



MEDIA CLIPS – June 11, 2018

Rox stuck in malaise as D-backs dominate

By Anne Rogers MLB.com

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DENVER -- Games have not boded well for the Rockies at Coors Field as of late. The D-backs won 8-3 on Sunday, and the Rockies were swept for the second straight time at home.

After suffering sweeps against the Dodgers and D-backs in their last two home series, and dropping seven straight at home, the Rockies (32-33) dropped below .500 for the first time since April 11 when they were 6-7. Colorado is now 3 1/2 games behind the D-backs for the National League West lead.

Not even Rockies starter **Kyle Freeland**, who entered with a 2.19 home ERA, could escape the offense that Arizona found in Denver. The D-backs ran his pitch count to 106 in six innings, and scored four runs, on four hits and four walks.

"They did a really good job of getting deep into at-bats," Freeland said. "They're really good at picking and choosing what they're going to swing at, fouling things off, getting their pitches."

After **Paul Goldschmidt** crushed a one-out double in the sixth, Freeland walked **John Ryan Murphy**. **Ketel Marte's** single scored Goldschmidt. **Chris Owings** grounded to third baseman **Nolan Arenado**, who threw to home plate. **Chris Iannetta** fielded the low throw, but when trying to tag Murphy, tagged his own shin and lost the ball. **Jarrod Dyson's** sacrifice fly to left capped off the three-run inning for the D-backs.

And then the bullpen took over. After Sunday, the Rockies bullpen had a 10.41 ERA at home since June 1, the first game of the Dodgers' sweep.

On Sunday, the Rockies sandwiched a veteran, **Chris Rusin**, between two young arms in relief. Left-handed pitchers Jerry Vasto, who came in for the seventh, and **Sam Howard**, who took the mound in the ninth, both made their Major League debuts.

Vasto gave up Goldschmidt's two-run triple, Rusin surrendered a run in 1 1/3 innings and Howard pitched a scoreless ninth.

"It's a really tough situation [for Vasto and Howard], playing a tough team, coming in on the third game of the series," Iannetta said. "But they did pretty well and got their feet wet, so the next time they go out, they're ready to go."

The pitching staff hasn't met manager Bud Black's expectations over the last 10 games. It's not just the bullpen. The starters had a 9.00 ERA and allowed 15 hits in 14 innings in this weekend's series.

"Pitching is paramount to winning," Black said. "And these last 10 games or so, we haven't pitched well as a group. The 13-man pitching staff has not pitched well enough to beat the other team. And this series, they out-pitched us and out-hit us."

The Rockies' offense didn't break through against D-backs starter **Zack Godley** until the sixth. **Ian Desmond** smacked a two-out single to drive in **DJ LeMahieu**, who had singled, and Arenado, who had walked, and the Rox deficit was cut to two.

"It's not just pitching," Desmond said. "It's offense, too. The objective is to score more runs than the other team. When we weren't scoring runs, they were holding teams to less runs than we had. It's our job to score more runs to help them out, to pick them up."

The Rockies begin a six-game road trip on Tuesday in Philadelphia. On the road this season, Colorado has gone 21-14. Last year, the Rockies performed better at home (46-35) than on the road (41-40).

The Rockies players are keeping it in perspective. The D-backs lost 15 of 17 from May 9-27, and the Dodgers started out slow, too.

"I've been on teams where you look back and a coach or somebody will come up to you and say, 'Last year at this time da-da-da-da-da,'" Desmond said. "I don't really like to look at it that way. This is where we are right now. This is where this team is right now. We've got to look ourselves in the mirror. Sometimes losing helps you do that."

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

The D-backs were up 2-0 with one out in the sixth when Arenado attempted to cut down Murphy at the plate when fates worked against the Rockies.

Arenado was at a difficult angle and had to run into foul ground for a throwing lane to Iannetta. But grasping the ball turned out to be another problem.

"The throw on the run, it was a little bit low, coming from a funky direction, and Chris just couldn't handle it," Black said.

SOUND SMART

The last time two Rockies players debuted in the same game was Sept. 8, 2016 -- utility man Jordan Patterson and right-handed pitcher **German Marquez**. Sunday was the first time the Rockies have ever had two pitchers debut in the same game, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

HE SAID IT

"We're a very talented team on both sides of the ball. I can say that we're underperforming. It's a long season. Like the guys said, you'd rather hit your stride a little later. But it is a grind. It's tough. If we can just scratch out games here and there when we're not clicking like we want to, that's going to be really big." -- *Shortstop **Trevor Story**, on how the Rockies can ride out this cold streak*

UP NEXT

Through many fits and starts this season, right-handed pitcher **Jon Gray** (6-6, 5.66) has had to work his way through a couple fundamental breakdowns, all while trying to find victory. There was an issue with his stride foot earlier in the year, and his hand separation at the start of his delivery is an ongoing issue. Gray, who had a high pitch count in five innings, but earned a win at Cincinnati in his last start, will lead the Rockies on Tuesday at Philadelphia in the opener of a three-game series. The Phillies will start righty **Aaron Nola** (7-2, 2.35).

Bridich staying the course despite struggles

By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb

Jun. 10th, 2018

DENVER -- Rockies general manager Jeff Bridich stood in front of the home dugout three days ago, knowing key relievers were struggling and vowing patience. To say the least, improvement wasn't immediate.

On Friday night, the Rockies trailed the D-backs by two runs in the eighth, only to have **Chris Rusin** give up two runs and the game turn into a 9-4 rout. On Saturday, **Bryan Shaw** fumbled a possible double-play grounder, then threw wildly to first to let the tying run score. Five more runs later -- all unearned because of his miscues -- he exited to some of the loudest boos at Coors in recent memory, and the Rockies would suffer a 12-7 loss that would drop their record to .500.

Shaw, in the first year of a three-year, \$27 million deal, went into Sunday's series finale 2-5 with a 7.03 ERA. Rusin sat at a 7.86 ERA. Lefty **Mike Dunn**, in the middle of a three-year, \$19 million deal, went to the disabled list with a rhomboid (upper back) strain and took a 9.00 ERA with him. The bullpen implosion accelerated when **Adam Ottavino**, who has been one of the best relievers in the National League this season, went to the disabled list with a left oblique injury. In Ottavino's 11-game absence, the bullpen's 6.95 ERA and 42 runs (35 earned) are MLB highs.

When he spoke, Bridich said the plan was to ride out this storm and coach their way to answers, as long as that's feasible.

