Holland struggles at outset of road trip

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | @scottmerkin | June 2, 2017

DETROIT -- The start of the White Sox fourth three-city road trip Friday night at Comerica Park didn't exactly go as planned.

In fact, the 15-5 shellacking administered by the Tigers represented the highest run total and highest hit total (18) by an opposing offense against the South Siders this season. The problem began and ended with White Sox starting pitcher Derek Holland, at least in Holland’s mind.

"If anything, this is all my fault," said Holland, who fell to 4-5 and saw his ERA climb to 3.43 after a 2 1/3-inning performance. "I didn't do a good-enough job."

Holland was touched up for eight runs on eight hits over 58 pitches, striking out two and walking two. But these weren't seeing-eye singles or bloopers just out of the defense's reach.

Mikie Mahtook, J.D. Martinez and John Hicks all went deep, and their home runs each surpassed 430 feet in distance. He became the second pitcher this season to yield three homers of 430-plus feet in a game and allowed six barrels in a contest for the first time in the Statcast™ era.

Of course, Holland felt good warming up for his 11th start this season.

"I thought everything was going the way I wanted it to. But the main thing is I have to beat myself up," Holland said. "I didn't do my job. Those guys put some runs on the board for me to try to hold them down, and I didn't do that at all. I had two walks, shouldn't have had those.

"I'm frustrated with the walks more than anything. It's just a frustrating game with myself. Huge props to my teammates, still trying to battle back. They never gave in. It could have been a really bad game, but those guys battled for me. Unfortunately, I didn't do my job today."

Michael Fulmer didn't receive a run of support when losing to the White Sox last Saturday. The Tigers more than made up for that oversight on Friday, although the White Sox offense continued to fight.

Following two more games in Detroit, the White Sox move on to play three at the Rays and three more in Cleveland. They will finish this trip with 38 road games played.

Having five pitchers work in the first game of the journey certainly isn't ideal, especially considering Michael Ynoa left with right quad soreness. But White Sox manager Rick Renteria looks at this Holland start as more of an anomaly than a point of concern.

"One of his truly rare outings. Happens every now and then," Renteria said. "Seemed like everything he threw up there they were able to put a good swing on and wasn't able to stop it and it's just one of those days for him."

"Sometimes you don't have it, and the main thing is you have to try to find ways to find it," Holland said. "It's just a frustrating day."
Garcia drives in 3, but Sox humbled by Tigers

By Jordan Horrobin and Scott Merkin / MLB.com | June 2nd, 2017

DETROIT -- Led by J.D. Martinez and Miguel Cabrera, the Tigers used a team-wide onslaught to secure a 15-5 win over the White Sox on Friday night at Comerica Park. Detroit overwhelmed Chicago early, scoring 10 runs on 10 hits in the first three innings, with every hitter in the lineup reaching safely at least once in that span. Michael Fulmer (6-3) had his MLB-best quality start streak snapped at 10, but received enough support to win with five runs allowed over seven innings.

"There are going to be days where our offense is good enough that we should do that for pitchers," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "We should score enough runs even when they're not at their sharpest or it isn't a quote-unquote quality start."

"Just a bad night," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "I don't want to give it rhyme or reason. Just a bad night."

The Tigers have been on-again, off-again offensively through two months this season, but Friday they showed what happens when everything goes right. Against Derek Holland (4-5), who entered the game tied for the fourth-best ERA among MLB starters (2.37), Detroit teed off for eight runs (including three home runs). Hard contact was a big part of the success, as Detroit recorded six barrels off Holland, the most he's allowed in a start in the Statcast™ Era.

"Tomorrow is a new day. Get ready for that and move on," Holland said. "These things happen, and you have to get past it."

After a grueling 11-game, 10-day road trip spanning three cities, the Tigers had an off-day Thursday, their first since April 15. Ausmus said before the game that he was tired of using the long road trip as an excuse, but his team's offensive burst suggests there could be truth behind the claim.

"The fact that we haven't played as well, we've had some injuries, we've had a little bit of a tough schedule and we're still in it," Ausmus said. "I think that bodes well."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

J.D. reheats: After an explosive 2017 debut three weeks ago, Martinez had cooled off lately. He entered the game hitting 2-for-22 (.091) in his past seven games, including 0-for-8 with three strikeouts last weekend against the White Sox. But Friday, he lit up Chicago for three extra-base hits and two RBI's, finishing just a single shy of the cycle.

Miggy hits 1K: With his second double in as many innings to start the game, Cabrera notched his 1,000th career extra-base hit. He's fourth on the active leaderboard for extra-base hits and 39th all-time. It was also Cabrera's first game of the season with more than one extra-base hit.

