

## ***The Boston Red Sox Monday, April 15, 2019***

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

#### **David Price pitches seven shutout innings, leads Red Sox past Orioles**

Nora Princiotti

When the Red Sox starting pitching struggled over the opening weeks of this season, that problem begat a second issue. Already going through 2019 without a traditional closer, the Boston bullpen found itself taxed less than a month in.

That made David Price's sparkler Sunday badly needed. Price (1-1, 3.79 ERA) went seven innings on an efficient 92 pitches, 64 of them for strikes. He gave up no runs and only three hits with seven strikeouts and no walks. More, he set things up nicely for Ryan Brasier to pitch the eighth and Matt Barnes to pitch the ninth in an economical 4-0 Red Sox win against the Orioles.

"Everybody knew where we were pitching-wise today and for [Price] to go seven, give the ball to those last two guys, it was very important for us," said manager Alex Cora. "Now tomorrow we kind of reset and we're ready for the game tomorrow."

Baltimore starter John Means went five innings and gave up just one run but the Red Sox did the bulk of their scoring against Orioles relievers in the eighth inning when Xander Bogaerts hit a hanging slider off Josh Lucas to the batter's eye for a three-run home run.

"I was looking for off-speed the whole at-bat," Bogaerts said. "After he threw me that first slider I thought [darn], I might be struck out right now because his first slider was nasty. It was down and away and I was like, wow, that's pretty tough. That last one he just left it in the middle and I'm happy I didn't foul it off because I definitely would have been in the dugout."

Bogaerts (2 for 3, 4 RBIs) drove in the other Red Sox run in the fourth inning, sending Steve Pearce home on a sacrifice fly.

One of Boston's seven hits was a double by Andrew Benintendi in the third inning. Benintendi was supposed to have the day off but was inserted into the lineup, batting leadoff, because Jackie Bradley Jr. was out with the flu. Benintendi's hit came after a scary moment when he fouled a ball hard off the top of his right foot, crumpled to the ground and lay there for more than a minute. Benintendi finished his at-bat but was replaced by Blake Swihart in the fourth inning. He got X-rays, which were negative, and was diagnosed with a right foot contusion. He is day-to-day.

Both Brasier and Barnes could have been sharper in their relief efforts. Brasier had runners on first and third with two outs in the eighth but escaped when Dwight Smith lined out to Mookie Betts. Barnes gave up a single and a walk and needed 24 pitches for the ninth inning but struck out Chris Davis looking with a 97-mph fastball to end the game.

With Rick Porcello not making it out of the fifth inning Saturday and Hector Velazquez expected to pitch only four or five innings Monday, Price needed to have the kind of start he did.

Cora said he talked to his starter during the sixth inning and Price said he was in good shape to keep pitching. Price allowed doubles to lead off both the sixth and seventh innings but both times prevented the runners from advancing.

“I knew the situation, I knew that in Arizona as well, knowing the next game was going to be a bullpen day,” Price said. “Got to eat up as many innings as possible and we were able to put up zeroes today so that was big for us.”

Because of that, the Red Sox will return to Fenway on Monday in better shape than they were when they got to the park on Sunday: With a chance to win the series against the Orioles and with a better-rested bullpen. First pitch against the Orioles is 11:05 a.m.

### **Andrew Benintendi leaves after fouling ball off foot**

Nora Princiotti

Andrew Benintendi is having a bit of bad luck. He’s gotten a few bruises in the batter’s box, the latest one a right foot contusion suffered when he fouled a ball hard off his foot in the third inning of Sunday’s game, one in which he wasn’t even supposed to be playing.

“I mean I’ve got nobody else to blame but myself. You know, you’re pulling off or something,” said Benintendi, who also fouled a ball off his right knee on March 30. “So it’s definitely been some bad luck but I’ll wear some protective gear and hopefully it’s better.”

Luckily for Benintendi, the damage appears minimal. It looked bad at first, with Benintendi falling to the ground and staying there for more than a minute, but he was able to get up and complete his at-bat with a double. He was replaced by Blake Swihart in the top of the fourth and went to get x-rays, which came back negative. He’s day-to-day, though manager Alex Cora said it was unlikely he’d play Monday.

“That was a good shot,” Cora said. “Seems like he’s been getting that every other day.”

Benintendi was able to run but started to feel the hit more once he was standing on second.

“It didn’t feel good,” he said. “I think once I got to second the pain kind of came back but it feels a little better now and we’ll see how it feels tomorrow.”

Benintendi was supposed to have the day off Sunday but was inserted into the lineup, batting leadoff, during batting practice Sunday morning because Jackie Bradley Jr. was out with the flu.

“It’s been going on since spring training so we’ll keep him away from the team, see how he feels tomorrow,” Cora said. “Nothing we can do with that.”

Holt on the mend

Brock Holt, on the injured list with a scratched right cornea, is feeling better but will have to go on a minor league rehabilitation assignment before getting back into the Sox lineup.

Holt will skip the road trip to New York next week and go to the doctor on Tuesday to see if he’s ready to start an assignment.

“If everything goes well then we’ll make a decision,” Cora said. “Obvioulsy, he needs to get at-bats. I don’t know how many but he will need at-bats. We’ve got to take this seriously. At this level, you’ve got to be able to see the ball and you’ve got to be able to reconize spin and all that stuff, so we’ll be very cautious with him. Whenever he’s ready he’s ready but we’ve got to be careful with that.”

Velazquez to start

Hector Velazquez gets the ball Monday for the Red Sox but Cora said Sunday that he’ll probably only pitch four or five innings.

“Five, honestly four,” Cora said when asked what would be a realistic innings expectation for Velazquez. “We’ll see how it goes. I mean, he’s pounding the strike zone and he’s actually pounding the strike zone

with good stuff which is great. Not hard contact and his split is a lot better than last year, so you never know with him. He can get some quick outs and that might extend him more than what we feel he can do.”

Velazquez, who has been a long reliever, does have something to build on. He pitched three scoreless innings last Sunday in Arizona.

Martinez connecting

J.D. Martinez has hit safely in 15 of 16 games at .333 with seven extra-base hits and nine RBIs. . . . The Sox are 18-4 against the Orioles since the start of last season . . . Orioles pitching coach Doug Brocail was ejected by first base umpire Stu Scheurwater in the sixth inning. Unfortunately for Brocail, Scheurwater will be manning home plate Monday . . . Major League Baseball made a scoring change from Saturday’s game. Rafael Devers was given an error for the groundball he mishandled in the seventh inning that allowed a runner to advance to second base. Marcus Walden was not charged with any earned runs as a result . . . General James McConville, the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, threw out the first pitch. He is a Quincy native . . . The Sox also recognized a large group of wounded veterans who will compete in the Boston Marathon. They represented the Achilles International Freedom Team . . . Sox players will wear marathon-themed outfits when they travel to New York Monday.

### **David Price and Tiger Woods have something special in common**

Peter Abraham

David Price was on the mound at Fenway Park in the fifth inning when Tiger Woods sank a short putt to win The Masters.

The Red Sox waited until after the inning was over to play a clip of that magic moment on the scoreboard along with the news that the 43-year-old Woods had won his first major championship in 11 years.

Price was back in the clubhouse by then but he heard the cheers.

“I asked what happened because I thought somebody ran out on the field, a streaker,” Price said.

Advance scouting assistant J.T. Watkins told Price the cheers were for Woods.

“Good job, Tiger,” Price said later after throwing seven strong innings in a 4-0 victory against the Baltimore Orioles. “We messed up by not wearing red today. I’m happy he pulled that off.”

Price can appreciate a good redemption story because he has lived one himself with the Red Sox.

He had a 5.11 earned run average in his first 11 starts with the Sox after agreeing to a seven-year, \$217 million deal. That triggered criticism that he couldn’t handle the pressure of playing in Boston.

It seems foolish now when you consider Price is 40-20 with a 3.75 earned run average with the Sox — 21-6, 3.32 in 41 games at Fenway Park.

Price also shed the stigma of not pitching well in the postseason when he fired six shutout innings in Game 5 of the American League Championship Series to eliminate the Houston Astros.

Price then pitched 13<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings against the Los Angeles Dodgers in the World Series and allowed three earned runs. He held the Dodgers to one run over seven innings in the Game 5 clincher and should have been named Most Valuable Player.

When the Sox got their World Series rings last week, Price was the first player summoned from the dugout. It seemed fitting and the reaction of the fans confirmed it. So, sure, Price can identify with Woods a bit when it comes to changing perceptions.

“It’s awesome. For him to endure everything that he’s been through, to get back on top and win another Masters, we’re all pumped up,” said Price, who was looking forward to going home and watching a replay of the final round.

As Woods was slipping on his green jacket, Price was back on the mound securing his victory.

The lefthander’s best work came in the sixth and seventh innings. Both times he allowed leadoff doubles but stranded the runner to preserve a 1-0 lead.

Richie Martin led off the sixth inning with a double to center field. But Price struck out Cedric Mullins and Jonathan Villar before getting Joey Rickard on a line drive to third base.

Trey Mancini doubled to left field to open the seventh inning. Blake Swihart, pressed into service as an outfielder for the first time this season, had a chance to get Mancini at second but his throw was off.

Price retired Renato Nunez on a pop to center. Hanser Alberto followed with a sharply hit ball back to the mound. Price made the play, looked the runner back and threw to first.

Jesus Sucre then popped up to first base. The lead was safe.

“With nobody out I don’t want that guy to advance to third,” Price said. “You can’t go for the strikeout at all times in that situation. You have to try and make pitches. Don’t let him get any further.”

Price allowed three hits and struck out seven without a walk. It was the longest start the Red Sox have had this season. In what has been a messy start of the season for the rest of the rotation, Price has a 3.79 ERA and 0.95 WHIP. He has given up runs in four of the 19 innings he has pitched.

“The numbers that really matter, there’s not too much traffic with him,” manager Alex Cora said.

Xander Bogaerts drove in all four runs, three with a home run in the eighth inning. Watching Price extricate himself from those jams was inspirational.

“You want to do something for him. Hopefully sooner rather than later,” Bogaerts said. “We know how hard runs are for us lately.”

That the bullpen was needed for just two innings was important. Rick Porcello lasted four innings on Saturday and Hector Velazquez is a spot starter on Monday with perhaps four innings in him.

“It was very important for us,” Cora said. “We kind of like re-set.”

The Sox have won three of their last four games and can win their first series of the season by beating the Orioles one more time. Then it’s off to New York for the first two games of the season against the Yankees.

“Whenever you win it feels good in the clubhouse today. It’s going to feel good in the clubhouse tomorrow morning. It’s big,” Price said.

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

### **David Price, Red Sox shut out Orioles**

Rich Thompson

David Price gave a pitching performance expected of a Red Sox starter.

The lanky southpaw threw seven shutout innings and allowed three hits with seven strikeouts in the Red Sox 4-0 victory over the Baltimore Orioles on Sunday afternoon before 36,023 at Fenway Park.

Orioles lefty starter John Means picked up the loss despite giving up one run on five hits through five innings with three strikeouts and a walk.

“I felt okay just going out there and making pitches and had good things happen with two outs,” said Price. “Good things happen when you throw good pitches with timely hitting.”

Price picked up his first win (1-1) in three starts and went deeper into the game than any Red Sox starter this season. Price dropped his ERA from 6.00 to 3.79 and was able to avoid the multi-run innings and the long ball that limited him to six innings in his previous starts at Oakland and Arizona.

“If you take a look at his starts, his stuff has been there,” said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. “Stuff wise he is way ahead where he was last year at this point and everybody knew where we were pitching wise today.

“For him to go seven and give the ball to the last two guys was very important to us. The ERA will go up and down but there is not much traffic with him.”

The Red Sox removed a little of the drama with three runs in the bottom of the eighth. Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez reached on singles and shortstop Xander Bogaerts brought them home with a home run to the center field bleachers. Bogaerts drove in all of the Red Sox runs.

“We’ve been looking for that for a while and it gave us some breathing room,” said Cora. “Mookie did a good job with two strikes going the other way and J.D. put some good swings and with Xander, it was a handing slider if I’m not mistaken.

“We haven’t done that the whole season so to say. It was good to see it.”

