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San Francisco Chronicle

Giants blow two leads, lose in 10th to Rockies

Henry Schulman

DENVER — The Giants have way too many issues for one Bunyanesque left-hander from North Carolina to fix. Maybe everyone is looking at Madison Bumgarner’s pending return the wrong way.

Maybe he is not a savior. Maybe the Giants need to tighten their play, stop walking hitters at key junctures, catch the ball better, get down bunts, capitalize on great scoring opportunities and be the type of team that can ride a horse like Bumgarner into contention.

The Giants are definitely not that. They gamely clung close to .500 amid a sea of injuries but now are tumbling amid a 1-5 trip that continued with their first walk-off loss of the season Monday night.

The Giants blew two leads, one in the eighth inning, in their 6-5, 10-inning loss to the Rockies. Colorado won on Chris Iannetta’s one-out, bases-loaded single off Hunter Strickland, who started the inning by walking Nolan Arenado.

Bumgarner’s return might take a bit longer than everyone hoped and expected after his gangbusters rehab start in Sacramento on Saturday night.

After the Giants reached the one-third point of the season at 25-29, manager Bruce Bochy said they plan to have Bumgarner throw one more minor-league game at San Jose on Thursday to extend his pitch count.

Bochy left a lot of wiggle room, saying that is the plan “for now,” further adding, “We’ll talk about it some more. We’ll see where we’re at.”

Andrew Suarez, one of the youngsters in the rotation because of injuries to Bumgarner and Johnny Cueto, did a creditable job in his first Coors Field foray, clamping down after he allowed Trevor Story's three-run homer in the first inning.

Suarez lasted five, did not allow another earned run, struck out six of his final eight hitters and said that pitching at Coors did not faze him.

"It kind of reminded me of some of the places I pitched in the Pacific Coast League," he said.

Suarez even stood to earn a win when the Giants came from behind and took a 5-4 lead in the sixth on Evan Longoria's RBI double and Pablo Sandoval's pinch, tie-breaking single with two outs. Longoria had three RBIs.

Bochy needed four shutout innings from his bullpen to prevent the Giants' 11th loss in their past 12 games at Coors, but got only two before the Rockies tied it 5-5 in the eighth on two singles and Ian Desmond's sacrifice fly off Tony Watson.

The Giants then stranded five runners in the ninth and 10th innings. In the 10th, Austin Jackson's failure to bunt with two on and nobody out was a factor. Lack of execution and clutch hits have been a theme all season.

"We did what we were hoping to do and create situations you like," Bochy said. "But you've got to finish it off and we couldn't do it."

Strickland then issued the leadoff walk to Arenado. The Rockies' third baseman will get you one way or the other.

"I can't walk him there," Strickland said. "That's been an issue. I've got to be better than that."

With two on and one out, Andrew McCutchen seemed to make a sliding catch on Desmond's sinking liner, but the ball popped out of his glove. Desmond had a single that loaded the bases ahead of Iannetta's decisive, nice-and-easy single up the middle that ended it.

Now, the Giants need to win Tuesday night or fall five games out of first, creating a bigger hill to climb for Bumgarner and all the returning injured to climb in the near future.

"I think we still have confidence in ourselves," Gregor Blanco said. "We've got to try to find a way and keep hanging in there. It's not going to be easy, but we've got to do it."

San Francisco Chronicle

New Giants pitcher Dereck Rodriguez brings famous dad to tears

Henry Schulman

DENVER — Dereck Rodriguez had been inside the visiting clubhouse at Coors Field before

Monday. He was 12. His dad, Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez, was in town with the Tigers for an interleague series.

“It’s nice coming here and having my name on the locker and not his,” Dereck Rodriguez said after the Giants purchased his contract from Triple-A Sacramento to bolster the bullpen.

Father and son spoke by phone. Pudge is in Colombia.

“He was crying,” Dereck said. “He was excited, emotional. He was probably the most emotional of anybody.”

Dad posted an all-smiles video and said, “I’m very proud of you, son. I love you. You made it, man. You made me very proud. Good luck tonight.”

The Dereck Rodriguez story goes beyond being Pudge’s son. The Twins drafted him as an outfielder and converted him to pitching just four years ago. He signed with the Giants as a minor-league free agent last winter after talking to Miami workout partner, Pablo Sandoval, to confirm that San Francisco was a good club to join.

