



# ***Press Clips***

**(July 9, 2018)**

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- **Mike Trout Was Going Through a Thing**

**FROM THE OC REGISTER****Shohei Ohtani's pinch-hit homer leads Angels to series victory over Dodgers**

By Jeff Fletcher

ANAHEIM — When Shohei Ohtani stepped to the plate in the seventh inning of a tie game Sunday night, he was still feeling the effects of the ball he had fouled into his knee a night earlier.

“It was going to be hard for me to run all out,” Ohtani said through his interpreter. “I was glad I was able to hit a home run, so I didn’t have to run.”

The Angels rookie phenom, who is now limited to hitting while his injured elbow prevents from pitching, added another chapter to the lore of his season with a tie-breaking pinch-hit homer in the Angels’ 4-3 victory over the Dodgers on Sunday night.

The Angels took two of three from the Dodgers to win the Freeway Series, just before the Dodgers continued down the freeway — to San Diego — with a new issue.

Yasiel Puig is likely headed to the disabled list with a right intercostal oblique strain. He will have an MRI on Monday. Puig, who had hit a three-run homer to put the Dodgers up 3-0 in the second, was hurt taking a huge cut at the third pitch of his second at-bat.

“The only thing I can do now is rest,” Puig said.

Puig’s homer ended up being all the Dodgers would get, which is just what Manager Mike Scioscia had hoped when he gave Andrew Heaney a pep talk in the dugout following the hanging curve he threw Puig.

“He said ‘Keep them there,’” Heaney recalled. “‘We’re going to score some runs. We’re going to win this game.’”

The Angels did, starting with Justin Upton’s two-run single in the third, just after Mike Trout had been intentionally walked to load the bases. Upton had just one hit in his previous 19 at-bats with runners in scoring position.

“Justin was in little bit of a down cycle, but one thing his process is good,” Scioscia said. “He doesn’t expand. He takes his walks if they’re there. When he starts squaring baseballs up, it’s going to give us a big lift.”

Albert Pujols then tied the game in the sixth with a solo homer against Alex Wood, who was done for the night after the inning.

When the Dodgers removed their lefty starter to start the inning, it provided the perfect opportunity for Scioscia to use Ohtani, who had been getting treatment on his sore right knee for most of the day.

Scioscia probably would not have started Ohtani anyway on Sunday, because the Dodgers were starting the left-handed Wood. Once the Dodgers brought in the right-handed J.T. Chargois to start the seventh, he had to face at least one hitter. It was Ohtani, hitting for Jefry Marte.

Chargois threw him a 2-and-2 fastball that was 95.8 mph on the inner half of the plate. Ohtani blasted the ball 443 feet to straightaway center field.

It was his seventh homer of the season, and first as a pinch-hitter. He hadn't homered since May 17. He had missed almost a month on the disabled list, waiting for his elbow to heal.

"It's really impressive," Heaney said of Ohtani. "It's great to have for us, obviously you bring in a guy like that to pinch hit or have him at DH. It's going to definitely help our lineup."

Ohtani's homer came just in time to get a victory for Heaney, who had retired 12 in a row after the Puig homer and did not allow another run through his seven innings. He struck out 10.

Hansel Robles and Justin Anderson then worked the final two innings — with Blake Parker and Cam Bedrosian both unavailable from recent heavy work, Scioscia said — to lock up the series win for the Angels.

"Maybe it just takes a series like this where you can get a little bit of something going," Heaney said. "That'd be great if we did."

## **Mike Trout again voted to All-Star team, campaigns for Angels teammate Andrelton Simmons**

By Jeff Fletcher

ANAHEIM — Not long after Mike Trout learned that he had been once again elected as a starter for the All-Star Game, he was campaigning to have one of his teammates as company.

"We need to get Simba in," Trout said of Angels shortstop Andrelton Simmons, who was one of five players picked to go on the ballot this week for the final spot in the American League.

Simmons is up against Andrew Benintendi, Giancarlo Stanton, Jean Segura and Eddie Rosario. Voting begins immediately online, and concludes on Wednesday. Voting details can be found on all official Major League Baseball websites.

A three-time Gold Glove winner, Simmons has never made an All-Star team. He started to gain more attention for his overall game last year, when he had his best offensive season, one good enough for him to eighth in the league in MVP voting.

This year he was hitting .312 with an .815 OPS heading into Sunday's game. He was particularly adept at putting the ball in play, with just 15 strikeouts in 325 plate appearances.

Simmons didn't crack the initial roster because he's in a league with Manny Machado and Francisco Lindor, who are both also having outstanding seasons. They were picked to the team, with Machado named the starter.

The AL shortstop crop also includes Segura, who is having an outstanding season, and Carlos Correa, who is currently hurt.

"Especially with all these great shortstops in the American League, (making the team) would be special," he said. "It would really be a milestone for me. First of all, I'm just happy I'm here in this position."

As All-Star talk has begun to circulate around Simmons, he insisted he had been paying little attention. He also said, although he would love to go, he wouldn't mind having four days off.

He said he's already got some plans for the break.

"I might have to move a couple things here and there, but if I have to, it's going to be for the best," Simmons said.

Trout, on the other hand, likely never makes plans for the All-Star break. He has been selected for the game all seven of the full seasons he's been in the majors. He has been elected as a starter six times, although he couldn't play last year because he was rehabbing from a thumb injury.

"It feels great," Trout said. "Obviously getting voted in from the fans is a big deal. It's obviously humbling, a great honor."

## **Nick Tropeano hoping to return to Angels' rotation soon**

By Jeff Fletcher

ANAHEIM — Nick Tropeano is ready to rejoin the Angels rotation.

At least, he says he is. Whether he does is out of his hands.

A day after Tropeano threw five scoreless innings for Class-A Inland Empire on Saturday night, he said he felt good enough to make his next start in the majors.

"I was kind of just trying to get my feet back under me," said Tropeano, who has been out about a month with a shoulder injury. "I hadn't been on the mound in a little bit. I felt good. I was trying to work on all my pitches. The results don't matter. I felt good coming out of it. That's the most important thing."

Tropeano only needed 52 pitches to get through his five innings, so that was well short of a normal starter's workload. Garrett Richards last week returned to the rotation after throwing just 63 pitches in his one rehab outing. He threw 80 in his first game back.

Manager Mike Scioscia was noncommittal on the plans for Tropeano.

“We’ll get an evaluation on Nick and see what the next step might be,” he said.

The Angels also may be getting Tyler Skaggs back within a few days.

Skaggs, who is out with a tight hamstring, was expected to throw a bullpen session on Sunday and then be re-evaluated. Skaggs is eligible to come off the disabled list on Wednesday. The Angels have no starter listed for Thursday, so he could pitch then, if all goes well.

### **SURPRISED BY INJURY**

As Zack Cozart sat in the Angels clubhouse on Sunday, with his left arm in a sling, he said he was not expecting to need season-ending surgery to repair a torn labrum.

“I was really optimistic, thinking I’d need three or four weeks of rehab,” said Cozart, who spoke to reporters for the first time since undergoing surgery just over a week earlier. “It didn’t go that way.”

Cozart, who was hurt when he hit the ground awkwardly trying to make a play on June 13, said he’d been taking batting practice, fielding ground balls and throwing. He hadn’t been playing catch because when he reached across his body with his glove his shoulder felt loose.

He said he’s expecting to be fully functional by the start of spring training.

### **ALSO**

Shohei Ohtani, who fouled a ball off his knee on Saturday night, was not in the lineup on Sunday, although Scioscia said before the game his availability hadn’t yet been determined. He said X-rays were negative. Ohtani likely wouldn’t have been in lineup anyway because the Angels were facing a lefty. Ohtani is 4 for 34 against lefties this season...

Matt Shoemaker (forearm nerve surgery) said he will begin his throwing program on Tuesday. It will take weeks for him to get on a mound, though. If he is able to pitch again this season, it will be well into the second half.

### **UP NEXT**

Angels (Garrett Richards, 5-4, 3.42) vs. Mariners (Mike Leake, 8-5, 4.11), Tuesday, 7 p.m., Fox Sports West, KLAA (AM 830).

**FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES****Five things we learned from the Angels' series-clinching 4-3 win over the Dodgers**

By Ethan Bauer

Here's five things we learned from the Angels' 4-3 series-clinching victory over the Dodgers Sunday afternoon.

