



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Monday, May 14, 2018

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Twins miss chance in 9th inning, Angels don't
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | May 13, 2018

ANAHEIM -- The Twins found themselves on the wrong side of a heartbreaker on Sunday, losing on a walk-off RBI single from Zack Cozart in the ninth inning of a 2-1 loss to the Angels in the series finale that saw the teams split the four-game set at Angel Stadium.

After Ehire Adrianza was thrown out at home and the Twins couldn't score with the bases loaded in the top of the inning, reliever Zach Duke came in and plunked Chris Young with an 0-2 curveball to put the leadoff hitter aboard. After a sacrifice bunt from Martin Maldonado, Cozart ripped a single that left fielder Eddie Rosario was unable to field cleanly for a throw home. It marked the sixth time the Twins have lost via a walk-off this season, and they finished their road trip with a 7-3 record.

"It was a good series and very competitive, and we talked about how tough it is to win those close games against tough teams on the road, but we almost did it three times in a row," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "It was well-pitched on both sides."

The Twins missed on a prime scoring opportunity in the ninth, when Robbie Grossman doubled into the right-center gap but Adrianza was thrown out trying to score from first base. Adrianza, who was running on the play, hesitated near second base to make sure the ball wasn't caught, and the Angels executed a great relay to nab him at home. Minnesota loaded the bases with two outs, but Brian Dozier popped out to third to end the inning.

"It was a big play because we needed that run to win the game," Adrianza said. "It happens. They made a perfect relay. I saw Chris Young go back, and once he turned, I started to go."

The offense struggled, as right-hander Shohei Ohtani lived up to his billing, striking out 11 and allowing three hits through 6 1/3 innings. But the Twins scratched across a run in the seventh after Ohtani issued a one-out walk to Logan Morrison. He was the Twins' lone player to have success against Ohtani, going 2-for-2 with a walk against him.

"He was really good," Morrison said. "I think he's doing something that nobody has probably ever done and it might be a long time before you see it again. There's another guy in that clubhouse who is a really good player, but to me, with what [Ohtani] does on the mound and with the bat, he's probably the best player in the world."

Reliever Cam Bedrosian gave up a one-out single to Grossman before the Twins turned to Joe Mauer as a pinch-hitter. Mauer delivered with a

game-tying single to right on a 1-2 slider with Ohtani charged the run. The Twins had two runners in scoring position with two outs, but Dozier grounded out to end the threat.

Rookie right-hander Fernando Romero continued the strong start to his career, allowing one run on four hits and three walks with six strikeouts over five innings. He has a 0.54 ERA through three starts.

Romero saw his streak of 15 2/3 scoreless innings come to an end in the fifth. Romero allowed a double to Maldonado and an infield single to Cozart to put runners at the corners with nobody out. Romero nearly got out of the jam, striking out Kole Calhoun and getting Justin Upton to ground into a potential double play to third, but Upton beat it out to score the game's first run.

"I relied on my slider because I could throw it for a strike today," Romero said. "My fastball command was OK, but I'm trying for it to get better."

SOUND SMART

Romero's scoreless-innings streak to open his career is the third-longest in Twins history. The record is 19 2/3 by reliever Caleb Thielbar in 2013, while starter Andrew Albers went 17 1/3 scoreless to start his career, also in '13. Romero is ranked as the Twins' No. 2 prospect by MLB Pipeline.

HE SAID IT

"You've got to look at as a big picture. This was a good road trip for us. We need to keep building on it. I've been throwing the ball well myself, besides today. We've just got to stay where we're at and playing good ball." -- Duke, who had a streak of 13 scoreless outings snapped

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

The play at the plate in the ninth inning was challenged by the Twins, but after a review, replay confirmed that Adrianza was out at home on the throw from Kinsler. Adrianza admitted after the game that the correct call was made.

"He got me," Adrianza said. "I was out, for sure."

UP NEXT

Mauer and center fielder Byron Buxton will return to the starting lineup Monday when the Twins host the Mariners in a makeup game at Target Field at 6:10 p.m. CT. Right-hander Jake Odorizzi (3-2, 3.83 ERA) starts for Minnesota, while lefty Wade LeBlanc (0-0, 3.18) takes the mound for Seattle. Odorizzi is coming off a solid start against the Cardinals, allowing one run on two hits over five innings.

Mother's Day tribute special for Dozier, Twins

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | May 13, 2018

ANAHEIM -- The Twins and the other 29 Major League clubs celebrated Mother's Day on Sunday, as players, coaches and uniformed personnel wore pink gear and used pink equipment to raise awareness for breast cancer as part of MLB's annual "Going To Bat Against Breast Cancer" initiative.

The Twins wore specially designed pink-accented caps with pink ribbons on their jerseys over their left chest. Several Twins players used pink bats and pink cleats, while catcher Bobby Wilson even had pink catching gear, including his chest protector and knee pads.

[View Full Game Coverage](#)

Twins second baseman Brian Dozier said he uses a pink bat and pink cleats every year to raise awareness for breast cancer, which hits close to home for him, as he lost his grandmother to the disease in 2008.

"The big thing is raising awareness for breast cancer, which is great," Dozier said. "It's good for the game and raising awareness. All in all, moms are the backbones of the family that keep everyone together. Any time you can give a little love to them, it's pretty special."

[View image on Twitter](#)[View image on Twitter](#)[View image on Twitter](#)[View image on Twitter](#)

Additionally, each club selected an Honorary Bat Girl, with the Twins set to honor Jennifer McLaughlin of Wayzata, Minn., during the next homestand (Monday through May 23). McLaughlin works at the Hope Chest for Breast Cancer and was diagnosed with the disease on Dec. 26, changing her perspective from someone who works with survivors to becoming someone with breast cancer.

Her cancer was detected with a 3D mammogram, and she encourages others to do the same, as it likely wouldn't have been detected that early without one. Each honoree's story of fighting breast cancer can be found at [HonoraryBatGirl.com](#).

