to Trout’s

1.083. Martinez was fourth at 1.0333 and was hitting .328 after Tuesday. Cleveland's Jose Ramirez, with 33 homers, 83 RBIs, and a .300 average, is also in the MVP discussion.

While Martinez loves to play the field, manager Alex Cora probably should limit that. Martinez has sustained injuries while playing the outfield that kept him out of the lineup while he was in Detroit. While you can't keep him in bubble wrap to protect him, using him as the DH preserves his value as the middle-of-the-order power. To lose Martinez for any length of time because of an injury sustained in the outfield would be hard to swallow.

Teammates are just watching in awe as Betts and Martinez put up eye-popping numbers.

"Oh, man, obviously they've been unreal leading the way," Moreland said. "It's tough when you just have one of those guys in your lineup, but when you have two guys who could possibly be the MVP, that's saying something. We got 80 wins, they're leading the way for us.

"Yeah, I feel you hear starting pitchers say that you set the bar and then you want to keep it going and do better than the next guys. It's like a friendly competition. They [Betts and Martinez] don't have as many people doing what they're doing. It puts us in a good spot."

Martinez didn't want much to do with the topic, preferring to stick to the team's success.

"No, I don't care about that," he said. "You guys know how I am and how I answer those questions. Just worry about tomorrow and the next day and what we have to do to win. This is all kind of stuff that you think about when the season is over. We're on a mission to keep doing what we keep doing and win a World Series."

Betts also wasn't biting on MVP talk, but continued to rave about Martinez.

"It's a lot of fun. I'm spoiled. It's amazing to watch him," Betts said. "It's not just home runs. It's hits and good at-bats. It's J.D. doing what he does.

"We don't give up at-bats. We never make it easy on our opponents."

Cora, meanwhile, is enjoying his front-row seat.

"We feel like we're always one swing away from getting back into games," Cora said.

Two amazing MVP candidates. Right now, it's too close to call.

Red Sox plan to activate Chris Sale on Sunday

Peter Abraham

TORONTO — The Red Sox are planning to activate Chris Sale off the disabled list to start Sunday afternoon's game at Baltimore.

Sale has not pitched since July 27 because of inflammation in his left shoulder. He played catch on Tuesday before the Red Sox played the Toronto Blue Jays and is scheduled to throw in the bullpen on Wednesday.

"Everything seems fine," manager Alex Cora said. "It looks like that's going to happen."

The Sox are planning on Nathan Eovaldi to start the first game of the Baltimore series on Friday. David Price would start the first game of Saturday's doubleheader with the starter for the second game yet to be determined.

"Somebody on the 40-man roster," Cora said.

Because the Sox can add an extra player for the doubleheader, they could promote William Cuevas or Justin Haley from Triple A Pawtucket to make that start.

Cuevas is 8-6 with a 3.45 ERA in 20 starts. He has allowed two or fewer earned runs in five of his last six starts.

Cuevas had two stints on the major league roster in July. He pitched one inning of relief at Washington on July 3 and allowed one run.

Haley is 5-7 with a 3.72 ERA in 18 starts.

Devers ready

Rafael Devers was 1 for 4 with a home run and played six innings at third base for Single A Lowell in a rehabilitation game on Monday night. He then flew here on Tuesday morning and had a lengthy pregame workout.

Devers, who has been on the disabled list with a strained left hamstring since July 29, will be activated Wednesday. Infielder Tony Renda will be optioned to Triple A Pawtucket.

Devers said he felt fine and had no issues running.

The news continues to be positive for lefthander Eduardo Rodriguez. He threw in the bullpen on Tuesday and on Friday is scheduled for live batting practice at Camden Yards.

Rodriguez sprained his right ankle on July 14 and has been on the disabled list since. But he has made quicker-than-expected progress.

Typically, the next step after live batting practice for a pitcher on the DL would be a minor league game.

“We don’t know yet. Let’s go through Friday and then we go from there,” Cora said.

Mutual admiration

Patriots coach Bill Belichick was at Fenway Park for Sunday night’s game against the Yankees and had plenty of praise for the Sox while speaking to reporters in Foxborough on Tuesday.

“What a team they have,” Belichick said. “I marvel at the way they compete and how consistent they’ve been, how many people have contributed, just the overall organization.”

Cora met Belichick during spring training and said they had a good conversation.

“He was cool, down to earth,” Cora said. “He opens up a little more when the cameras are not on, I guess.”

Cora is a big proponent of rookie receiver Braxton Berrios, a fellow Miami Hurricane.

“Everybody knew he was the type of player, he’s going to be good in New England even before he was drafted by the Patriots,” Cora said.

Johnson to start

Brian Johnson will face the Blue Jays on Wednesday. The lefthander is 2-1 with a 2.57 ERA in seven starts this season. He also has made 21 relief appearances. Johnson’s versatility has been a big plus for the staff. “He knows how to pitch. He has a feel about pitching,” Cora said . . . Steven Wright, out since June 23 because of a setback with his surgically repaired left knee, threw off a mound during the weekend and is

making some progress. "I don't want to get ahead of myself. But I do feel that he's going to be back at some point during the season," Cora said . . . Dustin Pedroia, who is recovering from the same surgery on his left knee, continues rehab work in Arizona and hasn't given up on playing this season. "The door is still open," Cora said. "He feels that it might happen. I know the player. I know he's going to do everything possible for this to happen." . . . Single A hitting coach Nelson Paulino was selected as a hitting coach with the Mesa Solar Sox of the Arizona Fall League, which starts on Oct 9. The Red Sox, Cubs, Tigers, Angels, and Athletics will share the Mesa roster this season.

Red Sox looked vulnerable, tired even, but pulled through in the end

Peter Abraham

TORONTO — The Red Sox had one run on two hits through seven innings against the Toronto Blue Jays on Tuesday night and that run was the product of an error.

That starter Drew Pomeranz had trouble throwing strikes and couldn't get through five innings only made it worse. The best team in baseball looked vulnerable, tired even.

That they left the Rogers Centre having won the game, 10-7, in 10 innings was hard to explain. Or maybe it wasn't.

"We're pretty good," said Mitch Moreland, whose three-run homer in the 10th inning rescued the Sox after Craig Kimbrel blew a save in the ninth. "We keep creating opportunities. It didn't start off great for us, but that's the reason you play nine innings or however many you need."

The 80-34 Sox have won five straight, nine of 10, and 24 of 29.

What had been largely a poorly played and pitched game for the Sox changed in the eighth inning when they scored four runs to take a 5-3 lead.

Toronto starter Marcus Stroman, who had baffled the Sox, came out of the dugout but returned after warming up because of a blister on his right middle finger.

The Jays, who traded away their best relievers last month, went to Ryan Tepera and the Sox pounced.

The comeback started when Sandy Leon doubled down the line in right. Mookie Betts drew a walk and Andrew Benintendi singled to load the bases.

When Moreland grounded to the right side, Toronto took the out at second base as Leon scored.

Tepera then fell behind J.D. Martinez, 2 and 0. He came in with a fastball and Martinez pulled it down the line, keeping his hands inside the ball.

Tepera shouted at umpire Ed Hickox when the inning ended and was ejected.

Matt Barnes allowed a run in the eighth inning before Kimbrel inherited a 5-4 lead in the ninth. He got one out before Justin Smoak homered to right-center.

Kimbrel managed to keep the game tied, but it was the latest in what has been a concerning run of games. The All-Star closer has allowed five runs on six hits and five walks over 5½ innings in his last five games.

"It's frustrating," Kimbrel said. "Today I felt like I had the best stuff I've had in probably the last two weeks . . . I hate it. I hate blowing games. I hate making us play extra innings. But again our guys do what they do."

Sox manager Alex Cora feels Kimbrel has lost his curveball.

“You see them foul it off, taking it right away,” he said. “It seems like recognizing that right away it’s a ball. They’re not offering.

“Like everybody else, we’ll get back and take a look at it. We’ll fix him and if we have a save situation, he’ll be there tomorrow.”

In a 5-5 game, Betts tripled to center field off Ken Giles with one out in the 10th. Toronto then pitched around Benintendi, setting up a double play with Moreland at the plate.

“I wasn’t thinking single,” said Moreland, who pounded a fastball for his 14th homer.

After Xander Bogaerts singled, Jackie Bradley Jr. homered to right-center. The extra runs were needed. Tyler Thornburg allowed a two-run homer by Kevin Pillar in the bottom of the inning before ending the game.

The Red Sox bullpen allowed five runs, the Blue Jays bullpen nine.

Martinez was 3 for 5 with four RBIs. He is hitting .328 with 34 home runs and 97 RBIs with 48 games remaining.

Pomeranz left the mound with two outs in the fifth inning with the Sox trailing, 2-1. But the score had little relation to how he pitched.

Pomeranz put nine men in base over $4\frac{2}{3}$ innings, threw only 44 of 84 pitches for strikes, and got only three swings and misses.

Toronto scored in the third inning when Randal Grichuk walked and Devon Travis followed with a 428-foot shot to left field for his eighth home run.

“I pitched pretty good other than that,” Pomeranz said, his assessment ignoring all the walks.

Pomeranz at this point is not a viable starter. He has a 6.31 earned run average and 1.81 WHIP in 11 starts.

The lefthander was on the disabled list for nearly two months with biceps tendinitis before returning on July 24. He has a 5.02 ERA in three starts since.

“This whole year I feel like something is holding me back a little bit,” Pomeranz said. “I’m blocking myself off. I can roll through outs. I lose three hitters and then I get it back.”

Cora did not commit to Pomeranz starting again on this road trip.

“We’ll see. He’s still searching; we’re still looking,” Cora said. “We need this guy. He’s very important for what we’re trying to accomplish.”

With scheduled days off Monday and Thursday next week, the Sox can skip Pomeranz and see if he can find a role in the bullpen.

Trailing, 2-0, the Sox got a run back in the fourth.

Benintendi reached on an error by Travis at second base on a routine ground ball. After Moreland walked, Martinez knocked an RBI single into right field.

Facing Brandon Workman, Kendrys Morales led off the bottom of the sixth inning with a shot up the gap in right. What should have been a double was only a single for the slow DH.

Yangervis Solarte drew a walk ahead of a single by Aledmys Diaz. Morales stopped at third.

With the bases loaded, Morales stayed put on a fly ball to left. When Luke Maile dribbled a ball down the third base line, catcher Leon was quick to scoop it up and tag Morales as he lumbered past.

Grichuk then tapped a ball in front of the plate and Workman flipped it to Leon for the final out of an unusual inning.

Rotation has carried the Red Sox since the All-Star break

Alex Speier

Just imagine if they were hitting.

The Red Sox have accelerated their winning pace since the All-Star break. With a four-game sweep of the Yankees, they went into Tuesday's game in Toronto 11-4 (.733) since resuming their season, pulling away in a fashion that has forced New York to be more mindful of its increasingly insecure place in the wild-card standings than a divisional race that seems just short of a foregone conclusion.

Yet even as the Red Sox have padded their advantage, they've done so in a way entirely counter to the fashion in which they forged their strong first-half start. They have scored just 4.7 runs per game in the second half, ninth in the American League. They're in the middle of the big league pack in batting average (.250, 16th of 30 teams), on-base percentage (.323, 14th), and slugging (.426, 16th).

Though the Red Sox have been held to four runs or fewer in nine of 15 games since the break, they were 6-3 in those contests. How? A dominant run of starting pitching has a lot to do with it.

While the bats have been dormant at times, the rotation has been electric. The Red Sox had a 1.74 rotation ERA in that time; no other team had a mark under 2.96, while the Yankees were more than three runs worse (4.78).

The Red Sox were averaging just under 6⅓ innings a start, meaning that a standard start reaches the seventh inning. While doing so, they were striking out 25 percent of opposing hitters (fourth-best in the AL), walking just 5.7 percent of batters (second-best in the AL), holding hitters to a .193 average (lowest in the majors), and they've done a better job of keeping the ball in the park (0.7 homers per nine innings) than any other team in baseball.

The run started just before the All-Star break. Over the last 17 games, the team's starters had a 1.74 ERA. According to Elias, that is the lowest ERA for a Red Sox rotation over a 17-game span in almost exactly 100 years — since Carl Mays, Babe Ruth, Joe Bush, and Sad Sam Jones (one would hope his outlook improved during the run) forged a 1.64 mark in the final regular-season days of what proved a championship season.

