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*** *The Boston Globe***

Red Sox pound away in thorough thrashing of Yankees in Game 3

Peter Abraham

NEW YORK — Red Sox manager Alex Cora sent Brock Holt a text message on Sunday night telling him he would be starting Game 3 of the Division Series against the Yankees on Monday.

Holt, 1 for 15 in his career against New York starter Luis Severino, was a bit surprised.

“Are you sure?” he thumbed back.

Cora was. He also had decided to move up Nathan Eovaldi to start the game and to get Rafael Devers and Christian Vazquez in the lineup for the first time in the series along with Holt.

The result was a 16-1 thrashing of the Yankees as Holt hit for the first cycle in postseason history and drove in five runs and Eovaldi pitched seven dominant innings.

As Holt made history with his cycle, Cora had a perfect game as every move clicked. Devers, Holt and Vazquez were 8 for 18 with seven RBIs and six runs scored.

“Play the Powerball tomorrow, and hopefully I can get it,” Cora said.

Game 4 will be 8:07 p.m. on Tuesday. If the Sox win, they host the Houston Astros in Game 1 of the American League Championship Series on Saturday. Rick Porcello will face CC Sabathia Tuesday.

A loss would mean a deciding Game 5 at Fenway on Thursday.

“We’ve got a chance to come here and put a good game and see what happens. I know they trust CC. We trust Rick,” Cora said. “It should be fun.

The 16 runs were the second-most ever scored by the Red Sox in a playoff game and the most allowed by the Yankees. The Sox, who had 18 hits, scored the final two runs when Holt homered to right field in the ninth inning off backup catcher Austin Romine.

“I knew I needed a home run,” Holt said. “I told everyone, ‘Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle.’ I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I’d ground out to first, be out in front of something.

“But I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything . . . I was trying to hit a home run. That’s probably the first time I’ve ever tried to do that.”

As the Sox offense battered the Yankee pitchers, Eovaldi quieted their lineup in the first postseason game of his career. The righthander allowed one run on five hits and struck out five without a walk. Only two runners advanced beyond first base as he fired 72 of 97 pitches for strikes.

Eovaldi has faced the Yankees four times since the Red Sox acquired him from Tampa Bay in July and allowed one earned run over 23 innings.

“We were able to score some runs early, which made it easier for me to pitch,” Eovaldi said. “I feel like my fastball command and my cutter were really effective tonight, and I was just trying to use their aggressiveness against them and try and get some quick outs.”

Yankees manager Aaron Boone felt his hitters expanded their strike zone. Once the Sox scored seven runs in the fourth inning to take a 10-0 lead, Eovaldi pounded strike after strike.

Initially the Game 4 starter, Eovaldi was bumped up to Monday after Porcello pitched in relief in Game 1. With a sellout crowd howling, Eovaldi never blinked.

“He was just being Nate,” Cora said. “Pitching in Tampa or pitching in Fenway or pitching in Yankee Stadium, he knows his stuff is good, and it’s just about executing, throwing strikes, and letting the defense do the job.”

Cora made four changes to the lineup he used in Game 2, one out of necessity and three by choice.

With Mitch Moreland being treated for a strained right hamstring, Steve Pearce started at first base. But Cora decided to play Devers at third base instead of Eduardo Nunez and Holt at second base in place of Ian Kinsler. He also caught Vazquez in lieu of Sandy Leon.

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Devers had two hits, scored twice, and drove in a run. Vazquez had two hits, one run, and one RBI.

That Kinsler, Leon, and Nunez had contributed little to the offense in the first two games was a factor. But Cora also pointed to how well Holt swung the bat at the end of the regular season and Devers’s ability to deliver an extra-base hit.

“Christian, his ability to put the ball in play is important. There’s a few things we feel we can do,” Cora said before the game.

Cora looked smart in the second inning when Vazquez hit a two-strike pitch hard up the middle and it deflected off Severino far enough for Devers to score from third base.

Severino started to become unraveled in the third inning. Mookie Betts walked and went to third on a single to shallow left field by Andrew Benintendi. J.D. Martinez’s sacrifice fly made it 2-0. Benintendi then scored when Devers grounded into a force.

The fourth inning blew the game open as the Sox scored seven runs on six hits. They sent 11 men to the plate.

Holt singled and Vazquez singled and Jackie Bradley Jr. drew a walk to load the bases. That was the end of the night for Severino. The crowd booed him off the field in much the same way Fenway Park serenaded David Price in Game 2.

Lance Lynn walked Betts to force in a run. Benintendi then hit a cue-shot double into the right-field corner that cleared the bases. The Sox were on their way to a rout.

“I was trying to stay short and just put the ball in play and hopefully get something to the outfield and at least get one run in,” Benintendi said.

From there, Holt made history.

“Tonight is something I’ll remember for a long, long time,” he said.

For Rick Porcello, Game 4 at Yankee Stadium is ‘what it’s all about’

Peter Abraham

NEW YORK — Rick Porcello grew up about 40 miles from Yankee Stadium in Morristown, N.J., so close that he will often spend a night at the home he has there when the Red Sox get a day off in New York.

Porcello has pitched seven times at Yankee Stadium during his career, but Tuesday night will be his first postseason game in the Bronx.

“I couldn’t think of a better spot to be in as a big leaguer, getting the opportunity to have the ball for Game 4 in Yankee Stadium. That’s what it’s all about,” Porcello said Monday.

With the Sox taking a 2-1 series lead with a 16-1 rout of the Yankees, a victory on Tuesday would put the Sox in the American League Championship Series for the first time since 2013.

“We’re confident in him. He goes out there, and he attacks,” left fielder Andrew Benintendi said of Porcello. “He’s going to take it right to them. Hopefully, we can put up a good number of runs tomorrow and get out of here with a win.”

Porcello, who will face CC Sabathia, was lined up to start Game 3. But he faced three batters in relief in Game 1 and the decision was made to push him back a day.

The change in schedule did not affect him.

“No, not at all,” Porcello said. “Just kind of seeing how everything shapes up. Especially in the short series, you got to be ready for anything. I was prepared to pitch Game 1 and ready to pitch Game 4 now.”

Porcello was 2-0 with a 2.31 earned run average in four starts against the Yankees this season and has a 2.61 ERA in 13 starts in all since being traded to the Red Sox.

The righthander pitched one of the best games of his career against the Yankees at Fenway Park on Aug 3, allowing one run on one hit over nine innings and struck out nine without a walk.

The only hit in his 86-pitch gem was a home run by Miguel Andujar in the third inning. Porcello then retired the final 21 in a row.

“I just think attacking their hitters, that’s the biggest thing,” Porcello said.

“These guys are very good hitters. They’re very well coached. They have a solid approach.

“If you fall behind guys, you give them the opportunity to see pitches in the strike zone. That’s the only way you can get back into the count because they’re disciplined and they don’t chase a lot. I think attacking, being aggressive, and go from there.”

The only issue now is avoiding requests for tickets from his friends in New Jersey.

“I learned how to say no, so there’s not that many people coming,” Porcello said.

No Sale (in Game 4)

“No, no, no “ said manager Alex Cora when asked if he would consider starting Chris Sale on short rest on Tuesday instead of waiting for a possible Game 5 on Thursday.

It’s also unlikely Sale would pitch in relief.

“If you ask him, he’ll pitch today,” Cora said.

“That’s the nature of the playoffs. The mentality of all these guys is ‘Push, push, push; grind, grind, grind,’ in the great words of Mike Lowell. But we’ve got to be smart, too. We’ve got other guys we feel can do the job.”

Sale had two stints on the disabled list with shoulder inflammation, making it very unlikely the Red Sox would take any chances with him now.

Moreland recovering

First baseman Mitch Moreland, who strained his right hamstring running the bases in the seventh inning of Game 2, did not play. On Sunday, Cora was “very concerned” the Sox would have to replace Moreland on the roster. But that dissipated a bit on Monday. “For him not to play, it takes a lot,” Cora said. “It’s tough to see him that way, honestly.” Moreland is unlikely to be in the lineup against Sabathia, a lefthander . . . First base umpire Angel Hernandez had a poor game. Four of his calls were challenged and three overturned. Yahoo Sports reported that Hernandez declined comment. MLB issued a statement that said, “There were several very close calls at first base tonight, and we are glad that instant replay allowed the umpiring crew to achieve the proper result on all of them.” . . . The 16 runs for the Sox were the second-most in a playoff game in franchise history. They beat Cleveland, 23-5, in a Division Series game in 1999 . . . The seven runs in the fourth inning matched a franchise record for a postseason inning . . . Brock Holt’s five RBIs were the most for a Sox player in the postseason since Dustin Pedroia had five in Game 7 of the 2007 ALCS.

Could Price pitch

David Price told Cora he would be available to pitch Monday. Cora seemed unlikely to take him up on that because the lefthander threw 42 pitches Saturday.

But Cora has not ruled out the idea of using Price in relief at some point in the series, despite his woes against the Yankees this season.

“He told me that he’s all in. We’ll see how it goes,” Cora said.

Cora burst out laughing when asked why fans should believe Price can “mentally handle” the postseason.

“There’s been guys around the league that they struggle their first 10 [postseason starts],” Cora said.

“[Justin] Verlander. Nobody remembers that he wasn’t very good early in his career in the playoffs and now he’s kind of like the poster child of playoff baseball.”

Cora was somewhat correct. Verlander was 3-3 with a 5.57 ERA in his first eight postseason starts. Clayton Kershaw is another example. He was 1-6 with a 4.86 ERA in his first nine postseason starts.

Price is 0-9 with a 6.03 ERA in 10 playoff starts. But he has a 2.35 ERA in eight relief appearances.

“One thing for sure, he’s in the same spirits,” Cora said.

Yankees fans were in good spirits, too.

They mockingly cheered Price when he was introduced before the game.

They had booed all of the other Red Sox, even the athletic trainers and coaches.

In perspective

Cora was asked how many friends, famous or otherwise, have reached out to him during the postseason. “I got a lot of texts after Game 1, and for some reason didn’t get too many after Game 2,” he said. “I think people get, like, scared that you lost a game. You can text me. There’s other stuff in life that we’re going through.” . . . Four-time World Series champion Tino Martinez threw out the first pitch . . . The Yankees have a small section of seats in right field dubbed the Judge’s Chambers for Aaron Judge. They invited the

families of some fallen NYPD officers to sit there Monday. On Tuesday, the seats will be for Red Cross volunteers who assisted with relief efforts after Hurricane Florence.

The Red Sox were at their best on a night when they had to be

Chad Finn

Nine thoughts on the Red Sox' 16-1 victory over the Yankees . . .

1. Now that is what a 108-win team is supposed to look like in the postseason. The Red Sox entered Game 3 of the American League Division Series tied with the Yankees at one win apiece, but it didn't feel even. The Red Sox held on for a tense 5-4 win in Game 1, succumbed to the David Price House of October Horrors in a 6-2 loss in Game 2, and headed to New York presumably burdened by the weight of their struggles on offense and some clear flaws on the pitching staff.

So what happens? Brock Holt (Brock Holt!) became the first player in postseason history to hit for the cycle, Mookie Betts (2 hits, 2 runs, 2 RBIs, one brilliant baserunning play) and Andrew Benintendi (three-run triple) came to life at the plate, and every Red Sox batter had reached base in the game before the seven-run fourth inning was over.

We know that a rout in one game means nothing when the next game begins (see Game 3, 2004 ALCS), but we also know this: The Red Sox were at their best on a night when they had to be, and now they're assured of coming back to Boston for Game 5 if they do not close this out Tuesday.

The 2018 Red Sox have been extraordinary, and perhaps never more extraordinary than they were Monday night. Feel good about them. Believe in them. With a performance like this, they've earned at least that much.

2. The Red Sox scored 16 runs on 18 hits, and the awakening of their offense may only be the co-story of the night. Nathan Eovaldi, a quasi-journeyman with a scar on his pitching elbow who came over from the Rays at the trading deadline, was exceptional in a drama-free way that was at least slightly reminiscent of Derek Lowe's casually efficient dominance in the 2004 postseason.

Eovaldi allowed just five hits and a run in seven innings, with no walks and five strikeouts. He lacks an ace's résumé, but does possess an ace's triple-digit fastball and a vicious cutter, and he maintained his best stuff all night.

In the seventh and final inning, on his 88th pitch, he touched 100 miles per hour. He's earning a reputation as a Yankees killer — in four previous starts against New York this year, he had a 1.93 ERA and a 0.77 WHIP.

Shutting down that lineup in the postseason, in a pivotal moment in a short series, is feat that won't be forgotten anytime soon.

3. Alex Cora made three fundamental lineup changes for Game 3, none individually surprising even if the alterations affected a full third of the lineup.

Holt started at second base instead of Ian Kinsler. Christian Vazquez got the start behind the plate in place of Sandy Leon. And Rafael Devers got a turn at third over Games 1 and 2 starter Eduardo Nunez.

How'd it go? Let's put it this way. If Cora was hoping for them to work out any better than they did, he's greedier than he's ever let on. All three lineup newcomers contributed in a major way. Let's look at them one-by-one.

4. Might as well admit it: I did not like the idea of starting Vazquez, a lightweight at the plate who seemed to lose some of the shine on his near-golden defense this season. I'm partial to Blake Swihart, who hit three

home runs and had a .618 OPS this year and still somehow seems a useful offensive option. (He did hit all three of his homers in 108 plate appearances in the second half, with a .708 OPS.)

But Vazquez was the improbable ignitor of the Red Sox offense in Game 3. He drove in the Red Sox' first run on an infield single with two outs in the second inning, then delivered a perfectly placed hit-and-run in the seven-run fourth. It's the best game I've seen from him in a long time.

5. Cora has seemed a little frustrated with Devers lately, mentioning that he needs to be more committed to hard work on a couple of different occasions in recent weeks. The rationale for not playing him in the first two games was that Eduardo Nunez was a better defensive option at third base, a damning suggestion given that I'd take '78 Butch Hobson at third base over the scattershot Nunez on most nights.

Cora deserves credit for keeping an open mind about Devers, who clearly exasperates him from time to time, but who also possesses enticing, if unrefined, potential as a hitter. The reward was a solid overall contribution — no mistakes on defense, two hits, two runs, and an RBI on offense, and the possibility that he can be bigger contributor (as he was last year against the Astros) as the playoffs go on.

6. Though Kinsler drove in one of the Red Sox' two runs in Game 2, the unscientific conclusion here is that the majority of Red Sox fans thought Holt deserved a shot.

The majority of Red Sox fans did not know how right they were. Holt really had a nice bounce-back season (.277/.362/.411) after dealing with lingering concussion symptoms and vertigo in 2017.

I wondered if his time was nearing an end with the Red Sox entering the season, but he just got better and better as it went on. He was especially productive in the second half this year, with an .809 OPS after the All-Star break and a couple of absolutely crushed home runs.

7. I do not, however, believe anyone outside of the most optimistic member of the Holt family thought he was capable of hitting for the cycle.

What an epic performance. He made a vintage Dustin Pedroia-style defensive play on a rocketed grounder by Brett Gardner with one on and one out in the third, singled to start the fourth and ripped a two-run triple to punctuate the inning, added a ground-rule double in the eighth, then homered in in the ninth off Yankees catcher/knuckleballer Austin Romine.

I do still believe Cora should make future decisions at second base based on the matchup, because Kinsler is a good player who might have his big moment along the way. But Holt deserved a shot, got it, and he took advantage of it in a spectacular way Monday night. Hard not to be happy for the guy.

8. Umpire Angel Hernandez had three of his calls overturned at first base out of four that went to replay. A .250 average is adequate for a hitter nowadays, but it's brutal for an umpire, and such incompetence is not unusual for him.

9. OK, I'll ask: At what point would you have felt comfortable bringing in David Price? Bottom of the eighth with a 14-1 lead seemed safe to me. Though it would have been amusing to use him for the last three innings to earn the cheapest save in baseball history.

Alex Cora went against analytics in Game 3 — and the result was spectacular

Nick Cafardo

NEW YORK — Alex Cora managed it. It's that simple.

He saw that what he had drawn up wasn't working. As much as he loved and believed in the lineups in the first two games, he had left two of the hotter hitters of the past couple of weeks on the bench. So even

though Brock Holt and Rafael Devers had horrific numbers against Luis Severino, he put them in the lineup anyway.

This was one of those nonanalytic moments. Cora simply had a feeling, a Joe Morgan hunch, that the two lefthanded hitters would do something significant. And he was right. Man, was he right. As in 16-1 right and a 2-1 lead in the series with the possibility the Red Sox could win the clincher Tuesday.

“We know the numbers didn’t look good, but Brock’s a good player and all he needed to do was put some good swings together,” Cora said. “I knew he could do that because of the way he’s been hitting the fastball lately. He’s a good player, and he showed that tonight.”

Holt replaced Ian Kinsler at second base and hit for the cycle — the first in postseason history — with five RBI, hitting the home run in the ninth against catcher Austin Romine, who came into pitch in the blowout. Holt had two hits in his first three at-bats and had a single, triple, double, and homer in that order.

Devers singled, was credited with a stolen base, and scored on an infield single by Christian Vazquez (oh, yeah, another change) in the second inning. Devers also drove in a run when he hit into a fielder’s choice in the third.

By necessity, Mitch Moreland’s injured hamstring, Steve Pearce had to play first base. He delivered an RBI single in the fourth.

Cora also elected to flip-flop Nathan Eovaldi and Rick Porcello, so that Eovaldi would start Game 3. That worked, too. Eovaldi kept the Yankees off the board for the first three innings while the Red Sox amassed their double-digit lead and gave the Red Sox a seven-inning start.

