

Curtain Call

JUNE/JULY 2022



Against The Clock

Pitch clock leaving its mark on
Indians games, for better or worse

BY MIKE LOPRESTI P. 12

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Curtain Call

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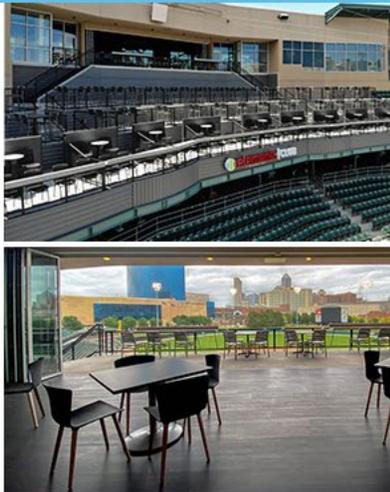
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UPCOMING SCHEDULE & PROMOTIONS

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 OMA 8:05	2 OMA 8:05	3 OMA 8:05	4 OMA 8:05
5 OMA 6:05	6	7 C 7:05	8 C 1:35	9 C 7:05	10 C 7:05	11 C 7:05
12 C 1:35	13	14 GWN 7:05	15 GWN 7:05	16 GWN 7:05	17 GWN 7:05	18 GWN 6:05
19 GWN 1:05	20	21 S 7:05	22 S 1:35	23 S 7:05	24 S 7:05	25 S 7:05
26 S 1:35	27	28 NAS 8:05	29 NAS 8:05	30 NAS 8:05		

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 NAS 8:05	2 NAS 8:05
3 NAS 7:05	4 C 6:15	5	6 C 7:05	7 C 7:05	8 C 7:05	9 C 7:05
10 C 1:35	11	12 COL 7:05	13 COL 7:05	14 COL 12:05	15 COL 7:05	16 COL 7:05
17 COL 4:05	18	19-21 ALL-STAR BREAK			22 S 7:05	23 S 7:05
24 S 1:35	25	26 TOL 7:05	27 TOL 7:05	28 TOL 7:05	29 TOL 7:05	30 TOL 7:05

HOME AWAY

JUNE / JULY HIGHLIGHTS

YOUTH CLINIC | WED., JULY 6 PRESENTED BY PETERMAN HEATING & COOLING, TOYOTA

Gates open at 5:00 p.m., demonstrations start at 5:10 p.m. The Youth Clinic is included with your ticket purchase for the Indians' game on Wednesday, July 6. Give your kids an unforgettable experience at Victory Field as their favorite Indianapolis Indians teach them the fundamentals to baseball and softball during the annual Youth Baseball Clinic.

CIRCLE CITY NIGHT | THUR., JULY 7 PRESENTED BY AES INDIANA

Rep the 317 and support your hometown Indians who will wear Indy-inspired jerseys as a celebration of the Circle City. Arrive when gates open to hear local DJs performing pregame on the home dugout. Be sure to take advantage of a special ticket package offer to receive a baseball t-shirt from The Shop Indy.

MARVEL SUPER HERO™ NIGHT WITH DOCTOR STRANGE | SAT., JULY 9 PRESENTED BY DAMAR

Be one of the first 2,500 fans through the Victory Field gates and receive a comic. Plus, the Indians will wear Doctor Strange specialty jerseys that will be auctioned off during the game, with all proceeds benefiting Indianapolis Indians Charities.

SUNDAY CHARACTERS WITH DANIEL TIGER'S NEIGHBORHOOD | SUN., JULY 10 PRESENTED BY MHS

Stop by the Center Field Plaza before and during the game for meet-and-greets and photos with Daniel Tiger & Katerina Kittykat.

MARVEL SUPER HERO™ NIGHT WITH THANOS | SAT., JULY 23 PRESENTED BY ELEMENTS FINANCIAL, NUCOR INDIANA

Be one of the first 2,500 fans through the Victory Field gates and receive a comic. Plus, the Indians will wear Thanos specialty jerseys that will be auctioned off during the game, with all proceeds benefiting Indianapolis Indians Charities.



AGAINST THE CLOCK

Pitch clock leaving its mark on Indians games, for better or worse

By Mike Lopresti

This was in the Victory Field press box earlier this season.

A Cincinnati sportswriter, more accustomed to the often-pokey pace of major league baseball games, had come to town to do a story on the Reds' Luis Castillo and his rehab start for Louisville against the Indians. Lost in his writing, the man didn't realize it was the ninth inning until he looked up from his computer and saw the final Indians' out.

"It's over already?" he asked.

Welcome to the world of the pitch clock.

We know why it's here. The pace of baseball games has begun to grow positively glacial. As Indians' president Randy Lewandowski explained, "For the good of the game and the fan and the players, there just needs to be a better flow than what we've gotten used to with all the starts and stops and stepping out of the batting box.

"We do know that when games get to three hours, 3:15, 3:30 people will filter out because it becomes really long. In today's society of go-go-go, to really attract the younger audience that pace of play is what's going to be really important. I didn't say time, I said pace of play."

