Jackie Robinson: 5 famous Brooklnitites share memories of Dodgers legend on 70th anniversary of big-league debut

By Christian Red / New York Daily News / April 14, 2017

The 13-year-old boy, who had lost his father four years earlier, was a student at Bensonhurst Junior High on that Tuesday in April when he and some school buddies decided to play hooky and catch the Brooklyn Dodgers’ 1947 season opener against the Boston Braves at Ebbets Field.

“I cut school and so did my friends. Me and four friends took the subway, got there real early, ran up to the bleachers. If you got in early, you could get the front row,” says Larry King, the iconic TV and radio show host. “The front row of the bleachers was as good a seat as any for watching baseball.”

King, who is celebrating his 60th year in journalism, was part of a crowd of 25,623 – not a sellout (and 1,000 less attendees than baseball-reference.com’s listed attendance of 26,623) – at the old Brooklyn ballpark, where a Dodgers rookie named Jackie Robinson would forever change the baseball landscape that afternoon. Robinson, the Georgia-born, UCLA standout athlete who lettered in four sports, and who later starred in the Negro Leagues with the Kansas City Monarchs, broke baseball’s decades-old color barrier 70 years ago, April 15, 1947. The history-turning event will be recognized Saturday at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles, with Rachel Robinson, Jackie’s widow, and the couple’s two living children expected to be on hand. A statue of Robinson, who died in 1972, is to be unveiled at the venerable stadium next to Chavez Ravine.

Robinson’s No. 42 is already retired throughout Major League Baseball and in the minor leagues, and all players wear No. 42 throughout the majors on April 15 of the regular season in recognition of the Hall of Fame Dodger. Robinson’s impact on America’s pastime and society at large was indelible and still reverberates today – Rachel Robinson presides over the Jackie Robinson Foundation, which continues to promote the former Dodger’s legacy and values, and provides educational scholarships to young African-Americans.

Jackie Robinson’s contract bought by Brooklyn Dodgers

But to understand Robinson’s Dodgers debut in the context of 1947, the Daily News spoke with five former Brooklnitites who witnessed firsthand the era when one man changed a historically all-white sport and paved the way for integration.

King, 83, says that after his father died in 1943, he went to his first Brooklyn Dodgers game with his uncle that summer. The Dodgers had never won a World Series as a Brooklyn franchise up until that point, and the Dodger fan base would have to wait a few more years for the title drought to end. King says that before the ’47 season opened, he had followed Robinson’s minor-league career with the Dodgers’ Triple-A affiliate, after Robinson had signed with the Dodgers organization in late 1945.
“I had followed (Robinson) in Montreal,” says King, referring to Robinson playing for the Montreal Royals. “I read The Sporting News. He was MVP (of the International League) in 1946.”

Lupica: Tribute to a Hero in Jackie’s Memory
But although King was well-versed in Robinson’s nascent Dodgers career, and although newspapers, including the Daily News, had tracked Robinson’s path to his history-making debut with Brooklyn, King says now that it was a “startling” sight to see Robinson take the field for batting practice and pre-game warm-ups prior to first pitch on April 15, 1947.

“I'll never forget (Robinson) running onto the field. He was a very dark man. The Dodgers’ uniform was the whitest uniform in all of sports. None was whiter,” says King. “The juxtaposition of that uniform against that color, it was startling, and at the same time, you knew that you were part of history.”

Four days prior to the team’s home opener, the National League Dodgers played the cross-borough, American League rival Yankees in an exhibition game at Ebbets Field.

Jerry Reinsdorf, the owner of the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Bulls who was born and grew up in Brooklyn, was an 11-year-old baseball fan in 1947 and bled Dodger blue. Reinsdorf says now that whenever he could scrape together $1.25 in those days, he used the dough to get a general admission seat at Ebbets Field to see his heroes play. On April 11, 1947, Reinsdorf was on hand to see the official first time Robinson donned his Dodgers No. 42 jersey.

Madden: Jackie Robinson Relieving Ralph Branca’s Pain
“I was there before Larry King,” Reinsdorf jokes. “Larry King says he was at the April 15th game. But that was not the actual first game that Jackie Robinson played as a Dodger. (Brooklyn Dodgers general manager) Branch Rickey kept Robinson on the Montreal roster all spring, never indicating that he was going to bring him up or not bring him up. In those days, (the Dodgers) would end spring training with a home-and-home series against the Yankees. So, (Rickey) had to make his decision and he actually put Robinson on the Brooklyn roster for the exhibition game against the Yankees at Ebbets Field. That's the game I was at.”

Reinsdorf, 81, says he was an avid Daily News reader as a kid, “when it was two cents,” and The News’ back page on Saturday, April 12, 1947 ran a black and white photograph of Robinson signing autographs for kids leaning over the home dugout roof at Ebbets Field. The headline of that News' back page edition blares: “DODGERS WIN, GET 11 IN 5th,” and the photo caption under the image of Robinson signing autographs says Robinson “was wearing Brooklyn’s uniform for the first time yesterday.” The same back page also features a photo of Yankee Hall of Famer Babe Ruth in Florida, beaming while standing next to a “50-pound sailfish he hooked in the Gulf Stream.” A year later, in 1948, the Bambino would die from cancer.
While The News’ Saturday coverage of that Dodgers’ ’47 exhibition win over the Yankees included a separate box with a recap of Robinson’s performance, the main story, written by famed sportswriter Dick Young, has no mention of Robinson’s unofficial debut, nor even hints that Robinson will make history in his regular-season debut. “Maybe the Brooks weren’t playing such lousy teams in the pushover papaya circuit after all,” Young wrote in the lead of the April 12, 1947 story.

Reinsdorf says that he remembers no specific buzz or hype about Robinson that day when he scored tickets to the exhibition tilt, which also had many empty seats.

Young: Jackie Robinson has his day
“Opening Day wasn’t even a sellout either. I always went to the preseason games because I couldn’t wait until the season started,” says Reinsdorf. “In ’47, I was only 11-years-old, and I wasn’t that into social stuff. I had what we called Negro friends at that time. I knew what my friends and I were thinking about -- it was not that there was going to be a black player playing for the Dodgers, but was he going to be any good?”

Jerry Reinsdorf, Chicago White Sox and Bulls owner, circa late 1940s pitching at the Parade Grounds near Brooklyn’s Prospect Park. (COURTESY JERRY REINSDORF)
Reinsdorf says he was crushed in 1946 when his beloved Dodgers blew a 7 ½-game lead to the Stan Musial-led Cardinals in the National League, before Brooklyn lost in a playoff to St. Louis, the eventual World Series winner. In 1947, Reinsdorf says he had renewed optimism for his Dodgers, and that he was particularly interested in the two Dodgers rookies – Robinson and third baseman Spider Jorgensen – and what they were going to bring.

“I remember focusing on, ‘Were these two guys going to help put us over the top?’ None of my friends and I even cared that (Robinson) was black or (Jorgensen) was white,” says Reinsdorf. “The first time I actually focused on it, was some time during that year. I asked a friend of mine named Lester Davis who his favorite player was. And Lester looked at me like I was nuts, because Lester was black. He said, ‘Jackie Robinson, of course.’ I remember that conversation so clearly, and it was 70 years ago. That’s when I realized, ‘Oh yeah, (Robinson) is the only black player.’

