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Monday July 9, 2018**

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Rosario needs Final Vote support to make ASG

Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | July 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- Eddie Rosario has kept the Twins' offense afloat for much of the season, but will need some last-minute help from Minnesota fans if he hopes to notch his first All-Star Game appearance.

Rosario is one of five players up for the final American League roster spot as part of the Camping World MLB Final Vote for the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard at Nationals Park, as announced Sunday on ESPN. The 26-year-old outfielder leads the Twins in most major offensive categories and is hitting .301 with 18 homers and 53 RBIs.

His bWAR of 4.0 was the 10th-best in the American League, entering Sunday, and his 43 extra-base hits were tied with Aaron Judge for the ninth most in the AL. For a lineup that has been plagued by injuries this season, Rosario has appeared in 86 of Minnesota's 87 games.

If Rosario wins the Final Vote, he will join Minnesota starting pitcher Jose Berrios. The duo came up together through the Minnesota organization, both splitting time between the Majors and Triple-A Rochester in 2016 before breaking through as full time big leaguers last season.

"I'm happy for him. He's my brother Puerto Rican," Rosario said of Berrios. "He's working hard. This is a dream for both of us. When I see Berrios' face, I felt proud of him."

Rosario will share the final vote ballot with Yankees outfielder/designated hitter Giancarlo Stanton, Red Sox outfielder Andrew Benintendi, Mariners shortstop Jean Segura and Angels shortstop Andrelton Simmons.

Minnesota manager Paul Molitor has proclaimed for much of the season that he believes Rosario, as well as Twins utilityman Eduardo Escobar, both deserve plenty of All-Star consideration.

"Things change," Molitor said. "People back out. People get hurt. We've got the vote with Rosie. I hope people respond. We're going to do whatever we can to do our part. I think he's played like an All-Star. As much as [Escobar], 51 extra-base hits, a lot of things that are really impressive about his first half. To pick one of those guys over the other is tough to do as what they've contributed to our team. I know our crew here, we're going to do everything we can to get Rosie in that game and hopefully Esco gets a chance, too, if something happens."

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 3 p.m. CT.

Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans can submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 All-Star Game MLB.com MVP Vote.

The 89th Midsummer Classic, at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C., will be televised nationally by FOX Sports; in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and RDS; and worldwide by partners in more than 180 countries. FOX Deportes will provide Spanish-language coverage in the United States, while ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide exclusive national radio coverage of the All-Star Game. MLB Network, MLB.com and SiriusXM also will provide comprehensive All-Star Week coverage.

For more information about MLB All-Star Week and to purchase tickets, visit AllStarGame.com and follow @MLB and @AllStarGame on social media.

Berrios named to All-Star team for first time **Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | July 8, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- For the past few days, Jose Berrios had been texting back and forth with his mother, discussing potentially meeting up with his family in Florida during the All-Star break.

Now, he'll have to cancel those plans and prepare for a trip due a bit more north. Berrios was selected to the American League squad for the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard for the first time in his career, and will be headed to Nationals Park on July 17, as announced on ESPN on Sunday. The 24-year-old Twins ace is in the midst of a breakout season and has posted an 8-7 record and 3.54 ERA while tallying 114 strikeouts in 114 1/3 innings.

"It means a lot," Berrios said. "We've got a lot of good players. We know a couple guys deserve to be there, too, but that's baseball. I feel proud to represent my organization, the Minnesota Twins and my family in Puerto Rico. I'm so excited to be there in D.C."

Berrios, who grew up with aspirations of playing in the All-Star Game as a position player, idolized Rangers star and fellow Puerto Rico native Ivan Rodriguez. When it became apparent that his future was on the mound, Pedro Martinez became one of his idols, as well.

"We have an opportunity to make that a goal, to play in the All-Star Game," Berrios said. "So, right now, I feel happy and so excited. We know a lot of good players, a lot of big stars and Hall of Famers played there. Now Jose Berrios is going to be there too."

Even before he received the All-Star nod, 2018 has already shaped up as banner year for Berrios. He got the chance to pitch in front of family and friends in April when the Twins faced off with the Indians for a two-game series at Hiram Bithorn Stadium in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He threw seven innings of scoreless ball in that outing, and has racked up four outings in which he struck out 10 or more batters.

"It's a tremendous honor for a young pitcher that we have really spoke at length about in terms of his development," Minnesota manager Paul Molitor said. "What he means in this clubhouse and where we're going. To be selected, it should be special for him. A lot of guys don't play to be All-Stars, that's just their makeup. They play at a high level and they get acknowledged when they perform well. This was the case for him."

Berrios hopes he won't be the only Twin headed to D.C. Eddie Rosario is one of five players who will have a chance to make the roster via the Camping World MLB Final Vote. Rosario has carried the Minnesota offense for much of the season and his 4.0 bWAR entering Sunday ranked 10th among AL position players.

Rosario is hitting a team-best .301 with 18 homers and 53 RBIs.

"I'm surprised," Berrios said when asked if he thought multiple Twins would make the AL roster. "I told [Eduardo Escobar], Rosario, [Fernando Rodney] -- they've all played so well, so far. But that's baseball -- they made the decision. Right now they'll just have to keep doing what they're doing, keep competing, and they're going to be great."

Fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online as part of the 2018 Camping World MLB Final Vote, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 3 p.m. CT.

Then on Tuesday, July 17, while watching the 2018 All-Star Game presented by Mastercard live on FOX, fans can submit their choices for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet with the 2018 All-Star Game MLB.com MVP Vote.

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For more information about MLB All-Star Week and to purchase tickets, visit AllStarGame.com and follow @MLB and @AllStarGame on social media.

Dozier's homer caps 8-run 6th as Twins sweep **Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | July 8, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- In a little over 20 minutes on Sunday, Brian Dozier amassed six total bases and three RBIs as he and the Twins piled on eight runs in the sixth inning.

Minnesota used the big frame to cruise to a 10-1 win over the Orioles at Target Field, locking down its first four-game sweep of the season. Sunday marked the second time this season that the Twins have scored 10 or more runs in a game, and the first such game they have won. Dozier drilled a double off the left-field wall to lead off the sixth and the next six Twins batters reached base.

"Much-needed," Minnesota manager Paul Molitor said of the performance. "Just trying to establish a little bit of something here as we head into our last week before break, and the guys responded. I think there's been a lot of encouraging signs, from nice starts from the rotation to some bats that contributed -- really everybody that got a chance somewhere along the way the last four days contributed."

Eduardo Escobar followed Dozier's double with his 14th homer of the season. Logan Morrison then dragged a bunt down the third-base line and Orioles starter Alex Cobb was removed from the game after Baltimore's athletic trainers examined a blister on his right hand.

Paul Fry came on to replace Cobb and the Twins greeted him with a barrage of hits. Robbie Grossman and Max Kepler drilled back-to-back singles, and Mitch Garver drove in a run and reached safely when Manny Machado's throw to home pulled Caleb Joseph off the plate.

Jake Cave followed with an RBI single before the Orioles recorded the first two outs of the inning. But Dozier ket the inning going when he crushed a 376-foot homer to left.

"It's really good," Molitor said of Dozier's day. "I know that he's prepared, he's working, he's just trying to find his rhythm up there. You know when he's hot and when he's not. He can hit a fastball as good as anybody in the game when things are going well, and he got a couple today. A little bit of topspin on the first one, which kept it in the park, but the next one he got a 3-1 fastball and it was really good to see him just click on it."

Jake Odorizzi delivered his strongest start in nearly two months as he struck out five batters over six innings and held Baltimore scoreless. Odorizzi generated nine swinging misses on the afternoon, including four in the sixth inning alone. He outlasted his former Tampa Bay teammate, Cobb, long enough for Minnesota's offense to come to life.

"The final score was kind of deceiving, but it was a close game for five or six innings," Odorizzi said. "Garver and I worked really well, tried to keep them off balance, do what we do. But the offense was the story. They really exploded there in that sixth inning. That allowed a lot of people relax and some guys get off their feet too, which is kind of crucial this time of year."

