



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Monday, May 7, 2018

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Twins take series vs. Sox with late breakthrough
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

CHICAGO -- Despite not getting their first hit until the seventh inning, the Twins found a way to win their third straight game after Logan Morrison, who is continuing to heat up, slugged a go-ahead, two-run double in the seventh in a 5-3 win over the White Sox on Sunday at Guaranteed Rate Field.

The Twins couldn't hold the lead after Morrison's double, but scored the game-winning run on an unusual play in the eighth with runners on the corners with one out. Max Kepler hit a slow roller to third baseman Yolmer Sanchez, who failed to look back at Joe Mauer at third, allowing the Twins DH to race home after Sanchez threw to first. Eddie Rosario added an insurance run in the ninth with his team-leading seventh homer of the year.

"We've had plenty of games in the first five or six weeks where we found a way to lose, but today we found a way to win," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "So it was a good way to finish up the series."

The Twins didn't get their first baserunner against White Sox starter James Shields until Ehire Adrianza walked in the sixth, and didn't get their first hit until Eduardo Escobar singled with one out in the seventh. That helped spark a three-run rally that saw Rosario single home a run before Morrison gave Minnesota the lead with his double down the right-field line.

"It was a changeup that cut, but it looks exactly like his heater," Morrison said. "Just grinded it out, and was able to deepen it enough and get in the air enough, so it worked out."

Morrison went 5-for-16 with two homers, two doubles and five RBIs in the four-game series. He's hitting .297 with three homers and nine RBIs over his last 10 games to raise his average from .113 to .182.

"We've seen signs of better at-bats," Molitor said. "He hung in there. Breaking balls have given him trouble with two strikes against lefties, and he stayed on it and was able to poke it and keep it fair. He's starting to put together some numbers here and some good at-bats."

But the Twins couldn't protect the lead in the seventh. White Sox second baseman Jose Rondon hit a leadoff single and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt. Kyle Gibson struck out Adam Engel looking on his 102nd pitch of the afternoon and lefty Zach Duke was brought in to face the

switch-hitting Leury Garcia. After falling behind 2-0 in the count, Duke gave up a game-tying RBI single to right. But the Twins came back thanks to Mauer's heads-up baserunning in the eighth.

"It's fun -- those are little games within the games," Mauer said. "And to be able to make a play there for the boys, to get the winning run in, is definitely good."

Gibson was stuck with the no-decision after allowing three runs on four hits and two walks over 6 2/3 innings with eight strikeouts. He was hurt by leadoff doubles from Engel in the third and Sanchez in the sixth. The first run came on Gibson's first wild pitch of the year.

"It's all about execution and getting ahead of guys," said Gibson, who has a 3.49 ERA this season. "They showed early they were going to be aggressive."

SOUND SMART

The Twins won three consecutive games for the second time this season and the first time since April 10-12. Despite their 13-17 record and recent slide, they're only two games back of the Indians in the American League Central.

"I think that's the identity of the team we want to have, a veteran team that never gives up and doesn't get down on ourselves," Gibson said. "Whether it's just one game [in a series], you have to keep it in the right perspective when you have three left. You can come out of a series 3-1 and looking pretty rosy after a tough one that first one. You've gotta have the right perspective -- that we're only 30 games in and there's a lot of season left."

HE SAID IT

"It's not what you've done, it's what you're gonna do, and I think this team's done a great job of putting the past in the past and focusing on the present." -- Morrison

UP NEXT

The Twins head to St. Louis for a two-game Interleague series against the Cardinals that begins on Monday at 7:10 p.m. CT. Rookie right-hander Fernando Romero (1-0, 0.00 ERA) will look to build on his impressive debut, when he threw 5 2/3 scoreless innings against the Blue Jays. There remains an outside chance center fielder Byron Buxton could return from the 10-day disabled list. Right-hander John Gant (1-0, 0.00 ERA) starts for the Cardinals.

Buxton (toe fracture) to resume running Monday

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

CHICAGO -- Twins center fielder Byron Buxton continues to hit without any issues as he works toward a return from a hairline fracture of his left big toe, but he took a break from running on Saturday and Sunday after testing it out on Friday.

Buxton took a normal round of batting practice with his teammates on Saturday and hit in the cages before Sunday's game. He's expected to try running again once the club gets to St. Louis for the two-game series against the Cardinals beginning Monday.

View Full Game Coverage

"I think everyone's looking forward to the day when you see his name back in the lineup," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "As always, you try to use the best judgment you can for the player and for the team."

The Twins are also still weighing whether Buxton will need a rehab assignment, but Buxton has said he'd prefer to skip it and return to the lineup without playing in any Minor League games. Buxton hasn't played with the Twins since April 12. He played one Minor League rehab game on April 23, when he suffered the toe injury when he fouled a ball off his foot. Buxton was originally on the 10-day disabled list with migraines suffered during the Puerto Rico Series on April 17.

Morrison practices playing left field

Twins designated hitter/first baseman Logan Morrison took some reps in left field to try to increase his versatility, especially with the chance for double switches in the upcoming Interleague series against the Cardinals. Morrison hasn't played in left since 2015, but with 241 career starts there, he has plenty of experience.

"[We are] trying to expand things we might have to consider along the way, depending on injuries," Molitor said. "It gives you another option to find out how much viability there is there. It's a long summer of baseball. People get hurt. Somedays you get a little short-handed and you're never sure. He actually came in and made the suggestion."

Molitor trying to find right spots for Hughes

Right-hander Phil Hughes made his first appearance of the season in relief on Saturday, giving up a solo homer to Tim Anderson in the ninth inning. Hughes showed better velocity in his short stint, averaging 92.5 mph on his fastball after averaging 90.5 mph in his two starts.