“When the (’47) season started, Spider Jorgensen looked like he was going to be better than Jackie. Jackie got off to a terrible start,” Reinsdorf continues. “Jackie was hitting in the mid-.200s going into May, I think. Then he caught on and we saw what Jackie was.

“Brooklyn was a melting pot,” adds Reinsdorf. “There were people of all ethnic backgrounds that lived together. It was so long ago, but I don’t recollect that there was any particular excitement or buzz about (Robinson’s debut).”

When the Dodgers opened that season against the Braves – what would be a 5-3 Brooklyn victory – King says he “knew that we were part of history,” and that he remembers Robinson receiving applause from the home crowd.
“Brooklyn always supported Jackie,” says King. “He never got booed to my knowledge. Of course, he was a hell of a ballplayer.”

Dick Young: Baseball hasn’t done enough for Jackie Robinson
In The News’ coverage of that 4/15/47 game, however, Dick Young doesn’t mention Robinson until the fifth paragraph of his game story, and even then, it is to describe Robinson’s “deft” seventh-inning bunt, in which he reached base on an error. Even when Young writes about Robinson making his major league debut, it is in the last paragraph of the story and there is no mention of Robinson breaking the color barrier, nor any historical context. “In his debut, Jackie Robinson, the majors’ most-discussed rookie, fielded flawlessly at first base but went hitless in three official trips to the plate,” Young writes. Robinson played first base, and was 0-for-3 with a run scored in his Dodgers debut.

The Dodgers chugged along in ’47, en route to a World Series appearance against – who else? – the damn Yankees. Brooklyn lost that Fall Classic in seven games. But during the ’47 season, Oscar-winning actor Lou Gossett Jr. and Mets owner Fred Wilpon say they attended games to cheer on their Dodgers, and witness Robinson’s feats up close. Gossett Jr., who is African-American, says he had to sit in a section of Ebbets Field reserved for blacks.

“I went to games that season. Everything Jackie did, I did as if I was catching the ball like him, as if I was running the bases like him,” says the Brooklyn-born Gossett Jr. “We’d cheer for him from the gut. There was a whole section of black people, cheering for him from the gut.”

Gossett Jr., who turns 81 May 27, adds that when he was a kid, he would go to games courtesy of the Knothole Gang, a charitable organization attached to teams that provided free passes to kids who wanted to go to baseball games.

But Gossett Jr., who won his Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his unforgettable role as a drill sergeant in “An Officer and a Gentleman,” says he also remembers his family crowded around “this beautiful Grundig radio,” listening to Dodgers games and the voice of Red Barber.

The Fleer “Dubble Bubble” baseball cards that Gossett Jr. says he collected then are long gone now. “I wish I had them,” Gossett Jr. says with a laugh. “Probably worth a fortune now. Who would have known? But my experience with the Dodgers was indelible.”

Wilpon, 80, went to Lafayette High School with King and Hall of Fame Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax, and Wilpon says that although he was not at the Dodgers’ season opener, he did attend a Dodgers game during Robinson’s rookie season.

“I remember attending a game in (Robinson’s) first season in ’47. That was my first ever night game with my father,” says Wilpon, who was 10-years-old during the ’47 season.
“To this day, I remember walking into Ebbets Field through the rotunda, which was smaller than the current Jackie Robinson Rotunda, which needed to be a part of Citi Field. While going to my seats, it was just magical when I saw the field and lights. On that night, the Dodgers were wearing a satin uniform and I can remember to this day walking down the aisle with my dad. I was just mesmerized. When I was young enough to still sit on my father’s lap, we only had to buy one ticket.”

Mesmerizing is how Reinsdorf describes Robinson when he was on the baseball diamond.

“Even when (Robinson) wasn’t hitting, you could see how exciting he was, because whenever he got on base he was a threat to steal,” says Reinsdorf, who went to Erasmus Hall High School in Flatbush. “He ran wild on the bases. He could bunt, he could hit a home run, he could do anything to win a game. He probably was not the best player I ever saw, but he was the most exciting player I ever saw.”

Gossett Jr., who went to Brooklyn’s Lincoln High School, says that before Robinson’s arrival, Hall of Fame shortstop Pee Wee Reese was his favorite Dodger, but that he switched favorites once Robinson was on the team. Gossett Jr. says he even imitated Robinson’s bow-legged batting stance when Gossett Jr. played in a sandlot league.

“He so affected me,” Gossett Jr. says of Robinson. “I played sandlot. We played in Coney Island, Gravesend Park with the “Sugar Rays,” a team sponsored by (boxer) Sugar Ray Robinson. I was the only black kid on the team.

Everybody else was Italian.”

Reinsdorf says he would take the subway to Ebbets Field for games, but that he would always walk home afterward “to save the nickel.” A few years into Robinson’s Dodgers career, Reinsdorf says he was at the stadium for a night game and that he was sitting with his friend. Reinsdorf’s one-and-only chance to meet Robinson came and went that night, a missed opportunity Reinsdorf says he still laments.

“There was a sold-out game one night. We were sitting in our unreserved, general admission seats. Some guy came by and he said, ‘Would you two kids like to be on the “Jackie Robinson Show”?‘ (Robinson) had a pregame radio show at Ebbets Field. We thought we were pretty smart and we said, ‘You’re just trying to get our seats.’ We weren’t going to give up our seats,” says Reinsdorf. “So we turned down this alleged offer. About a half hour later, two other kids came walking by, so excited, and said, ‘We were just on the “Jackie Robinson Show”!’ We thought we were pretty savvy. So I missed my one and only opportunity to meet Jackie Robinson.”

Reinsdorf says that although he would occasionally travel to the Bronx to take in a Yankees game, it was sacrilege for Dodgers fans to ever enter the Polo Grounds, the then home stadium for the New York baseball Giants in upper Manhattan. Remember, this was the golden era when Gotham boasted three professional baseball teams.
“I would not set foot in the Polo Grounds. I hated the Giants. I wouldn’t spend any money there,” says Reinsdorf.

Robinson’s play sparked many a debate among young baseball fans at the time, including King, who says that he had only one fistfight as a kid because of an argument with a friend over whether Robinson ranked higher than his Yankee counterparts.

“I had the biggest fight I ever had in my life with Herbie Cohen. Herbie was the only one of our gang who was a Yankee fan. We had a Giants fan, a Yankee fan, and all the rest were Dodgers fans,” says King, referring to his childhood friends. “We used to argue position by position. They were great arguments – (Roy) Campanella or (Yogi) Berra? We get to second base (where Robinson played later). The Yankees had a second baseman named George (Snuffy) Stirnweiss, who led the league once, hit .309 (in 1945). Herbie said, swear to God, ‘Jackie Robinson never won a batting title. George Stirnweiss won the batting title. I think Stirnweiss is better than Robinson.’ The only fist fight I ever had in my life. I hit him, he hit me. We hit the lamppost, chins bleeding, over Robinson versus Stirnweiss.”

While Reinsdorf used to practice his pitching skills in the Parade Grounds of Prospect Park, Wilpon’s pitching prowess developed at Lafayette High, where in the early 1950s, the lefty Wilpon got more attention than another southpaw, Sandy Koufax, Wilpon’s Lafayette classmate and friend. Wilpon’s pitching skills even provided him with an opportunity to pitch batting practice to the Dodgers one day. Yes, Fred Wilpon once pitched to the likes of Robinson and Pee Wee Reese.

