



**Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Monday, August 6, 2018**

- Cave's 1st career slam powers sweep of Royals. MLB.com (Bollinger) p.1
- Jake Cave's grand slam helps Twins sweep Royals with 6-5 victory. Star Tribune (Miller) p.2
- Robbie Grossman headed to disabled list because of strained hamstring. Star Tribune (Miller) p.3
- Postgame: Adrianza's squeeze attempt foiled by Royals All-Star catcher. Star Tribune (Miller) p.4
- Souhan vs. Reusse: Dueling opinions over the state of the Twins. Star Tribune (Souhan and Reusse) p.4
- Twins-Cleveland series preview. Star Tribune (Miller) p.5
- Meet Oliver Drake, the new Twins reliever who now holds an MLB record. Pioneer Press (Mizutani) p.5
- Jake Cave leads offensive explosion as Twins complete sweep of Royals. Pioneer Press (Mizutani) p.6
- Cave's grand slam powers Twins past Royals. Fox Sports North (AP) p.7
- Preview: Twins at Indians. Fox Sports North (AP) p.9
- Derek Falvey discusses Byron Buxton's swing, plan for Trevor May. ESPN 1500 (Depue) p.9
- As Twins try to pick up the pieces, Jake Cave's grand slam fuels sweep of Royals. The Athletic (Kelly) p.10

Cave's 1st career slam powers sweep of Royals

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 5, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- Jake Cave has been a pleasant surprise for the Twins in the absence of Byron Buxton in center field, and he came through in a big way on Sunday at Target Field, connecting on his first career grand slam off lefty Danny Duffy.

Cave, starting against a left-handed pitcher for just the third time in his career, helped the Twins to a 6-5 win over the Royals to complete a three-game sweep. He worked the count full against Duffy before crushing a fastball to right field for his fourth homer of the season to give the Twins a 4-2 lead in the second inning. It was a no-doubter, as it had an exit velocity of 108.7 mph and went a projected 402 feet, per Statcast™.

"I'm glad I could do something to help the team to win when I got the chance to start against a lefty," Cave said. "I know he has good stuff, he's a competitor and he's going to come right at me at some point with the heater. I got it, just stayed short and didn't try to do too much. I was rewarded with something good happening."

Cave, 25, was acquired in a trade with the Yankees before the season, with the Twins sending pitching prospect Luis Gil to New York on March 16. With Buxton dealing with injuries and offensive struggles this season, the left-handed-hitting Cave has seen regular time in center, although mostly only against right-handed starters. He's hitting .276 with four homers and 20 RBIs in 41 games.

"He's got a little moxie to his game," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I think he's taken advantage so far. Hopefully it's good stuff for him as he tries to get himself established up here."

The grand slam helped back right-hander Ervin Santana, who lasted 4 1/3 innings in his third start of the season after undergoing surgery on his right middle finger in February. Santana struggled with his velocity, as his fastball averaged 88.8 mph, and he allowed three runs on seven hits and a walk. He gave up a two-run homer to Lucas Duda on a changeup in the first and allowed three straight singles to open the fifth before getting Salvador Perez to fly out to left. Lefty Gabriel Moya came in and got out of the jam to pick up his second career win.

"When I don't have my good stuff, I still battle with my stuff that I have right now," said Santana, whose average fastball velocity is down roughly 3 mph compared to last season. "I make every pitch and every day I feel better, so that's what matters right now."

Duffy, who entered with a 0.95 ERA in three starts against the Twins this season, served up the grand slam to Cave and also gave up two runs in the fourth. Ehire Adrianza singled home Max Kepler after a leadoff double and Robbie Grossman pulled an RBI double into the left-center-field gap to score Adrianza.

The Royals made it interesting with Whit Merrifield's two-run homer off reliever Trevor Hildenberger in the seventh. They also put on two runners with two outs in the eighth, but reliever Trevor May struck out Alcides Escobar to get out of the jam. The Twins loaded the bases with nobody out in the eighth and failed to score, but closer Fernando Rodney threw a scoreless ninth to pick up his 24th save. The Royals had two runners in scoring position with two outs, but Rodney got Rosell Herrera to ground out to third on a nice play by Miguel Sano to end the game.

"It was a little [tense] out there," Molitor said. "I don't know, he figures out a way to get it done, it's a little stressful. But we found a way to win, so a nice way to finish off the homestand."

GROSSMAN PLACED ON 10-DAY DL

Grossman left the game after a one-out single in the seventh, as he sustained a mild right hamstring strain and was placed on the 10-day disabled list after the game, with a corresponding roster move coming on Monday. He was replaced by Logan Morrison as a pinch-runner, with Morrison remaining in the game and moving to first base, Adrianza moving to left field and Eddie Rosario to right field. Grossman was 2-for-4 before being removed for Morrison.

"I felt it grab on my third at-bat, when I hit the double," Grossman said. "I got to second, and I could feel it right away. I tried to play through it, thought I could, but it just wasn't working. I've had hamstring injuries before, but it hurt. Hopefully it's not too bad."