QUOTABLE

"Any time you start the beginning of a road trip with a little falter, it's not the way you want to start it. But that being said, it's the beginning of the road trip. It's also the kind of, cuts both ways. It's just the beginning. Hopefully it goes better certainly tomorrow." -- Renteria, trying to be optimistic after the loss
"Yeah, I'll give up five and take a win over giving up one and taking a loss any day of the week." -- Fulmer, on earning his first win in the past three starts despite allowing a season-high five earned runs

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Martinez laced an RBI double to the left-center wall in the first with an exit velocity of 112.5 mph, which was his hardest-hit ball (base hit or otherwise) of the Statcast™ Era. In the second, Mikie Mahtook hit his hardest (108.6-mph exit velocity) and farthest (projected 448 feet) home run of the Statcast™ Era.

EXCUSED ABSENCE

White Sox reliever Michael Ynoa faced exactly two hitters in the third before departing with a sore right quad and being replaced on the mound by Gregory Infante. Ynoa will be re-evaluated on Saturday. Detroit designated hitter Victor Martinez was pinch-hit for by Alex Presley in the fifth, as Martinez left with flu-like symptoms.

WHAT'S NEXT

White Sox: When Miguel Gonzalez (4-5, 4.43) last faced the Tigers, on May 28, he retired the first 18 batters faced. He'll get them again on Saturday at 3:10 p.m. CT. Gonzalez earned the victory last week to end a personal five-game losing streak, but is 0-4 with a 6.56 ERA over his last four road starts.

Tigers: Right-hander Jordan Zimmermann (4-4, 6.47) will face the White Sox for the second time this week and third time this season in game two of the three-game series at 4:10 p.m. ET at Comerica Park. He has allowed 10 runs and 15 hits (four home runs) in his two starts against the White Sox in 2017.

Beck emerging as relief weapon for Sox
By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | @scottmerkin | June 2nd, 2017

DETROIT -- Much of the attention directed at the 2017 White Sox bullpen has focused upon the great starts from closer David Robertson, Tommy Kahnle and Anthony Swarzak. The name of Chris Beck should not get lost in that mix.
Beck entered Friday's series opener in Detroit having retired 23 of the last 26 batters he has faced as a regular piece of Rick Renteria's relief crew. Attacking the strike zone stands as a simple reason as to why the 26-year-old has emerged.

"Just really dumbing it down, strike one," Beck said. "It's a game we play, a game of inches. So strike one gets you in better counts. Avoiding the walk column as best as possible. Staying aggressive.
"Getting out there and getting the ball in your hand is the biggest difference. You kind of get a familiarity with how the game is going to be played and the situations you are put in."

Beck added a split-finger to his arsenal in 2016, and he's using it effectively again this season. Beck also has "bared down" more on his slider, trying to regain or rediscover the arm slot he had with the pitch at Georgia Southern.

"It's been a battle to get it back," said Beck, who has a 2.84 ERA in 14 games, with 18 strikeouts and five walks in 19 innings. "It comes and goes.
"[Pitching coach Donn Cooper] says another pitch is another weapon. Put that in the arsenal and it's one more thing a hitter thinks about."

**Rodon making progress**

Carlos Rodon, who has been on the disabled list with biceps bursitis in his left shoulder since the start of the season, threw another successful simulated game yesterday in Arizona.

"We're getting ready to have him move forward in his next phase," Renteria said. "The next phase could be going out to start competing in some games on a rehab, but that's still to be determined as to when and how and where."

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**White Sox recognize top prospects for May**

*Kopech named Pitcher of the Month; Adolfo takes player honors*

By Scott Merkin and Fabian Ardaya / MLB.com | @scottmerkin | June 2nd, 2017

DETROIT -- Micker Adolfo and Michael Kopech earned the White Sox May Player and Pitcher of the Month Awards, respectively, through their outstanding performances.

But it's the development behind the statistics that stands out for these two young talents.

Kopech, 21, still has the 100-mph fastball at the top of his repertoire that has made him the White Sox' No. 2 prospect, but also has improved his changeup and mixed in a sinker while at Double-A Birmingham.

"The changeup is getting there," said Kopech, who struck out 47, walked 17 and posted a 2.31 ERA over 35 innings pitched in May. "I hate to sound like I'm patting myself on the back, but it's almost unnecessary to throw it at some points. I have to remind myself to use it.

"I've given up a couple home runs on changeups this year just because I'm speeding guys' bats up. It has become a better pitch, but I have to be smart about when I'm using it and to whom I'm using it. It's something that experience is going to kind of take over and I'll get it down even more but I'm comfortable throwing it now.