Rodriguez went to Sacramento and pounded the strike zone with a 95-mph fastball and an array of secondary pitches, going 4-1 with a 3.40 ERA and 53 strikeouts versus 11 walks in 501/3 innings.

Rodriguez said he had a strong, accurate arm as an outfielder, which has helped him be a strike-thrower as a pitcher. He got what he termed “the call I’ve been waiting for my whole life” at 11:30 p.m. Sunday from River Cats manager Dave Brundage.

“That phone call lasted five minutes,” Rodriguez said. “The phone call with my mom lasted half an hour.”

Maribel Rodriguez flew to Denver for Monday night’s game. Ivan expects to be in San Francisco on Friday night.

Briefly: The Giants optioned second baseman Miguel Gomez to Sacramento to clear a 25-man spot for Rodriguez. To gain a 40-man spot, they designated left-handed reliever D.J. Snelton for assignment. ... The Giants cut Triple-A catcher Hector Sanchez and brought former Cincinnati catcher Ryan Hanigan to Sacramento from extended spring. ... Joe Panik singled and scored in his first rehab at-bat for Sacramento. He played five innings and went 1-for-2.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants add 13th pitcher to start week Bumgarner, Panik might return

Henry Schulman

DENVER - Memorial Day brings us the 54th game and the end of the first third of the season,

Giants' first game at Coors Field, expected thunderstorms and a new pitcher, the first of many changes that should come over the next week to 10 days.

Starter Dereck Rodriguez is being promoted from Triple-A most likely to add bullpen depth ahead of three games at Coors. After one weekend with 12 pitchers and a five-man bench, the Giants are back to 13 and four.

To clear a roster spot on the 25-man the Giants optioned second baseman Miguel Gomez to Sacramento. In a bit of a surprise for the 40-man spot that Rodriguez needed, the Giants designated for assignment left-handed reliever D.J. Snelton, a highly regarded prospect who got four games in the majors this season.

The Giants would have had other DFA candidates in Roberto Gomez and Jose Valdez, but both are hurt and by rule cannot be cut.

Before the week ends, Madison Bumgarner, Mark Melancon and Joe Panik could be back. Alen Hansen should follow soon, and the Giants need to make a decision on Hunter Pence before the weekend under the time limits of minor-league rehab assignments.

The front office and manager Bruce Bochy probably have an idea how this all will sort out. Meanwhile, the 25 men on the field have to concentrate on now. The Giants' 1-4 swing through Houston and Chicago forces them to hold their own at Coors to stay relatively close to .500 and the first-place Rockies.

As the big roster shuffle gets under way, focus on second base. Even with Gomez optioned the Giants still face a logjam with Panik, Hanson and Kelby Tomlinson. Tomlinson has a minor-league option, which puts him at risk.

One suspects that Bochy had Pablo Sandoval at second Sunday night partly as a tryout to see if the roster can withstand one fewer second baseman as injured players return. Versatility is paramount with a four-man bench, too.

Panik began his rehab assignment from a sprained thumb with Sacramento on Monday. He could be back with the Giants on Friday, when Bumgarner could debut as well.

The more immediate concern is getting rookie Andrew Suarez through a Coors Field start. Suarez has been leaking oil - 14 earned runs in 14 innings over his past three starts -- and this is not the place for a rookie pitcher to leak oil.

Rodriguez is most likely Suarez's backup Monday night. The 25-year-old right-hander also could be auditioning for a spot in a rotation that can use a big arm that throws 95 and commands all the necessary secondary pitches.

Bumgarner can pitch only once every five days. Even assuming one of Suarez, Ty Blach and Chris Stratton falls out of the rotation when the Big Fella returns, the Giants need to be on the lookout for improvement there lest this bullpen get fried by the Fourth of July.

Rodriguez impressed the Giants with his command and stuff in nine starts at Sacramento, where he was 4-1 with a 3.40 ERA and 53 strikeouts against just 11 walks in 50 1/3 innings. He did allow 11 home runs, a number probably inflated by the hitter-friendly parks in the Pacific Coast League, but still something to watch.