SOUND SMART

Cave said it was the first grand slam he had hit at any level in his professional career. Cave has 45 career homers in the Minors.

"I never had one in the Minor Leagues or anything like that -- maybe in high school or something like that," Cave said. "So it was pretty neat."

HE SAID IT

"I love it. This is my dream. I'm going out there, playing big league baseball. I'm starting every day for a big league baseball club, and I wouldn't have it any other way." -- Cave, on getting regular time in center field

UP NEXT

The Twins head to Cleveland for a four-game series against the first-place Indians that begins on Monday at 6:10 p.m. CT. Right-hander Kyle Gibson (5-8, 3.47 ERA) will be facing Cleveland for a second straight start, as he gave up three runs over six innings in a loss at Target Field on Tuesday. He'll start opposite right-hander Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34).

Jake Cave's grand slam helps Twins sweep Royals with 6-5 victory

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018

The odds weren't good. Danny Duffy had given up two runs in his previous 20 innings against the Twins this year. Jake Cave was hitting only .158 against lefthanded pitching. So when Cave came to the plate in the second inning Sunday, the bases loaded thanks to a couple of singles and a walk, nobody in Target Field could have expected what happened next.

Including Cave.

"I'm thinking, just put a ball in play, try to get a run in," the rookie outfielder said. "I've never had a grand slam before, even in the minors."

He has now. Cave worked the count full, taking a low fastball that the Royals dugout believed might have been a strike, and then he unloaded on a 95-mile-per-hour fastball on the outer edge of the strike zone. The ball landed in the right field seats, and the Twins took a lead they would never relinquish, finally sweeping the Royals with a 6-5 victory.

"It surprised me a little," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "He hasn't played against lefties a lot, but he was battling. He took some tough pitches to get full, and he got a fastball that looked like it was in his wheelhouse."

With the postseason race more distant by the day, Molitor is giving young players like Cave, and like lefthanded reliever Gabriel Moya, a chance to learn on the job, and it paid off Sunday. Moya snuffed a Kansas City threat for Ervin Santana in the fifth inning, then pitched a perfect sixth to earn his second career victory, the first coming Friday night.

Minnesota Twins Jake Cave celebrates his grand slam with Ehire Adrianza (16), Miguel Sano (22), and Logan Forsythe (24) against the Kansas City Royals in the second inning of a baseball game Sunday, Aug. 5, 2018, in Minneapolis. (AP Photo/Bruce Kluckhohn)

More

“It’s exciting. I thank Molitor for trusting me to work it out,” Moya said. “I just attack. Attack the zone, trust my command.”

Ehire Adrianza and Robbie Grossman also drove in runs, and the bullpen managed to nurse the lead the rest of the day — though only just barely. Whit Merrifield closed the gap to one run with a seventh-inning home run, and the Royals put runners on second and third in both the eighth and ninth innings, but never could quite overcome the Twins’ early lead that Cave delivered.

Taylor Rogers struck out two in the seventh, and Trevor May whiffed Alcides Escobar with two runners, both of whom reached on Twins fielding mistakes, in scoring position. “He was fired up, and he should be,” Molitor said. “He dialed it up and got a huge strikeout for us.”

Then Fernando Rodney, despite giving up two singles and a walk, recorded his 24th save in 30 chances, though the best throw of the inning came from his catcher. After Merrifield led off with a single, Mitch Garver made a perfect throw to catch him stealing, a play that saved the guy with all the saves.

“That’s the great thing about catching — even when you don’t have a great offensive game, you can help the team win in many different ways,” said Garver, 0-for-4 on the day. “To be able to help those guys navigate their way through the line, and then throw a guy out in the ninth, that’s just as satisfying as going 2-for-4.”

Robbie Grossman headed to disabled list because of strained hamstring

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018

Robbie Grossman doubled in the fourth inning and singled in the seventh Sunday, his first hits in 10 days. But he probably wishes he hadn’t.

As Grossman sped to second base, he felt a grabbing sensation in his right thigh. “I could feel it right away,” he said after a 6-5 victory over Kansas City. “I told [manager Paul Molitor and athletic trainer Tony Leo] after the inning, but I thought I could play through it.”

He couldn’t. The sensation returned as he ran to first in the seventh, and he was quickly removed for pinch runner Logan Morrison. The injury was diagnosed as a strained right hamstring, and Grossman stayed behind as the Twins left for their flight to Cleveland. He will be placed on the 10-day disabled list Monday.

The injury catches the Twins shorthanded, given that fellow outfielder Byron Buxton is on the disabled list at Class AAA Rochester, Zack Granite is batting only .211 for the Red Wings, and outfield prospect LaMonte Wade just went on the DL last week. The Twins could recall utility player Willians Astudillo, who played outfield during his month in the majors.

