



SF Giants Press Clips

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San Francisco Chronicle

Giants waste another late 1-0 lead, fall 2-1 to Astros

John Shea

Madison Bumgarner watched Dereck Rodriguez pitch seven shutout innings Monday night. Then duplicated the feat Tuesday afternoon. Then, like Rodriguez the night before, he was asked to explain how his team could walk away a loser.

Fourteen scoreless innings by the Giants' starters and a two-game sweep by the Astros. It was a microcosm of the Giants' season if ever there was one.

"I felt we had a good chance to win both those games," Bumgarner said after Tuesday's 2-1 loss at AT&T Park. "Really good chance."

Didn't happen. Bumgarner, after 100 pitches, gave way to Ray Black, whose 100-mph fastball and 101/3-inning hitless streak made him the right man to protect a 1-0 lead in the eighth.

But Marwin Gonzalez opened with a double, and Tyler White crushed a two-run homer into the left-field bleachers, not far from where Gonzalez's game-changing homer off closer Will Smith landed about 18 hours earlier.

"We let them slip away," Bumgarner said. "You never want to do that. It's getting to the time of year now where we've got to minimize those. We've got to find a way."

The repeat performance easily could be attributed to bullpen collapses, perhaps unfairly, but the Giants were asking for trouble by scoring one run each game. It was tough to blame Smith and Black, who made 1-0 leads disappear with misplaced fastballs, especially because they had been so dominant before the reigning champs came to town.

That the late-game leads were a mere 1-0 was the first problem. The Giants had just four hits off Dallas Keuchel and five relievers and failed to advance the fastest man on the team, Alen Hanson, the final 90 feet after his triple to open the seventh. Steven Duggar popped up, and sidewinder Joe Smith entered and struck out pinch-hitter Hunter Pence and Andrew McCutchen.

For the second straight day, Brandon Crawford scored the Giants' lone run. He homered Monday and doubled to open the second inning Tuesday, scoring on Chase d'Arnaud's opposite-field single, the Giants' lone hit in eight at-bats with runners in scoring position.

The Giants' bullpen has been living on the edge a lot this season, never more so than the past two days. Smith and Black had to be close to perfect, and they weren't. Smith had converted seven consecutive saves, and Black had thrown 101/3 straight hitless innings.

The Giants, who have been in the .500 neighborhood all year, fell to 57-58. They've spent a majors-leading 68 days holding a .500 record or being a game above or below, the epitome of ordinary.

Yet, Bumgarner has hope this team can make a playoff push, and bases his optimism on his experience in orange and black.

"This team, the Giants, we've been counted out plenty of times since I've been here and turned it around," said Bumgarner, who has three World Series rings as proof. "I don't remember a year we were the favorites except for maybe the first half of '16.

"The rest of the time, we've never been the favorites. We don't need that. Regardless, it doesn't matter if you are or are not. You've got to win games."

Certainly, Bumgarner pitched a winnable game. He struck out seven, walked three and gave up five hits, and his most impressive moment came when he covered the plate to get the final out in the sixth.

When a ball ricocheted from catcher Nick Hundley, Bumgarner rushed from the mound while Josh Reddick rushed from third. Bumgarner didn't stop running as he caught Hundley's throw and barreled his big body across the plate, tagging Reddick on the head.

The lefty did all he could to win the game, as Rodriguez did Monday. The team results spoke for themselves.

San Francisco Chronicle
Giants' Ray Black takes loss after hitless streak ends
John Shea

Ray Black pitched the eighth inning as Madison Bumgarner's replacement Tuesday, and the

Giants felt confident their shutout bid would remain intact.

Black surrendered three runs in his big-league debut July 10 but rebounded to throw hitless ball in his next 10 outings, covering 10¹/₃ innings.

It was the longest hitless stretch by a Giants reliever since Yusmeiro Petit's 12¹/₃ innings in 2014.

The run ended when Black gave up a double to leadoff man Marwin Gonzalez and two-run homer to Tyler White, who blasted a 1-2 fastball that got too much of the plate. The Giants lost 2-1, and Black took his first big-league loss.

"In my mind, I'm thinking he might be sitting on an off-speed pitch," Black said of White. "I didn't locate a fastball in a pitcher's count. That's on me. He tagged me for it. Tip my hat to him. He put a pretty good swing on it, but a mistake was made on my part, too."