The "Going To Bat Against Breast Cancer" initiative began in 2006, while the Honorary Bat Girl program started in 2009. The initiative is

supported by MLB charitable partners, Stand Up To Cancer and Susan G. Komen.

Twins edged by another walkoff loss, this time by Angels

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | May 14, 2018

ANAHEIM, CALIF. – Their journey began with a punch in the gut, a ninth-inning homer by White Sox outfielder Trayce Thompson off Addison Reed on May 3.

Sunday, the Twins had to make another slow trot off the field as the Angels scored off Zach Duke in the ninth inning to win a 2-1 battle. It was the Twins' major league-high sixth walkoff loss. Still, after the game, the feelings were nowhere nearly as raw as they were earlier in the month.

“When we first came in [the clubhouse],” second baseman Brian Dozier said, “everyone was saying, ‘Heck of a road trip.’ ”

A lot happened between the bookend walkoff losses. The Twins went 7-1 in the other eight games of the 10-game road trip. They swept a two-game series over the NL Central-leading Cardinals and split four tight games with an Angels team that's right on the heels of the defending World Series champion Astros in the AL West.

The Twins might lament not recording another victory or two on this trip, but they will open a nine-game homestand this week back within two games of .500 and confident that they are performing closer to the way they should be.

“We came out and had a tough trip and found a way to come away with a winning record,” manager Paul Molitor said. “A lot of good signs. Some guys swung the bat well, and our pitching was pretty good for the most part.”

In four days in Anaheim, the Twins got a first-hand look at what Japanese two-way star Shohei Ohtani was all about. Thursday, he homered and hit an RBI double. Sunday, he held the Twins to one earned run on three hits with two walks and 11 strikeouts.

Down 1-0 in the seventh, the Twins took advantage of a walk to Logan Morrison on Ohtani's 103rd and final pitch. Morrison's aggressive baserunning got him to third on Robbie Grossman's single to right, and then Morrison's pinch runner, Ehire Adrianza, scored the tying run on Joe Mauer's pinch-hit single.

However, Adrianza should have scored another run two innings later. In the top of the ninth, he lined a one-out single off Blake Parker, then took off to second on a 1-2 pitch to Grossman. Grossman swung and drove the ball to the wall in right-center field.

Adrianza slowed at second base to see where the outfielders were. He could have peeked toward the plate while running to second — he might not have stopped had he seen how well Grossman hit the ball.

Adrianza was waved home, but he was thrown out by second baseman Ian Kinsler's throw on a close play at the plate.

In the bottom of the inning, Duke hit Young with an 0-2 pitch. Young was bunted to second, then scored when Zack Cozart hit Duke's first pitch to him to left for a winning RBI single.

“It's never a good idea to hit the leadoff guy,” Duke said.

Duke had gone 13 consecutive appearances without giving up an earned run before Sunday. He said he will just start a new streak tomorrow, a reflection of how the Twins have shaken off many of their tough losses.

“We're playing good, clean baseball,” Duke said. “Outside of today, we've been coming up with big hits late and just grinding through. We're not going to carry over today. Just be ready for the Mariners tomorrow.”

Shohei Ohtani proves to be a formidable mound opponent for Twins

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | May 14, 2018

ANAHEIM, CALIF. – A player can learn only so much from scouting reports. The Twins saw Sunday in their 2-1 loss to the Angels that Shohei Ohtani — the pitcher — is the real deal.

Twins second baseman Brian Dozier led off the game by pulling a 95-mile-per-hour fastball from Ohtani past third baseman Zack Cozart for a single.

When Dozier batted again in the third inning, Ohtani struck him out on three pitches using only breaking balls and offspeed pitches.

Ohtani unleashed a 98-mph fastball in striking out Bobby Wilson in the third inning. Wilson was geared up for the heater when he hit two innings later, but when the Twins catcher missed badly on a slider, Ohtani stuck with the pitch and watched Wilson drop to a knee while striking out again.

Then there was the encounter with Eddie Rosario in the sixth. Ohtani dropped a 1-0 curveball clocked at 76 mph over for a strike. The next pitch was 99 mph, and Rosario barely fouled it off. The next pitch was a nasty splitter Rosario swung at and missed for Ohtani's 11th and final strikeout of the game.

"When you have a guy who has strikeout stuff, he can make mistakes," Dozier said. "You still have to make adjustments, but when you do make those mistakes, they don't get hit as often because of the stuff that he has. I was very impressed with him, first time facing him."

Ohtani can exploit overaggressive hitters. Wait for a fastball, he will drop in a curve or a splitter. If he finds a weakness, he will exploit it.

In 6½ innings, he gave up one run on three hits and two walks with those 11 strikeouts.

"Seemed to me he got the majority of his outs on non-fastballs," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I think it's in the back of everybody's mind that he throws as hard as he does."

Fernando Romero wasn't as sharp as Ohtani, but the Twins rookie righthander began Sunday's game with four shutout innings before giving up his first major league run when Martin Maldonado scored on a fielder's choice in the fifth as Justin Upton beat out a potential double-play grounder.

The Twins were pleased that was the only run the Angels scored off the 23-year-old. In three starts, his ERA sits at 0.54.

"He pitches amped up," Molitor said. "We had to try to make sure he stays in control. Got a little frustrated at times with the command and the pitches and how they were climbing. But he did a good job. He minimized and kept it to one run."

Romero gave up four hits and three walks to go along with six strikeouts. He still needs to economize his pitches better so he can pitch deeper into games. He threw 92 pitches to record 15 outs, pitching with runners on in each of his final four innings following an eight-pitch, 1-2-3 first.

"I still felt good," Romero said. "Like I still wanted the ball."

LoMo creeps closer

Logan Morrison was 2-for-2 with a walk, all against Ohtani, and he was the only Twins starter who didn't strike out.

"I was just battling," the first baseman said. "I found a couple holes. I didn't hit anything especially hard. Just trying to battle and get on base."

Morrison reached in the second when he beat out an infield hit up the middle, as the Angels infield was playing him deep and to pull. He added a single in the fifth when his hard-hit grounder to right sneaked through the shift.