"My sinker -- it's not necessarily a fourth pitch, it's pretty much another fastball. But at the same time, it's disruption of timing, too," Kopech said. "The two-pitch thing, I think, is out the window, but I've been excited about progressing my changeup."

Adolfo, 20, continues to follow a set offensive approach he spoke with MLB.com about back in Spring Training. The right-handed-hitting outfielder hit .333 with two home runs, 11 doubles and 17 RBIs for Class A Kannapolis in May.

"Staying middle to right field, that approach, it really helps me stay on the ball a lot longer," Adolofo said. "So that approach really helps me from kind of being too quick and thinking I have to pull everything. I'm really trying to trust my hands a lot more and that's really helped me."

Who else stood out in the Sox system? Here is a look.

Dane Dunning, Class A Advanced Winston-Salem: Dunning bounced back in his first outing back from a seven-game suspension, giving up a pair of runs over 6 2/3 innings while picking up his second win on
Wednesday. He's 4-0 this season with a 2.31 ERA in nine starts between Winston-Salem and Kannapolis. Dunning is ranked the club's No. 11 prospect.

Reynaldo Lopez, Triple-A Charlotte: Lopez, acquired this offseason in the trade that sent Adam Eaton to Washington, put together one of his best starts of the season on Wednesday in holding Syracuse to one run on five hits while striking out six in six frames. The White Sox' No. 5 prospect has given up three or fewer earned runs in nine of his past 10 starts at the Triple-A level.

Cody Asche, Charlotte: Asche has more than enough big league experience to no longer be considered a prospect, but the 26-year-old outfielder has been notable for his standout performance with Charlotte. He's been strong over his past 10 games, going 14-for-29 and slugging four homers to go with 14 RBIs. Asche hit .105/.177/.175 with a homer and four RBIs in 19 games with the big league club this year.

Also of note in the Sox system:

- Charlotte second baseman Yoan Moncada -- the top-ranked prospect in baseball and another major cog of the Chris Sale deal -- is still working his way back after going on the disabled list with a wrist injury. He's 3-for-22 with an RBI since his return, striking out eight times.

- Defending International League Player of the Week and White Sox No. 4 prospect Lucas Giolito couldn't match the seven-inning no-hitter he threw in his last outing for Charlotte, scattering eight hits and two runs over four innings.

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Gonzalez seeks strong follow-up vs. Tigers

By Scott Merkin / MLB.com | June 2nd, 2017

It will be difficult for Miguel Gonzalez to top his last trip to the mound, unless the White Sox right-hander throws a no-hitter Saturday evening at Comerica Park against the Tigers.

Gonzalez actually was perfect for six innings against the Tigers last Sunday at home, retiring the first 18 hitters he faced before Andrew Romine reached on what originally was ruled a Tim Anderson error and then changed to a hit. Gonzalez snapped a career-high five-game losing streak by allowing three runs on six hits over 7 2/3 innings. He struck out six and didn't issue a walk.

Jordan Zimmermann gets the call for the Tigers, just as he did last Sunday in the loss at Guaranteed Rate Field. After allowing seven runs on eight hits in five innings, including three home runs, Zimmermann said that he didn't have feel for his slider, yet his most-battered pitch this season has been his fastball, which opponents have 13 home runs and an .826 slugging percentage against, according to Statcast.

Three things to know about this game

- Omar Narvaez's last start behind the plate for the White Sox was May 28, but manager Rick Renteria has not anointed Kevan Smith as the starting catcher.

"We're just trying to match 'em up and still catch the same guys that we like them to catch," Renteria said. "We're going to see how it continues to flow and we're getting ready to go to Tampa.

"We'll see what their starting pitching is going to be like. It's just a combination of couple of things, how they're doing and the matchups a little bit. Maybe Narvy will go three in a row going forward. It depends."
Detroit has won seven consecutive season series against the White Sox, but trails, 6-3, this season.

Jose Abreu owns an 18-game hitting streak against the Tigers, with 12 RBIs during that stretch.

Already one of MLB’s most dominant pitching prospects, Michael Kopech is still “learning how to pitch”
By Dan Hayes/ CSN Chicago | June 2, 2017

He’s still blowing hitters away and walking more than he’d like. But White Sox prospect Michael Kopech has also begun to incorporate some of the many nuances of being a pitcher into his approach and is improving.

In order to keep hitters off balance, the Double-A Birmingham pitcher has added a two-seam fastball to his repertoire and is also working to better utilize his changeup. Kopech was named the organization’s minor league pitcher of the month in May on Thursday after he struck out 47 batters and posted a 2.31 ERA in 35 innings. White Sox minor league pitching coordinator Richard Dotson said he likes what he has seen from Kopech, who has just 210 professional innings pitched to his credit.