This year's Red Sox recognize how much the consistent work of the rotation has meant to the team's sustained success.

“They've given us a chance to win on a nightly basis,” said manager Alex Cora. “It seems like they're always ahead in the count, they're putting the opposition in the corner 0-and-1, 0-and-2, 1-and-2, and at this level you know the numbers. The average goes way down when you're in those counts, so they're doing an outstanding job working ahead. They've been very efficient.”

The Red Sox are doing all this at a time when Eduardo Rodriguez (moving closer to game action) and Steven Wright have been absent, and with Chris Sale (12 scoreless innings since the All-Star break) sidelined to give his shoulder time to return to full strength.

Nathan Eovaldi (15 scoreless innings since joining the Red Sox) has looked like a potentially significant contributor into October in his first two outings thanks to the 92- to 94-mile-per-hour cutter that complements his high-90s fastball, splitter, and slider. David Price has a 1.33 ERA in three second-half starts, his adjustments to attack both sides of the plate while altering his pitch sequencing yielding considerable dividends. Rick Porcello is 3-0 with a 2.18 ERA, 20 strikeouts, and two walks in 20⅓ innings. And depth starter Brian Johnson has a 2.30 ERA with 21 strikeouts and five walks in 15⅓ innings.

There will come a correction at some point — the Red Sox have gotten somewhat lucky with some of the hardest contact they've yielded finding gloves — but their steady attack on the strike zone with a mix of pitches gives them a far stronger look than they had in their July series in the Bronx. Then, it looked as if Boston's lefty-heavy rotation might be a liability in the playoffs.

Against the Yankees this time, Porcello, Eovaldi, and Price carved the plate with full pitch mixes, creating unpredictability. Eovaldi and Johnson have given the Red Sox depth to withstand the absence of a couple of top starters.

“With adding Nathan, just the way he's throwing the baseball, it's been a big plus for us,” said Price. “I don't think anybody's thrown the ball better than us since the All-Star break.”

The Yankees, meanwhile, spent most of the weekend scrambling. CC Sabathia got knocked out after three innings. New acquisition J.A. Happ was unavailable because of hand, foot, and mouth disease.

Luis Severino got ambushed for three early runs in his loss. Only Masahiro Tanaka executed with postseason-caliber precision.

Otherwise, there are limits to what even the deep, high-octane Yankees bullpen can withstand. Eventually, especially in a short series, repeated exposure of relievers can whittle their advantage.

Avoiding that overexposure comes from getting additional innings and outs from the starters. Right now, the Red Sox starters are providing that.

The result has been an entirely different formula for success than the one the Red Sox employed leading up to the All-Star break.

They are showing different formulae for victories — dominant starting at times, an overpowering lineup at times, an opportunistic one at others (with the team's low strikeout rate permitting rallies such as the four runs in the final two innings Sunday without benefit of an extra-base hit, and base-stealing and base-running making a difference in other games).

The fact that they are not reliant on a single style of play to win attests to why they've been able to sustain a pace that requires the sweep of history to provide adequate context.

Bill Belichick on the Red Sox: 'I marvel at the way they compete'

Andrew Mahoney

Patriots coach Bill Belichick likes what he sees with the Red Sox this year. On Sunday night, he had an up-close look as he took in the Red Sox-Yankees game at Fenway Park, sitting next to president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski.

“We have some mutual friends,” said Belichick. “Dave's done a great job.”

Despite trailing, 4-1, entering the ninth inning, the Red Sox rallied for a 5-4 win.

“What a game that was Sunday, what a team they have,” said Belichick. “I marvel at the way they compete, how consistent they’ve been. How many people have contributed to the overall organization — Tony [La Russa], Alex [Cora], the scouting staff.”

In June, Belichick canceled a practice and instead held a team bonding experience at Fenway Park.

“We have a good relationship with those people,” said Belichick. “They’ve been good to us. They provided us with a great experience in June for our football team.

“I wish the Red Sox nothing but the best, not that they need any help from me, they seem to be doing just fine.”

*** *The Boston Herald***

Red Sox bats break out late, beat Blue Jays in 10 innings

Michael Silverman

TORONTO — There’s no such thing as a self-inflicted wound in the Red Sox’ charmed life that a three-run home run can’t cure.

After Matt Barnes and Craig Kimbrel wasted the impact of J.D. Martinez’ go-ahead three-run shot in the eighth inning last night by allowing the Blue Jays to tie the game with a Justin Smoak solo home run (off Kimbrel), Mitch Moreland made his three-run 10th-inning blast count as the Red Sox came away with a 10-7 win at Rogers Centre.

After Moreland’s strike, a two-run homer by Jackie Bradley Jr. gave the bullpen enough cushion to survive, although Tyler Thornburg did allow a two-run home run in the bottom of the 10th.

Mookie Betts started the 10th-inning rally with a land-speed-record triple, followed by a Ken Giles walk to Andrew Benintendi.

“It’s huge for us, we always feel like we’re one swing away from getting back into games,” said manager Alex Cora. “We put up good at-bats, Mookie, he walked and he hit a double in the gap, Benny, that was a good at bat as far as not expanding the zone with Kenny. And then Mitch got a pitch over the part of the plate — that was good to see. If somebody needed a good swing and a home run, it was Mitch.”

The victory was the fifth in a row for the Red Sox, their ninth in their last 10 games and 24th in their last 29.

Toronto starter Marcus Stroman held the Sox to two hits and one run in his seven innings, leaving it up to his replacement, Ryan Tepera, to throw a match on the visitors’ simmering lineup.

The Blue Jays got to Red Sox starter Drew Pomeranz in the third inning, with a two-run home run by Devon Travis into the second deck in left field.

Pomeranz allowed four hits and five walks, with just one strikeout in his 4²/₃ innings. Of his 84 pitches only 44 were strikes.

“The breaking ball wasn’t there,” Cora said. “We’ll see, he’s still searching, we’re still looking. We need this guy, we need this guy, this guy is very important to us for what we want to try to accomplish, so we’ll keep working at it.”

Cora did not commit to Pomeranz making his next start. The lefty now has 28 walks in 38 career innings pitched against the Blue Jays.

Of Kimbrel, Cora said he is struggling with his curveball.

“The breaking ball, you see them foul it off, taking it right away, it seems like they’re recognizing the pitch right away as a ball and they’re not offering,” the manager said. “Like everybody else, we’ll get back, take a look at it and we’ll fix him and if we have a save situation he’ll be there tomorrow.”

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Alex Cora’s success approaches Patriot levels

Michael Silverman

TORONTO — The Red Sox have played second fiddle with the Patriots for roughly the past decade at least.

But at this point of overlap in the New England sports calendar, at a time when the Patriots are sweating out training camp just as the Red Sox are nearing the final turn before their playoff run, that second fiddle’s starting to play a tune that’s sounding a little stronger and louder than it has in a long time.

The crossover of the two winning teams and franchises has been in our face the past few days.

Belichick sat with Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski at Sunday night’s unforgettable rally of a win against the Yankees.

On Monday, Belichick gushed about the game and the team, wishing “the Red Sox nothing but the best, not that they need any help from me. They seem to be doing just fine.”

By mid-afternoon yesterday, Cora had yet to hear about Belichick’s remarks, which is unusual considering that Cora does not shy away from admitting he is an avid consumer of sports media.

Still, it made him happy to hear that Belichick is a fan of what’s happening.

The manager saw an opportunity to parlay the attention into a favor.

“That’s cool — I need tickets for the Texans-Patriots game for a friend of mine,” said Cora jokingly.

Somebody should tell Cora’s friend to make plans to be at Foxboro on Sept. 9.

The Red Sox are gaining believers at a time when the Patriots have a growing share of doubters.

That has to do with the cracks that started to show in the Bill Belichick-Tom Brady-Robert Kraft triangle last year, the Malcolm Butler-less loss in the Super Bowl and Brady’s advanced age. Few would bet against the Patriots’ chances of at least reaching the Super Bowl again this year, just as they have eight times in the last 17 years, winning five of them.

But the Patriots’ absurd amount of winning over more than a decade and a half is nearing its expiration date, which is why the recent sports smooches between Belichick and the Red Sox and then Cora’s return

of affection signaled to some that the pendulum could be swinging back, ever so slowly, in the direction of the Red Sox.

Winning back-to-back AL East division titles in 2016 and 2017 counted, but that felt hollow in hindsight once the Red Sox were eliminated right away each time in the postseason.

Check back at the end of October for how the Red Sox will fare this time, but the 2018 Red Sox are playing winning baseball at a caliber this season that has been absolutely Patriots-like .

It feels different this year with the Red Sox. A lot of that is the feeling that Cora has had a magical touch in Year One of his reign.

Belichick was in Jupiter, Fla., this March when the Red Sox were in town for an exhibition game with his friend, Tony La Russa, who is now an advisor of Dombrowski's.

Cora caught a side of Belichick that few others — well, at least few in the media — see.

“It was cool; like, down to earth. He opens up a little bit more when the cameras are not on,” said Cora, who is arguably the biggest University of Miami fan on the Eastern seaboard. “We were talking about Miami football and all that. He was doing his tour as far as scouting and all that stuff. Dave told me that throughout the game, he asked a lot of questions. He’s in tune with what we’re doing. I found out, too, that they had a day at Fenway (in June, playing cornhole), Dave told me, and they had a blast as a team. He’s the best.”

Cora was joking — probably, hopefully — when he had a take on Belichick’s frequently frosty relationship with the media.

“Excellent. He does a good job,” said Cora.

He turned more serious when it came to putting the Patriots’ run of success in some perspective.

“He knows his team, he has a great pulse about it,” said Cora. “For what they do on a yearly basis, that’s very impressive to play the big game every year, that’s crazy, I can’t even imagine. But yeah, he’s the best on that.”

Understanding what type of player the Patriots need is what Cora focused upon as an organizational trait that is most valuable.

“It’s not that I follow them as a fan, but I know what they do,” said Cora. “The fact that they let players go and they bring in guys that people don’t think can do the job but they fit the system. He knows his system, he knows what kind of players he needs for this to work. They have one right now, (Braxton) Berrios, that went to U-M. Everyone knows, he’s the type of player, he’s going to be good in New England before he even got drafted by New England. I was like ‘Yeah, that makes sense, a little guy that can run and make plays.’”

Cora gets Belichick and the Patriots and — this is more important — Belichick gets Cora and the Red Sox.

Baseball will never be confused with football.

The more the Red Sox resemble the Patriots in wins and big wins, the better chance they will have of stealing back some of the spotlight.

Red Sox notebook: Ace Chris Sale will start Sunday vs. Orioles

Michael Silverman

TORONTO — Chris Sale is slated to return to action Sunday afternoon in Baltimore.

Sidelined last week by a “mild” case of inflammation in his left (throwing) shoulder, Sale has to get through a bullpen session today before receiving clearance for the start against one of the weaker links in the AL East.

“Everything seems fine so it looks like that’s going to happen,” Sox manager Alex Cora said.

Nathan Eovaldi will start the first game of the Orioles series on Friday night, with David Price pitching in Game 1 of Saturday’s doubleheader. The Game 2 starter has yet to be named, but will likely be a minor league callup.

There had been some talk about Sale pitching on Saturday. Cora said there was no particular reason for splitting up the two lefty aces.

“I don’t know, kind of like keep them on the same program as far as days in between starts,” Cora said. “It’s going to become a little bit different coming up with off days on Monday and Thursday, the one yesterday. It’s not that we are trying to reset the rotation but we’re trying to take advantage of the off days. We are going to give these guys as much rest as possible. There are going to be guys throwing in five days, others in six, others in seven. We’ll see how it goes. It’s not that we were planning on it but it works this way and the schedule is going to let us do this.”

Devers on way back

Third baseman Rafael Devers (hamstring) is eligible to come off the disabled list today and Cora intimated strongly that would happen.

“Everything is pointing that he will be active (today),” said Cora.

Depending on how everybody came out of last night’s game, the most likely demotion to make room for Devers would be Tony Renda.