So the magic wand, hunches, good old-fashioned gut feeling panned out nicely. Cora didn’t need anyone to spit out the formula for this one, because such a formula didn’t exist. Holt was 1-for-15 against Severino. Devers was 0-for-12. Andrew Benintendi, who tripled in three runs, had great success against Severino with an 11-for-27 (.407) mark, while J.D. Martinez also had a lofty .412 average against him.

This was an offense that was hitting .213 for the first two games. But in Game 3 in enemy territory, in one of the most hostile environments you can imagine, the Red Sox offense stopped the “Boston Sucks!” chants early on.

One of the loudest places in baseball suddenly became quiet and sullen, as the Red Sox have now taken the Yankees to the brink in this five-game series.

Holt is simply a winning ballplayer. He might not be a starting player, but he does what he does about as well as any player in baseball. He’s a sparkplug who comes up with big hits at big times. There might be a hundred players with more talent, but he works for the Red Sox, and the way he was swinging the bat late in the season, he was worthy of a start. Whether he starts against lefty CC Sabathia on Tuesday night remains to be seen. Ditto Devers, who got the nod over Eduardo Nunez. But in Game 3 it worked famously, despite all of the numbers being completely stacked against them.

“AC let me know last night that I’d be playing somewhere whether it was first or second base,” Holt said. “My numbers aren’t good against Severino, so I texted him back and said, “Are you sure?”

As much as Red Sox fans were concerned about their team after Game 2, that same concern swept over Yankeeeland after this one and likely more so since the Red Sox could wrap it up.

You could see why Cora seemed so loose and not worried before the game. He was joking around with media and even went over to Yankee third base coach Phil Nevin, with whom he once had words and gestures for after an April brawl between the two teams, and they seemed to patch things up.

It's not often a manager impacts a baseball game, because to be honest, it's the players who impact the game the most. But if you contrast the two rookie managers Monday night, you'd conclude that Cora was an A and Aaron Boone was an F. Nobody could figure out why Boone stuck with Severino for so long while Cora's moves were shining.

When this series was tied at 1-1, you had to start to think, would the Red Sox bow out of the divisional series for the third straight year? And if you're the Yankees now, despite winning 100 games, if they bow out in the divisional round, that would be much worse than losing in Game 7 of the ALCS last season to Houston. The Yankees fired Joe Girardi after he led a Yankee team that really overachieved last season to that point.

If the Red Sox are about to wrap this up, then Cora has earned accolades because of his 108 regular season wins and because he's finally got the Red Sox into the ALCS. Beating the Astros, his former team, would be the ultimate satisfaction for Cora, but he needs to come up with another very good game plan to put the Yankees away on Tuesday.

Cora could have stuck with Nunez, Kinsler, and Sandy Leon, but he went against the numbers. And sometimes that's not only the best way, but refreshing in this day and age.

Red Sox got up off the mat to make a brand new start of it in New York

Dan Shaughnessy

NEW YORK — Take that, Aaron Judge!

The star Yankee outfielder had a little fun at the expense of the Red Sox after New York's 6-2 win at Fenway Saturday night. On his way to the team bus in the underbelly of the ancient yard, Judge strolled past the Sox clubhouse with his boom box blaring Sinatra's Yankee victory song, "New York, New York."

It was supposed to feed into New England's worst fears. The 108-win Red Sox were going to roll over for the big, bad Bronx Bombers. Just like in the bad old days.

Apparently not. The 108-win Red Sox got up off the mat and pantsed the Yankees 16-1 in Game 3 Monday. Comforted by a superb seven innings from starter Nathan Eovaldi, the Sox offense pinballed to a 10-0 lead in the top of the fourth and thoroughly embarrassed the Yankees. Brock Holt made his first appearance in the series and hit for the cycle, crashing a garbage-time ninth inning homer off Yankee catcher Austin Romine.

"I was trying to hit a home run," admitted Holt. "This is one I'll remember for a long time. Hopefully, it will carry over into [Tuesday]."

So there. After two days of high anxiety in Red Sox Nation, the Townies one again were A Number One, Top of the List, and Kings of the Hill . . . While Yankees manager Aaron Boone slept in a city that doesn't sleep.

Though it was clear that Yankee starter Luis Severino (who was late getting to the park) had nothing, Boone left his ace in to surrender six runs on seven hits and two walks in three-plus innings. In contrast to Alex Cora, who had the second-inning hook for David Price on Saturday, Boone let the game get out of hand before his guys could get into the Red Sox bullpen. Severino was hit hard in the first three innings, yet was allowed to start the fourth when a 3-0 deficit turned into 10-0.

Severino loaded the bases to start the inning. Lance Lynn — always a starter — was ill-equipped to enter a game with the bases loaded and no outs.

Why stick with the tardy and tired Severino?

“Just hoping he could get through the bottom of the lineup there,” said Boone. “Once the first two guys got on, we figured Bradley would bunt. But it just snowballed on him and then Lance had trouble coming in there, so it just turned into a bad inning for us.

“Certainly, in hindsight, we could have started the fourth inning with Robbie [David Robertson]. But we just couldn’t stop the bleeding at all. He couldn’t get an out. The inning just got away.”

The chagrined Boone wound up using his Romine, his backup catcher, on the mound in the ninth. Romine got two outs before issuing a walk and then Holt’s two-run homer. There was a lot of joy in the Sox dugout.

Boone is fortunate that George Steinbrenner was not around for this one. The Yankees manager was downright Grady-esque.

“We have no choice but to flush it,” said Boone. “It’s one game. As awful as it was for us, [Tuesday] we’ve got to turn the page and it’s do or die.”

Cora, meanwhile, had a great night.

One day after saying it was important to “be patient” and not overreact to the small sample of two games, the Sox skipper had four new bats in the lineup and all of them produced. Steve Pearce had a hit, Christian Vazquez had a couple of hits, Rafael Devers had two hits, stole a base, and scored twice. Holt produced the first cycle in postseason history.

Andrew Benintendi’s three-run double off Lynn in the seven-run fourth was the game-breaker.

“I know a lot of people got caught up in Game 2, but it was a 3-1 game in the sixth inning,” said Cora. “We show up every day. That’s the thing about this team. It’s boring and people don’t like it, but we turn the page. [Tuesday] we’ll show up and be prepared to play. We know that if we don’t win [Tuesday], we have a Game 5.”

Quite a turnaround. The Sox have two chances to advance to the ALCS. Rick Porcello can close it out Tuesday at Yankee Stadium against CC Sabathia. (Mookie Betts should start the game off with a bunt.) The astoundingly-inept Angel Hernandez will be home plate umpire for Game 4.

If the Sox lose Tuesday, they have ace Chris Sale ready to go in Game 5 Thursday night at Fenway.

Sweet. I haven’t felt this good about the Red Sox chances in a playoff series against the Yankees since Pedro Martinez took a 5-2 lead into the eighth inning of Game 7 at the Stadium in 2003.

The Red Sox-Yankees is the only division series still going. The Dodgers and Brewers will play in the NLCS and Houston awaits the winner of Boston-New York. Astros star Alex Bregman is already making jokes about the world champion Astros playing their playoff games during the day so that the networks can focus on Boston and New York.

The champions ’Stros will be in prime time Saturday. And the resurgent Red Sox hope that game is played at Fenway.

This time, the Red Sox were the ones dominating at the plate

Alex Speier

NEW YORK — Over two days of buildup to Game 3 of the American League Division Series, the same theme was drummed repeatedly: The Red Sox faced an extremely tall order stifling the Yankees lineup in its home park. The Sox heard it, digested it, nodded, and then spent Monday night wielding a sledgehammer in the batter’s box in the House That Ruth Built.

Already up, 3-0, against Yankees starter Luis Severino entering the fourth inning, the Red Sox erupted for seven runs, tying a franchise postseason record for a single inning, en route to a 10-0 advantage and an eventual 16-1 win.

The Red Sox are now up, 2-1, in the best-of-five American League Division Series, with a chance to close out the series with a win in Game 4 on Tuesday night, with Rick Porcello slated to take the mound against CC Sabathia. The win shifted the series odds considerably. Of the 62 teams to own a 2-1 advantage in a best-of-five Division Series, 47 (76 percent) went on to advance to the League Championship Series.

Some takeaways:

- Eovaldi had his moment: Nathan Eovaldi posted a 1.93 ERA against the Yankees in four regular season starts. New York came no closer to solving his combination of a high-90s fastball at the top of the zone and a devastating cutter in Game 3.

Eovaldi kept the Yankees in the park, allowing one run over seven innings while scattering five hits (all singles). His stuff was outstanding, as he topped out at 101 miles per hour (joining Noah Syndergaard as the only starters to throw that hard in a postseason game since Statcast tracking started in 2015) with his fastball and dominated with his cutter and slider.

He averaged 98.5 m.p.h. on his fastball. He threw his cutter for strikes at will (26 of 30, 87 percent), with either no contact (four swings/misses) or bad contact (the Yankees were 0-for-6 with 6 groundouts against the pitch). And when he incorporated his slider late, it was devastating, with 8 swings and misses resulting from the 14 times he threw the pitch.

For years, teams thought Eovaldi had ace potential. On Monday, he pitched like one.

- Cora was rewarded for his flexibility: Three games into his postseason managerial career, Red Sox skipper Alex Cora has shown a willingness to be adaptable in his ways. He's changed his reliever usage, changed his starting pitcher schedule on the fly, and on Monday, he shook up the bottom of his lineup, replacing Eduardo Nunez at third with Rafael Devers, Ian Kinsler at second with Brock Holt, and Mitch Moreland (injured) at first with Steve Pearce.

Cora looked beyond specific matchup histories (poor for Devers and Holt against Severino) in search of impact. He got it.

Holt became the first player in postseason history to hit for the cycle as part of a 4-for-6 night, and the group went a combined 7 for 16 while driving in seven runs and scoring six. As a first-year manager, Cora has been confident enough to adapt his playoff player usage, and he's been rewarded for doing so.

- Boone will have questions to answer: In the fateful fourth, Boone opted a) to stick with Severino to start the inning; b) waited until the bases were loaded with no outs to summon a reliever; and c) brought in starter-turned-reliever Lance Lynn — someone who'd come in with runners on base once during the regular season — to face Mookie Betts with the bases loaded and no outs. As his decisions self-destructed, Boone played a contributing role in turning the game non-competitive.

- The Yankees are not invincible at home: The Yankees, who entered the game 7-0 at home in the playoffs in 2017-18, are now 7-1.

Call him Mr. Brocktober: It was a historic night for Brock Holt

Alex Speier

NEW YORK — Evidently, Brock Holt was ready when the opportunity was presented to him.

Holt sat out of the first two games of the American League Division Series against the Yankees. And with Luis Severino on the mound for Game 3 — a pitcher against whom Holt had a woeful 1-for-15 career line — the utility infielder wasn't particularly anticipating the text he received from manager Alex Cora on Sunday night telling him to be ready to be in the starting lineup for Game 3.

"A.C. sent me a text and said I'm playing somewhere tomorrow. He said either first base or second base," said Holt. "I don't have very good numbers against Severino, so I told — I sent him a text, and I said, 'Are you sure?'"

Yes. Yes he was. And, as a result of that decision, Holt was in position to make history in the Red Sox' 16-1 victory over the Yankees in Game 3 of the ALDS, becoming the first player ever to hit for the cycle in a playoff game, amassing a single, double, triple, and homer as part of a 4-for-6 game in which he drove in five runs and scored three times.

Holt grounded out in his first plate appearance, but bounced back with a single (first pitch of his second at-bat against Yankees starter Luis Severino to lead off the fourth inning and set in motion a seven-run frame by the Red Sox), two-run triple (also in the fourth inning, this time against reliever Chad Green), and run-scoring double (eighth inning against lefty Stephen Tarpley).

Given one last opportunity to hit when Ian Kinsler walked with two outs in the top of the ninth, Holt blasted a 79 mile-per-hour, first-pitch offering from Yankees catcher-turned-mopup man Austin Romine into the seats down the right field line for his roundtripper.

"I knew I needed a home run. I saw Romine was on the mound. So you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound," Holt said. "I told everyone, 'Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle.' I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I'd ground out to first, be out in front of something.

"But I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That's probably the first time I've ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me."

It was likewise a moment of celebration for Holt's teammates, who reveled in one of the most popular members of the team — and someone who doesn't typically occupy top billing for the club — marking his territory as the first player ever to achieve such a rarity in the playoffs.

"Something magical happened," said Mookie Betts.

"I think that's a big part that a lot of people pass on. Everyone wants to talk about the main guys on the team and the star players," added J.D. Martinez. "But . . . it's guys like that that make the difference in the game. Guys like that that need to get more credit. He did a great job today. He hit for the cycle. What is that the first time it's ever happened? That's amazing."

That blast made him the first player ever to hit for the cycle in October, though Holt had done it once before in the regular season. Even so, the accomplishment in the playoff spotlight in Yankee Stadium came with a different meaning.

"This," said Holt, "is one I'll remember for a long time."

How the Red Sox put together a seven-run fourth inning

Alex Speier

NEW YORK — The Red Sox exploded for a seven-run fourth inning against the Yankees in Game 3 of the American League Division Series, tying a franchise postseason record for their most runs in a single inning.

Though Yankees starter Luis Severino struggled in falling behind, 3-0, through three innings, New York manager Aaron Boone elected to leave him in for the fourth inning. The decision quickly proved disastrous.

Brock Holt — part of a revamped bottom of the order — led off with a first-pitch single, and advanced to second when Christian Vazquez lined a hit-and-run first-pitch fastball to right for another single.

Rather than summoning a lefty from the bullpen for Jackie Bradley Jr., Boone stuck with Severino against the lefthanded Bradley, and was rewarded with a four-pitch walk. Boone then finally made it to the mound, but opted for a surprising choice with the bases-loaded, no outs, and MVP favorite Mookie Betts due up. Rather than a reliever accustomed to coming into games with traffic, Boone brought starter-turned-long reliever Lance Lynn into the game.

Lynn missed the strike zone badly on four straight pitches to force in a run — the first postseason RBI of Betts's career — and put the Red Sox up, 4-0. They weren't done. With Lynn pumping nothing but fastballs to the plate, Andrew Benintendi ripped a three-run double down the right field line to put the Red Sox up, 7-0.

After a J.D. Martinez groundout, Xander Bogaerts followed by ripping a cutter to left for another run. (At that point, Bogaerts was 2 for 3 for the night with all three balls in play having an exit velocity of at least 100 mph.)

With the Red Sox up, 8-0, Boone again made a move, bringing Chad Green into the game. After Green got Rafael Devers to pop up to second for the second out of the inning, Steve Pearce smoked an RBI single to left and Brock Holt concluded the damage with a run-scoring triple to right.

When Christian Vazquez grounded out to end the inning with the Red Sox up, 10-0, the dust had settled on one of the biggest innings in Red Sox playoff history.

The Red Sox had three prior seven-run innings in franchise history: One in the 2004 ALDS against the Angels, one in the 2007 ALDS (also against the Angels), and a third in Game 1 of the 2007 World Series against the Rockies. Their six hits tied a team record for the most in an ALDS inning.

*** *The Boston Herald***

Nathan Eovaldi shuts down Yankees in Red Sox' 16-1 Game 3 blowout

Jason Mastrodonato

NEW YORK -- The fans near the Red Sox bullpen in Yankee Stadium were "relentless," pestering Nathan Eovaldi as he tried to warm up for the biggest game of his career.

Well, of course they were. This is October baseball. Yankee Stadium provides one of the least friendly playoff environments in the majors. That's how this works.

The Red Sox now have some starting pitchers who can handle the pressure and use hostile atmospheres to fuel their adrenaline ... and some who can't.

Eovaldi's masterful performance last night in the Red Sox' 16-1 blowout of the Yankees in Game 3 of the American League Division Series was as good as it gets this time of year.

He worked seven sharp innings on 97 pitches, allowing just one run on five singles and striking out five. He generated an astounding 17 whiffs from the potent Yankees offense. It was easily the best start by a Sox pitcher in a playoff game since 2013. They hadn't received a quality start in the postseason since John Lackey lasted 6⅔ innings in Game 6 of the World Series that year.

Now the Red Sox know Chris Sale isn't their only starter who can shine under the October lights.

"His stuff is that good," manager Alex Cora said of Eovaldi. "And one thing with him, it really doesn't matter. Like this stage, you guys saw it. It was unbelievable before the game and the first few innings, and he was just being Nate."

He threw harder than he usually does, touching 101 mph (he had done that in just one game all year) and averaging 98.7 mph on his fastball (second-hardest of the season, according to Brooks Baseball). But his command never suffered as he kept the best home run-hitting team in baseball history from going deep. And he silenced the very fans who were heckling him from the get-go.

"When you come here, you know the crowd's going to be against you," he said. "I try to turn it around and try to keep them out of it as much as possible. I know that maybe if I give up a free base or give up a couple hits in a row, the crowd's going to get back into it, and I don't want that to happen to get those guys going over on the other side."

It was the first time in four playoff games this year that Aaron Judge did not hit a home run. He was 1-for-3 with just a single off Eovaldi, who continued to dominate the Yankees. They have just one run in their past 23 innings against him.

Did Eovaldi completely change his attack plan from the previous three times he faced them since the Red Sox acquired him in July?

"No, he does the same thing," Judge said. "A good fastball, he likes to work up in the zone, and a good cutter off of that. He'll sprinkle in a curveball or splitter here and there. He's just got an electric stuff. That's why they won the pitching in Game 3 here at Yankee Stadium. He went out and did his job."

Eovaldi's first pitch of the game was a 99-mph fastball on the inside edge to Andrew McCutchen for a called strike, and he never got any worse.

