



Press Clips

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FROM THE OC REGISTER**Rookie Jaime Barria continues strong work while Angels' offense erupts against Rockies**

By Jeff Fletcher

DENVER — As Jaime Barría has prepped for this first big league opportunity, the best advice he's gotten from his teammates is to forget that the major leagues are any different.

After Barría's best performance yet, 5-1/3 innings in the Angels' 8-0 victory over the Colorado Rockies on Wednesday, he said he's tried to live by that idea.

"Everybody told me, it's the same as any other game, just more people in the stands," the 21-year-old Panamanian said through an interpreter. "It's the same game of baseball. I went out and competed and performed well."

Barría made an impression on everyone from his manager to his teammates in the way he got through the challenge of a game at Coors Field, which can be a nightmare venue for pitchers.

Barría still pounded the strike zone, throwing 61 of his 89 pitches for strikes.

"I'm really impressed with him," third baseman Zack Cozart said. "You don't see a lot of young guys like him come up and just pump strike after strike with any pitch. He seems to be pretty polished at such a young age."

Barría was particularly effective after getting into a couple jams.

"We were very impressed with the poise," Manager Mike Scioscia said. "In the second inning and fourth inning, he made some pitches to get out of it."

In the second, the Rockies had runners at the corners with one out, and he struck out Ian Desmond and Daniel Castro. In the fourth, the first two hitters of the inning reached, but then he struck out Chris Iannetta and Desmond, and he got Castro on a flyout.

"He was great," catcher René Rivera said. "He came out attacking the zone. He missed a couple times, and then he came right back. It's tough to pitch here. Everybody knows that. But he did a great job keeping them off balance and making pitches."

Four starts into his big league career, Barría has been a revelation for the Angels. Although it's still early, he seems to be on his way to proving the Angels were right to consider him part of the starting pitcher depth chart before he'd ever pitched in a big league game.

Through his first 18-1/3 innings, he has a 2.45 ERA. He won three of his starts. In the other, Brandon Belt's 21-pitch at-bat cranked up his pitch count so much that he ran out of gas in the third inning. Even that at-bat, though, demonstrated something about Barría.

He throws strikes.

So far he's thrown 68.3 percent of his pitches in the majors for strikes, better than the major-league average of 63.2 percent. He's thrown the first pitch for a strike 65.2 percent of the time, better than the major-league average of 59.8 percent.

It no doubt helped that he threw all of his pitches with the lead, thanks to Cozart leading off the game with a double and scoring on Mike Trout's single.

Cozart, who had just been moved to the leadoff spot in place of slumping Ian Kinsler, hit his fifth homer of the season to put the Angels up 2-0 in the third.

Two batters later, Justin Upton belted a two-run homer. Upton also had a single and a double. He is 12 for 31 (.387) with four homers, starting with his game-winning single against the Orioles on May 1.

Rivera added a homer in the seventh, despite a badly bruised hand from two foul balls in one inning, and the Angels tacked on a few more runs late.

Angels drop slumping Ian Kinsler from leadoff spot

By Jeff Fletcher

DENVER — Although Mike Scioscia concedes there's no place to hide a hitter in a major league lineup, he's nonetheless trying a new neighborhood for Ian Kinsler.

Scioscia moved Kinsler out of the leadoff spot, to the No. 6 spot, for Wednesday's game. Kinsler was hitting .189, including .134 over his previous 67 at-bats.

With Mike Trout batting second, it's obviously better if the Angels' leadoff man is getting on base more regularly.

"There is a lot of focus on whoever is hitting in front of Mike," Scioscia said. "Ian is just working on a couple things. I'm sure at some point he's going to get back up there."

Zack Cozart was in the leadoff spot for Wednesday afternoon's game at Colorado. Cozart was hitting .313 over his past eight games, around a short break with some back tightness.

Scioscia was also asked if he considered putting Andrelton Simmons, who has been the second-hottest hitter, in front of Trout. Simmons has mostly been hitting fifth.

"I think Simba is really good where he is," Scioscia said. "I like him hitting with guys in scoring position."

NEXT FOR OHTANI

The Angels have officially listed Shohei Ohtani as the starter for Sunday's game against the Minnesota Twins at Angel Stadium, continuing their pattern of using him on six days' rest when possible.

That means Ohtani is likely to be in the lineup as the DH on Thursday and Friday, and off Saturday.

Garrett Richards and Tyler Skaggs are scheduled to start the first two games of the series. Nick Tropeano is expected to come off the disabled list to start Saturday.

ALSO

Scioscia said "everything was good" with Keynan Middleton's rehab outing Tuesday night and it's possible that he could be activated as soon as Thursday. Middleton has been out with elbow inflammation. ...

Blake Wood (elbow impingement) was supposed to be back by now. He still hasn't thrown off a mound, although that's been imminent for a few days. "Just the process of getting the inflammation out of there," Scioscia said. "Sometimes it takes a day or two longer to get to the next step. You can't run through any steps. Although we anticipated it would calm down a little quicker than it has, it's just a minor thing." ...

Parker Bridwell (elbow inflammation), who is on the Triple-A disabled list, is scheduled to be activated to pitch for Salt Lake City on Saturday. Scioscia said he will pitch three innings...

Blake Parker has allowed two runs in his last 11 innings, with 11 strikeouts. Parker finished last season as the Angels' closer but he got off to a rough start this year. "Lately we're more excited the last couple outings because he's making good pitches," Scioscia said. "Now he's feeling more comfortable. The process is important with Blake. I think we're seeing a better process." ...

Thursday's game will not be broadcast by the Angels' local TV network. The national FS1 broadcast will air in Southern California.

UP NEXT

Angels (Garrett Richards, 4-1, 3.93) vs. Twins (José Berrios, 3-3, 3.98), Thursday, 7 p.m., FS1, KLAA (830 AM).

FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

Angels snap Rockie's six-game winning streak in 8-0 victory

By Jeff Miller

His slider was working and so were his changeup and fastball.

Everything was working for Jaime Barria on Wednesday. Everything but his bat.

"I think his last at-bat was a home run when he was 16," manager Mike Scioscia joked. "He couldn't carry that momentum over to today."

No problem. The Angels already have one two-way phenom in Shohei Ohtani. As long as Barria can pitch like he did in an 8-0 victory over Colorado, the team is fine with him being a one-way sensation.

The rookie produced 5 1/3 in-control innings, continually flustering the Rockies with runners on base and allowing the Angels to earn a split of this two-game series.

It didn't matter that his first two big league plate appearances resulted in three outs, the latter being a groundball double play.

For the record, Barria said his most recent at-bat actually came when he was a shortstop at age 15, a year before the Angels signed him out of Panama to be a pitcher.

"I didn't have enough time to practice," he said through an interpreter. "I was a little nervous (hitting) at the beginning."

When it came to Barria's pitching, the first thing Scioscia praised was the opposite of nerves: poise.

After pinch-hitter Noel Cuevas led off the fifth with a single, Barria struck out Charlie Blackmon with a high fastball. The inning abruptly ended when David Dahl next lined into a double play.

In the fourth, the first two Rockies reached on a single and a hit by pitch. Barria struck out Chris Iannetta and Ian Desmond -- on six pitches -- before getting Daniel Castro to fly out.

He also pitched around a leadoff double in the second and a two-out double in the third, the 21-year-old successfully navigating the pitfalls of pinballing Coors Field.

"It's tough to pitch here," catcher Rene Rivera said. "He did a great job."

