

KELTNER'S HOT CORNER

Special Edition

Feeling like I haven't written a newsletter in months, I thought I would send out the latest Wisconsin major league update including a MLB debut for Holmen's Taylor Kohlwey and the first former Milwaukee Public Schools student to play in the big leagues since Bob Ueker.

One other note, the president of the Wisconsin chapter will no longer be 19 miles further from Milwaukee than the AZ chapter prez as of August - we are returning to the Badger State in August after being away for three years. We need to be closer to kids, grandkids and now a great-grandson.

Waukesha's Kelenic breaks foot kicking a cooler



Waukesha native and Seattle Mariners outfielder Jarred Kelenic delivered an emotional apology Thursday after a moment of frustration resulted in a stay on the injured list.

Kelenic kicked a water cooler Wednesday after a ninth-inning strikeout against Minnesota, breaking his foot.

'I made a mistake. I let the emotions get the best of me there. I just feel terrible, especially for the guys,' Kelenic told reporters. 'I just let the emotions get the best of me and I just let them down and take full responsibility for it. It's on me. It just can't happen.'

The team believes surgery won't be necessary, but Kelenic

doesn't have a timetable for return.

Kelenic has 11 home runs this season and a .759 OPS; it's not the white-hot numbers he was putting up early in the season, but it's still a big leap forward in his third year in the big leagues.

The Mariners enter the weekend right at .500 and struggling to keep pace in the American League West with frontrunners Texas and Houston. They're 5 1/2 games out of the last wild-card spot in the AL.

Kelenic joins Kenosha Indian Trail's Gavin Lux on the shelf. The Los Angeles Dodgers shortstop was injured and lost for the season in spring training.

Kelenic's self-inflicted situation isn't unique; Wisconsin fans will recall Milwaukee Brewers pitcher Devin Williams breaking his pitching hand after punching a wall, forcing him to miss the 2021 postseason.

Could we get an all-Wisconsin matchup this weekend in Milwaukee?

With Atlanta heading to town for a three-game series at American Family Field this weekend, we'll have an opportunity to see a Wisconsin pitching/batting matchup for the first time in 2023.

Whitewater High School alumnus Ben Heller, 31, is back in the major leagues for the first time since 2020 and pitching out of the bullpen for Atlanta. That means he could get a chance to square off with the Brewers' own Wisconsinite, Owen Miller (Ozaukee), who has been pressed into duty as the regular first baseman with Rowdy Tellez injured.

Heller has dealt with injuries the last two seasons and signed a minor-league deal with Tampa Bay for 2023, then had his contract selected ... but he was optioned back to the minors before appearing in a game. He was subsequently traded to the Braves in June for international bonus pool money and finally made it back to a big-league mound.

He has a 3.27 ERA in 12 games for Atlanta, the best team in the National League.

Technically, we've already had a matchup this season between two players who were born in Wisconsin when Tampa Bay's Pete Fairbanks retired Oakland's Jonah Bride on June 15; both were born in Milwaukee, but Fairbanks grew up in Missouri and Bride in Oklahoma.

Drew Rucinski of the Athletics, born in Neenah but also attending high school in Oklahoma, faced Kelenic on May 4.

River Falls native and ex-Brewers reliever J.P. Feyereisen, then with the Rays, faced Angels outfielder Jared Walsh in May 2022; Walsh grew up in Oconomowoc but went to high school in Georgia. For a matchup between two players who attended high school in Wisconsin, it stretches back to April 28 of last year: Feyereisen faced Kelenic as part of his two perfect innings in a 2-1 Rays win. In between those frames, ex-Brewers outfielder Brett Phillips delivered a go-ahead single, and Feyereisen got the win.

Taylor Kohlwey makes MLB debut

Outfielder Taylor Kohlwey (Holmen) made his major-league debut with the San Diego Padres on Wednesday, collecting his first hit shortly after earning the recall from Class AAA.

The UW-La Crosse alumnus, 28, was drafted in the 21st round in 2016 and had been on the 40-man roster for the Padres.

Other Wisconsinites in MLB

Daulton Varsho (Marshfield), Toronto Blue Jays

Daulton Varsho, a UW-Milwaukee alumnus, continues to be one of the best defensive outfielders in baseball, though he's seen his offensive numbers dip relative to the last two years in Arizona.

Varsho has a .636 OPS and 12 homers in 94 games, and his Blue Jays are squarely in the wild-card hunt.

Danny Jansen (Appleton West), Toronto Blue Jays

Speaking of the Jays, Danny Jansen has appeared in 60 games this year, now in his sixth big-league season. He has a .736 OPS with 11 homers and 40 RBIs, just four shy of his total from last year in both departments.

He hit a walk-off home run May 17 to beat the New York Yankees, three days after his walk-off single to beat the Braves.

Alex Call (River Falls), Washington Nationals

Alex Call has a .214 average and .629 OPS for Washington, playing as the starting center fielder (and faring well defensively).

Alec Marsh (Milwaukee Reagan), Kansas City Royals

Alec Marsh has made three starts with Kansas City and lost them all, posting a 5.40 ERA in 15 innings, but he's gotten progressively better each time. On July 15, he struck out 11 batters in six innings, permitting two runs on five hits.

He's the first Milwaukee Public Schools alumnus in the big leagues since Bob Uecker.

Saw the majors this season

Terrin Vavra (Menomonie), Baltimore Orioles. The 26-year-old utility man has played in 27 games this year for the team that's now leading the American League East, but he's been back in the minors since the start of June.

Ben Rortvedt (Verona), New York Yankees. He's appeared in five games this year, garnering a double among his two hits in seven at-bats. He's currently in the minors.

JD Radcliffe, "Waukesha's Kelenic breaks foot kicking a cooler," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, July 22, 2023, 3B.