



***Press Clips***

**(September 8, 2018)**

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**FROM THE OC REGISTER****Shohei Ohtani continues homer binge in Angels' victory over White Sox**

By Jeff Fletcher

CHICAGO — Shohei Ohtani is showing marked offensive improvement at a difficult time.

Ohtani, who learned two days earlier that he needs Tommy John surgery, hit a three-run homer against Chicago White Sox lefty Carlos Rodón, leading the Angels to a 5-2 victory on Friday night.

Ohtani hadn't hit a homer off a lefty all season until Tuesday, and now he has two homers off lefties among the four homers he's hit in the past three games.

And three of those have come since he learned he won't be pitching for a while.

"Shohei got some very disappointing news the other day and he has some big decisions coming up, but he wants to play baseball," Manager Mike Scioscia said. "He's out there. He's excited to be able to swing the bat. He's playing very well."

On Tuesday Ohtani homered against lefty Mike Minor. Ohtani has four hits in his last eight at-bats against lefties, which has lifted his average to .203 against them.

"Lately, when he's getting a pitch to hit from a lefty, he's hitting it hard," Scioscia said. "The results are there. As we talked about it, it's just going to be a matter of him getting comfortable and seeing more lefties. He'll be fine. He's swinging it well again righties and lefties and everyone in the last week."

Ohtani said his improvement against lefties has just come along with experience that helped him improve in all facets.

"There have been a lot of changes since the beginning of the year," Ohtani said through his interpreter. "The more at-bats I get, the more comfortable I feel, the better I see the ball. It's just seeing a lot of pitches over and over."

Ohtani also broke the record for a rookie from Japan with his 19<sup>th</sup> homer (281 plate appearances), surpassing Kenji Johjima's 18 with the Seattle Mariners in 2006 (542 plate appearances).

Andrelton Simmons also homered for the Angels, providing a cushion for Felix Peña to pick up the victory.

Peña gave up two runs in seven innings, matching the career-high he set in his last start. He's worked at least six innings in five straight starts, posting a 2.82 ERA in the span.

The Angels moved Peña from the bullpen to the rotation at Triple-A in April, and since he's joined the Angels he has a 3.82 ERA in 14 starts.

"He was terrific," Scioscia said. "Everything you are looking for in a starter."

After José Álvarez worked a scoreless eighth, Ty Buttrey got the call for the ninth. Blake Parker, who has been the Angels' closer for most of the season, was available, but Scioscia said he felt it was a good time "to get (Buttrey) acclimated to the back end."

Buttrey said he had no idea he'd be the closer until "about five seconds after the phone rang." He retired the White Sox in order to pick up the save.

"I tried to keep the same mindset as when I came in in the sixth, seventh or eighth," he said. "I was trying not to make it a bigger moment. Obviously, it is. It's really cool to do that, especially in the big leagues."

## **Mike Trout says he's not thinking about extension talks with the Angels**

By Jeff Fletcher

CHICAGO — Mike Trout greeted the latest round of speculation about his future in typical fashion, with a shrug.

Asked on Friday if he is expecting or hoping the Angels open extension talks this winter, Trout said little.

"I don't know," he said. "It's up to them. Obviously you've got to finish out the season and worry about it in the offseason. I don't want to worry about it right now."

Trout, 27, has two years remaining on his \$145 million contract. While Trout has won two MVP awards and played at an elite level throughout his career, the Angels have been to the playoffs just once in his first seven seasons.

There is a widespread perception that one part of keeping Trout will be the front office making enough moves to surround him with a team he believes will give him a chance to win.

"Obviously I want to win," Trout said. "It's not a good feeling being in early September and you're out of it. It's definitely in the back of my mind, but you've got to trust the front office. We brought a lot of guys in this year and we were just banged up. You can't predict injuries like that."

When asked what expectations he has for moves this winter, Trout said: "I haven't really thought about it. I'm just trying to finish out the season strong and see how it goes in the offseason."

### **ALSO**

Justin Upton (concussion) returned to the lineup after missing four games. He was hurt when his head hit the ground when he was trying to catch a fly ball in Houston. ...

Andrew Heaney will start in Shohei Ohtani's place on Sunday. Heaney will be pitching on a normal four days rest. ...

Tyler Skaggs (groin) is scheduled for a simulated game next week, Manager Mike Scioscia said. Skaggs had said a couple weeks ago that he was aiming to make it back for three starts before the end of the season. ...

The Angels called up left-hander Williams Jerez, increasing their active roster to 34 players.

