



## **SF Giants Press Clips Monday, September 3, 2018**

### **San Francisco Chronicle**

**Chris Stratton goes for 10<sup>th</sup> win of season as Giants host Mets  
Steve Kroner**

Chris Stratton has a chance to become the Giants' first pitcher to reach 10 wins this season as he faces the Mets on Sunday afternoon in the finale of a nine-game homestand.

Stratton (9-7, 4.99 ERA) began the season well — he was 2-1 with a 2.32 ERA in his first five starts — but after back-to-back rough outings against Colorado in late June and early July, he got demoted to Triple-A Sacramento.

He rejoined the big club in late July, but after giving up six runs on 10 hits in three innings in a loss at Arizona on Aug. 3, he returned to the River Cats.

In the ensuing Triple-A stint, he worked with former Giants right-hander Ryan Vogelsong and put together back-to-back strong outings. The Giants recalled him to face the Mets on Aug. 21; he held New York to two runs on six hits in 61/3 innings. Then on Monday, in his best big-league start, he worked eight innings and limited the Diamondbacks to five hits in a 2-0 victory.

Before Sunday's game, Giants manager Bruce Bochy discussed why Stratton has looked so much better in his past two outings.

"One thing in particular is command, the command of all his pitches," Bochy said. "He's not making the mistakes he was earlier. He's working both edges of the plate. Breaking ball, he's

putting in a better place, especially when he's ahead in the count. He's got that good command that he had last year and the start of this year."

Right-hander Noah Syndergaard (9-3, 3.51 ERA) goes for the Mets. He held the Giants to two runs on five hits in six innings in a 5-3 New York victory Aug. 22.

**Briefly:** Giants shortstop Brandon Crawford is out of the lineup for a third straight game because of a sore left knee. ... The Giants recalled infielder Kelby Tomlinson from Sacramento.

**San Francisco Chronicle**  
**Met's Noah Syndergaard throws 2-hitter to beat Giants**  
**Steve Kroner**

Example No. 839 of how ineffective the Giants' offense has been lately and for much of this season:

In Bruce Bochy's news conference following his team's 4-1 loss to Noah Syndergaard and the Mets on Sunday at AT&T Park, Bochy singled out the Giants' best plate appearance of the afternoon, pitcher Chris Stratton's sacrifice fly in the third inning.

"He really competed well," Bochy said of Stratton, who fouled off two 0-2 pitches before sending a drive to right plenty deep enough to score Alen Hanson. "He found a way to get that run in. That was impressive."

Impressive certainly characterized Syndergaard. In throwing the first complete game of his four-year career in his 81st start, the right-hander they call "Thor" threw a two-hitter.

Syndergaard ended the game by getting Evan Longoria swinging for his 11th strikeout. Syndergaard walked only one in improving to 10-3 this season.

Of course, the way the Giants have been hitting — they managed three hits in a 2-1, 11-inning loss to New York on Saturday — it's hard to pinpoint how much of Syndergaard's dominance derived from his stuff or from the Giants' malaise at the plate.

"He's got some of the best stuff in baseball," Bochy said. "He's probably (one of the) top two or three hardest throwers as far as starters."

Said Stratton, without much exaggeration: "His changeup's the same speed as my fastball."

Hanson's third-inning triple (he had been in an 0-for-18 slide) and Longoria's fifth-inning single were the only hits Syndergaard allowed.

"He's throwing 99, good slider, good changeup, two-seamer," Bochy said. "You don't expect to score a lot, but that said, you'd like to think there'd be more than two hits."

Stratton (9-8) gave up only three hits in his six innings, but two of them came back-to-back to open the second. Todd Frazier cracked a double to left before Michael Conforto drove a ball over the center-field wall for his 20th homer of the season.

The pitch to Conforto was the one Stratton wished he had back. Other than that, Stratton breezed, retiring the final 10 hitters he faced. He struck out two and did not issue a walk. Since the Giants recalled him to take on the Mets on Aug. 21, Stratton has allowed four earned runs in 201/3 innings (1.77 ERA).

Before the game, Bochy discussed why Stratton has looked so much better in this his third stint with the big club this year.

"One thing in particular is command, the command of all his pitches," Bochy said. "He's not making the mistakes he was earlier."

"He's working both edges of the plate. Breaking ball, he's putting in a better spot, especially when he's ahead in the count. He's got that good command that he had last year and the start of this year."

The Giants did put together a 5-4 homestand, and their starters thrived in the final eight games, allowing seven earned runs in 621/3 innings (1.01 ERA).

Entering play Sunday, the Giants had the best ERA (3.24) in the majors since June 1.

"Sometimes that goes unnoticed on how well we have been pitching," Bochy said. "... That's been a silver lining through all this, our struggles, the fact how often and how well they're keeping us in the game, giving us a chance."

"As you all know, you see the numbers, it's been tough since June 1 with the offense. A couple of guys getting hot, driving in runs, that's what we're missing. Somebody's got to do that for you to win ballgames."

The Giants fell to 19-54 when scoring three runs or fewer in a game. When they've scored at least four, they're 49-16.

## San Francisco Chronicle

### Giants' Alen Hanson does his best Brandon Crawford impersonation at short Steve Kroner

**Brandon Crawford** missed the series against the Mets because of a sore left knee. **Alen Hanson** replaced Crawford at shortstop for all three games. On Sunday, Alen Hanson looked just like ... Brandon Crawford.

Hanson ranged to his right. He ranged to his left. He made long throws. He made off-balance throws. He probably made the Mets' **Michael Conforto** angry after twice robbing him with excellent stops on hard-hit balls.

After the game, Hanson was asked how he would respond if someone said he resembled Crawford, a three-time Gold Glove winner.

"You'd be saying the truth. It's part of the work that I've put in," Hanson said through interpreter **Erwin Higueros**.

The Giants signed Hanson, 25, as a free agent in January. He made brief appearances with the Pirates in 2016 and '17. He also played 69 games for the White Sox last season.

For San Francisco, Hanson has started 29 games at second base, 14 in left field, 10 at short, and five at third.

"He gets moved around a lot," Giants manager **Bruce Bochy** said. "It's not like he can focus on one position. That shows you how athletic the kid is."

Hanson wasn't the only contributor to the Giants' defensive highlight reel. **Brandon Belt** saved Hanson a few times with nice scoops at first. Center fielder **Gregor Blanco** ranged far into right-center to make a backhanded, diving grab of a drive off the bat of former Giants center fielder **Austin Jackson**. Right fielder **Austin Slater** took away a hit from **Tomas Nido** with a sliding catch.

Given the Giants' offensive woes, their defense Sunday gave Bochy some solace.

"When you don't hit, you look flat," he said. "You don't look like you have a lot of energy out there, but ... we played hard."

**Briefly:** Belt stole second base in the seventh inning, extending the Giants' streak of successful stolen-base attempts to 13. ... Rookie **Chris Shaw** went 0-for-3 with two strikeouts. In three

games, he's hitless in six at-bats with five K's. He did hit the go-ahead sacrifice fly in Friday's 7-0 win. ... Before Sunday's game, the Giants recalled infielder **Kelby Tomlinson** from Triple-A Sacramento. ... Bochy said outfielder **Steven Duggar** will have surgery on his torn left labrum Tuesday.