Red Sox right handed reliever Ryan Brasier pitched out of a first and third jam in the eighth and closer Matt Barnes to preserved the shutout despite putting runners at second and third with two outs.

“Brasier was out there in a one run game and Barnes got a little cushion and didn’t allow any runs and that was big for us,” said Price. “You got to eat up as many innings as possible and we put up zeros today and that was big for us.”

After retiring 10 batters through three innings, Price encountered adversity that was not of his making. Right fielder Joey Rickard opened the fourth with a hard grounder down the third base line.

Rafael Devers was handcuffed on the play and his throw to first sailed into the photographers pen aside the Red Sox dugout. Price exited unscathed when Trey Mancini struck out, Rickard was gunned down stealing third and before Renato Nunez went down swinging.

The Red Sox picked up one in the fourth that could have yielded more runs. Steve Pearce opened the inning with single to right and went to third on a wall double by Martinez. Bogaerts hit a deep sacrifice fly to center that scored Pearce and left Martinez on third.

### **Xander Bogaerts drives in four in Red Sox win over Orioles**

Rich Thompson

Shortstop Xander Bogaerts was an RBI machine in the Red Sox 4-0 victory over the Baltimore Orioles on Sunday afternoon at Fenway Park.

Bogaerts drove in the only run Boston starter David Price would need with a sacrifice fly with no outs in the fourth. Bogaerts put the game away when he scored Mookie Betts and J.D. Martinez with a two-run blast to the unoccupied section of the centerfield bleachers.

“I know its been hard scoring a lot of runs and I’m not saying I was going up there to hit a homer,” said Bogaerts. “That was definitely not what I was doing but in this game is you miss some pitches you have to hunt them and not miss them.”

The story behind Bogaerts second home run of the season was a tale of two sliders. Orioles reliever Josh Lucas befuddle Bogaerts with a down and away slider on his first swing. But when Lucas left his second slider up in the strike zone, Bogaerts took him to task.

“It’s about going up there with a plan and sticking to your plan,” said Bogaerts. “I was looking off speed the whole at bat and after he threw that first slider I was thinking “I’m going to be a strikeout.”

“His first slider was nasty down and away and it was “wow, that’s pretty tough.” The last one he left in the middle and I was happy that I didn’t foul it off.”

Bogaerts has reached base in 13 of 15 games and is battings .308 with a team high .413 OBP and a .519 slugging percentage.

#### Outfield shuffle

Red Sox manager Alex Cora scratched centerfielder Jackie Bradley Jr., who had come down with the flu. Cora had originally planned to give Andrew Benintendi the day off and use J.D. Martinez in left, Mookie Betts in right and Bradley at center.

Benintendi went back to left with Betts at center and Martinez in right. Benintendi fouled a ball off his right foot in the third but remained in the game to finish his at bat. Upon returning to the batter’s box, Benintendi smacked an opposite field double down the left field line. He was replaced in left field by Blake Swihart in the fourth.

“He’s day to day and sore, that was a good shot,” said Cora. “We’ll see how he feels but the x-rays were negative but we’ll stay away from him (on Monday). “

#### From DL to DH

Red Sox manager Alex Cora placed Dustin Pedroia at the DH and started Eduardo Nunez at second. Cora’s decision to DH Pedroia (knee), who had come off the DL for the home opener on Tuesday, was purely cautionary.

“We have got to be careful,” said Cora. “He is just like any other player and he understands we have to be careful with him and at the same time they have a lefty of the mound and we can take advantage of that.”

Pedroia went 0-for-4 with a strikeout and reached on a fielder’s choice. Pedroia is currently batting .133 but feels confident in his swing and believes the he will return to form.

“I feel good but I’m still grinding it a little bit at the plate,” said Pedroia. “It will come back to me and the hits are coming, the hits will be there.”

### **Red Sox pitcher Hector Velazquez wants new photo to strike fear in batters**

Michael Silverman

ake a look at the headshot on the Fenway Park scoreboard Monday morning when Hector Velazquez throws the first pitch.

Instead of the happy, carefree, smiley shot that he's been using the last two seasons, Velazquez has opted for a snapshot that captures him wearing the closest look he can summon to menacing: head tilted, eyes ever so slightly squinty, a scowl crossing his mouth.

He will not soon be mistaken for the Night King or Bane.

And Velazquez has no intention of frightening young children or crows.

His "I'm a bad man" look is directed at one person only, and one person at a time: whoever is standing in the batter's box while Velazquez is on the mound.

Because in case the batter can't tell from the serious look Velazquez is flashing from 60-feet-6 inches away, Velazquez wants to reinforce the message by forcing the batter to behold his double on the 17-foot scoreboard looming over the center field bleachers.

"I need to intimidate the batters," said Velazquez. "Because when I'm on the mound, it's like a war out there. And the easiest way to intimidate them before I even get out there is through the photo, in my opinion. Whenever the batter swings aggressively, I want to be able to match that aggressiveness with each pitch that I throw."

The expressions other pitchers use for their headshots run the gamut. On full display Sunday was David Price's TV-game-show-host smile, then there are barely smiling snapshots, or the more stone-faced, slightly sinister visages from Chris Sale, Rick Porcello and Eduardo Rodriguez.

What stuck out to Velazquez recently were the smiley faces. They struck a nerve.

"I saw some of the other pictures of my teammates, and they're smiling, and I thought, 'Why smile?'" said Velazquez.

It's no longer a question for Velazquez.

Boston Red Sox pitcher Hector Velazquez throws against the Arizona Diamondbacks in the first inning of a baseball game, Sunday, April 7, 2019, in Phoenix. (AP Photo/Rick Scuteri)  
The scowl is there, on the mound and on the scoreboard over his shoulder at Fenway Park and all of the other ballparks where he will pitch for the rest of the season.

When Velazquez is not in warrior mode, it should be stressed that he is about the most easygoing and pleasant person on the roster. A father of two young boys, he said he "sometimes" uses that scowl on them, but he laughed hard enough after saying that to let anyone know he would never.

"I'm not a 'bad man,'" he would like you to know.

Velazquez' presence on the Red Sox roster has been a pleasant, low-key and virtually completely under the radar experience since he arrived in spring training in 2017.

A 30-year-old native of Mexico, Velazquez answered more than half of the questions lobbed at him Sunday morning in English, much to the pleasant surprise of Red Sox translator Daveson Perez.

Velazquez' desire to be seen professionally as having a fierce countenance is just one subtle indicator of a personality that has been kept largely under wraps.

Another is his already stated declaration that he will not join the team when the owners, maybe the manager and some of the players visit the White House on May 9.

President Trump's antagonistic and vituperative stances towards Mexicans made Velazquez' decision sound relatively easy.

“You know what the reason is, everybody knows what the reason is,” said Velazquez. “A couple of guys here want to go to the White House and they have their reasons. It’s my decision, too.”

But to be clear, Velazquez explained.

“Mexicans, the President doesn’t speak too well about them, and the Wall, things like that, these are my reasons,” said Velazquez. “I try to keep a healthy balance for myself because I know this is my job and this is my team, and part of the job when you win the World series is to go to the White House. But I have a lot of friends and family in Mexico and I don’t want them to be offended if they see me go or be bothered if I go. That’s why I choose not to.”

Velazquez is more excited to talk about the pride he feels whenever he hears manager Alex Cora call him and his fellow pitcher Brian Johnson the “MVPs” of last year’s championship drive for their versatility, the ability to bounce back and forth between spot starts like Monday’s, long relief or the occasional right-on-right or left-on-left specialty service.

Velazquez’ 2.79 ERA after five appearances — one start already, with no walks and nine strikeouts in 9-2/3 innings — this season is right in line with his 2.92 ERA in 24-2/3 innings two seasons ago and 3.18 ERA last year in 47 appearances, including eight starts.

“I’ve really found the value in what my role is on this team,” said Velazquez. “I know now that not a lot of people in the big leagues can do what Brian and I do — start one day and then two days later relieve. I’m starting to realize that I am one of the best in terms of that aspect, of looking around the league and not seeing anyone who can do that.”

And as his photo proves, with Velazquez, seeing is believing.

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

### **Red Sox 4, Orioles 0: Price, Bogaerts power Boston to victory**

Bill Koch

BOSTON --- Rick Porcello was the exception this weekend. Red Sox starting pitchers throwing well was the norm.

It’s a welcome reversal from the first couple turns through the rotation. David Price followed the Friday lead of Eduardo Rodriguez in locking up the Orioles, and Boston is at the doorstep of a first series victory this season.

Xander Bogaerts provided all the offensive support, and it was far more than Price and a pair of relievers needed on a splendid afternoon at Fenway Park. Baltimore was limited to just five hits in a 4-0 shutout, the second blanking authored by Red Sox pitching in as many Sundays.

“Winning makes everybody feel better,” Price said. “Whether or not you get zero hits or don’t have a very good outing, that feels good in the clubhouse today. It’s going to feel good in the clubhouse tomorrow morning.”

Bogaerts drove a sacrifice fly to deep center field in the bottom of the fourth and went the same way with a three-run homer in the bottom of the eighth. Mitch Moreland’s solo shot was the difference in a 1-0 victory at Arizona last weekend, a game in which Hector Velazquez turned in three scoreless frames in a spot start. These were more conventional circumstances, as one of the projected cornerstones of the Boston rotation delivered as expected.

“(Price) kept most of his balls low in the zone and caught a lot of guys in front cheating on the fastball,” Bogaerts said. “The way he mixed was really nice today.”

Price required 92 pitches to navigate through seven innings, working out of trouble spots in three of his last four. Joey Rickard reached on a two-base error to lead off the fourth and doubles to left by Richie Martin and Trey Mancini gave the Orioles threats in the sixth and seventh. None of those men reached third base, as Rickard came closest when he was caught stealing with one out.

“For him to go seven and give the ball to those last two guys, it was very important for us,” said Red Sox manager Alex Cora, as he summoned Ryan Brasier and Matt Barnes for three outs apiece. “Now we reset and we’re ready for the game tomorrow.”

It was the first scoreless outing of more than three innings by any Red Sox starter this season. Price also authored the last in the clinching Game 5 of the American League Championship Series against the Astros, firing six shutout innings in a 4-1 victory. The left-hander lowered his earned-run average from a bloated 6.00 to a trimmer 3.79.

“I’ve thrown the ball well this year,” Price said. “I know I gave up four runs in each start, but I feel like I’ve thrown the ball well.”

Bogaerts sent Cedric Mullins to the edge of the warning track with a deep fly in the fourth, plating Steve Pearce from third base to make it 1-0. He rode a 1-and-1 pitch from Josh Lucas a bit deeper in the eighth, crushing a hanging slider onto the black tarp covering two sections of the bleachers. It was suddenly a comfortable cushion and the near-sellout crowd of 36,023 fans let out a collective exhale.

“We know how hard runs are for us lately, and that will turn around,” Bogaerts said. “We’ve got a lot of our horses that aren’t playing the way they normally do, and that will turn around because they’re horses.”

“We haven’t done that the whole season,” Cora said. “It was good to do that.”

Rodriguez fired 6 2/3 strong innings on Friday in a 6-4 victory over Baltimore, making a lone mistake when Dwight Smith Jr. ran into a changeup and rode it out to right field for a two-run homer. The left-hander allowed just three hits and struck out eight against no walks, a nearly identical line to the one posted by Price.

### **Red Sox Journal: Outfield depth being tested**

Bill Koch

BOSTON — The Red Sox could face a shortage of healthy outfielders entering their series finale with the Orioles on Monday.

Andrew Benintendi (right foot contusion) and Jackie Bradley Jr. (flu) are both ailing and Boston might have to cobble together an unconventional lineup for the traditional 11:05 a.m. first pitch on Patriots’ Day. Blake Swihart played the last six innings of Sunday’s 4-0 shutout victory in left field after Benintendi fouled a ball off his instep.

“I’ve got nobody else to blame but myself,” Benintendi said. “I’m pulling off or something. It’s definitely been some bad luck.”

Benintendi howled in pain as he fell to the ground on the dirt surrounding home plate. Red Sox manager Alex Cora was quickly out of the Boston dugout to check on his leadoff hitter, and Benintendi ultimately slashed a liner to the corner in left for a double. Benintendi hobbled all the way to second base and was removed after Mookie Betts sent a fly ball to center for the last out of the third.

