



## SF Giants Press Clips Tuesday, September 11, 2018

**San Francisco Chronicle**

**Giants lose 9th straight, Rodriguez deserved better**

**John Shea**

Giants manager Bruce Bochy had a message regarding his two young starting pitchers before Monday night's homestand opener:

Let 'em pitch.

"We have no concern with those two right now," Bochy said of Dereck Rodriguez and Andrew Suarez, referring to their season inning totals, both professional career highs.

With that, Bochy let Rodriguez pitch into the seventh inning, which is when the game turned because of a misplay by center fielder Gorkys Hernandez. The Giants lost 4-1 to Atlanta, though no one was blaming Rodriguez for their ninth straight loss.

The Giants had three hits, and their final 20 batters were retired, mostly in routine fashion. After the third inning, just three balls got past the infield, and the Giants were held to one or no runs for the 31st time; only the last-place Orioles and Marlins have done it more.

Near the end of a second straight lost season, life isn't all negative for the Giants, and one reason is Rodriguez, who made it clear to Bochy he didn't want to exit after six innings.

Bochy obliged.

"I like playing with old-school managers," said the right-hander, son of Hall of Famer Ivan Rodriguez. "I've seen the games my entire life. That's the game I learned and grew up watching, the old-school game. Yeah, having Bochy as a manager and him having the confidence in me so early is awesome."

"That kid pitched a great game, didn't he? As he has so many times this year," Bochy said. "It's a shame

we couldn't get some runs for him. We were just shut down."

Rodriguez threw 86 pitches in five innings and 102 through six. Then he threw four more, the number of pitches it took second baseman Ozzie Albies to show how speed and smarts can win games.

LocalGiants pick New York developer for Mission Rock project near...

Albies opened the seventh with a groundball up the middle, and he took a big turn around first, trying to trick Hernandez to throw behind him. Sure enough, Hernandez fell for it, and his throw sailed over Brandon Belt.

Albies advanced to third on the error and scored moments later on Dansby Swanson's sacrifice fly. It was a big mistake by Hernandez — even if his throw was on line, Albies would have taken second with ease.

"It was a little too aggressive on Gorkys' part," Bochy said. "Of course, he threw it away. That's what really cost more damage. He was halfway between first and second. Just get the ball in."

Albies also tripled home a run in the ninth, crushing a Hunter Strickland pitch that one-hopped the wall near the 421-foot sign in right-center. Albies ran to third so fast, it seemed as if he were on a Little League field, then he scored on a safety-squeeze bunt by Swanson.

The nine-game losing streak is the Giants' longest since July 23-Aug. 1, 2006.

Rodriguez, one of the league's top rookies, yielded one earned run and four hits and lowered his ERA to 2.36. That's the fifth lowest in the league among pitchers with at least 16 starts.

The only earned run Rodriguez allowed came in the fourth when Freddie Freeman singled and scored on Kurt Suzuki's single. Ronald Acuña Jr., who has eight leadoff homers and is a Rookie of the Year favorite, was hitless.

Rodriguez, who had faced Acuña in the minors, knows he's aggressive on first pitches and threw a cutter to begin the game. Acuña grounded to third.

"I knew he's on a tear and likes that first at-bat," Rodriguez said. "We had that set since before I went out there. I knew he was going to try to ambush the first pitch. It's the easiest pitch to hit, (usually) a first-pitch fastball. I wanted to make it a little tough on him and give him a cutter, and it worked out."

## **San Francisco Chronicle**

### **New Giants infielder Abiatal Avelino explains quirky routine before at-bats**

**John Shea**

Google the name Abiatal Avelino or do a search for the Giants' new infielder on social media, and the results might not prominently show his statistics, versatility or skills.

At least not as much as his unique on-deck mannerisms.

"I'm just trying to be ready to run," Avelino said Monday after stepping into AT&T Park for the first time.

Avelino, one of two prospects acquired in the trade that sent Andrew McCutchen to the Yankees last month, has a routine before at-bats that would make any fan do a double-take.

Avelino starts by moving his bat behind his head with both hands, then puts his hands on his knees, pushes the knees together and then rests the knees to the ground before popping up.

Abiatal Avelino struck out in his first big league at-bat. He has an interesting routine before getting to the plate.

The purpose, he said, is to stretch the groin and quads and create an “activation” with his legs that helps him be flexible.

“My trainer in low-A, he taught me the exercise,” said Avelino, referring to his stint with the 2014 Charleston RiverDogs. “I felt really good at that moment. I felt the stress (relieved) and said ‘OK.’ Now I try to do it every at-bat, to help me be ready.”

It just so happens Avelino’s locker neighbor is Hunter Pence, whose own routine in the on-deck circle is well-chronicled, if not legendary.

“Every player experiences baseball a little bit differently,” Pence said. “We’re all different, and while there are similar things that improve you, we all have to find our way to get there. We all do it in different ways. He seems like an excited player. I’m getting to know him. We see his speed and glove.”

Avelino had his first two big-league at-bats Saturday after hitting a combined .283 with 15 homers and 27 steals in Double-A and Triple-A.

Another surgery: Ryder Jones will undergo left knee surgery in the next couple of days. In eight big-league at-bats, Jones had three hits, including two homers, but dislocated his patella on a swing Sunday in Milwaukee.

“He was excited about getting some playing time,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “It’s tough for these guys when this happens. He was trying to show he can play here and hoping to compete for a spot on the squad next year. This is a setback, but you’ve got to deal with it.”

**San Jose Mercury News**  
**Giants go quietly in ninth straight loss**  
**Mike Lefkow**

SAN FRANCISCO — The Giants wasted a gem of a pitching performance Monday night. And so the defeats go on.

Derek Rodriguez, the 26-year-old rookie who should certainly garner some Rookie of the Year votes, allowed two runs (one earned) over 6½ splendid innings, but Giant hitters managed only three hits of their own and lost to the Atlanta Braves before an announced crowd of 35,996 at AT&T Park.

The loss was the ninth in a row for the Giants, who remain winless in September.

The game was tied 1-1 until the seventh, when Braves second baseman Ozzie Albies stretched a hit to

center into a double, continued to third on a throwing error by Gorkys Hernandez and scored on Dansby Swanson's sacrifice fly. The run was unearned.

"You saw the effort," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "The kid pitched great. It's a shame we couldn't get him some runs. He's thrown some fine games."

Rodriguez (6-3) allowed five hits, walked two and struck out three. He threw 110 pitches.

"We've been taking care of him," Bochy said. "His sixth inning was a very good inning. He started the seventh and could have kept going, but we had to find a way to get some runs."

Said Rodriguez, "I asked him if I could stay out there. I feel strong."

Rodriguez should get three more starts. But it's not going to do much good for the Giants' record-wise if they keep flailing like they did on Monday.

Other than Austin Slater, the Giants went with a veteran lineup, respecting Atlanta's status as a contender in the National League East. Brandon Belt had a first-inning single, and Slater and Gorkys Hernandez had hits in the third.

After that. Nada.

The Giants scored their run when Hernandez opened the inning with a single, was sacrificed to second by Rodriguez and stole third. Slater then singled to left to drive in Hernandez.

