And it's not surprising... blocking the ball is a thankless job sometimes.

All catchers know this.

You have to be a wall. Throw your body in front of it. Keep it in front.

It's dusty, exhausting, and definitely NOT easy!

So tomorrow I'm going to go through some of the questions I got.

But first, today I just wanted to talk directly to the catchers.

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Catchers, you're doing a very important job for your teammates.

**The impact your blocking has on the game is more than just any ONE pitch.**

* It's more than just making sure the batter doesn't reach 1st on a dropped third strike.
* It's more than just keeping runners from advancing into scoring position because you kept it close.

It might be impossible to measure with a statistic, but here's one of the most important things about great blocking...

**...is how it affects the pitcher!**

When the catcher can't block... well, there's no official way to measure the impact on your pitcher, but I can guarantee we've all seen what can happen.

A dirt ball gets by and a runner advances.
The next time a catcher calls for that pitch, the pitcher doesn't feel as confident.
Maybe they baby the pitch a little.
Maybe they aim it.... but what happens too often is, the pitch gets left over the middle... and it gets hit. HARD.

Now the pitcher not only has lost confidence in the catcher's ability to block, but also...

...they've lost confidence in the pitch itself!

And it becomes an avalanche, almost impossible to stop.

**But the opposite is also true**

When the pitcher TRUSTS his catcher to block, it creates the confidence he needs to be at his best.

And they throw each pitch with conviction.

Trust in the catcher says to the pitcher, "Go ahead. Let that curveball rip! Throw it where the hitter can't hit it. I'm gonna block everything!"

This is why people say "A good catcher is worth his weight in gold." (Dusty Baker)

And it's also why catchers who play with heart - AND work hard to improve - are rewarded in the end.

People WILL begin to notice.

Pitchers will ask for you.

Coaches will want you on their team.

And it will open opportunities, because there's always room for a great catcher at "the next level"

So remember, those bruises are a badge of honor!

Be proud, and keep up the hard work,

Ryan Lavarnway
Catcher, Cleveland Indians
(Formerly catcher for the Red Sox, Braves, A's, Reds, Yankees, Pirates, & Marlins)