As The Chronicle wrote in this spring-training story, he is the son of Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez and a converted outfielder.

Pudge posted a video message on social media, telling the world of Dereck's promotion and speaking directly to him, saying, "I'm very proud of you son. I love you. You made it, man. You made me very proud. Good luck tonight."

Hector gone: Triple-A Sacramento made a flurry of roster moves Monday, starting with Panik being added to start his rehab assignment.

The River Cats also released catcher Hector Sanchez and brought former Red Ryan Hanigan to Sacramento from extended spring. Whether the timing is related to Buster Posey's hip issue is not immediately clear.

This reporter does not get into the business of suggesting players' futures, but in Sanchez's case, you have to root for him to pick another line of work. He has had concussions heaped upon concussions (including one with Sacramento this season). With everything we now know, it's scary to think of what Sanchez's future will be like even if he never catches another pitch.

San Francisco Chronicle

Giants calling up Dereck Rodriguez, son of Hall of Famer Ivan 'Pudge' Rodriguez

John Shea

The Giants need another pitcher for their series in Denver, and the call went to Dereck Rodriguez, who referenced the promotion on his Instagram account: "Just got the best call of my life!!!! It's showtime !!!"

Rodriguez, 25, the son of Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez, was 4-1 with a 3.40 ERA in nine starts for Triple-A Sacramento.

The Giants were down a reliever in their three-game series in Chicago, after left fielder Mac Williamson took lefty Josh Osich's roster spot. They'll need a full complement of relievers in the hitting-friendly confines of Coors Field, where they'll play their next three games.

Rodriguez signed a minor-league contract with the Giants over the winter after spending seven

seasons in the Twins' organization. He converted from an outfielder to pitcher in 2014.

Rodriguez's dad tagged out J.T. Snow at the plate to end the 2003 Division Series, sending the Giants home and the Marlins to the next round.

"I was there. I was in the clubhouse," the younger Rodriguez said in spring training. "When my dad played, I was always in the clubhouse. For sure, it's one of his best moments. He always says it. He still has the ball."

The Giants will need to create a spot on the 40-man roster and also remove someone from the 25-man roster. With Pablo Sandoval showing Sunday he's acceptable at second base, it's possible Miguel Gomez could be optioned.

MLB.com

Giants waste chance in 10th, lose walk-off

Chris Haft

DENVER -- Though the Giants officially lost Monday, 6-5, when Colorado's Chris Iannetta rolled a 10th-inning, bases-loaded single up the middle at Coors Field, their lapses on offense in the top of the 10th were a significant factor in precipitating their latest setback.

The Giants squandered a promising scoring opportunity in their half of the 10th, which began with solid singles by Evan Longoria and Brandon Crawford off Rockies reliever Bryan Shaw. However, pinch-hitter Austin Jackson couldn't sacrifice the runners ahead and ended up having to swing away, resulting in a grounder that forced Longoria at third. Shaw proceeded to survive the inning and preserve the 5-5 tie by coaxing groundouts from Kelby Tomlinson and Gregor Blanco.

San Francisco also left the bases loaded in the ninth, which ended when Brandon Belt lined out to second base. Overall, the Giants outhit the Rockies, 12-11, but went 2-for-12 with runners in scoring position. Colorado was 4-for-10 in such situations.

"We did what we were hoping to do -- create those situations that you like," said Giants manager Bruce Bochy, who lamented the lack of a conclusive hit for the second day in a row.

Bochy refused to find fault with Jackson, calling Shaw a pitcher who's difficult to bunt against due to the cutting action on his pitches. Bochy also pointed out that he rescinded the order for Jackson to bunt after the first attempt.

"I think he wanted to show that he could get it done," Bochy said.

The end came shortly after Nolan Arenado drew a walk from Hunter Strickland to open the Rockies' 10th. Arenado advanced to second base on Trevor Story's flyout to center. Carlos Gonzalez received an intentional walk before Ian Desmond was credited with a single on a

sinking liner to right fielder Andrew McCutchen that appeared catchable. Iannetta then delivered his game-winner.

Strickland criticized himself for violating one of pitching's most sacred laws: Thou shalt not walk batters to lead off an inning.

"That's been an issue," Strickland said. "I've got to get better at that aspect of the game."