Even when he made mistakes, which was rare in this one, he didn't suffer.

He left a fastball over the middle of the plate to Judge in the first inning, but at 101 mph, Judge couldn't quite get the launch angle he needed, and Mookie Betts was able to make the play on the right field warning track.

There were plenty of chances for Eovaldi to unravel, but he never did.

Not when Didi Gregorius dropped a surprise bunt attempt on him in the second inning. Eovaldi mistakenly looked to second base to get the lead runner, then was late changing his mind and throwing to first. Gregorius was ruled safe, but the call was overturned and Eovaldi escaped the jam.

And there was no sign of panic when Eovaldi slipped on the wet mound and missed a chance at an easy out to start the fourth inning. Luke Voit reached on the mistake and later scored on a groundout, but Eovaldi kept that inning from getting out of hand.

"I feel like my fastball command and my cutter were really effective tonight, and I was just trying to use their aggressiveness against them and try and get some quick outs," he said.

By the seventh, he was still touching 100 mph.

It was electric stuff that played even bigger on the postseason stage. The Red Sox will take a 2-1 series lead and a lot of momentum into Game 4 tonight, when Rick Porcello starts opposite CC Sabathia with a chance to pop champagne at Yankee Stadium for the second time in less than three weeks.

They have Eovaldi to thank, and the easiest way to express their gratitude would be to bump him up in the rotation should the Sox advance to meet the Houston Astros in the ALCS.

The Red Sox have found their No. 2 starter this postseason.

Red Sox silence Yankee Stadium in easy fashion

Michael Silverman

NEW YORK – It's no easy task to silence the Yankees bats or shut up their fans.

Last night, the most remarkable feat wasn't that the Red Sox accomplished both at Yankee Stadium.

The most amazing sight was they made it look so ridiculously easy.

The Yankees held all the cards and had all the momentum after winning Game 2 at Fenway to even the Division Series. Predictably, Yankee Stadium was in full deep-throated roar mode well before too much beer had been sold and the anthem was sung.

What happened next were the sounds of silence. Not long after the Red Sox stepped onto the field, they stomped on the Yankees' throats.

The 16-1 thumping was a major embarrassment for the pinstripes and an earnest reminder from the Red Sox that their 108 wins in the regular season were not some sort of meaningless fluke.

How could we have ever doubted them?

Up and down the respective lineups (Brock Holt hit for the cycle and had five RBI), on the mound and in the managers' seats, the Red Sox top-roped the Yankees while the home team collapsed.

With another win tonight in Game 4, the Sox can drench the Yankees' visitors clubhouse with suds in the playoffs for the first time since Game 7 of the 2004 ALCS.

It's a stretch to fathom the Red Sox dominating the Yankees here two nights in a row. But a win? After this massacre, why not?

The Red Sox shut down and shut up the Yankees. That's something.

"I knew it was going to be loud. That's something I told them a few days ago," manager Alex Cora said. "I mean, from the introductions to the first pitch ... it was alive. This place is great.

"You've just got to stay in the moment. Just don't get too overhyped because we're playing the Yankees and it's loud. Just keep it simple. Win every pitch, and tonight we did."

This one had the right feel for the Red Sox from the start – and maybe even earlier.

Mookie Betts took a ferocious swing at the very first pitch from Yankees starter Luis Severino and launched it to dead center, where Brett Gardner settled under it at the warning track. The loud out was an early warning shot that Betts was awake after being a non-factor (1-for-7) the first two games.

But a back story to the hack emerged mid-game, well after Severino had been sent to the showers by Yankees manager Aaron Boone. TBS reported Severino only warmed up for 10 minutes because he thought the game started after 8:00 instead of 7:42. After the game, Boone denied the story.

“He had plenty of warmup. He did what he intended to go down there and get done, and (pitching coach) Larry (Rothschild) said he was able to get through his normal routine, where he faces a couple hitters and everything, so it wasn't an issue,” Boone said.

True or not, Severino's stuff and command were issues in the Red Sox' favor, while his counterpart Nathan Eovaldi was a machine, methodically mowing down the Yankees inning by inning.

The Red Sox made Cora's shuffling of the lineup look magical. He replaced the lifeless bats from the first two games (Ian Kinsler, Eduardo Nunez, Sandy Leon) with Brock Holt, Rafael Devers and Christian Vazquez.

Every move was rewarded.

Vazquez singled in Devers (single) in the second inning for a 1-0 lead that was bigger than it looked. Devers had two hits and scored twice, and of course, there was Holt, the first big leaguer to ever hit for the cycle in the postseason.

One play in particular stood out in the third, when Betts went from first to third on a single to left field. Left fielder Andrew McCutchen ran in on the ball, but he did not run hard enough or fast enough. Betts appeared to slightly slow as he rounded second base, but he kicked into a high gear once he saw McCutchen's non-urgent play.

“As the ball was hit, my mindset was to try to get to third,” Betts said. “As the play unfolded, I just kept going.”

So did the Red Sox, for a long, long time, well after the fans zipped their lips and headed home.

Red Sox notebook: Brock Holt becomes first player in history to hit for cycle in playoffs

Jason Mastrodonato

NEW YORK -- Alex Cora has made a habit of keeping all 25 guys involved all year long, and he did it for moments like this.

Cora plugged three backups into the game last night, switching up his lineup after the Red Sox had scored just seven runs and hit just .213 in the first two games of the ALDS.

One of them, Brock Holt, became the first player in baseball history to hit for the cycle in a playoff game.

Holt finished 4-for-6 with a single, double, triple and finally a home run, which he hit in the ninth inning off Yankees catcher Austin Romine, who was on the mound to save the bullpen in the Red Sox' 16-1 Game 3 blowout.

“I knew I needed a home run,” said Holt, who drove in five runs altogether. “I saw Romine was on the mound. So you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, ‘Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle.’ I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I'd ground out to first, be out in front of something.

“But I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That's probably the first time I've ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me.”

Holt was benched in favor of Ian Kinsler at second base in the first two games, but Cora went with Holt against the right-handed Luis Severino.

“I found out I was playing (Sunday night),” Holt said. Cora “sent me a text and said I’m playing somewhere tomorrow. He said either first base or second base. I knew I was going to be in here. I don’t have very good numbers against Severino, so I sent him a text and I said, ‘Are you sure?’”

“(Cora) does a good job of letting the guys that don’t play every day, letting us know when we’re playing so we can kind of mentally prepare in that way. That makes a huge difference, knowing that you’re going to be in the game.”

He began the night with a productive out, moving Rafael Devers from second to third base. Devers eventually scored the first run of the game in the second inning.

But Holt made just one additional out the rest of the game.

The Sox have always been better with Holt in the lineup. Since Holt became a regular big leaguer in 2014, the Red Sox are 236-182 (.564) when he starts and 207-185 (.528) when he doesn’t. That’s about a six-win difference for 162 games.

“He’s been swinging the bat well for a while now,” Cora said. “We felt the matchup was good for him tonight, although he was 0-for-whatever coming into the game tonight against Severino. He’s been able to catch up with fastballs headed the other way, breaking balls, and pull it with power. He’s a good player.”

Kinsler, Eduardo Nunez and Sandy Leon were on the bench in favor of Devers at third base, Holt at second and Christian Vazquez behind the plate.

The Red Sox will probably go back to their Game 1 lineup tonight in Game 4, when they face left-hander CC Sabathia, though Holt might have earned another start somewhere.

MORELAND SITS OUT

Injured first baseman Mitch Moreland, who usually starts against right-handed pitching, was also out of the lineup for Steve Pearce.

Moreland hurt his hamstring running the bases in Game 2 on Saturday and was having trouble moving around on Sunday, but the Sox are hoping they won’t have to make a roster change.

“Honestly, I was very concerned,” Cora said. “Today, less concerned but still concerned. For him not to play, it’s a lot. It takes a lot. He was here yesterday. Treatment was very aggressive. Today he walked in and is like, ‘I’m all right.’ We talked a little bit. If we use him, we use him. If we stay away from him, we stay away from him. It has to be kind of like a perfect storm for him to go out there.”

Moreland has been beat up and was dealing with various ailments for much of the second half, when he saw his numbers dip dramatically after he made the All-Star team.

“It’s tough to see him that way, honestly after everything he went through through the season and taking care of him and then that happens,” Cora said of the hamstring. “It’s been going up and down, up and down. The most important thing is to be honest. That’s the most important thing. So far, he’s been honest.”

BAD CALLS ABOUND

First base umpire Angel Hernandez had a memorably bad game last night, when four of his calls at first base were challenged, and three were overturned.

Former Red Sox pitcher Pedro Martinez said on the TBS broadcast after the game, “Angel was horrible. Don’t get me going on Angel now. Major League Baseball needs to do something about Angel. It doesn’t matter how many times he sues Major League Baseball. He’s as bad as there is.”

Hernandez is scheduled to call balls and strikes tonight in Game 4.

He chose not to speak to reporters after the game, but MLB issued a statement, according to Yahoo Sports: “There were several very close calls at first base tonight, and we are glad that instant replay allowed the umpiring crew to achieve the proper result on all of them.”

PRICE AVAILABLE IN 'PEN

Cora has an idea how he'd like David Price to adjust before his next outing.

“From my experience, and this is my only experience with him, everything was blended together as far as velocity,” he said of Price's Game 2 performance, when he allowed three runs in less than two innings. “And we saw what happens early in the season when everything is together. There was some velocity. When the fastball was 93 mph and the changeup was 86 mph, he dominated. When he used his fastball in different spots he was really, really good.”

After throwing just 42 pitches in Game 2, Price told Cora he'd be fine to pitch out of the bullpen last night, but he was never used and should be available tonight for Game 4.

“We'll see how we're going to use him,” Cora said. “I talked to him today. He said he's available. He's in good spirits. We talked a little bit yesterday, just talked to him about it. We'll see how it goes. Still, he made a start two days ago. Health is very important. I know there's a point that everybody's all in, but at the same time, I have to be smart about it. He told me that he's all in, so we'll see how it goes.”

Rick Porcello ready to attack Yankees hitters in Game 4

Michael Silverman

NEW YORK — Nobody, not even Chris Sale, threw a better start this season for the Red Sox than Rick Porcello.

And while it would be unfair for Red Sox fans to expect him to throw another one-hit complete game like he tossed against the Yankees on Aug. 3, anything resembling that gem will likely send the Sox home after today's Game 4 in extremely high spirits.

So if anyone has a grasp on what it takes to tame a lineup as gifted as what the Yankees boast, it's Porcello.

“I just think attacking their hitters, that's the biggest thing,” said Porcello before the Red Sox beat the Yankees 16-1 last night in Game 3. “These guys are very good hitters. They're very well coached. They have a solid approach. If you fall behind guys, you give them the opportunity to see pitches in the strike zone. That's the only way you can get back into the count because they're disciplined and they don't chase a lot. I think attacking, being aggressive, and go from there.”

Porcello's August start was not an outlier for him against New York. He made three other starts this season and went 2-0 with a 2.31 ERA over 23 1/3 innings. In 24 appearances and 23 starts against the Yankees, including the postseason, he is 10-9 with a 3.22 ERA.

In the postseason, Porcello's record is decidedly more mixed. In his dozen career postseason appearances, he is 0-3 with a 5.33 ERA.

Obviously, the stakes could not be much higher for Porcello when he starts. He'll want to repeat his success against the Yankees and avoid his past overall postseason efforts. Plus, a win tonight will clinch the best-of-five series and send the Sox into the ALCS against Houston.

“This is what it’s all about — you get an opportunity to have the ball in Yankee Stadium, Game 4, this is the culmination of the entire season leads up to your opportunities in the postseason,” said Porcello. “So I’m definitely looking forward to that and giving us a chance to win.”

Because Porcello pitched effectively in Game 1 out of the bullpen (two-thirds of a scoreless inning), he has had a head start on flipping his postseason script.

It’s a positive and encouraging trend.

“We saw it in Game 1, and we saw it throughout the season. He’s been actually good against them,” said Sox manager Alex Cora. “At one point of the playoffs, he was going to start, regardless if it was Game 3 or 4. It just happened that he came in relief in Game 1, and we decided to give him one more day.”

Porcello sees value in everything he’s learned from all of his postseason stints, as both starter and reliever.

“I think some of my experiences in Detroit, I started postseason games in Detroit, came out of the bullpen, just seeing what transpires, especially in a short series in five games, each game is essential,” said Porcello. “I mean, it’s not a seven-game set. You’ve got to do whatever you can. If you have the lead that night, you’ve got to do whatever you can to win, and if that means starting pitchers pitching, that’s what it means.”

Cora sees every reason to have every confidence in Porcello.

“Over the course of the season, talking to him, and we have a great relationship, I think, we’re very close, the way he goes about his business and how fiery he is and how he prepares . . . this guy, he gets it,” said Cora. “So I’m very confident that, regardless of what happens today, we have the right guy on the mound tomorrow.”

*** *The Providence Journal***

Red Sox 16, Yankees 1: Eovaldi’s brilliance, Holt’s cycle power Boston

Bill Koch

NEW YORK --- In retrospect, this felt like the last time the Red Sox played a postseason game at Yankee Stadium.

Boston knocked New York’s starting pitcher out early, widened its lead against a converted member of the rotation working out of the bullpen and left the proud denizens of the Bronx generally silent in the late innings.

This wasn’t the landmark American League Championship Series of 14 years ago. But the Red Sox now sit one win from reaching that next round of the playoffs after a stunning display on Monday night.

Luis Severino and Lance Lynn played the hapless roles of Kevin Brown and Javier Vazquez, respectively, as Boston’s offense raked both men over the coals. Brock Holt bettered the grand slam cracked by Johnny Damon with the first postseason cycle in Major League history. It all added up to a 16-1 Red Sox blowout, as the majority of the 49,657 fans on hand were long gone by the inevitable finish in Game 3 of the A.L. Division Series.

“This one I’ll remember for a long time,” Holt said. “Obviously you don’t go into the game expecting to make history or do anything like that, let alone score 16 runs against a very good New York Yankees team. It was a good night.”

Boston plated a touchdown's worth of runs in the fourth inning to blow open what was a 3-0 lead. Severino retired just nine batters, Lynn was hooked after facing just four men in relief and Nathan Eovaldi was left to cut through the dangerous New York lineup with a comfortable cushion. The trade deadline acquisition from Tampa Bay was overpowering, carving his way through seven innings in his first postseason start.

"I felt like my fastball command and cutter were really effective tonight," Eovaldi said. "I was just trying to use their aggressiveness against them and just get some quick outs."

Severino was nicked for a single run in the second on an infield single by Christian Vazquez and surrendered two more in the third on a sacrifice lineout to left by J.D. Martinez and a fielder's choice grounder by Rafael Devers. He was sent back out for the fourth and left a mess for Lynn, as Holt and Christian Vazquez knocked back-to-back singles to right and Jackie Bradley Jr. walked.

Lynn promptly threw gasoline on the fire, walking Mookie Betts to force in a run and make it 4-0. Andrew Benintendi followed by adding what was the truly killer blow, lining a three-run double to the corner in right. Steve Pearce's RBI single through the left side and Holt's two-run triple to right against Chad Green were the icing on the cake, as Boston enjoyed a 10-0 lead.

"We've faced these guys so many times this year," Benintendi said. "It's kind of cat and mouse going back and forth, but we knew what our game plan was."

It was just the fourth time in a playoff inning where the Red Sox had plated at least seven runs and the second-most runs overall Boston has scored in any playoff contest. Like so many of their milestones set or matched this season, the previous reference points were teams who won championships. The Red Sox scored seven times in one frame twice in the ALDS against the Angels – Game 1 in 2004, Game 3 in 2007 – and in Game 1 of the 2007 World Series against the Rockies.

There were 329 pitches thrown by nine pitchers on Monday night, and it was Eovaldi who threw the 25 hardest. He reached or exceeded 100 mph seven times, topping out at 101.0 on a soft grounder to second by Miguel Andujar to end the second. Eovaldi allowed a lone earned run in the fourth on a Didi Gregorius fielder's choice grounder.

That's also the only run Eovaldi has conceded in four Red Sox appearances against New York this season, covering 23 innings. He threw 72 of his 97 pitches for strikes and forced 17 swings-and-misses, striking out five against no walks. Acquiring him for Jalen Beeks now looks like a masterstroke by Boston president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, one that has put the Red Sox one more victory from advancing.

"It was a special moment for me," Eovaldi said. "I don't think it's quite settled in yet. For me to pitch the way I did and for us to score as many runs as we did, it was a big game for us tonight."

Rick Porcello will take the ball to the mound in Tuesday's Game 4 with a chance to earn Boston a playoff rematch with Houston. The meeting would happen one round later than in 2017, with the Astros finishing off a sweep of Cleveland and clinching a return to the ALCS. Alex Cora was Houston's bench coach in that title-winning season, and he helped his club dispatch the Red Sox in four games in the ALDS.

Rick Porcello set to start Game 4

Bill Koch

NEW YORK — There's finally a level of certainty for Rick Porcello in this American League Division Series.

The Red Sox right-hander will start Game 4 on Tuesday night at Yankee Stadium. There will be no surprise bullpen appearances like the one Porcello made in the eighth inning of Game 1, a 5-4 victory at Fenway Park. There also won't be a decision to move up Chris Sale on short rest should the best-of-5 matchup with the Yankees and the 2018 hang in the balance.

“Especially in the short series, you’ve got to be ready for anything,” Porcello said. “I was prepared to pitch in Game 1 and I’m ready to pitch Game 4 now.”

Porcello was summoned with the Red Sox relief corps floundering and on the verge of losing a 5-0 lead on Friday. He retired the first two men he faced, then gave way to Craig Kimbrel for a four-out save after Gleyber Torres dribbled an infield single to third base. Boston manager Alex Cora called the bullpen prior to the seventh and asked for Porcello to begin throwing just in case.