Bochy made sure to note that the Giants' only run was manufactured, but he was clearly unhappy with the overall effort by his offense.

"We didn't make a lot of hard contact," he said. "That was the story. Give their pitcher credit. But we were late (on pitches) a lot tonight."

Braves starter Sean Newcomb hadn't exactly been on a roll coming into the game. In his last five starts, he was 1-3 with a 7.98 ERA. A hard-throwing lefty with command issues, he had walked 15 batters in 23⅓ innings over that five-game stretch.

Against the Giants, he didn't issue a single base on balls. He struck out eight.

Of course, Monday's performance will likely raise more questions about whether Bochy will use some of his younger players over the 17 games that remain.

Any realistic hopes of the post-season evaporated on during a just-completed 0-6 road trip, and Bochy knows fans might like a glimpse of players such as top outfield prospect Chris Shaw and infielder Abiatal Avelino, who was acquired from the New York Yankees in the Andrew McCutchen trade.

"We'll mix in the young guys," Bochy said before Monday night's defeat. "But we want to finish strong. Even if we put in the young guys, we'll try to win the game."

The Giants don't have that many call-ups on the roster. Shaw and Avelino are the most promising.

Catcher Aramis Garcia is in San Francisco because of Buster Posey's season-ending hip surgery. Infielder Ryder Jones will have surgery this week because of a left knee patella dislocation. Outfielders Slater and Steven Duggar were up well before September. Duggar also is out for the season because of shoulder surgery.

Avelino, 23, surely is an intriguing prospect.

"You look at his tools," Bochy said. "He's a good athlete. He can run. He gives us speed off the bench."

Nevertheless, Shaw might be the more important prospect. The Giants' outfield doesn't exactly strike fear in opposing pitching staffs. Hernandez is the only outfielder on the Giants' roster who is in double digits with homers. He and third baseman Evan Longoria are tied for the team lead with 15. Duggar, Slater, Jones, Hunter Pence and Gregor Blanco have combined for nine.

Alen Hanson has started 14 games in left field, but none of his eight homers have come when he was playing out there.

Shaw belted 24 homers with Triple-A Sacramento. The 24-year-old left-handed hitter might represent the best power potential the Giants have in the outfield unless the injured Mac Williamson returns or a free agent is signed in the off-season.

Bochy said Shaw likely will start Tuesday night when the Braves pitch Mike Foltynewicz. Shaw is just 1-for-17 to begin his big-league career. His one hit was a homer. He has 11 strikeouts.

Shaw, as is often the case with younger players, is just happy to be in the majors. Sure, he'd like more playing time than the five starts and eight games he's appeared in thus far, but he knows he has to wait his turn.

"I'm not in position to have an expectation to play," Shaw said. "My expectation right now is I'll play whenever Bochy calls on me."

Of the 17 remaining games on the Giants' schedule, only six are against non-contenders. Both are three-game series against the San Diego Padres.

"We may do that," Bochy said of going with whatever younger players the Giants have on the roster when they oppose the Padres. "We don't have that option right now. But with certain series you may see it."

- No timetable yet for the return of pitcher Jeff Samardzija. He has only made 10 starts this season because of shoulder miseries. He is 1-5 with a 6.25 ERA.

**MLB.com**

**Giants give little help to solid Rodriguez**

**Chris Haft**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Discriminating members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America who will cast

National League Rookie of the Year ballots shouldn't be fooled by the decision that Dereck Rodriguez absorbed in the Giants' 4-1 loss Monday night to the Atlanta Braves.

Rodriguez (6-3) surrendered two of Atlanta's runs as the Giants' losing streak reached nine games. But he pitched capably, surrendering five hits in 6 1/3 innings to record his 13th quality start in 16 outings.

Though Atlanta left fielder Ronald Acuna Jr. and Washington outfielder Juan Soto are likely to dominate the balloting, Rodriguez and his 2.35 ERA, which leads all NL rookies, should receive some attention.

Rodriguez isn't dwelling on his Rookie of the Year chances.

"I'm just trying to go out there and put on a good performance, regardless of what everybody else is doing," he said.

But he did relish his confrontations with Acuna, who entered Monday leading the NL in runs and home runs since the All-Star break. Rodriguez held him hitless in two at-bats and walked him once in an 0-for-4 evening. Knowing Acuna would try to stun him immediately, Rodriguez made sure his first pitch of the game had a wrinkle in it. He threw a cutter that Acuna grounded to third base.

"I've faced Acuna in the past, in the Minors," Rodriguez said. "It's been a pretty good matchup."

It's usually a good matchup for the Giants no matter who Rodriguez faces.

"Rodriguez was really good," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "The guys were having a hard time seeing against him. He changes speeds well, he changes off his fastball. He screwed everybody's timing up. That's the big thing. Guys were talking about they were having a hard time getting anything going against him."

Rodriguez owns a 1.74 ERA in 12 games (10 starts) against teams with records of .500 or above, including the NL East-leading Braves. He logged his 13th start of the season in which he has pitched at least six innings and allowed two or fewer runs. According to Stats LLC, the only two pitchers since 1913 to have lasted at least six innings while allowing two runs or fewer in at least 13 of their first 16 career starts are Rodriguez and the Expos' Steve Rogers. The last Giants pitcher -- and only other since 1913 -- with 13 such starts in his first 16 starts in a season was Hall of Famer Juan Marichal in 1965.

The go-ahead run that Rodriguez yielded in the seventh inning happened to be unearned. With the score tied, 1-1, Atlanta's Ozzie Albies stretched a single into a double by taking a wide turn around first base and drawing an overthrow past first base from Giants center fielder Gorkys Hernandez. The error moved Albies to third, from where he scored on Dansby Swanson's sacrifice fly.

Albies was at it again in the ninth inning, tripling home a run and scoring to pad Atlanta's lead.

This was more than enough offense to subdue the Giants, who mustered three hits.

The Giants manufactured a third-inning run to open the scoring against Braves starter Sean Newcomb. Hernandez blooped a single to right-center field, advanced on Rodriguez's sacrifice bunt and scored on

Austin Slater's single, a high bouncer over third base.

Atlanta pulled even in the fourth following Freddie Freeman's leadoff single. He moved to third base on a wild pitch and an infield out before scoring on Kurt Suzuki's two-out single.

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Giants manager Bruce Bochy praised Albies' baserunning in the tiebreaking seventh.

"He's so athletic," Bochy said. "We wouldn't have had a shot at him at second base. It was a little too aggressive on Gorky's part."

#### SOUND SMART

With quality starts in 13 of his 16 outings, Rodriguez's quality-start percentage is 81.25. Only Mets right-hander Jacob deGrom (85.7 percent) and Washington ace Max Scherzer (86.7 percent) have better quality-start percentages.

