

MINOR LEAGUE REPORT

developing already looks razor-sharp. But forget about the numbers on his fastball. Just do what Kratz suggests, and watch the hitter. “They’re always going to let you know,” he says. “Their body language. As a catcher, you get to the point where a guy takes a pitch, and you can tell he’s still late. He’s not on that. He might have been taking the whole way, or he might have been trying to see a pitch. His timing’s not there.

“That’s the kind of fastball Deivi has. Even on nights when it’s only 90, it still gets on guys.”

Before the weekend started, Scheer explained that there would be a lot of waiting around. What she failed to mention was just how awkward some of the waiting could be. On Saturday night, J.P. Feyereisen’s parents were at the game, and in the eighth inning, the crew headed to the stands for an interview. Only, once Doyle had his camera in position and Gibson had his boom up and ready, Bell emerged from the dugout to summon from the bullpen, of all people, Feyereisen. Not wanting to step on the moment

Feyereisen’s family came to see, the crew tried to make themselves and all of their equipment invisible until the inning ended.

After the win, which snapped a four-game skid, Feyereisen led his usual post-game celebration in the clubhouse, presenting the championship belt to that night’s star, pitcher Josh Maciejewski, as Eddie Murphy’s ludicrous 1985 hit single “Party All the Time” blasted and club lights flashed. In the seconds before Feyereisen made the presentation, he walked over to Scheer and asked how to pronounce Maciejewski’s name, as the pitcher had just been called up from Trenton that day. The producer life never stops.

Scheer, Doyle, Wermes and Gibson have handled almost every episode of the show since its launch together, and in that time, the crew has built a valuable trust with the guys in the clubhouse (and not just by doling out *Homegrown* swag). So, when new faces come to town, the other players help Scheer and her crew make inroads, and vice-versa. “They’ve seen how Blayke is,” says Lail, “how well their crew handles us. We’re a pain in the butt sometimes. Those guys that kept coming up through the system were able to accept that and see how those guys experienced it, and get right to it.” That trust helps the *Homegrown* crew tell the stories that wouldn’t otherwise break through.

Everyone in Triple-A has game, but it’s not as though the room is filled with 25 Gleyber Torreses, or even 25 Deivi Garcias. There’s no shame in being McBroom or Lail or Gosuke Katoh; quite the opposite. *Homegrown* is their story, arguably more so than the superstars. For the guys on the cusp, there are different stakes involved, real, swaying emotions. Last year, a dejected Mike Ford told Scheer that he expected he would be a financial adviser within a year. Instead, he was hitting home runs in Yankee Stadium this summer. Lail has been appearing on the show since it debuted, so when he got the surprise call to the bigs during Saturday’s game, it played like a major, late-season plot twist for a show’s third season. “It just gives fans an opportunity to see how people really are, aside from the way they play on the field,” McBroom says. “And I



Gibson miked up Wendell Rijo [top] before batting practice, then the ebullient infielder tried to stealthily interview his teammates in the outfield. But as usual, the RailRiders players were quickly able to suss out the spy in their midst.