"It's trying to find the right spots," Molitor said. "Preferably, we'd like to do it in shorter stints where he can be real aggressive and try to let it go as much as he can. But unfortunately, there might be a day where I have to let him go longer -- it might just be how things go."

Sunday's top prospect performers

Mike Rosenbaum | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

- No. 77 overall prospect Stephen Gonsalves (Twins' No. 3) recorded his second win in as many starts for Triple-A Rochester. Working 6 2/3 innings, the 23-year-old lefty allowed one earned run on three hits and one walk, while matching his season high with nine strikeouts. He's allowed four hits in 14 1/3 innings since moving up to Triple-A after going 3-0 with a 1.77 ERA in four starts with Double-A Chattanooga.

Joe Mauer's savvy baserunning provides critical run as Twins edge White Sox

Phil Miller | MLB.com | May 7, 2018

CHICAGO – Getting on base has always been a Joe Mauer specialty. And so is what he does once he gets there.

Mauer's canny baserunning at a critical moment — two steps forward, stop, a step back, stop, then full speed ahead — turned a potentially rally-squelching chopper into the go-ahead run Sunday, and carried the Twins to their third consecutive victory, 5-3 over the White Sox at Guaranteed Rate Field.

"Joe just did a nice job of reading the distance he had to play with," manager Paul Molitor said. "It's kind of a cat-and-mouse game over there with the third baseman. ... Joe has that good in-game awareness."

The Twins, who won a road series for the first time since their season-opening weekend in Baltimore, suddenly have some big-picture awareness, too. Thanks to a three-game winning streak here, and the Indians' three consecutive losses at Yankee Stadium, the Twins find themselves in second place in the AL Central, only two games out of first despite a 13-17 start to the season.

Smart baserunning, another sturdy start from Kyle Gibson and a dollop of clutch hitting from Eddie Rosario and Logan Morrison enabled the Twins to win on a day when they managed only four hits, and none until the seventh inning. Eduardo Escobar looped a slow curve into shallow right field, breaking up James Shields' 6 1/3 innings of no-hit ball — the veteran righthander retired the first 16 batters he faced before walking Ehire Adrianza in the sixth — and triggering a Twins rally that eventually produced a fourth victory in five days.

Rosario, 8-for-18 in the series with eight RBI, singled home Brian Dozier, and Morrison pulled a soft liner just inside the foul line in right field that drove home Escobar and Rosario, giving the Twins a temporary lead. Rosario also smacked a home run in the ninth, his fourth blast in six days in May.

But it was Mauer's base-running instincts that broke a 3-3 tie in the eighth. He drew a one-out walk off Bruce Rondon, then put so much pressure on White Sox second baseman Jose Rondon that he couldn't handle a double-play toss from shortstop Tim Anderson, an error that also enabled Mauer to move up to third.

The White Sox, hoping for an inning-ending double play, shifted their defense to the right for lefthanded-hitting Max Kepler, with third baseman Yolmer Sanchez moving in on the grass and a couple of steps toward short. Kepler hit a soft chopper to Sanchez, and Mauer made his move.

VideoVideo (02:01): Twins designed hitter Joe Mauer says the "game within a game" on the bases is a fun challenge, especially when he succeeds in scoring the winning run like he did Sunday.

Or actually, he didn't make his move. The plan was for Mauer to run on contact, in order to draw a throw and prevent a double play. Instead, he took two steps and stopped.

"That ball was kind of an in-between and [Sanchez] had to go a little bit to his left, so I was able to take another step or two," said Mauer, who

faked back to third, further clouding Sanchez's judgment by making it appear he would hold. "I was kind of waiting to see what he was going to do. It started to get a little later, so I knew he had to get it out. As soon as he started to throw [to first base], I just took off. I knew he had to at least get an out."

Mauer scored without a throw, as the crowd groaned. "Joe just did a nice job of reading the distance he had to play with over there," Molitor said. "If you're fortunate enough to anticipate that throw, you can score."

Said Mauer: "It's fun. Those are little games within the games. And to be able to make a play there for the boys, to get the winning run in, is definitely good."

After zero hits through six innings, Twins do enough to win

Phil Miller | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

CHICAGO – In New York, Kyle Gibson took a no-hitter into the sixth inning, and the Twins lost anyway. So it's only fair that Sunday, his opponent no-hit the Twins into the seventh inning, and they still managed to win.

James Shields, making his 25th career start against the Twins, retired the first 16 hitters he faced and didn't give up a hit until Eduardo Escobar waited on a slow curveball with one out in the seventh inning and served it into right field.

"He was throwing all different angles, back and forth, up and down, changing speeds. He was tough," said Joe Mauer, who went 0-for-3 vs. Shields. "I told the guys, that was a good battle, a good fight. Both guys were throwing the ball well, Gibby and Shields."

Gibson wasn't as perfect as Shields, but he wasn't far off. He gave up only two hits over the first five innings, though Adam Engel, who doubled, scored on a two-out wild pitch to Jose Abreu.

"I tried to force it down too much. Abreu is a guy who loves the ball down and in. For me, it's kind of a danger zone down there," Gibson said. "But sometimes I'm able to get him to swing at pitches outside of that nitro zone for him, and unfortunately forced that one down and put [catcher Bobby Wilson, making his Twins debut] in a really tough spot. It cost us a run."