E-Rod on mend

Left-handed starter Eduardo Rodriguez (sprained right ankle) will throw a live bullpen session on Friday in Baltimore, the same locale where Rodriguez slipped while warming up in a start last season and hurt his knee.

Cora did not want to look beyond Friday for a timetable for Rodriguez’ return.

“Ian Kinsler (hamstring) is doing OK, he’s in Boston, him and Blake (Swihart, hamstring), most likely they’re going to join us in Baltimore, both of them,” Cora said. “In Baltimore, we can do more things as far as BP with them and taking groundballs. Here, we’re trying to avoid that. It seems like he’s feeling better.”

Cora declined to judge which hamstring player was further ahead of the other.

“We don’t know yet because they haven’t sprinted yet, they’ve been, I think, running, like 60, 65 percent,” the manager said. “We’ll know a little bit more when we push them as far as running.”

Cora issued a positive progress report on starter Steven Wright (knee), predicting he would return this season.

“He actually got on the mound during the weekend, we had a conversation with him on Sunday and he’s feeling a lot better,” Cora said. “Actually, he said that now he feels a lot better than when he came back the first time. Kind of knowing what he has to do to avoid lapses like this, he’s been doing great in the weight room, he’s been keeping his arm in shape. I don’t want to get ahead of myself but I do feel he’s going to be

back at some point during the season. I'm not saying that's next week but the way he's been working the last week, even getting on the mound for a few pitches, is telling us that it's gonna happen. When, I don't know. But it's gonna happen."

Asked if he was as optimistic about Dustin Pedroia (knee) returning this season, Cora said, "Actually, I had a great conversation with Dustin today. There's a lot of stuff going on as far as with his rehab over there. There's like three sessions of stuff that he's doing. He feels good about it. The door is still open. He feels it might happen. I believe, I know the player, I know he's going to do everything possible for this to happen and if he's able to come back, that's a plus for us too."

Leon on a roll

Catcher Sandy Leon started last night with Drew Pomeranz on the mound. In Leon's last 24 starts, the Red Sox were 23-1. . . .

Left-hander Brian Johnson gets the start tonight against the Jays. In his seven starts this season, Johnson is 2-1 with a 2.57 ERA, and that includes the four earned runs (and 11 strikeouts) he allowed against the Yankees last Thursday.

"I told you guys with the Yankees, as far as the line, it was the weirdest line I've seen, five runs, 11 strikeouts, but he actually gave us a chance to win," said Cora. "It didn't look great because they scored all those runs but he was outstanding."

Jerry Remy a true all-star in the booth

Steve Buckley

A cancer diagnosis in the family always is a crushing, confusing, emotional moment.

Yes, family members with an ear for optimism can turn the doctor's every syllable into a ray of hope. But that comes later. First comes the confusion, the emotion. The feeling of being crushed.

As we've all been there, we all empathize with what Jerry Remy and his family are going through. This is not the first time the popular Red Sox television analyst on NESN has received bad news from the medical people, but that doesn't make it any easier. You don't get comfortable being told you're sick.

Jerry Remy is a private man, and not given to idle chit-chat. We all know that. We also know he has an intensely complicated family situation, though we can't gauge how he's coping in his personal life simply by tuning in to a Red Sox game.

But we can agree on this: Never in Jerry Remy's broadcasting career has he sounded better. Never has he been more focused, more on top of the game being played in front of him. He's never been more anecdotal. And with the obvious exception of the instant-classic "Here Comes the Pizza" moment from April of 2007, he's never been funnier.

It hasn't hurt that former Red Sox teammate Dennis Eckersley has been joining Remy and play-by-play man Dave O'Brien in the booth from time to time. While it's true that Remy made a surprisingly easy — and, we should add, graceful — transition from longtime friend/broadcaster Don Orsillo to O'Brien, having Eck in there seems to bring him a special joy. With Remy and Eck knowing when it's time to tell old stories, and with O'Brien knowing when to sit back and let them keep on keeping on, the three men have been showing the potential to be as good a booth trio as the Mets' Gary Cohen, Keith Hernandez and Ron Darling, which is saying a lot.

But take Eckersley and O'Brien out of the equation and we still arrive here: Remy, even while battling illness in recent years, has been enjoying a professional renaissance that's breathtaking to behold.

Remy loves baseball, even if at times over the years he's come across as a crank, such as practically rooting for a game not to go to extra innings so he can get on the Pike and go home. But as a kid growing up in Somerset he was a frequent attendee at Sox games, and he was among the masses storming the field at Fenway on that fantastic final day of the 1967 season. He was 15 at the time, and, of course, a gifted young ballplayer. Yet he was also a fan, always has been. That's not a given.

That Remy is a Massachusetts native has helped him as a broadcaster. In the pre-2004 years he understood the "1918" thing as well as anybody, and in the post-2004 years he understands that once is never enough. He transitioned to the booth after a caved-in knee ended his outstanding playing career — he was as deft at laying down a drag bunt as anybody you'll ever see — and he then found a second calling as a color analyst. He got off to a rocky start, sure, but he soon found a breezy chemistry with the late, great Ned Martin. But, of course, Remy grew up listening to Martin. He later developed a rapport with Sean McDonough, and then Orsillo, and then O'Brien.

It's impossible to write about Remy without acknowledging that his son Jared is serving life in prison for murdering his girlfriend, Jennifer Martel, with whom he fathered a daughter. Jerry and his wife, Phoebe, later hoped to raise their granddaughter, but came out of the case settling for visitation rights.

We mention it here because it's clear that Remy, despite all the turmoil in his private life, has found peace in the booth in recent years — as well as being able to provide important financial support for his family. Yet it never sounds like he's going through the motions in order to bring home a paycheck; he has been involved, invested, entertaining. Before games he sits in on Red Sox manager Alex Cora's press briefings. He still has a can't-be-taught talent for telling you what's going to happen before it happens.

And now Jerry Remy faces another cancer battle.

As has been the case all the way along, we're rooting for him.

*** *MassLive.com***

Boston Red Sox's 154 homers just 14 shy of 2017 total with 48 games left; 'We always feel we're one swing away'

Christopher Smith

TORONTO -- J.D. Martinez and Mitch Moreland both belted three-run home runs and Jackie Bradley Jr. bashed a two-run homer against the Blue Jays on Tuesday. Boston won 10-7 in 10 innings here at Rogers Centre.

"We always feel we're one swing away from getting back into games," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said.

That wasn't the case in 2017 when Boston finished last in the American League with 168 homers.

But the addition of Martinez has made a huge difference here in 2018. He provides a constant threat of power in the middle of Boston's lineup. He makes everyone else better.

The 2018 Red Sox have belted 154 homers, . They are only 14 home runs shy of their 2017 total (168) with still 48 games remaining.

The 154 homers:

J.D. Martinez 34
Mookie Betts 26
Xander Bogaerts 16
Rafael Devers 15

Andrew Benintendi 14
Mitch Moreland 14
Jackie Bradley Jr. 9
Eduardo Nunez 6
Hanley Ramirez 6
Steve Pearce 5
Sandy Leon 4
Christian Vazquez 3
Brock Holt 1
Blake Swihart 1

Homers can change the complexion of a game quickly. Boston scored only one run through the first seven innings Tuesday before scoring nine runs over the final three innings. Eight of the nine runs scored on home runs.

Boston, meanwhile, leads the majors with 426 extra-base hits, 30 more than the Yankees who are second in the big leagues.

"We keep creating opportunities," Mitch Moreland said. "It didn't start off great for us. But that's the reason you play nine innings or however many you need after you tie it up."

Craig Kimbrel, Boston Red Sox closer: 'I hate blowing games. I hate making us play extra innings'

Christopher Smith

TORONTO -- Craig Kimbrel blew his second save in his past three opportunities here Tuesday at Rogers Centre.

The Red Sox closer gave up a game-tying solo homer to Justin Smoak in the ninth inning. But Boston ended up winning 10-7 over the Blue Jays in 10 innings.

Kimbrel has allowed five earned runs, six hits and five walks in his past 5.1 innings (five outings) dating back to July 23 in Baltimore.

What's wrong with the All-Star?

"Today I feel like I had the best stuff I've had in probably the last two weeks and just made an errant pitch," Kimbrel said. "A pitch 3-0 to Smoak there and he was hacking and put barrel on it. I hate it. I hate blowing games. I hate making us play extra innings. But again, our guys do what they do."

Mitch Moreland belted a three-run homer and Jackie Bradley Jr. added a two-run homer in the 10th inning to lead Boston to their 80th win.

Kimbrel fell behind 3-0 against Smoak. He threw three curveballs for balls to start the at-bat. Smoak then bashed a 97.4 mph fastball over the wall in right-center field.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora said Kimbrel has struggled with command of his curveball recently.

"I don't if it's an issue but it's not there since Baltimore," Cora said. "He's been struggling with it. His fastball is still there. Velocity's good. Location is still good. But I think that the breaking ball, you see them foul it off, taking it right away, it seems like they're recognizing the pitch right away as a ball and they're not offering. Like everybody else, we'll get back, take a look at it and we'll fix him. And if we have a save situation, he'll be there tomorrow."

Kimbrel doesn't think it's mainly the curveball that's causing his issues.

"I think it's been command of everything," he said. "I mean you can throw strikes but it depends on where you're throwing them. You can have command in the zone or out of the zone. You kind of float through those as the year goes on.

"The last couple of weeks I've been struggling with some things and working through them. Even though I gave up the home run tonight, I felt like I made a bunch of strides forward. Fastball was a little better tonight and breaking ball was sharp at times. Frustrating but happy we won the game today."

Sandy Leon's tag underrated play in Boston Red Sox's comeback win; 'Still got a lot of wins left,' Leon says

Christopher Smith

BOSTON -- Blue Jays' Luke Maile hit a soft roller down the third base line with one out and bases loaded during the sixth inning.

Red Sox catcher Sandy Leon charged down the line, grabbed the ball with his glove and tagged out Kendrys Morales who sprinted home from third base in the sixth inning.

"Nunez was playing back," Leon told MassLive.com. "That was my only chance. ... So I was like, 'I've got to catch the ball before (Morales) goes by me. It worked."

The Red Sox won 10-7 over the Blue Jays in 10 innings here at Rogers Centre.

Leon never considered letting the ball roll into foul territory because he didn't think it would.

"No, no. It was staying there (in fair territory)," Leon said. "It was like infield hit and RBI. So that was my only chance."

The Blue Jays loaded the bases with no outs in the sixth against reliever Brandon Workman. But they failed to score thanks to Workman bearing down and Leon's play.

Kevin Pillar flied out to shallow right field for the first out. Leon recorded the second out with his tag play.

Randal Grichuk grounded out to Workman who flipped to Leon for the inning's final out.

"Good win today," Leon said. "It's what it's all about. It's trying to win every game. Somehow. Don't matter how, just win. 1-0. 10-7."

The Red Sox earned their 80th win. They are playing .702 baseball at 80-34. They are on pace for 113 wins.

"Long season. Still got a lot of wins left."

Boston Red Sox activate Rafael Devers, option Tony Renda on Wednesday

Chris Cotillo

The Red Sox will activate third baseman Rafael Devers and option infielder Tony Renda before Wednesday's game in Toronto, a source confirmed to MassLive on Tuesday night.

Devers left Boston's game vs. Minnesota last Saturday with hamstring trouble and was placed on the disabled list Sunday. He missed eight games in his 10-day D.L. stint, with Eduardo Nunez filling in at third base.

Devers was 1-for-4 with a home run and two RBI in a rehab game with Lowell on Monday and flew to Toronto on Tuesday, as our Chris Smith reported. He'll likely get the start Wednesday night in the second game of Boston's series with the Blue Jays.

Renda never got an at-bat with the Sox but scored the winning run in Sunday night's extra-innings game against the Yankees. He remains on the 40-man roster.

Mitch Moreland, J.D. Martinez belt 3-run homers to lead Boston Red Sox over Blue Jays in 10 innings

Christopher Smith

TORONTO -- The Red Sox bullpen couldn't hold the lead after J.D. Martinez's three-run homer in the eighth inning put Boston ahead 5-3.