It wasn't a totally barren Memorial Day for the Giants. After rain delayed the game's first pitch for 55 minutes, starter Andrew Suarez surrendered Story's three-run homer in the first inning. But Suarez recovered nicely, yielding one unearned run in the next four innings before leaving the game. The rookie left-hander continued to demonstrate potential by striking out seven Rockies.

"He showed some fortitude. I'm proud of the kid," Bochy said. "He settled down and threw the ball very well."

Longoria went 3-for-5 with two doubles and three RBIs. Also, Gorkys Hernandez remained productive at the leadoff spot by hitting his sixth home run of the season and extending his hitting streak to 10 games.

The game's competitive pattern developed quickly. Longoria drilled a two-run, first-inning double, but the Rockies rolled ahead in their half of the first on Story's three-run homer.

Hernandez's homer tied the score in the third inning before Desmond's RBI single in the bottom of the third restored Colorado's lead.

SOUND SMART

For the first time this season, the Giants lost when leading after seven innings. They had been 21-0.

HE SAID IT

"It kind of reminded me of some places where I pitched in the Pacific Coast League. But I thought my stuff was good today. I simplified my mechanics and shortened my stride a little bit so I could get out in front." -- Suarez, on pitching in Coors Field for the first time and on his performance in general

UP NEXT

On Tuesday, Jeff Samardzija (1-3, 6.23 ERA) hopes to build upon his previous outing against the Rockies, when he worked a season-high 6 2/3 innings in a no-decision at San Francisco on May 17. Lifetime, he's 4-5 with 3.84 ERA in 16 games (12 starts) against Colorado, including 2-2, 4.87 in eight games (five starts) at Coors Field. Rockies left-hander Kyle Freeland (4-5, 3.28) will oppose Samardzija.

MLB.com

Bumgarner slated for second rehab outing

Chris Haft

DENVER -- Quashing speculation regarding Madison Bumgarner making an imminent return to the Giants, manager Bruce Bochy said Monday that the ace left-hander will start for Class A Advanced San Jose on Thursday.

This plan could change if the Giants' bullpen is overused during the next two games at Colorado, where pitching can be a nightmare. Bochy left open the possibility, very slightly, that Bumgarner could pitch for the Giants sooner if they need pitching reinforcements. Speaking after San Francisco's 6-5, 10-inning loss to the Rockies, Bochy prefaced his remarks about Bumgarner by saying that this is the Giants' plan "right now."

San Jose was selected for logistical reasons. It's local, and the environment should be conducive to Bumgarner making an extended stint, an essential step prior to returning to the Majors. Triple-A Sacramento, where Bumgarner made his first Minor League injury rehabilitation appearance, will be playing at El Paso, Texas.

It had been speculated that Bumgarner could slide back into the rotation Friday against Philadelphia at AT&T Park. The fact that Thursday is a scheduled off-day for the Giants would ease the task of filling in the rest of the rotation around Bumgarner, since it gives the club more scheduling flexibility.

But Bochy indicated the Giants would prefer to see Bumgarner elevate his pitch count methodically. Unless the Giants change their minds.

"Right now -- I'm saying right now -- he's scheduled to pitch in San Jose on Thursday, possibly Friday," Bochy said. "We just wanted to put him in a situation where we can get him stretched out. ... We'll talk about it some more."

Bumgarner was so dominant in his Minor League injury rehabilitation outing last Saturday for Triple-A Sacramento that the previously scheduled three-start regimen for him might not be necessary. He threw 31 strikes in 47 pitches and struck out eight of 12 Albuquerque batters he faced.

Moreover, he's Madison Bumgarner, who proved in the 2014 postseason that the usual limits don't apply to him. He could be ready to throw close to 100 pitches after his between-starts throwing session, which he performed Monday.

San Jose faces Visalia on Thursday and Modesto on Friday.

Relishing the experience: Right-hander Dereck Rodriguez, whose contract was purchased by the Giants from Sacramento, was struck by an emotional lightning bolt when River Cats manager

Dave Brundage told him Sunday night that was headed for the Majors.

Rodriguez was having a quiet evening, since he was scheduled to start Monday afternoon for the River Cats.