The performance continued an impressive run for the Angels' rotation, a run that is reaching notable levels. Over the past nine games, the starters have an ERA of 1.87 and none has allowed more than two runs.

Just seven pitches into the game, the Angels had a lead they wouldn't relinquish when Zack Cozart, who had doubled, came home on Mike Trout's single.

Cozart was moved to the leadoff spot in place of Ian Kinsler, who entered batting .189 and then, hitting sixth, had an RBI single and a walk in five plate appearances.

Cozart's response to the move also included a solo homer in the third, putting the Angels up 2-0.

Justin Upton, who finished with three hits, followed a batter later with a two-run homer, doubling the Angels' lead and giving Barria room to exhale.

The Angels' fifth run came on a homer by Rivera, a drive that apparently validated the health of the catcher.

Rivera was hit in the right hand by a foul tip early and appeared to be heading to the bench after his first practice throw to test the hand sailed into the outfield.

"The first couple minutes are the tough ones," said Rivera, who was X-rayed after the game and pronounced himself OK. "Your hand gets numb. You have to wait to get the feeling back."

He stayed in and still remained after taking another ball off the same spot while securing a foul tip that lodged in his right armpit.

"That was strange," Rivera said, smiling. "It hit my hand and then came right in my armpit and just stayed there. I don't know how I did that, just more reaction."

Whatever the explanation, the results worked Wednesday for the Angels, who are 22-14 and heading back to Anaheim for the longest homestand of the season.

U.S. Virgin Islands teammates reunite on the Angels roster

By Jeff Miller

There they were Wednesday, nearly 3,000 miles from home, separated by a single locker in one of the most unlikely developments of this Angels season.

"This is something you couldn't even imagine," **Jabari Blash** said. "It was dope just playing behind Akeel in Salt Lake."

When **Akeel Morris** debuted with the New York Mets in 2015, he was the 12th player from the U.S. Virgin Islands to make the big leagues. The next season, Blash, then playing for San Diego, became the 13th.

On this trip, the former travel-ball teammates in St. Thomas and fellow graduates of Charlotte Amalie High were reunited at the sport's highest level.

"For the island, this is huge," Morris said. "It's exciting for them. Most people back home are Angels fans now. This is definitely something special."

Though neither is guaranteed anything going forward given the fluid status of the club's roster, they've had four days at least to delight in the astronomical odds of two Virgin Islanders sharing the same major league clubhouse.

This is, indeed, something historic. When Morris entered in the ninth inning Wednesday, it marked the first time two natives of the U.S. Virgin Islands appeared in a game as teammates in more than a half-century.

The last two to do so were **Al McBean** and **Elmo Plaskett**, who played together for Pittsburgh from 1961-63.

"You look back now and you laugh at how far we've come," Blash said. "It's amazing."

The Angels traded for Blash during spring training and for Morris just after the start of the season.

When the latter deal was announced, Blash texted Morris to acknowledge the incredible coincidence they were about to be living.

They were teammates first at triple-A Salt Lake and then, starting Sunday when Blash was promoted, with the Angels.

"It's the first thing we said to each other," Morris said. " 'What are the odds, right?' When we talk about, it's easy to get excited. It's exciting, every moment of it."

Middleton to be activated

Reliever **Keynan Middleton** (elbow inflammation) could be activated from the disabled list as soon as Thursday.

The right-hander, who leads the Angels with six saves, pitched a scoreless inning for triple-A Salt Lake on Tuesday.

Ohtani to pitch Sunday

Shohei Ohtani, who threw a light bullpen session Wednesday, is scheduled to make his next pitching start Sunday at home against Minnesota. He later pinch-hit in the eighth inning and singled.

FROM ANGELS.COM

Bats back Barria as Halos end trip with shutout

Rookie righty strikes out seven in 5 1/3 vs. Rockies

By Owen Perkins

DENVER -- With a boost from Zack Cozart at the top of the order, the Angels' bats came alive Wednesday, scoring four of their first five runs on the long ball and pairing the offensive onslaught with stellar starting pitching from Jaime Barria in an 8-0 blanking of the Rockies to earn a series split in the two-game set.

Cozart, Mike Trout and Justin Upton accounted for the Halos' first four runs, going a collective 5-for-6 over the first three innings in the top three spots in the order, respectively. Cozart filled Ian Kinsler's leadoff role, as Kinsler relinquished his spot atop the lineup for the first time when he's been in a game

this season. Cozart responded with a leadoff double and scored on Trout's RBI single to center to seize the early momentum.

Cozart homered to left with one out in his next at-bat, followed by another Trout single and Upton's second round-tripper in as many days, a two-run liner to left that put the Angels ahead 4-0.

Barria started off strong, retiring the Rockies in order in the first frame. He faced traffic every inning after that, scattering five hits, a walk and a hit batter over 5 1/3 innings while striking out seven.

His biggest challenges came in the second and fourth innings. In the second, he had runners on first and third with one out and struck out Ian Desmond and Daniel Castro to escape danger. Two innings later, he gave up a leadoff single to Carlos Gonzalez and hit Trevor Story, putting men on first and second with no outs. Barria struck out Chris Iannetta and Desmond and retired Castro on a fly to right to evade his last significant threat.

The Angels added an insurance run in the seventh on a leadoff shot from Rene Rivera and two more in the eighth when Upton and Albert Pujols opened the inning with back-to-back doubles and Kinsler plated the second run with a single up the middle. Shohei Ohtani kept the rally going with a pinch-hit single to center before Rivera grounded into an inning-ending double play.

Kinsler out of leadoff spot for 1st time this year

Cozart replaces veteran infielder at top of lineup for Wednesday's finale

By Owen Perkins

DENVER -- Ian Kinsler came into Wednesday's series finale in Colorado with 22 games under his belt for the season and 22 times hitting leadoff for the Angels. For the first time this year, Kinsler was out of the leadoff spot.

Kinsler was struggling through a 1-for-20 road trip and a 0-for-14 streak, and his slash line of .189/.260/.256 is well short of the expectation for an effective table-setter in front of Mike Trout, Justin Upton and Albert Pujols.

"Right now there is a lot of focus on whoever is hitting in front of Mike," manager Mike Scioscia said before the second of the two-game set with the Rockies. "Ian is just working on a couple things. I'm sure at some point he's going to get back up there."

Zack Cozart -- who led off for 13 games when Kinsler, who batted sixth Wednesday, was on the disabled list early in the season or otherwise out of the lineup -- was back at the top of the order and made an immediate impact, doubling in his first at-bat then homering in the third inning. Entering Wednesday's game, Cozart was slashing .238/.293/.434 and was 5-for-14 with three doubles, a homer, an RBI and three runs in a three-game hitting streak on the five-day road trip. He hit .313 (10-for-32) over his previous eight games following an eight-game slump that had him hitting .037 (1-for-27).

Kinsler is in his first season with the Angels, after spending the previous four seasons with the Tigers. He is fourth all-time with 47 homers from the leadoff position, trailing Rickey Henderson (81), Alfonso Soriano (54), and Craig Biggio (53).

Middleton ready to return

Angels closer Keynan Middleton is close to returning from the disabled list where he's been recovering from elbow inflammation. He went on the DL retroactive to April 29.

Middleton started a rehab game with the Triple-A Salt Lake City Bees on Tuesday, pitching one inning, walking two and striking out two. Scioscia said he could be activated in time for Thursday's series opener with the Twins.