Indeed, it's how some games crawl that has become a concern. And we know the clock is having an impact. Out of 103 nine-inning games last season, the Indians had 37 pass three hours and 61 – well more than half – go at least 2:50. In the first 24 nine-inning contests this season, only six went 2:50, and four of those were in the first two weeks when the rules were just being introduced. Meanwhile, the Indians beat Columbus in a speedy 2:05 and lost at Iowa in 2:06. Barely enough time for that third hot dog.

What we don't know yet is how much everyone will be on board, especially the

men charged with playing a game that is already hard enough, without a tick . . . tick . . . tick going off in their heads. Or if this experiment being tried in the minor leagues will ever make its way up the ladder to the Yankee Stadiums and PNC Parks of the world.

First, the basics. A pitch must be thrown in 14 seconds, or 19 if there is a runner on base. If not, a ball is called. The batter must be in the box ready to hit when the clock reaches the nine-second mark. If not, it's a strike. After an at-bat, the next hitter has 30 seconds to get to the box, so no taking the slow, scenic route from the on-deck circle. Also, a pitcher can't just make repeated throws to first base, to keep a runner close, while bringing the inning's tempo to a screeching halt. On the third try, the runner must either be picked off or he gets another base.



If these rulebook tweaks are designed to keep the game snappy. The clock is always there in centerfield and behind home plate, silently nudging the players and managers and umpires to move things along. It must constantly be started, stopped, reset, tended to. Which means the guy upstairs pushing the button has no time for day-dreaming. "That's the hardest job in the ballpark

right now," Lewandowski said. "There's not a break."

So, pitch clock. Good? Bad? Both? Neither? Friend or foe, inspiration of abomination? Let's take the matter to the Indians' clubhouse, where – at least early on -- views touched most every point on the compass, each man considering the idea from his own spot on the baseball landscape. Here's an oral history of the pitch clock in Victory Field. All two months of it.

HITTING COACH ERIC MUNSON: "There is give and take. If you like baseball and you

want to come and watch the game and enjoy the game and not worry about the time, it might not be for you. If you're somebody who wants the game to go quick, then you're going to like it.

"I've seen both sides of it. When the game's in a good rhythm or a good flow, the clock helps that and it keeps going. The next thing you look up and the game's over in 2 hours and 30 minutes.

PITCHER JERAD EICKHOFF: "I understand the reason behind it but there's definitely some serious issues with it. I think the biggest thing for me is you get an outcome whether it's a walk or a strikeout without a pitch being thrown. I think that's a huge problem. The hitter didn't earn that walk, and as a pitcher I didn't earn that strikeout. Those are calculated and go on our stats and our stats matter, our stats are our livelihood. In those key moments there has to be a way to put the clock aside.

PITCHER AUSTIN BRICE: "It doesn't take account of the fact that baseball's baseball sometimes. Has it sped up play? Maybe. I consider myself an extremely fast worker on the mound, and there's a few times you shake twice and then you're trying to get to the pitch, and that's (called) a ball. I actually walked a guy because of that. That part can be frustrating."

PITCHING COACH DAN MEYER: "Early I didn't like it because it was something we had to relearn in a way. Some guys have a mental clock. We've talked to guys about holding runners, or holding your times to the plate. You can't hold it eight, nine, 10 seconds anymore. And also if you're 2-0 and you've thrown a couple of bad pitches, we used to teach to take a walk and take a deep breath behind the mound. You can't do that as much anymore. So there are some things that have been taught in baseball for so long that we have to get away from to make it fit in the pitch clock. That's been the toughest part."

CATCHER JASON DELAY: "I think the biggest thing is with runners on second base. As a catcher I've got to go through a series of signs to make sure the runner on second

can't relay what pitch is coming. Sometimes that takes time. The last thing I want is to be going through my signs, a pitcher shakes off, and then I've got to go through a whole other set and we have a ball (called). That side of it has been frustrating.

"But at the same time we've played a lot of fast games. That's appealing to a lot of fans, and players, too. We like fast-paced games, it keeps the defense in it and all that."

MANAGER MIGUEL PEREZ: "I think it's a personal thing. I've seen guys affected, I've seen guys who haven't been affected. It's one of those things we'll see where we're at. The rules are dictating some of the at-bats. It's dictating strikeouts, walks. It can change the whole at-bat. The guys are aware of that and they're doing a good job trying to adjust."

FIRST BASEMAN MASON MARTIN: "I definitely have been a victim of the pitch clock a few times. It's not fun to get struck out to end the inning when you didn't even get to swing. It's a frustrating feeling. It feels like a lot of guys are focusing on the pitch clock rather than their plan or approach at the plate or the pitch they're about to make on the mound. It makes it an added challenge to what we're trying to do. What we're already trying to do is so hard, hit a 95-mile-an-hour fastball. That's already hard enough."

PITCHER CAM ALLDRED: "I see what they're trying to do with it as far as speeding the game up a little bit but for the most part when we get sped up we want to slow the game down. What gets me the most is the first pitch of the inning, because I like to get the resin and get the feeling in my hand of dryness. And then before I know it, I'm looking over and there's four seconds left. I work from the stretch, so I have to come set and go real quick."