## **San Jose Mercury News**

### **Stratton's solid start wasted as Giants subdued by Mets Curtins Pashelka**

SAN FRANCISCO — No one knows, of course, what the Giants' starting rotation might look like for the beginning of the 2019 season, and whether Chris Stratton will once again be on the Opening Day roster. Certainly, though, if he keeps pitching like he has been of late, his name will be in the conversation.

Stratton had his third straight quality start Sunday. But as has been the case for a majority of the season, the Giants were done in by their offense, which managed just two hits and struck out 11 times against starter Noah Syndergaard in a 4-1 loss to the New York Mets at AT&T Park.

Certainly, though, if he keeps pitching like he has been of late, his name will be in the conversation.

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With New York leading 2-1, reliever Sam Dyson allowed a two-run single to Mets second baseman Jeff McNeil in the eighth for some insurance, as the Giants dropped to 68-70, finishing up their homestand with a 5-4 record. The Giants, who have scored one run or less in four of their last five, begin a six-game road trip Monday in Colorado.

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"I think you do have to look at who's on the hill. You don't expect to score a lot," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said when asked about his offense. "That said, you'd like to think that you can get more than two hits."

Stratton allowed just three hits and two earned runs over six innings.

His one major mistake was having a four-seam fastball catch too much of the plate against Michael Conforto, who hit a two-run home run to center field in the second inning to give the Mets a 2-0 lead.

“It’s something to definitely build on,” Stratton said. “As soon as I threw that pitch (to Conforto) I felt that what I had been working on kind of got out of whack. You hate for it to be to one of their best power hitters.”

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Stratton was taken out before the bottom of the sixth, as Hunter Pence was inserted as a pinch-hitter to lead off. Pence battled in an eight-pitch at-bat but struck out swinging.

Stratton, who is under team control for the next two seasons, has been exceptional since his recall from Double-A Richmond on Aug. 21, allowing just four earned runs in 20.1 innings.

The key has been his command. Before his two previous starts, he walked 41 batters in just over 100 innings this season. But Sunday’s outing was his third straight without allowing a base on balls.

“When you’re having success, it’s easy to just kind of go with it,” said Stratton, who also drove in the Giants’ only run with a sacrifice fly that brought in Alen Hanson. “I just think I’m more prepared now and I know what I need to fix it now than I did in the past.”

The defense, too, was exceptional, with Hanson playing a starring role at shortstop in place of the injured Brandon Crawford, making seven assists. Gregor Blanco and Austin Slater also shined in the field.

Crawford, who missed his third straight game Sunday, is considered day-to-day with a bruised knee.

“If you don’t hit, you look flat, it doesn’t look like you have a lot of energy out there,” Bochy said. “But you look at what (Hanson) did today, that was really impressive game at short. He was all over the field.

“We played hard. It’s just you have your work cut out going against Syndergaard.”

One Giants hit was a triple by Hanson in the third inning, as his ball to right got past Brandon Nimmo and rolled to the wall. San Francisco’s other hit was a cue shot from Evan Longoria between first and second base in the fourth.

Otherwise, Syndergaard largely cruised, as he needed to throw just 72 pitches through six innings. He finished with 114 pitches, routinely touching the high-90s with his fastball, the low 90s with a slider and change-up, mixing in a curve every so often for good measure.

“He commanded the strike zone with all of his pitches,” Longoria said. “When a guy throws that hard, that alone can be difficult. He’s developed a feel for his two-seam fastball, he’s pitching in

and away. He had a good feel for all of his pitches today.”

### **San Jose Mercury News**

#### **Giants’ Duggar to have surgery Tuesday: “The goal is not missing a single day I’m in camp” Curtis Pashelka**

SAN FRANCISCO — Steven Duggar will have season-ending surgery on his torn left labrum Tuesday in Arizona — exactly a week after he suffered the injury — and is hopeful he’ll be able to return for the start of spring training in February.

Duggar said the inflammation in his shoulder has calmed down to the point where he’s not experiencing any pain right now and has better range of motion, clearing the way for him to have the procedure.

Duggar suffered the labrum tear, and a shoulder subluxation, when he dove headfirst into second base in the ninth inning of Tuesday’s game against Arizona.

“We did a good job getting all of that (inflammation) of there, and I feel like we’re in a really good place going into the surgery,” Duggar said. “That’s been the focus the past couple days, trying to get it back to normal as much as possible.”

Duggar said he was leaving San Francisco for Arizona later Sunday. He will remain there for most of this month before he returns sometime during the Giants’ final homestand Sept. 24-30 to be checked out by head trainer Dave Groeschner and physical therapist Tony Reale.

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After that, he’ll return to Arizona to begin rehab. He’s aiming to make a “good push” from December into January, amp things up from there, and “get this thing ready to roll for spring training.”

“The goal, for sure, is not missing a single day I’m in camp,” Duggar said. “Because once we’re back and once we’re healthy, you’ve got to go test it and make sure this thing is where it needs to be.

“I feel like once I get back into some games, the mental side of it, that’ll take care of itself once I get back out there playing, running around and I have to make a play or two, then we’re right back to where we need to be. That’s the goal.

“That being said, even though it’s a pretty cut and dry surgery, you never know. There could be setbacks along the way. But that’s the goal. When everybody reports to camp, I’m fully healthy and ready to rock.”

Duggar said he's spoken to his sister and a former Clemson teammate, Tyler Krieger, who have both had the same injuries.

"You just try and put yourself in the best frame of mind going into it," Duggar said of the rehab. "I'm sure there'll be some long days, but at the same time, but you start to realize that even on the dark days, it's not just for yourself. You're rehabbing for (your teammates)."

Brandon Crawford will miss Sunday's game — his third straight — with a bruised knee. Crawford could still be an option for Monday's game in Colorado.

## MLB.com

### Hanson's defense stands out in loss to Mets

Chris Haft

SAN FRANCISCO -- Virtually every season, the Giants make something out of nothing in their pursuit of able personnel. Their ability to scour talent from the ranks of players who entered Spring Training as non-roster invitees remains uncanny.

Aside from Rookie of the Year candidate **Dereck Rodriguez**, this year's leading example has been **Alen Hanson**, who looked impressive even as the Giants fell to the New York Mets, 4-1. Mets right-hander **Noah Syndergaard** struck out 11 and yielded two hits in his first Major League complete game.

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Performing an accurate impersonation of shortstop **Brandon Crawford**, who rested a sore left knee for the third consecutive game, Hanson made several difficult defensive plays besides tripling and scoring San Francisco's lone run in the third inning.

"That was really an impressive game," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said of Hanson's performance.

Asked how he would react if told how much he resembled Crawford, the three-time Gold Glove winner who combines flash, dash and efficiency, Hanson said through interpreter Erwin Higueros, "You'd be saying the truth. It's part of the work I put in."

Hanson established a personal single-game high with seven assists, adding to his total most notably by darting up the middle to snare **Michael Conforto's** sharp seventh-inning grounder before whirling and throwing to first base for the out.



Hanson's hit, a sinking line drive that skipped under Mets right fielder **Brandon Nimmo's** glove, ended an 0-for-12 skid. Formerly a member of the Pirates and White Sox, Hanson has lengthened the Giants' list of successful non-roster pickups, a group that includes Andres Torres, **Gregor Blanco**, **Joaquin Arias** and Ryan Vogelsong, among others. Like them, Hanson appears to be a keeper for another season.