Tyler Austin, acquired from the Yankees in the Lance Lynn trade last week, also has experience in the outfield, though he has played only 21 minor league games there in the past three seasons, and just three this year. Austin, 4-for-19 (.211) with two homers for Rochester, has started three major league games in the outfield.

No power, yet

Grossman

Jorge Polanco thought he had one. The Twins shortstop turned on a 95 mph Danny Duffy fastball and drove it deep to left field. But it hooked as it rose, and passed the pole on the foul side.

Polanco eventually grounded out, and though he had a hit later, he still ended the homestand without a home run. For a guy who clubbed 13 of them last year, that zero in the home run column is glaring.

“I was thinking that when I got here — I want to hit a home run,” Polanco said. “I don’t know why [it’s so important]. Get the first one out of the way, I think. It’s the hardest one.”

But Polanco is hitting .287 since his return from an 80-game steroids suspension, and has six doubles and two triples. He’s become an offensive force again, and with Eduardo Escobar and Brian Dozier gone, Molitor has returned him to the third spot in the lineup.

“He trusts himself well, especially from the left side. He’s a pretty good two-strike hitter, he knows the zone really well,” Molitor said. “He’s not afraid to take pitchers’ pitches early in the count if it’s not what he’s looking for, because he feels like he can do damage.”

Just not home run damage. Not yet.

“I talked to him about it last week, and I said, ‘Don’t worry about that.’ You can see once in awhile, he’s starting to get big with his swing,” Molitor said. “Just do what you do and the home runs will come.”

That's what Polanco believes, too. "Right now, when I go to bat, I just think I need to get on base," Polanco said. "I'm not thinking, hit a homer."

It's an experience

Molitor on Fernando Rodney, who pitched a scoreless ninth to protect a one-run lead, despite allowing two singles and a walk: "It was a little tenuous out there. I don't know — he figures out a way to get it done. It's a little stressful."

Postgame: Adrianza's squeeze attempt foiled by Royals All-Star catcher

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 5, 2018

Paul Molitor was as surprised as anyone when Ehire Adrianza squared around to bunt with runners on second and third base and two outs in the eighth inning Sunday. He didn't mind the play, but he thought Adrianza forgot one important factor.

"That's an All-Star back there," Molitor pointed out. "He's pretty good."

Yes, Salvador Perez spoiled Adrianza's plan by hustling out from behind the plate, grabbing the bunt about 20 feet up the line, and firing it to first base, ending the inning.

"It was supposed to go farther toward third," Adrianza explained after the game. Third baseman Rosell Herrera "wasn't expecting it. But I didn't get it far enough away."

Still, Molitor said, "it wasn't a bad play. You just want to take the catcher out of the play when you bunt to third. ... Just better execution on [the Royals'] side."

XXX

Molitor was forced to move Adrianza to the outfield when Robbie Grossman got hurt, in order to use Logan Morrison as Grossman's pinch runner. The manager didn't want to use Joe Mauer unless he had no choice, and he didn't want to use backup catcher Bobby Wilson. Complicating matters: He had given Max Kepler the day as designated hitter, and he was reluctant to send him to the outfield, thus forcing his pitchers into the lineup.

So Morrison went to first base in the eighth, moving Miguel Sano across the diamond to third, and Adrianza from third base to left field, where he had played once this season and 17 times last year. Eddie Rosario went from left field to right.

Souhan vs. Reusse: Dueling opinions over the state of the Twins

Jim Souhan and Patrick Reusse | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018

In Sunday's Star Tribune, columnists Jim Souhan and Patrick Reusse took very different points of view on the state of the Twins.

Souhan writes that Twins management did the right thing by sheeding veteran players in return for a collection of minor-leaguers. Here's part of his column:

Had [Twins executives Derek] Falvey and [Thad] Levine decided not to trade players away, most likely this year's team would have missed the playoffs anyway, and the Twins would be without 11 prospects they received in their five July deals.

Want to blame someone for this year's failure? Instead of picking on a front office that added players with strong track records this winter, how about blaming Miguel Sano, Brian Dozier, Jorge Polanco and Max Kepler for failures and absences? Or blame injuries to Ervin Santana, Byron Buxton, Jason Castro, Addison Reed. Or all of the above.

Falvey and Levine were hired because the franchise required a reboot and the farm system lacked depth. Trading for prospects gives the Twins a puncher's chance at building a sustainable winner. You can read his column here.

Reusse doesn't look so kindly on the decisions. Not at all. Here's some of what he wrote:

There has been bad luck and, more so, wretched roster decisions. [Eduardo] Escobar would have signed for \$10-\$11 million per on a multiyear deal, and Dozier would have been worth more if the Twins hadn't overplayed their hand earlier, and Sano should not have left spring training in that shape.

There's also a bullpen that now includes 31-year-old Oliver Drake, when J.T. Chargois (Dodgers) and Randy Rosario (a lefthander with a 1.97 ERA when pitching for the Cubs) were waived for no good reason.

Ninety losses are back in the picture, and a foundation remains that wouldn't support a mud hut.