#### **UP NEXT**

Angels (RHP Matt Shoemaker, 1-0, 2.53) at White Sox (RHP James Shields, 6-15, 4.39), Saturday, 4 p.m., Fox Sports West

## **Angels' Shohei Ohtani plans to finish rookie season as a hitter; no decision on surgery yet**

By Jeff Fletcher

CHICAGO — Shohei Ohtani is not ready to have his season end on an operating table.

Ohtani said Friday that he plans to play the rest of the season as a hitter while he ponders the medical recommendation to undergo Tommy John surgery.

“Nothing is set right now,” Ohtani said through his interpreter. “I have a few options out there. I am still trying to look into every single option. I will make a decision sometime toward the end of the season.”

Although Ohtani is still expected to have the surgery, pushing it back until immediately after the season tightens the timeline for him to make it back as a hitter by opening day 2019. He still could make it, but there would be less margin for error.

Ohtani, 24, said there is value in getting another three weeks worth of at-bats.

“I feel like I’m progressing as a hitter right now, so I’m trying to gain as many experiences as I can while the games count,” Ohtani said.

Ohtani said the news that he needed surgery did not come as a total shock. After he had platelet-rich plasma and stem-cell injections in June, he said he knew “it wasn’t going to work 100 percent.”

“Somewhere in the back of my mind I was preparing to get Tommy John,” he said. “That’s something that was in the back of my mind the whole time.”

Ohtani’s reluctance to commit to the surgery is likely just a formality. He said he does not plan to abandon his career as a pitcher, and PRP and stem-cell therapy already failed to sufficiently heal his damaged ulnar collateral ligament.

Whether he has the surgery now or in three weeks, Ohtani will not be able to pitch until the 2020 season.

The timetable for returning to hit is somewhat more difficult to pin down, although most experts believe he should be able to hit in games within six months.

Finding comps for Ohtani is difficult, not only because he's a two-way player but also because he throws right-handed and hits left-handed.

Other position players who have had Tommy John surgery still can't come back until they throw, because of the demands of playing defense. Also, most of them have the surgery on their throwing arm, which is the back arm in a swing for a player who hits and throws from the same side.

One recent player who provides something of a roadmap for Ohtani is New York Yankees infielder Gleyber Torres.

Torres is a right-handed hitter who last June had Tommy John surgery on his left elbow, the result of a slide into home. Torres was taking batting practice four months after surgery.

If Ohtani can continue to hit while rehabbing from the surgery, it would be a significant plus for Ohtani and the Angels, taking some of the sting from the news that he won't be able to pitch.

"I'm trying to take it as positive as possible," he said. "I'll still be able to hit next year, so I'll try to stay positive."

Ohtani is batting .287 with an on-base percentage of .367 and a slugging percentage of .579 with 18 home runs in 82 games. He went 4 for 4 with two home runs on Wednesday hours after it was announced the pitching portion of his season was over.

### ***FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES***

## **Busting some myths: No need to trade Mike Trout for now; Shohei Ohtani is the rookie of the year**

By Bill Shaikin

On the day after, the Angels rested, the calm before what could be a franchise-defining storm.

On the day after the news that was heard around the world — Shohei Ohtani needs surgery to reconstruct a ligament in his pitching elbow — the Angels did not play. Mike Trout hopped a plane to Philadelphia to watch his Eagles open the NFL season.

Ohtani still can hit while his elbow heals. On Wednesday, with an elbow ligament shredded, he hit two home runs. His once-in-a-century ability to hit and pitch at the world's highest level of baseball led to curiosity and speculation about his future, the future of Trout, and the future of the Angels.

With apologies to educational television, welcome to this two-part episode of "MythBusters."

**Myth: If Trout won't sign a contract extension this winter, the Angels should trade him.**

On the surface, this makes sense. Trout has two seasons left on his contract. The closer he gets to free agency, the less another team might offer in return and the more the Angels risk losing Trout for nothing more than a draft choice. With the revival of the Angels' minor league system, the additional infusion of young talent from a Trout trade could open a window of success from 2021 to '25.

In reality, there is absolutely no reason for Trout to sign an extension this winter. He has not confronted the Angels with any ultimatum. He likes playing in Anaheim. But he burns to win, and the proof can come only on the field, not in a negotiating session.

In his eight years in Anaheim, this is the Angels' stubbornly mediocre scorecard: four winning seasons, four losing seasons if they don't get to .500 this September, zero postseason victories.