“This guy, he gets it,” Cora said. “So I’m very confident that, regardless of what happens (on Monday), we have the right guy on the mound tomorrow.”

It marked the first time Porcello had pitched in a postseason win. Detroit and the Red Sox had lost in each of his first 11 appearances, including four starts. Porcello lasted just 4 1/3 innings in a 5-4 loss to Cleveland in the 2016 ALDS and three innings in a 5-4 defeat against Houston in the 2017 ALDS, one that finished Boston’s season.

With that in mind, it might have been tempting for Cora to move up Sale after just three days to recover. Friday marked the sixth start for Sale since July 27 and only the second time he’s exceeded 90 pitches. To force the left-hander back to the mound after an extended period battling shoulder inflammation seemed unlikely from the outset.

“If you ask him, he would pitch today,” Cora said. “That’s the nature of the playoffs. The mentality of all these guys is push, push, push, grind, grind, grind — the great words of Mike Lowell. But we’ve got to be smart, too.”

October isn’t generally a good time to have something in common with David Price, but in this case Porcello certainly does. As to whether or not Porcello can learn anything from their mutual struggles, he didn’t shy away from saying he’s been as much of a friend to Price following a 6-2 loss in Game 2 than he would be at any point in the season.

“It’s easy to point fingers at an individual, but over the course of any game we all have something that we can do to help us win or do better — especially when we take a loss,” Porcello said. “So none of this is ever entirely on David’s shoulders or one player.

“We can all do something better. We can score more runs. We can play better defense. We can pitch better in relief. We can do a lot of things better. It’s not just on his shoulders. We all take responsibility for wins and losses, and that’s how we move forward.”

Porcello enjoyed his finest start of the season against New York on Aug. 3, requiring just 86 pitches to craft a complete game in a 4-1 home victory. Miguel Andujar’s solo home run leading off the third inning was the only hit allowed by Porcello, who changed speeds and attacked the potent Yankees’ lineup fearlessly. His career numbers at this ballpark suggest it will be more difficult to repeat that performance, as Porcello holds a 5.56 earned-run average and has allowed 49 hits over seven starts here.

“I couldn’t think of a better spot to be in as a big-leaguer getting the opportunity to have the ball for Game 4 in Yankee Stadium,” Porcello said. “That’s what it’s all about.”

Porcello was something of a pitching prodigy growing up about an hour west of here in Morristown, N.J. He starred at Seton Hall Prep and was a first-round draft pick by the Tigers in 2007, selected No. 27 overall. Porcello was just 20 years old when he debuted for Detroit in 2009 and made his first road start against New York the following season.

“There aren’t that many people coming today or tomorrow,” Porcello said. “I have a lot of friends who are envious of the position I’m in right now. I get the opportunity to pitch against the Yankees in the postseason.”

* **MassLive.com**

Rick Porcello, Boston Red Sox ALDS Game 4 starter, has 2.31 ERA vs. Yankees, has dominated NY past 4 years

Christopher Smith

NEW YORK -- Two of Rick Porcello's best starts during the 2018 regular season came against the Yankees.

The Red Sox rightly has a chance to finish off New York on Tuesday here at Yankee Stadium. The Red Sox lead the best-of-five ALDS 2-1.

Porcello will start Game 4 opposite Yankees lefty CC Sabathia.

Porcello went 2-0 with a 2.31 ERA (23.1 innings, six earned runs) in four starts against the Yankees this regular season. New York hitters slashed .143/.209/.234/.443 against him. But he allowed five earned in 5.1 innings in his only start at Yankee Stadium.

What did he learn from his complete game?

"I just think attacking their hitters," Porcello said. "That's the biggest thing. These guys are very good hitters. They're very well coached. They have a solid approach. If you fall behind guys, you give them the opportunity to see pitches in the strike zone. That's the only way you can get back into the count because they're disciplined and they don't chase a lot. I think attacking, being aggressive, and go from there."

Porcello is 0-2 with a 5.85 ERA (13 earned runs, 20 innings) in four career postseason starts. So he has something to prove like David Price.

"This is what it's all about," Porcello said. "You get an opportunity to have the ball in Yankee Stadium, Game 4. This is the culmination of the entire season, leads up to your opportunities in the postseason. So I'm definitely looking forward to that and giving us a chance to win."

Porcello year by year vs. Yankees as a member of the Red Sox:

2015: 2 starts, 2.81 ERA (16.0 innings, 5 earned runs)
2016: 2 starts, 2.05 ERA, (22.0 innings, 5 earned runs)
2017: 4 starts, 3.24 ERA, (25.0 innings, 9 earned runs)
2018: 4 starts, 2.31 ERA, (23.1 innings, 6 earned runs)

"Rick's a bulldog," Andrew Benintendi said. "He'll go out there and compete. He doesn't care what situation he's thrown in. You saw the other night. He came in in the eighth inning. He just wants to win. We're confident in him. He goes out there, and he attacks. He's going to take it right to them. Hopefully, we can put up a good number of runs tomorrow and get out of here with a win."

Mookie Betts, Andrew Benintendi's aggressive base running shouldn't go unnoticed

Christopher Smith

NEW YORK -- The Red Sox's seventh-run, fourth-inning rally put Game 3 of the ALDS out of reach. Boston won 16-1 over the Yankees to take a 2-1 best-of-five series lead.

But don't forget about the two important runs Boston scored in the third inning thanks to the aggressive base running of Mookie Betts and Andrew Benintendi.

Betts singled to left field to begin the third. Benintendi followed by blooming a 70.6 mph single to left field.

Betts and Benintendi both took an extra base on the blooper. Betts hustled from first to third base, just beating left fielder Andrew McCutchen's throw.

Benintendi saw Betts head to third and so he sprinted to second base.

"As the ball was hit, my mindset was to try and get to third," Betts said.

Steve Pearce said, "They're gamers, man. They get after it. They're diving. They take an extra base. They're doing whatever they have to do to win. And that's why he (Betts) is the player he is. Because that's how he approaches the game. Not just tonight but every day."

Betts scored on J.D. Martinez's sac fly. Benintendi scored on Xander Bogaerts' single.

This day was all about Brock Holt who hit for the cycle and Nathan Eovaldi who allowed just one run in 7 innings.

But Benintendi played a terrific game, too. He ripped a bases-clearing double off Lance Lynn during the seven-run, fourth-inning rally to put Boston ahead 7-0.

"He had just walked Mookie on four pitches, and he threw the first pitch; it was a ball. At that point you pretty much can bank on if it's going to be a fastball, it's going to be something to hit," Benintendi said. "I fouled it off. After that, I think I swung at the next pitch out of the zone, and I was trying to stay short and just put the ball in play and hopefully get something to the outfield and at least get one run in. I hooked it down the right field line, and I was fortunate enough to keep it fair."

Statement win in Game 3 puts Sox one win away from ALCS

Chris Cotillo

NEW YORK -- Despite splitting the first two games of the ALDS at Fenway Park, the Red Sox didn't exactly inspire a ton of confidence heading into Game 3. The Game 1 win was a bit tainted with a shaky bullpen performance, David Price had choked again in a big spot and the offense sure didn't look it had during a historic 108-win regular season.

Game 3 wasn't technically a must-win for the Sox, but it had that feel. Going up against a veteran like CC Sabathia in a win-or-go-home Game 4 on the road wouldn't be ideal. Suddenly, a team that had faced almost zero pressure in six months might have felt uncomfortable.

If they did, they sure didn't show it Monday night.

Boston's 16-1 rout in Game 3 took the air out of Yankee Stadium and guaranteed the Red Sox two chances to clinch the series, with one coming at Fenway Park with Chris Sale on the mound. Nathan Eovaldi dominated the Yankees again, Brock Holt made history with the first postseason cycle ever and the Red Sox had their most meaningful postseason victory in five years.

The Red Sox downplayed the fact that they had lost home-field advantage in the series over the last 48 hours, noting that it was only one loss. Even as Aaron Judge not-so-subtly reminded them of the tough task ahead, the team remained even-keeled in search of its first road postseason win since the 2013 World Series.

"It's boring, and people kind of like don't like it, but we show up, we prepare, we play, we turn the page, and we've been doing it the whole season," manager Alex Cora said.

Cora deserves as much credit as anyone for the win, as his decision to shake up the lineup by starting Holt, Rafael Devers and Christian Vazquez paid off in a big way. Those three went 8-for-18 on the night, driving in a combined seven runs and scoring six.

Sandy Leon will almost certainly catch Rick Porcello in Game 4, but Cora will have to choose between rolling with the hot hand (Holt and Devers) or favoring platoon matchups (Kinsler and Nunez) against lefty CC Sabathia on Thursday. History suggests he'll do the latter, going against the numbers in the way October often forces one to do.

Either way, the Sox have the chance to do something that wasn't a slam dunk entering Monday. After a bit of an uneasy start to the series, they're one win away from their second champagne celebration in the Bronx in three weeks.

"It was tough today coming here 1-1," Cora said. "The only thing we know is that, if we don't win tomorrow, we have a Game 5. That's the only thing we gain today. But we've got a chance to come here and put a good game and see what happens."

Brock Holt cycle: Red Sox 2B says 'I was trying to hit a home run'

Chris Cotillo

NEW YORK -- When Brock Holt got a text from Alex Cora that he'd be in the lineup for Game 3 of the ALDS Monday night, Holt's mind immediately flashed to his lack of success against Yankees starter Luis Severino. Knowing he was 1-for-15 with six strikeouts for his career against Severino, Holt texted Cora back with concern.

"Are you sure?" Holt asked.

Cora was sure, inserting Holt at second base as one of the three lineup changes he made after the offense sputtered in Game 2. That decision was one of the keys to a 16-1 Red Sox victory Monday night, as Holt made history by becoming the first player ever to hit for the cycle in a postseason game.

"He's been swinging the bat well for a while now," Cora said. "We felt the matchup was good for him tonight although he was 0-for-whatever coming into the game tonight against Severino. He's been able to catch up with fastballs headed the other way, breaking balls, and pull it with power."

Holt came into Game 3 with just 21 career homers, including one in the ALDS against the Indians two years ago. Never known as a power threat, he said Monday night that his ninth-inning at-bat against Yankees catcher Austin Romine was the first time he had ever gone to the plate trying to hit a home run.

"You get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle," Holt said. "I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I'd ground out to first, be out in front of something."

Holt got his wish when Ian Kinsler drew a two-out walk to keep the inning going. He scooted up in the box and decided to swing at anything close with the goal of hooking it to right field. He got his wish.

"Obviously, you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to," Holt said.

With the Sox up 14-1 in the ninth, Holt let his teammates know how badly he wanted his first career cycle.

"Usually when stuff like that's going on, you don't really talk about it," Benintendi said. "Everybody knows, but they don't talk about it. Brock is going around, 'Get me up. I need a homer.' He wasn't shy about it. Everybody was rooting for him."

Holt was one of a few Red Sox to get things going offensively Monday, as six players had more than one hit in the rout. But his night was a historic one, one that he was happy that his wife and son got to see in person.

"This one I'll remember for a long time," Holt said. "Obviously, you don't go into the game expecting to make history or do anything like that, but let alone score 16 runs against a good New York Yankee team. So it was a good night overall for everyone."

Brock Holt hits for cycle, Nathan Eovaldi dominates, Boston Red Sox beat Yankees in ALDS Game 3

Christopher Smith

NEW YORK -- Brock Holt began the Red Sox's seven-run, fourth-inning rally vs. the Yankees with a single to center field. He finished it with a 102.3 mph two-run triple to right field.

That wasn't all for Holt.

The super utility man, who started at second base, became the first major leaguer ever to hit for the cycle in a postseason game. He went 4-for-6 with five RBIs and three runs.

Starting pitcher Nathan Eovaldi, meanwhile, hurled 7 dominant innings.

The Red Sox won 16-1 over the Yankees to take a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five ALDS. Game 4 is here at Yankee Stadium on Tuesday at 8:07 p.m.

Red Sox manager Alex Cora decided to shake up his Game 3 lineup against Yankees ace Luis Severino.

It worked. Everyone in the starting lineup stroked at least one hit.

Cora sat Eduardo Nunez and Ian Kinsler. He started Rafael Devers at third and Holt at second despite the two being a combined 1-for-27 with 11 strikeouts vs. Severino.

Devers and Holt combined to go 2-for-4 with an RBI and two runs vs. Severino. They went a combined 6-for-12 with six RBIs and five runs in the game.

Holt capped off his cycle with a 105.8 mph, 355-foot two-run homer to right field against Austin Romine (a position player) in the ninth.

He also hit for the cycle June 16, 2015 at home against the Braves.

The Red Sox knocked out Severino during the fourth inning. Holt and Christian Vazquez singled to begin the frame. Jackie Bradley Jr. walked to load the bases for Mookie Betts.

Yankees manager Aaron Boone replaced Severino with Lance Lynn who walked Betts on four pitches to force in a run, making it 4-0. Andrew Benintendi then ripped a 101.1 mph bases-clearing double to right field to put Boston ahead 7-0.

Steve Pearce made it 8-0 with an RBI single. Holt's two-run triple gave Boston a 10-0 lead.

Eovaldi delivers in postseason debut

Nathan Eovaldi entered with a 1.93 ERA (23.1 innings, five earned runs) in four starts against the Yankees this year.

He delivered again. The righty went 7 innings and allowed just one run, five hits and no walks while striking out five.

It marked his first postseason appearance ever.

He has allowed just one earned run in 23 innings (0.39 ERA) against the Yankees as a member of the Red Sox.

Game 4 pitching matchup

The Red Sox have a chance to finish off the Yankees on Tuesday.

RHP Rick Porcello (17-7, 4.28) will start vs. LHP CC Sabathia (9-7, 3.65).

Porcello went 2-0 with a 2.31 ERA (23.1 innings, six earned runs) in four starts against the Yankees this regular season. New York hitters slashed .143/.209/.234/.443 against him. But he allowed five earned in 5.1 innings in his only start at Yankee Stadium.

Sabathia went 1-0 with a 4.50 ERA (14 innings, seven earned runs) in three starts vs. the Red Sox this regular season. He started against them twice at Yankee Stadium, allowing five runs in 11 innings. Overall, Red Sox hitters slashed .300/.364/.483/.847 vs. him.

Andrew Benintendi, New York Yankee Killer: Red Sox outfielder continues to hit well vs. rivals

Matt Vautour

In August, Andrew Benintendi delivered a walk off single in the 10th inning to give the Boston Red Sox a dramatic walk-off win over the New York Yankees.

In Game 3 of the ALDS he didn't wait nearly that long.

Benintendi added to his reputation as a Yankee killer Monday. His fourth-inning three-run double was the highlight of the Red Sox's seven-run fourth inning that staked them to a 10-0 lead.

Benintendi hit .358 with one home run, 12 RBIs and four stolen bases against New York this season. In 44 career games, he's hit .301 with 6 home runs and 28 RBIs.

*** *RedSox.com***

Sox one win from ALCS after rout in the Bronx

Ian Browne

NEW YORK -- They were revved up and primed for a party at Yankee Stadium on Monday night. But the man who turned down the noise and reduced the pressure for his team was Nathan Eovaldi.

The flame-throwing righty -- who was bumped up a day early in a bit of a surprise move by manager Alex Cora -- mowed right through the powerful Yankees lineup in his career postseason debut while helping the Red Sox to an impressive 16-1 romp over their rivals in Game 3 of this American League Division Series. Boston now leads the series, 2-1.

"Warming up before the game, the crowd was pretty relentless down there in the bullpen area," said Eovaldi. "I think once you get going and you get that first pitch out of the way, you're able to settle down and it's just another game. You go out there and you try and attack the hitters. I was effective, I felt like, from the first pitch on, and we were able to get some quick outs and get back to the dugout."

The other headliner for the Red Sox was Brock Holt, who became the first player in postseason history to hit for the cycle. It was quite a night for Holt, who didn't play in the first two games of the series.

If you include the postseason, Holt is now the 26th player in history to hit for cycle more than once. He completed the unlikely feat by mashing a two-out, two-run homer against position player Austin Romine in the top of the ninth.

"Well, obviously, yeah, I knew I needed a home run," said Holt. "I saw Romine was on the mound. So you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, 'Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle.' I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to."

Holt's milestone was the capper on a night everything went right for the Red Sox.

Boston's 16 runs is the most lopsided road win in postseason history. The previous record was 14, done twice. In Game 5 of the National League Championship Series in 1996, the Braves beat the Cardinals, 14-0, while the Yankees beat the New York Giants, 18-4, in Game 2 of the 1936 World Series.

The outburst came on a night Cora made four lineup changes, inserting Holt, Steve Pearce, Rafael Devers and Christian Vazquez, all of whom made important contributions.

"I guess he's got the crystal ball or something, huh? I don't know. He's been doing it all year," Red Sox slugger J.D. Martinez said of his manager. "He mixes it up. I think he's got faith in everybody in here."

It was also Cora who chose to adjust from his original plan and pitch Eovaldi in Game 3 instead of Rick Porcello, who will instead get the nod in Game 4. The reason for the switch is that Porcello got two outs in relief to help Boston win Game 1. It was another move that worked to perfection for the first-year manager.

As former Yankee Eovaldi (seven innings, five hits, one run, no walks, five strikeouts) set the tone early, the Red Sox took a sledgehammer to Yankees ace Luis Severino, knocking him out in a seven-run fourth inning that gave the visitors a 10-0 lead.

"Lights-out," Martinez said. "That was honestly the performance we needed coming in here, and he stepped up and he did it."