“X-rays were negative, so you never know,” Cora said. “All of a sudden they wake up and they feel great. As of now we’ll probably stay away from him tomorrow.”

Bradley was a late scratch from the original lineup and was sent home. Both his and Benintendi’s left-handed bats would be welcome against right-hander Dan Straily. He carries a 19.29 earned-run average into a game Baltimore must win to split the four-game set.

Tiger a hit at Fenway

News from the golf world took center stage for a few brief moments at Fenway Park on Sunday.

A scoreboard message between innings informed the 36,023 fans on hand about the events unfolding at The Masters. Tiger Woods celebrated his return to the top of the leader board by capturing the 15th major championship of his career. The crowd let out a cheer that reached all the way down the tunnel inside the first base dugout to the edge of the home clubhouse.

“I heard a whole lot of cheering outside and we have delayed TVs now,” Boston pitcher David Price said. “I asked what happened. I thought somebody ran out onto the field — a streaker.”

Price was among a handful of Red Sox players watching coverage of the tournament early Sunday morning. He had yet to make his big league debut the last time Woods won a major at the 2008 U.S. Open and was a college freshman at Vanderbilt University when Woods captured his last green jacket in 2005.

“We messed up by not wearing red today,” Price said, referencing the traditional Sunday shirt choice favored by Woods. “I’m happy he pulled that off.”

Holt works out

Brock Holt (right eye) was among a small group of Boston players to go through a pregame workout on the field Sunday.

Holt fielded ground balls on the left side of the infield and took batting practice, inching closer to a return to action for the first time since April 5. He’s currently on the injured list.

“Obviously he needs to get at-bats,” Cora said. “I don’t know how many, but he will need at-bats. We’ve got to take this seriously.”

That suggests a potential rehab assignment for Holt, who suffered a scratched cornea. He’ll see an optometrist this week, staying back while the Red Sox embark on a five-game road swing through New York and Tampa Bay. Brian Johnson (left elbow) has yet to resume baseball activities and will also be off the road swing.

Velazquez on tap?

Hector Velazquez and Swihart are tentatively scheduled to make up Monday’s battery. Velazquez threw an inning in relief at his request in Saturday’s 9-5 loss to Baltimore. The right-hander hadn’t pitched since a spot start at Arizona on April 7, tossing three scoreless frames in a 1-0 victory.

“He’s actually pounding the strike zone with good stuff, which is great,” Cora said. “It’s not hard contact. His (split-fingered fastball) is a lot better than last year.”

Price turned in seven strong innings on Sunday and handed the ball to Ryan Brasier and Matt Barnes for one apiece. That meant a needed rest for much of the bullpen one day after Rick Porcello failed to get out of the fifth inning in Saturday’s 9-5 defeat.

“Knowing the next game was going to be a bullpen day, you’ve got to eat up as many innings as possible,” Price said. “We were able to put up zeroes today, so that was big for us.”

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

### **David Price throws seven shutout innings, Xander Bogaerts has four RBIs as Boston Red Sox shut out Orioles, 4-0**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- David Price sure looked like the best version of himself Sunday afternoon.

Price threw seven shutout innings, allowing three hits and striking out seven Orioles in a 4-0 Red Sox win. Xander Bogaerts drove in all four of Boston’s runs, hitting a sacrifice fly in the fourth inning and a three-run homer to center to put the game away in the ninth.

Price had allowed four earned runs in six innings in each of his first two starts on the west coast, but Sunday was a different story. He issued no walks and induced 18 swings-and-misses against a Baltimore offense that walked eight times and had 13 hits Saturday.

Baltimore had back-to-back chances to tie the game late, with Richie Martin and Trey Mancini hitting leadoff doubles in the sixth and seventh, respectively. Price escaped both jams, getting three quick outs in both frames.

After Ryan Brasier got out of a first-and-third jam in the eighth to preserve the lead, Boston’s offense came alive against relievers Paul Fry and Josh Lucas. Mookie Betts and Martinez each hit singles before Bogaerts broke things open with a deep shot to center field. Matt Barnes allowed two baserunners in the ninth before striking out Chris Davis to end the game.

Bogaerts had four RBIs on five occasions in 2019 but entered play Saturday with just four in 14 games. Boston’s offense was quiet for most of the day, registering just four hits off O’s starter John Means.

The Red Sox improved to 6-10 and clinched at least a split of their four-game series against Baltimore. The two teams will be back in action Monday morning for the annual 11:05 a.m. start on Patriots’ Day.

Benintendi removed from game after fouling ball off foot

Benintendi fouled a ball off his right knee in the fourth inning, collapsing in pain before spending a few minutes trying to walk off the injury. He finished the at-bat by doubling into left field but was removed from the game at the beginning of the next inning.

Benintendi completed his at-bat and hit a double before being replaced by Blake Swihart in the field.

Blake Swihart took over in left field. The Sox announced Benintendi suffered a right foot contusion and is day-to-day. X-rays were negative.

Sox go for first series win of 2019 on Monday

After losing their first three series on the road and splitting a two-game set with the Blue Jays, the Sox are looking for their first series win of 2019 on Monday morning. Righty Hector Velazquez will get the start for Boston opposite righty Dan Straily.

### **Andrew Benintendi injury: Boston Red Sox OF day-to-day after fouling ball off foot**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- Red Sox outfielder Andrew Benintendi doesn't believe the right foot injury he suffered Sunday is anything to worry about.

"I don't see it as being anything super serious," Benintendi said. "We'll see how it feels (tomorrow) and go from there."

Benintendi was removed from Sunday's win against Baltimore after fouling a ball off his right foot in the third inning. He completed that at-bat and hit a double before being replaced in left field by Blake Swihart.

"He said it was good and hit the double," manager Alex Cora said. "At that point, I was like, eh, this is not a good idea."

X-rays on the foot were negative and Benintendi is day-to-day with a right foot contusion, according to the team. He's unlikely to play Monday morning in the series finale against the Orioles.

"You never know, (sometimes) they wake up and they feel great," Cora said. "But as of now, we can stay away from him tomorrow."

Benintendi has made a habit of fouling balls off himself this season, doing it a number of times in Boston's first 15 games. Sunday's shot-- which hit the Nike logo on the side of Benintendi's cleat-- was the most painful so far.

"I've got nobody else to blame but myself. I'm either pulling off or something," Benintendi said. "It's definitely been some bad luck but I'll wear some protective gear and hopefully it's better."

Benintendi said his foot felt a little bit better after the game but acknowledged it was still sore. Boston enters Monday's game short a couple of outfielders, with Benintendi likely out and Jackie Bradley Jr. dealing with the flu.

### **Tiger Woods' Masters win inspiring to Boston Red Sox's David Price: 'We messed up by not wearing red today'**

Chris Cotillo

BOSTON -- When Red Sox lefty David Price heard a loud cheer in the middle of his start Sunday, he thought a streaker had run out on the field at Fenway Park. Instead, the crowd was reacting to the news that Tiger Woods had won his fifth Masters Tournament.

"Good job, Tiger," Price said. "We messed up by not wearing red today. I'm happy he pulled that off."

Price was in the tunnel in the bottom of the fifth inning when he heard the cheer and was informed by advance scouting assistant J.T. Watkins that Woods had won the Masters for the first time in 14 years. Price, who had watched some of the final round of the tournament in the clubhouse before the game, was elated to find out.

"That's awesome," Price said. "For him to endure everything he has been through, to get back on top and win another Masters... we're all pulling for him."

Price, who pitched seven scoreless innings Sunday, played in the Woods-hosted Hero World Challenge in 2014 and was able to spend some time with the legendary golfer at that event. He documented that encounter on Twitter at the time.

**\* *The Pawtucket Times***

## Chavis 'second' to none

Brendan McGair

PAWTUCKET — Given Dustin Pedroia's recent injury history, it's no surprise to see the Red Sox attempt to cover themselves with internal solutions at second base.

As much as Michael Chavis had a strong desire to play second base, the 23-year-old understood his place.

"Obviously it's not like I can walk up to them and say 'Hey, I want to play there,'" Chavis said.

Oh, how things have changed.

Friday night saw Chavis appear at second base for the second straight game. It was his fourth-ever game at the position – all coming this year with the PawSox.

"When they told me in spring training that I was going to start working over there, I was super excited. It's something that I was looking forward to," Chavis said. "That first day, I went out with (Red Sox third base coach Carlos Febles) and (Boston manager Alex Cora) was out there, too."

It wasn't long ago when Chavis was viewed as a power hitter who could play both corner infield spots. Now, he's wearing another label in his first pro season as a member of Boston's 40-man roster. This time, the focus is on making sure to be effective on flips and feeds.

The early returns have been promising. In the seventh inning of Thursday's 3-2 win over Syracuse, Chavis took the throw from shortstop Tzu-Wei Lin, then delivered a strong throw to first base with the speedy Rajai Davis on the base paths. It was one of two twin killings that Chavis had a hand in turning.

"Right now the biggest thing for me is turning double plays where I'm receiving and also breaking towards the bag. The other side of the infield is what I'm used to. Working towards my right instead of my left is a huge difference," said Chavis, "but I've done so much work and practice that it's about repeating what I've done. I've felt pretty comfortable.

"I take pride in how hard I work," Chavis added. "Working with (PawSox coach Bruce Crabbe, who has played a substantial role in hastening Chavis' education as a second baseman) and everybody else around here ... we have a great group of middle infielders. Whether it's going over something as simple as footwork, it's been huge working with them as far as asking questions."

Entering Friday, Chavis has yet to commit an error in 26 innings at second base.

"He's going to learn and he's going to make some mistakes. So far, he's played well," said PawSox manager Billy McMillon.

"So far it's been nothing but positive," said Ben Crockett, Red Sox vice president for player development. "For someone who hasn't had a ton of time at second base in the past, I thought he handled himself fine during spring training. He looked pretty comfortable and made the routine plays while working on some of the intricacies around the bag."

Crockett added the plan is to expose Chavis to first, second and third base "just in case something happens." Typically, that's code for a filling a need that arises at the major-league level.

Chavis says he's watched film of those who have made a living as a second baseman. He also spent considerable time around Pedroia during spring training. To receive pointers from someone who's won four Gold Gloves ... Chavis couldn't ask for a better tutor than Pedroia.

“One day, I was taking groundballs at third and turning double plays with Pedey. He talked to me about making sure my throws were on line to him so he can handle it and do what he needs to do,” Chavis said. “I took that opportunity to speak to him about what I would need to do if I was at second base. To learn from him ... he was my favorite player when I was growing up. It was a special moment for sure.”

His new defensive calling card has helped to simplify what Chavis does before games.

“Wherever I’m playing that day, that’s where I’m going to take groundballs so I can get the reads,” he said. “The angles between first and third are sort of similar but the angle at third is completely different when you’re at second, which is obvious. Then you have to do the footwork around the bag as far as receiving throws and picks in the dirt.”

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

### **Price continues domination at Fenway vs. O's**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- With a full arsenal of pitches working in harmony, David Price gave the Red Sox their best start of the season so far in Sunday’s masterpiece during a 4-0 win over the Orioles at Fenway Park.

The lefty carved Baltimore up with fastballs, changeups and cutters over seven innings, and made the 1-0 lead his team staked him to in the fourth feel a lot bigger.

“He was great,” second baseman Dustin Pedroia said. “All of his pitches were working. He’s getting quick outs, putting guys away. He stepped up big for us. Obviously, when a guy throws like that, you build off it and that carries momentum.”

The Red Sox (6-10) are quietly building just a little momentum -- at last. After a 2-8 start, the defending World Series champs have won three out of four and four out of six.

“Winning makes everybody feel better, whether you get zero hits or don't have a very good outing,” Price said. “Whenever you win, that feels good in the clubhouse. Today, that’s going to make it feel good in the clubhouse tomorrow morning, so that's big.”

Momentum, as they say, generally starts with the starting pitcher.

And Price helped the Red Sox answer Saturday’s 9-5 loss with thorough dominance on Sunday. Price was crisp in throwing 92 pitches. He allowed just three hits, walked none and struck out seven.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Price came up big in his first start of the season at Fenway. With a 27-7 record in Boston (as a home player and as a visitor), Price’s .794 win percentage at the ancient yard is second in history behind Smokey Joe Wood among pitchers with at least 20 starts.