"I was watching Netflix," Rodriguez said. "I wasn't really thinking anything about baseball. Then I get this weird phone call from Oregon. My manager, I guess he's from Oregon. He told me this is the phone call I've been waiting for my whole life. I started tearing up. It was an emotional fun moment."

Rodriguez, whose father is Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez, played mostly outfield until switching to pitching in 2014.

Asked if he saw this day coming as he made his transition, he replied, "Not as fast as it did. I thought it was going to take a little longer. But I always had a good arm. I was always able to throw the ball from the outfield with accuracy. So when I got to the mound, I never really walked a lot of guys. I think that's what helped me a lot more and got me through the levels quicker, not walking a lot of guys and stuff."

Rodriguez was 4-1 with a 3.40 ERA in nine starts for Sacramento, though Bochy said that the 25-year-old will be used in relief.

In corresponding moves, infielder Miguel Gomez was optioned to Sacramento and left-hander D.J. Snelten, the Giants' 25th-ranked prospect per MLB Pipeline, was designated for assignment. When a player's contract is designated for assignment -- often abbreviated "DFA" -- that player is immediately removed from his club's 40-man roster, and 25-man roster if he was on that as well. Within seven days of the transaction (it was previously 10 days), the player must either be traded, released or placed on irrevocable outright waivers.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Little mistakes come back to bite Giants in extra-innings loss to Rockies

Alex Pavlovic

DENVER — Coors Field is the last place in the majors where you come in thinking you'll get beat by the little things. This park is about altitude-aided homers, flares to the gap that go for doubles, and rallies that chew up pitchers.

But on Monday night, the first this season in Denver for the Giants, it was about the little things. The Giants, on their way to a 6-5 loss, loaded the bases in the top of the ninth and could not find a way to push a run across. They got two straight singles to open the 10th and could not score. Austin Jackson twice failed to get a bunt down in the latter inning, and instead of having runners on second and third with one out, Jackson bounced into a first-to-third force that erased the lead runner.

“We were missing a hit,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “We left some guys on yesterday and we just couldn’t get a big hit. That was missing tonight.”

Bochy pointed out that Bryan Shaw is tough to bunt on, which is true. But this has been a season-long issue for the lineup and the pitching staff. This is a team that struggles to get bunts down, and there are other little things the Giants do not do well.

Chief among them, the pitching staff has issued too many walks in tight situations. Hunter Strickland walked Nolan Arenado to open the 10th, and that was the eventual tying run.

“I can’t walk that guy,” Strickland said. “That’s been an issue and I’ve got to get better at that.”

Arenado then played fundamentally sound ball, tagging up and reaching second on Trevor Story’s fly ball to deep center. With the bases loaded later in the inning, Chris Iannetta hit a bouncer up the middle to bring the winning run across.

The Giants dropped to 1-5 on this road trip. They also dropped behind the surging Dodgers in the National League West, and down into fourth place. They’re four games back of these first-place Rockies.

Many of the issues on this three-city trip have been big ones, starting with the rotation. But on Monday night, it was the little things that did them in.

--- Andrew Suarez gave up three runs in the first but settled in and went five, allowing another unearned run. Suarez struck out six of the final eight batters he faced. He said he made an adjustment after his last start, shortening his stride and simplifying his mechanics.

It’s possible that Suarez will be optioned soon, with Madison Bumgarner getting close. But if this is one of the last impressions he leaves for the time being, it was a good one.

“He showed some fortitude tonight,” Bochy said. “I was proud of the kid. We scored two (in the first) and the last thing the pitcher wants to do is give up three. He didn’t cave in.”

--- Speaking of Bumgarner, Bochy said the plan right now is to have him make one more rehab start on Thursday in San Jose. But, he several times said that’s the plan “right now.” The Giants will discuss this again tomorrow and it’s still possible that Bumgarner might return on Friday in San Francisco.

NBC Sports Bay Area
Coors Field continues to haunt Giants in walk-off loss
Alex Pavlovic

DENVER — This had all the makings of so many past nights at Coors Field. The game was long. The weather didn't cooperate. Nolan Arenado scored a big run. The Giants lost.

Arenado scored on Chris Iannetta's single up the middle in the bottom of the 10th, giving the Rockies a 6-5 win. The Giants dropped to 1-5 on this three-city road trip.