"He's so athletic and versatile," Bochy said of Hanson, who has started 29 games at second base, 14 in left field, 10 at shortstop and five at third. "You can play him anywhere."

Hanson's feats weren't enough to inoculate **Chris Stratton** (9-8) from defeat, though the right-hander performed respectably while allowing three hits in six innings.

Stratton lapsed only in the second inning, when Conforto homered following **Todd Frazier's** leadoff double. That run support sufficed for the dominant Syndergaard (10-3), who actually faced one of his most significant challenges with Stratton in the third inning. Entering the game batting .108, Stratton fouled off a pair of 0-2 pitches before hoisting a sacrifice fly that scored Hanson. Stratton put Syndergaard's performance in proper perspective: "His changeup is the same speed as my fastball."

### **SOUND SMART**

The Giants endured their 30th game in which they scored one or zero runs. That's tied for fourth-most in the Majors with the Mets and Cubs. The Giants collected two hits, marking the 10th time they've totaled three or fewer in a game. That's the fourth-most in the big leagues.

### **YOU GOTTA SEE THIS**

According to **Statcast™**, Giants right fielder **Austin Slater** traveled 85 feet to make his ninth-inning grab of **Tomas Nido's** drive to right-center field. It was one of several above-average defensive plays that the Giants recorded.

### **UP NEXT**

The Giants begin a two-city, six-game trip on Monday with a 12:10 p.m. PT Labor Day matinee at Denver's Coors Field. **Madison Bumgarner**, who has yielded one earned run in his last 15 innings spanning two starts, will pitch the series opener for the Giants. San Francisco must sweep the three-game series to sustain its flickering postseason hopes. Colorado, in the midst of the scramble atop the National League West, will throw left-hander **Tyler Anderson** at the Giants.

**MLB.com**

## **Crawford sits for 3<sup>rd</sup> straight with sore knee**

**Chris Haft**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Shortstop **Brandon Crawford**'s lingering left knee soreness kept him out of the Giants' lineup Sunday for the third game in a row.

Giants manager Bruce Bochy declined to guess when Crawford will start his next game.

### **View Full Game Coverage**

"He bruised [the knee] up pretty good," Bochy said.

As is the case with most key performers, Crawford's absence underscores the importance of his presence. The three-time Gold Glove Award winner averaged a team-high 148 games per year throughout his previous six full seasons, and he'll likely lead the club in games played for the second year in a row. Crawford entered Sunday having appeared in 129 games; right fielder **Andrew McCutchen** had played in 130 when he was traded to the Yankees last Friday.

**Alen Hanson** replaced Crawford at shortstop for the third consecutive game.

- With September's roster expansion to 40 players, the Giants recalled utility man **Kelby Tomlinson** from Triple-A Sacramento for the fifth time this season. Entering Sunday, Tomlinson hit .226 in 53 games with the Giants, including 27 starts.

### **The Athletic**

## **A loss to the Mets doesn't cloud Steven Duggar and Chris Shaw's transition from college foes to a focus on the Giants' future**

**Shayna Rubin**

Steven Duggar and Chris Shaw are close friends. Getting drafted in the same year, 2015, by the same team and ascending almost simultaneously through the minor league ranks has a funny way of bonding baseball players like these two.

There was a time, though, that Duggar feared his future comrade.

Duggar, a Clemson Tiger, and Shaw, a Boston College Eagle, played against each other three times a year back in the players' collegiate days. Shaw's raw power was so evident that one swing from him back in May 2014 is seared into Duggar's memory.

"Shaw hit a ball at Clemson that probably still hasn't landed," Duggar recalled before the Giants' 4-1 loss to the Mets on Sunday. "He was always a guy, on defense, where you're holding your breath when he comes up because you're like, he could leave the yard at any time."

That ball eventually found the grass somewhere beyond Clemson's fences at Doug Kingsmore Stadium, about a year before the pair — along with fellow Atlantic Coast Conference opponent Andrew Suárez — would find each other on the Salem-Keizer team in Oregon to begin their careers as Giants.

Suárez, said Duggar, was "the big profile guy" in a tough left-handed University of Miami rotation. And, yes, Shaw instilled some fear in Suárez's heart, too, hitting a home run off him in Miami on a lazy 2-0 cutter.

"He went 0 for 3 against me the next year, though," Suárez said, side-eyeing Shaw from across the Giants' clubhouse.

Add Austin Slater into the mix — an outfielder drafted one step ahead of this prospect squadron — and you've got a group of longtime roommates, yes, and a crew that should occupy many lineups to come in this tryout month and beyond.

"All of us being here at the same time has been a lot of fun because there was this vision when we first got drafted and became close in Salem, and when we went to San Jose together it was kind of the same thing," Duggar said. "We'll have the opportunity to all be together to make an impact at the highest level and hopefully be together to do it."

The squad's all here. Now the growing experience shifts to a showing experience.

Suárez and Slater have dug in their cleats a bit already, but Shaw's promotion serves as another flag waving this Giants "retool" season into motion. Even with Duggar sidelined by a shoulder injury (more on that later), the Giants outfield is stacked with some viable prospects.

Shaw's game differs a bit from that of his fellow outfielders. His defense comes secondary to his power hitting potential. In the outfield Sunday, center fielder Gregor Blanco gloved the in-betweeners and threw the rookie some reassuring smiles afterward.

"I was like, 'Can't you let me get one?'" Shaw laughed.

Blanco not only handled the routine ones, but flashed some leather while robbing the Mets' Austin Jackson of extra bases in the fifth inning. Not to be outdone by a veteran, Slater showed his savvy in a tough right field in the ninth inning, chopping down Jackson's drive headed for Triples Alley and robbing Tomas Nido of a hit with a diving catch to end the inning.

Defensive heroics aren't the priority for Shaw; his potential for young power is unique among his fellow prospects. That's why his all-out approach against a filthy Noah Syndergaard was justified Sunday, although he came up empty against the Mets starter, who locked up the

Giants lineup with a two-hitter.

“The way I look at it, and talking to these guys, you’re pretty much getting baptism-by-flame right now,” Shaw said after the game. “You’re coming in and facing two of the best pitchers in the league. Syndergaard is Syndergaard, and (Zack) Wheeler, after the All-Star break, has been one of the best in baseball, so to have your first two starts be against those two guys, I don’t look at the results as any deterrent or discouraging. I’m just happy to get my feet wet against the two (of the) best.”

To be fair, Shaw wasn’t the only one Syndergaard torched. The Giants starter had 11 strikeouts, including two by Shaw, ushering in Syndergaard’s first career complete game in the Mets’ eventual win Sunday afternoon.

Things aren’t coming to Shaw instantly, but he’s picking up more than it may seem in his at-bats as he shakes off some jitters. He noticed that pitchers are throwing him up and in and then going soft, and that he’s been over-swinging trying to compensate.

Shaw isn’t too stressed over getting his first major league hit. Duggar isn’t concerned about him either.

“I’ve seen him hit balls to the moon, personally, so he’s got the juice for it, for sure,” Duggar said of Shaw. “He’ll get a hold of a couple for sure and people will be like ‘...OK.’”