In the seventh, Morrison fouled off three 1-2 pitches and drew a walk with one out. That led to the end of Ohtani's day, as well as the Twins' only run.

The hits lifted Morrison's batting average to a season-high .190. He was 0-for-11 and 1-for-23 to start 2018 and has been fighting to get above .200 ever since.

Impressive numbers

The Twins outscored opponents 51-32 during their 7-3 road trip. They outhit opponents 82-67 over the 10 games and batted .342 with runners in scoring position.

Adrianza's baserunning, Duke's breaking ball and Dozier's first-pitch hacking
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | May 14, 2018

About to head back to the Twin Cities. But let's look at a couple plays from the Twins-Angels game on Sunday:

1. Ehire Adrianza took off for second during a pitch to Robbie Grossman in the ninth inning, and when Grossman socked it to the gap in right-center, it seemed as if Adrianza should have scored the lead run easily.

Then Adrianza was thrown out at home, and we all wanted to know why.

Adrianza was more than halfway to second when Grossman drove the ball to the gap. Adrianza stopped short of second to make sure the ball was going to fall. To do this, he watched for the Angels outfielders to see if their backs were turned to him, chasing the ball.

"I saw Chris Young," Adrianza said. "When he turned his back, I was going for sure. Everything was fine after that. It was a pretty good relay."

Twins third base coach Gene Glynn shouted at Adrianza as he rounded third to go in hard (he knew it was going to be close), and he tried. But Adrianza was thrown out by a hair at home plate. Twins manager Paul Molitor was going to ask the umpires to review the plate either way, given the point of the game. The review didn't take long.

The Angels got the ball back in perfectly to get Adrianza - but he should have scored.

I think the play broke down when he waited to see the outfielders. Baserunners are taught to peek at the plate when they take off for second. He would have seen the ball off the bat, and made a better decision.

"I just slowed up a little bit between first and second because I was trying to read the ball, but he got me," Adrianza said. "I was out for sure."

2. Reliever Zach Duke had Young down 0-2 in the ninth when he made a mistake.

"I threw a backdoor breaking ball that actually hit the back foot," Duke said. "It's never a good idea to hit the leadoff guy. If I make the big pitch there, he gets out. It's frustrating."

No kidding. Young came around to score on Zack Cozart's single to walk off the Twins. Cozart likes to jump on the first pitch. I thought that would have been the time to get him to chase something off the plate.

"It was up a little bit," Duke said. "It was up just enough. He's a good hitter. I wanted to go in right there. I wanted it to be by the belt. Unfortunately, it was above that and he can handle that pitch."

That ended a run of 13 scoreless appearances by Duke.

3. Some folks were grumbling on twitter that Brian Dozier should have taken a couple of pitches in the ninth. Dozier swung at the first pitch and popped it up.

It's fine to see if a pitcher is going to continue to be charitable. But Dozier has made a career out of bashing first pitch fastballs. He got a pitch in the zone he normally hits. He took a shot and he missed this time. That really didn't bother me that much.

Analytics crunch numbers but give personalities short shrift
Jim Souhan | Star Tribune | May 14, 2018

For Billy Beane, Theo Epstein and their acolytes, sports analytics proved transformative. Today, sports analytics are more necessities than differentiators, and as we watch the NBA and Stanley Cup playoffs, and hear of the Twins building an analytics department to rival the CIA, you won't need a calculator to figure out why certain teams succeed and others fail.

Judging personality is the oldest sports analytic, and the most important.

Baseball scouts have long called this "makeup." They're not talking about mascara; they're talking about something deeper than cosmetics —

discipline, ambition, adaptability, coachability, leadership and the willingness to fit into a team.

Miguel Sano possesses All-Star and perhaps MVP talent. Analytics can inform his approach at the plate — he is much better when he is willing to drive the ball to right-center. Personality will determine whether he can develop the discipline to adopt the correct approach, keep himself in optimal shape and capitalize on his immense gifts.

Eddie Rosario is a little more than half Sano's size. Since signing with the Twins he has often shown a willingness to swing at bad pitches, but he is a determined young player who has proved to be durable, and who has learned to harness his aggressiveness at the plate in a way that has made him the Twins' best all-around player since midsummer of 2017.

The Timberwolves have built their best team since 2004. Jimmy Butler and Karl-Anthony Towns are deserving All-Stars, and Andrew Wiggins might be the most talented athlete on the team.

Butler was the 30th pick in the 2011 NBA draft. He has worked to become a powerful athlete and a quality shooter. He is also headstrong and capable of dividing a team or franchise, as his mid-playoff critiques of his teammates proved.

Butler could stay in Minnesota long-term and become a franchise leader, or he could leave in a year and destroy what Tom Thibodeau is trying to build. Analytics will tell you that the Wolves need to improve at three-point shooting. Duh. What will determine the near future of the franchise is personality — how Butler handles his leadership role, how players and key members of the organization react to Thibodeau's demanding nature and whether Wiggins ever learns to compete consistently.

Conversely, the Lynx are the gold standard for Minnesota sports excellence and stability. While the team's talent is undeniable, the key personalities and how they mesh make this team capable of winning a fifth title in eight years.

Lindsay Whalen, Maya Moore, Seimone Augustus, Sylvia Fowles and Rebekkah Brunson could fight over shots and honors. They instead have chosen to adapt their offense to what each situation or series demands, and under coach Cheryl Reeve they have created a template for superstar unselfishness.

The Lynx employ analytics, yet insist that the key to their success is the compatibility of their personalities.

The Wild, for years, has been defined by the personality of recently fired General Manager Chuck Fletcher. Ambitious and impatient, Fletcher displayed desperation in free agency and the trade market, giving away assets without markedly improving his team.

The Twins, under Terry Ryan, displayed his foremost traits — hard work and loyalty. According to a few of his friends in the organization, those traits led Ryan to become too reliant on a handful of key figures, and unwilling to make major changes that would have cost the jobs of longtime allies.