Gibson didn't give up much else, though. Yolmer Sanchez doubled to open the sixth inning and scored on a sacrifice fly, and Gibson was charged with a third run when Zach Duke gave up a tying two-out RBI single to Leury Garcia in the seventh. But Gibson struck out eight, gave up only four hits and was happy with his outing.

"They showed early they were going to be aggressive. I talked to Bobby before the game [and said], 'We'll see how aggressive these guys are and that will kind of dictate what we're going to do,'" Gibson said. "We had a pretty good plan coming in and Bobby did a good job making adjustments when we needed to."

Outfield lobby

Logan Morrison did outfielder drills with coach Jeff Pickler during batting practice Saturday. You could tell how long it had been since he had been out there just by looking at his bright-blue-with-gold-laces glove.

"Yeah, Rays colors, right?" Morrison said. "I've had it awhile. But it needs to be broken in."

That's because Morrison never actually played the outfield at Tampa Bay; he hasn't stood in the outfield since 2015 when he was with Seattle, and hasn't done so as his primary position since 2012 with Miami. But he went to Twins manager Paul Molitor recently and volunteered to go back out there if Molitor needed to make a switch during a game.

"It's a long summer of baseball. People get hurt. Some days you get a little shorthanded," Molitor said. With the Twins headed to St. Louis, where the designated hitter won't be in use, Morrison wanted the manager to know he can still make himself useful.

"It makes the lineup more flexible. I don't think I'm going to be Willie Mays out there, but I can pick it up and throw it to the right base," Morrison said. "I just wanted to get some work out there so he doesn't hesitate if the need arises."

Sunday's game was Morrison's ninth start at first base, and he wouldn't mind being on the field more. This is the first season of Morrison's eight-year career in which he's primarily been the DH, with 17 starts so far.

"It's definitely an adjustment, one I'm still looking to make. To be honest, I'd rather feel like I'm part of the game, playing the outfield, instead of

DH-ing all the time,” Morrison said. “I’m not saying that I’m not [happy] at DH, but it’s half the game, playing defense.”

Straight arrows

Morrison joined Fernando Rodney on the mound for the closer’s characteristic arrow launch pantomime after the final out, something he said he used to do when they were teammates in Seattle. So where did Rodney, who earned his fifth save on the season, shoot that arrow?

“Between the white and blue flag [next to the scoreboard] today,” Morrison said. “All the guys wanted me to go up there and ask him. Figured I’d oblige.”

Bobby Wilson makes his Twins debut today, catching Kyle Gibson

Phil Miller | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

CHICAGO — It’s a day game after a night game today, so as is customary, the backup catcher is in the lineup. And in this case, with Jason Castro on the disabled list and Mitch Garver now the everyday starter, Bobby Wilson gets his first chance to play for the Twins.

It’s a particularly good day for it, Twins manager Paul Molitor said before the game, because sinkerball specialist Kyle Gibson gets the start in the finale of this four-game series with the White Sox.

“He’s a veteran guy. He’s certainly a really good receiver,” Molitor said of Wilson, an eight-year big-league veteran. “Bobby has a lot of strengths. The bottom of the [strike] zone is one of his strengths, which is a good matchup for Gibby.”

Gibson’s 3.38 ERA is the best among the Twins’ starting pitchers, and he’s only given up two runs and six hits over his last 11 innings, and he’s struck out 16. Yet the Twins have lost Gibson’s last three starts — a surprising turnaround, given that they had won 11 straight Gibson starts immediately before this skid. The fact that the Twins have scored only eight runs in his last three starts probably accounts for some of that as well.

“We’ve seen Kyle at times get on pretty good runs. He’s been throwing it over better. His mix has been good,” Molitor said. “He’s been unpredictable in his patterns of pitching — all things that tend to lead to being successful.”

The Twins have been successful, in general, against White Sox starter James Shields; Minnesota has won six of the last nine games Shields has started against them.

Joe Mauer will lead off for the third straight day; given that the Twins are 2-0 with the veteran atop the lineup, that’s no surprise. Mauer has reached base five times in those two games, raising his on-base percentage to .440. That’s second only to Mike Trout’s .447 in the American League — pretty heady company.

Twins-St. Louis series preview

Phil Miller | MLB.com | May 7, 2018

TWO-GAME SERIES AT BUSCH STADIUM

Monday, 7:10 p.m. • ESPN, FSN, 830-AM: RHP Fernando Romero (1-0, 0.00 ERA) vs. RHP John Gant (1-0, 0.00)

Tuesday, 12:15 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM: RHP Jake Odorizzi (2-2, 4.10) vs. RHP Carlos Martinez (3-1, 1.40)

Twins update

The Twins are 10-12 all-time vs. the Cardinals and 4-10 in St. Louis, but 2-3 in the current Busch Stadium. Their last victory in St. Louis came on June 28, 2009. ... They are 2-3 in interleague play this season, having beaten the Pirates and Reds once apiece. They are 6-10 on the road. ... RHP Lance Lynn, who will not pitch in this series, won 72 games for the Cardinals from 2011 to '17 before becoming a free agent last winter. Only RHP Adam Wainwright, with 81 wins, had more for St. Louis in that time. ... LHP Zach Duke posted a 2.81 ERA in 55 games with St. Louis in 2016-17. ... Romero, the 23-year-old who will make his second major league start Monday, has never batted in seven seasons as a professional. ... IF Eduardo Escobar leads the major leagues with 15 doubles, and his .623 slugging percentage ranks sixth in the American League.