Slater, Duggar and Shaw aren’t too concerned about the onus of expectation hovering over them, either. But they understand the vision. They’ll repeat the tried and true “taking things day by day” *modus operandi* while keeping an eye on how they fit into a revamped Giants baseball landscape.

“It’s just a matter of taking advantage of the opportunity we have up here in this final month to show not only (Bruce) Bochy, but the front office what we have,” Slater said. “That that picture could potentially become a reality.”

And perhaps, too, this final month won’t tell us all we need to know about the future of this team. We can certainly glean positive steppingstones all around. The rotation is beginning to thrive, even without its expensive core. Chris Stratton made his third straight quality start despite the loss Sunday, pitching six innings with one mistake pitch to Michael Conforto that was blasted to the deepest part of center field for a two-run shot in the second inning.

On this day, that was all the Mets needed, as there’s only so much a pitcher can do in back of this iteration of the Giants’ offense against Syndergaard.

“His changeup is as fast as my fastball,” Stratton said of Syndergaard.

So the Giants will have to wait for another day. Just as the up-and-coming Shaw-Duggar-Slater outfield won’t unite again until spring training, when Duggar is expected to rejoin the team.

Duggar's locker was cleared out after Sunday's game; he was headed to Arizona to have surgery Tuesday on his torn labrum.

He opened up earlier about how he cried alone at his locker when he realized the severity of his injury.

Since then Duggar has come to terms with the unfortunate timing of his injury. He was just starting hit his stride, he said. It was clear to him when he was lying in the infield dirt that the injury was bad, but had convinced assistant athletic trainer Eric Ortega, and himself, that he would be fine. Adrenaline hid the pain.

"When I woke up the next morning I knew it wasn't good," Duggar said. "It was tough for me to get it off the side of my body. I couldn't move forward."

But the inflammation has subsided, he said, and he's set his focus on recovery. The timetable has not been set yet, but Duggar has been told rehab could take about five months, just in time for spring training.

"It was laser focus once I got to terms with it," Duggar said.

September is short, and the rookies called up to show their stuff will operate on their day-to-day basis or, in Duggar's case, on a laser-focused fast track to recovery.

But, for this new group of faces, the vision began in their college days. A couple over-swings Sunday against one of the best pitchers in the game was just a slice of the process.

## **The Athletic**

### **Giants' sleepy loss to Mets prompts a closer look at the September call-up possibilities**

**Shayna Rubin**

Pure energy and the raw tangibles of an imminent youth movement that had coaxed the Giants to life just one night before ended up crashing hard in the light of day Saturday.

"Last night, you'd like to think you can build on that game," manager Bruce Bochy said of Friday's 7-0 victory over the Mets.

Instead, on Saturday, the Giants struck out 16 times, 11 of them against Mets starter Steven Matz. Brandon Belt wore a golden sombrero. The lineup got three hits total, including Evan Longoria's solo home run in a 2-1, 11-inning loss to the Mets.

Still, there were small moments Giants fans could enjoy.

In the sixth inning, a heads-up play by shortstop Alen Hanson flipped a difficult situation into a doable one on a day when runs were scarce. The Mets had a threat going as Todd Frazier stole second base and had an opportunity to go further when catcher Nick Hundley's throw sailed into center field. But Hanson didn't move toward the errant throw; instead, he feinted as if he had the ball, putting his empty glove down for a tag — and Frazier, showing a bit a secondhand fatigue, didn't even look toward third base as center fielder Gorkys Hernández scooped up the errant throw.

Hanson's heady defense saved the day again on the next play, when he fielded Michael Conforto's jam shot and — rather than trying to get Conforto — flipped it to third baseman Longoria to catch Frazier taking one step too many as he rounded third base for the out.

"The guy knows what he's doing out there," Saturday's starter Derek Holland said of Hanson.

Here are the two plays:

The Hanson-Frazier sequence thwarted one of the few scoring chances either team could scratch out Saturday, preserving a 1-1 tie that was not broken until the Mets cracked a game-winner out of an imperfect Hunter Strickland in the 11th inning, handing the Giants the one-run defeat.

Strickland's pair of two-strike mistakes to Wilmer Flores and Frazier marked the first time the Giants bullpen had allowed an earned run in 17 innings. Holland's six-inning, one-run outing preserved a pristine 1.51 ERA for the starting rotation over the last 12 games. The pitching staff as a whole has posted a league-leading 3.26 ERA since June 1.

The separation of powers within this game sums this Giants season up, doesn't it?

As this team chugs through the final month and looks toward 2019, it's clear what strengths they can start to hang their hat on and, also, where ever-present weaknesses continue to fester.

But Hanson's bit of defensive fun wouldn't have happened without some bad news attached to the other end of it: Brandon Crawford was out of the lineup for a third game in a row. Bochy revealed his shortstop's prolonged rest was due to a nagging left knee injury.

At this point, there is absolutely no reason for Crawford to push through the pain. All signs — injuries to core players both devastating and benign contrasted by moments of jubilation brought by young faces — point to an all-in look at some of the talent waiting in the wings.

Friday night, the new kids on the block made the case that they were more than ready to take over and start to plant some seeds that could blossom in 2019.

There's only so much wiggle room, though.

Aramís García went 2 for 4 with a home run Friday, but Hundley remains the starting catcher. Holland and other starters continue to praise Hundley for his ability to instill confidence in

pitchers. The platoon splits against Matz favored a day off for lefty Chris Shaw and an outfield made up of Hunter Pence, Hernández and Austin Slater, Bochy said before the game.

But one listless Saturday afternoon of watching veterans ground out does not a September strategy make.

The timing of Crawford's injury allows him the space to rest on it more than he would any other month, any other year; he's day to day, Bochy said. It also may open the door a bit wider for new acquisition Abiatal Avelino, brought west in the Andrew McCutchen trade with the Yankees. Signed as a 16-year-old out of the Dominican Republic, Avelino would be eligible for the Rule 5 Draft this offseason. If he's added to the 40-man roster, we could very well see him patrolling shortstop in a few games this month.

Avelino's potential call-up, if it happens, may well be the move that shakes these tepid September waters most. The first day of expanded rosters wasn't too dramatic: Ray Black made his expected return to the bullpen.

Bochy said some pitchers will join them in Colorado after the Sacramento River Cats season ends on Sept. 4. The probable names are mostly familiar: Casey Kelly and right-handed pitcher Tyler Beede could make his move back up to the bigs but perhaps, this time, as a member of the bullpen.

Beede made his transition back on June 17 after a rough outing for the River Cats in which he allowed four runs and never escaped the first inning.

Control was an issue for Beede in his big league debut with the Giants back in April, but his burgeoning renaissance within Sacramento's bullpen saw Beede chisel his WHIP little by little from 1.92 to 1.85.

One new name that may pop up to the bigs is right-hander Tyler Herb, but he's tied up with a 5.65 ERA in 12 starts in the Pacific Coast League.

Mac Williamson would be next in line to supplant the outfield, but he hasn't played since Aug. 7 due to lingering side effects of a concussion incurred in a crash on the bullpen mound this April in San Francisco. His girlfriend, Kaitlyn, chronicled Williamson's struggles in an honest, powerful blog post.

Alas, it's clear a more dramatic youth movement that revs up in September has its restrictions.

