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*** *The Boston Globe***

David Ortiz's welfare was all that mattered at Fenway Park on Monday

Pete Abraham

As a large group of reporters gathered around Jason Varitek in the middle of the Red Sox clubhouse on Monday, Pookie Jackson and Kenyatta Gomez watched from a corner of the room, standing only a few feet away from the set of lockers David Ortiz used when he played.

Jackson and Gomez have been with the Red Sox for 25 years, working as clubhouse attendants. They're the most unsung of heroes, doing all the little things that help a team run smoothly.

Both men looked tired, and understandably so considering they had stayed awake long past midnight trying what seemed like every number in their cell phones to get information on Ortiz's condition after he was shot on Sunday in the Dominican Republic.

"We're all just worried about him," Jackson said. "He's like part of our family."

Gomez was wearing a T-shirt with the words "Gracias 34" across the front. The Sox had them made three years ago when Ortiz retired.

Gomez has visited the Dominican several times as Ortiz's guest, and the idea that somebody would shoot him in the back didn't seem possible.

"Shocked," he said. "We're all just shocked."

Varitek said many of the same things, that sleep had not come easily out of concern for a great teammate and a better friend.

The former team captain had to pause to control his emotions, his characteristic stoicism cracking.

"He's a dad," Varitek said. "It's a very scary thing that something like that could happen that easily."

It was that kind of day at Fenway Park. The game against the Texas Rangers was secondary to concerns about Ortiz. Players from both teams discussed the incident, as did the ushers, security guards, vendors, and everybody else who works at the ballpark.

What have you heard? How is he doing?

Team president Sam Kennedy, flanked by president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski and assistant general manager Eddie Romero, answered some of the questions with principal owner John Henry standing off to the side.

"It was jarring. It was, frankly, stunning and terrifying," Kennedy said.

"It was a horrific incident. Our focus right now, our exclusive focus, is on his health and well-being."

Kennedy joined the Red Sox in 2002, just a few months before Ortiz was signed as a free agent after being released by the Minnesota Twins.

Ortiz was 27 at the time and Kennedy 29. They grew up together in the organization, Kennedy's influence and Ortiz's fame rising at the same time.

They celebrated three World Series championships together, survived managerial changes and other controversies.

Kennedy is a cool hand in a crisis, a polished executive who knows the right thing to say and when to say it. But this situation wasn't one he was prepared for.

For the first time that anybody could remember, Kennedy almost broke down. Like Varitek, Jackson and Gomez, it was overwhelming to consider what could have happened, how close the organization was to tragedy.

"It's an emotional time. I love David Ortiz," he said. "We all love David Ortiz. So telling my kids [Sunday] night what has happened was really difficult.

"It's hard to express what David Ortiz means to the Boston Red Sox. When you love someone and they come in harm's way, it's jarring. But you have to put those emotions aside and focus on what's necessary."

Alex Cora, who played parts of four seasons with Ortiz, didn't hide how he felt. That wouldn't have been possible.

"For those that believe, just pray for him," Cora said. "Keep your positive vibes. I always said that he's bigger than life."

Nobody had any baseball questions for Cora. What was the point?

"There's life. There are more important things than the Red Sox winning or losing," Cora said.

"This is just part of what we do. The big man, I know he will be fine. I do trust that he will be fine. That's what I want from everybody here. Stay positive and keep praying for him. It has been tough, very tough."

Cora let out an audible sigh.

"He's a superhero without a cape. That's the way we see him. He'll be OK," he said.

As batting practice finished up, word came that Ortiz was on his way back to Boston and the care of Mass General.

"I want to go see him now," Mookie Betts said. "Definitely looking forward to seeing that smile again."

Red Sox brass kept their mission simple: Help David Ortiz

Alex Speier

For members of the Red Sox organization, the initial reaction to news that franchise cornerstone David Ortiz had been shot in the Dominican Republic proved similar to that felt throughout much of New England and beyond. A numb sense of bewilderment and confusion prevailed, while making sense of an event that bordered on incomprehensible.

"It shocked us to the core," said team president and CEO Sam Kennedy. "It was jarring. It was frankly stunning and terrifying. It was a horrific incident."

"You're shaken, really, is what it comes down to," added president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski. "Not only is he iconic, but he's a friend. You just feel for him and his family."

With disbelief giving way to an understanding that Ortiz was indeed facing a medical emergency, team officials confronted the raw emotions of the news with determination to help the 43-year-old in any way possible. A person whom manager Alex Cora described as a “superhero without a cape” suddenly needed his own rescue.

In the hours that followed the initial reports of the shooting on Sunday night, the team worked feverishly to ascertain information about what had transpired while also trying to formulate a plan to help.

Kennedy, principal owner John Henry (owner of the Globe), team chairman Tom Werner, limited partner Linda Pizzuti Henry (the Globe’s managing director), president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski, assistant GM Eddie Romero, senior vice president Raquel Ferreira, members of the club’s medical team (including team medical director Larry Ronan), and a pair of Red Sox employees at the team’s Dominican academy — Javier Hernandez and Martin Rodriguez — were all involved in the efforts to gather information and try to offer support Ortiz and his family.

From roughly 9:30 or 10 p.m. on Sunday night through Monday morning, communication was, in Kennedy’s words, “constant” about the situation. Hernandez and Rodriguez were particularly valuable in helping to provide updates from Santo Domingo.

“Fortunately, we had a couple people on the ground there who were incredible in getting us some information. That really helped us and allayed our fears a little bit,” said Romero. “But we understood it was a serious situation.”

In recognition of that notion, the team defined its mission as straightforward.

“Our focus right now, our exclusive focus, is on his health and well-being and to do what we can to support the family and get David back here to Boston,” Kennedy said at a press conference, flanked by Dombrowski and Romero.

Hence, in concert with Ortiz’s family members (including wife Tiffany Ortiz, with whom Kennedy established contact via text message), the decision was made to provide an air ambulance to transport Ortiz — who underwent the surgery at the Clinica Abel Gonzalez in the Dominican — to Boston for medical care at Mass General.

By Monday afternoon, the team was in position to help a puzzled clubhouse — featuring many players who’d either once been teammates of the Red Sox great or who’d gotten to know him in his current Red Sox special assistant capacity — make sense of what had transpired. After Kennedy, Dombrowski, and Romero spoke to the media at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, Cora was joined by Kennedy, Dombrowski, and Henry in a meeting with the players about Ortiz’s status.

“I wish sometimes that we lived back in the 80s because stuff like this, overnight, it was tough to see everything,” said Cora. “There were some questions about what’s going on. They gave answers to whatever they could answer.”

Ortiz had improved to serious but stable condition by Monday evening, a status that permitted him to take off from the Dominican before the game’s first pitch. At roughly 7 p.m., with Ortiz in the air and just before the anthem, Red Sox P.A. announcer Henry Mahegan asked fans at Fenway Park for the Red Sox-Rangers game to “offer a moment of reflection, thought, and prayer for a complete healing and a full recovery for our beloved Big Papi.”

During the silence, Ortiz’s number 34 was posted on the scoreboard in left-center, along with a message, “We send our love to David Ortiz.” In a ballpark where Ortiz had memorably given strength to a shaken region following the Marathon bombings of 2013, the Red Sox hoped that their fans might prove capable of returning the favor.

“I think we all remember in 2013 when we needed David Ortiz the most, he was there for us in late-April,” Kennedy said. “And so, it’s appropriate and expected that this community would rally around David when he needs us the most.”

Steve Pearce is making progress in his recovery

Nora Princiotti

Steve Pearce took a small step forward in his recovery Monday.

The Red Sox first baseman has a lower back strain and has been on the 10-day injured list since May 31. He was cleared to resume baseball activities Sunday, and swung a bat for the first time since the injury Monday afternoon.

“Felt like I had a little more pep in my step today,” Pearce said.

Pearce said he’d swing off a tee, and he was still at least a step away from hitting actual pitches. He will likely go on a rehab assignment before he gets back into the Red Sox lineup.

Pearce told manager Alex Cora he felt numbness in his legs right after fouling out to first in the second inning against the Yankees May 31. He immediately left the game.

Pearce is batting .180 with one home run and 9 RBIs this season. The Red Sox have been using Michael Chavis and Sam Travis at first base with both Pearce and Mitch Moreland (quadiceps) hurt.

Pearce is on the injured list for the second time this season. He was on it for the first time at the beginning of the season after straining a calf during spring training.

Pearce hit .286 in the three weeks before he strained his lower back, significantly better than he’d been hitting earlier in the season, but with the 36-year-old also ironing out some mechanical issues, it’s likely his timeline will be on the conservative side.

Poyner called up

The Red Sox recalled lefthanded pitcher Bobby Poyner from Pawtucket in advance of Monday night’s game against the Rangers.

To make room on the 25-man roster, they optioned lefthanded pitcher Josh Taylor to Pawtucket.

Poyner has appeared in two games for the Red Sox this season, allowing two runs in one inning. He hasn’t given up a run for Pawtucket in six outings since May 25.

Taylor was called up May 29 and made five relief appearances in the first major league stint of his career. He gave up six runs in 5.0 innings, most recently giving up four runs in one inning of work in Game 1 of Saturday’s doubleheader against Tampa Bay.

Earlier start

The Red Sox have moved the start time of Wednesday’s game against the Rangers from 7:10 p.m. to 4:05 p.m.

The change was made to avoid a conflict with Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final. The Bruins and Blues are scheduled to play at 8 p.m. at TD Garden.

Gates will open at 2:35 p.m. at Fenway Park. Season ticket-holders and Red Sox Nation members will be able to enter at Gate C starting at 1:35 p.m.

One leading man

Only one Red Sox player — designated hitter J.D. Martinez — leads at his position in early online voting for the All-Star Game.

Martinez has received 491,955 votes, well ahead of Texas's Hunter Pence. No other Red Sox player is closer than Rafael Devers, who is in fourth place among third basemen.

Mookie Betts, the league's Most Valuable Player in 2018, is fifth among outfielders.

Angels outfielder Mike Trout leads all American League vote-getters with 951,002 votes.

The "Primary" period of voting ends June 21 at 4 p.m. The final election of the starters begins June 26 at noon and finishes at 4 p.m. the next day. The winners will be announced that night.

The rest of the roster will be revealed June 30. The All-Star Game is July 9 in Cleveland.

Inside the Red Sox clubhouse, fond memories of David Ortiz ease the pain

Nick Kelly

Jason Varitek paused for seven seconds before he could finish his statement as he began to think about David Ortiz.

Ortiz, who was shot Sunday night at a bar in the Dominican Republic, played with Varitek for nine seasons with the Red Sox.

"He's a dad," said Varitek, the former catcher who now serves as a special assistant to the general manager. "And you know, your heart goes out to Alex, D'Angelo, and his wife and the rest of his family. It is a very scary thing that something like that could happen that easily."

Varitek spoke in the Red Sox clubhouse in front of a crowd of reporters. The amount of media members ahead of the Red Sox-Rangers series opener was about twice that for a typical game. Even CNN sent a reporter.

Upon arrival at the ballpark, many of the players were still trying to gather facts about what happened Sunday and had not discussed much about it, pitcher Rick Porcello said. They were certainly thinking about him, though.

"He's definitely in our thoughts and prayers, along with his family, and we look forward to seeing him again," pitcher David Price said.

The more players who talked before Monday's game, the more it became clear that Ortiz maintains a major presence and influence in the Red Sox clubhouse three years after his retirement. The impression he left and the relationships he built with many players still with the team made the news especially difficult for those getting ready for the game.

"David Ortiz, there's no one like him," second baseman Brock Holt said.

Some of that has to do with Ortiz's baseball abilities. He was a 10-time All-Star and helped lead the Red Sox to three World Series titles, taking home Series MVP in 2013.

Yet none of the players who spoke mentioned these accolades, though. The person Ortiz is away from the game left a much greater impression on those who spent time and played with him.

“He was the same person no matter who you were,” Holt said. “He always had a smile on his face and was always welcoming to anyone. He treated everyone the same. That’s the way it should be.”

Jackie Bradley Jr. and Mookie Betts, who were just starting their major league careers during Ortiz’s final years, both called him a brother, despite a significant age difference. Ortiz is 17 years older than Betts, 14 years older than Bradley.

For Bradley, the way in which Ortiz worked helped influence how he went about his job every day as a major leaguer. Much of what Bradley learned, he said, came from watching Ortiz. Bradley said that listing all of the things he picked up from Ortiz would take too long and there would not be enough space on a page.

“He was a great, great teammate,” Bradley said.

Ortiz made a quick impression on Betts, who was then in his early-twenties when he joined the Red Sox. On multiple occasions, Ortiz told Betts that he was going to hit a home run in his next at-bat, and then he did.

In addition to walking away impressed, Betts tried to learn from Ortiz.

“Just to be confident,” Betts said, referring to one of the lessons learned from Ortiz. “Confidence in taking it to places you didn’t know you could get to.”

Price only spent one year as Ortiz’s teammate in 2016. The way in which Ortiz acted that season left a strong impression on Price.

“He embraced me with open arms,” Price said. “I didn’t want it to be anything about me and him. I wanted it to be all about him. He didn’t want it to be all about him. He wanted it to be about us as a team.”

It also didn’t take long for Price to observe how Ortiz treats people, acting as if they are his best friends from the outset, Price said.

Porcello agreed. He doesn’t have a favorite memory from the two seasons he spent with Ortiz. Instead, he remembers how Ortiz and others made him feel anytime he strolled through the clubhouse.

“I haven’t seen anybody have the effect that he has on people,” Porcello said. “Out of all the unbelievable things he has done in baseball, to me what separates him and why he is who he is, it’s his personality.”

Red Sox executives pledge support for David Ortiz and family

Andrew Mahoney

The Red Sox have arranged to get David Ortiz back to Boston, possibly as soon as Monday night, Red Sox president and CEO Sam Kennedy said at a news conference at Fenway Park Monday afternoon. He will be treated at Mass General Hospital.

“Our medical team here in Boston and the doctors in the Dominican Republic have confirmed that David’s condition is serious, but that he is stable enough to be transported back to Boston for continued care,” said Kennedy.

The club has arranged a medical air ambulance to transport Ortiz to Boston from Santo Domingo. The Red Sox did not have any new updates on his condition.

Kennedy was asked about Ortiz’s impact on the city in the days after the Boston Marathon bombing.

“We all remember that in 2013 when we needed David Ortiz the most, he was there for us in late April. And so it’s appropriate and expected that this community would rally around David when he needs us the most,” said Kennedy.

Kennedy got emotional when he was asked about how the news affected him Ortiz.

“It’s an emotional time. I love David Ortiz. We all love David Ortiz. So telling my kids what happened last night what had happened was really difficult,” said Kennedy. “But you have to put those emotions aside and focus on what’s necessary at this moment.”

Manager Alex Cora talked about his friendship with Ortiz.

“This guy is bigger than life,” said Cora. “That vibe he brought in on a daily basis to those teams, and what he brings any time I see him, that smile.

“He’ll give you a hug, a big smile. He does it with everybody. He does it with my daughter, my kids, so, it’s been a tough one. I just hope when he gets here, he’s fine, and we can see that big man again with us and filling a room with joy.

It marked the first time members of the organization’s leadership spoke to the media since news broke of the shooting of Ortiz in the Dominican Republic Sunday night.

Ortiz was shot in the back at the Dial Bar and Lounge in the Dominican capital city of Santo Domingo. He was hit by a bullet on his right side, according to a person briefed by his medical team. He experienced limited blood loss and is in stable condition. But part of his colon was removed, and he also suffered injuries to his gallbladder and limited damage to his liver, according to the person.

I’ve seen firsthand why people in the Dominican Republic adore David Ortiz

Pete Abraham

When David Ortiz holds a press conference in the Dominican Republic, local reporters often preface their questions by saying how honored they are to be talking to him. Some even present him with a small gift as a token of their appreciation.

It’s not what we would do in Boston, but the emotion is genuine. Ortiz, Pedro Martinez, and other Dominican baseball stars are revered in their homeland.

People literally come running just to catch a glimpse of Ortiz walking by when he is in the Dominican. It’s not just about baseball for them. Ortiz’s charity, the David Ortiz Children’s Fund, has raised money to pay for live-saving heart surgeries for hundreds of children.

He’s reached into his own pocket countless times to help others in need.

I’ve traveled to the Dominican eight times over the years to write stories about Ortiz, Martinez, and other players. Every time, I’ve come away impressed with the passion the people there have for baseball and the players who represent their country in the major leagues.

That’s why the news that Ortiz was shot in the back on Sunday night while sitting with a friend at a club in Santo Domingo was so shocking. The idea that somebody would attempt to assassinate Ortiz in the Dominican doesn’t seem possible.

Ortiz is from Santo Domingo, the son of a car parts salesman. He’s comfortable there and visits often, even though his primary home is in Miami.

The last time I saw Ortiz in the DR, after he retired in 2016, he paused a conversation to walk over to some servers in the hotel restaurant and hand them extra money for helping out at his event.

I asked Ortiz how much he has given them and he waved the question off, saying it was his duty to treat people right.

I've experienced that personally, too.

After my Globe colleague and friend Nick Cafardo died suddenly during spring training, Ortiz arrived at camp a few weeks later talking loud behind his designer sunglasses and hugging everybody.

You always know when Big Papi is around. He fills up any room.

Then Ortiz pulled me aside to quietly ask about Nick's family and how I was doing. Ortiz told me how much he appreciated Nick's approach to the job and that he always regarded him as a true professional. He encouraged me to hang in there.

"Keep doing your thing. That's what he would have wanted," Ortiz said.

It was just a brief conversation, but it meant a lot. I later found out that when Ortiz first heard the news about Nick, he started sobbing.

That's the type of person he is, unapologetically emotional and caring about people who are around him. I've watched him around babies and presidents. He connects with everybody.

Carlos Slim, who at the time was the wealthiest person in the world, came to Fenway Park for a game in 2011 and went into the clubhouse wanting to get a photo with Ortiz.

Ortiz didn't know who Slim was and flung an arm around his shoulder, much to the horror the gun-toting security man standing a few feet away. He laughed later when he found out who Slim was.

"I should have asked him for some money!" Ortiz said.

Ortiz always made for good stories with what he did on the field, the controversies around him at times, or his occasionally inflammatory comments. Nobody in Boston at the time will ever forget his comments following the Marathon bombings.

He's had his rough moments, too, saying or doing things he later regretted. But they also were a product of his personality. He doesn't hold back.