"There are some very, very good pitchers in that bullpen, very talented guys, who just are not performing consistently to their potential and their talents," Bridich said. "We need to continue to help them reach their potential -- even the level of past performance that they have exhibited -- before we think much about what else is out there.

"The solutions aren't always external. We've got to fix some things internal."

It's probably not the answer most fans want, with no one having taken control of the National League West. But the tack is similar to the one he and the Rockies' staff took with the offense, which struggled mightily early, but over 14 games before Sunday averaged 6.36 runs and slashed .302/.357/.459.

Specifically, **Carlos Gonzalez** (scratched from Saturday's game with back spasms, but not placed on the disabled list) hit .400 in 11 games through Friday, after a slow start that led to him not being as frequent a member of the lineup as usual. **Ian Desmond** -- a target of recent boos -- is still languishing a .190 average, but has batted .270 in 12 games before Sunday, and catcher **Chris Iannetta** was at .320 since the start of the last homestand.

But the same way Gonzalez eliminated some upper-body movement from his setup and Desmond spent time in the batting cage and made an adjustment with his hands (while working with hitting coaches Duane Espy and Jeff Salazar) is the same way relievers are expected to improve.

"This job, and the farm director job, teach you a lot about patience," Bridich said. "These guys are human beings. These guys aren't robots. There are going to be periods of great production and there are going to be down periods. It's nice to see [Carlos Gonzalez and Ian and Chris [Iannetta] start to impact the ball like they know that they can and we believe they can. Offensively, are we in a better spot than were in April? Yes. Is there more we can do as a group? I do believe that's the case."

There also is bench improvement, which -- like what has been done with hitting and what they hope will be done with relief pitching -- was fostered from within. Trying to control the payroll, the Rockies went with infielders **Ryan McMahon** and **Pat Valaika**, and outfielder **Mike Tauchman**, as part-time players, and all needed to be sent to Albuquerque. The bench was unproductive early, but outfielder **Noel Cuevas** has provided a lift since being promoted from Albuquerque, and McMahon has been much better since his return.

"I wouldn't say it's just the bench, but we're always going to have interest in having talented young guys matriculate to the big league level, whether that's as a starter like Trevor Story did, or in a limited role -- platoon or bench role," Bridich said.

The Rockies entered Sunday in a three-way tie with the Dodgers and Giants, 2 1/2 games back of the D-backs. With the Dodgers run of talent and success looming, any objective observer could legitimately say teams have blown a chance to open some distance against the longtime champ. Bridich, however, said he can't fear one team when his own team has issues.

"We've got our own sets of things to be concerned about," Bridich said. "It's wasted time spending too much on the other teams."

"Our goal is to stay on top of the division and play better baseball."

Vasto earns first callup; Oberg to DL

By Anne Rogers MLB.com

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DENVER -- Felician University is a small, Division II college with a campus in Rutherford, N.J. Most people are unaware of its existence, but it was the only school to offer left-handed relief pitcher Jerry Vasto a scholarship. In Round 24 of the 2014 MLB Draft, the Rockies selected Vasto.

And on Sunday, Vasto was called up to the Majors for the first time in a bullpen role with the Rockies. He appeared out of relief in Sunday's **8-3 loss** to the D-backs, working 2/3 of an inning, while allowing three earned runs. Despite the rough start to his career, he managed to record his first career strikeout.

"It was crazy," Vasto said before Sunday's game against the D-backs. "I wasn't expecting it at all. Called my parents, put them on speakerphone so my coaches could hear them, and it was a moment I'll never forget."

Vasto is 2-0 with a 1.71 ERA, to go along with 26 strikeouts in 21 innings at Triple-A Albuquerque. The pitch that has been key for him has been his slider.

"The slider, when thrown properly, is a legit big league slider," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "It's just a matter of him becoming consistent with throwing strikes. And this Triple-A season, especially lately, that's been happening."

Vasto replaces right-handed pitcher **Scott Oberg**, who was put on the 10-day disabled list with a back strain. Oberg last pitched Thursday in Cincinnati, then was injured in the weight room.

For Vasto, getting the call that he was coming to Denver was unforgettable. He flew in on Sunday and took a car to Coors Field, where left-handed pitcher **Zac Rosscup**, who is on the 60-day disabled list with a wart on his left middle finger, was his guide.

"[I have to stick] with the routine that I was doing down there," Vasto said. "It's still baseball up here, just the best players in the world. So, I have to attack hitters."

Vasto grew up in Atlantic Highland, N.J., a town of 4,485 people. His father, Jerry, is the chief of police in the town. Vasto didn't play much travel ball during his high school summers because he had to work -- delivering pizzas, pushing carts, and as a camp counselor, before Felician signed him.

Still having to work in the summers during college, Vasto didn't play any summer ball, except for half of the summer his last year.

"It didn't feel like I was missing out," Vasto said. "I still worked out, threw when I could. If anything, it probably saved me a little bit. That's a lot of innings those guys are throwing."

The Rockies designated right-handed pitcher **Jairo Diaz** for assignment to clear a 40-man roster spot for Vasto. Diaz pitched in 21 games for the Rockies in 2015 (0-1 with a 2.37 ERA), underwent Tommy John surgery before 2016 and appeared in four Major League games (0-0, 9.00) last year.

When a player's contract is designated for assignment -- often abbreviated "DFA" -- that player is immediately removed from his club's 40-man roster, and 25-man roster if he was on that as well. Within seven days of the transaction (it was previously 10 days), the player must either be traded, released or placed on irrevocable outright waivers.

Gonzalez feeling better

Outfielder **Carlos Gonzalez** missed Saturday's game, and was not in the starting lineup on Sunday with rib problems, which were originally announced as back spasms.

Gonzalez felt a twinge in the left rib area in his last at-bat on Friday. He finished the game without saying anything and got treatment after the game.

"I had a really bad night trying to sleep because I couldn't breathe well," Gonzalez said. "I saw the chiropractor and they adjusted me, and I feel much better."

Pitching injury updates

Rosscup will leave on Monday for his rehab assignment with Triple-A Albuquerque. He has yet to appear in a game this season for Colorado.

Right-handed pitcher **Adam Ottavino** reported feeling good Sunday morning after throwing his 20-pitch bullpen session with intensity on Saturday.

Pounders meant no harm

Right-handed reliever **Brooks Ponders** hit D-backs star **Paul Goldschmidt** on the hip in the ninth inning on Saturday night, which prompted yelling from the Arizona dugout. Ponders says it was unintentional.

Goldschmidt crushed a home run off of Ponders' slider on Friday night, so Ponders said he tried a fastball on Saturday - but it slipped.