After a 55-minute rain-and-hail delay, the teams combined for five runs in the first inning. This looked like it would be a classic Coors shootout, but the pitching settled down from there.

With the score tied at five, the Giants loaded the bases in the top of the ninth on two walks and a hit-by-pitch, but Wade Davis got Brandon Belt to line out softly to second. They opened the 10th with back-to-back singles, but Austin Jackson couldn't get a bunt down and three straight groundouts ended the frame.

Arenado drew a walk from Hunter Strickland in the bottom of the 10th and alertly took second on a deep fly to center. He went to third on Ian Desmond's liner to right that Andrew McCutchen couldn't quite glove and scored when Kelby Tomlinson couldn't knock down Iannetta's slow roller.

Here's what else you need to know from the first night at Coors Field this season...

— It was an interesting evening for rookie Andy Suarez. He gave up a three-run bomb in the first and looked headed for disaster. But then he figured something out, repeatedly pounding the corner on his glove side. Suarez struck out six of the final eight batters he faced before being lifted for a pinch-hitter. He allowed four runs — three earned — in five innings. That's serviceable for a first start at Coors Field.

— Evan Longoria had a two-run double in the first and brought Brandon Belt home with a double in the sixth. He has 16 of them on the year, tied for the most in the National League. The Giants got 26 doubles from all their third basemen combined last season.

— Gorkys Hernandez hit a solo shot to lead off the third. It was his sixth, which puts him behind only Belt and Longoria on this roster. That's one surprise. Here's another: He's batting .321.

— Gregor Blanco came on in the eighth to play left for Mac Williamson. He did the same when the Giants had the lead in Chicago. As you consider upcoming roster moves with Hunter Pence and the pitching staff and all that, it's worth remembering that Bruce Bochy likes having Blanco as his late-innings defensive replacement.

NBC Sports Bay Area

Dereck Rodriguez looks to maintain recent form in first stint in the bigs

Alex Pavlovic

DENVER -- Dereck Rodriguez was preparing to start a Triple-A game on Monday afternoon when he got a late-night call from his manager telling him his dreams had come true. Rodriguez caught a flight to Denver where he already has a sense of familiarity with the park where he hopes to make his Major League debut.

Rodriguez, the son of Hall of Famer Ivan Rodriguez, visited Coors Field in 2004 when his father's Tigers played here on the Fourth of July. On Monday night, it'll be the son who will take the field. He's available out of the bullpen for the Giants.

"I've been to a lot of stadiums but I wasn't there for me, I was there for my dad," he said. "It's nice coming here and having my name on the locker, not his."

If Dereck, a 25-year-old right-hander, keeps throwing the way he was in Sacramento, his name will be on the locker for quite a while. In nine starts he went 4-1 with a 3.40 ERA and 53 strikeouts to just 11 walks. Manager Bruce Bochy said he will serve as a long reliever for now but could push his way into the rotation.

"We needed another arm here," Bochy said. "This was his start day so he can give us a lot of work as necessary."

Rodriguez was a sixth-round selection of the Twins in the 2011 draft but struggled at the plate. Before the 2014 season, the Twins moved the hard-throwing outfielder to the mound. He was a closer at first and then slid into the rotation. He has progressed steadily through the minors ever since. Rodriguez reached Double-A with the Twins and then chose the Giants as a minor league free agent. He said Pablo Sandoval, a training partner in Miami, helped sell him on the Giants.

Rodriguez had a strong camp and opened eyes with his quality stuff. He has not shown the wildness you might expect from a longtime outfielder, and he said that ability to command the ball helped him reach the highest level faster than he expected.

"I always had a good arm and was able to throw with accuracy," he said. "I think that's what got me through levels quicker, not walking a lot of guys."

Rodriguez was watching Netflix when Triple-A manager Dave Brundage called him. He said that call lasted five minutes and included tears. He talked to his dad, who is in Colombia right now but plans to be at AT&T Park this weekend. He also talked to his mom, who will be at Coors Field on Monday night. That was an emotional discussion, Rodriguez said.

"That call lasted half an hour," he said, smiling.