For the Vikings, analytics will determine how they build an offense around Kirk Cousins — which pass plays create the best chance of success for him. Cousins' personality — his ability to handle championship-level pressure, to handle the responsibilities of a highly paid franchise quarterback — will set the ceiling for a franchise that believes it should win a Super Bowl.

Analytics are a necessary component for a winning modern sports franchise.

You want to win a championship? You'd better have the right kinds and combinations of people in the locker room, and the front office.

Sunday's Twins-L.A. Angels game recap

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | May 14, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Shohei Ohtani, Los Angeles

The Angels rookie sensation held the Twins to one run over 6½ innings on three hits and two walks while striking out 11.

BY THE NUMBERS

3 Walkoff wins by the Angels this season.

6 Walkoff losses by the Twins this season.

20 Strikeouts for Fernando Romero through his first three games, a Twins record.

0-for-16 What the Twins' No. 2-5 hitters did at the plate.

2-9 The Twins' record when they score three or fewer runs.

Twins-Seattle makeup game preview

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | May 14, 2018

MAKEUP GAME AT TARGET FIELD

Monday, 6:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM

RHP Jake Odorizzi (3-2, 3.83) vs. RHP Wade LeBlanc (0-0, 3.18)

Twins update

The Twins are back in town for a nine-game homestand, starting with a game with Seattle after their meeting April 8 was postponed by bad weather. The teams split the first two games of that series. ... Odorizzi has pitched at least six innings in only three of his eight starts this season.

Mariners update

All-Star 2B Robinson Cano fractured his right hand when he was hit by a pitch in Sunday's 5-4 loss in Detroit and said he will see a specialist on Tuesday, adding, "It is broken bad, so there might be surgery." ... LeBlanc is replacing injured Erasmo Ramirez in Seattle's rotation.

Twins' walk-off loss to Angels spoils rookie pitching duel

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | May 13, 2018

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Fernando Romero did all he could to match Japanese sensation Shohei Ohtani in Sunday's much-anticipated showdown of 23-year-old rookie starting pitchers.

"It was kind of a pound-for-pound boxing match between us and them with Ohtani and Romero," Twins second baseman Brian Dozier said after a 2-1 walk-off loss to the Los Angeles Angels.

Both young pitchers were long gone when Zack Cozart's single in the ninth ended a taut battle that turned on a few key miscues by the Twins. Left-hander Zach Duke, working for the third straight day for the first time with the Twins, hit Chris Young with a no-ball, two-strike curveball to start the ninth.

"I yanked it," Duke said after giving up his first earned run since April 7. "I tried to throw a backdoor breaking ball that actually hit the back foot."

Martin Maldonado bunted Young into scoring position, and Cozart followed with a first-pitch single to left as the speedy Young scored without a throw. Cozart had been hitless in six career at-bats against Duke before the game-winner.

"It was up just enough, and he's a good hitter," Duke said. "He can handle that pitch."

It was the sixth walk-off loss of the year for the Twins and their fifth in the past 23 games, dating to April 20. Closing out a three-city road trip at 7-3 with a four-game split, the Twins (17-19) failed to get back to .500.

Before Cozart's game-winner, the Angels had been 1 for 13 with runners in scoring position and 2 for 24 over the past 24 innings.

The Twins left the bases loaded in the ninth when Dozier fouled out after Ehire Adrianza was thrown out at home on a perfect relay from Mike Trout to Ian Kinsler to Maldonado. Adrianza hesitated before rounding second on Robbie Grossman's double to the wall in right center.

"I was trying to read the ball — just to make sure — but he got me," Adrianza said. "It's a big play because we needed that run to win the game. That happens. They made a pretty good cutoff and and relay."

Adrianza said he wasn't decoyed by shortstop Andrelton Simmons, noting he took off once he saw Young turn his back in right to pursue Grossman's long fly. Adrianza, who entered as a pinch runner in the seventh, knew the play was going to be close as he rounded third and heard third-base coach Gene Glynn tell him, "You've got to go hard."

Replay review upheld the pivotal out call.

"I was out for sure," Adrianza said.

Ohtani outlasted Romero by pitching into the seventh and piled up 11 strikeouts to Romero's six, but their duel ended in a draw thanks to Joe Mauer's game-tying pinch single in the seventh. Romero scattered four hits in his five innings, leaving with a 0.54 earned run average three starts into his career.

"I was just thinking, 'Keep calm and control yourself,' Romero said. "All you have to do is control it and let it happen."

Romero's career-opening scoreless streak ended at 15 2/3 innings after shortstop Gregorio Petit made an ill-advised jump throw across the diamond on Cozart's infield hit in the fifth. Had Petit simply held the ball, the game's first run wouldn't have scored when the Twins failed to turn two on Justin Upton's high chopper to third.

Maldonado alertly took third, beating Logan Morrison's return throw from first.

"I saw (Maldonado) going back, so that gave me more confidence to try to throw to first," Petit said. "He just got a good read, took a chance and made it. I did what I thought was right at that point. I thought I had a chance. It just worked out perfectly for them."

Pulled after 92 pitches, Romero touched 96 mph and got 12 swing-and-miss strikes, seven on his mid-80s slider.

Ohtani allowed just three singles (two by Morrison) and two walks while enticing 20 swing-and-miss strikes in his 6 1/3 innings. Eight of those came on his low-80s slider, while six more came on a split-finger fastball at 88-90 mph.

"I think he's doing something that nobody has probably ever done, and it might be a long time before you see it again," Morrison said. "There's another guy in that clubhouse (Trout) who is a really good player, but to me, with what (Ohtani) does on the mound and with the bat, he's probably the best player in the world."

Morrison started the game-tying rally with a nine-pitch walk after one out in the seventh. Grossman greeted reliever Cam Bedrosian with a sharp single, and Mauer jumped on a 1-2 slider for the equalizer.