“I was just a 16-year-old kid. I pitched batting practice to the Dodgers one summer, but that was not uncommon if you were a sandlot player and they had some interest in you,” says Wilpon. “I got to meet all the players including Jackie Robinson and share a locker room with them. They treated me like a player and not just a kid. It was an amazing experience for me. They always encouraged me to throw curveballs to left-handers which of course you didn’t do during batting practice. They called me ‘Lefty’ and laughed after I threw some curveball.”

Koufax was a basketball standout at Lafayette, but he eventually signed with the Dodgers before the 1955 season, and made his debut that year when Brooklyn advanced to the World Series and finally toppled the Yankees. Koufax didn’t pitch in the ’55 Fall Classic, but he spent his first two seasons playing alongside Robinson and he says the pioneering player left a forever impact on Koufax.

“(Robinson) was a great teammate and a great competitor,” says Koufax, 81. “And he was certainly nice to me. A wonderful human being.”

After their improbable ’55 title, Robinson played one more season for Brooklyn, when the Dodgers returned to the World Series against the Yankees. The Dodgers lost in seven games in the ’56 World Series, which featured Yankee pitcher Don Larsen’s
perfect game – the only such feat in World Series history. Following the 1957 Dodger season, with Robinson already done playing, team owner Walter O’Malley moved the team west to Los Angeles, a gut punch that still causes Brooklyn fans to wince.


The White Sox owner adds that there are still arguments over whether city planner Robert Moses is really to blame for the Dodgers’ move out of Brooklyn. But Reinsdorf still points the finger squarely at O’Malley.

“Some believe it really was Moses’ fault. But it wasn’t, it was Walter’s. Moses wouldn’t let (O’Malley) move (the team) to downtown Brooklyn, where he wanted to go,” says Reinsdorf. “Moses wanted him to go out to Flushing Meadows (in Queens). I remember O’Malley saying, ‘We can’t play in Queens and be the Brooklyn Dodgers.’ And I remember thinking, ‘You can’t be the Brooklyn Dodgers in Los Angeles either.’”

Wilpon says crushing doesn’t even begin to describe his hurt when his childhood baseball team left the borough.

“Crushing isn’t a strong enough word. More like devastating,” says Wilpon. “My family loved the Dodgers. My dad loved the Dodgers. We watched every game we could together and went to about 15 games a year with him. That’s why Ebbets Field made such an impression on me. I never rooted for another team after they left. I stayed with the Dodgers until the Mets came (in 1962).”

King, meanwhile, says he had taken up a new baseball rooting interest when he began his career on Miami radio in 1957, the same year the Dodgers played their final season in Brooklyn.

“I left in April (of ’57), and (the Dodgers) left at the end of the year. I was very sad for the borough,” says King. “But I started rooting for the Orioles because they trained in Miami. When the Orioles beat the Dodgers four straight in 1966 (World Series), I was rooting for the Orioles. But when I moved to California in 1996, I re-established my love for the Dodgers.”

King, who has interviewed many of the most famous people of the 20th and 21st centuries, says he got to meet Robinson twice after Robinson was finished playing. King says he remembers the Dodgers icon being “strongly opinionated” and “passionate.”

“(Robinson) was just as incredible off the field, as he was incredible on the field. He was a moderate Republican, and he supported (Richard) Nixon in 1960 (during the presidential race). He told me he supported Nixon because Nixon was pragmatic,” says King. “And he doubted that (John F.) Kennedy knew any black people, even though later (Robinson) would come to appreciate (Kennedy).”
While the civil rights movement churned in the late ‘50s and ‘60s, Robinson became a leading voice and activist in the fight for racial justice in the U.S. King says he had the opportunity to interview another famous King during that same era – civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. – and he says Dr. King corrected Larry King shortly after the interview began.

“I introduced him by saying, ‘My guest is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. He can certainly be called the founder of the American civil rights movement,’” says Larry King. “And Dr. King said, ‘We’ve just met, but I’m going to correct you. Jackie Robinson is the founder of the American civil rights movement.’ That’s what (Dr. King) called him.”

King says he thinks Red Barber, the Dodgers announcer who preceded the legendary Vin Scully, used to refer to Robinson as “Jack,” not “Jackie,” out of respect. Rachel Robinson, Jackie’s widow, has always referred to her husband as “Jack,” and Scully uses “Jack” as well, when referring to Robinson.

“Vin probably got it from Red,” says King. “It was a popular term at the time, before there was a Jackie Robinson. I knew Red Barber well. He thought he was giving (Robinson) the due respect. Jackie was an imposing figure, and he had a beautiful speaking voice, and was highly intelligent.”

Every day he goes to his office at Guaranteed Rate Field (formerly U.S. Cellular Field), White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf is able to admire several artifacts from his childhood days rooting for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Two items in particular are dear to him.

“After the Dodgers left (Brooklyn), my brother was riding his bike past Ebbets Field when they were knocking it down (in 1960),” says Reinsdorf. “He looked in and there was one workman there. My brother said, ‘Can I get a couple of seats?’ And the workman told him, ‘Sure, here take these two. Give me five bucks.’ My brother went in his pocket and had something less than two dollars. The guy let him have two seats. My brother put them on his bicycle and walked the bike back home. Ebbets Field was not more than a mile, mile and a half from where we lived.

“My father took (the seats) and put them in the storage room of the apartment building we were living in, and kept them for a number of years,” Reinsdorf continues. “And years later, when I bought my first home, he sent them out to me. They’ve been in my office ever since.”

When Citi Field was built, one of Wilpon’s wishes was to have the old-style ballpark pay homage to Robinson. The rotunda at the stadium’s entrance is worthy tribute to one of Wilpon’s childhood heroes.

“I have had a long relationship with Rachel (Robinson) and her family. It goes back to when she started the Jackie Robinson Foundation,” says Wilpon. “Jackie Robinson is obviously more than just a Hall of Fame baseball player. He’s an American icon. He did as much for the civil rights movement as anyone. He was a great man and Rachel is a
remarkable woman. The Mets and Judy (Wilpon’s wife) and I personally have supported the Jackie Robinson Foundation and many of their other initiatives."

King and Gossett Jr. are now Los Angeles residents, and both still ardently root for the Dodgers, with King usually seen at home games in his customary seats behind home plate. The Dodgers last won the World Series in 1988.

While King says players now may not fully appreciate the impact or legacy of Robinson, Gossett Jr. says the current divisiveness in American society could use a 21st-century savior.

“We desperately need one another now. It’s becoming a no-brainer,” says Gossett Jr., who has a foundation called Eracism, which is devoted to promoting racial harmony. “Jackie was my role model. The other ones were older – Ralph Bunche. But heroes? The Brooklyn Dodgers. Everybody loved Jackie. America is supposed to be a team. I think the one good thing about the (2016) election is that we’re awake now.”

King says that when he met Robinson, the Hall of Fame Dodger told King then that baseball still “had a long way to go” from the work Robinson had started. But baseball in 2017 has players from all corners of the world, and there are African-Americans in front office roles and in manager positions. The population of African-American players in the game has dropped off significantly in the last three decades, however.

Will another player like Robinson ever come along to create a similar transcendent moment? We can only hope.