Ponders said he got Goldschmidt's number from Rockies catcher **Chris Iannetta** and texted him to apologize.

"The guy goes about his business the right way and he's a professional on and off the field," Ponders said. "There might be some repercussions from it, I don't know ... I don't have enough time [in the Majors] to be drilling people on purpose."

Diamondbacks sweep Rockies as Kyle Freeland's grind isn't enough, bullpen falters again

The notion that the Rockies are on the brink of collapse was reaffirmed on a sweltering Sunday at Coors Field

By KYLE NEWMAN | knewman@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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If there was any doubt who the Rockies' best starter is, second-year left-hander Kyle Freeland reaffirmed that status Sunday with another strong, albeit flawed, outing at Coors Field.

But the notion of the Rockies being on the brink of collapse in early June was also reaffirmed. Their bats were inconsistent, the bullpen was a no-show once again and the Arizona Diamondbacks chipped away at Freeland for a 8-3 win that gave them a series sweep and handed Colorado its seventh consecutive loss at home.

"I think it's coincidentally happening (that we're struggling at home)," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "I wish I could answer that question."

Besides Ketel Marte dinging Freeland for a solo homer in the second — the red-hot second baseman's 10th straight extra-base hit, which tied a Diamondbacks record — the Rockies' starter worked well through the first five innings, surrendering just two hits and often grinding into deep counts in order to retire Arizona hitters.

"The pitch count got elevated the first three innings, and then the fourth and fifth he reeled it back in and found the range a little bit," Black said. "Overall, I think he threw the ball fine. They had some good at-bats. He had some good at-bats against them as well."

But the Diamondbacks finally got to Freeland in the sixth as the left-hander's pitch count climbed above 100 during a three-run inning. First Paul Goldschmidt, who hit four homers in the previous two games combined, roped a one-out double. Then a walk, a single, a botched fielder's choice and a sacrifice fly ballooned the Diamondbacks' lead to 4-0.

"I still felt strong in the sixth there. They just kept doing a really good job of getting deep into at-bats," Freeland said. "They were really good at picking and choosing what they were going to swing at, fouling things off and getting their pitch."

The Rockies finally came to life in the bottom of the frame, retaliating with two runs via an Ian Desmond RBI single to cut the score to 4-2.

From there, with Freeland out, a new face emerged from the Rockies bullpen, with the same predictable result.

Left-handed Jerry Vasto, recalled from Triple-A Albuquerque earlier in the day and the Isotopes' ERA leader this season, made a messy major-league debut. After a single and a walk, Goldschmidt continued his Coors Field rampage with a two-RBI triple, and the Marte double that followed made it 7-2 and chased Vasto.

"(Vasto) did OK. He wasn't really pounding the zone, but he looked like he was trying to pitch aggressively," Black said.

From there, Colorado got set down in order in the seventh by Yoshihisa Hirano, and then Chris Rusin surrendered another in the eighth to make it 8-2.

The Rockies added one more in the bottom of the ninth as Chris Iannetta's double drove in Mike Tauchman to cut the lead to 8-3 after left-hander Sam Howard pitched a scoreless top half of the frame in his major-league debut.

With the loss, Colorado sits 3 1/2 games behind the first-place Diamondbacks in the National League West as the Rockies head on a six-game road trip starting Tuesday at Philadelphia.

"This series, they outpitched us and they out-hit us," Black said.

Looking ahead

Monday: Off day

Tuesday: Rockies RHP Jon Gray (6-6, 5.66 ERA) at Phillies RHP Aaron Nola (7-2, 2.35), 5:05 p.m., ATTRM

Wednesday: Rockies LHP Tyler Anderson (3-1, 4.81) at Phillies RHP Nick Pivetta (4-5, 3.76), 5:05 p.m., ATTRM

Thursday: Rockies RHP German Marquez (4-6, 4.79) at Phillies RHP Vince Velasquez (4-7, 4.95), 11:05 a.m., ATTRM

Friday: Rockies RHP Chad Bettis (4-1, 4.40) at Rangers LHP Mike Minor (4-4, 5.65), 6:05 p.m., ATTRM

Rockies recall left-hander Jerry Vasto, place Scott Oberg on the disabled list

In 19 appearances out of the bullpen for the Isotopes this year, Vasto led the team with a 1.71 ERA in 21.0 innings

By KYLE NEWMAN | knewman@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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The Rockies made a bullpen move for a third consecutive day Sunday, recalling a familiar face in left-hander Jerry Vasto from Triple-A Albuquerque while placing Scott Oberg on the 10-day disabled list with a back strain.

“Jerry’s been in big-league camp with us the last couple years, and he’s shown a fastball with a little bit above-average velocity that plays at the top of the zone,” Rockies manager Bud Black said. “His slider is mid-80s (mph) when thrown properly, and it’s a really good pitch — a swing-and-miss type slider versus a lefty or a right-handed hitter.”

In 19 appearances out of the bullpen for the Isotopes this year, the 6-foot-2, 195-pound Vasto led the team with a 1.71 ERA in 21 innings, recording 26 strikeouts while walking eight.

Black described the 2014 24th-round selection’s command as just “OK” but improving.

“This year, it’s been better statistically and from game reports; previous minor-league seasons were a little variable on the walk rate,” Black said. “But he’s got a major-league arm and major-league stuff. Now it’s just a matter, like for all these guys, of location.”

Oberg, a right-handed reliever who was recalled May 28, posted a 4.08 ERA in 17 2/3 innings with the Rockies.

“His back is locked up pretty good,” Black said. “He probably wasn’t going to be available in the next few days, and he was unavailable yesterday and the day before.”

On Friday, Colorado called up right-hander Jeff Hoffman, and Saturday another southpaw, Sam Howard, joined the bullpen. The Rockies have the second-worst bullpen ERA in the National League at 5.13, and their best reliever, Adam Ottavino, is on the disabled list with a sore oblique.

With the move, the Rockies also designated right-hander Jairo Díaz for assignment. Díaz made four appearances out of the bullpen for the Isotopes this season, posting a 9.82 ERA and has been on the disabled list since April 19.

How long can the Rockies keep DJ LeMahieu? He wants to stay in Colorado, but his contract soon expires

Bridich and his front office also have to make hard choices regarding future payrolls

By **PATRICK SAUNDERS** | psaunders@denverpost.com | **The Denver Post**

PUBLISHED: June 9, 2018 at 6:00 am | UPDATED: June 10, 2018 at 8:39 pm

DJ LeMahieu doesn't like talking about DJ LeMahieu. He's even more sheepish talking about his uncertain future with the Rockies. He only says that if given a chance, he would like to stay in Colorado.