**Add pinch hitter to Ohtani's repertoire**

Shohei Ohtani walked out of Saturday's game limping after he fouled a pitch from Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen off his knee, then swung and missed at Jansen's next pitch. No limp was evident when Mike Scioscia tapped him to lead off the bottom of Sunday's seventh inning by pinch hitting for first baseman Jefry Marte.

With the game tied and Scioscia cognizant of a lack of available arms in his bullpen, he sent Ohtani up to try to break the 3-3 tie. Ohtani did so when he launched a 2-2 pitch into the center field waterfall at Angels Stadium.

It was well known that Ohtani could pitch and hit, but now he can apparently also hit when coming in cold off the bench.

**There's hope for the Angels' offense against lefties**

Despite sporting a righty-dominant lineup, the Angels have had trouble hitting lefties this season.

The team entered Sunday hitting .248 off righties and .224 off lefties even though Ohtani, third baseman Luis Valbuena and right fielder Kole Calhoun are the only left-handed bats who consistently start. The problem continued through two innings Sunday against Dodgers lefty Alex Wood until Justin Upton came to the plate.

The bases were loaded following an intentional walk to Mike Trout, and Upton delivered a two-RBI single to right field to give the Angels their first runs of the contest.

It's not a habit yet, but when the team has struggled against lefties all year, it's encouraging to see Upton deliver. Albert Pujols also homered off Wood.

**Cody Bellinger runs fast**

Bellinger made three fairly routine plays at first base much closer than they looked off the bat.

One, when Marte tossed a chopper to starting pitcher Andrew Heaney covering first base, was challenged, and Bellinger lost by the slimmest of margins.

He'd already wanted a challenge on another close play at first base earlier in the game, and he also made his game-ending double play tight.

Bellinger became known for his power last year, and while it should be apparent he also has speed when he can rotate between playing first base and center field, he showed it off Sunday.

### **Yasiel Puig is in the midst of a breakout, but...**

Puig is 8-for-23 in July, including a three-run home run to straightaway center on Sunday against Heaney. His average is up to .265 for the season.

He hurt himself on a foul ball against Heaney in the fifth inning, and he was officially diagnosed with a strained right intercostal oblique muscle.

Puig's loss could be a big one for the Dodgers, although when he'll return is unclear. He's homered in two straight games, but for now, that streak will have to be paused.

### **Andrew Heaney is on a strikeout streak**

The 27-year-old lefty struck out 10 Sunday to match his career high. He also matched his career high in the start before that and one more time earlier this season, on May 14.

With the Angels' rotation reduced by injuries, Scioscia said Heaney's strikeout ability as well as his ability to limit damage has been essential, including in Sunday's game.

"Andrew was great," Scioscia said.

## **Shohei Ohtani comes through in a pinch against Dodgers**

By Mike DiGiovanna

Being a one-way player in the major leagues isn't quite as impressive as being a two-way player, as Shohei Ohtani was for the first two months of the season, when the Angels rookie wowed baseball with his pitching and hitting prowess.

But it beats being a no-way player.

A June 6 elbow injury will probably prevent Ohtani from pitching again this season. It will not stop him from hitting, as Ohtani showed Sunday night when he crushed a pinch-hit home run in the seventh inning to lift the Angels to a 4-3 victory over the Dodgers in front of 42,213 in Angel Stadium.

"It was going to be hard for me to run all-out," Ohtani said through an interpreter, "so I was glad I was able to hit the home run."



Ohtani spent much of Sunday morning undergoing treatment after fouling a ball off his right knee Saturday. Though he felt some discomfort Sunday, he informed manager Mike Scioscia in the second inning that he could hit.

When Dodgers right-hander J.T. Chargois replaced starter Alex Wood to start the seventh inning of a 3-3 game, Scioscia sent the left-handed-hitting Ohtani up for Jefry Marte.

Chargois (2-2) threw a 2-and-2 fastball at 96 mph on the inside part of the plate and down. Ohtani seemed to lean back as he dropped the barrel of his bat on the ball, sending a 109-mph laser into the rock formation beyond the center-field wall, 443 feet away, for his seventh home run and first since May 17.

“With Ohtani, his nitro zone is down,” Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. “I don’t know how much of the plate it got, but to come off the bench and put that at-bat together, foul off some offspeed pitches and get a fastball he can handle and hit it to the big part of the park ... you have to tip your hat.”

Ohtani said the pitch “wasn’t in a great location” for a hitter. “I was kind of lucky that the ball found the bat,” he said.

The Angels weren’t necessarily buying that.

“It’s just what he does,” said left-hander Andrew Heaney (5-6), who gave up three runs and three hits in seven innings, matching a career high with 10 strikeouts, to improve to 5-6 with a 3.94 earned-run average. “It’s really impressive. And it’s great for us.”

Hansel Robles got Justin Turner to ground into a double play to end the eighth inning, and Justin Anderson got Cody Bellinger to bounce into a double play to end the game, as the Angels won two of three from their Southern California rivals.

The Dodgers lost more than a series. They also lost right fielder Yasiel Puig to a right intercostal oblique strain, an injury Roberts said would “almost certainly” send Puig to the disabled list.

Puig had homered in two consecutive at-bats, a 419-foot shot to center field in the ninth inning Saturday and a 421-foot three-run shot to center field against Heaney that gave the Dodgers a 3-0 lead in the second inning Sunday.

The slugger looked as if he was trying to hit a ball 500 feet in his next at-bat when he swung violently through a 1-and-0 changeup and then at a 1-and-1 fastball that he fouled off in the fifth inning.

Puig clutched his right side and grimaced in pain as he hopped out of the batter’s box. After conferring with Roberts and athletic trainer Nate Lucero, Puig was pulled from the game.

“I don’t know how long I’m gonna be out,” said Puig, who will undergo an MRI test Monday. “I feel bad because I can’t help my team win. Now, all I can do is rest, work with the trainers ... we’ll see.”

Heaney retired 12 consecutive batters after Puig's home run to keep the score close. The Angels cut the deficit to 3-2 in the third, an inning that started with Martin Maldonado's single and David Fletcher's one-out single to right field.

Maldonado took third base on Fletcher's hit, and Fletcher took second when Puig air-mailed his throw to third, missing the cutoff man. Andrelton Simmons popped out for the second out.

With first base open, the Dodgers gave Mike Trout his major league-leading 16th intentional walk so they could pitch to Justin Upton, who had a .161 average (14 for 87) with runners in scoring position and a .167 mark (two for 12) in at-bats after intentional walks to Trout.

Upton jumped on a 2-and-0 fastball from Wood and lined a two-run single to center. Albert Pujols struck out with runners on first and third to end the inning, but he drove a hanging curve from Wood over the left-center-field wall in the sixth for a two-out home run that tied the score 3-3.

It was Pujols' 627th home run and 1,276th extra-base hit, the latter moving him into sixth place all time.

## **Mike Trout named an All-Star starter, but Andrelton Simmons still needs your vote**

By Ethan Bauer

Mike Scioscia was faced with a question that seemed obvious: Do you almost take it for granted that Mike Trout is going to be in the All-Star game?

"Last year he wasn't," Scioscia answered.

Despite being voted into the starting lineup for the sixth time and making the squad for the seventh, Trout injured his thumb on a head-first slide and missed last year's festivities.

Trout had been a constant at the All-Star game, and he's headed back after Sunday's announcement that he was voted a starter once again. The bigger surprise for the Angels was shortstop Andrelton Simmons being one of five candidates for the final spot on the American League team.

Simmons entered Sunday tied with Trout for the team lead with a .312 batting average. Fans can vote at MLB.com until Wednesday at 1 p.m. PDT.

"Being voted in by the fans is a big deal," Trout said. "Now we need to get [Simmons] in."

Trout never has had trouble getting into the All-Star game because his first-half numbers have tended to be better than his second-half numbers.

Last season, for example, he hit .337 before the All-Star break and .285 after. It was the same story in 2016 (.322 vs. .305), 2015 (.312 vs. .283) and 2014 (.310 vs. .257).

Trout already has 25 home runs, tied for second most in the AL and his seventh straight season with at least that many.

"I don't think you can take anything for granted in this game, but if there's a guy who's been more consistent than Mike over the course of their career, I don't know who that would be," Scioscia said. "He's been sensational, and he's having another terrific year."

Trout entered Sunday with a league-leading .455 on-base percentage. He also led the league in Wins Above Replacement (6.8) and walks (78).