MUNSON: "This is the only sport where we're on offense but we don't have the ball. As a hitter you've got to be able to have the ability sometimes to slow (pitchers) down or step out and ask for time. A pitcher gets in a flow, they can quick pitch you and it's uncomfortable as a hitter. That's one of those things we'll keep watching and seeing how it translates. We haven't had a long



conversation about it. We told them to just be aware of it, just make sure you're in the box looking at the pitcher with 10 seconds (to go). Give yourself a little extra time and make sure you're ready to hit."

BRICE: "There's a couple of times that I've been out there and I've thrown a ball just to kind of throw it and maybe not had the best intent behind it because I'm trying to beat the clock."

ALLDRED: "I can sense when I'm slowing down. I definitely peek at it, just to see where I'm at. If it's five, then I'm good. It's definitely sped me up a little bit."

DELAY: "I feel like runners can take advantage of it. I'm a baserunner and I see the clock winding down to zero I'm going to start stealing with one second left because you know the pitcher has to pitch, especially if they've already picked off twice. Basically we can't pick off. I just feel like with that, guys are more inclined to steal, which maybe is great for the fans but not for a catcher."

EICKHOFF: "Holding runners is a key way to prevent stolen bases. When you're forced to throw a pitch at a certain time it affects the randomness of pickoffs or the randomness of holding the runners close."

MARTIN: "I've heard several different umpires say several different things based on what the rule actually is. For me the rules changed three weeks in a row. One week, they said I had to be in the box by 10 seconds, the next week they said I had to be in the box by nine seconds, the week after that they said I had to be alert to the pitcher by nine seconds. So although I was in the

box with two strikes and two outs in a big situation in the game, because I wasn't by the umpire's definition alert to the pitcher, the inning ended and that situation in the game disappeared. I don't know if that should be happening."

EICKHOFF: "Especially in the big leagues, my experience there is, when guys get on base and hits happen – and they're going to happen – big league pitchers slow down. Whether that's actually slowing down between pitches to gather yourself, thinking about executing the next pitch, what have you. There's times I think that's an advantage as a pitcher because you have the ball and the game's dictated by you. This kind of eliminates that."

MARTIN: "I used to be a guy where I would step out of the box, unstrap my gloves, take a big deep breath, get back to the plan, step in the box. Now there's no thinking, because you don't have time. You have your plan in the dugout or on-deck and then once you start walking up to the plate, you know it's going to go quick, bang, bang, bang. So whatever plan you have going up there, you better hope it works. Because there's no time for adjustments. That's what I think is great about baseball. There's adjustments every single pitch and now you've kind of taken that out of the game."

Bottom line, the clock is here to be studied and judged. And it's future?

PEREZ: "I think it's TBD. That's why we're doing it here, to see if it can be implemented at a higher level. This is a learning process for all of us. Who knows what's next? It

hasn't changed anything (for a manager's job) but it puts you in the situation where you have to be aware and make sure the players are aware.

"Hopefully they sit down and see things in scale and find a balance for this. We might end up looking at this as normal two years or a year from now."

MUNSON: "I'm kind of torn. I don't really know if I like it or not. But it doesn't matter if I like it. The jury is still out."

BRICE: "I feel like the structure right now isn't going to work. It needs to be retooled. But I can see where the potential could be there to help the game in terms of time. Do I think whatever's going on now is going to work in the major leagues? Absolutely not. When you play in the major leagues it's a chess match. I don't think there's any room for speeding the game up and almost taking thinking out of the play."

ALLDRED: "I wouldn't make it permanent. For the most part we're trying get outs up there, we're not really worried about how quick or how slow we're going. That's just something we're going to have to deal with."

MEYER: "I couldn't even gauge the temperature of the water on that subject. I'm not against it. I definitely understand it. Those (quick) games were nice. I will say, now that we've gotten better at it, the games do run a little bit better. I think my mind is changing on it, I'm just not sure where I land on it."

DELAV: "I like it in some form. I don't love all of the rules we have this year. Maybe that's just we haven't adjusted properly. Everyone loves quick games but I don't know if the pitch clock is the answer."

MARTIN: "For me personally my motto is I don't care what the rules rule, I'll play by them. I don't know the rules and I don't really know the people who do make the rules. In years past I did know the rules."

EICKHOFF: "We're Triple-A. This is one step away from the big leagues and this isn't happening in the big leagues. I know they have to try things but I think it's also unfair to us to have us do this here and then go to the big league and things are

completely different. If you're going to have these trial runs, I think it needs to be at the lower levels."

Lewandowski understands this rainbow of feelings. He began as a skeptic, too.

"As a traditionalist and a purist I was certainly against it," he said. "The time of game matters but it's the pace of game that matters even more. One is subjective and one is objective. The clock is an object, so we need to be careful not to get so objective."