“In the moment, we didn’t recognize the significance of Robinson’s impact to the extent we do today,” says Wilpon. “We certainly recognized that an African-American man was leading the charge for others to eventually play in the big leagues. That was monumental. But I didn’t realize at the time how monumental it was for our country and what it did to push the civil rights movement and the iconic man and great leader (Robinson) would become. Jackie had a short life, but one full of impact and a career not only as a great player, but a remarkable citizen and leader.”

**Garcia gets hit in first Major League at-bat**

*24-year-old starts opener on Friday vs. Twins*

By Patrick Donnelly / MLB.com | April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS -- Willy Garcia didn’t just make history Friday as part of the first outfield with three players sharing the same last name. He also made his Major League debut in the White Sox 2-1 win over the Twins at Target Field.

Garcia was called up from Triple-A Charlotte to fill the roster spot of Melky Cabrera, who is on paternity leave through the weekend. White Sox manager Rick Renteria said it was a “natural thing" to take a look at Garcia, who was hitting .423/.559/.692 with two home runs in his first week with the Knights.
"He was doing well," Renteria said. "He's been working out there in left a little bit, so it's just kind of slotted for the next three days. We'll give him a start tonight and then we'll see how the rest of it goes."

Garcia went 1-for-4 in his debut, doubling off Twins starter Adalberto Mejia in the second inning in his first Major League at-bat. He was thrown out trying to stretch it into a triple, but that didn't dampen his enthusiasm. Neither did a 35-minute rain delay or intermittent showers that sprung up throughout the game.

"When I go out there and I see the tarp on the field and I say, 'Oh my gosh, this is my debut and it's raining.' I was a little bit nervous," Garcia said. "But when I saw the guys take the tarp off, I said, 'OK, here we go.'"

The early struggles of Jacob May also played into Renteria's decision to give Garcia a shot. May is hitless in his first 14 Major League at-bats after breaking camp with the White Sox. The coaching staff decided to give him a three-game break, holding him out of the last two games in Cleveland and Friday's series opener in Minnesota.

That opened the door for Garcia, who joined the organization when the White Sox claimed him off waivers from the Pittsburgh Pirates during the offseason. Renteria said when they sent Garcia to the Minors last month, they asked him to focus on staying on the ball and going up the middle. He took the challenge to heart.

"The first adjustment I made was in my mindset, just to try to be more relaxed, more confident, more secure about my skills," Garcia said through an interpreter. "In the offensive part, I just tried to follow the instructions of my coaches, the drills that they put us through in Spring Training and in Charlotte. Now I'm more patient at the plate and my pitch selection is much better, and I think the results are there."

Garcia, who said his favorite player growing up was Manny Ramirez, will be moving to his hero's position in left field after spending the last two years in right field for the Pirates' affiliates. He's not worried about the change, especially after starting working there in Charlotte.

"I feel very confident about my skills at the position, about my job there. It's nothing different for me."

Teammate Leury Garcia is excited to see the rookie get his first shot in the big leagues.

"I had a chance to see him play in the Dominican in winter ball," Leury Garcia said. "He's a great player. He's got some pop, he can throw, he can play. He really can play."

Davidson takes advantage of chance to impress

*White Sox third baseman's solo home run proves to be difference on Friday*
MINNEAPOLIS -- A broken foot cost Matt Davidson an opportunity to impress after just one game with the White Sox last year. This time around, he's doing everything he can to make the most of his chance.

Davidson hit a tie-breaking home run leading off the seventh inning and the White Sox held on for a 2-1 victory over the Twins on Friday night at Target Field.

Filling in again for an ailing Todd Frazier at third base, Davidson smashed his team-leading third home run of the season off a 2-2 pitch from Twins reliever Ryan Pressly. The ball caromed off the scoreboard just below the upper deck in right-center field, a projected 404 feet away from home plate. It got there in a hurry, too, leaving his bat at a game-high 105.3 mph, per Statcast™.

Davidson had fallen behind 0-2 before battling back to even the count by taking a four-seam fastball high and a curve in the dirt. Pressly followed with a slider on the outside corner, and thanks in part to a change in his two-strike approach, he put good wood on it.

"Recently with the strikeouts I've had, I've been trying to protect everything rather than trying to make my zone smaller, to make myself only swing at strikes instead of trying to get bigger and protect," Davidson said.

"That's all I was trying to do, just trying to shorten my zone. If [Pressly] made a really good pitch, I was going to let him have it, like if it was on the corner or something. But I was just trying to make my zone smaller so I wouldn't chase."

It was the second straight game with a home run for Davidson, who was a centerpiece of the trade that sent former closer Addison Reed to the D-backs following the 2013 season. After struggling for two years in Triple-A, Davidson finally worked his way up to the Major Leagues late last June, but after only two at-bats, he broke his foot and was done for the year.

This year he broke camp with the big club for the first time in his career, and he's holding up his end of the bargain. Frazier missed two games with flu-like symptoms and served as the DH on Friday, giving Davidson three straight games at third base. The White Sox won all three and he's had four hits and six RBIs in the process.

"I'm just enjoying every single day," Davidson said. "It definitely helps when you get a little rhythm going. I'm just preparing the same way if I'm not playing, if I'm DHing, or if I'm playing third. I'm just going to do the same thing every day and enjoy it."

The White Sox started an all-Garcia outfield in Friday's win

By Gemma Kaneko / MLB.com | April 14, 2017

There have been about 160 players in MLB history with the last name "Smith," and about 111 with the last name Johnson. Other common baseball last names include "Davis," "Jackson," "Jones" and "Gonzalez." So it's actually a bit surprising that, for Friday's game against the Twins, the White Sox managed to do something that's never been done before -- start three outfielders with the same last name:
From left to right, that's Avisail Garcia, Willy Garcia and Leury Garcia (the outfielders are not related). Now, all White Sox need to do is trade for Brett Anderson, and then they'll have a full house. Wait, you might be thinking, didn't Felipe, Matty and Jesus Alou start a game together when they played for the Giants? The answer to that question is below:

Though they occasionally played in the same game together, you never saw "Alou" written three times on a starting lineup. From the New York Times:

On Sept. 15, [1963], Felipe played all three outfield positions, and Matty and Jesus joined him in the outfield as late-inning substitutes. Two days later, Felipe started again and Matty and Jesus moved into the outfield late in the game. And on Sept. 22, they played in the outfield together one last time, with Felipe again starting and ultimately playing all three positions before Matty and Jesus flanked him in the late innings.

The Alous all played in the same game one more time, on Sept. 25, when Felipe started and his brothers pinch-hit.

The next season Felipe was traded to the Milwaukee Braves. The brothers all played at least 15 seasons in the major leagues, but the chances for an all-Alou outfield were over.

The outfielders themselves think it's pretty cool.

"That's going to make this game more special because it's something happening for the first time in the Major Leagues," Willy told MLB.com's Patrick Donnelly through an interpreter. "Something that's going to be fun too is if someone calls us by our last name, we're not going to know who they're calling."

Each Garcia recorded at least one hit in Chicago's 2-1 win (Avisail - 2 H, 1 R, 1 RBI), (Willy - 1 H), (Leury - 1 H, 1 R). So, maybe the White Sox need to get themselves even more Garcias?

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**Davidson’s HR backs Covey; White Sox win**

By Rhett Bollinger and Patrick Donnelly / MLB.com | April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS -- Dylan Covey threw 5 1/3 strong innings in his Major League debut and Matt Davidson connected on a go-ahead solo homer in the seventh to lift the White Sox to a 2-1 win over the Twins on a rainy Friday night at Target Field.

