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- Chicago Tribune, Joe Maddon's advice to struggling Cubs youngsters: 'Try to keep anger out of it'

- Chicago Tribune, Cubs' bullpen holds off Red Sox, extends scoreless streak to 16 innings

- Chicago Sun-Times, Arc of Theo: Why 2016 ring has goat but 2004 ring has no Bambino

- Chicago Sun-Times, Maddon sees young Cubs, Red Sox on World Series collision course

- Daily Herald, 7th-inning rally propels Cubs to win over Boston
  http://www.dailyherald.com/sports/20170429/7th-inning-rally-propels-cubs-to-win-over-boston

- Daily Herald, Veteran Cubs looking just as good as youngsters

- Daily Herald, Ostrowski: Imagining a Cubs-Red Sox World Series

- Cubs.com, Cubs get even at Fenway with a little help

- Cubs.com, Montero a calming presence on both sides

- Cubs.com, Epstein, Vedder rock out for good cause

- Cubs.com, Maddon preaches patience with Baez

- Cubs.com, Hendricks faces Red Sox for first time in finale

- ESPNChicago.com, Prodigal son Theo Epstein returns home to Fenway Park
Kyle Schwarber single punctuates Cubs' 7-4 comeback victory over Red Sox
By Mark Gonzales

Kyle Schwarber broke out from survival mode Saturday to sheer satisfaction with one protective swing.

Schwarber poked a low and outside 0-2 pitch from left-hander Robby Scott into shallow center field for a single to score the go-ahead run in the seventh inning. It was a highlight of the three-run rally that enabled the Cubs to treasure a 7-4 comeback triumph over the Red Sox at Fenway Park.

Schwarber’s hit provided relief from his struggles and those of his teammates, who overcame a 3-0 deficit against knuckleball maven Steven Wright while angry John Lackey vocally sparred with home plate umpire Bill Welke in the first and parried a Red Sox lineup that couldn’t knock him out.

The Cubs’ comeback victory featured home runs from Anthony Rizzo, Miguel Montero (a game-tying shot in the seventh) and Ben Zobrist, but Schwarber’s hit eased plenty of tension.

"It’s great to see him hang in there like that," manager Joe Maddon said of Schwarber, who was 1-for-16 with nine strikeouts before collecting his game-winning hit. "He has been struggling a bit, a lot of swings and misses going on.

"But he’s like a shooting guard in basketball. He has to keep swinging. He has to keep shooting. It’s going to come to him. And when it does, the ball is going to fly very far. I love he doesn’t get beaten by it. He doesn’t get down, just upset with himself, which I’m good with because he doesn’t get angry."

The left-handed hitting slugger was 4-for-22 with 10 strikeouts against lefties before fouling off a slider and then swinging under a fastball from Scott for his single.

"Once you get (to 0-2), it’s straight battle mode," Schwarber said. "You’re trying to put the ball in play any way possible and put pressure on the defense. That’s what happened. Butt out, flip it out where they’re not. I’ll take it."

After rounding first base, Schwarber clapped his hands vigorously as he retreated to the bag. His hit came less than 24 hours after he struck out four times against three left-handed pitchers, including Scott.

"I was more worried about trying to get (Jon Jay) in," said Schwarber, who referred to Wright's knuckleball as "some funky stuff."

"I didn’t really care who was out there at the time. I was glad I could get the job done."

Lackey trailed 3-0 after three innings but avoided giving up a knockout hit while Montero told Welke he would handle his pitcher.

"Johnny definitely orbits in a different manner," said Maddon, who has known Lackey since 2002 with the Angels.

"I believe those pitches were borderline," Montero said. "The reality is he threw too many good pitches to hit. As the game went on, he was better."

Zobrist’s defense at second base helped Lackey earn the victory as he prevented Dustin Pedroia from trying to slide around him with a shoulder tag that wiped out Pedroia’s attempt to stretch a single into a double to open the sixth.
In the eighth, Zobrist moved to left field and played the carom perfectly on a Mookie Betts single off the Green Monster that prevented Betts from attempting to advance to second. The play helped set up an inning-ending double play.

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Chicago Tribune
Red Sox expatriates with Cubs having ball in much-hyped return to Fenway
By Paul Sullivan

Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia was talking the other day about how strange it was going to be facing former teammate John Lackey and seeing so many old Boston friends during the Cubs’ trip to Fenway Park.

"There are a ton of people over there that a lot of us have good relationships with," Pedroia said. "For me, facing 'Lack' is going to be weird. He's like family."

Like many family reunions, this one began with a lot of hugs Friday afternoon and probably will end with everyone exhausted and ready to leave by Sunday night.

Here’s a scorecard of how the former Red Sox have fared thus far during their return to Fenway:

• Theo Epstein: The master of ceremonies has been a busy man, catching up with old friends and co-hosting the Hot Stove Cool Music charity event on Saturday night at a Boston club.

This weekend has been "The Theo Show" for the most part. Red Sox outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr., whom Epstein drafted, recalled the last time he saw his old boss at an awards banquet over the winter.

"He won a World Series award, and lot of different things — most powerful man in the world, or something like that," Bradley said with a grin.

The most powerful man in the world brought his 2016 World Series ring to Boston to let his dad wear it, and jammed with Eddie Vedder. He accidentally walked into a utility closet in the visitors clubhouse on Friday, but recovered with only a minor bruise to his ego.

Epstein’s twin brother, Paul, was asked Saturday what he thought of the "Draft Epstein" movement that included "Theo for President" bumper stickers given away outside Fenway.

"As Theo said, 'Ridiculous,'" Paul said, before adding he got one for their mom.

Theo basically has served as a chamber of commerce spokesman for both Chicago and Boston.

"I don’t know if I could go anywhere else, to a run-of-the-mill baseball market and work, because it would probably feel like work," he said. "And in Boston and Chicago it doesn't feel like work. It feels like a privilege, like you're part of family when you're with the Red Sox and the Cubs, respectively."

• John Lackey: Notched the victory in the Cubs’ 7-4 triumph Saturday, a day in which he served up three home runs, jawed at the plate umpire after the first and yelled a profanity so loud after the fifth it could be heard in the press box high above the field. Just a normal day for Lackey.

"Johnny definitely orbits in a different manner," manager Joe Maddon said.

Lackey said he texted Pedroia "on the way to the yard," calling him "a guy I respect about as much as you could respect somebody as a teammate. ... You like to go to battle with a guy like that. You know he's going to bring it."