Now Ortiz is in a hospital, a victim of senseless violence. Here's hoping we all hear that big laugh again sometime soon. David Ortiz is a proud son of the Dominican Republic, but Boston still needs to borrow him every once in a while.

*** *The Boston Herald***

Red Sox unravel late in 11-inning loss to Rangers

Steve Hewitt

After the Red Sox blew the game in the ninth, and rallied with an opportunity to win in dramatic fashion, Alex Cora thought about how fitting it would be.

Less than 24 hours after David Ortiz was shot in the native Dominican Republic, and on a sobering day of reflection of the franchise icon as he flew into Boston to continue his recovery, his friend and former teammate had a moment.

“At one point ... when they came back and we had a chance to win the game, I was like, ‘This is kind of like what David used to do.’”

But as the Red Sox fought hard to come back, setting up what would have been something of a storybook ending to the day with a chance for a walk-off victory, it wasn't meant to be.

After Matt Barnes spoiled another strong performance from Chris Sale, the Red Sox came back to tie it, but they couldn't do enough to avoid a crushing 4-3, 11-inning loss to the Texas Rangers in the opening game of a four-game set at Fenway Park.

“It's one of those days that you don't want to be a part of, honestly, on a personal note,” Cora said. “But we have a job to do. The guys grinded it out. They played hard. It doesn't matter. We didn't win.”

Sale was brilliant, producing seven innings while allowing just three and striking out 10, and Andrew Benintendi's two-run home run in the first inning was enough to give the Red Sox (34-33) a 2-1 lead going into the ninth. But that's when everyone went wrong.

The Red Sox were two outs away from sealing the win when Barnes gave up three consecutive hits to the heart of Texas' lineup. With runners on second and third and one out, Cora opted to bring the infield in, and Nomar Mazara blooped a two-run single to left that gave the Rangers a 3-2 lead.

“I just sucked tonight,” Barnes said. “Plain and simple.”

Still, the Red Sox had their chances to win it.

The first came in the ninth, when Brock Holt pinch hit for Sam Travis and hit a two-out, RBI single to left that tied the game. Marco Hernandez pinch hit for Eduardo Nunez followed and hit a double down the right-field line, and Holt looked to score from first.

But Andy Barkett, who's filling as the third-base coach, motioned for Holt to stop, and he either didn't see him or blew right through it. Holt was easily thrown out at home to send the game to extras.

“Andy was hanging with him,” Cora said. “That's a late stop. I don't know if Brock saw Andy, but he made the decision and he was out at the plate.”

The Red Sox loaded the bases with two outs in the 10th, but couldn't score after Xander Bogaerts flew out to right. Ryan Brasier came on in the 11th and gave up a double to Danny Santana before Elvis Andrus drove him in with a single to center for the go-ahead and eventual game-winning run.

After Benintendi's first-inning blast, the Red Sox produced just three hits off Texas starter Mike Minor. They had Jackie Bradley Jr. on third base with one out in the fifth, but Mookie Betts struck out and Benintendi grounded out. That kind of inconsistent hitting has been a theme, and it cost the Red Sox on Monday.

“We've been talking about it for a while here, we had a chance to add on throughout the game and we didn't,” Cora said. “It's been the story of us the last month. We haven't been able to put teams away offensively. We've got to do a better job.”

With the Ortiz news fresh in their minds, it was certainly an atypical day for the Red Sox. Cora admitted before the game that it wasn't easy to focus on baseball, and Sale said after that he “felt it a little bit.”

As bad of a loss Monday was, though, they want to rally around Ortiz, who the Red Sox confirmed arrived in Boston on Monday night for continued treatment at Mass. General.

“You’re talking about a guy who’s put a team and a city on his back basically his entire career and you want to be able to pick him up when you can,” Sale said. “Obviously we’re thinking about him. We had a meeting before the game about it. He’s as much a part of this team as anyone has ever been. (Sunday) was a tough day and (Monday) too. We’re obviously glad he’s doing well and he’s back here and in good hands. So we’re just hoping for the best and try to get some wins for him. I know that would make him happy, that’s for sure.”

David Ortiz in Boston after targeted attack in Dominican Republic

Alexi Cohan

Wounded former Red Sox slugger David Ortiz landed in Boston tonight in an air ambulance after he was shot in a targeted attack at a bar in the Dominican Republic — an ambush that forced doctors to remove his gallbladder and part of his intestine.

The Red Sox dispatched the jet to Santo Domingo to bring Big Papi to Massachusetts General Hospital. He arrived at about 10:30 p.m.

“We’re going to Boston,” Ortiz’s father, Leo, announced. “Big Papi will be around for a long time.”

Red Sox President Sam Kennedy said the team is doing “everything we can to support David and his family during this very difficult period.”

Ortiz, 43, was shot at close range in the torso after two men on a motorcycle approached the Dial Bar and Lounge in Santo Domingo Sunday night, police said. One man fired a shot at Ortiz as other patrons ran for cover.

One man escaped on foot but suspect Eddy Vladimir Feliz Garcia, who was previously arrested for drug charges in 2017, was arrested and taken to the hospital after being beaten by a crowd of people at the bar, Dominican Republic National Police reported. The bar where he was shot is in a bustling nightlife district packed with dance clubs and expensive bars that Ortiz is known to frequent.

Dominican officials declined to confirm the gunman’s motive, but Ortiz’s spokesman, Leo Lopez said, “There is not a single doubt that this was an act of hired killers.”

Eliezer Salvador, who was at the scene, said he drove Ortiz to the hospital, and described what he saw on Dominican radio station Zol 106.5.

“We got there and I talked with the owner of the place ... and not 2 minutes had gone by when the motorcycle stopped and a guy got off. He lifted his sweater and shot Ortiz,” Salvador said in Spanish.

“I heard the shot and I thought it was just fireworks. It didn’t sound like a shot, it sounded like something homemade. There was a lot of smoke and the fire alarm went off and the shooter didn’t shoot again, it was just one single shot,” said Salvador.

Salvador said he immediately went to his car that was parked out front and got Ortiz into the vehicle to rush him to the hospital, hitting several cars along the way.

Dominican newspaper, El Diario Libre, reported that Ortiz left his home nation around 5 p.m.

Dr. Abel Gonzalez said he had to remove Ortiz’s gallbladder, along with parts of his intestines.

“He tolerated the surgery without any complications, his blood pressure was good, he went to intensive care where he remained stable. ... When he opened his eyes, the first thing he asked for was his family and he was in a good mood,” Gonzalez said in a press conference with Dominican media on Monday.

Two other people were wounded, including Jhoel Lopez, a Dominican TV host who was with Ortiz. Police believe Lopez was wounded by the same bullet, said National Police Director Ney Aldrin Bautista Almonte.

Ortiz — a hero both in the Dominican Republic and Boston — led the Red Sox to three World Series championships, was a 10-time All-Star and hit 541 home runs. He famously urged Boston to rally in the wake of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, telling the crowd at Fenway Park on April 20 of that year: “This is our (expletive) city. And nobody’s going to dictate our freedom. Stay strong.”

The Sox went on to win the World Series that year — with Big Papi named the World Series MVP.

“He’s on the Mount Rushmore of Boston sports,” said Eddie Romero, the team’s assistant general manager.

Ortiz retired after the 2016 season and lives at least part of the year in the Dominican Republic. He is often seen getting his cars washed and hanging out with friends, including other baseball players, artists and entertainers.

Red Sox Manager Alex Cora calls for prayers for David ‘Big Papi’ Ortiz

Jason Mastrodonato

With concern of David Ortiz’s health dominating the conversation at Fenway Park on Monday evening before the Red Sox took on the Rangers, Manager Alex Cora emphasized the importance of hope.

“One thing about David, he’s strong, he has no fear, he never shows weaknesses,” Cora said. “So because of that reason, the Lord will be with him. For us that believe, just pray for him. Keep your positive vibes.”

Those around the Red Sox organization were stunned and anxious upon hearing the news that Ortiz was shot in the back while in his native Dominican Republic on Sunday night, but they were thankful Ortiz was in stable condition after surgery.

“I didn’t sleep very well last night,” former Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek said. “I don’t think anybody did. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was going on. Still don’t know that much but everybody has seen and heard.”

Cora said he addressed the players in the locker room before their 7:05 p.m. game along with President Sam Kennedy and owner John Henry.

“I always said that he’s bigger than life, David,” Cora said. “He’ll give you a hug, a big smile, he does it with everybody. He does it with my daughter and my kids. So it’s been a tough one. I just hope when he gets here everything is fine and we can see the big man again with us filling a room with joy.”

Kennedy, a Brookline native who has been with the Sox since new ownership took over in 2002, read a prepared statement and then answered reporters’ questions.

“I love David Ortiz,” he said. “We all love David Ortiz. Telling my kids last night what happened was really difficult. It’s hard to express what David Ortiz means to the Boston Red Sox.”

Red Sox Assistant General Manager Eddie Romero, who has spent a lot of time in the Dominican Republic, said Ortiz means even more to the people in his native country.

“He is the guy in the Dominican Republic,” Romero said. “He’s more famous than any president. People think of the Dominican Republic they think David Ortiz, Pedro Martinez. And that’s coming from someone who has been exposed to the Dominican over the years. I’ve been awed by the impact he has. Any restaurant he goes to or anywhere, they love him, and it comes from the way he treats people.”

Kennedy said he’s been in touch with Ortiz’s family and made it clear that the team is willing to help however they can.

“We all remember that in 2013 when we needed David Ortiz the most, he was there for us in late April,” Kennedy said. “And so it’s appropriate and expected that this community would rally around David when he needs us the most.”

The team asked those in attendance Monday night to stand with them for a moment of “reflection, thought and prayer” for Big Papi.

Kennedy said earlier it was the right thing to do. “We’ll certainly recognize what’s happened,” he said, “but our focus all day I can tell you is on his health and ability to transport him back to Boston and focusing on those logistics exclusively.”

David Price: ‘I’ve got nothing but love and respect’ for David Ortiz

Steve Hewitt

When David Price signed with the Red Sox before the 2016 season, it coincided with the final year of David Ortiz’ playing career. The two had a contentious history, and Price admittedly was nervous about meeting his new teammate during spring training.

It didn’t take long for Price to learn who the real Big Papi was.

With a handshake and a hug, the two quickly buried their history. Price admitted he needed that to feel like he truly was a part of the Red Sox. Big Papi told Price at the time how much the Red Sox needed their new ace, and that’s all the lefty needed to hear.

Price, who had matched up with Ortiz many times as a member of the Tampa Bay Rays, developed a deep appreciation for Ortiz, not only the player but the person. That was apparent Monday as Price and the Red Sox continued to digest the news from Sunday that Ortiz had been shot in the Dominican Republic.

“He embraced me with open arms,” Price said. “It was his last year here. I didn’t want it to be anything about me and him. I wanted it to be all about him. He didn’t want it to be all about him. He wanted it to be about us as a team. I’ve got nothing but love and respect for Big Papi, and he’s well aware of that.”

When Price heard the news, his reaction was just like everyone else’s.

“When my wife asked me if I heard what happened to Big Papi (Sunday) night, my heart sank,” Price said. “Initially, I just thought for the worst and hoped for the best, and then she told me what happened. I was able to get more information on it, and that’s tough.”

Price said he hasn’t been checking in on the media’s reports of Ortiz’s health progress.

“Most of the time, you guys aren’t right anyway,” Price said. “You report on what you hear from another source that heard from another source so no, I haven’t been checking my phone. I’ve been in contact with people close to him to get the real story.”

Though they played one season together, the impact Ortiz had on Price was deep and long-lasting.

“Everybody in here and in this city understands the way that he treats people,” Price said. “It’s second to none. So he’s definitely in our thoughts and our prayers, along with his family, and we look forward to seeing him again.

“Just his presence in the clubhouse. Obviously his presence in the batter’s box as well. Just, like I said before, the way that he treated everybody. He might not know your first name, but he’s going to act like you’ve been best friends for a very long time. We all have a ton of love and a ton of respect for Big Papi, and we’re all wishing him and his family well.”

Time change

With Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final starting at 8 p.m. on Wednesday at the Garden, the Red Sox pushed back the start time for their game against the Texas Rangers to 4:05 p.m. to accommodate Bruins fans. The game originally was scheduled for 7:10 p.m.

Fenway Park gates will open at 2:35 p.m. on Wednesday.

Martinez returns

After missing all four games of the series against the Rays with back spasms, J.D. Martinez returned to the Red Sox lineup on Monday. He batted third as the designated hitter. ...

The Red Sox recalled reliever Bobby Poyner from Pawtucket on Monday and sent down Josh Taylor, who gave up four runs on six hits in an inning of relief in the Game 1 loss of Saturday’s doubleheader to Tampa. Poyner has made two appearances for the Red Sox this season, last pitching on April 23.

Red Sox hold ‘moment of reflection’ for David Ortiz after ‘hectic’ chase for information

Jason Mastrodonato

Shortly before the Red Sox’ game Monday night, the entire team lined up in front of the dugout, put their heads down and listened to the public address announcer.

“Ladies and gentlemen, please rise and remove your caps,” the announcer said as the crowd rose to its feet. “All of us were shocked by last night’s news about David Ortiz, and our community has felt a palpable concern ever since.

“As befits his outsized personality, wishes for a speedy recovery have poured in from all over baseball, from the world of sports, and even from respected world leaders. He is loved throughout our nation and beyond, yet to us, he is our own adopted son.

“Won’t you please join us as we offer a moment of reflection, thought, and prayer for a complete healing and a full recovery for our beloved, Big Papi.”

On the video board it showed fans holding signs that read, “You got this Big Papi, Red Sox Nation — Ortiz Strong,” and another that read, “Thoughts and prayers for our Big Papi — We love you.”

Then the videoboard showed Ortiz’ retired No. 34 that hangs on the right field facade.

Less than 24 hours earlier, the Red Sox were caught up in a chase for information as they attempted to uncover the truth about what happened to Ortiz.

“It was difficult to gather information,” team president Sam Kennedy said. “Anytime you have a chaotic situation, it’s difficult. ... We were all in constant communication starting around 9:30, 10 o’clock at night, when we were first made aware of the incident. We’ve been in constant contact ever since then. We’re just trying to gather information and work with the medical team to focus on his health.”

While Kennedy reached out to Ortiz' wife, Tiffany, he left a voicemail that was answered only via text.

The Red Sox had two team employees in the Dominican Republic who were able to gather reliable info and send it back to the club.

"It was hectic, it was scary," assistant general manager Eddie Romero said. "Trying to get accurate information was extremely difficult. Fortunately, we had a couple people on the ground there who were incredible in getting us some information. That really helped us and allayed our fears a little bit. But we understood it was a serious situation and really, our prayers are with David and hoping he just gets better soon. Everybody is worried about him. He's obviously everybody's big brother. It's tough news to swallow."

Former Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek said, "We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was going on. Still don't know that much but everybody has seen and heard. My wife texted Tiffany immediately, heard from her this morning. I immediately sent a note to David, tried getting a hold of Pedro (Martinez), seeing if there was any more information."

When they finally learned of the news, the Sox were stunned.

"Shocked, stunned, concerned about him and his family," pitcher Rick Porcello said. "Just hoping that he was OK. Not a whole lot of details as far as reports and things like that, and kind of hard to tell what exactly happened. Just praying for him and his family."

Porcello was watching the Bruins game when he saw the news.

"I honestly haven't heard any updates today besides that he was stable and last night, I was watching the Bruins game and I saw it on the news after," he said. "So other than that, just not a whole lot of definitive information up to this point, but I continue to check in and try to get as much info as possible."

The Red Sox flashed again to Ortiz' No. 34 while the crowd roared just before Chris Sale threw the first pitch of the game around 7:10 p.m.

*** *The Providence Journal***

Rangers 4, Red Sox 3 (Final/11): Bullpen woes cost Sale, Boston

Bill Koch

There was a baseball game to play Monday night at Fenway Park despite the disturbing off-field events of the previous evening.

The season rumbled on for the Red Sox even with one of their former stars en route to the city via medical air transport. David Ortiz was on his way to Massachusetts General Hospital after being shot in the Dominican Republic in a stunning act of violence on Sunday.

A routine victory would have been the perfect way to move forward, but nothing has come easily for Boston this season. The latest reminder came courtesy of Matt Barnes, Ryan Brasier and the much-maligned Red Sox bullpen.

The Rangers scored three times against Boston relievers after Chris Sale turned in yet another gem. Elvis Andrus slapped a base hit up the middle in the top of the 11th inning to finally finish this one off, as Texas scrapped to a 4-3 victory.

“It’s one of those days that you don’t want to be a part of, honestly, on a personal note,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said. “But we have a job to do, and the guys grinded it out. They played hard. It’s just a matter that we didn’t win.”

Danny Santana lined a leadoff double to the corner in right and Andrus finally put the Rangers ahead to stay with a sharp one-hopper to center. Jackie Bradley Jr. came up throwing but was too late, as Santana cruised toward the plate with the winning run. Brasier was tagged with the loss and slipped to 2-3 on the season.

“Made a couple pitches they were able to get barrel on,” Brasier said. “Starting any inning off with a double, you’re kind of behind the eight-ball.”

Both bullpens suffered through a meltdown in the ninth, forcing a pair of extra frames. Matt Barnes was first to give up the lead, as Santana singled to left and Andrus sent a soft liner to the corner in left to put the tying and go-ahead runs in scoring position. Nomar Mazara worked the count to 3-and-1 before sawing off a curveball in on the hands to the opposite field, giving the Rangers a 3-2 cushion.

“I made a poor pitch in the 3-1 count to Mazara,” Barnes said. “I’ve got to be smarter than that with him. Just didn’t make enough pitches.”

The Red Sox struck back against Shawn Kelley, as J.D. Martinez and Xander Bogaerts opened with back-to-back singles. Rafael Devers bounced into an unconventional 4-3-6-3 double play, but Brock Holt fisted a pinch-hit RBI single into left-center to make it 3-3. Boston’s own potential winning run was thrown out at the plate, as Marco Hernandez’s bloop double down the line in right set up Holt to be retired by a good 15 feet.

“We had a chance to add on throughout the game and we didn’t,” Cora said. “That’s been the story of us the last month. We haven’t been able to put teams away offensively.”

The Red Sox squandered a chance to walk it off in the 10th. Boston loaded the bases on a Sandy Leon single and a pair of walks, bringing up Bogaerts with two outs. Bogaerts could only fly to right-center, and Delino DeShields made a comfortable running catch to extend the game.