Covey, selected from the A's in the Rule 5 Draft, didn't factor into the decision, but he limited Minnesota to one run on five hits and three walks with a strikeout.

"I had some jitters in the first inning, but I was able to calm down after that," said Covey, who gave up a hit and walk to the first two batters he faced. "I just threw as many strikes as I could and let the defense work behind me, which they did."

Fellow rookie Adalberto Mejia made his second career start for the Twins and was also solid, allowing one run on four hits with three walks and four strikeouts. It was his second straight start against Chicago, but he fared much better than his season debut, when he lasted 1 2/3 innings.
"I felt better," Mejia said. "I felt more comfortable. I let the past be the past and was more prepared this start. I think the important thing is I was more confident."

The Twins scored early on an RBI groundout from catcher Jason Castro after Max Kepler doubled and reached third on a passed ball. But the White Sox quickly tied it in the third after loading the bases with one out, getting a run on an RBI fielder's choice grounder from Jose Abreu.

Davidson was the hero with his solo shot off Twins right-hander Ryan Pressly to lead off the seventh on a night that didn't feature much offense. Neither team had a hit with a runner in scoring position. Dan Jennings, Zach Putnam, Nate Jones and David Robertson combined to throw 3 2/3 scoreless innings for the White Sox with Robertson tossing a perfect ninth to get his second save of the year.

"A slider down and away," Davidson said of the pitch he hit out. "I was just trying to keep it in the zone, trying to get a good strike to swing at. He threw one in there and I got it."

**MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

Davidson goes deep: Davidson has mostly started against left-handed pitchers this season, but he could see more playing time with his production so far. He crushed a 2-2 slider from Pressly to right-center field for his team-leading third blast of the year. It left the bat at a game-high 105.3 mph and went a projected 404 feet, per Statcast™. It was his second straight game with a homer.

Castro's drive denied: With Miguel Sano at second base with two outs in the sixth, Twins catcher Jason Castro smacked a deep drive into left-center field, but Leury Garcia was able to track it down near the warning track to end the inning. The liner was the only ball hit by the Twins classified as "barreled" by Statcast™, as it left the bat at 89.4 mph with a launch angle of 27 degrees, traveling an estimated 382 feet.

"We had missed opportunities," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "We had some good hitters' counts, too."

**QUOTABLE**

"The experience in and of itself, I hate to say it, unless you've lived it, it's hard to describe. But it's a culmination of all those things you dream about when you're a kid, and then you get there and you get an opportunity, it's a pretty special moment." -- White Sox manager Rick Renteria, on the Major League debuts of Covey and Willy Garcia

**SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

The White Sox started an all-Garcia outfield, marking the first time in Major League history a team's three starting outfielders all had the same last name. All three collected hits, including Willy Garcia, who doubled in his first Major League at-bat in the second, but he was thrown out at third trying to stretch it to a triple.

**REPLAY REVIEW**

Brian Dozier laced an extra-base hit into the right-center-field gap with one out in the fifth, and tried to stretch it to a triple, but was called out at third by umpire Todd Tichenor. The Twins challenged the play, but after a review, the call was upheld for the second out of the inning.
"It looked to me like the replay was inconclusive," Molitor said. "The glove got hidden there in the angles as far as when contact was made. I thought it was worth a challenge. It would've been a big overturn if we could get it."

**WHAT'S NEXT**

**White Sox:** Left-hander Jose Quintana will look for his first win of the season as he takes on the Twins on Saturday at 1:10 p.m. CT. Quintana is 0-2 with a 6.17 ERA, but he held the Twins to two runs in 6 1/3 innings in his last start.

**Twins:** Right-hander Ervin Santana starts for the Twins against the White Sox on Saturday at Target Field. Santana is off to a great start, as he's 2-0 with a 0.69 ERA and only four hits allowed in 13 innings.

Watch every out-of-market regular-season game live on MLB.TV.

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**Quintana goes for series win vs. Twins on JR Day**
By Patrick Donnelly / MLB.com | April 14, 2017

The Twins and White Sox will celebrate Jackie Robinson Day by sending their aces to the mound on Saturday in a rematch of a classic pitcher's duel earlier in the week.

Minnesota's Ervin Santana (2-0, 0.69 ERA) worked six scoreless innings as the Twins pulled out a 4-1 victory on Sunday at Guaranteed Rate Field. The right-hander will be going for his third win in as many starts this season against the White Sox.

White Sox starter Jose Quintana (0-2, 6.17) was strong into the seventh inning on Sunday but took a hard-luck loss. Twins slugger Miguel Sano, who has homered in each of the Twins' first three series this year, hit a two-run shot in the eighth inning to help Minnesota take two of three in Chicago.

**Three things to know about this game**
- Santana is 3-2 with a 2.32 ERA in his last five starts against the White Sox at Target Field.
- Twins second baseman Brian Dozier is hitting just .224 (11-for-49) against Quintana, but four of his hits have been home runs.
- White Sox third baseman Matt Davidson has homered in each of his last two starts, including a decisive solo shot in Friday night's opener that gave the South Siders a 2-1 win.

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**White Sox to Feature an All-Garcia Outfield vs. Twins on CSN and CSNChicago.com**
By Dan Hayes / CSN Chicago | April 14, 2017

Rick Renteria is making Tres Garcias happen.

The White Sox announced lineup for Friday night's contest features an outfield full of Garcias.
Avisail Garcia is starting in right field for the White Sox, who open a three-game series at Minnesota at 7:10 p.m. CST on CSN and streaming live at CSNChicago.com.

Leury Garcia will start in center field. And Willy Garcia, who was promoted earlier Friday when Melky Cabrera was placed on the paternity list, gets the start in left field.

The White Sox are the first team in major league history to boast a starting outfield with the same last name, according to the Elias Sports. There have only been three other games in major league history in which a team had three outfielders with the same last name. All three Alou brothers — Felipe, Matty and Jesus — played in the San Francisco Giants outfield late in contests on Sept. 15, 17 and 22, 1963 but did not start.

Avisail Garcia has been the hottest White Sox hitter so far as he's slashed .452/.500/.645 with a homer and eight RBIs. Leury Garcia has produced a .724 OPS in his first 13 plate appearances. And Willy Garcia is coming off a stretch in which he was named the named the International League player of the week at Triple-A Charlotte. Friday's contest will be the major league debut for Willy Garcia, who has slashed .423/.559/.692 with two homers and six RBIs in 34 trips to the plate at Charlotte.

Renteria suggested Thursday he might make the all-Garcia outfield happen if the White Sox promoted Willy Garcia to take the place of Cabrera, who returned to Chicago on Friday. Cabrera is expected to rejoin the White Sox when they open a series at the New York Yankees on Monday night.

Friday's White Sox lineup behind starting pitcher Dylan Covey is: Tim Anderson (SS), Tyler Saladino (2B), Jose Abreu (1B), Todd Frazier (DH), Avisail Garcia (RF), Matt Davidson (3B), Willy Garcia (LF), Kevan Smith (C), Leury Garcia (CF).

Matt Davidson's Home Run Lifts White Sox Over Twins
By Associated Press / April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) With three Garcias behind him in the outfield and Matt Davidson getting his back at the plate, Dylan Covey's big league debut was a memorable one.