• Anthony Rizzo: The one-time Boston prospect never got a chance to play in Fenway in a Red Sox uniform, but homered off knuckleballer Steven Wright on Saturday to ignite the comeback.
"People breathe sports in Chicago and Boston," Rizzo said. "It’s cool to see people excited the Cubs are in town, and overhearing people talking about it. Two great cities — good food, and good sports."

• Jon Lester: Unfortunately the Cubs switched Jake Arrieta and Lester in the rotation, depriving us of a Lester start at Fenway. Though Lester could relax, Boston was deprived of the drama accompanying a start at Fenway. Maybe October.

• Koji Uehara: The former Red Sox closer pitched a perfect seventh inning Saturday, and said afterward it wasn’t hard to leave "because the Cubs wanted me, and going to a team that really wanted me was the best choice for me."

• Jed Hoyer: Once again swallowed up by the tsunami of media attention directed at Epstein, the Cubs general manager was able to enjoy himself in peace.

• Eric Hinske: The Cubs coach and former Red Sox player enjoyed annoying his old pals by repeatedly yelling "Tom Bradley is a cheat-uh," in a Boston accent, purposely mispronouncing Tom Brady's name.

Somehow it never got old.

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Chicago Tribune
Joe Maddon’s advice to struggling Cubs youngsters: 'Try to keep anger out of it'
By Mark Gonzales

Cubs manager Joe Maddon sensed there would be some rough patches that his young players would experience, even after many of them excelled during their run to the 2016 World Series title.

That moment has arrived, and Maddon is the least surprised.

"Even coming off a World Series victory, each year presents differently," Maddon said Saturday. "They’re all going to be fine. They’re going to show their goods in a short period of time. But when they struggle, no one expects them to struggle after what they did last year. I did."

Maddon stressed it's important to keep emotions out of the equation.

"Try easier and try to keep anger out of it," Maddon said. "When you start getting angry at a umpire or someone else, it’s a bad emotion to take into a game. Anger never works. If you’re upset with yourself, talk to yourself but you need to come back quickly."

Maddon recalled being involved in stressful moments, such as the seventh game of the 2002 World Series as a coach with the Angels, the seventh game of the 2008 American League Championship Series with the Rays, and the 2016 World Series with the Cubs.

"It’s crazy, it’s exhilarating," Maddon said. "Of course you want to come out on top. It’s always good for the sport and industry."

And he’d rather be in the middle of a seventh game than enjoying a specific meal.

"Have a nice glass and cooking a steak in the backyard, who wants to do that?" Maddon smirked. "I’d rather be sweating it out in the corner of a dugout."
Manager Joe Maddon estimated it would take about one month to figure out the best spots to use the Cubs’ relievers.

But their gradual effectiveness after a slow start has given Maddon plenty of options.

That’s been evident recently, especially after Koji Uehara, Hector Rondon and Wade Davis pitched the final three innings of a 7-4 comeback win over the Red Sox on Saturday.

The Cubs’ bullpen extended its scoreless streak to to 16 innings dating back to Sunday at Cincinnati.

"We’re at that point where guys are starting to get into that thing," Maddon said after Davis converted his sixth save in as many chances.

It’s become more evident that Maddon has shown more faith in a wide cast of relievers to deploy them in any situation and "not wear anyone out."

In his return to Fenway Park, Uehara, 42, pitched a perfect seventh and hasn’t been scored upon in 10 of his 11 appearances.

"I want to use him in right moments," Maddon said.

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Twelve years after he helped the Red Sox break the Curse of the Bambino as a 30-year-old, second-year general manager, Epstein’s influence on Chicago’s curse-busting rise was so thorough and pervasive that it included interior space designs in the Cubs’ new office building and clubhouse, and the idea to put the goat on the inside of the Cubs’ World Series rings.

If he’d had the same kind of influence in 2004, would those Red Sox rings have included a silhouette of Babe Ruth?

“I just think we were new at it back then and didn’t know all the possibilities,” Epstein said. “Having the Bambino on there definitely would have been cool. He’s a little bigger than a goat, though. ...Hard to fit on a ring.”
Epstein brought his new ring in his first professional return to Boston since leaving his hometown team for the Cubs in the fall of 2011.

While Epstein’s mother and brother scooped up “Theo for President” bumper stickers being distributed around Fenway Park this weekend, his dad was able to hold and compare the two most historic rings in baseball and take pictures wearing both. Theo gave him his first ring in 2004.

Epstein said this week that he has grown up a lot since the formative years of his career with the Red Sox — “at least I hope I have.”

That includes how he evaluates players. And, he said, how he picks his battles has evolved.

Even in the few days after the Cubs’ Game 7 victory in Cleveland last fall, Epstein said: “Winning at 42 vs. 30, I have a greater appreciation for how hard it is. And how many people have to contribute and how lucky you have to get along the way, too. I feel like I appreciate this more now than I did back in ’04.”

As the deeply rooted Boston part of his career converged with the fresher, passionate Chicago part this weekend, he reflected on the only part that seemed clear about whatever might come next in his career:

“I don’t know that I could go anywhere else, just a run-of-the-mill baseball market and work,” he said. “Because it would probably feel like work. In Boston and Chicago, it doesn’t feel like work. It feels like privilege.”

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Chicago Sun-Times
Maddon sees young Cubs, Red Sox on World Series collision course
By Gordon Wittenmyer

BOSTON — The buzz this weekend is all about old friends, old haunts and old times.

But it’s a much younger vibe that manager Joe Maddon buzzes about whenever he’s asked about the Cubs and the Red Sox, who have split the first two games of a wildly hyped series at Fenway Park.

One night after a comeback fell short in a one-run loss, the Cubs came from three runs back to beat knuckleballer Steven Wright and the Red Sox 7-4 on Saturday.

The two oldest Cubs, starter John Lackey (2-3) and reliever Koji Uehara, combined to pitch the first seven innings, and the two oldest hitters, Ben Zobrist and Miguel Montero, each homered in the comeback Saturday.

But for two games, some of the best young players in the game showed the kind of impact that made these teams trendy preseason picks to meet in the World Series six months from now.

“It would be so cool,” Maddon said. “When I see this, I just think it’s good for the game, it’s good for the industry when people can watch a game like this, see young players on both sides that the fans can identify with play baseball so well.”