For now, keep an eye on how Andrew Suárez, Dereck Rodríguez and Chris Stratton plant their feet into the rotation. Don't forget about Reyes Moronta and Black establishing themselves as mainstays in the bullpen. Or Austin Slater's quiet consistency (12 for 36 in his last 10 games), or Steven Duggar's ascent that was devastatingly cut short.

On a sleepy Saturday afternoon, it's normal to yearn for promises of a more thrilling future —

and a couple of relatively new faces could be on their way in a few days. But a sleepy Saturday also provides the space to reflect on the players that have already made 2019 look a little more promising.



Buster Posey hobbled into the clubhouse before Saturday's game on a pair of crutches. The first order of business was to shake García's hand.

Then, he had an update.

Posey said his surgery was delayed because the surgery before him took a little longer than expected. Then Posey talked about the research he'd done months before that day.

He had read a report written by his surgeon, Dr. Marc Philippon, and made sure to pay close attention to the players the doctor operated on and how they recovered.

When the Giants played the Reds, their catcher Curt Casali relayed some encouraging words.

"He mentioned to me that he felt really good this year," Posey said. "So that was encouraging."

**NBCsportsbayarea.com**

**Giants stymied by Noah Syndergaard, drop series to Mets**

**AP**

SAN FRANCISCO — Noah Syndergaard pitched a two-hitter for his first career complete game, striking out 11 as the New York Mets beat the San Francisco Giants 4-1 on Sunday.

Syndergaard (10-3) made his 81st start in the majors and topped the Giants for the second time in 12 days. He matched his season high for strikeouts, walked one and retired 20 of the final 22 batters.

Syndergaard allowed only two runners past first base and set the side down in order five times. He yielded a one-out triple to Alen Hanson in the third and a single to Evan Longoria in the fourth.

The right-hander overcame a one-out throwing error by first baseman Jay Bruce in the seventh by striking out Austin Slater and getting Nick Hundley to ground out.



Syndergaard continued a strong stretch by New York's rotation. Over the past 15 games, Mets starters have a 1.61 ERA.

Michael Conforto hit his 20th home run, Jeff McNeil had two hits and two RBIs and Todd Frazier added a pair of hits.

The Mets won for the seventh time in their last eight games at AT&T Park.

Hanson tripled and scored for San Francisco. The Giants have lost three of four.

Limited to a total of two runs in the first two games of the series, the Mets matched that in the second. Frazier led off with a single and Conforto homered off Chris Stratton (9-8).

Hanson tripled and scored on Stratton's sacrifice fly in the third. McNeil hit a two-run single in the eighth.

### **TRAINER'S ROOM**

*Giants:* SS Brandon Crawford (left knee) missed his third consecutive game. . OF Steven Duggar will undergo surgery Tuesday to repair a torn labrum in his left shoulder. . INF Kelby Tomlinson was called up from Triple-A Sacramento.

### **UP NEXT**

*Mets:* RHP Jacob DeGrom (8-8, 1.68 ERA) faces the Dodgers in Los Angeles on Monday. DeGrom leads the majors in ERA.

*Giants:* LHP Madison Bumgarner (5-5, 2.68 ERA) pitches against Colorado on Monday afternoon. He has allowed one run over his previous 15 innings.

### **NBCsportabayarea.com**

#### **Why Giants rookie Chris Shaw has learned more than ever in 2018**

##### **Dalton Johnson**

The past two seasons, Chris Shaw has led the Giants, from the minors to the majors, in home runs. In back-to-back years, the former first-round pick has launched 24 long balls.

While Shaw has certainly found success at the plate, he says he has learned the most about himself this season in Sacramento, especially the past two months.

"It's been a really good learning year for me," Shaw **said on KNBR** before his MLB debut on Friday. "I haven't really bought into a plan like I've bought in the past two months or so,

learning about myself as a hitter."

Before this season, Shaw was much more of a see-ball-hit-ball hitter using his natural ability and power. Now he understands heat maps of where he succeeds and struggles, and the tendencies he shows in the box.

In Sacramento, Shaw had an up-and-down season at the plate, batting .259 with an .813 OPS. He essentially followed a down month with a big month at the plate and vice versa. All in all, the big lefty brings a much-needed power bat to the Giants where his home runs and .505 slugging percentage would lead the team.

Another aspect of his game Shaw has continually worked on is his defense in the outfield, which has also been more of a question mark than his bat. Shaw played right field collegiately at Boston College, but was drafted as a first baseman. He officially moved to left field last season in Double-A Richmond.

"I feel great out there now, I really do. I feel as natural out there as I could on a baseball field," Shaw said.

The Giants called up Shaw hours after trading Andrew McCutchen to the Yankees on Aug. 31. He knew a McCutchen trade could open a spot up for him, but made sure to keep his focus on Sacramento before San Francisco.

"There's so much uncertainty with what exact move they're going to make following that, what it's going to be," Shaw said. "All along I thought that might be a way to open up some playing time."

Shaw sat on a bus with his bags packed for a trip to Las Vegas with the rest of his River Cats teammates when he found out the news. Manager Dave Brundage ordered Shaw off the bus and told him to get to San Francisco with the rest of his Giants teammates.

"It's pretty incredible," Shaw said of the moment. "It's one of those moments you dream about your whole life from the time I played Little League. Coming up through the ranks, it's kind of your motivation for your offseason workouts and to finally have it come to fruition, I can't even put it into words."

No more bus rides for Shaw. He's in San Francisco as a Giant for the rest of the season and will catch a flight to Colorado Sunday night where he can finally have some leg room. Welcome to the bigs, rook.

## **The Press Democrat**

### **Mets' Noah Syndergaard too much for slumping Giants offense**

**Michael Wagaman**

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SAN FRANCISCO — Right-hander Noah Syndergaard stopped worrying about his mechanics and focused on making pitches.

In doing so, the New York Mets right-hander might have solved one of the biggest issues that has plagued him most of the year.

Syndergaard pitched a two-hitter for his first career complete game, striking out 11 as the Mets beat the Giants 4-1 on Sunday at AT&T Park.

“It’s definitely really encouraging, a step in the right direction,” Syndergaard said. “I didn’t really have to think about it that much at all. I wasn’t really fighting myself out there. Things just started to click and I felt more fluid.”

Syndergaard (10-3) made his 81st start in the majors and topped the Giants for the second time in 12 days. He matched his season high for strikeouts, walked one and retired 20 of the final 22 batters.

Mets manager Mickey Callaway said Syndergaard was more relaxed than in previous starts.

“Maybe the last couple of outings he’s been worried too much about mechanics and internal things instead of just worrying about where the ball’s going,” Callaway said. “Today he went out there and the ball went wherever he wanted it to, probably because he was focused a little bit more down at home plate.”

Syndergaard allowed only two runners past first base and set the side down in order five times. He yielded a one-out triple to Alen Hanson in the third and a single to Evan Longoria in the fourth.

Syndergaard overcame a one-out throwing error by first baseman Jay Bruce in the seventh by striking out Austin Slater and getting Nick Hundley to ground out.

“It was amazing to watch from my point of view,” Mets catcher Tomas Nido said. “He was just trying to go out there and throw the ball, not worried about little things that can sometimes get you out of focus.

“He just went out there and trusted his stuff.”

Syndergaard continued a strong stretch by New York's rotation. Over the past 15 games, Mets starters have a 1.61 ERA.