Eovaldi (97 pitches, 72 strikes) came into this one with eight days of rest, and it showed. According to Statcast™, he fired seven pitches at 100 mph or more, the most by a traditional starting pitcher in any MLB game this season. Eovaldi, who averaged 98.5 mph on his four-seamer and topped out at 101, has allowed just one earned run over 23 innings against the Yankees since he joined the Red Sox at the end of July.

When asked what he expected out of Eovaldi in Sunday's off-day news conference, Cora somewhat lightheartedly said, "Seven innings, two hits, one run."

He wasn't far off.

"It was a special moment for me," Eovaldi said. "I don't think it's really quite settled in yet. To be able to pitch the way I did and then for us to score as many runs as we did, it was a big game for us tonight. We needed to win this one going into tomorrow. Hopefully we'll be able to clinch here tomorrow and move on to the next round."

Coming off a 6-2 loss in Game 2 that deadlocked the series, Boston stole back the momentum and reclaimed home-field advantage by putting a hurting on the Bronx Bombers in this one. The pressure is now squarely back on the Yankees, who must win Game 4 tonight to stave off elimination.

In the history of best-of-five series with the 2-2-1 format, clubs with a 2-1 lead going into Game 4 on the road have taken the series 19 of 27 times (70 percent). Of those 19 series victories, 15 ended in Game 4.

"We're very excited," said Mookie Betts. "It doesn't matter if it's at home or on the road, we just have to win one game to advance to the next round, something we haven't done in the last couple of years, so we'll be excited and ready to go."

After chipping away off Severino for a 3-0 lead through three, the Red Sox erupted with that stunning rally in the fourth to turn the game into a blowout.

In the inning, the Red Sox sent 11 batters to the plate and had six hits -- none of them homers. Holt capped the damage with a two-run triple to right to make it 10-0.

At that point, it seemed like the only thing you could hear at Yankee Stadium was the Red Sox crushing the baseball.

"You've just got to stay in the moment," said Cora. "Just don't get too overhyped because we're playing the Yankees and it's loud. Just keep it simple. Win every pitch, and tonight we did."

All nine Boston starters had at least one hit, marking the seventh time in history the club has done that in a postseason game -- and the third time it's happened in the Bronx.

Holt, who didn't play in the first two games, led the charge offensively by going 4-for-6 and driving in five. Benintendi also had three RBIs. Betts set the tone at the top with two runs, two hits and two RBIs. Xander Bogaerts, Devers and Vazquez all had multihit games as the Red Sox resembled the balanced team that won 108 games during the regular season.

"I felt like our offense, we were able to score some runs early, which made it easier for me to pitch," Eovaldi said. "I feel like my fastball command and my cutter were really effective tonight, and I was just trying to use their aggressiveness against them and try and get some quick outs."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Benintendi blows it open: The first four batters of the fourth inning had already reached when Benintendi turned a baseball game into a blowout, pummeling a three-run double down the line in right against Lance Lynn to make it 7-0. In 23 career games at Yankee Stadium, Benintendi has a .953 OPS.

"He had just walked Mookie on four pitches, and he threw the first pitch," said Benintendi. "It was a ball. I mean, at that point, you pretty much can bank on if it's going to be a fastball, it's going to be something to hit. I fouled it off. After that, I think I swung at the next pitch out of the zone, and I was trying to stay short and just put the ball in play and hopefully get something to the outfield and at least get one run in. I hooked it down the right-field line, and I was fortunate enough to keep it fair."

SOUND SMART

This was just the fourth game in postseason history to be decided by at least 15 runs, and it's the Red Sox who still hold the MLB record for run differential in a game with their 23-7 victory over the Indians in Game 4 of the 1999 Division Series.

HE SAID IT

"It was tough today coming here 1-1. The only thing we know now is that if we don't win tomorrow, we have a Game 5. That's the only thing we gain today. But we've got a chance to come here and put a good game together and see what happens. I know they trust CC [Sabathia]. We trust Rick [Porcello]. Veteran guys, they've done it for a few years. It should be fun." -- Cora

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

In the fourth, Didi Gregorius nearly hit into a 4-6-3 double play. But the Yankees challenged it, and it was overturned. A run scored on the play, and the Yankees trailed, 10-1.

UP NEXT

Porcello has a chance to pitch the Red Sox into the American League Championship Series against the Astros if he can lead his team to victory in Game 4 against the Yankees. Porcello is winless in his previous four postseason starts, going 0-2 with a 5.85 ERA. He was tremendous against the Yankees this season, going 2-0 with a 2.31 ERA in four starts. The Yankees counter with Sabathia, who has made 44 career starts against Boston (including postseason), going 18-15 with a 4.38 ERA. First pitch is set for 8:07 p.m. ET.

Holt homers in 9th for first postseason cycle

Anthony DiComo

NEW YORK -- When a baseball player is on the verge of doing something extraordinary -- a no-hitter, a four-homer game, a cycle -- his teammates tend not to speak to him. This is part of the sport's unspoken code: better to leave an artist alone than risk disrupting him.

By the ninth inning of the Red Sox's 16-1 drubbing of the Yankees in American League Division Series Game 3 on Monday night, Brock Holt was making that impossible. Holt bounced around the dugout, yelling at his teammates to give him one last crack at the plate. He urged at least one of them, any of them, to reach base.

The odds were in his favor. So thoroughly defeated over the game's first eight innings, the Yankees had turned to backup catcher Austin Romine to pitch the ninth. No one was more acutely aware of that fact than Holt, due to bat fourth with a single, a double and a triple already to his name.

"Get me up!" Holt crowed in the dugout. "I need a homer!"

"He wasn't shy about it," teammate Andrew Benintendi said. "Everybody was rooting for him."

With two outs, Ian Kinsler worked a walk, providing Holt his chance. Romine's first pitch came in at 79 mph, sinking toward the bottom of the zone. Holt abandoned all patience, all bat control, all semblance of proper technique. "I was trying to hit a home run," he said. "That's probably the first time I've ever tried to do that." When the ball landed about a half-dozen rows up the right-field grandstand, Holt grinned back to the dugout where his teammates were erupting.

With that swing, Holt completed the first cycle in postseason history and the second of his career. Finishing 4-for-6 with three runs scored and five RBIs, he led the Red Sox to a 2-1 advantage in the ALCS, as he continued the process of redefining a career that injuries nearly destroyed.

"It's a night that I'll remember," Holt said, "for a long, long time."

An All-Star for the Red Sox in 2015, Holt appeared in just 158 games the next two seasons as he battled a concussion and resulting vertigo, then ankle, oblique and shoulder injuries. As Holt's production dropped well below league average, his role on the team diminished. Then, this April, Holt began sparking, reestablishing himself as a bench bat capable of playing all four infield positions. He appeared in 109 games, batting .277. Long a favorite within the clubhouse walls, Holt was again a force on the field.

When he sat out Games 1 and 2 of the ALDS, Holt -- one of Boston's hottest hitters in September -- figured manager Alex Cora would find a lineup spot for him before long. He just didn't believe it would be Monday against Luis Severino, who had held him to one hit in 15 prior meetings.

Ignoring that, Cora texted Holt on Sunday evening, telling him he would be in the lineup.

"Are you sure?" Holt texted back.

Cora was certain, and even more so when Holt ripped a single up the middle to open Boston's 11-man, seven-run, fourth-inning rally. Later that inning, Holt tripled into the right-field corner to plate two runs.

Then, in the eighth, he doubled to center. More than three years removed from the first cycle of his career on June 16, 2015, Holt was on the cusp of doing it again.

When Romine took the mound to open the ninth, Holt began chirping to his teammates. A high school pitcher, Romine had not thrown off a mound since that time. (Asked afterward to grade his performance, he answered simply: "F.") Red Sox outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr. figured Holt had "great odds" to complete the 23rd cycle in franchise history because, in his words, "Brock's the man." Combining regular season and postseason, Holt is just the 26th player in history to hit for the cycle more than once.

Holt's performance offered no counterargument. Sitting to Holt's right in his postgame press conference, Benintendi gushed about a "great teammate" who "will do anything for you." Cora implied that all Holt needed was a return to health. At one point, Holt unclasped his smartwatch from his wrist because it was buzzing too frequently with text messages.

"To be able to do it on this stage and at this stadium and in the postseason is pretty special," Holt said. "Like I said, it was a pretty special night for me. But a pretty special night for all of us."

Porcello eager for chance to close out Yanks

David Adler

NEW YORK -- Closing out the Yankees on their home turf won't be easy. But the Red Sox will get their shot in Game 4 of the American League Division Series tonight, and they're putting the ball in the hands of the second AL Cy Young Award winner in their rotation.

Rick Porcello, pushed back a game after making a relief appearance in Game 1, will start with a chance to send the Red Sox to the AL Championship Series. Boston holds a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five series after a dominant 16-1 win on Monday night in Game 3 at Yankee Stadium.

"This is what it's all about," Porcello said on Monday afternoon. "You get an opportunity to have the ball in Yankee Stadium, Game 4, this is the culmination of the entire season -- it leads up to your opportunities in the postseason."

The Red Sox are the first team to beat the Yanks in a playoff game in the Bronx in the last eight tries. They'll look to Porcello to do it for a second straight night. It wouldn't be the first time the right-hander dominated the Yankees this season.

On Aug. 3, Porcello one-hit New York in a complete-game masterpiece. He also threw seven scoreless innings of two-hit ball to beat the Yankees on April 12.

Now, both of those wins came at Fenway Park. Pitching at Yankee Stadium can be a different animal, especially in a playoff atmosphere. In Porcello's only start in New York this season, he was knocked around for five runs in 5 1/3 innings.

And Porcello hasn't been at his sharpest in the playoffs -- he has a 5.33 ERA in 12 career postseason games, and a 5.85 ERA in the four that were starts. Porcello's only quality start in the playoffs came with the Tigers in 2011.

But unlike David Price, his Cy Young Award rotation-mate who also has a rocky postseason history -- and who was roughed up in by the Yankees in Game 2 -- Porcello at least has recent success against the Yanks to lean on.

"Rick's a bulldog," Andrew Benintendi said. "He doesn't care what situation he's thrown in. You saw the other night, he came in in the eighth inning. He just wants to win. We're confident in him. He goes out there, and he attacks. He's going to take it right to them."

Porcello will also be pitching with a fully rested bullpen behind him, as Nathan Eovaldi's seven-inning effort and the lopsided result in Game 3 allowed Boston's key relievers to get a night off.

And even if Porcello falters in tonight's matchup against CC Sabathia, the Red Sox would have Chris Sale - also fully rested, and already having beaten the Yankees in Game 1 -- lined up to pitch a winner-take-all Game 5 at Fenway Park.

"The only thing we know is that if we don't win tomorrow, we have a Game 5. That's the only thing we gain today," manager Alex Cora said after Game 3. "But we've got a chance to come here and play a good game, and see what happens. I know they trust CC. We trust Rick. Veteran guys, they've done it for a few years. It should be fun."

*** *WEEI.com***

Nathan Eovaldi made a few people look pretty smart

Rob Bradford

NEW YORK -- It has been too easy to say this Nathan Eovaldi thing was a mistake.

While the Red Sox have been thirsting for bullpen help, having had to lay in the bed Dave Dombrowski made them at the trade deadlines, there was Eovaldi.

He had left a great first impression. A really bad one for the next few weeks. And, finally, something palatable in his final few starts to make a postseason appearance acceptable in the eyes of those deconstructing what the Red Sox might be working with in their American League Division Series against the Yankees. According to Dombrowski, the pitcher had been the priority. But through it all, it was an existence that didn't seem like it should be prioritized.

Well, as Dombrowski wheeled his bag toward the bus following the Red Sox' 16-1, Game 3 win over the Yankees, he would have been in his rights to offer one last chuckle. It could have been his last laugh. Thanks to Eovaldi's night, the president of baseball operations probably deserved it.

"Starting Game 3 in New York, we thought he could handle those situations. We talked a lot about him," Dombrowski told WEEI.com. "We didn't know we would play the Yankees but he had pitched in New York before so he had been part of a playoff-type of atmosphere. He always handled it. Our review on his makeup for anybody we talked to was that he was a solid guy who didn't get shaken by any situation. We felt comfortable he could handle it."

They figured right.

The pitcher who conducts virtually every interview in a Red Sox t-shirt and dress pants, while offering little in the way of an elevated decibel level, offered ace-like stuff against the Yankees. The biggest game brought the biggest performance. The intestinal fortitude matched the 100 mph fastball and a wipeout slider. Seven innings. One run. Five hits Five Strikeouts. No walks. And a defining moment for himself, the guy who traded for him and the manager and coaches who decided this was the right guy at the right time.

"The overall success he's had against (the Yankees) this year. Power stuff. Regardless if it was Nate or Rick (Porcello), we trusted them. We trust both of them. We felt it was a perfect time for him to pitch this time," said Red Sox pitching coach Dana LeVangie. He added, "First playoff game, but he's the same guy regardless of who he's facing. In control. The atmosphere makes no difference. That's the way he is. His ability to communicate in between innings, during warmups, whatever it is. He's comfortable where he's at. ... I think any time going into a game there are nerves about everything. I'm sure he had them too. You just think about the stuff, the success he's had against them this year. It's a perfect scenario."

The debate about the deadline might rage on, and that's fair.

We still don't know if the Red Sox have enough in the bullpen for the long haul, and certainly, the lack of activity at trading-time when it came to getting relief help continues to seem uncomfortable. But now the Red Sox have this performance from Eovaldi, it's fair to ask if he actually should have been at the top of the to-do list.

Who knows if he can repeat it against the Astros if the Red Sox advance. And perhaps this is largely a product of the match-up that the Yankees offered. But it is what it is.

Dombrowski traded for a guy who stepped on the Yankee Stadium mound with the season on the line, shut down baseball's most powerful lineup and shut up an overly-confident Bronx crowd. It's hard to imagine that wasn't worth Jalen Beeks.

"I keep going back with this whole thing, 'Who do you want? You want (Mets ace Jacob) deGrom?' 'Yeah.' But okay, if he's not available, then you go after the second-best stuff available," LeVangie said. "Nate was the guy: Power stuff, maybe he doesn't get the swing and misses, but it will sure play against everybody if we just get him to throw the right way. It's a great matchup for him."

He hit 101 mph, got 17 swings and misses on eight of his 14 sliders and finished his 2018 against the Yankees (while pitching in a Red Sox uniform) with a 0.39 ERA in 23 innings.

That seems like a pitcher we can now say is worth prioritizing.

As Cora summed it up after the game, "He was just being Nate."

Brock Holt on first postseason cycle in baseball history: 'This one I'll remember for a long time'

John Tomase

Babe Ruth never did it. Ted Williams never did it. Neither did Mickey Mantle, David Ortiz, Joe Morgan, Derek Jeter, or Mr. October himself, Reggie Jackson.

Brock Holt? Well that's another story.

On Monday night, the Red Sox demolished the Yankees, 16-1, to win Game 3 of the American League Division Series. As if the margin of victory wasn't historic enough, real history was made when Holt lined a pitch from catcher (it was that kind of night) Austin Romine into the left field seats in the ninth inning for a two-run homer that completed the first cycle in postseason history.

"This one I'll remember for a long time," Holt told reporters. "Obviously, you don't go into the game expecting to make history or do anything like that, but let alone score 16 runs against a good New York Yankee team. So it was a good night overall for everyone. Like I said, this is one I'll remember for a long time, and hopefully we can carry this over into tomorrow."

Holt singled and tripled as part of a seven-run fourth, added a ground-rule double in the eighth, and completed the second cycle of his career with the home run in the ninth. All told, he went 4-for-6 with five RBIs.

"I knew I needed a home run," Holt said. "I saw Romine was on the mound. So you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle. I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I'd ground out to first, be out in front of something. But I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That's probably the first time I've ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me."

Holt also hit for the cycle vs. the Braves in 2015. His teammates love him.

"He plays every position and just finds a way to get on the field and he shows you why he belongs on the field by doing stuff like that today," Mookie Betts told reporters. "I'm super happy for him. It's a first that's going to definitely be tough to beat. I'm not sure what those odds are, but whoever got it is a rich man for sure."

Red Sox pulverize Yankees because that's how they've responded to adversity all year

John Tomase

In case you had any doubts, these officially aren't last season's Red Sox.

They didn't win 108 games by hyperventilating after every tough loss, though that was easy to forget after the Yankees teed off for a 6-2 victory at Fenway Park in Game 2 of the American League Division Series on Saturday. David Price stunk, Aaron Judge and Gary Sanchez put the bomb in Bronx Bombers, and the Yankees returned to New York with a chance to close out the series.

Fat chance, as it turns out.

With Brock Holt hitting for the cycle, Nathan Eovaldi routinely hitting 100 mph, and the offense exploding for 10 runs by the end of the fourth inning, the Red Sox regained control of the series with a 16-1 victory that guarantees, at worst, a return to Boston if they fail to finish things off on Tuesday in Game 4.

"Special night and a good night all around for the Red Sox," Holt told reporters. "Hopefully, we can carry this over."

We shouldn't be surprised, because this is who the Red Sox were all year. Not only did they never lose more than three straight, they dropped consecutive games only 15 times. Time and again they answered the call, starting practically from day one.

After the bullpen blew the opener in Tampa, the Red Sox responded with the kind of run that would define their season, winning 16 of their next 17 to establish themselves as the best team in baseball. They similarly dominated after dropping two of three in New York at the start of July, winning their next 10 and 30 of their next 36 to take control of the division en route to a franchise record for wins.