"There are a ton of reasons why," the two-time all-star second baseman said. "I feel like I have so many great friends and teammates. There are so many relationships I've built over the last seven years. I love (manager) Buddy (Black) and the coaching staff. I love Denver. I think this team has a chance to go places."

LeMahieu, the 2016 National League batting champion, might lack the star power of other major-league second baseman, but he's become invaluable to the Rockies.

"DJ is very important to this team, because he is, in essence, the glue that holds everybody else together," said all-star center fielder Charlie Blackmon, one of LeMahieu's best friends. "He's the guy that nobody really talks about. He's just the guy who shuts up and plays.

"He's not the guy you see on TV hitting 40 homers, but he's the guy who is just as important because he's there every night getting it done, playing good defense, coming through with the big at-bats. I would rather have that guy playing consistently for you, rather than that guy who has potential that shows up at times, but is always up and down."

The Rockies, however, might be ready to move on without their veteran second baseman. LeMahieu, 29, is scheduled to become a free agent after this season. He's making \$8.5 million this year (a relative bargain) and looks to be in line for a career payday. Thus far, however, general manager Jeff Bridich confirmed that there have been no contract discussions with LeMahieu.

Bridich, however, has not completely closed the door on LeMahieu returning.

"I feel like there is mutual respect on both sides, and there would be no acrimony involved in any decision regarding DJ's future," Bridich said. "It's tough to say at this point of the season what could happen. But I do know that most players don't like to deal with (contracts) during the middle of the season, and I feel the same way — I would rather not do that."

Bridich stressed that the Rockies and LeMahieu went through the arbitration process without any difficulties and he thinks the lines of communication would be open, even when LeMahieu becomes a free agent.

"I would say there is some potential there for DJ to return, but we'll just have to see," he said. "We haven't closed the door on anything."

There are, however, a number of reasons why the second baseman could be playing his final season in Colorado. First, in the contemporary business of baseball, teams must build their team with an eye toward the future. As much as the Rockies might like LeMahieu, they are already grooming No. 1 prospect Brendan Rodgers to fill LeMahieu's shoes. Rodgers, 21, was batting .279 with 11 homers and a .838 OPS for Double-A Hartford entering the weekend. A promotion to Triple-A Albuquerque could be in the offing soon.

Athletic infielder Garrett Hampson, 23, is already in Triple-A and is on the Rockies' radar after a solid spring training.

"We have a number of young infielders we are developing," Bridich said. "It's not a direct line from Double-A or Triple-A to the majors of course. Things have to happen, but we feel like we have potential and depth."

Bridich and his front office also have to make hard choices regarding future payrolls. They already made a big decision this spring, signing Blackmon to a six-year contract worth \$108 million. The deal includes two player options, which could keep Blackmon with the Rockies through the 2023 season.

Also on the books for next year is a \$15 million salary for first baseman Ian Desmond, \$18 million owed closer Wade Davis, \$8.5 million each for relievers Jake McGee and Bryan Shaw and \$7 million for reliever Mike Dunn.

Looming huge on the horizon is the status of five-time Gold Glove third baseman Nolan Arenado. He's making \$17.75 million this year and is scheduled for one more year of arbitration in 2019 before he hits the open market. After last winter's strange offseason, it's difficult to predict how much money, or how long of a contract Arenado will command. But it's fair to speculate that his deal will be more lucrative than Blackmon's.

It's not a sure thing that Arenado wants to stay in Colorado. Discussions with the Rockies are on the back burner, for now, and Arenado has repeatedly said that his overriding desire is to play for a perennial contender. How this season ends up will influence his decision.

"There is something to be said for being with an organization for your whole career, I definitely believe in that," Arenado told The Denver Post over the winter. "I admired Todd (Helton) and I admired (Yankees icon) Derek Jeter; guys who stick with one team their whole career. So I have a lot of respect for what Todd did. But at the end of the day, I don't want to be in Todd's shoes where I only go to the playoffs twice in my career."

Colorado manager Bud Black said he can't foresee LeMahieu's future, but it's clear the second baseman has earned his manager's respect and affection. Moreover, Black thinks LeMahieu makes those around him better.

"DJ's baseball instincts and his baseball IQ are really high, and his feel for in-game situations is really good for our club," Black said. "He's like a point guard that can see a play develop, or the quarterback who drops back to pass and he can see things unfold and knows where to throw. It's almost like DJ knows in advance what's going to happen."

Although LeMahieu would like to remain with the Rockies, who acquired him in a trade with the Chicago Cubs in December 2011, he understands the reality of the situation.

As for the hitting the open market? He says only that it would be "interesting to see what's out there."

Despite his reputation as one of the baseball's best infielders, it's difficult to quantify DJ LeMahieu's future value. In February, for example, the MLB Network's "Top 10 Right Now" series ranked LeMahieu as the majors' fifth-best second baseman. He came in behind Houston's Jose Altuve, Seattle's Robinson Cano (now serving an 80-game suspension after testing positive for a banned substance), Minnesota's Brian Dozier and Washington's Daniel Murphy (who had offseason knee surgery).

Although LeMahieu won the 2016 NL batting title with a .348 average, the knock on him is that he lacks consistent power, and his reputation often takes a hit because of the ever-present Coors Field factor. Mike Petriello, who analyzed the top-10 second basemen for the MLB Network, rated LeMahieu no better than ninth.

“LeMahieu is always a divisive player, because the surface-level stats all look wonderful (.310/.374/.409), but of course a lot of that production came in Coors Field,” Petriello wrote after the 2017 season. “At home, his batting average was higher by 33 points, his (on-base percentage) by 44 points and his slugging by 16 points. That all matters. It has to. He’s still a good defender, of course, and his hard-hit rate of 41.2 percent was well above the major-league average of 33.3 percent. There remains a lot to like here.”

The conclusion? It’s doubtful LeMahieu stays in Colorado past 2018, and he might not earn the kind of contract his teammates believe he deserves.

The bottom line?

Black provides this answer: “DJ is a winner. He’s the kind of player that teams win championships with. That tells you a lot about him.”

After chiropractic adjustment to relieve pain under his rib, Rockies' outfielder Carlos Gonzalez "feeling almost normal"

The injury, which was originally described by the Rockies as back spasms, occurred while swinging during Friday night's loss

By KYLE NEWMAN | knewman@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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Rockies outfielder Carlos Gonzalez, who was a late scratch from Saturday's lineup, sat out a second straight day Sunday but said he's "feeling almost normal" while recovering from pain under his rib on the left side of his back.