“It’s the process,” Dotson said. “He can still throw the crap out of it, but he’s learning to pitch.

“He’s doing really well and making strides.”

There’s no doubt Kopech has the tools for success at the major league level. He throws a 100-mph-plus fastball and has a wicked slider to accompany it. Those two pitches alone could almost certainly have him working out of a major league bullpen right now.

But the 11th ranked prospect in baseball, according to MLBPipeline.com, wants to be a starting pitcher. And it sounds as if he realizes that he’s going to need some softer pitches in his arsenal to become that pitcher.

The White Sox would like Kopech to rely more often on his changeup, which has above-average potential and grades out to 50 on the 20-80 scouting scale. He threw it 4-5 times on Wednesday when he allowed an unearned run and struck out 10 batters in 5 2/3 innings. Kopech said he’s comfortable with the changeup, but still needs to improve how he implements it.

“I’ve given up a couple home runs on changeups this year just because I’m speeding guys bats up,” Kopech said. “It has become a better pitch, but I have to be smart about when I’m using it and to whom I’m using it.”

That’s where the two-seamer has been helpful. Whereas the fastball reportedly touched 105 mph last July, the two-seamer provides variance in velocity. With the sinker utilized, Kopech’s fastball velocities now have a range between 94-102 mph.

Unlike it’s rapid, straighter four-seam brethren, Kopech’s sinker has “tail and run -- it has movement with angle,” Dotson said.
“It’s not necessarily a fourth pitch,” Kopech said. “Pretty much another fastball, but at the same time it’s disruption of timing, too.”

Disruption is the key word here. Kopech should always be confident in his 102 mph fastball. But some hitters will be able catch up to that pitch at the major league level and he’ll need offspeed pitches to keep them from looking for the four-seamer.

Also, by trying not to blow every hitter away, Kopech should see a natural reduction in his walk-rate. Kopech said he has strived to pitch to contact more often when he can in games, though he isn’t afraid to pitch for a strikeout with runners on base.

While he has improved his command some, Kopech would like to be even better. After walking 10 batters in his first 12 innings pitched, Kopech has walked 21 in the last 41, including 17 in 35 May innings. That’s a six-percent reduction in walk rate from 18.2 percent in April to 12.2 percent in May.

Still, that translates to 97 walks in 200 innings, a figure he’d like to see decrease. But given his 2.38 ERA and the fact that opposing hitters have only a .539 OPS against him, Kopech knows he’s not too far from where he needs to be.

“My walks are close misses,” Kopech said. “I have an approach to each and every hitter. I have a plan where I go into the game and if I tally up a couple walks it’s not as big a deal as if I’m trying to go after a guy and I’m just missing. It’s getting there, but it’s not exactly where I want it. But I’m a little more comfortable than I was at the beginning of the year.”

White Sox name Michael Kopech, Micker Adolfo Minor Leaguers of the month
By Dan Hayes / CSN Chicago | June 1, 2017

Michael Kopech became the second consecutive player acquired for Chris Sale to win a White Sox minor leaguer of the month award on Thursday.

Kopech posted his second double-digit strikeout performance of the season on Wednesday night at Double-A Birmingham to finish May with 47 whiffs in 35 innings. The right-hander went 3-1 with a 2.31 ERA in six starts, allowing 20 hits and walking 17 over 35 innings. He was named the organization’s pitcher of the month.

Single-A Kannapolis’ Micker Adolfo was named the player of the month for May after he slashed .333/.385/.531 with two home runs and 17 RBIs in 104 plate appearances. Adolfo, who received a $1.6-million signing bonus in 2013, finished May with 14 extra-base hits. The outfielder, who turns 21 in September, has already appeared in 40 games this season, 29 shy of the most he’s played in one campaign. Adolfo played 69 games in 2016, including 65 at Kannapolis.

Yoan Moncada, who was also acquired from the Boston Red Sox in exchange for Sale, was named the organization’s minor league player of the month in April.

Kopech is the No. 2-rated prospect in the organization and is ranked 12th overall in baseball, according to MLBpipeline.com. Toting a 100-mph-plus fastball, Kopech entered the season with plenty of optimism after a strong finish to the 2016 season. Despite early struggles with command, he’s has put together a
very strong season with 75 strikeouts in 53 innings. Kopech reduced his walk-rate from 18.1 percent in April (14 in 77 batters) to 12.2 percent in May (17 in 139).

He and Moncada were the main pieces in a four-player package that sent Sale to the Red Sox in December. The White Sox also acquired Single-A Winston-Salem outfielder Luis Basabe and Single-A Kannapolis pitcher Victor Diaz in the deal.