The Athletic

Dereck Rodríguez fulfills a dream with a call-up to the Giants, who still can't solve their Coors Field woes

Jack Etkin

DENVER — Hours before yet another Giants loss at Coors Field, this one tinged with extra-inning agony, and before manager Bruce Bochy announced that the plan, for now, is to have Madison Bumgarner start Thursday for high Class A San Jose, Dereck Rodríguez was remembering a day nearly 14 years ago when he first visited this ballpark.

He was 12 and sat with his father in the visitors' dugout. It was July 2004, Ivan "Pudge" Rodríguez's first season with the Detroit Tigers. He was about two-thirds of the way through a memorable catching career that would carry him to the Hall of Fame.

This was a perk that came with having a ballplayer father. Time spent in a clubhouse in the big leagues was the norm for Rodríguez. He was simply accompanying his father to work. Rodríguez was in the Giants' clubhouse Monday, but this was wonderfully different.

"I've been to a lot of stadiums, but I wasn't here for me," Rodríguez said. "I was here for my dad. It was nice coming here and having my name on the locker and not his."

Rodríguez turned slightly and glanced toward the verifiable proof: A nameplate that said Dereck Rodríguez with his No. 57 between his first and last names.

Rodríguez, who turns 26 on June 5, was scheduled to make his 10th start Monday afternoon for Triple-A Sacramento, where he was 4-1 with a 3.40 ERA, 53 strikeouts and 11 walks in 50 1/3 innings. He was going to oppose Albuquerque, which is Colorado's top affiliate. But instead of facing Rockies prospects such as Raimel Tapia, Tom Murphy and Garrett Hampson, Rodríguez's life took a sudden hit-the-jackpot swerve just as he was about to go to bed Sunday night.

"I was watching Netflix," Rodríguez said. "I wasn't really thinking anything about baseball, then I get this weird phone call from Oregon. My manager (Dave Brundage), I guess he's from Oregon. He told me this is the phone call I've been waiting for my whole life. I started tearing up. It was an emotional fun moment."

After a short conversation with Brundage, Rodríguez called his mother, Mirabel, in Florida and spoke to her for about 30 minutes. Rodríguez said it was about 3 a.m. in Florida, so she just stayed up and traveled to Denver on Tuesday with Rodríguez's two sisters, younger brother and stepfather. Rodríguez then spoke with his father, who is in Colombia.

"He was crying," Rodríguez said. "He was excited, emotional and all that stuff. He was probably the most emotional of everybody. My mom was more in shock. She was sleeping. I woke her up with this news. But my dad was up when we talked."

ESPN broadcaster Eduardo Perez, who was in Denver to do color commentary on Monday's game, said he spoke with Pudge Rodríguez during the day and that he was unable to get a flight from Colombia, where his wife is from. Perez, a former major leaguer whose father is Hall of Famer Tony Perez, said the elder Rodríguez hopes to be here Wednesday.

Pudge was a 14-time All-Star and winner of 13 Gold Gloves who was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2017, the first year he was eligible. He wrote on his Twitter account: "Congrats son very proud of you and welcome to the big show."

"It's a great story," Bochy said. "Obviously with his dad, making a position change and here he is up in the big leagues now. As a converted guy, it looks like he's getting a nice feel for pitching. Secondary pitches just got better in the short time he was there. He uses his fastball well and looks like he has good command."

The Twins drafted Rodríguez in the sixth round in 2011, and he began his professional career as an outfielder. He played in the Rookie Gulf Coast League for two seasons and in 2013 played for short-season Rookie League Elizabethton (a Minnesota Twins affiliate) where he hit .222 with a .621 OPS in 41 games with 46 strikeouts in 153 at-bats. The following season, he converted to pitching and became the closer at Elizabethton, going 2-2 with five saves and a 1.05 ERA in 17 games.

The Twins wanted to stretch him out, so the following season Rodríguez began starting. He arrived here after pitching at each level in the minors and logging 425 innings with 116 walks and 370 strikeouts, 402 hits allowed and a 3.54 ERA to go with a 27-26 record.

"I thought it was going to take a little longer," Rodríguez said. "But I always had a good arm. I was always able to throw the ball from the outfield with accuracy. So when I got to the mound, I never really walked a lot of guys. I think that's what helped me a lot more and got me through the levels quicker."