For the Cubs, Kyle Schwarber, 24, bounced back from a slow start to single home the go-ahead run in the seventh Saturday; MVP Kris Bryant, 25, hit a long home run Friday and a pair of doubles Saturday; Anthony Rizzo, 27, followed one of those doubles with a two-run homer in the fourth that changed the tone of the game; and Albert Almora, 23, homered over the Green Monster on Friday and had the Cubs’ first hit of the game Saturday.

For the Red Sox, rookie Andrew Benintendi, 22, homered in both games; Mookie Betts, 24, doubled Friday and led off Saturday’s eighth with a drive off the Green Monster in a one-run game; Xander Bogaerts, 24, reached base twice Friday, then tripled and scored Saturday; and Jackie Bradley Jr., 27, had big RBIs in each game.
“Hopefully, this is something we can carry into the future,” Maddon said. “It’d be nice to eventually end up in the last seven games of the year between these two teams.”

This series already is the first time these teams have met at Fenway when both had winning records since 1918, the only time they’ve faced in a World Series.

“They’ve definitely got some young guys on that team. It’s a deep lineup,” said Lackey, who won a World Series with the Red Sox in 2013 and the Cubs last year.

But for all the youth in both lineups, it’s the veteran pitching — certainly for the Cubs — that might have more to say about whether a rematch happens this fall.

That included three Cubs relievers, who were nearly flawless for three innings to extend the bullpen’s scoreless streak to 16 innings over the last six games.

Lackey didn’t give up a first-inning run for the first time in five starts Saturday. But he gave up one in the second after a leadoff walk and two more in the third, missing at times over the plate and getting angry at umpire Bill Welke when he didn’t get calls on the corners.

“He’s always been that guy,” said Maddon, who emphasized before the game that anger doesn’t work in baseball. “You probably got me there. Johnny definitely orbits in a different manner.”

Montero, the veteran catcher, might have been just as important behind the plate as his two-hit game was offensively.

“I just told the umpire, ‘I’ll take care of it,’ ” Montero said of his mediating work for Lackey. “The last thing I wanted to do was get a little retaliation there.”

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Daily Herald
7th-inning rally propels Cubs to win over Boston
By Bruce Miles

BOSTON -- It seemed quite proper for Chicago Cubs manager Joe Maddon to do a little October/November dreaming Saturday.

After all, his defending champions are taking on another talented young team, the Boston Red Sox, in what many prognosticators say could be a Fall Classic matchup.

"I've been a fan of their group for a while," Maddon said before the Cubs beat the Red Sox 7-4 at Fenway Park. "They're just a really, really good group. They've got a great tradition, vibe going on. They're going to be good for many years, also.

"I thought (Friday) night was a really nice first matchup among the youth on both sides. It would be nice to eventually end up in the last seven games of the year between these two teams.”

Whether anybody's heart can take another seven-game World Series is a matter we'll get to later.

But Saturday's game featured Fenway in all its glory on a summerlike late afternoon. Young players from both sides figured into the action.

Andrew Benintendi hit a home run off Cubs starting pitcher John Lackey. Cubs young stars Anthony Rizzo, Kris Bryant and Kyle Schwarber got into the action with Schwarber dunking a single into center field to break a 4-4 tie in the seventh inning to highlight a 3-run rally that brought the Cubs back from being down 4-2 in the sixth. Rizzo hit 1 of 3 Cubs homers, and Bryant had a pair of doubles.
It's been a rough go for Schwarber lately. He went 1-for-5 with 4 strikeouts in Friday night’s 5-4 loss. He flailed away against knuckleballer Steven Wright Saturday, going 0-for-3 with 2 strikeouts before he singled against left-handed reliever Robby Scott, brought in specifically to face Schwarber.

"Little bit of relief," Schwarber said.

No matter what happens in Sunday night’s finale, Schwarber is loving Fenway.

"Oh, it's beautiful," he said. "That's kind of that bucket-list stadium you want to cross off and play at. So whenever you get to come here and play, it's really cool."

Schwarber will trek to the top of the Green Monster in left field sometime Sunday, but he did go inside and sign his name on the inside of the wall.

Lackey, the Cubs' sometimes irascible warhorse, managed to gut out 6 innings to get the win even though he allowed 8 hits and 4 runs. He also exchanged greetings with home-plate umpire Bill Welke over a couple of close calls that didn't go Lackey's way early.

"Just keep fighting," he said. "Until they take the ball from me, keep fighting, keep competing. Try to give your team a chance to win."

The Red Sox did commit 4 errors, but the game was supremely entertaining for the 36,776 in attendance, many of whom were wearing Cubs blue and making their voices heard.

"Two in a row, and I think the fans have been entertained," Maddon said. "When I see this, I just think it's good for the game. It's good for the industry when people can watch a game like this and see young players on both sides the fans can identify with play baseball so well. Of course, you want to win. But beyond all that, the larger picture is two really good teams playing the game properly and hard. Now it's 1 and 1. Let's go for the rubber match tomorrow."

Even after living through the stress of the Cubs' seven-game World Series victory last fall, Maddon says doing it again beats the alternative.

"Doing a steak, having a nice glass of wine, cooking a steak in the backyard, who wants to do that?" he said. "I'd rather be sweating it out in the corner of a dugout. Absolutely."

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**Daily Herald**

Veteran Cubs looking just as good as youngsters

By Bruce Miles

BOSTON -- The Chicago Cubs' young players shined in Saturday's 7-4 victory over the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park, and the veterans didn't fare poorly, either.

Catcher Miguel Montero hit his second homer of the season, and he worked to settle down starting pitcher John Lackey.

The Cubs started Jon Jay in left field and later moved Ben Zobrist from second base to left. Both Jay and Zobrist handled the 37-foot-high Green Monster in left like old hands at it.

Jay played a carom correctly in the sixth inning. Dustin Pedroia led off by hitting the ball off the wall. Jay fielded it and threw out Pedroia as he tried for a double.
Zobrist moved to left in the eighth. The leadoff hitter, Mookie Betts, hit the Monster, but Zobrist played the bounce and held Betts to a single instead of a double. After a forceout, reliever Hector Rondon got Mitch Moreland to ground into a 3-6-3 double play.

Zobrist gave the Cubs an insurance run with a solo homer in the ninth, and he tagged out Pedroia on Jay's play.

"That's a big play by Zo, the last one especially," said manager Joe Maddon. "Zo makes a great tag on the back end of one from Jon and then Zo makes the front end and keeps (Betts' ball) to a single, which pretty much leads to the double play. Stuff like that goes uncharted sometimes."

