

## **Pride brings Chipper back Outfielder unwilling to give troublesome foot more rest**

By Mark Bowman / MLB.com

Chipper Jones is happy to be back in the lineup, since pinch-hitting isn't for him. (David J. Phillip/AP)

ATLANTA -- Although his injured left foot was still providing discomfort, Chipper Jones' pride told him it was time to return to the starting lineup for Wednesday afternoon's series finale against the Marlins at Turner Field. After taking batting practice and doing some running, Jones came into the Braves dugout and told manager Bobby Cox that he was ready to make his first start since injuring the foot while running toward home plate on April 24.

When Jones drilled the first pitch he saw from A.J. Burnett over the right-field wall for a first-inning solo homer, it was further evident that he was at least healthy enough to provide a spark to the Braves offense.

"I need to know if I can go out there and play," Jones said before the game. "I feel like I can go out there and play. I feel great. I felt better running today than I did yesterday. I could no longer sit by and watch what's going on without being out there and feeling like I'm part of the team."

Jones, who saw the Braves go 4-3 in the seven starts that he missed, remains convinced that he suffered some ligament damage and that his injury was certainly more than a bone bruise.

"I was told it was a bruise and 10 days later, it's obviously not a bruise," Jones said. "There's something else that's wrong. They've assured me nothing else can go wrong. I can't hurt it any worse. So, let's go."

Jones is hopeful to regain the form that allowed him to hit .381 with four homers and 13 RBIs before the injury. In his four pinch-hit appearances since, his only production has been a walk that helped the Braves claim Saturday night's comeback win over the Cardinals.

When Jones struck out looking in Tuesday night's eighth inning, it furthered his struggles as pinch-hitter. He has just three hits in 26 career at-bats as a pinch-hitter.

"I hate pinch-hitting," Jones said. "I don't know how those guys do it. They are a rare breed and I admire that breed."