



WHITE SOX HEADLINES OF July 1, 2018

Rodon, bullpen can't contain Rangers in rout

By Jacob Prothro / MLB.com / June 30, 2018

ARLINGTON -- For the better part of three innings, Chicago left-hander Carlos Rodon was mowing through the Rangers' lineup.

But in the fourth inning he faltered, surrendering three two-out runs in the White Sox 13-4 loss to the Rangers Saturday night at Globe Life Park. He wasn't the only Chicago pitcher to struggle.

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The White Sox bullpen combined to give up seven runs in 3 2/3 innings, effectively ending any chance the team had to get back in the game. Bruce Rondon was hit especially hard, giving up five runs, and recording only one out in what turned into a seven-run inning.

"You just don't like seeing a game like that," manager Rick Renteria said. "That wasn't a pretty game at all."

It was the third matchup in as many days that the bullpen has been called upon for an extended period. On Friday Renteria even turned to a position player -- outfielder Matt Davidson -- to get three outs to save the staff some work.

"I wish we hadn't had to bring in [Jace] Fry to get out of that," Renteria said. "We wanted Brucey to finish that off. That didn't work. It just wasn't working today."

Rodon retired the first seven batters he faced -- three by strikeout. The only blemish in his first three innings came when Joey Gallo deposited a belt-high fastball into the bleachers in right-center field, cutting the White Sox early lead to 2-1.

The 25-year-old was within one strike of working a scoreless fourth inning, but lost his command. Rodon threw eight-straight balls to walk Rougned Odor and Jurickson Profar to load the bases.

Robinson Chirinos made him pay, lining Rodon's second pitch of the at-bat down the right-field line and up against the wall. Nomar Mazara scored. Odor scored. Profar scored.

In the blink of an eye the White Sox found themselves facing a 4-2 deficit.

"I left a fastball out over the middle," Rodon said. "We were trying to go in on him. I started off hot, but I just didn't give my team a chance to win today."

The White Sox jumped on Rangers starter Bartolo Colon in the first inning, with Yoan Moncada hitting the first pitch he saw back up the middle. Yolmer Sanchez followed that with a double that hugged the left-field line and put runners on second and third with no one out. But Chicago couldn't capitalize, as Moncada was thrown out at the plate on a grounder to short.

"I think that we should have scored a run early, which we didn't," Renteria said. "[In the second] we ended up scoring two, instead of three or more."

Missed opportunities cost the White Sox throughout the game. The team made two errors and left 10 runners in scoring position. In clutch situations, the White Sox bats were silent.

"It really costs you when you leave runners on base," Renteria said. "We just didn't end up executing as well as we want to."

After the game Renteria said he addressed his team about its play Saturday. He wants to see more out of them. He wants them to be sharper.

"All these young men are learning that big league baseball is not an easy thing," Renteria said. "One of the lessons that you learn is you really have to grind. Every pitch is important, everything you do matters. That's a lesson that they need to take to heart. Today's game was a hard lesson for them."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

The White Sox had two men on and one out in the top of the eighth inning, and were down by two runs. But Daniel Palka struck out swinging, and Moncada went down looking, ending the threat.

SOUND SMART

Colon labored through five innings to earn win number 245, which ties him with Dennis Martinez for the most career wins by a Latin-American pitcher.

Colon worked hard to earn the win. He threw 42 pitches in the second inning, but worked his way in and out of trouble to hold the White Sox to three runs over five-plus innings.

HE SAID IT

"If you're asking me if he gave the best effort that he possibly could, no he did not. He's a pretty good runner. I think he took it for granted that a play would be developing at the plate." -- Renteria, on Moncada being thrown out at the plate in the first inning

UP NEXT

The last time Reynaldo Lopez took the mound against the Rangers he allowed just two hits and struck out eight in eight scoreless innings on May 20. He'll need to replicate that success Sunday afternoon at 2:05 p.m. CT, as the White Sox face Rangers ace Cole Hamels in the series finale.

Carlos Rodon's good start falls apart, White Sox fall 13-4 to Rangers

By Phil Thompson / Chicago Tribune / June 30, 2018

Carlos Rodon struck out the side in the second inning Saturday night against the Rangers.

