



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Monday, June 4, 2018

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Twins walk off on Rosario's 3rd HR of day
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 3, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- As Eddie Rosario came to the plate with the game tied in the bottom of the ninth inning and the fans throughout Target Field chanting his name, his father, Eddie Rosario Sr., stood at his seat behind home plate and had a feeling something special was about to happen.

Rosario, who had his parents, wife and three children in attendance, had already homered twice and was looking to become the first Twins player to ever register a second three-homer game. His father's hunch proved correct, as Rosario crushed a walk-off two-run blast off closer Cody Allen to lift the Twins to a 7-5 win over the Indians in the series finale on Sunday. And incredibly, it was the second time his family, which hails from Puerto Rico, was there to witness a three-homer performance, as they also saw him do it against the Mariners on June 13, 2017.

"That walk-off -- I asked for it," said an emotional Eddie Sr. after the game. "As soon as it left the bat, I just said, 'Game over.' And a lot of things in Spanish. But it was great. I'm very glad with what he's doing right now. My emotions, I'm just excited. And the family is so happy right now. Heck of a game."

Rosario admitted he was trying to hit a homer off Allen and said he knew he was getting a fastball up in the zone on a 2-1 count. Rosario didn't miss it, as the ball landed in the flower beds in right field for his second-career walk-off homer.

"It's special for me and it's more special for my family," Rosario said. "I feel proud, good and happy with my family here."

His three blasts helped the Twins overcome a pair of homers from Edwin Encarnacion, including a go-ahead shot in the sixth. And it helped Minnesota move within 3.5 games of Cleveland with its third straight win.

"It was Rosie's day," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I've seen a lot of good days in the big leagues. But I don't know if I've seen one that was more dramatic than that as far as the first inning all the way through the end."

Brian Dozier tied the game with his solo blast off starter Mike Clevinger to open the seventh before Rosario connected on his go-ahead homer off reliever Tyler Olson. It was the sixth multi-homer game of the year for Rosario and the fourth time the club hit back-to-back shots this year.

Since May 1, Rosario is hitting .378 with 10 homers and 28 RBIs in 31 games and has emerged as an All-Star candidate for the Twins.

"When you're going good and you're really locked in like he is, you feel like you can't get out," Dozier said. "That's how it is. It's been an impressive couple months so far."

Rosario helped the Twins get out to an early lead against Clevinger with his solo homer in the first. Eduardo Escobar also smacked an RBI double to score Miguel Sano from first. Minnesota scored again in the second on an RBI single from Dozier, and it would've been a bigger inning if it weren't for Bradley Zimmer's incredible diving catch in left-center to rob Ryan LaMarre of extra bases.

The Indians, though, came back with the help of Encarnacion, as Twins right-hander Kyle Gibson was very good otherwise. Gibson gave up a solo homer to Encarnacion in the fifth and exited with a runner on second and two outs in the sixth. After Ryan Pressly issued a four-pitch walk to Jose Ramirez, Encarnacion jumped on a first-pitch fastball to give Cleveland a brief lead.

Gibson was under the weather, but said that wasn't a factor in getting pulled because the coaching staff was unaware of his illness.

"That was just something that -- physically -- warming up just didn't feel good and just had stomach churning most of the day," Gibson said. "Nothing that factored into any hits or anything like that, or being taken out

Michael Brantley later tied the game with his solo homer off reliever Addison Reed in the eighth and the Twins saw Ehire Adrianza get thrown out at home on a LaMarre double in the bottom of the inning, but Rosario's heroics in the ninth helped the Twins to the huge series win.

"It's really important," Rosario said. "These three games, we proved the Twins belong. It's a long season but it's a good experience for the team to win these games."

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

Yan Gomes hit a deep drive to left that hit off the top of the wall, mere inches from a home run. It was ruled a double and it was upheld after a crew chief review. Gomes ended up getting thrown out at second on a sacrifice bunt, suppressing a rally and keeping the Indians from adding any critical insurance runs.

SOUND SMART

Rosario became the 34th player to hit three homers in a game, including a walk-off blast, according to Baseball-Reference. Manny Machado was the last to do it, when he pulled off the feat against the Angels on Aug. 18, 2017. The only players to do it since '02 are Albert Pujols, Ryan Howard, Joey Votto, Khris Davis, Machado and Rosario.

"It was something we really needed, a guy to go out there and put together a bunch of extra-base hits like he has, and hit a couple big homers like he has," Gibson said. "I think our offense got a lot of momentum from him doing that all May and hopefully we keep it going."

HE SAID IT

"As many as we've experienced, we haven't had a lot of those chances to see the home-plate celebrations. The right guy did it. I didn't see exactly what happened, but I'm sure it was pretty festive." -- Molitor, on the club's third walk-off win of the year after already suffering eight walk-off losses this season

UP NEXT

After an off-day on Monday, the Twins have a doubleheader against the White Sox that begins on Tuesday at 3:10 p.m. CT at Target Field. Right-hander Zack Littell is expected to be called up from Triple-A Rochester to make his debut and start one of the two games, but the Twins haven't announced their starters for the twinbill. The White Sox will start Reynaldo Lopez (1-4, 3.80 ERA) in Game 1 and Lucas Giolito (3-6, 7.53 ERA) in Game 2.

Twins could focus on pitching in this year's Draft **Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 3, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- After taking shortstop Royce Lewis with the No. 1 overall pick in the 2017 Draft, the Twins find themselves in a different situation in '18 after their surprising run to the American League Wild Card Game last season, as they have the No. 20 overall selection this year.

Minnesota also had three of the top 37 picks in '17, but this year, the club's first two selections are No. 20 and No. 59 after they dealt the No. 74 pick as part of the Phil Hughes trade. The Twins lost their third-round pick after signing right-hander Lance Lynn, who declined the Cardinals' qualifying offer. But the Twins believe it's a strong Draft and there will be plenty of talent still on the board when it's their turn to pick.

"It's different at 20 than it was a year ago," Twins chief baseball officer Derek Falvey said. "There's a smaller subset of players. But we feel really

good about the crop of guys we've evaluated; we think we'll be there at 20."

The 2018 Draft will take place today through Wednesday, beginning with the Draft preview show on MLB Network and MLB.com at 5 p.m. CT today. MLB Network will broadcast the first 43 picks (Round 1 and Competitive Balance Round A), while MLB.com will stream all 78 picks on Day 1. MLB.com will also provide live pick-by-pick coverage of Rounds 3-10 on Day 2, with a preview show beginning at 11:30 a.m. CT. Then, Rounds 11-40 can be heard live on MLB.com on Day 3, beginning at 11 a.m. CT.

Go to MLB.com/draft to see the Top 200 Prospects list, projected top picks from MLB Pipeline analysts Jim Callis and Jonathan Mayo, the complete order of selection and more. And follow @MLBDraft on Twitter to see what Draft hopefuls, clubs and experts are saying.

Here's how the Draft is shaping up for the Twins.

In about 50 words

The Twins aren't selecting in the top 15 for the first time since 2011, but with two of the first 59 picks, they have an opportunity to add to an already strong farm system that boasts five players ranked among MLB Pipeline's Top 100 prospects.

The scoop

This is the second Draft under the new leadership led by Falvey, general manager Thad Levine and scouting director Sean Johnson. Last year, the Twins got creative, signing Lewis for under his slot value, allowing them to sign other highly regarded selections for over-slot such as right-hander Blayne Enlow. But the Twins have less bonus money to work with this year, so it will be tougher to pull off. Minnesota also employs a best-player available strategy.