#### UP NEXT

Andrew Suarez will attempt to keep improving upon his productive rookie season Tuesday night beginning at 7:15 PT when he confronts the Braves. The left-hander received the decision in a 5 1/3-inning outing at Atlanta on May 6 as the Giants prevailed, 4-3. Suarez has 118 strikeouts, tied for seventh on the franchise's all-time San Francisco-era list for rookies, behind John Montefusco (215, 1975), Matt Cain (179, 2006), John D'Acquisto (167, 1974), Tim Lincecum (150, 2007), Chris Heston (141, 2015) and Pete Falcone (131, 1975). John Burkett also struck out 118 in 1990. Suarez will oppose Atlanta right-hander Mike Foltynewicz.

#### **MLB.com**

#### **Jones to have surgery for dislocated patella**

**Chris Haft**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Add Ryder Jones' name to the extensive list of Giants requiring season-ending surgery.

Jones, 24, dislocated his left patella while swinging at a pitch during San Francisco's 6-3 loss Sunday at Milwaukee and left the game in the seventh inning. Giants manager Bruce Bochy said Monday that Jones will undergo surgery "in a couple of days."

Jones went 3-for-8 with two home runs in five games for the Giants this year. He homered during a one-game promotion on July 20 in a 5-1 triumph over the A's and went deep last Saturday in a pinch-hit appearance at Milwaukee.

Jones, selected by the Giants in the second round of the 2013 Draft, hit .274 with 22 doubles, four triples, 11 home runs and 59 RBIs in 116 games with Triple-A Sacramento.

"He was excited about getting some playing time," Bochy said of Jones, who hit .173 in 59 games for the

Giants last year. "It's tough for these guys who are trying to show that they can play here."

Right-hander Johnny Cueto, catcher Buster Posey, infielder Pablo Sandoval and center fielder Steven Duggar are other Giants who have undergone season-ending surgeries

#### **Cut4 by MLB.com**

#### **Hodor visited SF and made the Giants look very small**

**Matt Monagan**

Baseball players are large humans -- tall, strong and, at times, incredibly yoked. Not many people can make them look small.

Except for, you know, Hodor.

Yes, that's actor Kristian Nairn, who plays Hodor in Game of Thrones, in town for Game of Thrones Night. You can also see him in the main photo above with Ryder Jones and Trevor Brown. Nairn is one of the few men who can make baseball players (and more specifically, Giants) look small.

After Nairn participated in some pregame festivities he made his way upstairs and dropped some beats. He's a DJ in his spare time, after all:

I guess Hodor really can say more than one word.

#### **NBC Sports Bay Area**

#### **Dereck Rodriguez edges Ronald Acuña Jr. in battle of two top NL rookies**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — The favorite for the National League Rookie of the Year Award walked up to the plate at 7:15 p.m. Monday night. Dereck Rodriguez had a plan for him.

Two months ago, the Giants pitcher had dreams of vaulting to the top of the race. As good as the right-hander has been, Ronald Acuña Jr. appears poised to edge Rodriguez, Juan Soto and the rest of a star-studded field. When you're 20 years old and have 25 homers and a .940 OPS for a surprise Atlanta Braves team that should win the National League East, you're going to be tough to beat.

But Rodriguez hasn't given in, and he wasn't eager to become part of Acuña's campaign on Monday. The young outfielder has taken over the conversation in large part by ambushing opponents for leadoff homers, and Rodriguez was well aware of it. Long before he took the mound, he knew what he was going to do with his first pitch.

"I went out there and knew he tries to ambush the first pitch," Rodriguez said. "That's the easiest pitch of the game, a first-pitch fastball. I gave him a cutter and it worked out."

Rodriguez threw a cutter on the outside edge of the plate. Acuña took a big swing and bounced out to third baseman Evan Longoria. In the third, he again grounded out to third. In the fifth, Rodriguez walked him.

The battle between two of the best young players in the National League went to the Giant. The rest of



this night belonged to the Braves. They scored on a mistake by Gorkys Hernandez in the seventh and tacked on two runs in the ninth. A 4-1 loss was the ninth straight for the Giants, who haven't yet had a handshake line in September.

This march to the final out of the season gets more depressing by the day, but at least the Giants have found Rodriguez. In a season full of so much disappointment, the right-hander looks like a foundation of the rotation. It no longer is a small sample size. On Monday, Rodriguez went over the 100-inning mark for the year. His ERA (2.35) ranks fourth among National League starters with 100 innings thrown. The three men in front of him — Jacob deGrom, Aaron Nola and Max Scherzer — will make up the top three on every Cy Young ballot.

"I'm not surprised anymore," manager Bruce Bochy said. "He knows what he's doing out there. I've said it so many times — four pitches, with command, and he goes up and down. And he's such a good competitor."

Even with where the Giants are, Rodriguez asked to go out for the seventh. Bochy obliged, but that wasn't enough to get the Giants over the hump. The offense is too poor right now to beat a pitcher like Sean Newcomb, and it has cost Rodriguez at least three or four wins in the second half. He could be sitting at 10-2 right now, perhaps better, and that certainly would resonate a bit more with voters.

Instead, Rodriguez took an undeserved loss. He's 6-3, and although few pitchers in the game have been better this summer, it appears there's nothing he can do to unseat Acuña. If that bothers the rookie, he hasn't shown it. He talked Monday about how excited he is to have three more starts.

"I'm just trying to go out there and put on a good performance regardless of what anyone else is doing," he said. "I can't control what I can't control. The past couple of months have been pretty crazy [with other rookies]. We'll see how it is."

## **NBC Sports Bay Area**

### **Giants notes: Outfield mistake proves costly in ninth straight loss**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — During batting practice on Monday afternoon, young Atlanta Braves Ronald Acuña Jr. and Ozzie Albies came over to the Giants dugout to chat with Hensley Meulens. Albies, like Meulens, is from Curacao, and the two were at a clinic together last offseason. Albies plans to bring Acuña Jr. along this offseason to help teach the next generation of stars from his country.

The Giants did not need that connection to know what Albies does so well. He is a spark plug, the type of player you can't take your eyes off when he's between the lines. But Gorkys Hernandez forgot how dynamic Albies can be, and it cost the Giants in a big spot.

The young second baseman led off the seventh by poking a single into right-center. He took a wide turn around first, getting halfway to second as Hernandez scooped the ball. The right move was to run towards the infield and get the ball to Brandon Crawford or Kelby Tomlinson. Instead, Hernandez tried to back-pick Albies at first. His throw sailed to the visiting dugout and Albies ended up on third. He scored the winning run on a sacrifice fly, and the Braves handed the Giants their ninth straight loss.

"With the runner, he's so athletic," manager Bruce Bochy said. "Once [Hernandez] threw it he's headed

to second and we wouldn't have had a shot at him. It was a little too aggressive on Gorkys' part. He's halfway between first and [second], just get the ball in."

To be fair to Hernandez, his aggression brought in the only run for the Giants. He stole third with one out in the third and scored when Austin Slater bounced a ball over a drawn-in infield. That was it for the lineup. The Giants managed just three hits against Sean Newcomb and none against three Braves relievers.

"We didn't make a lot of hard contact," Bochy said. "That was pretty evident. We didn't make good hard contact as often as you need to. We were late a lot tonight. (Newcomb) has got a good live fastball and then he keeps you honest with the breaking ball and changeup."

--- The Giants were held to one run or fewer for the 31st time. Somehow that's tied with the Cubs. Somehow that's also not worst in the big leagues. The Orioles have done it 36 times and the Marlins have done it 33 times.