Return to Angels roots reminds Addison Reed of his batboy days **Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | May 13, 2018**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Twins reliever Addison Reed was a baseball-crazy kid growing up in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., about 40 miles east of Angel Stadium, when he got the opportunity of a lifetime. This was back in late '90s during a family trip to Tempe, Ariz., to watch Angels spring training.

"One year we were there kind of early, just watching the guys work out, and some guy with blond hair comes up to me and asks if I want to bat boy," Reed said. "Being the baseball fan that I was, I was stoked. I said, 'Heck, yeah.' "

The invitation came from visiting clubhouse manager Brian "Bubba" Harkins, who gets a chance to relive the story every time Reed returns to face the Angels. Reed figures he was 8 or 9 the first time he helped out.

Scott Reed took his son to a local sports store to buy him a San Francisco Giants hat, which Barry Bonds signed for him during his batboy stint. This weekend Scott Reed presented Harkins with a print of a dugout photo he took of Addison and “Bubba” almost two decades ago.

(l-r) Addison Reed, age 8 or 9, as a spring training bat boy with Brian “Bubba” Harkins, visiting clubhouse manager for the Los Angeles Angels. Courtesy: Brian Harkins. (l-r) Addison Reed, age 8 or 9, as a spring training bat boy with Brian “Bubba” Harkins, visiting clubhouse manager for the Los Angeles Angels.

Harkins had it blown up to 8-by-10 and plans to frame it for his clubhouse office. First, however, Reed was going to autograph it; they worked together for three or four straight spring trainings around the time of the Angels’ only World Series title in 2002.

“I guess I made a good first impression with my batboy-ing skill,” Reed said. “I had to run out and grab a bat and I guess I did a good job at it.”

Back in 2012, the first time Reed came through as a rookie with the Chicago White Sox, Harkins was plotting out the locker assignments when he came across a name that sounded familiar.

“He has a distinctive first name,” Harkins said. “I was going to ask him, ‘Hey, are you the same Addison Reed who used to bat boy for me at spring training?’ but he came over first.”

Three more scoreless innings this weekend gave Reed six scoreless outings (7 1/3 innings) and three saves at Angel Stadium. In addition to his parents, Scott and September, his brother and sister and their young families came out each day to visit during batting practice.

“I was an Angel fan until the day I got drafted by the White Sox,” Reed said. “Jim Edmonds was my favorite player. I remember we had multiple Rally Monkeys in our house — multiple. And I tell you what, I hate to see that thing now coming here as a visiting player. I hate the Rally Monkey.”

As far as Harkins knows, Reed is the only former bat boy of his to reach the majors or even play professionally.

“But there’s still hundreds of possibilities out there,” he said.

TWO-WAY BUCK

Byron Buxton wasn’t in Sunday’s lineup after going 1 for 10 with a walk in his first three games off the disabled list, but that just meant he’d have a better view of two-way rookie sensation Shohei Ohtani.

“It’s one of the coolest things,” Buxton said. “To me it’s incredible just to have somebody that could go both ways and finally break through. I grew up playing a lot of sports, so the more you do the better off I feel like you are and the more fun you have. That’s my opinion.”

While leading Appling County High School to a Georgia state title in 2012, Buxton brandished a mid-90s fastball that he claims hit 99 mph on two separate occasions.

“For me to throw 99 I had to be mad,” he said.

He says he wouldn’t mind playing both ways if he could play center field on the days he didn’t pitch, but pitching wasn’t his preference in high school.

“I hated pitching with a passion,” he said. “I did it because my high school team wanted me to pitch. I knew that I wanted to run around and I wanted to hit. I’m telling you, pitching is not my thing.”

BRIEFLY

Fernando Romero’s parents, Fernando and Johanna, were unable to secure visas in time to see his Mother’s Day start in person, but the young Twins star said he is optimistic that will happen soon. When it does, younger brother Marcos, a 9-year-old pitcher and second baseman, plans to join them on the visit.

Cozart, Angels edge Twins 2-1 on walk-off single
Associated Press | Fox Sports North | May 13, 2018

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Shohei Ohtani had four pitches that were all doing terrible things to the Minnesota Twins. The two-way sensation got five

consecutive strikeouts at one point while he pitched into the seventh inning of another dominant performance.

Although the Los Angeles Angels couldn't do enough against the Twins' own rookie pitching star to get a win for Ohtani, they made sure to end their series with a celebration anyway.

After Ohtani racked up 11 strikeouts while yielding only three singles, Zack Cozart delivered a walk-off RBI single in the Angels' 2-1 victory Sunday.

Ohtani again dazzled his home fans while throwing a season-high 103 pitches in his sixth start for the Angels. With his fastball hitting 99 mph and his off-speed pitches plummeting through the strike zone, the Japanese right-hander reached 43 strikeouts for the season, blowing past Bo Belinsky's franchise record for strikeouts in a pitcher's first six games.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia called Ohtani's performance "phenomenal. ... He had both breaking balls working, his slider and his curveball. His splitter was as good as we've seen it, and he got some big outs with his fastball."

Yet Ohtani was denied his fourth win after he left to a standing ovation following Logan Morrison's nine-pitch walk in the seventh. Reliever Cam Bedrosian promptly allowed hits by his first two batters, including pinch-hitter Joe Mauer's tying RBI single.

"I didn't feel fatigued at all, actually," Ohtani said through a translator. "I feel like I was able to mix in all of my pitches and keep the hitters off balance."

Although neither got a decision, Fernando Romero joined Ohtani in an entertaining duel at the Big A.

Romero pitched five innings of four-hit ball in his third big-league start as the Twins finished their impressive 10-game road trip with seven wins, but also their major league-worst sixth walk-off defeat.

Romero allowed his first run in the fifth inning, ending his scoreless start to his career at 15 2/3 innings when Justin Upton beat out a potential double-play grounder in the fifth. But the Dominican right-hander otherwise excelled against the Angels' veteran lineup, striking out six while walking three.

"We battled, and you've just got to take the positive stuff into the next game," Romero said. "I felt so good."

Minnesota put four straight batters on base in the ninth inning, yet the Angels kept it tied.