In fact, he has won each of his past 10 decisions at Fenway dating back to last season, with the Red Sox going 13-1 over those 14 starts.

“It's a tough place to pitch,” Price. “You've got the Monster right over your shoulder, Pesky Pole, I don't know. I like pitching here. I wouldn't have signed here if I didn't like pitching in this park, that's for sure. It might just make you lock in a little bit more, knowing that a fly ball to left can be a double or a home run, a ball down the right-field line can be a home run.”

Price showed how locked in he was in his final two innings. In both the sixth and the seventh, Price gave up a leadoff double. And on each occasion, the Baltimore runner didn't advance past second.

“I trust the guy,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “He knows how maneuver an inning, and he was throwing the ball well. His fastball, his velocity was good, the changeup was great, I didn't think about going to the bullpen that early, he's in great shape, he's healthy and he's a guy that we really trust. I talked to him in the sixth, and it's, 'I'm good, I'm really good,' so we just let him go.”

Of Price's 92 pitches, 48 were fastballs. He also mixed in 28 changeups, 12 cutters, two curves and two sliders. The Orioles swung and missed 18 times. Price only one start last season where he generated more, also against the Orioles, who whiffed at 21 of his pitches on Aug. 11.

While the Red Sox have struggled as a rotation early in the season, Price (1-1, 3.79 ERA) is the one starter who has kept them in all three games he's pitched.

Once strong starts become a habit again, the Red Sox should be able to get back to where they are expected -- at or near the top of the American League East.

Price pumped by Tiger

Amid his own strong performance, Price was fired up when he heard that Tiger Woods won the Masters.

“I was downstairs, might've been after bottom five, I believe. I hear a whole lot of cheering outside, and we have delayed TVs now everywhere, so I just kind of asked what happened,” said Price. “I thought somebody ran out on the field, a streaker, and J.T. Watkins, our video guy said Tiger won the Masters. Good job, Tiger. We messed up by not wearing red [jerseys] today. I'm happy he pulled that off.”

Like most of the general public, Price was enthused by the rebirth of a sports legend.

“That's awesome. For him to endure everything he's been through and get on top and win another Masters, we're all pumped for him,” Price said.

Bogaerts provides separator

Clinging to a 1-0 lead from the bottom of the fourth and into the eighth inning, Xander Bogaerts finally allowed the Red Sox to breathe a little.

The shortstop clocked a three-run shot to center off Orioles reliever Josh Lucas. Bogaerts smoked the 85.2-mph slider over the wall in center at an exit velocity of 108.4 mph and a projected distance of 418 feet.

Translation? He got all of it.

“That's why we gave him the money we gave him. He comes up with the big hits,” Price said. “That's what Bogey does. He comes up with a lot of big hits for us.”

Considering that the Red Sox aren't fully clicking offensively, it was a huge swing.

“We've been looking for that for a while, that breathing room,” Cora said. “It was big, we haven't done that probably the whole season I want to say but it was good to see that.”

### **Benintendi sustains foot contusion during at-bat**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- Andrew Benintendi was originally supposed to be out of the lineup on Sunday against the Orioles. That changed -- but not for long.

Benintendi, who led off and started in left field for the Red Sox after Jackie Bradley Jr. was scratched with the flu, suffered a right foot contusion after fouling a ball hard off the lower part of his leg in the bottom of the third inning.

X-rays were negative, and the Red Sox have listed him as day to day.

Initially, Benintendi was able to stay in the game and finished his at-bat by belting a double to left.

“At that point, I just figured I would try to flick something and just try to get on base and see where it goes from there,” Benintendi said. “I hit it down the left-field line, and I was thinking two out of the box still, so I was trying to get there and get into scoring position.”

But when the Red Sox went out for defense in the top of the fourth, Benintendi was replaced in left field by Blake Swihart.

“It didn’t feel good. I think once I got to second, the pain kind of came back,” Benintendi said following the Red Sox’s 4-0 win. “It feels a little better now, and we’ll see how it feels tomorrow.”

With an 11:05 a.m. ET first pitch set for Patriots’ Day, it might be tough for Benintendi to bounce back by then. Tuesday at Yankee Stadium could be more realistic.

“I don’t see this being anything super serious,” Benintendi said. “But like I said, we’ll see how it feels and go from there.”

After hitting the ball off his foot on a 93.1-mph fastball from Orioles starter John Means, the 24-year-old Benintendi crumbled to the ground in obvious pain. Red Sox trainer Brad Pearson came out with manager Alex Cora to check on Benintendi, who stayed on the ground for a few minutes before rising and eventually walking it off.

“I hit it hard off my foot and, I don’t know, I was just trying to take my time and get the feeling back in it and try to stay in. That’s what I was thinking,” Benintendi said.

### **Holt (cornea) nearing Minors rehab assignment**

Ian Browne

BOSTON -- Red Sox super-utility player Brock Holt (scratched right cornea) is eligible to come off the injured list on Wednesday. However, it is more likely he will start a brief Minor League rehab assignment around that time.

Holt suffered the injury accidentally when his 2-year-old son, Griff, scratched him in the eye during Boston’s season-opening road trip.

“He’s going to see the doctor on Tuesday,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “If everything goes well, then we’ll make a decision. Obviously he needs to get at-bats [in the Minors]. I don’t know how many, but he will need at-bats. We’ve got to take this seriously.

“At this level, you’ve got to be able to see the ball, and you’ve got to be able to recognize spin and all that stuff. We’ll be very cautious with him and whenever he’s ready, he’s ready. But we’ve got to be careful with that.”

Though Holt is a reserve, he is invaluable to the Red Sox because of his ability to play every position but pitcher and catcher.

Meanwhile, it is still slow going for Boston’s other player on the injured list, lefty Brian Johnson (left elbow inflammation).

“Just rehab, getting treatment,” Cora said. “Most likely, he’ll stay back for this road trip and keep getting treatment, non-baseball activities. He’ll probably see the doctor during the week, see where we’re at, and we’ll go from there.”

Bradley scratched

Andrew Benintendi was supposed to get a day of rest on Sunday against Orioles lefty John Means. But that changed when center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. was taken out of the lineup a couple of hours before first pitch due to the flu.

Mookie Betts shifted to center field and J.D. Martinez, who was originally going to start in left field, moved to right.

Pedroia’s progress? Encouraging

Sunday marked Dustin Pedroia’s fourth start of the season since coming off the injured list earlier this week, and the first time he played on consecutive days. Cora had him in the DH spot.

Overall, the Red Sox are encouraged with how Pedroia looks after his prolonged rehab from a major left knee injury.

“He’s moving well,” Cora said. “I think the at-bats, he’s hitting the ball on the ground but at the same time, he’s been disciplined. Good at-bats, especially late in games. I think it’s more about repetitions, getting good at-bats and he’ll be fine, but he’s moving well at second.”

Pedroia made a vintage diving stop to his left during Saturday's 9-5 loss to take a hit away from Cedric Mullins.

“I went back to that play yesterday,” Cora said. “He took four steps for that ball, which is impressive. The one he made to the left, he was great, the double play. He was moving well. He’s moving really well.”

## **\* *WEEI.com***

### **David Price really likes pitching at Fenway Park**

Ryan Hannable

Maybe all David Price needed was to return to Fenway Park.

Going into Sunday, Price had two average starts on the West Coast to open then season, but Sunday was by far his best as he helped lead the Red Sox to a 4-0 win over the Orioles.

Price threw seven shutout innings, while allowing only three hits and striking out seven. The left-hander had his best stuff of the season as he recorded 18 swing-and-misses.

The strong performance is nothing new for him at Fenway. The Red Sox have won 13 of his last 14 starts at Fenway and since joining the team he's 21-6. For his career he is 26-7, which is good for the second-highest winning percentage with a minimum of 20 starts. Smoky Joe Wood is first at 39-6.

"It's a tough place to pitch. You've got the Monster right over your shoulder, Pesky Pole, I don't know," Price said to reporters afterwards of his success at home. "I like pitching here. I wouldn't have signed here if I didn't like pitching in this park, that's for sure. It might just make you lock in a little bit more, knowing that a fly ball to left can be a double or a home run, a ball down the right field line can be a home run. I don't know. I've been on really good teams since I've been here. I think that makes it a little bit easier. I don't have any answers for you for that."

He added: "I felt OK, just going out there making pitches, had good things happen with two outs there in the fourth, whatever inning it was, whenever they had the runner on second base, with two outs and Rickard hit the line drive to Devers. You've got to have that type of stuff. Good things happened. Made a lot of good pitches and some timely hitting."

The Red Sox have now one four out of their last six games after a 2-8 start to the year.

"Winning makes everybody feel better, whether you get zero hits or don't have a very good outing," Price said. "Whenever you win, that feels good in the clubhouse. Today it's going to feel good in the clubhouse tomorrow morning, so that's big."

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

### **From malcontent to masterful: How David Price became indispensable to the Red Sox**

John Tomase

Somebody should rummage through the discarded laundry of the 2014 Red Sox and find a t-shirt that's only to be worn on the days David Price pitches.

"He's the Ace."

Three years after signing a record \$217 million contract and two years after watching it nearly all burn, Price has claimed his place atop the Red Sox rotation in a comeback that might not reach Tiger Woods levels, but certainly deserves its own extended golf clap.

A one-time candidate for highest-paid malcontent in sports, Price has emerged from his darkest days in Boston to stabilize the defending World Series champions.

On Sunday, he gave the team exactly what it needed following Saturday's listless loss to the Orioles, tossing seven shutout innings and making one measly run stand in a 4-0 victory.

It was easily his best start of a season that had seen him pitch better than the 0-2 record and 6.00 ERA he carried into the game. Months after exorcizing his postseason demons and declaring that he held all the cards, Price found himself dealing again, and not a moment too soon.

Highlights from the Sox 4-0 win over the Orioles

"If you take a look at his starts, his stuff has been there, three pitches in Oakland, then that inning in Arizona, but stuff-wise he's way ahead of where he was last year at this point," said manager Alex Cora. "Everybody knew where we were pitching-wise today, and for him to go seven and give the ball to those last two guys, it was very important to us."

With ace Chris Sale and former Cy Young Award winner Rick Porcello struggling alongside postseason hero Nathan Eovaldi, the Red Sox rotation had found itself mirroring the disastrous 2014 group that claimed it had five aces when in fact it had none. These Red Sox were adrift and in need of an anchor.

Enter Price.

"Every time he takes the ball, he expects to go deep into a game and shut the other team down," said teammate Dustin Pedroia, who was in the opposing dugout during Price's coming-out party during the 2008 American League Championship Series. "That's his mentality. Today was a perfect example. I've seen it a lot of times. We've had it happen to us a lot. He was great today."

Price limited the Orioles to three hits and no walks, striking out seven. His fastball reached 94 mph and he induced 18 swings and misses with six different pitches.

Price has endured some serious slings and arrows since arriving in Boston, often of his own making. But he was the team's best pitcher down the stretch last season, going 6-1 with a 2.25 ERA after injuries shelved Sale, and then he should've won the World Series MVP Award after a narrative-shattering postseason that included a victory in the clincher.

Sandy Leon discusses calling games and his trust with pitchers

He entered this season as the presumed No. 2 starter behind Sale, but three uncharacteristic starts from Price's fellow left-hander has left the top spot in the rotation up for grabs, and Price has snatched it.

"You look at the real numbers pitching-wise, I don't know, his WHIP is below 1.00, so that's a good sign," Cora said. "The ERA right now, obviously, that will go up and down, it's not too many innings but the numbers don't really matter, there's not too much traffic with him."

After the game, Price was asked about Tiger winning the Masters. From one redemption story to another, he offered his congratulations.

"We messed up by not wearing red today," Price said. "I'm happy he pulled that off. That's awesome. For him to endure everything he's been through and get on top and win another Masters, we're all pumped for him."

Price can relate. The Boston experience hasn't always been smooth, but at this moment, Price is exactly where he belongs. Somebody order the t-shirts.

### **Andrew Benintendi day-to-day after fouling yet another ball off his foot**

John Tomase

Andrew Benintendi has found himself under assault this season. The aggressor?