Simmons, a career .269 hitter, is enjoying the best offensive season of his career. Despite his success, he said he wasn't expecting to make the team.

"The All-Star break kind of snuck up on me," he said. "I'm doing OK, feeling good, but I didn't even know we were a week away from the All-Star break until, well, now."

His defense also has been steady, which was expected. He's won three Gold Gloves in his career.

"His defense makes my job easy in center field," Trout said. "On balls up the middle, I don't really have to go for them anymore. He's catching everything, and obviously his bat this year has been great."

### **Tropeano back soon?**

Nick Tropeano, sidelined almost a month with a shoulder injury, could be back in the rotation soon. The right-hander threw a game with class-A Inland Empire on Saturday night and struck out four in five scoreless innings.

"The numbers looked terrific," Scioscia said. "We'll get an evaluation on Nick and see what the next step might be."

Tropeano, back at his locker in Angels Stadium on Sunday, said he feels ready to pitch in the big leagues again. He'll throw a bullpen session Tuesday.

"I just wanna see how I bounce back these next two or three days between this bullpen, and obviously it's not my call," he said, "but I feel like I'll be ready to go."

### **Ohtani sits, then strikes**

After fouling a pitch off his knee Saturday, Shohei Ohtani was out of the lineup Sunday against Dodgers left-hander Alex Wood. Ohtani's splits against lefties aren't favorable, so Scioscia went with Albert Pujols as his designated hitter and started Jefry Marte at first base.

He said the decision wasn't impacted by Ohtani's injury, but when asked if Ohtani was available as a pinch-hitter, he said "We're still evaluating that."

Well, Ohtani delivered the Angels' first pinch-hit home run of the season in the seventh inning, a tiebreaking solo shot off right-hander J.T. Chargois.

**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## **Simba eyes first All-Star nod via Final Vote**

*Fans have until Wednesday to help send shortstop to D.C.*

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- Andrelton Simmons has never been selected to an All-Star team, but he has a chance to finally add that distinction to his resume.

Simmons is one of five Camping World Final Vote candidates in the American League, giving him an opportunity to join Angels teammate Mike Trout at the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard at Nationals Park on July 17. The other four players vying for the final spot on the AL squad are Red Sox outfielder Andrew Benintendi, Twins outfielder Eddie Rosario, Yankees outfielder Giancarlo Stanton and Mariners shortstop Jean Segura.

"It's a great accomplishment, especially with all these great shortstops right now in the American League," Simmons said. "It'd be special. It'd be a milestone for me, but first of all, I'm just happy I'm here in this position."

Simmons has long been one of top defenders in baseball, but he's enjoying a career season after taking a big step forward in his offensive development. The 28-year-old is batting .312 with an .812 OPS, 16 doubles, two triples, six home runs and 39 RBIs in 59 games. He ranks fifth in the AL in batting average and ranks second in the Majors with 11 Defensive Runs Saved, according to Fangraphs.

"Best shortstop in the league," Trout said. "Obviously, there's great shortstops -- Correa, Lindor and Machado -- but I see how hard he works every day. His defense makes my job easy in center field. Balls up the middle, I don't really have to go for it anymore. He's catching everything and obviously his bat this year has been great."

By cutting down his chase rate and maintaining a high rate of contact, Simmons has become one of the toughest hitters to strike out. He is striking out once every 21.67 plate appearances, which is the best rate in the Majors.

"Some of it is just maturity," Simmons said of his improved offense. "Some of it is just talking to my teammates, listening to the coaches. I've got to give it to my teammates for giving me advice here and there whenever I'm not feeling good or they're seeing something. It wasn't just wake up and get better. It was a lot of help. I needed a lot of help, so I've got to thank the people around me."

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 1 p.m. PT.

Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans can submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 All-Star Game MLB.com MVP Vote.

The 89th Midsummer Classic, at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., will be televised nationally by FOX Sports; in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and RDS; and worldwide by partners in more than 180 countries. FOX Deportes will provide Spanish-language coverage in the United States, while ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide exclusive national radio coverage of the All-Star Game. MLB Network, MLB.com and SiriusXM also will provide comprehensive All-Star Week coverage.

For more information about MLB All-Star Week and to purchase tickets, visit [AllStarGame.com](http://AllStarGame.com) and follow @MLB and @AllStarGame on social media.

## **Another Ohtani first lifts Angels past Dodgers**

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- Shohei Ohtani continues to find ways to deliver for the Angels, even with only half of his skill set available.

Ohtani crushed a tiebreaking pinch-hit home run off reliever JT Chargois in the seventh inning to lift the Angels to a 4-3 win over the Dodgers in their Freeway Series finale at Angel Stadium on Sunday.

Ohtani didn't start against Dodgers left-hander Alex Wood after fouling a ball off his right knee on Friday, but he received treatment before the game and informed manager Mike Scioscia in the second inning that he'd be ready to go if needed.

With the game tied at 3 in the seventh, Scioscia decided to have Ohtani hit for Jefry Marte. Ohtani promptly hammered a 96-mph inside fastball from Chargois over the center-field fence for his seventh home run of the season and his first since May 17. Ohtani's first career pinch-hit home run had an exit velocity of 108.8 mph and traveled an estimated 443 feet, according to Statcast™.

"It was going to be hard for me to run all-out, so I was glad I was able to hit a home run," Ohtani said through interpreter Ippei Mizuhara.

Ohtani, 24, is 3-for-17 since returning from the disabled list on July 3, though he also helped spark the Angels' 3-2 walk-off win over the Dodgers on Friday by manufacturing the tying run in the ninth inning. He has been limited to hitting due to a Grade 2 sprain of the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.

"It's just what he does," left-hander Andrew Heaney said. "It's really impressive. It's great to have for us. Obviously, you bring in a guy like that to pinch-hit or have him at DH, that's going to definitely help our lineup."

With the win, the Angels improved to 46-45 and stayed 11 games behind the Mariners for the second Wild Card spot in the American League. The Angels and Mariners are scheduled to open a three-game series at Angel Stadium on Tuesday.

Sunday's comeback kept the Angels from squandering another strong start from Heaney, who gave up three runs on three hits while walking three and striking out 10 over seven innings.

Heaney's lone blemish came in the second, when he issued a pair of walks to Matt Kemp and Logan Forsythe before hanging a curveball to Yasiel Puig, who hammered it out to center field. Puig later departed the game after suffering an oblique strain on a swing in the fifth inning. He's likely headed to the DL.

"After that inning, [Scioscia] could tell I was pretty hot," Heaney said. "He just came down and said, 'Hey, keep them at 3, we're going to score some runs and we're going to win this game.'"

Sure enough, the Angels then began their rally with two runs off Wood in the third. Martin Maldonado singled to lead off the inning and advanced to third on David Fletcher's one-out single to right field. Puig fielded the ball and then fired to third in an attempt to nab Maldonado, allowing Fletcher to easily take second. After Andrelton Simmons popped out in foul territory, Mike Trout was intentionally walked for an MLB-high 17th time this season to load the bases for Justin Upton with two outs.

Upton entered Sunday batting .161 with runners in scoring position, but he finally made the Dodgers pay for walking Trout, lining a two-run single to center field to trim the deficit to 3-2.

"Justin was in a little bit of a down cycle, but his process is good," Scioscia said. "He doesn't expand, he'll take his walks if they're there. When he starts squaring baseballs up, that's going to give us a big lift."

Heaney retired the next 12 batters he faced after Puig's home run, but he fell into trouble in the sixth after yielding back-to-back singles to Justin Turner and Max Muncy and walking Kemp to load the bases with two outs. That brought up Cody Bellinger, who bounced a grounder down the first-base line. Marte fielded the ball and threw to Heaney, who narrowly beat Bellinger to the bag for the final out of the inning.

The Dodgers challenged the call, but the ruling would stand following a review.

"It was huge," Heaney said. "You hate to get beat in big situations by base hits. You hate it even more whenever it's ground balls on the infield or beating the shift, or something like that. Those are the ones that really hurt, so I'm glad that wasn't a backbreaker."

The play loomed large in the bottom half of the inning, as Albert Pujols launched a solo shot off Wood to tie the game at 3. It was Pujols' 13th home run of the season and his 1,276th career extra-base hit, passing Alex Rodriguez for sole possession of sixth place on the all-time list.