"He walked the first two guys, but everything looked good," Scioscia said. "His velocity was good. He came back and cleaned up the inning with no damage. I think he feels good coming out of it. We will evaluate him today and just see what the next step is."

Honorary bat girl

Each Major League Baseball team has designated an honorary bat girl for Sunday's Mother's Day games as part of their effort to raise awareness and funds to fight breast cancer. Those honored with the position are individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to fighting breast cancer.

The Angels' honoree is Anne Fleck, an occupational therapist working with children with special needs in Orange County. Fleck is a survivor, and her breast cancer was discovered last August after a routine mammogram. Her early detection and subsequent ability to avoid chemotherapy or radiation treatment serves as a reminder for women to get routine check-ups to aid in the early detection of the disease.

Players will wear special uniforms on Mother's Day, with pink-crowned caps and a pink ribbon on their jerseys. They'll also have the option of wearing pink socks, compression sleeves, wrist bands, footwear, catcher's equipment, and more, and many players will choose to use pink bats during games on Mother's Day.

Louisville Slugger will donate proceeds from the sale of their pink bats, which will be stamped with the MLB breast cancer awareness logo, to Susan G. Komen and Stand Up To Cancer, and Major League Baseball will donate its licensed uniform royalties through Mother's Day apparel to Susan G. Komen and Stand Up To Cancer.

FROM MLB.COM

Shohei Ohtani crushed a batting-practice homer so hard it left a mark on Coors Field

By Jake Mintz

Everyone knows about the incredible power-hitting prowess of Angels slugger / flamethrower Shohei Ohtani. Ohtani consistently does things that no one around baseball has ever witnessed before, and that continued Tuesday with a moonshot he clobbered during batting practice at Coors Field.

Ohtani's shot was hit so hard, in fact, that the ball left a physical mark on a stadium railing.

And for scale, here's a photo of how far away that is from home plate. Shohei Ohtani, a true wonder of wonders. What will he do to wow us next?

Cam Bedrosian tried to throw a hat back to a fan, but had to settle for putting it on a bush

By Eric Chesterton

A hat and sunscreen are essential items for the fan looking to enjoy an afternoon at the ballpark. With the sun likely to be shining bright, you need all the protection you can get. Be careful, though. Hats have a funny way of getting away.

In the second inning of Wednesday afternoon's game between the Angels and Rockies, a fan dropped his cowboy hat into the Angels bullpen. Cam Bedrosian picked it up and -- nice guy that he is -- tried his darndest to return it to the fan. There was only one problem: The bullpen is way below the concourse:

After coming to the realization that he wouldn't be able to achieve the proper loft to return the hat to the fan, Bedrosian took to finding a new home for the object. Enter the bullpen shrubbery:

Of course, the cowboy hat didn't have long to get acquainted with its new owner before it was returned to the fan waiting up above. Even though it looked great on the bush, everyone knows a hat's proper place is on a head.

NL set to end 14-year Interleague losing streak

By Will Leitch

When's the last time you thought about Interleague Play? This is the 22nd season of Interleague Play -- it made its Major League Baseball debut the same year as Bartolo Colon -- and it has become so

normalized that unless it's a rivalry game (Mets-Yankees, Cubs-White Sox, Dodgers-Angels, Giants-A's), I doubt you even notice they're happening anymore. This is the sixth season in which we have had an Interleague game every single day of the schedule, and all told, I doubt the average fan finds a Twins-Cubs game any stranger than a Marlins-Cubs one.

This, suffice it to say, is quite a journey from where we were when Interleague Play was first introduced. In 1997, Bob Costas called it a "slapdash deal that baseball has thrown together with its usual lack of thought." This was the general consensus, Interleague Play as a gimmick tossed at the wall as a cheap way to draw back fans after the 1994 strike. (Originally, it was going hand-in-hand with the elimination of the designated hitter.) But water eventually finds its natural level, and at this point, attendance at Interleague games is essentially the same as non-Interleague games. It's just the sport right now, and forever.

Which means, other than those rivalry series (and then only a few), there's only one particularly noteworthy aspect of Interleague Play left. And it's a good one. Last year, the American League had a better record than the National League in Interleague Play, 160-140. That's a pretty close margin -- it's roughly the winning percentage the Brewers had last season -- but that's not what's important about it. What matters is simply that the AL won. Again.

2017 was the 14th consecutive season that the AL had a better record than the NL in Interleague Play. Fourteenth! The first eight seasons of Interleague Play were a dead split, 4-4. The 13 after that, heading into this year, were all AL victories. It was close in 2013, when the AL won 154-146, and a massive blowout in '06, which the AL won 154-98, which was the AL beating the NL at the pace of a 99-win team. For all the chatter about Interleague Play, the two leagues have become much more of a piece in the past decade; the umpires are the same, the players are the same, the stadiums are roughly the same, everything's the same but the DH. But still: 14 years in a row! It's a curse!

There are various theories as to why this streak might be happening -- the DH messing with roster construction, travel-time disparities, random chance -- but it is worth noting: So far, 43 of the 300 Interleague games in ... the NL is in the lead. The NL has won 28 of the first 43 games, a whopping .651 winning percentage that's higher than anything either league has ever put up. The NL is playing against the AL so far the way the Dodgers played against everyone last year. This could finally be the year.

Of course, we have said that before. Here is [FiveThirtyEight](#) speculating that 2016 could be the NL's breakthrough; here is [CBS](#) doing the same last year, as late as August. And each time: The AL still came out on top.

There are reasons to think this really is the year, though. First off, 28-15 is quite the head start: The NL only needs to go 123-144, a .461 winning percentage (roughly last year's Orioles), to come up with the 151 wins necessary. But more to the point: For the first time in a decade, the NL seems to definitively have better teams than the AL. It's not particularly close.

The AL has the defending champions, it has the Yankees and Red Sox, it has Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani. But it also has the Orioles and the AL Central. The O's alone could swing this: They are arguably the worst team in baseball right now -- and one that will presumably get even worse once it finally trades away Manny Machado, the AL MVP Award contender in the middle of its lineup -- and haven't

even played any Interleague games yet. And the AL Central, a division that doesn't have a team with a winning record, has to play the NL Central this year, a division in which the Cubs are currently fourth.

Here's a fun fact: There are more teams with losing records in the AL Central than there are in the entire NL. I swear that this is true. There are only four teams in the NL with losing records: The Padres, the Reds, the Marlins and ... the Dodgers, the defending NL champions. This is where the primary disparity between the leagues lies; the NL teams who have taken a step backward in recent years have taken a step forward this year, and the AL teams haven't.

- AL teams who had a losing record in 2017 but have a winning record in 2018: 2 (Mariners, Blue Jays)
- NL teams who had a losing record in 2017 but have a winning record in 2018: 5 (Mets, Braves, Phillies, San Giants, Pirates)

Even if a couple of those NL teams fall back -- I'm looking at you, Giants and Pirates -- that's a steep hill for the AL to climb. Tellingly, four of the five best team records are in the AL; only Arizona reaches that level out of the NL. But the NL teams fattening up on bad teams in the AL, and there are a lot of bad teams. The NL will likely fatten up on them in the same way.

So yes, it is early. But every indicator -- early-season starts, depth of quality teams, pure regression -- points to the NL breaking the streak this year. I'll just go out and say it: The NL is coming out on top in 2018. It's finally happening. It almost has to. If it doesn't, maybe there is some sort of curse.

Prospects who have boosted their stock the most

By Joanthan Mayo

While the Draft is now less than a month away and we're all hyper-focused on it, I wanted to take a quick break from that world and focus on the Minor League prospect side of MLB Pipeline.