In other words, the clock can't totally dictate the sport. Baseball isn't built that way. "It's a great game. They've been playing it hundreds of years. Don't mess it up," Lewandowski said. But all he need do is look at the stands of Victory Field to know that faster-paced games can be a positive in today's culture, and might even be mandatory.

"If a game drags for 3 ½ hours, people are going to go, 'was that a good experience, or did I miss something because I felt like had to leave early and didn't stay for the end of the game?' Whereas they feel like they can stay for a 2 ½ hour game," he said, calling a game time of 2:30 to 2:40 "probably the sweet spot for everybody. That's for the players, that's for the staff, that's for the business side, that's for the fans."

And so far in 2022, the pitch clock is providing a lot of days with sweet spots. The muscles are not so tight for the seventh inning stretch. But don't put off that last trip for ice cream too long.

"I heard an interesting comment from a major league side person that it's generational, too," Lewandowski said. "As we educate the younger players getting into the professional ranks about the pace and the clocks it'll become second nature. It'll just become what they're used to."

"It's an acclimation period just like any other rule. I just think we all have to be patient and let it run its course and settle it. We're all creatures of habit. You resist change, then you start to comply with that change, then you accept the change. We're still in the early phase of the change cycle."

VISITORS AT THE VIC



Columbus Clippers

Cleveland Guardians Triple-A affiliate since 2009, West Division
June 7-12

Get to Know 'Em: The Columbus Clippers were founded in 1977 and as an International League squad, didn't play Indianapolis until the Triple-A Alliance from 1988-91 and again since 1998 when the Indians moved into the IL. Indy has a rich history against Columbus-based baseball teams other than the Clippers, however, as it played the Columbus Senators from 1902-30, Columbus Red Birds from 1931-54 and Columbus Jets in 1963. The Clippers ended the 2021 campaign in fifth place of the Triple-A East Midwest Division with a 59-68 record for their first sub-.500 season since 2013. Since 1988, Indianapolis is 218-239 (.477) against the Clippers, including a 113-109 (.509) record at home.

Players to Watch: The 2022 Clippers could feature some veteran players such as outfielder Daniel Johnson, catcher Sandy Leon and left-hander Alex Young along with top-end organizational prospects like middle infielder Tyler Freeman (No. 1), shortstop Brayan Rocchio (No. 3), outfielder George Valera (No. 4) and third baseman Nolan Jones (No. 6). Outfielder Will Benson hit 14 home runs with Double-A Akron and added three more homers late in the season with Columbus, too. Two southpaws, Logan T. Allen (No. 9) and Juan Hillman, could be mainstays in their starting rotation. Allen went 9-0 with a 2.26 ERA (28er/111.1ip) and 143 strikeouts in his professional debut season while Hillman amassed a 10-4 record, 3.77 ERA (45er/107.1ip) and 85 strikeouts in Double-A last season.

League Championships (11): 1979, 1980, 1981, 1987, 1991, 1992, 1996, 2010, 2011, 2015, 2019 (International League)



Memphis Redbirds

St. Louis Cardinals Triple-A affiliate since 1998, West Division
June 21-26

Get to Know 'Em: The Memphis Redbirds were announced as an expansion team of the Pacific Coast League in 1998 and have been the top affiliate of the St. Louis Cardinals ever since. In 2000, Memphis won the PCL championship and earned the right to play the Indianapolis Indians – the International League champions – in the Triple-A World Series held in Las Vegas, Nev. It was the first and only time in history where Indianapolis and Memphis have faced each other. The Redbirds had LF Albert Pujols in their lineup for all four games, but the Indians prevailed to win the Triple-A World Series, three games to one.

Players to Watch: 2B Jose Rondon signed a minor league contract with the Cardinals in December 2020 and has made a quick impact with Memphis this season, driving in 16 runs in the first 18 games to tie for first in the Triple-A East in RBI. No longer a prospect but a name Indians fans will recognize is switch-hitting utilityman Max Moroff, who was signed to a minor league deal by St. Louis this offseason and had his contract selected by the big-league club on May 14. He appeared in 258 games for Indy from 2016-18 and hit 29 home runs while driving in 120 runs. In seven games with Memphis, Moroff continued his dominant Triple-A hitting, batting .538 (14-for-26) with four home runs and nine RBI to earn his MLB promotion.

League Championships (4): 2000, 2009, 2017, 2018 (Pacific Coast League)

VISITORS AT THE VIC



Iowa Cubs

Chicago Cubs Triple-A affiliate since 1981, West Division
July 4, July 6-10

Get to Know 'Em: The Iowa Oaks were founded in 1969 and kept that name through the 1981 season. Then in 1982, Iowa adopted the Cubs nickname after becoming the Triple-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs the year prior. Indianapolis and Iowa were both members of the American Association from 1969-97, but Indy joined the International League and Iowa went to the Pacific Coast League when the American Association disbanded ahead of the 1998 campaign. Since 1988, Indianapolis is 91-65 (.583) against Iowa, including a 50-27 (.649) record in Indy.