"The players impact you so many years away that drafting for need in the amateur draft can lead you down the wrong path," Falvey said.

First-round buzz

Both Mayo and Callis have the Twins selecting Florida right-hander Jackson Kowar with the No. 20 overall pick. They've also been linked to high school right-handers such as Cole Winn (Calif.), Grayson Rodriguez (Texas) and Cole Wilcox (Ga.).

Money matters

Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement, each team has an allotted bonus pool equal to the sum of the values of that club's selections in the first 10 rounds of the Draft. The more picks a team has, and the earlier it picks, the larger the pool. The signing bonuses for a team's selections in the first 10 rounds, plus any bonus greater than \$125,000 for a player taken after the 10th round, will apply toward the bonus-pool total.

Any team going up to 5 percent over its allotted pool will be taxed at a 75 percent rate on the overage. A team that overspends by 5-10 percent gets a 75 percent tax plus the loss of a first-round pick. A team that goes 10-15 percent over its pool amount will be hit with a 100 percent penalty on the overage and the loss of a first- and second-round pick. Any overage of 15 percent or more gets a 100 percent tax plus the loss of first-round picks in the next two Drafts.

This year, the Twins have a pool of \$6,745,200 to spend in the first 10 rounds, including \$3,120,000 to spend on their first selection.

Shopping list

The Twins seem to always go heavy on pitching and shortstops, but they could use a catcher or two at the lower levels. Falvey said there's no such thing as having too much pitching and he generally likes half of the club's selections to be pitchers. Last year, of the club's 41 picks, 21 were pitchers.

Trend watch

Minnesota loaded up on left-handed pitchers early last year, as three of their first nine selections were southpaws. They love athletic position players who can play multiple positions up the middle, while they're big on pitchers with clean deliveries. They went heavy on college players last year, as 31 of their 41 picks were from the college ranks.

RECENT DRAFT HISTORY

Rising fast

Shortstop Nick Gordon, the club's No. 4 overall prospect by MLBPipeline.com, was promoted to Triple-A Rochester on May 22 and is hitting .332/.374/.505 with 23 extra-base hits and seven stolen bases in 56 games between Triple-A and Double-A. He could make his Major League debut this season, potentially as a September callup and could be a regular next year, depending on what the Twins do with impending free agents Brian Dozier and Eduardo Escobar.

Cinderella story

Right-handed reliever Trevor Hildenberger was a 22nd-round Draft pick in 2014, but has emerged as a dependable bullpen option for the Twins. The sidearmer had a breakout rookie season last year, posting a 3.21 ERA in 37 appearances and is one of the club's top setup relievers this

season.

In The Show

Byron Buxton, the No. 2 overall pick in 2012, has established himself as the game's fastest player and the best defensive player, while right-hander Jose Berrios, the No. 32 pick in the '12 Draft, is developing into a frontline starter. Catcher Mitch Garver, a ninth-round pick in 2013, is the club's starting catcher after Jason Castro's season-ending knee surgery.

The Twins' recent top picks

2017: Royce Lewis, SS, Class A Cedar Rapids. 2016: Alex Kirilloff, OF, Class A Cedar Rapids. 2015: Tyler Jay, LHP, Double-A Chattanooga. 2014: Nick Gordon, SS, Triple-A Rochester. 2013: Kohl Stewart, RHP, Double-A Chattanooga

The last two times Eddie Rosario's family has been at a game, he's hit three home runs

Matt Monagan and Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 3, 2018

Eddie Rosario, a man who doesn't normally hit a ton of home runs, hit THREE against the Indians on Sunday. The last, a two-run shot, was of the walk-off variety -- helping the Twins to a 7-5 victory. His family was a tad excited:

This was the second three-homer game of Rosario's career -- he did it in June of last year. Amazingly enough, that was also the last time his family was cheering him on from the stands. He mentioned his family was in attendance during his postgame interview on that June date and then, on Sunday, he talked about the strange coincidence:

MLB.com's Rhett Bollinger asked him about the moment:

"It happened again. My family is here ... It's special for me and it's more special for my family. I feel proud, good and happy with my family here."

Rosario's father, also named Eddie Rosario, said he predicted it from his seats:

"That walk-off. I asked for it. As soon as it left the bat, I just said, 'Game over.' And a lot of things in Spanish. But it was great. I'm very glad with what he's doing right now. My emotions, I'm just excited. And the family is so happy right now. Heck of a game."

"Right now, he's very happy. His wife and his kids are here, and us. It's so much fun. He enjoys this a lot."

It begs the question: If Eddie Rosario brought his family to every single game ... would he hit 436 dingers per season? Makes you think.

Littell likely to debut in Tuesday's doubleheader

Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | June 3, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The Twins are expected to call up 22-year-old right-hander Zack Littell in the coming days in order to provide some roster flexibility for their upcoming doubleheader.

Littell will likely make his Major League debut and start one of Minnesota's games when they face the White Sox two times at Target Field on Tuesday.

The Twins have not announced the move and will be provided with a 26th roster spot for the doubleheader.

"It's not settled," Minnesota manager Paul Molitor said on Sunday. "We're looking at options. Everybody knows there are things we've done in Triple-A to help set ourselves up. We have to figure out how we want to use the 26th man or other roster moves depending on how things go today. That would probably influence how we want to go into Tuesday."

Littell's most recent outing at Triple-A Rochester came on Monday, when he tossed six scoreless innings and struck out six batters on 91 pitches. In five appearances at Rochester this season, he is 1-1 with a 2.57 ERA.

The 6-foot-4, 220-pound Littell was taken by the Mariners in the 11th round of the 2013 MLB Draft. The Twins acquired him when they traded Jaime Garcia to the Yankees in 2017.

Mauer continues rehab

Joe Mauer fielded ground balls, ran the bases and took batting practice on the field prior to Minnesota's matchup with the Indians Sunday. The 30-minute workout was the latest step as he continues to work his way back from the cervical neck strain that has kept him sidelined since May 19,

when he was placed on the 10-day disabled list. It was the first time he has performed any baseball activities on the field since Thursday, when he experienced some concussion-like symptoms.

Mauer sat in the Twins dugout for the entirety of Minnesota's game after the Thursday workout, and was also in the dugout on Friday, but did not take part in any baseball activities.

Mauer hit in the batting cage at Target Field on Saturday, but did not work out on the field in order to avoid aggravating the symptoms he had experienced on Thursday. He was present in the dugout for the entirety of the 7-5 walk-off win against the Indians.

Molitor updated his first baseman's status after the win.

"Joe's doing pretty well," Molitor said. "He was out there the whole game and we're going to give him an off day tomorrow and get back in here on Tuesday to continue."

Eddie Rosario's three-homer game sparks Twins past Indians 7-5 **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 4, 2018**

It could be because of the long-awaited offensive eruption. It could be because of manager Paul Molitor's speech Thursday. It could be because of the in-progress dominoes tournament in the clubhouse that has seemed to energize players.

Whatever the reason might be, the Twins seem to have rediscovered their groove. And Eddie Rosario is leading the way.

Sunday, Rosario had perhaps the best game of his major league career. He made the Twins a 7-5 winner over the Indians with his third home run of the game, a walkoff, two-run shot off Cody Allen in the ninth inning at Target Field.

Rosario batted .467 in the series with four home runs, eight RBI and four walks, two intentional. The Twins scored 29 runs over four games vs. Cleveland, winning the final three to cut their deficit in the AL Central to 3½ games behind the Indians.