We believed they were better than the last two clubs to bow meekly in the first round after consecutive division titles, but we needed to see them do it in the playoffs to believe, and now we have. Every regular recorded at least one hit as the Red Sox shook off the disappointment of Game 2 by putting the Yankees on blocks and stripping them for parts.

"I know a lot of people got caught up in Game 2, but it was a 3-1 game in the sixth inning," manager Alex Cora told reporters. "Just one good swing by Gary and it was 6-2. We show up every day. That's the thing about this team. It's boring, and people kind of like don't like it, but we show up, we prepare, we play, we turn the page, and we've been doing it the whole season. We'll do it tonight, and tomorrow we'll show up and be prepared and play again.

"It was tough today coming here 1-1. The only thing we know is that, if we don't win tomorrow, we have a Game 5."

The Red Sox scored their runs the old-fashioned way, working eight walks and pounding 18 hits, all but five of them singles and more than one of the infield variety. The Red Sox didn't homer until Holt concluded his second career cycle with a two-run shot off of catcher Austin Romine in the ninth, but they didn't have to, not with Rafael Devers and Andrew Benintendi stealing bases and Mookie Betts taking an aggressive first-to-third on a soft single to left field when the result remained in doubt.

The Red Sox demonstrated why they were the best team in baseball, with Holt, Christian Vazquez and Devers joining the lineup to record eight hits and drive in seven runs, and the unheralded Eovaldi maintaining his mastery of his former team over seven outstanding innings.

Unlike the last two years, when the Red Sox wilted in the face of postseason adversity, this time they responded. Mookie Betts, limited to one hit in the first two games, singled twice, walked, took that extra base, and scored two runs. J.D. Martinez drove in two. Holt recorded the first cycle in postseason history.

On the mound, Eovaldi delivered seven strong innings, sparing the bullpen another night of heavy usage after it combined to throw 11 innings in the first two games. He was never seriously threatened while allowing five hits and striking out five.

"I felt like our offense, we were able to score some runs early, which made it easier for me to pitch," Eovaldi said. "I feel like my fastball command and my cutter were really effective tonight, and I was just trying to use their aggressiveness against them and try and get some quick outs."

At this point we should we note that we know where the Red Sox are headed next if they survive, and the challenge that awaits won't be easy. The defending-champion Astros swept the Indians on Monday and are realistically the best all-around team in baseball, even without 108 wins.

They're fearless, they're experienced, and they're healthy. Should the Red Sox get that far, Houston will represent the toughest challenge of the season.

It's entirely possible the Red Sox lose that series. But as Monday night reminded us, they won't go down without a fight.

*** *NBC Sports Boston***

As Red Sox dominate Game 3, a separator emerges: contact

Evan Drellich

NEW YORK — Wake up the Bambino and ask him to sign the deed transfer, because Yankee Stadium has been annexed by Boston.

Xander Bogaerts' jump-throw in the hole from short to end the most lopsided postseason defeat in Yankees history was the final nail, the bolt that secured the Red Sox' flag in the Bronx.

Brock Holt had already hit for the cycle on Monday night, the first major leaguer to pull off that feat on a playoff stage. Nate Eovaldi, a former Yankees pitcher, had already thrown one of the best games of his career and shut down the greatest home run hitting team of all-time. Then, at the end of a 16-1 trouncing, here was Boston's own No. 2 — a kid who grew up idolizing Derek Jeter and has become a complete shortstop himself — politely mimicking Jeets' signature move.

"In a playoff game," Bogaerts said of the win, "It's probably one of the best feelings besides the last game of the World Series."

For as great as Eovaldi was, the night was about offense. Because if there is one thing to be seen in Monday's win that can be set in motion the rest of October, it lies within the lineup, and one potentially mammoth separator between the Sox and Yanks.

When Monday began, there were four American League contenders left. Three of them ranked atop the major leagues in one category: contact rate. The Indians were the best anywhere, at 80.6 percent in the

regular season. They're gone now, swept by the Astros, who were second at 79.9 percent. In third place? The Red Sox at 79.3 percent.

Consider this: Before Holt homered off Austin Romine in the ninth inning, the Sox were in position to become just the third team in postseason history to score at least 14 runs without a homer. For as valuable as the long ball is — and that value should not be minimized — so too is the ability to win with a pass-the-baton order.

The Yankees? They weren't fourth in the majors in contact rate, or fifth or 10th or 15th. They were 24th, at 75.7 percent.

All or nothing is a fair criticism of the Yanks lineup, and it might be the weakness the Sox wind up exploiting if they advance.

The Sox lineup, the one that scored more runs per game than anyone in the regular season, was quiet against Masahiro Tanaka in Game 2. Really, it had been tame since the middle of Game 1. Then on Monday, the Sox took it to Aaron Boone's most dangerous pitcher — or at least their hardest throwing — Luis Severino.

They didn't do it with the long ball, but with a steady stream of contact against a pitcher who tore up the A's in the Wild Card game her last week.

"Against Tanaka, we got a little overaggressive, swinging at a lot of pitches out of the zone," Bogaerts said. "Tanaka was throwing some balls close to the zone but balls. Even myself, I think I was a little bit overaggressive. But tonight, I think we settled down pretty nice. We worked the count. His pitch count was pretty up."

In Division Series play, the Sox have the highest percentage of balls in play of any team, at 19.7 percent. The Yankees are third lowest, at 15.8. The Indians finished at 15 percent.

Highlights from the Sox's Game 3 win

The Dodgers, who have advanced to the NLCS, were last at 13.9 percent. There are different ways to win.

"I think they both can strike, can strike big," said Hyers, who was with the Dodgers as they went to Game 7 of the World Series last year. "We can score a lot of different ways. But if you're comparing the two, I mean, they can strike. They can put up a three-spot in a hurry and this club can do the same thing."

Whether the Yankees can do it the same way the Red Sox can, without the long ball, might be what pushes the Sox to the next round.

Three Strikes: Red Sox silence Yankee Stadium in 16-1 blowout

Evan Drellich

NEW YORK — The Red Sox romped in a pivotal Game 3 of the American League Division Series on Monday night, pushing the Yankees to the brink with a 16-1 win and setting up a potential clincher that would send the Sox to the Championship Series on Tuesday. The Astros await the winner of this series after finishing off a sweep of the Indians in the other ALDS on Monday.

Highlights from the Sox' Game 3 win over the Yankees

Here are three takeaways from a thorough Sox win in the Bronx:

1. What a thrashing. What a night for Red Sox fans to soak in. Yankee Stadium was empty by the eighth inning. Brock Holt, seeing his first action of the postseason, hit a home run off Austin Romine in the ninth. That's Austin Romine, the catcher. The homer gave Holt a cycle, the second of his career, after one in the regular season in 2016. He's the first player in major league history to hit for the cycle in a playoff game.

How's this for a measure of how dominant the Sox offense was: if Holt had not homered in the ninth inning, the Sox may have become just the third team in major league history to score at least 14 runs in a postseason game without a home run. The most runs any team has scored in a postseason game without a homer is 15.

2. Nate Eovaldi was still throwing 100 and fooling Yankees hitters in the seventh inning Monday night in a dominant performance that made Luis Severino look juvenile in comparison. Eovaldi's night also meant the shaky Sox bullpen never even had to enter the equation. Eovaldi was efficient and dominant, garnering a gentle wave from a baffled Gleyber Torres in the seventh for a swinging strike. For just the third time in his career, Eovaldi went at least seven innings, allowed one run or fewer and walked none. His line: seven innings, five hits, one run, no walks and five strikeouts on 97 pitches. The only two other times were both in July, once with the Rays, once with the Red Sox. One of Eovaldi's best traits is his ability to keep the ball in the park, and the Yanks never got anything going, never mind hit a home run.

3. Aaron Boone's management of the fourth inning was terrible, but Boston also deserves huge credit for cashing in on an opportunity. The Sox already had a 3-0 lead and Luis Severino did not look sharp. It would have been defensible to pull Severino before the start of the frame, but, with the Nos. 7-9 hitters due up for the Sox, waiting until the top of the order was also defensible. The problem is that once Holt and Christian Vazquez singled on consecutive pitches, both fastballs, Boone didn't have someone ready for Jackie Bradley Jr. Bradley may be inconsistent, but he has pop, and in this case, drew a walk on four pitches as Severino simply lost command. On came righty Lance Lynn with the bases loaded and none out — a ridiculous ask for any pitcher, never mind someone nowhere near the top of the totem pole and who is not a strikeout specialist. The results were predictable and the Red Sox, to their credit, capitalized in a way the Yankees did not in, say, Game 1. The Sox scored seven runs in the frame and sent 11 men to the plate, going up 10-0. Why Boone didn't make a move sooner to get Severino out of the game, and why Lynn was the choice, will linger if the Sox win the series.

Bonus: Angel Hernandez, one of baseball's most disliked umpires, may have had the worst night of all at first base. Four of his calls were challenged, and three of them were overturned. Hernandez calls have been overturned more frequently during the regular season as well, per ESPN's Mark Simon.

Hernandez is to be behind the plate in Game 4 of the American League Division Series on Tuesday, with Rick Porcello scheduled to pitch for the Red Sox and CC Sabathia for the Yankees.

Alex Cora: Chris Sale over Rick Porcello in Game 4 not in consideration

Evan Drellich

NEW YORK — Chris Sale is not in consideration to start Tuesday's Game 4 of the American League Division Series, even if the Sox lose in Game 3 and face a must-win game in the best-of-five series, manager Alex Cora said. A loss in Game 3 would put the Red Sox down two games to one.

"No, no, no," Cora said.

Rick Porcello is scheduled to start.

"This is what it's all about," Porcello said. "You get an opportunity to have the ball in Yankee Stadium, Game 4, this is the culmination of the entire season leads up to your opportunities in the postseason. So I'm definitely looking forward to that and giving us a chance to win."

Sox more annoyed by Judge's bat than his music

The more rest for Sale, historically, the better — even without consideration for his recent bout with bursitis in his left shoulder.

He's made just one start on short rest in his major league career, in 2012 with the White Sox, allowing three runs in five innings. That was on three days rest after he pitched one inning in relief three days earlier — not after a start. So he's never technically made two starts with fewer than normal rest in between.

Sale did pitch in relief on three days rest in last year's Division Series, throwing 4 2/3 innings and allowing two runs against the Astros in the decisive Game 4 loss for the Sox.

Sale has a lifetime regular season ERA of 3.01 on a normal four days rest and 3.22 on five days rest. When he's had six days of rest or more, he has a 1.67 ERA.

Cora didn't make Sale pitching in relief in Game 4 seem likely either.

"I think that's a great question, but if you ask him, he'll pitch today," Cora said. "That's the nature of the playoffs. The mentality of all these guys is push, push, push, grind, grind, grind, in the great words of Mike Lowell.

"But we've got to be smart too. We've got other guys we feel can do the job. Some guys that stepped up two days ago that it was good to see. Joe [Kelly], and even Heater [Heath Hembree], they attacked them the right way and we got some outs."

The guy slated to have the ball, the 2016 Cy Young winner Porcello, said that going right after the Yankees is essential.

"Attacking their hitters. That's the biggest thing," the righty said. "These guys are very good hitters. They're very well coached. They have a solid approach. If you fall behind guys, you give them the opportunity to see pitches in the strike zone. That's the only way you can get back into the count because they're disciplined and they don't chase a lot. I think attacking, being aggressive, and go from there."

*** *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

Brock Holt makes baseball history with cycle

Sean McAdam

NEW YORK — Baseball players are generally loathe to acknowledge trying to hit a home run — for good reason.

First, it's considered bad form. Secondly, it's not easy to accomplish.

But Brock Holt made no secret about his intentions in the ninth inning. Holt had already singled and tripled — in the same inning, no less — and doubled in the eighth.

He needed a homer to achieve the cycle. And thanks to the Red Sox' gaping, double-digit lead in the ninth, the Yankees have waved the white flag by having catcher Austin Romine pitch the ninth.

In defiance of baseball custom, Holt actively campaigned for the opportunity.

"Usually when stuff like that's going on," said Andrew Benintendi, "you don't really talk about it. Everybody knows, but they don't talk about it. Brock is going around, 'Get me up.' He wasn't shy about it."

"I saw Romine was on the mound," recounted Holt, "so you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, 'Get me up — I need a home run for the cycle.' I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I'd be out in front of something and ground out to first."

But on this night, Holt could do no wrong. He moved up in the box a bit and got a 79 mph slider from Romine and hooked it down the line, taking aim at the short right-field porch at Yankee Stadium. The ball cleared the wall, and Holt had, in order: his homer, his cycle, and a place in the record books.

Turns out, no one had ever before hit for the cycle in the postseason game.

“Obviously, you don’t expect to hit a home run,” said Holt after the Red Sox 16-1 rout of the Yankees. “But I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That’s probably the first time I’ve ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me.”

It was particularly unexpected since Holt couldn’t get himself into the starting lineup for the first two games of the ALDS. But with Ian Kinsler struggling offensively, Holt was notified Sunday night that he would be in the lineup Monday night — despite an inglorious track record (1-for-15) against New York starter Luis Severino.

“I sent (manager Alex Cora) a text and said, ‘Are you sure?’” revealed Holt.

The night was a career high for Holt, who battled concussion issues for each of the past two seasons. Last season, fighting through the after-effects, Holt lost his ability to drive the ball, with just six extra-base hits — all doubles — in 140 at-bats.

Earlier this spring, Holt was quizzed by reporters after a game in Port Charlotte, Fla. who wanted to know if he felt he was in danger of making the team. Holt was sufficiently worried enough to seek out a meeting with Cora the next day to inquire about his job security.

Holt enjoyed a nice bounce-back season in 2018 and seemed to save his best for last in September, finishing with four homers in his final 14 games. That was enough to gain the confidence of Cora and with Kinsler scuffling, he called on Holt to start Game 3.

“He’s been swinging the bat well for a while now,” said Cora. “We felt the matchup was good for him tonight although he was 0-for-whatever coming into the game against Severino. He’s been able to catch up with fastballs headed the other way, breaking balls, and pull them with power.

“He’s a good player.”

He’s also a popular teammate, thanks to his habit of handing out celebratory hugs in the dugout and for his ability to contribute whenever — and wherever — he’s asked.

“I think,” said Benintendi, “if you ask anybody on our team, Brock does a lot, a lot more than people see. He’s a great teammate and he’ll do anything for you. So, I think everybody in our clubhouse is glad that he’s on our side.”

“It’s a night that I’ll remember for a long, long time,” said Holt.

With some help from the record book.

Nathan Eovaldi deftly fills void left by David Price’s high-priced flop

Greg A. Bedard

Well, that was the best \$731,204 the Red Sox have spent in some time.

Two days after watching David Price, their Thirty-plus Million Dollar Man, need to be rescued after less than two innings at home in an eventual 6-2 Game 2 loss to the Yankees, the Red Sox sent one of their trade deadline additions, journeyman Nathan Eovaldi, to the mound at Yankee Stadium.

Talk about pressure. The Red Sox had just been outscored 10-2 since the third inning of Game 1. The Yankees were undefeated in their last seven home playoff games. Eovaldi was opposed by the Yankees' ace, Luis Severino. And the Red Sox could ill-afford to drop another game to New York with the prospect of a do-or-die Game 4 on Tuesday night.

After the Red Sox went quietly in the top of the first inning, Eovaldi took the mound against the Yankees and a raucous crowd and dispatched New York in order in 12 pitches.

That was just a harbinger of things to come, as Eovaldi went seven strong innings, allowing just five hits and one run, while throwing 97 pitches (72 strikes).

Pressure? What pressure?

“One thing with him, it really doesn't matter,” Alex Cora said. “Like this stage, you guys saw it. It was unbelievable before the game and the first few innings, and he was just being Nate. ... Pitching in Tampa or pitching in Fenway or pitching in Yankee Stadium, he knows his stuff is good, and it's just about executing, throwing strikes, and letting the defense do the job. ... We trust the guy. His stuff is that good.”

Heading into the trade deadline, everyone knew the Red Sox needed bullpen help, and they still do judging by Game 1. But as the relievers they eyed kept getting picked off by other clubs, the Red Sox decided — partially because they were dealing with injuries at the time to starters Steven Wright and Eduardo Rodriguez — to make a deal for Eovaldi about a week before the deadline.

“We've had some starting pitching injuries; he gives us depth in that regard,” Dave Dombrowski said at the time. “He also can be a guy that can slip into the bullpen as time goes on. He's been a very effective pitcher. Also, he's been part of a pennant race in the AL East, he's pitched in New York. There's a lot of things we like about him. ... This is a big need for us. It gives us an extra arm that we really like.”

The Red Sox may not have quite envisioned a night like Monday playing out the way it did, but score one for Dombrowski. Eovaldi had 17 swings and misses (eight on his 15 devastating sliders) in Game 3, and he finished this season with an 0.39 ERA against the Yankees in 23 innings with the Red Sox. He hit 101 mph and his 88th pitch of the night registered 100 mph.

“It was outstanding, efficient, great stuff from the get-go, using the fastball in different spots and mixing up breaking balls and his splitter,” said Cora. “He's been great against them the whole season, and that was good to see tonight.”

“He's obviously been tough on us all year,” said Yankees manager Aaron Boone. “Once he got the lead, he just continued to pound the strike zone. The cutter was a factor. He mixed in some breaking balls and some splits but was able to locate and elevate his four-seam fastball. It seemed like he mixed in some two-seamers as well, which isn't something he does a lot of. It seemed like that anyway from the side. But he once again was an issue for us.”

Eovaldi's teammates knew what kind of performance they were witnessing.

“Man, he was huge putting all those zeros,” said Mookie Betts. “They struggled to put together an inning and that's huge. We came out and swing the bat well and gave him some confidence, but I don't think he really needed it.”