Ehire Adrianza was thrown out at the plate by Mike Trout and Ian Kinsler while he attempted to score from first on Robbie Grossman's double.

WATCH: Mauer snags ball on a hop, saves a run in LA

"You just put the best throw on the bag that you can," said Kinsler of his relay throw to Martin Maldonado, who made a slick tag. "There's a lot of ways that can go wrong."

Blake Parker then got Brian Dozier to pop out with the bases loaded to end the ninth. Parker (1-1) got the win for throwing just one pitch.

Chris Young was hit by a pitch from Zach Duke (2-2) leading off the Angels' ninth. After Maldonado bunted Young to second, Cozart cracked his third hit of the day and his second game-ending hit of the season into left field, where Eddie Rosario couldn't field it cleanly for a throw to the plate.

SHOHEI SUNDAY

Ohtani was making his first daytime home start since he took a perfect game into the seventh inning of a brilliant one-hit, 12-strikeout performance against Oakland on April 8. The Twins managed two short singles early on, but Ohtani also struck out nine of 12 batters during the first four innings, including five in a row during the second and third.

"As advertised," Minnesota manager Paul Molitor said after his club's first look at Ohtani. "He's got pitches. He could get the breaking ball over, and he got guys to chase it."

MIDDLETON LEAVES

Angels reliever Keynan Middleton threw just 12 pitches in the eighth inning, heading to the dugout with a 1-1 count on Rosario. Middleton only returned from the disabled list last Thursday after sitting out with elbow inflammation. Scioscia said Middleton had "elbow discomfort" and will undergo an MRI exam Monday.

LOMO KNOWS SOMETHING

Morrison got two hits and that key walk against Ohtani while the rest of Minnesota's lineup struggled mightily. He was the only Twins starter who didn't strike out at least once.

IRON MAN 2

Trout didn't start for the first time this season, but the two-time AL MVP struck out looking as a pinch-hitter with two runners on in the seventh inning. He was on deck when Cozart ended it. Trout has played in all 39 games for the Angels, joining Upton in making an appearance every day so far this season.

MARTIN MASHES

Maldonado had two hits and a walk for the Angels, scoring the game's first run on Upton's groundout. The Gold Glove catcher is 14 for 24 since his 0-for-34 hitless streak ended May 1.

UP NEXT

Twins: Jake Odorizzi (3-2, 3.83 ERA) takes the mound when they return home for a makeup game against Seattle. The April 8 meeting was postponed by cold. The right-hander has 38 strikeouts in 42 1/3 innings this season.

Angels: Andrew Heaney (1-3, 4.78 ERA) is on the mound for the start of the Houston Astros' first visit to Angel Stadium since winning the World Series. The Halos won two of three against their AL West rivals last month in Houston.

Wetmore's 5 thoughts: Good road trip for the Twins ends on a sour note **Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | May 13, 2018**

The Twins had a great road trip that they should feel good about. The final game, a loss to the Angels on Sunday, looks from the outside like a big missed opportunity. And ending things on a sour note tends to spoil the song.

Ehire Adrianza was thrown out at the plate in the top of the 9th inning. The Angels rallied to win in the bottom of the inning, when Eddie Rosario bobbed a ball in left field as the runner streaked around third base on his way to the plate.

This column presents 5 thoughts from Sunday's game:

1. Twins' rookie Fernando Romero lasted 2+ starts into his big league career without allowing an earned run. He dazzled at times against the Blue Jays at home in his MLB debut, and then he was even better against the Cardinals in start No. 2.

Romero made it into the 5th inning Sunday before a runner finally crossed the plate on his watch. That's a combined 15 2/3 scoreless to start his career, the most by a Twins starter since Andrew Albers ran an improbable 17 1/3 innings to begin his career in Minnesota.

2. Ehire Adrianza should have scored the go-ahead run in the 9th inning. A tricky read and a bad decision got him thrown out at the plate.

Adrianza, who had scored the Twins' only run to that point, got on board with a one-out single in the 9th inning against Jim Johnson. He was on first when Robbie Grossman lifted a double to the wall in right-center field. With one out, he tried to read whether the outfielders would catch the ball (requiring a retreat to first base), or if the ball would land (which would have been his invitation to try to score the potential winning run and make his teammate a hero).

Adrianza paused before he got to second base, froze his momentum as he read the outfielders.

I'm not sure what he saw, because I was in Minnesota watching the game on TV. And actually, I'm not sure if stopping on the short side of second base is the right ploy in that spot. What I saw was a surprisingly timely trip from first to home plate, and it only made sense while watching a replay and recognizing that Adrianza stopped early in his journey to get a better look.

Adrianza eventually recognized that the ball would not be caught, and he put his head down to start running around second base. At that point he had so much ground to cover that a well-executed relay throw from Mike Trout to Ian Kinsler was enough to cut down the Twins' shortstop as he slid head-first into the plate.

(The Twins had another chance that inning: Bobby Wilson drew a tough walk after the Angels intentionally walked Joe Mauer, but Brian Dozier popped out in foul territory with the bases loaded to end the threat.)

Dozier's popout felt a bit like a missed opportunity after Wilson's walk. But the real crusher was Adrianza's misadventure earlier that inning.

3. Joe Mauer entered the game in the 7th inning and made his presence felt right away.

Mauer pinch-hit for Gregorio Petit in the 7th with teammates on first and third base, and the Angels wanted Cam Bedrosian to face the lefty. Mauer hit a slider into left field to plate Adrianza and tie the game at 1-1.

In the bottom of the 7th, the Angels had a threat brewing. Ryan Pressly was up against pinch hitter Mike Trout with right on first and second base with one out. A two-strike fastball at the belly button was called a strike and Trout didn't like it – but it was a critical out for the Twins.

Then Justin Upton hit a ground ball down the third-base line. Eduardo Escobar grabbed it on the run and tapped third base with his foot before making a throw across the diamond while still on the run. It was a bad throw and bounced in the dirt. But luckily for Escobar and the Twins they had Mauer standing over there at first base, as he crouched and then lunged, making the scoop on the throw while keeping his right foot glued to the first-base bag.