Sale turned in a three-hit shutout on Wednesday against the Royals and was nearly as good on this occasion. Santana’s two-out RBI single was the lone run Texas was able to nick off the left-hander, and it was unearned. Brandon Workman was all business in a 1-2-3 eighth before Barnes wobbled in the ninth.

“It’s tough, especially after the last series we had,” Sale said, referencing three losses in four games against the Rays over the weekend. “You want to come back and start this one on the right foot and get back on track. This is obviously a tough game and the outs get harder closer to the end.”

The Rangers went down in order in each of the first three innings and didn’t muster a threat until the top of the sixth. Rougned Odor drew a leadoff walk, the only one issued by Sale on the night. Odor stole second, reached third on a throwing error by Leon and scored when Santana sent an RBI liner into left.

Sale reached 10 strikeouts for the third straight start and the eighth in his last 10 – no other pitcher in the big leagues this season has recorded more than back-to-back games with double-digit strikeouts. It was also the eighth time in his last 10 games Sale has surrendered two earned runs or less. That Boston is only 4-6 in that stretch is more to blame on its wasteful offense than a pitcher who has a 2.17 earned-run average since April 23.

The Red Sox required just two batters to take a 2-0 lead. Mookie Betts drew a leadoff walk in the bottom of the first and Andrew Benintendi sent a second-pitch fastball to deep left-center. The towering drive settled into the Monster Seats out by the second light tower to put Boston on the board.

Red Sox Journal: Team tries to focus on baseball

Bill Koch

Chris Sale's first pitch Monday signified the return of business as usual for the Red Sox.

Boston's organization and fan base had been through a harrowing previous night, with reports of David Ortiz being shot in his native Dominican Republic burning through social media. Red Sox front office members Sam Kennedy, Dave Dombrowski and Eddie Romero addressed the incident in an afternoon press conference, and club owner John Henry was also on hand.

All of this took place before manager Alex Cora's typical pregame briefing. Cora took no baseball questions during his 10 minutes at the microphone, instead focusing on the health of his friend and former Boston teammate. He said there were no thoughts of cancelling or postponing Monday's contest, but Red Sox players were obviously a bit preoccupied by the shocking news.

"We'll find a way because that's what we have to do," Cora said. "It's not easy. I know we've got to go out there and perform. We have to. We'll find a way to do it."

Kennedy said there were no formal tributes planned to honor Ortiz, but the club would make some sort of acknowledgement of his injuries and medical status. Boston waited until the early hours of Monday morning to make any formal statement, still attempting to gather accurate information.

"It was jarring," Kennedy said. "It was frankly stunning and terrifying. It was a horrific incident."

Henry, Kennedy, Dombrowski and Romero addressed Red Sox players later Monday afternoon. Dombrowski said Cora might have had some individual conversations with players as well. Boston counts three natives of the Dominican Republic on their 25-man roster — Rafael Devers, Marco Hernandez and Eduardo Nunez.

"For us that believe, just pray for him," Cora said. "Keep your positive vibes. This guy, I always said that he's bigger than life."

Martinez returns

J.D. Martinez (back spasms) returned to the lineup after missing all four games of the weekend series with the Rays.

Martinez was pulled from Thursday's series finale against the Royals and unable to make a start while the Red Sox dropped three of four against Tampa Bay. It's the second time Martinez has missed the entirety of a four-game series against an American League East foe. He also was held out of action in late May against Toronto, dealing with an illness and lower back tightness over four days at Rogers Centre.

Martinez batted third and served as the designated hitter. Boston also went with Sam Travis in favor of Michael Chavis at first base, giving the rookie a night off after a recent tough stretch. Chavis has struck out at least once in 18 of his last 20 games and 35 times in his last 77 at-bats.

The Red Sox also made a roster change in the bullpen, recalling left-hander Bobby Poyner and sending left-hander Josh Taylor to Triple-A Pawtucket. Poyner has thrown six straight scoreless outings for the PawSox, covering 8 1/3 innings. Taylor allowed six earned runs and struck out six in his five Boston appearances, making his debut on May 29 against the Yankees.

Wild race

The Red Sox entered Monday seven games behind the Rays and Yankees in the A.L. East race, something that makes the Rangers a far more noteworthy foe.

Boston was 34-32 and battling for the second wildcard spot behind Tampa Bay. Texas (34-30), Cleveland (33-32), the White Sox (31-33), Oakland (33-33) and the Angels (31-35) are all currently within striking distance as the Red Sox attempt to reach the postseason for the fourth straight year.

Boston faced the smallest deficit in its division race among the group. Minnesota led the A.L. Central by 10½ games behind rookie manager and Rhode Island native Rocco Baldelli. Houston topped the A.L. West by 9½ games.

Time change

Sunday night's result in the Stanley Cup finals prompted the Red Sox to follow through with a schedule change.

Boston and the Rangers will play Wednesday's game at 4:05 p.m., clearing the evening stage for the Bruins and Blues to battle in Game 7. It's the first Game 7 of a championship series to be played in the city since the Celtics downed the Lakers and captured an NBA championship in 1984.

A victory would allow Boston to hold three of the four major sports championships simultaneously. The Red Sox and Patriots have put the Bruins in position to give the city a first since the Tigers, Lions then Red Wings completed a Detroit trifecta in 1935-36.

Ortiz's shooting unnerves his Red Sox family

Bill Koch

With shaking hands and a quavering voice, Jason Varitek addressed the assembled media in the Red Sox clubhouse Monday afternoon.

This has traditionally been a comfortable place for the former Boston catcher and current special assistant to president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski. Varitek spent 15 years with the Red Sox and is one of the club's immortals, a two-time World Series champion in 2004 and 2007.

This particular subject, however, went well beyond balls and strikes. David Ortiz, a teammate of Varitek's for each of his last nine seasons, was shot Sunday night in his native Dominican Republic. Varitek was among those scrambling for information while Ortiz was rushed to Clinica Abel Gonzalez for emergency surgery to repair a host of internal injuries.

"I didn't sleep very well last night," Varitek said. "I don't think anybody did that knew. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was going on."

It was a somber afternoon prior to the opener of a four-game series with the Rangers. Club staff from owner John Henry to pitcher David Price were visibly affected by the news. A lone gunman approached Ortiz from behind at a Santo Domingo bar and fired once into his back, causing damage to Ortiz's liver, intestines and bowel. His assailant was not immediately identified or arrested, and the motive for the shooting was under investigation, with authorities trying to determine whether Ortiz was the target.

"It's an emotional time," Red Sox president and CEO Sam Kennedy said. "I love David Ortiz. We all love David Ortiz. Telling my kids last night what had happened was really difficult."

Ortiz, 43, was joined at his bedside by his father, Leo, and his brother, Eloy. He underwent a six-hour operation and was reported to be in serious but stable condition on Monday afternoon. Doctors removed his gallbladder and part of his intestine, according to a spokesman. The Red Sox organization had arranged for what Kennedy described as a "medical air ambulance" to transport Ortiz to Massachusetts General Hospital on Monday night.

“Your heart goes out immediately to him and his family,” Dombrowski said. “It was also difficult gathering information that was accurate. We were making sure we tried to get that.”

Price received the news at his area home from his wife, Tiffany. They were teammates for Ortiz’s 2016 swan song, the first for Price in Boston after signing a seven-year contract in free agency. Price watched from opposing dugouts in Tampa Bay, Detroit and Toronto as Ortiz carved out a 20-year career that eventually resulted in his No. 34 being retired by the Red Sox.

“The way that he treated everybody — he might not know your first name but he’s going to act like you’ve been very best friends for a long time,” Price said. “We all have a ton of respect and a ton of love for Big Papi and we’re wishing him and his family well.”

That outsize personality made Ortiz a legend in his home country. Among his hospital visitors Monday afternoon was Leonel Fernandez, who served three terms as president of the Dominican Republic from 1996-2000, 2004-08 and 2008-12.

Tributes poured in on social media from the likes of Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, Celtics legend Bill Russell, Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask and a host of others.

“He is ‘The Guy’ in the Dominican Republic,” said Eddie Romero, Boston’s executive vice president and assistant general manager who helps oversee international scouting. “He’s more famous than any president. When people think of the Dominican Republic, they think of David Ortiz. They think of Pedro Martinez.

“That’s coming from somebody who has been exposed to the Dominican over the years. I’ve been awed by the impact that he has just going to a restaurant or any place he is. Everybody loves him. He’s that guy.”

Alex Cora said his cell phone started buzzing at 9:45 p.m. and didn’t stop through the following afternoon. He played with Ortiz for all four of his seasons with the Red Sox (2005-08) and has worked with him since being named Boston’s manager in November 2017. Ortiz serves as a special assistant to Fenway Sports Group, an ambassadorial face for Henry and the club’s ownership.

“He’ll give you a hug, a big smile — he does it with everybody,” Cora said. “He does it with my daughter, my kids. It’s been a tough one. I just hope when he gets here, everything is fine and we can see the big man again with us filling a room with joy.”

Kennedy said the Red Sox organization was primarily focused on Ortiz’s health, with club medical director Dr. Laurence J. Ronan in contact with doctors in the Dominican Republic. Kennedy and Varitek’s wife, Catherine, also have been in contact with Ortiz’s wife, Tiffany. Their three children include son D’Angelo and daughters Jessica and Alexandra.

“You’re shaken,” Dombrowski said. “Really, that’s what it comes down to when you hear this type of stuff. He’s not only iconic but he’s a friend.”

*** *MassLive.com***

Boston Red Sox’s surreal day ends with harsh dose of reality from bullpen in loss to Rangers

Chris Cotillo

In the late innings of a dramatic game between the Red Sox and Rangers on Monday night, NESN’s broadcast wasn’t all that focused on what was happening on the field. Instead, it showed a live shot of a police motorcade escorting wounded franchise icon David Ortiz from Logan Airport to Mass. General Hospital after being flown in on an air ambulance from the Dominican Republic.

The images of the motorcade summed up a surreal day for the Red Sox, who were reeling less than 24 hours after Ortiz was shot in the lower back at a restaurant in Santo Domingo. From the crowd of cameras in the clubhouse to the pregame “moment of reflection” to honor Ortiz, nothing about a beautiful June day at Fenway Park was normal.

“It’s one of those days you don’t want to be a part of, honestly,” manager Alex Cora said.

Cora was among the many members of the organization to discuss Ortiz before the game, and the manager vowed his team would try to perform despite the tough circumstances. That proved to be a tough task, even for one of the team’s most focused competitors.

“I felt it a little bit,” starter Chris Sale said. “You talk about a guy who has put a team and a city on his back his entire career, and you want to be able to pick him up when you can. Obviously, we’re thinking about him.”

Sale did his job, holding the Rangers to one unearned run through seven innings as the Sox kept a 2-1 lead through eight innings. Texas then rallied against reliever Matt Barnes to take a 3-2 lead in the ninth and won it in the 11th against Ryan Brasier.

The final few innings offered a harsh dose of reality for the Red Sox on an otherwise surreal day. Boston’s bullpen, which had been a pleasant surprise for much of the early season, has regressed and is now a legitimate item of concern.

“Everybody goes through their little ups and downs,” Brasier said. “I think we’re in a little rough patch right now.”

Barnes, who had allowed just three earned runs in his first 18 appearances, has posted a 9.82 ERA in nine outings since May 19 and seen his season ERA balloon from 1.42 to 3.76.

“I think command-wise, he hasn’t been as sharp,” Cora said. “We’ve been trying to give him a breather here and there, but he knows his job. We were in a situation here, three outs away from winning the game, and he didn’t do the job.”

Without Joe Kelly and Craig Kimbrel, the Sox built their bullpen-by-committee with Barnes as the featured option. The plan’s effectiveness hinged largely on Barnes not going through tough stretches, Brasier being automatic like he was in 2018 and other, unheralded relievers stepping up.

Barnes’ lack of command, Brasier’s season-long regression and the lack of depth options on the roster are beginning to outweigh surprisingly superb seasons from Heath Hembree, Marcus Walden and Brandon Workman. The late losses are beginning to pile up for the Red Sox, who are now near the top of the league with 10 blown saves.

The latest bullpen meltdown was Boston’s fourth loss in five games and dropped the Sox to eight games behind the division-leading Rays. All of that, of course, seems trivial in the context of the last 24 hours.

“Just hoping for the best and trying to get some wins for (Ortiz),” Sale said. “I know that’d make him happy, that’s for sure.”

Ortiz, Red Sox legend, ‘put a team and a city on his back for basically his entire career,’ Sale says

Christopher Smith

Chris Sale again dominated for the Red Sox on Monday at Fenway Park, allowing one unearned run, three hits and one walk while striking out 10 in 7 innings.

But the Red Sox bullpen again blew another save, the 10th this season. Texas prevailed 4-3 in 11 innings as Alex Cora's team dropped to 1-4 on the homestand.

But the loss Monday took a backseat to real life. The Red Sox held a moment of reflection for David Ortiz, who was shot in the lower back as he sat at an outdoor table at the Dial Bar and Lounge in Santo Domingo on Sunday night.

Ortiz is in stable condition. A medical air ambulance transported Ortiz to Boston. He arrived here late Monday night. He's being treated further at Mass. General.

Boston Red Sox legend David Ortiz is recovering after being shot in the lower back at a lounge in the Dominican Republic on Sunday night.

Sale never played on the same Red Sox team as Ortiz. Boston acquired the ace at the 2016 Winter Meetings, two months after Ortiz retired. But Sale — who presented Ortiz with a humidor (see photo above) during Ortiz's farewell tour in 2016 — understands the impact the longtime Red Sox DH had on this city.

Ortiz received gifts and tributes at every ballpark he visited during his final season.

"You're talking about a guy who's put a team and a city on his back for basically his entire career and we want to be able to pick him up when we can," Sale said after Boston's loss. "Obviously we're thinking about him. We had a meeting before the game about it. He's as much a part of this team as anyone has ever been. Yesterday was a tough day and today, too. We're obviously glad he's doing well and he's back here and in good hands. So just hoping for the best and try to get some wins for him. I know that would make him happy. That's for sure."

Red Sox's Holt, Barkett have 'miscommunication' in ninth inning that costs team run late in 4-3 loss

Chris Cotillo

If Brock Holt and Andy Barkett were on the same page Monday night, the Red Sox might have just avoided one of their toughest losses of the season.

Boston led, 2-1, entering the ninth inning before the Rangers strung together three straight hits against Matt Barnes and took a 3-2 lead. Brock Holt's RBI single in the bottom of the ninth tied things up before Marco Hernandez dropped a double into right field and gave Holt a chance to score the game-winning run.

With two outs, Holt tried scoring from first but was beaten by Nomar Mazara's throw by about 40 feet. It appeared Holt might have run through a stop sign from interim third base coach Andy Barkett, who originally waved him in before changing his mind as the runner rounded third.

"I really haven't spoken to him about it," Barkett said. "I know he ran past me. I haven't looked at the play in detail. Someone showed me an overhead view of when I threw my hands up and where he was and... he just took his eye off me, I really don't know. I haven't looked at it in detail. We had a miscommunication of some sorts."

That miscommunication led to the third out of the inning and the Rangers eventually won, 4-3, on an Elvis Andrus RBI single in the 11th. Red Sox manager Alex Cora said he believed Barkett was too late in his effort to hold Holt.

"That's a late stop," Cora said. "I don't know if Brock saw Andy, but he made a decision and he was out at the plate."

Holt was unavailable for comment after the game while Barkett explained that he was hesitant to send Holt due to Mazara's strong arm in right field. After seeing Mazara initially bobble the ball, Barkett decided he

would send Holt if Mazara had any more trouble. He decided to try to stop Holt once Mazara had cleanly fielded the ball.

“With two outs, obviously you want to be aggressive in a game like this,” Barkett said. “In my opinion, I thought he had the ball in time and thought he made a strong throw. We didn’t have a chance to score, I didn’t feel like. I just haven’t looked at it to know how late I was throwing my hands up.”

Darwinzon Hernandez, Red Sox’s No. 1 pitching prospect, to make first career MLB start Tuesday

Christopher Smith

Darwinzon Hernandez, who Baseball America ranks the No. 1 pitching prospect in the Red Sox organization, will make his first career major league start Tuesday against the Texas Rangers here at Fenway Park.

The 22-year-old lefty already made his major league debut in relief April 23 when he served as the 26th man on Boston’s roster for the second game of a doubleheader against the Tigers. He hurled 2.1 scoreless innings in relief, giving up four hits and one walk while striking out four.

Hernandez, a Venezuelan native, has struggled for Double-A Portland this year. But his poor statistics mainly are the result of a lack of control.

Darwinzon Hernandez recorded a 1.88 ERA (52.2 innings, 11 earned runs), 1.22 WHIP, .209 batting average against, 74 strikeouts and 25 walks in his final 10 starts for High-A Salem during 2018.

He’s 1-4 with a 5.13 ERA (10 outings, nine starts) for Portland.

He’s held the opposition to a .217 batting average and he’s averaging 13.2 strikeouts per nine innings. But he has walked 32 batters in 40 1/3 innings.

When he has been hit, it’s mainly righties doing the damage against him. He has held left-handed hitters to a .149 batting average. But right-handed hitters have batted .282 against him.

Hernandez will start opposite Texas right-hander Ariel Jurado (3-2, 2.78).

Boston Red Sox end emotional day with crushing 4-3 loss to Rangers in 11 innings

Chris Cotillo

The Red Sox were two outs away from ending an emotional day on a high note in the ninth inning Monday night, but the Rangers stormed back and stole a 4-3, extra-innings win in the series opener.

Still reeling from the news that franchise icon David Ortiz had been shot in the Dominican Republic on Sunday night, the Sox took a 2-1 lead into the ninth before Texas took the lead with three straight hits off Matt Barnes. The Sox rallied back to force extras with a ninth-inning rally of their own and loaded the bases in the 10th before Elvis Andrus hit a game-winning single off Ryan Brasier.

As Ortiz flew from Santo Domingo to Boston for further treatment at Mass. General Hospital, Boston held the lead for eight innings behind a dominant performance from Chris Sale and an Andrew Benintendi first-inning home run. Barnes blew his fourth save of the year, recording only two outs.

Boston rallied back in the bottom of the ninth, as J.D. Martinez and Xander Bogaerts led off with back-to-back singles. After pinch-runner Michael Chavis advanced to third on a Rafael Devers double play, pinch-hitter Brock Holt tied things up with a bloop RBI single.