Himself.

No, this isn't a (spoiler alert) Tyler-Durden-in-Fight-Club scenario. Benintendi is aware of what he's doing. At the moment he just seems powerless to stop it.

On Sunday, he fouled yet another pitch off his lower body, this one pegging his right foot. He crumpled to the ground, spent three or four minutes trying to walk it off, stayed in the game long enough to limp into second with a double, and then called it an afternoon in Boston's 4-0 victory over the Orioles.

"I've got nobody else to blame but myself," Benintendi said. "I'm pulling off or something. Definitely been some bad luck, but I'll wear some protective (padding) and hopefully it'll feel better."

This is at least the fourth time Benintendi has fouled a ball off himself this season, including two off the knee on the season-opening road trip. He said this one nailed him on the Nike logo on his cleat. He went 1 for 2 to raise his average to .293 before exiting.

The good news is he doesn't expect to be sidelined long, and he's considered day-to-day. X-rays came back negative, and manager Alex Cora said he probably wouldn't play in Monday's Marathon Day matinee.

"I don't see this being anything super serious, but we'll see how it feels and go from there," Benintendi said.

**\* *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

**David Price helps to save an overworked bullpen with seven shutout innings**

Sean McAdam

For a pitcher on the mound, it's best to keep focused on the target.

But you'll forgive David Price if, only metaphorically, he was looking both behind and ahead Sunday afternoon.

Price knew teammate Rick Porcello had managed just 12 outs in Saturday's loss, necessitating five long innings from Red Sox relievers to close out the game against the Baltimore Orioles. And he knew Monday's series finale will involve a spot start by Hector Velazquez, who, in a similar spot exactly a week ago, pitched effectively but briefly, giving the Sox just 39 pitches and three innings in Arizona.

Price knew what that meant: he needed to provide length to a depleted pitching staff. Of course, going deep into games is always a goal for starting pitchers. It's self-evident that the longer you stay on the mound, the better it is for your team.

But this was especially — maybe even doubly — true for the Red Sox on Sunday. Another four- or five-inning stint — before Sunday, only four of the first 15 games saw a Red Sox starter get through the sixth — and the Red Sox would have really been in a bad spot.

"Everybody knew where we were pitching-wise today," noted Alex Cora. "For him to go seven and get the ball to those last two guys (Ryan Brasier and Matt Barnes) was very important."

"I knew the situation," said Price. "Got to put up as many zeroes as possible, so that was big for us. But we could score 100 runs in the first inning and my approach isn't going to change — I'm out there trying to pound the strike zone, get quick outs and get us as deep as possible in that ballgame."

Price was efficient and effective from the start. In his first five innings of work against the Baltimore Orioles, he pitched to just one batter over the minimum, allowing just one hit. He yielded a leadoff single to Renato Nunez in the second, but kept him anchored to first. Two innings later, Rafael Devers airtailed a throw wildly to first, putting Mike Rickard on second and giving the Orioles their first baserunner in scoring position.

But Rickard tried to swipe third and Christian Vazquez threw him out with a laser throw.

On and on Price went. Things got tougher in the later innings. In both the sixth and seventh, he allowed leadoff doubles. Yet both times, not only did the Orioles not score, they also failed to advance the runner at all.

With runners in scoring position, Price managed to hold the Orioles without a hit in seven at-bats, bearing down to extricate himself from the few jams he encountered.

"We were able to make pitches in those situations today and that was big for us," Price said.

Perhaps we should have seen this coming. While Chris Sale has battled illness and flashed well-below-average velocity and both Porcello and Nathan Eovaldi have been atypically wild and Eduardo Rodriguez has been his usual enigmatic self, Price has actually been somewhat consistent.

In each of his first two starts, he managed to at least give the Sox six innings. In one, almost all of the damage came on homers — two solo, one two-run shot; in the other, he was victimized by a big inning, allowing four runs in one frame against the Diamondbacks.

On Sunday, there were no hiccups, not even a hint of a big inning against him. The Orioles never got more than one baserunner in any one inning. And because he was around the strike zone all day (no walks) and had the advantage of consistently pitching ahead, he was economical — in each of his first six innings, his pitch count never fluctuated to fewer than 12 pitches or more than 15.

It was unquestionably the best start from a Red Sox pitcher this year, better even than the one Eduardo Rodriguez provided Friday night.

When he left after seven, Cora had the final six outs mapped out for his two high-leverage relievers: Brasier for the eighth and Barnes for the ninth.

“Now, (Monday), we kind of like reset and we’re ready,” said a satisfied Cora, noting that his other six relievers got the benefit of a day of rest.

### **BSJ Game Report: Red Sox 4, Orioles 0 – Bogaerts, Price team up to blank Orioles**

Sean McAdam

Second shutout: As poorly as the Red Sox have pitched as a staff this season, Sunday marked the second shutout of 2019 and second in the last week. (The Sox also got a 1-0 win in Arizona a week ago in a bullpen game started by Hector Velazquez). This also marked the second quality start in the last three games for the Sox, so maybe there’s hope yet for a rotation which began the year in such inauspicious fashion. A big improvement has been made when it comes to limiting the long ball. After Red Sox pitchers seemingly allowed them by the bushel on the first three series, they have not allowed any in the last two games or five of the last seven. Starter David Price bore down when it was necessary, holding the Orioles to 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position, then got scoreless innings in relief from both Ryan Brasier and Matt Barnes.

Bogaerts supplies all the necessary offense: With a sacrifice fly in the fourth and a three-run homer in the eighth, Xander Bogaerts was responsible for all four runs that crossed the plate for the Sox on Sunday with a season-high four RBI. “I’m not going to say I was up there trying to hit a homer, because that’s definitely not what I was doing,” offered Bogaerts. “But I’ve been going up there with a plan and sticking to the plan. I was looking off-speed the whole at-bat. After (reliever Josh Lucas) threw that first slider, that was pretty tough. But that last one, he just left it in the middle (of the plate).” Then again, Bogaerts is accustomed to having big games against the Orioles: his last three four-RBI games have all come against the Orioles.

Benintendi gives Sox a scare: In the third inning, Andrew Benintendi fouled a ball off his right foot and went down in a heap. He remained there for a few minutes, wincing in pain before eventually getting up and gingerly testing the foot by first walking, then jogging, down the first base line. After a long delay, he remained in the game and stroked a double to left. But he was limping noticeably into second after the inning was over, the Sox moved Blake Swihart into left and took Benintendi out. This marked the third time in the first two and a half weeks of the season that Swihart has fouled a ball somewhere off his right leg — twice, on the opening road trip, he fouled balls off his right knee. “I got nobody else to blame but myself,” he said. “You’re pulling off (pitches when that happens) or something. It’s definitely been some bad luck but I’ll wear some protective gear and hopefully it’s better (Monday).”

#### **TURNING POINT**

In the seventh inning, with the Sox clinging to a 1-0 lead, Price allowed a leadoff double to Trey Mancini, with the middle third of the Baltimore lineup due next. But Price got a flyout, a groundout and an infield popup and Mancini never advanced from second.

#### **TWO UP**

J.D. Martinez: He reached base three times and has now hit safely in 15 of the Red Sox’ 16 games this season.

Ryan Brasier: He picked up an important hold with a scoreless eighth inning, stranding the potential tying run at third.

## ONE DOWN

Dustin Pedroia: Serving as the DH, Pedroia was 0-for-4, coming to bat with four runners on base in his first three at-bats and failing to deliver any of them.

## QUOTE OF NOTE

“Stuff-wise, he’s way ahead of where he was last year at this point.” Alex Cora on David Price.

## STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

Matt Barnes issued his first walk of the season.

The Sox improved to 21-4 in their last 25 games against the Orioles.

J.D. Martinez has four doubles in the last five games.

Mookie Betts (eighth-inning single) has reached base against Baltimore in 27 games straight.

## UP NEXT

The Red Sox and Orioles wrap up their four-game series Monday morning at 11:05 in the annual Patriots Day game. It will be RHP Hector Velazquez (0-0, 279) vs. RHP Dan Straily (0-1, 19.29)

## **MLB Notebook: Rays poised to give Yankees, Red Sox all they can handle in AL East**

Sean McAdam

The Red Sox are, naturally enough, perpetually measured against their rivals, the New York Yankees.

Even in winters in which the Red Sox are the defending champions, coming off a World Series triumph, there’s great consternation about what the Yankees did to improve and angst that they have closed the gap, or worse, overtaken the Sox — on paper, at least.

But for now, just over two weeks into the season, it isn’t the Yankees that the Red Sox should be most worried about. That’s due in part to the injury plague which has struck the Yanks, sending half of their projected lineup to the IL, along with 40 percent of the starting rotation and key bullpen pieces, too.

It’s also, however, a reflection of the Tampa Bay Rays, who came into Saturday with the second-best record in baseball and whom the Sox meet for the first time this season next weekend in a three-game weekend set at Tropicana Field.

It shouldn’t be a huge surprise that the Rays are, this early at least, formidable. They won 90 games last year in a division that saw the two teams ahead of them both win 100 games.

But while the Red Sox scuffle because of poor performance from their rotation and the Yankees limp through the first month, the Rays are streaking and already are comfortably ahead of both their far more monied divisional competitors.

It was naturally assumed the Rays would pitch, because their rotation, which already boasted of Cy Young Award-winner Blake Snell, added veteran Charlie Morton. Meanwhile, Tyler Glasnow and Yonny Chirinos have combined to go 5-0 with a 0.60 ERA. Chirinos benefited last year from the “opener” concept, adapting to the big leagues as the guy who would often handle the middle innings.

Now, he’s on his own in a more conventional role and the Rays have utilized the opener in just two of their first 14 games.

But beyond the pitching, the Rays are also pounding the ball — in the literal sense. Their 90.2 mph exit velocity heading into Saturday was the second-highest in the game. Tampa has scored at least once in the

first inning 10 times in first 14 games, including a stretch of seven straight which marked the longest streak for any team since 2006.

And there's evidence that the Rays are capable of more. Despite being in the top third in runs scored across MLB, the Rays haven't hit well with runners in scoring position, with a slash line of .232/.349/.341. If, as expected, their performance in those spots improves, they'll be even more potent offensively.

"I don't think they're going away," remarked one evaluator who has seen the Rays quite a bit in the early going. "They catch the ball, they can pitch and their lineup is better than it's been in a while. They're a really well-run organization and their willingness to try new things should be commended."

Another factor: there's more help on the way. Brent Honeywell, generally regarded as their best pitching prospect, is recovering from Tommy John surgery 14 months ago and could represent a big addition to the rotation in the second half.

The Red Sox will get a chance to see the Rays in person Easter weekend. They might not like what they see.

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Until the first inning Saturday when he supplied a two-run single to right field, Orioles first baseman Chris Davis found himself in the middle of a ghoulish spectacle, with the entire baseball world watching his hitless streak grow at-bat by at-bat, day by day. Davis came into Saturday 0-for-33 to start this season and 0-for-54 going back to last year, covering 62 consecutive hitless plate appearances — some opponents couldn't help but feel bad for him.

"Everybody in baseball is a family and you don't want to see that," said Dustin Pedroia. "Just playing against him, through the years, he had that stretch where he was launching everything. But it stinks to watch anybody go through a stretch like that. Just knowing him a little bit, he's a grinder, man. He'll run out there and play and do everything. He's trying to find a way to get out of it. It's just unfortunate. Sometimes in baseball, you hit tough patches and you've got to try to find a way to get out of it and he's trying to do that."

"As someone in the game, you're empathetic to someone who's having a hard time," said Red Sox assistant hitting coach Andy Barkett. "The game is hard and it's really hard at this level. Apart from contracts and everything else, he's a human being and it's tough to go through that. You feel empathy for the guy, but obviously, you want him to keep getting out because we want to win the game."

As Davis racked up one hitless at-bat after another, his plate appearances have taken on a circus-like atmosphere. When he was introduced as a pinch-hitter with two outs in the ninth Friday, the fans who had remained at Fenway were jeering and chanting derisively, cheering wildly with every strike. It wasn't much better at home, where Orioles fans — the few that are showing up at Camden Yards these days, that is — are angry that he's commanding such a large percentage of the team's modest payroll and taking their frustration out on Davis.