Luke Maile's RBI double against setup man Matt Barnes in the bottom of the eighth cut the Blue Jays' deficit to 5-4. Justin Smoak's 402-foot solo homer against Craig Kimbrel in the ninth tied it.

But this Red Sox team always seems to find a way. And it did again Tuesday to earn win No. 80.

The Red Sox won 10-7 over Toronto in 10 innings here at Rogers Centre.

Mookie Betts tripled with one out in the 10th and then Andrew Benintendi walked. Mitch Moreland followed with the go-ahead three-run homer against Ken Giles. It traveled 381 feet.

Jackie Bradley Jr. bashed a 388-foot two-run homer later in the inning.

Martinez's homer gives Sox their first lead

The Red Sox trailed the entire game but then Blue Jays starter Marcus Stroman exited in the eighth with a blister and Martinez got the chance to hit with runners on base.

Martinez stepped to the plate with two men on and two outs. He crushed a 94.8 mph fastball from reliever Ryan Tepera off the foul pole in left field, turning Boston's one-run deficit into a two-run lead.

The Red Sox scored four times in the eighth against Tepera.

Martinez pumped his fist as he made the turn around first base. The DH/outfielder has bashed 34 home runs in his first season with Boston.

Martinez cut the deficit to 2-1 in the fourth. Benintendi reached with one out on a fielding error by second baseman Devon Travis. Moreland walked and then Martinez stroked an RBI single to right field.

The Red Sox offense failed to do much against Stroman who allowed just one unearned run, two hits and three walks while striking out four over 7 innings.

Pomeranz wild again

Drew Pomeranz started for Boston. He walked five and struck out only one in 4.2 innings. He threw 52 percent strikes (84 pitches, 44 strikes).

Pomeranz's 26 four-seam fastballs averaged 89.8 mph. He topped out at 91.8 mph, per Baseball Savant.

He has averaged 88.9 mph with his four-seamer during 2018 compared to 91.4 mph in 2017.

He mixed in 42 knuckle-curveballs, 15 two-seam fastballs and one changeup. Overall, he got three swings-and-misses and just one swing-and-miss with his knuckle-curveball, which is his best pitch.

Devon Travis crushed a 106.2-mph, 428-foot two-run home run off Pomeranz in the third to give the Blue Jays a 2-0 lead. Travis connected on a 90.5 mph four-seamer from Pomeranz.

He has a 6.31 ERA and 1.81 WHIP in 11 starts. Since returning from the DL, he has allowed eight runs, 14 hits and 11 walks while striking out eight in three starts.

Leon's play helps Red Sox escape bases loaded, no-out jam

The Blue Jays loaded the bases with no outs in the sixth against reliever Brandon Workman. But they failed to score.

Kevin Pillar flied out to shallow right field for the first out. Luke Maile hit a dribbler down the third base line that Sandy Leon charged. He grabbed it before it went into foul territory. He made a sweeping tag on Kendrys Morales, who was running from third to home, to record the second out.

Randal Grichuk grounded out to Workman who flipped to Leon for the inning's final out.

Alex Cora on Jerry Remy: 'God is in control. He'll be back with us (Boston Red Sox) sooner rather than later'

Christopher Smith

TORONTO -- Manager Alex Cora began his pregame media availability Tuesday here at Rogers Centre by wishing Boston Red Sox NESN color analyst Jerry Remy well.

NESN announced earlier in the day Remy has cancer again. It's his sixth relapse.

"Before we start, thoughts and prayers for Jerry," Cora said. "I just texted him. God is in control. And he'll be back with us sooner rather than later. We're going to miss him for now but we know that he's going to be fine and he's going to be back with us."

Remy underwent surgery June 26, 2017, for his fifth relapse with lung cancer. He then underwent chemotherapy and radiation last offseason. He finished chemo Nov. 7. He finished radiation Jan. 16.

The 2018 season marks Remy's 31st year with NESN.

Steven Wright injury: Alex Cora thinks Boston Red Sox knuckleballer 'will be back at some point'

Christopher Smith

BOSTON -- Steven Wright threw off a mound over the weekend for the first time since being placed on the disabled list June 26 with left knee inflammation (retroactive to June 23).

He threw only a few pitches but it was a positive step. Red Sox manager Alex Cora thinks the knuckleballer will pitch again for Boston this season.

"We had a conversation with him on Sunday," Cora said. "He's feeling a lot better than when he came back the first time. Kind of like knowing what he has to do to avoid lapses like this. He's been doing great in the weight room. He's been keeping his arm in shape.

"I don't want to get ahead of myself but I do feel that he's going to be back at some point during the season," Cora added. "I'm not saying that's next week. But the way he's been working the last week, him

getting on the mound for a few pitches it's telling us that it's going to happen. When? I don't know. But it's going to happen."

He began the regular season on the disabled list. He returned April 28 and pitched extremely well. The knuckleballer is 2-1 with a 3.38 ERA in 10 outings (40 innings), including four starts. He allowed only one run in his first 20 2/3 innings as a starter but he then gave up 10 runs in 3 1/3 innings during his final start before returning to the DL.

Eduardo Rodriguez injury: Boston Red Sox lefty to throw live batting practice Friday in Baltimore

Christopher Smith

TORONTO -- Red Sox starter Eduardo Rodriguez will throw a live batting practice session Friday in Baltimore. It marks his first live BP since being placed on the 10-day disabled list July 15 with a right ankle sprain.

He threw a bullpen session here at Rogers Centre on Tuesday. He also threw a bullpen at Fenway Park on Sunday.

"He had an up-and-down today and everything was fine," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "Ankle was good. He feels great as far as his shoulder and the stuff. So that's the next step."

Cora is unsure if Rodriguez will go on a minor league rehab assignment after Friday's live batting practice session.

"We don't know yet. Let's get through Friday and then we go from there," Cora said.

Rodriguez is 11-3 with a 3.44 ERA and 1.22 WHIP in 19 starts this season.

Chris Sale injury: Boston Red Sox ace to start vs. Orioles on Sunday, will throw bullpen session Wednesday

Christopher Smith

BOSTON -- Chris Sale, who is on the 10-day disabled list with a mild case of shoulder inflammation, is expected to be activated Sunday to start against the Baltimore Orioles at Camden Yards.

Sale played catch Monday and Tuesday. He'll throw a bullpen session Wednesday.

"Everything seems fine," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "So it looks like it's going to happen."

The Red Sox placed Sale on the DL last Tuesday (retroactive to July 28).

Saturday's doubleheader

Nathan Eovaldi will start vs. the Orioles on Friday. David Price will start one of the two games Saturday.

The Red Sox might recall a starter from Triple-A Pawtucket who already is on the 40-man roster to pitch the other game Saturday.

Jerry Remy, Boston Red Sox NESN color analyst, diagnosed with cancer again

Christopher Smith

TORONTO -- NESN announced Tuesday that Red Sox color analyst Jerry Remy has cancer again.

NESN released the following statement: "Jerry Remy has been diagnosed once again with cancer. At this time, Jerry's focus is on his medical treatment. The thoughts and prayers of all of us at NESN and the Red Sox are with Jerry and his family during this difficult time."

Remy underwent surgery June 26, 2017, for his fifth relapse with lung cancer. He then underwent chemotherapy and radiation last offseason. He finished chemo Nov. 7. He finished radiation Jan. 16.

Chad Finn of The Boston Globe is reporting that Steve Lyons will work alongside play-by-play announcer Dave O'Brien here in Toronto the next three days and when the Red Sox play four games in Baltimore over the weekend.

*** *RedSox.com***

Sox storm back with 5-run 10th for 80th win

Ian Browne

TORONTO -- If J.D. Martinez's clutch, three-run rocket in the top of the eighth wasn't enough to sink the Blue Jays, Mitch Moreland and Jackie Bradley Jr. finished the job a couple of innings later.

Moreland erased the sting of Craig Kimbrel's fourth blown save of the season when he unloaded for a towering, three-run homer to right that led the scalding-hot Red Sox to a 10-7 victory in 10 innings in the opener of a three-game series on Tuesday night at Rogers Centre. Later in the inning, Bradley lofted a two-run shot that bounced off the top of the bullpen wall in right.

"It was one of those things," Martinez said. "It think it's been our story all year. We're never out of a game, really."

Though this one took longer than expected, the Red Sox (80-34) continue to win every which way. They became the first team to win 80 games this season and the fourth since 1961 to get there in 114 games or fewer ('17 Dodgers, '01 Mariners, '98 Yankees). This was Boston's ninth win in its last 10 games and 24th in the last 29.

For Boston, adversity tends to come in the form of speed bumps instead of potholes. Inevitably, manager Alex Cora's team seems to right itself. This comeback came on the heels of roaring back from a three-run deficit in the ninth to finish a four-game sweep of the Yankees on Sunday night.

"Yeah, we're pretty good," Moreland said. "We keep creating opportunities. It didn't start off great for us, but that's the reason you play nine innings or however many you need after you tie it up to win it. Yeah, we kept creating those opportunities, giving ourselves a chance, and J.D. came up with a big hit there to kind of put us ahead. We stumbled a little bit, but we're able to regain the lead and get the win -- it was a good one."

After scoring just once in the first seven innings, the Sox turned it on with nine over the final three. The five-run outburst in the 10th came against recently traded reliever Ken Giles.

"It's just us continuing to push," said star right fielder Mookie Betts. "We don't give away at-bats. We never make it easy for our opponents, and that's kind of why we're playing the way we're playing."

Without Martinez's MLB-leading 34th homer of the season, Kimbrel never would have had a save opportunity.

"That lineup is unbelievable," said Blue Jays starter Marcus Stroman. "You can't take a single pitch off from that lineup. There's no just get-me-over pitches; one through nine, you have to be on it. J.D. Martinez is unreal right now. He's the hottest hitter I think I've ever seen live. It's tough to navigate that lineup."

The Sox were down 3-1 to start the eighth, at which point Stroman had to depart with a blister on his right middle finger. On came righty Ryan Tepera, and then the latest comeback by Boston.

"I think it just kind of got them out of their rhythm. [Stroman] was in a rhythm out there and he was pitching well," Martinez said. "Tepera came out and we did a good job of battling him and getting guys on base, getting traffic going really."

The Sox loaded the bases with one out on a single by Andrew Benintendi. Moreland made it a one-run game with a fielder's-choice grounder.

Up stepped Martinez, who mauled a 2-0 pitch that was too far inside to be a strike, and managed to keep it fair down the left-field line. Martinez, who also leads MLB with 97 RBIs, had an exit velocity of 107.3 mph and a launch angle of 25 degrees on his blast, according to Statcast™.

"I felt confident the whole at-bat," Martinez said. "I was just trying to be short, try and put a good swing on him. Not trying to do too much."

But the Blue Jays came right back. Luke Maile smashed a two-run double against Matt Barnes in the eighth to make it a one-run game.

And in the ninth, with the Sox just two outs from victory, Kimbrel served up a game-tying solo shot to Justin Smoak. Kimbrel fell behind in the count 3-0 to Smoak on three straight knuckle-curves. Smoak was obviously sitting fastball on the 3-0 pitch, and he roped the 97.4-mph offering over the wall in right-center for his 18th homer of the season.

Kimbrel is in a rare slump of late, having given up at least one run in four of his last five outings.

"I think it's been command of everything. You can throw strikes but it depends on where you're throwing them," Kimbrel said. "You can have command in the zone or out of the zone. You kind of float through those as the year goes on. The last couple of weeks I've been struggling with some things and working through them. Fastball was a little better tonight and breaking ball was sharp at times. It's frustrating, but happy we won the game today."

The Red Sox rallied to win despite another underwhelming start from Drew Pomeranz, who has been unable to find any kind of groove. Pomeranz lasted 4 2/3 innings, allowing four hits and two runs while walking five and striking out just one. Of his 84 pitches, just 44 were for strikes. Half of the pitches Pomeranz threw were knuckle-curves. He induced only three swings and misses.

"He's still searching, we're still looking," Cora said. "We need this guy. This guy is very important to us for what we want to try to accomplish, so we'll keep working at it."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

When Betts belted one to left-center with one out in the 10th, Jays center fielder Kevin Pillar seemed primed to make one of those great catches that has made him one of the best defenders in the game in recent years. But Pillar couldn't keep it in his glove on the dive, and Betts roared all the way into third with a triple, helping to set the stage for Moreland.