The No. 21 prospect in the organization, Adolfo’s award arrives days after the White Sox spent a club-record $26 million to sign Cuban outfielder Luis Robert. At the time he signed, Adolfo’s bonus was the largest ever awarded by the White Sox to an international amateur.


Pitching nominees included: Charlotte’s Lucas Giolito, who threw a seven-inning no-hitter, Kannapolis’ Alec Hansen and Mike Morrison, and Winston-Salem’s Tanner Banks

**Derek Holland, White Sox start trip on sour note with 15-5 loss to Tigers**
Colleen Kane / Chicago Tribune | June 2, 2017

The White Sox weren't complaining when they left Guaranteed Rate Field for yet another three-city trip this week, but the South Siders have been on the move a lot in the early season.

And the road has not been a friendly place.

A string of bad play away from home continued Friday night when starting left-hander Derek Holland gave up a season-high eight earned runs in a 15-5 loss to the Tigers. It marked the Sox's 11th loss in their last 14 games on the road, with 14 of their next 18 games away too.

Holland left the Sox in no position to win after giving up eight hits, including three homers, in just 2 1/3 "frustrating" innings.

"I battled my mechanics, tried to find a groove and couldn't get it," Holland said. "I was behind the whole time, and when I did start to get ahead, it was missing right down the middle. It's a really good ball club over there. You have to give them credit."

Miguel Cabrera and J.D. Martinez hit RBI doubles to center field in the first. Mikie Mahtook's homer and Cabrera's two-run double — his 1,000th career extra-base hit — put the Tigers up 5-0.

Martinez's homer and John Hicks' two-run shot gave the Tigers eight earned runs off Holland, more than twice his previous season high of three.

Sox manager Rick Renteria said it was one of Holland's "truly rare outings" after he had entered the night with a 2.37 ERA.

"I don't want to give it rhyme or reason," Renteria said. "Just a bad night."
Michael Ynoa entered to relieve Holland with one out in the third, but he gave up an RBI triple and left the game with right quad soreness. Gregory Infante gave up a sacrifice fly as the Tigers crept into double digits, and the Tigers scored four runs off reliever Juan Minaya over two innings.

About the only thing that went right for the Sox on the mound was left-hander Dan Jennings prompted Martinez to fly out to right field in the seventh — leaving him a single short of the cycle.

The Sox made some — but not enough — progress off right-hander Michael Fulmer, who had limited them to three runs over eight innings when the teams met over Memorial Day weekend at Guaranteed Rate Field.

Yolmer Sanchez hit a ground-rule double to left field in the third and scored on Leury Garcia's RBI single. The Sox added three runs in the fourth, thanks to RBIs from Tim Anderson, Leury Garcia and Melky Cabrera, and another in the seventh before Fulmer exited.

Holland credited his teammates with battling for him, and he said he will do the same to get back on track.

"I'm not going to dwell on it — it's one start," he said. "I have the right people to help me get back to where I need to be. I'm not going to get caught up in one outing. Tomorrow is a new day. Get ready for that and move on."

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With majors on his mind, prospect Michael Kopech says command progressing

Colleen Kane/Chicago Tribune | June 2, 2017

The White Sox are taking a steady approach to the development of their top prospects this year, making sure the players meet every goal before considering a bump to the next level.

That won't stop Double-A Birmingham right-hander Michael Kopech from aiming high this season.

"For me, every year is an opportunity to make the big leagues, so I just hope they change their minds I guess," he said. "My goal is to crack the big leagues at some point this year."

The Sox's No. 2 prospect is making progress toward his ultimate goal and was named the club's minor-league pitcher of the month after a stellar May.

Kopech has gone 4-2 with a 2.38 ERA, 31 walks and 75 strikeouts over 53 innings and 10 starts this year. He has not allowed more than three earned runs in any game this season and has twice struck out 10, on April 8 and May 31.

On a conference call with Chicago reporters Friday, he said that while his walk rate still is too high, he feels he is making progress with his command and is "a lot more comfortable" with how he has been pitching lately. That starts with having an approach to every hitter.

"I have a plan and if I tally up a couple of walks it's not as big a deal as if I'm trying to go after a guy and I'm just missing," Kopech said. "A lot of it is not pitching for strikeouts, just pitching to contact when it's necessary. Sure, if I get runners on second and third, I'll try to get a strikeout so I can eliminate damage."
Kopech joined the Sox in the Chris Sale trade with the Red Sox in December and spent much of spring training with the big-league club. Two months into his stint with Birmingham, he said he has felt comfortable with the transition and working with Barons pitching coach Jose Bautista.