Garver put the Twins on the board in the fifth when he smashed a two-run homer for his fourth long ball of the season. In the four games he has started in the month of July, Garver is 6-for-13 (.462) with two homers and five RBIs.

UP NEXT

The Twins will begin a three-game set with the Royals at 7:10 p.m. CT on Monday at Target Field. Jose Berrios will get the nod for the Twins and is in search of his ninth win. He enters Monday's start with a 4.38 K/BB ratio, which ranks seventh in the American League. The Royals will counter with left-hander Danny Duffy (4-8, 5.19 ERA).

Jose Berrios is Twins' representative for All-Star Game; Eddie Rosario still has a shot

Jose Berrios was just starting to plan for the four days off that come during the All-Star break.

“I was talking with my mom,” Berrios said. “I said, ‘Mom, maybe I’ll go spend the All-Star break in Florida. In Orlando — Magic Kingdom for the kid.’”

Not anymore.

“Now,” he said. “We’re going to Washington.”

The Twins’ young gun is headed to his first All-Star Game, representing the American League. Berrios was told moments before the Twins played Baltimore on Sunday, and he reacted with surprise. He didn’t think his recent outings had helped his case. He gave up six runs over 4½ innings to the Cubs on June 29, then lost to the Brewers on Tuesday, giving up three runs over seven innings.

But someone felt differently, as Berrios is headed for the Midsummer Classic on July 17 at Nationals Park.

“It means a lot,” he said. “We’ve got a lot of good players. We know a couple guys deserve to be there, too, but that’s baseball. I feel proud to represent my organization, the Minnesota Twins and my family in Puerto Rico. I’m so excited to be there in D.C.”

Eddie Rosario could join him, as he was named one of five players who could be voted onto the team by fans.

Berrios, 24, is 8-7 with a 3.54 ERA heading into Monday’s start against Kansas City. He has emerged as the most talented starter on the staff and one of the better young starters in the game. He has held opponents to a .209 batting average. He is one of three starters with two complete games and one of nine with a shutout.

It will be the sixth time a Twins pitcher has been named to the All-Star team over the past six years. Glen Perkins made three consecutive All-Star Games from 2013 to ’15, and Brandon Kintzler and Ervin Santana were chosen for last year’s game.

“It’s a tremendous honor for a young pitcher that we have really spoke at length about in terms of his development, what he means in this clubhouse and where we’re going,” manager Paul Molitor said. “To be selected, it should be special for him. A lot of guys don’t play to be All-Stars, that’s just their makeup. They play at a high level and they get acknowledged when they perform well. This was the case for them.”

Twins players wanted to see Rosario, Eduardo Escobar and Fernando Rodney also receive recognition. Rosario still has a chance through the Final Vote, though he is going against Boston’s Andrew Benintendi, the Angels’ Andreton Simmons, the Yankees’ Giancarlo Stanton and Seattle’s Jean Segura.

The Twins already have a slogan ready: “Accept This Rosie.” They also have joined forces with the Brewers, who have Jesus Aguilar in the NL Final Vote; the teams are encouraging fans to vote for both, presenting the two as the Border Ballot.

“I’ve been working hard since the start of the season,” said Rosario, who is batting .301 with 18 homers and 51 RBI. “Everything happens for a reason. I’m happy for Jose. At least I’m in the last vote, and hope that people will vote for me.”

History is not on his side, as no Twins player has ever won the Final Vote. Rosario is their seventh candidate, joining Lew Ford in 2004, Torii Hunter in 2005, Francisco Liriano in 2006, Pat Neshek in 2007, Delmon Young in 2010 and Brian Dozier in 2015. Liriano and Dozier did make those All-Star Games as injury replacements, though.

And several players are expected to back out because of injuries or other reasons. That could be an avenue in which Rosario or Escobar — the major league leader with 35 doubles — find his way on the team.

“There’s always one or two guys who wow you, the fact they are not in it,” Dozier said. “You mentioned Escobar and there’s Rosario. What he’s done. At the same time, things can happen. Injuries, fatigue, Final Vote. Should be a fun week to campaign for him.”

Twins rout Orioles 10-1 to complete sweep after tough road trip

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 9, 2018

After going 1-8 on their recently completed road trip, the Twins just needed to remember what it felt like to win again.

And in came the Baltimore Orioles, the team with the worst record in baseball. A team with many familiar names, several All-Star appearances and one — shortstop Manny Machado — who will be the big trade target for contenders before the July 31 deadline.

The Twins went out and treated them like the last-place team that they are, sweeping a four-game series — with Sunday’s 10-1 romp the final blow.

The Twins hit .289, averaged 6.5 runs a game, posted a 2.25 ERA and played snappy defense during the four games. It was the kind of all-around play that was expected of them at the start of the season, but has been elusive.

The Twins’ Mitch Garver rounded the bases and slapped hands with third base coach Gene Glynn on a two-run home run off Orioles pitcher Alex Cobb in the

Now, the majors’ next-worst team — the Royals, who are only one game ahead of Baltimore — come to town for three games, and the Twins hope to build momentum. The Orioles are 24-65, Kansas City is 25-64.

“I’m glad how the guys went about their business these last four games, especially after a tough road trip,” second baseman Brian Dozier said after the Twins’ largest margin of victory this year. “But by no means are we done. We have more games left on his homestand before the break, and we have to accumulate some wins.”

The Twins took control of Sunday’s game by erupting for eight runs in the sixth inning, including home runs by Escobar and Dozier. Righthander Jake Odorizzi pitched six shutout innings, outdueling his former Tampa Bay teammate Alex Cobb. And the Twins swept the Orioles in a four-game home series for the first time ever.

“Much needed,” said Paul Molitor, who was freed from high-leverage managing for a change. “Just trying to establish a little bit of something here as we head into our last week before break, and the guys responded. I think there’s been a lot of encouraging signs, from nice starts from the rotation to some bats that contributed — really, everybody that got a chance somewhere along the way the last four days contributed.”

The game was scoreless until the fifth inning, when Mitch Garver blasted a full-count pitch to left for a two-run homer off Cobb.

That was the warmup act for the sixth, in which the Twins tied their season high for runs in an inning.

Dozier opened the inning with a double off the left-field wall, and Escobar followed with a blast to right for his 14th home run of the season. Logan Morrison, tired of Baltimore’s defensive shift in the infield, dropped down a bunt toward third base for a hit. That was also the final pitch for Cobb, who left because of a blister on his index finger.

The rally continued against the Orioles bullpen. Robbie Grossman and Max Kepler followed with singles off Paul Fry, loading the bases. Garver hit a grounder to Machado, who after the game was named to his fourth All-Star team. Machado tried to force out Morrison at home but bounced his throw, and catcher Caleb Joseph pulled his foot off the bag while catching it. Morrison was safe on the error to make it 5-0.

Jake Cave blooped an RBI single. Kepler scored on a Jorge Polanco groundout. Fry struck out Rosario for the second out before getting replaced by Ryan Meisinger, whose 3-1 fastball to Dozier was launched into the second deck in left field, giving the Twins a 10-0 lead.

“It felt like I hadn’t been on the mound for 30 minutes, watching it all unfold,” said Odorizzi (4-6). “There was an injury to Cobb. In that situation, it prolongs things a little bit. Any time you can put eight runs together, I think anybody will sit back and wait until it’s all over with.”

Collusion? Free agents at Target Field make shambles of that argument

Jim Souhan | Star Tribune | July 9, 2018

There were no ceremonies held to honor this winter’s batch of free agents at Target Field on Sunday. That was a missed opportunity for baseball’s owners.

Baseball braintrusts spent most of the winter making suspicious people like me think they were engaging in collusion. Now they can claim to have been displaying intelligence.

Sunday, when the Twins beat the woeful Orioles 10-1, Alex Cobb, Lance Lynn and Logan Morrison were in attendance. As contributors to two of the most disappointing teams in the American League, the three might have helped set back free agency to the days when Jack Morris signing with the Twins for one year at \$3 million was considered a risk.