The Angels can sit down with Trout this winter and offer him the key to Arte Moreno's vault. This is not about the money. Trout will get his, from Moreno or another owner. Barring a serious injury, he loses not a penny by waiting.

He would not be turning down a contract. He would be challenging the Angels to get better.

They should get better with him, not without him. And, if they do, there is no reason to believe he would not consider signing an extension next winter, perhaps one that would make him an Angel for life.

Trout has \$67 million left on his contract. That would be attractive to clubs hesitant to pay perhaps five times as much for Bryce Harper or Manny Machado in free agency this winter, but much less attractive if the asking price in a trade is the top five prospects in your farm system. And, from the Angels' perspective, prospects might never prosper.

When the Boston Red Sox two years ago traded for pitcher Chris Sale, who has started three consecutive All-Star games, they assumed \$38 million and sent four prospects to the Chicago White Sox. The headliners: infielder Yoan Moncada, regarded as baseball's best prospect at the time of the trade and now batting .222 and leading the majors in strikeouts, and pitcher Michael Kopech, who might never throw enough strikes to harness the power of his 100-mph fastball and is facing his own decision on Tommy John surgery.

The Red Sox were assured of three seasons of Sale. A team trading for Trout would be assured of two seasons at almost \$30 million more than Sale. Would the Angels get that much better of a package?

The Angels should try to win now with Trout, not later without him. They have a vacancy at catcher and questions at first base, second base, third base and on the pitching staff.

They also have Ohtani to hit next to Trout every day next season. They have some \$40 million coming off the player payroll this winter, plus \$6 million more from the contract of manager Mike Scioscia, who is expected to retire. In addition, teams can spend up to \$207 million next season without incurring a luxury tax, although that should not be a consideration if the Angels go all in to win with Trout.

The trade market for Trout would not evaporate, even if the Angels fail to win the following two seasons and trade him on July 31, 2020. They would get more if they traded him this winter, or even next winter, but they would not be able to say they had taken their best shot with him.

In this analytic era, general managers are asset managers, manipulating the disabled lists, the waiver wire and service time, trying to control as many players as possible for as long as possible. But try explaining that to the kids who flocked to Angel Stadium this summer for the best promotion in baseball: a free Trout shirt to every kid, every Sunday.

To hell with asset values. To hell with betraying your fans. You win with the best player in baseball or you go down trying.

**Myth: Ohtani missed too much time to be considered as American League rookie of the year.**

On the surface, this makes sense too. Ohtani dazzled as a pitcher, but his only start since June 6 will be the one in which his elbow blew up last Sunday. He was the Angels' best pitcher, with a 3.31 earned-run average and 63 strikeouts in 52 innings, but you can't be the rookie of the year if your year basically lasted two months.

In reality, there should be no question that Ohtani is the rookie of the year. He took a month off from hitting so his ill-fated therapy could take hold in his pitching elbow, but otherwise he has dazzled at bat.

The consensus alternative to Ohtani is Miguel Andujar, the third baseman for the New York Yankees. Andujar is batting .296, with 23 home runs in 494 at-bats. Ohtani is batting .287, with 19 home runs in 251 at-bats.

Ohtani has more home runs than anyone on the San Francisco Giants. He has stolen more bases than Andujar, and he has a sizable advantage in on-base percentage and slugging percentage.

The Yankees' partisans would say: So what? Percentages be damned, Andujar played every day. He has twice as many hits.

The snarky response would be: So what? How many batters has he struck out?

Here is a non-snarky response: Andujar has 523 plate appearances. Ohtani has 284, plus he has pitched to 211 batters. Look at it this way: That totals 495 plate appearances for Ohtani, as a batter or facing one. It's a wash.

Baseball, at its core, is about the batter-pitcher matchup. Ohtani has had just about as many of those matchups this season as Andujar. So Ohtani did not miss too much time after all, because of his two-way abilities.

And those abilities sparked interest in the Angels and in baseball, in Southern California and around the world. In a sport that struggles to market itself and its best players, that is no small consideration. With all due respect to Andujar and his impressive season, does anyone really watch the Yankees to see Andujar, or to see Giancarlo Stanton, Didi Gregorius, Masahiro Tanaka or the injured Aaron Judge?



From here, Ohtani is the winner, in a runaway.

**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## Ohtani's 19<sup>th</sup> HR sets mark for Japanese rookies

*Designated hitter's 3-run homer fuels Angels' win in Chicago*

By Maria Guardado and Max Gelman

CHICAGO – Shohei Ohtani continues to show he has no problems hitting with a torn ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow.