Players to Watch: The Cubs farm system is led by LHP Brailyn Marquez (No. 1) who started the season on the development list and C Miguel Amaya (No. 3) who is hitting .226 (12-for-53) with Double-A Tennessee. Both Marquez and Amaya could be wearing an I-Cubs uniform, midseason, when Iowa comes to Indianapolis for the first time since 1997. Marquez made his MLB debut last summer and has touched 102 mph on the radar gun. During Indy's first series at Iowa, I-Cubs OF Rafael Ortega (3 HR, 4 RBI) and 3B Abiatal Avelino (1 grand slam, 5 RBI) led the offense.

League Championships (1): 1993 (American Association)



St. Paul Saints

Minnesota Twins Triple-A affiliate since 2021, West Division
July 22-24

Get to Know 'Em: The St. Paul Saints were in affiliated baseball as a member of the American Association from 1902-60 and played Indianapolis during that time. Throughout that era, the Saints were affiliated with the White Sox (1936-42), Brooklyn Dodgers (1944-57) and Los Angeles Dodgers (1958-60). In 1961, the St. Paul franchise moved to Omaha and there was no professional baseball in the city until 1993. A new Saints organization returned and played independent ball in the Northern League (1993-2005) and American Association (2006-20) before joining the Triple-A East as the affiliate of the Minnesota Twins prior to the 2021 campaign. Dating back to 1938, the Indians are 247-257 against the Saints with a 7-5 record this season.

Players to Watch: The Twins farm system is currently led by SS Royce Lewis (No. 1, MLB Pipeline), who has spent the entire season on the 60-day injured list after tearing his ACL in the offseason. They recently improved their depth in the minors, adding Toronto's 2020 first-round draft pick, SS/OF Austin Martin (No. 2), and RHP Simeon Woods Richardson (No. 3) at the trade deadline on July 30. Both acquisitions have been assigned to Double-A Wichita, with Martin owning a .281 average (55-for-196) in 55 games and Richardson going 2-4 with a 5.76 ERA (29er/45.1ip) and 67 strikeouts in 11 starts at that level this season.

League Championships (2): 1948 (affiliated American Association) and 2019 (independent American Association)

QUICK HITTERS WITH CODY BOLTON

Bolton spoke on growing as a pitcher, video games, riding BMX bikes and more

Three years, a canceled minor league season and season-ending knee injury later, Indianapolis Indians' Opening Day starter Cody Bolton returned to the mound for the first time since 2019 and has flourished in a hybrid role for the Triple-A pitching staff this season. We sat down with the 23-year-old to talk about baseball and what life is like outside of the diamond.

Q: What is one thing that you have learned already this season?

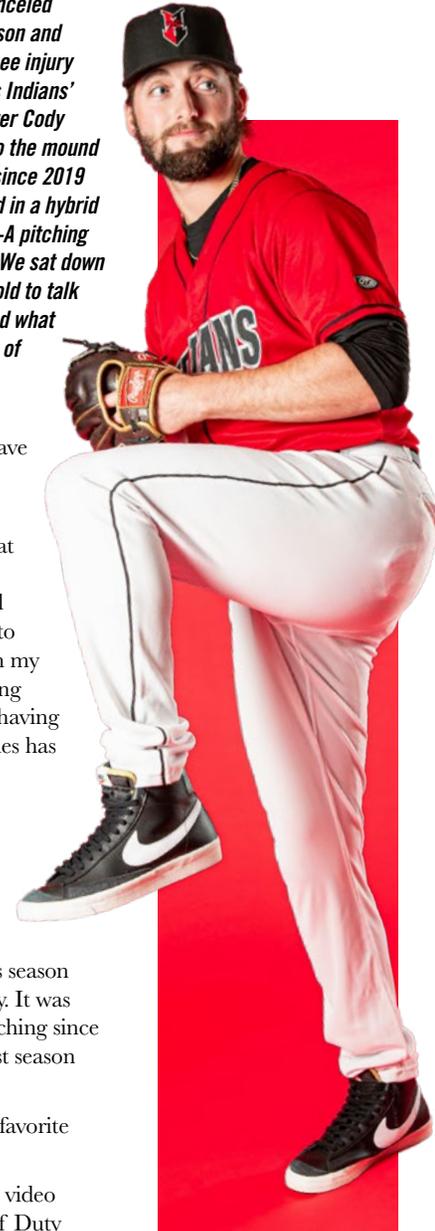
CB: Knowing that the hitters are good at this level and that I need to attack them with my best stuff. Building confidence and having trust in my pitches has helped.

Q: What is your favorite baseball memory?

CB: My first outing with Indianapolis this season on Opening Day. It was my first time pitching since missing all of last season with an injury.

Q: What is your favorite hobby?

CB: I like to play video games — Call of Duty



in particular. During the pandemic, I got into streaming on Twitch when I played.

Q: Favorite ballpark food?

CB: Hot dog.

Q: Where did you grow up and what is something you liked to do there?

CB: My family moved to California when I was nine years old. I enjoyed riding BMX bikes with my buddies on the block.

Q: Favorite movie?

CB: Gladiator

Q: What career path would you have taken if you weren't playing baseball?

CB: I would be a firefighter because I like to help people.