"It's really important," Rosario said. "They're a good team. Every day they have a different [quality] pitcher. These three games, we proved the Twins belong here. It's a long season. It's a good experience for the team to win games."

After losing six of seven, Molitor addressed the team before the series opener Thursday ... and then the Twins promptly fell behind 8-0. They rallied to tie the score before losing 9-8, but that's when Molitor felt his team began to respond.

"What we did in the first game it might have angered some people that we didn't finish it," Molitor said, "but I think everyone felt pretty good about the fact that we were coming out of a little bit of a funk, that we could score runs and get in their bullpen. But I don't know exactly if it is tangible or not, but it is a pretty confident group right now. Even with losing as many as we have had."

Molitor is not sure how much a speech can affect a team. And there were jokes that the dominoes tournament, which livened up the clubhouse before Saturday's game, brought the team together.

"We're 2-0," Brian Dozier said of his dominoes team. "One more and we go to the championship."

It just could be that they have remembered how to win games.

They led 3-0 through two innings Sunday, starting the scoring with Rosario's first home run. But after four perfect innings from Kyle Gibson, Edwin Encarnacion led off the fifth with a homer to left.

In the sixth, Gibson left after 99 pitches with two out and a runner on second. Ryan Pressly issued a four-pitch walk to Jose Ramirez, then saw his first pitch to Encarnacion — a 97-mile-per-hour fastball — blasted an estimated 430 feet into the third deck in left, a three-run homer that gave the Indians a 4-3 lead. Encarnacion's 15 homers at Target Field are the most of any opponent.

Dozier and Rosario hit back-to-back home runs in the seventh to reclaim the lead at 5-4. But Cleveland's Michael Brantley ended an 0-for-16 skid with a tying homer off Addison Reed in the eighth.

Dozier led off the ninth by drawing a nine-pitch walk off Allen. With a 2-1 count to Rosario, the All-Star closer fired a 94 mph fastball that was up and away. Rosario launched it 410 feet into the seats in center field, giving him his second three-homer game in less than a year.

It was the Twins' third walkoff victory of the season — and quite a way to end a series with their division rival.

How long the Twins can stay in this groove is up to them.

“We have to keep it going, you know,” Molitor said. “We can’t afford [to lose] those six out of seven and going the wrong way. Can’t afford to do that too many more times.”

Twins' Eddie Rosario feasting on pitches outside of strike zone' **Le Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018**

Eddie Rosario entered Sunday 14th in baseball at swinging at the most pitches outside the strike zone. It's not good, but it could be a lot worse. Teammate Eduardo Escobar is ninth, for example.

It can drive a coaching staff nuts to see a player so undisciplined at the plate. But Rosario routinely makes bad-ball hitting a good thing, like Sunday, when he blasted three home runs to send the Twins to a 7-5 victory.

Manager Paul Molitor said Rosario is making it look easier than it is: “I just think that he’s feeling it,” he said. “It’s a lot about going up there with confidence. We always say, Remember how you did it.’ And he seems to remember pretty well.”

And Rosario prepares. His .317 batting average is born out of a greater understanding of how he is being pitched, and by whom.

“I remember everything,” he said. “It’s more easy for me. I know the count and what they throw me.”

Sunday, he homered off starter Mike Clevinger in the first inning on a pitch headed for the opposite batter’s box. In the seventh, he homered off lefthander Tyler Olson on a pitch that was inside and off the plate. And in the ninth inning with Brian Dozier on first, he was able to hit a Cody Allen pitch in the ninth that was up and away 410 feet to center.

Eddie Rosario’s first home run Sunday came on a Mike Clevinger fastball well off the plate.

“When [Allen] threw the first-pitch fastball, I remembered the last time I faced him on Thursday,” Rosario said. “He came out and threw a fastball. But after he threw me a second ball, I knew he was going to throw me a fastball. It was up, and he throws 95, but I stayed through the ball. I didn’t know where the ball was going, but I wanted to try to finish the game.”

It’s the ninth time in Twins history a player has hit three home runs in a game. But five of the nine times have come in the past 275 regular-season games, with Rosario — who hit three homers last June 13 in a 20-7 victory over Seattle — the first player to do it twice.

Littell to get the call

Righthander Zack Littell is expected to be called up as the 26th player and make one of the starts Tuesday when the Twins play the White Sox in a doubleheader at Target Field.

Molitor would only confirm that Littell is being considered.

“It’s not settled,” he said. “We’re looking at options. Everybody knows there are things we’ve done in Triple-A to help set ourselves up. We have to figure out how we want to use the 26th man or other roster moves depending on how things go today that would probably influence how we want to go into Tuesday.”

It would be a quick rise for Littell, acquired from the Yankees for Jaime Garcia last July. Littell was 0-3 with a 5.87 ERA at Class AA Chattanooga before being promoted to Class AAA Rochester. Once there, he turned things around. He’s 1-1 with a 2.57 ERA in five outings for the Red Wings, including four starts. In 28 innings, Littell, 22, has given up eight earned runs on 20 hits and 10 walks with 30 strikeouts.

Righthander Aaron Slegers and lefthander Stephen Gonsalves of the Red Wings also are available to pitch, so the Twins have options for the spot start.

Minor details

Class A Cedar Rapids infielder Jose Miranda was named Twins minor league player of the week Sunday after hitting .414. He struggled the first month of the season but Miranda, 19, has hit .342 with a .952 on base-plus-slugging percentage over his past 22 games. He has played second and third for the Kernels.

And Cedar Rapids outfielder Alex Kirilloff has emerged into a promotion candidate by batting .332 with 10 home runs and 45 RBI, including a home run Sunday. His .972 OPS was second in the Midwest League entering Sunday’s games.

After having No. 1 pick last year, Twins have different strategy at No. 20
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018

Twins Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey and General Manager Thad Levine aren't traveling around the country to evaluate top prospects this year.

Former players Torii Hunter and LaTroy Hawkins aren't meeting with potential top picks to judge their makeup.

While the Twins organization continues to break down players in advance of Monday's annual amateur draft, it isn't using the white glove test to determine who should be its first-round pick. That's the difference between picking first overall last year, when the Twins focused intently on a small group of top players, and having the 20th overall selection this year.

Last year was a rarity, with a high school player — infielder Royce Lewis — going No. 1. This year's top pick, which goes to Detroit, is considered a tossup between two college players, Auburn righthander Casey Mize and Georgia Tech catcher Joey Bart.

At No. 20, the Twins will find it harder to click on a first-round pick. That adds a little more pressure to a scouting staff that has received good grades for last year's class, which included four of the first 76 overall picks.

"We'll be able to pick from a handful of guys who are going to be in our mix," Twins scouting director Sean Johnson said. "Hopefully we can pick the right guy. It comes down to having talented people on your staff, which we certainly do. We feel confident we will make a good pick."

The Twins entered their war room at Target Field on Memorial Day and started paring a list of about 50 college and high school stars. Their goal is to have a dozen or so identified by Monday so they can be ready for anything that happens before their turn comes. They also have the 59th overall pick during the second round. Their first-round pick is projected to take place around 7:30 p.m.

"This is a draft, when you're picking at 20, it seems like there's some clarity maybe in the top few picks and it gets a little less clearer on what teams are going to do in front of us," said Falvey, who has looked at videos of prospects this year instead of traveling to watch in person. "So we just need to be prepared with the top 20 guys on our board to make sure that we know how we have them ordered, because I think almost anything could play out right now."