The left-handed-hitting Ohtani crushed a three-run home run to cap a four-run third inning and lift the Angels to a 5-2 win over the White Sox in Friday night's series opener at Guaranteed Rate Field. It was his fourth home run in three games since sustaining new damage to his UCL, which led to a recommendation for Tommy John surgery.

Ohtani's 19<sup>th</sup> of the season also set a new record for Japanese rookies, surpassing Kenji Johjima for the 2006 Mariners.

Prior to Friday's game, Ohtani said he was still weighing whether or not to undergo the elbow reconstructive surgery. If he does elect to go under the knife to return to the mound, his rehab will likely not affect his ability to hit in 2019.

"Shohei got some very disappointing news the other day," manager Mike Scioscia said. "He's got some big decisions coming up when we get back to southern California. But he wants to play baseball. He goes out there, and he's excited to be in there and be able to swing the bat. He's playing very well."

Andrelton Simmons also homered for the second consecutive game, while Mike Trout drew a pair of intentional walks and reached base four times.

Right-hander Felix Pena yielded two runs on seven hits over a career-high-matching seven innings to lower his ERA to 2.81 over his last five starts. Pena, who struck out six and walked none in the 94-pitch effort, has now logged a 3.82 ERA in 14 starts since transitioning into the Angels' rotation, creating enthusiasm about his long-term viability as a starting option for the club.

"I'm not going to say easy, but every time I go out there I feel better," Pena said. "I feel physically and mentally strong. It takes work, and I'm going to continue to work hard to be able to sustain this."

Pena surrendered a solo home run to Avisail Garcia to open the second, but the Angels erased the deficit by striking for four runs in the third. Kole Calhoun and David Fletcher led off the inning by drawing back-to-back walks off White Sox left-hander Carlos Rodon, and Trout then reached on a hit by pitch to load the bases with no outs. Justin Upton, who returned to the Angels' lineup Friday after missing four games with a concussion, followed with a sacrifice fly to tie the game.

That brought up Ohtani, who hammered a 2-0 inside fastball out to center field to make it 4-1. Ohtani now has two homers off lefties this week after hitting none over his first 80 games as a designated hitter.

“There have been a lot of changes since the beginning of the year,” Ohtani said through interpreter Ipppei Mizuhara. “The more at-bats I get, the more comfortable I feel, the better I see the ball. It’s just seeing a lot of pitches over and over.”

The White Sox pulled within two runs in the fourth after Garcia reached on a hit by pitch, advanced to second on a single by Daniel Palka and scored on a two-out RBI single by Omar Narvaez, but Simmons padded the Angels’ lead with a solo shot off Aaron Bummer in the seventh.

Jose Alvarez relieved Pena in the eighth and worked a scoreless inning before giving way to Ty Buttrey, who struck out Matt Davidson and coaxed groundouts from Kevan Smith and Tim Anderson to earn his first career save.

“I think it was a good time for Ty to get out there,” Scioscia said. “All those guys down there, it’s really any pitcher any inning. I think [we’re] trying to get him acclimated to the back end. He’s slowly moved back, and it was a good day for him to go out there and try to close it out today.”

#### **MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

Pena was tested in the sixth after Garcia and Davidson singled to put runners on first and second with one out, but he dodged trouble by fielding a comebacker from Narvaez and throwing to Simmons to set up a 1-6-3 inning-ending double play.

“Felix was terrific,” Scioscia said. “I think everything you’re looking for in a starter. We got a lead, and he pitched to it, pitched well. We played solid defense behind him, and he went seven strong innings.”

#### **SOUND SMART**

The Angels are now 19-26 against left-handed starters this season.

#### **HE SAID IT**

“It’s pretty cool that a two-way player, when you get injured doing one thing, you can do another. And it’s pretty amazing how he could easily shut the season down but he wants to finish out strong, and he works hard in the cage, and he works hard in general coming to the field. You know it’s fun to watch, pretty incredible what he’s doing right now.” – *Trout, on Ohtani*

#### **UP NEXT**

The Angels continue their three-game series with the White Sox on Saturday at 4:10 p.m. PT and send Matt Shoemaker (1-0, 2.53 ERA) to make his third start of the year. Shoemaker underwent forearm surgery in May but returned to the rotation Monday, throwing five scoreless innings against the Rangers. James Shields (6-15, 4.39) goes for Chicago.