During his postgame interview, Bumgarner didn't object to exiting after 100 pitches, saying, "The bullpen's been throwing really well."

Pence decision: With Alen Hanson on third with one out in the seventh, manager Bruce Bochy hit Hunter Pence for Bumgarner. Houston manager A.J. Hinch summoned sidewinder Joe Smith.

Bochy said he stuck with Pence (instead of perhaps lefty-swinging Joe Panik) for two reasons: Pence hit a sacrifice fly last week against a similar pitcher, Arizona's Brad Ziegler, and Smith had been better against lefties (.152 batting average) than righties (.219).

Smith struck out Pence and Andrew McCutchen to end the inning.

D'Arnaud update: Chase d'Arnaud exited during his fourth-inning at-bat, having fouled a pitch off his left knee, causing a contusion. Hanson replaced d'Arnaud and swung through strike three, the strikeout going on d'Arnaud's record. D'Arnaud said X-rays were negative, and he expects to be available Thursday.

MLB.com

Ace deals, but SF drops another heartbreaker

Do-Hyoung Park

SAN FRANCISCO -- It happened again.

For the second day in a row, a low-scoring duel between Houston and San Francisco persisted into the late innings. The Giants, again, broke through for a single run against an elite Astros starter.

And once more, when Madison Bumgarner handed the reins to the bullpen after seven

scoreless innings, the relief corps yielded a back-breaking go-ahead homer, this time to Tyler White. The Giants fell, 2-1, and were swept in a two-game series by the defending World Series champions on Tuesday afternoon at AT&T Park.

"It's hard to take when you get that kind of pitching, but you're playing a good team with good pitching, too, and they kept it close, and lightning hit us twice," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said.

Both teams had their opportunities. Early on, the Giants took advantage. The Astros couldn't -- against Bumgarner, at least.

The final line for the Giants' ace shows seven strikeouts and five hits allowed in seven shutout innings, but the humble, unassuming box score doesn't tell the full story of Bumgarner's numerous escape acts throughout the afternoon.

"[Bumgarner] really did a great job of keeping them from scoring," Bochy said. "He had good stuff today, and like I said, he got far enough, and we just couldn't hold it. It's tough when you go to the eighth with a 1-0 lead and you can't win those games. Those sting, trust me."

In the second inning, Josh Reddick slashed a leadoff triple, but Bumgarner induced a pair of groundouts and struck out opposing pitcher Dallas Keuchel to escape unscathed. In the fifth, Jake Marisnick's leadoff double was squandered when Bumgarner collected a strikeout, a lineout and a flyout.

The sixth proved to be the culmination of Bumgarner's Houdini act, with a pair of Astros being thrown out at home.

White tripled to the center-field warning track on a sinking liner that rangy center fielder Steven Duggar couldn't snare on a dive, but he was nabbed by Buster Posey on Reddick's hard grounder to first. Reddick moved to third on a wild pitch and stolen base, but he was also thrown out trying to come home on a ball that trickled away from catcher Nick Hundley.

But after Bumgarner's exit, rookie Ray Black -- who hadn't allowed a hit in 10 appearances spanning 10 1/3 innings since his July 8 Major League debut -- yielded a leadoff double to Marwin Gonzalez and the go-ahead homer to White as the Astros finally broke through.

"He swung at a couple of fastballs before, and I'm thinking in my mind, 'He might be sitting on an offspeed pitch here,' and I just didn't locate my fastball in a pitcher's count," Black said. "That's on me. He tagged me for it. I tip my hat to him."

"Give them credit -- they beat two of our hottest relievers and found a way to win the games," Bochy said.

Again, it was Brandon Crawford who provided the Giants' offensive spark. After his homer off

Charlie Morton on Monday accounted for San Francisco's only run, the All-Star shortstop again keyed the offense on Tuesday with a double down the left-field line leading off the second inning.