Rookie Justin Anderson worked around a one-out single to Kemp to post a scoreless ninth and pick up his fourth save of the season.

### **SOUND SMART**

Heaney was a Dodger for a few hours in December 2014, acquired from the Marlins, then flipped to the Angels in the Howie Kendrick deal the same day.

### **UP NEXT**

The Angels will enjoy an off-day on Monday before continuing their homestand with a three-game series against the Mariners that begins on Tuesday night at 7:07 p.m. PT at Angel Stadium. Garrett Richards (5-4, 3.42 ERA) will start opposite Mike Leake (8-5, 4.11 ERA) in the series opener. Richards, who is set to

make his second start since returning from the disabled list, is 7-4 with a 3.06 ERA in 21 career appearances (13 starts) against the Mariners.

## **Trout gets Angels-record 7<sup>th</sup> straight All-Star nod**

*Fans vote outfielder to AL starting lineup a 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive time*

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- No surprise here: Mike Trout is heading to his seventh consecutive Midsummer Classic.

Trout will start in the outfield for the American League at Nationals Park on July 17 after earning his sixth consecutive fan election. Trout was the only Angels player named to the All-Star Game presented by Mastercard on Sunday, though he could be joined in Washington, D.C., by Andrelton Simmons, who is a Camping World Final Vote candidate.

"It feels great," Trout said. "Obviously, getting voted in from the fans, it's a big deal. We need to get Simba in. It's obviously humbling, a great honor. It's going to be fun."

Trout's seven All-Star selections are a franchise record for the Angels. He also joins Rod Carew as the only Angels players to be chosen as a starter in six consecutive All-Star Games. Trout is the first AL outfielder with six consecutive fan elections since Manny Ramirez, who accomplished the feat from 2001-06.

"My first couple went so quick," Trout said. "The best part of it is just being with the guys. You're on the biggest stage with the best."

Trout, 26, is in the midst of his best season to date, batting .312 with 18 doubles, three triples, 25 home runs, 50 RBIs and 13 stolen bases in 90 games. His 6.5 WAR currently leads the Majors, according to FanGraphs.

"He's definitely the best player I've ever played with or seen live," Simmons said. "It's an honor playing next to him day in and day out, and no surprise he's always up there in the MVP votes and, of course, an All-Star."

While Trout began Sunday tied for second in the Majors with 25 homers, he said he does not plan on participating in the Home Run Derby this year.

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 1 p.m. PT.

Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans can submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 All-Star Game MLB.com MVP Vote.

The 89th Midsummer Classic, at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., will be televised nationally by FOX Sports; in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and RDS; and worldwide by partners in more than 180 countries. FOX Deportes will provide Spanish-language coverage in the United States, while ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide exclusive national radio coverage of the All-Star Game. MLB Network, MLB.com and SiriusXM also will provide comprehensive All-Star Week coverage.

For more information about MLB All-Star Week and to purchase tickets, visit [AllStarGame.com](http://AllStarGame.com) and follow @MLB and @AllStarGame on social media.

## **Tropeano closing in on return to Angels**

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- Nick Tropeano is one step closer to returning to the Angels' rotation after tossing five scoreless innings in a rehab start with Class A Advanced Inland Empire on Saturday. Tropeano, who landed on the disabled list on June 15 with right shoulder inflammation, allowed only two hits, walked none and struck out four in the 52-pitch outing.

"I felt pretty good," Tropeano said Sunday. "I was kind of just trying to get my feet back underneath me. I hadn't been on the mound in a little bit. I felt good, just tried to work all my pitches really. Obviously, the results really don't matter, so I just felt good coming out of it."

Tropeano said he's scheduled to throw a bullpen on Tuesday and will be evaluated after that to see when he'll be able to fold back into the Angels' rotation. The 27-year-old right-hander said he feels he could make his next start in the Majors, though he acknowledged that the decision is out of his hands.

"I feel like I could," Tropeano said. "I just want to see how I bounce back these next two or three days between this bullpen. It's obviously not my call, but I feel like I'll be ready to go. Hopefully everything -- knock on wood -- checks out."

Tropeano was 3-4 with a 4.83 ERA over 54 innings for the Angels prior to the injury.

The Angels could also get left-hander Tyler Skaggs back in their rotation this week. Skaggs, who was placed on the DL on July 4 with a right adductor strain, was scheduled to throw a bullpen on Sunday and could return to pitch against the Mariners on Thursday if he comes out of the session well. Skaggs has been the Angels' best starter this season, going 6-5 with a 2.64 ERA over 92 innings.

## **Cozart disappointed by season-ending surgery**

Zack Cozart's first season with the Angels came to a premature end last week after he underwent surgery to repair a torn labrum in his left shoulder. Cozart, who signed a three-year, \$38 million deal over the offseason, said the surgery went well and shouldn't affect his readiness for Spring Training next year.

"I'm bummed," Cozart said. "You never want to end a season hurt. I love playing so much. I want to be out there with the guys. I don't like watching the games, knowing I can't do anything to help. It's just



something that I have to deal with. Luckily, we got it done early enough to where it won't be an issue for spring training, or it shouldn't be."

Cozart suffered a left shoulder subluxation while attempting to dive for a groundball in Seattle on June 13. His shoulder had bounced back from similar injuries in the past, but Cozart didn't feel it stabilize this time around.

"In the past, it had taken one, two, three days for the inflammation to calm down and then I was literally 100 percent fine, and it was never an issue because my strength was good around my labrum," Cozart said. "This time, it was a little different. I could swing, I could take ground balls, but I couldn't play catch because [my shoulder] was slipping.

"That's when I decided that I wanted to see another doc and see what they had to say. I was hoping that it would be good after a month, but unfortunately it was pretty clear after talking to him that I needed it done like right now because there was nothing I could do to really stabilize my shoulder at this point besides getting it fixed."

Cozart said he expects to resume hitting in four months. The 32-year-old infielder finished the season batting .219 with a .658 OPS, five home runs and 18 RBIs in 58 games.

#### **Worth noting**

- Right-hander Matt Shoemaker (forearm strain) said he is scheduled to begin a throwing progression on Tuesday. He will need several weeks to build up his arm, though he is optimistic that he will return to pitch this season.

Shoemaker made only one start for the Angels this season before landing on the disabled list April 3. He underwent surgery to decompress a nerve and repair the pronator teres tendon in his right forearm on May 29.

### ***FROM THE ATHLETIC***

## **Bowden: Who's getting snubbed – three years from now? Predicting the 2021 All-Star Game lineups\***

By Jim Bowden

It's amazing how much turnover there is in the starting lineups of the annual MLB All-Star Game, especially over a span of just three years.

Remember, it was just three years ago at Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati when Jhonny Peralta and Matt Holliday of the Cardinals were starting at shortstop and in left field. Now they're both out of baseball. In the American League, Alcides Escobar and Alex Gordon were starting at shortstop and in left field; now both are shells of their former selves and playing for one of the worst teams in baseball, the Royals — who won the World Series in 2015.

How quickly teams, and All-Stars, can change.

This year's All-Stars for both leagues were announced on Sunday. So we thought it would be fun to try to predict who will start the All-Star Game for both leagues three years from now, in 2021. I look forward to your opinions and thoughts in the comment section.

Here are my 2021 All-Star predictions:

### **2021 American League All-Stars**

#### **Catcher**

**J.T. Realmuto, Houston Astros:** I won't be surprised if Realmuto is traded by the Miami Marlins to the Astros either at this year's trade deadline or during the offseason. The two teams have had conversations in the past, and the Astros have made it clear they won't move either of their top two prospects in pitcher Forrest Whitley or outfielder Kyle Tucker. However, the Astros farm system is incredibly deep, and the Marlins' rebuilding program is looking more and more like it will take the full seven years. So dealing Realmuto at his maximum value only makes sense, especially if they can get three legitimate good prospects in return. Realmuto will develop into one of the best all-around catchers in baseball.

**Runner-up:** Gary Sánchez, New York Yankees

#### **First Base**

**Paul Goldschmidt, Boston Red Sox:** Goldschmidt will be a free agent at the conclusion of the 2019 season, and I think the best landing spot for him is Boston, where he can do serious damage on and over the Green Monster. Three years from now he should still be the best overall first baseman in the game, both offensively and defensively.