--- The Giants have lost nine straight for the first time since 2006, when they lost nine straight from July 23 to August 1. They appear to be making a late run at a top-10 draft pick.

--- Hunter Strickland has given up a run in three straight and four runs over his last two appearances. Overall, he's had just three scoreless appearances out of nine since returning, and his fastball velocity is down to 93-94 at times. As much heat as Strickland took early on, he was a pretty good relief pitcher before punching a door. The late collapse may have an impact on how the Giants view him for next season, and also may have an impact on trades. He was a candidate to be moved, given how few trade options this front office has, but he isn't ending on a high note.

## **NBC Sports Bay Area**

### **Giants squander another Dereck Rodriguez gem in ninth consecutive loss**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Giants hoped to be contending for a division title in September. At this point, they would settle for a single win in the month.

A close game turned into another ugly loss Monday night. This time, it was to the Braves. This time, it was 4-1.

The Giants are 0-for-September, and they've lost nine straight, their longest skid in 12 years.

Dereck Rodriguez is really good, though. So there's that.

Here are some things you should know from the Giants' loss at AT&T Park ...

-- Rodriguez crossed the 100-inning mark with six more dominant frames. He gave up one run on four hits. Among NL pitchers with at least 100 innings pitched, he ranks fourth with an ERA of 2.35. The three guys in front of him -- Jacob deGrom, Aaron Nola and Max Scherzer -- are fighting it out for the Cy Young Award.

-- The Giants did a lot of little things right to get their first run. Rodriguez put down a perfect sacrifice

following a single by Gorkys Hernandez, and Hernandez alertly stole third on Sean Newcomb. That led to the Braves bringing their infield in with one out, so Austin Slater's high chopper to third got over Johan Camargo's head and made it 1-0.

-- The Giants did a lot of things wrong to give up the second run of the night. Ozzie Albies hit a single to center and went halfway to second, daring Hernandez to throw. He did, except he threw it to first, and Albies easily made it to second. The throw got away, and Albies was awarded third, and he scored the go-ahead run on a sacrifice fly. The ball was shallow, but Austin Slater's throw home was 30 feet from the plate.

-- Hunter Strickland gave up a double, triple and squeeze in the top of the ninth. A 2-1 game turned into 4-1, and his velocity appears to be down a couple of ticks. It's been quite the fall for the former closer.

### **The Athletic**

#### **Battle of the rookies: Ozzie Albies leaves a fiery trail, Dereck Rodríguez another whiff of promise Shayna Rubin**

Behold, the audacious spirit of youth.

Amid an otherwise humdrum September game between an unexpected contender and the Giants, Atlanta's Ozzie Albies provided more energy at the plate and fire on the infield dirt than any Philadelphia groundskeeper's flamethrower could ever sputter.

Against a Giants lineup crafted to at least present a challenge for the Braves, Albies outsmarted and out-hustled everyone on the field. Gorkys Hernández was the first victim; the center fielder got mentally tangled up in Albies' speedy threat on what should have been a simple single in the seventh. An errant throw over Brandon Belt's head at first allowed Albies a free trip to third base and, then, a scamper home on Dansby Swanson's tie-breaking sac fly.

Albies jolted AT&T Park again not soon after, rocking Hunter Strickland's first-pitch 95 mph fastball into a gap for an easy RBI triple in the ninth, icing the Braves' 4-1 win Monday night.

Really, this was just a game met between two teams tracking opposite paths. One is on a quest to prove what playoff-bound teams in recent years proved before: that a squad fresh off a rebuild can have the unique, Albies-like talent and stamina to be a serious contender. The other is trying to figure out a way to finish the year as a potential spoiler while trying to provide the space for future pieces to learn and prove themselves.

It's odd that, amid this nine-game losing streak, the Giants can't find a way to marry both objectives. Hunter Pence got the start in left field against left-hander Sean Newcomb, because the platoon splits indicated this would pose the biggest offensive threat, but it was difficult not to wonder how Chris Shaw might have fared against a lefty and handled the couple of sharp line drives Pence couldn't quite get to.

In any event, the Giants are trying to get their first September win against this unexpectedly tough Braves team.

"I don't think too many people saw this team doing what they're doing now," manager Bruce Bochy said of the Braves before the game. The Mets and Nationals, given their quick starts, fit the bill as likely

contenders at the season's onset, in his eyes. "When you play those guys you see why they are where they are, especially with those two kids."

Those two kids he's speaking of are Albies and Ronald Acuña Jr., of course. Add a healthy Freddie Freeman and a solid young pitcher like Newcomb — who held the Giants to one run on three weak-contact hits over six innings Monday — and it's clear the Braves have a clear shot in a relatively weak National League at a deep October run.

And let's remember, too, that the Giants swept the Braves back in May at SunTrust Park. There was some iteration of this team that could compete with the Acúñas and Albies of the world (the Giants tallied 41 hits and outscored them 24-9 in that series).

And let's not forget, also, that at that point in the season Dereck Rodríguez was not part of that iteration. He was just a Hall of Famer's son who appeared with force in the Giants system seemingly out of nowhere.

From a macro perspective, youth spilling from Atlanta's dugout shined. But at a micro level, one of the more competitive moments in the game came between the three NL Rookie of the Year contenders (Acuña, Albies and Rodríguez). Rodríguez faced Acuña quite a bit during their minor league tenures, so he knew the leadoff hitter hunted quickly in the first at-bat. He knew he'd be looking for a first-pitch fastball.

So he threw him a cutter. Acuña chopped it over to Evan Longoria for an out.

"After that we only really talked about the first at-bat," Rodríguez said. "After that, it's fair game."

Acuña grounded out again his next at-bat, then drew a walk. Albies grounded out and flied out before befuddling Hernández in the seventh.

A look at the matchup between future pillars of these teams is essential. Albies and Acuña are easy figures to point to as instant successes borne of drastic tear-down-and-rebuilds. To the chagrin of many vocal Giants fans, changes in San Francisco will toe a more diplomatic line while the front office attempts to turn this franchise right side up again.

Rodríguez will be a major part of the U-turn. He pitched 6 1/3 innings and allowed one earned run Monday to lower his ERA to 2.35 — the best among all rookie starters and sixth-best among starters overall.

An ill-timed hamstring injury that might've curtailed his rookie of the year campaign also acted as an inning trimmer, of sorts (silver linings ... right?). His start Monday just put him over 100 innings, and Bochy said before the game there's no reason Rodríguez wouldn't get the three-four starts he's scheduled to make as this depressing season winds down.

He has enough chutzpah and pull with his manager, at this point, to sway his way to longer starts, too. After a solid sixth inning, at 102 pitches, Rodríguez convinced Bochy he had more in him — he returned to the mound in the seventh in a valiant quest mired by shortcomings within every other corner of the team.

Rodríguez shook his head, at himself, when Bochy took the ball from his hands two batters later, but the sparse crowd stood up for him.

Though out-shined — not able, yet again, to wear a W on his record though he deserved it — the audacious spirit of youth was represented on the Giants' side, too. It just didn't leave as fiery of a trail.