Cardinals update

Dexter Fowler's two-out, two-run, 14th-inning homer gave the Cardinals a 4-3 victory over the Cubs in a game that ended close to 1 a.m. Monday, NL Central-leading St. Louis' fifth victory in a row. That victory was the Cardinals' seventh extra-inning game this season, their second in a row and their fifth in their past 11. ... The Cardinals are 12-5 at home, including five walkoff victories. They are 2-0 in interleague play, having beaten the White Sox last week. ... Injuries are beginning to mount. Eight-time All-Star C Yadier Molina had emergency groin surgery after being hit by a foul ball Saturday, and will miss at least a month. RHP Dominic Leone (biceps) also went on the DL, and Wainwright will make a minor league rehab start this week as he recovers from elbow tightness. OF Tommy Pham (groin) and closer Bud Norris (triceps) are day-to-day. ... Norris is 7-for-7 in save opportunities. ... They added RHP Mike Mayers and C Carson Kelly on Sunday. Gant will be added to the roster Monday.

Sunday's Twins-White Sox game recap

Phil Miller | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Logan Morrison, Twins

The first baseman fought off a pitch from lefthander Luis Avilan that landed just inside the right-field foul line for a go-ahead, two-run double with two out in the seventh inning.

BY THE NUMBERS

7 Twins victories in their past 10 meetings with James Shields, whose bid for a perfect game for Chicago went to waste.

5-2 The Twins' record vs. AL Central opponents.

0 Baserunners in Fernando Rodney's past three appearances.

31 Strikeouts for Kyle Gibson over his past four starts.

Mauer's base-running instincts key to 5-3 comeback win over White Sox

Mike Berardino | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

CHICAGO — Joe Mauer danced off third, briefly in no-man's land, as the Sunday afternoon shadows crawled across Guaranteed Rate Field.

Next thing anyone knew, the Twins' 35-year-old franchise first baseman was crossing home plate with the go-ahead run in the eighth inning of Sunday's 5-3 win over the Chicago White Sox.

Just Mauer being Mauer, you might say.

"I guess there were a lot of things going on," Mauer said. "It's fun. Those are little games within the games, and to be able to make a play there for the boys, to get the winning run in, is definitely good."

Initially running on contact on Max Kepler's one-out tapper, Mauer stutter-stepped back toward third, freezing (confusing?) third baseman Yolmer Sanchez just long enough to draw a meaningless throw to first. Sanchez, who took a quick look at second as well before realizing there wasn't enough time for a double play, was playing in and off the line as the White Sox employed a modified shift against Kepler.

"Maybe if they're in the regular defensive format, then maybe I'm not able to get off (the base) as much," Mauer said. "I think that helped us. I didn't really see him look me back, so I just kept getting further off and further off. I knew that out at first or second was closing in, so I was able

to have an opportunity to sneak one in there.”

Winning a series of two or more games for the first time since April 9-11 against the Houston Astros, the Twins (13-17) also pulled into a tie with the first-place Cleveland Indians in the loss column. If they hadn't blown a 5-1 lead on Thursday, they would have swept a four-game road series from the White Sox for the first time since June 1979.

After James Shields no-hit them for 6 1/3 innings, Eddie Rosario added a homer in the ninth, his seventh on the year, as the Twins reached three straight wins for the first time since April 12.

Mauer started with winning rally with a four-pitch walk against Bruce Rondon, the former Detroit Tigers reliever. Brian Dozier followed with a tapper up the middle, but Mauer's hustle caused rookie second baseman Jose Rondon (no relation) to miss Tim Anderson's overhand feed from close range.

“It's one of the things we try to preach here, just running hard all the time,” Mauer said. “Anderson's pretty good out there, and probably 99 times out of 100 it's an out. Just run hard and keep playing the game.”

Lefty Aaron Bummer was summoned to face Kepler, who got a piece of a 3-1 slider. Sanchez's throw across the diamond completed a defensive breakdown by a young club that had taken a 2-0 lead into the seventh.

“Remember the play Joe did in New York as a catcher a long time ago?” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “He might have had the out at first, but he knew if he threw it (Brett Gardner) was going to score. You have to have that in-game clock and awareness and hopefully make a good decision. His (clock) is pretty good.”

Kyle Gibson worked into the seventh with eight strikeouts to give the Twins back-to-back quality starts for the first time since the season-opening series in Baltimore. Leadoff doubles in the third (Adam Engel) and the sixth (Yolmer Sanchez) led to single runs off Gibson, who left at 102 pitches with the tying run at second.

Switch-hitter Leury Garcia (3 for 19 against Gibson) greeted veteran lefty Zach Duke with a game-tying single to right on a 2-1 changeup that drove home the first inherited runner to score off Duke this year.

Logan Morrison's seventh-inning double off lefty reliever Luis Avilan left his bat at just 84.1 mph, but it looped down the right-field line to score the tying and go-ahead runs in a seesaw game. That capped a three-run uprising that began with Dozier's leadoff walk and Eduardo Escobar's one-out single on a 68-mph curve to break up Shields' no-hit bid. When Rosario followed with an RBI single to right, the Twins had finally awakened after Shields, who entered 1-3 with a 5.35 ERA, retired the first 16 batters he faced.

Fernando Rodney closed it out for his fifth save in eight chances, but it was Mauer's instincts on the bases that resonated.

“I was yelling ‘Hurry up,’ but Joe just reacted like he always does — real well — and took off,” third-base coach Gene Glynn said. “That was him.”

Playing for godfather Ozzie Guillen? Ehire Adrianza will soon get his chance

Mike Berardino | MLB.com | May 6, 2018

CHICAGO — Chatting for a few minutes in the hallway outside the Twins clubhouse on Friday night, Ehire Adrianza and his godfather Ozzie Guillen discussed family and Chicago dining and basically everything but their sport.