Said J.D. Martinez: “Lights out. Lights out,. Honestly, that's the performance that we needed coming in here, and he stepped up and he did it. ... He's been pretty tough on (the Yankees). When the guy's throwing 100 with the kind of movement he's getting on pitches, it's not fun to hit.”

After recovering from his second Tommy John surgery, Eovaldi made his first start in nearly two years on May 25 for the Rays. His last start before that surgery was on Aug. 10, 2016 — for the Yankees.

“It was a special moment for me,” Eovaldi said. “I don’t think it’s really quite settled in yet. To be able to pitch the way I did and then for us to score as many runs as we did, it was a big game for us tonight.”

“I’ve always enjoyed pitching here. I feel like that’s just baseball. Having the crowds, it’s a fun baseball atmosphere. When you come here, you know the crowd’s going to be against you. I try to turn it around and try to keep them out of it as much as possible. I know that, maybe if I give up a free base or give up a couple hits in a row, the crowd’s going to get back into it, and I don’t want that to happen to get those guys going over on the other side. Try to make it a game within itself, and try and get the guys out as fast as possible and keep the crowd out of the game.”

Mission accomplished. On a budget too.

BSJ Game Report: Red Sox 16, Yankees 1 – Everybody hits, especially Holt, in historic blowout

Sean McAdam

Cora the soothsayer: Manager Alex Cora remade his lineup for Game 3, inserting four new players who hadn’t started in the series. He went with Rafael Devers over Eduardo Nunez and got two hits, two runs scored and an RBI. He chose Christian Vazquez over Sandy Leon and was rewarded with two hits, two more runs and an RBI. He had Steve Pearce at first, which resulted in a run-scoring single. And last but hardly least, he opted for Brock Holt at second instead of Ian Kinsler and Holt became the first player in baseball history to hit for the cycle in a postseason game. Not a bad night for the manager. “We have depth,” said Pearce, “and when you have that many options, I’m sure it’s a good feeling for Alex.”

Eovaldi comes through: Originally slated to pitch Game 4, Nathan Eovaldi was moved up a day to provide an additional day for Rick Porcello who pitched out of the bullpen in Game 1. It worked perfectly, as Eovaldi pitched seven innings, allowing just one run on five hits with no walks and five strikeouts. In four appearances against the Yankees this season, Eovaldi has allowed one earned run in 23 innings. “He’s been great against them the whole season,” said Cora, “and that was good to see tonight.” Eovaldi was efficient, needing more than 15 pitches in an inning just once — in the first inning. He also finished strong, retiring the last six hitters he faced and 11 of the last 12.

Sox took crowd out early: Before Game 3, there was plenty of talk of how loud the crowd would be at Yankee Stadium, and indeed, in the minutes before the game, they made themselves heard, roundly booing every member of the Red Sox roster except David Price, whom they serenaded with a mock cheer. But when the Sox went ahead 1-0 in the second, it subdued them some. When they added two more in the third, it further took them out. And with the Yankees unable to get anything going against Eovaldi — who faced two hitters over the minimum in the first three frames — the ballpark was hushed with the Red Sox’ big seven-run fourth. “It was huge,” said Pearce. “That was part of the game plan — to get the crowd silent and then obviously, you’re doing good things.”

TURNING POINT

The Red Sox led 3-0 in the fourth inning, but given the power of the Yankee lineup and the Red Sox’ bullpen issues, that was hardly insurmountable. But after Mookie Betts drew a bases-loaded walk to make it 4-0, Andrew Benintendi laced a double into the right-field corner, clearing the bases and upping the lead 7-0, putting the game effectively out of reach.

TWO UP

Mookie Betts: After a quiet Game 2, Betts hit the first pitch of the game 400 feet to the warning track, setting the tone even though the ball was caught. He later had two singles, a walk and two runs scored.

Andrew Benintendi: He reached in four straight plate appearances from the third through the seventh, highlighted by a bases-clearing double in the fourth that blew the game wide open.

ONE DOWN

Eduardo Rodriguez: On a night where everything went right, it's difficult to find anything negative. But let's go with the guy who walked a batter with two outs in the ninth of a 15-run game.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"No choice but to flush."

— Aaron Boone on his team's lopsided loss.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

When Austin Romine entered the game in the top of the ninth, it marked only the second time in MLB history that a position player pitched in a postseason game.

The 16 runs marked the second-most number of runs scored by the Red Sox in the franchise's postseason history. They won 23-7 in Game 4 of the 1999 ALDS against Cleveland.

This was the first postseason road win for the Red Sox since the 2013 World Series in St. Louis.

The five RBI by Holt were the most by a Red Sox player in the postseason since Dustin Pedroia had five in Game 7 of the 2007 ALCS against Cleveland.

The seven runs in the fourth tied a franchise record for most runs in an inning in the post-season. They had one so three times previous.

UP NEXT

The Red Sox and Yankees meet in Game 4 of the ALDS at 8:07 Tuesday night, with RHP Rick Porcello (17-7, 4.28) vs. LHP CC Sabathia (9-7, 3.65).

* *The Athletic*

Brock Holt's hot streak continues, and it all started by borrowing Mookie Betts' bat

Jen McCaffrey

NEW YORK – The path to Brock Holt's historic night in the Bronx on Monday began exactly two months ago in the fifth inning of a game in Toronto with Mookie Betts' bat.

The Red Sox utility man had been mired in a slump entering that Aug. 9 game. He'd started off the season hot with a .298 average and .795 OPS through the end of June after spending much of the previous year on the disabled list dealing with a concussion and its lingering symptoms.

But from the beginning of July to early August, Holt was hitting .179 with just three of his 15 hits in that stretch coming for extra bases.

So when the Red Sox arrived in Toronto, Holt looked for a change.

"I was slumping and I needed something different," Holt said Monday as he exited the press conference room in the bowels of Yankee Stadium, less than hour after hitting for the first cycle in postseason history in Boston's 16-1 win in Game 3 of the American League Division Series.

That game in Toronto started out like many others with Holt grounding out in the first inning and then striking out in the third. So before his fifth-inning at-bat he had an idea.

"I said, 'Hey Mookie, can I use one of your bats?'" Holt recalled. "He said, 'Sure,' and I got a hit and kept using it."

It was an RBI single that day and a 3-for-4 day the next game. The hits kept coming. What had been a .253 average on Aug. 9 ended up at .277 by the final game of the season thanks to Holt hitting .337 with a 1.017 OPS in the final 35 games. He exclusively used the same bat in that stretch.

But it wasn't just about borrowing a bat from a guy who could win the American League Most Valuable Player award. Betts' bat was different. He uses an Axe Handle bat, a different style with an angled handle instead of a rounded knob. Baden Sports developed the concept and collaborated with a major-league approved bat company, Victus, to produce the MLB certified models of the Axe Bat.

Betts had been using them since 2015. Dustin Pedroia has used them as well as Blake Swihart and Sandy Leon. The Houston Astros' George Springer also uses the Axe bat.

Betts gave Holt two of his own Axe bats after he kept borrowing from the Sox leadoff hitter.

"I'm still using the same two that (Betts) gave me," Holt said on Monday. "Things weren't going well. Changed something up and why not use one of Mookie's bats because they seem to work for him?"

Red Sox hitting coach Tim Hyers smiled remembering the game in Toronto where things changed for Holt.

"Mookie Betts has been using (the Axe bat) forever and you know how us hitters are," Hyers said. "Things weren't going his way and he's like, 'I'm trying something new, Mookie grab me your bat.' I just remember talking to him in the tunnel like, 'Mookie I'm using your bat,' and it felt good and he started using it and the rest is history. He's gone off. Brock's a good hitter, obviously, but it is funny to look back when his streak started, things started to turn around for him again when he started using that bat."

Holt had one homer in 73 games entering that Aug. 9 game. In his final 35 games using the Axe bat, he hit six more along with three doubles and a triple.

Entering that game, he'd also been working on some mechanical adjustments with his hands, but the bat, with its angled barrel and knob, seemed to help with adjustments.

"I know he was working on something before that (game) where he was trying to get some separation and kind of settled in with his hands being a little closer to his body and kind of create some whip right there," Hyers explained.

"The separation was getting out a little too wide and started feeling that little whip in the backside and it started working for him. I'd say it's a slight change, a little adjustment. But he just found his hand slot and when guys find their hand slot and it's connected with the lower half that's when they really feel good."

Holt was the team's hottest hitter at the end of the season. But he wasn't in the lineup the first two games of the division series against the Yankees. So when he got his chance in Game 3 on Monday, he didn't waste it.

He grounded out in the second inning, but led off the fourth with a single to start a monstrous inning for the Red Sox. The next time he came to the plate it was still the fourth inning and the Red Sox had scored five runs. Holt smoked a triple to right field to drive in two more.

In the eighth, he hit a ground-rule double to right-center driving in another run. And when Holt came to the plate in the ninth with two outs and a runner on with a position player pitching for the Yankees, he had one thing on his mind.

"I knew I needed a home run," Holt recalled. "I saw (catcher Austin) Romine was on the mound. So you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, 'Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle.' I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I'd ground out to first, be out in front of something."

“That’s probably the first time I’ve ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me.”

Holt then entered the history books as the first person to notch a cycle in the playoffs.

And it might not have happened if he hadn’t taken Betts’ Axe bat to the plate in Toronto two months ago.

“Now, it’s a pretty cool story,” Hyers said.

‘It was a blur’: Unforgettable breakout inning by Red Sox not so easy for players to recall

Chad Jennings

NEW YORK — This is not another oral history of a singular sports moment. It’s quite the opposite, actually. It’s about what it takes to make the oral history format unattainable on an individual level.

Because baseball players have elephant memories, but Monday’s fourth inning at Yankee Stadium was so relentless, so persistent, it triggered a sort of euphoric amnesia in the Red Sox’s clubhouse, and if the Baseball Gods are kind, it triggered a compassionate amnesia for the Yankees.

That top of the fourth spanned 11 Red Sox hitters and led to seven Red Sox runs. It turned a manageable Yankees deficit into an off-to-the-races blowout, and by the time a 16-1 Red Sox victory was finished, this American League Division Series was on the verge completion. One more Red Sox win and it’s over.

So, could any of the Red Sox remember the pivotal inning, blow-by-blow, hitter-by-hitter, just a few hours after the blowout was complete?

“No, no,” Mookie Betts said, shaking his head. “I don’t remember all that. That was a lot. Just kind of shows you what kind of team we have, and we can explode at any minute.”

Back in May, LeBron James dazzled reporters with his ability to recall every detail of a late-game rally, but such recollection is commonplace in baseball. Pitchers can recite with remarkable detail every pitch of unremarkable at-bats, Jackie Bradley Jr. can still remember which way the wind was blowing on a catch he made in 2014, and just last month Steve Pearce retraced his own evolution through a series of at-bats against Jacob deGrom.

But Monday’s fourth inning was different. It involved every member of the Red Sox lineup, and the Yankees burned through three different pitchers who threw a total of 34 pitches. Their starter, Luis Severino, didn’t throw a single good one in that inning. He started it with a first-pitch single, then another first-pitch single, then a four-pitch walk before Aaron Boone finally walked to the mound to make a change. The Red Sox had four singles, two walks, a three-run double and a two-run triple in the inning. The outs were a routine grounder, an easy pop up, and a pretty dazzling play by Didi Gregorius to finally end the onslaught.

“It was a blur,” Bradley said. “Guys just kept battling, figuratively speaking, passing the baton to the next guy. Stuck with our game plans and put together a pretty good inning.”

During the regular season, the Red Sox scored five-plus runs in an inning 27 times, the most in the majors. They scored seven runs in an inning four times, twice against the Yankees. Monday’s fourth inning tied a franchise record for the most runs scored in a single frame during the postseason. The others came with rings: the fifth inning of the 2007 World Series, the eighth inning of the 2007 division series, and the fourth inning of the 2004 division series.

“That’s too tough (to remember the whole inning),” Christian Vazquez said. “Too many.”

It started with the night's ultimate hero, Brock Holt, hitting a clean single to center field. Then Vazquez singled and Bradley walked. That's when the Yankees went to Lance Lynn, who quickly walked Betts before allowing the biggest blow of the inning, a three-run double by Andrew Benintendi. At least Benintendi could recall his part in the devastation.

"He had just walked Mookie on four pitches," he said. "And he threw the first pitch, it was a ball. I mean, at that point, you pretty much can bank on, if it's going to be a fastball, it's going to be something to hit. I fouled it off (the second pitch). After that, I think I swung at the next pitch out of the zone. And (after another ball) I was trying to stay short and just put the ball in play and hopefully get something to the outfield and at least get one run in. I hooked it down the right field line, and I was fortunate enough to keep it fair."

With that hit, Yankee Stadium went from a roar to a whimper. And Red Sox manager Alex Cora had been worried, at least a little bit, about the impact of that Yankee Stadium crowd. He'd seen what it could do to even the best lineups when last year's Astros, with Cora as bench coach, averaged 5.67 runs per game at home during the postseason, but just 1.67 during their three ALCS games at Yankee Stadium.

"There were different at-bats here with the Astros," Cora said. "Throughout the three games that we played here, I don't know if it was the crowd or just the stuff that we saw, but it felt that they weren't able to just like stay in the moment."

The Red Sox had no such problem. They scored a run in the second inning, two more in the third, and then came onslaught of the fourth. After five straight Red Sox reached base, J.D. Martinez made the first out of the inning with a routine bouncer to third base. Xander Bogaerts followed with a single and the Yankees dug deeper into their bullpen for Chad Green. He got Rafael Devers to pop out before Pearce had an RBI single and Holt hit a triple that would prove crucial. He finished the game with the first ever postseason cycle.

"I didn't remember the triple," Bogaerts said. "Me and (Eduardo) Nunez were talking (in the ninth inning), like, 'Hey, does he have a triple?' I remembered he had a double 'cause he was dancing. I really don't remember the triple, and then they were all getting nuts when he hit (the home run), so I was like, 'You know what, maybe he did.'"

He sure did, and after Holt hit it, Vazquez hit a ball up the middle where Gregorius had to charge and make a nifty play for the third out. Finally. But the damage was most certainly done. How could anyone forget it?

"No shot," starting pitcher Nathan Eovaldi said. "I don't even remember who was leading off."

At some point, it became clear Eovaldi thought the question was about his half of the fourth inning, when he came back out with a 10-run cushion. But, no, what about the inning he watched as his teammates gave him an insurmountable lead.

"Oh, absolutely not!" Eovaldi said.

Even with our rudimentary knowledge of the Spanish language, it was clear Devers couldn't recreate the inning either.

"No!" he said, laughing. "Fueron muchos!"

Roughly translated, that meant: "There were a lot!" And Devers wasn't wrong. The Red Sox would end up with the second-most runs they'd ever scored in a postseason game, and the most the Yankees had ever given up in the playoffs. Without that big fourth inning, the Yankees might never have sent a position player to the mound in the ninth, which means Holt might never have hit his home run to achieve his historic cycle.

“I wouldn’t have been able to do it if, 1 through 9, our guys didn’t put together the at-bats they put together and gave me the opportunity to get up that many times,” Holt said.

If only someone in the Red Sox clubhouse could remember how it all unfolded, but things get busy. Details get fuzzy. Fueron muchos. And, besides, there’s still another game to game to play on Tuesday.

“I probably could,” Pearce said. “But right now, time crunch, and the bus (leaves) in five minutes.”

*** *The New York Daily News***

Boston's Brock Holt rides into history on game's first postseason cycle

Kristie Ackert

Brock Holt was antsy when he saw Austin Romine come in to pitch the ninth. The Red Sox infielder knew he needed just a home run to hit for the cycle for the second time in his career. Position players pitching are prime time for hitting.

“So you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, ‘Get me up’. I need a home run for a cycle. I was going to try to hit a home run, but I figured I’d ground out to first, be out in front of something,” Holt said. “But I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don’t expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That’s probably the first time I’ve ever tried to do that.

“I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me,” Holt continued. “Like I said, tonight is something I’ll remember for a long, long time.”

It will be remembered probably forever, because Holt completed the first ever postseason cycle in major league history.

“He’s been swinging the bat well for a while now. We felt the matchup was good for him tonight, although he was 0-for-whatever coming into the game tonight against (Luis) Severino. He’s been able to catch up with fastballs headed the other way, breaking balls, and pull it with power. He’s a good player,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “Last year was a tough one for him as far as being healthy and the whole thing that went on with him, but when healthy, he can help you out. Tonight was a great night for him.”

Holt played in just 64 games in 2017 due to a concussion and vertigo.

Holt also hit for the cycle on June 16, 2015 against Atlanta. He drove in five runs Tuesday, the most by a Red Sox player in the postseason since Dustin Pedroia had five RBI in the 2007 ALCS Game 7.

*** *The New York Post***

Yankees castoff continues to torment his former team

Howie Kussoy

Had the Yankees won the 2015 wild-card game, Nathan Eovaldi could have made his playoff debut in pinstripes in the following series. Had the Yankees not released the right-hander after he underwent Tommy John surgery the next year, Eovaldi could have been in the first-base dugout Monday night.

Oh, what could have been.

In the biggest start of his career, Eovaldi continued tormenting his former team, and moved the Yankees one loss from elimination, allowing just one run over seven dominant innings in Boston's 16-1 ALDS Game 3 win at Yankee Stadium.

Eovaldi, who missed all of last season due to injury, and was traded from Tampa Bay to the Red Sox on July 25, has now allowed just one run over 23 innings (0.39 ERA) against the Yankees since making the midseason move.

In his three starts against the Yankees since joining Boston, Eovaldi has held Yankees hitters to a combined .143 batting average (11-for-77).

