



**Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Thursday, September 27, 2018**

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Twins power past Tigers as Field hits 2 homers

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | September 26, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- Jake Odorizzi struggled in his final start of the year, but the offense more than made up for the slack with Johnny Field recording his first multihomer game of his career, Jorge Polanco driving in three runs and Tyler Austin connecting on a two-run homer.

Despite Odorizzi surrendering four runs over three-plus innings, the offensive outburst helped the Twins to an 11-4 win over the Tigers on Wednesday at Target Field. Odorizzi had been pitching better with a 3.83 ERA over his last nine outings dating back to Aug. 1, but finishes the year with a 4.49 ERA in 32 starts and 164 1/3 innings.

"I'm not going to let this outing determine my season," Odorizzi said. "I made a lot of adjustments, saw a lot of improvement up until this last one. I'm going to take the good from this season. I made all my starts. I stayed healthy. It was by no means a year that I'm proud of, but it's a year I learned a lot from."

The Twins jumped all over lefty Matthew Boyd, who surrendered six runs on eight hits over 3 2/3 innings. They scored three times in the first, with Polanco drawing a walk, stealing second and scoring on a single from Robbie Grossman. Austin followed with his ninth homer with Minnesota and his 17th on the year.

Field smacked a leadoff blast in the second and added a two-run shot in the fourth off Boyd. Field, playing in his 18th game with the Twins since being claimed off waivers from the Indians on Aug. 3, crushed a no-doubter in the second on a first-pitch fastball from Boyd. It had an exit velocity of 100.8 mph and went a projected 376 feet, per Statcast™.

"I told myself that I hadn't really played in a while -- like six or seven days -- and I didn't really want to get into some deep counts," Field said. "I didn't know what my timing would be like tonight. So I just told myself that the first good pitch I got, I was going to put a good swing on it."

His second homer needed the help of instant replay, as it was originally ruled a double. But after a review, Field was credited with a two-run shot that left the bat at 98 mph and went a projected 353 feet.

"I honestly didn't even think it would hit the fence on the fly," Field said. "I thought it was going to be down, so I was running with my head down, trying to go hard into second. I got there and saw the commotion. I had no idea it was even close to being out."

Minnesota broke it open with a five-run fifth that was nearly derailed by a potential triple play. With two runners on and nobody out, Willians Astudillo hit a liner to second with both runners going, and the Tigers threw to second for what was ruled the second out but shortstop Ronny Rodriguez couldn't get the ball to first in time. But after a review, it was ruled Rodriguez never touched second base, so Grossman was ruled safe

at second with one out.

"It was a good catch by replay," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "Because I was closing my eyes, hoping not to see a triple play, so I missed the play at second."

Three batters later, Chris Gimenez provided a two-run single to left with two outs before the Tigers opted to intentionally walk Joe Mauer. The decision backfired with Polanco clearing the bases with a triple to left-center.

Odorizzi didn't have it from the start, walking the first batter of the game and allowing an RBI triple to Christin Stewart, who was thrown out at home trying to stretch it to an inside-the-parker. Detroit scored two more times in the third, keyed by back-to-back walks with one out. Niko Goodrum and James McCann both brought home runs with RBI singles.

Odorizzi left in the fourth with the bases loaded and nobody out, walking the last batter he faced. Reliever Tyler Duffey came in and allowed a sacrifice fly but struck out the next two batters to escape the jam.

"He threw a lot of pitches that were real close," Molitor said. "But I think most of them were balls, and you start needing those pitches to hang around. But the walks, hits, just was having trouble. We were giving him a chance to get into a groove there, and it just didn't happen. So we went ahead and turned it over to Duffey after they loaded them up there in the fourth."

SOUND SMART

Molitor reached his 300th win as manager, becoming the fifth Twins skipper to reach that mark, joining Tom Kelly (1,140), Ron Gardenhire (1,068), Sam Mele (524) and Gene Mauch (378). Molitor is 300-343 since taking over in 2015.

"It snuck up on me a little bit," Molitor said. "Didn't realize it until Joe Mauer acknowledged it after the game, which was nice. I guess baseball likes round numbers. Would like to get to 300 wins already before you have seen 300 losses, but that hasn't been the case. Keep moving forward."