Nice work, fellas.

Twins-Cleveland series preview

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 5, 2018

FOUR-GAME SERIES AT PROGRESSIVE FIELD

Monday, 6:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

RHP Kyle Gibson (5-8, 3.47) vs. RHP Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34)

Tuesday, 6:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

LHP Adalberto Mejía (1-0, 2.60) vs. RHP Carlos Carrasco (13-5, 3.66)

Wednesday, 6:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

RHP Jake Odorizzi (4-7, 4.60) vs. RHP Mike Clevinger (7-7, 3.48)

Thursday, 12:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

RHP Jose Berrios (11-8, 3.51) vs. RHP Corey Kluber (14-6, 2.63)

TWINS UPDATE

This is the first of two trips they will make to Cleveland in August, wrapping up the season series. They are 7-5 against the Indians, having gone 4-3 in Minneapolis, 1-1 in San Juan and 2-1 in Cleveland. ... They are just 7-18 in one-run games, the worst record in the American League. ... They are 19-34 on the road and have lost 15 of their past 20. ... RHP Matt Magill is expected to rejoin the team in Cleveland following the birth of a son Saturday. The Twins will make a roster move to make room once he arrives. ... Logan Morrison has only one home run but has eight doubles in 18 games in Cleveland. ... Max Kepler has hit six of his 50 career home runs there. ... Berrios is 2-0 with a 2.63 ERA in two career starts in Cleveland.

INDIANS UPDATE

They are only 9-6 since the All-Star break but still own a nine-game lead in their quest for a third consecutive AL Central title. ... Chaska native Brad Hand has pitched seven innings since being acquired from San Diego and has allowed only one run. He has two saves in two opportunities. ... LHP Andrew Miller pitched Friday for the first time since May 25, having recovered from a right knee injury. ... Bauer gave up two runs in 6 1/3 innings in Target Field last week, while Carrasco pitched 7 1/3 scoreless innings. Kluber gave up four runs in five innings in Minnesota on June 15, but the two-time Cy Young Award winner pitched a three-hit shutout against the Angels in his last start on Saturday.

Meet Oliver Drake, the new Twins reliever who now holds an MLB record

Dane Mizutani | Pioneer Press | August 5, 2018

Oliver Drake barreled into the Twins clubhouse Saturday afternoon, an iced coffee from Starbucks serving as his lifeblood amid a crazy 24 hours after being claimed off waivers. He handed his suitcase over to a Twins official and spent the next 15 minutes or so introducing himself to his new teammates, something he's become quite good at this season.

"We landed around 2:30-ish," Drake said. "I just came straight here to the ballpark to get ready and meet everyone and get prepared for the game."

Minnesota Twins relief pitcher Oliver Drake throws to a Kansas City Royals batter during the ninth inning of a baseball game Saturday, Aug. 4, 2018, in Minneapolis. The Twins won 8-2. Drake pitched for his fifth team this season. (AP Photo/Bruce Kluckhohn)

A few hours later, Drake exited the bullpen in center field, trotted to the mound and mowed down all three batters he faced as the Twins earned an 8-2 win over the Kansas City Royals. In doing so, the 31-year-old set a major league record, becoming the first player to play for five teams in a single season.

“I don’t know if this is something I’ll brag about,” Drake said with a laugh. “It’s definitely cool having all the jerseys. That’s going to be something that, looking back, is going to be a cool collection. It’ll definitely be a neat story, especially down the line after the baseball career is over.”

Yes, someday Drake will tell his kids and grandkids about this season, one that started with the Milwaukee Brewers before stints with the Cleveland Indians, Los Angeles Angels, Toronto Blue Jays, and now the Twins.

“It’s not easy,” Drake said, crediting his wife, Shannon, with keeping him level-headed. “She’s been the savior of this whole thing. There’s been times she’s had to pack up apartments, line up car shipping, everything, because we’ve been bouncing all over the place. She’s really made this a lot easier.”

As chaotic as things have been, Drake finds solace on the mound, the 60 feet, 6 inches between him and a batter serving as his personal oasis. He looked in his element Saturday night at Target Field, using his full repertoire of pitches, which includes a cut fastball that sits in the low-90s, a splitter that has become his out pitch and a curveball he taught himself last offseason.

“I’m just trying to get guys out as quickly as I can,” Drake said, adding that he’s hoping for some stability with the Twins. “I’ve had so much time just kind of in limbo where I can’t do anything. My catch partner for the whole time has been a fence back home. It’s just nice to get back out there and playing.”

Drake called his scoreless frame a “good first step” as he tries to stick around in the Twin Cities for the rest of this season at least.

“My agent keeps telling me it’s always good to be wanted,” Drake said. “I keep getting good opportunities, so I’m just going to try take advantage of this.”