Covey pitched one-run ball into the sixth inning and Davidson homered in the seventh to lift the Chicago White Sox to a 2-1 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Friday night.

Covey allowed five hits, walked three and struck out one in 5 1/3 innings. Davidson's third homer of the year reached the upper deck in right field off Ryan Pressly (0-1), and David Robertson picked up his second save.

Dan Jennings (1-0) pitched one inning of scoreless relief.

The White Sox selected Covey in the Rule 5 draft from Oakland, the culmination of a winding road to the majors. He was a first-round draft pick of the Milwaukee Brewers in 2010, but did not sign and then was picked by the Athletics in the fourth round in 2013.

The only run he allowed came on a groundout from Jason Castro in the second inning.
"I was excited. I was nervous. Just thankful we got the win," Covey said. "I had some jitters in the first inning but I was able to calm down after that. I just threw as many strikes as I could and let the defense work behind me, which they did."

It was a historic defense, you could say.

The White Sox became the first team to start three players with the same last name in the outfield. Avisail Garcia, who had two hits to extend his season-opening hitting streak to nine games, started in right field and Leury Garcia was in center. Willy Garcia, who also made his big league debut, started in left field.

"The experience in and of itself, I hate to say it, unless you've lived it it's hard to describe," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "But it's a culmination of all those things you dream about when you're a kid and then you get there and you get an opportunity, it's a pretty special moment."

The hard-throwing Pressly had not given up a run in three appearances this season, with many in the Twins organization seeing him as a future closer. But Davidson got hold of a slider, sending his third homer of the year sailing into the seats in right field.

"I was just trying to keep it in the zone, trying to get a good strike to swing at," Davidson said. "He threw one in there and I got it."

Adalberto Mejia gave up one run and four hits in five innings for the Twins. Brian Dozier had two hits.

"Just not enough offense today," Twins manager Paul Molitor said.

## Cody Asche relying on 'strong mindset' to adjust to new team, new role

By Colleen Kane / Chicago Tribune | April 14, 2017

Cody Asche said he had no expectations and no familiarity with the White Sox's roster plans when he entered spring training on a minor-league deal.

The 26-year-old left-handed hitter thinks that probably helped him compete for the job he is now trying to fill.

"That played to my advantage because it helped me not over-think things," Asche said. "It kept me grounded on the day-to-day process of spring training. ... One of the reasons I've been a big-leaguer in my career is having a strong mindset, a strong will to get better and succeed and not let setbacks keep me down."

After spending his entire professional career with the Phillies organization — from the 2011 draft to 371 major-league games from 2013-16 — adjusting to a new team is just one challenge he faces this year. Another is learning to be a designated hitter, his role in his first six Sox games. He had the day off Friday as the Sox put Todd Frazier in the DH slot to ease him back from the flu.
Asche said he doesn’t find it all that different than coming off the bench in the National League. He still has to find ways to stay warm and locked into games when he’s not on the field. He will hit in the cage, jog in the tunnel and do whatever he can to keep his hands warm.

The results haven't been ideal thus far. He went 2-for-20 with an RBI, two walks and eight strikeouts through Thursday. But he said he's confident in his ability and isn't worried about the effect of not playing defense, though manager Rick Renteria said he will play in the corner outfield and infield spots at times.

"Maybe it's harder after the game, if you don't get any hits, you don't get on base, you feel like you didn't do anything because you weren't on defense," Asche said. "But once the game is over, I'll analyze for a couple of minutes and take a positive take-away from the day. Once I leave the park, I'm done with it and the preparation for the next day starts."

Renteria said he is not concerned about Asche’s adjustment period.

"He hasn't had the results that he or we wanted, but his at-bats have actually been pretty good," Renteria said. "He's a pretty comfortable and prepared hitter."

**Opener:** Tim Anderson started in the leadoff spot for the second day in a row. Renteria said he likely will continue using different players in the role.

"I just want (him) to be the first guy who gets to see the pitcher," Renteria said. "He can take the first pitch or if he gets a strike he's going to jump on it like he did yesterday."

**Day off:** Rookie center fielder Jacob May received a third day off to work with coaches but Renteria said he might return to the lineup Saturday.

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**White Sox shower Dylan Covey with congratulations after solid MLB debut**

By Colleen Kane / Chicago Tribune | April 14, 2017

Dylan Covey’s White Sox teammates showered him with “all sorts of beverages” when he went into the visiting clubhouse at Target Field after a 2-1 victory over the Twins on Friday night.

“I don’t even know what it was, but it's pretty stinky in the shower right now,” Covey said.

Covey and outfielder Willy Garcia received the greeting to celebrate their major-league debuts in the same game.

While Garcia recorded his first career hit, Covey, a 25-year-old right-hander, turned in a solid 5 1/3 innings that helped keep the Sox in a close game. He allowed one earned run on five hits with three walks and a strikeout.

“He gave us a nice job,” Sox manager Rick Renteria said. “He gave us an opportunity to stay in the ballgame. He worked through traffic but got through it.”
Covey started by giving up a leadoff single to Brian Dozier and issuing a walk to Robbie Grossman. But a double play helped him get out of early trouble, and he was able to relax a bit. Max Kepler doubled, advanced on a passed ball and scored on a groundout in the second for the only run against Covey.

“I was excited; I was nervous,” Covey said. “I’m just glad we got the win. I had some jitters in the first inning, but I was able to calm down after that and throw as many strikes as I could and let the defense work behind me.”

Covey didn’t have great conditions for his debut.

He had to wait through a 35-minute rain delay to start the game, but Renteria said he kept his focus well. He also had to pitch through periods of pouring rain, which he said was a first.

“It was different, but I’d rather pitch in the weather we had today than something super dry,” Covey said. “When I was holding the ball in my hand it felt tacky almost because of the humidity. It’s hard to have a good feel for your pitches when it’s super dry. So I felt pretty comfortable out there.”

Covey’s wife and other family and friends waited for him in the tunnel outside of the Sox clubhouse after the game to congratulate him. The moment was made more special given the winding path Covey took to get there.

A 2010 first-round draft pick of the Brewers, Covey instead attended college after being diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes just days before the signing deadline. He was drafted by the A’s in the fourth round in 2013 and came to the Sox in the Rule 5 draft this winter.

“I’ve been waiting a long time, so it felt really good,” Covey said. “I had my family here. My wife is here, so I’m happy they got to see it, and I can’t wait to go out there and give everyone a hug.”

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**Three-Garcia outfield makes MLB history in 2-1 White Sox victory**

By Colleen Kane / Chicago Tribune | April 14, 2017

Willy Garcia ran up the steps from the visiting dugout at Target Field to take his spot in left field Friday night, and Leury Garcia trotted a few steps behind to center field.

When Avisail Garcia ran to right field 30 seconds later for Brian Dozier’s first at-bat in the first inning, the White Sox officially made Major League Baseball history.

A wet but otherwise ordinary 2-1 victory over the Twins can go down as the “Tres Garcias Game” as the Sox became the first team in baseball to start an outfield of three players with the same surname, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

In 1963, the Giants played brothers Felipe, Jesus and Matty Alou together in the outfield in three September games, but they didn’t start all three in any game.

“I know there’s a little buzz about that,” Sox manager Rick Renteria said. “I guess we’ll take whatever positive we can get out of it.”
The Garcias combined to go 4-for-10 with a walk and a run, and Leury contributed solid outfield defense. Matt Davidson hit his third homer, a shot off Ryan Pressly in the seventh, to break a 1-1 tie.