Remember this winter? Until a late flurry of bargain-shopping, the Twins were being accused of cheapness because they weren’t signing someone like Cobb, and owners were being accused of collusion for letting so many free agents sit on the market like charred burgers on a hot grill.

Free agency is Giancarlo Stanton. It produced a home run, a few doubles and a slew of strikeouts. The Red Sox signed J.D. Martinez, who leads

baseball in home runs. Jake Arrieta has been pretty good for the Phillies, and Lorenzo Cain was an important addition for the Brewers.

Consider the players the Twins seemed to be mulling:

Lynn has a 5.21 ERA. Morrison is batting .192. Cobb has a 6.57 ERA. Yu Darvish has a 4.95 ERA. If owners did engage in collusion, they did so wisely.

The Twins aren't even enjoying the other potentially productive aspect of free agency — the contract year.

In 2009, Joe Mauer was heading into free agency and he produced by far the best season of his career. He missed a month and hit 28 home runs. He has never hit more than 13 in any other season. He turned his power spike and MVP award into an eight-year, \$184 million contract.

In 1996, Chuck Knoblauch anticipated potential free agency by hitting a career-best .341 and landing a then-lucrative five-year, \$30 million deal.

One of the Twins' many problems this season is that players in their so-called contract years are performing like they hate money.

Brian Dozier was frustrated the Twins didn't want to discuss a lengthy contract this spring. He's hitting .222. Lynn and Morrison signed one-year deals and are destroying their value. Only Eduardo Escobar, who will become a free agent this fall, has created a market for himself.

Or has he? Dozier has been the Twins' best player for years, yet the Twins didn't find much interest in him on the trade market two years ago, and seem set against investing in a 31-year-old middle infielder.

Twins starter Jake Odorizzi earned the victory Sunday. He shares a clubhouse with Lynn and is friends with Cobb. He believes the uncertainty faced by free agents this winter affected their performances.

"I think so," he said. "We're all creatures of habit. ... You see things on TV about spring training getting underway and you still don't have a job, you don't know where you're going to be."

Odorizzi noted that Lynn and Cobb started slowly after signing late. "With Lance, you see how good he can be once he's back to his normal self," Odorizzi said. "We'd all be guilty of rushing back to pitch in a big league game again. It's tough. Hopefully, there's a lot better to come from [Cobb]. I know that for a fact.

"Give it some time and you'll see a really good pitcher."

Modern general managers are less inclined than their predecessors to bow to public pressure to spend money on players, or to reward players for what they have accomplished instead of what they are expected to accomplish. That's one of the benefits of analytics — removing sentiment from big decisions.

Free agency has always been a risky endeavor. The Twins and Orioles have provided a reminder this season that throwing money at a baseball problem can be the financial version of throwing to the wrong base.

Twins' Garver swinging a hot bat

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 8, 2018

Mitch Garver batted with two on and two outs in the second inning Sunday. He fell behind 0-2 in the count against Orioles righthander Alex Cobb but battled back to run the count full.

Cobb fired a fastball, and Garver squared it up. He had time to admire the laser ... all the way into shortstop Manny Machado's glove to end the inning.

But Garver was locked in, and the Twins catcher carried that into his next at-bat in the fifth. Batting with a runner on and nobody out, Garver fell behind 0-2 again, worked the count full again and hit a line drive again.

This time, he hit it with a little more loft. Garver hit a two-run homer off Cobb to break a scoreless tie, and the Twins were on their way to a 10-1 victory.

"I had an idea of how he was going to throw me, because I did get my hands extended on the first at-bat," he said. "I was able to barrel one that Machado made a great play on. I had an idea how he was going to attack me, get a pitch and keep it fair."

Garver, who is splitting time with Bobby Wilson behind the plate, is batting .542 (13-for-24) since June 21, raising his average 50 points to .268.

The Twins like his hitting potential. He also has made strides with his defense.

“I think you’re always learning in-game about just the approach that might work out best for you,” manager Paul Molitor said. “I think it was more reactionary than really looking for that pitch, and that’s when most hitters are at their best.”

Polanco leads off

It took less than a week for Jorge Polanco to slide into the leadoff spot. With Joe Mauer getting a day off, Molitor needed someone at the top of the lineup.

“Looking at Joe and how many games he has played consecutively, and heading into these last eight games [before the All-Star break], I didn’t think it was realistic to play tomorrow,” Molitor said. “I thought today was a good day to back him off. When he’s out, I’ve got to find someone to hit first.”

Rather than returning Brian Dozier to his preferred spot in the order, Molitor went with Polanco, who is batting .286 in seven games since returning from an 80-game PED suspension. But Molitor has long considered Polanco to be near the top of the list of Twins who consistently take good at-bats.

“Polanco is the type of guy who can fill that role more than adequately with his patience and ability to get on base,” Molitor said. “We’ll see how it goes. It’s an opportunity to give him a little different look today.”

What of Buxton, Sano?

Center fielder Byron Buxton went 3-for-5 Sunday, getting his average up to .239 at Class AAA Rochester. Third baseman Miguel Sano went 2-for-4 and is hitting .340 with a homer and seven RBI at Class A Fort Myers.

The Twins are keeping tabs on both as the two search for consistency at the plate. Sano has the additional challenge of getting into better shape.

There are no signs the Twins are close to summoning either player back to the majors. Molitor, who keeps in regular contact with both, said the club will remain patient because the Twins want both players to be productive upon their return.

With Buxton, it’s easy to see why he is not back up — until recently, he wasn’t hitting. Sano’s case is different because of the holistic approach the Twins are taking with him.

Twins Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey confirmed last week that Sano has lost some weight while in Florida.

“Without getting too redundant, we’re getting very specific reports and assessments on development of some of the things particularly, trying to get him in a better place physically to play,” Molitor said. “You watch his at-bats and watch some of the things he’s been able to do with his swing that seem to be related to the fact that his body is working better.”

Milroy vs. Milroy at Target Field? Twins president proposes the idea **Staff Report | Star Tribune | July 9, 2018**

For the last three years, the Minnesota Twins have hosted the Town Ball Classic, which brings a half-dozen teams to Target Field for a day of baseball in the summer.

After reading Patrick Reusse's story about the two teams in Milroy, Minn., which have never played each other owing to a family feud that caused the creation of a second team a few years ago, Twins president Dave St. Peter took to Twitter on Sunday with an idea.

The Milroy Yankees and Milroy Irish should play at Target Field for charity.

The day of baseball is sponsored by ESPN 1500 radio and this year featured teams from Kimball, Lake Henry, Miesville and Victoria, as well as an All-Star Game between two metro area teams.

The Town Ball Classic is a benefit for the Twins Community Fund.

Sunday's Twins-Baltimore game recap **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 8, 2018**

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Brian Dozier, Twins

The veteran second baseman, fighting through a difficult stretch, went 2-for-4 with a home run and three RBI. It was his 164th homer, ninth most in Twins history.

BY THE NUMBERS

11-3 The Twins' record against Baltimore over the past two seasons, including 6-1 this year.

15 Multi-hit games this season for Robbie Grossman, who went 2-for-4.

.422 Orioles All-Star shortstop Manny Machado's career average at Target Field.

Twins-Kansas City series preview

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | July 8, 2018

THREE-GAME SERIES AT TARGET FIELD

Monday, 7:10 p.m. • FSN, 830 AM

RHP Jose Berrios (8-7, 3.54 ERA) vs. LHP Danny Duffy (4-8, 5.19)

Tuesday, 7:10 p.m. • FSN, 830 AM

RHP Aaron Slegers (1-0, 2.38) vs. RHP Ian Kennedy (1-8, 5.11)

Wednesday, 12:10 p.m. • FSN, 830 AM

RHP Lance Lynn (6-7, 5.21) vs RHP Burch Smith (0-0, 5.40)

TWINS UPDATE

This is the second of six series between the teams; the Twins lost two of three at Kansas City in late May. ... Berrios is 0-1 with a 6.66 ERA in five career starts vs. the Royals, but he is 5-0 with a 2.39 ERA this year vs. AL Central teams. ... RF Max Kepler is batting .429 over his past four games. ... 1B Joe Mauer remains tied with Kirby Puckett with 414 doubles, the most in Twins history.