"I thought he had a chance at it for sure, thought I didn't get it in the gap enough," Betts said. "I guess I put it in a good spot. It's not easy [to get it by him], so just to see that one drop was just a great feeling, especially at that time of the game."

SOUND SMART

- The last time the Red Sox became the first team in MLB to hit the 80-win mark was 2009. In that season, they had 51 losses at the time, 17 more than they have currently.

- Though nobody wanted to see Christian Vazquez get hurt in July, catcher Sandy Leon is emerging into the quarterback of the pitching staff. He's also been making contributions at the plate. The Red Sox have won Leon's past 13 starts and are 24-1 in his past 25.

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Speaking of Leon, he made a huge play to help the Red Sox get out of a bases-loaded, nobody-out jam in the sixth against Brandon Workman. With one out, Maile hit a soft roller down the third-base line that was about to go foul. Before it could, Leon pounced on it, grabbed it, and chased down Kendrys Morales for the second out of the inning. Workman induced Randal Grichuk into a groundout for the third out, and the Sox were still in striking distance for the ensuing comeback.

HE SAID IT

"I don't care about that. You guys know how I am and the way I answer all those questions. We're worried about tomorrow, that's it. We're worried about tomorrow and the next day and what we need to do to win. Those are all kinds of stuff you think about when the season is over. Right now, we're on a mission and that's to keep doing what we're doing and win a World Series." -- Martinez, when asked about the American League MVP race that he is in, along with Betts

UP NEXT

Lefty Brian Johnson, who has been a stable fill-in for the Red Sox rotation, gets the ball for Wednesday's start in Toronto. Johnson again steps in for ace Chris Sale, who will return from the disabled list on Sunday in Baltimore. In seven starts this season, Johnson is 2-1 with a 2.57 ERA. The Blue Jays counter with righty Mike Hauschild, who fired six shutout innings last week in his season debut. The Red Sox are also expected to get third baseman Rafael Devers back from the DL. First pitch is scheduled for 7:07 p.m. ET.

Sale set to come off DL Sunday, start vs. O's

Ian Browne

TORONTO -- Red Sox ace Chris Sale is expected to return from his short stint on the disabled list on Sunday to pitch the finale of a four-game series in Baltimore.

The 29-year-old went on the disabled list on July 31, retroactive to July 28, with mild left shoulder inflammation.

"I didn't want to pitch David [Price] and Chris the same day in the doubleheader," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Nate [Eovaldi] is pitching Friday, so we're shooting for Sunday. [Sale] played catch yesterday. He played catch today. He's throwing his bullpen tomorrow. Everything seems fine, so it looks like that's going to happen."

That is good news for the Red Sox, especially when you consider Sale was in a stretch as dominant as any in his career before going on the DL.

In his last nine starts, Sale is 6-1 with a 0.75 ERA, notching 97 strikeouts in 60 innings and not giving up a homer.

Sale is having a Cy Young-caliber year so far, going 11-4 with an American League-best 2.04 ERA and 207 strikeouts.

Another of Boston's lefty starters is also making solid progress. Eduardo Rodriguez, who suffered a severe right ankle sprain on July 14, will throw live batting practice on Friday in Baltimore.

"Ankle was good," Cora said. "He feels great as far as his shoulder and stuff, so that's the next step Friday."

Devers on target

Third baseman Rafael Devers belted a home run in a one-game rehab assignment for Class A Lowell on Monday and is expected to be activated by the Red Sox on Wednesday, the first day he is eligible.

Devers was sidelined with a left hamstring strain.

"Raffy is fine," Cora said. "He had four at-bats yesterday. He moved around. He's not sore. He's going to go through a workout today and then we'll make a decision tomorrow."

Good news on Wright, Pedroia

Knuckleballer Steven Wright and second baseman Dustin Pedroia, who have both had topsy-turvy rehabs in their return from a cartilage restoration procedure of the left knee, are starting to make progress. Cora was particularly enthused about Wright, who was effective in his initial return from the surgery, going 2-1 with a 3.38 ERA in 10 appearances.

"He actually got on the mound during the weekend, we had a conversation with him on Sunday and he's feeling a lot better," Cora said. "Actually, he said that now he feels a lot better than when he came back the first time.

"Kind of knowing what he has to do to avoid lapses like this, he's been doing great in the weight room, he's been keeping his arm in shape. I don't want to get ahead of myself, but I do feel he's going to be back at some point during the season. I'm not saying that's next week, but the way he's been working the last week, even getting on the mound for a few pitches, is telling us that it's gonna happen. When? I don't know. But it's gonna happen."

Pedroia was able to play just three games in late May and early June before the knee flared up again. He has been rehabbing in Arizona.

"I had a great conversation with Dustin today. There's a lot of stuff going on as far as with his rehab over there," Cora said. "There's like three sessions of stuff that he's doing. He feels good about it. The door is still open. He feels it might happen. I believe [him]. I know the player, I know he's going to do everything possible for this to happen, and if he's able to come back, that's a plus for us, too."

Remy again diagnosed with cancer

Ian Browne

TORONTO -- Red Sox analyst Jerry Remy, a fixture on NESN for 31 seasons, has been diagnosed with cancer for the sixth time.

Remy was scheduled to broadcast Tuesday night's game in Toronto but traveled back to Boston after getting the diagnosis.

NESN released the following statement:

"At this time, Jerry's focus is on his medical treatment. The thoughts and prayers of all of us at NESN and the Red Sox are with Jerry and his family during this difficult time."

Steve Lyons will fill in for Remy in Toronto. Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley will also fill in while Remy is on medical leave.

"Obviously thoughts and prayers for Jerry," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "I just texted him. God is in control. He will be back sooner rather than later. We will miss him for now, but we know he will be fine and is going to be back with us."

*** *WEEI.com***

Why Tepera didn't have chance against J.D. Martinez

Rob Bradford

TORONTO -- It probably seemed like the right thing to do, let Ryan Tepera pitch to J.D. Martinez with two outs, runners on first and third and the Blue Jays clinging to a one-run lead over the Red Sox in the eighth inning Tuesday night.

Tepera had faced Martinez four times, retiring the righty hitter each of the at-bats, even striking him out once.

When the Martinez at-bat started? Sure. Feel good John Gibbons. Two pitches later, the result was almost a foregone conclusion.

"I felt confident the whole at-bat," Martinez said after the Red Sox' 10-7 win over the Blue Jays. "I was just trying to be short, try and put a good swing on him. Not try and do too much."

Everyone knows what makes the designated hitter so dangerous. When you're facing the big league's home run leader that's obvious. But why this scenario was especially lethal for Tepera was because of those first two pitches. They were both balls, putting the count at 2-0.

That leads us to the reason Martinez's subsequent three-run homer off the left-field foul pole shouldn't have come as a surprise.

Heading into the at-bat the slugger had seven hits in the nine times he put a 2-0 count in play this season. Three of them were home runs. That would be a batting average of .778. In the majors, only Colorado's Nolan Arenado equaled Martinez in such situations with as many at-bats.

It shouldn't have come as a surprise. Studying and setting up pitchers is Martinez's thing. And there is no better example than those 2-0 counts, a notion that has evolved over the past two seasons. Remarkably, he was 0-for-11 in such scenarios during the 2016 season. But last year he changed it all around, going 7-for-13. And now we have his current success.

"I think he just narrows his plan down," said Red Sox pitching coach Tim Hyers. "He's looking in an area. So he gets to an advantage count, he prepares so well. When he sets that lane and he has an idea of the area, he's aggressive to it. He's not timid to it. When he gets in the advantage count, he lets it go. He sets his eyes and sets his plan in that area. You throw it in that area and he's aggressive to it."

Kimbrel slump making things uncomfortable for Red Sox

Rob Bradford

TORONTO -- Craig Kimbrel has blown saves before. Heck, he's done it this year in this very same city.

But when the Red Sox closer allowed the game-tying home run to Justin Smoak in the ninth inning Tuesday night, it represented more than just a random blip on the radar. This time the blast was a continuation of a very un-Kimbrel-like streak that might be making things a bit uncomfortable that is the juggernaut that is the Red Sox.

Since July 23, Kimbrel has totaled an 8.44 ERA and .300 batting average against, managing to save just two of his four opportunities. He has allowed at least one run in four of the five appearances.

This time the struggle really came down to one at-bat, but it was still a pretty big bump in the road. Kimbrel went to 3-0 on Smoak thanks to some errant curveballs, paving the way for 97 mph fastball that was promptly sent over the Rogers Centre right field fence.

So, what's wrong?

After his team's 10-7, 10-inning win, Red Sox manager Alex Cora pointed to Kimbrel's breaking ball.

"I don't if it's an issue but it's not there since Baltimore, he's been struggling with it," said Cora of the closer's curveball. "His fastball is still there, his velocity is good, location is still good but I think that the breaking ball, you see them foul it off, taking it right away, it seems like they're recognizing the pitch right away as a ball and they're not offering. Like everybody else, we'll get back, take a look at it and we'll fix him and if we have a save situation he'll be there tomorrow."

Kimbrel wasn't quite as specific.

"I think it's been command of everything," he said. "You can throw strikes but it depends on where you're throwing them. You can have command in the zone or out of the zone. You kind of float through those as the year goes on. The last couple of weeks I've been struggling with some things and working through them. Even though I gave up the home run tonight I felt like I made a bunch of strides forward. Fastball was a little better tonight and breaking ball was sharp at times. Frustrating, but happy we won the game today."

Home runs the difference in latest Red Sox win

Rob Bradford

TORONTO -- Remember last year, when the Red Sox' strategy to score runs was based on grit, guile and a little bit of good fortune?

Forget that.

Down in the eighth inning? Let J.D. Martinez blast a three-run homer to give the Red Sox a late-inning lead against the Blue Jays. Craig Kimbrel blown save? No problem. Mitch Moreland answers with his own three-run blast in the 10th. Need some insurance? Jackie Bradley Jr. goes deep for two more runs.

"I wasn't thinking single," Moreland said with a smile.

It's as easy as that. At least it was in the Red Sox' 10-7 win over the Jays Tuesday night. (For a complete recap of the Sox' win, [click here](#).)

There were plenty of potential pitfalls in Alex Cora's club's 80th win of the year. (Yes, that is 13 shy of last year's division-winning total.) Drew Pomeranz only lasted 4 2/3 innings. Joe Kelly, Matt Barnes, Kimbrel and Tyler Thornburg each surrendered runs. And up until the explosion of power, the Sox did very little against Toronto starter Marcus Stroman.

For much of the night, this sure seemed like a textbook hangover from that four-game sweep of the Yankees. This mattered a lot to the Blue Jays, and really didn't a huge difference-maker for the Red Sox.

But there are many reasons why the Red Sox' find themselves in this position, and the ability to hit home runs when it counts the most is one of them. At least it was this time around.

Red Sox catcher Sandy Leon made the defensive play of the game ...

Pomeranz doesn't make it through 5 innings against Jays

Rob Bradford

TORONTO — Judging by his latest outing, Drew Pomeranz's time in the Red Sox starting rotation might be coming to an end.

The Red Sox starter lasted just 4 2/3 innings against the Blue Jays Tuesday night, with only 44 of his 84 pitches going for strikes.

And while Pomeranz gave up just two runs, he also elicited only three swings and misses. He also gave up four hits while walking five and only striking out one.

"It's been pretty frustrating," Pomeranz said. "Obviously you don't want to come out of that game but understandably, why I did come out of it. I'm just really frustrated with myself and it's really frustrating to know you're not yourself out there and trying to figure it out and work so hard and it's just not coming together. Like I said, I know it's still in there and I'm going to find it."

The appearances at Rogers Centre was the lefty's third since coming off the disabled list, having not made it into the sixth inning in any of the starts.

Pomeranz gave way to Heath Hembree with runners on first and second and two outs, with the reliever getting Teoscar Hernandez to fly out to right field to end the threat.

Both of the runs off Pomeranz came via a two-run homer in the third inning off the bat of Devon Travis.