Marco Hernandez doubled to left, but Holt and interim third base coach Andy Barkett got crossed up and right fielder Nomar Mazara threw Holt out to prevent the game-winning run from scoring. Barkett initially waved Holt and threw up the stop sign too late for Holt to stop his momentum.

The Red Sox loaded the bases in the 10th, but righty Jesse Chavez got Bogaerts to fly out to center to end the inning.

Sale allowed three hits and one unearned run in seven innings, striking out 10 Rangers hitters. Just three days after throwing a three-hit shutout in Kansas City, the lefty lowered his ERA to 3.52 with another dominant outing.

After Betts walked to lead off the bottom of the first, Benintendi took Rangers starter Mike Minor deep over the Green Monster to give Boston a 2-0 lead. The Red Sox would muster just three hits off Minor after Benintendi's homer as the lefty went eight innings, striking out six.

The Rangers plated a run on a series of Sox miscues in the sixth, as second baseman Rougned Odor walked, stole second and advanced to third on a throwing error by Sandy Leon before scoring on Danny Santana's RBI single. Texas had just three runners in scoring position before the ninth.

The Sox honored Ortiz with a pregame "moment of reflection" and fans chanted the slugger's name throughout the evening. Multiple Sox players, manager Alex Cora, president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski and team president Sam Kennedy spoke about the shooting before the game.

The Red Sox fell to 34-33 and have lost four of their last five. The two teams will meet again Tuesday night, with rookie lefty Darwinson Hernandez likely starting for the Red Sox against righty Ariel Jurado.

Ortiz shooting: Boston Red Sox's David Price says he has 'nothing but love and respect' for Big Papi

Christopher Smith

Red Sox left-hander David Price expressed shock over the news former teammate David Ortiz was shot in the Dominican Republic on Sunday night, adding he was glad to hear Ortiz is in stable condition less than 24 hours after the incident.

"Happy he's okay," Price said. "That's very unfortunate for him to have to go through that and his family to have to go through that. Everybody in here and in this city understands the way he treats people. It's second-to-none. He's definitely in our thoughts and our prayers along with his family and we look forward to seeing him again."

Price's wife, Tiffany, asked him if he had heard what happened to Ortiz late Sunday night. The lefty said his heart immediately sank before he got more information.

"Initially, I just thought the worst and hoped for the best," Price said. "(Tiffany) told me what happened and I was able to get more information on it."

Price and Ortiz publicly feuded before Price joined the Red Sox in 2016, as Price was upset at how Ortiz admired a home run in the 2013 ALDS and went on to hit him with a pitch in May 2014. The two made up in spring training once Price arrived in 2016 and became close in their year as teammates.

"He embraced me with open arms," Price said. "It was his last year here, I didn't want it to be anything about me and him. I wanted it to be all about him. He didn't want it to be all about him. He wanted it to be about us as a team. I've got nothing but love and respect for Big Papi and he's well aware of that."

Boston Red Sox roster moves: Bobby Poyner called up from Pawtucket, Josh Taylor sent down

Chris Cotillo

The Red Sox swapped out lefty relievers Monday afternoon, calling up Bobby Poyner from Triple-A Pawtucket and optioning Josh Taylor.

Poyner has made just two big-league appearances this season, back on April 20 and 23. He owns a 3.91 ERA and 11.4 K/9 in 25 1/3 innings with Pawtucket.

Taylor appeared five times after making his debut May 29, allowing six earned runs on 12 hits.

Boston currently has eight relievers in its bullpen: Matt Barnes, Ryan Brasier, Colten Brewer, Heath Hembree, Poyner, Mike Shawaryn, Brandon Workman and Marcus Walden. One of those pitchers will likely be demoted after Monday's game to make room for likely Tuesday starter Darwinzon Hernandez.

Ortiz shooting 'shocks Red Sox to the core': Alex Cora, Dave Dombrowski, Sam Kennedy react

Chris Cotillo

Key Red Sox decision-makers arrived at Fenway Park having slept little Sunday night after hearing Sox legend David Ortiz had been shot in the Dominican Republic. Team employees spent most of Sunday night and Monday morning gathering information and seeing how the organization could provide assistance to Ortiz and his family.

"The events of last night shook our Red Sox family to its core," team president and CEO Sam Kennedy said. "David Ortiz is one of the most celebrated and beloved members of the Red Sox family. On behalf of our entire organization, our thoughts and our prayers are with David."

Ortiz was shot at the Dial Bar and Lounge in Santo Domingo and is currently in "serious but stable" condition. The 43-year-old is likely to be transported by air ambulance later Monday night.

Ortiz could be transported to Boston as early as Monday night.

Kennedy, who has worked for the Red Sox since 2002, called Monday a "very difficult day for the organization." He has texted back-and-forth with Ortiz's wife, Tiffany, and has been in constant communication with other club executives over the last 18 hours.

Alex Cora addressed the media about Boston Red Sox legend David Ortiz, his former teammate who was shot in the Dominican Republic on Sunday.

"It shocked us to the core," Kennedy said. "I can speak on behalf of (owners) John (Henry) and Tom (Werner) and everyone in the front office. It was jarring. It was, frankly, stunning and terrifying. It was a horrific incident."

Kennedy choked up when asked what Ortiz meant to him.

"It's an emotional time. I love David Ortiz. We all love David Ortiz," Kennedy said. "Telling my kids last night what had happened was really difficult. I know the same holds true for everyone up here, for ownership. It's hard to express what David Ortiz means to the Boston Red Sox. When you love someone and they come in harm's way, it's jarring. But you have to put those things aside and focus on what's necessary."

President of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski was emotional as well.

"It's shocking when you get this type of news," Dombrowski said. "I heard it last night at the same time. Your heart goes out immediately to him and his family. It was also difficult gathering information that was accurate. Making sure we tried to get that with all different types of indications on what had taken place. You're shaken, really, is what it comes down to, when you hear this type of information. He's iconic, but he's a friend. When you hear that, you feel for him and his family."

Manager Alex Cora, who was teammates with Ortiz from 2005 to 2008, said his phone didn't stop going off after about 9:45 p.m. Sunday night.

"It's hard to believe," Cora said. "Just keep praying, stay positive, and when he comes back, he will be taken care of and he'll be back. He'll be in that clubhouse with a big smile and that huge heart."

Cora urged fans to pray for Ortiz and said he is confident his friend will pull through.

"One thing about David, he's strong, he has no fear and he'll never show weaknesses," Cora said. "Because of that reason, the Lord will be with him. For us that believe, just pray for him. Keep your positive vibes."

Cora, Kennedy, Dombrowski and Henry addressed the team before its game against the Rangers on Monday night. Boston will face Texas in the first game of a four-game series beginning at 7:10 p.m.

"We'll find a way because that's what we have to do," Cora said. "But it's not easy. We've got to go out there and perform. We have to. We'll find a way to."

Ortiz's longtime Red Sox teammate Varitek holds tears back; 'I didn't sleep very well last night'

Christopher Smith

David Ortiz's former Boston Red Sox teammate Jason Varitek held tears back as he addressed the media at Fenway Park on Monday. He said the "nerves kicked in" when he heard about Ortiz getting shot in the Dominican Republic on Sunday night.

The Red Sox have arranged for a medical air ambulance to transport Ortiz back to Mass. General Hospital. The hope is Ortiz will arrive in Boston on Monday night. Red Sox president Sam Kennedy said Ortiz's condition is serious but he's in stable enough condition to be transported back to Boston.

"I didn't sleep very well last night," Varitek said. "I don't think anybody did that knew. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was going on. Still don't know that much besides what everybody's seen and heard."

Varitek's wife Catherine Varitek immediately texted Ortiz's wife Tiffany Ortiz. The Variteks heard back from Tiffany on Monday morning.

"And then I immediately sent a note to David and I tried getting a hold of Pedro (Martinez), seeing any more information that you can get besides what's already public. It doesn't really change much from there."

Varitek and Ortiz played together for the Red Sox from 2003-11.

Varitek now serves as a catching instructor and a special assistant to president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski.

"He's Big Papi. He's a big man," Varitek said. "And great human being. Not only being a great player but played the game right."

"He's a dad," Varitek added, taking a few seconds to hold tears back. "Heart goes out to (daughter) Alex and (son) D'Angelo and his wife, and the rest of his family. It's a very scary thing that something like that could happen that easily."

*** *The Lawrence Eagle Tribune***

Five Takes: Red Sox bullpen spoils another Chris Sale start

Chris Mason

Matt Barnes and Ryan Brasier are supposed to be Alex Cora's two most reliable relievers.

But their fingerprints were all over last night's loss, as each hard-throwing right-hander struggled in the series opener against Texas. Barnes blew a save in the ninth, and then Brasier gave up the dagger in the 11th as Boston fell, 4-3.

Here are five takes from another game the Red Sox let slip away:

1. Barnes blows it first

With a 2-1 lead in the bottom of the ninth inning, the Red Sox were three outs away from a crisp victory.

In the midst of a midseason regression, Barnes allowed three straight hits and the lead turned into a deficit very quickly. It was the fifth time he's allowed a run in his last nine appearances.

2. Brasier still can't find command

It's one thing if opponents are hitting good pitches, but Brasier is struggling to hit his catcher's mitt with consistency.

The reliever gave up back-to-back hits in the 11th, and both were on fastballs right down the heart of the plate. That's not where Christian Vazquez was calling for either. It's been a troubling trend with no easy solution.

3. Good Brock then Bad Brock

If you're a glass-half-full thinker, Brock Holt tied the game in the bottom of the ninth with a clutch RBI single blooped into center field.

If you prefer to see your glass half empty, moments later Holt ran through acting third base coach Andy Barkett's stop sign and it wasn't wise. Holt was out by roughly 20 feet — he wasn't in the screen yet when the catcher caught the ball on the television broadcast — and the game went to extra innings.

4. No W for Sale

If you're wondering why the pitcher wins stat is becoming antiquated, look no further than Chris Sale.

The Red Sox ace pitched very well. Again. He didn't pick up the win. Again.

Sale spun seven innings of one-run ball, striking out 10 and only allowing three hits, but had nothing to show for it. It was the sixth time Sale (2-7) has thrown a quality start this season and not gotten the win.

5. Benny hits a bomb... in the first?

In a plot twist, Andrew Benintendi's best inning was the first. The left fielder got the Sox on the board early with a two-run bomb that was croaked into the Monster Seats.

Prior to last night's game, Benintendi was hitting .106 with only one double and no homers in 55 first-inning plate appearances.

*** *The New Hampshire Union Leader***

Working Press: Good news/bad news all at once

Mike Shalin

THE NEWS, coming right about the time the Bruins were sending their fans into a state of euphoria, struck with the force of a bolt of lightning in the Dominican sky.

David Ortiz had been shot in the back in what appears to be an assassination attempt in his native Dominican Republic.

Just like that, sports fans, Red Sox fans, had a potential John Lennon situation on their hands.

Lennon, of course, was gunned down on a New York street in 1980, the Beatle's death resounding until this day.

Lennon was an icon. A legend.

Ortiz is an icon. A legend.

Papi survived through surgery and the Red Sox sent a plane for him to bring him back to his adopted home — his “bleeping city” — to continue his treatment.

“Six years ago, David Ortiz's spirit and resolve helped us all begin to heal from the Boston Marathon bombing,” Barack Obama tweeted as heartfelt feelings poured in from all over the world. “Today, I want to join many others in wishing him a speedy recovery of his own. Get well soon, Papi.”

From teammate and friend Pedro Martinez: “I'm at peace knowing you out of danger; you a strong man Compai, can't wait to hear your voice. My thoughts and prayers are with you, see you soon ...”

Word of the Ortiz shooting came, as we said, just as the Bruins were bringing the Cup Final back home — for Wednesday night's Game 7, which leads us to three more tweets.

One, coming from 98.5 The Sports Hub's Marc Bertrand, read: “There is one right answer for who should be the Game 7 banner captain. @Tom Brady wearing a @davidortiz jersey.”

Brady, reacting Monday, wrote, “Papi defines Boston Strong ... get well soon my friend!!!”

As far as the first Cup Final Game 7 ever played in Boston, my pal Phil Stacey of the Salem News wrote, “Boston's long and painful pro sports championship drought of 129 days could finally be ended on Wednesday night. What pain and suffering we've endured since Feb. 3.”

Tuukka time

The Bruins played a strong game in St. Louis Sunday night. But Tuukka Rask played a more than strong game in evening the series. Boston strong? You bet.

Rask, the goalie folks around here love to hate, continued a run that will win him the Conn Smythe Trophy if the Bruins win Wednesday night. There will be sentiment he should win it whether the Bruins win or lose, but I don't think that will happen.

I also don't think he's going to lose. The crowd will be even louder, with some sort of pre-game tribute to Ortiz.

From NHL public relations: “Tuukka Rask became the 19th NHL goaltender to record 50 career playoff wins and required the 10th-fewest games (tied) in league history to do so.”

From ESPN’s Emily Kaplan: “Tuukka Rask in an elimination game this postseason: 3-0, 1.33 GAA, .953 save pct (82 saves, 86 shots). Four goals allowed in 179.81 minutes.”

From The Athletic’s Scott Wheeler: “Only five goalies have ever played 20 or more playoff games in a season with a save percentage above .940. Tuukka Rask is on his way to becoming the first to do it twice. (Jonathan) Quick, (J.S.) Giguere, (Olaf) Kolzig, (Tim) Thomas each did it once.”

His .941 save percentage in these playoffs is the third-best ever posted by a goalie with at least 17 games in that postseason.

In other words, very special.

Oh, and Rask chimed in on Papi Monday, tweeting, “Glad to hear you’re in stable condition @davidortiz. Wishing you a quick recovery.”

David Krejci, who finally got his first point in the Cup final with a late assist Sunday, was flying in that game. His underrated experience is a definite plus for the Bruins.

Trouble at Fenway

Column pal Jonny Miller asked me Friday if the Red Sox’ three-game sweep in Kansas City was a mirage or if this was the start of a Sox run.

I thought this was a time for the Sox to take three of four from the feisty Rays. But with Chris Sale not pitching, the Rays waltzed into Fenway and took three of the four, winning 20-4 in those three victories.

Through Sunday, the Sox’ record against the Rays, Astros and Yankees was 7-13. Throw in a 1-2 against the Indians and your Red Sox are 8-15 against AL contenders.

They visit the Orioles this weekend, starting a stretch of 16 of their next 29 games against the Orioles and Blue Jays. After that, it’s seven of the next 10 against the Yankees and Rays.

With J.D. Martinez, Mitch Moreland and Steve Pearce hurting, the news of a Nathan Eovaldi setback was another Sunday downer at Fenway. “With Nate, we’re going to push his bullpen back,” said manager Alex Cora. “... In the last simulated game, mechanics wise, he felt off. So, yesterday, he had a little bit of soreness in the bicep, bicep tendinitis. We’ll make sure everything is fine with that. We’ll take a look at the mechanics and make an adjustment from that. Hopefully during the week he gets back on track. Until the symptoms go away, we’re not going to push it.”

Happy for Kimbrel

Heath Hembree, who has been pitching well out of the bullpen, wishes his old buddy well as Craig Kimbrel begins life as a Cubbie.

“He’s a for-sure Hall of Famer,” Hembree said. “Honestly, he’s pitched himself to be such an elite pitcher that only a handful of teams can afford him. He’s so good that it kind of worked against him. But I’m just happy to see him back on the field and see him back out there. When he’s not in the game out there pitching, it’s not right. He deserves to be on the field. So I’m excited for him.”

More B’s

Wednesday night’s game will be played on the 35th anniversary of the Celtics defeating the Lakers in the seventh game of the NBA Finals, giving the C’s their 15th title.

Karson Kuhlman became the 21st Bruin to score a goal in these playoffs — the most players from a team scoring in a postseason since the 1987 Flyers had 22. By the way, Philly didn't win the Cup that year.

Brad Marchand scored the first goal in Wednesday night's win. The Bruins are 25-1 when Marchand scores a goal in a playoff game, 6-0 in finals (4-0 against Vancouver in 2011, 2-0 against the Blues, and he didn't score in the 2013 final against Chicago.

*** *The Portland Press Herald***

Red Sox Farm Report: Shortstop could be another gem from independent leagues

Kevin Thomas

Baseball players don't dream of playing in the independent leagues. They want to wear the uniform of a team affiliated with a major league organization.

Shortstop Ryan Fitzgerald is in his second year in the Red Sox organization after playing in the independent leagues.

But what if you can't find an organization interested? For Ryan Fitzgerald, the independent league meant opportunity. As an infielder at Creighton University, he hoped to be drafted after his junior year. It didn't happen.

Then came an ill-timed slump during his senior year in 2016. No doors opened for a .230 hitter. That didn't stop Fitzgerald.

"I was going to play until they took the jersey off my back," said Fitzgerald, who signed with the SouthShore RailCats in Gary, Indiana, in 2017.

Fitzgerald was ready to begin a second season in Gary in 2018 when the Red Sox called. Now, in his second year of affiliated ball, he's close to a promotion to Double-A Portland. Fitzgerald, who turns 25 next week, is batting .315 with an .815 OPS.

"He's just a good hitter," said Greg Norton, the Red Sox minor league hitting coordinator. "We've had some success with independent league guys."

The Red Sox seem to like signing players from independent leagues; there have been four with the Sea Dogs this year.

Others have found success. Daniel Nava signed with the Red Sox out of the independent leagues, suited up for the Sea Dogs in 2009 and played on Boston's 2013 World Series champion.

When the Sea Dogs were affiliated with the Marlins, they welcomed an independent-league slugger named Kevin Millar. He also owns a Red Sox World Series ring, from 2004.

In previous years the Sea Dogs featured independent-league pitchers Curtis Martin (now pitching for Texas) and Aaron Wilkerson (up and down with the Brewers).

Fitzgerald made the All-Star team in his only year in independent ball, although he batted .239. It was enough to impress Boston.

The Red Sox sent him to low Class A Greenville, where he played 80 games (.274/.733 OPS), almost exclusively at shortstop.

Fitzgerald considers himself a student of hitting and continued to tweak his approach – “a lot of offseason work.” It’s paid off.

“He came to us and really did a lot of work on his swing,” Norton said. “Since he stepped on the field with us, he seems to have an advanced knowledge of hitting ... He controls the zone, knows his swing and has really performed for two years.”

At Creighton, Fitzgerald played both middle infield spots. His best way to advance in the pros may be as a utility player. As long as he keeps hitting, the Red Sox will keep him around.