**Runner-up:** Matt Olson, Oakland Athletics

#### **Second Base**

**Gleyber Torres, New York Yankees.** I'm expecting Torres to develop into a perennial All-Star; he has the capability to become a 30-homer-a-year second baseman while winning multiple Silver Slugger and Gold Glove awards. He'll have tough competition from José Altuve the next couple of years, but should be ready to be the starter by 2021.

**Runner-up:** José Altuve, Houston Astros

#### **Shortstop**

**Francisco Lindor, Cleveland Indians:** Lindor and Carlos Correa of the Houston Astros should be sharing the starting position for the AL for years to come. Lindor's defensive range to both sides, speed and athleticism and a better first half will give him the nod to start the game. However, Correa will have a better second half and end up winning the AL MVP.

**Runner-up:** Carlos Correa, Houston Astros

#### **Third Base**

**Vladimir Guerrero Jr., Toronto Blue Jays:** This race won't be as close as the one at shortstop in 2021. Guerrero will end up being the best offensive third baseman in the league, leading the league at that spot in on-base percentage, home runs, RBIs and WAR at the break. The fast start to his career will

already have people buzzing about him as a future Hall of Famer.

**Runner-up:** Miguel Andújar, New York Yankees

### **Right Field**

**Mookie Betts, Boston Red Sox:** The only reason Betts shouldn't be the starting right fielder for the AL All-Stars in three years is if he doesn't re-sign with Boston or another AL club. He is the second-best overall player in the game today (behind only Mike Trout), the best defensive right fielder in the league, and his legitimate five tools, strong makeup and intellect should allow him to continue to play at this level for years to come.

**Runner-Up:** Nomar Mazara, Texas Rangers

### **Center Field**

**Mike Trout, Los Angeles Angels:** We don't need a pencil when writing in who will be the AL All-Star center fielder as long as Trout is in the league. He is the best player of this generation, the same as LeBron James and Tom Brady. When we compare him to Willie Mays, Mickey Mantle, Rickey Henderson, Hank Aaron and others, we do it for a reason. Enough said.

**Runner-up:** Byron Buxton, Minnesota Twins (yes, he'll finally learn how to hit).

### **Left Field**

**Jo Adell, Los Angeles Angels:** Jo Adell will be the talk of baseball as he'll be on pace for 40 home runs and 30 stolen bases, and trail only teammate Mike Trout in the categories of slash line and WAR. Billboards will be all over Orange County and Los Angeles promoting the dynamic duo as the best two offensive outfielders to play together in the history of the game. OK, maybe I'm going a bit overboard on this one — but that's how much I like Adell's potential.

**Runner-up:** Eloy Jiménez, Chicago White Sox

### **Designated Hitter**

**Aaron Judge, New York Yankees:** Judge and Betts will have a fun competition over the years, as both are Gold Glove-caliber right fielders. Judge will hit more homers than any other right fielder in the game over the next decade, but with Betts' overall game and speed, Judge will have to DH for the All-Star Games.

**Runner-up:** J.D. Martinez, Boston Red Sox

### **Starting Pitcher**

**Luis Severino, New York Yankees:** Severino will have already won two Cy Young Awards and will be leading the league in ERA, WHIP, FIP and WAR at the All-Star break, making it an easy decision to start him.

**Runner-up:** Forrest Whitley, Houston Astros

*\*\*\*Article edited to include only American League.*

## Shohei Ohtani can't pitch, can't run but can still crush clutch home runs

By Fabian Ardaya

ANAHEIM, Calif. — At the crack of the bat, Shohei Ohtani was a little surprised he even made contact. As he jogged his first steps out of the batter's box, he willed the ball over the wall, hoping he would not have to run at full speed.

He wouldn't have to break his trot.

Ohtani put on one of his most memorable, yet brief, shows of versatile and elite skill by hobbling off the bench to blast a go-ahead, pinch-hit home run to center field to help the Angels knock off the crosstown rival Dodgers 4-3 and steal the first part of the Freeway Series on Sunday.

The Angels' two-way star's pitching future remains on hold — his Grade 2 sprain of the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow has shown healing, but not quite to the extent he could start throwing. However, something else was ailing him as he worked around the ballpark before the game.

Ohtani had fouled a ball off his right knee in the ninth inning of Saturday's 3-1 loss, leaving his status for the series finale in doubt as he was held out of the lineup. Around the second inning, Ohtani was officially cleared by team physicians, and he told manager Mike Scioscia he was ready.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts forced Scioscia's hand by bringing in right-hander J.T. Chargois into a 3-3 game to lead off the seventh inning against Jefry Marte. Wanting the proper matchups, Scioscia went for the win — he brought in Ohtani instead of the left-handed Luis Valbuena, looking, if anything, to start a rally with a walk as the 24-year-old had done two nights prior.

Ohtani worked Chargois to a 2-2 count, then looked for a changeup low in the dirt that had troubled him often in his first 16 at-bats since coming off the disabled list. Instead, he saw a 95.8-mph fastball low and on the middle half of the plate.

It was a good location, just not to Ohtani.

"With Ohtani, his nitro zone is down," Roberts said. "I don't know how much of the plate it got, but to come off the bench and put that at-bat together, foul some off-speed pitches off and get a fastball he could handle and hit it to the big part of the park, you got to tip your hat."

Ohtani drove the pitch, the ball traveling 108.8 mph off the bat and to the deepest part of Angel Stadium. Stat Cast measured the blast at 443 feet, his second-longest of the season. He slowly jogged around the bases, removing his helmet after reaching home plate to bow to Kole Calhoun near the on-deck circle.

"I saw the video, and that pitch was in a really good spot," Ohtani said through interpreter Ippei Mizuhara. "I had to keep the changeup in my mind. I was kind of lucky that the ball found the bat."

"It was going to be hard for me to run all-out, so I was glad I was able to hit the home run. I wouldn't have to run."

Ohtani called the health of his knee somewhere between 75 and 80 percent, icing it and having it in a brace after the game. He said that, with an off-day on Monday, he should expect the knee to return to normal. The Angels are hoping for the same for their offense, which desperately needed production from the left side of the plate in Ohtani's absence as well as a bat to protect Mike Trout.

Trout, elected to his seventh consecutive All-Star selection earlier in the evening, again found himself struggling to find a pitch worthy of a swing. His presence at the plate drew Roberts to intentionally walk him in the third inning, loading the bases in a 3-0 game instead of giving Trout the opportunity to knot things up himself. It was his 16th intentional walk of the year to set a new career high and add to his major-league lead.

Justin Upton, who entered play Sunday hitting a measly .161 with runners in scoring position, singled to center to produce a pair of runs off Alex Wood. In the sixth, Albert Pujols brought the Angels all the way back with a game-tying solo homer off Wood. The duo of Upton and Pujols, which had gone a combined 8-for-44 behind Trout to open the month of July, delivered.

"You guys kept asking me [about the walks], and it was going to come through sometime," Trout said.

The Angels (46-45) found themselves shorthanded on pitching, having burned through their bullpen, including high-leverage options Blake Parker and Cam Bedorsian, through the first two games against the Dodgers (48-41). But starter Andrew Heaney provided a much-needed boost, not allowing a single run after Yasiel Puig's three-run homer in the second inning and finishing with 10 strikeouts.

In a tie game, even with Heaney's length, Scioscia went for the jugular and summoned Ohtani to spark something.

"We needed to score," Scioscia said. "I don't know that we had the 15 innings of pitching that was going to give us a chance. We needed to score, and we needed to score and win this thing in nine innings. This seemed like a great spot for him, and he definitely came through."

**FROM ESPN.COM**

## **Shohei Ohtani delivers again for Angels with long, winning blast**

By Alden Gonzalez

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Shohei Ohtani's right knee was still sore when he arrived at Angel Stadium on Sunday. He took a baseball directly to it in the previous night's ninth inning, on a foul ball against Los Angeles Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen, then spent the ensuing morning receiving treatment.

In the second inning, Ohtani informed Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia that he would be available to pinch hit if needed.

In the seventh, he hit the home run that won the game.

"It was going to be hard for me to run all-out," Ohtani said through his interpreter after a 4-3 win in the Freeway Series finale. "I was glad I was able to hit a home run so I didn't have to run too much."

Ohtani's tiebreaking solo home run carried an exit velocity of 108.8 mph and traveled 443 feet, according to Statcast. It was his first since May 17 and only his third hit in 17 at-bats since returning from the disabled list.