"I kind of worked backwards for the most part a little bit," Syndergaard said. "I think their game plan was to just come out and jump on the fastball and I didn't really allow them to do that."

Michael Conforto hit his 20th home run, Jeff McNeil had two hits and two RBIs and Todd Frazier added two hits.

The Mets won for the seventh time in their past eight games at AT&T Park.

Hanson tripled and scored for San Francisco. The Giants have lost three of four.

Limited to a total of two runs in the first two games of the series, the Mets matched that in the second. Frazier led off with a single and Conforto homered off Chris Stratton (9-8).

Hanson tripled and scored San Francisco's lone run on Stratton's sacrifice fly in the third.

"We're having trouble scoring runs," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "We have to find a way to score. You can't sit on one run."

The Giants were held to one run for the 23rd time this season and are 4-19 in those games.

With Brandon Crawford still resting his sore left knee, Hanson made his third consecutive start at shortstop and made a handful of defensive gems. Most notably was his backhand stop of Conforto's sharp grounder in the fourth when Hanson ran to his right and made a strong throw for the out.

"The defense behind me was unbelievable," Stratton said. "Hanson was great."

**SF Examiner.com**

**Chris Stratton again falls victim to anemic San Francisco Giants offense, Mets win 4-1**

**Ryan Gorcey**

**AT&T PARK** — Chris Stratton threw his third straight quality start on Sunday, after the tutelage of Ryan Vogelsong helped shore up his mechanics, but as has been a trend with this year's San Francisco Giants, he came away with not much to show for it.

Out of 33 games in which the Giants have seen their starter go six or more innings, allowing two or fewer runs, they have won just 11, according to Bill Arnold of the Sports Features Group.

Stratton, on Sunday, threw No. 34, striking out two and allowing three hits — including a two-run home run — to the New York Mets in six innings of work, but San Francisco couldn't muster any run support, losing 4-1. Pitching and defense can win championships, but not without something resembling a shadow of an offense. The Giants (68-70) don't even have that against Noah Syndergard.

"I think you have to look at the pitching we did face in the series," said manager Bruce Bochy.

"You're facing really big arms. He's done that to a lot of clubs. He's throwing 99, a good slider, a changeup, a two-seamer, you have your hands full. You hope your pitching keeps you in the game."

San Francisco ranks 26th in the major leagues this season in runs per game (3.91), but have slid four spots since the start of July, with their average dropping by 0.23 runs per game. Heading into Sunday's game, since July 1, San Francisco had managed just 3.53 runs per game — which would be the worst in the major leagues this season by almost a quarter of a run. Over that same span, they're hitting .225 as a team.

To add insult to injury, the Giants have the best ERA in the majors since June 1 (3.23 headed into play on Sunday), but that still doesn't give San Francisco much margin for error. The Giants bats were again listless on Sunday, managing just two hits against Syndergard, who at 25, is having his worst big league season to date, with a 3.51 ERA.

"They give us a chance, but you see the numbers; it's just been tough since June 1 with the

offense,” Bochy said. “A couple of guys getting hot, driving in runs, that’s what we’re missing. Somebody’s got to do that for you to win ballgames. That’s what we’re missing.”

Syndergard struck out 10 in his first career complete game, the second complete game thrown against the Giants this season. His last pitch clocked in at 99 mph.

“He’s one of the best in the game,” Stratton said. “His changeup’s the same speed as my fastball. You just go up there and battle him the best you can.”

“You do have to look at who’s on the hill,” Bochy said. “You don’t expect to score a lot, but with that said, I’d like to think we could get more than two hits.”

The only real mistakes Stratton made on the day came in the second, when he allowed a 2-2 double to third baseman Todd Frazier and then a first-pitch homer on a 90-mph fastball to Michael Conforto — his 20th of the season. He would allow just one more hit on the day. After that home run, Stratton retired 12 of the next 13 men, including seven in a row.

The 28-year old right-hander had to provide his own run support, as for the sixth time this season, he got less than two runs of help from the rest of the offense. After a leadoff triple by Alen Hanson in the bottom of the third — his sinking liner to right got past a diving Brandon Nimmo — Stratton fought off two 0-2 offerings from Syndergard and sent a sacrifice fly to right, accounting for the Giants’ only run.

Stratton would be taken out after 75 pitches, with his spot due to lead off the seventh. Hunter Pence struck out on seven pitches.

“He threw a nice ballgame, [but] leading off there in the sixth, it was pretty evident we’re having trouble scoring runs,” Bochy said. “Put a hitter up there to lead things off against a

tough pitcher, see if we could get a run. We worked Stratton pretty hard last game — eight innings, 116 pitches— and he could have kept going, but we had to try to find a way to score. Doesn't do us any good to sit on one run.”

Sunday was the sixth time that Stratton has gone six or more and allowed two or fewer runs, but he's far from the only pitcher who has been victimized by what's become a generally anemic offense. He's not even had the brunt of it.

Saturday's starter, Derek Holland, has gone six while allowing two or fewer a team-high seven times. San Francisco has won two of those games. Madison Bumgarner has gone six or more while allowing fewer than two runs six times. The Giants are 1-5 in those games.

Hanson — who scored the Giants' only run — started at short in place of Brandon Crawford, who has now spent three straight games on the bench with a bruised left knee. Hanson turned in four spectacular plays at short, capped by a ball he fielded nearly behind third and fired on one bounce to Brandon Belt at third to end the top of the ninth.

Hanson also made a spinning, sprawling, rolling play behind second to get Conforto after a Frazier double in the seventh.

“The defense behind me was unbelievable,” Stratton said. “It doesn't need to be overshadowed by the game. Just Hanson out there was unbelievable, the plays that he made.”

Gregor Blanco added to the defensive wizardry, making a diving snag on a sinking liner by former Giant Austin Jackson in the fifth. Austin Slater made a diving catch in right field for the final out in the top of the ninth.

“You don't hit, you look flat, you don't look like you have a lot of energy out there, but you look

at what Hanny did today, that was a really impressive game at short,” Bochy said. “He was all over the field, the forehands, backhands, really did a nice job. Blanco, nice catch, Slater, we played hard. You’ve got your work cut out going against Syndergard.”

Crawford will be back against Colorado, Bochy said, but he may not be much help; he’s hitting .177 since July 1.

**KNBR.com**

**Giants fall to Mets again after Syndergaard throws complete game**

**Jacob Hutchinson**

For the second-straight day, the sun was out for a beautiful matinee game between the Giants and New York Mets. And for the second-straight game, the Giants could only muster a single run in the face of a lights-out start by a Mets pitcher. The Giants lost 4-1 as Noah Syndergaard threw for a full nine innings of two-hit baseball.

After Steven Matz struck out a career-high 11 batters in eight innings yesterday, Syndergaard followed suit, striking out 11 Giants and failing to allow a hit after the fourth inning. It was Syndergaard’s first-career complete game. His only baserunner after the fourth came from an error.

The Giants received a fantastic pitching performance of their own from Chris Stratton. Outside of a two-run home run from Michael Conforto in the second inning, Stratton was near-perfect. He allowed just one hit after that, retiring the final 11 batters he faced. While Noah Syndergaard struck out six Giants batters, Stratton was not one of them.