“We weren't talking about baseball,” said Adrianza, who on Sunday made his 14th start at shortstop this season. “We never talk about baseball when we're together.”

That will change next offseason in the Venezuelan Winter League when Guillen manages Adrianza for the first time. Set to return for a third season as manager of Caracas-based Tiburones de La Guaira, Guillen was pleased this spring when his general manager swung a trade with Caribes (about five hours away) for Adrianza.

ADVERTISING

All it cost Guillen's last-place team was Luis Sardinas, the utility infielder for the Baltimore Orioles. Adrianza, who has played a total of eight games in the past three winter-league seasons, is looking forward to going home at age 29 to play in front of his large extended family.

Having Guillen as his skipper certainly takes the opportunity to another level.

“I think it’s going to be weird, you know?” Adrianza said with a smile. “He’s going to be my manager. I have to play for him. It’s going to be awesome. I’m very excited about it.”

The last time Guillen, who grew up in the same neighborhood as Adrianza’s father, so much as hit grounders to Adrianza, the Twins’ utility man was “just a kid” of maybe 6 or 8 years old. Will the famously emotive Guillen be able to yell at Adrianza should he feel the need?

“If he has to, he can do that,” Adrianza said. “He’s the manager. When we are in the stadium, he’s my manager. Off the field he can be my family again. We have to separate that kind of stuff.”

THINKING OF YADI

There was plenty of concern in the Twins clubhouse for St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina, who is expected to miss four weeks after undergoing surgery for a pelvic injury related to a foul tip that struck his groin.

In addition to ex-Cardinals pitchers Zach Duke, Lance Lynn and replay-coordinator Corey Baker, Molina, an eight-time all-star, was a World Baseball Classic teammate of fellow Puerto Ricans Jose Berrios and Eddie Rosario.

“Great teammate, great leader, great catcher,” Duke said. “I know it’s not an ideal situation, but if I know Yadi he’s going to come back as soon as he can and be at the same level. It’s just an unfortunate part of this game. You know things like that can happen. I wish him nothing but a speedy recovery.”

It’s unclear how soon Molina will be able to return to Busch Stadium, but the Twins are hoping to be able to pay their respects to Molina while in town for a two-game interleague series Monday and Tuesday.

“With him behind the plate, it takes so much pressure off the pitcher just because you know how prepared he is,” Duke said. “You don’t have to think a lot about what you’re going to throw because pretty much whatever he puts down is the right pitch at the time.”

WILSON PLAN

A handful of teams pursued Bobby Wilson on minor-league deals this offseason, but his familiarity with a pair of Twins executives tipped the scales in their favor.

In addition to Twins general manager Thad Levine, who knew Wilson from his final two seasons with the Texas Rangers (2015-16), first-year farm director Jeremy Zoll knew Wilson from the 2017 season he spent at Triple-A with the Los Angeles Dodgers.

“It just seemed like a good fit,” Wilson said before making his first Twins start Sunday.

Shortly after cutting ties with former backup catcher Chris Gimenez, who took his free agency after being outrighted off the 40-man roster in November, the Twins signed Wilson to a deal that included a June 1 opt-out and pays him \$950,000 in the majors.

While Gimenez is stuck with the Triple-A Iowa Cubs, where he is hitting .200 in 75 plate appearances, Wilson’s defensive chops got him back to the majors when Twins starting catcher Jason Castro was placed on the 10-day disabled list Saturday.

“Obviously it was disappointing at the end of the spring to have to go back to the minor leagues again,” Wilson said. “but I kind of understood the situation and took a couple days to think about what I wanted to do. I’m just glad to be back in the big leagues. I feel like this is a place we have a chance to win.”

Twins rally late to defeat White Sox 5-3 **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | May 6, 2018**

CHICAGO — Chicago’s James Shields pitched a no-hitter into the seventh inning before the Minnesota Twins rallied late for a 5-3 victory over the White Sox on Sunday.

With the Twins trailing 2-0, Eduardo Escobar broke up the no-hitter with a one-out single in the seventh. Eddie Rosario then followed with a

single to drive in Brian Dozier, who led off the inning with a walk.

Shields, who retired the first 16 batters, got the next batter Robbie Grossman on a fly to center for the second out (with Escobar advancing to third) before being lifted after 91 pitches.

Left-hander Luis Avilan was brought in to face lefty Logan Morrison, but the strategy backfired as Morrison dropped a soft liner just inside the right-field foul line for a two-run double to give the Twins a 3-2 lead.

Shields allowed three runs and two hits in 6 2/3 innings.

The 6 1/3 innings of no-hit ball was the longest for a White Sox pitcher since Jose Quintana (also 6 1/3 innings) on May 21, 2013.

Rosario homered and drove in two runs as Minnesota won its third straight.

Leury Garcia and Matt Davidson each had an RBI for Chicago, who has dropped seven of eight.

Davidson's sac fly in the bottom of the seventh tied the game at 3.

In his previous start Tuesday at St. Louis, Shields allowed one run and two hits in six innings. He allowed a lead-off homer to Tommy Pham and then retired 15 straight. Shields left with Chicago leading 2-1, but received a no-decision after the bullpen surrendered two runs in a 3-2 loss.

Minnesota regained the lead on Sunday on an RBI groundout by Max Kepler in the eighth and Rosario added a solo homer in the ninth.

Zach Duke (2-1) got the win with Fernando Rodney pitching the ninth for his fifth save.

Bruce Rondon (1-2) took the loss.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Twins: CF Byron Buxton (fractured left big toe) took batting practice Saturday and Sunday. He ran on Friday and is expected to run again on Monday.