## Ohtani to keep hitting; TJ decision still to come

By Max Gelman

CHICAGO – Shohei Ohtani plans to finish the 2018 season as a hitter and likely won't make a definitive decision on whether or not he will undergo Tommy John surgery until the offseason, he announced Friday before the Angels' game against the White Sox.

Ohtani was diagnosed with a torn ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow Wednesday, two days after returning to the mound for the first time since being diagnosed with a Grade 2 sprain of that UCL in early June. Other than that start, he has played solely as a designated hitter since July 3 and repeated Friday that the injured ligament does not affect his hitting.

"Nothing's set right now [for surgery]," Ohtani said through a team interpreter. "I have a few options out there and I'm still trying to look into every single option. I will end up making a decision sometime toward the end of the year."

Once Ohtani is fully healthy, he said he plans to continue both pitching and hitting.

"That's not in the plans," he said when asked if he would consider stopping pitching. "I'm progressing as a hitter right now and trying to gain as many experiences as I can while the games count."

Ohtani reportedly had a Grade 1 UCL sprain when he signed with the Angels. He received a platelet-rich plasma (PRP) shot to his elbow as part of stem cell therapy last October, but the ligament damage worsened in June, when he had another PRP shot.

Because of the repeated injuries to his elbow, the possibility of having Tommy John surgery remained in the back of his mind, Ohtani said.

"I knew that wasn't 100 percent, my elbow wasn't 100 percent, so somewhere in the back of my mind I was preparing for the Tommy John stuff," Ohtani said. "It was something that was in my mind the whole time but I'm trying to take it as positively as possible. I will still be able to hit next year, so I'm trying to stay positive."

Playing Wednesday night after receiving the new diagnosis, Ohtani went 4-for-4 with two home runs against the Rangers. The performance appeared to ease doubts that Ohtani would not be able to hit during any potential surgery rehab.

"I don't really like bad news. I like a lot of good news better, so I was trying to send some good news and I was able to do that," Ohtani said.

The two-way phenom has garnered significant American League Rookie of the Year attention despite the injuries, owning a .287/.367/.579 slash line with 18 home runs in 279 plate appearances, and a 3.31 ERA with 62 strikeouts in 51 2/3 innings pitched.

**FROM THE ATHLETIC****Shohei Ohtani plans to hit the rest of 2018, meaning AL Rookie of the Year race remains very much on**

By Fabian Ardaya

Shohei Ohtani took his two-way show across the Pacific Ocean from Japan to the Angels in part due to the promise it would mean.

He would hit and he would pitch, using a regimented schedule that mirrored his days with the Nippon Ham Fighters and allow him to do what Major League Baseball had not seen since the days of Babe Ruth. And when healthy, he has done just that.

Even now, with his ulnar collateral ligament in his right elbow incapacitated to the point where he can no longer pitch, it is clear: When he is healthy enough to both pitch and hit, Ohtani will indeed continue to do both.

Ohtani's UCL showed new damage in an MRI on Wednesday, leading the Angels to recommend Tommy John surgery that would sideline him from pitching for all of 2019 and possibly into 2020 if he trends toward the far end of the typical 12- to 18-month recovery timeline. He has not made a decision to go under the knife. He will continue to "look into every single option" before coming to decision at the end of the season.

In the meantime, Ohtani will continue to hit. He remained in the Angels' lineup against the White Sox on Friday, just two days after he slugged two home runs against the Rangers on the same day his MRI showed he would likely need surgery. Combined with his home run on Tuesday, he has homered three times with a damaged UCL.

"Obviously that was kind of bad news, but I don't like bad news," Ohtani said in Chicago on Friday through interpreter Ipei Mizuhara. "I like good news better so I try to start some good news and I was able to do that."

So what does this mean in the short-term? For one, his AL Rookie of the Year case remains intact.

Ohtani will likely DH just about every day for the Angels through the stretch run, something previously not afforded by both his pitching schedule and Albert Pujols' required days off his feet in order to preserve his lower body. Even while on the comeback trail, Ohtani hasn't been an everyday player — now, he can be.

Ohtani entered Friday with a 157 wRC+, which ranked sixth-highest in baseball among those with 250 or more plate appearances. That's the same as Dodgers breakout sensation Max Muncy, one point ahead of Yankees slugger Aaron Judge and just one point behind AL MVP candidate José Ramírez.

Even in just 279 plate appearances, Ohtani had hit 18 home runs, which ties Kenji Johjima for the most ever by a Japanese-born rookie in the major leagues.