The event was made possible when Willy was called up from Triple-A Charlotte to fill in for Melky Cabrera, who is on paternity leave for the birth of his fourth child, a daughter.

The trio — 24-year-old Dominican Willy, 25-year-old Venezuelan Avisail and 26-year-old Dominican Leury — took a couple of minutes to commemorate the day early Friday afternoon with a group photo, even though Willy had to prepare for his major-league debut.

Willy, who was informed by a reporter the all-Garcia outfield was an MLB first, said he expected Twins fans and Sox teammates to have fun with it.

“That's going to make this game more special because it's something that's happening for the first time in the major leagues,” Willy said through a team interpreter. “If someone calls out our last name, we're not going to know who they're calling. People can make that joke to have fun.”

He had his own fun in the second inning when he recorded his first major-league hit, a double to left-center field off lefty Adalberto Mejia, though being thrown out trying to stretch it to a triple likely lessened the thrill. He said he made the call to try for third on his own, but despite the out, he was relieved to record his first hit.

“When I go to the box and stay there, I said, ‘Oh my God, this is real life. I’m here,’” Willy said. “The first three pitches I was nervous. And when I saw the fastball, I said, ‘Let’s go you. You need to do something, put in a good swing, don’t try to do too much.’”

A Sox waiver claim in January from the Pirates, the team he signed with in 2010, Willy earned his promotion after going 11-for-26 with a double, two homers and six RBIs in seven games in Charlotte.

“One of the first adjustments I made was in mindset, to try to be more relaxed, more confident, more secure about my skills,” Garcia said. “Now I'm more patient at the plate. My pitch (recognition) is much better and the results are there.”

Sox catcher Kevan Smith said Willy looks like a different player from the one he faced in Triple A last year.

“He has really opened my eyes a lot,” Smith said. “He was squaring a lot of balls up down there, making some nice plays in the outfield.”

The other two Garcias also recorded hits in the first four innings, including a third-inning double from Leury, who evened the game at 1-1 when he scored on Jose Abreu's groundout.

Perhaps overshadowed by the quirky outfield alignment was right-hander Dylan Covey's major-league debut as the Sox's fifth starter. He pitched 5 1/3 innings, some of it in driving rain, allowing one run on five hits with three walks. He was pulled after he walked Miguel Sano in the sixth.

David Robertson recorded his second save.
Willy, who was given three game balls afterward that he planned to keep for himself, his wife and his mother, was relieved the Sox got the game in. He had been afraid that might not happen given the rain that delayed the first pitch 35 minutes.

“I saw the tarp on the field, and I said, ‘Oh my God, it’s raining,’” he said. “I was a little nervous because I wanted to play. When I saw the guys take the tarp off, I said, ‘Let’s go. Turn it on and try to do your job.”’

That’s a first: All-Garcia outfield leads White Sox past Twins

Willy, Leury and Avisail to patrol the outfield for White Sox Friday

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun-Times | April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS — The Sox’ lineup Friday one day will be the answer to a trivia question.

With Willy Garcia in left field, Leury Garcia in center and Avisail Garcia in right in a 2-1 victory over the Twins, the Sox featured three players with the same last name starting in the outfield for the first time in history. A rain delay made everyone wait for a moment that seemed more coincidental and trivial than historic.

“Everybody talked about it,” Sox manager Rick Renteria said. “It’s pretty cool. Kind of a coincidence, but it’s neat.”

According to Elias, there have been three games in major-league history in which one team had three outfielders with the same last name at the same time, but they didn’t all start. Brothers Felipe, Jesus and Matty Alou appeared in three games with the San Francisco Giants in September 1963.

As it turned out, each one made a contribution. Leury doubled and scored a run and pleased Renteria by using his speed to cut off a couple balls hit in the gaps, Avisail singled twice to raise his average to .452 — he has hit safely in all nine games — and Willy doubled in his first major league at-bat in the second, although he made the third out trying to make it a triple.

The Sox called up Willy Garcia from Class AAA Charlotte to replace left fielder Melky Cabrera (paternity list), whose wife delivered the couple’s fourth child Friday. Leury Garcia made his third consecutive start in center in place of rookie Jacob May.

“It was the best experience of my life,” Willy said. “When I saw the tarp on the field (delaying the start 35 minutes) I said, ‘Oh my God, it’s my debut and it’s raining.’”

Garcia said when he stepped in the batter’s box against left-hander Adalberto Mejía, he thought to himself, ‘Oh my God this is real life. I’m here.’ I was nervous the first three pitches but when I saw that fastball I thought, ‘Let’s go. Put on a good swing and don’t try to do too much.’”

White Sox outfielders, all named Garcia, celebrate the Sox’ 2-1 win over the Minnesota Twins in Minneapolis. From left are Willy Garcia, Leury Garcia and Avisail Garcia. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

Covey’s special moment
Like Willy Garcia, right-hander Dylan Covey made his major league debut. A Rule 5 draft pick who has fought back after dealing with diabetes, Covey pitched 5 1/3 innings of one-run ball. He doesn’t recall ever pitching in rain like that before.

After the game, the moisture didn’t stop as Covey, 25, got “showered with all sorts of beverages,” he said. “I don’t even know what some of it was, but it’s pretty stinky in the shower right now.”

“I’ve been waiting [for this moment] a long time. My wife and family were here — I’m happy they got to see it. I can’t wait to go out there and give everyone a hug.”

**Frazier at DH**
Todd Frazier, who missed two games in Cleveland with an illness, was 0-for-4 at designated hitter, victimized by two excellent infield plays. Renteria said he hoped to put Frazier back at third base Saturday.

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**No. 42 Day is special for White Sox’ Tim Anderson**
By Daryl Van Schouwen / Chicago Sun-Times | April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS — Tim Anderson won’t take Jackie Robinson Day lightly Saturday. The White Sox’ 24-year-old shortstop, like everyone else in baseball, will wear Robinson’s No. 42 to honor the man who broke the color barrier 70 years ago.

Anderson has a special appreciation for the pressure and prejudice Robinson endured when he broke into baseball with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 “to pave the way and knock down the door for guys like us,” Anderson said Friday.

“[Saturday] is a special day for me,” Anderson said before the Sox’ 2-1 victory against the Twins at Target Field. “As an African-American, it’s a blessing to go out and play for such an amazing man like him. It’s a very special day in the game as baseball pays its respects to him.”

Anderson, leading off a second consecutive night after he ignited the Sox’ 10-4 victory over the Indians on Thursday by launching Josh Tomlin’s first pitch for a home run, was 0-for-3 with a walk and a pair of nice plays in the field. He flew out twice to center and grounded to third as he battles through a slow start (.154 but with two homers).

Third baseman Matt Davidson broke a 1-1 tie by hitting his third homer, an opposite-field shot against Ryan Pressly to lead off the seventh.

By that time, Sox right-hander Dylan Covey was finished with a strong 90-pitch effort in his major-league debut, allowing one run despite giving up five hits and three walks in 5 1/3 innings.

Dan Jennings (1-0), Zach Putnam, Nate Jones and David Robinson combined for 3 2/3 innings of one-hit ball. Robertson (0.00) collected his second save with a perfect ninth.