Along with a fastball that can top 100 mph and a solid slider, Kopech has worked on developing a sinker and improving his changeup, about which he said he's excited.

"It has become a better pitch, but I have to be smart about when I'm using it and to whom I'm using it," he said. "...But I'm comfortable throwing it now."

Elsewhere, Class A Kannapolis outfielder Micker Adolfo was named the Sox minor-league player of the month for May.

Derek Holland, White Sox start trip on sour note with 15-5 loss to Tigers
Rodon watch: Renteria said reports were good from left-hander Carlos Rodon's simulated game Thursday in Arizona. Rodon, who is recovering from biceps bursitis, had been scheduled to throw five innings and manager Rick Renteria said he suffered no setbacks in the outing.

It appears a rehab assignment soon could be in Rodon's future, but Renteria was short with details.

"The next phase could be going out to start competing in some games on a rehab, but that is still to be determined as to when and how and where," Renteria said.

Catching on: Sox catcher Kevan Smith started his fourth straight game Friday night against the Tigers. Renteria said he started Smith over the left-handed-hitting Omar Narvaez because of opposing pitching matchups and pairings with certain Sox pitchers.

Smith was 3-for-9 with a double and an RBI in the three-game series against the Red Sox

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Yolmer Sanchez keeps things fun in White Sox clubhouse
Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun Times | June 2, 2017

DETROIT — Yolmer Sanchez is like the mischievous little brother in your family, only he’s the mischievous little infielder in the White Sox’ clan.

He’s part class clown and part goofball, the one jumping on the back of bigger teammates, such as Jose Abreu, in the clubhouse. He tries to distract teammates during interviews by lifting his shirt or using a bat as a mock microphone. He also likes playing cards with Todd Frazier.

You might recall Sanchez doing the silly “Rock-a-by Baby” bit with Adam Eaton, a salute to his son. Now that Eaton is no longer with the team, Sanchez makes pretend Mickey Mouse ears instead, as he did after hitting a double against the Tigers’ Michael Fulmer on Friday.

Always up, never down. Always loose, never tight. Keep it fun, Sanchez likes to say.
Yolmer Sanchez (5) celebrates scoring on a Melky Cabrera sacrifice fly against the Detroit Tigers in the fifth inning of a baseball game in Detroit, Friday, June 2, 2017. (AP Photo/Paul Sancya) ORG XMIT: MIPS118

“That’s the point,” Sanchez said. “Work hard and have fun. For me, I can’t wait to come here and be here with my teammates. I try to jell with everyone here.”

The Sox were in need of amusement while getting thumped 15-5 by the Tigers in the opener of a nine-game road trip. Derek Holland (4-5) allowed eight runs and eight hits, including three homers, in 2⅓ innings.

“Very frustrating,” Holland said. “Everything was coming back over the plate, missing right down the middle. I was battling my own mechanics, trying to find a groove. Couldn’t get it.”

Sanchez, playing second base, doubled, singled, walked and scored two runs. Manager Rick Renteria has watched Sanchez take control of second base. With Tyler Saladino hitting .200 and being slowed by back spasms, the switch-hitting Sanchez has stepped forward by putting up solid numbers.

Sanchez took a career .224/.261/.357 slash line into the season but is hitting .299/.345/.438 with two homers and 15 RBI.

“He’s just taken hold of the opportunity and is running with it,” Renteria said. “He’s a pretty gifted young player. Like most young players he’s gaining confidence and running with it.”

Holland’s confidence must have taken a hit after Mike Mahtook homered in the second and J.D. Martinez and John Hicks homered in the third. The Tigers scored two in the first on RBI doubles by Miguel Cabrera and Martinez, and Cabrera drove in a pair of runs in the second with his second double and 1,000th extra-base hit of his career.

With the Sox needing innings out of their bullpen, Michael Ynoa, Holland’s replacement, lasted only two batters — a single to Jose Iglesias and a triple to Dixon Machado — before exiting with soreness in his right quad. Ynoa, who will be re-evaluated Saturday, was replaced by Gregory Infante.

It was the latest injury issue to the Sox’ pitching staff, who already have James Shields, Carlos Rodon, Jake Petricka, Zach Putnam and Dylan Covey on the disabled list. (Petricka threw a scoreless inning in a rehab outing for Class AAA Charlotte on Friday, and Shields is scheduled to pitch for Charlotte Saturday).

The Sox scored a run in the second on a double by Yolmer Sanchez and a single by Leury Garcia against.

The first of two doubles by Matt Davidson, RBI singles by Tim Anderson and Leury Garcia (2-for-4, three RBI) and a sacrifice fly by Melky Cabrera gave the Sox three runs in the sixth.