It might seem an odd decision given the time of year, but we have plenty of time to get full-on Draft fever (New mock from Jim Callis coming Friday!). And there have been a couple of things to make us, and me in particular, shift focus at least briefly.

On the personal front, I just got back from a quick sojourn to Manchester, N.H. where I got to sit and break down video with Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Bo Bichette (story coming soon!). I also witnessed, in person, Vlad Jr. hitting a home run to the opposite field, off a tee. Which is just insane.

On the more macro side of things, we just had a story, courtesy of Mr. Callis, laying out a dozen changes to our Top 100 list, market corrections, if you will. We'll be doing that again before our major summer re-rank, and it's elicited a lot of discussion about who should be moving up and down the list.

I let that inform my choices in which questions to answer for this week's Inbox. Most are about one individual prospect, with names that have come up, either internally or externally, in the discussion about our Top 100 updates.

Whose stock has risen the highest in this first quarter of the season?

This one ties directly to the Top 100 updates we made. I discussed one pitcher who has made the largest leap, as well as a hitter who is moving himself to the top of offensive prospect lists, in the video above.

Brandon Marsh is off to a great start with Burlington in low A ball. Really love his approach at the plate and he goes to the opposite field with ease hitting. Thoughts on him over the long term?

Marsh, the toolsy outfielder who is currently No. 5 on the Angels' Top 30 Prospects list, is indeed off to a very good start in his first taste of full-season ball, with a .327/.423/.538 line over his first 104 Midwest League at-bats. The Angels love his raw tools; it just took him some time to get on the field to show them off.

Marsh was a two-sport standout in high school and signed with the Angels as their second-round pick in 2016, but didn't play that summer because of a back issue that popped up in his post-Draft physical. The organization was understandably cautious and didn't send him out until the rookie-level Pioneer League started last summer. Marsh promptly went out and posted a .944 OPS with 10 steals in 39 games and he's picked up where he left off.

While we didn't move Marsh into the Top 100 with these updates, he's now much more firmly on the Top 100 radar. His feel to hit, combined with his athleticism and raw power still gives him tremendous upside. Don't be surprised to see him climb onto the big list in the near future. Boy, that outfield in Burlington with him and Jo Adell in it, sure is fun to watch!

Is Peter Alonso legit...and do you think there is a chance he gets called up this season?

He's so legit, you probably should know his name is Alonso, with an 's,' but I digress.

There are some folks in the Twitterverse who very much would've liked to see the Mets first-base prospect, No. 4 on their Top 30 and No. 7 on the Top 10 1B list, get moved onto the Top 100 with this update. While we didn't make that move, it's hard to argue with how he has swung the bat. As of Wednesday, he led the Double-A Eastern League in OPS, just ahead of Guerrero. He's also tied for the league lead with eight homers.

This isn't an aberration, it seems. The 2016 second-round pick out of Florida hit .289/.359/.524 in his first full season across the Florida State and Eastern Leagues. Back in Double-A, he's now at .373/.488/.686 this season to give him a gaudy .310/.389/.566 career line. The main reason why I see him as "legit" is his approach at the plate. This year, he's striking out at an 18.7 percent rate, while walking in 16.3 percent of his plate appearances. That trend continues with his raw power and he's an everyday first baseman in the near future. Whether he makes it up this year will largely be based on need, keeping in mind he's a first baseman only and the options they have in the big leagues (even if they are uninspiring), with Dominic Smith in Triple-A. I'll say maybe a September callup, even if his performance says he should get a shot earlier.

Where is Trevor Rogers?? Drafted LY and has NOT thrown 1 pitch

OK, so Rogers' name didn't come up in Top 100 update conversation, but if we were going to do updates to team Top 30s, perhaps we'd look at the Marlins' list, where Rogers is currently No. 5.

Since being taken No. 13 overall in last June's Draft, the lefty from the New Mexico high school ranks has yet to throw an official professional pitch. The Marlins gave him extra rest last summer rather than rush him out, then his instructs were washed out by Hurricane Irma.

The good news is that there's nothing wrong with the 20-year-old southpaw physically. Because of his lack of time on the mound, the Marlins are just erring on the side of caution, keeping him back in extended spring camp and letting him slowly build up so he's ready to join a rotation later this summer. He's getting his innings up and has reportedly been up to 95 mph with his fastball with an eye on an assignment, possibly to a short-season club.

FROM MiLB.COM

Prospect Roundup: Games of May 8*

A's Fowler mashes before callup; Phils' Medina back on track

By Sam Dykstra

Who stayed hot

Angels OF Brandon Marsh, Class A Burlington: 3-for-4, 2 2B, 3 RBI, R, BB -- No. 2 Angels prospect Jo Adell got plenty of attention for his four-hit performance in his return from the disabled list, but his teammate added three hits of his own. Marsh, the Angels' No. 5 prospect, is now hitting .327/.423/.538 in his first 28 games with Burlington. On a loaded roster, Marsh's 161 wRC+ is tops among qualified Bees hitters, and a noted improvement over his still-impressive 125 wRC+ with Rookie-level Orem last season. With speed and a good arm in the outfield, Marsh could give Adell a run for his money as the Angels' most well-rounded outfielder. Well, Minor League outfielder.

**Article cut to only include Angels-related material.*

FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Angels snap Rockies' six-game winning streak in 8-0 victory

Rene Rivera homered with a sore right hand, Jaime Barria threw efficiently into the sixth and the Angels beat Colorado 8-0 on Wednesday to end the Rockies' six-game winning streak.

Barria (3-1) allowed five hits and struck out seven over 5 1/3 innings. Relievers Justin Anderson, Jose Alvarez and Akeel Morris allowed three hits the rest of the way as the Angels improved to 14-4 on the road.

Zack Cozart and Justin Upton both homered in the third. Rivera added a solo shot in the seventh despite taking a pair of foul tips off his right hand while catching in the fourth.

After a visit from the trainer, Rivera threw one of his practice tosses into left field.

Tyler Anderson (2-1) struggled over five innings and allowed four runs. His outing snapped Colorado's string of nine straight quality starts.

Ian Desmond had a rough day at the plate, striking out four times and stranding six runners.

It was another gem for Barria, who took a no-hitter into the sixth against Baltimore in his previous start.

The right-handed Barria kept the Rockies off balance by relying on a sneaky slider and fastball that was in the low 90s.

Cozart led off the game with a double and was brought in by Mike Trout. That halted a streak of 24 straight scoreless innings by Colorado's starters at home. The previous time a Rockies starter allowed a run at Coors Field was when Chad Bettis allowed four in the first inning on April 23 against San Diego.

FROM ESPN.COM

Mookie Betts vs. Bryce Harper – and other pressing baseball debates

By David Schoenfield

Some debates at the current moment in baseball time:

Mookie Betts is better than Bryce Harper

Harper is off to an excellent start. He began the week leading the National League in home runs and walks, while ranking second in runs, third in RBIs and fourth in on-base percentage. Betts, however, is playing like Secretariat at the Belmont. He began the week leading the majors in home runs, runs, batting average and slugging percentage, while ranking second in WAR.

We all know Harper is going to receive a mega-payday in free agency, given his age -- he'll turn 26 in October -- and potential to put up MVP-caliber numbers like he had in 2015 (when he won) and in 2017 (when he might have won if he hadn't hurt his knee in August).