Compare that to some of the other candidates for AL Rookie of the Year:

Player	PA	AVG/OBP/SLG	HR	RBI	wRC+	fWAR
Shohei Ohtani (LAA)	279	.287/.367/.579	18	47	157	3.3
Miguel Andújar (NYY)	520	.297/.331/.523	23	76	128	2.4
Gleyber Torres (NYY)	402	.277/.349/.501	22	66	128	2.1
Joey Wendle (TB)	458	.297/.346/.425	7	49	113	2.6

Ohtani has shown the ability to not just be a capable hitter in the big leagues, or an apt rookie — on a per-at-bat basis, he's been a star-level hitter. Now, he'll get possibly a year (and a month) to entirely focus on and develop his hitting. Since June 6, when his elbow underwent the PRP and stem-cell injection treatment, he has a 165 wRC+.

With Pujols out for the rest of the season after undergoing knee surgery, Ohtani will also get the chance to work on overcoming one of his weaknesses as a hitter — hitting left-handed pitching. Tuesday's blast off the Rangers' Mike Minor was Ohtani's lone home run in 76 plate appearances against left-handers. Facing southpaws, he's carrying just a 68 wRC+ and is striking out a staggering 35.5 percent of the time.

The act of swinging a bat doesn't put the same level of strain on the UCL as pitching does, meaning — as he's been able to show — Ohtani shouldn't be impacted by the injury as he closes out his rookie year.

"The plan is to finish up the season as a hitter, as of right now," Ohtani said. "There's no — swinging doesn't affect my elbow in any way. I feel like I'm progressing as a hitter right now, so I'm trying to gain as much experience as I can while the games count."

The trouble in Ohtani's right elbow began before he even slipped into an Angels uniform, as reports indicated that a pre-signing MRI showed a Grade 1 sprain of the UCL, which he then treated using a platelet-rich plasma (PRP) injection. His two-way experiment lasted in a big-league uniform until June 6, when he left a start against the Royals with the recurrence of a blister on his right middle finger.

As the finger was being drained, he complained of stiffness in the elbow, which led to an MRI that showed the sprain had worsened to a Grade 2. Again, he received the PRP treatment in addition to stem-cell injections, a typical non-invasive remedy the Angels had attempted in the past with Garrett Richards, Andrew Heaney and J.C. Ramirez. He returned to the mound on Sept. 2, only to have his velocity drop and leave his start against Houston after just 2 1/3 innings.

Tommy John surgery is not something Ohtani likely will have much of an option against. But if he does have the surgery, despite being barred from pitching, he would likely be able to hit as a designated hitter possibly as soon as Opening Day.

"I knew that (stem-cell treatment) wasn't 100 percent, I knew it wasn't 100 percent, so somewhere in the back of my mind I was preparing for having to get Tommy John so it was something that was in my mind the whole time," Ohtani said. "I'm trying to take it as positive as possible. I'll still be able to hit next year, so I'm still positive."

With the success as a hitter and the natural durability questions that come with hitting, it's a natural question to ponder if the Angels would allow Ohtani to maintain his pursuit of being a two-way player. He's been successful with both, though that could have led him to become even more vulnerable to injury. The Angels and Ohtani have both affirmatively concurred on whether they'd consider a chance.

"Not as of now," Ohtani said.

### **FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

## **Shohei Ohtani homers again, Angels beat White Sox 5-2**

By Matt Carlson

CHICAGO (AP) — Nothing seems to bother two-way star Shohei Ohtani at the plate.

Not bad news. Not a hard-throwing, up-and-coming left-hander.

Ohtani homered for the third straight game after learning he will probably need Tommy John surgery, launching a three-run shot to cap the Los Angeles Angels' four-run third inning in a 5-2 victory over the Chicago White Sox on Friday night.

Shut down as a pitcher because of the right elbow problem, the left-handed hitting Ohtani smacked his 19th homer of the season off Carlos Rodon to break a tie with Kenji Johjima for the most by a Japanese rookie in the majors. It was Ohtani's second home run this season off a lefty.

"The more at-bats I get, the more comfortable I feel, the better I see the ball," Ohtani said through a translator. "It's just seeing a lot of pitches over and over."

"He's been swinging the bat well against righties, lefties anybody in the last week," manager Mike Scioscia said.

Ohtani, in the lineup as the designated hitter, has four homers in his last three games. Before the game against the White Sox, Ohtani said he plans to finish the season as the DH and hasn't decided yet if he'll have Tommy John surgery.