But it was also the second time in three games that he ignited a win for his team, coming 48 hours after his two-out walk and stolen base propelled the Angels to a walk-off victory in the series opener against the Dodgers.

"That's a clutch hit," Scioscia said. "No doubt."

Ohtani sat because the Dodgers started a lefty, Alex Wood, then replaced the right-handed-hitting Jefry Marte to lead off the seventh, when right-handed reliever JT Chargois entered with the score tied at 3. Scioscia could have saved Ohtani for later, perhaps with runners on base, but the Angels were coming off a bullpen game that forced them to use six relievers for nine innings. There was urgency.

"We needed to score," Scioscia said. "I don't know if we had the 15 innings of pitching that was going to give us a chance."

Ohtani fouled off a 2-2 changeup then kept his hands in on a 96 mph fastball and somehow drove the pitch out to center field, where all but one of his home runs have been hit this season.

"It says a lot for his power, because he doesn't have to get total extension to drive a ball," Scioscia said.

Said Ohtani: "I saw the video, and the pitch was in a really good spot, and I had to keep the changeup in my mind. I was kind of lucky that the ball found the bat."

Ohtani has homered only seven times in 131 at-bats, yet he has hit two of the three farthest balls at Angel Stadium this season. Sunday's ranks third. The one he hit on April 6, which traveled 449 feet, ranks first.

He was noticeably limping as he rounded the bases Sunday. He agreed with a reporter who estimated that the health of his knee might be at about 75 percent and added that he would benefit from Monday's day off, which might allow him to return to full health for a critical three-game series against the Seattle Mariners.

"It usually doesn't take too long to recover," Ohtani said.

**FROM FORBES.COM**

## Ohtani Misses Start Because Of Bruised Right Knee; Hits Pinch-Hit Homer

By Barry M. Bloom

Shohei Ohtani was held out of the lineup on Sunday with a bruised right knee as the Los Angeles Angels closed a three-game series against the rival Los Angeles Dodgers at Angel Stadium. But when Ohtani pinch-hit to lead off the seventh inning, he hit a mammoth home run to win the rubber match, 4-3.

Ohtani fouled a ball off the knee Saturday night on the next to last pitch of his final at bat in the ninth inning from Dodgers reliever Kenley Jansen. He wears a shin guard on that leg, but the foul hit squarely off the knee above that guard.

The left-handed designated hitter hobbled around for a few minutes and then struck out swinging. He limped back to the dugout, having gone 0-for-4 with a pair of strikeouts in the Angels' 3-1 loss.

On Sunday, he was cleared to play after the game had begun and the Dodgers had grabbed a 3-0 lead on Yasiel Puig's second-inning, three-run homer.

Ohtani, already nursing a torn ligament in his right elbow, addressed the media afterwards and said the knee was at 75-80% capacity.

"I was moving around before the game and during the game, too," Ohtani said. "I got the final clearance about that time. Around the second inning."

Scioscia chose to rest Ohtani against tough Dodgers left-hander Alex Wood. Ohtani is a .118 (4-for-34) hitter against left-handed pitching anyway, in this his first Major League season after coming over from Japan.

Overall, he's slashing at .275/.354/.519 with seven homers and 21 RBIs. He's 3-for-16 with seven strikeouts, and the homer since returning from the disabled list this past Tuesday in Seattle.

The Angels have an off-day on Monday before opening a three-game home series against the Mariners on Tuesday night.

"I still have the day off to recover from the ball hitting off my knee," Ohtani said. "It usually doesn't take too long."

Angels manager Mike Scioscia said on Saturday that Ohtani was day-to-day.

Sunday before the game, Scioscia added: "Shohei was sore last night. He's being evaluated right now. And we'll see what availability he has."

Scioscia also said that X-rays on Ohtani's knee were negative.

Ohtani was evidently available. He pinch-hit for Jeffrey Marte against Dodgers right-hander reliever JT Chargois to lead off the seventh, and on a 2-2 pitch, crushed a 443-foot shot toward the rock pile in center for his first career pinch-hit homer. It was his first homer of any kind since May 17.

It has been an eventful weekend for Ohtani, who won one game with his bat, another with his feet and bruised his knee.

On Friday night, Ohtani helped beat the Dodgers by walking on four consecutive Jansen pitches with an 0-2 count, no one on, two out, and the Angels trailing, 2-1.

He quickly stole second, went to third on a throwing error and scored the tying run on a base hit. A moment later, the Angels won, 3-2. He said he wasn't capable of running like that on Sunday.

"It was huge that these were both come-from-behind, one-run victories," Ohtani said. "We took the lead and never looked back."

Ohtani went on the disabled list June 8 with a Grade 2 sprain of the ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow. The first regular two-way player in the Major Leagues since Babe Ruth has been restricted from pitching or throwing a baseball since he was taken out of a game against the Kansas City Royals after four innings June 6.

That start was only his second in 17 days. An MRI revealed the nature of the tear. He took a stem-cell injection and a platelet-rich plasma shot on June 7.

Ohtani was cleared to hit again 10 days ago after another MRI showed some scabbing and scarring of the ligament, and the Angels had hoped he'd at least get back into the flow at the plate.

Last season, in Japan, the Nippon Ham-Fighters also restricted Ohtani as he dealt with ankle, hamstring and evidently the elbow injury. He was limited to 25 1/3 innings off the mound, but made 231 plate appearances.

After the season he had a PRP shot in the elbow and was diagnosed with a Grade 1 sprain of the UCL. The Angels were aware of this when they signed him to a contract this past December, paying him a \$2.31 million bonus, the minimum of \$540,000 and a \$20 million posting fee to the Fighters.

This year, Ohtani has thrown 49 1/3 innings and as had 148 plate appearances. The latest injury was never really considered serious. As soon as Scioscia could use him, he did.

"That was obviously a big, clutch hit in the game," Scioscia said. "We're a little thin on pitching. To be able to get the lead and hold it was huge. Shohei had treatment all morning. He said he felt good about the second inning and that he would be available if we needed him. It was a big hit, no doubt."



## Trout, Harper Elected By Fans to All-Star Teams; In Spotlight Again

By Barry M. Bloom

Mike Trout and Bryce Harper have been tied at the hip since both outfielders came up permanently as 19-year-olds, Trout in 2011 with the Los Angeles Angels and Harper a year later with the Washington Nationals.

Once again, they've been voted by the fans to their respective All-Star teams, Trout to the American League, Harper to the National League. But this time, Washington will host the All-Star Game on July 17 at Nationals Park.

For Trout, it's his seventh consecutive All-Star Game and for Harper it's his sixth overall and fourth in a row.

"It's always fun to get back to the east coast," said Trout, who grew up in the town of Millville, N.J., just north of Philadelphia. "I'm a fan of his. I've followed him throughout the years. Obviously, we were brought up together. And he's playing in his home park. So, that's going to be special to him."

Harper said he will participate in the annual Home Run Derby on the night of July 16 if he was he elected to the team. Trout said Sunday he will not.

"So, count me in for the Derby if and only if I make the team," Harper said last month. "But if I do I will be a participant in the 2018 Home Run Derby."

Harper is in.

The American League outfield is comprised of Mookie Betts of the Boston Red Sox with 4,286,994 votes, Trout with 3,682,164 and New York Yankees slugger Aaron Judge at 2,766,661. George Springer of the Houston Astros was 1.15 votes behind in fourth place.

Harper finished third in the National League voting behind Nick Markakis of the Atlanta Braves and Matt Kemp of the Los Angeles Dodgers. Markakis had 3,556,469; Kemp was 2,930,353 and Harper at 2,335,733 finished a little less than 500,000 ahead of Jason Heyward of the Chicago Cubs.

Trout has been the AL MVP and the All-Star Game MVP twice each already. And the only knock on him is that the Angels haven't made the playoffs during his short, but stellar tenure. That's not his fault, though. Baseball is a team game and Trout has yet to have the requisite supporting cast around him in Anaheim.

It's probably not going to happen again this season.

The Angels are currently 15 games behind the World Series-defending champion Houston Astros in the American League West and 11 1/2 games in arrears of the Seattle Mariners for the league's second Wild Card spot.

The All-Star Game is another story.

“It’s obviously a humbling and great honor,” Trout said. “It should be a lot of fun.”

Trout continues to flourish offensively, heading into Sunday night’s re-match against the Dodgers at Angel Stadium, slashing at .312/.455/.630 with 25 homers, 50 RBIs and a 1.085 OPS.