ROYALS UPDATE

With the second-worst record in baseball, Kansas City will be a seller this month. A report had three teams showing interest in 3B Mike Moustakas. ... Kennedy (strained oblique) is on the disabled list but can be activated Tuesday. Smith is taking Jason Hammel's spot in the rotation, as Hammel has been sent to the bullpen. ... SS Alcides Escobar was out of the lineup Sunday, ending his major league-best streak of 421 consecutive starts.

Twins pitcher Jose Berrios is headed to his first All-Star Game

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | July 8, 2018

Over the weekend Jose Berrios called his mother back home in Puerto Rico and suggested a family vacation to Orlando, Fla., during the upcoming all-star break.

"I was thinking we'd go to the Magic Kingdom, for the kids," Berrios said Sunday. "Now we're going to Washington."

The Twins' lone selection for the July 17 All-Star Game at Nationals Park, Berrios and wife Jannieliz will gladly audible along with their three young children. Going 8-7 with a 3.54 earned-run average through 18 starts forced this welcome change of plans for the 24-year-old right-hander after being named to the American League squad.

"I put it in my mind, that goal, at the beginning of the season — to try to make the All-Star Game," Berrios said. "So I worked for that. I got myself prepared to be ready every start out there and try to help the team win. I give my 100 percent, and that's why I deserve this right now."

Twins left fielder Eddie Rosario, a surprising omission from Sunday's selections, is one of five players in the Final Man vote for the AL. He's up against Giancarlo Stanton (Yankees), Andrew Benintendi (Red Sox), Andrelton Simmons (Angels) and Jean Segura (Mariners).

Rosario leads the Twins in most offensive categories, including 18 home runs, 53 runs batted in, a .544 slugging percentage and seven outfield assists.

"I'm happy for him," Rosario said of Berrios. "He's my brother, Puerto Rican. This is a dream for both of us, but when I saw Berrios' face, I felt proud of him. At least I'm in the last vote. I hope that people will vote for me."

Also overlooked were Twins infielder Eduardo Escobar, who leads the majors with 35 doubles; and 41-year-old closer Fernando Rodney, who has 19 saves. Berrios said he was surprised to be the Twins' lone representative at this point.

"I told Eskey, Rosario and Rodney they all played so well so far, but that's baseball," Berrios said. "(Major League Baseball) made a decision. Right now they just have to keep doing what they're doing, keep competing and they're to be very happy at the end of the season."

It's just the second time in the past six years the Twins could have one all-star selection. Infielder Eduardo Nunez was their representative at the 2016 game in San Diego, only to be traded before the month was out.

Berrios, a 14-game winner in 2017 now in his third big-league season, isn't going anywhere. Drafted 32nd overall in 2012, 30 picks after Byron Buxton, Berrios has cut his walk rate by one third (2.0 walks per nine innings) while pushing his strikeout rate to an even one per inning.

It's still possible Rosario, who finished ninth in fan voting among AL outfielders, or another Twins teammate will join Berrios in D.C.

"Things change," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "People back out. People get hurt. We've got the vote with Rosie. I hope people respond. We're going to do whatever we can do on our part. I think he's played like an all-star."

Already 31 innings shy of his career-high for innings in a big-league season, Berrios rebounded from a heat-marred outing at Wrigley Field to work seven strong innings at the first-place Milwaukee Brewers in his last start.

That was his 11th quality start already this year, which includes a pair of complete games and a career-best 12 strikeouts on June 24 against the Texas Rangers.

Since Johan Santana was traded a decade ago, Berrios is just the second Twins starting pitcher named an all-star. Fellow right-hander Ervin Santana was among three Twins all-stars last summer in Miami.

"It's amazing," Berrios said. "We have an opportunity to make that a goal, to play in the All-Star Game. So right now I feel happy and so excited. We know a lot of good players, a lot of big stars and hall of famers played there. Now Jose Berrios is going to be there, too."

Twins complete four-game sweep with 10-1 win over woeful Orioles

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | July 8, 2018

Could it be it's not how you play but who you play?

It's certainly fair for the Twins to wonder that after pummeling the Baltimore Orioles 10-1 on Sunday afternoon at Target Field. Clubbing three homers, two of them during an eight-run uprising in the sixth, the Twins completed a four-game sweep of the majors' worst team.

The four-game home sweep over the Orioles was the first in Twins history in the head-to-head matchup. The Twins also took four straight at Camden Yards in August 2015, back in Paul Molitor's first year as manager.

With the rebuilding Kansas City Royals coming in next for a three-game series, followed by the middling Tampa Bay Rays, the Twins suddenly seem capable of a fire sale-arresting surge into the all-star break.

"If we keep winning up until the break, I would say certainly," Twins right-hander Jake Odorizzi (4-6) said after tossing six scoreless innings. "We have to keep doing it. That's basically it. We're to the point where just winning series isn't going to do much for us. If we're trying to keep this together, we have to have sweeps."

Coming off an 1-8 road trip through Chicago and Milwaukee that included back-to-back sweeps against the top two teams in the National League, the Twins are one game shy of their season-long five-game winning streak, accomplished back in early May.

“It’s a tough spot to be in for (the front office),” Odorizzi said. “I don’t really envy it. We just have to take care of our business and let them do their thing. I like the way we’re going right now. You can start to see that confidence come out from everybody. We’re playing the right way.”

This one was scoreless until rookie catcher Mitch Garver connected on a two-run homer to left in the fifth. Garver’s 419-foot shot came on the eighth pitch of a prolonged battle with Orioles right-hander Alex Cobb.

Garver also fell behind 0-2 and pushed Cobb to eight pitches in the second before lining out.

Cobb, Odorizzi’s former teammate with the Tampa Bay Rays, signed a four-year, \$57 million deal in March that has been nearly as disastrous as the Orioles’ season as a whole. Eduardo Escobar added a two-run homer to jump-start the sixth, and Logan Morrison, another ex-Ray, followed with a bunt single to beat the shift.

Morrison later hustled home to score ahead of Manny Machado’s throwing error toward home on Garver’s chopper. Catcher Caleb Joseph had enough time to step on the plate, but in his haste he allowed the fifth Twins run to score.

Brian Dozier added a three-run homer to cap the Twins’ outburst, which tied with an eight-run fourth on April 11 against the Houston Astros for their biggest inning of the first half. That time the Twins blew an 8-1 lead after four and had to win on Max Kepler’s walk-off homer in the ninth.

Cobb, who left with a blister on his first index finger, failed to record an out in the sixth and left with a 6.67 earned-run average. Odorizzi spoke openly in the spring about trying to recruit his friend to the Twin Cities, but it never seemed Cobb was a priority for the Twins, who instead signed ex-Cardinals right-hander Lance Lynn to a one-year, \$12 million deal.

“He was out there for a long time,” Molitor said of Cobb. “He was a guy that crossed a lot of teams’ conversations. We were able to land a couple of starting pitchers; he wasn’t one of them.”

Chris Davis’ two-out homer in the ninth kept the Twins from notching their seventh shutout. The Orioles (24-65) remain on pace for 118 losses.

Since tweaking his glove-side mechanics three starts ago, Odorizzi (4-6) has allowed just two earned runs (1.06 ERA) over his past 17 innings. Has Odorizzi lobbied the front office to buy the Twins a little more time before sending prospective free agents elsewhere?

“That’s above my pay grade,” he said. “I’ve got enough to worry about on the field. I don’t need to worry about what’s going on with chess moves off the field. As long as everybody has that same mindset, you don’t worry about what might happen. Just worry about what can happen.”