As for Montero, he homered off knuckleballer Steven Wright and worked Lackey through possible danger with home-plate umpire Bill Welke, who called some borderline pitches balls early in the game.

"I just told the umpire I'll take care of it," Montero said. "The last thing I wanted to do was get a little retaliation. I don't want to do that. Just keep throwing it there because he (Welke) is going to call it (a strike) eventually. And he did."

A break for Baez:

Javier Baez did not start, but he did get into the game as a defensive replacement in the eighth inning. He is batting .203 with 21 strikeouts in 59 at-bats.

"The biggest thing for me with him is you expect to get him back to where he had been offensively with a little bit more control of his strike zone," Joe Maddon said. "And he will. He'll definitely get back to that. But in the meantime, we have all these other options that you just don't have to run somebody into the ground. It's worked out really well, I think, the way it is.

"He had a great camp, a really good camp. I think he might be the proverbial trying a little too hard right now. He's in the moment now here he's taking the pitch he should be swinging at and swinging at the pitch he should not. Happens."

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Daily Herald
Ostrowski: Imagining a Cubs-Red Sox World Series
By Joe Ostrowski

A Cubs vs. Red Sox World Series would have it all. The sort of thing Commissioner Rob Manfred and FOX TV executives' dreams are made of.

It's difficult to watch this weekend series and not fantasize about such a Fall Classic. Especially with the Cubs 2016 and Red Sox 2004 "curse-breaking" trophies side by side.

The World Series trophies made an appearance together at Theo Epstein's charity event on Saturday night. Fans attending the game on Sunday night will have the opportunity to take a once-in-a-lifetime picture with them.

The Ballparks

Wrigley Field and Fenway Park are the two most historic stadiums in Major League Baseball. The Red Sox have been playing in Fenway since 1912. Wrigley opened in 1914, but the Cubs moved there in 1916.

The ongoing renovation at Clark and Addison is modeled after what they did in Boston.

The History
It’s been 99 years since the Cubs and Red Sox met in The Fall Classic. Boston won the 1918 World Series in six games with Hall of Famer Babe Ruth. Cubs home games were played at Comiskey Park because Weeghman Park’s seating capacity was only 14,000.

The 2016 Cubs ended the franchise's 108-year title drought. The 2004 Red Sox won a championship for the first time in 86 years. The "Curse of the Billy Goat" and "Curse of the Bambino" were dead.

America’s Teams

The Cubs and Red Sox were the two favorites to win the World Series coming into the season. These are two of the most popular teams in baseball and all of team sports with very explosive offenses.

Kris Bryant and Dustin Pedroia are league MVP winners. Jake Arrieta, Rick Porcello, and David Price have earned themselves Cy Young Awards.

Chicago-Boston Connections

Theo Epstein will go right into the Hall of Fame after orchestrating three World Series winners with the Red Sox and Cubs. He also deserves some credit for Boston's 2013 championship since he brought in the majority of that roster.

Jon Lester said goodbye to the Red Sox for the Cubs and a six-year, $155 million contract before the 2015 season. Lester's first nine years were in Boston, where he won two of his three titles.

Anthony Rizzo was a sixth round draft pick by Boston in 2007. Rizzo beat Hodgkins lymphoma in 2008, while in the Red Sox organization. Cubs general manager Jed Hoyer traded for Rizzo in San Diego and again two years later, in 2012, to the Cubs.

Chris Sale is the ace of the Red Sox starting rotation after spending seven seasons on the south side. The Sale trade in December kickstarted the White Sox’s rebuild.

John Lackey was the winning pitcher in Boston’s 2013 World Series clinching Game 6.

Be greedy, Cubs fans. You’re dreaming of a dynasty. Pick your World Series opponent while you’re at it.

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Cubs.com
Cubs get even at Fenway with a little help
By Ian Browne and Carrie Muskat

BOSTON -- A resilient Cubs offense grinded its way back from an early three-run deficit on Saturday and made a winner of John Lackey in his return to Fenway Park.

Moments after Miguel Montero hit a game-tying homer in the top of the seventh, Kyle Schwarber’s flare of an RBI single into shallow center put the Cubs ahead for the first time during the crucial three-run rally, and the bullpen held it over the final three innings for Lackey in a 7-4 win over the Red Sox. Boston committed four errors in the game, including a pair in the fateful seventh.

"I said, 'Tip my hat to everyone who hit [Steven Wright] today,'" said Schwarber, who was facing a knuckleball pitcher for the first time. "It’s some funky stuff. I guess that’s why it’s so effective, because it’s so unpredictable. We were able to get to him early, and big homer by [Montero] there and got to the 'pen."

For the second straight day, the two historic franchises played an entertaining game in front of a sold-out crowd that had plenty of supporters for both teams.
A World Series hero for the Red Sox in 2013, Lackey scattered eight hits and four runs over six innings, walking one and striking out four.

"I talked to [Dustin Pedroia] on the way to the yard, sent him out a text," said Lackey. "He texted me back. He's a guy I respect about as much as you can respect a teammate, the way he goes about it. You like to go to battle with a guy like that. He's a great player and you know he's going to be involved and he's going to bring it."

Koji Uehara, another key member of that memorable ‘13 title run, fired a scoreless seventh for Chicago. Wade Davis took care of the ninth for his sixth save.

"It's kind of tough facing a former teammate, but Lack does what he does," said Pedroia. "He gives everything he has. He competes. He's a pretty special teammate to play with. He always gives his team a chance to win. That's what happened today.

"And we've seen that many times with [Uehara]. It's a little different playing against those guys, but you've got to go out and compete and try to win."

Lackey didn't get too sentimental about his return to Fenway.

"If it'd been the first time to leave somewhere, it would've been a little different," Lackey said. "I was just trying to win a game."

After a 5-4 win on Friday, it looked like it was going to be another good day for the Red Sox, who got an RBI single by Jackie Bradley Jr. in the second and then two more runs in the third, highlighted by a mammoth solo homer by Hanley Ramirez. Ramirez’s second homer of the season had a projected distance of 469 feet, the longest at Fenway Park during the Statcast™ Era, which started in 2015.

"It's a heck of a swing," said Red Sox manager John Farrell. "Obviously he hits the ball a long way. We're seeing more consistent, hard contact from him."