"Inconsistent," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Take a look at the line, it's almost 50-50 percent strikes and balls. He made some good pitches but walked some guys on four pitches – I don't mind the last one with (Justin) Smoak in that situation, hitter was ready. He swings at what we want him to swing at or we walk him. Velocity, not great, but the fastball was actually a lot better today than the breaking ball, the breaking ball wasn't there. We'll see, he's still searching, we're still looking. We need this guy, we need this guy, this guy is very important to us for what we want to try to accomplish, so we'll keep working at it."

Cora sends the love back Belichick's way

Rob Bradford

TORONTO - Evidently, Alex Cora and his team left quite an impression on Bill Belichick when the Patriots' head coach swung by Fenway Park Sunday night. (To read Belichick's comments on the Red Sox, [click here](#).)

It was an analysis that didn't escape the attention of Cora.

"That's cool. I need tickets for the Texans-Patriots game for a friend of mine," the Sox manager joked. "I met him in Jupiter in one of the spring training games. He was there with Tony (LaRussa), it was cool, like, down to earth. He opens up a little bit more when the cameras are not on. That's the rumor, but we were talking about Miami football and all that. He was doing his tour as far as scouting and all that stuff. Dave (Dombrowski) told me that throughout the game, he asked a lot of questions. He's in tune with what we're doing. I found out, too, that they had a day at Fenway, Dave told me, and they had a blast as a team. He's the best."

It then led to a reciprocating of the admiration.

"It's impressive," said Cora of Belichick's accomplishments. "It's not that I follow them as a fan but I know what they do. The fact that they let players go and they bring in guys that people don't think can do the job but they fit the system. He knows his system, he knows what kind of players he needs for this to work. They have one right now, (Braxton) Berrios, that went to U-M (the University of Miami). Everyone knows, he's the type of player, he's going to be good in New England before he even got drafted by New England. I was like 'yeah, that makes sense, a little guy that can run and make plays.' He knows his team, he has a

great pulse about it. For what they do on a yearly basis, that's very impressive to play the big game every year, that's crazy, I can't even imagine. But yeah, he's the best on that."

And Cora's take on how Belichick deals with the media?

"Excellent," the manager said with a chuckle. "He does a good job."

Sale slated to make his return Sunday in Baltimore

Rob Bradford

TORONTO -- Chris Sale has a return date.

The Red Sox pitcher, who has been on the 10-day disabled list with right shoulder soreness, is slated to start Sunday in Baltimore. It will be Sale's first outing since being scratched from his scheduled start Thursday against the Yankees.

"He played catch yesterday," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora prior to his team's game at Rogers Centre Tuesday night. "He played catch today. He's throwing his bullpen tomorrow. Everything seems fine so it looks like that's going to happen."

Cora chose not to pitch Sale during Saturday's doubleheader, which will see David Price pitch the opener with the starter for Game 2 still to be determined. Nathan Eovaldi will pitch Friday.

"Kind of like keep them on the same program as far as days in between starts," said Cora when asked what went into the decision to not pitch Sale Saturday. "It's going to become a little bit different coming up with off days on Monday and Thursday, the one yesterday. It's not that we are trying to reset the rotation but we're trying to take advantage of the off days. We are going to give these guys as much rest as possible. There are going to be guys throwing in five days, other in six, others in seven. We'll see how it goes. It's not that we were planning on it but it works this way and the schedule is going to let us do this."

In other news regarding Red Sox starters, Eduardo Rodriguez will throw a live batting practice session Friday.

NESN broadcaster Jerry Remy diagnosed with cancer again

Ryan Hannable

NESN broadcaster Jerry Remy has been diagnosed with cancer again.

On Tuesday, the network released a statement: "Jerry Remy has been diagnosed once again with cancer. At this time, Jerry's focus is on his medical treatment. The thoughts and prayers of all of us at NESN and the Red Sox are with Jerry and his family during this difficult time."

This is Remy's sixth time battling cancer, as he had his last treatment from the fifth time back in January. Remy underwent five weeks of radiation treatment following chemotherapy in August and surgery for lung cancer on June 26 of last year.

The 65-year-old and former Red Sox second baseman was first diagnosed with lung cancer in 2008.

*** *BostonSportsJournal.com***

Even in comeback victory, bullpen issues pose threat for Red Sox

Sean McAdam

TORONTO — Ultimately, they won the game, which, in the end, is all that matters.

All that matters for the night, that is, in the present, which is where teams live. The Red Sox' 10-7, 10-inning triumph will not count any less after their bullpen nearly sabotaged them over the final four innings.

"Nearly" is the operative word here, of course, because, again, the win counts fully, regardless of how it was achieved.

But given that the win moved the Red Sox to an almost unfathomable 46 games over .500 and gave them is-that-some-kind-of-misprint winning percentage of .702, this isn't about their lead in the East being threatened or compromised.

With almost eight weeks to go, the Red Sox can't print playoff tickets yet, but they can take a macro view of things and assess how they shape up for October. And from 30,000 feet, or from the dugout, there's a problem that can't be ignored.

On a night when Rogers Centre leaked and allowed rain to seep in, making the roof retractable but not exactly impenetrable, it also seemed to serve as a metaphor for the Red Sox bullpen.

Here's one way to look at it: starter Drew Pomeranz, who walked five, got only three swings-and-misses and missed the strike zone with nearly half (40-of-84) of his pitches, was one of only two pitchers to face more than one batter and still post some scoreless innings Tuesday.

Six different relievers made the visiting bullpen door a turnstile, one after another entering, and more often than not, allowing runs to the Blue Jays. Heath Hembree inherited two baserunners and stranded both when he retired the only hitter he faced. Brandon Workman loaded the bases with no outs and somehow extricated himself, Houdini-like, by emerging unscathed.

After that, it was all downhill:

Joe Kelly pitched an inning and allowed a run, aided and abetted by his own errant pickoff attempt; Matt Barnes allowed two hits and a run immediately after J.D. Martinez had helped to give the Red Sox their first their lead of the night, 5-3;

Craig Kimbrel suffered his fourth blown save of the season when he gave up a game-tying homer to Justin Smoak with one out in the bottom of the ninth;

Tyler Thornburg was rocked for two runs on three hits in the 10th, bringing the potential tying run to the on-deck circle in an inning which began with a five-run lead.

Is any of this providing comfort as the Red Sox look ahead to the postseason, when the Red Sox will face lineups far deeper and talented — and goodness knows, more motivated — than the moribund Blue Jays, currently being kept out of the AL East basement only by the presence of the Baltimore Orioles?

Actually, Kimbrel's struggles — runs allowed in four of his last five appearances — should be considered separately. He's battled command issues for the last few weeks, but there's little doubt that he'll figure out some things mechanically. If the Sox have to worry about Kimbrel, then their pennant hopes are moot.

But if the Red Sox can't protect one- and two-run leads late in games to get themselves to Kimbrel, they're in deep trouble.

Barnes, to be fair, has been mostly excellent, but some missteps of late serve as a reminder that he hasn't locked down the eighth in truly big-game settings.

Kelly? Fantastic first two months, followed by two equally abysmal ones, out from which he's only recently begun to dig himself. He remains the proverbial "work-in-progress."

Workman has bounced back-and-forth between Triple-A and the big leagues and has generally lacked consistency. Thornburg has shown promise in some outings in the last two weeks, but two walks against the Yankees Sunday night and a few hard-hit balls in the 10th on Tuesday night are evidence that he's not yet the Thornburg of 2016.

The good news? First, the lineup is eminently capable of bailing out the bullpen, as it did repeatedly Tuesday night. And a few starters — Chris Sale and Rick Porcello, most obviously — will routinely pitch deeper into games to limit the bullpen's exposure and handle some of their own high-leverage innings themselves.

And, with nearly eight weeks remaining, there's time. Time to fix mechanical issues, build confidence, and maybe snag someone through the waiver process.

Yes, there's time. Which is fortuitous, because on an otherwise very good — maybe even history-making — the Red Sox still have a very significant weakness to address.

BSJ Game Report: Red Sox 10, Blue Jays 7 (10) – Long balls make up for bullpen failures

Sean McAdam

HEADLINES

Moreland comes through in the 10th: After Craig Kimbrel blew the save in the bottom of the ninth, Mitch Moreland helped the Red Sox come back in the very next inning, cranking a three-run homer off Toronto reliever Ken Giles. Six of his 14 homers this season have given the Red Sox the lead, but this may have been his biggest of the year. Moreland had a rough July, going the entire month without hitting a homer, but here in August, he's already got two, none bigger than the one he hit Tuesday night. "It definitely felt good, especially after trying to come through (and failing) earlier in the game," he said. "I've put in a lot of work and there's still a lot to be done. I've just kept my head down and kept working. You're going to go through the ups and downs. You try to make the most of it and keep fighting."

Kimbrel trips again: It's been a rough last couple of weeks for Kimbrel, who's allowed runs in four of his last five outings. He wasn't sharp Saturday in a non-save situation against the Yankees, and Tuesday night, entrusted with a one-run lead in the bottom of the ninth, he couldn't preserve it, allowing a game-tying homer to Justin Smoak with one out. It was his fourth blown save of the year.

"Tonight was frustrating, personally," said Kimbrel. "I felt like I probably had the best stuff I had in the last two weeks. I threw a pitch to Smoak 3-and-0 and he was hacking and he put the barrel on it. I hate it. I hate blowing games. I hate making us play extra innings. But in the end, our guys did what they do and went back out there and kept hitting the ball." Kimbrel said his struggles of late have been about command — both of his curveball and fastball. "You kind of go through (those valleys) as the year goes on," he said. "The last couple of weeks, I've been struggling with some things."

Another poor outing from Pomeranz: So much took place after starter Drew Pomeranz left the game in the top of the fifth, it was almost easy to forget he pitched at all. But Pomeranz was all over the strike zone, issuing five walks in just 4.2 innings. He also registered just one strikeout and recorded only three swings-and-misses. He gave up just two runs, but he was far from sharp. He was unable to get into a rhythm, with baserunners — often multiple — every inning. "It's a little bit frustrating," he acknowledged, "kind of like this whole year. I feel like something's been holding me back." He's still not locked-in mechanically, and the velocity (88-90 mph) isn't getting any better. Interestingly, Alex Cora wouldn't commit to giving Pomeranz another start, noting that, after the series in Baltimore, the Sox have two days off the span of the next five days, giving them some flexibility with their rotation.

TURNING POINT

In a game that featured 17 runs and 22 hits, it's hard to single out a play in the sixth inning as a key. But the Blue Jays led 2-1 at the time and had loaded the bases with no out. Brandon Workman got Kevin Pillar on a flyout to shallow right for the first out. The next hitter, Luke Maile, hit a squibber down the third base line. Red Sox catcher Sandy Leon pounced, and before the ball had a chance to roll foul, picked it up in fair territory, and with one swipe, managed to slap a tag on the runner from third, Kendrys Morales, for the second out. One batter later, the Sox were out of the jam at a time when the game threatened to get away from them.

ONE UP

J.D. Martinez: Martinez continued to be a run-producing machine. He knocked in Boston's first run with a single in the fourth, then blasted a three-run homer off the left field foul pole in the ninth, giving him three hits — he also doubled in the seventh, but was stranded at third — and four RBI. He leads the majors in RBI (97) and also multi-RBI games (29).

TWO DOWN

Joe Kelly: Kelly allowed a leadoff single in the seventh and, thanks to a throwing error by Andrew Benintendi, the runner ended up on second. Then Kelly compounded things by an errant pickoff throw into center, allowing Devon Travis to move to third, from where he scored on a sacrifice fly.

Matt Barnes: With the Sox having scored four in the top of the eighth to take the lead for the first time in the game, he quickly gave a run right back in the bottom of the inning.

QUOTE OF NOTE

“Ummm ... I wasn't thinking single.”
— Moreland, when asked if he was thinking about trying to hit a homer in the 10th inning.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

The Red Sox became the first team to reach 80 wins this season.

The game marked the 14th time the Red Sox reached double figures in runs scored.

Boston improved to 38-14 against teams from their own division.

The Sox are 24-1 in Leon's last 25 starts.

Moreland has 11 game-winning RBI, second on the team.

The 10th inning homer for Jackie Bradley was his first career homer in extra innings.