The injury, which was originally described by the Rockies as back spasms, occurred while swinging in Friday's loss to the Diamondbacks.

"I was really sore after the night game (Friday), and I was having some trouble sleeping that night with the pain," Gonzalez said. "They decided to give me a day, and yesterday I saw the chiropractor and he made me feel a lot better."

Gonzalez said it felt like "something was out of place on the left side of my back, under my ribs," but that with yesterday's adjustment he could be available to pinch hit Sunday as Colorado looks to avoid the sweep at the hands of Arizona.

"Hopefully I'm available to come in late in the game," Gonzalez said. "Or, I could take today and tomorrow off and just be ready for Philadelphia."

The Rockies play a three-game set at Citizens Bank Park from Tuesday through Thursday.

Goldschmidt stays hot as Diamondbacks beat Rockies 8-3

Associated Press

DENVER -- A weekend trip to hitter-friendly Coors Field has sparked Arizona's offense.

Paul Goldschmidt doubled and tripled and had two RBI to finish off a dominating series and the Diamondbacks earned an 8-3 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Sunday.

Goldschmidt homered twice in each of the first two games against the Rockies. He was 8 of 13 with four home runs and nine RBI in the three-game sweep.

"This is definitely a good weekend," Goldschmidt said. "We had a stretch of where our offense was really struggling, maybe longer than that. This weekend was definitely a step in the right direction."

Ketel Marte had three hits and three RBI for Arizona on Sunday. The Diamondbacks scored 29 runs in Colorado after having just 10 in a three-game series in San Francisco.

"You win three games here the way we did against this type of team, this atmosphere, you're doing a lot right," Arizona manager Torey Luvollo said.

Marte led off the second inning with his fourth home run of the season off Kyle Freeland and added an RBI single in a three-run sixth.

Freeland (6-6) allowed four runs and struck out eight in six innings for Colorado. The Rockies have lost seven straight at home for the first time since April 23 to May 10, 2016 to fall below .500 for the first time since April 11.

"You don't want to fall below .500 now, but you know there is still a lot of time to get things going and make runs like teams have already done," catcher Chris Iannetta said.

Colorado scored twice in the bottom of the sixth inning on Ian Desmond's two-run single that chased Zack Godley (6-5). Godley allowed two runs and five hits and struck out eight in 5 2/3 innings.

Arizona added three runs in the seventh. Goldschmidt tripled off Jerry Vasto to drive in two, and he scored on Marte's double to left.

"For us to add on was big," Goldschmidt said. "A two-run ballgame, anything can happen."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Diamondbacks: C Jeff Mathis was placed on paternity leave and OF Christian Walker was recalled. ... RHP Shelby Miller (Tommy John surgery) was scheduled to throw 85 to 90 pitches for Double-A Jackson on Sunday.

Rockies: OF Carlos Gonzalez (rib) has shown improvement and was available to pinch-hit on Sunday. He could return to the lineup Tuesday in Philadelphia. ... RHP Adam Ottavino (left oblique strain) felt fine after a 20-pitch bullpen session Saturday. "Thinks are pointing in the right direction," manager Bud Black said. ... RHP Scott Oberg was put on the 10-day DL with a back strain, retroactive to Friday.

EXTRA EXTRA

Marte's home run gave him 10 straight hits for extra bases, which tied a club record. His sixth-inning single ended the streak.

"I never think about it," Marte said. "After the game somebody told me."

ROSTER MOVE

The Rockies promoted Vasto from Triple-A Albuquerque and designated right-hander Jairo Diaz for assignment to make room for Vasto on the 40-man roster. Vasto and fellow left-hander Sam Howard made their major league debuts. It was the first time in club history two players made their debuts in the same game.

UP NEXT

Diamondbacks: LHP Patrick Corbin (6-2, 2.87 ERA) will open a three-game home series against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Monday night.

Rockies: RHP Jon Gray (6-6, 5.66) will start Colorado's six-game road trip against Philadelphia on Tuesday night.

Rockies drop seventh straight at home
By Drew Creasman - Posted on June 10, 2018 | BSN Denver

DENVER – For some reason, and just about everyone is searching for that reason, the Colorado Rockies just cannot get into a rhythm at home.

For the second straight series at Coors Field, the Rockies were swept by a divisional opponent, first the Dodgers and now the Arizona Diamondbacks who cruised to a 7-2 victory that was almost never truly in doubt. They've now lost seven in a row at home and have fallen to 11-19 in their own ballpark.

Starter Kyle Freeland was mostly fine, though unlike most of their recent games, the offense looked like they were out of fighting spirit for most of the game as well.

With the exception of surrendering a second-inning home run to Ketel Marte—who was in the midst of a ridiculously hot stretch, garnering 10 consecutive extra-base hits—Freeland efficiently dominated the Diamondbacks lineup.

He allowed just one baserunner, a walk, over the third, fourth, and fifth innings, but ran into all kinds of trouble after recording one out in the sixth. He had Paul Goldschmidt down 0-2 but Goldy fought back to line a double to center. He then walked John Ryan Murphy before Marte stayed hot but broke his streak of XBH's by simply singling on a grounder to left, scoring Goldschmidt.

Chris Owings then bounced a soft grounder to third and Nolan Arenado elected to come home with the throw but he bounced it to an awkwardly-positioned Chris Iannetta who was unable to come up with the baseball and apply the tag. This allowed Marte to reach third and eventually score on a sac fly from Jarrod Dyson. Freeland struck out Deven Marrero to finally escape the frame but the damage had been done with Arizona taking a 4-0 lead.

The Rockies finally strung together some offense in the sixth, getting a leadoff single from DJ LeMahieu and a one-out walk from Arenado. Trevor Story popped out on the infield for the second out and Gerardo Parra was hit by a pitch to load the bases for Ian Desmond.

Desi came through by firing a ground ball through the right side to score a pair and pull the Rockies to within two. He then, representing the potential tying run, stole second base to give Noel Cuevas a good chance to tie the game with a single. But the rookie stuck out to end the inning, leaving two aboard.

Jerry Vasto made his MLB debut in the following half-inning as manager Bud Black continues his search for somebody—anybody—to give him some quality outings to bridge to Wade Davis. But Vasto fell victim to the same fate that has befallen everyone Black has turned to lately.

He surrendered a leadoff single to Christian Walker, recorded his first career strikeout against Jon Jay, walked Nick Ahmed then gave up a triple to Goldschmidt and a double (seriously?) to Marte. Suddenly, the Diamondbacks led 7-2.