Extra Innings

— Ryder Jones dislocated the patella on his left knee swinging at a pitch in Sunday's game against the Brewers. Bochy announced before the game that Jones will have surgery "in the next couple days."

**KNBR 680**

**Hernandez error, invisible offense highlight Giants' ninth-straight loss  
Jacob Hutchinson**

There's a saying that great pitchers never get any help. It's true for Jacob deGrom, the Cy Young Award candidate of the Mets, and tonight, it proved true again for Dereck Rodriguez, the Giants' Rookie of the Year contender.

Despite pitching 6 1/3 fantastic innings, Rodriguez received practically no help from the Giants' offense and took a 4-1 loss to the Atlanta Braves thanks to a throwing error from Gorkys Hernandez.

A pair of singles from Gorkys Hernandez and Austin Slater put the Giants on the board in the third inning before Freddie Freeman and Kurt Suzuki did the same to tie game in the fourth.

After 102 pitches through six innings, Bruce Bochy sent Rodriguez back out for the seventh. Then, disaster struck in the form of a nightmare play by Hernandez.

The rapid Ozzie Albies hit a slow ball on the ground into center field for a would-be single. Albies took a huge turn around first base, causing Hernandez to pick up the ball quick and make an ill-advised throw, seemingly intended for first.

The throw sailed off the field and nearly into another area code for what was recorded as a double and throwing error that sent Albies to third. On the next play, Dansby Swanson hit a sacrifice fly to right field, scoring Albies and giving the Braves a one-run lead.

Rodriguez was spared the offense of an earned run thanks to Sam Dyson, came in to turn a 1-6-3 double play after Rodriguez hit Rio Ruiz with a pitch.

The statistical benefit is about all Rodriguez and the Giants can take in a positive sense from tonight's game. The team's offense was stagnant as usual, picking up three hits all night, the last of which was Slater's RBI single back in the third inning.

Starting in the third, the Giants could only watch as Braves pitchers retired 20 straight batters to end the game. To add insult to potential injury, Hernandez took a ricocheted ball to face in the ninth inning, when Kurt Suzuki doubled off the wall.

After a groundout, Albies continued his torment of the Giants, hitting a triple into the alley to score

Suzuki and give the Braves a 3-1 lead. A bunt from Dansby Swanson scored Albies to put the Braves up by three.

While the Braves had three extra-base hits after the third inning, the Giants hit just four balls into the outfield after the third – one of which was a pop-up to shortstop hit by Brandon Crawford which barely made it into the outfield grass.

It goes without saying that the Giants (68-77) are now at their lowest point of an already underwhelming season.

#### **KNBR 680**

#### **Krueger and Schulman strongly disagree on prospect of Giants rebuild**

#### **Staff**

Larry Krueger and Giants beat writer Henry Schulman got into a spirited discussion Monday afternoon, on the subject of how the Orange & Black are likely to approach the next few seasons, on the heels of missing the playoffs in consecutive years.

Krueger believes the club will commit to a three or four year rebuild, while Schulman doesn't think that's how longtime Giants executive Brian Sabean operates. They also discussed how the Giants will handle the contract of Madison Bumgarner, which is set to expire after next season. Here's a full transcript of the back-and-forth:

—

Krueger: "It's going to be interesting. Do they take a realistic view of 2019, or do they take a ticket-sales view of 2019, wanting (Madison Bumgarner) to front a new rotation? Is he going to be kind of like the sacrificial lamb as far as the marquee guy in the midst of the rebuilding years a la Don Mattingly with the Yankees in the mid-80s? It'll be interesting. I imagine they're going to want to consult Bum and ask him what he would like. 'Do you want to be the big fish on a rebuilding three year, four year deal, or do you want to go somewhere?'"

Schulman: "Why do you keep saying that when you know that's not going to happen Larry?"

K: "What's that, say what?"

S: "There is not going to be a three or four year rebuilding thing."

K: "It's already been two."

S: "There's not going to be a two year rebuilding thing. They are going to try and win next year. That's what they do. And you said ticket sales, I didn't, but yeah, ticket sales."

K: "Was this year a rebuilding year? No. But this year in the fan's eyes was, because they're not competitive. You can want what you want, but it doesn't mean that you can..."

S: "Larry, you can dream all you want about this big three or four or two year rebuild..."

K: "They can dream all they want about being competitive in 2019, I can play this game all day."

S: Alright but you asked me a question Larry, you asked me a question. You asked me a question if they're going to go to Bum(garner) and ask him how he feels about being the big fish in three or four year rebuild, you can run the tape. It's not going to be a three or four year rebuild. They're going to use the \$40 million that they're going to save from (Hunter) Pence and (Andrew) McCutchen, plus the \$9 million that the luxury tax is going to go up and they're going to try and build a winning team next year, and they're going to try and compete.

"They're not going to go to Bumgarner and say 'Do you want to be here for three or four more years.' They're going to go to Bumgarner and say 'We're going to try to win next year,' and he's still a bargain at \$12 or \$14 million. And if the whole season goes south next year like it did this year, and they get to July 31, you're going to have Madison Bumgarner available assuming he's pitching well, you're going to have Madison Bumgarner available in a pennant race for something on the order of \$4 to \$5 million, for the rest of the season, and that'll make him very attractive."

"You've been following the Giants for 20 years, you've been following Sabean for 21 years, on what planet do you think they are going to say 'we're going to take a step and rebuild'? I don't see it."

K: Well they can take any approach they want, but the rest of the National League is going to have a little say on this as well, and the Padres are building a very good team, and the Giants aren't as good as the other teams in the division. So they can announce they're going for it, heck we all showed up at FanFest this year Henry and they announced they were going for it. They were never in the race.

"They have an older team with a \$200 million payroll and I'm sure there are guys in that ownership room that don't want it to go to \$250. So they can say they want to be competitive next year, but the reality is they're old, they don't have a lot to trade, there's not a deep free agent market, so how are they going to compete? How are they going to be competitive? To me you can say what you want, but the reality is, until their farm system starts to spit out big-time guys, they are going to be in a rebuild, and I think they probably will go to Bumgarner and say, 'You know what? We've got you under contract. Do you want to sign a long-term deal here and be part of this? Or would you rather us go in a different direction?'

"I bet you they will give him that opportunity to express what he wants and what his future is going to entail."

S: "Yeah I disagree with that, and I'm not disagreeing with you on whether they can be competitive or not last year, I'll say it's a long shot. I'll say two things: One, Brian Sabean has brought this team back from the dead twice. It's different situations, but he's brought this team back from the dead twice. The first time he did it in one year, and the second time he did it in two. You can't say that they're not going to be competitive forever.

"But I will also say that actually it may not be Bumgarner who they come to. If they decided to go in that direction, which I can't see in a million years that they will. But if they decide to go in that direction, I think it would be the guys that they have signed longer term, like (Brandon) Crawford specifically, who has a no-trade contract and has I believe three years left after this one. He's the guy I think they would go to if they did that and say, 'Look, we love you. You're the heart of this team, you're a great defensive player and what not, but we're going to shoot for 2021 do you want to be part of this? Would you accept a no-trade?' Bumgarner is a guy with one year left on his contract at \$12-14 million. If they have any designs of putting a competitive team on the field next year, I can't see them trading him."