THE INDEPENDENT players now in Portland are getting adjusted. None was with the Sea Dogs when the season began.

“It’s really good baseball (in the independent leagues) but it’s not where everyone wants to be,” said pitcher Konner Wade. “You have to remember, going out to the field, to really have a plan, and then execute that plan so you can get back to an opportunity like this.”

Wade, a seventh-round draft pick of the Colorado Rockies in 2013, was released last spring and pitched in 2018 for the Sugar Land (Texas) Skeeters – the team that once included Jeremy Barfield, a former Sea Dogs slugger.

Wade, 27, signed with the Red Sox three weeks ago. He’s made only three appearances with Portland (5.52 ERA).

Cody Asche, 28, has five seasons and 390 games of major league time but found himself without a job this spring. He landed in Sugar Land but had to be talked into it.

Signed by Boston on June 1, Kevin Lenik is 1-0 with a 2.25 ERA with two appearances in Portland. Staff photo by Carl D. Walsh

“I don’t think any player has that as a goal, to play independent ball. It sure wasn’t mine,” Asche said. “It took some convincing from people I trust around the game, and my family, for me to give it a shot.”

Asche didn’t stay long, signing May 3 with Boston and being assigned to Portland. He’s currently on the injured list with a bruised shinbone.

Dylan Thompson and Kevin Lenik recently joined the team. Thompson, once with the Rockies’ organization, was a three-year starter for the Sioux Falls Canaries before the Red Sox signed him last month. He won his first start for Portland last week but was sent down Monday to Salem.

As for Lenik, well ... Lenik’s been around. An undrafted free agent, Lenik was signed by Texas in 2016 after participating in a tryout. Released in 2017, Lenik went independent with the Windy City Thunderbolts before the Royals signed him.

Lenik stayed in the Royals’ organization until April. Released, he dropped back to the independents, joining the Kansas City T-Bones. Boston signed him June 1. He’s 1-0 with a 2.25 ERA with two appearances in Portland.

“They say the minor leagues are a grind, Lenik said, “but they don’t know grind until they’ve been in the independent leagues.”

IN SALEM, PRIME pitching prospect Bryan Mata (1.83 ERA) returned after a one-month stay on the disabled list with a sore shoulder. He pitched five shutout innings Friday, allowing two hits and one walk, striking out five.

THE LOWELL SPINNERS’ short-season schedule begins Friday.

*** *The Pawtucket Times***

PawSox chairman Larry Lucchino says he's praying for Big Papi

Brendan McGair

Standing in one of the private suites at McCoy Stadium, Larry Lucchino paused for several seconds before the PawSox principal owner/chairman finished his train of thought about David Ortiz.

Like many individuals in the Boston sports community, Lucchino was clearly shaken upon hearing that Ortiz was shot Sunday night at a bar in his native Dominican Republic. The link between the former larger-than-life slugger known as "Big Papi" and Lucchino is a special one. When Lucchino served as Red Sox president/CEO, he was one of the driving forces in bringing Ortiz to Boston prior to the 2003 season.

On Monday afternoon, Lucchino emptied his pockets when asked about a charismatic individual who clearly means a great deal to him as the facts surrounding Ortiz were still be gathered.

"By all accounts, he's my favorite baseball player and I've been in the game for almost 40 years," said Lucchino. "He and (former Red Sox ace) Pedro Martinez have the two biggest hearts of any ballplayers I've ever seen. They can relate to fans ... so many things beyond simple baseball. The size of their hearts really distinguished them from everybody else.

"I'm not above praying for other people, but I will pray for David," Lucchino added. "The irrationality of this world should not surprise any of this, but this surprises me."

Lucchino received word about Ortiz's involvement in an act of violence from PawSox president Dr. Charles Steinberg.

"You're hoping that it's not true," said Steinberg, standing not too far from Lucchino on Monday.

"He's going to be part of baseball and our lives for a long time," said Lucchino, who hopes to connect with Ortiz's wife Tiffany in the coming days.

Lucchino is on the board of directors of The David Ortiz Children's Fund and has been to the Dominican Republic on several occasions.

"It's interesting when you go down there. So many sports stars try to protect their privacy and free time," said Lucchino. "Invariably, they'll go to his event because of him and the cause he supports is so worthy."

*** *RedSox.com***

Sox players, front office react to Ortiz shooting

Ian Browne

The Red Sox went from the shock of digesting the jarring news that David Ortiz was shot on Sunday night to putting all of their positive energy on Monday into their hopes of a full recovery for the beloved slugger who led the franchise to three World Series championships.

It was a surreal and somewhat somber day at Fenway, where the Red Sox simultaneously played a baseball game against the Texas Rangers -- an eventual 4-3 defeat in 11 innings -- while also sending positive thoughts out to their friend and former teammate, who is an icon in both Boston and the Dominican Republic.

Red Sox president and CEO Sam Kennedy said Ortiz's condition remained serious. However, Ortiz was stable enough that the Red Sox were able to send a team plane to transport him back to Boston. Ortiz arrived at Massachusetts General Hospital for continued care around 10:30 p.m. ET Monday night.

"The events of last night shook our Red Sox family to its core," said Kennedy. "David Ortiz is one of the most celebrated and beloved members of the Red Sox family. On behalf of our entire organization, our thoughts and our prayers are with David. They are also with his father Leo, his wife Tiffany, his kids D'Angelo, Jessica and Alexandra as well as his extended family and friends throughout the world."

Just prior to first pitch Monday night, the Red Sox paid tribute to Ortiz with an announcement from the public address announcer and a message on the scoreboard. Just to the right of an image of Ortiz's retired number 34 were the words "We send our love to David Ortiz."

For several seconds, the crowd had a quiet reflection in recognition of Boston's adored Big Papi. Then they applauded.

A couple of minutes later, a highlight montage ended with an image of Ortiz waving his arms to the crowd after his final game with the Sox. The crowd cheered again.

Everyone in the ballpark could feel the emotion of the moment.

"Yeah, it makes you think about it," said Red Sox center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. "It puts things in perspective. Just makes you want to continue to try to uplift him and his family and hope everything goes well."

Pedro Martinez, a teammate of Ortiz's in Boston from 2003-04, spoke passionately about his close friend on MLB Tonight, saying Ortiz is "a great role model to society, to baseball, in general as a human being, as a father. I don't have enough words to describe what David means to baseball."

Red Sox ace Chris Sale, who missed playing with Ortiz by one year and fired seven strong innings on Monday, acknowledged that the revered slugger was on his mind.

"I felt it a little bit," said Sale. "You're talking about a guy who's put a team and a city on his back basically his entire career and you want to be able to pick him up when you can. Obviously we're thinking about him. We had a meeting before the game about it. He's as much a part of this team as anyone has ever been."

"Yesterday was a tough day, and today too. We're obviously glad he's doing well and he's back here and in good hands. So we're just hoping for the best and trying to get some wins for him. I know that would make him happy that's for sure."

It was hard for anyone to make sense of such a senseless act, in which Ortiz was shot in the back and wounded at an amusement center in his hometown of Santo Domingo.

"He's a dad," former Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek said as he held back tears. "[My] heart goes out to Alex and D'Angelo and his wife and the rest of his family. It's a very scary thing that something like that could happen that easily."

In addition to the outpouring of positivity from within the Red Sox family, well wishes also came from those who faced Ortiz during his career.

"When I look at my playing career, and the rivalry that we have with Boston, David was one of the first names that comes to mind," said former Yankees captain and current Marlins CEO Derek Jeter. "Everybody knows what he was able to do on the field. But the type of person he is off the field. Getting to know him over the years. What he's meant to the community, not only in Boston but in the Dominican."

This is a guy that's beloved throughout the sport and sports in general. You just wish him a speedy recovery. It was a complete and utter shock."

The Rangers tweeted out a thoughtful message before Monday night's series opener at Fenway Park.

"I think we were all shocked of that happening, especially to him," said Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus. "He's such a huge figure not only here, [but] especially there in the Dominican Republic. We don't know what was the reason, but in the meantime, really glad that he's alive, really glad that he's stable. Hopefully he recovers well."

Red Sox manager Alex Cora -- a teammate of Ortiz's from 2005-08 and a long-time friend -- talked with his players before Monday's game in a meeting that also included owner John Henry, Kennedy and president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski.

"We just met with everybody and there were some questions about what's going on. They gave answers to whatever they could answer," said Cora. "Everybody knew what was going on. As you know, we live in an era that it's very easy to get information. I wish sometimes that we lived back in the '80s because stuff like this, overnight, it was tough to see everything. But like I said, we're going to stay positive and keep praying. We're not going to question the plan from the man upstairs because that's not how it works."

In Cora's daily session with the media, there were no baseball questions. Everything was about Ortiz.

"One thing about David -- he's strong, he has no fear, he never shows weaknesses," said Cora. "Because of that reason, the Lord will be with him. For us that believe, just pray for him."

Many current Red Sox players spent at least a season or two playing with Ortiz.

"That's very unfortunate for him to have to go through that, his family to have to go through that," said Red Sox lefty David Price. "Everybody in here and in this city understands the way that he treats people. It's second to none. So he's definitely in our thoughts and our prayers, along with his family, and we look forward to seeing him again."

Ortiz underwent a six-hour operation performed by three doctors Sunday night into early Monday morning.

"Yeah, it's definitely tough," said Red Sox reliever Matt Barnes. "We understand we have a job to do and to go out there and win ballgames. He's always going to be with us and be part of it -- good, bad or indifferent. Unfortunately, this is one of those situations where there's not much we can do to help right now except stay positive for him and his family."

When the Red Sox had three straight innings where they could have walked off with the win on Monday, it was hard not to flash back to Ortiz, who had 23 game-ending hits (including the postseason) in his illustrious career.

"I don't know if here they say it, but back home [in Puerto Rico] they talk about superheroes without capes," said Cora. "He's a superhero without a cape. That's the way we see him. He'll be OK."

Sox squander superb Sale start, lose in extras

Ian Browne

The bullpen -- which doesn't have a lockdown closer -- again became an issue for the Red Sox in an 11-inning, 4-3 loss to the Rangers on Monday night at Fenway Park.

First, Matt Barnes couldn't hold a 2-1 lead in the ninth. Instead, he gave up a two-out, go-ahead single to Nomar Mazara.

Though the Red Sox swiftly came back to tie it on Brock Holt's RBI single with two outs in the bottom of the inning, there would be more bullpen issues later.

Ryan Brasier came on in the 11th and gave up a leadoff double to Danny Santana and then an RBI single to Elvis Andrus that wound up as the game-winning hit.

With the July 31 Trade Deadline less than two months away, there will be scrutiny on whether Red Sox president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski will upgrade the 'pen for his struggling team, which is 1-4 on the current homestand and 34-33 overall. The Sox trail the Rays by eight games in the American League East.

"Every part of baseball and a team -- bullpen, bats, starters, everybody -- goes through little ups and downs," Brasier said. "I think we're just in a little rough patch right now. But every day coming in and trying to get out of it is big for us right now. Hopefully we can string some zeroes together on the back end and get back on track."

The Red Sox have spent the early portion of the season trying to get by without a set closer. Barnes, their best reliever, has been used in a variety of ways in the late innings.

In this one, he was asked to be a traditional closer.

Was that an adjustment?

"No, I just sucked tonight," said Barnes. "Plain and simple."

Of late, the righty has struggled, giving up at least one run in three of his last four outings. Barnes is 4-for-8 in save opportunities this season. In his last nine outings, he has a 9.82 ERA.

"I think he hasn't been as sharp, obviously," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "We talked about it a few weeks ago, the way we were using him, using him against the middle of the lineup the whole time. We've been trying to give him a breather here and there, but he knows his job. He was in a situation here, three outs from winning the game, and we didn't complete the job."

Brasier, who was projected to be the team's other top reliever this season, has also been inconsistent.

"Made a couple pitches that they were able to get barrel on," Brasier said. "Start any inning off with a double and you're kind of behind the 8 ball. Ground ball squeaked up the middle and they scored a run. So, one bad pitch and a good piece of hitting."

Baserunning confusion

The Red Sox came close to winning it in the ninth, moments after Holt's equalizer. Marco Hernandez blooped one down the right-field line and it fell in front of Mazara. Holt tried to score all the way from first.

Third-base coach Andy Barkett put up the stop sign, but it might have been too late. Holt apparently didn't see him and was tagged out by several feet to send the game to extra innings.

"The guy in right field, he's got a good arm," said Barkett. "I was trying to stay with him as long as I could and trying to make a decision and he kind of bobbled it at first and I read that."

"I knew it was going to be a late send if the ball kicked away from him or took a bad bounce of some sort. I threw my hands up, I really haven't looked at the play in detail to say if I was late or not. I know he didn't see me so that happened. I know he ran past me. He must have not seen me. Someone showed me an overhead view of when I threw my hands up, where he was. He just took his eye off me. I really don't know. We had a miscommunication of some sort."

Sale's vintage effort again wasted

In what has become an all-too familiar theme for the Red Sox, Chris Sale pitches a gem and his team loses.

Coming off a complete-game shutout at Kansas City, Sale fired seven sparkling innings in this one, giving up three hits and no earned runs while walking one and striking out 10.

But the only run support he got was a two-run homer to left-center field by Andrew Benintendi in the bottom of the first. Sale's 3.52 ERA is now the exact same as his run-support average.

More importantly, the Red Sox are somehow 4-10 when their ace starts.

Then again, Boston's offense has struggled throughout the homestand.

"We've been talking about it for a while here," said Cora. "We had a chance to add on throughout the game and we didn't. It's been the story of us the last month. We haven't been able to put teams away offensively. We've got to do a better job."

Ortiz arrives at Boston hospital after shooting

Ian Browne

Retired Red Sox slugger David Ortiz, who was shot and wounded at a club in his hometown of Santo Domingo on Sunday, is now recovering in Boston.

A team spokesman said Monday evening that an air ambulance carrying Ortiz had departed the Dominican Republic bound for Boston. In stable condition, Ortiz will continue his recovery at Massachusetts General Hospital. NESN's broadcast of Monday night's Red Sox game showed footage of the ambulance carrying Ortiz arriving at the hospital sometime before 10:30 p.m. ET, just moments prior to the completion of Boston's 4-3 loss to the Rangers.

"David Ortiz is probably the most beloved and one of the most important players in our history, leading us to multiple World Series championships, and an active member in the community," said Red Sox team president Sam Kennedy. "I would be hard-pressed to think of anyone more beloved than David. It's a very difficult day for the organization.

"I love David Ortiz. We all love David Ortiz. So telling my kids last night what had happened was very difficult. It's hard to express what David Ortiz means to the Boston Red Sox. When you love someone and they come in harm's way, it's jarring. But you have to put those emotions aside and focus on what's necessary."

Ortiz's media assistant Leo Lopez told ESPN that the former slugger underwent a six-hour operation performed by three doctors, led by Dr. Abel Gonzalez. Ortiz's father, Leo Ortiz, addressed reporters on Sunday and said doctors anticipate a full recovery.

"Doctors say he is out of danger, but he is heavily sedated and will be in intensive care for the next 24 hours," Lopez said.

"It's shocking when you get this type of news," president of baseball operations Dave Dombrowski said. "Your heart goes out immediately to his family. It was also difficult gathering information that was accurate. You're shaking, really, is what it all comes down to when you hear something like this."

Just before the Red Sox's game against the Rangers at Fenway Park, the team paid tribute to Ortiz with an announcement from the public address announcer and a message on the scoreboard. Just to the right of an image of Ortiz's retired No. 34 was the inscription: "We send our love to David Ortiz."

For several seconds, the crowd had a quiet reflection in recognition of Ortiz. And then they applauded.

A couple of minutes later, a highlight montage ended with an image of Ortiz waving his arms to the crowd after his final game. The crowd cheered again.

Two others were also wounded in the incident, including Jhoel Lopez, a Dominican television host who was with Ortiz, Dominican National Police Director Ney Aldrin Bautista Almonte told ESPN. Bautista said the alleged driver of a motorcycle that brought the suspected shooter to the scene was captured by civilians near where the shooting took place. The alleged driver was identified as 25-year-old Eddy Feliz Garcia, according to police spokesman Colonel Frank Duran Mejia. Sources close to the investigation told ESPN that the alleged gunman was also in custody, though police have only acknowledged one arrest.

“Yeah, I mean, it’s a crazy world we live in,” said Red Sox center fielder Jackie Bradley Jr. “You never want to see anything like that happen to anyone in general. Obviously with someone you know, it kind of hits close to home. Still have a job to do. His family is in our prayers and we’ll continue to pull for him.”

Originally signed by the Mariners in 1992, Ortiz was traded to the Twins in 1996 and played parts of six seasons with Minnesota. Ortiz was released by the Twins and signed with the Red Sox in 2003.

The 43-year-old Ortiz belted 541 home runs overall in his career and led the Red Sox to World Series championships in 2004, 2007 and 2013 before retiring after the 2016 season. Ortiz was named MVP of the 2013 Fall Classic. During his 14 seasons with the Red Sox, he was a 10-time All-Star and a seven-time Silver Slugger winner. Ortiz also holds the Red Sox single-season record for home runs with 54, which he set in 2006.

Among designated hitters, Ortiz is the all-time leader in MLB history for homers (485), RBIs (1,569), and hits (2,192). He is eligible to be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 2022.

Ortiz currently serves as an MLB studio analyst for FOX Sports. He contributes to the network’s regular season, All-Star Game, postseason and World Series coverage.

*** *WEEI.com***

Alex Cora explains why he pitched to Nomar Mazara

Rob Bradford

Before a pitch was thrown to Nomar Mazara in the ninth inning Monday night, it was an interesting baseball debate.

With one out, the Red Sox leading by a run and runners on second and third, Red Sox reliever Matt Barnes was slated to face off with Mazara. There was little in terms of history between the two to help make any sort of decision, with the Rangers outfielder claiming one hit in three at-bats against Barnes while basically carrying the same batting average against lefties and righties.

But with first base open, the conversation regarding possibly walking Mazara to load the bases wasn't a crazy one.

Up next was righty hitter Hunter Pence, who wasn't as good against right-handers but was 3-for-4 this season with the bases loaded.