The Giants signed Rodríguez as a minor league free agent Nov. 15, 2017. He said he had interest from other teams but said he chose the Giants because he knew their history and something about the organization. As luck would have it, Pablo Sandoval was working out at the same facility as Rodríguez in the Miami area.

"I asked him how they were," Rodríguez said. "I knew how the Giants were, but I just wanted it from an insider. He's been here most of his career."

Rodríguez made a start for the Giants in spring training against the Diamondbacks on March 21 at Salt River Fields. Facing a lineup that included most of Arizona's regulars, Rodríguez threw three scoreless innings, struck out two in what was a Cactus League blur for most but a vitally important outing for him.

"First time I faced big league hitters more than once in the lineup," he said. "After that, it kind

of gave me a view of where I was against these guys. It boosted my confidence a lot after that start.”

Before Monday’s game, Bochy said the Giants promoted Rodríguez because they were in need of “a fresh arm” after Pierce Johnson worked three innings in relief Sunday night at Chicago and Ty Blach delivered the Giants sixth start in seven games of five or fewer innings. Left unsaid was the plan to have Rodríguez ready to take the mound, since it was his scheduled day to pitch, if starter Andrew Suarez again stumbled.

Staked to a 2-0 lead in the first, Suarez gave it all back when Trevor Story hit a three-run homer in the bottom of the inning. He allowed an unearned run in the third, an inning he ended by striking out Chris Iannetta and Ryan McMahon with runners on first and second. Indeed, Suarez retired the final eight batters he faced, six on strikeouts.

“He showed some fortitude tonight,” Bochy said. “I was proud of the kid. ... He didn’t cave in and ended up settling down and pitching a pretty good ballgame.”

The Giants loaded the bases in the ninth against Rockies closer Wade Davis, who issued consecutive walks and hit a batter with two outs. But Davis broke Brandon Belt’s bat as he hit a soft liner to second to end the inning.

Evan Longoria, who doubled home two runs in the first and doubled home another in the sixth, led off the 10th with a single. Brandon Crawford singled, but pinch-hitter Austin Jackson, after unsuccessfully attempting to sacrifice, grounded to first baseman Ian Desmond, who cut down Longoria at third. Two ground balls later, the inning was over, paving the way for heartbreak.

Hunter Strickland opened the 10th by walking Nolan Arenado. He tagged up and took second on Story’s fly to deep center. After an intentional walk to Carlos Gonzalez, right fielder Andrew McCutchen was unable to hold Desmond’s low liner that went off his glove as he tried for a sprawling catch. Iannetta then bounced a seeing-eye single past Strickland and up the middle for the game-winning hit.

The Giants went 1-9 at Coors Field last year, winning the final game here between the two teams to break a 10-game losing streak that stretched back to September 2016. Monday’s loss was their 11th in 12 games at Coors Field and their 15th in 19 games dating back to 2016.

The Giants went 2 for 12 with runners in scoring position and stranded 10 runners — five in those final two fateful innings. After bemoaning the inability to get a key hit, Bochy addressed Bumgarner’s situation. He threw 47 pitches in 3 2/3 innings in his first rehab start Saturday at Triple-A Sacramento. Bumgarner would like to make his next start Friday at AT&T Park against the Phillies, but the Giants seem inclined to have him pitch once more in the minors on Thursday.

“Right now, I’m saying right now, he’s scheduled to pitch in San Jose,” Bochy said. “Just put him

in a situation here we can get him stretched out. He's had one start down there. We'll talk about it some more."

Asked if how the starters fare and the bullpen is used here the next two days might cause him to change his mind, Bochy said, "That's always a possibility."

For Rodríguez, it was 10 innings watched from afar, namely the Giants bullpen in right-center. He sat with his new teammates, his fellow relievers and paid attention to the Colorado hitters. Rodríguez has relieved in winter ball in Puerto Rico. But the next time he runs from the bullpen, there will be a second deck on the stadium, and he will be headed toward the mound ... and his major league debut.

"It was awesome," Rodríguez said. "Another game of baseball, lot bigger stadium but between those lines, it's the same game. It made me more hungry than I was when I first got here to get out there and get that first outing."