They added another run against Chris Rusin in the eighth.

The Rockies did manage to get one back in the bottom of the ninth after Desmond singled and was replaced on the bases by Mike Tauchman who hit into a fielder's choice then scored on a gap double off the bat of Chris Iannetta. But that was it for any comeback attempt, making the final score 8-3.

Colorado falls to below .500 at 32-33 and are now back in fourth place in the NL West having entered the weekend tied for first.

WHAT'S NEXT:

After one of the most needed off days of the season, the Colorado Rockies are back out on the road where they have played a considerably better brand of baseball. They will face the Philadelphia Phillies starting on Tuesday night. John Gray faces off against Aaron Nola. First pitch at 5:10 Mountain Time.

BSN Exclusive: Rockies newest pitcher revels in pitching big games
By Drew Creasman - Posted on June 10, 2018 | BSN Denver

DENVER – When left-handed pitcher Sam Howard was first drafted, by the Chicago Cubs, he was more than a bit surprised and a little unprepared.

“I wasn’t even expected to be drafted out of high school,” he told BSN Denver. “I didn’t have an agent or anything. I didn’t know much about it. My dad made the call for me. He talked to a few scouts before the draft. They said I need to go college. Get bigger, get stronger because I was real, real skinny coming out of high school. So really, it was my dad’s call and that’s what he thought was best for me and it worked out.”

He opted to attend Southern Georgia University to help hone his craft. “I had some offers from other places,” he recalls. “But when I went to Georgia Southern, with coach BJ Green, the pitching coach, it just felt like home. I just fit in there. I didn’t hesitate and picked to go there.”

Three years after his initial draft experience, Howard was ready for the call this time. That call came in the third round of the 2014 draft and it came from the Colorado Rockies.

As almost all pitchers do, he got knocked around in Grand Junction a bit, in the stadium the locals call “Coors Light” Field. It actually plays even more toward the offense than its big-league counterpart due to hotter, drier conditions and no humidior.

After putting up a 5.40 ERA over 53.1 innings in his first taste of professional ball, the Rockies still thought they saw enough in his approach and progress to move him swiftly through the organization.

It paid off, with Howard pitching to a 3.43 the following year at the A- level then a 2.47 in 2016 at A+ ball. He earned a promotion to Double-A in the middle of that season and held mostly steady until settling into that level in 2017 for a 2.33 ERA that earned him yet another mid-season promotion to Triple-A where he pitched well enough to demand that the Rockies add him to the 40-man roster.

“That was huge,” he says. “That was my goal all of last year. It was to make a push for the big leagues and to get added on the roster. That was very exciting for me and my family when I got the call. I’m just trying to get rolling this year and do some big things.”

Well, on June 9, it was announced that Sam Howard would be added to an MLB roster for the first time. However it may go, that is a big thing.

In addition to the marked improvements he has shown throughout his career, Colorado has been especially pleased with Howard's durability and potential versatility as a lefty with the ability to go multiple innings as a starter or reliever.

He has pitched at least 120 innings in each of the past three seasons. "The biggest thing is getting a polished routine for my five day rotation," he says of his penchant to stay on the field and near his peak. "It's just getting a routine of knowing what I need to do each day for my arm to bounce back and feel ready to go every five days."

And while he has typically been perceived as a prospect just out the outside of the Rockies Top 10, he has also shown an affinity to show up well in the big games he has had a chance to pitch in his career.

When the Albuquerque Isotopes packed the house for the Green Chile Cheeseburger game (isn't minor league baseball just the best?) Howard took the mound and soaked in every moment. He tells us that he still has the promotional hat from the game at home on a shelf.

"It was fun," he says. "I think it may have been one of my first three starts in Triple-A when I got called up here last year. I just happened to get that start. It was a lot of fun. I think there was close to 17,000 people. It was a lot of fun. Hopefully, I get lucky and get that start again this year."

Or, you just may get to start in front of 30,000 or more at the confines of Coors Field.

Howard also got a chance to pitch a highly-attended (15,000) July 4 game against San Francisco's Sacramento affiliate and reflected on enjoying that moment as well: "I like the bigger games, the more intense atmospheres. So, 4th of July, sold out, I was just locked in. I don't think it was (anything) specific. Just locked in. Throwing all my pitches for strikes so the hitters have to respect them all. I like the big games. That's what I'm trying to make every game like (that)."

Now, every game is like that.

Rockies Battling A Home-Field Disadvantage
TRACY RINGOLSBY - JUNE 10, 2018 | InsideTheSeams.com

The Rockies showed up at Coors Field on Friday afternoon, just a half-game back of the Diamondbacks in the NL West standings, looking to enjoy a weekend at home.

Well, they were home for the weekend, but there wasn't much to enjoy.

The Diamondbacks continued their mastery of the Rockies, sweeping a three-game series, leaving the Rockies not only 3 1/2 games out of first place in the division, but a game behind the Giants and Dodgers, who are tied for second, and just two games ahead of the last-place Padres.

So much for the home-field advantage. But then it's been that kind of season for the Rockies, so far. The Rockies are 11-18 at Coors Field, which would be their worst home-field percentage ever. They have had a losing record at home in only eight of their previous 25 seasons.

HOME WOES

Season	W	L	Pct	ERA
2018	11	18	0.379	6.07
2012	35	46	0.432	5.97
x-1994	25	32	0.439	5.74
2015	36	45	0.444	5.68
2004	38	43	0.469	6.27
2011	38	43	0.469	4.71
1999	39	42	0.481	7.11
x-1993	39	42	0.481	5.8
2005	40	41	0.494	5.18

x-Mile High Stadium

Swept in a three-game weekend series by the Diamondbacks after losing the final four games of their previous homestand -- the final game of a series to the Giants before being swept by the Dodgers -- the Rockies have lost seven in a row at Coors Field.

They have equaled the third longest home losing streak in franchise history. Not only have they allowed at least seven runs in each of the seven losses, but they now have allowed 10 or more hits in a record 12 consecutive home games.