Cora chose to pitch to Mazara and bring the infield in. It resulted in a go-ahead single into the left-center field gap. After what would ultimately turn into a 4-3, 11-inning loss for the Red Sox, the manager explained his decision. (For a complete recap, [click here.](#))

"No, we're not going to walk the bases loaded," he said. "You can't put that guy on the corner there, because then he cannot expand, and then you've got (Asdrubal) Cabrera behind (after Pence). You've got to play the infield in there. You play back, they tie the game. Where we're at bullpen-wise, nah. You've got to finish it there. I've always said, the infield in, the infield back, it's about defending lanes. Ten steps back, you give them that lane. That's how it works nowadays. You've got defenses shifting. Positioning is just a matter of you cutting the angle. That's what we're trying to do there."

How 24 hours helped define Boston's relationship with David Ortiz

Rob Bradford

There are reports. There are rumors. There are whispers. There are videos. There are headlines.

That is and will be the reality of this story. When a national hero and sports icon gets shot in the manner David Ortiz did Sunday night people yearn for answers. They're coming, I would imagine.

But for now, what we should remember are the 24 hours that offered a reminder of exactly how unique a figure we are dealing with. This was not a normal day and it was primarily because this was not a normal subject. From the wee hours of the morning in a Dominican Republic operating room to the ambulance ride to the confines of Massachusetts General Hospital a full day later, this was a collective scream telling the world why our f*****g city doesn't forget just because the uniform is off.

Ortiz has meant that much. He was flat-out the most impactful player in Red Sox history, and then some.

There was a reason more eyes were on the flashing lights down the street from Fenway Park rather than the actual baseball game being played this night. The late-inning drama between the Red Sox and Rangers had no chance. Ortiz was back in town.

Perhaps we truly didn't realize the relationship between Ortiz and this city, the organization and the players still playing before these 24 hours. That might seem hard to believe, but it also seems to be a very real thing.

The first hint of that would be the conversation leading up to late afternoon. The Bruins should have been the talk of the town. They had just earned the right to play one game for a Stanley Cup championship. But nope. Callers wanted to call. Talkers wanted to talk. And it was a whole lot more about Ortiz than the hockey team. Cameras were focused on the airport runways, with none of them pointed at flights landing from St. Louis.

All reporting hands on deck were sent to Santo Domingo, Logan Airport and Fenway Park.

Then there was emotion in and around 4 Jersey St. Turn any corner and you could hear the conversations buzzing about what happened down in the Dominican Republic. Talk to anybody associated with the Red Sox and some sentence would be accompanied by a cracked voice or moist eye.

Life in these parts were put on hold.

Street names. Bridge dedications. Number retiring. As it turns out, nobody truly knew how important Ortiz was until these 24 hours. The voices in the Red Sox clubhouse after their loss only reiterated that notion.

"At one point ... when they came back and we had a chance to win the game, I was like, 'This is kind of like what David used to do.' It's one of those days, when you're involved in the game, you forget about it," said Red Sox manager Alex Cora. "Andy (Barkett) told me the last inning that he's here, that he got to the airport. But it's one of those days that you don't want to be a part of, honestly, on a personal note. But we have a job to do. The guys grinded it out. They played hard. It doesn't matter. We didn't win."

"I felt it a little bit," said the Red Sox' starting pitcher Monday night Chris Sale. "You're talking about a guy who's put a team and a city on his back basically his entire career and you want be able to be able to pick him up when you can. Obviously we're thinking about him. We had a meeting before the game about it. He's as much a part of this team as anyone has ever been. Yesterday was a tough day and today too. we're obviously glad he's doing well and he's back here and in good hands. So we're just hoping for the best and try to get some wins for him. I know that would make him happy that's for sure."

"It's definitely tough," Matt Barnes said. "We understand we have a job to do and to go out there and win ballgames. He's always going to be with us and be part of it – good, bad or indifferent. Unfortunately, this is one of those situations where the only thing you can do – there's not much we can do – to help right now except stay positive for him and his family."

Why has Ortiz elicited this reaction?

Go down the list. Great player. Powerful voice. Charitable presence. Welcoming superstar. Take your pick. But it is the concoction that made up the man which most likely prioritized the prayers and police escorts.

Twenty four hours? It was the time it took for the relationship between a city and its hero to be unexpectedly defined.

*** *NBC Sports Boston***

Emotional Red Sox describe fallen slugger as 'superhero without a cape,' pray for speedy recovery

John Tomase

Jason Varitek verged on tears. Alex Cora spoke of God's plan. Owner John Henry stood solemnly to the side while executives Sam Kennedy and Eddie Romero tried to find the words to describe their shock and sorrow.

The Red Sox were hours away from playing the Texas Rangers on Monday in a game with playoff implications, but all anyone could think about was David Ortiz.

Hours after the iconic slugger had been shot in his native Dominican Republic, the Red Sox mobilized their considerable resources to transport him to Boston, where they hoped he'd be admitted to Mass. General on Monday night.

But in the meantime, they spoke of the retired superstar's impact on Boston, and what he means to the city and franchise.

"David Ortiz is probably the most beloved and one of the most important players in our history, leading us to multiple World Series championships," Kennedy said. "An active member in the community. You would be hard-pressed to think of anyone more beloved than David. You can imagine how this has impacted the Red Sox organization. I know how it has impacted many of you who are here who loved David. It's a very difficult day for the organization."

Details remain scarce, but what's clear is that around 9 p.m. on Sunday night, Ortiz was seated outside at a Santo Domingo club when a gunman leaped from a motorcycle and shot him once through the back, with the bullet exiting through his stomach.

According to multiple reports, he underwent six hours of surgery to repair damage to multiple organs, including his intestines and liver. The Red Sox described his condition as serious but stable.

"One thing about David, he's strong, he has no fear, he never shows weaknesses, so because of that reason the Lord will be with him," Cora said. "For us that believe, just pray for him. Keep your positive vibes. I

always said that he's bigger than life, David, that vibe he brought in on a daily basis to those teams and what he brings anytime I see him, that smile. He'll give you a hug, a big smile, he does it with everybody. He does it with my daughter and my kids. So it's been a tough one."

Red Sox pitchers Rick Porcello and David Price saluted their former teammate for making everyone feel welcome.

"He might not know your first name but he's going to act like you've been best friends for a very long time," Price said. "We all have a ton of love and a ton of respect for Big Papi and we're all wishing him and his family well."

Added Porcello: "He's beloved by everyone. Somebody just asked me what my favorite memory was, and it's not all the home runs and game-winning hits that he's had, World Series, it's how he embraces everyone in the room. Just that imposing, loving figure that he is that makes everyone feel special. That's something that you don't see a lot. It's kind of what separates him for me."

Varitek, who played with Ortiz for nearly 10 years, was the most emotional.

"He's Big Papi," Varitek said. "He's a big man. Great human being, not only being a great player, but played the game right from his DNA from being a Twin and all that he brought when he was here.

"This is ... he's a dad. Heart goes out to Alex and D'Angelo and his wife and the rest of his family. It's a very scary thing that something like that could happen that easily."

Romero, with his extensive experience scouting and developing players in Latin America, described Ortiz's impact in his home country.

"Just think of how big an impact he's had in the city of Boston," Romero said. "He's obviously an icon on the Mount Rushmore of Boston athletes, but he is the guy in the Dominican Republic. He is more famous than any president. People think of the Dominican Republic, they think David Ortiz, they think Pedro Martinez. And that's coming from somebody who has been exposed to the Dominican over the years. I've been awed by the impact that he has, just going to a restaurant or any place he is, everyone loves him. He's just that guy. It comes from the way he treats people. He treats everyone the same, which is incredible. I know that the country itself has been stirred by this incident and it doesn't surprise me that so many people have reached out already trying to help. The ex-president was there, so it's been an outpouring of support for him."

Ortiz cut a larger-than-life figure during his Red Sox career, and Cora figures that persona will help him now.

"I don't know if here they say it, but back home they talk about superheroes without capes," Cora said. "He's a superhero without a cape. That's the way we see him. He'll be OK."

Want the worst 2019 has to offer? Red Sox check virtually every box in dispiriting loss

John Tomase

The Red Sox played the most 2019 game you're ever going to see on Monday. Needless to say, it was not pretty.

You want the season in a nutshell? Try this little macadamia of misery:

-- Chris Sale pitched great, but the Red Sox fell to 4-10 in his 14 starts anyway. He found that extra gear on his fastball in the late innings and struck out 10 over seven frames. He did allow one avoidable run after getting squeezed on a two-strike slider, though, and apparently that's not good enough for this particular edition of the Red Sox. Throw a shutout next time.

-- The offense struck like a cobra, and then scurried under the porch like a vole. Andrew Benintendi's two-run homer in the first seemed like it might start something. But the offense went hydrophobic again and withered, stranding another man at third with one out and going 1 for 8 with runners in scoring position.

"We had a chance to add on throughout the game and we didn't," said manager Alex Cora. "It's been the story of us the last month. We haven't been able to put teams away offensively."

-- Uh-oh, bullpen time! The final innings feel like a nightly dance with a chainsaw, and this time it was Matt Barnes' turn to hack off a limb. After a clean eighth from Brandon Workman, the previously reliable Barnes choked away the lead in the ninth on two singles and a double. His ERA has soared from 1.42 to 3.76 in the last three weeks. "I just sucked tonight," he said. "Plain and simple."

-- Even after falling behind 3-2, the Red Sox rallied. The first two runners reached in the ninth, but because absolutely nothing is easy, Rafael Devers nearly killed the comeback with your garden variety 4-3-6-3 double play (don't ask). With the Red Sox down to their final out, Brock Holt played the hero, slicing a single to left-center.

-- What would the quintessential 2019 Red Sox game be without some baserunning egregiousness, however? Marco Hernandez laced one into the right field corner that the cannon-armed Nomar Mazara briefly boxed around. Fill-in third base coach Andy Barkett waved in Holt until he didn't. Whether the stop sign came late or Holt simply blew through it, the result was the same -- a 9-2 putout by about 70 feet. On to extras!

-- The Red Sox squandered a bases-loaded opportunity in the 10th on a Xander Bogaerts lineout before Ryan Brasier came on for the 11th, by which point it was raining, because a game only two outs from being completed in 2:15 ended up lasting 3:25.

-- If Brasier was nails last year, now he's one of those drywall anchors you accidentally hammer into an L. He allowed a leadoff double to Danny Santana and an RBI single up the middle to Elvis Andrus, and that was the end of that. The final out came with Marco Hernandez, seeing some of his first action in two years, striking out swinging.

It was a brutal loss in a season that's seeing them accumulate like the garbage in Sarah Sylvia Cynthia Stout's kitchen. Add the depressingly disorienting arrival of franchise icon David Ortiz, who landed from his native Dominican before being whisked to Mass. General in serious condition with a gunshot wound, and you had a recipe for what it's been like to follow this nothing Red Sox team, which is just good enough not to be bad, and just bad enough not to be good.

One year after giving us so much, they can hardly engage the clutch. They've now lost three of four to the Rays and two of three to the Indians, Yankees, and Astros (twice) in the last three weeks. Add the Rangers, who lead them in the race for the second wild card, and the Red Sox appear incapable of beating anyone of note.

They sure can find torturous ways to lose, though.

Welcome to 2019.

*** *Bostonsportsjournal.com***

Red Sox reeling in the aftermath of David Ortiz shooting

Sean McAdam

The Red Sox had business to which they needed to attend Monday night, the first game of a four-game series with the Texas Rangers, another team in the American League wild-card mix.

But for much of the day, their focus — in the clubhouse, on the field, and in the offices of Fenway Park — was elsewhere, fixed squarely on franchise icon David Ortiz, seriously wounded in a shooting in his native Dominican Republic Sunday night.

The act itself was shocking enough — sudden, brazen and unexpected. But perhaps what made it so difficult to comprehend was that an act of violence would be perpetrated against Ortiz, known for his high-wattage smile, gregarious nature and larger-than-life persona.

Red Sox president and CEO Sam Kennedy termed the events of Sunday night — with Ortiz shot in the back by someone wielding a gun in a Santo Domingo nightspot — “jarring, frankly stunning and terrifying. It was a horrific incident. Our exclusive focus is on his health and well-being and doing what we can to support the family.”

Former Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek, a teammate of Ortiz’s from 2003 through 2011, struggled to keep his emotions in check as he addressed the shocking news.

“I didn’t sleep very well last night,” Varitek admitted. “I don’t think anybody did who knows him...He’s Big Papi — he’s a big man. Great human being, not just a great player. It’s a very scary thing that something like that can happen that easily.”

“It hasn’t been easy,” conceded Alex Cora, who was Ortiz’s teammate from 2005 through 2008. “One thing about David — he’s strong, he has no fear, he never shows weakness. I guess for that reason, the Lord will be with him. For those who believe, just pray for him, keep some positive vibes. He’s bigger than life. That vibe he brought in on a daily basis to those teams and what he brings on a daily basis, that smile.

“It’s been a tough one. I just hope that when he gets here, he’s fine and we can see that big smile again and filling our room with joy. This is something you don’t expect.”

“He’s obviously everybody’s big brother,” said Eddie Romero, the Red Sox’ assistant general manager, “so it was tough news to swallow.”

Red Sox management and ownership was rocked by the news Sunday night and began making phone calls and reaching out to contacts in the Dominican to obtain more information. Over time, they were able to obtain details about his condition and began making plans to send a medical transport plane to the DR to return Ortiz to Boston.

With his condition still serious but stabilized, he was cleared to travel. Late Monday afternoon, the expectation was that Ortiz would arrive in Boston late Monday night or early Tuesday morning.

Kennedy said the news of Ortiz’s shooting “shook our Red Sox family to its core. David Ortiz is one of the most celebrated and beloved members of the Red Sox family. ... He’s probably one of the most important players in our history, leading us to multiple World Series championships. You’d be hard-pressed to find anyone more beloved than David and you can imagine how this has impacted the Red Sox organization. It’s a very difficult day for the organization.”

The outpouring of emotion from fans and others in the Boston community toward Ortiz represented a payback of sorts, since in April of 2013, in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombing, Ortiz rallied the city with his stirring — and occasionally profane — speech on the Fenway lawn.

“It’s appropriate and expected that this community would rally around David when he needs us the most,” noted Kennedy.

The incident was a reminder that safety and security has to be a concern for star athletes, even those who have retired.

“There are measures that we take and we try to educate our players,” said Romero. “But it’s not just limited to David and this incident. It’s a problem you encounter in a lot of places with high-profile athletes and the exposure and money that comes along with it. There are factors that play into that that are sometimes out of control, so we try to educate the players as much as we can. We hope this just an isolated incident, but in David’s case, it’s a tough one.”

The move sobering enough to put things in perspective for the whole organization, and especially those who know Ortiz well.

“I’ve been saying all along, and this is why sometimes I’m brutally honest — there’s life, there’s more important things than the Red Sox winning or losing or pitching changes and this and that,” said Cora. “We went through it with Nick (Cafardo, the Boston Globe reporter who passed away in February); we went through it with Blake (Swihart, who lost his brother during spring training); I went through it with (a family friend and son of a former University of Miami teammate) last year. It’s part of what we do.

“The big man, I know that he will be fine. I trust that he will be fine. That’s what I want from everybody here — stay positive, keep praying for him. But it has been very tough.”

Still, the Sox had business to take care of, and Cora, who addressed the team mid-afternoon, said the team had to be ready.

“We’ll find a way because that’s what we have to do,” concluded Cora. “But it’s not easy. We have to go out there and perform. We have to. We’ll find a way to do it.”

BSJ Game Report: Rangers 4, Red Sox 3 (11) – Sox don’t support Sale and bullpen lets one get away

Sean McAdam

HEADLINES

Barnes melts down: The Red Sox led 2-1 heading into the top of the ninth, but not for long. After getting the first out of the inning, Matt Barnes gave up three straight hits, the last a two-run single to Nomar Mazara that gave the Rangers their first lead of the night. Over the last nine appearances, dating back to May 22, Barnes has allowed nine hits and seven walks in 7.1 innings for a 9.82 ERA. “I just didn’t execute enough pitches,” said Barnes. “I think command-wise, he hasn’t been as sharp,” acknowledged Alex Cora. “We’ve been trying to give him a breather here and there. He knows his job. He was in a situation where he was three outs away from winning the game and he didn’t do the job.” The blown save was the fourth of the year for Barnes and 10th overall for the Red Sox bullpen. The game also marked the third time this season that the Sox lost a game in which they were leading after eighth innings.

Sale given no support again: Chris Sale was his dominant self, allowing just one unearned run over seven innings. He limited the Rangers to just four hits, walked only one and fanned 10. But in a familiar storyline, the Sox didn’t provide him with much backing, getting two runs in the first inning, then nothing more until the ninth. In Sale’s 14 starts, the Red Sox have scored two runs or fewer in 10 of them. He’s received four or more runs of support just twice. Sale hasn’t allowed an earned run over his last 17 innings and has more 10-strikeout games (eight) than any other starter in the big leagues. But it’s not translating to wins — either for himself or the team — because the Sox aren’t scoring runs while he’s on the mound. “You want to win every start and you want to win as many games as you can,” said Sale. “But you just pick your head up and come back ready tomorrow.”

Familiar story at the plate: All weekend, the Red Sox had trouble producing hits with men on base and, especially, with baserunners in scoring position and now that the opponent has changed, nothing else did Monday night. The Sox were a woeful 1-for-8 with runners in scoring position. “We had a chance to add on

throughout the game and we didn't," said a frustrated Cora. "That's been the story of us for the last month. We haven't been able to put teams away offensively. We've got to do a better job." Of course, it didn't help that when the Sox did deliver with a man on base — Brock Holt on first with two outs in the sixth, a pinch-hit double to right by Marco Hernandez — there was some confusion between third base coach Andy Barkett and Holt. As Holt neared third, Barkett was waving him home, but just before he got to the bag, Barkett threw up the stop sign. Holt either didn't see him or chose to keep going, and was out by 20 feet at the plate, the final out of the inning.

TURNING POINT

Sale thought he was out of a jam in the sixth. He issued a leadoff walk to Rougned Odor, and a stolen base and throwing error by Sandy Leon landed Odor on third. Sale then struck out Jeff Mathis and Delino Deshields and had two strikes on Danny Santana. It looked like Santana had failed to check his swing on a breaking pitch in the dirt, but on appeal, first base umpire Angel Hernandez said otherwise, giving Santana another life. Santana then singled to left, scoring Odor with the Rangers first run. That loomed especially large in the ninth when the Rangers scored twice to take the lead. "Yeah, it's tough," admitted Sale. "But at the end of the day, I look at it like I had another opportunity to get (Santana) out and I didn't. Would you like to see it (called)? Yeah. But I'm not going to sit here and point fingers. I had another opportunity to get the guy out and I didn't execute a pitch."