Anthony Rizzo, a one-time top Red Sox prospect, gave the Cubs a big lift in the fourth inning. With his team down 3-0, the left-handed-hitting slugger unloaded for a two-run homer on a 61.9-mph knuckleballer from Wright. Andrew Benintendi got one of the runs back with a solo homer to right-center.

But the Cubs kept chipping away, closing to within a run on a fielder’s-choice grounder by Ben Zobrist in the sixth, helping to pave the way for the breakthrough that happened in the seventh.

It wasn’t the most artistic game-winning rally you’ll ever see, but the Cubs gladly took it. Jon Jay set up Schwarber’s hit with the definition of a Fenway double, a lazy flyball that had a hit probability of 2 percent and an exit velocity of 81.2 percent, according to Statcast™. Schwarber’s bloop left the bat at 65.3 mph. On a day the Cubs were facing a knuckleballer for the first time since 2011, Wright gave up seven hits and five runs over 6 1/3 innings.

**MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

Montero equalizer sets up big seventh: Not only did Montero tie the game with a solo shot to right-center to open the seventh against Wright, but he put the wheels in motion for a three-run inning. For the Red Sox, the lowlight was a groundout to first baseman Mitch Moreland to start a sequence that resulted in two errors on the same play. Moreland fired to shortstop Xander Bogaerts for the force at second, but pitcher Ben Taylor appeared late getting to the bag to cover first for the potential double play. The throw to first by Bogaerts soared away for the first error. And when Moreland retrieved it, his throw to second to try to get Rizzo went to the outfield. Rizzo roared into third, and the Cubs were up by two.

Pedroia cut down by Jay: With the Red Sox clinging to a 4-3 lead, Pedroia tried to get a rally started in the bottom of the sixth when he hammered one off the Monster against Lackey. But Cubs left fielder Jon Jay made a strong throw to second, nailing Pedroia, and Lackey faced just three batters in his final inning.
"Well, we were winning at the time," said Pedroia. "We're a pretty aggressive team. So, no, I don't have any second thoughts. Maybe I should have hit it softer. I don't know. We're pretty aggressive. You can't play scared in this game, otherwise you'll get abused. That's it."

QUOTABLE

"No, we're fine, that one inning we had a snowball fight. Other than that, we've been pretty good. Obviously we're a team that shifts a lot and kinds of plays in weird spots. I thought our guys have done a good job." -- Pedroia, on Boston's defense

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Lackey has now pitched at least six innings in each of his first five starts this year, the second time he's done that in his career to open a season. The right-hander also did so in 2008 with the Angels. All three of Benintendi's home runs this season have been against National League teams. He's hit two in this series, and he also belted a three-run shot against the Pirates on Opening Day.

MONSTER MASH

Mookie Betts led off the bottom of the eighth with a hard-hit liner off the Green Monster, and Zobrist played it perfectly, holding Betts to a single. Said Maddon: "That's a big play by Zo. Zo makes the great tag on the back end of one from [Jay], and then Zo makes the front end and keeps that to a single, which pretty much leads to the double play. Stuff like that goes uncharted sometimes. Zo had a great game, Zo did everything right today. It was beautiful to watch."

WHAT'S NEXT

Cubs: Last year, Kyle Hendricks was better at Wrigley Field than on the road. So far this season, he's 2-0 on the road and 0-1 with a 6.30 ERA in two home starts. He'll get the call at Fenway on Sunday in the series finale in his first career start against the Red Sox. First pitch will be 7:05 p.m. CT.

Red Sox: In Sunday night's 8:05 p.m. ET series finale, left-hander Eduardo Rodriguez will try to build off his solid performance his last time out against the Orioles, when he gave up one hit over six shutout innings. This is Rodriguez's second start at Fenway this season. He got a no-decision against the Pirates on April 13, giving up two earned runs over 5 1/3 innings.

Cubs.com

Montero a calming presence on both sides

By Carrie Muskat

BOSTON -- Before Saturday's game, Cubs manager Joe Maddon was talking about how important it was for players to avoid getting angry. Getting frustrated is understandable, but Maddon didn't want to see them mad.

Then there's John Lackey.

"You've probably got me there," Maddon said when reminded of his comments after Saturday's 7-4 win over the Red Sox. "Johnny definitely orbits in a different manner. He's always been that guy. I've known him since 2001, and back in the day, I was a bench coach and I was able to go out and have a beer with him and settle him down."

Catcher Miguel Montero had that responsibility in Saturday's game, which marked Lackey's return to Fenway Park. The former Red Sox pitcher picked up the win, but not without an argument. In the first inning, he was not happy with some of the calls by home-plate umpire Bill Welke and told him so as he walked off the field.
"Did you call that in?" Lackey asked Welke about a pitch to Mookie Betts.

Welke confirmed he did.

"Then you missed it," Lackey said.

Montero could tell the right-hander wasn't happy.

"I just told the umpire, 'I'll take care of it,'" Montero said. "The last thing I wanted to do was get a little retaliation there. I told [Lackey], 'Just keep throwing it there, because he's going to call it eventually. They're strikes, and he'll start calling it,' and he did."

Lackey lasted six innings, and he has gone that far in each of his first five starts this year, the second time in his career he's done so (also 2008 with the Angels).

This wasn't an emotional return to Boston for Lackey. He's changed teams more than Jon Lester, for example, who grew up in the Red Sox's organization. What was new on Saturday was Boston knuckleballer Steve Wright, who baffled the Cubs' hitters.

"The ball goes in to you or away from you or down or stays up," Montero said. "I told the umpire, 'I'm going to close my eyes and swing hard in case I hit it.'"

Did Montero close his eyes when he homered in the Cubs' seventh, tying the game at 4?

"No," he said.

"Montero is a good fastball hitter," Boston manager John Farrell said. "Knuckleball stays up, and it floats out of here with the wind blowing out to right. He got it good, but that ties it up."

Anthony Rizzo also homered off Wright with a two-run shot in the fourth.

"I said, 'Tip my hat to everyone who hit [Wright] today,'" Kyle Schwarber said. "It's some funky stuff."

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Cubs.com
Epstein, Vedder rock out for good cause
By Quinn Roberts

BOSTON -- It had just hit 1 a.m. ET early Sunday morning at the Paradise Rock Club on Commonwealth Avenue, and if you weren't there, you may not have believed it.

Deep into the final song of the night for the Hot Stove Cool Music benefit concert, Cubs president of baseball operations Theo Epstein decided to jump off the stage and into the crowd. Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder followed.