Throughout the ups and downs of a 162-game schedule, it doesn’t hurt to have guys like Sanchez around for dud games.

“It’s awesome, he’s a high energy kid — very happy,” Renteria said. “We have quite a few of those, he happens to be the one who is most boisterous. It’s fun to have him.”
Holland rocked for eight runs in Tigers' 15-5 rout of White Sox
Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun Times | June 2, 2017

DETROIT — White Sox left-hander Derek Holland, who entered Friday's game against the Detroit Tigers with a stingy 2.37 ERA — third best in the American League — couldn’t finish the third inning and left after allowing eight runs on eight hits, including three homers in a 15-5 Tigers victory.

The loss was the third in a row for the Sox, who opened a nine-game road trip. They fell to 20-25.

Mike Mahtook homered in the second and J.D. Martinez and John Hicks homered in the third off Holland (4-5). The Tigers got Holland for two runs in the first on RBI doubles by Miguel Cabrera and Martinez, and Cabrera drove in two runs in the second with his second double and 1,000th of his career.

Holland's ERA jumped to 3.43. He threw 58 pitches.

Michael Ynoa, Holland's replacement, lasted only two batters, giving up a single to Jose Iglesias and a triple to Dixon Machado. Ynoa left with soreness in his right quad and will be re-evaluated Saturday. He was replaced by Gregory Infante.

Cabrera hit a sacrifice fly into the right-field corner for his fourth RBI in three at-bats in the first three innings. Detroit led 10-1 after three innings.

The Sox scored a run in the second on a double by Yolmer Sanchez (2-for-3, walk, two runs) and a single by Leury Garcia (3-for-4, three RBI) against Tigers right-hander Michael Fulmer.

Matt Davidson doubled twice for the Sox. Jose Abreu went 0-for-4, snapping an 18-game hitting streak. The Tigers (26-28) finished with 18 hits.

Learning process ongoing for Sox' top pitching prospect Michael Kopech
Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun Times | June 2nd, 2017

DETROIT — Right-hander Michael Kopech seems to understand the process, but he’s young — he just turned 21 on April 30 — so knowing he hardly can wait to get to Chicago comes as no surprise.

“Every year is an opportunity to make the big leagues, so I just hope they change their minds, I guess,” Kopech said Friday. “I don’t know. My goal in mind is to crack the big leagues at some point this year.”

The Sox are exercising patience with their top Class AAA pitching prospects, so Kopech should know they’ll take their time with him even though he might be the most talented of the bunch. Kopech is ranked No. 11 among all prospects in baseball, according to MLBpipeline.com.

After being named the Sox’ minor-league pitcher of the month, Kopech said he’s getting more comfortable as he learns how to be more than just a thrower at Class AA Birmingham.

In May, Kopech went 3-1 with a 2.31 ERA and 47 strikeouts in 35 innings.

With a 100 mph fastball and a good slider, Kopech already is equipped to be an effective pitcher out of the bullpen. But the Sox’ goal is for him to be in the starting rotation. Building up innings — the most
Kopech has thrown in the minors is 65 at Class A Greenville in the South Atlantic League in 2015 — and commanding a good third pitch are boxes that need to be checked off.

“The changeup is getting there,” he said. “I hate to sound like I’m patting myself on the back, but it’s almost unnecessary to throw it at some points. I have to remind myself to use it. I’ve given up a couple home runs on changeups this year just because I’m speeding guys bats up.”

In 53 innings, Kopech has 75 strikeouts and 31 walks. He’s 4-2 with a 2.38 ERA.

“My stat line may not show [improved fastball command],” Kopech said. “I’m still having a lot of walks.

“It’s getting there, but it’s not exactly where I want it, but I’m a little more comfortable than I was at the beginning of the year.”

Kopech has thrown between 95-104 pitches in each of his last seven starts, and he’s learning to pitch to contact “when necessary.”

“Sure, if I get runners on second and third, I’ll try to get a strikeout there so I can eliminate damage,” he said. “It’s pitching to contact when it needs to be so I can [get] myself back in the dugout quicker.”

Outfielder Micker (pronounced Mike-er) Adolfo, 20, who batted .333 with two homers, 17 RBI and 11 doubles in May, was named the Sox’ minor-league player of the month. Adolfo said he credits his step forward to having a routine, trusting his hands and having a middle-to-right-field approach at the plate.

Adolfo was signed as an international free agent as a 16-year-old. Kopech was acquired from the Red Sox along with infielder Yoan Moncada (ranked No. 1 by MLBpipeline.com), outfielder Luis Basabe and right-hander Victor Diaz in the trade for Chris Sale.