LONGEST HOME LOSING STREAKS IN ROCKIES HISTORY

Dates	L	IP	H	R	ER	BB	HR	ERA	Opp
y-July 24-Aug. 18, 1993	9	83	108	67	59	39	17	6.4	STL,ATL,SFG,PHI
x-May 30-June 9, 2018	7	63	82	69	62	31	17	8.86	SFG,LAD,ARI
April 23-May 10, 2016	7	66	83	55	53	32	12	7.23	LAD,PIT,ARI
July 17-Aug. 1, 2012	7	63	77	54	52	22	17	7.43	PIT,CIN,STL
April 25-May 18, 2015	6	52.1	67	38	38	32	6	6.54	SFG,ARI,LAD,PHI
May 21-June 6, 2014	6	54	77	48	45	20	11	7.5	SFG,ARI,LAD
June 8-14, 2012	6	54	77	54	50	23	15	8.33	LAA,OAK
Aug. 24-29, 2002	6	54	65	42	39	20	17	6.5	NYM,SFG
July 23-28, 1999	6	54	84	52	49	31	10	8.17	STL,HOU
April 7-12, 1998	6	54	86	72	68	33	10	11.33	STL,CIN
y-May 11-30, 1993	6	54	89	65	59	27	10	9.83	SFG,PHI
y-April 28-May 9,1993	6	54	73	58	49	38	12	8.17	STL,ATL
x-Still Active									
y-at Mile High Stadium									

They have lost eight consecutive home games to the D-Backs, which equals the longest losing streak to a team at Coors Field, and is three games shy of the franchise record for consecutive losses to one team at home. The Rockies lost the first 11 home games in franchise history, at Mile High Stadium, to the Braves.

STREAKING -- IN REVERSE

Team	G	Beginning-Ending
x-Braves	11	May 6, 1993-Aug. 9, 1994
y-Diamondbacks	8	June 21, 2017-June 10, 2018
Pirates	8	July 27, 2014-April 27, 2016
x-Giants	7	May 11-1993-June 24-1994
Braves	6	July 21, 2011-April 23, 2013
z-Pirates	6	June 4, 1994-Aug. 22, 1995
z-Giants	6	June 26, 1994-Sept. 29, 1995

x-at Mile High Stadium y-Still active x-at Mile High Stadium and Coors Field

The Diamondbacks pitchers have overpowered Rockies hitters during the eight consecutive losses, particularly Nolan Arenado (.154) and Ian Desmond (.115). And that's after Desmond came up with two hits on Sunday, his 12th multi-hit game of the season. Arenado, meanwhile, was held hitless on Saturday and Sunday, the third time he has been hitless in back-to-back games this season, but the first time it has happened in the same series. He also was hitless April 25 (Padres) and April 27 (Marlins), and March 31 (Diamondbacks) and April 2 (Padres).

Player	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG
Alexi Amarista	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Nolan Arenado	8	26	2	4	1	0	0	2	3	5	0.154
Charlie Blackmon	8	27	4	9	1	0	2	4	5	6	0.333
Noel Cuevas	3	7	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	0.286
Ian Desmond	8	26	3	3	0	0	0	2	4	9	0.115

Player	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG
Carlos Gonzalez	5	17	2	4	3	0	0	2	3	8	0.235
Chris Iannetta	3	7	0	2	1	0	0	1	2	2	0.286
DJ LeMahieu	8	35	7	12	2	1	1	4	1	6	0.343
Jonathan Lucroy	2	9	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0.111
Ryan McMahon	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Tom Murphy	3	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Gerardo Parra	5	19	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	3	0.316
Mark Reynolds	3	9	2	2	1	0	1	2	4	3	0.222
Trevor Story	8	30	3	8	2	0	3	9	0	9	0.267
Mike Tauchman	6	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.2
Raimel Tapia	2	6	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.333
Pat Valaika	4	9	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0.111
Tony Wolters	4	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	2	0

German Marquez, who lost the opener of the weekend series, and Kyle Freeland, who lost on Sunday, have both lost twice in the Rockies eight-game losing streak against the Diamondbacks.

Player	L	G-GS	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO
Tyler Anderson	0	1-0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3
Chad Bettis	0	1-1	4	5	5	5	3	2	6
x-Tyler Chatwood	0	1-1	2/3	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mike Dunn	0	3-0	1 2/3	5	6	6	1	3	2
Carlos Estevez	0	3-0	4 1/3	8	4	4	2	2	3
Kyle Freeland	2	2-2	10	9	7	7	1	7	12
Jon Gray	1	1-1	5	5	3	3	1	3	6

Player	L	G-GS	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO
Jeff Hoffman	1	2-1	6 1/3	10	10	10	0	3	4
x-Greg Holland	0	1-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Sam Howard	0	1-0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Jordan Lyles	0	0	2 1/3	6	3	3	0	0	1
German Marquez	2	2-2	10	12	9	9	5	1	13
Jake McGee	0	3-0	2 1/3	5	1	1	0	0	1
Pat Neshek	0	1-0	2/3	0	0	0	0	0	2
Harrison Musgrave	0	1-0	2	2	1	1	0	1	1
Scott Oberg	0	3-0	5	1	0	0	0	0	5
Adam Ottavino	0	1-0	2/3	0	3	3	0	3	1
Brooks Pounders	0	2-0	2 1/3	2	1	1	1	0	3
Zac Rosscup	0	2-0	2/3	0	0	0	0	0	2
Chris Rusin	0	3-0	4 2/3	5	4	3	0	4	5
Antonio Senzatela	1	1-1	5	8	9	9	2	3	3
Bryan Shaw	1	0	2/3	4	6	1	0	2	2
Jerry Vasto	0	0	2/3	3	3	3	0	1	1

Decision making, pitching dooms Rockies in embarrassing sweep to Diamondbacks

By Aniello Piro - June 10, 2018 | Mile High Sports

The Rockies can't find a way to win at home.

Colorado lost a big game to the Arizona Diamondbacks 8-3 Sunday afternoon, which resulted in their seventh straight defeat at Coors Field.

Arizona struck first blood in the second inning when Ketel Marte hit a solo home run to lead off the inning and give Arizona an early 1-0 lead. Following the home run, both team's starting pitchers locked in on the mound as the next runs of the game would not come until the sixth inning where Arizona plated three.

Paul Goldschmidt stayed hot at the plate by hitting a double to deep left field for the first hit in the sixth inning. Kyle Freeland then issued a walk to John Ryan Murphy to give Arizona two base runners. From there, Marte again came through for the Diamondbacks, hitting an RBI single to left field to score a run. Chris Owings then hit into a fielder's choice to manufacture another run which was followed by a sacrifice fly hit by Jarrod Dyson to put Arizona up 4-0.

Freeland finished with a line of six innings pitched, allowing four runs on four hits, walking four batters and striking out eight.