The concert, which began in Chicago in 2012, was a joint effort between the Red Sox and Cubs to benefit the Red Sox Foundation and the Foundation To Be Named Later. It marks one of a handful of events to benefit the charities during a three-game series between the clubs in Boston this weekend.

"It's great to see these two teams come together," Vedder said. "It's nice to see everyone getting along for the greater good. I hope everyone follows their lead."

Vedder headlined the concert for the third year in a row and played for two hours, singing familiar tunes including "Hearts and Thoughts," and also some covers like "Comfortably Numb" by Pink Floyd and "The Kids Are Alright" by The Who.
While Vedder is a huge Cubs fan -- and could be seen in the stands throughout the club's 2016 World Series run -- he donned a Red Sox hat and helmet during parts of the show.

The Boston and Chicago Hot Stove All-Stars each performed sets, which included musicians like Buffalo Tom's Bill Janovitz, Letters to Cleo's Kay Hanley and Belly's Tanya Donelly.

Former Yankees outfielder Bernie Williams, an accomplished guitarist, even performed with the Boston All-Stars. It was something comedian Mike O'Malley, who emceed the event, cracked jokes about the entire time.

Between sets, O'Malley keep the crowd entertained. That included auctioning items like a cowbell signed by Will Ferrell for $2,000 and a guitar signed by Vedder for a whopping $13,000, with all proceeds going to the foundations.

"It's a simple concept: Just take people's enthusiasm about the Red Sox, and now the Red Sox and the Cubs, and try to convert some of that enthusiasm into fundraising for a lot of nonprofits that do some of the most important work in our society," Epstein said. "One thing I can say for certain: Red Sox fans and Cubs fans are very, very generous and community-minded, and this is just a mechanism to direct some of those dollars toward nonprofits that we know do great work."

Red Sox and Cubs players, coaches and front-office officials all took in the concert from the second floor.

With the ceiling so low, Red Sox starter Drew Pomeranz's head nearly touched it. His teammate Chris Sale said he banged his head a few times on it.

Even recently-acquired Red Sox utility player Chase d'Arnaud didn't miss the event. He searched through his suitcase to find a "Believe in Music" T-shirt.

"Everyone is here, it is amazing," said Red Sox knuckleballer Steven Wright.

A plethora of fans wore Cubs and Red Sox apparel. Even a few had Cubs jerseys with the last name "Vedder" across the back. The fans stood the entire night, dancing with their hands held high and cheering like they were at a baseball game. With the stage full of musicians who performed during the show, each played a part in performing Neil Young's "Rockin' in the Free World" to finish out the concert.

As the final chord was played and the lights went up, Vedder spoke.

"This has been an amazing night," Vedder said.

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Cubs.com
Maddon preaches patience with Baez
By Carrie Muskat

BOSTON -- Javier Baez was uncharacteristically out of position and missed a grounder on Friday night, and he also hasn't been as consistent at the plate, but Joe Maddon isn't worried. He's quick to point out Baez is young, as are the majority of the Cubs' hitters, and they will go through phases.

"He was frustrated on that," Maddon said of Baez's rare miss, "but then he makes a great play on a bouncer over the mound. He's fine. The biggest thing for me, is I'd like to get him back to where he had been offensively and more in control of his strike zone."

Baez had a good spring, and Maddon said the infielder, who was the co-MVP in the National League Championship Series last year, may simply be trying too hard now.
"It's a cyclical kind of year, always," Maddon said. "I'm aware of that. I don't have any solid explanation, but when guys aren't hitting well, they're normally swinging at what they shouldn't be, and that's what he's doing now." And they're also young.

"I tried to remind everybody about that last year," Maddon said of the Cubs' youth. "Even when everything was going perfectly for all of them, I was impressed with our inexperience as much -- not just being young. I guess youth and inexperience are synonymous terms.

"Even coming off a World Series victory, each year is different. They'll show their goods. Nobody expects anybody to struggle after they've done what we did last year. I do. I expect to struggle. They're all going to be fine."

• Speaking of young players, this Interleague series between the Cubs and Red Sox is showcasing some solid talent who have bright futures, Maddon said.

"It'd be nice to eventually end up in the last seven games of the year between these two teams," Maddon said.

Does it have to be a stressful seven?

"I've been involved in seven how many times? Angels in 2002 [World Series], then seven games against [the Red Sox] in the [American League Championship Series], then seven last year [in the World Series]," he said. "It's crazy, it's exhilarating and of course, you want to come out on top. It's always good for the sport."

• When Theo Epstein first joined the Cubs prior to the 2012 season, he had an empty picture frame on his desk. He was using that as a little motivation. Someday, he'd put a photo from the Cubs winning the World Series in that frame.

Well, now that the Cubs did win last year, has the frame been filled? Epstein, president of baseball operations for the Cubs, said it's being taken care of.

"It's a photo from Cleveland of us all celebrating on the mound together," he said.

Will he have another empty frame on his desk now to motivate him for another World Series championship? "I think I probably should, right?" Epstein said.

• Jon Jay had played once before at Fenway Park, doing so in 2013 with the Cardinals during the World Series. He started in left field on Saturday and will have to deal with the Green Monster.

"The biggest thing in [batting practice] is going out and shagging and learning how the ball comes off there," Jay said. "There's a lot of different possibilities."

Maddon has been impressed by how veterans Jay and Miguel Montero have accepted part-time roles.

"They're going to play a lot during the course of the year," Maddon said. "It's always early that the acceptance seems more difficult. ... I've been trying to get them both involved. Acceptance is really big, because it also leads to better performance. They've been both outstanding. I love putting them in the lineup."

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Cubs.com
Hendricks faces Red Sox for first time in finale
By Carrie Muskat

The Cubs and Red Sox close their Interleague series on Sunday night, and some fans may be able to get a unique souvenir from the event.
The Red Sox Foundation and Cubs Charities will give fans the chance to take photos with the two "curse-breaking" trophies -- from the 2004 Red Sox World Series championship and the 2016 Cubs Fall Classic title.

Both will be on display in the Gate K/B concourse when Fenway Park gates open on Sunday at 6:35 p.m. ET. A recommended donation of $20 is asked of fans who take photos with the trophies to benefit the Red Sox Foundation and Cubs Charities.

The trophy get-together is the last of a series of collaborative events between the Red Sox and Cubs organizations to raise money for charity.

As far as the game, it will be Chicago's Kyle Hendricks vs. Boston's Eduardo Rodriguez. Rodriguez is coming off a win over the Orioles in which he threw six shutout innings.