The Twins have been linked with several players in recent weeks, including Florida righthander Jackson Kowar, South Florida lefthander Shane McClanahan and Mississippi lefthander Ryan Rolison. Johnson believes that there will be a run on college players early, leaving some good prep talent available at No. 20, so the Twins are keeping that in mind as they construct their run through different scenarios.

"There will be high school position players and high school pitching that will make its way down to us," said Johnson, who likes the crop of high school pitching available. "There will be some college guys too, but there will be a pretty good blend of players from both."

A report on MLB.com Friday had the Twins growing more interested in shortstop Osiris Johnson, from Encinal High School in Alameda, Calif. He is a cousin of 2007 NL MVP Jimmy Rollins.

They recently were in Arizona to watch third baseman Nolan Gorman from O'Connor High in Phoenix and lefthander Matthew Liberatore from Mountain Ridge High in Glendale. Some projections have those two going well before 20, but teams might have other ideas on draft day.

Teams will work back channels in "NCIS"-like fashion in an attempt to uncover what other clubs are plotting. In the end, they have to trust their reports and hope the player they want the most is available when their turn to pick comes.

The Twins get two shots on Monday.

"We're down to two picks in the top 100, so it's different," Johnson said. "You're still trying to pull out good players with upside, but the premium tool guys are gone with in the first few picks.

"But there are still big-leaguers available. The attitude doesn't change as far as the expectations of getting a truly dynamic player."

Sunday's Twins-Cleveland game recap
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Eddie Rosario, Twins

The left fielder was 3-for-5 with three home runs and four RBI, the final homer a walkoff shot off Cody Allen. Rosario batted .467 in the four-game series.

BY THE NUMBERS

15 Home runs by Edwin Encarnacion at Target Field, one more than Jose Bautista, Salvador Perez and Carlos Santana for the most by any Twins opponent there.

16 Losses for Cleveland after holding a lead this season.

7 Home runs hit in the game.

ON DECK

The Twins will continue their homestand Tuesday when they begin a four-game series with the White Sox with a traditional doubleheader.

MLB draft information

Staff Report | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018

When: First and second rounds Monday (7 p.m.); rounds 3-10 Tuesday (1 p.m.); rounds 11-40 Wednesday (noon).

Top prospects:

(from mlb.com)

Casey Mize, RHP, Auburn; Joey Bart, C, Georgia Tech; Nick Madrigal, IF, Oregon State; Brady Singer, RHP, Florida; Jonathan India, IF, Florida; Alec Bohm, 3B, Wichita State; Matthew Liberatore, LHP, Mountain Ridge HS (Glendale, Ariz.); Nolan O’Gorman, IF, O’Connor HS (Phoenix); Travis Swaggerty, OF, South Alabama; Cole Winn, RHP, Orange (Calif.) Lutheran HS.

First-round order:

(Teams can’t trade picks, slot value listed in parentheses)

1. Detroit (\$8,096,300)
2. San Fran. (\$7,494,600)
3. Philadelphia (\$6,947,500)
4. Chicago White Sox
5. Cincinnati
6. New York Mets
7. San Diego
8. Atlanta
9. Oakland
10. Pittsburgh
11. Baltimore
12. Toronto

13. Miami
14. Seattle
15. Texas
16. Tampa Bay
17. Los Angeles Angels
18. Kansas City
19. St. Louis
20. Twins (\$3,231,700)
21. Milwaukee
22. Colorado
23. New York Yankees
24. Chicago Cubs
25. Arizona
26. Boston
27. Washington
28. Houston
29. Cleveland
30. Los Angeles Dodgers

Possible Twins picks, according to mock drafts:

- Ryan Rolison, LHP

Ole Miss (Baseball America and ESPN)

- Logan Gilbert, RHP

Stetson (MLB.com)

- Ryan Weathers, LHP

Loretto (Tenn.) HS (Bleacher Report)

NOTABLE PICKS AT NO. 20

2002

Denard Span, OF, Twins

A solid outfielder throughout his career, he led the NL with 184 hits in 2014.

1998

C.C. Sabathia, LHP, Indians

Is 239-147 in his career, and tormented the Twins during his days with Cleveland.

1993

Torii Hunter, OF, Twins

Twins have had success drafting center fielders, and he was one of their best.

1990

Mike Mussina, RHP, Orioles

Twins scouted the probable Hall of Famer at Stanford ... then drafted Todd Ritchie.

1977

Bob Welch, RHP, Dodgers

Won 211 games in his career. Went 27-6 in 1990 while with the Athletics.

Twins' past five picks

2017

(1st overall)

Royce Lewis, SS, Class A Cedar Rapids

Batting .307 for the Kernels while playing solid shortstop. One of the better prospects in the game, he turns 19 on Tuesday.

2016

(15th overall)

Alex Kirilloff, OF, Class A Cedar Rapids

Missed all of 2017 after Tommy John surgery, but is lighting up the Midwest League, hitting .332 with 10 home runs.

2015

(6th overall)

Tyler Jay, LHP, Class AA Chattanooga

Plagued by injuries. Attempts to make him a starter failed. Has a 1.96 ERA this year but needs to cut down on walks.

2014

(5th overall)

Nick Gordon, SS, Class AAA Rochester

Can hit and has ignored persistent rumblings that he's a better fit at second base. Batting .327 in 14 games after promotion.

2013

(4th overall)

Kohl Stewart, RHP, Class AA Chattanooga

Twins have been patient with Stewart, whose strikeout rate is up. But he has a 6.60 ERA in 10 games with the Lookouts.

Twins postgame: Gibson pulled in sixth; Wilson makes big play; Ehire on the bases
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018

I love Twitter sometimes. It provides a vehicle those raw, unfiltered emotions of a disgruntled fan to be shared on social media. And that was the case on Sunday as Twins manager Paul Molitor removed righthander Kyle Gibson from the game in the sixth inning then had his move blown to bits by Edwin Encarnacion, who hit a three-run homer on the first pitch from Ryan Pressly.

I disagree with the notion that Gibson should have stayed in the game.

Gibson looked strong early, putting his fastball where he wanted then mixing in breaking pitches as he went. He retired the first 12 Indians batters he faced, striking out five.

The run ended with a 1-2 changeup to Encarnacion that was socked into the seats in left. Cleveland's first hit of the afternoon made it a 3-1 game.

Sometime during Gibson's sixth-inning encounter with Cleveland's Francisco Lindor, the game changed on him.

The All-Star shortstop pushed Gibson to his limits with 12-pitch at bat, during which Lindor fouled off seven pitches. Pitch No. 12 was a ball, earning Lindor a walk. Gibson was at a critical point of the game - the point where he starts to wear down. Pitching coach Garvin Alston, paid him a visit before he got Michael Brantley to ground out for the second out.

"That's what he said, just trying to give me a little break," Gibson said. "Unfortunately that puts Molitor in a situation where he has to take me out.

Molitor then replaced Gibson with Ryan Pressly. Gibson, for the season, has averaged 17 outs a game. The Twins have tried to let him pitch beyond the sixth inning a few times without much success. Molitor had that in mind when he removed Gibson from the game.

"You never want to be taken out in the middle of an inning," Gibson said. "Molitor has great instincts, and he makes a lot of good decisions."

Ryan Pressly entered, walked Ramirez, then gave up the home run to Encarnacion.