White Sox: There is still no timetable for the return of RF Avisail Garcia (right hamstring strain), who was placed on the 10-day DL April 24. "Avi took some swings (Saturday) and (Sunday)," manager Rick Renteria said. "We still have to put him on a regimen where we can start doing some more explosive work with him."

UP NEXT

Twins: RHP Fernando Romero (1-0, 0.00 ERA) pitches the opener of a two-game series at St. Louis on Monday night after winning his major-league debut last week. RHP John Gant (1-0, 0.00) goes for the Cardinals.

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Twins rally late for a 5-3 victory over Shields, White Sox **Associated Press | ESPN | May 6, 2018**

CHICAGO -- With the White Sox struggling, James Shields doesn't want to hear about moral victories or solid efforts.

His goal is to help his team win, so anything short of that can't be considered a success.

Shields pitched a no-hitter into the seventh inning before the Minnesota Twins rallied late for a 5-3 victory over Chicago on Sunday.

"At the end of the day, we had a two-run lead and we gave it up," he said. "It was a good effort, but we came up short."

With the Twins trailing 2-0, Eduardo Escobar broke up the no-hitter with a one-out single in the seventh. Eddie Rosario then followed with a single to drive in Brian Dozier, who led off the inning with a walk.

Shields, who retired the first 16 batters, got the next batter Robbie Grossman on a fly to center for the second out (with Escobar advancing to third) before being lifted after 91 pitches.

Left-hander Luis Avilan was brought in to face lefty Logan Morrison, but the strategy backfired as Morrison dropped a soft liner just inside the right-field foul line for a two-run double to give the Twins a 3-2 lead.

"We got a lot of talented guys on the team, got a lot of talented position players that can score runs in bunches," Morrison said. "Good to see that today and keep it going."

Shields allowed three runs and two hits in 6 2/3 innings.

The 6 1/3 innings of no-hit ball was the longest for a White Sox pitcher since Jose Quintana (also 6 1/3 innings) on May 21, 2013.

Rosario homered and drove in two runs as Minnesota won its third straight.

Leury Garcia and Matt Davidson each had an RBI for Chicago, which has dropped seven of eight.

Davidson's sac fly in the bottom of the seventh tied the game at 3.

In his previous start Tuesday at St. Louis, Shields allowed one run and two hits in six innings. He allowed a lead-off homer to Tommy Pham and then retired 15 straight batters. Shields left with Chicago leading 2-1 but received a no-decision after the bullpen surrendered two runs in a 3-2 loss.

"He's really commanding the strike zone; he's been very, very effective," White Sox manager Rick Renteria said. "He continues to maybe prove that he's still capable of commanding respect on the diamond."

Minnesota regained the lead on Sunday on an RBI groundout by Max Kepler in the eighth and Rosario added a solo homer in the ninth.

Zach Duke (2-1) got the win with Fernando Rodney pitching the ninth for his fifth save.

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FIELDING MISCUES

The go-ahead run in the eighth was unearned and a result of a physical and mental mistake by the White Sox.

Joe Mauer led off with a walk and advanced to third as shortstop Tim Anderson's flip for the force out at second wasn't handled by Jose Rondon for an error.

Chicago then brought the infield in, but Mauer scored on a slow grounder to third because Yolmer Sanchez never looked him back before throwing to first.

"It's fun," Mauer said. "Those are little games within the game."

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Wetmore's 5 thoughts: Gibson's Good Outing, Reed's Save Assist, Heads Up Joe Mauer **Derek Wetmore | MLB.com | May 7, 2018**

The Twins took the long way there but they did what they should have been expected to do this weekend in Chicago. They won 3 of 4 games against the White Sox as they scrape and claw their way back after a rough month of April.

The only blemish was a gut-punch walk-off homer off the bat of Trayce Thompson on Thursday. But Good Kyle Gibson and the new-guy relievers were good, and Minnesota's bats eventually got to crafty hurler James Shields to take the series finale Sunday.

This column presents 5 thoughts from the series with the White Sox:

1. Joe Mauer batted leadoff for the third consecutive day, with Brian Dozier moved down to the No. 2 spot in the order.

A lot of teams around the league are using the No. 2 spot for their best hitter, and I think this move makes sense for the Twins for a couple of reasons.

For one thing, I can't count the number of times people have asked about Brian Dozier penchant for hitting home runs with the bases empty. Maybe some of that is a result of pitchers treating him differently when there's nobody on base, perhaps pitching less carefully when there's only one guy in scoring position. (By that I mean Dozier himself, who is in scoring position as soon as he gets his bat off the rack.) But we've also got to point out that Dozier comes up to the plate with nobody on base from time to time, and he can't control that the worse hitters at the bottom of the Twins' lineup aren't getting aboard in front of him.

Joe Mauer, meanwhile, is the team's best on-base threat, their best contact hitter, and I'd also say that he's easily got the most patient approach. While he's certainly not the fastest guy on the team, Mauer has always struck me as a savvy base runner.

Anecdotally, I'd say that Eddie Rosario looks pretty comfortable batting with 2 strikes — I just can't imagine that anybody is actually more comfortable than Mauer when the count runs to 2 strikes. And I think that all of those things make Mauer a pretty great fit at the top of the order. Then he'll be on base about 35-40% of the time for Dozier to work his magic.

We won't cherry pick individual batter stats from just a few days, but here's a stat for you. The Twins are 3-0 since making the switch and haven't been walked off in games that Mauer hits leadoff this year. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I rest my case.