HE SAID IT

"From start to finish my arm felt really good. My back felt good. Those are the kind of positives you take out of a year like this. It's nothing I'm proud of by any stretch of the imagination. Truth be told, I'll probably forget about 2018 tomorrow. I'm going to focus on next year and improving and getting back to the pitcher I am and this team deserves." -- Odorizzi

UP NEXT

The Twins will use an opener for the final time this season in their rubber game against the Tigers on Thursday at 7:10 p.m. CT. Lefty Gabriel Moya (3-1, 4.72 ERA) is again the opener, as he's done it five times this year, including three times against Detroit. Fellow lefty Stephen Gonsalves (1-2, 6.75 ERA) is expected to serve as the primary pitcher. Former Twins lefty Francisco Liriano (5-11, 4.40 ERA) starts for the Tigers.

Molitor wins 300th game, wants to return in '19 **Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | September 27, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- Twins manager Paul Molitor, who signed a three-year deal before the season after winning the American League Manager of the Year Award last year, didn't hesitate when asked if he wants to return in 2019.

"Yeah, I don't have any doubts about that," said Molitor before the Twins' 11-4 win over the Tigers on Wednesday. The win was Molitor's 300th as manager.

After a surprise run to the AL Wild Card Game last year, the Twins are at the end of a disappointing season with a 73-84 record. The front office has yet to give an indication on Molitor's future, but they're expected to meet with the media shortly after the season concludes, and a managerial change would be a surprise.

Molitor, 62, has dealt with a depleted roster that has been hurt by injuries to players such as Byron Buxton, Ervin Santana and Miguel Sano, the 80-game suspension of Jorge Polanco and the trades of veterans such as Brian Dozier, Eduardo Escobar, Lance Lynn, Zach Duke and Fernando Rodney.

"You don't ever want to sound like we're making excuses," Molitor said. "Every team has to deal with certain things along the way. We had some things that went not according to plan, and we had to make adjustments. Sometimes we did well and sometimes not so well. I think our guys learned, they're continuing to learn. There was an obvious fallback from last year what we were able to do, so expectations weren't met, but I still

try to look for positives."

Molitor, who finished his Hall of Fame playing career with the Twins from 1996-98, has managed Minnesota since 2015, posting a 300-343 record. The St. Paul native finished third in the balloting for AL Manager of the Year in 2015 before winning it last year.

Paul Molitor picks up career win No. 300 as Twins top Detroit 11-4
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 27, 2018

When a team underachieves, as the Twins have this season, changes are often made.

So all eyes will be on the Twins front office and ownership to see if, in addition to new players, they also will push for changes among the coaching staff.

One person who wants a shot to turn things around next season is manager Paul Molitor. When asked before Wednesday's game if he wants to return in 2019, Molitor didn't hesitate.

"Yeah," he said. "I don't have any doubts about that."

The Twins then went out and whipped Detroit 11-4 behind two home runs by Johnny Field, a home run by Tyler Austin and a bases-loaded triple by Jorge Polanco. It was Molitor's 300th career victory to go with 343 losses.

"It snuck up on me a little bit," Molitor said. "Didn't realize it until Joe [Mauer] acknowledged it after the game, which was nice. I guess baseball likes round numbers. Would like to get to 300 wins already before you've seen 300 losses [he has 343], but that hasn't been the case. Keep moving forward."

Righthander Jake Odorizzi was knocked out in the fourth inning after giving up four runs on six hits and a career-high-tying five walks. But reliever Tyler Duffey replaced him with the bases loaded and gave up only a sacrifice fly. Field hit his second homer of the game, a two-run shot to left that was verified by replay, in the fifth.

The Twins then exploded for five runs in the fifth. Chris Gimenez hit a two-run single to score Robbie Grossman and Austin, while Jake Cave moved to second. With Mauer batting, the runners moved up on a wild pitch, and the Tigers countered by intentionally walking Mauer.

Facing Tigers reliever Zac Reininger, Polanco hit a shot to the gap in left-center, driving in all three runners and putting the Twins ahead 11-4.

The win allows the 73-84 Twins to avoid 90 losses. It is a small consolation in a season that began with high expectations following a run to the wild-card game a year ago. The Twins battled injuries and Polanco's PED suspension early and never got on track. When the trade deadline came, the front office hit the unload button, training away six players for mostly prospects. The Twins have been playing out the schedule ever since.