Let me throw this out there: If Harper is going to receive a \$300 million or maybe \$400 million contract, what will Betts get? Betts will be eligible for free agency after the 2020 season, and while he's the same age as Harper -- they were born nine days apart -- that means he'll be two years older than Harper at

free agency, which factors into the potential payout. But consider each player's total WAR since the start of 2015:

Betts: 24.6

Harper: 17.0

That's Baseball-Reference WAR, which uses defensive runs saved as its defensive component, and DFS absolutely loves Betts, crediting him with plus-63 runs above average in right field in 2016 and 2017.

OK, here are the FanGraphs numbers:

Betts: 21.1

Harper: 18.5

It's a little closer, but Betts still comes out ahead. Is he the better all-around player? It's hard to argue against that statement, although the gap for now is because of his big edge on defense and durability (but note that the four seasons we're looking at include only one season in which Harper missed significant time).

The weird thing about Harper's 2018 numbers is that he has just two doubles to go with his 12 home runs. Betts, meanwhile, has remained a doubles machine even with all the home runs (13) and is on pace to top 40 doubles for the third straight season. Betts has been the better offensive player in 2018, but Harper holds a decisive edge over the four seasons, as Baseball-Reference estimates he has created 123 runs above average, compared to 73 for Betts.

Harper supporters also might suggest that Betts is helped by a stronger lineup around him. Indeed, Harper has seen just 41.7 percent of pitches in the strike zone, the second-lowest rate in the majors. However, that figure matches his 41.8 percent rate since 2015, so he's not necessarily being pitched more carefully this season than in the past. Betts also is helped by Fenway Park -- he has hit .314 there, compared to .277 on the road for his career, although he actually hits more home runs on the road. (He hits way more doubles at home, thank you, Green Monster.)

Anyway, it's a close call. I'd take Betts for 2018, given his premier defense and hot start, which suggests his offense might go to a new level. I might prefer Harper on a 10-year contract, but that's gambling on his health.

Clayton Kershaw is still the best pitcher in baseball

For the third straight season and fourth season in five, Kershaw is going to miss time on the disabled list, this time with biceps tendinitis. Kershaw won his fifth ERA title in 2017, and his ERA since 2013 is 1.99. And it's at 2.86 this season, even as he was pitching with diminished velocity.

The concern isn't so much his ability, but his ability to stay on the mound. He also has seen his home run rates increase drastically over the past two seasons, perhaps the strongest indicator that Peak Kershaw has come and gone.

Is he still the best? I'd say the torch has been passed -- I'm just not exactly sure to whom. Bill James has a formula to rank starting pitchers, which gives more credit to recent starts while incorporating results from the past, but with less emphasis the further back you go.

James' current rankings:

Max Scherzer: 594.2 points

Justin Verlander: 592.4 points

Corey Kluber: 586.7 points

Chris Sale: 562.5 points

Clayton Kershaw: 556.4 points

A year ago, Kershaw held a 14-point edge over Scherzer at 577 to 563. I think it's fair to say those four guys all have passed Kershaw -- they've all been more durable (Kluber did miss a little time last year with a back issue). I'm good with Scherzer as the current No. 1, especially given his lights-out start in 2018, with 80 strikeouts, a 1.74 ERA and just three home runs allowed in 51 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings.

The Astros could have the best rotation ever

Whoa, let's not get too far ahead of ourselves. It has been only 36 games. Still, what an amazing start. Houston's rotation owns a 2.34 ERA, while averaging 10.63 strikeouts per nine innings. That matches Kershaw's mark for 2014, when he led the majors. At the beginning of the week, Baseball-Reference estimated the rotation's value at 6.2 WAR and FanGraphs had it at 6.3. Split the difference and prorate it over 162 games and you get 28.1 WAR.

Comparing rotations across eras is even more problematic than comparing position players. In the dead-ball era, starters pitched ungodly numbers of innings. Modern-day pitchers benefit from increased strikeouts. Offensive levels have changed throughout history, making straight ERA comparisons worthless. For what it's worth, FanGraphs' top five rotations using WAR:

2011 Phillies/1970 Cubs: 26.0

1971 White Sox: 25.9

1997 Braves: 25.4

1967 Twins: 24.7

1996 Braves: 24.6

You know those Braves rotations, fronted by Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz. The 2011 Phillies featured Roy Halladay (2.35 ERA), Cliff Lee (2.40) and Cole Hamels (2.79), plus Roy Oswalt (3.69) and Vance Worley (3.01) in more limited duty. A quick comparison:

TEAM	ERA	LG ERA	SO/9	LG SO/9	IP
2018 Astros	2.39	4.29	10.84	8.70	1,035.0 *
2011 Phillies	2.86	3.81	7.88	7.29	1,064.2
1997 Braves	3.05	4.20	6.92	6.89	1,096.2

*projected

The interesting thing is how many innings Astros starters have thrown so far. That pace is probably unsustainable, given that Houston starting pitchers threw just 899 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings in 2017. This group is better and different with a full season of Verlander and Gerrit Cole taking his game to another level, but no team's starters have reached 1,000 innings in the past two seasons.

Still, the Astros have put themselves on the map for fielding a potential all-time great rotation. If the pitchers stay healthy, you never know.

Mike Trout is the still the best player in baseball

Mike Trout on that 14.8-WAR pace

I mean, he's probably not going to keep that up -- Babe Ruth, with 14.1 WAR in 1923, is the only player to reach even 13 WAR, according to B-R. Barry Bonds peaked at 11.9 in 2001. Carl Yastrzemski's remarkable Triple Crown season in 1967 comes in at 12.5, behind only two Ruth seasons. Trout's personal best is 10.5 in 2012 and 2016, but given his early power output and improved defensive metrics, a 12-WAR season appears possible. And, yes, that means he's still the best player in baseball.

FROM CBS SPORTS

Twins, Angels to open 4-game set

The Minnesota Twins will try to continue their recent success against the Los Angeles Angels when they open a four-game series Thursday night at Angel Stadium.

By STATS

The Minnesota Twins will try to continue their recent success against the Los Angeles Angels when they open a four-game series Thursday night at Angel Stadium.

The Twins have won nine of their past 13 meetings against the Angels over the past two seasons, and come into this series on a roll, having won five in a row.

The Twins (15-17) have scored at least four runs in their past nine games, helping them pull within a game of the Cleveland Indians for first place in the American League Central.

"Now that the weather's gotten warm, we're feeling pretty good at the plate," Minnesota right fielder Robbie Grossman told reporters after a 7-1 victory at the St. Louis Cardinals on Tuesday. "Every part of this team has it going now."

The Angels (22-14) are coming off a two-game split at the Colorado Rockies.

Los Angeles ended Colorado's six-game winning streak with an 8-0 win on Wednesday afternoon. Angels third baseman Zack Cozart replaced Ian Kinsler in the leadoff spot and went 2-for-4 with a double and home run.

Justin Upton and Rene Rivera also homered for Los Angeles.

The Rockies and Twins are two of the five teams that have entered a series against the Angels this season riding a winning streak of at least four games.

The Yankees had a six-game winning streak and the Boston Red Sox had won four in a row when they came to Anaheim last month. The defending World Series champion Houston Astros had won six straight before the Angels came to town and won two of three April 23-25.

In the series opener against Minnesota, the Angels are scheduled to face right-hander Jose Berrios (3-3, 3.98 ERA) for the second time in his three-year career.

Berrios pitched six innings at Angel Stadium on June 4, allowing two runs and six hits in the 3-2 win, part of his 7-1 start to last season.