2. Sunday started as a pitcher's duel.

Kyle Gibson and James Shields locked horns into the 6th inning of what was shaping up to be a pretty good (albeit unexpected) pitcher's duel. The final score doesn't show that, though, as some scoring broke through late, including 3 runs for the Twins in the 7th inning that proved to be the winners.

Shields, for his part, was perfect through 5 1/3 despite some pitches that got smoked (Mauer, Dozier to name a couple). Ehire Adrianza broke up the perfect game bid with a walk in the 6th inning before the Twins added 3 runs in the 7th. Shields loves to throw the offspeed stuff, and he seemed to do a good job Sunday of keeping several good hitters off balance. He was also the beneficiary of some good luck in the form of hard-hit balls turning into outs.

Gibson can be a real difference maker for the Twins this year. After a mid-year improvement last season, Kyle Gibson has been a different and better pitcher. Sunday he was throwing his 4-seam and 2-seam fastball for strikes, and he struck out 8 White Sox hitters in his 6 2/3 innings. He got a strikeout with his changeup, two more with a pair of 2-seam fastballs, one 4-seam heater, and he did the rest of his damage — 4 punchouts Sunday — with his slider.

When Sunday's version of Kyle Gibson toes the rubber, the Twins ought to like their chances.

3. Things turned the Twins' way when the White Sox made a mistake.

After plating 3 runs in the 7th inning, the Twins scored the eventual winning run in the 8th. Joe Mauer reached base on a one-out walk. (He's

reached base with a hit or a walk in 26 of the 28 games he's started.)

Two plays that are important to highlight:

a) With Mauer on first base and one out, Dozier hit a tapper that shortstop Tim Anderson charged to the infield grass to field. He made an awkward transition to try to throw across his body and behind him (while still on the move) and he wound up throwing the ball into centerfield. On replay, I believe that second baseman Jose Rondon should have caught that ball. It would have put two outs on the board and left Dozier alone on the bases at first base. Instead, the Twins got first and third base with only one out.

b) Then Max Kepler hit a soft grounder to third baseman Yolmer Sanchez. He kinda-sorta tried to look Mauer back to third base, but the threat evidently wasn't real enough to Mauer, who was still in good enough position to beat any White Sox fielders to the third-base bag if he needed to. Then Sanchez went to first base with the ball, and although Chicago did secure the out, it allowed Mauer to scamper home from his head-start position off third base. That run shouldn't have scored but it did. It gave the Twins a 4-3 and they didn't give it back.

The Twins had some bad luck during their stretch of losing 12 out of 14 games, but they also played some shoddy defense. It had to be nice to play another relatively clean game — a recent trend — and instead watch the White Sox get punished for their mistakes Sunday.

4. Addison Reed was clutch in the 8th inning.

The Twins had just scored 4 runs in 2 innings, including the go-ahead run in the top of the 8th. Manager Paul Molitor turned to trusted setup reliever Addison Reed.

Reed's last outing was the walk-off loss in which he served up a homer to Trayce Thompson on Thursday night in Chicago. So, you could say he was looking for a bounceback.

He had the toughest relief assignment on the night, in my opinion, because he faced Chicago's 3-4-5 hitters in a lineup that overall looks a little light in other spots. Reed did what we've seen Reed do in a number of spots since he signed on to pitch with the Twins: He went right after them.

He got ahead of Jose Abreu and then challenged him and struck him out on a fastball. He got Nicky Delmonico to pop out in foul territory, as Eduardo Escobar made an athletic catch just shy of the rolled up rain tarp. Next hitter, Matt Davidson, fell behind Reed, as well. On a 1-2 count, Reed again challenged the hitter and again struck him out with a high fastball.

That got the Twins off the field with the lead and set up Fernando Rodney's clean save in the 9th inning. I know that they only track saves. I just think Reed should get credit for pitching to better hitters with the game every bit as much on the line as when Rodney entered in the 9th. Give Reed a Save Assist for that one.

5. Logan Morrison added a 2-RBI double in the 7th inning.

Don't look now but Logan Morrison is starting to heat up. I thought he squared up a number of balls pretty well at the end of the last Twins' homestand. He wasn't always getting rewarded for it, although the base hits were starting to come.

It will take his numbers a little while to recover from a rotten first dozen games with the Twins (3 hits in 50 plate appearances). As we talked about on Friday's Twins Show, you'll take what you've gotten over his past 50 plate appearances. The veteran free-agent bat-for-hire has hit .275/.362/.549 with 4 home runs in his 15 games since bottoming out. Adding his thunder back to the lineup would be all good news for the Twins.

Monday's Trip To Busch Stadium Will Be Different For Former Cardinals' Minor-Leaguer Corey Baker **Rob Rains | STL Sports Page | May 6, 2018**

When Corey Baker was pitching for the Double A Springfield Cardinals in 2014, he and three of his teammates took advantage of a day off to make the drive up Interstate 44 to attend a game at Busch Stadium.

Baker, Marco Gonzales, Mitch Harris and Nick Martini watched batting practice on the field and got a tour of the Cardinals' clubhouse.

"It was really cool," Baker said.

For the first time since that day, Baker will be back at Busch on Monday, but he no longer has dreams of playing for the Cardinals. Instead of

turning right to enter the Cardinals' clubhouse when he enters the stadium, he will keep walking down a hall until he gets to the visiting clubhouse.

That's where he will unpack his computer and get ready to go to work in his new job – as the assistant MLB advance scout/replay coordinator for the Minnesota Twins.

Baker, 28, was hired by the Twins in March in part based of a recommendation from Jeremy Hefner, who was briefly Baker's teammate at Memphis two years ago. Hefner went to work for the Twins last year.