Chase d'Arnaud drove him home with a one-out RBI single to give the Giants the lead against stingy Astros lefty Keuchel, who otherwise allowed only one other hit in six effective innings, striking out five and walking two.

d'ARNAUD DAY TO DAY AFTER KNEE CONTUSION

The Giants second baseman exited the game in the fourth inning with a left knee contusion after fouling an 0-1 offering from Keuchel into the area just below his left kneecap. He is considered day to day, and Bochy expects him to be fine after Wednesday's day off.

d'Arnaud was on the ground for several moments while being tended to by the training staff, and though he eventually appeared to be able to put weight on the leg and run on it, he exited the game after a lengthy discussion.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Giants can't plate insurance run: Though the Giants cashed in on their scoring threat in the second inning, they weren't able to capitalize on a tremendous opportunity to add an insurance run in the seventh -- and, as it turns out, a run that could have been pivotal.

Hanson, playing for d'Arnaud, lifted a fly ball to the right-field corner off reliever Tony Sipp that went in and out of the glove of Reddick at the wall, and he coasted into third with a leadoff triple. But Sipp induced a popout from Duggar, and Joe Smith struck out both Hunter Pence and Andrew McCutchen to quell the threat.

"[Pence] had been getting some big RBIs for us over the last three weeks," Bochy said. "[Smith] just got a big strikeout. We fought pretty hard up there and fouled a couple of tough pitches off, but we just couldn't put the ball in play."

HE SAID IT

"I'm never going to tell you any different, whether it's the truth or not." -- Bumgarner, on whether he felt he could have pitched the eighth inning with his pitch count at 100

UP NEXT

The Giants have Wednesday off before rookie left-hander Andrew Suarez opens a four-game series against the Pirates at AT&T Park on Thursday at 7:15 p.m. PT. Suarez will look to bounce back after allowing career-highs in hits (10) and earned runs (8) in a loss to the D-backs on Saturday. Pittsburgh will counter with veteran right-hander Ivan Nova, who allowed four runs in 5 2/3 innings in a May 13 loss to San Francisco.

MLB.com

d'Arnaud day to day after fouling ball off knee

Do-Hyoung Park

SAN FRANCISCO -- With the Giants' infield depth already thin -- as both Brandon Belt and Pablo Sandoval are sidelined with injuries -- San Francisco dodged another major setback when second baseman Chase d'Arnaud avoided serious injury after fouling a ball off his left knee in the fourth inning of Tuesday afternoon's 2-1 loss to the Astros.

d'Arnaud is considered day to day with a left knee contusion, and manager Bruce Bochy expects him to be fine after Wednesday's scheduled off-day.

The foul, on an 0-1 offering by Houston's Dallas Keuchel, appeared to strike the 31-year-old just below his left kneecap. After being examined by the training staff, d'Arnaud appeared to be able to put weight on the leg and run on it, but he was removed from the game following a lengthy discussion.

Alen Hanson completed the at-bat and struck out swinging -- the strikeout was charged to d'Arnaud -- before assuming d'Arnaud's position at second base in the top of the fifth. d'Arnaud drove in the only run of the game on an RBI single in the second inning.

d'Arnaud, who has played first, second and third for the Giants this season, is hitting .264 with three homers and eight RBIs this season.

MLB.com

Giants to retire Bonds' No. 25 on Saturday

Do-Hyoung Park

SAN FRANCISCO -- It could be a long time before anyone touches Barry Bonds' record number of 762 career home runs. But one thing is for sure: No Giants player will touch his uniform number of 25 again.

The Giants announced that the home run king's number will be retired on Saturday in a 5 p.m. PT pregame ceremony at AT&T Park preceding the game against the Pirates.

"It's going to be a big day for Barry," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "I know he's excited about it. He was here yesterday, and I'm sure he's going to have a lot of fun with this."

All five of the Giants' Hall of Famers -- Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, Orlando Cepeda, Juan Marichal and Gaylord Perry -- will be in attendance, along with a selection of former teammates and former managers Jim Leyland, Dusty Baker and Bochy.

Bonds' number 25 will be the 11th number retired by the storied franchise, joining 3 (Bill Terry), 4 (Mel Ott), 11 (Carl Hubbell), 20 (Monte Irvin), 24 (Mays), 27 (Marichal), 30 (Cepeda), 36

(Perry) and 44 (McCovey), along with the number 42 retired league-wide in honor of Jackie Robinson.