Berrios has never faced Angels sluggers Mike Trout or Albert Pujols. Kinsler has seen Berrios the most of any current member of Los Angeles, and he's 2-for-9 in his career with a home run.

Berrios gave up a two-run homer in the first inning of his most recent start, the eighth straight inning he allowed at least one run, but bounced back and allowed two runs over the next five innings to earn the win in a 6-4 victory against the Chicago White Sox.

The Angels will counter with right-hander Garrett Richards (4-1, 3.93 ERA).

Richards is coming off his best outing of the season, throwing 6 2/3 shutout innings in a 5-0 win at the Seattle Mariners on Friday. That followed his worst start of the season, when he gave up nine runs (five earned) and five hits in 1 2/3 innings of an 11-1 loss against the visiting Yankees on April 28.

Richards told reporters after his most recent start that he's been working closely with pitching coach Charles Nagy.

"It's rhythm and tempo and mechanical stuff," he said. "My mindset is still there. I'm trying to attack guys and fill up the zone and get ahead in counts. Nothing's changed as far as that goes, just really kind of finding a happy medium with my tempo going toward the plate to help me be a little more consistent."

Richards is 2-1 in his career against the Twins with a 2.61 ERA. He last faced them on April 15, 2016, allowing two runs and four hits in six innings of a 5-4 loss in which he did not receive a decision.

FROM YAHOO! SPORTS

Mike Trout reveals the MLB pitcher he just can't figure out

By Mike Oz

There could be some argument about this, but there shouldn't be: Mike Trout is the best baseball player on the planet.

Trout is a two-time MVP at 26, a guy who has never finished any lower than fourth in the MVP vote. He's already having one of his across-the-board-great seasons, which shouldn't be a surprise at this point. He's also the guest on this week's Yahoo Sports MLB podcast, which we can't say will add to his Wins Above Replacement total, but it sure won't take away from it either.

In a fun sitdown with Yahoo Sports' Tim Brown, Trout talks about a number of topics, including Albert Pujols and Shohei Ohtani, what he loves about baseball, what pitcher he just can't figure out and even a little bit of football — he puts together an NFL roster of baseball players.

If you're not already a subscriber to our podcast, now is a good time to fix that. Click the image below to be whisked away to Apple Podcasts, where you can subscribe to the show and get new episodes each week when they're released.

As for the pitcher who frustrates Trout — it's not Clayton Kershaw or Justin Verlander. It's Max Scherzer, the Washington Nationals ace, who has almost as much hardware in his awards case as Trout.

"When Scherzer was with Detroit," Trout told Yahoo Sports. "I'm happy he went to the NL.

"He's got unbelievable stuff. Obviously with the Cy Young awards. He's just an athlete on the mound. He's a grinder. You see his emotion out there. He competes. I like guys who go out there and leave it all on the line."

The numbers support Scherzer owning Trout. In 16 at-bats against Scherzer, Trout has struck out 10 times and has only three hits. One is a homer at least. There are only 10 pitchers in MLB who have ever struck out Trout 10 times and Scherzer is the only one to do it in fewer than 20 at-bats.

If you listen to the entire podcast, you'll see how Trout holds Scherzer in high regard. He also earned himself a spot on Trout's Football-Baseball team. Once again, you can find the show on Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, Acast and where ever else you find podcasts. If you dig what we're doing, we'd appreciate your ratings and reviews.

MLB Power Rankings: The unbeatable Yankees surge to the top spot*

The Evil Empire is officially back! The New York Yankees have claimed the top spot in our MLB Power Rankings for the first time this season, and it's tough to argue against that choice.

The only team threatening the Yankees for that spot is the Boston Red Sox, who we ranked No. 1 last week. Both teams currently have the same record, but the Yankees are on one heck of a streak right now. New York has lost just one game out of its last 17. That gave them the edge over Boston for now.

There's still plenty of season left, though. We have a feeling these two teams will be stealing the top spot from each other a few times before the postseason starts.

5. Angels (22-14; last week: 11)

At some point, Mike Trout is going to stop improving, right? Somehow, his numbers keep getting better. Through 35 games, he has a .328/.453/.703 slash line with 12 home runs. There's no debate, he's the best player in baseball.

**Article cut to only include Angels-related content.*

FROM THE ATHLETIC

Long before Shohei Ohtani and Ichiro, pitcher Masanori Murakami blazed a trail for Japanese major leaguers

By Jim Caple

You've likely read/heard/seen a lot this season about the Angels' Shohei Ohtani, who is both a starting pitcher and hitter, the first player to regularly pull this off at a high level since Babe Ruth. And you certainly know about Ichiro, the future Hall of Famer with 3,089 career hits in the majors – plus another 1,278 in Japan. And Yankees pitcher Masahiro Tanaka. Or the retired Hideki Matsui and Hideo Nomo, and many other Japanese baseball stars who have played in the U.S. major leagues.

But how much, if anything, do you know about Masanori Murakami, aka Mashi?

Murakami was the first Japanese player in MLB history, pitching for the Giants way back in late 1964 and then 1965. That was long enough ago that the next Japanese player to arrive in the majors, Nomo, had not even been born.

"We didn't know what kind of player he was back then, so not much about what he did here," Mariners pitcher Hisashi Iwakuma said when asked what he knew about Murakami. "But he definitely was the guy who was the pioneer for us."

San Francisco Giants CEO Larry Baer said his team still remains in touch with Murakami, more than half a century later.

“He was just a beloved character who came in with a lot more obstacles than,” he said. “Pitching in the major leagues 53 years ago, from the language barriers to [the] cultural. We live in a much more global world now. But in 1965, think about what he had to do to be able to successfully navigate just the basics. Through the language, the culture and customs of major-league baseball. We take a lot of pride in being the first team to have a Japanese player on our team.

“He’s one of those great stories that just doesn’t get told.”

Murakami was born in early May 1944, when the United States and Japan were at war. (He didn’t meet his father for the first time until 1948, when the elder Murakami was released from a Soviet labor camp years after the war ended.) He signed with the Nankai Hawks for \$30,000 at age 18 in 1962. After one season with their lone minor league team, the Hawks sent him to the U.S. in 1964 to play in the Giants’ minor league system. He was just 19 when he joined them in spring training, along with two other young players from the Nankai minor league team. The goal was to learn more baseball.

It wasn’t easy. Murakami responded for this story through his friend, Fred Tanaka, that, unlike with today’s Japanese ballplayers, he had no translator: “It was very difficult, not knowing English and American culture.”

Because few could pronounce his name correctly, he was called Mashī, a nickname he still goes by. He had no transportation and very little money, either, and said he had to hitchhike just to get dinner. But he brought an English-Japanese dictionary with him everywhere and learned to communicate over time.

At the end of August 1964, he was called up all the way from Class-A Fresno to the majors because the Giants were in need of a left-handed reliever. He made his debut Sept. 1 against the Mets in New York, walking to the mound while humming the global No. 1 hit song “Sukiyaki.” He then struck out two batters in a scoreless inning.

“It was one of my best memories,” he said of that MLB debut.

Mashī didn’t allow a run until the final game of the season, finishing with a 1.80 ERA and 15 strikeouts in 15 innings. He threw a decent fastball and changeup but also an excellent curve.

“He was such a kid,” said Robert Fitts, who wrote the excellent and well-researched book *Mashī* about Murakami. “He wasn’t just the only Asian and the only Japanese player, he was also one of the youngest players, too. The experience of what he went through is kind of mind-boggling. To go from high school and a minor league player in Japan to being an important part of a major league bullpen in a few months is pretty amazing.”