"I don't like it," said Barkett. "It's no good. Stuff like that, I don't like. I was in the minors (when former St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Rick) Ankiel was scuffling with his command issues and saw some things that were very uncomfortable to see and hear. You empathize with the guy, even though you're competing against him. He's a human being."

"But I guess it's part of the deal when you're on the public stage and you make money to perform and you don't perform, the fans feel like they have a right to say what they want. It's just part of the deal."

Barkett recalled when he was managing in the Marlins minor league system, current Milwaukee Brewers outfielder Christian Yelich went through a similar skid, going hitless in 33 at-bats. But because Barkett saw Yelich hitting the ball hard and getting his walks, he never knew the streak was in place.

“At some point, there has to be a mental component to it,” said Barkett. “You have to be thinking about it all the time.”

“I’ve actually saw some highlights on MLB Network,” said a sympathetic Pedroia. “He’s hit some balls good, but right at (fielders). He’s hit some balls good. (Friday) night, he flipped a ball out there, but right into the shift. If you’re not going well like that, you’re not feeling good and the balls you do hit good, it seems like there’s 50 outfielders.

“Baseball, man, it’s a hard spot. (Hitting) is the hardest thing to do. Guys are throwing it 95 mph, the ball’s moving everywhere ... it’s not easy. You just show up to work every day and grind. You don’t worry about the ups and downs. You just try to find a way to get better every day.”

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Allen Craig, who was part of the big five-player deal between the Red Sox and St. Louis Cardinals in 2014, officially retired from baseball late last week and joined the San Diego Padres front office as a Baseball Operations advisor.

Craig’s career went into descent in rapid and unexpected fashion. In his first three full seasons with the Cardinals, he compiled an .863 OPS and an OPS+ of 136.

But beginning in 2014 and continuing with his time with the Red Sox, Craig was a completely different player. He totaled just 65 games played for the Sox and spent the better part of three seasons (2015-17) at Pawtucket, where he was also underwhelming. After spending 2018 at Triple-A in the Padres’ organization, Craig was in spring training with San Diego on a minor league deal, but failed to make much impact.

No doubt, a bothersome lisfranc injury contributed to Craig’s downfall. It was theorized that he made some adjustments at the plate to deal with the injury, and never could re-discover his original swing.

Craig, of course, was with the Cardinals in 2013 and took part in the World Series against the Red Sox that fall.

Now, just six years later, it’s stunning to see how few players remain in the game today. Of the 13 players with the most plate appearances for that Red Sox team, just three — Pedroia, Jacoby Ellsbury (nominally) and Jose Iglesias — are still active.

Ten others — Jarrod Saltalamacchia, Mike Napoli, Stephen Drew, Will Middlebrooks, Jonny Gomes, Shane Victorino. David Ortiz, Daniel Nava, Mike Carp and David Ross — have all retired.

Among pitchers, of the 10 pitchers with the most innings pitched, just three — Jon Lester, Clay Buchholz and Andrew Miller — remain active in organization pro ball in North America.

That’s a reminder of how quickly things evolve, how much roster churn exists in the game, and as free agents from the last few winters can attest, how hard it is to survive as a 30-something player in 2019.

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### The List/Top 3

In honor of Craig, a look at the three most disappointing players acquired via trade by the Red Sox.

1. Danny Cater: Trading away Sparky Lyle after the 1970 season was bad enough, and made doubly so by the fact that Lyle went on to become the Yankees’ closer on two championship teams in New York, winning a Cy Young Award in the process. But Cater’s meager return made this deal worse. The same guy who had finished 10th in the A.L. in batting average the previous year proved to be a major disappointment in his three uneventful seasons with the Sox.

2. Allen Craig: As noted Craig never got untracked in Boston. He looked like a shell of his former self and not even a long stay in Pawtucket could get his swing and approach back in order. At a certain point, it also became a financial issue for the Red Sox, who outrighted him off the 40-man roster so his salary didn't count against the luxury tax threshold, then couldn't bring him back up without it counting again.

3. Yoenis Cespedes: Intent on not going through a rebuild as they plummeted in the standings following their 2013 championship and with their chances of extending Lester dropping by the day, the Sox shopped Lester and found a willing partner in Oakland, which offered the slugging outfielder in exchange. Cespedes' time in Boston was entirely forgettable — he has a .719 OPS in 51 games, with just five homers and 33 RBI. Worse, Cespedes angered the coaching staff for his unwillingness to work on his outfield play and generally gave off the air who wasn't invested. As was the case with the Lyle-Cater deal, what made things worse was how well Lester pitched after leaving Boston. Cespedes was then dealt that December to Detroit for Rick Porcello.

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

### **The story behind the rare 'Boston' jerseys the Red Sox wear on Patriots Day**

Jen McCaffrey

Six years ago this week, David Ortiz lingered around the mound as the Red Sox wrapped up an emotional pregame ceremony in their first game at Fenway Park following the Boston Marathon bombings.

It was April 20, 2013. The sold-out crowd had just finished singing the national anthem in unison. Ortiz was one of three players to catch ceremonial first pitches from a group of first responders and bombing survivors.

He announced an unexpected uniform change.

“This jersey we are wearing today, it doesn't say, ‘Red Sox’, it says, ‘Boston,’” Ortiz said. “We want to thank Mayor Menino, Gov. Patrick, the whole police department for the great job they did this past week. This is our fucking city, and nobody is going to dictate our freedom. Stay strong. Thank you.”

The latter part of Ortiz's short speech rocketed into instant fame. But the first part — that part about abandoning the jerseys with the “Red Sox” script that had been their traditional home garb for decades — is a lesser known story that's become as much a part of Marathon Monday as the 11 a.m. game time.

In many ways, social media played a pivotal role in connecting, informing and organizing efforts on the ground in Boston in the week following the bombings. It also played a big role in the Sox' uniform change.

The “Boston Strong” mantra on Twitter and Instagram was popularized when Red Sox infielder Will Middlebrooks retweeted fans' comments of support with the #BostonStrong hashtag.

The Red Sox, who were headed to the airport after their game at Fenway when the bombs went off on April 15, 2013, tried to support the city from afar during their ensuing three-game series in Cleveland. They hung a Red Sox jersey with the “617” Boston area code on its back in the visitors dugout, and wrote Boston Strong on their cleats and hats.

Back home, the suspects were still on the loose and a mixture of heartbreak and angst blanketed the city. While processing their own emotions about a tragedy that happened a mile from Fenway, Red Sox staff knew the team needed a plan, both to comfort the city and to honor victims, survivors and first responders when the games resumed at Fenway later in the week.

Meghan Ryan, the team's social media director at the time, passed along an idea to the front office.

“She was saying there are a lot of people on social that are chiming in saying it’d be cool for you guys to wear Boston jerseys at home,” Red Sox executive vice president and chief marketing officer Adam Grossman said. “She came to us and said, ‘Hey, this is what we’re seeing it’d be really cool to be able to do this.’”

It may seem like an easy fix to remove “Red Sox” from the front of the home white jerseys and add “Boston,” but the timeframe in which they had to work was extremely tight. The attacks happened Monday. The Red Sox were scheduled to host the Royals on Friday night.

The club still had to get approval from MLB and then had to coordinate with the league’s official uniform company, Majestic.

“When this went down, the league has really strict deadlines of when you can change uniforms and it’s like a year in advance,” said Troup Parkinson, the Sox executive vice president of partnerships. “You’re really going to the league and asking their permission, and even see if it’s possible.”

While patches are often sewn on to jerseys last minute, authorizing and creating a brand-new jersey in less than a week is virtually unheard of. But, in one of the most unusual weeks in Boston’s history, the response was unusually quick.

Clearance arrived and the uniforms were hastily created. Majestic used the home white material for Red Sox jerseys and cut out the red Boston lettering for the front. Each jersey also had a ‘B Strong’ patch over the heart. Majestic then made extra patches for the Royals uniforms.

Getting those uniforms to the park was the next hurdle, however. The tight turnaround created issues for shipping them. So Andy Davis, a marketing manager for MLB who works with the Red Sox, picked up the uniforms from the Majestic factories in Easton, Penn., and drove them five hours to Boston in time for the team’s arrival on Friday.

Friday’s game, however, was postponed because the city went into lockdown as the manhunt for the Marathon bombing suspects reached a climax. One suspect had been killed in a shootout in the wee hours of Friday morning. The surviving suspect was apprehended later that night around 8 p.m. The Red Sox were then cleared to play Saturday’s game. Debuting those Boston home jerseys, the Red Sox beat the Royals 4-3, thanks to a three-run homer in the eighth inning from Daniel Nava.

“Everything that was supposed to happen did happen,” Parkinson said. “People didn’t worry about deadlines and how you should handle stuff. Everyone realized it was much bigger than that conversation, so it was sort of a huge effort.”

The Boston home jerseys were so well received and meaningful that the team, with the blessing of MLB and Majestic, decided to make it a yearly tradition. Every Marathon Monday since 2013, the Red Sox have rolled out the Boston home jerseys.

Each year, the jerseys have been auctioned off to raise money for the Red Sox Foundation.

Clubhouse manager Tommy McLaughlin collects the jerseys worn after every Marathon Monday game and organizes them to be signed by the players.

“We don’t launder them, we give them to our authenticator as is,” McLaughlin said. “They get stickered, there’s a whole process they go through to authenticate them as ‘game worn.’”

It’s an apt description, Red Sox senior director of community and player relations Sarah Narracci said.

“They’re dirty and they’re wet and sweaty and gross,” she said.

The community relations team works with MLB authenticators to ensure the process is done properly.

“Typically what we do is that (Marathon Monday) is most often a travel day, so we’ll set up in the back parking lot and (McLaughlin will) bring them out,” Narracci said. “We’ll hang them on a rack and when guys come out, the authenticator will be there and we’ll have them sign them. Normally we’d have them sign (inside) their numbers, but they sign under the Boston and then they get authenticated and go to the Red Sox Foundation.”

Last year, the Marathon Monday game was rained out. In those instances, the jerseys are not worn in the rescheduled game later in the year. Rather, they are signed and auctioned off as ‘game issued’ as opposed to “game worn.”

“We decided not to wear them (again) because they’re so specific to the day,” McLaughlin said.

This year, Marathon Monday falls on Jackie Robinson Day. So these home jerseys will not only have Boston on the front, but the number 42 on the back to commemorate Robinson.

The players have changed over the past six years, (Dustin Pedroia is the only active Red Sox player who played in that first post-Marathon attack game), but the Marathon jerseys have remained a constant.

“A lot of guys ask why we wear them,” McLaughlin said. “We try to make sure they know, so I’d like to think they appreciate it.”

If McLaughlin has his way, they’ll keep wearing the Marathon jerseys for years to come.

“I hope it does (remain),” McLaughlin said. “I never want to see it go away out of all the traditions we have because of what that year meant to the city.”

### **What’s it like writhing in pain in front of 36,000 people? Andrew Benintendi is learning all too well**

Chad Jennings

Three months ago, my wife and I bought a house. When you’re turning 40 and expecting your second child, it seems like a good time to give all your money to a woman named Jane, who will then give her house to a bank, which will let your family borrow that house for the next 30 years.

Within days of moving in, I was walking through the kitchen, still unfamiliar with the geography of the room, and stubbed my toe on a bar stool. I shouted a word my 2-year-old had never heard, doubled over in agony, and collapsed to the ground, convinced for just a moment I’d never walk again. My wife flinched, then laughed.

I think we’ve all been there. It’s never our finest hour. But at least we’ve never had a stadium full of people watching it happen.

For two full minutes on Sunday afternoon, Andrew Benintendi was in a similar heap, except he had all of Fenway Park glued to his every move, plus a television crew stationed at every angle, plus a radio broadcast describing his every wince and wiggle.

“If it were up to me, I probably would have stayed down even longer,” Benintendi said. “But the game’s gotta go on, obviously.”

Yep. Obviously. That was the problem.

Everything around Benintendi came to a standstill when, on the second pitch of his second at-bat, he fouled a 93 mph fastball off his right foot. It hit right across the Nike logo of his spikes, and the outfielder dropped immediately to the dirt. He was down for only a few seconds before he tried to stand up, but that didn’t

work at all, so he went right back down. He said even the Orioles catcher, Jesus Sucre, told him to just stay there.