"It was a special moment for me," Eovaldi said. "I don't think it's really quite settled in yet."

How could it?

The right elbow that's undergone Tommy John surgery twice consistently fired fastballs that touched triple-digits. Eovaldi mixed in devastating cutters, and 80-something mph breaking balls, leaving the Yankees' powerful lineup off-balance all night.

Eovaldi opened with three scoreless innings, and returned for the fourth with a win locked up, having been staked to a 10-0 lead. Still, the 28-year-old never let the Yankees sniff a rally, allowing his lone run on a groundout.

Eovaldi allowed five hits, no walks and struck out five, throwing 97 pitches (72 strikes).

"Warming up before the game, the crowd was pretty relentless down there in the bullpen area, but I think once you get going and you get that first pitch out of the way, it's just another game," Eovaldi said of his playoff debut. "I was trying to use their aggressiveness against them, and try and get some quick outs."

In two years with the Yankees, Eovaldi went 9-8 with a 4.76 ERA, before succumbing to a season-ending injury in August 2016. By that November, the Yankees cut ties with the talented, but injury-prone pitcher, unwilling to see if his future would be as bright as his potential.

"I've always enjoyed pitching here," Eovaldi said. "This one I'll remember for a long time."

Alex Cora made the right moves when Red Sox needed it most

Howie Kussoy

For much of the season, the Red Sox seemed to be on autopilot, cruising to more wins than all but six teams in the history of the sport.

The bats always came around. The arms always straightened out. The 108-win team never lost more than three games in a row.

In Monday's 16-1 win over the Yankees in Game 3 of the ALDS, Boston's rookie manager served a reminder of how much he has had to do with his team's historic season.

With the Red Sox just two losses from becoming an all-time failure, Alex Cora made four changes to his starting lineup, and jump-started his offense to the second-most postseason runs in franchise history, highlighted by Brock Holt becoming the first player ever to hit for a cycle in the playoffs after he spent the first two games on the bench.

"I guess he's got the crystal ball, or something, huh?" J.D. Martinez said of his manager. "He's been doing it all year. He mixes it up. He has faith in everyone here."

“Everyone wants to talk about the main guys on the team, and the star players, but when you look, it’s guys like that [who] make the difference in the game.”

With right-hander Luis Severino starting, Cora inserted the left-handed hitting Holt at second base over Ian Kinsler, and used the same rationale for starting Rafael Devers at third base over Eduardo Nunez, even though the numbers told him not to.

Devers was hitless in 12 career at-bats against Severino. Holt was 1-for-15.

“A.C. sent me a text [Sunday night] and said I’m playing,” Holt recalled. “I said, ‘Are you sure?’ ”

Cora’s instincts soon morphed into brilliance.

Devers opened the second with a single and stolen base, then scored the game’s first run on an infield single by catcher Christian Vazquez, who started in place of Sandy Leon. In the third, Devers gave the Red Sox a 3-0 lead with an RBI groundout.

The rout was on following a seven-run fourth inning, started with singles by Holt and Vazquez. Steve Pearce — who started at first base in place of the injured Mitch Moreland — added an RBI single, and then Holt capped the frame with a two-run triple, putting Boston up 10-0.

The outcome was stripped of all mystery, but history was put in play when Holt hit a ground-rule double in the eighth inning, leaving him a homer shy of his second-career cycle.

“I told everyone, ‘Get me up,’ ” Holt said. “I was going to try to hit a home run. That’s probably the first time I’ve ever tried to do that. ... I figured I’d ground out to first.

“You get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound.”

With catcher Austin Romine pitching in the blowout, Holt set off a team celebration with a two-run homer to right, finishing 4-for-6 with five RBIs.

“It’s a really special night,” Holt said. “I don’t think it’s sunk in. Whenever you say the first player ever to do something, that’s crazy to even think about.”

Red Sox’s Cy Young winner stands in way of desperate Yankees

Howie Kussoy

In Game 4 of the ALDS, the Red Sox have the luxury of using a recent Cy Young winner to wrap up the series. They’ll also be starting a pitcher with zero playoff wins, and a 5.33 postseason ERA.

Originally slated to start Game 3, Rick Porcello will take the mound Tuesday night at Yankee Stadium with a chance to clinch Boston’s first trip to the ALCS in five years. Porcello’s start was bumped back a day, following a key relief appearance in Boston’s Game 1 win, which marked the first time in 12 career playoff outings that Porcello pitched, and his team won.

Porcello, who holds an 0-3 career postseason record, lasted just three innings in his most recent playoff start — during last year’s ALDS against the Astros — and allowed five runs in 4 ¹/₃ innings during his other playoff start with Boston, in a 2016 ALDS loss to the Indians.

Yet, despite Porcello’s postseason struggles, manager Alex Cora remains confident that the right-hander’s best side will be showcased in the team’s biggest game of the year.

“We saw it in Game 1, and we saw it throughout the season,” Cora said before Boston’s 16-1 win Monday. “He’s been actually good against them. ... The way he goes about his business and how fiery he is and how

he prepares, I've seen it firsthand in the sense that this guy, he gets it. So I'm very confident that, regardless of what happens [in Game 3], we have the right guy on the mound."

Porcello (17-7) posted a 4.54 ERA in 13 games after the All-Star break, and gave up five runs over 5 1/3 innings in his only start at Yankee Stadium this season, but the 29-year-old has largely excelled against the most prolific home run-hitting team in baseball history.

In four outings against the Yankees this season, Porcello has gone 2-0 with a 2.31 ERA, while holding them to a combined .143 batting average.

"I just think attacking their hitters," said Porcello, of his approach against the Yankees. "If you fall behind guys, you give them the opportunity to see pitches in the strike zone. That's the only way you can get back into the count because they're disciplined and they don't chase a lot. I think attacking, being aggressive, and go from there."

Porcello didn't expect to be used in Game 1. He didn't expect to start in Game 4. But the New Jersey native can now end baseball in The Bronx this year.

"I have a lot of friends that are envious of the position I'm in right now," Porcello said. "I couldn't think of a better spot to be in as a big leaguer getting the opportunity to have the ball for Game 4 in Yankee Stadium. That's what it's all about."

*** *The USA Today***

Wild night in Bronx: Red Sox take command of ALDS against Yankees

Bob Nightengale

NEW YORK -- The only one who had a worse evening than the New York Yankees in the Bronx on Monday was first base umpire Angel Hernandez.

It was the most gut-wrenching scene witnessed by New York fans in Yankee Stadium history.

The Boston Red Sox humiliated the Yankees, 16-1, for the most lopsided loss in Yankee postseason history, marking only the fourth time a postseason game has been decided by at least 15 runs.

Red Sox second baseman Brock Holt, a utility player by trade, became the first player to hit for the cycle in postseason history.

"I'll remember for a long time," he said. "Obviously, you don't go into the game expecting to make history or do anything like that, but let alone score 16 runs against a good New York Yankee team."

It was a night the Yankees will never forget. It will haunt them all winter, as their season is on the brink, one loss from extinction.

The Red Sox are up 2 games to 1 in this American League Division Series with 2016 Cy Young winner Rick Porcello on the mound Tuesday night and 2018 Cy Young candidate Chris Sale scheduled for Game 5, if needed.

The Red Sox, who made sure not to utter any inflammatory quotes, play music in their clubhouse, or troll the Yankees by playing Sweet Caroline on their way to the team bus, hope to save Sale for a possible Saturday Game 1 of the AL Championship Series against the Houston Astros.

"Everybody is super-excited right now, doing something like this at a place like this. But it only counts for one win," said MVP favorite Mookie Betts, "We got to do it one more time."

“Then, you’ll see us really celebrate.”

Really, as quiet as Yankee Stadium was this night, with most of the sellout crowd of 49,657 headed to the exits by the fifth inning, the Red Sox could have merely clapped their hands and you would have heard it reverberate throughout the stadium.

The Red Sox, equaling a Yankee Stadium postseason record by scoring seven runs in an inning (the fourth), giving them a 10-0 lead with Yankee-killer Nathan Eovadi on the mound, saved their biggest celebration for Holt in the ninth inning.

Holt, who asked Red Sox manager Alex Cora if he was sure that he would be starting in Game 3 when he received a text late Sunday, already had singled and tripled in the fourth inning, and doubled in the eighth, when he stepped to the plate in the ninth with catcher Austin Romine on the mound.

The Yankees, wanting to save their prized quartet of Aroldis Chapman, Dellin Betances, David Robertson and Zach Britton for the rest of the series, decided to accept the indignity of employing a position player to pitch for only the second time in postseason history.

Holt wanted to punish them for the circus act.

“Well, obviously, yeah, I knew I needed a home run,” Holt said. “I saw Romine was on the mound. So, you get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, ‘Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle. I was going to try to hit a home run.’”

“I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don’t expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. ... That’s probably the first time I’ve ever tried to do that.

“I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me. This one I’ll remember for a long, long time. ... Whenever you say first player ever to do something, I mean, that’s crazy to even think about.”

And to think that of the approximately 20,000 players to play in the major leagues, everyone from Babe Ruth to Jackie Robinson to Roberto Clemente to Barry Bonds to Mike Trout, Holt would achieve a feat never before accomplished on baseball’s biggest stage.

“I don’t know what the odds of him were becoming the first player to do that,” Betts said, “but whoever had him, is a rich man, for sure.”

The Yankees need to shake off their first home playoff loss since 2015, spanning seven games, with their fans booing them off the field.

“No choice but to flush,” Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. “The good thing (about) today is it’s one game, and as awful of a night as it was for us, we got to turn the page.

“[Tuesday’s] obviously do or die.”

It’s hard to imagine the Yankees recovering from this debacle. This series is over.

Right?

Well, it was 14 years ago when the Yankees thought it was over, too, routing the Red Sox 19-8 in Game 3 to take a 3-0 lead in the ALCS, only to make history by becoming the first major-league team to lose the next four games.

We'll see what happens, but right now, Cora has the magic touch. He overhauled his lineup Monday, benching Kinsler, third baseman Eduardo Nunez and catcher Sandy Leon, and replaced them with Rafael Devers, Holt and Christian Vazquez.

Voila!

The Red Sox unleashed 18 hits, 26 players reached base, and the new trio of subs went 6-for-18 with seven RBI and six runs. Plus, there was Holt's cycle.

"I guess he's got the crystal ball or something, huh?" Red Sox designated hitter J.D. Martinez said.

Either that or someone should whisk him away to the casinos in Atlantic City.

"Play the Powerball tomorrow," Cora said, "and hopefully, I can get it."

The Powerball can wait.

The only number the Red Sox are focused on now is one.

Red Sox's Brock Holt hits first cycle in MLB playoff history

Jace Evans

Brock Holt stands alone in baseball history.

The Boston Red Sox infielder became the first player in MLB history to hit for the cycle in a postseason game.

He completed the feat in the ninth inning of the Red Sox's 16-1 Game 3 rout of the rival New York Yankees, hitting a two-run homer off Austin Romine – a catcher who was called on to throw the final inning of the blowout.

"You get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, 'Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle,'" Holt said. "I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That's probably the first time I've ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me."

"He wasn't shy about (trying to get the cycle)," outfielder Andrew Benintendi said. "Everybody was rooting for him."

Holt got an RBI ground-rule double in the eighth inning and a single as well as a two-run triple in the Red Sox's big fourth inning, which busted the game open.

"This one I'll remember for a long time," said Holt, who was unaware of his achievement until he was told by a reporter during an on-field interview. "Obviously, you don't go into the game expecting to make history or anything like that."

Holt was making his first start of this postseason in Game 3.

"He's been swinging the bat well for a while now," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. "We felt the matchup was good for him."

Was it ever.

*** Associated Press**

Holt 1st with postseason cycle, Red Sox rout Yankees 16-1

NEW YORK -- Brock Holt had one thing in mind: He was swinging for the fences.

After all, the game was decided long ago. And everything else went Boston's way all night, so why not this?

The part-time utilityman put the finishing touch on a Red Sox blowout, becoming the first player to hit for the cycle in a postseason game as Boston routed the New York Yankees 16-1 on Monday to seize a 2-1 lead in their best-of-five AL Division Series.

"This one I'll remember for a long time," said Holt, unaware of his achievement until told by a television reporter right after the final out. "Obviously, you don't go into the game expecting to make history or do anything like that, let alone score 16 runs."

Andrew Benintendi lined a three-run double and Holt tripled home two more in a seven-run fourth inning that quickly turned the latest playoff matchup between these longtime rivals into a laughter. Handed a big early lead, Nathan Eovaldi shut down his former team during New York's most lopsided defeat in 396 postseason games.

"An embarrassing day," shortstop Didi Gregorius said.

Game 4 is Tuesday night in the Bronx, where the 108-win Red Sox can put away the wild-card Yankees for good and advance to the AL Championship Series against Houston. Rick Porcello is scheduled to pitch against New York lefty CC Sabathia.

Boston battered an ineffective Luis Severino and silenced a charged-up Yankee Stadium crowd that emptied out fast on a night when Red Sox rookie manager Alex Cora made all the right moves.

By the ninth, backup catcher Austin Romine was on the mound for New York and he gave up a two-run homer to Holt that completed his cycle .

"You get a little antsy when a position player is on the mound. I told everyone, 'Get me up. I need a home run for a cycle,'" Holt said. "I scooted up in the box a little bit, and I was going to be swinging at anything and try to hook anything. Obviously, you don't expect to hit a home run, but I was trying to. I was trying to hit a home run. That's probably the first time I've ever tried to do that. I rounded the bases, and seeing everyone going nuts in the dugout was a pretty cool moment for me."

His teammates, too.

"He wasn't shy about it," Benintendi said. "Everybody was rooting for him."

Boosted by noisy fans in their homer-friendly ballpark, the Yankees entered 7-0 at home the past two postseasons -- against out-of-division opponents. But the Red Sox, frequent visitors who clinched the AL East crown at Yankee Stadium just 2 1/2 weeks ago, were hardly intimidated.

"I think from pitch 1, we let them know that we were here," Cora said.

Mookie Betts, in fact, hit a 405-foot flyout to the center-field warning track to begin the game.

Making his first playoff start this year, Holt opened the fourth with a single off Severino and capped the 26-minute outburst with a triple to right field. The 2015 All-Star also doubled home a run in the eighth and finished with five RBI.

Holt also hit for the cycle against Atlanta on June 6, 2015.

"He's been swinging the bat well for a while now," Cora said. "We felt the matchup was good for him."

Every starter had at least one hit for the Red Sox, who piled up 18 in all. The only time they scored more runs in the postseason was a 23-7 win over Cleveland in 1999.

Eovaldi pitched for the Yankees from 2015-16 before injuring his elbow, which required a second Tommy John surgery. Boston acquired him from Tampa Bay in July and the hard-throwing righty compiled a 1.93 ERA in four starts against New York this season -- three with the Red Sox.

Bumped up a day in front of Porcello, he delivered a gem in his first postseason appearance. Eovaldi allowed one run and five hits in seven innings, throwing 72 of 97 pitches for strikes.

"I was just trying to use their aggressiveness against them and try and get some quick outs," Eovaldi said. "It was a special moment for me. I don't think it's really quite settled in yet."

Going with Eovaldi was one of several choices that paid off for Cora.

Looking to play left-handed hitters against Severino, the first-year skipper inserted Holt at second base and Rafael Devers at third. Christian Vazquez started at catcher over Sandy Leon.

Devers singled twice, stole a base, scored two runs and knocked in another. Vazquez's infield single off Severino's glove drove in the first run.

Benintendi, already a Yankees nemesis, was on base four times and scored twice. Betts also scored two runs and drove in two.

"It just kind of shows you what kind of team we have and that we could explode at any minute," Betts said.

TBS reported Severino began warming up only 10 minutes before the game, and he certainly looked out of sorts from the start in misty weather. He left with the bases loaded and nobody out in the fourth and was charged with six runs and seven hits.

"He got his normal pitches routine," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "It wasn't an issue."

STRANGE SIGHT

The only other position player to pitch in a postseason game was Toronto infielder Cliff Pennington against Kansas City in the 2015 AL Championship Series.

IF AT FIRST

There were four replay challenges in the first four innings -- all involving calls by first base umpire Angel Hernandez. Three were overturned.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Red Sox: 1B Mitch Moreland sat out after leaving Game 2 when he hurt his right hamstring running the bases. "Mitch is available, but he's not 100 percent," Cora said. Steve Pearce played first and had an RBI single in the fourth.

Yankees: CF Aaron Hicks remained out of the lineup after missing Game 2 with tightness in his right hamstring, which forced him from the series opener Friday. Boone said Hicks was doing "significantly

better," and sitting him was a much more difficult decision than it was Saturday. Brett Gardner was back in center, but Boone said he wouldn't hesitate to use Hicks in any role off the bench.

UP NEXT

Red Sox: Porcello (17-7, 4.28 ERA) got two late outs in relief during the series opener last Friday, so his start was pushed back a day to Game 4. The 2016 AL Cy Young Award winner, who grew up a Mets fan in nearby New Jersey, was 2-0 with a 2.31 ERA in three starts against the Yankees this year -- including a one-hitter on just 86 pitches Aug. 3 at Fenway Park. He is 0-3 with a 5.33 ERA in 12 career postseason outings, including four starts.

Yankees: The 38-year-old Sabathia (9-7, 3.65) will be on 11 days' rest when he makes his 23rd postseason start. The big lefty was ejected from his last regular-season outing for hitting Tampa Bay catcher Jesus Sucre with a pitch during a testy game between division rivals on Sept. 27. Sabathia appealed a five-game suspension from Major League Baseball that would not take effect until next season. He said Monday he definitely wants to play in 2019 -- even if it's not for the Yankees.