"Yeah, it didn't work out," Molitor said. "I'm just kind of watching it unfolds. He hadn't given up a lot of hits or a lot of runs. A lot of pitches over the last couple of innings. I was just trying to get one out there. I felt good about the 7 th-8 th-9 th innings, of how we were going to navigate through that. But we got a walk and a homer. It changed fast.

"I know he wanted to face Ramirez. It's easy to look back and say we should have given him a shot. But, the last couple of innings and the way they had gone, he was economical early and then it started catching up to him late so I went with the fresh arm."

Nice play by Wilson

Yan Gomes led off the seventh with a double. Greg Allen came to the plate and attempted to bunt him over to third. The ball landed on the chalk in front of home plate. Twins catcher Bobby Wilson pounced on the ball so quickly that he and Allen bumped slightly as Allen ran to first.

Gomez froze off second base. Wilson picked up the ball and paused slightly.

"It was a weird play, with that ball just dying there," Wilson said. "I think I might have beaten him out of the box there. You know he's bunting and you know you are going to have to get to the ball to make a play. Just tried to make an aggressive play with it."

Wilson threw to second in time to nab Gomes.

"That's a pretty big play," Molitor said. "They execute the bunt there, it changes that inning dramatically. He threw it on the money too."

Molitor said it was a savvy play by an alert veteran.

"I try to say every day what an opportunity this is for all of us," said Wilson, who played in 324 major league games before signing with the Twins as a minor league free agent during the offseason. "try to take advantage of every day. There was an opportunity to make something happen to help the ballclub. And it worked out."

Ehire on the bases

I was in Anaheim when Ehire Adrianza failed to score from first on Robbie Grossman's double on May 13. That's when he didn't pick up Grossman's ball right away, stopped before he reached second and ended up being thrown out by a hair. There was another Ehire moment on Sunday.

He was on first base - as a pinch runner for Grossman - when Ryan LaMarre followed with a double just inside the left field line. Third base coach Gene Glynn waved Adrianza home. But Cleveland's relay was perfect, and Adrianza was thrown out easily.

But Adrianza slowed down as he approached third base, then stumbled as he rounded the bag. Is he safe if he has a smooth trip there?

"We'll never know," Molitor said. "You get the wave, then you stumble. I'm going to look at it, but I would think one of his options was that he lost his chance there and you try to recover and get back to third. I'm not sure how or why he stumbled."

My take: I would have left Grossman in. According to STACAST's sprint speed data, Grossman is the third fastest player on the Twins, covering 27.8 feet per second. Adrianza is eighth, at 26.8.

Run Robbie, run.

Eddie Rosario's three-homer day carries Twins to 7-5 win over Indians **Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | June 3, 2018**

An expectant hush fell over Target Field as Cody Allen prepared to throw his 2-1 pitch to Eddie Rosario in Sunday's ninth inning. For a few tense moments, it was quiet enough to hear a division race tighten.

And then Allen reared back and threw his 94-mph fastball up in the zone, right where Rosario likes it. The Twins' left fielder connected on his third home run of the day, this one a two-run moonshot over the high scoreboard in right field to complete a 7-5 walk-off victory over the Cleveland Indians.

With that, the party was on as the jubilant home crowd of 26,096 chanted "ED-DIE! ED-DIE!" in the hero's honor.

"It was Rosie's day," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I've seen a lot of good days in the big leagues, but I don't know if I've seen one that was more dramatic than that."

With parents Eddie and Maria and two brothers Jackie and Gaby in town to join his wife and three children, Rosario couldn't have picked a better time for the second three-homer day of his career. The first came nearly one year ago (June 13), launching a career turnaround that has barely stopped to take a breath.

"Today, everything happened," said Rosario, 26. "I know it's special for me, but for my family it's more special right now. I feel proud for me. I feel good. I'm happy when I see my family."

Taking three of four from the first-place Indians, the Twins climbed back within 3½ games of the division lead in the American League Central. Had they been able to complete Thursday's stirring comeback from an 8-0 hole, the Twins might have had their first four-game sweep of the Indians in 37 years.

Including a two-game split in April in Rosario's native Puerto Rico, the Twins now lead the season series 4-2 against the two-time division champs, a team that rattled off nine straight wins at Target Field last season.

"It's a new year; everything is different," Rosario said after a combined seven homers flew out on Sunday. "Now it's 2018 — 2017 is past. Everything changes."

Not many regular-season series include a pair of team meetings, one on the field before batting practice on Thursday and another before the game on Friday, but the Twins were in danger of seeing their high hopes slip away after losing seven of eight.

"Now," Rosario said, "Cleveland knows the Twins are here."

After suffering eight walk-off defeats through their first 27 road games, including six by homer, the Twins enjoyed their third walk-off victory of the year and the first at home since April 12 against the Houston Astros. The other one came April 18 in San Juan against the Indians in 16 innings.

Twins relievers Ryan Pressly and Addison Reed gave back a pair of leads via homers. Edwin Encarnacion's second blast of the day, a three-run homer off Pressly, wiped out a 3-1 Twins lead in the sixth, and Michael Brantley's solo shot off Reed tied the game at 5 in the eighth.

It was the second homer off Pressly in his past three outings and the second in as many outings for Reed, who also saw Francisco Lindor take him deep for the game-winner on Thursday.

With 31 and 28 appearances, respectively, Pressly and Reed are on pace to finish the year with 91 and 82, which would be career highs for both. The Twins' single-season leader is Mike Marshall with 90 in 1979.

Perfect through four innings with six strikeouts, Kyle Gibson gave up a leadoff homer to Encarnacion on a two-strike changeup in the fifth. Francisco Lindor's 12-pitch walk led to Gibson's removal at 99 pitches.

Brian Dozier, who opened the ninth with a nine-pitch walk, went deep at home for the first time this season. His leadoff blast to left chased Mike Clevinger in the seventh, and Rosario followed with his second homer, off curveballing lefty Tyler Olson, to reclaim the lead.

Rosario had gone more than three weeks without a homer before connecting on a Trevor Bauer cutter Saturday and again off a Clevinger sinker in Sunday's first inning. His family, Rosario noted, arrived from Orlando only late Friday.

Now hitting .342 in 202 career at-bats against the Indians — with 13 homers, 33 runs and 31 runs batted in — Rosario is slugging an insane .604 against the division leaders. His next-highest homer total is seven against the Chicago White Sox.

"I remember everything," Rosario said. "It's easier if you know sometimes what they're going to throw you."

Will Twins grab more pitching with 20th pick in Monday's draft?

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | June 3, 2018

If the Twins didn't tip their hand before taking Royce Lewis with the first overall pick last June, you'd better believe the leaks will be at a minimum before they select 20th in the first round on Monday night.

"I am quite proud of the way our room handled itself last year in terms of not much getting out right up until the end," Twins chief baseball officer Derek Falvey said. "I will continue to be proud of that. It matters when you're selecting these guys. Our guys are really good about that."

For obvious reasons, there is little consensus among the most prominent mock drafts when it comes to the Twins' top selection this year. Will they make it three straight high school position players and four out of five, dating to shortstop Nick Gordon out of Orlando in 2014?

Or will they go for a college arm — a la lefty Tyler Jay out of Illinois in 2015 — for the fourth time in the past decade?

Baseball America projects the Twins to select Georgia prep right-hander Ethan Hankins, while others have pegged University of Florida right-hander Jackson Kowar or Stetson righty Logan Gilbert for the Twins.