Jake Cave leads offensive explosion as Twins complete sweep of Royals **Dane Mizutani | Pioneer Press | August 5, 2018**

Twins outfielder Jake Cave stood in the batter’s box with the bases loaded in the second inning Sunday afternoon at Target Field, looking for the perfect pitch to hit. He was cautious in his approach against Royals starter Danny Duffy, who entered the game with a 0.95 earned-run average in three starts against the Twins this season.

Cave battled his way to a full count and finally got a pitch he liked, turning on a fastball and roping a grand slam to right field to give the Twins a 4-2 lead.

“I just wanted to compete up there,” Cave said, adding that he was looking for a fastball. “I got it and just stayed short and didn’t try to do too much. I was rewarded with something happening.”

It was the first grand slam of his professional career, and yes, Cave knew it was gone as soon as he made contact.

“I knew I had it pretty good,” Cave said with a smile. “I never had one in the minor leagues. Maybe in high school or something like that. It was pretty neat.”

That got the ball rolling, and in the end, the Twins’ offense did just enough in a 6-5 win to complete the sweep of the Royals. It was the third straight game in which the Twins scored at least a half-dozen runs, a good sign as they try to make up ground in the AL Central.

“Sometimes when a team gets onto a little bit of a roll, offensively in this case, it frees guys up to go up there and not feel too much pressure about having to do something special,” manager Paul Molitor said before the game. “We all know that when the lineup is going with contributions from top to bottom we get a lot better offensive production.”

That proved to be the case, with Cave shining as the unlikely star.

After making his major league debut 2 1/2 months ago, Cave has become an everyday player for the Twins, spending most of his time in center field with Byron Buxton battling a host of injuries.

“He’s gotten after it,” Molitor said, adding that Cave has “moxie” to his game. “He’s taken advantage of it so far. Hopefully it’s good a step for him as he tries to get himself established up here.”

Besides the grand slam from Cave, the Twins also got timely hits from third baseman Ehire Adrianza and outfielder Robbie Grossman.

Meanwhile, reliever Gabriel Moya recorded his second win of the weekend, taking over after a subpar outing from starter Ervin Santana. Closer Fernando Rodney made things interesting in the ninth inning before slamming the door shut.

“It was a little tenuous out there,” Molitor said of Rodney, who allowed three base runners. “I don’t know. He figures out a way to get it done.”

Now the Twins will shift their focus to trying to chase down the Cleveland Indians, doing so without guys like second baseman Brian Dozier and third baseman Eduardo Escobar, who were jettisoned last week at the trade deadline.

That means players like Cave will need to continue to step up. He promises he’s up for the challenge.

“This is my dream,” Cave said. “I’m going out there and I’m starting every day for a big-league baseball club. I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

BRIEFLY

After the game, Grossman was placed on the 10-day disabled list with a strained hamstring. Although he came out of the game in the seventh inning, Grossman suffered the injury earlier.

“I felt it grab on my third at-bat, when I hit the double,” Grossman said. “I got to second, and I could feel it right away. I tried to play through it.”

Cave’s grand slam powers Twins past Royals **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | August 5, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Twins’ blueprint for 2018 included a dynamic young center fielder making great plays on defense and coming up with big hits. Of course, that role was supposed to be filled by Byron Buxton, once considered the top prospect in baseball.

Instead, the Twins are rallying around Jake Cave.

Cave hit his first career grand slam and closer Fernando Rodney survived a chaotic ninth inning as the Minnesota Twins beat the Kansas City Royals 6-5 on Sunday.

Buxton’s 2018 has been mostly a washout due to injuries. The No. 2 overall pick in the 2012 draft was optioned to Triple-A Rochester and is currently on the minor league disabled list with an injured wrist. That opened the door for Cave, a 25-year-old rookie the Twins acquired in a minor league trade with the Yankees this spring.

“This is my dream,” said Cave, who’s more or less been the Twins’ everyday center fielder since late June. “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Cave homered in his major league debut on May 19, and he established himself with a number of highlight-reel catches along the way, earning him the trust of manager Paul Molitor. The latest step in that process is came Sunday as Molitor started the left-handed hitting Cave against a hard-throwing lefty in Kansas City’s Danny Duffy (7-10), who had been tough on the Twins in three prior starts this season.

WATCH: Twins' Jake Cave hits first career grand slam

That trust was rewarded with two outs in the second inning when Cave jumped on a full-count fastball for his first career grand slam and fourth homer of the season to put the Twins on top 4-2.

“I know Duffy’s got good stuff, I know he’s a competitor, and I know he’s going to come right at me at some point with the heater,” Cave said. “I got it, just stayed short, didn’t try to do too much, and I was rewarded.”

Cave fell behind 1-2 in the at-bat and then laid off some tough pitches, including a curveball that just missed inside at 1-2 and a fastball just below the knees one pitch before the grand slam.

“I had him punched out twice, and it’s tough to see the ball go out of the yard,” Duffy said. “But you still have to keep pitching.”

Molitor likes what he’s seen so far from the Twins’ second choice in center field.