In his only at-bat, Stratton gave the Giants their first – and only – run of the game. After he fouled off a pair of pitches from Syndergaard, Stratton hit a deep line drive to right field, allowing Alen Hanson – who had just tripled – to tag and score from third.

The sacrifice fly is something the Giants have struggled to pull off all season, let alone by pitcher against a triple-digit thrower in Syndergaard. The team is batting .217 this season with two outs and at runners in scoring position, the sixth-worst mark in baseball.



Stratton's efficiency does beg the question why he was pulled from the game after six innings and just 75 pitches, 50 of which were strikes. He demonstrated he has long-game potential after going eight scoreless innings in his last outing. However, that last outing took 117 pitches, a potential cause for why his day wasn't extended into the seventh.

After Stratton's day was over, Ray Black threw a scoreless inning before Sam Dyson came in for a tough eighth. He allowed a leadoff single to Tomas Nido – who entered the game batting .170 – before Syndergaard moved him over with a sacrifice bunt. Then Amed Rosario and the Giant-killing Jeff McNeil – batting 11-for-21 (0.524) against the Giants this season – hit a two-run single to give the Mets a 4-1 lead.

The loss drops the Giants back to 68-70.

**KNBR.com**

**Bochy explains decision to pull Stratton after 75 pitches**

**Jacob Hutchinson**

At the end of the top of the sixth inning in Saturday's game, Chris Stratton was cruising. His one major miscue – a two-run home run in the second inning – was in the past. He'd allowed just one hit – a single – since the home run and retired his last 11 batters while only throwing 75 pitches. But in the bottom half of the inning, Stratton was gone.

Hunter Pence pinch-hit for Stratton, struck out, and then top two hitters in the lineup both grounded out to first. While Ray Black pitched a shutout inning in the seventh after giving up a double and a walk, Sam Dyson gave up three hits and two runs in the eighth. The Giants fell behind 4-1 and couldn't mount any offense after that.

Manager Bruce Bochy was asked after the game whether Stratton – who had the Giants' lone RBI on Saturday with a sacrifice fly – was pulled due to an injury.

"He's fine, threw a nice ballgame," Bochy said. "You know, leading off there in the sixth, we were having trouble scoring a run so I put the hitter up there to lead things off against a tough pitcher to see if we could get a run. We worked Stratton pretty hard last game: eight innings, 117 pitches. He could have kept going, but you have to try to find a way to score. It doesn't do us any good to sit on one run, so that's why he was taken out."

Bochy credited the opposing pitching for a tough series. The Giants mustered just three runs off

the three Mets starters they faced in Zach Wheeler, Steven Matz and Noah Syndergaard. Each starter added an inning in succession, with Wheeler going seven, Matz going eight and Syndergaard going nine, for his first career complete game – a two-hitter. Both Matz and Syndergaard struck out 11 while Wheeler struck out nine.

“I think you have to look at the pitching we did face in this series,” Bochy said. “We faced some really big arms. (Syndergaard) has done that to a lot of clubs. You throw 99 with a good slider and a changeup, two-seamer, you got your hands full. You have to hope your pitching keeps you in the game, which we did.”

The skipper said it hurt to see the Mets score two runs in the eighth, but that the team needs to produce more offensively regardless of the opposing pitching.

“I think you do have to look at who’s on the hill,” Bochy said. “You don’t expect to score a lot. But with that said, you like to think you’ll get more than two hits.”

For more Giants videos click [here](#).

**SFbay.com**  
**Syndergaard outduels Stratton, steamrolls Giants**  
**Julie Parker**

In Sunday’s rubber match between the Giants and Mets, Chris Stratton — like Derek Holland, Andy Suárez, Madison Bumgarner and Dereck Rodríguez before him — put up a quality outing, his third-straight since former Giant Ryan Vogelsong diagnosed a problem with his mechanics during a stint in Sacramento.

He even notched his team’s only RBI, but Stratton couldn’t do it all himself. Though he allowed just two runs, the Giants(68-70) fell to the Mets (61-75), 4-1, on getaway day.

San Francisco has been the beneficiary of stunning pitching this summer, even without their Nos. 2 and 3 in the rotation.

Said Manager Bruce Bochy:

*“Sometimes [it] goes unnoticed how well we have been pitching. You look at what happened this year —Bum being out for a while, we lost Cueto, Samardzija’s been out, yet we’ve been pitching as well as anybody since June 1, better than anybody. So that’s been the silver lining through all this.”*

Their offense though, Bochy acknowledges, has been missing in action:

*"It's been tough since June 1 with the offense, [we need] a couple guys getting hot [and] driving in runs, that's what we're missing. Somebody's gotta do that for you to win ballgames."*

Starters posted a 3.12 ERA in August, and each outing has represented a challenge to the next guy up in the rotation.

Stratton (L, 9-8, 4.90 ERA) rose to the occasion in Sunday's matinee, allowing just two runs on three hits, and he felt good about his performance:

*"I think when you're having success it's easy to continue to go with it, but I just think that I'm more prepared now and I know what I need to do to fix it now [better] than I did in the past."*

But in a familiar theme, the Giants offense failed to support a quality start, striking out 11 times, only marginally better than the 16 strikeouts they notched the day before.

Stratton defended the honor of his team's offense, which outscored the Mets 9-6 in this weekend's three-game set, but still lost the series:

*"We faced Noah Syndergaard today, he's one of the best in the game. His changeup's the same speed as my fastball. You just going out there battling the best you can. I mean we've faced three really good starters from them."*

The Giants young righty has just two pitches he'd like back, fastballs to Todd Frazier and Michael Conforto in back-to-back at-bats leading off the second inning. The first, Frazier lined to left for a double, and the very next pitch Conforto sailed over the wall in center field (20) to give the Mets a 2-0 lead.

*"As soon as I threw that pitch I felt that what I'd been working on kind of got out of whack there. It's a one pitch adjustment, but you hate for it to be to one of their best power hitters in that situation there with a runner on."*

Two runs shouldn't have been insurmountable, even against Noah Syndergaard (W, CG, 10-3, 3.33 ERA) and Stratton, for one, was able to help his own cause. In the third inning, after the gazelle-like Alen Hanson took three bags on a one-out liner to right field, Stratton hit a sac fly deep enough to score Hanson.

Executing in this situation has been something the Giants haven't been able to count on from position players this season, let alone pitchers at the plate, so it was certainly encouraging.

Bochy was appreciative of Stratton's ability to get the job done.

*"He really competed well, battled up there to find a way to get that run in and that was impressive."*

Stratton would allow only one more hit, a single in the third, before retiring the next 10

Mets in order. But at just 75 pitches, Bochy pinch-hit for him in the bottom of the sixth inning with the Giants still down, 2-1.

Bochy stipulated that Stratton wasn't pulled out early for any health issue, though:

*"[He] threw a nice ballgame, [but] leading off there in the sixth, it was pretty evident we were having trouble scoring runs, so [I decided to] put a hitter up there to lead things off against a tough pitcher to see if we could get a run."*

He added:

*"We worked Stratton pretty hard last game, eight innings, 117 pitches, so he could've kept going [Sunday], but we gotta try to find a way to score, it doesn't do us any good to sit on one run."*

The Mets added on two more off Sam Dyson in the eighth, but it wouldn't matter, Stratton's was the only RBI for San Francisco all afternoon. Syndergaard put the Giants away in his first career complete game, as he notched more than 10 strikeouts for just the 14th time in his career.