Anderson, who made his debut less than a year ago, already has a $25 million contract to his name because the Sox project him as a centerpiece of their rebuild. Anderson, who was still at Class AAA Charlotte on Jackie Robinson Day last season, has deep respect for what Robinson did to pave the way.
He has had a big impact on guys like me,’’ Anderson said. “All guys, really. He’s motivating, number one, for me. If it wasn’t for him, African Americans wouldn’t be in the game. I’m very thankful for his bravery and handling what came with it and sticking up to and sticking with it and breaking in that road.

“He was strong. He went through a lot and would have been easy to break down and give up. But he fought through it.”

It’s not lost on Anderson that he’s one of two African Americans on the Sox along with rookie Jacob May, and one of only 62 in baseball. That represents 7.1 percent of players, which is down from 17.2 percent in 1974 and is the lowest since 1958 according to numbers compiled this week by USA Today.

“One reason I play is to motivate the youth,’’ Anderson said. “Overall, kids in general but more so African Americans, motivate them and let them know ‘don’t give up on your dream.’ Have fun with it, but don’t give up because you never know how close you are.

“A lot of kids get in the wrong situations or with the wrong group of guys.”

Anderson played baseball as a young boy but basketball was his game, and he led Hillcrest High School in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to a state title his senior year. He didn’t play serious baseball until his junior year but started attracting scouts to his games at East Central Community College in Decatur, Mississippi.

“I made a full commitment to baseball my freshman year and my sophomore year and I knew I actually had a chance to make it my job,’’ he said. “The scouts started rolling in and my phone started buzzing. I knew I had a chance to do something special and be a professional athlete.”

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Uno, dos, tres, Garcias! White Sox OF filled with Garcias

By Jon Krawczynski / Associated Press | April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS -- If Chicago White Sox manager Rick Renteria wanted to get Garcia's attention in the outfield on Friday night against Minnesota, he had to be more specific.

Renteria put together a lineup of Avisail Garcia in right field, Leury Garcia in center field and Willy Garcia in left field for the series opener against the Twins, the first time in major league history that a team has started three outfielders with the same last name.

Willy and Leury Garcia are from the Dominican Republic and Avisail is from Venezuela. They are not related.

"That will be fun," Willy Garcia said through a translator before hitting a double in his first big league at-bat during a a href='https://apnews.com/2d04c370765c422d881c77b5225655e1/Davidson's-HR-lifts-3-Garcias,-White-Sox-over-Twins-2-12-1-victory/a over the Twins. "We know each other. We are Latinos. I think it's going to be something very special."

There have only been three games in major league history in which an outfield has been filled with players of the same name, according to the Elias Sports Bureau. Brothers Felipe, Matty and Jesus Alou all
appeared in the outfield for the San Francisco Giants in three games in September of 1963, but they never started together. Each time, one was added as a defensive replacement late in the game.

"That's pretty cool," Renteria said. "It's kind of a coincidence, but it's a neat little point of history now."

The White Sox claimed Willy Garcia off waivers from the Pittsburgh Pirates in January, and he hit .423 with two home runs in seven games for Triple-A Charlotte before being recalled to take the place of Melky Cabrera, who is on paternity leave. Garcia wore a wide smile on his face as he prepared to take the field for the first time and laughed when asked about the comfort of being surrounded by two other Garcias in the outfield for his debut.

"That's going to make this game more special because it's something that is happening for the first time in the major leagues," Willy Garcia said.

Special - and maybe a little confusing.

"If someone calls out for us by our last name, for Garcia, we're not going to know who they are calling for," Willy Garcia said. "Some people can do that just to have fun and make jokes, but that will be fun for us."

Willy Garcia went 1 for 4 in his debut - he was thrown out trying to stretch his double into a triple. Avisail Garcia had two hits to extend his season-opening hitting streak to nine games and Leury Garcia got a hit and scored a run.

Less than a week after Spaniard Sergio Garcia won his first golf major at the Masters, these three outfielders put the Garcia name back in the headlines. In a season in which the White Sox plunged into rebuilding mode after trading ace Chris Sale and outfielder Adam Eaton during the winter, they welcomed the attention for the quirky bit of history.

"I know there's a little buzz about that," Renteria said. "I guess we'll take it, whatever positive we can get out of it, absolutely."

Davidson's HR lifts 3 Garcias, White Sox over Twins 2-1
By Jon Krawczynski / Associated Press | April 14, 2017

MINNEAPOLIS -- Dylan Covey allowed one run on five hits while pitching into the sixth inning of his big league debut and Matt Davidson hit a solo home run in the seventh to lift the Chicago White Sox to a 2-1 victory over the Minnesota Twins on Friday night.

Covey walked three and struck out one in 5 1-3 innings. Davidson's third homer of the year reached the upper deck in right field off Twins reliever Ryan Pressly (0-1) and David Robertson picked up his second save.

Dan Jennings (1-0) pitched one inning of scoreless relief.
The White Sox selected Covey in the Rule 5 draft from Oakland, the culmination of a winding road to the majors. He was a first-round draft pick of the Milwaukee Brewers in 2010, but did not sign and then was picked by the Athletics in the fourth round in 2013.

The only run he allowed came on a groundout from Jason Castro in the second inning.

Covey wasn't the only White Sox player to make his big league debut on Friday night.

Left fielder Willy Garcia was recalled from Triple-A Charlotte to fill in while Melky Cabrera is on paternity leave. Garcia hit a double in his first at-bat, but was thrown out trying to stretch it into a triple.

Garcia also was a part of history, with the White Sox becoming the first team to start three players with the same last name in the outfield. Avisail Garcia, who had two hits to extend his season-opening hitting streak to nine games, started in right field and Leury Garcia was in center. The three are not related.

The hard-throwing Pressly had not given up a run in three appearances this season, with many in the Twins organization seeing him as a future closer. But Davidson got hold of one of his fastballs to lead off the seventh inning, sending his third homer of the year sailing into the seats in right field to give the White Sox the lead.

Adalberto Mejia gave up one run on four hits with four strikeouts and three walks in five innings for the Twins. Brian Dozier had two hits.

**TRAINER'S ROOM**

White Sox: Todd Frazier returned to the lineup at DH after missing the previous two games with an illness. Manager Rick Renteria said he wanted to ease Frazier back in as the DH before getting him some time back at 3B later this weekend.

**DELAYED START**

The start of the game was held up 36 minutes by rain. Steady showers fell again in the second and third innings, but the teams were able to keep playing through it.

While the crowd waited for the game to begin, the Twins showed Game 2 of the NHL Western Conference quarterfinals series between the Minnesota Wild and St. Louis Blues on the big screen.

**TOUGH BREAK**

Twins CF Byron Buxton has been sensational in the field but has struggled mightily at the plate. He is hitting .081 with a league-leading 20 strikeouts. He hit a line drive in the second inning off Covey that appeared headed down the left field line for extra bases. But the ball drilled third base umpire Todd Tichenor and fell foul, taking the hit away. Buxton struck out swinging after that and went 0 for 3.

**UP NEXT**

The Twins send RHP Ervin Santana (2-0, 0.69) to the mound to face White Sox LHP Jose Quintana (0-2, 6.17) in the second of a three-game series. Santana ranks fifth in the American League in ERA, with just one run allowed in his first two starts. Quintana is holding opponents to a .222 batting average, but has given up eight runs in 11 2-3 innings.