"He's got some big decisions coming up when we get to Southern California," Scioscia said. "But he wants to play baseball and he's excited to be in there to swing the bat."

Fellow slugger Mike Trout is impressed.

"When got injured on one thing, he can do another," Trout said. "It's pretty amazing. He could easily shut the season down, but he wants to finish out strong and he's worked hard in the (batting) cage and just in general coming to the field."

Andrelton Simmons added a solo shot in the seventh, and Felix Pena pitched seven strong innings to help the Angels win for the third time in their last four. Pena (2-4) allowed two runs while scattering seven hits and walking none. The righty fanned six.

“Felix was terrific, everything you look for in a starter,” Scioscia said.

Avisail Garcia hit a solo shot as Chicago’s DH after missing four games with a sore right knee. Omar Narvaez drove in a run with a single.

Rodon (6-5) lasted just 4 2/3 innings, allowing four runs on six hits and five walks. It was the left-hander’s second straight rocky outing following a run of nine straight quality starts when he was 5-0 with a 1.84 ERA.

“The first inning went pretty good, Rodon said. “Wish the whole game went that way but just no feel for nothing.”

Garcia homered to center to lead off the second and give Chicago a 1-0 lead.

The Angels capitalized on Rodon’s wildness in the third. Rodon walked Kole Calhoun and David Fletcher, and then hit Mike Trout with a pitch to load the bases.

Justin Upton hit a sac fly to center to plate the Angels first run, then Ohtani drove Rodon’s 2-0 pitch just over the center field fence as Adam Engel jumped high and narrowly missed catching it.

The White Sox cut it to 4-2 in the fourth when Narvaez singled in a run. Simmons homered to left-center off Aaron Bummer in the seventh.

Jose Alvarez pitched a scoreless eighth and Ty Buttrey tossed a perfect ninth for his first career save.

#### DIMMED PROSPECT

The White Sox learned Friday that top pitching prospect Michael Kopech has an injured right elbow and probably will need Tommy John surgery that will cause him to be sidelined through the 2019 season.

GM Rick Hahn expects the 22-year-old right-hander to be ready for spring training in 2020.

Kopech was recalled from Triple-A Charlotte on Aug. 21 and made four starts with the White Sox, going 1-1 with a 5.02 ERA. Two of the right-hander’s first three starts were shortened by rain, but the 6-foot-3 Kopech was impressive in all three, allowing just one run in 11 innings.

Before his last start, Wednesday against Detroit, Kopech had trouble getting loose during his warmups. He allowed seven runs on nine hits in 3 1/3 innings in the loss, then reported discomfort in his arm to the team Thursday.

#### TRAINER’S ROOM:

Angels: CF Trout was back in the lineup after missing Wednesday's game at Texas to rest his right leg. Trout was hit by a pitch in the calf on Tuesday. He was hit again (on the arm) on Friday and was walked twice intentionally. ... Upton (concussion) also returned Friday. He'd been out since Sept. 1 after colliding with Simmons in the field.

White Sox: Kopech was surprised to learn that he had a significant tear in the ulnar collateral ligament in his elbow, leading to the Tommy John surgery recommendation. ... Garcia is usually the White Sox right fielder. He's expected to have knee surgery after the season. "We're going to do everything we can, whatever we have to do, to spell him and just keep him off his legs as much as possible," manager Rick Renteria said

UP NEXT:

Angels: RHP Matt Shoemaker (1-0, 2.53) faces White Sox RHP James Shields (6-15, 4.39) on Saturday.

## **Angels' Ohtani plans to keep hitting, no decision on surgery**

By Matt Carlson

CHICAGO (AP) — Los Angeles Angels two-way star Shohei Ohtani says he plans to finish this season as the team's designated hitter and hasn't decided yet if he'll have Tommy John surgery.

The 24-year-old rookie maintains he'll be able to return next season as a DH, even though he might not be able to throw again until 2020. He homered in his first at-bat Friday night against the Chicago White Sox, giving him four homers over three games and 19 for the season.

"Nothing's set right now," Ohtani said through a translator. "I have a few options out there. I'm still trying to look into every option. And I will end up making a decision hopefully sometime toward the end of the season."

The Angels announced Wednesday that an MRI showed Ohtani had new damage in his pitching elbow, and that Tommy John surgery was the recommended course of action. Ohtani, who throws right-handed and bats left-handed, later hit two home runs that night in Texas.

"Swinging doesn't affect my elbow in any way," Ohtani said. "I feel like I'm progressing as a hitter right now. I'm getting as many experiences as I can while the games count."