Q: Favorite pitcher to watch growing up?

CB: Adam Wainwright, my dad is a Cardinals fan so I grew up watching him pitch. I also enjoyed watching Madison Bumgarner because I was a Giants fan growing up.

Q: What is your goal for this season?

CB: My goal is to make it to the big leagues this season, and I hope to stay there.



THIS DAY IN INDIANS HISTORY

Baseball history runs deep in Indianapolis. Now in the 120th season of Indianapolis Indians baseball, the club has had its fair share of iconic moments and baseball stars come through the Circle City. We highlighted some of the top moments in team history for the months of June and July.

JUNE 1, 1997



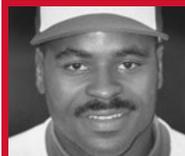
The Indians won 3-0 and 4-0 in a doubleheader sweep over Nashville at Victory Field, which led the American Association Eastern Division at the time. Scott Kligenbeck tossed 6.0 scoreless innings in Game 1 and Scott Service earned his seventh save of the year in the 3-0 win. In the nightcap, right-hander Brett Tomko improved to 6-3 with 6.0 three-hit innings and Felix Rodriguez finished off the 4-0 win. Eric Owens and Tim Belk each had multiple hits in the opener, with Belk driving in a run on the only home run of the day. Pat Watkins and Aaron Boone led the offense with multi-hit games to end the twin bill.

JUNE 3, 2016

The Indians carried a 10-2 lead through six innings at Toledo, but the Mud Hens scored one in the seventh, three in the eighth and four in the ninth, with the game-tying swing being a grand slam by Jordany Valdespin off Arquimedes Caminero. Both teams traded single runs in the 11th inning before Indy hung a five-spot in the top of the 13th to win 16-11. Indians second baseman Alen Hanson hit a three-run homer off Logan Kensing in the final frame and finished with a game-high tying four RBI alongside Danny Ortiz.



JUNE 11, 1990



Indians center fielder Quinn Mack finished 5-for-6 with two doubles, two RBI and three runs scored as Indy won big in Oklahoma City, 13-1. The Indians tallied 20 hits with the lone home run coming from Mel Houston, his first and only dinger of the season in 106 games.

JUNE 14, 1973

In front of 8,526 fans at Bush Stadium, home runs from George Foster and Joel Youngblood led the Indians to a 10th-inning exhibition victory over the Cincinnati Reds, 8-7. Pete Rose went 3-for-3 with a home run for the big-league club. For the Indians, Hal King, Jim Driscoll and Youngblood each had two hits.



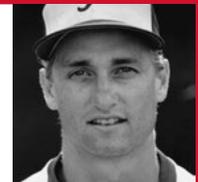
JUNE 28, 2009



In his first appearance with the Indians since Aug. 31, 2005 vs. Toledo, right-hander Ian Snell again toed the rubber vs. the Mud Hens for a history-making outing. Snell struck out a Victory Field era record 17 batters in 7.0 two-hit innings as the Indians won, 2-1, in 10 innings against their divisional rival. The record-setting performance didn't stop there as 13 of those strikeouts were consecutive, another Victory Field era best.

JUNE 30, 1990

The Indians prevailed at Iowa in 14 innings, 5-4, behind an 18-hit attack. Indianapolis sent the game to extras by scoring one in the ninth to make it 3-3, and both teams traded single runs in the 12th to extend the game further. Indy left 19 runners on base to Iowa's eight in the triumph. Center fielder Steve Hecht finished 3-for-8 with a double, RBI, two runs scored and a stolen base atop Indy's lineup.



JULY 2, 1997



Pedro Martinez tossed the first of four 9.0-inning complete games in 1997 for the Indians in a 9-0 shutout at Nashville. He improved to 2-1 on the season after giving up six hits and two walks while striking out two. The Indians offense backed him with one run in the fourth and sixth innings before erupting with seven runs in the seventh to put the game out of reach. Brian Hunter and Ozzie Timmons both smacked three-run homers in the seventh to lead the team with three RBI apiece, while Pat Watkins and Eric Owens were the only Indy players with multi-hit games.

JULY 10, 1998

The Indians won a 12-inning, four-hour game vs. Norfolk on a two-run, walk-off home run by Jon Nunnally. He went 4-for-5 in the game with three RBI and was a triple shy of the cycle. It was Indy's second game back from the All-Star break, and Nunnally went a combined 6-for-10 with three doubles, a home run and three RBI in those two games combined.



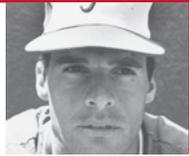
JULY 13, 2013



After the Indians' July 10 game at Huntington Park was suspended, Columbus and Indy picked up where they left off three days later at Victory Field and battled out a 16-inning game that lasted 5 hours and 32 minutes. Down 4-3 entering the ninth, Jared Goedert hit a solo home run to tie the game. The teams traded runs in the 14th and 15th innings before Indy put up three runs in the 16th inning behind a two-run home run by Brian Bocoock. The Indians had 19 hits to Columbus' eight with seven players recording two-plus knocks, including a game-high four by first baseman Jerry Sands.