Even at 41, Fernando Rodney is ready to pitch four straight days

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | July 8, 2018

Even after working three straight days for the first time this season, Twins closer Fernando Rodney offered his services for Sunday’s series finale.

“It wasn’t more than 10 minutes (after Saturday’s game) when he asked about being ready (Sunday),” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “It’s a little different in today’s game, but I give him credit. He’s one of our most resilient arms. You want to be smart at the same time.”

The Twins built a 10-0 lead over the Orioles after six innings en route to a 10-1 victory, and Rodney’s services were not required.

Rodney, 41, is at 319 career saves and closing in on Francisco Cordero’s record of 330 by a Dominican-born reliever. With 28 games finished, he needs seven more to trigger the first of five \$300,000 bonuses that would stack atop his \$4.25 million base salary this season.

Rodney also is reportedly among the potential reliever acquisitions the Boston Red Sox are monitoring closely. The well-traveled Rodney, who said he grew up a big fan of Roger Clemens, has never pitched for the Red Sox.

Molitor loosely recalled iron-man closer Duane Ward, his Toronto Blue Jays teammate in the mid-1990s, saving games on nine straight days. Ward, who had 45 saves in 1993 at age 29, had stretches that year in which he worked six of seven days and five of six.

Ward then got hurt and made four total big-league appearances the rest of his career.

“The point being that we used to lean on guys and not worry so much about the consecutive days,” Molitor said. “I think we’re a little more protective now.”

CAVE RAVE

Rookie center fielder Jake Cave continues to impress in the field, robbing Orioles hitters of extra bases throughout the series.

“Positioning, in tune pitch to pitch, good breaks, routes — all those things we think he can do well,” Molitor said. “I think the high-end plays have been, I won’t say a pleasant surprise, but I think it just goes with the fact he knows how to play the outfield and he’s putting himself in good spots.”

BRIEFLY

–Infielder Ehire Adrianza (hamstring) has resumed defensive drills and hitting in the cage and could be activated off the 10-day disabled list as soon as Thursday.

–Triple-A Rochester outfielder LaMonte Wade Jr. and Class A Cedar Rapids right-hander Bailey Ober were named the Twins’ minor-league player and pitcher of the week, respectively. Wade hit .391 with two home runs in 23 at-bats, while Ober had 12 strikeouts and no walks in a seven-inning start.

–Right-hander Fernando Romero worked seven strong innings on Sunday to close out the first half for the Red Wings. In three starts since his demotion, Romero is 3-0 with a 1.45 ERA and 13 hits allowed in 18 2/3 innings.

–Joe Mauer, who had made six straight starts and eight of nine, was left out of Sunday’s lineup entering the final week before the All-Star break.

–How close of an eye are the Twins keeping on Miguel Sano down at Class A Fort Myers? “We videotape pretty much everything he’s doing,” Molitor said.

Zulgad: Don’t be fooled, Twins’ sweep of putrid Orioles means nothing **Judd Zulgad | ESPN 1500 | July 8, 2018**

The Twins completed a four-game sweep of the Baltimore Orioles on Sunday with a 10-1 victory at Target Field that included an eight-run sixth inning in which Minnesota sent 11 men to the plate.

The previously struggling Brian Dozier began the inning with a double and came up again with two outs and belted a three-run homer to left field. The Twins’ offensive output gave them 26 runs in the series, while the Orioles finished with nine.

The Target Field optimists will tell you that the past four days provide reason for hope. That the Twins following a brutal 1-9 road trip against the White Sox, Cubs and Brewers with a series sweep means this is a gritty club that isn’t dead. Twins players might try to convince you, or themselves, that the club’s ability to display resiliency means chief baseball officer Derek Falvey shouldn’t begin selling off parts as soon as possible.

This is nonsense and anyone who follows baseball knows it.

The Baltimore Orioles are currently playing a brand of baseball that makes the 103-loss Twins of 2016 look as if they cared deeply. The Orioles are the definition of a dumpster fire and the only evidence you need is their 24-65 record. Baltimore is 37 games out of first place and has a run differential of minus-144.

That’s brutal but it’s not the worst in the big leagues.

The Kansas City Royals hold that distinction with a run differential of minus-186. The Royals (25-64) have a slightly better winning percentage than the Orioles — Baltimore is at .270 and K.C. at .281 — but those are the worst in the major leagues.

Did I mention that the Royals will be at Target Field for a three-game series beginning on Monday night? Kansas City was swept by Boston over the weekend and has lost nine in a row and 10 of 11.

The Twins were 35-48 on Wednesday when they returned after dropping three games in Milwaukee. They are now 39-48 and in second place in the AL Central, sitting 9.5 games behind Cleveland after the Indians lost two of three to visiting Oakland over the weekend.

The Twins should be able to dispatch of the Royals over the next days before closing their 11-game home stand against Tampa Bay. That would give the Twins a seven-game winning streak and, still, getting the least bit excited about that would be silly.

The American League is filled with bad teams this season. Some are embarrassingly bad, with the Orioles and Royals leading that group. The Yankees, Red Sox, Indians, Astros and Mariners are basically either sure bets or very good bets to be the AL teams that will make the playoffs. A mediocre club, such as the 2017 Twins, stands no chance of being in the postseason this year.

These Twins aren't awful but they aren't good. Beating up on bottom-feeders might make the beer at Target Field taste better but it means nothing. Falvey and general manager Thad Levine are just as likely to hit the detonate button on this roster today as they were after the Milwaukee series came to an end.

A year ago, the duo made a few deals at the non-waiver trade deadline that seemed to inspire the struggling Twins and got them back on track to make the playoffs. That team's resilience was admirable and made that club even more likeable.

This team bounces back when it's convenient and easy but there is no hope. Don't let wins over the Orioles, Royals or any other team from the putrid AL Central (namely the White Sox or Tigers) fool you.

Eddie Rosario one of 5 'final vote' all-star candidates in the American League

Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | July 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS – The Twins were hopeful to get as many of their players as possible into the all-star game, and standing at center stage on the campaign trail was Eddie Rosario.

Given his strong first half of the season, some assumed Rosario would be rewarded with his first nod to the Midsummer Classic in his career. But considering the strong outfield candidates in the A.L., Rosario will have to earn his way in by way of a final vote.

Rosario is one of five candidates in the American League for the "final vote," the annual campaign designed to give fans a way to have their voice heard over their favorite players that they believe got "snubbed" from the all-star roster.

Rosario is enjoying a breakout campaign in which the left fielder is batting .306/.346/.544 with 18 home runs and 53 RBIs in 85 games. Those numbers in a vacuum certainly look all-star-worthy.

Two things were working against Rosario getting in before the last-chance vote:

His A.L. competition in the outfield is fierce. Just look at the starters: Mike Trout, Mookie Betts and Aaron Judge. And look at several other players who could have been considered: Giancarlo Stanton, Mitch Haniger, Shin-Soo Choo, Andrew Benintendi, Michael Brantley. The Twins entered play Sunday a full 10 games below .500. Starter J.O. Berrios was selected to the game as the lone Twins' representative, and it's fair to ask the question: How many all-stars should be chosen from a 38-48 team? The other final vote candidates are Jean Segura, Andreton Simmons, Benintendi and Stanton.

Two other Twins hopefuls, Eduardo Escobar and Fernando Rodney, did not make the team. Twins fans can vote for Rosario at MLB.com or Twinsbaseball.com.

Twins starting pitcher J.O. Berrios named to his first MLB all-star game

Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | July 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS – Young Twins pitcher J.O. Berrios went public with his goal to make the American League all-star team in February during the early stages of spring training in Fort Myers, Florida. Assuming he keeps a written checklist with his goals and his meticulous workout notes, Berrios can check one big goal off the list.

Berrios was named an all-star Sunday for the first time in his MLB career. The Twins and Berrios hope that it's the first of many.

"It's an honor for me," Berrios said. "I feel proud to represent my organization the Minnesota Twins, and for my family and Puerto Rico. I'm excited to be there in [Washington] D.C."