The play spared the Twins from having to face Albert Pujols in the 8th inning in an RBI situation. I don't think it would be an overreaction to just give Mauer the Gold Glove this week.

4. The Twins are playing better baseball these days and have won 7 of their past 10.

April was not kind to this team in just about every facet of the game. May has been better and I'd imagine that there's a better vibe in the team's clubhouse these days.

Fernando Romero is the one that started the winning ways with his MLB debut on May 2. At that point the Twins were scuffling some type of way, and his 5 2/3 shutout innings helped the team beat Toronto and turn back to some winning baseball.

In the 10 games since Romero's debut, the Twins are 7-3, and the starting pitching is at least partly responsible. Only Lance Lynn (once) has come up short of completing 5 innings during that time. J.O. Berrios hasn't quite looked like his old self in his two starts, but other than that this rotation is rolling pretty well right now. Over those 10 starts, the quintet has combined to pitch 61 2/3 innings with a 3.65 ERA, with 59 strikeouts and 24 walks.

(The offense is averaging a shade better than 5 runs per game during that stretch, which helps, too.)

And anecdotally it seems to me that the fielding has been cleaner for the most part this month than it was during the rough patch in April. In short, this team looks like the team that we expected it to be when they put this thing together over the winter and left spring training at the end of March. The Twins got off to a rocky start but it looks like things could be back on track at last. Now the challenge will be to dust off the dirt and climb out of the early hole they've dug.

5. Angels starter Shohei Ohtani lived up to the billing Sunday.

The rookie sensation struck out 11 Twins hitters and finished 6 1/3 innings with just one earned run on his ledger. He mixes a big fastball — which maxed out at 99 mph Sunday — with a split-finger fastball and two different breaking balls. In a matchup of rookie flamethrowers, Ohtani one-upped Romero, whose fastball maxed out at only 97 mph.

Ohtani's one of the amazing stories around the game in the early part of the season. His two-way abilities continue to impress. If you had to pick one Twins player to give it a go as a combo hitter-pitcher, who would it be? The top 3 guys that I'd like to see are Joe Mauer, Byron Buxton and Miguel Sano.

Mining the Minors: LaMonte Wade showing power; Zack Littell promoted **Jake Depue | ESPN 1500 | May 13, 2018**

The last piece of the puzzle may be falling into place for LaMonte Wade.

Wade's an on base machine, reaching base at a .400 clip throughout his minor league career. In addition to drawing a ton of walks, he rarely strikes out, and has a career average near .300. The one tool he hasn't shown much of is power.

In 519 plate appearances last season, he hit just seven home runs, and has never reached double-figures in home runs in a season. This season, in just 127 plate appearances, he already has four. That would put him on pace to hit around 17 home runs this season, if he got the same number of plate appearances as he did in 2017.

If Wade can demonstrate an improved ability to hit for power, while maintaining his elite walk rate, he projects as a solid big league bat. Although seen as a corner outfielder, he's split his time this season at all three outfield spots. If playing a serviceable center field is in his skill set, Wade could provide a lot of value as a fourth outfielder. He could fill in at all three spots and serve as a pinch hitter off the bench. In my view, he has the potential to be Robbie Grossman with a better glove.

Like Nick Gordon, Wade is in his second year in Chattanooga, and has more or less conquered the level. In his age-24 season, he seems like a prime candidate to move to Triple-A, with an eye towards a September call-up and bench role next season.

Stephen Gonsalves

Gonsalves was promoted to Rochester in late-April, and has generally pitched well. Although he didn't fare well in his most recent start, Gonsalves has a 3.94 ERA, 26.7% strikeout rate and 8.3% walk rate in 16 innings for the Red Wings. That follows up yet another fantastic stint in Chattanooga—he also had excellent numbers there in 2016 and 2017—in which he had a 1.77 ERA, very good 32.9% strikeout rate, and 13.2% walk rate.

Gonsalves said last week he was sent back to Double-A because his velocity was down in spring training. After injuries delayed the start of last season, he said he only threw two bullpens in the offseason so he'd be fresh coming into the year. That may have contributed to the decreased velo, but he's now back in the 89-93 range where he typically pitches, and seeing good results.

It's hard to say exactly how far away he is from the big leagues. With Fernando Romero already up and having early success, the Twins have shown a willingness to bring up prized pitching prospects without much Triple-A time. Minnesota, though, is about to get two rotation arms—Ervin Santana and Trevor May—back in late May. Barring injuries, that likely means Gonsalves will be in Rochester for the next couple of months.

If he keeps putting up good numbers, a second-half call-up is within reason. If the Twins end up selling at the deadline, impending free agents Lance Lynn and Ervin Santana would be candidates to be moved, opening up a spot. If they're in contention, he'd likely be at the top of the list to make a spot start in a double-header, or be inserted into the rotation if one or more starters struggle or hit the DL.

In 2019, Gonsalves, Romero and J.O. Berrios should form a talented starting pitching core that will be under team control for a number of years. Assuming good health, it's a decent bet all three will be in the opening day rotation next year. Speaking of young, talented starters...

Zack Littell

With Fernando Romero graduating to the big leagues, Zack Littell will replace him in this space moving forward. I wrote a piece on Littell in spring training, arguing that based on his numbers, he gets undervalued in prospect rankings. In his age-21 season last year, Littell had a 2.12 ERA and 22.5% strikeout rate across High-A and Double-A. Those numbers bested the 2017 numbers of Romero and Gonsalves, and he did it at a younger age.

Littell doesn't have the velocity and stuff of Romero, and thus probably has a lower upside. Even at a young age, though, he has a track record of success, and now finds himself in Triple-A after being promoted earlier this month.

Although he had just a 5.87 ERA in 23 innings at Chattanooga this year, his peripheral numbers suggest he pitched much better than that. He had a 3.38 FIP, 31.7% strikeout rate, and 6.9% walk rate with the Lookouts. In 12 innings with Rochester, he has a 0.75 ERA, 30.4% strikeout rate, and 13.0% walk rate.