Twins owner Jim Pohlad, during an interview Wednesday, expressed his disappointment over the season but said he will listen to any recommendations made by Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey and General Manager Thad Levine on personnel matters. He then was asked if he wanted Molitor to return next season.

"I have no idea what they are going to come with," Pohlad said of the front office. "No matter if we win the World Series or have a disappointing season like this, they are going to come with recommendations. Some of those recommendations could be personnel changes, could be methodology changes. I don't know, but I look forward to that."

Falvey would not speculate on the future of Molitor and the coaching staff, but said there will be meetings right after the season ends to determine if changes are necessary.

"Get to the end of the season," Falvey said, "let the season end and meet and then start talking about what that looks like. But we'll do that in a thoughtful manner."

Molitor plans to play Joe Mauer 'as much as we can' this week
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 27, 2018

Twins manager Paul Molitor has been mindful of Joe Mauer's workload ever since he took over as manager in 2015. Most day games following night games, Mauer has not been in the lineup. Lefthander on the mound? Give him a break. Off day coming up? Maybe sit Mauer out the day before to give him a two-day breather.

There's always been flexibility, based on how Mauer has felt. But with this being the final week of the season — possibly his last season — how much Mauer will play during these final games might be weighed differently.

"I've talked with Mollie and that's the thing," Mauer said. "Always prided myself on being available and getting out there and playing. This will be no different."

We're in the midst of an unsure and very subdued possible final week of Joe Mauer's career, which means he's getting more attention than usual but not as much as you might expect.

Mauer, 35, was the designated hitter Wednesday against Tigers lefthander Matthew Boyd. Chances are good that Mauer will be in the lineup Thursday in the series finale.

The Twins have a doubleheader Friday against the White Sox, so Mauer might play in only one of those games. The next interesting decision will come Saturday when the White Sox plan to start lefthander Carlos Rodon.

And Mauer, of course, is expected to play in the season finale Sunday.

"I'm going to play him as much as we can," Molitor said. "It's the last week and he's feeling good. We're checking every day."

When asked if playing in four of the final six games made sense to him, Mauer replied: "Like I said, I'd like to play every one of them. We do have that doubleheader on Friday. We'll see when we get there. I plan on playing them all."

Garver available

Catcher Mitch Garver has been cleared by the league and is available off the bench. Garver hasn't played since Sept. 12 when he was hit in the facemask by a foul ball while working behind the plate. He initially wasn't diagnosed with concussion symptoms, but those appeared a couple of days later.

The Twins did not officially place Garver on the concussion disabled list, but still informed the league about his condition and treatment.

Garver will not catch over the final week of the season, but he could pinch hit and possibly DH or play some at first base.

New affiliate coming

The Twins definitely will have a new Class AA affiliate next season. The Cincinnati Reds have signed a two-year deal to return to Chattanooga after a seven-year absence. The Twins spent the past four seasons at Chattanooga, winning the Southern League title in 2015.

Pensacola, Fla., and Amarillo, Texas, are the two locations the Twins are considering. The Padres also are interested in Pensacola, which is in the Southern League. The Reds, it just so happens, are moving to Chattanooga from Pensacola.

Amarillo is building a new stadium for Class AA baseball, and the San Antonio Missions are moving into the facility next season and looking for a MLB franchise to sign them as an affiliate.

Etc.

- Miguel Sano continues to battle soreness behind his left knee and was unavailable Wednesday. Sano has been hobbled since Sept. 5 when he injured his lower left leg sliding into second base in Houston. He returned Sept. 18 against Detroit, striking out in all four at-bats, but hasn't played since.

- While righthander Aaron Slegers has been activated from the disabled list, it's not a lock he will pitch in a game. "It's not a high priority," Molitor said. "We'll just see how the games go. He hasn't pitched since July and we weren't in position to get him to face hitters or anything like that. I don't know how likely it is, but we will see how it goes."

Wednesday's Twins-Detroit game recap
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 27, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Johnny Field, Twins

The outfielder was 2-for-4 with two home runs

BY THE NUMBERS

300 wins for Paul Molitor

31-18 record for the Twins when they get 10 hits or more.

ON DECK

The Twins will use an opener for the final time this season as Gabriel Moya starts and is followed by Stephen Gonsalves. Lefthander Francisco Liriano will start for the Tigers.