“He’s got a little moxie to his game. He’s not afraid to take some chances on the bases and defensively, which is good because when he got up here we said, ‘Don’t play tentative.’ If you play timid, the game will bite you,” Molitor said. “I think he’s taking advantage so far. Hopefully it’s a good step for him as he tries to get himself established up here.”

RODNEY WALKS THE TIGHTROPE

Rodney came on to protect a one-run lead and promptly gave up Whit Merrifield’s fourth hit of the game leading off the ninth. But catcher Mitch Garver threw out Merrifield trying to steal second. Alex Gordon then struck out. Big sigh of relief, right?

Hold that thought. Salvador Perez lined a single to center. Pinch runner Adalberto Mondesi stole second, then took third as Lucas Duda walked on a full-count pitch. Duda even stole second, his first stolen base since 2014.

But with the tying run 90 feet away, Rodney retired Rosell Herrera on a ground ball to earn his 24th save in 30 chances.

“I thought that we were going to find a way to score a run there,” Royals manager Ned Yost said. “We just couldn’t muster it.”

QUOTABLE

“It’s easy to get frustrated, which I did. I came back to the dugout and I had my little 30 seconds of being upset. But I know we’re winning this game, we’re up by one and we’ve got our big man (Rodney) coming in in the ninth. I’ve got no choice but to give my best for him.” — Garver, on refocusing after he grounded into a rally-killing double play in the eighth inning.

SHORT START

Twins starter Ervin Santana lasted just 4 1/3 innings in his third start since spending half of the season on the disabled list. Santana gave up three runs on seven hits and left after throwing 78 pitches.

Lefty Gabriel Moya (2-0) got out of the two-on, one-out jam and earned his second career victory. He picked up career win No. 1 in Friday’s series opener.

“I just kind of felt we were at a little bit of a crossroad there,” Molitor said about pulling Santana in the fifth inning. “My gut told me we wanted to go ahead and try to get those last two outs with Moya, and thankfully he got it done.”

TRAINER’S ROOM

Royals: Mondesi got a second day off to rest his right shoulder, which he strained while diving for a ball on Friday.

Twins: Grossman was replaced by a pinch runner after hitting a one-out single in the seventh. After initially listing him as day-to-day with a mild right hamstring strain, the team announced after the game that Grossman would be placed on the 10-day disabled list.

UP NEXT

Royals: RHP Jakob Junis (6-11, 5.12 ERA) takes the mound on Monday to open a three-game series against the Chicago Cubs in Kansas City. In his last start, Junis pitched into the sixth inning and struck out five White Sox to pick up his first victory since May 18.

Twins: RHP Kyle Gibson (5-8, 3.47) will face the Indians for the second straight outing as the Twins open a three-game series in Cleveland on Monday. Gibson pitched six innings and allowed three earned runs while fanning six in a 6-2 loss to the Indians last Tuesday.

Preview: Twins at Indians

Associated Press | Fox Sports North | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND — It hasn't taken Leonys Martin long to adapt to his surroundings and teammates, and Cleveland's new center fielder will be in the lineup Monday night, batting ninth, as the Indians welcome the Minnesota Twins to Progressive Field for a four-game series.

Martin was acquired from Detroit in a July 31 trade that saw Cleveland send minor league shortstop prospect Willi Castro to the Tigers. In Martin's first four games with the Indians, he is 4-for-11 (.364) with two home runs, three RBIs and three runs scored.

"I'm really happy with my start here. I came here to do the best I can to help this team get where we want to go," Martin said.

The 30-year-old left-handed hitter was plugged immediately into the No. 9 spot in manager Terry Francona's lineup, and Martin has hit the ground running in Cleveland.

"He makes a difference. He thickens our lineup, and he can run," Francona said. "I don't think he's a No. 9 hitter, but that's where he is at the moment. It's a good way to turn the lineup over to (leadoff hitter) Frankie (Lindor)."

Martin says he's comfortable hitting ninth.

"It doesn't matter where you hit," he said. "I'm only hitting ninth in the first inning. Once the game gets going, you could leadoff two or three times. I just try to get on base, because I've got the best hitters on the team behind me."

On Monday, Martin will also be playing behind one of the best pitchers in the American League, as right-hander Trevor Bauer (10-6, 2.34 ERA) will make his 24th start. Bauer has pitched his way into the Cy Young Award discussion.

He's third in the league in strikeouts, third in innings pitched and fourth in ERA, and is in the top seven in strikeouts per nine innings and opponents' batting average.

Bauer hasn't lost a game since June 29. In six starts since then, he is 3-0 with a 2.03 ERA. In his last nine starts, he is 5-1 with a 1.80 ERA while averaging 11.1 strikeouts per nine innings and holding opposing batters to a .213 average.

Bauer is 1-1 with a 3.75 ERA in two starts against the Twins this year. In 18 career appearances vs. Minnesota, he is 5-7 with a 4.72 ERA.