As Fitts writes in *Mashī* and Robert Whiting details in his book, *The Meaning of Ichiro*, there were difficult relations between the Giants and the Hawks. The Giants wanted him back for 1965, but Nankai did not want him playing outside of Japan again and initially insisted that he return to the Hawks. This dispute went on for months, with the commissioners of both leagues getting involved, while Murakami had to stay in Japan to train with the Hawks.

Finally, at the end of April, the two leagues and teams agreed that Murakami could pitch the 1965 season with the Giants, though Nankai said he would have to return to Japanese baseball in 1966.

Murakami quickly flew to San Francisco and threw his first game May 9, three days after his 21st birthday. Mashi did not start off well, with an ERA of 9.31 in early June after seven appearances. But he got better as the season went on and finished at 4-1 with a 3.75 ERA and 85 strikeouts in 74 1/3 innings.

He also was extremely popular with fans. The Giants even held Masanori Murakami Day for him at Candlestick Park on August 15, the 20th anniversary of the end of WWII. They had Mashi be their starting pitcher that day.

“For the Japanese Americans who had struggled so much during and after World War II just because they were Japanese,” Murakami says in Fitts’ book, “having a special day for a Japanese at Candlestick Park was more impressive than I could have imagined.”

A week later, Murakami also finished up the infamous Giants-Dodgers game when Juan Marichal smashed catcher John Roseboro over the head with a baseball bat.

Mashi was so well-liked by his teammates that Willie Mays gave him a pair of diamond cuff links at a team barbecue at his home. As Mays told a newspaper back then, “Murakami and I are good friends, so good that we may not need a language between us.” And, as fellow Hall of Famer Gaylord Perry told Fitts in his book, “He was, and is, one of the nicest guys you will ever meet.”

Murakami still wanted to pitch for the Giants in 1966, but returned to Japan out of respect for Nankai manager Kazuto Tsuruoka, who he says helped him study and play in the U.S. He pitched the next 17 seasons for Nankai and Nippon Ham, but dealt with some elbow and other arm issues. He won 103 games with 30 saves and had a 3.64 ERA.

After his final year in Japan, Mashi went to spring training with the Giants in 1983 hoping to play for them again, but did not make the team. He pitched batting practice with San Francisco, then returned to Japan and eventually became a game broadcaster for NHK. The Giants have honored Murakami several times in the past decade, including a bobblehead giveaway in 2008 and another on the 50th anniversary of his first major league season with him throwing out the opening pitch.

“He was fun-spirited and a great person to be the first [Japanese player],” Baer said. “Because he had a strength of character and courageousness and also a fun side, that made what was a perfect persona for pioneering. And then, through the years, he’s come back and been a great emissary. He’s basically been the ambassador for Japanese baseball.”

While there were a number of Americans who left MLB to play in Japan from the 1960s on, there were no other Japanese players in the major leagues for 30 years after Murakami left the Giants.

“What happened was they came up with a solution, a compromise,” Fitts said of that 30-year gap. “The two commissioners agreed they would not raid each other’s leagues. Basically, they were untouchable unless they were selling the contracts outright. Americans continued to go over to Japan, but no American team bought a Japanese player’s contract.”

In 1995, Fitts said, Hideo Nomo’s agent discovered that there was a contract clause allowing a player to retire from Japan’s baseball leagues and then become a free agent. Nomo did so, signed with the

Dodgers and went on to have a 12-year career. He made the National League All-Star team his first season with the Dodgers, threw a no-hitter in 1996, twice finished fourth in the Cy Young vote and won 123 career games.

Nomo's excellence led to more pitchers coming to MLB over the next several years and, in 2001, Ichiro signed with the Mariners to become the first Japanese position player in MLB.

"[Mashi] was from an earlier generation and, that said, it's too bad because Hideo Nomo had all the attention," Ichiro said of Murakami. "It's not his fault. He was obviously huge. But back then, our country didn't get to see U.S. major league baseball, period."

Fitts says there was some fear, especially after Ichiro paved the way for position players, that too many of Japan's top players would leave the country to play in MLB. That has not been the case.

Still, Mashi says, "I believe that it is a good thing that other Japanese players want to come to the U.S. to challenge the best baseball players."

The most notable recent player, of course, is Ohtani, who is 3-1 with 32 strikeouts in 26 1/3 innings as a pitcher while batting .333 with four home runs, 14 RBIs and a 1.001 OPS.

"Ohtani is not only a good baseball player, but he is a very good person. Cheerful, polite and a very good personality," Mashi said. "I think he can mingle with the players well."

By the way, unlike Ohtani, Murakami only batted when he pitched in a game and had just 16 plate appearances. He also did not hit any home runs like Ohtani (though he had an inside-the-park homer in the minors). But here is one final amazing piece of info about Murakami: One of his two career hits was off Sandy Koufax. Said Murakami of that hit in the *Mashi* book: "The Giants bench cheered, and I was puffed up with pride."

While Murakami did not play in the U.S. for long, he did things well worth remembering.

FROM FOR THE WIN/USA TODAY

Mike Trout's broken bat hit an umpire, so he stopped to apologize before running to first

By Ted Berg

Moments ago, in the Angels-Rockies game in Colorado:

Mike Trout broke his bat and it hit Chris Iannetta, so he apologized before running to first base.
<https://streamable.com/2v3rp>

That there is Mike Trout, greatest baseball player in the world, breaking his bat on a ball hit to center field, realizing that part of the bat flew straight behind him toward Rockies catcher Chris Iannetta and home-plate ump Jerry Layne, and briefly pausing en route to first base to make sure they were alright.

We already know Trout has baseball instincts to burn, but apparently his nice-guy instincts are also off the charts. Who else would even think to delay his baserunning for a quick "my bad?" Trout's so freaking good at baseball he can afford to be super polite in the process.

Both Iannetta and Layne appeared OK and remained in the game after getting hit with Trout's wayward bat fragment. The hit was Trout's second in the first three innings of the game. He would come around to score on a Justin Upton home run.

FROM MIDLAND DAILY NEWS

Angels snap Rockies' 6-game winning streak in 8-0 victory

By Pat Graham

DENVER (AP) — Rene Rivera had a big hand in this win even if it was tender and sore after the game.

It's not every day a catcher gets hit by two foul tips in the same inning and in the same spot.

Rivera shook off the pain in his right thumb and later hit a solo homer as he helped the Los Angeles Angels beat Colorado 8-0 on Wednesday to end the Rockies' six-game winning streak.

"Nothing to worry about," Rivera said after returning from the X-ray room. "I can't remember (if that's happened before). Probably. We get hit a lot."

Rivera took a foul tip off the bat of Trevor Story in the fourth. After a visit from the trainer, Rivera threw one of his practice tosses into left field.

Soon after, Chris Iannetta's foul tip struck Rivera in the same spot, with the ball rolling up his arm. Rivera held on to it in the crook of his arm to record the strikeout.

"I don't know how I caught it," Rivera said.

His hand throbbing in the seventh, Rivera drove a fastball from Chris Rusin over the fence in right-center for his second homer this season.

"There's a huge knot on his hand," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "I was expecting he was going to come out the game. He said, 'Let me try it.' He ended up playing a great game."

Jaime Barria (3-1) allowed five hits and struck out seven over 5 1/3 innings. Relievers Justin Anderson, Jose Alvarez and Akeel Morris allowed three hits the rest of the way as the Angels improved to 14-4 on the road.