Manager Alex Cora came out of the Red Sox dugout. Trainer Brad Pearson rushed to Benintendi's side. Orioles infielders walked toward the mound, where starting pitcher John Means had nothing to do but wait. Every person in the stadium was on standby until Benintendi could get up and moving again.

"Takes the helmet off as he rolls around in the batters' box on the right side of the plate," WEEI's Sean McDonough told listeners during Sunday's 4-0 win over the Orioles. "And now he's on his knees and elbows with his head down."

A player sitting in the dirt doesn't make for great radio, so McDonough killed time by reading an advertisement for broccoli crowns and baby carrots at Shaw's. Ninety-nine cents per bag!

Meanwhile, Benintendi was just sitting there, in the dirt, feeling like his foot had cracked in two, and well aware that an announced crowd of 36,023 was waiting for him.

"You kind of think about that," he said. "I didn't realize how long I was laying down, but, you know, it almost makes you feel awkward. I don't know how long I was laying down there for, but for me, it seemed like I was laying down there for like a minute and a half, but it might have been more like five minutes."

Actually, Benintendi was almost exactly right about the timing. It felt longer in retrospect, but he was on the ground in the right-handed batter's box for almost exactly two minutes while Pearson pushed and pulled his foot.

"It's a lot of, 'How (do) you feel? Can you go?'" Cora said. "And then Brad just walks him through the whole process: 'Where do you feel pain? Is there tingling in your toes?' All this stuff."

After two minutes and 45 seconds, Benintendi started to walk, but with a severe limp. At 3 1/2 minutes, he hopped up and down a couple of times. After nearly four minutes, he tried to jog, and those 36,023 people began to cheer. Benintendi said he barely heard them.

"Not really," he said. "I feel like I was just trying to focus so hard on trying to make it feel better. I think, for me, if I was laying on the ground for five minutes, I don't want to get pulled out after that. So, I wanted to finish the at-bat."

During the previous west coast road trip, Benintendi had fouled two balls off his right knee, and both were pretty painful. They were also still in his mind as he suffered through this latest stinger.

"I feel like I've been on the ground obviously three times now," he said. "And I don't want to be labeled as a guy who just goes down and stays down every time. ... I don't want to be that guy. The pitcher was throwing well at the time, so I wasn't trying to take him out of his game or anything like that, just can't do anything about it."

After 4 minutes and 20 seconds, Benintendi put his helmet back on and grabbed his bat. After 5 minutes and 10 seconds, he was back in the box. Then it got worse — he actually hit the ball! A sharp line drive into the left-field corner meant extra bases, and suddenly Benintendi, who couldn't stand up a few minutes earlier, was rounding first base. He said he was thinking double all the way.

"I hit it at first and was like, damn!" he said. "Whatever, gotta go."

He went, all right. Got to second base for his fourth double of the season in his final at-bat of the game. Benintendi said the pain came back as soon as he got to second. Cora decided to pull him after the inning.

"At that point, I was like, 'Ehhhh, it's not a good idea,'" Cora said.

In the clubhouse afterward, Benintendi was wearing sneakers and seemed to be moving pretty well. He'll likely sit out Monday's game, but he doesn't expect to miss significant time. X-rays were negative.

"That's the hardest I've ever hit a ball off my foot," he said. "At least it wasn't my knee again. It could have been worse."

Would have been worse if he'd stayed on the ground even longer. Being the center of attention on a baseball field isn't always a good thing.

## **\* *The New York Times***

### **James Paxton of Yankees, Already Struggling, Will Face Crucial Test in Red Sox**

Bob Klapisch

When James Paxton takes the mound at Yankee Stadium on Tuesday, he will be at the center of one of baseball's hottest rivalries. The crowd will be electric, the atmosphere charged if not primal. And in the Boston Red Sox, Paxton will not just be facing the Yankees' archenemies, but the defending world champions.

It's a lot to ask of any pitcher, but for Paxton, who has been struggling with mechanical and confidence issues, there will be an extra degree of difficulty.

After spending the first six years of his career with the Seattle Mariners, Paxton is off to a lackluster start with the Yankees: 1-2 with a 6.00 E.R.A., including an especially rough outing against the Houston Astros during which he allowed five runs and two home runs, and was removed in the fifth inning without recording an out. Paxton's early exit sealed Houston's three-game sweep of the Yankees, and was yet another reminder that a transition to the Yankees' universe can be tougher than it looks.

Paxton admits he has been somewhat overwhelmed by the outsize expectations — his own.

"I think just getting that under control and realizing it's the same game," Paxton said on Sunday morning, adding: "I think I've been trying to do too much, trying to be better than what I am. I realized I'm good enough being who I am or who I was in Seattle."

This is no small issue for Paxton or the Yankees. The team watched Sonny Gray, another small-market talent, pitch himself out of the Bronx in less than two full seasons as a result of his discomfort in front of a bigger, more demanding audience. But unlike Gray, who never successfully confronted those demons, Paxton is working with a sports psychologist he has retained since his minor league days.

Compounding Paxton's confidence problems is the ease in which Houston detected his pitches last Thursday. For that, the left-hander says he has only himself to blame.

It was when he went back over his performance that he realized how obvious his tells had become. Working from the stretch position, Paxton's raised left index finger would peek out from his glove before throwing the knuckle curve, allowing Astros runners on second base to alert hitters what was coming.

That would help explain why the Astros looked so comfortable pummeling Paxton. .

Going over video with Carlos Beltran, the former Yankee who is now a consultant for the team, helped Paxton grapple with the issue.

"Look at these takes. Look at that swing," Paxton said, recalling Beltran's words. "They wouldn't be making these swings or takes if they didn't know what was coming."

The good news for the Yankees is that Paxton is already working on better camouflage. Now, as he goes into the stretch, he is waiting until the ball is deep in his glove before changing grips. But even with a batted-down delivery, Paxton still has to prove he can handle the pressure that the Boston rivalry can offer.

Granted, the Red Sox have barely resembled the 2018 version of themselves, losing 10 of their first 16 games. The team has been undermined by its pitching staff's 5.80 E.R.A. — 13th in the American League even after David Price shone in a 4-0 win over Baltimore on Sunday. The Yankees have not fared much better. Their 5-2 loss to the Chicago White Sox on Sunday was their fifth in six games. Except for a three-game wipeout of Baltimore last weekend, the Yankees have dropped every series this season.

Masahiro Tanaka, who had brandished a 1.47 E.R.A., was ambushed by Tim Anderson's grand slam in the fourth inning on Sunday and was subsequently knocked out in the fifth.

The loss scuttled plans for the Yankees to build momentum heading into the Red Sox series. It was Boston, after all, that on the way to winning the World Series ended the Yankees' season in a division series last October.

"That left a bad taste in our mouths," Luke Voit said.

It's because of the long history of battles between the teams that even amid a sluggish April for both of them, a Yankees-Red Sox showdown can still offer plenty of excitement.

That's one of the reasons Paxton will be scrutinized so closely. A pitcher's worth to the Yankees has always been commensurate to his success against Boston. As a Mariner, Paxton was successful against the Red Sox, going 2-0 with a 2.79 E.R.A. But that calculus changes on Tuesday night, when every inning will feel like the postseason.

Does Paxton have the stomach for what's around the corner?

He acknowledged the concern, saying "I'm sure I'll be a little nervous going in, having it be my first experience being a part of this rivalry."

Paxton will probably come in loaded up with tips and reminders from his support team: Keep the ball hidden in the glove and keep your wits about you. Breathe slow and easy. But Paxton could simply unload the baggage and adopt C. C. Sabathia's war cry: Just bring it on.

## **\* *The USA Today***

### **'It's a baseball problem': MLB redoubles its efforts as sport's black population remains low**

Bob Nightengale

PHOENIX — It was 30 years ago this month when Ken Griffey Jr. made his major-league debut, and almost instantaneously, became the pure, innocent, joyful face of baseball.

There was that unbridled passion for the game, that infectious smile, the backwards cap, showing the world it was cool to be a Major League Baseball player.

Here we are, three decades since Griffey's broke onto the scene with the Seattle Mariners, with the game now perhaps having more young stars than ever before, but something is missing.

There's a serious dearth of African-American baseball players.

While commemorating Jackie Robinson's 100th birthday this year, MLB has an African-American population of only 7.7% this season. There are 68 African-American players among the total of 882 players on opening-day rosters, injured lists and restricted lists, according to research by USA TODAY Sports.

There are a staggering 11 teams that don't have more than a single African-American player on their 25-man roster, including three teams that don't have one. There are three African-American players on active rosters in the entire National League West.

There were twice as many African-American players in baseball when Griffey broke into the major leagues. There were 15 African-American players alone on the 1989 All-Star team – which didn't include Griffey – including six who were later inducted into the Hall of Fame, along with All-Star MVP Bo Jackson, the famed two-sport athlete. There were just seven African-Americans in last year's All-Star Game.

"I don't think it's the intent of baseball not to have black ballplayers," Griffey told USA TODAY Sports, "but we have to find a way to get these kids back. We lost them to football. We lost them to basketball. We lost them to golf. People don't see how cool and exciting this game is.

"The NFL and NBA has done a better job than we have in showing the fun side of the sport, having people talk about it whether it's on social media, commercials or the news.

"Really, it's not a black problem or a white problem, but it's a baseball problem."

Its image is the problem the league is desperately trying to change, convincing the American public that baseball isn't boring. MLB, behind marketing guru Barbara McHugh, launched the "Let the Kids Play" ad campaign during last year's postseason with Griffey scolding baseball's archaic unwritten rules. It unleashed its 2.0 version this year with a panel of 11 stars, who turned a boring press conference into a delightful, trash-talking escapade.

Maybe it will turbo-charge the Q rating of baseball's biggest stars who are as anonymous walking along the city streets these days as the peanut vendors, a far cry from the days of Griffey and Jackson, the Heisman Trophy winner who played for the Kansas City Royals and the Los Angeles Raiders. You couldn't turn on the TV without seeing them featured in commercials.

These days?

Mookie Betts, the American League Most Valuable Player who led the Boston Red Sox to the 2018 World Series championship, doesn't have a single commercial.

"Can you believe that," Red Sox starter David Price said. "How can someone as likable as Mookie Betts is, as good a person as he is, and as marketable as he is, doesn't have a commercial?"

Who knows, maybe Betts, who won the Pro Bowling Association's Celebrity Invitational in February, rolling a perfect game in the qualifying rounds, will be in national commercials featuring his bowling skills rather than his baseball prowess?

"I really, really hope that happens," Price said, "just to show that it took bowling to promote one of our biggest baseball stars."

MLB can't force shoe companies, sandwich shops, or thirst-quenchers to market their stars. They would love to see more of their athletes featured in national endorsements outside Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels. Perhaps, it would have all changed if Heisman Trophy winner Kyler Murray elected to stay with the Oakland A's instead of giving up baseball and his \$4.6 million signing bonus for the NFL draft.

"I checked into my hotel two months ago in Atlanta, the guy sees my business card," says Athletics assistant GM Billy Owens, perhaps the leading candidate to become baseball's next African-American GM,

“and the guy is asking me about Kyler Murray. I’m sitting at a game the other day, and a 10-year-old kid says, ‘Have you met Kyler Murray?’

“We have one of the best young stars in the game in Matt Chapman, but Kyler Murray is our most famous guy.”

Who knows how much of an impact Murray could have made for baseball’s image to have the world to see the best collegiate player choose baseball over the NFL, just as Jackson did?

How much of a difference would it make if MLB had more than one African-American manager in Dave Roberts of the Los Angeles Dodgers, with baseball entering the third consecutive season without an African-American general manager?

And what if the NCAA increased the amount of scholarships for baseball teams from the mere 11.7 they get now? For comparison’s sake, FBS football teams get 85 full rides to give out.

Major League Baseball can certainly monitor, and make sure that clubs are interviewing African-Americans for their GM and managerial job openings, but can’t tell owners who to hire. The league can lobby the NCAA to increase baseball scholarships, but are powerless to enact a change. They can recommend, and do their best to persuade, but can’t tell national advertisers who to be their national spokesmen.

