

## GUERRERO, JR.'S BREAKOUT SEASON ARRIVES

A ballplayer knows he's in fairly select company when an admiring opponent says it's fun to watch a "franchise superstar at work."

Those were the words of Washington's Josh Bell in an [MLB.com](#) story after Vladimir Guerrero, Jr., of the Toronto Blue Jays officially struck the word 'potential' from his career description by slamming three home runs, two of them (including a grand slam) off three-time Cy Young award winner Max Scherzer, in a late April game. He finished with seven RBI.

After four or five years of speculation and hope, Vlady Guerrero, Jr., has emphatically arrived.

For two years, Guerrero, Jr., has been the face of the Baby Jays, a trio of great young players many observers felt would grow together to lead Jays into a powerhouse. There were signs of stardom in years one and two, but Year 3 appears to be the launching pad to that predicted superstardom.

Scherzer, who was tagged for a home run by Vlady's daddy 10 years ago, joined a select duo: The only pitchers to give up a home run to Guerrero Sr. and Jr. are him and Ivan Nova, who retired in 2020.

What an April for Guerrero, Jr.! The slimmed-down infielder (he lost 30 pounds since last year) ended the month batting .350, with seven homers (two shy of the MLB lead) and an OPS of 1.155, trailing only Mike Trout and Ronald Acuna, Jr.

Bo Bichette and Cavan Biggio, who also had fathers with sterling major league careers, are the other two Baby Jays who appear to be fulfilling the hopes of Blue Jays' fans. Bichette bats in the No. 2 slot for the Jays and is a solid hitter (.260 and seven homers at the end of April) while Biggio has struggled in his third year, but definitely belongs in the bigs.

The Jays went 13-12 through their first 25 games and did that without two of their best offensive stars — free-agent acquisition George Springer, and Teoscar Hernandez, who slammed 16 homers in 50 games last year but missed most of April after testing positive for COVID-19. To throw the hard-hitting Springer and Hernandez into a lineup which also includes the red-hot Guerrero, Jr., Bichette and Randall Grichuk will be throwing trepidation into the psyche of opposing pitchers as the 2021 season carries on.

Meanwhile, as the homers fly out and the Jays contend for the American League East pennant, it's only a matter of time before talk becomes serious about linking Guerrero, Jr., and Most Valuable Player discussion. May as well make this breakout season of his complete.

- **RJ Currie** of sportsdeke.com: "According to a recent British study, people surrounded by happy, smiling faces tend to lose their feelings of aggression and anger. In a related story, Maple Leafs fans fight a lot."
- **Patti Dawn Swansson**, aka the River City Renegade: "**Rink Rat Scheifele** spent some time in coach **Paul Maurice's** pooch palace on Saturday night for, appropriately enough, dogging it."
- Swansson again: "*Hockey Night in Canada* was broadcast/streamed in 10 different tongues on Saturday night. It would have been 11 different languages, except **Don Cherry** was fired a year and a half ago."
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**: "After guest-hosting 'Jeopardy,' **Aaron Rodgers** announced he does not want to return to the Green Bay Packers. It seems Aaron grew to like the idea the contestants on 'Jeopardy' do not try and sack the guest-host."
- Headline at Theonion.com: "Terrified **Zach Wilson** Cuts Off Pinky Finger To Get Out Of Draft That Would Ship Him Off To Jets"
- Young fan's sign at a Cubs game: "Shhhhhh! I'm remote learning."
- **Bob Molinaro** of pilotonline.com: "Now that MLB seven-inning doubleheader games are here to stay, it's time to get accustomed to the fifth-inning stretch."
- **Jesse Spector** of Deadspin.com, via Twitter: "If **Aaron Rodgers** is going to host 'Jeopardy!', then (actor) **LeVar Burton** should get to be the Packers quarterback. Fair is fair."
- **Janice Hough** of leftcoastsportsbabe.com, on CDC guidelines now saying people can be outside without a mask if they're not in a crowd: "So Marlins fans should be fine."
- Comedy writer **Alex Kaseberg**, on why TV ratings for the Academy Awards fell 58 per cent: "A list of movie nominees that were more depressing than a New York Jets film session."
- **Dwight Perry** of the Seattle Times: "The Milwaukee Bucks offered COVID-19 vaccinations to any fans attending Sunday's game against Brooklyn — but only the first dose of Pfizer. You'd think a championship-caliber NBA team might have a better shot selection."

- **Field Yates**, on Twitter: “The Panthers have taken Deonte Brown in the sixth round, who is large enough to play guard and tackle at the same time.”

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