Lamented Bochy:

*"He's done that to a lot of clubs, throwing 99 with a good slider, changeup, two seamer—you got your hands full. It would've been nice to have kept it at one [run], but I do think you have to look at who's on the hill. You don't expect to score a lot, but with that said you'd like to think you'd get more than two hits."*

## **UP NEXT**

Sunday is a getaway day for the Giants as they head to Denver to face the Rockies in a three-game set. Madison Bumgarner (5-5, 2.68) will face lefty Tyler Anderson (6-7, 4.79) in Monday's 12:10 p.m. series opener at Coors Field.

## **Notes**

Brandon Crawford was out of the lineup for all three games of the series with the Mets. According to Bochy, Crawford is dealing with a badly bruised left knee, and ahead of Saturday's game Bochy said the Gold Glove shortstop would be available off the bench, but he has not played since the series finale against the Diamondbacks Thursday. Bochy has declined to offer any specific incident that may have caused the bruise, and has maintained that Crawford is day-to-day. ...Rookie Steven Duggar is expected to undergo surgery to repair a torn labrum in his left shoulder and according to Bochy, the procedure is tentatively schedule for Tuesday. Duggar will miss the rest of the season but is expected to be ready for Spring Training 2019.

**ESPN.com**

**Matt Kemp delivers again as Dodgers pass D-backs in NL West**  
**David Schoenfield**

Did Matt Kemp just save the Los Angeles Dodgers' season?

For the second game in a row, Kemp provided the dramatic, come-from-behind hit, following Saturday's three-run homer in the bottom of the eighth against the Diamondbacks with a walk-off double on Sunday that just missed being another home run:

That gave the Dodgers a 3-2 victory over Arizona, their third straight late-game win in a tension-filled four-game series, and they moved into first place by a half-game ahead the Rockies and a game in front of the Diamondbacks. In a sense, this was the first big September series of the season and you have to argue it was the best series of the season given the ramifications in the NL West.

Look at the four games:

-- On Thursday, Arizona won 3-1 on David Peralta's three-run homer in the fifth of Rich Hill. Kemp grounded into a key double play in the game, killing a rally with two on in the eighth.

-- On Friday, the Dodgers won 3-2 as Enrique Hernandez homered off Zack Greinke in the seventh and Justin Turner homered off Greinke leading off the eighth.

-- On Saturday, the Diamondbacks hit two home runs off an otherwise excellent Clayton Kershaw and led 2-0 heading into the bottom of the eighth. But Turner reached on an infield single off Archie Bradley, Manny Machado walked following a 10-pitch confrontation, and then Kemp slugged a 433-foot home run off a 1-2 curveball.

-- On Sunday, Daniel Descalso led off the ninth with a home run off Caleb Ferguson to give the Diamondbacks a 2-1 lead and it looked like it would be another of those late-inning losses for the Dodgers' bullpen. Instead, Kenley Jansen, who recorded saves on Friday and Saturday, got the final three outs, and in the bottom of the ninth Brad Boxberger walked Alex Verdugo and Max Muncy, Hernandez sacrificed and, after Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo called on Bradley, Kemp walked it off.

After Saturday's loss, Lovullo was gracious in defeat: "These kind of games is what makes baseball great." I'm not sure he'll repeat that sentiment after this one.

For Kemp, the two big hits are at least some redemption for a terrible second half. After hitting .310/.352/.522 in the first half, he had slumped to .212/.295/.345 after the break entering Sunday. Dave Roberts had stuck with him until the past week or so and Kemp has started just five of the past 10 games. (He came off the bench Sunday and went 1-for-2.)

For the Diamondbacks, even though they rank second in the majors in bullpen ERA, Sunday's loss exposed a potential weakness down the stretch. Boxberger has now blown seven games, is 2-5 with a 3.80 ERA, and has 26 walks and eight home runs allowed in 47⅓ innings. With all the concern about Jansen's health and recent struggles (maybe alleviated somewhat with three scoreless outings in the series), the Diamondbacks have issues with their closer.

Anyway, what a series. Games like this *do* make baseball great.

**Rockies salvage split with Padres:** After losing in 13 innings on Thursday and getting shut out 7-0 on Friday, it looked like the Padres were going to play spoilers, but the Rockies bounced back with 4-2 and 7-3 wins. Kyle Freeland had another solid effort, allowing three runs over six innings to improve to 13-7 with a 2.96 ERA. He's 5-1 with a 2.63 ERA in the second half. A Rockies fan suggested to me the other day that Freeland deserves to be right up there in the Cy Young race. Even accounting for Coors Field, I think he's a clear fourth behind Jacob deGrom, Max Scherzer and Aaron Nola. That's not to diminish what Freeland has done -- he has a 2.27 ERA at Coors Field, which is pretty much a miracle, so we should be careful about not dismiss his chances too quickly.

Consider this: In their history, the Rockies have had 58 pitchers qualify for the ERA title (that seems like a really low total, about two per season, which probably says something about how difficult it is just to stay healthy pitching in Colorado). Only two starters have finished with an ERA below 3.00: Marvin Freeman (2.80) in the 1994 strike-shortened season and Ubaldo Jimenez (2.88) in 2010. After Freeland's 2.96 mark, the next-best ERA on the list is 3.47. Put into that context, Freeland's season is pretty remarkable and he's a big reason why the Rockies are right there in the division race.

**NL MVP update:** The Brewers beat the Nationals 9-4 as Christian Yelich belted a grand slam to continue his torrid second half:

In what looks like a close NL MVP race, the fact that Yelich is doing more damage in the second half could be a minor factor in his favor. It's a little bit of the "What have you done for me lately?" perspective combined with the idea that a win in September counts more than a win in April. With the six-hit cycle game earlier in the week and Sunday's grand slam, Yelich has now had a couple of signature moments that voters may remember. Compare that to, say, Freddie Freeman, who has hit .287/.350/.439 in the second half. They may be even in WAR, but Yelich's second half probably trumps Freeman's first half. Not saying that's how it should be, but history suggests it's a factor.

Meanwhile, Javier Baez went 2-for-5 with his 30th home run and 100th RBI as the Cubs beat Aaron Nola and the Phillies 8-1. Nola fanned 11 in 5⅓ innings, but Daniel Murphy and Anthony Rizzo also homered as Nola let up three home runs after entering the game with just eight allowed in 27 starts. Baez becomes just the fourth Cubs middle infielder

with a 30-homer, 100-RBI season, joining Hall of Famers Rogers Hornsby, Ernie Banks and Ryne Sandberg.

"I don't know that we predicted that before the year began," Joe Maddon said Sunday. "I think you predicted a good year, but this is above and beyond being an All-Star, being an MVP candidate."

**Timing is everything:** The Marinersve been a pleasant surprise, looking like a playoff team until the A's decided to stop losing. The Mets, of course, have been criticized all season for a mess of a year:

The Mariners, who really needed a sweep or at least wins in three of four against the A's, lost 8-2 on Sunday to split the series. The Mets beat the Giants 4-1 behind Noah Syndergaard's complete-game two-hitter, his first career complete game. One team is hanging by its fingernails. The other is widely viewed as a disaster. Are the talent levels all that much different though?