Bonds, the seven-time National League Most Valuable Player Award winner and 14-time All-Star, spent 15 seasons in San Francisco and hit 586 of his 762 career homers with the Giants -- including his 715th to pass Babe Ruth on May 28, 2006, and his 756th to pass Hank Aaron on Aug. 7, 2007. He won five of his MVP Awards with the Giants.

"When you look at what Barry's done since he joined the Giants back in 1993, he just brought baseball back and excitement for the fans, and he's just so loved here because of what he did on the field -- and he also helped win the Giants win a lot of ballgames in that era," said Bochy, who managed the slugger in 2007. "We're talking the best player in his era."

Gates will open at 3:45 p.m. for the ceremony.

Sandoval's surgery is successful

Pablo Sandoval successfully underwent season-ending surgery on his torn right hamstring on Tuesday morning, according to Bochy. The surgery was finished just before Bochy spoke with the media prior to Tuesday afternoon's 2-1 loss to the Astros.

Bochy didn't have more details on the surgery, but Dave Groeschner, the Giants' senior director of athletic training, was present and will fill Bochy in.

Belt could return in Los Angeles

First baseman Brandon Belt ran on a treadmill for the first time on Monday as he continues his recovery from a hyperextended right knee sustained on July 25 in Seattle. He took ground balls again before Tuesday's game.

Per Bochy, "if all goes well," Belt could return in time for the Giants' upcoming series against the Dodgers from Aug. 13-15.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Giants' bullpen melts down at worst possible time: 'Lightning hit us twice'

Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO — Bruce Bochy stopped as he walked out of the dugout Tuesday morning after his session with the media. He thought back to the previous night's result.

"Those are the ones that are really difficult," he said, before slowly making his way back to the clubhouse.

It's even more difficult when it happens a second time.

A few hours after the Giants blew a late one-run lead and lost 3-1 to the Astros, they did it again. This time the final score was 2-1, the decisive blow coming on another homer, this time in the eighth instead of the ninth.

"Lightning hit us twice," Bochy said Tuesday afternoon.

It would seem hard for that to happen, but the Giants have made a habit of this over the years. First it was Matt Cain for so many starts, and in recent years it has been Madison Bumgarner. Seven shutout innings are not always rewarded by this lineup, and on back-to-back days, Bumgarner and Dereck Rodriguez got 21 outs without giving up a run and also ended up with a no-decision.

Tuesday's loss had a bit more buildup than Monday's, starting with a sequence in the bottom of the seventh. Bumgarner had thrown 100 pitches and Bochy went up for a handshake. Bumgarner's hands were at his hips, and he looked a bit surprised to be pulled, but his spot was coming up and Bochy had a dominant arm ready for the eighth.

Asked if he wanted to stay in the game, Bumgarner paused.

"I'm never going to tell you anything different whether it's the truth or not," he said. "The bullpen has been really good. Ray (Black), is that the first hit he's given up in a month?"

The homer was, in fact, the first hit Black had allowed since July 8. But first, the Giants had to do what they do so often. They wasted a golden opportunity to tack on. Alen Hanson led off the bottom of the seventh with a triple but Steven Duggar popped up. The Astros brought in side-arming Joe Smith, and Bochy thought back to a matchup in Phoenix, where Hunter Pence drove in a run against Brad Ziegler. This time, Pence struck out.

"He's been getting some big RBI over the last three weeks," Bochy said of Pence. "(Smith) just got a big strikeout. (Pence) fought pretty hard, he fouled a couple pitches off. He just couldn't put the ball in play."

Andrew McCutchen didn't either, striking out to end the inning. Black was called on with a hitless streak of 10 1/3 innings going. Marwin Gonzalez greeted him with a double. Two batters later, Tyler White hit a high two-run shot into the left field seats. The Giants had done it again.

Facing an Astros team without their three best hitters, the Giants got 14 shutout innings from their starters. But they managed just two runs off Charlie Morton and Dallas Keuchel, and the bullpen, so good for two straight months, melted down at the worst possible time.

"I felt like we had good changes to win both those games, really good chances," Bumgarner said. "We let them slip away."

NBC Sports Bay Area

Giants bullpen blows late 1-0 lead vs Astros for second straight game

Alex Pavlovic

SAN FRANCISCO — Twice in less than 24 hours, the Giants took a 1-0 lead into the late innings against the Houston Astros. Twice, they managed to lose.