He's pitched in the World Baseball Classic, in the MLB postseason, and one of the thrills of his life came this April, when Berrios pitched for the Twins in front of adoring fans in his birthplace Puerto Rico. Maybe now he'll get to add pitching in a Midsummer Classic to his growing list of cool career moments.

"Amazing. ... We know a lot of good players, stars, Hall of Famers, who have played there. And now I, Jose Berrios, am going to be there, too," he said.

Berrios currently ranks 15th among American League starters in ERA (3.54), Wins Above Replacement (1.9, per FanGraphs) and strikeout rate (25%). He ranks 11th in the American League walk rate (5.7%). He's deserving of all-star consideration by virtue of being among an elite group of his peers.

Every year the all-star team features a number of pitcher who throw the day before the break and thus take themselves out of consideration for the game. Right now Berrios is lined up to pitch Monday and Saturday for the Twins before the break, which would in theory allow him to pitch an inning or two in an all-star setting.

Assuming that he gets to pitch in the game – and even just being selected to the team – is remarkable when you consider that Berrios wasn't even a pitcher growing up. The Twins drafted him at the end of the first round in 2012, when he was a shortstop and athlete with a great arm, and they immediately said that he'd be a pitcher. He started turning heads with strong numbers in the minor leagues, and he's always been known for his attitude and work ethic.

When he started on the mound, he said, he would watch videos of guys like Pedro Martinez and the late Jose Fernandez. Both great pitchers, and two players to whom Berrios has been compared in the past.

Too lofty comparisons, for sure. But Berrios isn't shy about his belief in himself.

“Trying to be like them,” Berrios said, “or better.”

Report: Red Sox have Fernando Rodney 'on their list' with trade deadline a few weeks away
Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | July 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — Twins closer Fernando Rodney could be a popular name in trade rumors this month, as we draw closer and closer to the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline.

He's already on the target list for the Boston Red Sox, according to ESPN's Jerry Crasnick.

@jcrasnick

The #RedSox are cutting a wide swath in search of bullpen depth. One name on their list: Fernando Rodney, who is familiar to GM Dave Dombrowski from their time together with #Tigers. Rodney, 41, has 18 saves and a 2.97 ERA for #Twins this season. File it under "worth a look."

He might even be a bigger target if not for an April with terrible results.

The ageless closer has 19 saves for the Twins right now, and Minnesota should be clear sellers this month and next — despite winning the first three games against the Orioles this weekend.

If you could wave a magic wand and eliminate Rodney's bad April stats, you'd be looking at a closer with a 2.28 ERA in 23 2/3 innings, to go along with a 28.4% strikeout rate and a 7.4% walk rate. He gets it done with a fastball that can be solidly in the mid-90's, and a great changeup.

It's not clear what that type of pitcher would bring back in a July trade, but it does look like Rodney could fit in the late innings for a contender seeking relief help.

Twins complete much-needed sweep with 10-1 victory
Associated Press | Fox Sports North | July 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — When you get home after a disastrous road trip, it's nice to have the worst team in baseball waiting for you.

Jake Odorizzi pitched six scoreless innings and Mitch Garver, Eduardo Escobar and Brian Dozier homered as the Minnesota Twins completed a four-game sweep of the Baltimore Orioles with a 10-1 victory on Sunday.

The Twins went 1-8 on a nine-game swing through Chicago and Milwaukee and had lost six straight after being swept by the Cubs and Brewers. But they took out their frustrations on the hapless Orioles, who lost for the 12th time in 13 games and fell to 24-65 on the season.

“We're just trying to establish a little bit of something here as we head into our last week before break, and the guys responded,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “I think there's been a lot of encouraging signs, from nice starts from the rotation to some bats that contributed.”

The Twins remain 9 1/2 games behind Cleveland in the AL Central, but they picked up 3 1/2 games on the Indians this weekend and have a chance to cut the lead further as series with Kansas City and Tampa Bay round out their last homestand before the All-Star break.

Odorizzi (4-6) turned in his third consecutive strong outing, allowing just five hits and a walk while striking out five. In his last three starts, the Twins' opening day starter has allowed just two earned runs over 17 innings.

“The final score was kind of deceiving, but it was a close game for five or six innings,” Odorizzi said. “Garver and I worked really well, tried to

keep them off-balance, do what we do.”

Orioles starter Alex Cobb (2-11), Odorizzi’s former teammate in Tampa Bay, kept the Twins at bay for the first four innings but still ended up taking the loss. That ties him with Kansas City’s Jason Hammel for the most in the major leagues.

“Alex was really good in the first four innings,” Orioles manager Buck Showalter said. “We’re just not scoring runs, (which) creates a lot of pressure on pitchers to be perfect.”

Garver’s home run broke up a scoreless game in the fifth, and the Twins poured it on with an eight-run sixth to put the game away. After three close wins to start the series, Minnesota enjoyed a rare laugh with its largest margin of victory this season.

However, as promising as the four-game sweep was for the Twins, their manager cautioned them to keep things in perspective.

“Enjoy today, (but) be ready to play tomorrow,” Molitor said. “We’re not in a position to let our guard down, by any means.”

GARVER GOES DEEP

Garver’s home run was aided by the process he went through in his first at-bat of the game. With two on and two out in the second inning, Garver fell behind Cobb 0-2 before working the count full. Then he hit a line drive but was robbed by Manny Machado, who made a diving catch at shortstop to end the inning.

The next time around, after Max Kepler drew a leadoff walk, Garver again worked the count full before slamming a fastball high and deep down the left field line, just inside the foul pole, for his fourth home run of the season.

“He had an opportunity to see the arsenal, the knuckle curve and the rising fastball,” Molitor said of Garver. “He worked it to where he got what he could handle. I think you’re always learning in-game about just the approach that might work out best for you.”

EIGHT IS GREAT

The Twins took command with their eight-run sixth. Dozier led off with a double and Eduardo Escobar followed with a 426-foot home run onto the plaza in right field for his 14th homer of the season.

Minnesota strung together four singles and an error to score three more runs before Dozier capped the inning with a three-run shot to the second deck in left-center off reliever Ryan Meisinger.

DAVIS SPOILS SHUTOUT

Baltimore’s Chris Davis homered off reliever Matt Magill with two outs in the ninth for the Orioles’ only run. It was a bit of payback for Davis, who was called out on strikes with two on and two out in the first and sixth innings.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Orioles: Showalter said that RHP Chris Tillman, who has been on the DL since May 11 with a strained lower back, is expected to make a minor-league rehab start on Tuesday at Class A Frederick. . Cobb left the game during Minnesota’s eight-run sixth with a blister on his right index finger, but he said after that game that he doesn’t think it will affect his next start.

Twins: 1B Joe Mauer got the day off. The 35-year-old had started the last six games, and with the Twins not getting a day off until the All-Star break Molitor said he was looking for a good spot to give Mauer a rest.

UP NEXT

Orioles: Baltimore hosts the Yankees for a doubleheader on Monday afternoon. The Orioles have not yet named a starter for the opener, while rookie RHP Yefry Ramirez (0-2, 2.51 ERA) will start the second game.

Twins: Minnesota’s homestand continues with a three-game series against the Royals, who have the second-worst record in the majors and have lost nine straight. RHP Jose Berrios (8-7, 3.54) will start the opener for the Twins.

Twins’ Berrios named to 2018 MLB All-Star game, Rosario to compete for final spot
Staff Report | Fox Sports North | July 8, 2018

Minnesota Twins ace Jose Berrios is headed for the nation's capital for the 2018 MLB All-Star game — and there's a chance a teammate could join him, too.

The young right-handed pitcher will represent the Twins at the midsummer classic, hosted by the Washington Nationals on July 17 at Nationals Park. Outfielder Eddie Rosario will be a part of the final vote, an opportunity for baseball fans to choose one of five players in a pool to decide the last spot on the American League roster.