ONE UP

Marco Hernandez: Since being promoted, Hernandez has contributed to all four games. He had a pinch-hit double in the ninth and has three doubles in four games.

TWO DOWN

Rafael Devers: Devers got a day off Sunday, but it didn't help him snap him out of an 0-for-14 funk. He went 0-for-5 on the night.

Ryan Brasier: He's pitched himself out of a high-leverage role, but the Sox went to him as their fourth reliever out of the bullpen and he promptly surrendered two hits and the winning run in the top of the 11th.

QUOTE OF NOTE

"No. I just sucked tonight. Plain and simple." — Matt Barnes, on whether it was an adjustment coming in for a more traditional save situation in the ninth after being used in other high-leverage spots this season.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

The Sox fell to 2-21 when scoring three runs or fewer.

When the Sox scored two runs in the first, it marked just the 9th time in 67 games that they've scored multiple runs in the first.

Brock Holt is hitting .406 in the 10 games since he's come back from a rehab assignment.

UP NEXT

The Red Sox and Rangers continue their series Tuesday at 7:10 with LHP Darwinzon Hernandez (0-0, 0.00) making his first major league start against RHP Ariel Jurado (3-2, 2.78).

* *The Athletic*

At Fenway Park, love pours out for David Ortiz, a 'superhero without a cape'

Jen McCaffrey

Red Sox manager Alex Cora entered the interview room at Fenway Park on Monday afternoon and rubbed his eyes before sitting down in front of an unusually large crowd of reporters and television cameras.

A bleary-eyed Cora had barely slept after receiving news the previous night that David Ortiz, his friend and former teammate, had been shot in the back at point-blank range in his native Dominican Republic.

“First of all my thoughts and prayers for David and his family,” Cora said.

“One thing about David, he’s strong, he has no fear, he never shows weaknesses, so because of that reason the Lord will be with him. For us that believe, just pray for him. Keep your positive vibes. I always said that he’s bigger than life, David, that vibe he brought in on a daily basis to those teams and what he brings anytime I see him, that smile. He’ll give you a hug, a big smile, he does it with everybody. He does it with my daughter and my kids. So it’s been a tough one.”

People throughout the organization found it hard to put into words what Ortiz means to the city of Boston, but the emotions at Fenway on Monday said everything.

The ever-stoic Jason Varitek, who was teammates with Ortiz for nine seasons and two World Series championships, couldn’t hold back his tears at the shock of the news.

“I didn’t sleep very well last night,” Varitek said. “I don’t think anybody did that knew. We spent a lot of time trying to figure out what was going on. Still don’t know that much but everybody has seen and heard.”

“This is ... he’s a dad,” Varitek added, as he paused for a moment. “Heart goes out to (his children) Alex and D’Angelo and his wife and the rest of his family. It’s a very scary thing that something like that could happen that easily.”

Police in the Dominican were looking for a suspect who they think shot Ortiz. Another suspect, who was allegedly driving a motorcycle that carried the gunman, was apprehended.

The Red Sox mobilized to help Ortiz and his family as soon as they became aware of the situation late Sunday night. Coordinating between employees in Boston and at the Red Sox Dominican Academy, the club was able to connect with Ortiz’s surgeons at Clinica Abel Gonzalez. Red Sox team doctors provided medical advice and helped facilitate a move of Ortiz, who was still in serious condition, via air ambulance to Boston, where he was expected to arrive at Massachusetts General Hospital on Monday night.

“The events of last night shook our Red Sox family to its core,” Red Sox president Sam Kennedy said. “David Ortiz is one of the most celebrated and beloved members of the Red Sox family.”

The immense effort to help Ortiz only underscored his importance to the club.

Just before first pitch on Monday against the Rangers, the video board showed two fans holding up signs in support of Ortiz that read, “You got this Big Papi!”

Shortly thereafter, the team held a short pregame ceremony for Ortiz with his No. 34 on the video board and a message reading, “We send our love to David Ortiz,” followed by a moment of silent reflection, thought and prayer for Ortiz.

In the bottom of the sixth inning, cheers from the Fenway crowd could be heard, “Papi! Papi!” and “We love Papi!”

“It’s an emotional time. I love David Ortiz,” Kennedy said earlier in the day, his voice wavering. “We all love David Ortiz. So telling my kids what had happened last night was really difficult. I know the same holds true for everyone up here, for ownership. It’s hard to express what David Ortiz means to the Boston Red Sox. When you love someone and they come in harm’s way, it’s jarring. You have to put those

emotions aside and focus on what's necessary at this moment — it's exclusively focusing our efforts on doing everything we can for Tiffany and the kids and David, and doing everything we can to help."

The initial shock of Ortiz's attack had worn off, but it was clear worry still hung in the air with reports surfacing throughout the day of possible organ and intestinal damage caused by the bullet.

"I wish I could go visit him now," Mookie Betts said.

Cora tried to find perspective, reflecting on a series of trying situations over the past year.

"This is why sometimes I'm brutally honest," Cora said. "There's life. There's more important things than the Red Sox, winning or losing, pitching changes, this and that. It's life. We went through it with Nick (Cafardo), we went through it with Blake (Swihart's brother), I went through it with Ari (Arteaga) last year. This is just a part of what we do. The big man, I know he will be fine. I do trust that he'll be fine. So that's what I want from everybody here. Stay positive and keep praying for him. But it has been very tough. Very tough."

Ortiz's booming personality and compassionate demeanor helped heal Boston in 2013 following the Marathon bombings.

"I think we all remember in 2013 when we needed David Ortiz the most, he was there for us in late April," Kennedy said. "And so, it's appropriate and expected that this community would rally around David when he needs us the most."

But it wasn't just Bostonians and Dominicans who were reeling on Monday. Stakeholders from across baseball shared words of support and concern for Ortiz.

"Pretty painful," said Phillies manager Gabe Kapler, a former Red Sox teammate of Ortiz. "Pretty hard read this morning to wake up and read that. David is as good a person, a teammate, as you'd ever want to be around. I've known him forever, since our days in the Florida State League in '97. And it's tragic when gun violence hurts a friend. It's tragic when gun violence impacts anybody. Any time something like this happens it's an opportunity for us to raise awareness. I have no doubt that David will use that platform the right way."

Prior to their game against the Colorado Rockies, Chicago Cubs starter Jon Lester, a cancer survivor who spent nine years in Boston with Ortiz, shared his concerns.

"It was good to hear today that he was in stable condition and they're going to get him up to Boston," Lester said. "I know those doctors up there obviously pretty well so I know he'll be in good hands."

José Abreu of the White Sox pointed to growing dangers for players in their home countries.

"That's something that scares you," Abreu said. "We know how the violence is in Latin America. In Latin American countries, violence is real. And just to see something like happen to David Ortiz is sad and is a shock. Right now we have to pray for him and give him our best wishes."

Red Sox assistant general manager Eddie Romero, a native of Puerto Rico and the former director of international scouting, spoke to Ortiz's massive influence in the Dominican.

"Just think of how big an impact he's had in the city of Boston," Romero said. "He's obviously an icon on the Mount Rushmore of Boston athletes, but he is the guy in the Dominican Republic. He is more famous than any president. People think of the Dominican Republic, they think David Ortiz, they think Pedro Martinez."

The Mets' Robinson Canó, a Dominican native, said Ortiz is like "a big brother" to him.

“This is really sad,” Canó said. “Hopefully they find the guy and find out what was really the situation.

“His presence (in the DR) is always going to be the same, no matter if he’s retired or still playing. He’s an idol for all of us — a guy who represents the country. We all know what he does with his foundation and so many lives that he’s saved, and he’s still doing it.”

The immense outpouring of support and well wishes for Ortiz provided further proof of his reach in the baseball world and beyond.

“Back home they talk about superheroes without capes,” Cora said. “He’s a superhero without a cape. That’s the way we see him. He’ll be OK.”

Let’s remember why David Ortiz is beloved in Boston

Steve Buckley

David Ortiz is a Boston guy.

Wrong, you say. Ortiz was born in the Dominican Republic, not Dorchester. He got his schoolin’ at Estudia Espaillat High, not Boston English. Long before anyone had ever heard of him, he was learning the game with such outfits as the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers and the Salt Lake Buzz, not with Mass. Envelope in the Park League or the Andre Chiefs in the Intercity League.

And that’s all true. David Ortiz is not from here. And yet somewhere along the line, certainly after 2004 but long before 2013, Big Papi morphed into a big Boston guy — without the accent, sure, but imbued with a deep-in-the-gut Boston attitude. When you charge into the manager’s pregame media session and scream about a scorekeeper’s decision from the night before that cost you an RBI, or when you take a bat and smash the bullpen phone to assorted pieces of plastic after getting rung up by the plate ump ... well, let’s just say there’s a lot of Masshole in that.

Today David Ortiz lay in a hospital bed in Santo Domingo, the victim of what looks nothing like a robbery attempt gone wrong but very much like an assassination attempt that also (blessedly) went wrong. And whatever news emerges about the motivation for this shooting, let’s remember it’s never OK for anyone to be targeted by a gun in a restaurant.

It’s important for outsiders to understand why Ortiz is so important, so respected, in Boston and beyond. The clutch hitting and the postseason heroics are a major part of it, of course, as is the fact that he played on three World Series winners, something that hadn’t happened in Boston since 1918 until Ortiz and the likes of Pedro Martinez, Manny Ramirez, Johnny Damon and Curt Schilling came along. But Big Papi’s baseball heroics merely provided a pulpit — admittedly, sometimes a bully pulpit — for the man to become so much more in Boston, and, man oh man, has he ever become so much more.

Many will point to that sunny Saturday afternoon in April 2013, five days after the Boston Marathon bombings, when a pregame ceremony was held at Fenway Park. It was a day of swirling emotions — mourning the victims, giving thanks to the police, fire and medical professionals and first responders who went above and beyond, and celebrating the capture of the second of two murderous brothers. (The first one having already been killed.)

This was the day the home team broke with tradition and asked the players to wear jerseys with “Boston” emblazoned across the front, rather than “Red Sox.”

This was the day David Ortiz grabbed a microphone and spoke these words: “This is our fucking city. And nobody’s gonna dictate our freedom.”

It was thrilling then, it remains thrilling today. The message was simple, it was direct, it was motivational, and yet, somehow, despite the choice of words, not in the least bit offensive except to those who live their lives clutching pearls.

When the day comes when they erect a statue outside Fenway Park in honor of David Ortiz, he will be holding a microphone, not a bat. And ... and, seriously ... the Red Sox will be able to get away with etching Big Papi's memorable quote into the base of that statue.

"This is our fucking city. And nobody's gonna dictate our freedom."

But it was not on that day that David Ortiz became a Boston guy. For Ortiz had long since established his credentials. Only a Boston guy could have struck the notes that Ortiz did that day, speaking as he did not just as a ballplayer but as a local guy who was really, really, really pissed off that a couple of second-rate terrorists brought so much pain and suffering to the city, to his city.

Try to remember how everybody was feeling that day. Those bombs claimed the lives of Krystle Campbell, 29, Lu Lingzi, 23, and little Martin Richard, just 8 years old (and who would have turned 15 on Sunday). Hundreds of others were injured, many seriously, some of them losing limbs.

As the terrorists tried to make their escape, they murdered Sean Collier, a member of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology police department.

On early Friday morning, during a shootout in Watertown, one of the terrorists was killed when he was run over by his own terrorist brother. Later that night, the surviving brother, soiled, bleeding, cowering, was pulled out of the back of a boat in a nearby backyard.

We wouldn't know it until 2014, but the bombings claimed another victim when Dennis Simmonds of the Boston Police Department died as a result of wounds suffered from a hand grenade thrown during the shootout.

Let's return to that pregame ceremony at Fenway Park on that Saturday afternoon. The Red Sox needed a speaker capable of delivering a message that was strong, defiant, memorable. In other words, they needed David Ortiz, who spoke in a way that made it known that he had long since become a Boston guy.

And today, that's who we're pulling for: The Boston guy.

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

Ortiz flown to Boston Monday, police arrest one suspected shooter, hunt still on for second suspect

Sarah Valenzuela and Leonard Greene

Fans of former Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz are hoping Big Papi makes a big recovery, and urged him to "stay strong" after he survived a weekend shooting in his hometown Dominican Republic that left him with damage to his liver and other organs.

The home-run hitter's larger-than-life legend is only bound to grow after surviving a close-range bullet in the back that forced doctors to remove his gallbladder and a small part of his intestines to control the bleeding from his liver.

Ortiz, 43, was listed in stable condition in the intensive care unit at Clinica Abel Gonzalez after surgery. By Monday evening he was at the airport and on a jet sent by the Boston Red Sox. After Ortiz's flight arrived in Boston late on Monday, he was taken by ambulance to Massachusetts General Hospital, local media said.

Dozens of fans crowded the Santo Domingo hospital earlier, causing a traffic jam. In the U.S., fans prayed for his recovery and wished him well, with New England Patriots star Julian Edelman assuring him on Instagram: “Papi, all of New England has your back.”

The Red Sox offered “all available resources,” including the ambulance aircraft sent to bring him back to Boston.

“He’s on the Mount Rushmore of Boston sports,” said Eddie Romero, the team’s assistant general manager.

Before he was operated on, Ortiz told doctors: ‘Please don’t let me die, I’m a good man.’ according to reports.

Ortiz, who splits his time between Miami and the Dominican Republic, was at the Dial Bar and Lounge in Santo Domingo when two people rode up on a motorcycle late Sunday. One got off and approached Big Papi and shot the former Red Sox All-Star in the lower back at “nearly point blank range,” according to TMZ and Diario Libre.

One of the suspects, identified later as 25-year-old Eddy Feliz Garcia, was tracked down and beaten to a bloody pulp by others near the scene before being arrested. The other is still at large, as police have not yet tracked him down.

The crime was initially reported as a robbery, though Dominican police have denied those reports and are still investigating whether the shooting was an attempted assassination.

Reports, including one in Diario Libre, a Dominican newspaper, said Ortiz had been warned that his life was in danger for allegedly dating a woman with close ties to a reputed drug dealer. Ortiz has been married to Tiffany Ortiz for 17 years, and has three children.

An Ortiz spokesman, Leo Lopez, rejected the affair-with-a-woman theory, but said it was certain that the shooting was a hired attack. Viral video of the attack shows Ortiz sitting with friends when the shooter approaches, and a puff of smoke appears before Ortiz clutches his stomach and falls to his left side.

Officials said the bullet hit him in the back before exiting his stomach.

Police said that when the bullet passed through Ortiz, it then struck his friend, Jhoel Lopez, a local TV host, in the right leg.

Ortiz, who retired from baseball in 2016 after helping the Red Sox win three World Series, is a popular figure in the Dominican Republic, where he was known to frequent bars and restaurants like the place where the attack happened.

Ortiz’s father, Leo Ortiz, told reporters earlier Monday that his son was expected to make a complete recovery.

ESPN reported that former Dominican Republic President Leonel Fernandez visited Ortiz in the hospital.

Ortiz also got well wishes from another former president.

Journalists wait outside the hospital where David Ortiz is being treated in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on Monday. Doctors removed Ortiz’s gallbladder and part of his intestine after the beloved “Six years ago, David Ortiz’s spirit and resolve helped us all begin to heal from the Boston Marathon bombing,” former President Barack Obama wrote on Twitter. “Today, I want to join many others in wishing him a speedy recovery of his own. Get well soon, Papi.”

Ortiz made headlines that year after a viral speech at Fenway Park as the Red Sox returned to the stadium after the 2013 terrorist attack which devastated the city.

“This jersey that we wear today, it doesn’t say Red Sox,” he said at the time. “It says Boston... This is our f--ing city. And nobody’s going to dictate our freedom. Stay strong.”

* ***The New York Post***

David Ortiz’s legacy and ‘aura’ through the eyes of one shaken Hall of Famer

Ken Davidoff

Hall of Famer John Smoltz, who knows from auras, sat in a Yankee Stadium broadcast booth Monday afternoon and thought back to the first time he witnessed Big Papi in full splendor, down in the Dominican Republic.

“Just the whole David Ortiz aura is unbelievable,” Smoltz said, before preparing to call the Subway Series opener (which rain postponed) for the MLB Network.

That unbelievable aura heightened the disbelief that circulated throughout the industry from late Sunday night through Monday: Ortiz, the retired Red Sox slugger, was shot in his back Sunday while at an outdoor bar in his native country. Following a lengthy surgery, he was being transported to Boston on Monday, courtesy of the Red Sox, to undergo further treatment.

Here in The Bronx, this didn’t go down as a general “Life is scary — you never know what can happen” moment, people recycling their clichés in response to a random tragedy, as much as a specific, emotional reaction to this bizarre scenario: Ortiz, one of the game’s biggest characters and best ambassadors, someone who always seemed to control the action on the field, finding himself victimized in a suspicious incident — captured on video, to boot.

“That’s about as scary as it gets,” said Smoltz, Ortiz’s teammate on the 2009 Bosox. “I can’t even imagine sitting there and having that happen in broad daylight, especially in his home country. When you read the [headline], it doesn’t sound that bad. But when you actually see what happened, it really is a miracle he’s alive. So hopefully he’s going to heal.”

“Scary. Scary,” echoed injured Yankees pitcher Luis Severino, a native Dominican like Ortiz. “You don’t see that happening often in the DR. They have respect for the players there, somebody like him. It was weird.”

How weird remains to be determined. The Daily Mail reported that Dominican authorities believe Ortiz was targeted by an unidentified drug lord who believed Ortiz was having an affair with his wife and therefore hired a pair of police officers for the mission. While Ortiz’s representative Leo Lopez reportedly told the Dominican newspaper *Diario Libre*, “It was an act of hired killers,” Lopez denied a woman was involved.

Ortiz has built up such goodwill among his contemporaries it’s hard to envision his star falling at all, no matter what led to this terrible episode.

“He was one of those people in the game you just gravitate towards — his personality, the way he is,” CC Sabathia said. “[He was] willing to help out with any charity thing I had. He’s always been there.”

“A giant in our sport,” Aaron Boone said. “Charismatic, a great guy, great competitor. He still is a giant in our sport, even in retirement.”

Imagine if Ortiz hadn’t emerged with the Red Sox in 2003 — yes, yes, he turned up positive in that year’s “survey testing” on illegal performance-enhancing drugs, yet passed every subsequent test — after the

Twins didn't tender him a contract following the 2002 season. How much poorer would the Yankees-Red Sox rivalry be without his presence? How much worse would baseball be?