Baseball, in the meantime, is doing what it can to help assure there are no more excuses for the lack of African-American players and executives, by making sure the pipeline keeps flowing.

Commissioner Rob Manfred and Renee Tirado, vice president and chief diversity and inclusion officer, visited Howard University, one of the country’s top HBCU schools (Historically black colleges and universities) in February to help recruit African-American executive candidates. Manfred was the first active sports commissioner, Tirado said, to visit an HBCU.

“We do have a legacy, a lot of history in the game, and great stories that still resonate,” Tirado said. “We have to do a better job sharing those stories and the relationships that we have. The world has changed, the landscape has changed, and we’ve revamped up things quite a bit.

“It’s just like when we went to Howard, we want to show the community how committed we are, and that baseball wants you in our front office. I’m very, very optimistic.”

The pipeline of African-American players to the major leagues hardly is overflowing, but baseball is encouraged that 28 of the 68 players are 26 years old or younger. Baseball had 44 African-American players drafted in the first round over the last seven years, including at least one player from the Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities program selected among the top five picks in the last three drafts.

“There’s a lot of work to be done, but we’re seeing a lot of change at the grass-roots level” said Tony Reagins, Los Angeles Angels executive vice president of baseball, who when appointed the club’s general manager in 2007, was just the league’s fourth-ever African-American GM. “We’re getting there. We’re moving in the right direction. We’re becoming more culturally relevant.

“I think what we’re seeing now is more a celebration of the game, an energy, the uniqueness of the game. You don’t see the celebration of a bat-flip in any other sport.”

This is where McHugh, senior vice president of marketing and advertising, are trying to make the most dramatic change to the sport’s conservative image. Griffey remembers the days of being chastised for wearing his baseball cap on backwards. These days, the “Let the Kids Play” campaign is telling everyone that baseball now not only accepts, but even embraces, bat flips high into the sky, dancing to first base on a home run, or jumping off the mound after a strikeout.

“We want to show the world the energetic and diverse intensity and passion to the game,” McHugh said. “That emotion resonates with culture and music and art and passion.

“We want to encourage players to express themselves on and off the field. We definitely think that when kids see the players’ emotions and joy they have in the game, it will help attract young people to play and consume the sport.”

Undoubtedly, it would have been a huge boon to baseball’s marketing if Murray had chosen to play for the Athletics instead of opting for the NFL draft. McHugh even joined the Athletics’ front office in January to meet with Murray in hopes of persuading him to play baseball, only for him to announce a month later he was going to the NFL.

“We talked a lot about the culture impact he could have as aspiring young athletes follow in his footsteps,” McHugh said. “He could have been the voice and face of baseball participation, particularly in the African-American community. It would have been nice to have him in a major-league uniform, but baseball will always be part of the conversation with him.”

There will be more Kyler Murrays that come along, two-sport stars who ultimately choose baseball, or three-sport stars like Dave Winfield who became a Hall of Fame baseball player, or even players like Jackson and Deion Sanders that played baseball and football simultaneously.

Baseball still isn’t offering any shortcuts to avoid those 14-hour bus rides and Red Roof Inn stays in the minor leagues. Those first-round signing bonuses don’t guarantee a day in the big leagues. Yet, if nothing else, Griffey says, perhaps a reminder that baseball can only be fun, but even encouraged to express your joy, could lead to a return of the best athletes, no matter what their skin color, once playing the game of baseball.

“You look at 40 years ago when Magic Johnson played, seeing him have such a good time, and laughing, and was such a great ambassador to the NBA. “We need guys like that to be ambassadors to the game of baseball. We need to have some of these personalities come out for people to be excited about.

“It’s like nobody wanted to play golf until Tiger [Woods] made it cool. Nobody wanted to be a defensive back until you saw Prime [Deion Sanders]. Nobody wanted to run back kicks until you saw Billy ‘White Shoes’ Johnson.

“Well, we can’t do the Billy ‘White Shoes’ Johnson dance every time you rob someone of a homer, or bat-flip every time you hit a homer, but we can do definitely things to get the younger people involved.

“At this point, we have no choice.”

## **\* *The Baltimore Sun***

### **Orioles shut out for first time this season in 4-0 loss to Red Sox, allow homer in 16th straight game**

Jon Meoli

An Orioles offense that broke out a day earlier reverted to its old ways Sunday at Fenway Park, collecting just five hits and getting shut out for the first time this season in a 4-0 loss to the Boston Red Sox and their one-time ace, David Price.

The Orioles left runners in scoring position the last four innings, failing to erase an early one-run deficit before a three-run home run off Josh Lucas in the eighth inning put the game out of touch.

“What cost us the game was not being able to move runners and score runners off David Price, who was really good today, and you’ve got to be able to execute with him on the mound,” manager Brandon Hyde.

“And not being able to keep the ball in the ballpark in the eighth inning after we put together a nice rally in the top half.”

Price, who pitched seven shutout innings, stranded leadoff doubles by Richie Martin and Trey Mancini in the sixth and seventh inning, and had done the same to a leadoff single by Renato Núñez in the second inning.

The Orioles' best chance to erase the one run Boston pushed across against left-hander John Means, on a sacrifice fly by Xander Bogaerts in the fourth inning, came in the eighth against reliever Ryan Brazier.

Orioles, Chris Davis move on from his hitless streak in a much better place than when it started Brazier walked pinch-hitter Rio Ruiz with one out, and Jonathan Villar singled to send him to third base with two outs, but pinch hitter Dwight Smith Jr. lined out to center field to leave them both stranded.

A walk by Mancini and a single by Hanser Alberto in the ninth inning meant the Orioles left a runner in scoring position for the fourth straight inning when Chris Davis struck out looking to end the game.

“Honestly, it was us not taking advantage of opportunities that we had early, offensively,” center fielder Cedric Mullins said. “We had guys on second base with no outs, and we just couldn't execute plays, including myself. I had an opportunity to move the guy over and botched it. That's kind of what cost us today.”

“Means was really good,” Hyde said. “He gave us a chance to win. We just couldn't... runner on second base and nobody outs three times and you don't advance him once, it's tough to win that way.”

Means allowed one run on four hits in five innings to bring his ERA below two at 1.98, and the relief corps of Evan Phillips, Paul Fry and Lucas tried to keep it a one-run game. They did so until Fry allowed a leadoff single in the eighth and Lucas allowed that run and two more to score on a home run by Bogaerts that accounted for the final four-run margin.

The Orioles (6-10), however, showed that Saturday's 13-hit, nine-run outburst was an anomaly of sorts. In the three preceding games, the hit column finished with four for the Orioles each time. Only Alberto's ninth-inning single pushed them past that Sunday, with five hits.

Brocail ejected

In the sixth inning, with Phillips on the mound and Bogaerts at the plate, Orioles pitching coach Doug Brocail's displeasure with the umpires was such that he was ejected by first base umpire Stu Scheurwater.

“There were a few questionable check swings that didn't go our way,” Hyde said. “All three didn't go our way, and I think Broc had enough. There was a lot of yelling from the dugout and Broc got singled out.”

The next pitch was a check-swing that home plate umpire Ben May didn't even appeal to first on before ringing Bogaerts up.

Another record

On the first day the Orioles haven't had to live with Davis' ignominious hitless streak, they set another major league record they'd rather have avoided.

Bogaerts' three-run home run off Josh Lucas in the eighth inning meant the Orioles have allowed a home run in the first 16 games of the season, tying a major league record set by the 2009 Philadelphia Phillies.

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

**Price and Bogaerts carry Red Sox past Orioles 4-0**

BOSTON -- The big foursome leading Boston's starting rotation had struggled badly this season.

David Price took care of that with a masterful outing.

Price pitched seven stellar innings with seven strikeouts, Xander Bogaerts hit a three-run homer and drove in every run, and the Red Sox beat the Baltimore Orioles 4-0 on Sunday.

Price, Chris Sale, Rick Porcello and Nathan Eovaldi entered Sunday 0-7 with an 8.43 ERA in 11 starts.

With the starters unable to go deep into games, the Red Sox bullpen has pitched a lot of innings.

"Excellent," Boston manager Alex Cora said of the performance. "Everybody knew where were pitching-wise today, for him to go seven and give the ball to those last two guys was very important for us."

Price (1-1) had easily the best outing from that quartet this season, mixing his mid-90s fastball with a sharp changeup and cutter to allow just three hits without issuing a walk.

"I knew the situation," Price said. "You've got to eat up as many innings as possible. I was able to put up zeros today, so that was big for us."

The teams wrap up their four-game series with Boston's traditional Patriots' Day morning game Monday, with first pitch set for 11:05 a.m. The Red Sox are scheduled to play on the holiday for the 60th consecutive year.

Baltimore's Chris Davis went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts a day after ending his record 0-for-54 stretch.

Ryan Brasier escaped a jam in the eighth, and Matt Barnes worked the ninth, closing out the combined five-hitter.

Bogaerts hit his shot off reliever Josh Lucas into the center field seats in the eighth.

John Means (1-2) gave up a run and four hits in five innings, striking out three and walking one in just his second big league start. He made his first career appearance in Fenway Park last Sept. 26, allowing five runs over 3 1/3 innings. He's been bouncing between the rotation and bullpen this season.

"I just want that role of being able to do whatever they ask me to do and I come to the field ready to go at all times," he said. "I do like starting. It's what I've always done. So, yeah, I'm just very comfortable."

The 25-year-old lefty wiggled out of what could have been a tough fourth when he gave up the run.

Steve Pearce had a leadoff single and advanced to third on J.D. Martinez's double. Pearce scored on Bogaerts' fly before Martinez was cut down at the plate on Dustin Pedroia's grounder. Rafael Devers bounced out to end the inning.

Baltimore pitching coach Doug Brocail, in the third base dugout, was ejected by first base umpire Stu Scheurwater. It was Brocail's ninth career ejection, six coming as a player.

## TRAINER'S ROOM

Orioles: Manager Brandon Hyde said OF Dwight Smith Jr.'s right leg was "a little sore." Smith was scratched about an hour before the game, prompting the shifting of four spots in the batting order. He flew out to center pinch hitting with two on, ending the eighth.

"In BP, just his leg, his quad was a little tight, and I just thought it was the right thing to do to give him a breather, and he'll be back in there tomorrow," Hyde said.

Red Sox: LF Andrew Benintendi left with a bruised right foot after fouling a pitch off it. He originally had the day off but was in the lineup when CF Jackie Bradley Jr. was scratched with the flu. Benintendi said after that he doesn't see it "being anything super serious." ... Cora inserted Pedroia in the DH slot to avoid playing him consecutive days at second base. Pedroia played just three games last season because of a knee injury.

#### HONORING TIGER

Shortly after Tiger Woods won the Masters, the Red Sox put a video of his final putt with Survivor's song 'Eye of the Tiger' playing in the background in the middle of the fifth inning.

The crowd cheered.

A message read: "Tiger Woods 2019 Masters Champion."

"Good job, Tiger." Price said. "That's awesome. For him to endure everything he's been through and get on top and win another Masters, we're all pumped for him."

#### MASTERING THE O'S

Price improved to 16-5 with a 2.65 ERA in his career against the Orioles, winning his eighth straight start against them.

The Red Sox have beaten Baltimore 21 of the last 25 meetings.

#### UP NEXT

Baltimore RHP Dan Straily (0-1, 19.29 ERA) is slated to face RHP Hector Velazquez (0-0, 2.79) in the series finale Monday.

#### **Benintendi exits after fouling ball off foot**

BOSTON -- Andrew Benintendi of the Boston Red Sox left Sunday's game against Baltimore with a bruised right foot after fouling a ball off it.

Benintendi is considered day-to-day and said after the game that he doesn't see it "being anything super serious."

The outfielder went to the ground in pain after the foul in the third inning Sunday. He had trouble putting weight on his foot when he got up and lightly jogged down the first baseline.

Benintendi then got back in the batter's box and doubled into the left-fielder corner. He had a noticeable limp heading into second and again when he ran the bases on Mookie Betts' inning-ending flyout.

Blake Swihart came into the game in left to replace Benintendi in the top of the fourth.

Benintendi originally had the day off, but was inserted into the lineup when center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. was scratched with the flu.