It was another gem for Barria, who took a no-hitter into the sixth against Baltimore in his previous start. The right-handed Barria kept the Rockies off balance by relying on a sneaky slider and fastball that was in the low 90s.

"He was great," Rivera said. "Came out attacking the zone."

Zack Cozart and Justin Upton both homered in the third to make it a 4-0 game — more than enough for Barria.

Tyler Anderson (2-1) struggled over five innings and allowed four runs. His outing snapped Colorado's string of nine straight quality starts.

Ian Desmond had a rough day at the plate, striking out four times and leaving six runners on base. Desmond is now hitting .176 this season.

"Today it looked like he wasn't seeing the slider," explained manager Bud Black, whose team was 0 for 12 with runners in scoring position. "He will turn up tomorrow."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Angels: RHP Keynan Middleton (elbow inflammation) struck out two and walked two in one inning of work for Triple-A Salt Lake on Tuesday. "He feels good coming out of it," Scioscia said. ... RHP Blake Wood (shoulder impingement) was slated to throw three innings Wednesday.

Rockies: 2B DJ LeMahieu was out of the starting lineup a day after coming off the 10-day disabled list with a strained right hamstring. "We planned this," Black said.

OHTANI MANIA

Right-hander Shohei Ohtani drew quite a crowd for his bullpen session behind the fence in right-center. Fans leaned over the railing to get a better look at his pitches.

Asked if he would have liked to see Ohtani pitch at Coors Field, Scioscia responded: "It would have been an advantage to have a pitcher like Shohei being able to hit. He would give you a lot of offensive advantage. But it didn't work out."

Ohtani, who didn't start because there is no designated hitter in NL parks, came up as a pinch-hitter in the eighth and sharply singled.

SO CLOSE

Shortstop Andrelton Simmons originally had an infield single in the eighth, but the Rockies challenged the play and the call was changed to an out. He drew a walk with the bases loaded in the ninth. Simmons finished 0 for 4 to end his 12-game hitting streak.

STREAK STOPPED

Cozart led off the game with a double and was brought in by Mike Trout. That halted a streak of 24 straight scoreless innings by Colorado's starters at home. The previous time a Rockies starter allowed a run at Coors Field was when Chad Bettis surrendered four in the first inning on April 23 against San Diego.

UP NEXT

Angels: RHP Garrett Richards (4-1, 3.93 ERA) starts Thursday against Minnesota as the Angels begin an 11-game homestand.

Rockies: The Rockies will see a familiar face on the mound Thursday when RHP Jhoulys Chacin (2-1, 4.08 ERA) throws for Milwaukee. Chacin was with the Rockies from 2009-14. Colorado will throw RHP German Marquez (2-3, 4.76).

FROM REUTERS

Barria shines as Angels shut out streaking Rockies

Justin Upton homered for the second time in two days at Coors Field and Zack Cozart and Rene Rivera also hit homers as the Angels won 8-0 to end the host Colorado Rockies' six-game winning streak.

It was the Angels' sixth win in their last eight games, as four pitchers combined for 14 strikeouts.

The early offense backed Los Angeles rookie right-hander Jaime Barria (3-1), who worked 5 1/3 shutout innings, allowing five hits and a walk with seven strikeouts and pitching around some trouble to keep the Rockies at bay.

Cozart, who hit leadoff early in the season when second baseman Ian Kinsler was hurt, returned there Wednesday with Kinsler hitting just .189.

Against Rockies left-hander Tyler Anderson, Cozart opened the first inning with a double to deep right field. Mike Trout followed with a single to score Cozart.

The top of the Angels' order struck again in the third. With one out, Cozart hit a solo home run to left-center field, his fifth homer of the season. After Trout singled again, Upton launched a home run to left field, his eighth of the season, stretching the lead to 4-0.

Upton had three hits on the day and moved into a tie with Trout for the team lead in RBIs with 25.

Anderson (2-1) was coming off one of his best starts of the season, having allowed just two runs and three hits with nine strikeouts to beat the Cubs in Chicago on May 2. But in five innings Wednesday, he gave up four runs on six hits and struck out only three. He walked one.

Barria, meanwhile, escaped a few tough spots. He allowed a leadoff double to Carlos Gonzalez in the second inning. A flyout got Gonzalez to third, and Barria walked Chris Iannetta. But Barria struck out Ian Desmond looking and Daniel Castro swinging.

The Rockies posed a more serious threat in the fourth. Gonzalez led off with a single to center, and Trevor Story was hit by a pitch. Barria then struck out Iannetta and Desmond and got Castro on a weak fly ball.

Barria gave up a single to Nolan Arenado to begin the sixth, but came back to strike out Gonzalez before he was lifted in favor of right-hander Justin Anderson. Anderson struck out Story, and after Iannetta was hit by a pitch, Desmond struck out for the third time. He struck out in the ninth inning as well.

The Angels scored in the seventh on Rivera's second home run of the season, a solo shot off lefty reliever Chris Rusin.

They added two in the eighth against right-hander Brooks Pounders on doubles by Upton and Albert Pujols and an RBI single by Kinsler.

In the ninth, Andrelton Simmons drew a bases-loaded walk to account for the Angels' final run.

Angels relievers Jose Alvarez and Akeel Morris escaped scoring threats in the eighth and ninth innings, respectively.

FROM USA TODAY HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

TBT: Jo Adell adjusting well to minor league pitchers

By Jim Halley

Jo Adell, who was the American Family Insurance ALL-USA Player of the Year last season at Ballard (Louisville), hits all the boxes on the check list for a legitimate prospect.

He's 6-3 and 208 pounds, runs the 60 in 6.19 seconds, can jump 41 inches, hits for power and can throw 94 mph. That's why the Los Angeles Angels drafted him No. 10 overall last June.

There are a lot of "can't miss prospects" who do, but Adell hasn't disappointed, even though he's had his share of injuries.

Last year, in his first pro season, a shoulder injury kept him out of playing center field, but as a designated hitter in 49 games for rookie-league Arizona and half-season Class A Orem, he hit .325 with five homers, 11 doubles, eight triples, 30 RBI, and eight stolen bases.

In the off-season, he stayed busy, holding a baseball camp at Ballard, taking an online communications class at the University of Louisville and sponsoring a Thanksgiving turkey drive in Louisville.

This spring training, he flashed his raw power while playing with the parent club, deforming baseballs:

This season, he's back in center field and hitting .321 with a .476 slugging percentage and 16 RBI in 56 at-bats for the Burlington Bees of the Midwest League, which is full-season Class A. On April 20, he drove in a career-high eight RBI in a win. On Tuesday, in his first game back after taking two weeks off to allow a thumb injury to heal, he had four hits, his second four-hit game of the season.

"The first couple of weeks up here, it was pretty brutal with the cold," Adell said. "I wasn't always swinging at pitches in my zone. Now, I'm looking for pitches in my zone that I can square up on."

He only has one home run, a grand slam, but Adell is more concerned about becoming a complete hitter.

"I think the big thing for me is getting on base," he said. "I know I'm not going to get a pitch to hit a home run off every game, so you have to figure out how to be effective. If I get a pitch that I can handle and make hard contact, that's great. The key for me is getting to third base so I can score."

He just turned 19 and is the youngest player on the team.

"I'm taking it game by game and buying into the process," he said. "I need to learn the things I need to do to play at this level. Once (the Angels) are confident I can handle that, I might get promoted. They've told me, once you show you have it under control, we're going to challenge every player."