In 18 starts this season, Berrios has compiled an 8-7 record, 3.54 ERA and a career-best 9.0 K/9. He's one of three pitchers in the AL to tally multiple complete games — a 7-0 win over Baltimore on April 1 and a 7-2 victory against the Chicago White Sox on June 7. It will be the first All-Star appearance for the 24-year-old.

Rosario leads the Twins in RBI (53), homers (18), hits (104), batting average (.306) and slugging percentage (.544) this season. He'll compete with Boston outfielder Andrew Benintendi, LA Angels shortstop Andrelton Simmons, New York Yankees designated hitter Giancarlo Stanton and Seattle infielder Jean Segura for the final spot.

Fans can help Rosario get to the All-Star game by following this link.

Preview: Twins vs. Royals

Associated Press | Fox Sports North | July 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — After snapping out of a lengthy funk with a four-game sweep of the woeful Baltimore Orioles, the Minnesota Twins will try to take advantage of another struggling AL opponent when the Kansas City Royals come to Target Field Monday night for the opener of a three-game series.

Minnesota had lost six in a row, eight of its last 10 and 11 of its last 13 before outscoring Baltimore 25-9 in the four-game sweep, which was just the Twins' second sweep of the season and their first four-game sweep of an opponent since Sept. 21-24, 2017.

Jose Berrios gets the start in the series opener. The right-hander turned in a strong performance in his last outing, holding the Brewers to three runs on five hits over seven innings but took the loss for a second consecutive outing.

"I didn't have all my best stuff," Berrios said after that outing, which was plagued by solo home runs to Milwaukee's Travis Shaw, Brad Miller and Nate Orf. "You could see that with the strikeouts. But now, I know how to pitch and get the hitter out. Fastballs down, and believe in my curveball and changeup."

"He's been able to respond (after losses) and come back the next outing and get back on track," manager Paul Molitor said.

Berrios is 0-1 with a 6.66 ERA in five career starts against the Royals, who are 0-7 so far this month and have dropped nine straight overall after falling to the Red Sox, 7-4, Sunday afternoon.

Slumping shortstop Alcides Escobar was held out of that contest, marking the first time he's missed a game since Sept. 25, 2015 when manager Ned Yost rested several starters against Cleveland a day after the Royals clinched the AL Central title. His streak of 421 consecutive games played was the longest active streak in the majors.

Escobar has yet to get it going at the plate this season. He was batting just .194 with three home runs and 19 RBIs heading into Sunday's game, so he understood why Yost held him out of the lineup.

"I was proud about this streak, 421 straight games, that's not easy," Escobar said. "I feel so happy I made that. I understand the situation right now. The team is looking for something different. Ned told me yesterday you have an off-day (Sunday). I said I don't have any problems, do whatever you want."

Yost said there was no particular reason that Sunday was the day for the streak to end.

"I just decided today was it," Yost said. "I don't have a 'scientific' equation where I went out and looked at 19 different factors and looked at how the stars lined up with the moon.

"We talked about the streak coming to an end about a month ago. It's taken me this long to get him an off-day. But I wanted to see Adalberto Mondesi back to back at shortstop, and see Hunter Dozier at third and Abraham Almonte, who hasn't played in a while."

Yost didn't say whether or not Escobar will be back in the lineup Monday behind left-hander Danny Duffy (4-8, 5.19 ERA) who is 5-1 with a 2.43 ERA in 18 career outings (14 starts) against the Twins, including a 4-0 record and 2.06 ERA in eight appearances, including six starts, at Target Field.

2018 All-Star Game rosters

Staff Report | ESPN | July 8, 2018

Complete rosters for the 2018 MLB All-Star Game at Nationals Park on July 17:

National League

STARTERS

POS	PLAYER	TEAM
C	Willson Contreras	Chicago Cubs
1B	Freddie Freeman	Atlanta Braves
2B	Javier Baez	Chicago Cubs
3B	Nolan Arenado	Colorado Rockies
SS	Brandon Crawford	San Francisco Giants
OF	Nick Markakis	Atlanta Braves
OF	Matt Kemp	Los Angeles Dodgers
OF	Bryce Harper	Washington Nationals

PITCHERS

POS	PLAYER	TEAM
SP	Max Scherzer	Washington Nationals
SP	Jacob deGrom	New York Mets
SP	Aaron Nola	Philadelphia Phillies
SP	Mike Foltynewicz	Atlanta Braves
SP	Miles Mikolas	St. Louis Cardinals
SP	Jon Lester	Chicago Cubs
SP	Patrick Corbin	Arizona Diamondbacks
RP	Kenley Jansen	Los Angeles Dodgers
RP	Sean Doolittle	Washington Nationals
RP	Josh Hader	Milwaukee Brewers
RP	Brad Hand	San Diego Padres
RP	Felipe Vazquez	Pittsburgh Pirates

RESERVES

POS	PLAYER	TEAM
C	Buster Posey	San Francisco Giants
C	J.T. Realmuto	Miami Marlins
1B	Paul Goldschmidt	Arizona Diamondbacks
1B	Joey Votto	Cincinnati Reds
2B	Ozzie Albies	Atlanta Braves
2B	Scooter Gennett	Cincinnati Reds
3B	Eugenio Suarez	Cincinnati Reds
SS	Trevor Story	Colorado Rockies
OF	Lorenzo Cain	Milwaukee Brewers
OF	Christian Yelich	Milwaukee Brewers
OF	Charlie Blackmon	Colorado Rockies

American League

STARTERS

POS	PLAYER	TEAM
C	Wilson Ramos	Tampa Bay Rays
1B	Jose Abreu	Chicago White Sox
2B	Jose Altuve	Houston Astros
3B	Jose Ramirez	Cleveland Indians
SS	Manny Machado	Baltimore Orioles
OF	Mookie Betts	Boston Red Sox
OF	Mike Trout	Los Angeles Angels
OF	Aaron Judge	New York Yankees
DH	J.D. Martinez	Boston Red Sox

PITCHERS

POS	PLAYER	TEAM
SP	Luis Severino	New York Yankees
SP	Corey Kluber	Cleveland Indians
SP	Chris Sale	Boston Red Sox
SP	Trevor Bauer	Cleveland Indians
SP	Justin Verlander*	Houston Astros
SP	Gerrit Cole	Houston Astros
SP	J.A. Happ	Toronto Blue Jays
SP	Jose Berrios	Minnesota Twins
RP	Aroldis Chapman	New York Yankees
RP	Edwin Diaz	Seattle Mariners
RP	Joe Jimenez	Detroit Tigers
RP	Blake Treinen	Oakland A's
RP	Craig Kimbrel	Boston Red Sox

* Verlander will be inactive for game

RESERVES

POS	PLAYER	TEAM
C	Salvador Perez	Kansas City Royals
1B	Mitch Moreland	Boston Red Sox
2B	Gleyber Torres	New York Yankees
3B	Alex Bregman	Houston Astros
SS	Francisco Lindor	Cleveland Indians
OF	Shin-Soo Choo	Texas Rangers
OF	Michael Brantley	Cleveland Indians
OF	Mitch Haniger	Seattle Mariners
OF	George Springer	Houston Astros
DH	Nelson Cruz	Seattle Mariners

AL final vote players

Andrew Benintendi, OF, Boston Red Sox

Eddie Rosario, OF, Minnesota Twins

Jean Segura, SS, Seattle Mariners

Andrelton Simmons, SS, Los Angeles Angels

Giancarlo Stanton, OF, New York Yankees

NL final vote players

Jesus Aguilar, 1B, Milwaukee Brewer

Brandon Belt, 1B, San Francisco Giants

Matt Carpenter, 3B, St. Louis Cardinals

Max Muncy, 1B, Los Angeles Dodgers

Trea Turner, SS, Washington Nationals

2018 MLB All-Star Game: AL and NL Final Vote to round out rosters; what you need to know about each candidate

Matt Snyder | CBS Sports | July 8, 2018

The 2018 All-Star Game rosters were officially announced on Sunday night. The catch, however, is that one roster spot for each team remains open. That's by design, of course, as that last spot will again be decided by fans as part of the appropriately named Final Vote. Here's the ballot.