"Each class is a little different, but this one seems a little deeper up top with the college crop and a little bit less clear after you get through the teens range because of maybe more of the high school crop," Falvey said heading into his second Twins draft. "I would say this year, more than previous years for me, it's a little less clear as to what will be there at 20."

After loading up with four picks in the top 76 last year, the Twins hold just two of the top 123 selections (Nos. 20 and 59). They lost their third-round pick as compensation for signing free-agent right-hander Lance Lynn in March, and they sent the No. 74 overall pick to the San Diego Padres in a May 27 trade along with Phil Hughes and \$14.5 million of the \$22.1 million that remained on Hughes' deal through 2019.

The Twins' bonus pool for the first 10 rounds is \$5.93 million, fifth-lowest among the 30 organizations. Slot value for the 20th overall pick is \$3.12 million, while the No. 59 pick carries a slot value of \$1.14 million.

TUESDAY STARTER

The Twins are still "looking at options" to start along with Fernando Romero in Tuesday's doubleheader against the Chicago White Sox, manager Paul Molitor said, but Triple-A Rochester right-hander Zack Littell is among those receiving consideration.

Littell, 22, has a 2.57 ERA in five May outings for the Red Wings. His strikeout/walk ratio for the season, including a shaky April at Double-A Chattanooga, is 62/17.

"Strike throwing has been good," Molitor said. "He's not a particularly hard thrower, but his velocity seems to play up in the zone. There's some

interest about where he might go someday, whether (or not) he gets the nod on Tuesday.”

Littell, who last started on May 28, would be working on seven days’ rest after reliever Gabriel Moya took his turn in the rotation on Saturday.

PINEDA PLAN

Right-hander Michael Pineda is scheduled to throw his fifth bullpen on Monday as he works back from Tommy John surgery last summer. Pineda will throw 30 pitches this time after working out to 50 pitches (all fastballs) in previous sessions.

Mentally, he has circled the Sept. 10-12 home series against the New York Yankees, his former team, as a reasonable goal for his 2018 return. He can’t wait to visit with former locker mates CC Sabathia and Dellin Betances.

“I love everybody over there; they treated me great,” Pineda said. “I learned so much from CC. Great teammate, great person. I love CC. But when they come here, I want to win.”

BRIEFLY

Joe Mauer, out since May 18, took grounders and hit on the field Sunday morning as he works back from neck and concussion issues.

Molitor and son Ben attended the Gophers’ extra-inning win over UCLA on Saturday night in the NCAA regional at Siebert Field, but they had to leave during the lightning delay in the fourth inning.

Catcher Mitch Garver had some bruising above his left knee after taking a foul tip in the ninth inning on Saturday but he was available off the bench.

Postgame notes: Rosario’s massive day, baserunning issues, bullpen usage, and a huge series win **Jake Depue | ESPN 1500 | June 3, 2018**

Eddie Rosario is becoming a star.

The game he had Sunday against Cleveland was one of the most impressive individual performances in franchise history.

In the first inning, he deposited a down-and-away fastball from Cleveland starter Mike Clevinger into the left field bleachers. The pitch was off the plate, but as he’s done all season, Rosario showed tremendous opposite field power, and a rare ability to consistently put the barrel on balls well out of the zone. To my untrained eye, his hands are as good as anyone in the league.

In the seventh, he hit a Tyler Olson breaking ball—again well off the plate, but this time down and in—over the high right field wall to give the Twins the lead, after Brian Dozier tied it with his first Target Field home run of the season one batter earlier.

Then came the grand finale, a two-run blast to center off Cleveland closer Cody Allen. Allen’s fastball was located perfectly, on the outer edge of the zone, but location seems to make no difference to Rosario right now.

He’s carrying the Twins at the moment, and will surely represent them in the All-Star game in July.

Gibson shines again

Lost in the Rosario madness and late lead-changes was another strong start from Kyle Gibson. Gibson went 5.2 innings against a good Cleveland lineup, giving up two runs on two hits while striking out seven. One of the runs charged to Gibson came after he exited, when Ryan Pressly gave up a 3-run home run to Edwin Encarnacion.

Gibson’s been arguably the Twins’ best starting pitcher this season. His ERA is down to 3.54, he’s getting deeper into games, and averaging more than a strikeout an inning. The strikeouts are way up for Gibson this year, in part because of what’s become a devastating slider, and an increased willingness to attack the zone.

Gibson spoke earlier this year about needing to trust his fastball, rather than nibbling around the zone as he’s done in the past. The former first round pick has clearly figured some things out in his age-30 season, and it’s paying big dividends for the Twins.

Bullpen usage

Ryan Pressly and Addison Reed have both been outstanding this season, but both had a rough day Sunday. Pressly came in in the sixth and walked Jose Ramirez on four pitches, before giving up the home run to Encarnacion. Reed allowed a game-tying home run to Michael Brantley in the eighth—the third straight appearance in which he’s allowed a run.

Pressly and Reed are two critical members of the 'pen, and it's fair to wonder whether they're being asked to do a little too much right now. Going into play Sunday, Pressly ranked third in the American League in relief appearances, while Reed was tied for 14. It's hard to say definitively whether their heavy usage contributed to the struggles Sunday, but it's something to monitor moving forward. Paul Molitor may have to entrust Matt Magill (1.53 ERA) and Trevor Hildenberger (2.79 ERA), among others, to get outs in high-leverage situations a bit more often, in order to keep Pressly and Reed fresh through a long season.

Baserunning issues

The Twins lost a game in Anaheim back in May when Ehire Adrianza misread a Robbie Grossman double in the ninth inning and got thrown out at home, missing a golden opportunity to score the go-ahead run.

Adrianza's had a few baserunning gaffes this season, but Molitor opted to use him as a pinch-runner in the eighth inning Sunday after Robbie Grossman hit a one-out single. As MLB.com's Rhett Bollinger noted, that was a strange decision given that Statcast data show Grossman is a considerably faster runner than Adrianza.

After Ryan LaMarre hit a double down the third base line, third base coach Gene Glynn opted to send Adrianza home, who was trying to score from first on the play. Adrianza appeared to stumble a bit around third, and was thrown out easily.

It's easy to second-guess after the fact, and questioning in-game decisions can be overdone and often unfair. That said, in my view there were two very questionable coaching decisions there—pinch running a demonstrably slower runner (Adrianza) for a faster runner (Grossman), and sending him home with one out on a play in which it sure looked like he would have been thrown out easily even without the stumble. Luckily for the Twins, Rosario's heroics made up for the missed opportunity in the eighth.

Moving forward

Winning the last three games of the Indians series, after coming back from eight runs down only to lose 9-8 in Game 1, has a chance to be a huge momentum shift in a season that was threatening to spiral out of control. Despite being five games under .500, the Twins now find themselves just 3.5 games back of the Indians, with four games coming up against the lowly White Sox, beginning Tuesday at Target Field.

A series loss to the Indians would have meant an awfully big hole to climb out of for the Twins, who need to be in contention by the July 31 trade deadline, or risk losing some of their key pieces. While there's still plenty of work left to do, this weekend was a big step in the right direction for Minnesota.

Rosario's three home runs power Twins past Indians

Associated Press | Fox Sports North | June 3, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — After suffering through a historic streak of walk-off losses, the Minnesota Twins were only too happy to reverse the trend.

Eddie Rosario hit his third homer of the game, launching a two-run shot in the bottom of the ninth inning to lift the Twins over the Cleveland Indians 7-5 Sunday.