Twins postgame: Near triple play turns into big inning
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 27, 2018

Paul Molitor couldn't watch. FSN's Dick Bremer actually had gotten, "and a trip...." out of his mouth.

The Tigers had a shot at a triple play in the fifth inning but ended up getting just one - after replay.

With Robbie Grossman on second and Tyler Austin on first, Molitor called for a hit and run with the contact intensive Willians Astudillo at the plate. With the runners going, Astudillo hit a liner right at second baseman Dawel Lugo. Uh-oh.

Lugo threw to shortstop Ronny Rodriguez to double up Grossman. Rodriguez threw to first to try to nab Austin but first baseman Niko Goodrum dropped the ball.

Two outs...not really.

"I couple guys in the dugout said we want to check it," Molitor said, "and right when we said we want to check it, the phone rang. So our guys were on top of it. They picked it up right away."

The Twins challenged the call at second and won. Rodriguez was off the bag when he caught the ball. So Grossman was ruled safe. It took 3 minutes, 36 for the replay mavens to rule on the play.

Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire came out of the dugout, and we all thought he was going to get tossed. Although it looked like an admonishment from where I was sitting, I guess Gardy was just getting a clarification on the rule because Grossman had vacated second base after he was called out.

"It kind of goes both ways," Molitor said, "but there is something in there about when a base is abandoned and the out call is made it's going to favor the offensive team, I believe, in replacing the runner on second base. It was a good catch by replay because I was closing my eyes, hoping not to see a triple play, so I missed the play at second."

It ended up being a big play, as the Twins started hitting and scored five runs in the inning - all after the Tigers botched a triple play on two ends.

"We had a triple play that turned into a five-run inning," Gardy said. "That's not good."

Garver cleared to play and is available against the Tigers tonight
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 26, 2018

Mitch Garver has been cleared by the league and is available off the bench tonight. Garver hasn't played since Sept. 12 when he was hit in the facemask with a foul ball while working behind the plate. He initially wasn't diagnosed with concussion symptoms, but those appeared a couple days later.

Garver will not catch over the final week of the season, but he could pinch hit and possibly DH or play some at first.

But first base might be occupied by Joe Mauer, who indicated last night that he's willing to play as much as possible during this final homestand.

Still no news on Miguel Sano, who is battling lingering soreness behind his left knee from when he slid into second base in Houston on Sept. 5.

Tigers

Jeimer Candelario, 3B
Christin Stewart, LF
Nicholas Castellanos, RF
Niko Goodrum, 1B
Jim Adduci, DH
James McCann, C
JaCoby Jones, CF
Dawel Lugo, 2B
Ronny Rodriguez, SS

Matthew Boyd, SS

Twins

Joe Mauer, DH
Jorge Polanco, SS
Logan Forsythe, 2B
Robbie Grossman, RF
Tyler Austin, 1B
Willians Astudillo, 3B
Jake Cave, CF
Johnny Field, LF
Chris Gimenez, C

Jake Odorizzi, RHP

Sports Illustrated examines the odd phenomenon of Joe Mauer
Michael Rand | Star Tribune | September 26, 2018

Welcome to the Wednesday edition of The Cooler, where you can know something exists without fully understanding it. Let's get to it:

*We're in the midst of an unsure and very subdued possible final week of Joe Mauer's career, which means Mauer is getting some more attention than usual but not as much as one might expect.

That said, the potential end of his career is not playing out how many of us would have imagined a decade or so ago, when Mauer was on a Hall of Fame trajectory and looked as though he might go down as one of the greatest catchers — and perhaps the greatest Twin — ever.

Concussions, age, shifting, the awfulness of the Twins since 2011 ... all of them have robbed Mauer in some way. And, of course, the \$184 million contract he signed in 2010 that kicked in during the 2011 season has undoubtedly altered public perception.

In some ways, Mauer's career is upside down. He won three batting titles and an MVP award by the time he was 26, and during those years he was vastly underpaid. But contracts are based on past performance, and since that MVP year in 2009 (and an underrated follow-up in 2010, the year he signed the deal), Mauer has had two vintage years (2012 and 2013), one pretty good year (2017) and five mediocre seasons spanning his contract.

It adds up to a strange legacy, one that Sports Illustrated recently probed. A hometown player such as Mauer, one of the Twins' best players in history (but clearly not the best), should be bathing in glory if this is, indeed, his final week.