JULY 18, 1986

Tom Romano (2x), Luis Rivera (2x), Herm Winningham (2x), Derrell Baker and Dallas Williams each stole bases to lead the Indians to a team-record eight bases swiped in an 8-6 win over Oklahoma City. Romano also went 3-for-3 and drove in four runs in the win.



JULY 23, 2001



With 22 hits in a 15-6 win vs. Toledo, the Indians set a new Victory Field era record for the most hits in a single game. Of those 22 team hits, eight were doubles and one was a home run. The effort was highlighted by first baseman Larry Jacobsen, who went 3-for-4 with two RBI and three runs scored on three doubles. Indy's No. 8 and 9 hitters – Elvis Pena and Robinson Cancel – tallied four hits apiece.

JULY 30, 2017

Tyler Glasnow struck out 12 batters through 6.1 innings for his fifth of seven 10+ strikeout games on the season. After taking a 1-0 lead in the second inning, Pawtucket tied the game in the seventh. Both teams traded runs in the 10th, and Kevin Newman singled home Eric Wood to give the Indians a 3-2 win in the 12th frame. The bullpen excelled, adding seven strikeouts to Glasnow's 12 to set a season high of 19 strikeouts by the Indians staff in one game. The 19 strikeouts set a new Victory Field era home record and was one strikeout shy of the overall Victory Field era record, set on Aug. 15, 2003 in Game 1 of a doubleheader at Charlotte.





The Way Out

Nathan Kirby's Climb out of Injury Limbo and the Minor League Ladder

Eight years after being drafted, Nathan Kirby has cracked the top ranks of MiLB

By Anna Kayser



Nathan Kirby's journey to standing on the penultimate rung of the big-league ladder has been unconventional, probably a bit of a statistical anomaly, and as he describes it – a rolling nightmare.

Now, for the second time in eight minor league seasons, he's doing what he does best.

"It's just awesome to be able to have fun again, it's all I wanted to do," Kirby said. "I'm a hyper-competitive individual and just want to go out and compete, have fun and earn a spot somewhere. That's the whole goal and all I've really wanted to do, and to finally be able to do it – I'm blessed to be in the position I am after having been where I've been. Statistically, it doesn't happen."

June 8 marked the seven-year anniversary of the 2015 Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft. In a year in which Dansby Swanson went No. 1 overall and the Pittsburgh Pirates selected Kevin Newman and Ke'Bryan Hayes in the first round, Nathan Kirby broke through from the University of Virginia to the Milwaukee Brewers farm system as the No. 40 overall pick.

He was an impressive product of James River High School in Buchanan, Va. even before his three collegiate campaigns, being named the 2012 Virginia Gatorade Player of the Year during his senior season. As a Cavalier, he was twice named as a First-Team All-ACC mem-



ber, tossed a no-hitter with 18 strikeouts at the University of Pittsburgh and earned the save in Game 3 to clinch the 2015 College World Series.

“I was definitely a different human,” Kirby said. “I had a lot of confidence – some arrogance – but I got the ego check pretty hard when I got drafted.”

At the time, the left-hander had been dealing with arm injuries behind closed doors and failed his physical coming out of the draft with a tear in his ulnar collateral ligament. The best course of action directed by a team of physicians, keeping in mind that his case was asymptomatic at the time, was to move forward with his budding career.

After just five appearances with Single-A Wisconsin in 2015, he underwent Tommy John surgery on Sept. 1.

“It was a unique time and a big learning time for me on just what baseball really is,” Kirby said.

That extended stay on the injured list soon turned into what felt like a lifetime. Twenty-one months following the first surgery of his professional baseball career, after coming almost all the way back from Tommy John surgery, Kirby underwent a second opera-

tion on his left ulnar nerve and remained in rehab for the entire 2017 season.

In his third season in minor league baseball, a campaign in which the southpaw could have reached the heights of Double-A – along with a handful of those in his draft class two years prior – he had only thrown 12.2 professional innings in his career.

“If I said I never had doubts, I’d be completely lying,” Kirby said. “I definitely had no idea what to do. I had a lot of people helping me with the mental side of things be-



cause I really had no idea how to handle it.”

Kirby returned to the mound in 2018, jumping into game action immediately on High-A Carolina’s Opening Day roster. He made 11 consecutive starts from April 8 (1)-June 2 before flourishing in a bullpen

role for the remainder of the season. He earned his first professional win on June 7 in a career-high 4.0 relief innings – a mark he would match three additional times over the course of the season.

And he was in a good place, mentally. For the first time as a pro-baller, Kirby was healthy, having fun and tapping into his hyper-competitive potential with consistent, confident appearances.

“In 2018, I had a lot of fun,” Kirby said. “I went through some shoulder soreness, but that was a great team, a great manager and I had a great pitching coach. It was a great time to be able to get back out there.

“Unfortunately, then I had surgery and the pandemic happened and I really struggled mentally.”