On Tuesday, the Twins tied the 1968 Pirates and 2010 Mariners with their eighth walk-off loss in their first 50 games.

"As many as we've experienced, we haven't had a lot of those chances to see the home-plate celebrations," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "The right guy did it. I didn't see exactly what happened at home plate, but I'm sure it was pretty festive."

Rosario became the first Twins player to have a pair of three-homer games. He also hit three home runs last June 13 at home against the Mariners. Harmon Killebrew and Tony Oliva are among the Twins who did it once.

Minnesota beat the AL Central-leading Indians for the third straight day.

Cleveland closer Cody Allen (2-2) walked Brian Dozier to lead off the ninth. Then he fell behind Rosario 2-1.

With the heart of the Twins' order coming up, Rosario knew Allen couldn't afford to put another runner on, and he was ready for what came next.

"After he threw me a second ball, I knew he was going to throw me a fastball," said Rosario, who popped up a 2-0 pitch against Allen when they faced each other on Thursday. "It was up, and he throws 95, but I stayed through the ball. I didn't know where the ball was going, but I wanted to try to finish the game."

Rosario, who began the day with 10 homers, hit a solo homer in the first inning and another solo home run in the seventh. Brian Dozier also homered for the Twins, whose struggling offense erupted for 29 runs in the four-game series.

Edwin Encarnacion hit two long home runs for Cleveland, and Michael Brantley's solo shot off Addison Reed in the eighth tied it at 5.

"I thought today was one of those days where he'd put us on his shoulders and we won," manager Terry Francona said of Encarnacion. "Well, we didn't. And it kills you. But, if he starts to heat up like that . boy, that'll be tremendous."

Encarnacion's second homer was a three-run shot in the sixth that put Cleveland on top 4-3. Reliever Ryan Pressly came on with a runner on second and two out, but he walked Jose Ramirez before Encarnacion hit the first pitch for his 16th homer of the season.

Dozier led off the seventh against Indians starter Mike Clevenger with his ninth homer of the season to tie it at 4. Rosario then greeted reliever Tyler Olson with his second homer of the game.

Fernando Rodney (2-2) pitched a scoreless ninth to pick up the victory.

Twins starter Kyle Gibson was perfect through the first four innings, striking out six batters. Encarnacion led off the fifth with a 434-foot drive to the second deck in left field.

The Twins are 4-2 against the Indians this year.

"I think we're going to be a team that's going to win a lot of close ballgames," Gibson said. "I think that's going to be our team identity, and coming through like that with a walk-off was a big win in this series."

GLOVE LOVE

The game wouldn't have reached the bottom of the ninth if not for some outstanding defense by the Indians. First, center fielder Bradley Zimmer saved at least one run with a spectacular diving grab on Ryan LaMarre's drive to left-center in the second. Then, Francisco Lindor's perfect relay throw to the plate nailed Ehire Adrianza, who was trying to score the go-ahead run on LaMarre's double in the eighth.

HOMER HYPE

Encarnacion has 15 homers in 37 career games at Target Field, more than any other opposing player. . Meanwhile, Dozier's ninth homer of the year was his 76th career longball at Target Field, but only his first of the season.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Indians: Manager Terry Francona said the team expects to activate OF Lonnie Chisenhall on Tuesday. Chisenhall has been on the DL since April 8 due to a strained right calf. ... OF Brandon Guyer (neck) remains on track to rejoin the team this week as well.

Twins: C Mitch Garver was available one day after taking a foul tip off his knee in Saturday's game. Molitor said he had planned to start Wilson at catcher even before Garver was injured.

UP NEXT

Indians: RHP Corey Kluber (8-2, 2.02 ERA) will face the Brewers on Tuesday night in Cleveland. Kluber has opened the season with 12 consecutive quality starts, the longest such streak for an Indians pitcher in 100 years.

Twins: Minnesota is idle on Monday and hosts the White Sox for a doubleheader on Tuesday. The Twins have not yet named starting pitchers for either game.

Thursday's moral victory led to three of the real thing as the Twins send a message to their division rivals **Nick Kelly | The Athletic | June 4, 2018**

An 8-0 hole was the last thing the Twins wanted or needed last Thursday night.

Certainly not after the road trip. Not after Minnesota won only one of six games.

And here the Twins sat back home and back in a less-than-desirable situation against the first-place Indians.

Starting pitcher Jake Odorizzi exited the game having given up seven of those runs. He could not help but chuckle Sunday when he thought about how that felt.

“Not the way you want to open up against a team you’re chasing,” Odorizzi said. “You just put it out of your mind and move forward. Not much that you can really do.”

Well, you can do what the Twins did.

Minnesota rallied to tie that game before losing 9-8, then rattled off three consecutive wins to take the series. Eddie Rosario’s walk-off, two-run home run on Sunday gave the Twins a 7-5 win and their first four-game series win at home since July 2015.

But this series, more than anything, showed that the Twins can get lucky bounces and accomplish the small things needed to make plays in big moments.

And it showed that Minnesota’s not dead yet.

That destination seemed close during that road trip. The Twins sat 5.5 games out of first place in the AL Central after Seattle swept them and Kansas City came close. Minnesota’s victory over Cleveland on Sunday brought the Twins within 3.5 games.

“These three games, we proved the Twins belong here,” Rosario said.

Rosario’s three home runs certainly helped prove that. And he was not the only one who provided timely hitting.

Brian Dozier hit a solo shot to the second deck to tie the game in the seventh after Cleveland took the lead for the first time in the sixth.

“Hitting is contagious, and it is kind of more feel than the actual ability to do it,” Dozier said. “Sometimes it happens; sometimes it does not. It is just depending on the intangibles in the game.”

Hits such as these make highlight reels and draw the biggest reactions from fans. But the Twins showed they belong in the conversation for the division largely because of the small things they did Sunday.

Just look to center fielder Ryan LaMarre, who’s filling in for Byron Buxton, who the Twins placed him on the DL on May 30 for a left great-toe fracture.

In the top of the ninth, LaMarre bolted to make a catch mid-stride that prevented Jason Kipnis from scoring.

His first career steal in the fourth played a much smaller role in the outcome, but it still exemplified the small things the Twins had to do to beat the first-place Indians.

Sure, it’s only a stolen base. But the Twins have struggled to steal bases this season. They rank No. 26 in the MLB in bases stolen per game.

“The little things take care of the big things,” Odorizzi said. “When you get in situations that really matter, it is kind of the little things that either make or break a game.”

And then there’s just getting lucky. The Twins experienced some of that, too.

To get in position to steal that base in the fourth, it took Cleveland third baseman Erik González almost running over pitcher Mike Clevinger to slow him down enough that Clevinger could not get the throw to first in time.

In the seventh, Bobby Wilson threw out the runner on second after Greg Allen’s bunt fell about a foot from Wilson.

That came immediately after a ball hit the top of the fence then bounced back in play. If it had bounced out, Cleveland would have taken a 5-3 lead. Instead, it led to a double.

There was also a bit of luck involved in starting pitcher Kyle Gibson’s performance. He was fortunate in that a stomach bug he is facing did not prevent him from giving the Twins quality innings. He did not give up a hit or allow a base runner over the first four innings.

Gibson said he did not tell anyone else that he was feeling a bit under the weather.

“I just physically didn’t feel my best today, and I’ve been kind of fighting a few bugs here and there. The kids are sick, so I caught it from them,” Gibson said.