And sure, there are plenty of fans cognizant of his contributions and aware of his place in history who are cheering extra loud for a few final moments.

But there is also a decent segment of Twins fandom counting down the days until his \$23 million a year deal is off the books. And there is another segment that views his potential departure from the playing field with a collective shrug.

Maybe a divided legacy is appropriate. As the only Twins player spanning the positive vibes of last decade and the negative vibes of this decade, Mauer is — fair or not — both a symbol and symptom of what went wrong.

One thing is for sure: These last eight years haven't played out as anyone imagined, and maybe sad is the best way to describe that feeling.

*Eduardo Escobar, one of several Twins traded during the middle of this lost season, homered for the Diamondbacks to help Arizona defeat the Dodgers — and Brian Dozier, another traded Twins player. The blast trimmed the Dodgers' lead to half a game over Colorado in the NL West, and it sure would be something if Escobar keeps Dozier out of the playoffs.

*FiveThirtyEight eschews the trade machine approach most of us have been taking to Jimmy Butler trades and examines which teams should actually make a strong play for him. The conclusion: Surprisingly few.

Jorge Polanco continues surge in 11-4 Twins win over Detroit Tigers
Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | September 26, 2018

It took just one inning Wednesday night for Jorge Polanco to remind everyone at Target Field why he's part of the Twins' solution rather than the problem.

First, he took Jake Cave's throw from deep center field and made a perfect relay home to keep Christin Stewart from circling the bases on a wild carom off the wall. In the bottom half of the frame, the switch-hitting shortstop worked a full-count walk, stole second and scored on Robbie Grossman's two-out single in an eventual 11-4 Twins win over the Detroit Tigers.

While Polanco has made 13 errors in less than half a season after serving an 80-game steroid suspension, he has shown enough on both sides of the ball to solidify his spot among the Twins' young core for 2019.

"I try not to set guys up too much," Twins manager Paul Molitor said, "but you've heard me talk pretty glowingly about what I think his future is going to look like. He's got a special bat."

Polanco, who added a bases-clearing triple in the fifth, hasn't been the same second-half terror he was in 2017, when he helped push the Twins into the wild-card game. Yet he still entered Wednesday hitting .310 with an .832 combined on-base/slugging percentage over his past 20 games and 90 plate appearances.

He's been much better from the left side (.838 OPS) than the right (.594) this year, but he split his six homers equally.

"He's got ability as far as finding the barrel, and I think he's dangerous from both sides," Molitor said. "I think we're going to continue to see a power development. I think he knows the strike zone. It's been a tough year for him in overcoming what he had to there in the first half, but he's finishing on a good note."

Still just 25, Polanco is weighing an offer to play in the Dominican Winter League for Escogido again this year after skipping last season. Part of that will depend on where he decides to conduct the bulk of his offseason workouts, no small consideration after running afoul of the game's performance-enhancing drug policies.

A second positive test would cost Polanco an entire season, while a third strike would mean a lifetime ban.

"I'm not sure if I'm going to pick a trainer in the Dominican," he said recently. "I'm trying to stay in the States. I got a couple of options: Tampa, New York or Fort Myers. I want to see how the offseason goes with the workouts."

The \$18 million Dominican training complex the Twins share with the Philadelphia Phillies in Boca Chica is about a 45-minute drive from Polanco's home in San Pedro de Macoris. His preferred workout is just 5 to 10 minutes from his home.

Another option is to join boyhood friend Miguel Sano in his planned workouts with Olympic 400-meter sprinter Yon Soriano.

"I know him," Polanco said. "He's a good guy. I worked with him last year for like two days. I've known him for awhile, but I'd never talked to him until last year. He taught me a couple of stretches, a couple of workouts."

Unlike Sano, Polanco could benefit from shaving a split-second off his running times. In Wednesday's fourth, he added the ninth bunt single of his young career, all in the past two seasons.

He has split his 12 stolen-base attempts this year, leaving him with a career success rate of just 63.2 percent in 38 big-league tries.

"I like to work a lot on my speed, too," Polanco said. "I don't know if I'll work with Yon because I have my guys over there."

Plus, running with an Olympic-level sprinter can leave a ballplayer feeling, well, slow.