Kyle Gibson will start for the Twins on Monday in what will be a reprise of the pitching matchup on July 31 in Minnesota, which was each pitcher's last start. In that game, Bauer and the Indians beat Gibson and the Twins 6-2.

Bauer pitched 6 1/3 innings, allowing two runs and four hits with three strikeouts and four walks. Gibson pitched six innings, giving up three runs and five hits with six strikeouts and three walks.

In three starts against the Indians this year, Gibson is 1-1 with a 2.89 ERA. He has made 16 career starts against Cleveland and is 3-7 with a 5.16 ERA.

Derek Falvey discusses Byron Buxton's swing, plan for Trevor May

Jake Depue | ESPN 1500 | August 4, 2018

Byron Buxton's difficult 2018 season has been well-chronicled.

Migraine headaches, a broken toe, and a recurring wrist issue have kept him on the DL for much of the season. After spending two weeks on the DL in Rochester with the wrist problem in July, he made just two starts before returning to the DL again on August 1.

Buxton's been tinkering with his mechanics for much of the season. He's added a leg kick at times, which he says gives him more power but less contact. Buxton had the leg kick in 2016 and the start of 2017, but abandoned it midway through last year, after which he experienced a great deal of success at the plate. After not having it at the start of this season, he used it briefly after getting sent down to Rochester, stopped, then added it again before his most recent trip to the DL.

Twins CBO Derek Falvey said the leg kick is going to stay, at least for now.

“I think maybe he was overthinking the leg kick vs. not,” said Falvey. “I think at this stage it’s part of it, for him, so he feels he can get in good position in his load. Ultimately he’s going to continue to develop, learn what works for him. You see guys at the big league level continue to tweak things. Maybe less notable than seeing a massive leg kick. I think he’s going to find the right balance of getting that kind of load with some leg kick.”

Buxton’s a hard worker who buys into the system and tries to incorporate the advice he gets into his approach. Is there too much advice, from too many voices, that’s causing more harm than good?

“I’ve thought about that to some degree,” said Falvey. “I’ll tell you that, I think that Byron is certainly thoughtful and listens to coaches, but Byron knows what’s good for him in his career. That’s what we want to train all players to do—take all the information in, process it, and then do what’s right for you. Coaches’ jobs are to support the functions of a player. In Byron’s case, he feels good about his plan, so I don’t think it’s a matter of having too many voices, I think it’s always one message, and the message is to continue to do what feels good for him.”

“Byron, through the course of this, he’s talked a lot with James [Rowson], Chad [Allen], Rudy [Hernandez], Rick [Eckstein], so many hitting guys that I think one of the things we impressed upon Byron is we want you to be athletic, we want you to be yourself, get in a comfort zone,” he added. “The key for him has been health. If we can get him a consistent run of plate appearances, whatever his mechanics are, I think they’ll solidify and we’ll see the upside we’re expecting.”

May’s plan
Trevor May made his return to the majors Tuesday, nearly two years after last taking the hill in the big leagues. Friday, he struck out three batters in a scoreless inning. It’s been a long road back for the hard-throwing righty, who underwent Tommy John surgery in spring 2017.

The original plan for May was to come back as a starter. He was a starter as he came through the system in the minors, and saw success in that role in the big leagues in 2015 before being converted to a reliever. He was excellent out of the bullpen in 2015, and though he had a high ERA in 2016, his strike out rate (32.1%) was very strong, suggesting he could have a future as a late-inning power arm.

Pitching in relief, though, contributed to back issues in 2016, according to May, and he said this spring he wanted to return as a starter. After starting in the first four games of his rehab stint this season in the minors, he was converted back to a reliever, making ten appearances out of the ‘pen for Rochester. (He technically started one game as an “opener,” pitching the first inning only, as the Twins continue to experiment with that approach in the minors. It’s possible that could be a role for him in the big leagues at some point as well, given his experience in both the rotation and bullpen).

The decision to transition back to a reliever was May’s, according to Falvey.

“Trevor, when he came back, even going back to last year, his desire was to start,” said Falvey. “As we started the rehab program, he expressed to us that maybe the best fit for him was out of the ‘pen, to take advantage of his pitches. We talk about partnering with players on plans. We said if you feel that’s the right fit, we see it, now let’s maximize your ability out of the ‘pen.”

Paul Molitor said Tuesday, before May’s debut, that his role was “a little bit undefined,” and that he may work multiple innings this season. The door isn’t shut on May starting down the road, perhaps even next season. For now, though, it appears he’ll work out of the ‘pen.

“It doesn’t rule anything out in the future,” said Falvey. “We can always have another conversation. I do believe you can build guys up in different ways, but I think for him right now, he thought this was a good fit and we agreed with him.”

As Twins try to pick up the pieces, Jake Cave’s grand slam fuels sweep of Royals **Nick Kelly | The Athletic | August 5, 2018**

Jake Cave sat in his locker steps away from the Twins clubhouse entrance in late July, not knowing what to think or expect.