To help you cast an informed vote, here's a look at the 10 players (five per league) included on the Final Vote ballot. Voting ends Wednesday, July 11, 2018, at 4:00 p.m. ET.

Eddie Rosario
MIN • LF • 20

The 26-year-old Rosario is having a career year for the Twins. Through 86 games, he's hitting .301/.342/.536 with 23 doubles, 18 homers and 53 RBI. Also meriting mention is his vastly improved defense in left field, where he was negative-6 last year in defensive runs saved and this season sits at a plus-8.

Eddie Rosario, Eduardo Escobar left off All-Star team as Berríos gets Twins' nod
Dan Hayes | The Athletic | July 9, 2018

If the Twins were 48-39 instead of the reverse, Eddie Rosario likely wouldn't need a win in this week's Final Vote contest to make the American League All-Star team.

While José Berríos is headed to Washington, D.C. next week as the team's lone All-Star Game representative, the underperforming Twins were saddled with a pair of snubs when Rosario and Eduardo Escobar were left off the AL All-Star squad when rosters were announced on Sunday evening.

But that's yet another harsh reality the Twins are facing as part of a disappointing first half. When you're 39-48, which the Twins improved to with a 10-1 victory over the Baltimore Orioles on Sunday to complete a four-game sweep, nobody looks in your direction.

Unfortunately, the team's poor play has Rosario on the outside looking in despite a spectacular first half. Hitting .301/.342/.536 with 18 home runs and 53 RBIs, Rosario must defeat the New York Yankees' Giancarlo Stanton, among others, to reserve a spot in next week's game.

"Rosie not making it is the biggest shame I can remember in recent years," Twins starting pitcher Jake Odorizzi said. "Sure, he's in the Final Vote. But he doesn't deserve to be in the Final Vote hitting (like that) with probably more outfield assists than anybody else in the outfield that is starting. I wouldn't say he's a starting outfielder just because of the Mookie Betts and Mike Trout. ... He definitely deserves to be there and not as a vote-in."

Look, every team is going to stump for its All-Star snubs. The unwritten rules of the clubhouse state that one must support his teammates at all times.

But the Twins have a legit gripe, particularly in Rosario's case.

The Los Angeles Angels' Andrelton Simmons — valued at 3.6 Wins Above Replacement by Fangraphs — is the only AL position player ranked higher than Rosario among f-WAR leaders to not be on the list. Rosario has produced 3.4 f-WAR and finished ninth in the fan vote.

"I'd be surprised if he wasn't (disappointed)," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I think there's some disappointment there. I like that he talked about this is how he wants to play all the time regardless of whether he goes or not. That's what you want to hear."

Rosario has made gains throughout his entire game this season.

Offense gets the notoriety as it should. In large part because of his improved plate discipline — Rosario is swinging at 38.7 percent of the pitches outside the zone compared to 47.4 percent in his rookie season (2015) — Rosario has carried the Twins at times. His Weighted Runs Created Plus is up to 139 from 116 in 2017, and Rosario already has 43 extra-base hits after finishing with 62 last year.

But Rosario also has improved significantly in the outfield. He's currently worth eight Defensive Runs Saved, according to Fangraphs, after producing minus-10 last season.

If Rosario feels slighted, he didn't mention it Sunday. He only noted that he was pleased for his "Puerto Rican brother" Berríos.

"Everything happens for a reason," Rosario said. "I'm happy for José. At least I'm in the last vote, and hope that people will vote for me. ... There are other players out there who are deserving to be there. I play hard and I play well and it is something out of my control."

@Twins
Help us get @EddieRosario09 into the All-Star Game! #AcceptThisRosie

Escobar also has a solid case, though he's 32nd in the AL in f-WAR at 1.9.

The utility man homered in Sunday's victory, his 14th round-tripper of the season, which is second only to Rosario among Twins hitters. It also was his 51st extra-base hit of 2018, which leads the majors.

As of now, neither Escobar nor Rosario is headed to the nation's capital next week. The team's record would seem to be an easy argument for why the Twins are sending only Berríos. But the 39-51 Cincinnati Reds put a wrench in that notion as they're sending three All-Stars to represent the National League (Joey Votto, Eugenio Suárez and Scooter Gennett).

"You never know," Twins reliever Zach Duke said. "You look at what we've done and you realize where we'd be without those guys. There's been a lot of days where if it wasn't for them we wouldn't have had a chance."

The Twins are hopeful that both players still have a shot to attend the Midsummer Classic. Brian Dozier was a participant in the 2015 Final Vote and was later named an injury replacement after Jose Bautista skipped the contest. Dozier homered in the game.

Dozier and Molitor said they expect to spend the next week stumping hard for Rosario to earn the trip. Odorizzi is disappointed Rosario finds himself in this position in the first place. Given that players sometimes receive bonuses for All-Star appearances and the notoriety can affect future contracts, etc., Odorizzi floated an idea that players, coaches and the media determine All-Star rosters and fans would then vote on who should start the exhibition (though it likely wouldn't have affected the Twins in this current case).

"He's earned the right to represent the Twins," Odorizzi said of Rosario. "I think if you did a blind test of stats with some people that have made it ahead of him you'd probably pick him without knowing it. That's the only thing I don't like about All-Star voting is sometimes it can be a beauty contest and not a numbers contest."

"Obviously, all these guys are deserving. That's not what any of this is about. You see a guy work really hard and have a fantastic first half, stay healthy, carry the team for a little while. Same thing for Esky. He's leading the league in extra-base hits, plays all over the place. He deserves to be there. I just think the system could be refined a little bit better moving forward."

Though his teammates were snubbed, it was a great achievement for the 24-year-old Berríos, an All-Star in just his second full season in the big leagues.

"I put it in my mind, that goal, at the beginning of the season, to try to make the All-Star Game," Berríos said Sunday. "So I worked for that. I got myself prepared to be ready every start out there and tried to help the team win. I give my 100 percent, and that's why I deserve this right now."

Molitor called it a tremendous honor for the young pitcher, who is 8-7 with a 3.54 ERA and 114 strikeouts in 18 starts this season.

"To be selected, it should be special for him," Molitor said. "A lot of guys don't play to be All-Stars, that's just their makeup. They play at a high level and they get acknowledged when they perform well."

Twins complete sweep of Orioles

The combination of six scoreless innings from Odorizzi and an eight-run rally in the sixth inning helped the Twins finish off a four-game sweep of Baltimore, which boasts the worst record in baseball (24-65). Dozier doubled to start the rally, which included a two-run homer by Escobar and a bunt single by Logan Morrison, before blasting a three-run homer later in the inning.

The run support was more than enough to back Odorizzi, who has put up three strong starts in a row. Odorizzi limited Baltimore to five hits and a walk in a 101-pitch outing, striking out five. The right-hander snapped a four-decision losing streak with the victory. Over his last three starts, Odorizzi has allowed two runs (both earned) in 17 innings while striking out 22 batters.

"(Mitch) Garver and I worked really well, tried to keep them off balance, do what we do," Odorizzi said. "But the offense was the story. They really exploded there in that sixth inning. That allowed a lot of people to relax and some guys get off their feet there too, which is kind of crucial this time of year."

Garver homered in the fifth inning off Orioles pitcher Alex Cobb to put the Twins ahead for good with a two-run shot. It was only the second series sweep of the season for the Twins, who previously took two games at St. Louis in May. The Twins have a chance to get even healthier with the lowly Kansas City Royals (25-64) headed to town for a three-game series.

Berríos starts the opener.

"We're not in a position to let our guard down, by any means," Molitor said. "The more games you can string together, it's obviously a good thing, and we've got José pitching tomorrow, which is an encouraging way for us to take the field against the Royals. I think they responded well to this opportunity this little homestand's presenting, and now we've just got to try to keep going."