UP NEXT

The Red Sox and Blue Jays play the middle game of their series Wednesday night at 7:07, with LHP Brian Johnson (2-3, 3.74) vs. RHP Mike Hauschild (1-0, 0.00).

Final: Red Sox 10, Blue Jays 7 (10) — Homers cover up bullpen failings

Sean McAdam

TORONTO – In a back-and-forth game of bullpen ineptitude, the Red Sox finally won out, flexing their muscles with three extra-base hits — including two multi-run homers — in the 10th, giving them a 10-5 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays, their fifth win in a row.

Mitch Moreland cranked a three-run homer and Jackie Bradley Jr. added a two-run blast two batters later.

That was needed, since Kevin Pillar answered with a two-run homer in the bottom of the 10th off Tyler Thornburg.

It appeared the Sox had the game won with a three-run homer by J.D. Martinez in the eighth. But in the bottom of the ninth, Craig Kimbrel blew his fourth save of the season by allowing a solo shot by Justin Smoak.

Starter Drew Pomeranz had another poor start, issuing five walks in 4.2 innings while allowing two runs.

IN-GAME OBSERVATIONS

10:06 Craig Kimbrel has had difficulty throwing his breaking ball for strikes for much of the season. He threw three straight to Justin Smoak, fell behind 3-and-0 and was forced to come in with his fastball, which Smoak plastered to right for a game-tying homer. Fourth blown save of the year.

9:08 Poor throw from Benintendi in left. Travis had stopped before he got halfway to second, but when Benintendi's throw to second far overshot the mark, Travis jogged into second.

8:56 Nice job by Brandon Workman to extricate himself from a bases-loaded, no-out jam. He got a flyout to shallow right (and a slow runner in Kendrys Morales, who didn't want to test his "speed" against Mookie Betts) and two choppers resulting in force outs at the plate.

8:37 More info on Pomeranz: half the pitches he threw tonight were curveballs, and he got just three swing-and-misses in his 84 pitches. And one strikeout.

8:32 Pomeranz didn't seem happy to be given the hook after his fifth walk over 4.2 innings. He threw 84 pitches and they were nearly 50-50, with 44 strikes and 40 balls. Heath Hembree on, trying to start another streak with inherited runners after his run of 19 straight came to an end Sunday.

8:01 The Sox capitalize on a mistake by the Jays. A one-out error by Travis allowed Andrew Benintendi to reach, and after a walk to Mitch Moreland pushed Benintendi to second, he scored on an opposite-field single to right by J.D. Martinez. That gives Martinez 94 RBI.

7:50 Drew Pomeranz was inviting trouble with his wildness in the first two innings, and just paid for it there in the third. He walked Randal Grichuk — his third walk of the game — and on a 3-and-2 pitch to Devon Travis, threw a 90 mph four-seamer down the heart of the plate which Travis golfed out to left for a 2-0 lead.

WHO: Red Sox vs. Toronto Blue Jays

WHEN: 7:07 p.m.

WHERE: Rogers Centre

WHAT'S UP: The Red Sox are flying high, having swept the Yankees over four games at Fenway over the weekend. They can become the first team to win 80 games in big league with a victory tonight. They're 8-1 in their last nine games and 23-5 over their last 28. Their nine-game lead is the largest for any division leader. The Jays are at 51-60 and just came off a 5-5 road trip. They're in fourth place and are 27 games in back of the Sox.

STARTING PITCHERS: LHP Drew Pomeranz (1-5, 6.56) vs. RHP Marcus Stroman (4-8, 5.63)

TV/RADIO: NESN/WEEI 93.7 FM

LINEUPS

RED SOX

Betts RF
Benintendi LF
Moreland 1B
Martinez DH
Bogaerts SS
Bradley CF
Nunez 3B
Holt 2B
Leon C

BLUE JAYS

Grichuk RF
Travis 2B
Smoak 1B
Hernandez LF
Morales DH
Solarte 3B
Diaz SS
Pillar CF
Maile C

NEWS AND NOTES

Alex Cora announced that Chris Sale will return to the Red Sox rotation Sunday in Baltimore. Sale was placed on the 10-day DL last week with mild shoulder inflammation, and initially, the Sox had targeted Wednesday here in Toronto for his return. But realizing that would have put him on schedule to also pitch in Philadelphia, where he would have to hit, they scrapped that and pushed him back to Sunday. “He played catch (Monday) and today and will throw a bullpen (Wednesday),” said Cora.

Rafael Devers had four at-bats in Lowell Monday night as part of a brief rehab stint. He’s eligible to come off the DL Wednesday and all signs point to him being activated then.

The Sox are undecided on their second starter for Saturday’s doubleheader. David Price will pitch the first game; the second could go to someone on the roster, or a call-up from Pawtucket. MLB rules allow teams to add a 26th player for doubleheaders.

Eduardo Rodriguez will throw live batting practice in Baltimore Friday. “He feels great,” said Cora.

Blake Swihart and Ian Kinsler — each out with strained hamstrings — remained back in Boston, but will join the team in Baltimore.

Steven Wright is “feeling a lot better,” according to Cora and threw off the mound over the weekend at Fenway. “He said he feels a lot better than he did the first time,” said Cora, “knowing what he has to do to avoid lapses like this. He’s been doing great in the weight room, he’s been keeping his arm in shape. I don’t want to get ahead of myself, but I do feel he’s going to back at some point during the season.”

There was also positive news on Dustin Pedroia, who remains in Arizona. “There’s a lot of stuff going on as far as his rehab,” said Cora. “He feels good about it. The door’s still open. He feels (returning this season) might happen. I know the player. I know he’s going to do everything possible for this to happen. If he’s able to come back, that’s a plus for us, too.”

*** *The Athletic***

Jason Varitek relishing added duties as catching instructor for Red Sox

Chad Jennings

TORONTO — Three hours before Tuesday's first pitch, Jason Varitek was in his full No. 33 uniform, walking off the field at Rogers Centre to take a well-earned seat in the Red Sox' clubhouse. He didn't have to be there.

With three All-Star appearances, two World Series rings, and a secure spot in franchise history, Varitek could have taken a more ceremonial role this season. He could have popped in for a few spring training drills, offered some words of wisdom behind the batting cage, and spent most of his time in the air-conditioned office of a front office advisor.

But the Red Sox asked him to do a little more, and so the old captain went to work.

"I wasn't a lazy person," Varitek said. "So, I'm not going to try to be lazy."

With their former catching instructor, Dana LeVangie, now the pitching coach, the Red Sox have leaned on Varitek and minor league catching coordinator Chad Epperson to serve as hands-on, de facto members of the major league coaching staff. Epperson floats in and out of Boston on his way through the minor league system – he was with the team for its previous homestand – and Varitek has become a semi-regular both at home and on the road.

"I don't think we've been two series in a row without one of them," manager Alex Cora said. "Which is very important. They pay attention to details. You see the progress that Blake (Swihart) has shown the last three weeks as far as throwing and blocking the balls. Christian (Vazquez), he improved throughout the season, and then Sandy (Leon) is still working, so they're very important for us."

And they both treat it that way.

Varitek's title is still Special Assistant to the President of Baseball Operations, but the Red Sox asked this spring if he would take on additional responsibilities. What exactly that means "remains undefined," he said, and it seems Varitek likes it that way. Or, at least, that he's embraced it that way. His primary focus is, of course, the catchers, but he also throws batting practice and studies – really studies — scouting reports. He shows up prepared to do a job, not simply to be a familiar face in a familiar jersey.

"I think that there's a lot of things, information and pieces that players have to take in, interpret and do," Varitek said. "And if you're asked, and part of your job is to be there as an aid to them, if you don't know what's going on, you're not doing your job. So, I think that's a big part of doing my job."

But why take on so much at this point?

"I don't really know how to answer that right now," he said. "You're trying to help any way you can."

For the past five years, LeVangie handled the Red Sox catchers. He was the team's bullpen coach from 2013 to 2017, and all the while he also served as catching coordinator. But this winter, LeVangie was promoted to pitching coach, and it quickly became clear that he could not – or should not – keep one eye focused on the guys behind the plate.

"That came up in spring training," Cora said. "We want Dana to be a pitching coach. I know he still feels for his catchers, he loves them, but we wanted him to make sure he's the pitching guy. We talked about it in spring training with (vice president of player development Ben Crockett) and (president of baseball

operations Dave Dombrowski) and everybody to kind of see, how can we make this happen? Jason and Eppy, they sat down and went through the schedule, and it works.”

Red Sox catchers routinely cite Epperson as a key part of their development behind the plate, and Varitek’s career speaks for itself, from his big league debut in 1997 through his 15 years as a Red Sox catcher.

“I ask questions; he answers,” Leon said. “It’s good having him around so you can learn from him, you know? He played a lot of years, especially in this division, so I learn a lot from him. I’ve been learning a lot.”

There will be plenty of opportunities for ceremonial handshakes. His legacy is secure. For right now, he has a job to do.

“From when I first came up, (the information) has changed dramatically,” he said. “But after a few years, it started becoming more and more available, and now there’s just different ways to skin the same cat. There’s a lot of the same basics to it, and different formulas to utilize, and technology gets better and better, so you continue to have more and more usable information.

“I’m preparing to be a part of what Dana and the whole staff does. If I don’t know what everybody’s doing and everything that’s going on, I can’t service the people that you’re trying to service. To help them, you have to know what’s going on.”

More than 20 years after his big league debut, Varitek is back in the Red Sox clubhouse. He still has a job to do.

*** *USA Today***

Red Sox broadcaster Jerry Remy faces another cancer diagnosis

Jesse Yomtov

Longtime Boston Red Sox analyst Jerry Remy was again diagnosed with cancer, according to a statement released by NESN.

"At this time, Jerry’s focus is on his medical treatment. The thoughts and prayers of all of us at NESN and the Red Sox are with Jerry and his family during this difficult time," the station said in the statement.

Remy, 65, was first diagnosed with lung cancer in late 2008, and took a leave of absence for most of the 2009 season. His cancer returned in 2013 and again twice in 2017. In January of this year, Remy announced on Twitter that he had completed a cancer treatment.

Remy, a second baseman, played from 1975-1984 with the Angels and Red Sox, making the AL All-Star team in 1978. He joined NESN in 1988.

*** *The Toronto Sun***

Explosive Red Sox offence sinks the Jays

Steve Buffery

First there was a leak in the roof at the Rogers Centre, then there was a leak in the Blue Jays bullpen.

Toronto starter Marcus Stroman left the game at the start of the eighth inning with the Jays ahead 3-1. It all went downhill from there.

The diminutive right-hander actually took the mound for the eighth but, after a visit from trainer Nikki Huffman, departed because of a right middle finger blister. Stroman gave up only two hits over seven innings and one run, which was unearned, while walking three. He strike out four and received a standing ovation as he left the game, applauding back to the crowd.

However, the Red Sox being the Red Sox ... the Mighty Beantowners stormed back to score four runs in the eighth and five more in the 10th to waltz away with a 10-7 victory over the Jays, their fifth straight win.

J.D. Martinez hit a three-run homer off reliever Ryan Tepera in the eighth and the Jays' new closer, Ken Giles, gave up a three-run homer to Mitch Moreland and a two-run homer by Jackie Bradley Jr. in the 10th inning to seal Toronto's fate. Not exactly a great debut for Giles in his first appearance at home as a Jay.

With the score 5-4 Boston, Jays first baseman Justin Smoak smashed his 18th home run of the season off Red Sox ace Craig Kimbrel with one out in the ninth to tie the game 5-5, sending the contest into extra innings. The Jays' bullpen, however, couldn't put a lid on the Red Sox offence. Kevin Pillar hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the 10th, his ninth, but it wasn't enough, obviously.

"It's something I've been dealing with all year to be honest with you, I just haven't said anything," Stroman said when asked about his blister.

"But I'm a competitor and it's not something I'm going to let deter me from making my next start. I'm going to do everything I can the next four days and be back out there on Sunday competing."

Stroman said the blister became worse in the seventh inning and "ripped pretty good."

Prior to the blister giving him trouble, Stroman had been enjoying one of his best outings of the season against one of the best offences in baseball, retiring 16 Red Sox batters via ground balls.