Ortiz has served as a tale of inspiration for many aspiring players, particularly those from Latin America. Now he adds an unwanted chapter of serious adversity to his tale, with hopefully the worst behind him.

"I know we're living in different times. We really are," Smoltz said. "I just can't believe it."

It'll be great, good fortune willing, when Ortiz can hang out on the field again, roaring jokes and laughing, before a Yankees-Red Sox game at Fenway Park. When the baseball world can go back to enjoying his presence rather than praying for him. When the video footage of him that people want to discuss the most involves him hitting clutch homers rather than suffering a brutal attack.

*** *The Fort Worth Star-Telegram***

'Oh my gosh, that was a huge win for our ballclub.' Here's what may be bigger for Rangers

Jeff Wilson

Anyone who travels regularly knows that days like the one Sunday, when my flight to Boston was canceled, are going to happen.

Rain caused havoc at DFW Airport, though no one was injured. Worse things were caused by that storm that raced through the Metroplex.

But delays stink, especially after six hours at the airport and half of those on an airplane that lacked sufficient air conditioning. It was so hot that, after finally pulling away from the gate, an infant needed medical care.

That led to a flight cancellation, two hours trying to find my luggage, and a 6 a.m. Monday flight here though Philadelphia.

And, just to rub some salt into the wound, I was forced to miss an Orangetheory class.

That's really unforgivable.

All that matters in the end is that the baby appeared to be OK and I made it to Fenway Park on Monday with about 20 minutes to spare before the Texas Rangers' clubhouse opened.

Here's some Rangers Reaction from a 4-3 win over the Boston Red Sox.

1. In terms of quality of wins, that one would have ranked highly if it had been against the Baltimore Orioles or Miami Marlins instead of the reigning World Series champions.

But because the Rangers' victory was against the Red Sox, maybe not as mighty as a season ago but still an upper-level club, it might rank as the best of the season.

The Rangers won a game at Fenway Park for the first time since July 5, 2016. They won a game started by Chris Sale. They won a game they trailed after eight innings and also saw their closer blow the lead in the ninth.

For those who don't think it's too early to look at the wild-card standings, the Rangers beat the team they are competing with for the second wild-card spot.

But if it's not too early to look at the standings, yeah, that was a big one.

“Oh my gosh, that was a huge win for our ballclub,” manager Chris Woodward said. “As the course of the season goes on, you’re trying to create an identity about your ballclub, and the players create that identity. Those players have embraced that belief that we are a good team and we are on the path hopefully to becoming a great team.”

The Rangers need to beat teams like the Red Sox, Houston Astros, New York Yankees and Minnesota Twins if they are going to be contenders. They need to win on the road, or at least break even.

They need to win more games like they did Monday, and Tuesday would be a good start. Wednesday or Thursday would work, too. What good is the Monday win if they can’t validate it with another here?

No team is perfect, and the Rangers certainly are not. They believe they are good, and wins like the one Monday will only bolster their belief.

Validating on Tuesday would go a long way, too.

2. Mike Minor had been seeking more efficiency in his starts, and he found it against the Red Sox. After throwing a season-high 117 pitches Wednesday in 5 2/3 innings, he threw 109 in eight innings Monday.

Minor hasn’t been pitching poorly -- he didn’t allow any runs Wednesday -- but he hasn’t been going as deep in games as he prefers. Eight innings is more like it, in his mind.

However, he doesn’t think he pitched well against the Red Sox.

“It wasn’t that great,” Minor said. “A couple good pitches when guys were on base, and then I don’t know how I got through it.”

The only pitch Minor felt was effective for him was his slider. His changeup wasn’t any good, his fastball location was only average, and his curveball was nonexistent.

The defense behind him was very good, especially shortstop Elvis Andrus and second baseman Rougned Odor. Maybe infield coach Tony Beasley has them positioned perfectly, Minor said.

“I felt like I got lucky,” he said. “They hit some hard ground balls right at our guys.”

Maybe, but Minor stood toe to toe without his best stuff against one of the best pitchers in the game, fellow left-hander Sale. The Red Sox’s lineup includes the reigning American League MVP and the third-place finisher.

There was Minor, finishing off the eighth inning despite trailing 2-0 after two hitters. He was in line for the win after the Rangers scored two in the top of the ninth. Shawn Kelley blew the save, but Andrus drove in the go-ahead run in the 11th.

And Minor wasn’t very good, or so he said.

“It was 2-0 after the first two hitters,” Woodward said. “He went eight after that and gave us a chance to win the game. He pretty much outdueled their guy. I know their guy is pretty good, but he didn’t go out. Our guy did. You can’t say enough about him.”

3. Drew Smyly’s days as a starter look to be numbered, though that has been said previously here. Woodward was also not totally discouraged with the way the left-handed thrower Sunday in giving up five runs in three innings.

Something to potentially build upon, Woodward said. That’s something that has been said previously, too.

There seemed to be more oomph behind Woodward's revelation that he, pitching coach Julio Rangel and Smyly will sit down and talk seriously about how to move forward. An athletic trainer might be in there, too, to talk to Smyly about his left ankle.

Putting him on the injured list would get Joe Palumbo back to the roster Friday against the Cincinnati Reds. Woodward said that the Reds would be a good matchup for Smyly, so the same would figure to hold true for Palumbo.

Club brass is starting to think more like this season isn't a full-blown rebuild. The Rangers already removed Shelby Miller from the rotation and are considering doing the same with Smyly.

The ninth inning needs to be resolved.

A couple of hitters need to find their A swings. Shoot, a C swing would be an upgrade.

The offense, though, is good enough. The bullpen has options. The rotation doesn't have many, and Smyly isn't an attractive one right now.

*** *The Dallas Morning News***

Comeback kids: Rangers begin crucial stretch with extra innings win over Red Sox

Evan Grant

In a place where they hadn't won in three years, facing a pitcher that has annually dominated, this is what the Rangers did on Monday night:

Fell down by two runs two batters into the game.

Trailed heading to the ninth inning.

Blew a save in the bottom of the ninth inning.

And won.

Really, the details of how they won - 4-3 over Boston in 11 innings - are secondary to the fact that the Rangers actually won. That, if it is possible, they had a statement win in the middle of June. OK, details: In the 11th Elvis Andrus singled to score Danny Santana, who led off the inning with a double, his fourth hit of the night.

The win began a stretch of 36 games leading up to the cusp of the trading deadline in which the majority of games are against contenders and the majority of the games against contenders are on the road. It's impossible to stamp yourself as belonging to that class of contenders with a single win, but the Rangers came about as close as possible.

"You are trying to create an identity for the club and our players have embraced, from the beginning that they are a good club that is going to be a great club," manager Chris Woodward said. "It's a challenge we want. It's a challenge we embrace. It was a huge win for us."

The win moved the Rangers back to five games over .500, matching their season high. It improved their lead over Boston and Cleveland for the AL's second wild card spot to two games. The Rangers play seven of their next 10 games against Boston and Cleveland.

Which only underscores that perhaps the idea of a statement-making win in baseball is kind of a temporary status.

"This win speaks to how this team has played all year," said Elvis Andrus, who scored the go ahead run in the ninth after doubling and then drove in the winning run in the 11th with a single. "We know we can pressure teams. We know we can comeback. But every game is important. We know it's a great win, but not the fight. We have to stay focused on that."

Nevertheless, Monday marked an accomplishment. The Rangers had not won in Boston since July 5, 2016 and stood two outs away from an eighth straight loss in Fenway, which would have matched their longest-ever losing streak in the stadium.

They also had not won this season when trailing after eight innings, though they had mounted significant ninth-inning comebacks that fell just short in the last week. They began the road trip 0-25 when trailing after eight this season; they were 3-85 when trailing after eight last season.

There were challenges for the Rangers to meet on this road trip.

"I'm excited to see how our guys respond," Woodward had said before the game. "We have a chance to show the league if we are for real or if we can be exposed."

The trip started with the Rangers going down in order against Chris Sale in the first inning. Then Texas' best pitcher, Mike Minor, walked the first batter he faced and gave up a two-run homer to the second.

"In the past, if I've felt bad or had bad things happen, I've almost given in to it," Minor said. "I decided this year that wasn't going to happen anymore. I was going to grind through it."

Minor responded by not allowing Boston anything else and pitching through the eighth, leaving only after Sale did. It was 2-1 Boston heading to the ninth.

In the ninth, Santana singled and Andrus followed with a double into the left field corner. With the Red Sox seemingly trying to pitch around Nomar Mazara, reliever Matt Barnes left his fourth consecutive breaking ball of the at-bat up. Though the pitch got in on Mazara, he was able to power it into left over a drawn-in infield for a two-run single to give the Rangers the lead.

And then in the bottom of the inning, Boston's Brock Holt tied the game with his own soft single to left. Marco Hernandez followed with a hit into right, but Holt was thrown out at home by 10 feet trying to score on an aggressive send.

Given another chance, the Rangers did not let it get away. Jesse Chavez pitched through a bases-loaded situation in the 10th leading to the 11th inning rally.

All of this happened in front of the eyes of GM Jon Daniels, who is on the first leg of the road trip and who will have to decide over the next month, if he believes this team can, in fact, contend. And, if so, what he might do about it.

"This team has definitely opened our eyes," Daniels said. "We began the season saying on numerous occasions that we weren't going to place any traditional labels on this club. If we don't see the energy and belief that this club has, then we're definitely not doing our jobs."

And in case anybody hadn't noticed that energy or belief before, Monday provided the most brilliant example yet.

*** *Associated Press***

Red Sox, fans rally around Ortiz after shooting

David Ortiz helped his adopted city recover from the Boston Marathon bombings. Now the Boston Red Sox are calling on their fans to reciprocate for their beloved Big Papi.

"We all remember in 2013 when we needed David Ortiz the most, he was there for us," team president Sam Kennedy said Monday, a day after the longtime slugger was wounded in a nightclub shooting in his native Dominican Republic. "So it's appropriate and expected that his community would rally behind David when he needs us most."

Ortiz, 43, was shot at a club in Santo Domingo. A team of surgeons operated on Ortiz for six hours and repaired damage done by the bullet to both intestines and his liver. They also had to remove Ortiz's gallbladder to work on the liver, though the gallbladder itself was not damaged.

"I didn't sleep very well last night," said Red Sox special assistant Jason Varitek, who was Ortiz's teammate for nearly a decade. "I don't think anybody did."

The shooting occurred during Game 6 of the Stanley Cup Final and stole the city's attention from the Bruins' victory, as fans and former teammates stayed up into the morning hoping for information on Ortiz's condition. Longtime rivals turned to social media to offer their best wishes, and former Dominican president Leonel Fernandez visited Ortiz in the hospital.

"It shocked us to the core," Kennedy said. "It was jarring, stunning and, frankly, terrifying. It was a horrific incident. Our focus right now is exclusively to focus on his health and well-being [and] to get David back here in Boston."

The Red Sox sent an air ambulance to the Dominican Republic to transport Ortiz to Boston, where he will continue his treatment at Massachusetts General Hospital. The plane landed Monday night while the Red Sox were playing the Texas Rangers.

The team asked fans to observe a moment of reflection shortly before Monday night's 4-3 loss to the Rangers at Fenway Park and posted a message on the videoboard: "We send our love to David Ortiz." In the sixth inning, fans broke out into cheers of "Papi!" and cheered when pictures of fans in his No. 34 jersey were shown on the scoreboard.

Chris Sale, who started Monday's game for the Red Sox, said afterward that things felt a little different given the situation with Ortiz.

"Obviously, we're thinking about him," Price said. "We had a meeting before the game about it. He's as much a part of this team as anybody's ever been. Yesterday was a tough day and today too. I'm glad he's doing well and in good hands. Just hoping for the best and trying to get some wins for him. I know that'll make him happy, that's for sure."

"I just hope when he gets here that everything is fine, and we can see the big man here again with us and filling our room with joy," manager Alex Cora said. "He's bigger than life."

A 10-time All-Star and the MVP of the 2013 World Series, Ortiz is one of the most productive -- and popular -- players in Red Sox history. He led the once-cursed franchise to three championships and retired in 2016 with a total of 541 home runs, 17th-most in baseball history.

"Somebody just asked me what my favorite memory was. And it's not all the home runs and game-winning hits that he's had and the World Series," Red Sox pitcher Rick Porcello said. "It's how he embraces everyone in a room. Just that imposing, loving figure that makes everyone feel special. That's something that you don't see a lot. That's what separates him, for me."

Ortiz further endeared himself to local fans when he went to the Fenway Park mound after the attacks at the marathon finish line and proclaimed, "This is our f---ing city!"

"Everyone knows what he was able to do on the field," said longtime New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter, who is now a Miami Marlins owner. "What he has meant to the community -- not only in Boston but in the Dominican -- this is a guy who is beloved throughout the sport and throughout sports in general."

"He's obviously an icon on the Mount Rushmore in the city of Boston athletes, but he is 'the guy' in the Dominican Republic," Red Sox assistant general manager Eddie Romero said. "He's more famous than any president. When people think of the Dominican Republic, they think David Ortiz, they think of Pedro Martinez."

Albert Pujols, who has been close with Ortiz for years and also hails from the Dominican Republic, said the legendary slugger means "everything" in their native country.

"As a player, as a fellow Dominican, you don't see that. People really respect players over there, down in the DR," Pujols said. "It's just unfortunate. He was, I guess, in the wrong spot at the wrong time."

Said Mets second baseman Robinson Cano, another fellow Dominican: "[Ortiz is] an idol for all of us."

Martinez was emotional in discussing Ortiz on Monday.

"I don't have enough words to describe who David is, what David means to baseball," Martinez said on the MLB Network. "But I'm so disappointed to know that someone like David, who has saved so many lives, can have someone after his life. It hurts me. It hurts me."

Red Sox starter David Price played with Ortiz in his last season and said the Boston icon embraced him with open arms.

"I didn't want it to be anything about me and him. I wanted it to be all about him. And he didn't want it to be all about him. He wanted it to be about us as a team. So I've got nothing but love and respect for Big Papi, and he's well aware of that," Price said.

Mookie Betts echoed that sentiment Monday, saying that Ortiz made him feel welcome and at home in his rookie year.

"I can't speak for other people, but for me, he's like a big brother and a dad at the same time," Betts said.

The outpouring of support for Ortiz extended beyond his former teammates on Monday. President Barack Obama and New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady were among those who sent well wishes.

The Red Sox retired Ortiz's No. 34 in 2017, less than a year after he retired, and a street outside the ballpark was renamed in his honor. He remains connected with the ballclub in a role that includes mentoring players, recruiting free agents and making special appearances.

Concern about Ortiz clouds Boston's 4-3 loss to Rangers

Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora started to feel it, with his ballclub loading the bases in the 10th inning after rallying to tie it in the ninth.

"This is kind of what David used to do," Cora said on a night when the game seemed secondary to his concern over former teammate David Ortiz. "It's one of those days you don't want to be a part of, honestly. But we have a job to do."

Danny Santana doubled to lead off the 11th for his fourth hit of the game and scored on Elvis Andrus' single, leading the Texas Rangers to a 4-3 victory over the Red Sox on Monday night.

Near the end of the game, Ortiz landed in his adopted city in an air ambulance from the Dominican Republic, where he was shot in the back while at a nightclub on Sunday night. Fans observed a moment of reflection before the game and chanted his nickname -- "Papi!" -- during it.

"You're talking about a guy that put a team and a city on his back, basically his entire career," said Red Sox starter Chris Sale, who struck out 10 in seven innings of three-hit ball and left with a 2-1 lead. "Obviously, you want to be able to pick him up when you can."

But the Red Sox weren't able to manage a walk-off hit like those that were the hallmark of Ortiz's career.

Instead, it was the Rangers who rallied from a 2-1 deficit in the ninth inning to take a 3-2 lead. Boston tied it in the bottom half to send the game into extra innings, but Texas went ahead again in the 11th -- and this time, it stuck.

Santana led off the 11th with a line drive down the line, a ball right fielder Mookie Betts had to dive for to stop it from bounding all the way to the corner for a potential inside-the-park homer. Andrus hit one up the middle past Ryan Brasier (2-3) to make it 4-3.

Jesse Chavez (2-1) pitched the 10th, and Chris Martin worked the 11th for his second save. The Rangers beat the Red Sox for just the third time in 15 games and snapped a six-game losing streak against Boston.

FOR STARTERS

Sale allowed just one unearned run.

Texas' Mike Minor allowed two runs on four hits and two walks, striking out six in eight innings. He walked Betts to lead off the bottom of the first, and Andrew Benintendi followed with a home run to left-center, his seventh of the season.

Minor only allowed four more baserunners.

"I'm proud of Mike," Texas manager Chris Woodward said. "He's trying to prove he's an elite pitcher. He gets down 2-0 to Sale, one of the best in the game, a lot of pitchers with any kind of doubt where they stand, if they're an elite pitcher or not, maybe kind of fold their tent."

FOR RELIEVERS

Brandon Workman pitched a perfect eighth for Boston, but Matt Barnes gave up a one-out single to Santana followed by a double by Andrus. With the infield in, Nomar Mazara fisted the ball over the head of shortstop Xander Bogaerts for a single to give Texas a 3-2 lead -- its first of the game.

It was Barnes' fourth blown save in eight opportunities.

"They took (Sale) out after seven and I think his pitch count was under 100, I think that kind of energized us," Minor said. "Bring in the 'pen, I know we're going to get these guys."

Texas reliever Shawn Kelley allowed two singles to start the ninth before Rafael Devers to hit a high chopper for a 4-3-6-3 double play. Brock Holt hit a blooper to left-center to score pinch-runner Michael Chavis and make it 3-3.

But Holt was easily thrown out at the plate when he tried to score from first on a high fly ball by Marco Hernandez that dropped in down the right field line for a double, sending the game into extra innings.

FALSE STARTS

The Red Sox loaded the bases in the 10th, but Bogaerts lofted an easy fly to center to end the inning.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Rangers: OF Willie Calhoun transferred to extended spring training in Arizona. He has been on the IL since May 22 with a left quad strain.

Red Sox: DH J.D. Martinez returned after missing four games with tightness in his back.

UP NEXT

The Rangers will send righty Ariel Jurado (3-2, 2.78 ERA) to the mound in the second game of the series against Darwinzon Hernandez (0-0), who will make his first career start. He pitched 2 1/3 scoreless innings of relief on April 23, his only major league appearance.