Littell is probably behind Gonsalves in the starting pitching pecking order, but in my view, he has just as much upside, and will likely be a candidate for the 2019 opening day rotation if he puts up a good year at Triple-A.

Tyler Jay

Jay is back from injury and pitching well in Double-A. In nine innings, he's yet to allow a run, while striking out eight and walking three.

In the case of Jay, his numbers in a small sample size are less important than his velocity and stuff on the fastball and slider. Those two pitches made him a coveted player coming out of Illinois, with the Twins selecting him sixth overall three years ago. He hasn't been healthy for much of his time in the Minors, and as a result those pitches haven't consistently been the plus pitches they were in college.

If Jay stays healthy and his stuff returns to where it was in college, he remains a candidate to be fast-tracked to the big leagues, but my guess is he'll have to be productive for at least a couple of months before the Twins would consider bringing him up.

Wild Card: Nick Anderson

You may not have heard of Anderson—he's a 27-year-old relief pitcher signed by the Twins out of independent ball. The last two seasons, though, he's been lights out at three different levels. In 2017, he had an ERA of 1.00 and 28.5% strikeout rate in High-A and Double-A. This season at Rochester, he has an 1.65 ERA and 36.5% strikeout rate in 16.1 innings, while flashing a mid-90s fastball. Like Trevor Hildenberger, he's an unheralded late-bloomer who's putting up video game numbers in the high-minors. Don't be surprised if he surfaces in Minnesota at some point this summer, which, by the way, is where he's from.

Twins suffer another walk-off loss, but a 7-3 road trip is a sorely needed good sign

Dan Hayes | The Athletic | May 14, 2018

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The big picture and the value looking at it provides can be difficult to reconcile at times. You're hopeful of achieving a lofty goal and don't, which instead forces one into appreciating previous accomplishments.

Sunday was one of those days for the Twins.

On the one hand, the Twins were headed back home from Southern California in far better shape than when they left, courtesy of a 7-3 road trip. But on the other, the Twins had to deal with the frustration provided by yet another walk-off loss. A combination of a dominant Shohei Ohtani effort (he struck out 11) and too many self-inflicted wounds added up to a tough 2-1 defeat to the Los Angeles Angels, the team's sixth walk-off loss of the 2018 season.

Instead of coming home with a .500 record, the Twins had to settle for feeling pretty damn good about themselves only two weeks after a horrifying stretch. And while that was the prevailing attitude in the clubhouse, the Twins still had to consider yet another frustrating loss.

"It was a good trip," manager Paul Molitor said. "It was a good series here. Very competitive. We've talked about the difficulty of winning those tight games late on the road against good teams. We almost did it three times in a row. It was a well-pitched game on both sides. Our bullpen logged a lot of innings and did a nice job. It just came down to not being able to score on the extra-base hit and a hit batsman (on an) 0-2 count to start the winning rally."

The final inning provided much of the Twins' consternation.

After struggling against the otherworldly Ohtani for six innings, the Twins tied it in the seventh on a Joe Mauer pinch-hit single. Then they had a chance to pull ahead in the ninth inning after Ehire Adrianza singled with one out on a double to deep right by Robbie Grossman. Off with the pitch, Adrianza temporarily slowed down before he reached second base to get a better read on the ball. Adrianza sped toward third base, but Mike Trout raced it down and fired a perfect relay to Ian Kinsler, who followed with a flawless throw of his own to nail Adrianza at the plate.

"It's a big play because we needed that run to win the game," Adrianza said. "It was a pretty good relay."

A pretty good pitch from the Angels' Blake Parker then ended the threat. Parker entered with two outs in the ninth to face Brian Dozier with the bases loaded and got him to pop out on the first pitch.

The Los Angeles offense got going almost as quickly in the ninth when Twins reliever Zach Duke yanked an 0-2 slider and hit Chris Young on the back foot. After a sac bunt moved Young into scoring position, Duke's fastball caught too much of the plate and Zack Cozart singled in the winning run.

"If I make the big pitch there, (Young) gets out," Duke said. "It's frustrating."

There wasn't much for the Twins to be irritated about on their three-city road trip.

The Twins rallied multiple times. Their starting pitchers found a rhythm they hadn't discovered during the previous 14 games. And the bullpen got back on track. Before Sunday, Duke hadn't allowed an earned run in 13 appearances dating back to April 7.

"We're playing good, clean baseball," Duke said. "Outside of (Sunday), we've been coming up with big hits late and just grinding through. We're not going to carry over today."

“This was a good road trip for us. We need to keep building on it.”

All things considered, the foundation of a 17-19 club is pretty solid.

After they got healthy against the last-place White Sox, the Twins won four of six against St. Louis and Los Angeles — both first-place clubs when Minnesota rolled into town. Whereas before all they could talk about was keeping their heads held high and not giving in, the Twins can now instead point to how that attitude kept them together and offered them a path to success as they return home for nine games at Target Field.

While it’s not an 8-2 trip and a .500 record, it’s something. And the Twins know it.

“We should’ve had that one today,” said first baseman Logan Morrison, who started the game-tying rally with a walk against Ohtani. “But they’re probably saying the same things about a couple of the other games. But we’ll take what we did this road trip and hopefully roll it into the homestand.”

Unlike years past, Dozier thinks this team knows how to let go of a tough loss. Early in the club’s 2-12 stretch from April 20-May 3, Dozier said players weren’t overwhelmed. They were upset, but they wouldn’t allow themselves to get too far down, which hasn’t always been the case for the Twins. Even though Sunday ended with a nagging loss, Twins players weren’t willing to lose sight of everything they’ve recently accomplished.

“When we first came in here, everyone was saying, ‘heck of a road trip’ because when you go 7-3 on a road trip against some good teams, I think that says a lot,” Dozier said. “Especially what we went through at home, losing a few straight. There’s still a lot of confidence in here.”