Then things unraveled for the White Sox left-hander in his fifth start since returning from shoulder surgery, and the bullpen imploded in a seven-run eighth en route to an 13-4 loss at Globe Life Park.

Rodon hung a 1-1 fastball in the third that Joey Gallo launched to center for his 20th home run. In the fourth, Robinson Chirinos hit a three-run double. An inning later, Rodon centered a 1-0 fastball to Ryan Rua, who cleared the wall in right-center field to push the Rangers to a 5-2 lead.

Rodon looked good early. He went 1-2-3 on a pair of groundouts and a lineout in the first, then he showed a glimpse of the old Rodon in the next inning. His fastball hitting the low 90s with sliders mixed in, Rodon got swinging strikeouts from Adrian Beltre, Rougned Odor and Jurickson Profar.

Before the game, Sox manager Rick Renteria noticed Rodon was "a lot free and easier in his delivery. And having seen the previous two years prior to the correction the surgery ended up doing, it looked like he had more fluidity to his actions."

But he added Rodon needed to avoid deep counts.

"His last outing (Sunday against the A's) he ended up being as efficient as he has been all season," Renteria said. "But if he can get out of some mild traffic early ... he has a chance of getting through and giving us a good outing."

That didn't happen. Rodon fell to 1-3 after giving up five earned runs on six hits and two walks in 5 1/3 innings, and he didn't record another strikeout besides his perfect second.

The Sox gave Rodon a lead in the second inning. Adam Engel's double off Bartolo Colon drove in Matt Davidson, then Yolmer Sanchez's sacrifice fly scored Omar Narvaez for a 2-0 advantage.

After the Rangers took a 5-2 lead, solo home runs by Davidson — who went 3-for-4 — in the sixth and Avisail Garcia in the seventh pulled the Sox within a run.

The Rangers got one of the runs back in the seventh before exploding for seven runs in the eighth against Luis Avilan and Bruce Rondon.

Minor moves: The Sox released Triple-A left fielder Alex Presley on Friday. Presley, 32, had a .198 average and 12 RBIs in 101 at-bats this season. ... The Sox bought the contract of Normal CornBelts left-hander Matt Portland, a former Northwestern pitcher. Portland, 24, was assigned to rookie affiliate Great Falls.

White Sox DH Matt Davidson throws everyone a curve in his major-league pitching debut

By Phil Thompson / Chicago Tribune / June 30, 2018

It's a simple line in a box score, but Matt Davidson might want to frame it.

"Pitcher change: M. Davidson replaces J. Minaya."

When Davidson got the call to relieve Juan Minaya in the eighth inning of the White Sox's 11-3 loss to the Rangers on Friday, it marked the first time he had pitched in a big-league game. He was the first Sox position player to do it since catcher Rob Brantly threw against the Indians on Sept. 7.

Davidson, who wore Randy Johnson's No. 51 growing up, mixed fastballs, splitters and curves, his go-to pitch at Yucaipa (Calif.) High School. He mostly threw in the high 80s but hit 91.9 mph on one fastball out of the zone. He retired the three batters he faced — Ryan Rua, Carlos Tocci and Rougned Odor — and struck out Odor on a near-80 mph slider.

"It sounds cheesy, but it was a dream come true. I grew up as a pitcher; that's all I did," Davidson said Friday after the game. "I really didn't start playing a position full time (until) my junior, senior year. I was a pitcher/DH, and that's what I did in high school."

On Saturday, teammates and relatives were still buzzing about it. "It was really exciting for me, something I'll never forget," he said.

Davidson said he's game if called on again. "You don't want to be losing 11-3, but I would love to kind of explore that idea, help out if the pen needs some rest."

He has thrown on the side throughout the season, but he said he'd be curious to see if he could top 92 mph if he got a chance to really stretch out his arm.

Maybe in spring training?

"I mean, I don't know, it's something we'd have to talk to the White Sox about," Davidson said. "Maybe try something and see how that would work out. It's something we'll just have to explore."

Manager Rick Renteria said Saturday that Davidson had a clean delivery and "saved us" when the bullpen was taxed by a 13-inning game Thursday against the Twins and Dylan Covey's start Friday was cut short by the Rangers' home-run fest.