A few hours after Will Smith gave up a three-run homer in the ninth, Ray Black was hit with a two-run shot by Tyler White in the eighth. The Giants lost 2-1 to the Astros, getting swept in a two-game series in which their starting pitchers threw 14 scoreless innings. That's hard to do. Here's what you need to know ...

— Black was given a high-leverage outing and made a mess of it. His streak of 10 $\frac{1}{3}$ hitless innings ended when Marwin Gonzalez smoked a leadoff double. Two batters later, Black threw 100 mph and 101 mph fastballs past White to get to 0-2. He elevated a 99 mph fastball and White hit a moonshot.

— Bumgarner matched Dereck Rodriguez with seven shutout innings. The Astros made Bumgarner work out of trouble, but he always had an answer. His final pitch may have been his best. With two outs and a runner on in the seventh, Bumgarner threw a filthy two-strike curveball that Alex Bregman couldn't hold up on.

— After a slow July, Brandon Crawford has found something at the plate in recent days. His homer provided the only run Monday, and his double got the Giants going in the second inning a few hours later. Crawford raced home on Chase d'Arnaud's single.

— D'Arnaud fouled a ball off his left knee in the fourth inning and crumpled in the batter's box. He tried to run a bit and stay in the game, but he couldn't do it. Alen Hanson replaced d'Arnaud and finished the at-bat, striking out. By the rules of the game, that strikeout counts against d'Arnaud.

— The Astros had two runners thrown out at the plate in the sixth inning. White hit a one-out triple and inexplicably tried to take home on a hard grounder to first. Buster Posey's throw to the plate beat White by a mile. With two outs, Josh Reddick stole his way 90 feet from a run, but he tried to score on a wild pitch that didn't get far from the plate. Bumgarner planted his knee in the dirt and took Nick Hundley's throw, ending the inning.

The Athletic

Lightning strikes Giants twice in loss to Astros, leading to all sorts of laments

Andrew Baggarly

There isn't much point in recapping a rerun, is there?

The Giants lost 3-1 to the Houston Astros on Monday after a starting pitcher fired seven shutout innings and a reliever served up a home run with traffic on the basepaths.

The Giants lost 2-1 to the Houston Astros on Tuesday after a starting pitcher fired seven shutout innings and a reliever served up a home run with traffic on the basepaths.

It was Madison Bumgarner instead of Dereck Rodríguez who pitched masterfully for the Giants on Tuesday, and Ray Black instead of Will Smith who trotted to the mound before casting his eyes toward the bleachers. Marwin Gonzalez, who hit Monday's three-run homer off of Smith in the ninth, embraced variety and singled this time ahead of Tyler White's blast off of Black in the eighth.

It made for a second viewing of "Medea." Different cast, same tragic ending. And there won't be any rave reviews from the pair of 40,000-plus crowds who watched the Giants somehow get swept in a series in which their starters pitched 14 shutout innings and the Astros scored all their runs on two swings.

"You give them credit," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "They beat two of our hottest relievers and found a way to win. You're playing a good team with good pitching, too. They kept it close and lightning hit us twice."

That can happen even when you aren't waving a 5-iron in the middle of a thunderstorm.

The Giants must have used up all their 1-0 karma when they won the first two games of the season by that score at Dodger Stadium.

Then again, this is not a team that is storing karma by the grain elevator. You know the litany of injuries by now. You also probably know that the Giants have found themselves sucked back to .500 on 21 occasions this season. You don't need to get hit in the head by Newton's apple to know that this is a .500 team through and through.

One game under .500 at the moment, to be precise.

But dissatisfaction and blame are natural traveling companions, and so let's scrutinize a few seemingly popular takes on social media following Tuesday's game:

"The bullpen is terrible."

No, really, it's not. Smith has pitched well as the closer and Black hadn't allowed a hit in 10 appearances since his major league debut July 8. Bochy had no qualms about leaving the final six outs for those two relievers, and he shouldn't have. In fact, give Bochy credit for having Black in that spot and not an incumbent like Sam Dyson or Mark Melancon.

"Bochy shouldn't have taken Bumgarner out after seven innings and 100 pitches."