"I think with each outing he's gained a little momentum," Red Sox manager John Farrell said of Rodriguez, who has walked 12 over 17 1/3 innings. "And when I say that, there's been times where he's shown flashes of dominance, and that's getting longer with each outing he's had.

"The walk totals are more than we would have though. They've been probably a little bit too frequent for a guy who's typically been a good strike thrower. But the ability with his fastball, I think he's continued to gain confidence with that, and the slider that he tightened up in Spring Training has been more of a weapon for him.

"He's getting closer to going on a little bit of a run in his own right, where each successive start has progressed."

Three things to know about this game

• Hendricks will be making his first start at Fenway Park and his first against the Red Sox. Maybe being away from Wrigley Field will help. So far this season, the right-hander is 2-0 with a 3.00 ERA in two road games, and 0-1 with a 6.30 ERA in two home games. He's coming off a win over the Pirates in which he threw six shutout innings.

• Red Sox setup reliever Matt Barnes will return to the bullpen on Sunday after serving a four-game suspension for throwing a pitch near the head of the Orioles' Manny Machado last Sunday.

• Boston's offense has been scuffling, and it's obvious the Sox miss David Ortiz. Cubs manager Joe Maddon saw plenty of Ortiz when he was the Rays' skipper. Ortiz hit 53 homers against Tampa Bay. Did Maddon miss Ortiz this weekend?

"I was very pleased actually, honestly," Maddon said.

ESPNChicago.com
Prodigal son Theo Epstein returns home to Fenway Park
By Scott Lauber

BOSTON -- It was 1997, and the New England Patriots -- before Belichick and Brady, mind you -- were playing in the Super Bowl. Amid the crowd on Bourbon Street in New Orleans, 23-year-old Theo Epstein sat on his best friend's shoulders and annoyed Green Bay Packers fans by reaching for their Cheeseheads.

“Unfortunately,” says Sam Kennedy, the best friend, recalling the events of the night to the best of his ability, “my massive, muscular build did not hold up. I went down like a sack of potatoes. Theo went down and hit his head. I think if it was 2017 versus 1997, he would’ve been diagnosed with a major concussion. It was not good. He had a migraine for about five days after that. Our parents wouldn’t have been very proud of that moment.”

Kennedy, now the Boston Red Sox team president, laughs at the memory. He knows it might embarrass Epstein, but if anyone has license to share that story, it’s Kennedy. And what better time than on the occasion of the prodigal son’s return to Fenway Park?
You see, when Epstein left the Red Sox in 2011, with the ashes of a historic September collapse still smoldering, he had already surpassed Oakland Athletics general manager Billy Beane as baseball’s most well-known executive. That’s what happens when you assemble the first World Series-winning Red Sox team in 86 years, then another one three years later.

But now, after leveling the Chicago Cubs organization down to its studs, overseeing a four-year rebuild, and last fall winning the franchise’s first World Series since 1908, Epstein has achieved full-on celebrity status. Fortune magazine recently named him the “world’s greatest leader,” ahead of even Pope Francis. And David Axelrod, a chief strategist to former president Barack Obama and die-hard Cubs fan, suggested last week that Epstein could have a future in politics, perhaps even as a savior for the Democratic Party.

Around here though, he’s still just Theo, the kid who grew up a mile from Fenway Park in Brookline, Massachusetts, dreaming of a career -- any career -- in baseball. He’s the son of a creative writing professor at Boston University and a clothing store owner and the twin brother of a social worker and guidance counselor at Brookline High.

Epstein, 43, hasn’t forgotten his roots, at least according to his brother, Paul. But if he has a momentary lapse -- like, say, whenever he’s invited on stage to play guitar alongside Pearl Jam frontman Eddie Vedder, something that happens frequently, including Saturday night at the Paradise Rock Club in Boston -- there’s a line of people at the ready to keep him in check.

“There is kind of an apotheosis thing going on right now. I’m aware of that,” Paul Epstein says. “But I think it’s good for him to be around family who can just knock him down a few pegs and bring him back down to earth. Not that he needs that because, trust me, none of this goes to his head at all.”

Says Kennedy: “I think people that have known him a long time, you quickly remind him of his shortcomings when he wasn’t the rock star baseball executive, world’s greatest leader. You harken back to 1987, 1988 when we were struggling to make the JV baseball team at Brookline High, or the lack of playing time that he may have had in high school, or the silly things we did together. I do remember him spending a lot of time as our third-base coach.”

And over the past few days, Kennedy has had ample time to remind Epstein of it.

EPSTEIN WOULD HAVE returned to Fenway Park sooner, but let’s just say he had a good excuse. When the Cubs played here in 2014, his wife Marie was about to give birth to their second child, Andrew.

“I was so bummed at the timing,” Epstein says.

So, from the moment he touched down in Boston last week, Epstein’s schedule has been packed.

On Thursday, he went for a midday run along the Charles River (and promptly got “an unsolicited high-five from a jogger going the opposite direction”), had dinner with his family, then got Kennedy to sneak him into Fenway for the last few innings of the Chris Sale-Masahiro Tanaka duel that wound up as a 3-0 New York Yankees win, after which he hung out and had a few drinks with a few former baseball operations co-workers. On Friday, Epstein co-hosted a luncheon panel discussion with Hall of Famer Pedro Martinez, former Red Sox catcher Jason Varitek, ex-Yankees center fielder Bernie Williams and former pitcher Ryan Dempster to benefit the Foundation To Be Named Later, the charity the Epstein brothers started with venerable baseball writer Peter Gammons.

And on Saturday night, Epstein joined Vedder and three ensemble bands for a benefit concert, the second half of the foundation’s annual Hot Stove Cool Music charity event. The goal for the weekend: raise close to $1 million to benefit youth organizations in Boston and Chicago.

“One thing I can say for certain is Red Sox fans and Cubs fans are very, very generous and community-minded,” Epstein says, “and this is just a mechanism to help redirect some of those dollars toward nonprofits that are going to be doing great work.”
Oh, and in between, the Cubs played two games against the Red Sox, with the series finale set for Sunday night (ESPN, 8:05 p.m. ET).

Say this for Epstein: He makes the most of his homecoming. It’s little wonder he says he was “not planning on sleeping much this weekend.”

“I’m really happy,” Epstein says. “I’ve been looking forward to this weekend a long time. I’m kind of on cloud nine, really loving it.”