"In the back of my mind ... I would rather not do it, to be honest," Renteria said. "For sure, he's pushed us over the course of the season and let us know, 'Hey, I can get out there. I can do this.'"

"I know I jokingly say he's our (Shohei) Ohtani. We don't want to put any position player in a situation where we can compromise him with the other side of his game, which is more prevalent."

Early in his high school career, Davidson said the idea of pitching in the majors seemed like a foregone conclusion.

The Riverside Press-Enterprise selected Davidson as the 2006 San Bernardino-area player of the year after going 10-1 with an 0.76 ERA and 60 strikeouts as a freshman. As a sophomore, he went 9-2 with a 1.21 ERA and 82 strikeouts, according to the Press-Enterprise.

Davidson, 27, said he last pitched in 2009, his senior year of high school. "Getting old now," he said.

Throughout the season, Davidson has tried different pitches on his teammates.

"I always mess around with everything when I'm throwing. You can ask Tim (Anderson) — they hate catching me," Davidson joked. "I just throw random stuff, try to make them miss."

The Sox had Davidson throw off flat ground earlier in the week and the day of Friday's game. When dream became reality, coaches pulled him aside to ask if he was ready.

"They just told me, 'Make sure you can throw strikes,'" he said.

'Hard lesson' for White Sox in second straight rout vs. Rangers

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 30, 2018

ARLINGTON, Texas – Can the White Sox start the second half over?

This road trip?

A night after losing 11-3 to the Rangers to finish the first half with a 28-53 record, the Sox took a 13-4 beating and looked bad doing it, committing two errors (right-hander Juan Minaya, catcher Omar Narvaez), getting gloves on balls not caught (Yoan Moncada, Tim Anderson) and even falling down in the outfield (Charlie Tilson on a triple). To make all of this painfully worse, they endured a half inning in the eighth that lasted 41 minutes.

The Rangers scored seven in that one, five against Bruce Rondon, who pitched so poorly manager Rick Renteria was forced to bring in one of his better relievers, Jace Fry. Rondon threw 33 pitches and Luis Avilan and Fry combined for 32 more.

It was a poor showing from the get-go, starting with Moncada getting thrown out at home on a good play by shortstop Elvis Andrus in the first inning. The middle infield was playing back, and manager Rick Renteria said Moncada didn't go all-out to the plate, thinking Andrus, fielding Jose Abreu's sharp grounder to his right, was conceding the run and throwing to first.

"If you're asking me if he gave his best effort, no he did not," Renteria said.

Moncada did have to elude Abreu's bat lying in the base line, but still. No excuse, Renteria said.

"You have to go out and execute," Renteria said. "If you don't, somebody is going to get you. Today's game was a hard lesson for them."

Only eight more to go on the trip, starting with Sunday's matinee in expected 102-degree heat.

Matt Davidson and Avisail Garcia homered for the Sox, so that was good, but the Rangers got solo homers from Joey Gallo and Ryan Rua and a bases loaded double from Robinson Chirinos against Sox lefty Carlos Rodon.

Rodon can't repeat

Rodon made his fifth start of the season, and couldn't finish the sixth inning after going a season high eight in his previous start against the Athletics.

Rodon allowed five runs on six hits and two walks over 5 1/3 innings. He struck out three and threw 53 of his 89 pitches for strikes.

"As a unit we didn't play too great," Rodon said. "It starts off with the pitcher. I'm the guy who holds the ball and starts the inning. You just have to be better. Tomorrow is a new day and you have to wash this one away."

History maker

Rangers righty Bartolo Colon, 45, notched his 245th career win, most by native of Dominican Republic and one shy of matching Nicaragua's Dennis 'El Presidente' Martinez for most in history by native of Latin America.

Nate Jones update

Nate Jones, who went on the disabled list with a pronator muscle strain June 13, played catch at 90 feet and ramped up some pitches from 60 feet on flat ground.

"He's starting to climb and feel better and it's moving along," pitching coach Don Cooper said.

Likely needing several days before throwing bullpens, live batting practice and then a minor league rehab outing, a return after the All-Star break seems more likely than before.