"When I'm going good, I'm getting a ton of ground ball outs, my sinker and my cutter were pretty good. I feel great, just starting to get back to being myself each and every day," added Stroman.

Second baseman Devon Travis put the Jays ahead 2-0 in the third when he hammered a 3-2 offering from Boston starter Drew Pomeranz into the second deck in left, a line-drive homer. It was Travis' eighth of the season.

Martinez's homer was his 34th of the season, tops in MLB. The Boston DH also doubled and singled.

"(Martinez) is unreal right now," said Stroman. "He's the hottest hitter I think I've ever seen live. It's tough to navigate that lineup."

Smoak extended his hitting streak to 11 games with his homer and single, tying Lourdes Gurriel Jr. for the longest streak by a Jay this season.

Yangervis Solarte single twice and drew a pair of walks.

THE DRURY MYSTERY

Infielder Brandon Drury has been placed on the 10-day DL (retroactive 8/5) with a left hand fracture — an injury he apparently suffered before he was traded to the Jays from the Yankees on July 26 in the J.A. Happ deal. Prospect Billy McKinney also came to the Jays in the trade. Drury was hit by a pitch a few days before being traded to Toronto. At the time the Yankees diagnosed Drury's injury as a bone bruise. Drury had an MRI done on the hand last weekend and that revealed the fracture. But Jays GM Ross Atkins said Toronto would have made the deal even if Yankees had discovered that Drury had a fracture. It's been a tough season for the Grants Pass, Ore., native who missed the majority of the 2018 season with the Yankees due to blurred vision and migraine-like symptoms. In his first eight games with the Jays, Drury had four hits and three RBIs while shuffling between shortstop, third and second base. The actual fracture

is at the base of his fifth metacarpal. The hand will be immobilized in a cast for two weeks and then evaluated at that time. Shortstop Richard Urena has been recalled from triple-A Buffalo.

HEALTH UPDATES

Gurriel Jr. (left ankle sprain) will begin a running progression program this week. He is going through a full range of motion and strength exercises as well as doing long tossing, hitting in the cage and taking ground balls while also going through a hop and jumping progression ... RHP Aaron Sanchez (Right index finger contusion) is scheduled to throw a Gulf Coast League game on Thursday, 55-60 pitches. Gibbons said Sanchez will have to get 2-3 minor league rehab starts before he comes back.

* ***The Toronto Star***

Blue Jays bullpen collapses in extra-inning loss to Red Sox

Richard Griffin

The Red Sox came to town in position for a short-term letdown after sweeping four from the Yankees in the Bronx. At the same time, Blue Jays starter Marcus Stroman was poised for a bounce-back after being banged around in Oakland.

Those possibilities proved solid for the first seven innings on Tuesday at Rogers Centre but devolved into a slugfest in the eighth as the game became a roller-coaster ride with each side blowing a save after taking the lead.

The end result was a 10-7 Boston victory led by three hits and four RBIs from J.D. Martinez. A 10th-inning triple by probable AL MVP Mookie Betts followed by a Mitch Moreland towering three-run blast and a two-run homer by Jackie Bradley Jr. — all off newly acquired Blue Jays closer Ken Giles — sealed the deal.

For seven innings the contest followed the script. Stroman worked three no-hit innings and second baseman Devon Travis supported him by clubbing a two-run homer to the back of the second deck in left field in the bottom of the third.

Travis is 12-for-38 (.316) with two homers, two triples and three RBIs in 10 games against the Red Sox this season. For his career, the 27-year-old second baseman has a .299 average with five homers and 15 RBIs against Boston.

However, as Stroman nursed a 3-1 lead and readied himself to start the eighth, he was visited by Jays head trainer Nikki Huffman and quickly removed after a look at a blister on the middle finger of his right hand. Yet another blister.

Red Sox' dominance could be heading to record level

Richard Griffin

The 2018 Boston Red Sox have the unmistakable look and feel of a championship team. Their win total headed to Toronto translated to 113 over a full 162 game season. That would be just three shy of the all-time mark of 116 W's by the 2001 Mariners guided by manager Lou Piniella and GM Pat Gillick. That team was led by future Hall-of-Famers, Ichiro Suzuki and Edgar Martinez.

When Red Sox president Dave Dombrowski felt that his starting rotation appeared fragile, with too many trips to the 10-day DL, he reached out and acquired Nathan Eovaldi from the Rays. When Dustin Pedroia was shut down and no longer an option at second base, he reached out and snagged Ian Kinsler from the

Angels. Earlier, when he felt a right-handed platoon option at first base would help the cause, he traded a minor-league shortstop to the Jays for Steve Pearce.

Make no mistake, this is no Cinderella story. The Red Sox under Dombrowski have the highest team payroll in baseball, currently standing at \$240.4-million, well into luxury tax territory. Nobody's turning into a pumpkin here. But for Sox fans, the best team in the organization plays in Boston, not AAA-Pawtucket, AA-Portland (ME), A-Salem (NC) or anywhere else on the farm and that's the way it should be.

Remember that Jays fans when you're looking to deal major leaguers with several years of club control for prospects so that AAA-Buffalo, AA-New Hampshire and the rest of the system can post better records than the big club.

The Sox under rookie manager Alex Cora found themselves off to a jackrabbit start in mid-April, going 17-2 and forging early separation from the Yankees. Now, since June 21, the red-hot Red Sox have been 30-8 including a step-on-the-throat four game sweep of the Yankees in the Bronx this past weekend.

Mookie Betts has been a constant as a superstar with this team over the past few years, but this year he is the clear leader in AL MVP consideration, with teammate J.D. Martinez also among the Top 5 candidates.

Betts has posted a .342 average and 1.080 OPS, with 29 doubles, three triples, 26 homers and 21 stolen bases. Martinez, who established himself as a star last season, was signed by the Sox as a free agent late in the off-season and has responded as the primary DH. He entered the Jays series with a .324 average, with 28 doubles, one triple, 33 homers and 93 RBIs.

Spending the most money on MLB payroll doesn't always mean better starting players, but it does allow the easy luxury of a deeper bench. With starting third-baseman Rafael Devers and second-baseman Kinsler each nursing wonky hamstrings and on the 10-day DL, those two have been capably replaced at third by Eduardo Nunez and at second by Brock Holt, the ultimate super-sub.

All that being said where does that put beleaguered Jays manager John Gibbons and the job he has done this year compared to what the rookie Cora has accomplished getting his team on pace to a franchise record win total?

Rumours have quietly mounted that Gibbons might be major-league toast before the season is over. His contract runs through 2019. Respected MLB insider Ken Rosenthal suggests he will be let go at the end of the current season, while others say it could happen before that. What makes some of those rumours more sinister is that some of those sources include media within Rogers own empire. The best guess at this time is a mutual parting of ways at season's end.

The bottom line for the reeling Jays has been injuries, a key suspension and playing in the AL East with the dominating Red Sox and Yankees. And now after winning three of four in Seattle, the Sox are in town after sweeping the Yankees.

"Really, it's 5-6 teams been playing good baseball in the American League," Gibbons pointed out. "It's kind of an odd year. When you're struggling, you don't look forward to playing those guys. They've had their way with us pretty good."

The Jays entering Tuesday were 3-10 vs. Boston and 4-9 against the Yankees. Against the rest of baseball they are 44-41. Gibbons believes this has been one of his toughest managing jobs, nothing like the playoff years 2015-16.

"Definitely," Gibbons agreed. "When you have those (Jays) teams that go to the post-season, they're good, strong, solid teams. You bring them out there to play and most things just kind of fall in place for you. When you're scuffling, you do more juggling, naturally."

Gibbons was not suggesting the Jays should have kept Roberto Osuna following his suspension for alleged domestic assault, but he is ready to identify that May 8 morning of the closer's arrest, as a key moment to a spiralling season.

"You knew when something happened to Osuna it was probably going to be tough," he said. "We kind of like the pieces we put in our bullpen (this spring), but you take away your closer and you know things are going to get more difficult.

"I think for the most part those other (relievers) hung in there, at least for a while. You never really know for sure, but if you're in the game long enough, you know there are certain spots you lose certain guys. It doesn't mean you can't do it, but it gets that much more difficult."

Now every day, with injuries mounting and players seeming to take longer to heal than predicted, it gets more and more difficult for Gibbons and his Jays.

*** *Associated Press***

Moreland homers in 10th to lift Red Sox over Blue Jays 10-7

TORONTO -- Craig Kimbrel felt bad about making his Boston Red Sox teammates play an additional inning.

Mitch Moreland didn't seem to mind.

Moreland hit a three-run homer during a five-run 10th inning, helping the Red Sox overcome Kimbrel's blown save to beat the Toronto Blue Jays 10-7 on Tuesday night for their fifth straight win.

Boston is the first big league team to reach 80 victories this season.

Moreland's one-out shot off Ken Giles (0-3) followed a triple by Mookie Betts and a walk by Andrew Benintendi.

"I figured he was trying to get ahead," Moreland said. "I got a fastball that kind of split the plate in half and that was it."

The All-Star first baseman drove in four. Jackie Bradley Jr. added a two-run homer later in the inning.

Giles was charged with five runs in his first home appearance with Toronto since being acquired from Houston in a deal that sent back Blue Jays closer Roberto Osuna.

Kimbrel (3-1) gave up a solo homer to Justin Smoak with one out in the ninth, tying the game at 5. Kimbrel stuck out the side otherwise. It was Kimbrel's second blown save in four outings.

"I hate blowing games," Kimbrel said. "I hate making us play extra innings but, again, our guys do what they do. They went back out there and kept on hitting the ball."

J.D. Martinez hit a three-run homer in the eighth, his major league-leading 34th. Martinez finished 3 for 5 with four RBI.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora said power is a "huge" weapon for his team.

"We always feel we're one swing away from getting back into games," he said.

Boston used a four-run eighth to turn a 3-1 deficit into a 5-3 lead but couldn't close it out. Toronto's Luke Maile hit an RBI double off Matt Barnes in the eighth before Smoak tied it with his shot off Kimbrel, connecting on a 3-0 pitch.

Boston got just two hits over seven innings against starter Marcus Stroman.

"He was tough today," Cora said of Stroman. "His ball was all over the place."

Stroman came out to warm up for the eighth but didn't throw a pitch, leaving with trainer Nikki Huffman after she visited the mound to examine a blister on the middle finger of his pitching hand.

"It's something I've been dealing with all year," Stroman said. "It got pretty bad in the seventh. It ripped pretty good, and I just wasn't in a position where I could throw my pitches effectively."

Ryan Tepera came on and loaded the bases for Moreland, who hit an RBI fielder's choice. Martinez followed with a drive off the left field foul pole.

Tepera was ejected for arguing with home plate umpire Ed Hickox as he walked off at the end of the inning.

Devon Travis and Kevin Pillar each hit a two-run home run for the Blue Jays. Toronto has lost 11 of 14 games against the AL East-leading Red Sox, owners of the best record in baseball.

Red Sox left-hander Drew Pomeranz allowed two runs and four hits in 4 2/3 innings, matching a season worst with five walks.

"We need this guy," Cora said. "This guy is very important for what we're trying to accomplish."

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP

The retractable roof at Rogers Centre was open when the game began but started to swing closed in the middle of the fifth. In the eighth, a steady stream of water could be seen leaking into the seats in right field as heavy rain fell outside. The parking garage beneath the stadium was flooded.

MAKING THEM COUNT

Six of Moreland's 14 home runs this season have given the Red Sox the lead.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Red Sox: LHP Chris Sale (mild left shoulder inflammation) is scheduled to come off the 10-day disabled list and start against Baltimore on Sunday. Sale (11-4) last pitched July 27. ... 3B Rafael Devers (strained left hamstring) is expected to be activated off the disabled list Wednesday, the first day he is eligible.

Blue Jays: Toronto put INF Brandon Drury (broken left hand) on the 10-day DL and recalled INF Richard Urena from Triple-A Buffalo.

UP NEXT

Red Sox LHP Brian Johnson (2-3, 3.74) faces Blue Jays RHP Mike Hauschild (1-0, 0.00) on Wednesday. Johnson is 2-0 with a 3.94 ERA in three career starts north of the border. Hauschild picked up his first career win by tossing six shutout innings of relief against Seattle last Thursday, his Blue Jays debut.