## **KNBR 680**

### **Bochy discusses approach to youth heading into final leg of season**

**Jacob Hutchinson**

Giants manager Bruce Bochy is not a fan of the term “spoiler.” But he is also aware of his team’s standing after eight-straight losses, the last six of which came on an abysmal road trip.

“That was a rough trip,” Bochy said. “It was a rough trip, but it was close to being a decent trip because we actually played some pretty good ball. We had some close games, had the lead late on the road, where we just couldn’t hold on.”

Bochy said the Giants are targeting a strong final two homestands. He said not to expect a full-on youth movement, or inversely, holding out young players in an effort to stay competitive. Bochy said he believes the concept of staying competitive and working in young players aren’t mutually exclusive concepts.

“Even if we’re putting in the young guys, we’re trying to win the game,” Bochy said. “We’re not going to sacrifice some playing time for a certain young player because we’re playing a contender, either. They have plenty of time to get to where they need to go. I don’t want to sound conflicting here, but it’s up to us to put out a team that gives us not just a chance to play but also a chance to see some guys.”

Two of those young guys, Steven Duggar and Ryder Jones, are out for the year. Duggar had surgery to repair a torn labrum in his left shoulder while Jones is waiting on surgery after dislocating his left patella. Bochy said there are no plans to call up any more players unless the team runs into injury issues at catcher.

“Ryder Jones got looked at today, he’s looking at surgery probably in a couple of days,” Bochy said. “I don’t have all the details for you yet. He’s definitely out for the year.”

Bochy also said he gave thought about starting Abiatal Avelino at second base tonight before giving the start to Kelby Tomlinson. He said he anticipated Avelino would be mixed in off the bench in addition to some starts. He also decided to bench Chris Shaw against Atlanta Braves starter Sean Newcomb, who Bochy said had “fairly significant” splits against left-handed hitters.

On a more positive note, Bochy said he has no plans to limit Andy Suarez, who’s pitched 139.1 innings this season, or Dereck Rodriguez, whose thrown 97 innings ahead of a start tonight.

“They’re holding up very well,” Bochy said. “They’re two strong kids that don’t seem to even be thinking about where they’re pitching at. And what I mean by that, pitching here in September. They love competing and really maintaining their stuff and command. So we have no concern with those two right now.”

## **SF Bay**

### **Rodríguez a tough-luck loser again, Giants drop ninth straight**

**Julie Parker**

The Giants homestand opener against Atlanta marked Dereck Rodríguez’s sixteenth big league start, and



though this is his first time playing beyond the month of August, he maintained the consistency he's had since his call-up, nearly matching the line from his first start on June 3 and appearing no worse for the wear.

But offensively, the Giants (68-77) have required near perfection from their starters. So while he allowed just two runs (one earned) in 6-1/3 innings, Rodríguez (L, 6-3, 2.35 ERA) took the loss as San Francisco bats failed to do any damage against Atlanta lefty Sean Newcomb, falling, 2-1, to the Braves (80-64) for their ninth loss in a row.

This story has been updated with quotes and post-game material from the Giants clubhouse at AT&T Park.

San Francisco did score first, cashing in a run on Newcomb (W, 12-8, 3.82 ERA) in the third on a pair of singles from Gorkys Hernández and Austin Slater and the early offense seemed to bode well for the Giants as they came in to Monday's match with a 42-28 record when they scratch the first run across. But things have looked pretty dire for the Giants of late.

A team that seemed stuck in the gravity well of .500 is now in something of a free fall, so perhaps such historical stats are no longer relevant.

Bochy was quick to stamp out the notion that Giants hitters were victims of bad luck Monday:

"If you look at the game as a story — we didn't make good hard contact as often as you need to win a ballgame. And you give the pitcher credit, but even our three hits, it's not like they were really smoked, we were late a lot tonight."

While the offense has scuffled, Bochy appears to have developed a level of confidence and faith in Rodríguez that is nearing the Madison Bumgarner threshold, based in part on a level of dependability surprising in a rookie who, just a few years ago, was catching fly balls in the outfield. But the veteran manager says that while he remains impressed, he's no longer surprised by Rodríguez's performances every five days:

"I think [the consistency] says a lot about him. He knows what he's doing out there. ... That kid pitched a great game — as he has so many times this year — it's a shame we couldn't get some runs for him."

Bochy said he can see similarities between Bumgarner and Rodríguez when it comes to the way they play the game:

"I think you look at how they compete out there — they pitch to win, and they're focused every pitch. That's what you like about 'em, they don't get rattled, [they have] great concentration and both of them have very good command."

Rodríguez kept San Francisco in it Monday. Despite allowing one run to tie it up in the fourth, he kept the Braves offense off-kilter, as he's done to most clubs he's faced this season

When asked earlier Monday if there were concerns on the innings allowances going into the homestretch on Rodríguez and fellow-rookie starter Andy Suárez Bochy insisted they are no worse for the wear:

“They’re two strong kids that don’t seem to even be thinking about where they’re pitching at [in September] — they love competing and really maintain their stuff [and their] command, so we have no concerns with those two right now, we’ll have them about where we thought we would have ’em at the end of the season.”

He doubled down on this assertion Monday, putting Rodríguez out to face the bottom of Atlanta’s order in the seventh with 102 pitches already logged to his arm.

Rodríguez was adamant that he was good to go for the seventh inning:

“I told him I wanted to go out. [I said], ‘I’m good, I wanna go back out there.’ I felt good [in] the sixth inning and regardless of the pitches I felt good and I thought I could throw a pretty good inning.”

There’s generally rhyme to Bochy’s reason when it comes to his managing style, but there’s a lot of gut instinct mixed in there, too. He doesn’t have a problem leaving his starters out there past 100 pitches if he believes they have outs left in them and the fact that his starters have tended toward the five inning mark in 2018 is more a function of how much gas they’ve had in the tank than any concerted effort to minimize innings. And despite the way the cookie crumbled Monday, Rodríguez expressed gratitude for the opportunity to play for a manager of the old school variety.

“I like playing with [an] old school manager. I’ve seen that [type of] game for my entire life, so that’s the game I’ve learned and grew up watching—the old school game, bunting guys over and all that stuff. Having Bochy as a manager and him having the confidence that he has in me so early, that’s awesome.”

The confidence may not have been misplaced, but a defensive miscue made it irrelevant. What should’ve been a leadoff single to center from Ozzie Albies turned into a double when Hernández, who, seeing Albies make a wide turn around second, decided to throw to first in an effort to get him in a run down instead of holding him to a single.

Bochy said Albies’ speed compounded the issue, and he would’ve preferred Hernández have thrown to second base:

“[Albies is] so athletic, once [Hernández] threw it, [Albies] was into second. We wouldn’t have had a shot at him at second base, so it was a little too aggressive on Gorkys’ part there. [Albies] was halfway between first and third — just get the ball in and if the infielders have a shot we’ll take a shot then.”