Harper’s club has been a perennial playoff team in four of his first six seasons, although they’ve never made it past the NL Division Series. The Nationals have struggled this season and are five games behind surprising Atlanta and Philadelphia in the NL East and among five teams within five games of the second NL Wild Card slot.

Although his power numbers are very similar to Trout, with 21 homers and 50 RBIs, and he’s right there in walks – Trout has 78, Harper 73 -- Harper has 31 less hits.

A left-handed hitter, Harper has been the victim of numerous shifts used against him, while Trout, a right-handed hitter, seems to have no problem spraying the ball everywhere. Unlike Harper, Trout’s basically unshiftable.

Consequently, Harper’s slash line is a very un-All Star-like .219/.371/.475 with an .846 OPS. Those 97 to 66 hits makes a big difference in on-base percentage and OPS, a stat that combines on-base and slugging percentages. At 25, he’s in his walk year toward a huge free-agent payday. It only seems like he’s been around forever.

For Kemp, the resurgence has been redemptive. He hasn’t made an All-Star team since 2012, during his first 10-year tour with the Dodgers, vying with the Arizona Diamondbacks for their sixth consecutive NL West title.

Kemp was brought back in the offseason in a salary exchange of sorts. The Dodgers sent the big contracts of Adrian Gonzalez, Scott Kazmir and Brandon McCarthy to Atlanta and brought back Kemp, who wasn’t even expected to make the team.

Kemp came to camp healthy, though, and has been earning every bit of the \$21.75 million he’s making this season. The fact is, the Dodgers signed him to this eight-year, \$160 million extension in 2012. He has one more year go.

Sometimes it all just comes circling back around. And this year, Kemp will be going back to the All-Star Game along with his teammate and closer, Kenley Jansen.

Kemp’s slashing at .317/.355/.550 with 15 homers, 57 RBIs and a .905 OPS. He hasn’t had a year in which he’s batted over .300 since hitting .303 in 2012, his last year as an All Star. He’s 33.

“Obviously, he’s had a tremendous first half,” said Dave Roberts, the Dodgers third-year manager. “So, to come back to Los Angeles and get voted back in by the fans to represent the Dodgers has to be immensely gratifying. I don’t think he’ll let on how much this means to him. But it’s well-deserved.”

The rest of the players selected by the fans looks like this:

The AL lineup includes Wilson Ramos of the Tampa Bay Rays behind the plate; Jose Abreu of the Chicago White Sox at first base; Jose Altuve of the Astros at second; Jose Ramirez of the Cleveland Indians at third, and J.D. Martinez of the Boston Red Sox as the designated hitter.

Over in the NL, it's Wilson Contreras of the Cubs catching; Freddie Freeman of the Braves at first; Javier Baez of the Cubs at second; Brandon Crawford of the San Francisco Giants at short, and Nolan Arenado of the Colorado Rockies at third.

## FROM NBC SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

### Shohei Ohtani's Pinch-Hit Homer Lifts Angels Over Dodgers in Freeway Series Finale

*An injured Shohei Ohtani hit a game-winning, pinch-hit home run, and the Angels came from behind to defeat the Los Angeles Dodgers, 4-3, to win the Freeway Series in Anaheim on Sunday.*

By Michael Duarte

The Japanese Kirk Gibson?

An injured Shohei Ohtani hit a game-winning, pinch-hit home run, and the Angels came from behind to defeat the Los Angeles Dodgers, 4-3, to win the Freeway Series in Anaheim on Sunday.

Following a split of the first two games that saw both teams battle in two low-scoring, close games, Ohtani provided Halo fans with a moment they'll remember forever in the finale.

For context, Ohtani hit a foul ball off his right knee in the ninth inning on Saturday, and was listed as day-to-day by Angels' manager Mike Scioscia entering Sunday's contest.

"Shohei had treatment all morning and said he felt good by the second inning and was available to do anything," said Scioscia after the game. "That was a clutch hit no doubt."

With the game tied at 3-3 in the bottom of the seventh inning, Scioscia sent Ohtani to the plate to pinch-hit against right-handed reliever, J.T. Chargois.

"We saw there was a righty warming up in the bullpen," continued Scioscia. "We needed to score and that seemed like a great spot for him, and he definitely came through."

In what will go down as a much less dramatic version of Gibson's Home Run in Game 1 of the 1988 World Series, as Ohtani sent Chargois deep on a 96MPH fastball that traveled 443-feet for the game-winning home run.

Ohtani slowly limped around the bases as the fans in attendance wearing red went wild for his first career pinch-hit home run.

"It was very hard for me to run all out, so I was glad I was able to hit the home run," said Ohtani through a translator. "It was huge we were able to come from behind. We took the lead and never looked back."

Ohtani put the punctuation mark on a four-run rally for the Angels after Dodgers' outfielder Yasiel Puig got the scoring started with a three-run homer in the top of the second.

"He threw me a slider [curveball] in the dirt earlier in the at-bat and my teammates advanced to the bases," said Puig of the at-bat. "After that I was trying to hit a line drive to score them. He threw me something, a slider? I don't know which pitch, and I was able to make contact for a home run."

The three-run blast was Puig's 11<sup>th</sup> longball of the season, but it would be the only runs Los Angeles would score in the game as Andrew Heaney and company closed the door on their Southern California rivals.

Puig would later leave the game in the fifth inning with a right oblique injury and will likely go on the disabled list.

"On the first swing I felt something, but not so much, and on the second swing I tried to get to that fastbal and that's when I felt it more," said Puig of the oblique injury. "I feel bad because I can't help my team win right now."

The injury could be devastating for the Dodgers as Puig is batting .348 with 13 runs, five doubles, seven homers and 18 RBI in his last 18 road games.

"When you're talking about an oblique, rib cage, or something like that, we're almost certain it's a DL situation," said Dodgers' manager Dave Roberts. "We're going to get a scan tomorrow in Los Angeles, and we'll know more than."

Heaney (5-6), earned the win, allowing three runs on three hits with three walks and a career-high tying 10 strikeouts in seven strong innings.

"Andrew was terrific," said Scioscia of his starter. "A couple walks and a breaking ball to Puig over the plate, but Andrew didn't make many mistakes. He pitched a strong seven innings."

Heaney became the first Halos pitcher to record 10 or more strikeouts in back-to-back games since Matt Shoemaker did it in May of 2016.

"When I have all three of my pitches working I have a good mix," said Heaney of his strikeout mark. "Especially when I'm throwing my slider for strikes, I feel like I can get ahead with any of my pitches. Having all three pitches is definitely key for me."

In his last seven starts at the Big A, Heaney is 5-1 with a 1.31 ERA and 46 strikeouts.

Some Dodger fans might remember that Heaney was briefly a member of the Boys in Blue when Los Angeles traded for Heaney in a seven-player deal in December of 2014.

However, just hours later, Heaney was sent to Anaheim for Howie Kendrick.

Alex Wood was given a three-run lead for the Dodgers, but the Angels chipped away at the left-hander, scoring two runs on a single by Justin Upton in the bottom of the third inning.

"I fell behind and got in a situation where you can play it safe or you could probably throw another pitch or two and see if works out," Wood said of the at-bat to Upton. "We went the safe route and threw him a sinker down and away and he took a single like a professional hitter would. I don't feel any regrets about that pitch."

Three innings later, Albert Pujols crushed a curveball from Wood into the rock waterfall in centerfield for the game-tying homer.

"I tried to slide him a breaking ball and I hung it, and he put a good swing on it," said Wood of the pitch to Pujols. "Just one bad one to Pujols."

Wood did not factor in the decision, and remains undefeated over his last five starts, surrendering three runs on five hits with two walks and four strikeouts in six innings.

"I didn't think I was very good tonight," admitted Wood after the game. "I battled through, but I wish my stuff was a little sharper because I probably would have gone back out there for the seventh and we wouldn't end up losing the game. That one's on me."

Justin Anderson pitched the ninth inning and recorded his fourth save of the season.

The Angels have won eight of their last 12 games against the Dodgers in the Freeway Series.

#### **Up Next:**

The Dodgers will travel south to San Diego where they will face the Padres in a four-game series starting on Monday. Clayton Kershaw gets the call in Game 1, opposite RHP Luis Perdomo. First pitch is scheduled for 7:10PM PST.