See above. But also ...

The Giants had Alen Hanson on third base after a leadoff triple in the seventh and doubling their lead should have been as easy as picking up a spare. The problem is that the Giants, judging by their situational hitting this season, don't bother to oil their lanes.

Steven Duggar struck out and Bochy sent up Hunter Pence to pinch hit for Bumgarner. That was the right move.

"Bochy should have sent up Joe Panik to pinch hit for Pence."

All right, now we're getting somewhere.

Astros manager A.J. Hinch took out his lefty in favor of right-hander Joe Smith, which was an anticipated move. Bochy said he recalled that Pence hit a sacrifice fly last weekend in Arizona against Brad Ziegler, a right-hander with a similar sidearm action.

No, Pence is not the same hitter any longer, he should not start ahead of Austin Slater in left field and he will occupy a place on this roster for the next seven weeks as a courtesy and out of the respect that he has fully earned.

But you know what? He's been pretty good off the bench. He has driven in three runs on five pinch hits. He has struck out five times in 24 pinch at-bats. He has won a game or two with some of his on-brand weirdness on a ball in play. There was no doubt Hanson would be running on contact. And the kind of ground-based contact that Pence makes — all manner of choppers, rollers and schtoinkers — was all the Giants needed for Hanson to flash across the plate.

Pence struck out. The Giants did not pick up the spare.

Should Bochy have burned Pence for Panik to get the left-handed matchup against Smith, knowing that Panik is one of the hardest players in the league to strike out? It's a valid argument.

But Smith had a reverse split. He had held lefties to a .152 average and had struck out 36.3 percent of the lefty batters he faced. Right-handers were batting .219 and had struck out 26 percent of the time.

And Panik's two home runs in those season-opening victories at Dodger Stadium are a distant memory. It has been a waste of a season for him — he is in danger of being non-tendered this winter and he has not exactly inspired confidence at the plate.

A skilled manager knows that matchups can be based on feel as well as the numbers, and this one didn't work out. That didn't make it the wrong move.

“Black shouldn’t have thrown a fastball with a 1-2 count.”

You might be interested to know that Black also second-guessed that decision, and then guessed his second-guess. He might spend most of the evening re-imagining that at-bat in the eighth.

He looks back and sees that White was late on a pair of 99-mph heaters. So there was no reason to go away from his fastball. Then again, it was clear that White sat heater and had it timed up when he sent it into the left-field seats. So maybe a slider would’ve wiped him out. Either way, a better location with the fastball would have led to a better outcome. Black seems like a thoughtful guy who will learn from this. His emergence this season has been one of the Giants’ biggest success stories, along with Rodríguez, Andrew Suárez and Reyes Moronta.

“Beer shouldn’t cost \$19.50.”

No, it shouldn’t. (The Giants would like you to know that \$19.50 is the price for a 22-ounce serving of a premium microbrew, and not a 16-ounce cup of domestic swill. But the point holds.)

People still fork over their Jacksons, though, just like they keep showing up to watch this team flirt with both sides of the .500 mark. The Giants had more than 40,000 for a Monday night game. They sold out the park for a Tuesday afternoon game. Sure, the Astros are the defending World Series champions, but the Giants had four packed houses on the last homestand against the Milwaukee Brewers.

They are master marketers. Master marketers tend to know what their customers want.

Will this mediocre season prolong the inevitable? Will they suffer the opportunity cost of not starting a rebuild earlier? Do they stay the course this winter and once again try to add to their current roster, professing faith in a current core that will be one year older? Are they really going to go after Bryce Harper, and if they do, will they target him so they can have an elite power threat in the lineup for the first time since Barry Bonds, or so they have a superstar they can market?

We’ll see. But for now, they have Rodríguez and Black and Moronta and Suárez and perhaps Slater and Duggar who either have emerged or are emerging as useful major league players. They have Bumgarner putting a lid on home plate again, stranding runners in scoring position and even showing some of his ornery nature by blocking the dish while applying a tag to Josh Reddick. That’s the kind of rotation-leading presence the Giants will need next season, especially with Johnny Cueto spending the year doing arm exercises.

There’s some profit in all of that — beyond those \$19.50 beers.

Because if you're going to complain, start there.