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**Cabrera, Martinez lead Tigers in 15-5 win over White Sox**

By Dave Hogg / Associated Press | Junes 2, 2017

DETROIT -- The Detroit Tigers didn't get as much rest as they might have wanted Thursday on their day off, but it was enough to get them hitting again.

In their first game after a 4-7 road trip that included four games in a 48-hour stretch in Chicago, the Tigers had a season-high 11 extra-base hits in a 15-5 win over the Chicago White Sox on Friday night.

"We got in early Thursday morning, so it wasn't ideal, but the bats certainly came alive," Tigers manager Brad Ausmus said. "It was good to see our big guys swinging the bat again."

Miguel Cabrera and J.D. Martinez combined for five hits, all for extra bases, and six RBIs in eight at-bats.

Martinez went 3-for-5 with a double, triple and homer, but flew out to right in the seventh inning to miss out on Detroit’s first cycle since Carlos Guillen in 2006. Martinez missed the first 33 games of the season with an ankle injury, and is hitting .297 with a .797 slugging percentage in 20 games.

"He's been unbelievable," Ausmus said. "He had a little lull on the road trip, but other than that, he's been as good as any hitter in baseball."
Michael Fulmer (6-3) allowed a season-high five runs and seven hits in seven innings. The Tigers had been shut out in his past two starts.

"I'll give up five and take a win over giving up one and taking a loss any day of the week," he said. "I'm not worried about my game. I'm just happy we got a win."

White Sox starter Derek Holland (4-5) allowed eight runs and eight hits, including three homers, in 2 1/3 innings.

"This one is totally on me," Holland said. "I was fighting my mechanics all night, and everything I threw ended up over the plate. That's a great offense, and they are going to hurt you when you make that many mistakes."

The Tigers took the lead in the first when Nicholas Castellanos walked and scored on Cabrera's RBI double. Two batters later, Martinez made it 2-0 with a double to left-center field.

Cabrera hit a two-run double in the second inning to become the 39th player with 1,000 extra-base hits, including active batters Adrian Beltre, Albert Pujols and Carlos Beltran.

Leury Garcia's RBI single pulled the White Sox to 5-1 in the third, but Holland allowed homers to Martinez and Hicks in the bottom of the inning to give the Tigers a seven-run lead.

Michael Ynoa replaced Holland and gave up a single and a triple before leaving with soreness in his right quad.

The Tigers led 10-1 before Chicago scored three runs in the fifth. Castellanos made it 11-4 with an RBI in the bottom of the inning, and Detroit added three more runs in the sixth.

TRAINER'S ROOM

White Sox: Ynoa will be evaluated on Saturday before a decision is made on his roster spot. RHP Jake Petricka (strained lat) was scheduled to start a rehab assignment with Triple-A Charlotte on Friday night, while RHP James Shields (strained lat) is expected to make a rehab start for Charlotte on Saturday.

Tigers: DH Victor Martinez left the game in the fifth inning with flu-like symptoms. RHP Anibal Sanchez, who has been starting in Triple-A Toledo in an attempt to revive his career, left Friday's start with a left-leg injury.

UGLY START TO A TRIP

The White Sox were playing the first of nine games on a three-city, ten-day road trip, and manager Rick Renteria acknowledged it wasn't the ideal start.

"This is going to be a tough trip, so you want the first game to be better," said Renteria, whose team will also visit Tampa and Cleveland.

BOYD HEADING FOR TRIPLE-A
The Tigers optioned starting pitcher Matt Boyd to Triple-A Toledo after the game, and will recall LHP Daniel Stumpf from the Mud Hens on Saturday. Boyd is 2-5 with a 5.69 ERA in 11 starts, and has gone 0-2 with a 10.13 ERA in his last four games.

"I have no one but myself to blame for this," Boyd said.

With a day off on Monday, the Tigers won't need a fifth starter until June 10.

AVILA STILL STANDING PAT

Tigers general manager Al Avila spoke to the media Friday afternoon, saying the team is still committed to trying to win the AL Central title this season, and that no decisions will be made about selling until closer to the trade deadline.

UP NEXT

White Sox: RHP Miguel Gonzalez (3-5, 6.99) is scheduled to start for Chicago on Saturday in the second game of the weekend series. Gonzalez is 0-4 with a 6.56 ERA in his last four road starts, but beat Detroit on May 28 in Chicago.

Tigers: RHP Jordan Zimmerman (4-4, 6.47 ERA) will pitch for the Tigers, six days after losing to Gonzalez and the White Sox. In that start, he allowed seven runs and eight hits in five innings.