## ***FROM DEADSPIN***

### **Shohei Ohtani Hit A Game-Winning Homer With A Busted Elbow And Knee**

By Avery Yang

Shohei Ohtani hit the ball far as fuck yesterday, 443 feet to be exact, deep into the ethers of Angel Stadium's cavernous rock structure in center field. The looping drive was his first homer since May 17, on account of the Grade 2 UCL sprain that kept him out of the lineup from June 4 to July 3. It was the eventual game-winner, allowing the Angels to beat the Dodgers 4-3 and keep pace with the four teams above them in the AL Wild Card standings.

Ohtani hit that dinger while still dealing with the aforementioned elbow injury and a screwed-up knee. According to Fabian Ardaya of The Athletic, the two-way star had fouled a ball off his right knee in the

ninth inning of Saturday's game, which prevented him from starting on Sunday. Ohtani hit his seventh inning tank as a pinch-hitter, his first and only at-bat of the night. He said after the game that the knee was between "75 and 80 percent" healthy, and that he was glad he hit a homer, since he wouldn't have been able to run the bases well had he been forced.

Ohtani wasn't even cleared to play at first pitch—it was only during the second inning that he was given the go-ahead by the Angels' medical staff and, with a righty coming in from the Dodger pen to lead off the seventh, Angels manager Mike Scioscia pulled the trigger on allowing his nicked-up slugger to take a few hacks.

Ohtani worked a 2-2 count, then unleashed on a 96 mph fastball down in the zone. The dude can't throw a ball or properly run the bases for the foreseeable future, but he can for sure still hit some dingers when his name is called.

## FROM FANGRAPHS

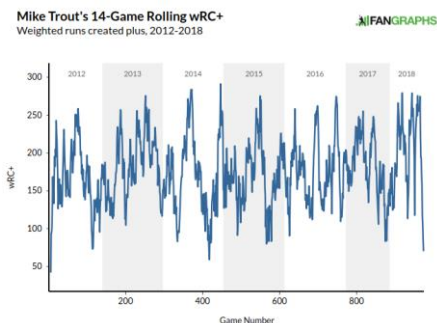
### Mike Trout Was Going Through a Thing

By Rian Watt

On Saturday afternoon in Anaheim, Mike Trout went 3-for-4 with two singles and a home run. For a player who, at age 26, has basically secured a place in the Hall of Fame, that kind of performance is pretty commonplace. Mike Trout is the best player in the world; nothing in this piece will attempt to convince you otherwise.

What was notable about that Saturday game, however, is that it represented Trout's first multi-hit effort since June 18th. If you're the kind of person who takes life as it comes, for good or for bad, this sort of thing might not even register. But for the rest of you, who worry about the little moments in between the big ones, there is this: for the last two weeks or so, before he got three hits on Saturday, Mike Trout had been in a bit of a slump. For about two weeks or so, Mike Trout was a below-average major-league hitter.

Consider the following, which is a chart of Trout's rolling wRC+ in 14-game chunks, dating back to the beginning of the 2012 season, which was his first full campaign, and concluding on July 6th, the day before his home run:



There are roughly 1,000 games here, so it's pretty condensed. The most important part of it, however, is the low point on the right-most edge of the graph. That's the slump Trout was enduring until Saturday, a 14-game stretch (June 22nd to July 6th) during which he recorded just a 70 wRC+. With the exception of that horrible second half he had back in 2014 and the very beginning of his 2012 season, it was the worst offensive period of his very excellent career to date.

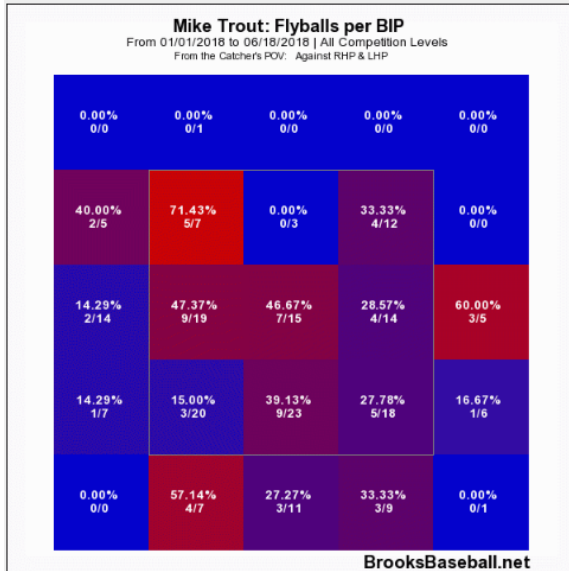
A couple weeks spent hitting 30% worse than league average isn't a news item for most players. Trout's teammate Justin Upton has recorded just a 64 wRC+ over the last two weeks, for example, and that's unlikely to inspire a post here at FanGraphs. Billy Hamilton owns a *lifetime* batting mark of 71 wRC+. For Mike Trout, however, this type of stretch is nearly unprecedented — and especially notable as it came hot on the heels of some of the best baseball in his glittering career.

So what was going on? Well, at some level, only Trout knows that. Trout and the members of the Angels' field staff, maybe. There is a theory that presents itself pretty conveniently, however, and it concerns the index finger that Trout sprained sometime early in the week of June 18th. The theory is the finger was still bothering him, and that once it's healed, he'll be better. In that sense, I'm pleased to see that he appears to be heating up just in time for this article to publish.

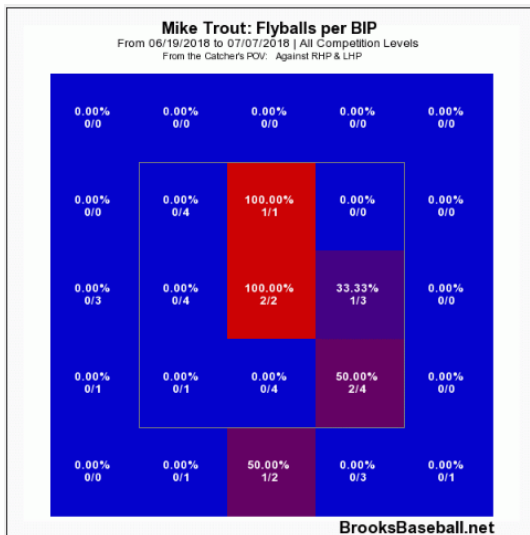
Here are some facts: on June 19th, Trout's finger was hurting sufficiently badly — it's not clear exactly how or when he hurt it — that he moved out of center field and into the designated-hitter spot, where he'd previously played just three times all season, where he said he felt uncomfortable, and where he stayed for nine consecutive games until moving back to center field on June 29th. In the 16 games after the injury moved him to DH, leading up to the 7th, Trout hit .176/.391/.275 with one home run in 70 plate appearances, after hitting .439/.535/.772 in the 16 games before that, with five home runs.

His slump, in other words, was entirely consistent with a player who still possessed an elite approach at the plate but lacked the physical capacity to do his customary level of damage on contact. During that interval, Trout struck out only a little bit more than he did before, (24.3% of the time since June 19th, compared to 18.6% before that date), but he actually walked *more* often (22.9% of the time against 19.2% before the move), which suggests to me that his eyes were just fine. He also, and somewhat more injuriously, more than doubled his rate of soft contact during the slump, all while raising his ground-ball rate from 30% before the injury to 50% after it.

All of which seems like the work of a man whose finger is still hurting him and who therefore finds it difficult to drop the head of the bat on the ball and drive it the other way. Or drive it at all, in any direction. Indeed, Trout's only home run since June 18th — besides the one he hit Saturday — was on June 29th against the Orioles' David Hess. You can see this particular change play out most dramatically if you examine the pitch locations on which Trout was able to generate fly balls before his move to the DH:



And compare them to the significantly smaller number of places in which he was able to generate fly balls in the 16 games after that time:



This somewhat fundamental difference in batted-ball type — even in a relatively brief sample — seems to support the hypothesis that Trout was not just enduring the kind of “luck” slump that all hitters experience from time to time. For the past two weeks, rather, he appears to have had quite a bit of trouble getting the ball in the air. He didn’t have trouble on Saturday, though. Mike Trout was the best player in baseball two weeks ago. Two weeks from now, the notion of a mini-slump could very well seem distant and silly. I hope it does, because it’ll mean that whatever was going on with Mike Trout was as simple as his finger hurting and not anything more complicated than that. Two weeks was probably enough time for a finger to get better, anyway.