“They were looking to expand and wanted somebody who recently had been playing,” Baker said. “It was something I was really interested in.”

The Cardinals had been the only organization Baker had known since he was a 49th-round pick out of the University of Pittsburgh in 2011. He advanced to Springfield just two years later, but then his career seemed to stall, and eventually he was released last July.

“It was pretty clear that they didn't see me helping them on the big league level going forward and it was time to let me go,” Baker said. “It caught me by surprise because I was having a pretty good year and had been in the Double A All-Star game just a couple of weeks earlier. But at the same time, when you spend enough time in the game nothing really surprises you.

“I was never a prospect. I always felt I would have to make my opportunities and that nothing was going to be handed to me and I was OK with that.”

After he was released, Baker began to consider his options. Hoping to keep playing, he went to pitch winter ball in Venezuela and was hoping to get an invitation to a spring training camp. As the months went by with no offers, he came to the realization his playing career was likely over.

Then came the call from Hefner, who remembered his friend from their time together in Memphis.

“He was kind of the leader of the pitching staff there, and we were both starters,” Baker said. “He had experience and had pitched in the majors, so I tried to pick his brain. We spent time together and I could tell he was someone I wanted to be around.”

Hefner briefed Baker on the duties of the position, which primarily consists of preparing video reports on the teams the Twins are preparing to play, such as the Cardinals. Baker also is the replay coordinator, the person on the other end of the phone from the dugout who has 30 seconds to decide whether or not to challenge an umpire's call.

That rush, Baker said - and the overall aspects of the job, and being around the major-league team on a daily basis – has helped ease the transition from no longer playing the game.

“I wasn't sure when I was done playing if I was going to stay in baseball,” Baker said. “I wasn't sure the coaching side was something I wanted to get into and I wasn't sure what other opportunities there were. When this came about I learned pretty quickly it was something I could do and possibly excel at.

“When you are around the game long enough you see guys go and the transition is sometimes difficult for a lot of players, and sometimes scary, to be honest, when you think about the next step. It's a reality that everyone has to face. This transition has been as smooth as it could be for someone who has played their whole life. It's been really good.”

The most exciting aspect of Baker's new job comes when the phone rings and he has to quickly scan all of the replays available and decide whether to recommend the team challenge a call.

“The phone rings and it's decision time,” he said. “Thirty seconds goes quickly. You don't notice it at the time but afterward you have some butterflies and the heart rate goes up a little bit. In that 30 seconds it's kind of like competing. When you are on the field you don't really notice the butterflies and nerves; you are just out there competing.

“After the 30 seconds, if you decide to challenge, then you have to wait another one to two minutes while the umpires look at it and make their call. You think, ‘What are they looking at? What are they seeing?’”

In Baker's first few weeks on the job, the Twins were successful on six of their first 10 challenges.

“It's more a product of what plays come your way,” Baker said. “You want the call on the field to be right, and you understand the process that goes into it, you understand you may not always have the best angle or that there might be something they see on the field that you didn't see. Sometimes it's worth taking a chance even if you think the call on the field might be right, it's still worth the risk.”

Before and after the game, Baker concentrates on preparing scouting packages, and he is enjoying that work as well.

He did not really work much with video during his seven minor-league seasons, when he pitched in 204 games, making 52 starts.

“The video in the minors is a lot of time using somebody you know who has an MILB subscription,” Baker said. “I’d log on and watch my outing. Sometimes you would be in places where the video was less than par, but you tried to find anything you could. Here we have access to all the video you could ever ask for.”

While Baker watches that video of the Twins’ opponents, he is looking for any angles or tips that he can provide to the coaching staff, which might provide the team an edge during the game.

He might have a little extra insight into the scouting reports on the Cardinals, since he played with many of those now on the major-league roster. At the very least, he is looking forward to catching up with his friends, both on the field and in the front office.

All are happy Baker has found a job he seems to love.

“Anytime that someone gets to do anything in the big leagues after spending your whole career in baseball, that’s pretty cool,” said the Cardinals’ Mike Mayers. “It sounds a pretty good gig and an awesome job. He’s probably pretty good at what he does. He’s seen a lot of baseball, he was always real knowledgeable about the game. He’s a real smart dude, so I imagine he is going to have a lot of success in that side of the game.”

It also was not surprising to Mayers that Baker landed the job, even though he never played for the Twins.

“It’s kind of what makes the baseball world cool, it’s such a small family,” Mayers said. “It doesn’t matter where in the country you’re from on where you are, if you stay in the game long enough and go somewhere, most of the time you know somebody. That’s what makes this baseball family so special.”

What also has been special for Baker is to realize that even though he no longer is in uniform, he is still contributing to the success of a major-league team.

“It’s a different role than I’ve had,” he said. “I know people come to see the product on the field. Until you work in it and get up close and personal, you don’t really see how many people behind the scenes are contributing in big and small ways to put people on the field, and put them in the best position to do their job.”

It’s a job Baker can see himself doing for the foreseeable future.

“I don’t think I would have gone into this if I didn’t see it as a possible career,” he said. “Hopefully if I start in a role like this I can go a lot of different directions. That was one of the draws to it, an outlook of ‘Where can I take this? What other careers could it lead to? To be exposed to different things is a positive.’”

Baker admits that his first time coming back to Busch, not as a player, might be a little different than going to any other stadium.

“A lot of teammates I came up with are there now and I look forward to seeing them,” Baker said. “I’m getting there in kind of different capacity than I expected throughout my career but it’s exciting nonetheless.”