WANT TO GET a rise out of Kennedy? Ask where he thinks Epstein rates among the most influential world leaders.

In March, Fortune magazine ranked the “50 greatest leaders in the world,” a list that included Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau (No. 31), former U.S. vice president Joe Biden (No. 23), Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts (No. 21), Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellin (No. 17), German chancellor Angela Merkel (No. 10), U.S. Senator John McCain (No. 9), U.S. National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster (No. 7), Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos (No. 5), billionaire philanthropist Melinda Gates (No. 4) and the aforementioned Pope (No. 3).

The notion that a baseball executive would even be considered among them?

“It’s been a little bit otherworldly when you have magazines -- legitimate publications on planet Earth -- referring to him as the greatest leader,” Kennedy says. “When you’ve known someone since they were a kid and you read these things and you hear these things, it becomes laughable because there are so many more important issues and causes and people in the world. I mean, we’re working in baseball, and he’s been portrayed as this world leader. I think he said it best -- it’s patently ridiculous.

“That said, I think it acknowledges how important a place that sports -- and especially the Red Sox and the Cubs -- has in American society.”

Indeed, it’s a measure of the magnitude of Epstein’s accomplishment as the architect of championship teams for two historic franchises that doubted they would ever win again. Combine that with his admittedly unrelenting need to tackle new challenges and folks like Axelrod are reasonably speculating about his next move. Last week, Axelrod told Politico that he believes Epstein could make a successful Senate bid in Illinois.

“Ridiculous,” Epstein insists.

OK, maybe in his home state of Massachusetts?

“I think I need to go do something really ill-advised or commit a felony or something. I can put a stop to it in a hurry,” says Epstein, who last September signed a five-year contract extension to stay with the Cubs through 2021. “But people who know me would just laugh at that. I barely can get out of bed and get my job done the right way in the morning most of the time. It’s a group effort.”

THOSE CLOSEST TO Epstein insist his successes and celebrity status haven’t changed him. As much as ever, he’s quick to give credit to his baseball operations compatriots, including Cubs general manager Jed Hoyer and player development chief Jason McLeod.

If anything, Epstein has grown up since his days as the boy wonder GM of the Red Sox. These days, as he approaches middle age with a wife and two sons, his idea of horsing around is a pickup basketball game with colleagues on the morning of a playoff game. Back in the day, though, he ran a baseball ops department that resembled a frat house.

“I was so young and immature and over my head, and as I think back on that whole saga, getting the job and the heartbreak in ’03 and then winning it in ’04, I went through that whole thing with this great group of friends who I work with and we just rode the wave,” Epstein says. “We didn’t come up for air or get perspective on everything. We couldn’t process it in real time. It just felt like one big wild ride, ending with a parade.”
Accent on “wild.” Even now, Paul Epstein often jokes with Red Sox chief marketing officer Adam Grossman about the abuse he took as an intern early in Theo's administration.

“They used to just have all-out brawls and violence towards the interns,” Paul Epstein says. "I always tell Adam, he should write a memoir and the title should be ‘Stapled’ because one time they threw a stapler at him. ‘Stapled: My Life As A Red Sox Intern.’”

File it under stories that only Epstein’s family and closest friends can tell, the tales that come up only when he comes home, the only place where the greatest leader in the world (or at least baseball) is still just Theo from Brookline.

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ESPNChicago.com
Kyle Schwarber saves his anger for the baseball
By Jesse Rogers

BOSTON -- Considering his earnest demeanor and body type, you might think Chicago Cubs leadoff man Kyle Schwarber would turn into the Incredible Hulk when things don't go his way at the plate. But as manager Joe Maddon said Saturday before the Cubs’ game against the Boston Red Sox, there is no place for anger when another plate appearance is around the corner.

When Schwarber stepped into the batter's box in the seventh inning of a 4-4 tie, he kept his composure.

The result was a lefty-on-lefty bloop to center that plated the go-ahead run in the Cubs' 7-4 win. It was a needed base hit from a struggling hitter.

"Once you step up to the next at-bat, it's a new at-bat," Schwarber said afterward. "You have to forget what happened."

Schwarber has had a lot to forget lately, as he has climbed the MLB leaderboard in strikeouts. In just one-and-a-half games in Boston, Schwarber struck out six times. Between seeing left-handed pitching and knuckleball starter Steven Wright, it wasn't exactly the easiest two days for him.

"That's some funky stuff," Schwarber said of Wright’s pitching.

The Cubs finally knocked Wright out of the game, as Red Sox skipper John Farrell called on -- you guessed it -- a lefty to face Schwarber with the go-ahead run at second base.

"I got to see them last [Friday] night," Schwarber said of the Red Sox's left-handers. "You have them fresher in mind. You know what they're going to come at you with.

"It was a grinder at-bat. It's straight battle mode. Put the pressure on the defense. Flip it out where they're not. I'll take it."

Schwarber hit an 0-2 pitch into center, and Jon Jay raced home. For the Cubs' World Series hero, that bloop was as good as any hard-hit ball.

All of a sudden, Schwarber likes how he's trending. A bases-loaded fly out to left one inning later didn't diminish his enthusiasm. He hit hard, which is all he's asking for these days.

"[I] feel like things are progressively starting to climb where I want it to be," Schwarber said.

See the difference two at-bats can make for a hitter's confidence? Midway through the game, there was little to cheer for when Schwarber came to the plate, but after each strikeout, he didn't get angry. Instead, he analyzed.
"It's more assessing the at-bat," he said. "You move on to the next. ... A lot of people have had slow starts. All I can keep doing is trying to grind through it."

If you think Schwarber's .211 batting average is a result of his hitting leadoff, think again. He isn't buying it.

"You can struggle anywhere," he said. "You can't blame it on the spot in the order you're hitting at. People will go through these kinds of periods throughout the season."

What makes Schwarber so special? His hitting coach thinks it's a simple answer.

"It's about helping the team," John Mallee said. "That's what it's about. He's such a team guy. ... He's a true pro. It's not about him."

On Sunday, Schwarber will climb the steps to Fenway Park's Green Monster so he can check something off his bucket list. He'll then take his familiar place as the Cubs' leadoff hitter, attempting to distance himself from an April slump on the final day of the month. Saturday's late-inning heroics were a good start.

And it was drive -- not anger -- which fueled him.

"I love that he's not beaten by it," Maddon said. "He gets upset with himself, which I'm good with. It's not anger, though."

Schwarber usually saves that for the baseball.

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