The Rockies answered in the bottom half of the inning by scoring a pair of runs. D.J. LeMahieu started the inning with a single, and Nolan Arenado later worked a walk while Gerardo Parra got hit by a pitch to load the bases for Ian Desmond. After watching strike one cross the plate, Desmond hit a 0-1 pitch to the right side of the infield which managed to sneak into right field to score two runs.

With the score sitting at 4-2 entering the seventh inning, Rockies manager Bud Black rolled out rookie pitcher Jerry Vastro to make his Major League debut. Vastro surrendered a single to Chrisitan Walker to begin the inning and then struck out Jon Jay before issuing a walk to Nick Ahmed. From there, the Rockies allowed the rook to face Goldschmidt, who had completely ravaged the club up to that point. Goldy took advantage of the matchup and raked a triple to left center field, making the score 6-2. Colorado still kept Vastro in the game and later in the inning he surrendered an RBI double to Marte to make the score 7-2. Vastro was the finally pulled from the game and replaced by veteran Chris Rusin who locked down the rest of the inning.

In one half inning, the game went from being close — with three offensive turns remaining — to a blowout and the final game of an embarrassing sweep at the hands of the division rivals and club that knocked Colorado out of the postseason last year.

Arizona tacked on another run in the eighth inning via an RBI single hit by Ahmed. The Rockies did the same in the ninth, but it was too little, too late for Colorado.

Sunday's loss was a very unsettling way for the Rockies to end their three-game home pitstop before hitting the road for a six-game road trip.

Colorado fell to 32-33, 3.5 games back of the Diamondbacks in the NL West.

The Rockies are off tomorrow before embarking on a three-game series against the Philadelphia Phillies. First pitch for Tuesday is set for 5:05 MST.

There's a reason Rockies are sliding after another Coors Field sweep. "We have to look at ourselves in the mirror."

By Nick Groke Jun 11, 2018

DENVER — Jarrod Dyson, a player of no particular authority in Arizona's lineup, a center fielder hitting just .197, finally and quietly tipped over the Rockies under a glaring sun Sunday afternoon. His dud of a fly out to shallow left field in the sixth inning at Coors Field sacrificed in the game-breaking run.

But more important, it pushed Colorado underwater.

The Rockies were swept in a second straight home series after the Diamondbacks cruised to an 8-3 victory behind hot-hitting Paul Goldschmidt and Colorado (32-33) sank below .500 for the first time since April 11.

Less than an hour later, they fell into fourth place in the National League West after the Dodgers and Giants won their games. The Rockies have not occupied a spot so low in their division since June 24, 2016, when another Diamondbacks victory behind another Goldschmidt highlight reel day won another marathon at Coors Field.

The Rockies that season spent just five days in fourth place. This slide quickly caught the attention of their clubhouse.

"We have to look at ourselves in the mirror," first baseman Ian Desmond said. "Sometimes losing helps you do that. It's time to see where we're at, see what we're made of."

Over their past 15 games, including 12 at Coors Field, the Rockies floundered to a 6-9 stretch despite a parade of runs. Since May 25, they have hit for a team-wide .836 OPS, the second-best offense in baseball behind only the Dodgers. But they continue to lose high-scoring games.

Colorado's pitching staff has allowed 10 or more hits in 12 consecutive games — the longest streak in club history and the longest in baseball since 2006. Coors Field is a scoundrel. But it is a place the Rockies retreat to center themselves, a ballpark that can hide pitching deficiencies behind a flood of offense.

It is not working.

"Pitching is paramount," Colorado manager Bud Black said. "And these last 10 games or so we haven't pitched well as a group. There have been some individual performances that have been fine. But our 13-man pitching staff has not pitched well enough to beat the other team. And this series, they out-pitched us and out-hit us."

Goldschmidt torched the Rockies over three games. On May 22, the Diamondbacks' star first baseman dropped his batting average below .200, a slump against type. But over one weekend in Denver, he went 8-for-13 with four homers, a

triple, two doubles, nine RBIs and eight runs. His 24 total bases in one series were the most ever at Coors Field by an opposing player.

He doubled and scored in the sixth off Rockies left-hander Kyle Freeland and he tripled and scored in the seventh off reliever Jerry Vasto, one of two pitchers who made their debuts for Colorado. Sam Howard pitched, too, in the ninth. They arrived over the weekend as replacements for a bullpen in desperate need of help.

Over the same stretch of offensive pulse, since May 25, the Rockies' bullpen allowed 50 runs (43 earned) over 56 1/3 innings, with 27 walks, good for a 6.87 ERA. That is the second-worst stretch in baseball, ahead of only the reeling Mets.

"We just haven't pitched well in the past 10 days or so, collectively," Black said. "We've had a couple good games here and there from our starters that kept us close. And there are other times when we haven't pitched well out of the bullpen."

Colorado catcher Chris Iannetta, who reached an NL division series playoff with the Diamondbacks last season before joining the Rockies, continues to carp against concern. A near-even record in June, he said, is acceptable. The second half of the season is the time to make a run, he said. And the Rockies have at least avoided damaging valleys.

"I keep saying it, this is the time of the year you want to do it. You never want to struggle, but if you're going to struggle, this is the time of year you want to go through it," Iannetta said. Winning three of every four games and playing .750 baseball, he said, is not feasible. The key is to stay afloat and make a later run.

"If you look at it in short spurts, sometimes it looks disjointed," he added. "That up and down, up and down. Sometimes your offense is up and sometimes your pitching is up and sometimes they go up and down together and sometimes they're inverted. You try to get the peaks to match up and eventually it will happen."

Desmond, though, is ready for a Rockies run. After his 12th multi-hit game of the season, including a two-run single in the sixth that brought them within a two-run deficit, he snapped an 0-for-10 skid that has left his average below the Mendoza Line, at .195.

But Desmond underlined a Trevor Story groundball as a sign of life. In the eighth, with two outs, Story barely beat out a ground ball to third base for an infield single with two outs. It led to nothing more. But "he still had it in him to dig that out and try to keep things going," Desmond said. "That's the never-quit mentality that we need to get to where we want to go."

The Rockies on Sunday flew across two time zones before starting a three-game series Tuesday in Philadelphia against the Phillies. They will play an interleague set against the Rangers in Texas over the weekend. Perhaps there is a window to make up ground — the Rockies have been remarkably good on the road, with a 21-14 record.

But in a division that includes four contending teams, playing .500 baseball will likely leave them short.

“There is no doubt we’re underperforming,” Desmond said. “Yeah, to say we’re near .500 and underperforming, I guess you can look at that as decent. But it’s time to start getting it going. And I’m just as much to blame. It’s time for me to get going too.

“We’re going to find out where we’re at soon.”