Prior to his likely 2019 Double-A campaign, Kirby began waking up every morning with numbness in his arm and lost his feel for the baseball completely. He then underwent surgery for Thoracic Outlet Syndrome – an injury common in pitchers in which the nerves and blood vessels around the collarbone are compressed – in April.

At a minimum, Kirby was set to be sidelined for the next three months – a timeline roughly outlined by Major League Baseball, estimated as few pitchers actually undergo the procedure. Then, in August, he suffered a stress fracture in his ribs and missed the remainder of the regular minor league season and Arizona Fall League campaign.

“I had so much doubt, and it kind of felt like a rolling nightmare for a little while,” Kirby said. “It felt like it just kept happening and I couldn’t get out of the nightmare. It’s not that I still have doubts, but it’s just something that I deal with – I have to trust

that my body works every day and I have to prepare a little bit more every day than I used to.”

At this point in his career, four years later, five minor league seasons and at a time when many in his draft class had either already debuted with their respective big-league clubs or were just on the cusp of achieving that goal, Kirby was awaiting his crack at a healthy Double-A campaign.

The rolling nightmare continued, and a now-healthy Kirby was sidelined yet again by a beast of fates design. On June 30, months after baseball in 2020 was effectively shut down due to the emergence of COVID-19, the Minor League Baseball season was cancelled.

“I really struggled mentally,” Kirby said. “I thought about quitting.

“But I started throwing again at the end of the year and picked myself up. It was a really tough time for me mentally, but I was living with my now-fiancée, and we got a dog. I kind of got away from baseball and then found my love for it again when I came back.”

With that decision to come back to baseball meant a concentrated effort to get back to what he loved doing, even with the creeping feeling that he was a step behind everyone else.

On the other side of another two-year hiatus, Kirby began the 2021 season with Double-A Biloxi. Through July 4, he ranked sixth among Double-A South relievers (min. 18.0 innings) with a 1.93 ERA (4er/18.2ip) and 19 strikeouts in 17 appearances.

“I felt like I was a freshman in the world of baseball again,” Kirby said. “There was a lot going on. I feel like I didn’t really relax until this year, honestly. I felt like I was always behind the eight ball with things, having to learn how to play after I had missed four years. Learning how to play at a Double-A level with these guys that had been doing it and hadn’t missed much time, it felt like a heavy year.”

He was then traded to Pittsburgh on July 6 in exchange for infielder Kevin Kramer. Even though his ERA jumped up to 4.26

(18er/38.0ip) for the season, his strikeout count nearly doubled in the same number of appearances with Double-A Altoona.

“Getting through [that season] – getting through the end of it – was just a really big confidence boost, like ‘I can do this, I can trust my body,’” Kirby said. “This year has been more about having fun, being competitive, playing for the team, doing my job and trying to stay consistently healthy and consistent on the field.”

The bounce back to having fun and competing at a high level was a combination of his mentality and physicality. His body needed to move differently than it had in the past, and with that came a strain.

In addition to just moving his body more – realizing he had previously been living a “sedentary lifestyle” – an important lesson Kirby learned from rehab and his numerous hurdles was recognizing the difference between general soreness and the pain of an impending injury.

“That was the big thing, making it through last year and learning how my body reacted to things,” Kirby said. “I think the one thing that you develop in rehab – for better or worse, and I think it’s for

worse the longer you’re in there – is just an internal awareness of your body. If you use it in a good way, it can be harnessed and used as a good thing, but also mentally draining.

“I don’t want to call it anxiety, but I think that it has created some anxiety within the game for me especially because I have to carry that all the time. It’s really a day-to-day thing – I wake up and ask myself how I’m feeling, where I’m tight, and usually attack it from there. It’s just starting from the bottom up and treating every day like it’s a new day.”

Now, he’s one step away from a dream

that, at times, didn’t feel like it would ever come to fruition.

After cracking Indianapolis’ Opening Day roster in 2022, Kirby has compiled a 2.74 ERA (7er/23.0ip) through 15 games (four opener appearances) this season. Three of his earned runs have come in 6.1 innings as an opener.

“I think that I can improve greatly on a bunch of things, namely, to make pitching easier on myself,” Kirby said. “I’m really happy and really proud of myself, just the way I’ve handled the positions that I’ve put myself. I believe that if you keep your goals and the things that you’re focused on team-oriented, on the bad days that you have individually the team carries the weight of those losses instead of you as an individual.”

Now, one year removed from a season in which the No. 1 overall pick from the 2015 First-Year Player Draft was crowned a World Series Champion, Kirby has thrown 144.2 professional innings in eight years. Looking back at that college-aged kid who got chosen in the first round – young, dumb and ignorant, as Kirby

describes his past self – it seems like a lifetime as passed.

For the now-28-year-old, that ignorance has faded way to a confidence that only comes when you’re forced to trust in yourself, a ladder he’s used to claw his way out of the depths of injury defeat time and time again.

“I learned a lot from the outside looking in about baseball and life,” Kirby said. “I feel very appreciative of everything that’s happened, everyone that I’ve met and I’ll I’ve learned. It’s wild to look back, it feels like forever ago. I guess it was.”





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