The close game probably didn't help his stomach settle, either. Gibson, who left the game in the sixth, said he expects the Twins to continue to win many close games. Most of the close games they have experienced thus far have not ended well. They're 3-12 in one-run games, the fewest wins in the majors.

It's why the Twins made sure to enjoy the moment, greeting Rosario as he trotted home after his third home run.

The Target Field crowd bellowed "Eddie! Eddie! Eddie!" He responded with a salute and a smile.

It was a far cry from the silence and disappointment that filled Target Field when the Twins trailed the Indians 8-0.

"Maybe that just spring-loaded us the right way," Odorizzi said. "We dug a big hole, and we got out of it. Now it has pushed us forward."

Mauer update

Joe Mauer took grounders, faced some pitches in batting practice and played catch in right field before Sunday's game. He also ran the bases under the watchful eye of a trainer.

"Joe's doing pretty well," manager Paul Molitor said. "He was out there the whole game, and we're going to give him an off day tomorrow and back in here on Tuesday to continue."

Mauer remains on the 10-day disabled list where he ended up after facing concussion symptoms. The Twins placed him on the DL for a cervical strain on May 19.

Mauer, 35, said he started to face concussion symptoms again during a Thursday workout. Those symptoms returned after he moved around the field, not during hitting.

Mauer faced balance issues and sensitivity to light when he was also placed on the DL for a sore neck.

Encarnacion's homer results in no-decision for Gibson

A 12-pitch walk of Francisco Lindor earlier in the sixth inning led to Molitor pulling starter Kyle Gibson with two outs in the inning.

Gibson induced a Michael Brantley groundout after Lindor. But after a quick, economical start (Gibson threw 36 pitches in his first three innings), Molitor watched his starter's pitches pile up and turned to Ryan Pressly for the final out of the inning. Pressly, who has made 31 appearances, walked José Ramírez on four pitches before Edwin Encarnacion hit a go-ahead, three-run homer.

Gibson, who hasn't won a start since March 31, earned a no-decision despite limiting the Indians to two earned runs and two hits in 5 2/3 innings. He walked two and struck out seven.

"It didn't work out," Molitor said. "I'm just kind of watching it unfold. ... a lot of pitches over the last couple of innings. I was just trying to get one out there. I felt good about how we were going to navigate through (innings 7-9). But we got a walk and a homer. It changed fast. I know (Gibson) wanted to face Ramírez. It's easy to look back and say we should have given him a shot. But, the last couple of innings and the way they had gone, he was economical early and then it started catching up to him late. So, I went with the fresh arm."

Eddie Rosario made Twins history, and he didn't even need a decent pitch to hit

Dan Hayes | The Athletic | June 4, 2018

A day after he frustrated Trevor Bauer by homering off a pitch well inside, Eddie Rosario hit two more rounder-trippers on offerings out of the zone on Sunday as part of a three-homer performance.

When the Twins outfielder drove a 94-mph fastball that was up and away from Cody Allen into the flower bed atop the 23-foot wall in center field for a game-winning homer, it set off a wild celebration at Target Field. Rosario's blast capped his red-hot weekend and lifted the Twins to a 7-5 victory over the Cleveland Indians. Not only did the 400-foot shot help the Twins (25-30) earn a critical series win, Rosario also became the first player in Twins history with a pair of three-homer games.

"He's a great bad-ball hitter," Twins first baseman Joe Mauer said. "When he usually swings he's going to put it in play. When he gets on fire, he gets on fire. It's really fun to watch.

"I wouldn't be trying to give him anything around the plate right now the way he's going."

You could argue that the Indians didn't try to give Rosario anything around the plate throughout the four-game series. Bauer's cut-fastball in the

third inning on Saturday was about eight inches inside. Rosario used his quick hands to pull it into the right-field bleachers for the go-ahead home run. Afterward, Bauer told Indians reporters: “It was in his own batter’s box, so whatever.”

As Mauer noted Sunday, “technically,” Rosario’s homer off Allen was on a pitch that found the upper right corner of the strike zone. For most of the baseball world, however, it’s not an enticing pitch. Rosario also homered on a 93.8-mph fastball down and away from Mike Clevinger in the first inning to give the Twins a 1-0 lead. His homer in the seventh, one that also temporarily gave the Twins the lead, came on a Tyler Olson curve that was down and in.

“(Facing Rosario was) pretty challenging,” Indians catcher Yan Gomes said. “I could say we didn’t quite figure it out. The guy is on a streak right now. Any time he puts the bat on the ball, it has been driven somewhere.”

Rosario has long made a habit of swinging at pitches outside of the strike zone.

Since 2016, Rosario’s 39.4 percent swing-rate at pitches out of the zone is 13th out of 178 qualified hitters in that span, according to Fangraphs.com. Kansas City’s Salvador Perez leads that crowd at 46.4 percent.

Rosario has increased that swing total to 40.1 percent this season, which ranks 14th out of 162. But in spite of his free-swinging, Rosario has seen a decrease in his strikeout rate. Whereas in 2016 Rosario had a strikeout rate of 25.7 percent, he’s down to 17.7 percent this season after an 18-percent showing in 2017.

The ability to put pitches out of the zone in play has also led to a gradual increase in his OPS. Rosario has a .925 OPS this season, up from .836 last season and .716 in 2016.

“He’s kind of always been that way,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “Now he’s just kind of refined it. The strikeouts are down. Generally, I think he does a good job of making pitchers work. Hopefully, he can keep it going. He’s carried us in a lot of ways here.”

Twins assistant hitting coach Rudy Hernandez thinks much of Rosario’s improvement comes from a combination of quick hands and intelligent work in the batting cage. Whereas Rosario mostly uses batting practice to get loose, Hernandez said his tee work indoors is much more defined.

“He’s really working hard,” Hernandez said. “He’s really focused in the cage.

“The way he’s swinging right now, it’s hard to face him.”

The way Rosario is currently hitting has also gained him a significant amount of attention. Twice this weekend “Eddie” chants could be heard ringing throughout Target Field. He also had to squint in the clubhouse after he was surrounded by news cameras adorned with bright lights.

The bat from the first of Eddie Rosario’s three home runs is headed to the Twins archive. (Credit: Dan Hayes/The Athletic) After that was a visit with a Major League Baseball official, who was there to witness and authenticate Rosario’s signature on the first of two bats he used to hit homers on Sunday. Rosario signed the bat he broke on a fourth-inning line out on a Clevinger pitch that was, go figure, right down the middle of the plate. He used a gold Sharpie pen to sign the 33.5-inch, 31-ounce maple Victus Pro Reserve ER20 bat that helped him become the first player in 68 years of Twins baseball to twice homer three times in a game. Rosario previously accomplished the feat on June 13, 2017, against the Seattle Mariners.

Both Hernandez and Rosario think the success the left fielder had during his breakout 2017 campaign has helped him to find a new level this season, one that could earn him a trip to Washington, D.C., and the All-Star Game next month.

“I feel more strong,” Rosario said. “I know last year, after the summer, I felt good. I had a good August. But this year, I wanted to start and do the same thing as last year when I finished. I feel good.”

Rosario’s Twins teammates had to feel the same way when they greeted him at home plate after his stunning blast off Allen in the ninth. After tying a major-league record with eight walk-off losses in their first 50 games, it was high time the Twins experienced one themselves. The homer, Rosario’s 13th, provided the Twins with only their third walk-off win of the season.

“As many as we’ve experienced, we haven’t had a lot of those chances to see the home-plate celebrations,” Molitor said. “The right guy did it.”