As a longtime baseball fan and player, Cave watched and read about MLB trade deadlines. But he had not experienced one until this past week.

Cave watched from his rolling black chair as Minnesota traded infielder Eduardo Escobar to Arizona and reliever Ryan Pressly to Houston on July 27, then reliever Zach Duke to Seattle and starter Lance Lynn to the New York Yankees on July 30, and finally, second baseman Brian Dozier to the Los Angeles Dodgers the next day.

Quite the first trade deadline for a rookie to witness in person.

“To see five guys go, obviously big roles on the team go,” Cave said. “It’s a little weird to see, but at the same time, you get to see the relationships that get built in this game because guys are leaving and there are people who are really sad and are upset.”

And there is still baseball to play. Although Cave has never had to go through the experience of seeing clubhouse leaders such as Dozier and Escobar leave, he is doing his best to move on in the way he thinks is best.

Hitting grand slams helps.

Cave on Sunday smacked a full-count, two-out 94.8 mph fastball past the right field fence for the first grand slam of his career to lead Minnesota to a 6-5 victory over Kansas City at Target Field. The Twins (52-58) swept the three-game series with the Royals, Minnesota’s third sweep of a series three games or longer this season — all of them in the last month.

If the Twins, who sit nine games out of first place in the American League Central, want to have even an outside shot at the postseason, they will need to follow Cave’s lead and move on. The Twins have four games in Cleveland this week that will once again provide an opportunity to keep the race for the division crown from being a runaway.

“All we can do is keep playing,” Cave said. “You can’t really dwell on it too much. Once that next game starts, new season basically.”

Granted, that is easier said than done when players such as Dozier and Escobar leave. Both had played in Minnesota since 2012. Dozier even made a quick impression on Cave, who said the former All-Star was one of the coolest guys he has been around.

“He obviously has a good amount of time, has made good money, but he never treated anybody differently,” Cave said. “That was cool to me, being a rookie. He talked to me any time I wanted to talk. He was awesome.”

So, Cave was sad to see Dozier go. Cave, though, is trying to continue using the things Dozier taught him on how to conduct himself as a professional baseball player.

If you ask Twins manager Paul Molitor, Cave is doing it well.

“He’s got a little moxie to his game,” Molitor said. “He is not afraid to take some chances on the bases, defensively — which is good because when he got up here, we said, ‘Don’t play tentatively.’ You play timid, and the game will bite you. So he has gotten after it.”

Cave does so with youthful exuberance, Molitor said, despite the chance at a postseason appearance looking bleak. The way Cave sees it: he is starting most games at center field for a major-league baseball team, making it easy to have energy and a smile on his face.

“I love it,” Cave said. “This is my dream.”

Grossman to disabled list

The Twins removed outfielder Robbie Grossman in the seventh inning Sunday after he suffered a mild right hamstring strain.

Molitor announced postgame that they would place Grossman on the 10-day disabled list. The Twins have not yet replaced him on the roster. Molitor said that they would finish discussions Sunday night about who would join them in Cleveland.

“I felt it grab on my third at-bat, when I hit the double,” Grossman said. “I got to second, and I could feel it right away. I tried to play through it, thought I could, but it just wasn’t working.”

Grossman will stay in Minnesota while the Twins head on the road for a week.

“I’ve had hamstring injuries before, but it hurt,” Grossman said. “Hopefully it’s not too bad.”

Grossman is hitting .249/.330/.359 in 273 at-bats this season.

It did not take pitcher Oliver Drake long to set a record in Minnesota.

Drake, who joined the Twins off waivers, pitched in the ninth inning hours after arriving in Minnesota on Saturday. He became the only player in MLB history to play for five different teams in one season.

Drake has made appearances for the Brewers, Indians, Angels, Blue Jays and Twins in 2018.

“It’s definitely cool having all the jerseys,” Drake said Saturday. “That’s going to be something that, looking back, will be a cool collection. I don’t know if it’ll be something I brag about. It’ll definitely be a neat story, especially down the line after the baseball career with kids, grandkids or anything, and they’ll see I think six jerseys I have now that are framed.”

Drake started the season with the Brewers, appearing in 11 games before being designated for assignment and then traded to the Indians in May. He pitched four times for Cleveland, then was designated again and eventually claimed off waivers by the Angels. He threw in eight games for them before again ending up on waivers and being claimed by the Blue Jays. After two games in Toronto, he was once again placed on waivers at the end of July and scooped up by the Twins in the wake of their busy trade deadline that saw three pitchers leave town.

Drake gave credit to his wife and family for helping him through a hectic season. She has packed up apartments, lined up car shipping and handled other logistical problems that they have faced while Drake plays for team after team.

Drake landed in Minneapolis at about 2:30 p.m. Saturday, traveling straight to Target Field where he met teammates and got ready to pitch if needed.

“My agent keeps telling me it’s always good to be wanted,” Drake said. “That’s definitely a nice thing. I keep getting good opportunities, so I’m just going to try take advantage of this one.”