"Yon can fly," Polanco said. "I think he ran like 5.8, 5.9 in the 60- (yard dash). That's too fast."

His throwing arm noticeably stronger after a full year spent working with Gene Glynn and Sam Perlozzo, Polanco also seems to have answered the constant questions about his ability to stay at shortstop. Molitor suggested offseason trade or free-agent opportunities would be the only thing that would force a position change.

"A lot of people have a lot of confidence in him playing that position," Molitor said. "I'm in his corner as far as the development as a shortstop. I think there's still improvement to be done — we all know that — but he does a lot of good things out there."

Paul Molitor definitely wants to return as Twins manager in 2019

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | September 26, 2018

Paul Molitor, shortly before picking up career victory No. 300, didn't hesitate Wednesday when asked whether he wanted to return for a fifth season as Twins manager in 2019.

“Yeah, I don’t have any doubts about that,” he said.

Named American League Manager of the Year after an 85-win season and a wild-card berth last season, Molitor’s three-year extension runs through 2020 at an estimated average of \$1.5 million per season. After failing to claw back into contention by the trade deadline in late July, the Twins shipped off a half-dozen of their top contributors, including two-time defending club MVP Brian Dozier, doubles machine Eduardo Escobar and 41-year-old closer Fernando Rodney.

Since the start of Molitor’s tenure, just three AL clubs (Orioles, Tigers and White Sox) entered Wednesday with fewer wins than the Twins, who went 299-343 in that span. The Twins had posted a cumulative run differential of minus-209 under Molitor, including minus-65 this year.

Their only year in positive territory was 2017, when they rallied late to finish at plus-27.

“It snuck up on me,” Molitor said of his 300th dugout win. “Didn’t realize it until Joe (Mauer) acknowledged it after the game, which was nice. I guess baseball likes round numbers.”

According to expected record, the Twins have been three wins behind their Pythagorean pace under Molitor since 2015, according to Baseball-Reference.com. They were break-even this year amid a steady stream of injuries and other setbacks.

“Don’t ever want to sound like we’re making excuses,” Molitor said. “Every team has to deal with certain things along the way. We had some things that went not according to plan and we had to make adjustments. Sometimes we did well and sometimes not so well. I think our guys learned; they’re continuing to learn.”

The Twins have tied a Minnesota franchise mark with 15 walk-off losses, one short of a major league record last reached by the 1975 Houston Astros.

“Hopefully we learned by some of the things we had to endure this year, including the walk-offs,” Molitor said. “Those put a big dent in your season and what you’re trying to do.”

GOODRUM PLENTY

Detroit Tigers rookie utility man Niko Goodrum, a former second-round pick who spent his first eight professional seasons in the Twins organization, caused a replay review with his barrel-roll slide into Logan Forsythe that broke up a potential double play on Tuesday.

Hunter Wendelstedt explained to Molitor that the slide was “bona fide” and within the rules despite Goodrum’s awkward approach. Forsythe also didn’t attempt a throw, Molitor was told, which caused the initial call of a simple forceout to stand.

Goodrum, who entered Wednesday with 112 starts and 470 plate appearances for manager Ron Gardenhire, has killed Twins pitching all year. In 55 trips this year against his former team, Goodrum entered with a combined on-base/slugging percentage of 1.133.

He had five home runs and 12 runs batted in against the Twins through 14 games. Against the rest of the majors, he had 11 homers in 378 at-bats.

“He’s had a ton of hits against us,” Molitor said. “I didn’t know he was so vengeful.”

BRIEFLY

J.P. Martinez, the Twins’ assistant minor-league pitching coordinator, is with the big-league club for this three-game series with the Tigers. Pete Maki, the former Duke pitching coaching hired as minor-league pitching coordinator last offseason, will follow him into town for the four-game, season-ending series with the Chicago White Sox.

Mitch Garver cleared the concussion protocol and is available to hit off the bench the rest of the way.

Miguel Sano (left knee) is still dealing with symptoms but remains hopeful of getting into at least one game before the season ends.

Former Twins catcher and bench coach Terry Steinbach stopped by to see his old friends on both sides.

It’s unlikely right-hander Aaron Slegers will get into a game after not pitching in the majors since July 10.

Field hits pair of homers in Twins' 11-4 win over Detroit
Associated Press | Fox Sports North | September 26, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — It looked like a sure triple play. A double play, at least. In the end, the Detroit Tigers got just one out from it, and the Minnesota Twins made them pay.