He's back

Yolmer Sanchez returned to the lineup after missing one start.

"He feels no pain," Renteria said.

Sanchez poked a soft double down the left field line in the first and gave the Sox a 2-0 lead with

The heat will be on Lopez

Reynaldo Lopez gets the ball for Sunday's series finale, which calls for sunshine and high temperature of 102 degrees.

"It's going to be hot; it doesn't matter," Lopez said. "We need to go out and perform in hot weather, cold weather, whatever the elements."

Lopez (3-5, 3.73 ERA) has a 2.55 ERA over his last three road starts.

In spring training, Lopez said his goal was to pitch 200 innings and win 15 games. Halfway through the season, he's at a 94 innings, second on the team to James Shields (107).

His second half goals?

"Keep rolling, do my job and stay healthy," Lopez said. "If you are healthy you are able to do good things. Those are my goals."

Kopech's line

Top pitching prospect Michael Kopech allowed three runs (one earned) on three hits and four walks while striking out eight for Class AAA Charlotte vs. Gwinnett, raising his International League leading total to 105. Kopech was not especially sharp, however, throwing 54 of his 97 pitches for strikes.

White Sox' Yoan Moncada learning on the job — the hard way

By Daryl Van Schouwen / Sun-Times / June 30, 2018

ARLINGTON, Texas — Baseball had always come easy for Yoan Moncada.

Mastering the game is not a cinch, though, as the 23-year-old second baseman and key piece of the White Sox' rebuild is learning.

Baseball is hard.

"Yes, it is," Moncada said.

Moncada was the Sox' biggest acquisition in the Chris Sale trade with the Red Sox two years ago. Last season, Moncada had a slash line of .231/.338/.412 with eight homers and three stolen bases in 54 games. Through 73 games this season, he is at .223/.291/.402 with 10 homers and eight stolen bases.

Entering the game Saturday against the Rangers, the switch hitter's strikeout total was at 115, and the rate has gone up while his walk rate has declined. He also had a team-high 13 errors at second base.

Almost everyone has expected better, including Moncada.

"I did not expect to have as many tough, difficult moments as I've been having," Moncada said Friday.

Moncada's body language is so relaxed, his demeanor so calm, his manner of talking so pleasant, a trap is set for anyone who wants to see nonchalance. He hasn't erupted in frustration after a strikeout this season, and he probably won't.

"I'm not that kind of person who is going to show his emotions," Moncada said. "I'm not the player who is going to throw a helmet or break a bat. When I have a bad moment, I keep it to myself. It won't make a difference if I show the people what my feelings are."

"Yes, of course, there are days when you are ticked off, when you are mad. But life is too short to [blow up] over those situations. You feel bad or mad, but you have to keep going. You have to have your mind right for the next opportunity."

Some view Moncada's strikeouts and errors as somewhat upsetting. Former Sox manager Ozzie Guillen, a commentator for NBC Sports Chicago and other media outlets, described Moncada by saying, "I hate him three days and love him two."

Guillen also acknowledged Moncada's considerable talent in the next sentence.

Fans can see it when Moncada hits the long ball, steals a base or makes a diving stop, but not so much on the called third strikes, swings and misses and errors on routine plays. Some fans aren't as high on Moncada as they were a year ago.

"I don't pay attention to that," Moncada said. "You can't control what people say or write. All you can do is play the game, knowing we're the ones who understand how tough it is to make a play, how difficult it is to hit a baseball. When we make mistakes, we know what we're doing wrong."

Moncada was out for early infield work on a sweltering Friday in Texas, so he's being aggressive about fixing the mistakes. The No. 1 lesson he has learned is that it's going to take longer than he thought.

"I've learned that this is a process, it's something young guys have to get used to," he said. "You can't get frustrated at any point. If you keep your faith in what you do, you're going to be good."

Moncada said he leans on fellow Cuban teammate Jose Abreu for advice. Advice, however, is starting to come from other sources, including fans, some of them growing impatient wanting to see more and wanting to see it now.

"I take all the attention, and I convert it to motivation," Moncada said. "That gives me the strength to come here every day and enjoy the game, to try to have fun and do the things I can do. I don't feel pressure from it, I feel motivation."