Ohtani entered Friday hitting .287 with 47 RBIs. As a pitcher, he's 4-2 with a 3.31 ERA in 10 starts.

Ohtani was diagnosed with a sprained right ulnar collateral ligament after a start on June 6. After receiving a platelet-rich plasma injection and an injection of stem cells, he was hitting again in early July, and returned to the mound with a start last Sunday at Houston.



Ohtani lasted only 2 1/3 innings against the Astros, and he had a drastic drop in velocity during the game. He had been scheduled to throw a light bullpen session Wednesday, but never did after reporting that his elbow was sore. The medical staff then decided that he should get the new MRI in Texas.

Ohtani said he wasn't surprised by the recommendation for reconstructive elbow surgery.

"I also got hurt in the middle of the season and had the PRP stem-cell shot and I knew it wasn't going to work 100 percent, so somewhere in the back of my mind, I was preparing for the Tommy John, having to get Tommy John," Ohtani said.

### **FROM USA TODAY**

## **Shohei Ohtani keeps making MLB history, even as he weighs having Tommy John surgery**

By Jace Evans

Earlier this week it was announced that Shohei Ohtani, the Los Angeles Angels' two-way sensation, had been advised to undergo Tommy John surgery.

Despite the diagnosis that would take Ohtani off the mound until 2020, he has remained in the Angels' lineup. And he keeps hitting dingers.

Ohtani homered twice the night he was informed that surgery was recommended to correct the issue with his ulnar collateral ligament.

On Friday, he made more MLB history with his 19th home run of the season. That blast gave him the record for most home runs by a Japanese-born rookie. The Mariners' Kenji Johjima set the previous record in 2006.

Ohtani said Friday that he hasn't decided whether he'll go through with the surgery, and at a minimum, he plans to play out the season as the DH.

"Nothing's set right now," Ohtani said through a translator. "I have a few options out there. I'm still trying to look into every option. And I will end up making a decision hopefully sometime toward the end of the season."

Ohtani, who throws right-handed but bats left-handed, said, "Swinging doesn't affect my elbow in any way.

"I feel like I'm progressing as a hitter right now. I'm getting as many experiences as I can while the games count."

"It's pretty amazing," Angels star Mike Trout said about what his teammate is doing.

"He could easily shut the season down, but he wants to finish out strong and he's worked hard in the (batting) cage and just in general coming to the field."

### FROM THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## Despite elbow diagnosis, the Angels' Shohei Ohtani still has plenty of power

By Phil Rogers

Shohei Ohtani is showcasing his skills as a hitter while he decides when to undergo major surgery on his right elbow, which will keep him off the pitcher's mound next season.

The 24-year-old from Japan blasted a 2-0 fastball from Carlos Rodon for a three-run homer on Friday night at Guaranteed Rate Field, the big blow in the Angels' 5-2 victory over the White Sox. It was his 19th home run, the fourth in his last three games.

"The plan is to finish up the season as a hitter, as of right now," Ohtani said through a translator. "Swinging doesn't affect my elbow in any way. I feel like I'm progressing as a hitter right now so I'm trying to gain as many experiences as I can while the games count."

Ohtani was 4-2 with a 3.31 ERA in 51 2/3 innings while battling recurring issues with his elbow. He is hitting .287 with 50 RBIs and a .953 OPS in 83 games.

He went 4-for-4 with two home runs on Wednesday in Texas, the day it was revealed he would need to have Tommy John surgery.

"Generally I try not to change anything, try to approach every game the same as every other day," Ohtani said. "But obviously that was kind of bad news and I don't like bad news. I like good news better. I was trying to (make) some good news, and I was able to."

Ohtani believes he can be a designated hitter in 2019 even though off-season surgery will keep him off the mound until 2020. He's expected to have surgery immediately after the season.

**Extra innings:** Avisail Garcia returned to the White Sox lineup after missing three games with a sore right knee and homered in his first at-bat. He was used as the DH. ... Rodon (6-5) failed to make it through the fifth inning for the first time in his 16 starts this season. "Just no feel for nothing," said Rodon, who allowed four runs in 4 2/3 innings on six hits and five walks. ... Rodon hit Mike Trout in the elbow with a pitch in the third inning; Felix Pena hit Garcia in the elbow with a pitch in the fourth. ... Michael Kopech's injury could make the Sox think harder about picking up James Shields' contract option. He has a 4.06 ERA and 1.21 WHIP since the end of April.