Johnny Field homered twice, Jorge Polanco hit a bases-loaded triple and the Twins beat the Tigers 11-4 on Wednesday night.

The game turned on an odd play in the fifth inning with the Twins leading 6-4.

With Robbie Grossman on second and Tyler Austin on first and nobody out, Twins manager Paul Molitor called for a hit-and-run.

Willians Astudillo followed with a line drive right at second baseman Dawel Lugo, who threw to second to — it appeared — easily double off Grossman. Shortstop Ronny Rodriguez's relay to first base seemed to beat Austin, but was in the dirt and Niko Goodrum couldn't make the scoop.

That's when it got interesting.

The Twins claimed Rodriguez was not touching second base when he took Lugo's throw and a replay reversed the call, putting Grossman back on second.

"I was closing my eyes hoping not to see a triple play, and I missed the play," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "A couple guys in the dugout said we want to check it . so our guys were on top of it and they picked it up right away."

Rodriguez was charged with the error, and it was a costly one. The Twins went on to score five runs in the inning, all with two outs. Chris Gimenez hit a two-run single, and after Joe Mauer walked to fill the bases, Polanco cleared them with a triple to the gap in left-center.

"We had a triple play that turned into a five-run inning," Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire said. "That's not good."

Austin also homered and Astudillo had three hits for the Twins.

Christin Stewart tripled and drove in two runs for the Tigers.

Tyler Duffey (2-2) earned the win with two scoreless innings in relief of starter Jake Odorizzi. Detroit starter Matthew Boyd (9-13) gave up six runs in 3 2/3 innings.

Field gave the Twins a 6-4 lead with his second home run of the game. The ball was originally ruled in play, but a video review showed that it barely cleared the fence before bouncing back onto the field.

There was no such doubt on Field's first home run. He led off the second by hitting Boyd's first pitch off the facing of the second deck in left, giving the Twins a 4-1 lead.

Austin's two-run drive followed Robbie Grossman's RBI single in the first inning. It was Austin's 17th homer of the season and ninth since the Twins acquired him from the Yankees in a July 30 trade.

The Tigers got RBI singles from Niko Goodrum and James McCann in the third inning, and Stewart tied the game with a sacrifice fly in the fourth.

MORE FRUSTRATION FOR ODORIZZI

The Twins acquired Odorizzi in a February trade with the Rays, hoping that he'd stabilize the starting rotation and be a solid No. 2 or 3 starter. And he was durable, making 33 starts on the season. But he would agree that too many of them were like his outing on Wednesday.

"Truth be told, I'll probably forget about 2018 tomorrow," said Odorizzi, who gave up four earned runs on six hits and five walks in just three

innings. "I'm going to focus on next year, improving and getting back to the pitcher I am and that this team deserves."

Odorizzi finishes 2018 with a 7-10 record and a career-worst 4.49 ERA. The five free passes he issued on Wednesday also pushed his walk rate to 3.8 per nine innings, tying his highest total in his five major league seasons.

"Take the good from this season," Odorizzi said. "I made all my starts. I remained healthy. It was by no means a year that I'm proud of, but a year that I learned a lot from. So if I can make the adjustments next year and stay healthy, I'm in for a lot better and will show the fans a lot better too."

MOLITOR MILESTONE

The victory gave Molitor his 300th career managerial victory in his fourth season with the Twins.

"It snuck up on me a little bit," said Molitor, whose career record stands at 300-343. "I guess baseball likes round numbers. I'd rather get to 300 wins before you've already seen 300 losses, but that hasn't been the case."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Twins: Mitch Garver returned to action for the first time in two weeks, pinch-hitting in the eighth inning and playing first base in the ninth. He'd been out since Sept. 12, when he suffered a concussion after taking a foul tip off his mask while catching.

UP NEXT

Tigers: LHP Francisco Liriano (5-11, 4.40) will pitch for Detroit on Thursday night in the series finale. Liriano lost consecutive starts against the Twins in August, giving up seven earned runs and walking seven in 6 2/3 innings.

Twins: LHP Gabriel Moya (3-1, 4.72) will serve as the "opener" for the Twins on Thursday. LHP Stephen Gonsalves is among the likely candidates to pitch in relief of Moya