But to add insult to injury, Hernández airmailed the throw to first and after the ball ricocheted off a bat boy in the Braves dugout, umpires called it a dead ball and awarded Albies third base. Atlanta’s 21-year-old second baseman scored on a Dansby Swanson sac fly to give the Braves the 2-1 lead, which they never relinquished.

The Braves scored two more runs off Hunter Strickland in the ninth, but the game was lost long before then as the Giants failed to muster even one more run.

UP NEXT

San Francisco hopes Andy Suárez (6-10, 4.33 ERA) can be their stopper in game two of three against Atlanta as they try to snap their longest losing streak of the season. It was Suárez who notched the Giants last win on August 31, and they have since lost nine in a row for the first time since a 2006 nine

game skid spanning July 23 to August 1 of that season. They will take on righty Mike Foltynewicz (10-9, 2.75 ERA) in Tuesday's 7:15 p.m. game at AT&T Park.

## Notes

Rodríguez has thrown six or more innings and allowed two or fewer runs in 13 of his first 16 career starts making him one of just two major league players to do that since 1913, the other being Steve Rogers (1973) of the Expos. The rookie's 2.35 ERA this season is the best among NL rookie pitchers. ... Monday was the 31st time this season the Giants have been held to one or fewer runs, which is tied for third-most with the Cubs, behind just the Marlins (33) and Orioles (36).

## **SF Bay**

### **Ryder Jones latest Giant to have season cut short with injury Julie Paker**

September call-up and corner-infielder Ryder Jones sustained a season-ending knee injury in Sunday's series finale in Milwaukee.

Jones crumpled to the ground after hacking an 89-mph Zach Davies fastball foul and was removed from the game with what was later diagnosed as a dislocated left patella.

The 24-year-old is expected to undergo surgery to repair the injury in the next few days.

Said Manager Bruce Bochy:

"He was excited about getting some playing time and it's tough for these guys when this happens. He's trying to show that he can play here, hoping to compete for a spot on the squad next year and this is a setback, but you gotta deal with it."

Jones was called up September 4 and in eight plate appearances he has a single, two home runs and five strikeouts.

His is just the latest in a slew of recent season-ending injuries for the Giants. Since July 29, Pablo Sandoval (torn right hamstring), Johnny Cueto (Tommy John Surgery), Buster Posey (torn labrum right hip) and Steven Duggar (torn labrum left shoulder) have all had their 2018 campaigns shut down early due to injury.

Bochy was unable to comment on a timeframe for Jones' rehab, but said the club expects to know more once surgeons are able to get in and see the extent of the damage.

## **San Francisco Examiner**

### **Rodriguez solid, but Braves youngsters steal show as San Francisco Giants drop ninth straight Ethan Kassel**

AT&T PARK — For the 13th time this season, San Francisco Giants rookie right hander Dereck Rodriguez allowed two runs or fewer in an outing of six innings or more, and for the fifth time — all coming since July 26 — the Giants couldn't come away with a win.

On Monday, against the Atlanta Braves, Rodriguez went 6 1/3, holding the Braves to just one earned run, but his opposite number — 25-year old Sean Newcomb — held the struggling Giants at bay.

Newcomb and three relievers kept San Francisco without a baserunner over the final six innings, as the Giants lost their ninth game in a row, 4-1. Over those nine games, San Francisco is hitting just .187 (56-for-299), and managed just three hits on Monday, as the Braves retired the last 20 in a row.

“He pitched a great game,” manager Bruce Bochy said of Rodriguez. “Shame we couldn’t get some runs for him. We’ve got guys that are cold against lefties.”

As poor as the offense was for the Giants, Rodriguez still looked like a pitcher worthy of Rookie of the Year votes, and he even shut down another likely candidate, Atlanta’s Ronald Acuna Jr.

Acuna has eight leadoff homers, but grounded out on a cutter on the very first pitch of the game. He went 0-for-4 with a walk. Twenty-one year old Ozzie Albies — who hit a seventh-inning double and scored to break a 1-1 tie, and then helped add insurance with a triple in the ninth — exceeded his rookie eligibility last year, leaving some potential for Rodriguez and Juan Soto of the Washington Nationals.

While Acuna is a 20-year-old outfielder and Soto is just 19, Rodriguez, a 26-year-old who bounced around the minors for years, has taken a completely different route but has managed to throw himself into the conversation with the blue-chip prospects.

Rodriguez yielded five hits and a pair of walks on the night, but he would have needed to be spotless to get a win.

Austin Slater knocked in the game’s first run with a chopper that beat a drawn-in Johan Camargo with one out in the third, San Francisco (68-77) went without another baserunner.

Rodriguez would be denied a shutdown inning in the fourth when Freddie Freeman singled, advanced to second on a wild pitch, moved to third on a Nick Markakis groundout and scored on a sharp single up the middle by Kurt Suzuki.

Newcomb struck out eight and didn’t allow a walk over his six innings, and none of the three hits he allowed were particularly well-struck. Brandon Belt flipped an opposite-field single in the first and Gorkys Hernandez dropped in a blooper to open the bottom of the third. He took second on a Rodriguez sac bunt and stole third, leading the Braves to bring the infield in and allow Slater’s bouncer to get past third base.

“Even our hits weren’t really smoked,” Bochy said. “[Newcomb]’s got good stuff and pitched a very nice ballgame. We were late on our swings, and he’s got good life on his fastball.”

The National League East-leading Braves broke the 1-1 tie thanks to Albies in the seventh.

The lightning-quick Albies snuck a sharp grounder under a diving Kelby Tomlinson to lead off the seventh, and as he rounded first, Hernandez hesitated to throw back to the infield. Albies broke for second, Hernandez threw behind him and airmailed first baseman Belt. Once the ball went out of play, the Curaçao native stood at third base. A sacrifice fly by Dansby Swanson put Atlanta (80-64) in front.

Scotts Valley High School alum Shane Carle pitched the bottom of the seventh and Johnny Venters, survivor of three Tommy John surgeries, took care of the eighth. Suzuki led off the ninth with a ringing double off Hunter Strickland — one that would've likely cleared the fences in the daytime — and Albies tagged a ball into Triples Alley to bring home an insurance run. Swanson dropped a squeeze bunt to score him and provide a three-run cushion.

Save for a couple of hard-hit grounders snared by Swanson, there were very few close calls for the Giants offense to give the crowd, which looked considerably smaller than the announced 35,996, any reason to cheer. In fact, the loudest reaction of the night went to actor Kristian Nairn, in attendance for Game of Thrones Night.

Had it not been for Albies sneaking one past Tomlinson to open the seventh, Rodriguez would have at least avoided the loss. He took the mound in the seventh having already thrown 102 pitches, but he had certainly earned that opportunity with the way he had handled the heart of the order in the sixth inning, including a strikeout of Freeman.

"I felt good in the sixth," said Rodriguez. "It's awesome to have [Bochy] confident in me having thrown so many pitches."

#### **San Francisco Examiner**

#### **San Francisco Giants will continue to go with regulars, Chris Shaw to start Tuesday Ethan Cassel**

AT&T PARK — San Francisco Giants manager Bruce Bochy confirmed that rookie outfielder Chris Shaw will return to the starting lineup on Tuesday after a three-day hiatus.

Shaw sat on Saturday against lefty Gio Gonzalez, and will sit on Monday against left-hander Sean Newcomb, who starts for the visiting Atlanta Braves.

Hunter Pence will instead get the start in left field, with left-handers batting just .186 against Newcomb. On Sunday, Bochy opted for defense behind Madison Bumgarner and started Gregor Blanco.

Bochy also noted that Abiatal Avelino, the prospect acquired from the New York Yankees in the Andrew McCutchen trade, will see at-bats as a pinch-hitter and play in a bench role. He started on Saturday in Milwaukee against Gonzalez. Bochy considered starting Avelino against Newcomb, but instead opted for Kelby Tomlinson at second base with Avelino more comfortable at shortstop.

The indication from Bochy is that the Giants will continue to play regulars in the starting lineup throughout most of September despite the deficit in the standings. In games against teams competing for playoff spots, most of the regular lineup will take the field, though it was hinted that more of the youngsters could see playing time in games against non-contending teams. The two remaining series against the San Diego Padres appear to present the best opportunity for the youth to start.

#### **Associated Press**

#### **Newcomb goes 6 strong, Albies provides jolt as Braves top SF Gideon Rubin**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The Atlanta Braves are threatening to turn a tight NL East race into a runaway finish.

Sean Newcomb pitched six strong innings, Ozzie Albies sparked the offense with two extra-base hits and Atlanta Braves beat the San Francisco Giants 4-1 on Monday night.

The Braves moved five games ahead of Philadelphia atop the NL East and reduced their magic number to 15 with their fourth win in five games.

The Giants lost their ninth straight, matching their worst skid since 2006.

Albies was 2 for 4 with a double, a triple, an RBI and two runs. Kurt Suzuki was 3 for 3, including a double leading off a two-run ninth inning.

Albies scored the go-ahead run in the seventh. He led off with a double against starter Dereck Rodriguez (6-3) and was awarded third when center fielder Gorkys Hernandez's throw trying to catch Albies after a wide turn at first was off the mark. Hernandez was charged with an error.

"Always aggressive," Albies said. "He throws behind me, I'm going."

Albies scored on Dansby Swanson's sacrifice fly that made it 2-1.

Albies had an RBI triple and scored a run in the ninth.

"He's an aggressive kid," Braves manager Brian Snitker said. "He's always looking to advance to the next base, that's for sure."

Newcomb (12-8) allowed a run on three hits. He struck out eight and walked none.

"I was just attacking the hitters the whole time, trying to make them uncomfortable," Newcomb said.

Braves closer A.J. Minter pitched a scoreless ninth for his 14th save.

Rodriguez gave up two runs, one earned, on five hits and two walks in 6 1/3 innings.

"I asked him to go back out for the seventh. I felt good regardless of pitches," Rodriguez said. "I thought I could pitch a pretty good inning. I feel strong. I want to keep going out there.

"I like playing with old school managers. It's the game I learned, bunting guys over to second, and grew up watching. Having Bochy as a manager and him having confidence in me is awesome."

The 26-year-old rookie joined some elite company.

Rodriguez became one of just two pitchers to allow two or fewer runs over six-plus innings 13 times in their first 16 career starts. The other is former Montreal Expos pitcher Steve Rogers, per to Stats, LLC.

The only other Giant to allow two or fewer runs in 13 of their first 16 starts in a season is Juan Marichal (1965).

#### NOTABLE

Braves OF Ronald Acuna Jr. was among the first eight players named to represent Major League Baseball in the 2018 All-Star Tour with Nippon Professional Baseball in Japan, which opens Nov. 7 at the Tokyo Dome. ... Acuna's 25th home run on Sunday moved him into a three-way tie fifth place on the career list for players under 21 with Hall of Famers Eddie Matthews (1952) and Orlando Cepeda (1958).

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Braves: RHP Arodys Vizcaino (right shoulder inflammation) will throw a bullpen session Tuesday for the first time in five days. He's expected to be activated by Friday, manager Brian Snitker said. ... RHP Brandon McCarthy (right knee tendinitis) threw a simulated game over the weekend but is not expected to pitch again this season. ... RHP Jose Ramirez (right shoulder inflammation) has been shut down for the rest of the season. ... IF Rio Ruiz was called up from Triple-A Gwinnett.

Giants: INF Ryder Jones (dislocated patella on left knee) will have surgery later this week. The 25-year-old was injured taking a swing during Sunday's game in Milwaukee.

#### UP NEXT

Braves: RHP Mike Foltynewicz (10-9, 2.75 ERA) is 2-3 with a 5.35 ERA in six career starts against the Giants.

Giants: LHP Andrew Suarez (6-10, 4.33) is tied for 11th in franchise history for a rookie with 118 strikeouts. He ranks seventh in that category in the San Francisco era.

#### **SB Nation – Minor League Ball**

#### **Thoughts on San Francisco Giants prospect Aramis Garcia**

#### **John Sickels**

From the Minor League Ball mailbag:

“Tell me what you think about Aramis Garcia in the SFG system” — Tom S., St. George, Utah

Garcia has played in four games since being promoted to the major leagues by the San Francisco Giants, going 4-for-11 with a pair of home runs, making this a fine time to answer Tom's question.

The Giants selected Aramis Garcia in the second round in 2014 from Florida International University. He's always stood out for his raw power, including 17 homers with a .274/.323/.485 line between High-A and Double-A in 2017.

Garcia ranked 10th on the San Francisco Giants pre-season Top 20 prospects list with this comment:

10) Aramis Garcia, C-1B, Grade B-/C+: Age 25, second round pick in 2014 from Florida International University; hit combined .274/.323/.485 with 32 doubles, 17 homers, 24 walks, 94 strikeouts in 402 at-bats between High-A and Double-A; rather old for just figuring out advanced minor league pitching but has been slowed by injuries; very good power, can be impatient and probably won't hit for high averages in the majors but should contribute HRs; pretty good defensive catcher who can also play a competent first base; ETA late 2018.

He split 2018 between Double-A Richmond (.233/.287/.395, 11 homers in 301 at-bats) and Triple-A Sacramento (.237/.268/.263 in 38 at-bats), combining for 22 walks and 88 strikeouts this year.

Garcia is 6-2, 220, a right-handed hitter age 25. As noted power has always been his calling card and he's demonstrated it in his first four games quite nicely. He's also turned himself into a decent defensive catcher. Although not especially deadly against runners (22 percent caught this year, 31 percent over his whole career), his receiving skills have improved substantially since he was drafted and he's certainly playable behind the plate.

There are two negatives for Garcia. One; at age 25 he's not young as prospects go. Two; his power has developed at the expense of his pure hitting skills, with his plate discipline deteriorating as he's moved up. He may struggle to clear .240 in the majors and his OBP won't be much to talk about, but his combination of power and viable defense should keep him in the picture for several years.

All told he's right on the edge between C+ and B- grade-wise. Garcia has a window of opportunity to contribute right now but Joey Bart, 2018 first-rounder, is the clear favorite as the eventual successor to Buster Posey.